

## CHAPTER FIVE : THE POLICIES OF WAR OR PEACE AND THE CHIEF COUNCILLORS

In foreign relations with the Jurchen, even though Gao Zong had the final say on any policy decision, he had still to adhere to the voice of his people. To go against the will of his own people would be a political suicide for him. Therefore, although Gao Zong was basically in favour of peace, he had to commend the war advocates for their words and actions. On the one hand the emperor had to build up the strength of the pro-peace officials at court, but on the other hand, he had to allow the pro-war advocates to have a say in court. As a result, there existed two factions or political groups, each having its own support within the government. Although Gao Zong was single-minded in his pursuit for peace, he was forced by circumstances at times to declare war against the Jin. (For example, during the joint military campaign by Jin and Qi against Song in 1134 and during the Jurchen invasion in 1141, Gao Zong had no choice but to fight.) Therefore, whether it was the pro-war or pro-peace faction that would come into power solely depended on Gao Zong's decision. This uncertain situation had continued until 1138 when the initial peace treaty was concluded. Since then, the emperor had assigned the chief councillor Qin Gui to be fully in charge of peace negotiations with Jin. The war faction was unable to regain its power, despite the fact that the Jurchen had breached the treaty in 1141. Due to the benefits that could be obtained from the signing of the peace treaty, Gao Zong did not waver in his peace policy from then onwards.

Due to the uncertain situation in the early years of his reign, Gao Zong had hesitated and wavered in his decision regarding war or peace. His indecisive state of mind could be seen by his frequent change of his right-hand men, the chief

councillors. Generally, the chief councillors could be categorized into three groups or factions, namely, the peace advocates, the war advocates and those who favoured the policy of defense. Each time Gao Zong changed his chief councillor, it would imply that he noticed there was a change in the political situation and a new administrator was needed to meet with the situation. Gao Zong did pay a great deal of attention to the situation within and without the country. When there was a need to go to war, the emperor would create opportunities for the war advocates to overthrow the peace advocates. When the situation was otherwise, he would prefer to appoint the peace advocates to hold the important positions at court.<sup>1</sup>

#### 1. THE RISE AND FALL OF CHIEF COUNCILLORS, 1127-1134

In 1127 when Gao Zong was newly on his throne, he had appointed the well-known war advocate Li Gang as his first chief councillor to help him in stabilizing his position and to gain the support of the people. Furthermore, because of the presence of Li Gang in court, reinforcement troops that gathered from all over the country (to help lift the siege in Kaifeng by the Jin army) had continued to swear loyalty to Gao Zong, thus providing a solid foundation for his army to expand. However, Li Gang's way of dealing with the Jin was considered too aggressive and Gao Zong was worried that it would affect his plan for peaceful negotiations if Li Gang failed to defeat the Jin by force. Therefore, Gao Zong had appointed the pro-peace ministers Huang Qianshan and Wang Boyan to high positions in court to pose as a check to the growing power of Li Gang. At the same time, Gao Zong had started to send envoys to Jin to negotiate for peace.<sup>2</sup> In 8th/1127, when the Southern Song was placed on a firmer footing and the

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<sup>1</sup> Gong Wei-Ai, "The Role Of Censorial Officials In The Power Struggle During Southern Song China, 1127-1128", M.A.Diss., Kuala Lumpur, University Of Malaya, 1971, p. 56.

<sup>2</sup> In 7th/1127, Gao Zong had started to send envoys to Jin when Li Gang was still in office. See *YL*, ch. 7, pp. 192-193.

internal administration was more or less established, Gao Zong dismissed Li Gang from his post and appointed Huang and Wang to be his successor. In dealing with the external pressure, peace envoys were sent continuously to the Jin. While internally, Huang and Wang were given a great deal of power to get rid of those anti-peace officials in court.

Gao Zong's inclination towards peace was in fact widely known by the officials in court as well as the generals. For example, at the beginning of Gao Zong's reign, the Governor of Kaifeng, Zong Ze, was courageous enough to point out the fact that Gao Zong had the intention to negotiate for peace.<sup>3</sup> On the surface, Gao Zong's intention of sending envoys to Jin was to send greetings and request information about the ex-emperors who were held in captivity. However, in actual fact his main purpose in doing so was to find out the possibility of holding negotiations with the Jin. Although Gao Zong had not openly admitted to this, his pro-peace stance in external policy was well-known among his ministers. In 2nd/1129 when the Jin invaded Song, the Custodian of the military prefecture of Jingning, Xu Huiyan (date of birth unknown), did not dare to confront the Jin troops as he was afraid that it might disrupt the court's intention to negotiate for peace.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, the Jin troops this time had forced Gao Zong to withdraw southwards across the Yangzi, and the emperor was forced by public opinion to dismiss both Huang and Wang from their posts.<sup>5</sup> After that Gao Zong

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 186.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, ch. 20, p. 400.

<sup>5</sup> According to Professor Liu Zijian, Wang and Huang were appointed for they were familiar with the waterways transportation of goods in the Huai region. So, apart from their pro-peace policy, their expertise could also benefit the country financially. Later on, when the government moved to the Yangzi region, they were dismissed immediately partly because of increasing opposition against them, and also because they were unfamiliar with the economic conditions in the Yangzi region, and it would be better to appoint others who would be more suitable. See "Beihai Liguoyu Banbi Shanhe De Changqi Wending", *Liang Song Shi Yanjiu Huibian*, p. 32.

had issued an edict admitting his mistake in appointing such incapable persons to office, but ironically, he had no intention to drop his plan of negotiating with the enemy. In the following few years, several ministers had been appointed to the post of chief councillors but Gao Zong had not given any clear indication to them as to whether the court should pursue a war or peace policy. Gao Zong was extremely careful in making his decision on this matter. In fact, the country's actual strength did not allow him to be the prime-mover in policy decision, but to "wait and see" while looking for opportunities for further action.

