THE LONG HAIRER ROBBERS

BY

CHARLES A. STANLEY

It is seventy-five years since the inception of the "Great Peaceful Heavenly Kingdom," a period quite too long for the memory of man, and to most of us the "T'ai P'ing Rebels," as they were called by Europeans, stand for little more than a myth. They were the "Long Haired Robbers" (長毛賊) to the Chinese and for most of the period of fifteen years when they were carrying their activities into thirteen of the eighteen provinces it was one long record of pillage and rapine. The genius of the movement seems to have faltered after the attempt on Peking, when in 1854 a large force penetrated North as far as Ching Hai (靜海) only twenty miles South of Tientsin—and History, in the mood of fait accompli, does not permit the raising of the supposititious "if." Still one cannot but wonder what might have been the outcome had there been leadership adequate to the task involved. "It is a matter of pathetic interest to know his in the proclamation issued from Nanking in 1860 by the "Shield King," Hung Seutsuen's wisest and noblest adviser and general, foreigners were never to be called opprobrious names, missionaries were to travel and live and preach everywhere, steamboats were to ply on all the waterways, and railroads were to intersect the country. Fire and life-insurance companies and newspapers were to be freely introduced for the good of China; soldiers were forbidden to seize the goods of the people in the villages; the Bible was to be introduced as a text-book in the public service examinations, and, finally, the definite elevation in the status of woman was not merely introduced into a proposed programme but was actually begun under the T'ai P'ing in Nanking. Some genuine enlightenment and some true patriotism must have been stirring in the minds of the leaders in the rebellion, though the mass of their rank and file became a mere rabble with no ambition but that of rapine." (The East of Asia, 1906. Vol. V, pp. 1, 3.)

Hung Hsiu-Ch'üan (洪秀全), the "Heavenly King" (天王), was leader of this movement which proved to be one of the worst human
scourges known to history. It is easy to condemn him as a misguided, mentally diseased fanatic but "let us pause before we form harsh conclusions on the acts of a man of strong religious feelings, who, brooding over the wrongs he and his have suffered, takes to the hills with one or two hundred followers to wage war with an Empire." (Report of Sir Geo. Bonham’s trip to Nanking in the "Hermes," April 22, 1853). Ample accounts and histories of the man and of the period have been written and are available so it is not necessary to go into detail here. Suffice it to say that the insurrection lasted from 1850 to 1865, when the last vestige of the "rebels" were stamped out in Szechuan Province. The best authorities estimate the loss of life during this period at 20,000,000—men, women and children.

The reason for bringing back to mind this shuddering fifteen years is the appearance about a year ago of a history of the T'ai P'ings in Chinese (太平天国野史) published by the Chung Hua Shu Chü (中华书局). This is a book of about four hundred pages and it goes into great detail in describing the organization, rites and teachings of the T'ai P'ings. The manuscript came to light in the following manner.

In 1911 Mr. Yao Ying (姚瀛), who happened to be in Ch'angsha, dropped into a book shop and overheard a man by the name of Wang bargaining with the proprietor of the shop for a piece of manuscript. Unable to come to terms, the man left and Mr. Yao asked to see the manuscript which proved to be an account of the T'ai P'ings. He gladly paid the price which the proprietor asked, and, taking the manuscript away, placed it with the Chung Hua Shu Chü (中华书局), who afterwards published it under the editorship of Mr. Ling Shou-ch'ing and with the title, "An Unofficial History of the T'ai P'ings." (太平天国野史)

The following is a translation of Mr. Ling's preface along with part of the chapter of the history having to do with the religious tenets, rites etc., of the T'ai P'ings—namely the General Introduction and the section on Worship (禮拜).

In passing, it is interesting to call attention to the fact that the late Dr. Sun Yat-Sen has referred to himself as "a second Hung Hsiu-Ch'üan."

AN UNOFFICIAL HISTORY OF THE PEACEFUL HEAVENLY STATE.

