

## THE TAIPING HEAVENLY KINGDOM (1850-1864):

### A POLICE STATE, A REIGN OF TERROR

BY TAO TIEN-YI

The "police state" and the "reign of terror" are two well established terms. When we refer to these two terms, we will recall the experiences of Soviet Russia and those of the French Revolution. During the 18th century, when the revolutionary government of France was at war with almost all the European monarchies, and when it was confronted with the enemies of the revolution in their own country, they resorted to desperate measures to save the regime<sup>(1)</sup>. In the thirties, when the Soviet government was collectivizing agriculture, they deliberately employed violence to eliminate all opposition and to subjugate the people to their will<sup>(2)</sup>. Although these pictures depict the darkest side of human history, the guillotine, the firing squadron, the torture, the concentration camp, and the massacre are not unique, but exist throughout history. These methods seem to be the integral part of war and revolution, and the indispensable basis of totalitarian and oppressive rule. Its counterpart in China was the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom.

In talking about the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, two factors which brought forth the reign of terror require our notice: an external threat to the regime, and an internal one.

(1) Throughout the thirteen years of this regime, the Taiping government was continuously confronted by the external threat of the Manchu army. They fought the Manchus all the way from their first base in Kuangsi to Nanking. When the Taiping government settled down at Nanking in 1853, the city was at once besieged by the Manchus. The siege lasted for eleven years

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(1) (a) Donald Greer, *The Incidence of the Terror during the French Revolution: A Statistical Interpretation* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1935), pp. 25-37, 111-128, 135-143.

(b) Albert Mathiez, *The French Revolution*, trans. by Catherine Alison Philips (New York: Russell & Russell Inc., 1962), pp. 331-509.

(2) Georg Von Rauch, *A History of Soviet Russia*, trans. by Peter & Annette Jacobsohn (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1964), pp. 177-181.

before it fell in 1864, which marked the end of the regime<sup>(3)</sup>.

(2) The internal threat to the Taiping government originated in their drive to consolidate power. The Taiping leaders used very inhuman measures, such as capturing people by thousands at a time and forcing them to join the regime at the threat of death. They broke up families, and organized the whole population under control into military camps, living collectively under the strictest controls. Moreover, they confiscated all their belongings, abolished private ownership, and had all the properties handed over to the national treasury. With these drastic measures, the government monopolized all the manpower and resources<sup>(4)</sup>. The Taiping government built up their power on the basis of an enslaved population which was very likely to be the avowed enemies of this regime.

Under such ever-present threat, the leaders of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom were most likely to take the same route as that of Robespierre and Stalin. In fact, this regime relied heavily on the tactics of coercion, as well as persuasion.

According to Yang Hsiu-ch'ing, the leading spirit of the regime, his philosophy was: "Bind them (the people) with severe laws; threaten them with strict orders; driving them to fatigue by labor and hardship, makes them unable to share alienated intention; killing all those who plot desertion, makes them suspicious of each other although they may have alienated desire."<sup>(5)</sup> This is a very concise statement of the terrorism of this regime, but since the source of this quotation is Manchu, a source hostile to his regime, we may have to be cautious of using it as evidence. We should let the facts speak for themselves

Information on this subject come from all the parties involved, pro, con and neutral: for example the Manchu government, people who were captured by the Taipings, those who were side observers and the Taipings themselves. It is inevitable that many sources are strongly biased. We checked and verified information from all the above involved parties. All sources, especially the

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(3) Lo, Erh-Kang, *T'ai p'ing t'ien kuo shih kang* (Shanghai: Shang wu yin shu kuan, 1936), pp. 47-80.

(4) Tien-yi Tao, "T'ai p'ing t'ien kuo ti tu shih kung shih (The City Commune of the T'ai ping Heavenly Kingdom)" *The Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica*, vol. XXXI (1960), pp. 405-433.

(5) Chang Te-chien, "Ts'e ch'ing hui ch'uan," *T'ai p'ing t'ien kuo*, vol. III (Shanghai: Shen chou kuo kuang she, 1952), p. 312. Hereafter abbreviated as *TPTK*.

Taiping's testimonies, supply convincing evidence on this subject. The following findings should be one founded on a very solid basis.

