



THE MARQUIS  
TSO TSUNGT'ANG

傳 棠 宗 左

TSO TSUNGT'ANG

*Soldier and Statesman of  
Old China*

by

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*TO MY WIFE*



## PREFACE

Tso Tsungt'ang lived in one of the many critical periods of Chinese history. He was born in obscurity and poverty, schooled himself under great difficulties, suffered many adversities, entered on an official career when well past middle age, and by his energy and genius rose to the highest posts open to a Chinese in the government of the empire during the Manchu period. He was not prepared either by education or by early training for the profession of arms, yet he became the foremost soldier of his generation in China. Not only did he win for himself a distinguished place among the greatest warriors his country has produced, but he was also a great statesman. His work in the pacification and reconstruction of vast areas devastated by war was notable.

The contacts which Tso Tsungt'ang had with men from foreign countries were not numerous. He laboured in fields that in large measure escaped the notice of contemporary observers from western lands. His great exploits on the Western Marches of the empire were noted by few and then only incidentally. It was said that he was "anti-foreign", a term that acquired a peculiar connotation among foreigners in the China of the late 19th century, and this gave no marked impetus to interest in his career.

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The rapid developments leading to the fall of the empire some twenty-five years after his passing, have further tended to obscure the great efforts he exerted to re-vitalize the Imperial Ideal. The course of events since the end of the old regime have been of a nature to focus attention on the contemporary scene, and to obscure the works of the notable men who laboured for an apparently lost cause. Thus Tso Tsung'ang has been little noted—almost forgotten.

Among the Chinese his life and works have been pushed aside by the circumstances of the times. For a few years following his death in 1885, his memory was extolled throughout the empire; but with the passing of the old regime a new order succeeded. In the exuberance of revolutionary zeal a marked tendency arose to stigmatize the great men of the preceding generation because of their services to an alien dynasty. Such a tendency was most natural. The uprising that dethroned the Manchus has been identified in some measure by the Chinese as a continuation of the Taiping Rebellion. The generation that succeeded in overthrowing the Manchus could hardly be expected to enthuse over the exploits of the men who suppressed the parent movement. While the revolution of the present century undoubtedly had some roots in the Taiping movement, in conception and scope the two differed widely. The Taipings aimed at overthrowing the dynasty but not the system. It was, as Sir Thomas Meadows pointed out, a rebellion. The later and successful movement aimed at overthrowing the system as well as the dynasty and was, under Meadows' definition, a revolution.

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More recently, under the cooling influence of time, a tendency is discernible among the Chinese to view the leaders of the past century in a more dispassionate light. There is a growing interest in the life and works of Tso Tsungt'ang, Tseng Kuofan and others of their generation. Tso Tsungt'ang was a Confucianist, and he laboured throughout his life to understand more fully and to follow more closely the Confucian Way of Life. He served loyally and devotedly the Imperial Ideal rather than the Manchu. The Confucian system in China antedates Confucius and it has permeated the soul of China over a longer period of time and more completely than any comparable system has done in any other land. Of the future it is not given to speak but it may be said without fear of contradiction that in the past no Chinese whose life and works were animated and guided by the teachings of Confucius has suffered for long the stigma of posterity.

My interest in Tso Tsungt'ang grew out of the occasional references found in works on northwest China and Chinese Turkestan, to the man who restored the great northwestern provinces to the empire by a series of campaigns between harvests—halting long enough to sow and reap grain for his army before making the next advance. However, so little could be found in English on Tso Tsungt'ang's novel method of campaigning that a more complete account was sought in Chinese works on the campaign. In its initial form a part of this study was submitted to the College of Chinese Studies, Peiping, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a degree, under the title "Tso Tsungt'ang and the Suppression of the Mohammedan Rebellion." It dealt with his campaigns

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in the Northwest, and touched lightly on his earlier campaigns in the Taiping Rebellion and the general background of the period. A more careful study was later made of the earlier campaigns and certain phases of his life not included in the original study. An introductory chapter was prepared giving a brief survey of the government, examination system, fiscal system and the Army of China during the 19th century, and chapters were added on the initial stages of the Taiping Rebellion, Moslems in China, and the Kingdom of Yakub Beg. The account of the suppression of the Mohammedan Rebellion was recast and the whole is offered herewith as a humble tribute to the memory of a very great man—Tso Tsungt'ang.

It is not intended to pose this sketch as an exhaustive piece of research in any sense of the word. The material available in Chinese on the life of Tso Tsungt'ang, the events in which he participated and the general background of the period, is so great that it would require years of work to go through it all. The account that is given here is somewhat in the nature of a digest of the "Nien P'u" or Annals from a work entitled "Tso Wen Hsiang Kung Ch'uan Chi"—the collected papers of Tso Tsungt'ang. This collection was edited by Yang Shulin who spent some four years on it and from the material which he collected wrote the "Nien P'u" or Annals, in ten books, a month by month, year by year account of Tso Tsungt'ang from his birth in 1812 to his death in 1885. The Annals have been supplemented by the official biography of Tso Tsungt'ang compiled by the Board of History under the late empire, by occasional passages

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from other Chinese works listed in the bibliography, and from such references in works by foreign authors as were available.

I am much indebted for inspiration, plan and for considerable material to the excellent work by William James Hail, "Tseng Kuofan and the Taiping Rebellion." It is hoped that this sketch will in a slight degree supplement that study by enlarging on the career of a man who by the nature of the case was mentioned only incidentally by Dr. Hail. In treating the Taiping period I have sketched this great movement rather briefly down to 1860. From 1860 to the end, I have stressed the part played by Tso Tsungt'ang. Naturally such treatment tends to throw the various components of this movement out of focus and to place the emphasis on a part rather than the whole. It is a distortion that seems to be inherent in biographies. Most of the works in English on the Taiping Rebellion have been devoted to particular phases or to particular individuals who figured in it. The earlier studies dealt almost entirely with the part played by certain foreigners who entered the chain of events subsequent to 1860, and they tended to magnify the contribution of foreigners in bringing the struggle to a close. More recently interest seems to be awakening in the matter of the Chinese participants, but much remains to be done before an adequate appraisal can be made of relative contributions in the suppressing of the Taipings. Tso Tsungt'ang played a notable part in bringing the rebellion to a close, a part that will prove even more notable the more the whole movement is studied. A little less support for the armies of Tseng Kuofan from the Hunan provincial

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government during the early stages of the rebellion would doubtless have been fatal to the Imperial cause. During these years Tso Tsungt'ang in a quasi-official position in the provincial government, came to be the most influential man in the province of Hunan. His influence was used unsparingly in the support of the Hunan armies.

A few extracts from Tso Tsungt'ang's memorials and letters that show something of his character, temperament and his grasp of the various situations facing the China in which he lived have been translated. So far as I know it is the first attempt that has been made to translate any of them. The rendering is free but I believe preserves his meaning very closely. All the translations from the Chinese given in this study are my own, and for such errors as they contain I am responsible. Li Shouhsien's account of the Taiping Rebellion was translated in 1865 by Mr. Lay as the "Autobiography of Chung Wang." It is now very rare and I have been unable to get a copy. The extract dealing with the beginning of the rebellion that is given here was made from the Chinese text.

