

CHAPTER THREE : INTERNAL ADMINISTRATION AND FOREIGN POLICIES OF THE SOUTHERN SONG, 1131-1141A.D.

In 4th/1130, Wanyan Zongbi and his army finally managed to free themselves from the ambush of the Song army led by Han Shizhong and withdrew to the north, and the Southern Song could have some peace for a while after this famous "Confrontation at Huangtiandang". However, after the many months of fighting ever since the invasion of the Jurchen which started in the intercalary eighth month of 1129, the Song was much weakened and needed time to recover. At that time, robbers and bandits were running wild and were beyond the control of the court. For those places that were free from rebels and bandits, the government would appoint local strong men or ex-generals as governors in charge of defence. This was, however, only a temporary measure and the government actually had no control over these areas.¹

In 5th/1130, the chief councillor Fan Zongyin (1100-1136) had referred to the Southern Song as an individual who had just recovered from a severe illness.² The Drafting Official of the Secretariat (*Zhongshu Sheren*), Ji Ling (1081-1135), was also of the opinion that the Southern Song was in a critical situation. The power of commanding the military was not in the hands of the central government, the generals could not work together as one, and the influence and power of the emperor had greatly declined. According to him Gao Zong was still able to keep his throne just because the people of the Song Dynasty had not yet given up hope for the Zhao royal family.³

¹ *YL*, ch. 33, pp. 639-640.

² *Ibid.*, p.645.

³ *Ibid.*, ch. 34, pp. 659-660.

In 1132, one of the minor ministers in court, Hu Yin, in his memorial to the emperor, had discussed the fact that the internal affairs in the government was in an unstable state. He also mentioned the fact that preparation for war at the borders was not properly carried out.⁴ A scholar without official position, Wu Shen (date of birth unknown), also presented a memorial, pointing out the current defects in the government and comparing the political situation of the Song with the puppet Qi regime. From his writing, it can be concluded that the situation of the Song government was in such a bad state that not only was it much weaker in comparison to the Jin government, it was even not as strong and peaceful as the Qi regime.⁵

From the opinion of the above mentioned scholar-officials, it can be seen that the government of the Southern Song during the early years of the Jianyan and Shaoxing⁶ era was in a very unstable state. In this chapter, I will attempt to consider the actual strength of the Southern Song by looking at the different aspects of its internal administration. The situation in the northern regimes of Jin and Qi will also be discussed. The foreign policies of the Southern Song in the years 1131 until 1141 towards these two regimes will also be highlighted. Further discussion will be on the policies and steps taken by the Southern Song as it faced the threat of internal rebellions and external invasions.

⁴ *Ibid.*, ch. 59, pp. 1018-1019.

⁵ *Ibid.*, ch. 61, pp. 1043-1045 .

⁶ The government of Gao Zong had changed the title year to *Shaoxing* in the first month of 1131, see *ibid.*, ch. 41, p. 753.

I. INTERNAL CONDITIONS IN EARLY SOUTHERN SONG

(i) The Rise of Bandits and their Pacification

After the Calamity of Jingkang, the whole central plain was in a chaotic state. The country was experiencing bankruptcy in the economy, and the people's lives and social order were also disrupted. The failure of Gao Zong's new government in the military area had also created many new problems, the populace were without food, and soldiers who were defeated in battles had gathered together to become robbers and bandits. Later on when the Jin troops pursued Gao Zong in their three invasions to the south, even though they did not succeed in eliminating the Southern Song, much of the areas and property were destroyed in the war especially in the Jiang-Huai region. This had increased the crime rates and banditry was rampant in these areas.

The Southern Song government was facing the threat of internal rebellions and external invasions at the same time. Under these precarious circumstances the existing military power was hardly able to sustain the shaky regime.⁷ Therefore, the government had resorted to the policy of "suppressing banditry internally prior to fighting the enemy externally". Under this policy, the government had adopted the following measures to curb banditry. Firstly, it decided to adopt the proposal of Fan Zongyin to set up regional commandaries⁸ to curb banditry. The idea was to set up regional commandaries in the Henan and Jiangbei areas, where banditry was rampant, and appoint bandit leaders to be "pacification commissioners" over these areas and

⁷ During the Jianyan era, Gao Zong's government merely possessed an army of 100,000 soldiers. With this small number of soldiers, the court was already facing difficulty suppressing the large number of bandits, not to mention the threat posed by the Jin invaders.

⁸ The idea of setting up regional commandaries was proposed by Fan in 5th/1130. At that time banditry was rampant everywhere north of the Yangzi, and the Song court was unable to suppress it. Fan's idea was to appoint bandit leaders as military governors or regional commanders to take charge of areas under their control so that they would at least pledge their loyalty to the court. See *YL*, ch. 33, pp. 639-640.

also give them certain authority from the court. This suggestion was rejected by most of the officials in court as this was contrary to the dynastic tradition of "strengthening the trunk and weakening the branches". However, the government decided to go on with this plan as there were no other concrete proposals to solve the problem at hand. The weak military forces were in fact not sufficient to keep the country under control at the moment, and the policy of centralization had to be abandoned for the time being. This suggestion was fully supported by Gao Zong and was carried out positively. Unfortunately, this new policy did not bring about any beneficial effects to the country after its implementation. On the contrary, many bandit leaders, having been given official titles, were able to make use of their positions to create more disturbances by openly disregarding the law. Further, most of them were not able to guard and defend the territory under their charge, making the situation even worse. Therefore, after the resignation of the chief councillor Fan Zongyin in 7th/1131, this policy was abandoned.

Another method used in quelling internal rebellions was to simultaneously carry out suppression and pacification of the bandits by recruiting them to be part of the military force. But strictly speaking, the Southern Song government was more inclined towards the policy of accommodation⁹ and persuasion rather than outright suppression. They chose to pardon and give rewards to those who would join the imperial army. This step was taken first of all because the military power of the court was not sufficient to suppress the bandit rebels, and secondly, the idea of recruiting the bandits into the army appeared to be a great idea. If the government could not control

⁹ As pointed out by Professor James T.C.Liu, the principle of accommodation became the salient feature in Southern Song politics. "Accommodation" means to get along with all existing political elements, high and low, by making or leaving some room for them in the power structure. It implies the use of such tactics as manipulating and particularly balancing. See Liu Zijian, "Baorong zhengzhi de tedian", *Liang Song Shi Yanjiu Huibian*, pp.21-40.

the bandits, they might as well recruit them and make them part of the government troops. This would not only save them the hassle of going to war and even losing in battles, it could also further strengthen and consolidate the military power of the court. Although this policy also had its defects,¹⁰ but looking at the situation on the whole, there appeared to be no other alternative.

As a matter of fact, this idea of recruiting the bandits to be soldiers was beneficial to the Southern Song and had succeeded in controlling the situation internally. It led to a further advantage in that the external situation gradually improved as the Song was able to rebuild its military strength. During the years from 1130 to 1141, the Southern Song had been successful in defending their country and even winning several battles against the Jin and the Qi. This was the direct result of implementing the above policy of suppressing internal rebellions prior to fighting external invasions. Of Course, the policy of recruiting the bandits into the imperial army was not entirely successful in keeping the nation in peace, but the rebuilding of military forces was Gao Zong's most urgent task in order to stop the Jin and Qi from continuing their invasions. Thus, a huge military force in terms of number and power was needed to keep the country alive. Since the idea appeared to be viable in defending the nation, the ministers in court therefore had no objection to its implementation. Although there were some who did not agree with it, they did not come out with other alternatives which sounded better, so this appeared to be the best solution to the problems for the time being.