When we come to understand this regime, we cannot fail to notice the fact of terror. The Taipings deliberately employed terror as an effective means of establishing its power. For example, they made it known that they would kill all the living creatures of a place which offered any resistance. Thus Chin-t'an, after desperately holding out for a hundred days, became a dead city. Of its seventy thousand people, half committed suicide, half were slaughtered by the Taipings in revenge<sup>(6)</sup>. After capturing a city, they turned it into hell. They indiscriminately killed, plundered, and captured people. According to one account, the Taiping general who conquered Wu-hsi, after having killed one hundred ninety thousand people, had to ask permission in a memoir from the central government before he stopped the killing<sup>(7)</sup>. Throughout the rule of the Taiping government, plundering and capturing people were the main sources of their strength. Several times for example, in Tao-chou, in Chin-lin, in Wu-ch'ang, Taiping troops forced the whole population of these cities to follow them at the threat of death<sup>(8)</sup>. Within two years, the total number of its followers reached three million<sup>(9)</sup>. People trembled at the thought of the coming disaster. It is astonishing to look at the great number of people who preferred to commit suicide, than fall into the hands of the Taiping troops<sup>(10)</sup>. Here, in attacking a place, in capturing the people and forcing them to join, we already find the important part played by terror. Terror, like a roaring lion which paralyzed a man to the point of collapse, destroyed the will to resist. The captive, under the everlasting threat of death, had only one desire: to escape death. The regime could demand anything from their hopeless captives: their property, their families, and their lives.

(6) (a) Chang Te-chien, "Ts'e ch'ing hui ch'uan," *TPTK*, vol. III, p. 299. (b) Ch'iang Ju-hsün, "Chin-t'an chien wen chi," *TPTK*, vol. V, p. 212.

(7) Shih Chien-lieh, "Chi-hsien ch'eng shih shou ke fu pen mo," quoted in Chien Yu-wen, *T'ai p'ing t'ien kuo tien chih t'ung k'ao* (Chiu lung: Chien shih meng chin shu chü, 1958), vol. I, p. 408.

(8) (a) Chang Te-chien, "ts'e ch'ing hui ch'uan," *TPTK*, vol. III, pp. 287, 296. (b) Ti fou tao jen, "Chin-ling tsa chi," *TPTK*, vol. IV, p. 610.

(9) (a) Ti fou tao jen, "Chin-ling tsa chi," *TPTK*, vol. IV, p. 611. (b) Chang Te-chien, "Ts'e ch'ing hui ch'uan," *TPTK*, vol. III, pp. 287, 296.

(10) (a) Rev. M. T. Yates, "The Taiping Rebellion," *TPTK*, vol. VI, p. 939. (b) Ch'iang Ju-hsün, "Chin-t'an chien wen chi," *TPTK*, vol. V, p. 212. (c) Chang Ju-nan, "Chin-ling sheng nan chi lüeh," *TPTK*, vol. IV, p. 698.

The next step for the Taiping leaders was to strengthen their hold on this group of people under their control. Again, a great part was played by the ever-present threat of terror. (1) They used strict controls to bind everyone together. (2) They used the security police to make everyone aware that he was under their supervision. (3) They used massacre and torture to make everyone tremble at the chance of being killed. Thus, they ensured obedience, maintained high efficiency, and crushed all opposition.

When thousands of people were brought into their group, they were at once put under strict control, and the strictest form of control was that of a military nature. In fact, the society under the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom was a big military camp. As we mentioned before, the family unit was broken. All people led a collective life. The ordinary unit was called *chun*, an army, which consisted of about thirteen thousand people, and the basic unit consisted of twenty-five people under the control of an official called *liang-ssu-ma*<sup>(11)</sup>. Every captive became a member in this group. One's name was recorded on the register of one's unit<sup>(12)</sup>; one was forbidden to move freely to other units, or even stay overnight at other units;<sup>(13)</sup> one had to wear a uniform on which one's position and one's units were indicated, and at the same time carry an identification, a wooden plate hung on the belt<sup>(14)</sup>. One had to get written permission to leave the city; this written permission would be checked all the way by the military posts<sup>(15)</sup>. There are sources that tell us that all the above regulations were a matter of life or death<sup>(16)</sup>. For example, laws were pro-