In the romanization of Chinese personal and place names numerous inconsistencies will be found. For names of persons I have tried to follow the romanization in current use for the Peking dialect or the so-called Mandarin pronunciation. For place names I have generally followed the spelling given in Dingle's "The New Atlas and Commercial Gazetteer of China." Most of the place names are shown on the various sketch maps that accompany the text. In writing the names of Chinese the surname is always written first followed by the given or personal name. Where the personal name contains two

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characters, as it generally does, I have written them as one word, as Tso *Tsungt'ang*, pronounced "Zo Zung Tang", the "a" as in "art". Lest anyone should be puzzled over the apostrophe in "t'ang", it is simply a concession to one of the rules of romanization and means that the "t" is pronounced like a "t" instead of like a "d" as is the case where the apostrophe is omitted. It may be mentioned that the Chinese are not responsible for or greatly concerned about our systems of romanization.

I take this opportunity to express my appreciation to Dr. W. B. Pettus, President of the College of Chinese Studies, for his generous and long-sustained encouragement, and for the valuable assistance extended to me by the Library staff and the Chinese teaching staff of the college. I am particularly indebted to Dr. F. D. Schultheis, Librarian of the College of Chinese Studies, for reading the manuscript and for the many helpful criticisms which he gave me; and to Col. Joseph W. Stilwell, U. S. Army, for the stimulating interest he took in this work and the many helpful suggestions which he made from time to time, coming as they did from one with such a profound knowledge of the land and the people.

Only those who have had a similar experience can appreciate my indebtedness to my Chinese teacher, Mr. Wang Chuming, of the College of Chinese Studies. He is a man with great personal charm, infinite patience, a profound grasp of his country's history and a rare enthusiasm for leading others to an appreciation of its greatness. His patience, interest and encouragement in guiding me through the Chinese text that forms the basis

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for this book, were notable. For any merit it may have, credit is due to Mr. Wang. However, since he is wholly unacquainted with English, he is not responsible for its many defects.

This sketch is but a preliminary reconnaissance over the trail of a great soldier and statesman who lived in a China that was rapidly changing from the old to the new. Tso Tsungt'ang was a man whose greatness will grow with time and a fuller acquaintance with his life and works. His character was rooted in Old China but his outlook on life was fresh and new. He battled mightily to stay the "everlasting sequence of the law of prosperity and decay." His successes, though they now seem to have been rather local and temporary, were notable. Perhaps from the vantage point of another cycle they may be viewed differently. Chu Keliang, whom Tso Tsungt'ang strove throughout his life to emulate, likewise seemed to have achieved successes that were largely local and temporary, yet he has become a symbol to many generations of his countrymen. Not so much in tangible achievements as in the degree of devotion to duty is ultimate success measured by the canons of Confucius. It is hoped that this preliminary sketch may lead someone better qualified for the task to go deeply into the wealth of material available, and to illuminate more clearly the life of this extraordinary man.

W. L. BALES,

February, 1937.

*Captain, U. S. Marine Corps.*

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## CHAPTER I

# A GENERAL SURVEY OF CHINA DURING THE 19th CENTURY

### *A. General*

In the beginning of the 19th century China was a great and flourishing empire. At the close of the century it was in the very last stages of disruption and decay. Such a phenomenon was not new to Chinese history. The great Chinese historian, Ssu-Ma Ch'ien, writing about the close of the 2nd century B.C., was able to deduce from the history of his country "the everlasting law of the sequence of prosperity and decay." It is a sequence that has been many times repeated since that early date and another celebrated Chinese, Ou-Yang Hsiu, writing in the 11th century of our era said, "Alas for the fullness and decay of human greatness! Though these are called the appointments of Heaven, truly they are the handiwork of man." Such a period of decay was the 19th century in China and it is not certain that the end is even yet. It was a tragic period, as the periods of the disintegration of a dynasty always have been. In such periods the very worst that is in man gains full scope in bringing down upon the just and the unjust the fullest measure of destruction, misery and

## Tso Tsungt'ang

despair. The last dynasty to rule in China died hard. The wonder is that it lasted through the century under review. That it did was due mainly to the heroic efforts of a few great spirits, among them being the subject of this study, General Tso Tsungt'ang.

The Manchu or Ta Ch'ing dynasty established itself by a combination of intrigue and force of arms in 1644 in a disintegrated and decadent China, brought to that stage by the weakness and ineptitude of the Ming dynasty. The new dynasty was favoured by a succession of vigorous and able rulers and China once again became a great and mighty empire culminating in the reign of the greatest of the Manchus, Ch'ien Lung. Ch'ien Lung became Emperor in 1736 and ruled until 1796, when he abdicated in order not to reign longer than his celebrated grandfather, K'ang Hsi. He was succeeded by his son, Chia Ch'ing, though Ch'ien Lung continued to rule in fact until his death in 1799. With the passing of Ch'ien Lung ended one of the truly magnificent eras in Chinese history. The successors of Ch'ien Lung were a different breed from the great rulers whose constructive statesmanship had established the mighty empire of the Ta Ch'ing. The de-energizing process that seems to be the inevitable end of conquerors in a conquered land was now complete. The later Manchus succeeded to the throne but not to the genius and spiritual heritage of Ch'ien Lung and his illustrious forbears.

At the time of the death of Ch'ien Lung the Chinese Empire was at its greatest territorial extent. It included all that we now find on current maps as China—Manchuria, Mongolia, Chinese Turkestan, Tibet. To the