In 3rd/1129, Zhu Shengfei was appointed chief councillor but he was only in office for a mere thirty days. He was dismissed after the Miao-Liu coup. The dismissal of Zhu Shengfei, however, was not related to his political standpoint. According to Professor Liu Zijian, although Zhu was successful in controlling the rebels and deserved immense credit for what he had done, he had nevertheless also seen the emperor in embarrassing circumstances, and it would be awkward for him to stay on, for Gao Zong being an absolute monarch that he was naturally did not want to be reminded of the degradation he had suffered earlier.<sup>6</sup>

Another minister, Lu Yihao, was appointed chief councillor on two occasions. His first appointment was in 4th/1129, after helping the emperor to gain back his throne in suppressing the Miao-Liu coup. After the incident Gao Zong had again planned to send envoys to Jin. The envoy this time had the mission to convey to the Jin Gao Zong's willingness to give up his title and to submit himself as a vassal of Jin. By not opposing this, Lü Yihao showed that he was in favour of peace during that time. In the same year, the Jin troops had invaded Song again and in 11th/1129, Gao Zong had

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<sup>6</sup> Liu.T.C. (James), *China Turning Inward; Intellectual-Political Changes In The Early Twelfth Century*, p.90.

declared his intention to lead the army personally in fighting the enemy.<sup>7</sup> However, in the following month, he was forced by the Jin troops to flee into the sea.<sup>8</sup> In 3rd/1130, the Jin troop led by Zongbi was trapped by the ambush laid by Han Shizhong in the Yangzi. On this occasion, Lü Yihao had suggested fighting the Jin and requested the emperor to lead the battle personally.<sup>9</sup> Although Gao <sup>Zong</sup> apparently consented, it was not without hesitation. On the same occasion, the Executive Censor Zhao Ding had objected to Lu's proposal for Gao Zong to lead the army personally. In his opinion, the victory of Han Shizhong in the battle of Huangtiandang was largely because the Song troops were more experienced than the enemy in naval warfare. It was largely due to good fortune that they managed to win despite their small number, but assessing from the military strength of the Southern Song, it would be very dangerous for the emperor to lead the army personally. However, Lü Yihao stubbornly held on to his own view and demoted Zhao Ding for his disagreement.<sup>10</sup> His action had offended many officials in court. Zhao Ding then led his supporters in a counter-attack upon Lü Yihao.<sup>11</sup> Gao Zong was naturally displeased with the chaotic situation in the court, and more importantly, Lü's persistence in asking the emperor to lead the army personally had made Gao Zong very uneasy. Under such circumstances, the dismissal of Lü Yihao was inevitable. Lü was dismissed in 4th/1130. Soon after this, Fan Zongyin who was only thirty-three in age, was appointed chief councillor because of his peace policy. However, he remained in the post for only one year as he was rather young and immature in dealing with political affairs. Obviously he had not mastered

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<sup>7</sup> *YL*, ch. 29, p. 576.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, ch. 30, p. 589.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, ch. 32, p. 630.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 631.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 634.

the emperor's tactic in governing, namely, the "policy of accommodation".<sup>12</sup> On the contrary, he had insisted on weeding out those officials who had received unjustifiable appointments and awards. This had not only made most of the officials in court unhappy with him but Gao Zong himself also felt threatened in his efforts to accommodate his subordinates.<sup>13</sup> Fan was therefore obliged to resign.<sup>14</sup>

In 9th/1130, Liu Yu was enthroned as the puppet ruler of the Qi regime by Jin. In the same month, the Administrator of the Bureau Of Military Affairs, Zhang Jun, proposed attacking the Jin from Shaanxi. Gao Zong consented because he was afraid that the Jin troops led by Zongbi might attack the south again because his troops were still gathered in the north bank of the Huai River after freeing themselves from the ambush in the Yangzi river earlier. If the Song army made an attack from Shaanxi, this could divert the enemy's forces from the Jiangzhe area. This military movement, however, met with failure.<sup>15</sup> From then onwards, Gao Zong had to be more careful in dealing with Jin and Qi. In 10th/1130, Qin Gui had fled to the south from Jin<sup>16</sup> and was rapidly promoted in government service with the recommendation of Fan

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<sup>12</sup> Liu Zijian, "Baorong Zhengzhi de Tedian", *Liang Song Shi Yanjiu Huibian*, pp. 41-77.

<sup>13</sup> In Gao Zong's opinion, the regular granting of awards would ensure the officials' loyalty towards him, and he therefore did not mind the continuation of such practice.

<sup>14</sup> *YL*, ch. 46, pp. 827-828. This incident occurred in 7th/1131.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, ch. 37, pp. 711-712. This was the Battle in Fuping.

<sup>16</sup> For the return of Qin Gui to Song, See *YL*, ch. 38, p. 719. Qin served as Executive Censor during the reigns of Hui Zong and Qin Zong. He was taken in captivity together with the two emperors to the north because of his opposition to the enthronement of Zhang Bangchang, and this had gained him good repute. See *ibid.*, ch. 2, pp. 49-53. His safe return from Jin together with his family remains a mystery in history. He was suspected to have been sent back as a spy by Wanyan Chang. See *ibid.*, ch. 38, pp. 718-721. Some modern scholars are also of the opinion that he was actually a spy placed in the Southern Song by Jin for the purpose of peace negotiations. See Qian Mu, *Guoshi Dagang*, pp. 457-458. In actual fact, Gao Zong had never stopped sending envoys to Jin since his accession to the throne, and since the Jin were militarily much stronger than Song, it was not really necessary for them to send Qin back for the purpose of peace negotiations.