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- (11) (a) "T'ien ch'ao t'ien mou chih tu," *TPTK*, vol. I, p. 325. (b) Chang Te-chien, "Ts'e ch'ing hui ch'uan," *TPTK*, vol. I, pp. 81, 82, 106, 107, 110, 138, 139, 141. (c) Tien-yi Tao, "T'ai p'ing t'ien kuo ti tu shih kung shih (The City Commune of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom)" *The Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica*, vol. XXXI (1960), pp. 405-433.
- (12) (a) Hsieh Chiai-hou, "Chin-ling kuei chia chi shih lueh," *TPTK*, vol. IV, p. 655. (b) Chang Te-chien, "Ts'e ch'ing hui ch'uan," *TPTK*, vol. III, pp. 125, 237, 317.
- (13) (a) Hsieh Chiai-hou, "Chin-ling kuei chia chi shih lueh," *TPTK*, vol. IV, p. 655. (b) Ti fou tao jen, "Chin-ling tsa chi," *TPTK*, vol. IV, p. 622. (c) Chang Te-chien, "Ts'e ch'ing hui ch'uan," *TPTK*, vol. III, pp. 213, 228. (d) Chang Ju-nan, "Chin-ling sheng nan chi lueh," *TPTK*, vol. IV, p. 696.
- (14) (a) Chang Te-chien, "Ts'e ch'ing hui ch'uan," *TPTK*, vol. III, p. 150. (b) Blakistan, "The Yang-tsz," *TPTK*, vol. VI, p. 945.
- (15) (a) Hsieh Chiai-hou, "Chin-ling kuei chia chi shih lueh," *TPTK*, vol. IV, p. 656. (b) Chang Ju-nan, "Chin-ling sheng nan chi lueh," *TPTK*, vol. IV, p. 700. (c) Chang Te-chien, "Ts'e ch'ing hui ch'uan," *TPTK*, vol. III, p. 234. (d) Ku Shen, "Hu hsueh sheng huan chi," *TPTK*, vol. VI, p. 734.
- (16) (a) Chang Ju-nan, "Chin-ling sheng nan chi lueh," *TPTK*, vol. IV, p. 696. (b) Chang Te-chien, "Ts'e ch'ing hui ch'uan," *TPTK*, vol. III, pp. 228, 234. (c) Blakistan, "The Yang-tsz," *TPTK*, vol. VI, p. 945.

mulgated, stating that for those who stayed at other units or fled, the penalty was death<sup>(17)</sup>. Taiping troops hated deserters. They cut off the queues of all followers—a symbol of the citizen under the Manchu dynasty—and sometimes words were tattooed on their faces to prevent them from fleeing<sup>(18)</sup>. To those who fled, the Taiping troops never showed any mercy. They carried the bloody heads of those who tried to escape along the street as a warning to others<sup>(19)</sup>.

Then, the followers were aware that they were always under surveillance. They were surrounded by the informers<sup>(20)</sup>, and they trembled whenever they met a member of the security police called *hsün-ch'a*. Even those who joined the revolution from the early period were also under their awful authority<sup>(21)</sup>. It was the *hsün-ch'a* who issued travel permits, who were in charge of the military posts and city gates<sup>(22)</sup>, and who searched for the fugitives<sup>(23)</sup>. All this information focuses our attention on this group, and with closer study we find that the regime, through them, imposed their will on the people, maintained discipline, and suppressed opposition.

Besides the hierarchy of officials in the administrative structure of the government, there existed a hierarchy of officials of the secret police. The headquarters of the security police in the central government was headed by a high-ranking official of the fifth rank called *tsung hsün ch'a*. In every local unit, *chün*, there was a *hsün ch'a* who had a rank equal to that of the head of the administrative unit<sup>(24)</sup>. The *hsün ch'a* were all manned by those who had joined the revolution at the very beginning at Kuangsi<sup>(25)</sup>. It is really a remarkable fact that the security police paralleled the administrative organ and extended their power to all corners of the kingdom.