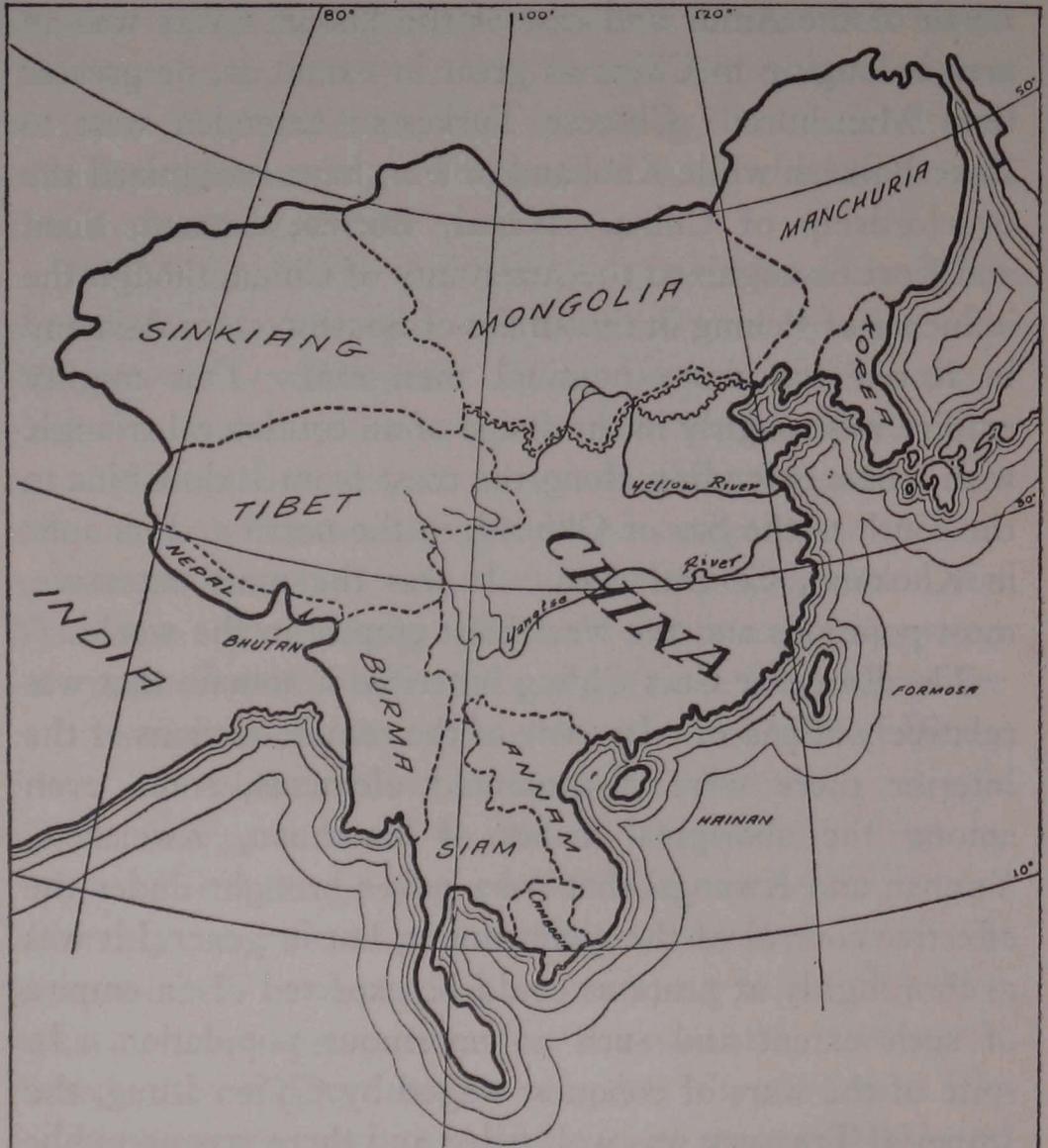
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north of the Amur and east of the Ussuri rivers was an area belonging to China as great in extent as, or greater than Manchuria. Chinese Turkestan extended west to Lake Balkash while Khokand or Ferghana recognized the overlordship of China. Nepal, Burma, Annam, Siam and Korea recognized the suzerainty of China, though the influence of Peking in the affairs of Southwestern Asia and in Korea was more nominal than real. This mighty empire was roughly in the shape of an equilateral triangle with a base extending along the coast from Indo-China in the south to the Sea of Okhotsk in the north and its apex in Khokand, Central Asia. It was the most extensive, most populous and the wealthiest empire in the world.

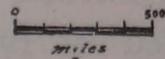
The Emperor Chia Ch'ing inherited a domain that was relatively at peace. In some of the remote sections of the interior there were discontented elements, some even among the aboriginal tribes of Szechuan, Kweichow, Yunnan and Kwangsi that were never brought under the effective control of the government, but in general it was as thoroughly at peace as could be expected of an empire of such extent and such an enormous population. In spite of the wars of conquest waged by Ch'ien Lung, the Imperial Treasury was well filled and there was no public debt. The level of material prosperity and well-being among the Chinese was at an exceptionally high level, higher than in any other country of that period. The governmental machinery was highly organized and performed its functions as effectively as obtained in any country in the world at the dawn of the 19th century.

Abroad the Chinese Empire enjoyed great prestige. In Europe China was viewed in an entirely different light

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Sketch  
*showing extent of*  
Chien Lung's  
EMPIRE  
*about*  
1796



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than was to be the case a half century later. Europe had become acquainted with Chinese culture through the writings of the early Catholic missionaries. These men were very favourably impressed with the achievements of the Chinese and as their writings obtained considerable currency during the 18th century, things Chinese were highly appreciated in Europe down to the early part of the next century. These early writers were men well qualified by training and temperament to note and interpret the cultural and spiritual features of Chinese civilization. In material culture the European had little that was superior to the Chinese. The extraordinary development of the machine age had not at this period made such a wide gulf between the industrial efficiency and military power of Europe and China. With the increasing contacts between Europe and China during the 19th century the differences between the two civilizations became more apparent. Moreover, China was subjected to the scrutiny of a different type of observer from the scholarly Jesuits. The hard-headed men of trade and commerce drew a different picture of the country. The gulf between the two in military power, however, was not so great in 1800 as to render it probable that any European country of that day could have successfully waged war against China. However, the nations of the west were enjoying an extraordinary stimulus to creative activity, particularly in mechanical lines, while the Chinese were content with things as they were. As a consequence the western nations soon completely outstripped the Chinese in those fields of activity that count most in war. As contact increased with the west the consequences were

inevitably unfavourable to China. The power of the Chinese Empire began to deteriorate rapidly, due not entirely to the impact of the west, but to a combination of causes, not the least being the extraordinary pride of the Chinese in refusing to recognize that the power of the empire was on the wane.

The Emperor Chia Ch'ing had none of the talents that distinguished his famous father. He was weak, addicted to the pleasures of the palace, vindictive, and more concerned with mulcting officials who had incurred his displeasure than in the serious business of governing an empire. It was not long before disorders began to break out in widely separated parts of the country. There were numerous elements among the Chinese that had not become reconciled to Manchu rule. The situation was further complicated by a phenomenal increase in population. In 1736, the year Ch'ien Lung ascended the throne, the population of China was given at one hundred and twenty-five million and in 1812 at three hundred and sixty-two million. Making due allowance for inaccuracies in such figures, it is certain that there was an extraordinary population increase in China during this period. It was not off-set by an industrial revolution such as accompanied the marked growth in population in the industrial states of Europe during the past century and it does not appear that there were any new fields of endeavour opened in the country that would tend to furnish a livelihood to any appreciable portion of the populace. The pressure of population on the available means of subsistence became, and has continued to be, a matter of the utmost concern for the peace and order of the country. Famine occurred

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with increasing frequency, followed by disorders and banditry.

As the population pressed more and more on the productive capacity of the available land, the yearly variations in crop conditions had the effect of producing extreme want and even famine in some section of China every year. Such a condition led to robbery and banditry on a large scale and to the breakdown of law and order over extensive areas. This in turn militated against the functioning of those remarkable water control projects that cover practically the whole of agricultural China. Some of these were under the direct control of the Imperial government, such as the Yellow River Conservancy. Others were under provincial governmental control, while innumerable small projects were simply cooperative efforts of the people concerned. These works are designed to prevent disastrous overflows, to drain off flooded lands, and to irrigate extensive areas. The whole scheme of water control has been worked out with infinite detail over thousands of years and is designed to make the farmers as free as humanly possible from the variations of rainfall. The farmers depend on a condition of peace for their proper functioning, and on their proper functioning depends the amount of food that will be available for the populace. A strong government is one of the essentials for internal peace and well may the Chinese charge their rulers with the responsibility for a series of natural calamities that bring hunger and misery to the people.

The Chinese were much addicted to secret societies. They flourished as in no other country and were not

infrequently anti-dynastic. A vigorous ruler like Ch'ien Lung kept these societies fairly well under cover, but under Chia Ch'ing they rose all over China. Two attempts were made to assassinate the Emperor. One, right in the well guarded precincts of the Forbidden City, was frustrated only by the timely arrival of Chia Ch'ing's son, who shot the ringleader with a fowling piece. These attempts on the life of the sovereign were believed to be the work of certain secret societies powerful enough to be able to subvert some of the Manchus, the sole guardians of the Emperor's person. Chia Ch'ing died in 1820, leaving the empire territorially intact but with many signs of a serious weakening in the power and prestige of the dynasty throughout China.