¹⁰ Recruiting the bandits into the imperial army actually only boosted the number of soldiers but the quality of the troops and the training they received remained questionable.

(ii) The Living Conditions of the Song Populace

The Song populace were having a hard time at the beginning of the Southern Song. This was clearly reflected in the memorials submitted by the officials at court to the emperor.¹¹ Looking at the whole picture, these hard times faced by the civilians were a result of heavy taxation and the disruption of peace by the government officials and the military.

The reason for heavy taxation was due to the fact that a large amount of money was used for military purposes. Large sums of money were used in suppressing bandits and robbers in the country and in fighting the Jin invaders from the north. When the recruitment of soldiers increased, the amount needed was even larger, and the taxes rose accordingly.

At the beginning of the Jianyan and Shaoxing eras, after the destruction by war, most of the population registers and records were lost, and tax collection could not be properly carried out. As a result, many corrupt officers and clerks had made deals with the rich and influential in making forged documents so as to evade tax. These rich people not only evaded tax but they also made use of their wealth to increase their land ownership. On the other hand the poor peasants who had sold off their property would have to bear the tax burden instead. This led to the situation whereby the people who did not own land had to bear a very heavy tax burden, while the rich did not have

¹¹ The officials at court frequently referred to the hard times faced by the populace in early Southern Song. These officials include Ji Ling, Wang Zao and Zhu Shengfei. See *YL*, ch. 34, p. 660 and ch.42, p.768. See also *HB*, ch.145, p.133.

to pay.¹² Therefore, the poor were living in increasingly difficult situations due to the oppression of government officers and clerks.

The difficulty caused by the military to the civilians was a great threat to the nation too. It is a known fact that the quality of the Song military was indeed poor. The army consisted mostly of former criminals who were very undisciplined. When the army was defeated by the enemy, the defeated troops would loot the civilians of their belongings and even rape the women. Their behavior was no different from existing bandits. Wang Zao (1079-1154) had pointed out the fact that during the time Gao Zong was at sea escaping from the Jin army, several military generals and leaders including Zhang Jun, Han Shizhong and Wang Xie (date of birth unknown), had openly allowed their soldiers to carry out looting.¹³ It is therefore not surprising that in the eyes of the civilians, the problem caused by the military was even worse than the threat posed by the robbers and bandits, and the Jurchen invaders.¹⁴

(iii) The National Finance

The financial status of the Southern Song was in a bad shape due to the poverty of the people, poor administration and the high cost of defence. First of all, the country did not have enough money because the civilians were very poor and the taxes collected were not enough. Corruption and bad management had further worsened the financial status of the country as a lot of taxes collected had been lost in the hands of

¹² This was reported by the Deputy Commissioner of Transport in the Lianghu region (*Lianghu Zhuanyun Fushi*), Li Chunnian, in 11th/1142. See *SHY*, ch. 17533, p. 4897. See also *YL*, ch.147, pp.2365-2366.

¹³ See *HB*, ch. 136, pp. 77-80. See also *YL*, ch. 30, p. 591, where it is stated that before the Jin army arrived at Mingzhou, the city had already been looted by the Song army led by Zhang Jun.

¹⁴ It is said that during the time Zongbi's troops arrived at Lin'an, "The people there only worried about the undisciplined Song soldiers and did not worry about the arrival of the Jin army." See *YL*, ch. 30, p. 584.

corrupt clerks and officers.¹⁵ Furthermore, the amount of money needed to maintain the military was about 80% of the national income.¹⁶ Other than maintaining the troops, money was also needed to pay the military leaders to gain their support and there were also all sorts of rewards awarded to those who did well in their military careers. Therefore, although the taxes became increasingly heavier, the Southern Song government was still faced with the problem of insufficient funds.¹⁷

(iv) The Military Power Of The Southern Song

At the beginning of the Southern Song, the Jin army had carried out large-scale attacks on the Song on three occasions and the Song troops were defeated without any serious confrontation. The relative strength and weakness between the Jin and Song was rather obvious. During the time Gao Zong was in Xiangzhou for the opening of the Generalissimo Headquarters (*Yuanshuaifu*), the number of soldiers was less than 100,000.¹⁸ Until the end of 1133, the Song had gathered about 200,000 soldiers.¹⁹ However, the government was still very weak because the crucial factor was not dependant on the number of soldiers they had but on their quality and administration. Gathering various information from historical writings, one can attribute several reasons for the weak military power of the Song. These could be summed up as having too many soldiers, fear of the Jin army, lack of horses, insufficient training and lack of

¹⁵ Lin Ruihan, "Shaoxing Shi'er Nian Yiqian Nan Song Guoqing zhi Yanjiu," *SSYJ*, vol. 1, p.193.

¹⁶ Gao Zong revealed this when he was discussing the expenditure of the country. See *YL*, ch. 189, p.3131.

¹⁷ Lin Ruihan, *op.cit.*, p. 196.

¹⁸ *SS*, ch. 24, p. 440.

¹⁹ *YL*, ch. 71, p. 1196.

discipline, the over-giving of rewards and the disharmony and lack of cooperation among the generals.²⁰

What should be noted here is the fact that even though many defects existed within their military forces, yet the Song troops could later on defeat the Jin army and were successful in defending the territory under the Southern Song. From an objective viewpoint, the reason for their later victory against the Jin troops was partly due to the existence of internal problems in the Jin government itself, and also partly because of the change in the military situation. One crucial factor was the fact that when Zhang Jun was posted to Sichuan and Shaanxi area as Pacification Commissioner (*Xuanfu Chuzhishi*) in 1129, he was successful in delaying the Jin troops in that area, negating the chances of them invading the South easily. Although Zhang Jun was later defeated by the Jin army in Fuping,²¹ his appointment of Wu Jie (1093-1139) and Wu Lin (1102-1167) had preserved the territory of Sichuan and prevented the Jin army from moving south-east. This had reduced much of military threat and external pressure on the Song government. Other than that, Gao Zong was wise in choosing four military generals who were able to contribute much to the country. In 1133-1142, banditry in the country was demolished by these four generals, namely, Liu Guangshi, Han Shizhong, Zhang Jun and Yue Fei (1103-1142). After solving the internal problems, they could then concentrate their military strength on fighting the Jin army. This began a new page in the relationship with the Jin and the Qi, which later resulted in the defeat of the Qi and the success of the Song in defending against the Jin invasions.

²⁰ Lin Ruihan, *op.cit.*, p.201.

²¹ The Battle of Fuping occurred in 9th/1130. The Jin army won the battle and captured Shaanxi. See *YL*, ch. 37, pp. 711-713.

2. SITUATION IN THE NORTH, 1131-1141

The military tactic used by the Jurchen in invading other states was to first capture the latter's emperor, and then to set up a puppet government to control the enemy country. Since they succeeded in using this tactic against the Liao, they had tried the same strategy on the Song Dynasty. They pursued Gao Zong until he fled to the sea but Gao Zong was successful in escaping. Failing to hunt down the Song emperor, the Jin then decided to establish a new government in the conquered Song territory. This was seen as a measure for the Jin to indirectly control the people in the area conquered by them.