Their function according to the information available may be summarized under two headings: guarding the regime against enemies, and imposing the

(17) Chang Te-chien, "Ts'e ch'ing hui ch'uan," *TPTK*, vol. III, pp. 228, 229.

(18) Ku Shen, "Hu hsüeh sheng huan chi," *TPTK*, vol. VI, p. 734.

(19) Chang Te-chien, "Ts'e ch'ing hui ch'uan," *TPTK*, vol. III, p. 305.

(20) Chang Te-chien, "Ts'e ch'ing hui ch'uan," *TPTK*, vol. III, p. 304.

(21) Ti fou tao jen, "Chin-ling tsa chi," *TPTK*, vol. IV, p. 619.

(22) Chang Te-chien, "Ts'e ch'ing hui ch'uan," *TPTK*, vol. III, pp. 234, 235, 239.

(23) (a) Chang Te-chien, "Ts'e ch'ing hui ch'uan," *TPTK*, vol. III, p. 213. (b) Ti fou tao jen, "Chin-ling tsa chi," *TPTK*, vol. IV, p. 619.

(24) (a) Chang Ju-nan, "Chin-ling sheng nan chi lüeh," *TRTK*, vol. IV, p. 695. (b) Chang Te-chien, "Ts'e ch'ing hui ch'uan," *TRTK*, vol. III, pp. 63, 83, 105, 246, 247. (c) Ti fou tao jen, "Chin-ling tsa chi," *TRTK*, vol. IV, pp. 617, 619, 634, 637.

(25) Ti fou tao jen, "Chin-ling tsa chi," *TPTK*, vol. IV, p. 619.

will of the regime upon the people. In guarding the regime against enemies, they issued travel permits, took charge of the military posts and city gates<sup>(26)</sup>, and searched for fugitives<sup>(27)</sup>. They also searched for those who discussed the military situation or criticized the regime<sup>(28)</sup>. Above all, they searched for those who plotted rebellion and for spies who were sent by the Manchus<sup>(29)</sup>. In imposing the will of the regime upon the people, they conveyed orders to the administrative bodies and to the people<sup>(30)</sup>. They searched for those who despised any order of the regime. For example, they searched for those who hid to avoid joining them, those who smoked opium, and those who hid private property<sup>(31)</sup>. If they suspected someone, they captured him and used torture to get a confession<sup>(32)</sup>. Let us introduce one example of the work of the security police. The symbol of the Taiping troops was their long hair. Among the people suspected of rebellion, there were some who for some reason — such as skin disease—had cut their long hair. The *hsün ch'a*, having tortured these people and gotten a confession of having plotted rebellion, issued a command to send all those who had cut their long hair to them. They captured four thousand people: males females, and children. In this case, over one thousand died of torture, suicide, and execution<sup>(33)</sup>. Moreover, the fact that the Taiping government widely circulated descriptions of trials reveals their intention to remind the people of the fact that no one could escape their supervision. Under the rule of the security police, society became rent with suspicion<sup>(34)</sup>. Data mention that one could trust no one, even close relatives, and one might lose his life if he happened to say one word against the regime<sup>(35)</sup>.

To keep the whole society under submission, the strict control and the

(26) Chang Te-chien, "Ts'e ch'ing hui ch'uan" *TPTK*, vol. III, pp. 234, 235, 239.

(27) (a) Chang Te-chien, "Ts'e ch'ing hui ch'uan," *TPTK*, vol. III, p. 213. (b) Ti fou tao jen, "Chin-ling tsa chi," *TPTK*, vol. IV, p. 619.

(28) Chang Te-chien, "Ts'e ch'ing hui ch'uan," *TPTK*, vol. III, p. 231.

(29) (a) "T'ien fu hsia fan chao," *TPTK*, vol. I, p. 7. (b) Ti fou tao jen, "Chin-ling tsa chi," *TPTK*, vol. IV, p. 637. (c) Hsieh Chia-hou, "Chin-ling kwei chia chi shih lueh," *TPTK*, vol. IV, p. 662. (d) Chang Te-chien, "Ts'e ch'ing hui ch'uan," *TPTK*, vol. III, p. 28.

(30) (a) Chang Ju-nan, "Chin-ling sheng nan chi lueh," *TPTK*, vol. IV, pp. 695, 711. (b) Ti fou tao jen, "Chin-ling tsa chi," *TPTK*, vol. IV, p. 632.