The successor to Chia Ch'ing ruled under the title of Tao Kuang. He was a man with some talent, but not sufficient for the task of reasserting the power that passed from the Manchus with Ch'ien Lung. Rebellion that had been gathering impetus during the preceding reign now began to break out all over the country. A list of the more important uprisings is sufficient to give some idea of the unrest and disregard of authority that prevailed at the time. In 1820, the year he came to the throne, there was an uprising in Kwangsi, focal point of rebellion even to the present era. In Shansi there was rebellion in 1822 and 1835; 1836 in Kweichow; 1826 and 1830 in Yunnan and Formosa; 1831 in Kiangsi; 1832 in Kiangsu; 1832 in Hupeh; 1834 in Szechuan; 1836 in eastern Kwangtung; 1836 in Hunan; 1832-36 a very serious affair broke out in the border districts of Kwangsi, Hunan and Kwangtung, in which the leader had the presumption

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to clothe himself in the Imperial yellow and assume the title of "prince of the Yellow Dragon".<sup>1</sup>

The crowning blow to Imperial prestige, however, was the war with Great Britain (1839-42). The British, with a relatively insignificant force, were able repeatedly to defeat such armies as the Chinese could muster; compelled them to ransom the most populous city in the empire; blockaded the coast; cut the Grand Canal, stopping the flow of rice to the capital, Peking; and forced the Chinese to sign a treaty such as none of the Ta Ch'ing Emperors had ever sanctioned. The repercussion from this humiliation gave an impetus to rebellion that heretofore had been largely localized. When Tao Kuang passed from the scene in 1850 a storm of revolt was breaking over the empire such as China in its long history of some four thousand years had never experienced.

The greatest of these uprisings was called the Taiping Rebellion (1850-1866) and is generally the best known among students of China because the nations of Europe and America were brought in close contact with it and had no small part in its suppression. The Great Panthay Rebellion in Yunnan lasted from 1855 to 1873, leaving Yunnan almost depopulated. The Nienfei bandits ravaged the provinces of Shantung, Anhui, Honan and Chihli during the period 1853 to 1868, at times reaching the proportions of a full fledged rebellion. The Mohammedan Rebellion in the northwest lasted from 1861 to 1877, completely devastating the provinces of Shensi, Kansu and Sinkiang, as well as considerable parts

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<sup>1</sup> Morse, *International Relations of the Chinese Empire*, V. I, p.440.

of Mongolia. The destruction of life and property in this series of rebellions has doubtless not been equalled in a period of twenty-five years in the entire world's history. Some have estimated that the Taiping Rebellion reduced the population of China by one hundred million, an estimate that is probably excessive.<sup>1</sup> However, if we consider the whole period of rebellion from 1850 to 1875 it is likely that such an estimate would not be far off the mark. No dynasty in China ever survived such a series of uprisings as the Manchus weathered during this quarter of a century. In addition to their domestic troubles a second disastrous foreign war was brought on from 1856 to 1860 with Great Britain and France.

The dynasty was steadily disintegrating in every quarter except one, and that was in its all consuming pride, a "pride that goeth before destruction." It was due in no small measure to this case-hardened sense of superiority that two foreign wars resulted. The Chinese took the position that there was no such thing as equality between nations, that in all the world there could be no sovereign of equal dignity to the "Son of Heaven," reigning in Peking. The Manchus were not responsible for this point of view. It was as old as China and they took it over with the empire which they wrested from the Mings. The responsibility of the Manchus consisted in their not being able to support this contention successfully on the field of battle. Throughout the period of conflict with the West the Manchus were not any more uncompromising on this point than was the Chinese mandarin.

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<sup>1</sup> Bland, *Li Hung Chang*, p.4.

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In fact, indications are not wanting that several among the high Manchu officials saw the problem posed by the impact of the western nations far more clearly than did their Chinese colleagues, notably in the earlier stages of the conflict. Any dynasty that might have been on the "Dragon Throne" would have taken the same stand that the Manchus took in their dealings with the nations of the West. Any difference in the ultimate outcome would have been conditioned by the force which might have been brought to support the point of view. There was nothing fundamentally wrong with the old Chinese viewpoint. The error was in not being able gracefully to adjust their pretensions to the power they could muster. After all, there is no reason why four hundred million people should not make some of the rules covering their external relations. But only those disposing of power make the rules.

It was inevitable that any government so weakened by rebellion in its most populous and wealthy centres and humiliated by foreign powers, should suffer territorial losses. The surprising feature is that during the century under review China lost no more than it did. The first of the outlying territories to go was Khokand which stopped paying tribute in 1812. By the treaties with Russia of 1858, 1860 and 1881, China lost all the territory in the lower Ili Valley and in the vicinity of Issik Kul in Central Asia, all north of the Amur and east of the Ussuri, including the port of Vladivostok. Nepal and Siam stopped their tribute in 1882; Hunan was lost in 1885; Burma was alienated in 1886 and Korea and Formosa lost in 1894. China had been forced to open

the country for trade, missionary activity, and residence of foreigners; had been forced to grant the establishment of legations in Peking; her Customs service was in the hands of foreigners; and foreigners of all nations enjoyed extraterritorial rights throughout the empire. She had succeeded in establishing a measure of order after years of rebellion but she suffered humiliating defeats by Great Britain, by Great Britain and France, by France and by Japan. That the Manchus still remained the ruling dynasty was due to certain support from European powers and to the loyalty of the Chinese mandarinates. Rebellion was again brewing with the close of the century and within a few years the Ta Ch'ing dynasty of the Manchus had completely exhausted the "Mandate of Heaven" and passed from the scene.

### *B. The Government<sup>1</sup>*

The Chinese Empire under the Ta Ch'ing dynasty was an autocracy. At the head of the state was the Emperor, absolute in theory in every aspect of government. He was the supreme law-giver, judge and executive. He was the source of all honours and offices and in a certain sense the Supreme Pontiff. As the "Son of Heaven," ruling by divine right, he was without a peer on the face of the earth. His personal name could never be mentioned from the day of his accession to the throne. Instead he selected a reign title which was used to designate the years of his reign. It thus became something

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<sup>1</sup> This section is based on Mayer, *The Chinese Government*, and Morse, *The Trade and Administration of China*.

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of a chronological reference point. For instance, the year A.D. 1835 was, and is, to the Chinese the 15th year of Tao Kuang; and the year A.D. 1492 is the 5th year of the Great Ming Emperor, Hung Che. After the death of the Emperor he was canonized and given another name. The succession to the throne was, according to strict Chinese theory, not hereditary. The Emperor as the "Son of Heaven," and speaking with the authority of Heaven, was supposed to designate "the worthiest" as his successor. This appointment was supposed to be the last act of the Emperor on earth. In practice it followed that he designated his son, or, in case he had no son, a prince of the blood. However, the prince so designated was seldom the eldest son. Though it was orthodox Chinese theory that the Emperor ruled by divine right, it was just as orthodox theory that the tenure of a dynasty depended on conforming to the "Mandates of Heaven," and when an Emperor failed to so conform the Mandate was considered to be exhausted and was bestowed on someone else. No family was considered to have a divine right to rule the "Middle Kingdom" forever.

