Introduction
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This introductory chapter describes “multi-polarity” is used in this study as the analytical tool for studying Tang China's complex external relations. Multi-polarity refers to an environment in which several countries compete against one another in the attempt to augment their respective powers. Tang foreign policy was guided by pragmatic pluralism, not by any emperor's grand moral vision for the world. In order to understand how the Tang court sought to arrive at a mix and balance of policies that would make a win-win outcome more likely in the complex relations between Tang China and its neighbors, the book examines these relations in terms of multi-polarity, mutual self-interest, interdependency, and appropriateness.