

# HOSTAGES IN CHINESE HISTORY

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## INTRODUCTION

The use of hostages as security existed as an institution in China until the middle of the seventeenth century. From the famous exchange of hostages between Chou and Cheng recorded in the *Tso chuan* under 720 B. C.<sup>1</sup> to the sending of Korean hostages to the Manchu rulers between 1637 and 1645,<sup>2</sup> numerous examples of the exchange or surrender of hostages can be cited. Chinese and alien dynasties have both found the system useful.

Hostages in Chinese history may be somewhat arbitrarily classified into the following groups:

1. "Exchanged hostages"—to guarantee a friendly relationship between two states or two other groups.
2. "Unilateral hostages"—to guarantee allegiance and loyalty.
  - a. "External hostages" might be taken by one of two belligerent parties from another during negotiation for an armistice or surrender. In more peaceful times, hostages might be taken by a powerful state from a weak state, by a suzerain from its vassal states or dependent tribes, or by a lord from a group of individuals at the time when they were offering their allegiance.
  - b. "Internal hostages" might be taken by a ruler from his military or civil officials, especially from those who were stationed along boundaries or sent out on an expedition.

<sup>1</sup> James LEGGE, *The Chinese Classics* 5.17.

<sup>2</sup> *Simyang-ŭlgi* or *Shinyō nikki* 瀋陽日記 (*Mammō sōsho* 滿蒙叢書 9), Tōkyō, 1921, is an official diary kept by secretaries to the hostage princes in Mukden. *Simyang-sange* or *Shinyō jōkei* 瀋陽狀啓 (*Keishōkaku sōsho* 奎章閣叢書 1), Keijō 京城, 1935, contains letters from these secretaries reporting to Korea. There are many interesting details in the two books. TAGAWA Kōzō 田川孝三, *瀋館考* in *Oda sensei shōju kinen Chōsen ronshū* 小田先生頌壽紀念朝鮮論集, Tōkyō, 1934, presents a valuable study based on these and other sources.