The step taken was different from the imposition of direct control on the Liao previously. This was firstly due to the cultural factor. The Jin and the Liao people had basically derived from the same kind of nomadic culture, therefore there would not be much problem controlling and governing the Liao, but to govern the Song people was a different case altogether. Song was an agricultural society, superior in culture to the Jurchen. To them, the Jurchen were an alien tribe who were very different in terms of culture, language and writing. If the Jin were to directly govern the Song, racial hatred and incooperation were inevitable and administrative problems would result.

The second reason why the Jin decided not to govern the Song directly was that the Song was a large country with a great population. Even though the Jin, despite its being a much smaller and less populated country, succeeded in defeating the Song government, they had second thought about keeping the vast territory of the Song under their control. Therefore, it would be wiser for them to appoint someone of Han origin to take control of the newly established government and rule the conquered territory on their behalf. The Jin nation could then make use of the opportunity to

further strengthen their own nation and get prepared to take over the government of the conquered land when they were strong enough to do so.

Thirdly, the Jin were faced with the problem of the existence of numerous groups of Song loyalists and bandits known for their guerilla tactics in the Huai region. Although this problem did not pose any major threat to the Jin army, but it did disrupt the Jurchen's planning, and made them realize that they were an alien race to the people of the Central Plain, who were bound to create a lot of political and administrative problems for them to handle. They also knew that besides the existing problem, the Song people would on the whole not submit to foreign domination. So instead of resorting to military force and dragging on the war, they would prefer to leave the problems to be solved by a puppet government which would be ruled by someone who came from Song, to pacify and govern the Song people. Therefore, after retreating from the south in 1130, the Jurchen continued to make use of their policy of "using the Chinese to control the Chinese", appointing Liu Yu and setting up the puppet Qi regime to fight the Southern Song. The Jin themselves on the other hand could return to the north and consolidate their internal administration.

The main intention for the Jurchen to set up the Qi regime was to use Liu Yu to govern the Song territory and to use Qi as a buffer state to soften the effect of direct confrontation between the Jin and the Song. This would enable the Jin to concentrate on their own problems at home.²² However, when Liu Yu was put on the throne, he was more ambitious than what the Jurchen intended him to be. The land given to Liu Yu as Qi's territory consisted of the heartland of the Northern Song. After the Song dynasty moved to the south, the people in the Central Plain were still loyal to the Song

²² *Ibid.*, ch. 105, p. 1711.

even after the Qi government had been established for a few years. Therefore, as long as the Southern Song was still in power, the position of Liu Yu would not be secure. That was the reason why Liu Yu tried very hard to stabilize his power and keep his throne by taking all the trouble to attack the Southern Song. Furthermore, while Liu Yu was on his throne, he had requested the Jin to install his son Liu Lin (date of birth unknown) as the crown prince of Qi. Nevertheless, the Jin had turned it down and stated that the request would only be granted if Liu Yu succeeded in destroying the Southern Song regime.²³ Jin's reply to Liu Yu's request might have been a delaying tactic or they might have merely intended to make use of Liu to create disruption to the Southern Song. In actual fact, the Jin knew for sure that Liu Yu did not have the ability to destroy Southern Song. Nevertheless, the provocation from Jin had led Liu to attack the Southern Song annually so as to gain the favour of the Jin. By so doing Liu hoped to consolidate his throne and to eventually install his son as the crown prince and continue the Liu dynasty.

Numerous small-scale attacks were being carried out against the Southern Song by the troops of Liu Yu from 1131 to 1133. In 7th/1134, under the advice of Luo You (date of birth unknown), the first major attack held jointly with the Jin army had taken place. Luo You's proposal of a full-scale invasion was based upon six factors. Firstly, since the Southern Song had not put up a strong defence in the Jiangzhe region, it would be easy for the Qi to carry out their attacks. The second reason given was that the Song emperor did not have any good advisor helping him, since none of his chief councillors appeared to be wise or capable. Thirdly, the Song generals were mostly arrogant people and could not cooperate with one another to fight the enemy. Fourthly, the Song army were made up of soldiers who were untrained and could be

²³ Tuo Tuo, *Jin Shi* (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1975), thereafter *JS*, ch. 77, p. 1762.

defeated without problem. The fifth reason given was that Gao Zong was the only one left within the Zhao family and it would be easy to take over the throne once he was overthrown. Lastly, it was argued that since the people in Song were poverty-stricken, it would be easy to defeat them.

Luo You further analysed the situation of the Qi, stating that Liu Yu should take the opportunity to eliminate the Southern Song as the Qi was actually not in a very stable condition. If Liu Yu just remained quietly on his throne and be satisfied with what he had at the moment, he would certainly encounter various problems later which might cost him his throne. First of all, if the Qi did not take the opportunity to attack the Song, the Southern Song would have time to recover from the financial difficulty they were in as they possessed much fertile land. They would soon be able to pay annual tribute to the Jin in exchange for peace and recognition. By then, the Qi would be facing a stronger Song army which might defeat Qi instead. Secondly, the Song and the royal Zhao family had been the ruler for more than a century and the people were still loyal to them. On the other hand, the Qi merely relied on the support of the Jin for its establishment. If the Jin one day decided not to support the Qi government, many would rise up against it and the Qi would collapse even without the attack of the Southern Song. Also, since Liu Yu's heir had not been named yet, there was no guarantee that the ministers would be in favour of supporting his son to succeed to his throne because most of the ministers were previously serving under the Song.²⁴

Liu Yu felt that the arguments put forward by Luo You was very logical and agreed wholeheartedly with the latter. Therefore, he made an immediate decision to

²⁴ For the above arguments by Luo You, see *YL*, ch. 78, pp. 1285-1287.

invade the Southern Song. However, knowing that he did not have sufficient power to once and for all exterminate the Southern Song, Liu Yu then sent envoys to the Jin emperor Tai Zong (r.1123-1134), putting forward the plan for a joint military campaign against the Southern Song. It was further suggested that if the campaign was successful, the Jin could then establish another puppet regime in the south. The new regime would be working together with the Qi under the control of the Jin, ruling the whole territory south of the Yangzī.²⁵

The Jin at that time was negotiating with the Song for the control of the territory north of the Yangzī and had met with some difficulty as the Song did not agree to its proposal. Consequently, the Jin decided to reject the Song proposal to increase the annual tribute to the Jin.²⁶ The Jin government's intention coincided with that of the Qi as both were in favour of launching a full-scale invasion on the Song. With the support of the officers in court²⁷, the Jin then dispatched 50,000 soldiers to help Qi. Wanyan Zongbi was assigned as the leader of the southern invasion²⁸ as he was familiar with the topography of the south. The joint campaign by Jin and Qi against the Southern Song was launched on 26/9th/1134.²⁹

In the above war, both the Jin-Qi forces and the Song army had won and lost several battles. Among the more important battles was the confrontation during the

²⁵ *Ibid.*, ch. 80, p. 1312.