Zongyin.<sup>17</sup> In 8th/1131 after the dismissal of Fan Zongyin, Qin Gui was appointed Right Chief Councillor.<sup>18</sup>

The rapid promotion of Qin Gui was undoubtedly closely linked to Gao Zong's intention to negotiate for peace with the Jin. Qin Gui was captured by the Jin together with the two ex-emperor and other Song officials during the downfall of the Northern Song. During his captivity in Jin, he had written some letters pleading for peace negotiations on behalf of Hui Zong to the Jin emperor.<sup>19</sup> The safe return of Qin Gui and his whole family to the Song had also drawn Gao Zong's attention. Qin was in the Jin territory for three years and he had worked under Wanyan Chang as a high ranking officer. Therefore, he was rather well-informed about the internal situation of the Jin court. At the time Qin Gui returned to Song, Liu Yu had just been enthroned by the Jin in the north, and Gao Zong, who was weary of continued warfare and constant fleeing from enemy attacks and was keen to negotiate for peace with the Jin, found Qin to be just the right man to take up the tough task. Qin Gui's appointment as chief councillor later, was also because he claimed that he had 'two great ideas which would alarm the whole nation', but he also declared that in order to know what these ideas were, he had to be first of all appointed chief councillor.<sup>20</sup> At this time Gao Zong was more or less stuck in a political deadlock and was unable to make any positive move, so the appearance of Qin Gui had brought him hope that there might be some solution to the problems lying ahead. Therefore Qin Gui was appointed to be the new chief

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<sup>17</sup> Qin was appointed Minister of Rites in 11th/1130. He was appointed Reader-in-waiting (*Shidu*) in 2nd/1131 and promoted to be Assistant Councillor (*Canzhi Zhengshi*) later.

<sup>18</sup> *YL*, ch. 42, pp. 766.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, ch. 38, p. 720.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, ch. 46, p. 835.

councillor and assigned with a special duty for dealing with the Jin and bringing about some new changes to Song's politics. Nevertheless, Gao Zong at the same time was worried about internal rebellions as well as external threat and he knew that pursuing peace alone would not serve as a good strategy to secure his newly established regime. Consequently, Lü Yihao was summoned back to court to be the Left Chief Councillor.<sup>21</sup> In this way Lü could take charge of military administration while Qin could concentrate on administrative affairs in the government.<sup>22</sup> It was hoped that on the one hand, this could create a stronger nation, with a stronger bargaining power in peace negotiations with the Jin later, and on the other hand, this would prepare the way for future negotiations with the Jin. However, unfortunately the two chief councillors could not cooperate with each other. Lü Yihao was strong-willed and stubborn. Seeing that Lü had made a lot of enemies in court, Qin Gui made use of this opportunity to gather the help of some reputable officials to get rid of Lü so that he could become the sole chief councillor. This was discovered by Gao Zong and he issued an edict warning the two chief councillors (actually meant for Qin Gui) not to set up factions in the government for their own benefit.<sup>23</sup> At the same time, he had also told Lü not to interfere with matters not within his jurisdiction,<sup>24</sup> and this in effect further secured the power of Qin Gui in court.

Nevertheless, in 7th/1132, Lü Yihao, in order to protect his own position, promoted Zhu Shengfei to take over his position as General Commander (*Dudu*) in the Jiang Huai area, while he himself returned to the central court in an attempt to oust

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<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, ch. 47, p. 847.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, ch. 53, p. 931.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 933.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 940.



Qin Gui from the government. At the same time, there were rumours that the peace envoy Wang Lun was returning to Song bringing good news. Taking the opportunity, Lü had used several censors in the government to point out the fact that Qin Gui was using peace negotiations as a tool to obstruct the Song government from reclaiming the lost land. Furthermore, they pointed out that after having served as chief councillor for a year, Qin had not brought any constructive changes to the government. His so claimed strategies to help the Song was "to return the people of Hebei to Jin and to send back the people of the Central Plain to Qi." This had made Gao Zong very angry even though he was in favour of peace. Qin Gui's proposal seemed to suggest that Gao Zong himself would have to be sent back to Jin because he was originally from the north.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, the party that would benefit most from Qin's "great strategies" was Gao Zong's sworn enemy, Liu Yu. This was a great humiliation to Gao Zong and Qin Gui had to be relieved from his post. Zhu Shengfei was named Right Chief Councillor taking over Qin Gui's position.<sup>26</sup>

The reason for Lü Yihao's re-appointment as chief councillor was mainly because Gao Zong hoped that Lü could help him to rebuild the military. His policy of pacifying internal rebellions before fighting the enemy externally had captured Gao Zong's attention. Within one year of his re-appointment, Lü was quite successful in improving the military administration within the country. The military power of the country had strengthened and during the year 1133, the bandit rebellions in the country were almost totally suppressed. However, Lü's re-appointment as chief councillor only lasted for two years. This was partly due to the fact that his personal

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<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, ch. 57, p. 999.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, ch. 58, p. 1006.