(太平天国野史)

Preface.

The "Peaceful Dynasty" from its inception to the time of its disintegration covered fourteen years. [Hung's forces (洪軍) having seized Yungan (永安) in the First Year of Hsien Feng (咸豐) of the Ch'ing Dynasty (清) the following year was denominated the "First Year of the Peaceful Heavenly State" (太平天國元年), consequently the actual duration of the state was thirteen years.]
The Great Seal of the Ta'i P'ing Army.
Active rebellion against the government covered a period of sixteen years [Namely from the thirtieth year of Tao Kuang (道光) to the fourth year of T'ung Chih (同治) when Prince T'an Ti Yuan (譚體元) was defeated and killed in Min (閩福), Victory and defeat varied with the rise and fall of fortune. Historically, this period cannot compare with that of Fu Ch'ien (福建) in duration; but in its benefits to the common people it was greater than the period of Wu and Yuëh (吳越). The ordinary individual cannot measure the importance to China of the changing fortunes of this period; but it may be that its influence will prove greater than the suppression of Yuan (元) by Hung Wu (洪武), or the supplanting of the Ch'ings (清) by the Republic (民). Intercourse between the West and China had its beginnings in Kuangtung and Kuangsi and compelled the Chinese of the time, mostly natives of these two provinces, to enlarge their vision to a world horizon. The T'ai P'ing leaders lived at this time and it was when they were studying and teaching the Western religion and had been stirred by the disastrous effects of the traffic in opium that they set up their banners. Though there was little real peace during these years it must be acknowledged that the experiments of this period form the background of the reforms of the Ch'ing Dynasty, such as the doing away with civil examinations, the teaching of science, the prohibition of opium, the emphasis upon hygiene, the edicts against foot-binding and the emphasis upon female education; and the reforms in dress, the revision of the calendar, the fulfilling of treaties, the emphasis upon the new world spirit, etc., of the Republic. Furthermore the disuse of the term "Emperor" in favour of "King" and the copying of the British governmental forms would seem to have a deep significance as a preparation for a popular leader. Had Heaven furthered their original plans, the disturbances of our day might have proved to be a thing of the past and the great Asian continent—the heritage from our emperors—might have been brought to a condition of stability even greater than that of Japan. Still, who can say. However, the effort overshot the mark. At a time of great unsetlement, the attempt to impose by decree an untried form of government upon a people who inherently and for thousands of years have been conservative, produced general fear and uncertainty and unreasoning opposition, to the advantage of others. Thus a beam of light was turned to gloom. The words of Confucius find fulfilment in the T'ai P'ing Princes: "Undue haste will hinder."

When I was a child I used to beg my mother beneath the evening lamp to tell me a story. She would tell me of the cruelties and sufferings of the period of the T'ai P'ings, pointing out without favour the faults of both sides. She did, however, praise Shih Ta-K'ai (石達開) and Li Hsü-Ch'eng (李秀成). When I was older I did a great deal of reading only to find that whenever anyone made reference to the T'ai P'ings it was always in derogatory terms. Especially was this so in reference to the two Princes, I (翼) and Chung (忠). [The two just mentioned.] When because of compulsion everyone's mouth is closed,
then one realizes the concealed suffering of the people. In what is written this fact is even more serious than in what is spoken, and so the real truth about the T'ai P'ings has been lost.

In the summer of Hsin Yu (1921) Mr. Ting Fu-Chih showed me a manuscript copy of Hung Yang Chi Shih (洪揚紀事), which was in the possession of Mr. Yao. The author had not subscribed his name. The manuscript contained an account of the T'ai P'ings up till the fifth year of Hsien Feng (咸豐). [The fourth year of the T'ai P'ings]. Each of thirty people had written about one hundred words and it was all regarding officials and the military organization, all very careful and minute. This material was not found in other books. For this reason I collected all available material and compiled a history, adding what was lacking, altering what was incorrect, and being more specific in what was too general. This labour consumed a year. Though in copying the originals there may have crept mistakes, yet everything from first to last should be here. Now that this account of the T'ai P'ings has been compiled, other students of the period may be able to make additions. This has been the original purpose of my labours.