²⁶ The Jurchen insisted on claiming the territory north of the Yangzī for the benefit of Liu Yu, see *ibid.*, ch. 71, p.1196 and ch. 78, p. 1283. According to Wang Hui (date of birth unknown), the area of Huainan, Sichuan and Shaanxi claimed by the Jurchen were places which produced a lot of salt. The profit from the salt sold would be much more lucrative than the Song's annual tribute to the Jin. Therefore, the Song government decided to keep the land and was willing to pay more tribute instead.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, ch. 80, p. 1312.

²⁸ *ibid.*

²⁹ *ibid.*, p. 1317.

10th month of 1134 between the Song Pacification Commissioner of Huaidong, Han Shizhong, and the troops of Zongbi at Dayi. On this occasion, the Song troops had heavily defeated the main Jin army led by Zongbi.³⁰ A second major battle was fought between Jin and Song in the late 10th to the 11th month of the same year, when the Jin troops were successful in attacking Haozhou and Chuzhou. Both these areas were taken by the Jin army within two months after the beginning of the war. This turmoil had made the Song troops retreat to safer ground south of the Yangzi.³¹ However, this confrontation did not last long, as in the last month of the same year the Jin army had pulled back their forces and the whole invasion ended. The reason for their withdrawal was first of all because the heavy snow during the war had resulted in the discontinuation of food supply. The Jin soldiers were furious about it and had pestered their leader to retreat. They threatened that if their request was disregarded and orders were given to continue with the war, after the troops crossed the Yangzi, they would turn their back on their leader, capture him and send him over to the Song troops. Due to these circumstances, it was thus impossible to continue with the invasion. The second reason for the withdrawal of the Jin troops was that they had received news stating that the Jin emperor, Tai Zong, was fatally ill. Zongbi was worried that there might be some political struggle in the government if the emperor passed away, so he withdrew his troops to return north the moment he heard the news. Messengers were only then dispatched to inform the Qi commander Liu Lin about their withdrawal. The Qi army was thus forced to quickly retreat from the front line.³² After the Jin army retreated, the Pacification Commissioner of Huaixi, Zhang Jun, and the Pacification Commissioner of the western circuit of Huainan, Liu Guangshi, had led their troops in

³⁰ *Ibid.*, ch. 81, pp. 1329-1331.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 1336-1337 and ch. 82, p. 1349.

pursuit of the retreating Qi soldiers, and were successful in recapturing the lost territories in Huainan.³³

In the six to seven years since his accession to the throne, Gao Zong had sent envoys to Jin for negotiation of peace on several occasions but this did not lead to any result. During the process, the Jin had also sent envoys to Song but they did not seem too keen to make peace with the Song because they still carried on fighting even though negotiations were in progress. Their attitude was that they could choose to continue or stop the invasion whenever they wanted to, and with this policy they had never stopped invading the Southern Song.³⁴ This continued to be the situation until the joint Jin-Qi invasion failed, and with the death of the Jin emperor Tai Zong, the government fell into the hands of pro-peace leaders. These people who included Zongpan, Wanyan Chang and other moderates had taken the opportunity to negotiate for peace³⁵ as the new Jin emperor was still young and could be easily persuaded. Apart from the internal factors mentioned above, the Jin were also obliged to negotiate for peace because of the external pressure they faced. At that time, the northern part of Jin was occasionally threatened by the Mongols, while in the west, the remnants of the defeated Liao tribe were trying to return to power at the borders of the Jin nation, and were conspiring with Xi Xia to overthrow the Jin government. To further worsen the

³² *Ibid.*, ch. 83, p. 1370.

³³ *Ibid.*, ch. 84, p.1375 and pp. 1381-1382.

³⁴ For example, the Song envoy Wang Lun (1084-1144) was sent to Jin since 11th/1127 and was held in captivity for five years. He was finally released by the Jin General Zonghan in 1132. See *SS*, ch. 371, p.11523. Another envoy Pan Zhiyao (date of birth unknown) was able to come back from his mission to Jin in 1132. See *ibid.*, ch. 27, p. 500 and p. 504. It seems that the Jurchen did have the intention to negotiate for peace at that time. However, in 12th/1133, Jin envoys who came over to Song had listed out harsh conditions demanding Song to give land to Liu Yu, return the Qi hostages captured by the Song and also to return the refugees (*guizhengren*) who had fled to the south from north of the Yangzi river, see *ibid.*, ch. 71, p.1196. Therefore, it is very clear that the Jin had no intention at all to negotiate for peace.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, ch. 84, pp. 1387-1389.

case, within the Jin nation itself, the Khitans had tried to revolt against the government. The situation within the Jin government had worsened and their political influence started to decline. At the same time, their plan to invade Sichuan was also blocked by the army of Wu Jie and Wu Lin. Furthermore, the Southern Song at that time had about 200,000 soldiers and their power of defence had become stronger.³⁶ Due to the above problems faced by the Jin, they had to seriously think about negotiating peace with the Southern Song.

Now we will turn our discussion back to the Qi. After the retreat of the Jin-Qi joint forces in 1134, Liu Yu had never given up the intention of invading the south despite his failure. The Song government from 1135 was occupied with suppressing the rebels and bandits in the Dongting Hu region, and Liu Yu thus made use of the opportunity to create trouble at the border to distract the Song military efforts in the suppression of the Yang Yao (d.1135) rebellion. However, the Song military led by Yue Fei was successful in suppressing the rebellion in the Dongting region in 6th/1135. Half a year later, the chief councillor Zhang Jun had proposed the idea of attacking Liu Yu's government. In 2nd/1136, preparations were being carried out for a military campaign against Qi,³⁷ and in the seventh month, the Song were all ready to start the war, stationing their troops at Huainan.³⁸

When Liu Yu heard that the Song troops had gathered for a major attack on Qi, messengers were quickly sent to the new Jin emperor Xi Zong (r.1135-1149) to ask for reinforcement in the hope that the Jin could defeat the Song army before the Song

³⁶ *LDZZS*, vol.11, pp. 195-196.

³⁷ *YL*, ch. 98, p. 1615.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, ch. 102, p. 1666.

launched their campaign. However, the Jin this time had considered the fact that Liu Yu had not only failed to play his role in making Qi a buffer state, but had involved the Jin in continuous warfare. It was a fact that if the Jin were to help the Qi nation, the benefit of winning the war would go to Liu Yu, but if they lost the battle, the Jin would have to bear the consequence.³⁹ Therefore, the Jin decided to wait and see. Upon failing to get reinforcement from Jin, Liu Yu dispatched his own troops of 300,000 men to be led by his own sons Liu Lin and Liu Nǐ (date of birth unknown) and the Song general Kong Yanzhou (1107-1160) who had betrayed Song, to fight the Song from three directions.⁴⁰

In this war the Song troops were actually in a more precarious situation. Their soldiers were all concentrated in Huainan and their frontline was much too long, consisting of many loopholes for the enemy to infiltrate or escape, and in case of any emergency, reinforcement could not be easily dispatched. Further, the Yangzǐ region was left unguarded,⁴¹ and if the Qi army charged through the defence line of Huainan, they could easily invade into the heartland of the Southern Song. Nevertheless, among the three divisions of the Qi army, only the troops under Liu Lin were formidable. Therefore, in fighting the Qi, the Pacification Commissioner of Huaixi, Liu Guangshi wanted to retreat to avoid direct confrontation with Liu Lin. But he was stopped by the chief councillor Zhang Jun, who gave a strict order directing the troops not to withdraw but to charge ahead, and anyone found resisting the order would be

³⁹ *Ibid.*, ch. 105, p. 1711.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 1712.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

punishable by death.⁴² With the strict order given by Zhang Jun the troops had no choice but to fight with high spirit and they eventually defeated the Qi army.