conduct in various matters had been exposed.<sup>27</sup> Also, he had made too many enemies in the government and there were numerous complaints against him, making the emperor lose patience with him.<sup>28</sup> Lü's intention to control the censors in court<sup>29</sup> had also displeased Gao Zong. In addition, since his reinstatement, Lü began to adopt a pro-war attitude, and had frequently requested the emperor to carry out military campaigns to the north. During that time, the Song troops were given some respite when the Jin had temporarily stopped attacking them. The Song army, however, still had to suppress bandit rebellions in the country, and due to this there was already insufficient military power to defend the borders in the north. Therefore, it was impossible for the Southern Song to organize any military campaign against the Jin. Although by now the army had gained in strength, it was however only able to destroy the untrained bandits and rebels within the country. The Song army was unable yet to deal with the experienced and formidable Jin troops.<sup>30</sup> Once the plan to invade the north was carried out, the Song would immediately face the problem of insufficient supply of food and military equipment.<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, it was not easy to attack the enemy in the latter's territory far away from the Song homeland as the enemy would be waiting in ambush in territories familiar to them. Therefore, although Lü had decided to attack the Jin, Gao Zong had never stopped sending envoys to Jin and adopting a low posture. At the same time, he also sent presents to Liu Lin, hoping that

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<sup>27</sup>In his attempt to protect the interest of his relative Wang Shi (date of birth unknown), Lü had made an enemy in Zhang Jun. See *YL*, ch. 63, p.1074. Also, in fighting over a concubine with a local official, Lü had made use of his influence to dismiss the latter and confiscate his land. Both these incidents were used to denounce him later. See *ibid.*, ch. 65, p. 1099.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, ch. 68, p. 1143.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, ch. 63, p. 1073 and ch. 66, pp. 1112-1113.

<sup>30</sup> This was stated by the Right Executive Assistant of the Department of Ministries, Li Yuquan (date of birth unknown), see *ibid.*, ch. 61, p. 1050.

<sup>31</sup> This was stated by Minister of Rites, Hong Ni. See *ibid.*, ch. 60, p. 1036.

the latter would agree to allow the Song envoy to pass via Qi territory enroute to Jin for peace negotiations.<sup>32</sup> In 5th/1133, the plan to attack the north was abandoned as Gao Zong wanted to negotiate for peace. The government also gave strict orders to the border troops, instructing them not to intrude into the Qi borders so that negotiations could go on smoothly.<sup>33</sup> In 9th/1133, Lü Yihao was dismissed. It was very clear that Gao Zong was no longer interested in keeping him because of his pro-war stance; the emperor was also afraid that Lü's aggressive approach would affect the plan to negotiate for peace.

In comparison, Zhu Shengfei was a more flexible and easily controlled person. Therefore, he could remain as the sole chief councillor until 3rd/1134. However, the joint military campaign by Jin and Qi against the Southern Song in 1134 had forced Gao Zong to change his external policy from peace to war. In 4th/1134, Zhao Ding was appointed chief councillor to carry out a counter-attack on Jin and he was successful in fighting the enemy. By this time, Gao Zong fully realized that to keep a peace advocate as chief councillor would merely destroy the high morale of the nation's military. Subsequently, Zhu was dismissed in 9th/1134.<sup>34</sup> The person who took his place was the well-known war advocate, Zhang Jun.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, ch. 65, p.1102.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p.1106.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, ch. 80, p. 1315.

<sup>35</sup> Zhang Jun was summoned back to court upon the recommendation of Zhao Ding in 11th/1134 and was promoted to be Administrator of the Bureau of Military Affairs. See *ibid.*, ch. 82, p.1349. In 2nd/1135, he was promoted to be the Right Chief councillor. See *ibid.*, ch. 85, p. 1397.

## 2. THE ZHAO-ZHANG AND ZHAO-QIN CO-CHIEF COUNCILLORSHIPS (1135-1138)

When Zhao Ding and Zhang Jun were jointly serving as chief councillors, Zhao was taking care of the internal administration while Zhang Jun was in charge of military affairs,<sup>36</sup> and was later deeply involved in the preparation of an invasion to the north to reclaim the Song land.<sup>37</sup> Gao Zong had adopted a pro-war stance at this moment, firstly because the Qi had started their attack on Song, and he had no choice but to defend his country. Secondly, the yearly invasions of the Qi troops had threatened the position of Gao Zong and he had to do something to eliminate this threat. Therefore he delegated much power and authority to the two chief councillors so that they could have a free hand in accomplishing their purposes.

Although Zhao and Zhang were noted for their pro-war stance, after having been appointed jointly as chief councillors, however, things did not work out smoothly as expected. Zhang was young in age and was rather rash and impulsive in character. Although he was brave and courageous, he often failed to provide adequate solutions to the problems. Zhao Ding on the other hand, was more experienced in life and was more stable in character and actions. Although he was noted for advocating war, he did not object totally to suggestions of peace negotiations. He was noted for making all decisions only after having carefully considered the situation of the day. Since their joint chief-councillorship, although there was great improvement in the political affairs of the country, their relationship which initially been cordial had unfortunately deteriorated. This was mainly because of their differences in dealing with the Jin and

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<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, ch. 85, p.1315.

<sup>37</sup> Since 1st/1136, Zhang Jun had proposed invading Qi in a northern campaign. From then onwards, the government had acted positively on preparing for a war against the enemy. See *ibid.*, ch. 97, pp.1603-1604, and ch. 99, p. 1622.

also because they could not see eye to eye on the issue of dealing with Liu Guangshi. Furthermore, with the instigation of the followers on both sides, they found that they were having more and more difficulty working with each other.