Except in the case of able and strong minded sovereigns like Yung Lo of the Ming dynasty, K'ang Hsi and Ch'ien Lung of the Ch'ing dynasty, the throne rarely took the initiative in the conduct of affairs. It acted rather as a reviewer of the acts of the provincial administrators, approving or rejecting, and influencing the course of events by the power of the veto, recall and appointment of officials. The functions of this autocracy were exercised through a bureaucracy that was the most carefully graded and minutely organized institution of its kind yet produced

in any country. It functioned with a degree of restraint from above that depended in large measure on the personality of the Emperor, while below it had little actual power to coerce the people as a whole. Morse says: "Autocracy and bureaucracy together govern by oriental methods a people which, as manifested in the life of the guild and the village, has the essentials of a democracy." Thus the Emperor in theory held absolute powers; in actual practice the range of his absolutism was exceedingly limited.

The administration of the Central Government was divided among a number of divisions and sub-divisions, the principal ones being:

*The Council of State*, which was in effect the Privy Council of the Emperor. There was no specified number of members but it rarely exceeded five, assisted by a staff of sixty secretaries. All the members were Ministers holding other high posts in the government. They met with the Emperor daily from 4 to 6 a.m.

*The Grand Secretariat* under the Mings was the highest council of state but under the Manchus it became a council with nominal functions. The membership was limited to six, four Grand Secretaries and two Assistant Grand Secretaries divided equally between Manchus and Chinese. To be a Grand Secretary was the highest distinction conferred on Chinese officials. It was generally conferred on particularly distinguished Viceroys and Imperial Commissioners and was more of an honorary title than a substantive post.

*The Six Boards*, the main administrative departments of the government, were as follows:

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*Board of Civil Office:* had to do with all appointments of civil officials throughout the Empire from District Magistrates up.

*Board of Revenue:* controlled the receipt and expenditure of all revenue or tribute for the throne or under the control of the central government.

*Board of Ceremonies:* made all arrangements for the various ceremonies in which the Emperor participated and all high functions of state.

*Board of War:* had the control, through the viceroys and governors, of the provincial military forces and the courier service. This Board had no jurisdiction over the Manchu military organization.

*Board of Punishments:* had jurisdiction over criminal cases and over officials charged with inefficiency or inattention to duty.

*Board of Works:* had charge of the construction and repair of public buildings throughout the empire, but had nothing to do with major conservancy projects, roads or bridges.

In 1860 the Tsungli Yamen was established to handle foreign affairs but did not have the status of a board. It functioned as a sort of committee of high officials of the government holding other substantive appointments. Frequently several members of the Grand Council were concurrently members of this yamen.

*The Mongolian Superintendency:* handled relations with Mongolia, Tibet and, until 1858, Russian affairs.

*The Censorate:* this was a department of government that exercised great power in China. It consisted of a group of high officials whose sole duty was to criticise

others and offer suggestions. All viceroys were ex-officio members of the Censorate, with the title of Associate-President, while provincial governors were junior Vice-Presidents. The Supervising Censors were charged with looking after the boards and other metropolitan bureaus, while the Censors, some fifty-six in number, were assigned to the task of supervision over the officials in the provinces. They were supposed to be privileged and could criticise even the Emperor without fear. In practice, however, not a few Censors lost their heads as a result of injudicious criticism.

*The College of Literature or Han-lin College:* made up of the most distinguished scholars in the empire, was charged with the supervision of education throughout China, and with the custody and preparation of the historical archives of the dynasty.

For administrative purposes the empire was divided into eighteen provincial governments in China proper; the three eastern provinces of Manchuria, organized more on the basis of a military government; and the subject territories of Mongolia, Tibet and Sinkiang. In various parts of the empire there were aboriginal tribes, particularly in the southwestern provinces of Yunnan, Szechuan, Kweichow and Kwangsi, that were governed under special regulations. The provinces were divided into Fu, or Prefectures; T'ing, or Sub-Prefectures; Chih-li Chou, or Independent Departments; Chou, or Departments subject to a Fu; and the Hsien, or District, subject to a Fu or a Chih-li Chou. From two to six Hsien, or Districts, made a Fu, or Prefecture; and two or more Prefectures were grouped together to make a Circuit. The T'ing

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and Chou were a superior kind of Hsien, and the Chih-li Chou was an inferior kind of Fu but not subordinated to a Fu. The Metropolitan province of Chihli and the province of Szechuan had no governor, but instead an official called Chiht'ai, or Tsungtu, properly translated as Governor-General, but generally styled "Viceroy". All the other provinces had governors. The provinces of Shansi, Honan and Shantung, bordering on the province of Chihli, were not subject to a Viceroy. The other provinces were grouped under Viceroys as follows:

Kiangsu, Anhui and Kiangsu . . . . .	Viceroy of Liang-Kiang.
Shensi and Kansu . . . . .	Viceroy of Shen-Kan.
Fukien and Chekiang . . . . .	Viceroy of Min-Che.
Hupeh and Hunan . . . . .	Viceroy of Hu-Kwang.
Kwangtung and Kwangsi . . . . .	Viceroy of Liang-Kwang.
Yunnan and Kweichow . . . . .	Viceroy of Yun-Kwei.

The highest ranking civil official of the provincial administration was the Governor-General or Viceroy. He was *ex-officio* an Associate President of the Court of Censors and *ex-officio* held the title of President of the Board of War. Although he was primarily a civil official he had control over all troops within his jurisdiction except the Manchu garrisons. The Governor of a province was regarded more as an associate than a subordinate of the Viceroy and he was charged with the general routine administration of the province. Below the Governor, in order of precedence, were: Finance Commissioner or Treasurer, with some of the functions of a Lieutenant-Governor; and the Provincial Judge. In some provinces there was a Salt Comptroller, charged with the collection of the salt taxes; and a Grain Intendant who controlled

the collection of grain-tribute. These four officials, or as many of them as were stationed in a province, formed the Provincial Government Council, and during the Taiping Rebellion came to be known as the Supreme Military Board of the province.

The Tao'ti, commonly called the Intendant of Circuit, had administrative control over two or more Prefectures and was also in command of such military forces as were stationed in his territory except the Manchu troops. In a general way he was the intermediary of communication between the provincial authorities and the Prefectural officials. The head of the Fu, or Prefecture, is commonly translated as "Prefect." He was the channel of communication between the Districts and the Intendant of Circuit, and as a court of appeal from the District Court. The functions of the head of a Chih-li Chou were similar to that of the Fu, or Prefecture, and those of the Chou to the District, or Hsien.

The basic unit in this governmental scheme was the Hsien or District. It was the civic, judicial and fiscal unit of Chinese life. Williams in "The Middle Kingdom" gives the number of Hsien in the eighteen provinces as 1,285, which may be taken as the number during the period of the Taiping Rebellion. The seat of government of a Hsien was always a walled town and the name of the town and of the Hsien were the same. "In it every Chinese subject is inscribed, and this inscription he does not willingly forfeit or abandon, no matter to what part of the empire or of the outer world his vocation may call him. Here is his ancestral temple if he is of the gentry, his ancestral home in any case; here he will return,

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if permitted, in the evening of his life, and here will his bones be sent should he die abroad; and during the whole of his life he is identified with his Hsien."<sup>1</sup>

The highest official of a Hsien is usually translated as "District Magistrate," a term that does not convey a full idea of his many functions. The District Magistrate was an unusually important personage, combining in one official the duties of Mayor, Judge, Prosecutor, Sheriff, Treasurer, Assessor, Chief of Police, Tax Collector, Famine Commissioner, Coroner and Guardian of the Public Morals. He was popularly called "The Father and Mother of the People." Under the District Magistrate was a large staff of secretaries, treasurers, collectors, constables, runners, jailers and hangers-on. He might delegate to subordinates various functions but he remained personally responsible for every act of government within his district. The salary of a District Magistrate was from one hundred to three hundred taels a year with an allowance of several times that sum "for the encouragement of integrity among officials."