The leading victory in this battle was the confrontation at Ou'tang in 10th/1136. An officer from the Palace Guard, Yang Yizhong, had defeated the troops of Liu Nǐ making the other two troops lose their spirit to fight, and they quickly retreated,⁴³ thus ending this major confrontation between the Qi and the Southern Song.

After Liu Yu was defeated, the Jin emperor sent an envoy to query Liu for his defeat. The Jin court by then had secretly decided to dethrone Liu Yu.⁴⁴ Liu Yu had subsequently attacked the Song border on several occasions in an attempt to secure his throne and had again requested for reinforcement from the Jin. This made the Jin lose their patience with him,⁴⁵ and they finally dethroned Liu Yu in 11th/1137, and the Qi regime was abolished.⁴⁶

The new Jin emperor Xi Zong was still young when he inherited the throne. As he was not able to handle the country's administration well, the government gradually declined and this led to power struggles among the ministers. After the dethronement of Liu Yu, the country's political situation had become worse and there existed two

⁴² *Ibid.*, ch. 106, p. 1717.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 1721.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 1736.

⁴⁵ In 2nd/1137, Liu Yu had directed spies to set fire on several prefectures in the Jiang-Huai region (*ibid.*, ch. 109, p. 1763). In the fifth month, the Qi troops invaded and took over Suizhou (*ibid.*, ch. 111, p. 1802) In the eighth month, the follower of Liu Guangshi, Li Qiong defected to Qi and the Qi had called for joint attack from Jin but failed. (*ibid.*, ch. 113, pp. 1826-1828 and p. 1831) In the tenth month, the Qi troops attacked Sizhou (*ibid.*, ch. 115, p. 1860).

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, ch. 117, pp. 1881-1883.

political factions, based on their differences in dealing with the Southern Song. One of the factions was in favour of establishing peace between Jin and Song and the other was in favour of using force to conquer the Song Dynasty.⁴⁷ The pro-peace faction included Zongpan and Wanyan Chang who were in favour of negotiating for peace because the failure of Liu Yu had triggered them to have such intention. Due to the weakness of Qi, reinforcement was always needed to be dispatched to help Liu Yu, thus defeating the policy of “using the Chinese to control the Chinese”. The army sent to the south also felt frustrated and regarded their efforts as a waste of energy because it never brought about any benefit to the Jin. That was why Jin ministers like Wanyan Chang had insisted on dethroning Liu Yu and negotiating for peace with Gao Zong. On the other hand, due to the fact that the Song emperor had never given up hope on negotiating for peace and was anxiously wishing for a peaceful settlement, the Jin realized that to replace Liu Yu with the existing Song Dynasty was not a bad idea as long as the Song were willing to follow the rules laid down by the Jin. Although this was different from the Jin conquering the Southern Song by military force, yet the Song could still be considered as under Jin’s rule.⁴⁸ With this in mind, the existence of Liu Yu thus posed as an obstruction to the negotiation. Subsequently, after the dethronement of Liu Yu, Wanyan Chang decided almost immediately to return all the territories under Qi to the Song government⁴⁹ and further agreed to release Hui Zong’s

⁴⁷ The Jin court was divided into two factions in their policy toward the Southern Song. The first was the aggressive war faction which included Nianhan, Zonggan, Zongxian, Zongbi and Xiyin. They had the intention to eliminate the Song totally and keep the country under their own control. The other faction consisted of moderates such as Zongpan, Zongjun and Wanyan Chang who were in favour of peace negotiations. They were willing to compromise by returning the territories to the Song so that the two nations could live in harmony.

⁴⁸ Miyazaki Ichisada, *op.cit.*, p. 26.

⁴⁹ In 4th/1137, Gao Zong again dispatched the envoy Wang Lun to see Wanyan Chang with the message: “The land of Henan, your esteemed country does not own it directly. Instead of giving it to Liu Yu, you can return it to the Song.” This somewhat indicated that Gao Zong was willing to reduce himself to the status of Liu Yu to serve Jin. See *YL*, ch. 110, p. 1782. In 12th/1137, when Wang Lun was about to return to Song, Wanyan Chang told him: “You should tell Jiangnan that now the pathway

coffin⁵⁰ and Gao Zong's mother, Empress Wei (1080-1159). The Jin's condition for peace in the negotiation was that the Song should recognize the superior position of the Jin, while matters regarding the annual tribute from the Southern Song had not been touched upon.

According to Edward H. Kaplan, there were two other major motives why the Jin willingly negotiated for peace with the Song and complied with Song's requests. Firstly, by returning the Qi territory to the Song, the Jin were in effect ridding themselves, at least temporarily, of a grave liability. The Jin could finally free themselves from the problems acquired with the land. Due to the fact that the Jin were unable to control directly the land acquired from the Song in 1127, Qi had to be appointed as an agent acting on behalf of Jin. But the Qi regime could not stop the discontent and rebellion from the people. Also, the ministers of Qi were not loyal to the Jin administration. Further, after ten years of war and ineffective administration, the Central Plain was already in a bad shape, and much money, time and effort were needed to rebuild the place. Therefore, the Jin were willing to throw this heavy burden back to the Song. Secondly, once the territory was returned to the Song, the Southern Song would have to move the defence line northwards several hundred miles to the banks of the Yellow River. This would cost the Southern Song heavy expenses and a lot of effort to effectively manage the area. Further, the area of Henan consisted largely of lowland and is flat in terrain, compared to the Jiangnan area which is hilly and has many waterways. This would be an important advantage to the Jin if they decided to

for negotiation has no more interruption." From this, it could be seen that the Jin court was willing to negotiate for peace. See *ibid.*, ch. 117, p. 1894.

⁵⁰ Hui Zong had already passed away in 4th/1135 at Wuguocheng. See *ibid.*, ch. 88, p. 1473.

invade the Song again one day.⁵¹ By the year 1139, the initial peace negotiations between Jin and Song were successfully concluded and the territory was also handed back to Song in the third month of that year.⁵²

However, in less than three months after the territories of Henan and Shaanxi were returned to the Song, the Jin itself had encountered a political crisis at court. The peace advocates Zongpan and Wanyan Chang were killed in the power struggle.⁵³ The war faction led by Zongbi had gained power in the government and had planned for an invasion against the Southern Song almost immediately. In 1140, the Jin invaded the Southern Song again.

The political crisis in the Jin government this time appeared to have been caused by differences of opinion regarding peace or war. Actually the main reason for the crisis was the power struggle between Zongbi and Wanyan Chang.⁵⁴ Since the very beginning of the reign of Jin Xi Zong, Wanyan Chang and his supporters had the upper hand in advocating a pro-peace policy. On the other hand, Zongbi had always not been happy with this decision and he was not able to accept the idea of returning the territory captured from the Song so as to befriend them. Furthermore, in the above peace negotiation, the Southern Song did not even have to give any annual tribute, nor had they sacrificed one single man in attaining peace and recovering the lost land.