The twelfth Year of the Republic.
The third Month. Wu Hsing (吳興)
Ling Shan-Ch'ing (凌善清).

CHAPTER FOUR.

Religion.

In the two Kuang and Fukien the Catholic Church (天主教) was the most in evidence in the early days. In the first year of Tao Kuang the local officials instituted a very serious persecution against them, whereupon the nomenclature was changed from a religious sect (教) to a society (會), such as Supreme Ruler Society (上帝會), Younger Brother Society (添弟會), Society of the Small Sword (小刀會) and so forth. By the close of the Opium War, with Chinese and foreigners living together up and down the coast due to the opening of five treaty ports, these clubs and societies had greatly increased. When Hung (洪) first organized his society it was called the Supreme Ruler Society (上帝會). This was changed to the Heavenly Ruler Society (天帝會), also known as the Younger Brother Society (添弟會). For this reason all who entered the organization whether old or young were called “brothers” (弟). Though the name of the organization was often changed, the purpose was similar to that of the Roman Catholic Church, except that there were some superficial differences. [During the Ming Dynasty foreigners, Ricci and others (利瑪竇, 湯若望, 南懷仁), came to China propagating Roman Catholicism and making many converts. They excelled in mathematics and astronomy, doing remarkable work on the calendar. They were good mechanicians and built artillery. By this means they gained entrance to all the cities in the Province of Chihli in which they built temples called Catholic Churches, very beautiful and awe-inspiring. In each church a foreigner was in charge. Anyone wishing to join the

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organization must first destroy his ancestral tablets and the five symbols of animistic worship, after which the one in charge would receive the applicant. They were known by the name of those who “ate the church” (吃教), also “church citizens” (教民). On their gateways they pasted a piece of red paper on which was drawn an oval encircling a cross. (In order to keep continually in rememberance the God whom they worshipped, named Jesus, who died crucified.). On the first and the fifteenth of every month members, men and women, met in the church behind closed doors for worship where they remained till evening. In illness they must have a member of the church to cauterize. Women also were to be naked when treated. In case of death the person in charge sent people to shroud the corpse. After the shrouding, the corpse was wrapped in a sack of white cloth which was sewed up around the neck, and then placed in the coffin. At first the Chinese looked upon the church as heterodox, and only by the moderate use of “benefits” (利) could its preachers gain a few adherents. Later, when the people became convinced that the organization was prompted by no motives other than compassionate goodness, some intelligent people became converts. They (T’ai P’ings) taught that Heaven ruled the cosmos, and that the Lord of Heaven ruled Heaven. All altars for the worship of heaven, earth, nature, ancient worthies and ancestors should be abolished and one should worship the Lord of Heaven alone. Further, had not the Lord of Heaven from the beginning of things kept creation together, heaven long since would have fallen and the earth would have turned over. In addition they teach that Jesus is the son of the Ruler of Heaven (天帝), who was born in Judea during the reign of the Emperor Ai (哀帝) of the Han Dynasty. He influenced men by his goodness and performed many miracles. King Herod hated him, took him by force and crucified him. After seven days, he re-coordinated his bodily functions by a spiritual energy, broke the tomb and appeared living for three days. Reciting some precepts, he departed up into heaven, where he remains till this day as the Lord of Heaven for all eternity. Their books of salvation teach that you must serve no gods but Heaven. There are many Heavenly Precepts, such as against murder and wrong-dealing, adultery, robbery, being unfilial, knavery and all evil. Marriage must be performed by the proper authority and must not be illicit. The rules were very commendable. At the first the leaders observed them very carefully: but later with the establishment of a military organization carrying several tens of thousands of men, although the religious rules were the basis for the army discipline, it was inevitable that there should be a certain amount of robbery, murder and disorder, and it was impossible for those in command to punish all offenders. While the Great Peaceful Army (太平军) emphasized its religious tenets it was unable to carry out its own regulations and seemed to make use of these tenets as a sort of label.