All officials from District Magistrate up to the highest in the empire were appointed by the throne. Under the Manchu regime no official could serve in his native province and the tenure of office, except for viceroys and governors, was limited to three years in any one place. Occasionally an official might get an extension of three years in a post but such was not the rule. The Manchus did not want officials to take root in a given locality or form cliques that might be dangerous to the throne, so

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<sup>1</sup> Morse, *International Relations of the Chinese Empire*, Vol. I, p.17.

they were continually shifted. As a consequence of the extraordinary disruption of the Taiping Rebellion a great many rules lapsed and a situation developed that the early Manchus had guarded against with much care. Parties arose in the mandariate, so that there was the Hunan party of Tseng Kuofan and Tso Tsungt'ang and the Anhui party of Li Hungchang. The greater part of the officials throughout the empire ranged themselves in one or the other of these groups. The fears that such parties might endanger the throne were not justified in this case. On the contrary the leaders of these two cliques were the mainstay of the throne through many of its darkest years.

All officials in the empire were selected from successful graduates of the state examinations. Such at least was the theory. Actually, the government was so pressed for funds from the last years of Chia Ch'ing onward that it resorted to the sale of offices, titles and degrees, to such an extent that the time-honoured system of entering the official world as a reward for scholarship was more honoured in the breach than in the observance. There were always many more graduates than there were posts to be filled and there arose a class called "expectant officials" or those qualified for appointment but obliged to wait for a vacancy. Many of these men hung around the various yamens and some held positions of great influence in extra-official posts under the responsible officials. In this way the provincial officials and even the District Magistrates were able to dispense a certain amount of patronage. Not infrequently it was from such extra-official service that they stepped to substantive

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appointments. It was thus that Tso Tsungt'ang got his first appointment after several years' service on the personal staff of the Governor of Hunan.

The Chinese Mandarinate was not a big organization. Those who might be termed "commissioned" civil officers numbered scarcely two thousand in the whole empire.<sup>1</sup> Estimates of expectant officials were about five for each post, so that even with ten thousand expectant officials, most of whom had some sort of unofficial post about the yamens, the total would only be 12,000 for the empire. Certainly a small number for the government of an empire of more than 400,000,000 souls. But Chinese officials had power. In no country in the world was so much power lodged in the hands of a group of officers comparable to the 1,300 Hsien or District Magistrates of China. Their authority was almost unlimited, yet hedged about with such minute rules, regulations and precedents that a District Magistrate had to be extremely careful. The greatest stress was placed on method, and a magistrate might easily get into the gravest difficulties for "abuse of authority" which on analysis was usually faulty technique rather than exceeding the law.

For the guidance of officials throughout the realm there were the most minute and comprehensive regulations covering every conceivable administrative act. Much weight was given to precedent and in the long course of Chinese history there was an accumulation of precedents that covered every imaginable situation, at least until the 19th century. The administrative system was worked

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<sup>1</sup> Parker, *China Past and Present*, p.74.

out with such infinite pains that the functions of the Central Government came to be almost wholly negative. Initiative was left almost entirely with the provincial governments but they were discouraged from displaying too much of it. When a situation arose for which the elaborate system made no provision, as the advent of foreigners demanding rights and privileges under a theory of international law which the Chinese had left out of their reckoning entirely, the Central Government used every means that could be thought of to avoid meeting the issue, and throughout the greater part of the 19th century tried to leave the international relations of the empire in the hands of provincial officials. That they came to grief was not so much the fault of the system as the decay in the quality of the officials who were working the system. The system was adequate for a group of strong minded men like K'ang Hsi and Ch'ien Lung to weld China into the mightiest empire of the age, just as it seemed to be the ideal system for a succession of weak and incompetent rulers to bring that same empire to dissolution. "The everlasting law of the sequence of prosperity and decay" defies all systems yet devised.

### *C. The Examination System*

In order to follow the career of a Chinese statesman or soldier with a fair degree of appreciation a certain amount of consideration should be given to the system of examination that was the gateway to the bureaucracy of China. It was an institution that fittingly illustrates a phase of the genius of the Chinese in the field of government. From the most ancient times the Chinese have venerated

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scholarly men and they recognized very early the principle that scholars were the men best fitted for the business of government. After many generations of observations and experience in government they came to adopt the theory of government expounded by the Confucian School as the one best suited to the genius of the race—a judgment justified by the fact that for more than twenty centuries the most thoughtful and talented men produced by a gifted people found it good and sufficient to meet the changing circumstances of the nation through a long and colourful history. This theory glorified the scholar and made government the highest end of scholarship. Thus there arose a scholar class which became the aristocracy of China—the governing class, the bureaucracy. Education became highly systematized and devoted to one major end, the training of officials. The very heart of this education was the writings and sayings of Confucius as explained, and to a considerable extent modified by certain commentators from Mencius (372-319 B.C.), his greatest disciple, down to Chu Hsi (A.D. 1130-1200). The system of public, competitive examination was designed to select the best talent from those educated in the principles and precepts of Confucius for entry into the ranks of officialdom.

The selection of officials by means of competitive literary examinations, is very old in China. It was used under the Han dynasty and probably earlier. The Emperor Yang Ti of the Sui dynasty, about A.D. 600, seems to have been the one to organize the system into the form that persisted without any radical changes until near the end of the 19th century. To compete success-

fully in these examinations the candidate had to be letter perfect in Confucian theory. There were no "systems," short cuts or easy methods of acquiring an education under the Chinese plan. The course of study was thoroughly standardized and after A.D. 1200, the basic Confucian texts suffered no change. There was no change in textbooks for close on 700 years.

An aspirant for official position was first examined in his native hsien under the supervision of the District Magistrate. The examination was free and open to all. As in all subsequent examinations, there was no limit to the number of times a man could take the examination and no age limit. Those qualifying in the preliminary examination were eligible for the next elimination, held in the Prefecture or Fu. Every two years the Literary Chancellor of the Province made the rounds of the prefectural cities holding examinations for those candidates who had successfully passed the district and the preliminary prefectural examination. This was the first real hurdle on the road to officialdom and those who passed with a high enough mark to bring them within the quota allowed for the Prefecture were given the degree or title of *hsiu ts'ai*, which has been translated, largely on the basis of analogy, as Bachelor of Arts. This degree did not render the holder eligible for office but it gave him status in the community, immunity from corporal punishment, and the right to compete in the provincial examination for the next higher degree.

The provincial examination was held in the capitals of all the provinces simultaneously, under the supervision of special examiners appointed from Peking. It was held

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every three years with special examinations decreed by the Emperor to mark particularly auspicious occasions, such as the birth of a prince, particular birthdays of the sovereign, great victories, etc. This examination was a very rigorous selection, as the number of graduates was limited from 70 to 80 to a province and not infrequently it happened that as many as 8,000 would take the examination in the more populous provinces. The successful candidates were given the title of *chu-jen*, "promoted men", which is usually rendered as Master of Arts. It was the first substantial reward for the aspiring scholar, making him eligible for appointment to office. As a matter of practice, however, few of the second degree graduates were so appointed. To be really in line for a position required the third degree.