⁵¹ Kaplan Edward Harold, "Yueh Fei And The Founding Of The Southern Song", Ph.D diss., University of Iowa, 1970, p. 382.

⁵² *YL*, ch. 127, pp. 2062-2063.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, ch. 130, pp. 2095-2097 and ch. 131, p. 2103.

⁵⁴ Lin Tianwei, "Yili Yu Shishi Zhi Zheng", *Songdai Shishi Zhiyi* (Taiwan: Shangwu Yinshuguan, 1987), p. 166.

Therefore, under the advice of Zongbi, the emperor gave order to attack and recapture the land given by Wanyan Chang to the Song.⁵⁵

Since the Jin had started the war, the Southern Song had to get ready for defence. This time, the two states were fighting for the territories of Jiangnan and Shaanxi. The Jin army was very strong and had been able to defeat its opponents and recapture several areas. On the other hand, the Song's defence was not weak though; they did successfully defend themselves against the Jin in several battles. Among those battles, the confrontation in Shunchang⁵⁶ led by the Regulator of Defence in the Huai area, Liu Qi (1098-1162), and the battle in Zhegao under the command of the Assistant Pacification Commissioner of Huaibei, Yang Yizhong,⁵⁷ had dealt a great blow to the Jin army. In Shaanxi however, both the Jin and Song troops had suffered some losses while winning some other battles at the same time.

The difficulties faced by Zongbi ever since he came into power in the Jin court made him consider negotiating for a second peace settlement with the Southern Song. Consequently, in 3rd/1142, the Jin had again signed a peace treaty with the Song government with several conditions for them to comply with. First of all, the Song would be a vassal to the Jin, and in return, the Jin would recognize Gao Zong as Song's emperor. Secondly, the Song had to pay 250,000 units of gold and silk each to the Jin as annual tribute. Thirdly, the Song government must send envoys to congratulate the Jin emperor during his birthday and convey New Year greetings annually. Fourthly, the Jin promised to return Hui Zong's coffin and Empress Wei to the Song. Finally, it

⁵⁵ *YL*, ch. 135, p. 2166.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, ch. 136, p. 2183.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, ch. 139, p. 2234-2235.

was decided to make the Huai River the eastern border and Dasanguan the western border between the two states.⁵⁸

Since the rise of the Jin army, they were able to defeat all enemies successfully. They first destroyed the Liao and then conquered the Northern Song. However, the Jin army this time had suffered successive defeat at Shunchang and Zhegao. The powerful army under Zongbi was even trapped at Kaifeng by the ambush of one single troop led by Yue Fei.⁵⁹ In examining the reasons for this defeat, one finds that a main reason was that the invasion of Jin took place during the summer. This had affected the effectiveness of the Jurchen army, which was more used to the cold weather. Secondly, during the battle between Zongbi and Yue Fei, the Jin were experiencing a mutiny within the court and this had diverted Zongbi's attention. Furthermore, in those previous wars, the Jin troops were battling in enemy's land; they were able to get food supply by force from the enemy, and the looting of the enemy's civilians and abducting of civilian women also made them high in fighting spirit and the efficiency of their cavalry was boosted. Thus, the Song army could not handle the speed and fatal attacks by the Jin troops and were afraid of them. But ever since Liu Yu was enthroned as the puppet ruler, areas like Jiangbei were seen as a part of Jin's own land. Therefore, in the event of war their first priority was to protect the people of that area so as to win their support. So instead of getting their supplies in these areas, they had to wait for supplies to be sent from their homeland.⁶⁰ The soldiers were also not allowed to loot the civilians and their morale was low. Due to these factors, the Jin troops were slow in their response to battles and were easily defeated. Also, with the abolition of the Qi

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, ch. 142, pp. 2288-2289 and ch. 144, p. 2313.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, ch. 137, p. 2203.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, ch. 142, p. 2288.

regime, the territory of Qi was returned to the Song, and the people in the Central Plain were loyal to the Southern Song. Thus when the Jin later declared war to reclaim the land, the situation in the place became chaotic and the people were unhappy and this had affected the military movement of the Jin troops.⁶¹

3. THE REBUILDING OF THE SOUTHERN SONG MILITARY POWER

After the retreat of the Jin troops in the second month of 1130, the traitor Liu Yu was enthroned as the puppet ruler of Qi by the Jurchen as a buffer state between the Jin and the Southern Song. Ever since then, besides making effort to deal with the continual attacks from the Qi, the Southern Song also had to deal with the activities of the rebels and bandits in the country at the same time.

There were two phases with regard to Gao Zong's strategy in dealing with the Qi. The first phase was at the beginning of the establishment of the Qi regime, when the Song government was not strong enough to fight the Qi, and knowing that the Qi was backed up by the Jin, they had to treat the Qi with respect. The families of some of the high-ranking officers in Qi, such as the chief councillor of Qi, Zhang Xiaochun (d. 1138), and senior ministers Zheng Yinian (date of birth unknown) and Li Ye (date of birth unknown), who stayed behind in the Southern Song, were treated with care and respect.⁶² During this time the trading activities between the Southern Song and the Qi nation were also allowed.⁶³ The second phase of Gao Zong's policy began in 1134 when the joint forces under Jin and Qi invaded the Southern Song. During the

⁶¹ *LDZZS*, vol. 11, pp. 260-262.

⁶² *JS*, ch. 77, pp. 1759-1760.

⁶³ *YL*, ch. 50, p. 1726.

war Gao Zong was forced to counter attack and after the war in 1134, Gao Zong began to plan for his northern campaign against the Qi.

In actual fact, the establishment of the Qi regime was in a way beneficial to the Southern Song. First of all, the military threat posed by Qi was far less than that of the Jin, and its influence in China could not compare to the Zhao-Song regime which had ruled the land for a hundred and seventy years. Therefore, though the existence of the Qi did have some pressure on Gao Zong, it had also helped the Southern Song because it actually produced a cushioning effect and the Song government had time to rebuild its military forces and further stabilize the political situation in the country. The Song policy toward Qi could be reflected clearly in the memorial submitted to the emperor by a civilian Wu Shen in 12th/1132, pointing out that the Song government was “using the Qi government as a fence to halt the Jurchen”.⁶⁴ Fortunately, the Jin at that time were concentrating their efforts on internal administration, and even though in the joint campaign of 1134, the Jin did dispatch soldiers to help Qi in their attack on Song, the forces sent were not as strong as their former armies. Therefore, during the few years when the Jin stopped their aggressive warfare,⁶⁵ despite the frequent disturbances of the Qi, the Song government had the opportunity to suppress the internal rebellions in the country, by changing the initial tactic of accommodating the rebels and bandits by recruiting them into the government army to a more active one of suppressing them by force. However, due to the prevalence of external threat, the

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, ch. 61, p. 1044.

⁶⁵ The Jin during the joint campaign in 1134, only dispatched 50,000 soldiers to assist the Qi government. After this there were no large-scale military movements. It was only until 5th/1140 that the Jin attacked Song again.