After having accepted Zhang Jun's proposal of invading Qi and capturing Liu Yu, the emperor was fully confident and supportive of Zhang. This could be seen when Zhang succeeded in convincing the emperor to move the capital to Jiankang and to lead the Song troops personally at Pingjiang. On the other hand, Zhao Ding held a different view with regard to the northern invasion. He felt that this invasion was decided without careful consideration and was too risky. However, in the later confrontation at Ou'tang, Zhang was able to defeat the Qi troops and was therefore gaining popularity in court.<sup>38</sup> As a result, he had become more confident with his hawkish policy, and began to disagree with Zhao Ding who suggested a moderate and careful approach. At the same time, with much praise given to Zhang by the emperor, Zhao Ding had the feeling that his position in the government had deteriorated and the emperor was losing confidence in him, so he decided to resign from his post. Gao Zong consented to his resignation as he knew that Zhao had differences with Zhang and that the two could not work with each other. Nevertheless, Gao Zong was impressed with the steadiness shown by Zhao, and he allowed Zhao to remain in government service in the nearby prefecture of Shaoxing so that he could immediately summon him back to court if necessary.<sup>39</sup>

In the above rift between Zhang Jun and Zhao Ding, therefore, Zhang had gained the upper hand and after the resignation of Zhao, Zhang had planned to bring

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<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, ch. 106, pp. 1721-1722.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, ch. 107, p. 1737.

Qin Gui back to take over the top position.<sup>40</sup> Earlier, when Qin was dismissed as chief councillor, Gao Zong had indicated that he would never re-appoint Qin<sup>41</sup> but he did not reject Zhang's recommendation of Qin. This was mainly due to the fact that with the various victories won by Song, the pro-war faction was gaining more influence in the government, and Gao Zong felt that it was necessary to appoint a pro-peace advocate to high position to balance the growing power of the war faction. On the part of Zhang Jun, in order to gain the favour of the emperor, he had recommended the pro-peace advocate Qin Gui in order to show that he did not harbour the intention to let the war faction monopolize the power in court.<sup>42</sup>

At that time the court was still monopolized by the hawkish elements, until the sudden appearance of He Xian (date of birth unknown), the peace envoy who was allowed to return to Song after having been sent to Jin for over a year. He brought back news concerning the death of Huizong and his empress Ningde (date of birth unknown).<sup>43</sup> His return was a strong indication that the Jin were willing to negotiate for peace. This had dampened the enthusiasm of the war faction in court, and it was at this time that Gao Zong promoted Qin Gui to be the Commissioner of Military Affairs and held confidential discussion with him on policy matters that very day.<sup>44</sup>

In fact, Gao Zong had continued to keep Qin Gui as a reserve whom he could turn to in times of need. Although he was relieved from the post of chief councillor

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<sup>40</sup> This was in 1st/1137. See *ibid.*, ch. 108, p. 1759.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, ch. 57, p. 1000.

<sup>42</sup> Kaplan, Edward Harold, "Yueh Fei And The Foundation Of The Southern Song", Ph.D.Diss., University of Iowa, 1970, pp. 351-352.

<sup>43</sup> *YL*, ch. 108, pp. 1760-1761.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

and was driven away from court due to the "two strategies" suggested by him, these great ideas of his and the rumours that he was actually a spy of the Jurchen did not lead to any accusation against him nor was any punishment imposed upon him. In 1st/1135, Gao Zong commanded all ministers who had previously served in top positions to put forward proposals regarding what steps should be taken by the government after the retreat of the Qi troops. Qin Gui had suggested a constructive proposal in dealing with the Qi :

The traitor Liu Yu had misled the Jin administration in attacking the south. The Song government should deal with this in a just manner. If the Song government does not attack Liu, it could not remain a nation; if the government does not appease the strong enemy (Jin), it would be difficult to defeat the defected traitor ... In order to appease the enemy, someone who had been captured from Jin should be used. He should be sent to see the highest Jin administrator to pass a message stating clearly that the Song government only wishes to attack the traitor and does not have the intention to offend the great nation (Jin) ...<sup>45</sup>

Qin Gui's principle of "attacking the traitor Liu Yu only" coincided with the emperor's intention to only attack the Qi regime and avoid confrontation with the Jin. Thus Gao Zong began to pay heed to Qin more and more. After his dismissal as chief councillor Qin served as the Governor of Wenzhou and was later transferred to be the Governor of Shaoxingfu. Then he was further promoted to guard the emperor's quarters. From this, it could be seen that Gao Zong wanted to keep him within reach to serve as a reserve for future use.<sup>46</sup> Although Gao Zong had declared his intention to fight and continued to be stationed at Jiankang,<sup>47</sup> he had actually lost interest in continuing the war when he heard rumours that the Jin had the intention to demolish

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<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, ch. 87, p. 1455.

<sup>46</sup> Kaplan, Edward Harold, *op.cit.*

<sup>47</sup> *YL*, ch. 109, p. 1773.

Qi.<sup>48</sup> When He Xian was allowed to return to Song, Gao Zong was even more certain that the Jin had the intention to negotiate. Therefore, Gao Zong once again changed his external policy to be pro-negotiation. In 4th/1137, the envoy Wang Lun was again sent to Jin on a mission of peace negotiations. Apart from negotiating for the return of the coffin of Hui Zong and the return of the empress dowager (Gao Zong's mother), Song was to request for the return of the land in Henan, so that it could take this opportunity to overthrow the Qi regime.<sup>49</sup> This again reveals that Gao Zong was willing to take over the position of Liu Yu and to submit himself as a vassal of the Jin government.