Worship.

The T’ai P’ing army, when in cities and towns, was billeted in the homes of the people; but when they camped in the open they erected
large wooden barracks usable for purposes of religious worship. The following is a condensed account of these rites. Where tables and chairs are not available the people may be seated on the ground in the worship of the Heavenly Father. When in cities and towns every effort must be made to give them proper setting.

When a city or town was taken, the more pretentious dwellings were occupied by the higher officers and the smaller ones by those of lower rank. Each dwelling accommodated one hundred or a few tens of soldiers, according to circumstances. In the centre of the main room a square table was placed which had a table scarf, either plain red or of embroidered material. In each room there were hung curtains, a lantern, scrolls and pictures. Sacrificial vessels, vases and mirrors were in place. These might be appropriated by force as needed. Should there be four glass lanterns one should be kept and the others distributed. Decorative lanterns should be treated in the same way. Thus there were no "pairs" and nothing could be hung in order. Honourary scrolls with gilt lettering should also be distributed singly. Appropriate a different one to make up the "pair," thus there would be no order with these. Thus everything in the room, scrolls, pictures, lanterns and vases, was placed in order to produce an effect of gorgeousness. But not knowing where things should be placed and with everything in disorder, the effect upon one who really knew how things should be was one of secret mirth. Incense and candles were not placed before the table of the Lord of Heaven. Thus there were no incense burners nor candle-sticks. Near the front edge of the table were placed two oil lamps. There was nothing specified as to what was to be on the table except that there must be a pair of vases or hat stands, in each of which was stuck a small three-cornered flag of authority, made of yellow satin. In front of the table there was an upright of bamboo about three feet long and one inch wide, on which was the legend, "By Heaven’s Authority." Behind the table were placed three chairs with cushions, etc. These chairs were for the highest in authority, the second and the secretary. Were there more secretaries, five or seven chairs might be used.

Every seventh day was reserved for worship. On the day previous the authorities ordered deputies, carrying the "flag of worship," to go through the streets beating cymbals and crying that "to-morrow is the day of worship." Everyone should be devout and there must be no disrespect. Just after midnight, each billet must light the two lamps and place offerings of three cups of tea, three plates of sacrificial meat, three bowls of rice, calling everyone together by the beating of a gong. The officer and secretaries assume the chairs placed in the centre while the soldiers sit about on either side. After a hymn of praise the secretary pens a memorial on yellow paper, writing down the name of each person in the billet. Holding this in his hands and kneeling, he reads the roll in a loud voice while all the others remain on their knees. After the reading the memorial is burned and the offerings are eaten by those present. These are the rites for the seventh day, the day of worship.

Every day for the morning and evening meal, the sound of gongs summoned the assembly. Three bowls of tea and of rice must be offered.
From the highest down, everyone is seated. After a hymn of praise the secretary prostrated himself and in silence presented the memorial. This was called the silent litany. The assembly knelt during this ceremony, after which they partook of their meal. The T'ai P'ings, knowing the poverty of the country people, used to attract them by giving them three meals. Worship was conducted in the morning and the evening but not at the time of the noon meal. One could surmise the type of officer in charge by the attitude of reverence or disrespect evident at the times of worship.

There were those who, when kneeling and presenting the "silent litany," would say in low tones, "May the Heavenly Father, the Supreme Ruler use his great authority; thunder upon the Heavenly Prince (天王), and consume with fire the Eastern Prince (東王)." Those who knelt behind and heard these words dared not to divulge them but had to maintain an attitude of respect just as the brethren from Kuangsi did.

(Phrase: This must refer to the lack of harmony which developed between some of the leaders.)

If you were not ill you did not present yourself at the sound of the gong, or showed any levity, you were beaten with several hundred strokes.