(31) Chang Ju-nan, "Chin-ling sheng nan chi lueh," *TPTK*, vol. IV, pp. 715, 716.

(32) (a) Chang Ju-nan, "Chin-ling sheng nan chi lueh," *TPTK*, vol. IV, p. 716. (b) Hsieh Chia-hou, "Chin-ling kwei chia chi shih lueh," *TPTK*, vol. IV, p. 662.

(33) Hsieh Chia-hou, "Chin-ling kwei chia chi shih lueh," *TPTK*, vol. IV, p. 662.

(34) "T'ien fu hsia fan chao," *TPTK*, vol. I, p. 7.

(35) (a) Hsieh Chia-hou, "Chin-ling kwei chia chi shih lueh," *TPTK*, vol. IV, p. 660. (b) Chang Te-chien, "Ts'e ch'ing hui ch'uan" *TPTK*, vol. III, p. 304.

security police were not enough; they had to be backed up by the will to use violence. The Taiping leaders never showed the slightest hesitation in using the death penalty as a threat.

When we examine the laws of this regime, we find that almost all the offenders were punished by death<sup>(36)</sup>. Those marked for execution included even those who could not learn religious prayers within three weeks, those who did not kneel on the roadside when they met a high official, those who hid private property, and those who had sexual relations—even between husbands and wives<sup>(37)</sup>. The parents of the Western Prince and one of the highest officials were executed for this latter offence<sup>(38)</sup>. Besides offence to the law, any offence to the will of the ruler was punishable by death. For example, when the Eastern Prince was selecting educated women to assist him in his administration, those who helped the qualified women avoid being selected were killed<sup>(39)</sup>. When Nanking was short of provisions, people were ordered to eat gruel; those who ate rice were killed<sup>(40)</sup>. When people were ordered to hear a sermon, they had to obey or were killed<sup>(41)</sup>. Once in Shao-hsing, there were anti-Taiping pamphlets posted on the walls, and when the Taiping troops could not find the ones who posted these, they killed all the people on that street<sup>(42)</sup>.

The Taiping regime was really too savage in killing. The parents of the Western Prince, the brother of the North Prince, and the sister-in-law of the Eastern Prince were killed by them<sup>(43)</sup>. When we consider that these people were the relatives of the most powerful rulers in this regime, then it is no longer necessary to consider the fate of the common people: they might be killed at any time. According to one source, there were several executions

(36) Chang Te-chien, "Ts'e ch'ing hui ch'uan," *TPTK*, vol. III, pp. 227-232.

(37) Chang Te-chien, "Ts'e ch'ing hui ch'uan," *TPTK*, vol. III, pp. 227-232.

(38) (a) Hsieh Chiai-hou, "Chin-ling kwei chia chi shih lüeh," *TPTK*, vol. IV, p. 658. (b) Ti fou tao jen, "Chin-ling tsa chi," *TPTK*, vol. IV, p. 639. (c) Chang Te-chien, "Ts'e ch'ing hui ch'uan," *TPTK*, vol. III, pp. 72, 313.

(39) Hsieh Chiai-hou, "Chin-ling kwei chia chi shih lüeh," *TPTK*, vol. IV, p. 663.

(40) (a) Chang Ju-nan, "Chin-ling sheng nan chi lüeh," *TPTK*, vol. IV, p. 715. (b) Hsieh Chiai-hou, "Chin-ling kwei chia chi shih lüeh," *TPTK*, vol. IV, p. 664. (c) Chang Te-chien, "Ts'e ch'ing hui ch'uan," *TPTK*, vol. III, p. 276.

(41) Hsieh Chiai-hou, "Chin-ling kwei chia chi shih lüeh," *TPTK*, vol. IV, p. 664.

(42) Hsü Yao-kuang, "T'an che," quoted in Chien Yu-wen, *T'ai p'ing t'ien kuo tien chih t'ung k'ao*, vol. I, p. 432.