Song government still preferred to adopt a more accommodative policy of pacification toward the rebels and bandits in order not to weaken their defence on the front line.⁶⁶

Due to the policy of recruiting the rebels as their own soldiers, the number of soldiers under the various generals grew rapidly. Also, the yearly attacks of the Qi troops were seen as good training for the newly formed Song troops. The few years of fighting against the Jin followed by successive years of fighting the Qi had made the Song troops more experienced in battle. Their experience had made the Song troops into a formidable force. Four armies consisting of experienced and well trained soldiers were formed, called the *sizhen*, the "Four Armies",⁶⁷ and Song military power was rebuilt at the same time. These four armies were able to encounter the Jin troops with great confidence and high morale in the subsequent years. They were thus relied upon as the court's most effective weapon against enemy attacks.

4. THE NEW POLITICAL CRISIS

From the founding of the Southern Song in 1127 until 1137, the country had encountered attacks from the enemy externally and disturbances caused by rebels and bandits internally. The Southern Song government could only rely on the help of the military generals during these crises. The government had tried positively to strengthen the army and had loosened the stringent policy to control the military generals, giving them more flexibilities and power to enable them to perform better in war.

⁶⁶ For example, in 9th/1311, there were pirate activities in the country. The leader Shao Qing (d. 1140) had several thousand boats and the government had no boats to counter the pirates' attack. Therefore, the only thing the Song government could do was to recruit them to prevent them from being used by the Jurchen to attack the government. In this way the Song government was able to turn rebels' power into a force that would be of help to the government. See *ibid.*, ch. 47, pp. 844-845.

⁶⁷ The *sizhen* were the four major armies of the Song government which were led by the four generals, Han Shizhong, Liu Guangshi, Zhang Jun and Yue Fei.

During the beginning of the Southern Song, the central government had given the power to control the troops to the Pacification Commissioner (*Anfushi*) in each circuit.⁶⁸ The policy was to name a civil official as the chief commander of the troops and the military general as an assistant commander. But since most of the civil officials were not familiar with military matters, the actual military power was still in the hands of the generals. Later the government had appointed some generals to hold the position of Regulators of Defence (*Zhizhishi*) and Defence Commissioners (*Xuanfushi*) with great power to enable them to handle the internal and external problems unrestrictedly. Some of the famous generals who had led successful battles had been given these positions later. These generals, including Han Shizhong, Liu Guangshi, Zhang Jun and Yue Fei, had become the very important military leaders of the time.

The policy of granting military power to the generals had brought about some positive results. The generals with more freedom in decision-making had played an active role in helping the country to achieve political and social stability. Nevertheless, on the other hand, it also resulted in a situation where the generals were in control of a large army and the regional power became stronger than the central government. During this period, the major military forces consisting of the "Four Armies" had become stronger by recruiting surrendered bandits into their armies. Training was done by the generals themselves and the quality of the troops rested entirely on the ability of the generals,⁶⁹ and the army was built upon the personal relationship

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, ch. 6, p. 161.

⁶⁹For example, the army of Yue Fei had the least number of soldiers among the *sizhen*, but they were the strongest in terms of training and discipline and were the best fighters. The troops of Han Shizhong were not so efficient compared to the troops of Yue Fei but in the later years, they had improved both in quality and efficiency. The other two armies under Zhang and Liu were of no comparison to the troops under Yue and Han. Zhang Jun's army was the largest in number and had the best equipment. However, they were lacking in training and discipline. Finally although Liu Guangshi came from a military background, his troops were the least trained and were notorious for their lack of discipline.

between the generals and their followers, and the central government had no control over them.⁷⁰ Before the “Four Armies” served under Gao Zong, they were private military troops under the leadership of their commanders in the chaotic time. After they came under the central government they still retained these characteristics. When they recruited the bandits and robbers into the army, they did it in the name of the leading generals and many joined them because they were impressed by the personality and ability of the generals and not because they wanted to come under Gao Zong’s regime.⁷¹ Consequently, in the early years of Gao Zong’s reign, the major armies were named after their leaders, such as “Han Army”, “Yue Army” and “Zhang Army” and so on,⁷² and were all private armies which shared the government’s military power. The soldiers only respected their leading general but did not bother about the central government. Furthermore, since the rotation and transfer system had been interrupted during war time, some of the soldiers even served under the same generals for their whole life, and this made them even closer to their leaders in relationship.⁷³ Under such circumstances, if any general were to revolt against the government and declare himself emperor as the Song founder did in the incident of Chenqiao, the soldiers would most probably support their leader without thinking about the question of legality. Such armies were therefore a potential threat to the central government. Furthermore, the disharmony and mutual jealousy among the generals and their lack of cooperation with one another and refusal to obey court orders had often put the court in an extremely difficult position.

⁷⁰ Huang Kuanzhong, “Li Qiong Bingbian Yu NanSong Chuqi de Zhengju”, *Taiwan Zhongyang Yanjiu Yuan Lishi Yuyan Yanjiushuo Jikan*, 1990.3, vol. 60, p. 95.

⁷¹ Wang Shizong, *op.cit.*, p. 163.

⁷² *YL*, ch. 137, pp. 2201-2202.

⁷³ *SS*, ch. 196, p. 4905.

This situation of powerful military generals had become more and more alarming for the Song government especially after they had been assigned certain territories under their custody. After being stationed at a certain place, the troops had a clear picture of what their jurisdiction was. From the positive point of view, the troops would be more responsible in their role of defending the area under their charge. However, from a negative point of view, the authority given to them also enabled them to engage in various activities such as trading and acquiring land for their own benefit.⁷⁴ The recalcitrance of these generals was also reflected by their request for tax-exemption⁷⁵ or ignoring the tax collection rules laid down by the government.⁷⁶

During the time of the Northern Song, half of the national forces were stationed in the capital while the other half were stationed at the borders and different parts of the country so that the central government would have sufficient military power to control the regions. The situation was totally different in the early years of Gao Zong's reign. The armies were under the control of the generals while Gao Zong himself did not have much military power in his hands. The only troops he controlled was the so-called "Shenwu Central Army" (*Shenwu Zhongjun*). In 1133, the Shenwu Central Army led by Yang Yizhong consisted of only three thousand soldiers and though most of them were weak and elderly, they had been frequently sent to the front line to

⁷⁴ For example, it is recorded in *SS*, ch. 367, p. 11439, that Yang Cunzhong had acquired much land illegally. Also, it is recorded in *YL*, ch. 147, p. 2372, that Han Shizhong had also acquired land in the early stage of his military career.

⁷⁵ Zhang Jun had openly requested for tax-exemption, but Gao Zong did not grant his request as he did not want to set a precedent. Instead Gao Zong granted him a gift of 5,000 bolts of silk to indicate his imperial favour. See *YL*, ch.135, p.2162. Prior to his death, Liu Guangshi had also requested for tax-exemption. Gao Zong initially agreed, but withdrew his order after facing opposition from court. See *ibid.*, ch. 147, p. 2367.