The tables and chairs which were used for worship were also used for court when necessary. Whenever the "clapper" sounded, silence prevailed. If without excuse you were absent from worship three times you were reported to the general and publicly executed. The foregoing regulations were carried out in the smaller places.

In the Heavenly City (天京 Nanking) a platform was raised without the main gate of the palace as a place to celebrate birthdays and festivals, and to worship Heaven. Within the palace there was an altar for worship, elaborate almost beyond description. The palaces of Princes Yang, Wei and Shih (楊雲石) was similarly arranged. Before worship at the morning and evening meal, the cymbals must be sounded sixty-four times and music played three times. Concubines and female officials to the number of about one thousand joined in the hymns of praise with a volume of sound that swelled the halls. The order of the gongs was as follows:

- in the presence of Hou (候) or Hsiang (相) 48 strokes; before Chien (検) or Chih (指) 36 strokes; before Tsung Chih (總制) or Chien Chün (監軍) 24 strokes; before Chün Shuai (軍帥) 20 strokes; before Shih Shuai (師帥) 16 strokes; before Lü Shuai (旅帥) 12 strokes; before Tsu Chang (卒長) 10 strokes; before Liang Szu Ma (兩司馬) 8 strokes. (Note. Various army rankings corresponding roughly to Major-General down through Sergeant.) From the rank of Prince (王) to that of Chih Hui (指揮) music must always be played.

Before each time of worship officials must make out signed orders to be presented at the various proper offices in order to procure the fruits, cakes, sea food, etc., for the offerings to Heaven.

This is the order of things at the Heavenly Capitol (天京). In the other camps it was not so, the offerings consisting of whatever they happened to have handy. When there was abundance there was variety;
but even when there was little in sight an offering must be made. Of the meats offered, dog meat was considered the best. When the ceremony was over the offering was distributed. On special occasions such as birthdays, festivals, the military occupation of a city—any occasion for rejoicing in the army—there was something out of the ordinary. A special banquet was prepared as an adequate offering to the Heavenly Father.

On occasions of illness or some special happiness, the event was written out in fashion similar to the Heavenly Rules. This was read and then burned as worship of the Heavenly Father, or as a petition for happiness. Special celebrations in the army must be on the Day of Worship and all inferiors in rank were supposed to present scrolls of congratulation. The period of punishment by the cangue was also determined by the Day of Worship. One’s sentence would be for three days of Worship (weeks), or five weeks and so on. All affairs of the army were similarly determined. For instance, the proclamation that if Wuch’ang were not taken in three weeks the one in command would be recalled to the capitol for punishment. All requisitions for provisions must also be made on the day of worship.

A CURIOUS CHINESE CANDLESTICK

BY

R. P. HOMMEL

By mere accident I saw in a Chinese drygoods shop in Linkiang, Kiangsi, which I had entered to buy some trifling article, a number of old pieces of bronze. The shopkeeper had acquired them from a pawnshop, where they had been left beyond the period allowed for redeeming them. After some negotiating I acquired the pieces, among them a pair of candlesticks, representing a kneeling person in foreign, old-fashioned dress and a tricorn on the head. As the accompanying pictures show, of the two figures one kneels upon the left knee with the other merely bent, and balances upon the outstretched left hand a turned rod with a hole at the upper end for the candle; while the other figure, an exact counterpart, kneels upon the right knee and supports a candleholder with the right hand. The height of the figure with base is 13 inches. The base is typically Chinese. On the figure itself, however, nothing is Chinese except the slanting eyes, which the modeller apparently had not recognized to be a characteristic of the yellow race only. This is a slip of the artist, who undoubtedly wanted to represent a foreign person, not merely a person in foreign attire. This intention we perceive from the unduly high nose, the shape of the head, and the way the hair is treated. The forehead is framed with curls and the hair at the back of the head ends in what reminds us of a bag-wig, or a thick crop of hair.