The war faction soon realized that Gao Zong was once again wavering in his policy to fight the Jin; they should by right rally up their influence at this moment and try to regain the support of the emperor. On the contrary, however, by their action and behaviour, they had pushed Gao Zong back to the pro-peace faction. This was mainly due to the fact that the military generals had left a very poor impression on Gao Zong, who felt extremely uneasy and worried that if war were to continue, it would be harder to recover the power given to these generals. In addition, Zhang Jun's mismanagement of Liu Guangshi's army which led to the rebellion of Li Qiong in Huaixi further increased Gao Zong's doubt upon the war faction. Also, the power gained by Zhang Jun in the military field had also worried Gao Zong as it might get out of control. Thereupon, Zhang was dismissed in 9th/1137 and Zhao Ding was appointed chief councillor once again.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1774.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, ch. 110, p. 1782.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, ch. 114, pp. 1844-1847.



Before Zhang Jun stepped down, Gao Zong had asked him for his opinion regarding a suitable candidate for the post of chief councillor. When Gao Zong suggested the name of Qin Gui, Zhang Jun disagreed saying that Qin was furtive and stealthy.<sup>51</sup> Therefore, Gao Zong had to set aside Qin for the time being, and had selected Zhao Ding as his new chief councillor. The cautious behaviour of Zhao was very helpful in providing a moderating effect on the hawkish atmosphere in court. Therefore it can be said that although Zhao Ding was re-appointed chief councillor, it was the pro-peace elements who were gradually gaining power in court.

It had been ten years since Gao Zong was on his throne and during this decade, many envoys had been sent to Jin to negotiate for peace, but this did not lead to any concrete results. In the intercalary 10th month of 1137, the Jin had dethroned Liu Yu and the Jin administration led by Wanyan Chang was ready to negotiate with the Song government. In 12th/1137, Wanyan Chang had dispatched the Song envoy Wang Lun back to the Southern Song stating that "Good news must be brought to Jiangnan that there would not be anyone who objects to the negotiations and it is bound to be a success."<sup>52</sup> Several months later, in 5th/1138, Wang Lun was again sent to Jin<sup>53</sup> and the Jin in return also sent their envoy to Song.<sup>54</sup> By then, peace negotiations officially started between the two states.

The officials in court were soon aware of the emperor's change of heart towards a peaceful approach. When Gao Zong decided to return to Lin'an after having stayed

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<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, ch. 113, p. 1830.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, ch. 117, p. 1894.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, ch. 119, p. 1923.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1929.

in Jiankang for sixteen months, some officials began to voice their objection to the emperor's decision but were not successful as they did not have the power and ability to change anything decided by the autocrat. The chief councillor Zhao Ding, being pragmatic as he was, agreed with the decision of moving back to Lin'an as he thought it was necessary to do so because of the circumstances of the time. However, he was also of the opinion that if the Jin were to return the land of Henan, the most appropriate place for the capital would be Jiankang.<sup>55</sup> The inspection tour of Gao Zong to Jiankang was actually one of the greatest political achievements of Zhang Jun. In fact, at the time of his dismissal, he had expressed his concern that Gao Zong might retreat from his pro-war stance and return to Lin'an. Qin Gui at that time had promised Zhang that he would make vigorous efforts to stop this thing from happening,<sup>56</sup> but when Gao Zong and Zhao Ding both decided to move back to Lin'an, Qin Gui, who was consolidating his own power at the time, merely viewed at the situation in silence and did not utter a single word.

Zhao Ding soon incurred the displeasure of Gao Zong, most probably because he held firmly on to certain principles with regard to peace negotiations. Zhao Ding was not opposed to the pro-peace policy, as he was of the opinion that the peaceful approach could be used as a means of diplomatic tactics. As long as the peace negotiations were able to bring about some benefit to the country, there was no harm in doing so. However, he insisted that on the question of principle, the government should stick firmly to its own stand. He could understand if the emperor had to humble for the purpose of filiality, but he could not agree to yielding the whole country to the enemy in order to reach a peace agreement. His uncompromising attitude on this issue

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<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, ch. 118, p. 1899.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, ch. 114, p. 1847.

might have reduced the ardent spirit of the Jin to a certain extent,<sup>57</sup> but this, however, was not what the emperor wanted. The emperor and Zhao could not see eye to eye on the details of the negotiations and were unable to come to an agreement. Zhao did not stop reminding Gao Zong that he should not give in too much to the demands of the Jurchen. This had irritated Gao Zong and he was worried that Zhao's attitude would further slow down the process of peace negotiations. At the same time, the Jurchen had threatened Gao Zong that they were planning to restore Qin Zong his throne at Kaifeng, and this had made Gao Zong even more anxious to reach a peace agreement. The differences in opinion between them had made it extremely difficult for Gao Zong to let Zhao continue in his post as chief councillor.

Further, Gao Zong was not satisfied with Zhao as he still insisted on using a passive approach in dealing with the military generals. After the mutiny in Huaixi, Gao Zong was really worried about the power vested in the generals' hands but Zhao still insisted on accommodating them and using the soft approach to win them over to the central government so as to stabilize the political situation.<sup>58</sup> This gentle and moderate approach could not produce any immediate result in controlling the military power of the four great generals. To the anxious Gao Zong who was trying very hard to break himself away from the shadow of the rebellious military, it would hardly reduce the worries deep in his heart. What had prompted Gao Zong to dismiss Zhao from his post was probably the things he had said during their discussion regarding the terms and conditions of the peace negotiations.<sup>59</sup> As the status of Song would be lowered if the

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<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, ch. 120, p. 1946.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, ch. 114, p. 1847.