(43) (a) Hsieh Chiai-hou, "Chin-ling kwei chia chi shih lüeh," *TPTK*, vol. IV, p. 668. (b) Chang Te-chien, "Ts'e ch'ing hui ch'uan," *TPTK*, vol. III, p. 56.

everyday<sup>(44)</sup>. Yet mere individual execution seemed rather mild, when compared with the massacre and bloody purges. Besides the massacre of Chin-t'an, we are told of another terrible story. During the internal struggle among the leaders, the Eastern Prince was the first to be killed. Twenty thousand of his followers were slaughtered<sup>(45)</sup>. The Northern Prince had the same fate, and his followers, including women and children were all massacred<sup>(46)</sup>.

Moreover, we should notice the deliberateness of the terrorism. The ruler was said to have terrified people by forcing them to watch the execution. The doomed person was driven to parade on the streets to denounce his own alleged guilts<sup>(47)</sup>. Not only were decapitated heads demonstrated to the public, but occasionally the same head was demonstrated several times under different names in order to intensify the effect of terrorism.<sup>(48)</sup> Then when someone rebelled against the regime, any rebel was killed in the most brutal way: either being burnt at the stake, or by being torn into pieces by five horses<sup>(49)</sup>. Those who attended the execution could never forget the scream of the dying man. This was an important part of the political education of the people.

The Taiping leaders eliminated their enemies under the name of killing the *yao* ("devil"). The term was used very freely. Massacre after massacre, the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom was a hell on earth built on the corpses of innocents. China suffered heavy population loss during this period. The lowest estimation of the casualties during the war was at least 20,000,000 or 3,000,000<sup>(50)</sup>, and was considered one of the heaviest losses among all the wars fought in China.

This brutal terrorism surely did not fail to be mentioned in the contem-

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(44) Chang Te-chien, "Ts'e ch'ing hui ch'uan," *TPTK*, vol. III, p. 265.

(45) (a) Chang Ju-nan, "Chin-ling sheng nan chi lüeh," *TPTK*, vol. IV, p. 704. (b) Ti fou tao jen, "Chin-ling tsa chi," *TPTK*, vol. IV, p. 641.

(46) Rev. M. T. Yates, "The Taiping Rebellion," *TPTK*, vol. VI, p. 942.

(47) (a) Chang Ju-nan, "Chin-ling sheng nan chi lüeh," *TPTK*, vol. IV, p. 715. (b) Chang Te-chien, "Ts'e ch'ing hui ch'uan," *TPTK*, vol. III, pp. 153, 265.

(48) Chang Te-chien, "Ts'e ch'ing hui ch'uan," *TPTK*, vol. III, p. 265.

(49) Chang Te-chien, "Ts'e ch'ing hui ch'uan," *TPTK*, vol. III, pp. 229, 264, 265. (b) Chang Ju-nan, "Chin-ling sheng nan chi lüeh," *TPTK*, vol. IV, p. 716. (c) "Lan-ch'i hsien chih," quoted in Kuo T'ing-i, *T'gi p'ing t'ien kuo shih shih jih chih* (Shanghai: Shang wu yin shu kuan, 1947), vol. II, p. 780.

(50) (a) Ho, Ping-ti, *Studies on the Population of China, 1368-1953* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959), pp. 236-247. (b) Lo Erh-kang, *T'ai p'ing t'ien kuo shih kang*, pp. 128, 129.



porary documents of that time<sup>(51)</sup>. Forrest remarked that it was impossible for the Taiping regime to acquire the whole of China, because they only used disgusting terrorism<sup>(52)</sup>. The British Ambassador, Bruce, in his report to the Foreign Minister, said that they knew nothing but to kill, burn, and destroy, and that they did not care about a steady income and mainly relied on plunder. Roberts, an America missionary, said that throughout this regime, from the top to the bottom, everyone was walking the same path of murder. The British Consul in *Ning-po* denounced the terror by saying that under Taiping, the head of a man meant no more than the head of a vegetable<sup>(53)</sup>. Even Karl Marx, after a period of excitement about this revolution, was also disgusted with this regime. He said that their only mission was disruption without any construction, and called it a calamity<sup>(54)</sup>.