⁷⁶ It is recorded in *YL*, ch. 148, p.2375 that on one occasion, Han Shizhong had paid all the taxes he owed to the government. The government had praised him for the action and did not punish him for his failure to pay taxes earlier.

fight.⁷⁷ In 3rd/1135, there were only nine hundred soldiers in the Palace Army (*Dianqiansi*) while the cavalry (*Shiweima*) and infantry (*Busi*) consisted of six hundred men each.⁷⁸ The following chart shows a comparison between the number of soldiers under the four armies and the total number of soldiers in the country from 1127 to 1135:⁷⁹

Generals of the Four Armies	Number of soldiers in 1127	Number of soldiers in 1129/30	Number of soldiers in 1132	Number of soldiers in 1135
Han Shizhong	1,000	8,000	40,000	50,000
Liu Guangshi	3,000	12,000	40,000	50,000
Zhang Jun	1,000	8,000	30,000	50,000
Yue Fei	few hundred	2,000	23,000	30,000
Total number of soldiers in the Four Armies	over 5,000	30,000	133,000	180,000
Total number of soldiers in the country	100,000	100,000	170,000	200,000
Percentage of the total number of soldiers under the Four Armies	5%	30%	79.4%	90%

From the above chart, it can be seen that the situation of military power being vested outside the central government was becoming worse each year. Such a situation was totally against the dynastic tradition of the Song. Many of the officials in court had

⁷⁷ *SS*, ch. 367, pp. 11434-11435.

⁷⁸ *YL*, ch. 87, p. 1442.

⁷⁹ This chart is taken from Shi Wenji, "Nan Song Zhongxing Sizhen", Phd. Diss.(Taiwan Wenhua Xueyuan Lishi Yanjiushuo,1974), p. 324.

raised their objections towards this situation and had submitted numerous memorials to the emperor. Among these memorials, the ones submitted by Wang Zao had the greatest impact upon Gao Zong and had deeply influenced the emperor's policies in later years. In 1st/1130 the Reviewing Policy Adviser (*Jishizhong*) Wang Zao had stated in his memorials that the generals were too arrogant and recalcitrant and were unwilling to obey court orders and their behaviour was even more terrifying than the threat posed by the Jin troops. He even said that these generals were punishable by death under the traditional law.⁸⁰ In 2nd/1131, he submitted another memorial suggesting three ways to curb the power of the military leaders.⁸¹ According to him, the best way to curb these military personnel was to punish one of them severely to set a precedent to others.⁸² Secondly, he suggested that the power given to the generals should be divided or redistributed by promoting others to be assistant commanders. Finally, he also urged the emperor to retrieve the power from the generals as soon as possible before any serious trouble broke out from among them.⁸³

On the issue of too much power being vested outside the central government, the officials at court had come out with various ideas. Other than the proposals put forward by Wang Zao, there were some who suggested setting up several military troops to be controlled directly by the central government to lessen the military power in the hands of the generals. Some suggested strengthening the imperial army while others suggested withdrawing military power from the hands of the generals. During

⁸⁰ *YL*, ch. 31, pp. 605-606.

⁸¹ This memorial had led to counter-attack from the military officials and the relationship between civil and military officials worsened. See *ibid.*, ch. 42, pp. 771-773.

⁸² On this occasion, the court had in mind to impose punishment on Wang Xie, who had disobeyed court orders. See *ibid.*, ch. 31, p. 606.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 772.

the time Zhang Jun was chief councillor, he had appointed civil officials to lead the army. He had also attempted to bring about centralization of military power by dismissing the generals so that the armies privately owned by these generals could be directly controlled by the central government. However, these steps taken by Zhang Jun had not led to any positive result.⁸⁴

Gao Zong at this time did not accept the suggestions of his ministers as the situation then did not permit him to do so. It was important for Gao Zong to place the military power in the hands of the generals so that they could have full power to defend the Song government against both external attacks and internal rebellions. To deprive the generals of their power would mean weakening their ability to fight and this would affect his own regime ultimately. Though he fully understood the importance of the dynastic tradition in curbing the power of the military, he chose not to do so at the moment because under such circumstances it was essential to delegate military power to the generals. Therefore, he put aside all the proposals and petitions of his officials by declaring that these were “not suitable for the political situation of the day”.⁸⁵

Gao Zong clearly knew that in order to survive, he had to pay a price, and that it was inevitable for the military power to be held by the generals. Nevertheless, under these circumstances, he had taken some precaution to protect himself. First of all, he had dispatched civil officials to the military camps to keep an eye on the generals, thus restraining them to a certain extent. Other than that, whenever Gao Zong had the

⁸⁴ Zhang Jun's first target was to eliminate the undisciplined troops of Liu Guangshi. However, the measures taken by him were too aggressive, making the troops in Huaixi revolt against the government. For this reason, he was dismissed from the post of chief councillor and this project of curbing the power of the Song military was abandoned.

⁸⁵ *YL*, ch. 68, p. 1153.

opportunity, he would admonish his generals so that they would be loyal to the emperor. He had taken the general Guo Ziyi of the Tang Dynasty as an example for his generals to follow. If the generals would heed his advice seriously (by following Guo's example), they would be given much wealth and fortune.⁸⁶ Although the admonish above appeared to be persuasive in nature, it actually consisted of some veiled threat in between the lines to caution the generals against any disloyalty. Furthermore, Gao Zong had tried to stop the increase of army personnel under the generals when the situation in the country was under control.⁸⁷ He admitted that he would prefer to decrease the size of various territories to be defended by a few more military officers rather than giving more soldiers to one general conferring him a larger territory to be controlled, to prevent the growth of regional power at the expense of the central government.⁸⁸ Gao Zong also had the intention to promote more deputy commanders to reduce the generals' power.⁸⁹ These passive measures adopted by Gao Zong to defend himself were rather limited in their effectiveness. However, due to the situation of the day, Gao Zong had to tolerate and accommodate the generals for whatever they did, and only hinted to them not to exceed the limits the government could tolerate.⁹⁰

⁸⁶ The Tang Dynasty was in a chaotic situation during Guo Ziyi's time. He led his troop to fight the enemy at the battle field most of the time, but when orders came from the court, he would immediately return to report to the court. His obedience and loyalty to the government had enabled him and his descendants to have wealth and enjoy a good life. *Ibid.*, ch. 139, pp. 2227-2228.

⁸⁷ In 2nd/1138, the Pacification Commissioner Yue Fei had requested for additional soldiers because the territory under his defence was large, but it was turned down by Gao Zong. See *ibid.*, ch. 118, p.1904.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ This was the first step towards reclaiming power from the military in 1138 where there was hope that negotiations with the Jurchen would be successful. However, the Jin had attacked again and the plan had to be abandoned. See *ibid.*, ch. 119, p. 1924.

⁹⁰ Liu Zijian, "Beihai Liguoyu Banbi Shanhe De Changqi Wending", *Liang Song Shi Yanjiu Huibian*, (Taiwan: Lianjing Chubanshiye Gongsi, 1987), p.35.

In the meantime, Gao Zong could only wait for a more opportune moment to carry out his next move.

With the help of the generals, Gao Zong was able to overcome the problems of external invasions and internal rebellions. His decision to delegate power to the generals temporarily was actually a right one. The Song troops had won several battles during the years from 1131 until 1137 and a solid foundation of the Southern Song was established. This had indirectly placed the Southern Song in a better and stronger position to negotiate with the Jin. Having succeeded in the peace negotiations, the subsequent step to withdraw the generals' power was crucial as a prevention against any rebellions. Therefore, one could conclude that Gao Zong's later success in curbing and reclaiming power from the generals was largely due to the success of peace negotiations, and this was actually the second time in Song history when the government withdrew power from the military.⁹¹

⁹¹ The first time of reclaiming power from the generals was during the time of Song Tai Zu.