<sup>59</sup> Jin's conditions for peace were that they would return Hui Zong's coffin, and the imperial relatives, including Gao Zong's mother, and restore the land taken by Jin in the previous war, but in return the Song would have to send annual tribute to Jin, and submit itself as a vassal state of Jin. See *ibid.*, ch. 118, p. 1897.

demands of the Jin were adhered to, Zhao could not totally agree with the conditions laid down by Jin, but since he found it difficult to express his objection to the emperor, Zhao therefore suggested that it would be good to consult the generals first.<sup>60</sup> This suggestion had violated Gao Zong's taboo, as he was very much in fear of the military generals and did not trust them at all. This incident must be one of the most important factors which made Gao Zong dismiss Zhao once again from office.

As Gao Zong had decided on negotiating with the Jin, he thus promoted Qin Gui to be the Right Chief Councillor and the Commissioner of Military Affairs in 3rd/1138.<sup>61</sup> Qin would have known very well the emperor's desire for peace. However, he also knew that the emperor had in the previous ten years been indecisive on the issue of war or peace. This wavering attitude of the emperor had led to the frequent changes in chief councillors and the ups and downs in the political fortunes of the war and peace factions, and this undoubtedly made Qin very insecure. So he boldly requested to be given full authority to take charge of the peace negotiations and asked the emperor to consider his request carefully. After ensuring that Gao Zong was in full support of him, Qin then went ahead to implement his peace policy.<sup>62</sup>

With the emperor's tacit consent, Qin Gui began building his own faction in court to help him in his plan to get rid of Zhao Ding. He had used his subordinates to accuse Zhao of conspiring with the censorial officials and military generals. The emperor agreed with the accusations<sup>63</sup> and took the opportunity to relieve Zhao from his post in 10th/1138.

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<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1900.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1911.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, ch. 122, p. 1974.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1968.

At the time of his dismissal, Zhao continued to admonish the emperor not to jeopardize his own position in the peace negotiations. He warned Gao Zong that in future someone would use the excuse of filial piety to force the emperor to reach a peace agreement.<sup>64</sup> Zhao's warning must have been prompted by the fact he had figured out the intention of Qin Gui. However, he would never have thought that this was actually the personal decision of the emperor and Qin Gui was merely carrying out the intention of Gao Zong.

### 3. THE SOLE CHIEF-COUNCILLORSHIP OF QIN GUI, 1138-1155

Since his re-appointment as chief councillor, apart from getting rid of Zhao Ding, Qin Gui was also simultaneously carrying out a major reshuffle in court to eliminate the war advocates. Fearing that the war advocates might hinder the plan for peace negotiations, Qin adopted the proposal put forward by the Drafting Official of the Secretariat, Goulong Ruyuan (1093-1154) to appoint his own man as censorial officials to impeach and bring about the dismissal of the war advocates and then to replace them with the pro-peace officials. Once the people who objected to peace were gone, peace negotiations could be carried out without obstruction. Thereupon Goulong Ruyuan was promoted to be Executive Censor to carry out the plan to eliminate the war advocates.<sup>65</sup> By adopting Goulong's proposal, Qin was able to enhance his power in the government, and the Censorate was now under his control. The pro-war officials were dismissed one after another but Gao Zong made no attempt to settle the disputes in court. On the one hand, he stood silently behind Qin, supporting him in carrying out his plan, and on the other hand, he made use of filial

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<sup>64</sup> *YL*, ch.122, p.1974.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, ch. 123, p. 1996.

piety as his excuse for his inability to act positively. This had created a false impression that the chief councillor was controlling the emperor in the government. Therefore, all criticism was aimed at the chief councillor Qin Gui, whereas Gao Zong as the mastermind behind the scene was overlooked.<sup>66</sup>

In 12th/1138, Gao Zong under the excuse that he was still in mourning for his father, ordered Qin to receive on his behalf the official letter from Jin, appointing him to be a vassal of Jin.<sup>67</sup> This was the first step towards peace agreement between the two states.

In order to make a success of the peace negotiations, Gao Zong was even willing to suffer humiliation of self and nation. This was partly because the country's military power was not strong enough to counter the Jin troops, and also because Gao Zong realized that it was far more practical to use diplomatic tactics to deal with the enemy than to use force. With regard to the officials who served in court from 1134 to 1137, it might appear that the pro-war advocates were in control of the central government, however, these officials were not cooperative enough and they never stopped criticizing one another and attacking one another. This not only made the emperor lose patience with them, it also provided opportunity for the pro-peace officials to extend and establish their power in court. In his position as chief councillor, Qin Gui had at least taken the opportunity at the time when the Jin dethroned Liu Yu to negotiate for a treaty whereas those anti-peace officials had not achieved any positive results except making noise but doing nothing to improve the political situation of the day. This was

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<sup>66</sup> It is stated in *YZ*, ch. 124, pp.2028-2029 that during this time, because of the empress dowager (Gao Zong's mother), the emperor had adhered to the conditions laid down in the treaty which degraded the status of the Song. This was mainly the work of Qin Gui and all the people in the country had blamed him for this.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 2027-2028.

one of the reasons Gao Zong had supported Qin and his followers, and enabled them to consolidate their position in court. Although the Jin had later broken the peace agreement of 1138 and invaded the Song again, and the Song even won a few battles in the fight-back, the anti-peace officials nevertheless were not able to regain their power in the government. Having tasted the goodness of peace, Gao Zong therefore made no attempt to go after the retreating Jin troops to reclaim the lost territory. On the contrary, he had planned for another negotiation with the Jurchen as he knew that the Song were not powerful enough to defeat the enemy. At this moment Gao Zong had decided not to make use of the war advocates to solve the political crisis, in case they would be a hindrance to future peace negotiations.