The Taiping regime relied heavily on the tactics of coercion, and achieved its goals through terrorism. For example, (1) its leaders, in a brief period of two years, expanded their forces to three million and set up their government in Nanking<sup>(55)</sup> (2) They eliminated all enemies from within. Chang Te-chien, the author of *Tse-ch'ien huai ch'uan* and the head of the intelligence office of Tseng Kuo-fan's army, in investigating the Taiping regime for the Manchus, admitted that there was no chance for the Manchus to send spies into Taiping controlled areas<sup>(56)</sup>. (3) They imposed their horrifying authority on the people. It is said that once when Taiping troops left a town, for three days after none of the inhabitants dared to tear down the paper with which the Taiping troops had sealed their treasuries<sup>(57)</sup>. Let us also consider this fact: avariciousness and sexual desire are among the most untapped impulses, and rape is almost unavoidable in war. But under the severe punishment of death, among the Taiping army almost no one dared offend the puritanic

(51) (a) Ti fou tao jen, "Chin-ling tsa chi," *TPTK*, vol. IV, pp. 632, 637. (b) Chang Te-chien "Ts'e ch'ing hui ch'uan," *TPTK*, vol. III, p. 153. (c) "Lan-ch'i hsien chih," quoted in Kuo T'ing-i, *T'ai p'ing t'ien kuo shih jih chih*, vol. II, p. 780. (d) "Chao shih jih chi," quoted in LO, Erh-kang, *T'ai p'ing t'ien kou shih k'ao* (Peking: San lien shu chü, 1955), p. 215.

(52) "T'ien ching yu chi," *TPTK*, vol. VI, pp. 957, 958.

(53) *Ma-k'e-ssu en-ke-ssu lung-kuo* (Peking: Jen min ch'u pan she, 1957), p. 138.

(54) *Ibid.*, p. 137.

(55) (a) Ti fou tao jen, "Chin-ling tsa chi," *TPTK*, vol. IV, p. 611. (b) Chang Te-chien, "Ts'e ch'ing hui ch'uan," *TPTK*, vol. III, pp. 287, 296.

(56) Chang Te-chien, "Ts'e ch'ing hui ch'uan," *TPTK*, vol. III, pp. 28, 29.

(57) Chang Te-chien, "Ts'e ch'ing hui ch'uan," *TPTK*, vol. III, p. 236.

(58) (a) Chang Ju-nan, "Chin-ling sheng nan chi lüeh," *TPTK*, vol. IV, p. 698. (b) Hsieh Chia-hou, "Chin-ling kuei chia chi shih lüeh," *TPTK*, vol. IV, p. 653.

discipline<sup>(58)</sup>. This is the strongest evidence to indicate that, with the reign of terror and the secret police, the Taiping leaders enforced the strictest discipline among their followers.

Terrorism is really very powerful. At the height of terrorism, resistance or open revolution from oppressed people seems unlikely. However, the seed of resistance is always there. The opposition could not be suppressed by terror alone. During the finest hour of the Taiping regime, the people of Chin t'an still defend their city against the threat of massacre by the Taiping. From the very beginning of the revolution, deserters were numerous, in spite of the severe punishment for desertion<sup>(59)</sup>. A great number of people preferred suicide rather than the rule of tyranny. Moreover, once a regime turns to terror to maintain its rule, violence and bloodshed become the rule of the day, and often become the way of solving the differences and disputes under this system. During the internal struggle among the Taiping leaders, they closed the gates of the capital and massacred all the followers of their opponents in the city—old and young, male and female—twenty thousand of them.

The behavior of the Taiping regime suggests to us that the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom might well be one of the forerunners of the modern totalitarian states. As in all totalitarian states, terrorism itself served as a deadly weapon against its opponents and enemies, and it also presented a serious threat to the regime itself.

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(59) (a) Ti fou tao jen, "Chin-ling tsa chi," *TPTK*, vol. IV, pp. 617, 618, 622, 623, 625, 634.  
(b) Hsieh Chiai-hou, "Chin-ling kwei chia chi shih lueh," *TPTK*, vol. IV, pp. 656, 665.  
(c) Chang Ju-nan, "Chin-ling sheng nan chi lueh," *TPTK*, vol. IV, pp. 699, 700. (d) Chang Chi-keng, "Chang Chi-keng i kao," *TPTK*, vol. IV, p. 761.