This examination was held every three years in Peking in the spring following the provincial examinations. All persons holding the second degree were eligible to compete but the number of degrees given was usually restricted to between 350 and 400. They were called *chin shih*, "entered scholars", or Doctors. The doctors were later given another examination called the Palace Examination. Those who passed this test were made members of the Han-lin Academy and entered at once on the government pay-roll. Within the Han-lin there were several grades, all reached by examination. The doctors were entered on the list of "expectant officials" and generally received appointment to some post in due time. There were always many more candidates eligible for appointment than there were posts to fill and the resulting competition was keen and disappointments many.

## Tso Tsungt'ang

During the period of decline of the empire and particularly during the difficult years of rebellion, the sale of degrees and offices seriously impaired the functioning of the system. Williams says that a Bachelor's degree could be purchased in Canton at one period for \$8,000. Since it did not make the holder eligible for office, it is some indication of the value placed on the prestige and status conferred by the possession of this degree. He also states that a certain Cantonese in 1831 was given a Master's degree for contributing \$50,000 for the repair of dykes near the city; and that many years later another Cantonese was given the rank and title of "Director of the Salt Monopoly" for contributing 100,000 taels (about U.S. \$75,000) to Tso Tsungt'ang's campaign in Turkestan. There were times when degrees and titles could be purchased much more cheaply than the above figures, but they give a general idea of the value Chinese placed on titles, mainly because official title was in itself a hall-mark of scholarship.

Such abuses, however, would hardly justify criticism of the soundness of the system as a means of selecting government officials. That the last five dynasties to rule China used it with few essential changes as the foundation of the bureaucracy which ruled the nation for some thirteen hundred years, is striking evidence for the soundness of the theory. Though in nearly every case the founder of a new dynasty was inclined at first to do away with the scholar class of officials, it soon became apparent that such a class was the safest insurance for the continuation of the dynasty that could be devised and the scholars were restored to favour, together with the literary examinations

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for their selection. The cornerstone of Confucian teaching was loyalty to the sovereign and though the history of China is full of rebellions, the bureaucracy has never been conspicuous for participation in them.

Not a little has been written about the so-called "right of rebellion" in China. Essentially it is just the same as in any country in the world. The right to rebel is recognized only when rebellion is successful. Success sanctifies rebellion the world over and failure stigmatizes it as treason, in China as elsewhere. The fact that the Chinese system made no provision for a popular referendum by voting as it is thought of in the West, and that only by violence could they register a "protest vote," did not mean that such violence was justified. In fact under pure Confucianism violence was never justified in theory. Confucianism recognized the contingency of "Heaven withdrawing its Mandate" from a ruler, but provided no technique for determining his successor. Heaven's pleasure only became manifested in China when some warrior untutored in the lore of Confucius established his claim to the throne by force of arms. It seems a strange coincidence that Heaven manifested its displeasure by withdrawing its mandate when military power was at its lowest ebb and in every instance bestowing it on a successful soldier. The literary aristocracy looked with supreme contempt on the profession of arms. However, when a warrior was able to make the Will of Heaven articulate with his sword, they were ready to give him their allegiance and at once set about emasculating the power that had founded the dynasty. There seems to be some degree of correlation between a strong military and

prosperity, and between the supremacy of the bureaucracy and decay.

*D. Currency, Revenue and Expenditure*

Nothing is more peculiar in China than the currency system. If today it is difficult for a westerner to comprehend, it was infinitely more so one hundred years ago. It is only just to state, however, that those features that made financial transactions so exasperating to foreigners were not so to the Chinese, who were thoroughly accustomed to the system. In fact it is evident that they liked it, finding in the system those attractions inherent in puzzles. The system of taxation and expenditure of government funds was even more unusual than the currency. The Chinese were thoroughly accustomed to this system and probably understood it but it is evident that they did not like it. One thing is certain, it seriously militated against the mobilization of the force requisite to suppress rebellion to say nothing of other uses that could have been made of properly armed and equipped forces during the 19th century. Throughout the long drawn-out struggle with the Taipings and with the Mohammedan rebels one of the most critical problems was money. The generals in the field were up against it for money from the beginning to the end, and in order to make clearer the conditions under which they laboured, a brief review is here given of the system used to finance the Chinese Empire.

With a few insignificant exceptions, China, down to near the end of the 19th century, never had a government coin of any other metal than copper. Insofar as coinage

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was concerned, China was on the copper standard. The coin was commonly called, among foreigners, the "copper cash". Its theoretical value, handed down from a distant past, was 1/1,000 of a *liang*, or ounce of silver. It was the currency of the people and all transactions among the common people were in copper cash. Larger values were thought of in terms of "strings of cash", a "string of cash" being 1,000 cash, a few cash being deducted for the string and the trouble of stringing. The actual exchange value of the cash was variable, varying as to time and place. For government and all big business of the country, the currency was not a coin but a weight, the *liang* or ounce of silver, called by foreigners the "tael". However, there was no standard of weights and measures that prevailed throughout China. Every one of the many commercial cities in the country had its own standard tael and in many places there were a dozen or more standards. Not only was there a variation in the weight of the tael but there was a variation in the degree of fineness of the silver. There were certain taels that had a wider currency than others, such as the Kuping tael, standard of the Board of Revenue; the Tsaoping tael, or tribute tael, used in commuting tribute; the Haikwan tael, after 1860, the standard of the Maritime Customs; and the Shanghai tael. The value of these taels was as follows: 100 Haikwan taels equals 101.642 Kuping taels, equals 103.38 Tsaoping taels, equals 111.40 Shanghai taels. The value of the tael in foreign currency depended on the price of silver but for a rough approximation the Haikwan tael was equal to about U.S. \$0.70. The Chinese government did not issue any paper money during the period under

review except a little during the reign of Hsien Feng (1851-1861). No attempt was made by the government to standardize either the weight or the fineness of the silver used in the empire. The usual form in which silver circulated was in bars or in sycee or "shoes", weighing from 10 to 50 ounces. In all transactions the silver was weighed and reduced to the tael current in the locality or specified by contract. The government and big firms had two sets of scales, one for paying out and one for receiving, and they paid a slightly lighter weight than they would receive.

The sources of revenue were the following: Land Tax; Customs, Native and Foreign; Salt; Likin; and Miscellaneous. Of these the land tax was the main source of revenue for the Imperial Government at the beginning of the 19th century, and provided probably two thirds of the cash receipts of the Imperial Treasury. An assessment was made in 1713 by the Emperor K'ang Hsi, who decreed that the tax paid for that year was to be the fixed rate forever. This rate was very substantially increased however, to several times K'ang Hsi's tax by a very ingenious system of fees for accretions, cost of collection, and fixing an arbitrary exchange rate between the tael and copper cash that bore no relation to the current exchange rate. The basic assessment was that of 1713 but the amount actually paid was three or four times the assessed rate. The returns made to the Imperial Treasury, less authorized deductions, were made on the basis of the 1713 rate. The amount assessed seems to have been apportioned to the provinces arbitrarily since Shansi, one of the poorest provinces agriculturally, was

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number one on the land tax list while Kwangtung, a particularly rich province, was rated number ten. The total amount of land tax returned to the Treasury is given by Morse as Tls. 25,887,000, and he estimates that the amount paid by the taxpayers was four times that amount.