On the part of the Jin, they also recognized that although the Song did not have the power to counter attack, they did have the power to defend themselves. Therefore they were willing to begin another round of negotiations if the terms and conditions laid down by the Song were reasonable. Consequently, Gao Zong and Qin Gui immediately turned their attention to the only obstruction to the peace negotiations, namely, the military generals and the troops they commanded. The central government thus started to take various steps to reclaim power from the military, and eventually Yue Fei, who was very much feared by the Jin army, was executed. The Treaty of Shaoxing was thus successfully signed in 1142.

The success of the peace negotiations that led to the Treaty of Shaoxing had not only further confirmed the fact that Gao Zong had opted in favour of peace and security, it had also enabled Qin to gain more confidence and trust from the emperor. From then on the emperor began to delegate more and more power to his chief councillor, and put him in total charge of the national affairs. In this way Qin was able to take complete control of the government until the time of his death in 1155.

Between the years 1142-1155, Qin had full control over the Song government. He had established his own political influence in the government and most of the governmental decisions and the power to appoint officials were solely invested in his hands. The appointment and termination of top ministers in the government were controlled by him.<sup>68</sup> During that time, his administration did not lead to any beneficial effects to the politics of the country. Although Gao Zong had full knowledge of his political activities such as setting up his own faction and establishing control over the Censorate and building up his own power, he did not raise any objections to these. This was due to the fact that Qin was responsible for the success of the peace negotiations, and Gao Zong was afraid that if Qin was dismissed, the Jin might suspect that Gao Zong had changed his policy towards them.<sup>69</sup> This fear of the enemy had constantly been portrayed in Gao Zong's attitude ever since he sat on his throne. For example, during the early days, knowing that the war advocate Li Gang was disliked by the Jin, the emperor had continued to obstruct the former in his political career. Also, despite the fact that Zhang Bangchang had served as a puppet emperor under Jin and was later executed by Gao Zong, the emperor later tried to make amends by rendering favourable treatment to Zhang's family and descendants. It was based upon this same psychology that Qin was able to serve as the sole chief councillor for seventeen years, until the day of his death in 1155.<sup>70</sup>

The death of Qin Gui did not lead to any major changes in the government. Gao Zong managed to gain control of the situation quickly. He eliminated Qin's faction

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<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, ch. 152, pp. 2459-2460.

<sup>69</sup> Gong Wei Ai, "The Role Of Censorial Official In The Power Struggle During Southern Song China, 1127-1278", p. 140.

<sup>70</sup> Qin passed away in 10th/1155, see *YL*, ch. 169, p. 2771.



and reshuffled the bureaucracy. Those censors controlled by Qin formerly were also replaced by new personnel, and the Censorate once again served as the "ears and eyes" of the emperor. Apparently, being the sole chief councillors for seventeen years, Qin seemed to have controlled everything, but in actual fact the emperor was actually making preparation for himself, that soon after the death of Qin Gui, Gao Zong easily attained his purpose of absolutism with little effort. Although he had taken several measures to restructure the government, he was actually trying to create an impression that he was making an effort to eliminate Qin's faction, but in actual fact, he had not changed the country's peace policy.<sup>71</sup>

In the later stage of Gao Zong's reign, he was ready to face the criticism of the people with regard to his peace policy without any misgivings. In 1st/1150, Gao Zong had openly criticized that those anti-peace elements were sinister and ruthless.<sup>72</sup> In 3rd/1156 the Jurchen began to have doubts concerning Song's external policy when they heard about the death of Qin Gui and the rumours that the Song court had reappointed Zhang Jun to serve in the central government. In an attempt to assure the Jurchen about his firm decision to continue with the peace policy, Gao Zong had issued an edict, declaring that the peace negotiations with Jin were his personal decision and that Qin was only helping him to achieve this purpose.<sup>73</sup> By now, Gao Zong had already consolidated his power, and all censors and top officials in court were those who had been "filtered" to support the emperor, and therefore his open admission of his peace policy did not lead to any protest in court. Furthermore, having

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<sup>71</sup>Gong Wei Ai, "The Role Of Censorial Officials In The Power Struggle During Southern Song China, 1127-1278", pp. 163-164.

<sup>72</sup> The person so criticized was Li Guang (1078-1159), an ex-councillor who had turned from a pro-peace stance to be an advocate of war. See *YL*, ch. 161, p. 2604.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, ch. 172, pp. 2827-2828.

experienced peace for more than ten years, and since all activities of the pro-war activists were controlled firmly by the government, most of the officials and populace had already come to terms with the peace policy. With the whole situation under control, Gao Zong would not need to find another surrogate to carry out his plans. It is interesting to note that during the post-Qin Gui era, there were again frequent changes made to the chief-councillorship. Within seven years from 1155 to 1162, five ministers had served as chief councillor.<sup>74</sup> It should also be noted that all these people had formerly worked with Qin Gui, and they were all pro-peace. From here, it can be seen that the emperor still held on firmly to his peace policy with the Jurchen. It was only until 1161 when the Jurchen had once again invaded the Southern Song that Gao Zong was forced to use military force to defend the country against the Jin.

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<sup>74</sup> These five chief councillors were:-

- 1) Tang Situi (d. 1164) who served from 10th/1155 to 12th/1160.
- 2) Shen Gai (date of birth unknown) from 12th/1155 to 6th/1159.
- 3) Moqi Xie (1083-1157) from 3th/1156 to 12th/1156.
- 4) Zhu Zhuo (1086-1163) from 7th/1160 to 6th/1162.
- 5) Chen Kangbo (1097-1165) from 9th/1157 to the reign of Xiao Zong (after 1162).