*Tribute* was a form of taxation levied on the produce of the country and the principal item was grain. Other items were copper, silk, timber, wax, fruits, ginseng and porcelain. The amount so collected was hard to determine but is estimated by Morse at Tls. 7,420,000.

*Customs:* Dues were levied on the export and import trade with foreign countries as well as on native products shipped from one port to another within the empire. There were also land stations on the frontier and at some of the larger cities, particularly Peking, where all goods entering the city paid a tax. Prior to 1841 all sea-borne foreign trade was confined to the port of Canton. The main land station was at Kiahkta, through which the Russian trade passed. By the treaty of 1842 with Great Britain four other ports were opened to foreign trade and this number was enlarged in various treaties during the century. During the general dislocation consequent on the Taiping Rebellion the foreign consular officials in certain ports collected the customs dues on behalf of the Chinese Government, a system that later on, in order to meet the requirements of the indemnities exacted by the British and French in 1860, led to the establishment of the Chinese Maritime Customs. The Maritime Customs was administered by foreigners in the service of the Chinese Government but not wholly subject to Chinese

jurisdiction and collected all import and export tariffs at the treaty ports. Thus arose the distinction between Native and Foreign Customs, the Native Customs collecting the duties at the non-treaty ports and the interior river stations and the Foreign Customs making the collections in the treaty ports. The Maritime Customs gradually became a major source of revenue, although prior to its organization customs dues made no great contribution to the Imperial revenues.

*Salt:* The salt tax is one of the oldest taxes in China. It is a form of taxation that readily lends itself to abuse and full advantage has been taken of the opportunity during more than one period of Chinese history. The sources of salt were: Sea Salt from the coast; Lake Salt from saline lakes and marshes in the interior; and Well Salt from the salt wells of Yunnan and Szechuan. Morse says: "The greatest obscurity covers the revenue from the salt gabelle, owing to the mixture of the official and mercantile elements in its collection. Salt is everywhere under the strictest government control and is taxed at every stage—in its manufacture, purchase at the vats, transport, sale at the depot, and sale to the people."<sup>1</sup>

*Likin:* This was a tax first instituted in the Yangtze Valley in 1853 as a means of raising money to carry on the war against the Taipings. By 1861 it was in force in every province under control of the Imperial forces. Originally it was a tax of one-tenth of one per cent on inter-provincial trade. This rate was gradually and arbitrarily raised, varying widely in different provinces,

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<sup>1</sup> Morse, *The Trade and Administration of China*, p.100.

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and within the same province it became in some cases almost a tax on trade from one district to another. The province of Hunan kept to the original principle in that goods which had once paid the likin were exempt from further likin charges within the province. In other provinces stations became so numerous as to impose the greatest restrictions upon trade. Few taxes have been more abused than the likin.

*Miscellaneous Taxes:* The principal ones of a general nature as distinct from local levies were: Reed tax, tea licence, mining royalties, fees for registering titles, pawn-brokers and other mercantile licences.

Chinese revenues and expenditures under the empire are matters very difficult to determine with any degree of exactitude. The system of collecting, disbursing, and accountability were such that it is unlikely that the Emperor, Board of Revenue, or anyone else in the government had more than the haziest idea of the relation the amount paid by the tax-payers bore to the amount returned to the government. Taxes were not paid into a central treasury and by that treasury disbursed to the various agencies of the government. Instead the collecting agencies generally made the disbursements to the government agencies. Aside from the Salt, Grain Tribute and Customs, the taxes were collected by the District Magistrates, who made their returns to the Provincial Treasurers. In ordinary times the revenue varied little from year to year and the amount disposable was known in Peking. In the late autumn a schedule of expenditures for the coming year was made up. It usually took the form of directing the Provincial Governments, Salt and

Grain Intendants to remit from certain funds specified amounts to designated governmental agencies, for a particular purpose. The money did not pass through the Treasury at all, but was remitted direct to the agency designated. Some of the poorer provinces sent nothing in the way of revenue out of the province but received "grants in aid" from the richer provinces. The transfer of funds was subject to many charges in the way of exchange, discounts and cuts. Pertinent to this study as showing how General Tso Tsungt'ang got money for campaigning in Kansu is the example given by Morse of "an ordinary everyday incident of revenue collected in Kiangsu and remitted as a grant-in-aid to Kansu. The tax note will be in Treasury taels; it will be paid in local taels; the proceeds converted into Tsaoping taels for remittance to Shanghai, where it is converted into Shanghai taels; again converted into Tsaoping taels for remittance to Kansu (assuming that it is remitted by draft), where it is received in local taels; these are converted into Treasury taels for accounting with Kiangsu, and back again into local taels for deposit in a bank, and again into Treasury taels for accounting with the Imperial Treasury, and again into local taels or into cash for disbursement. This is no burlesque, but an exact account of what happens, and we have a series of nine exchange transactions, each of which will yield a profit of at least a quarter of one per cent on the turnover, apart from the rate of exchange on actual transfer from place to place, and altogether outside any question of 'squeezing' the tax-payer. Moreover . . . regularly in the past and frequently in the present, the remittance is made by

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actually sending the silver from Kiangsu to Kansu, not reducing the exchange operations noted above by a single step, but adding enormously to the cost by the expense of transport and escort for a journey which must be counted by months and not by days.”<sup>1</sup>

As an indication of the Imperial revenues and expenditures the following figures taken from Parker’s study give an approximation of the annual amounts during the last decade of the 19th century.

<i>Receipts</i>	<i>Tls.</i>	<i>Tls.</i>
Land Tax . . . . .	25,887,000	
Tribute, grain . . . . .	7,420,000	
Customs, Native . . . . .	3,360,000	
„ Foreign . . . . .	21,482,000	
Salt . . . . .	12,600,000	
Likin . . . . .	11,930,000	
Native Opium . . . . .	1,960,000	
Miscellaneous . . . . .	3,856,000	88,495,000
	<hr/>	
<i>Expenditures</i>		
Remittance to Peking in cash . . . . .	7,790,000	
Tribute to Peking . . . . .	4,080,000	
Privy Purse . . . . .	1,341,000	
Cost of shipping grain to Peking . . . . .	1,700,000	
Northeast Frontier Defence . . . . .	1,755,000	
Northwest     „     „ . . . . .	3,660,000	
Peking, Civil and Military pay . . . . .	1,572,000	
Peking, Special defence . . . . .	2,270,000	
Navy . . . . .	1,450,000	
Railway Fund . . . . .	550,000	
Army . . . . .	25,200,000	
Arsenals . . . . .	3,385,000	
Yellow River . . . . .	1,389,000	
Foreign Customs expenses . . . . .	2,147,600	
Provincial Administration . . . . .	34,042,000	
Aids to Poor Provinces . . . . .	4,745,000	97,076,600
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<sup>1</sup> Morse, *The Trade and Administration of China*, pp.83-84.

The outgo exceeds the income according to the above tables but it is probable that had the actuality been no more than shown above in any year after 1850, the Imperial Government would have been exceedingly pleased. Parker says of these estimates that they were prepared "with care from the accounts furnished the Emperor by his viceroys within the past twenty years . . . it is notably defective in that the figures of each item for one and the same year are rarely obtainable."<sup>1</sup> Approximate as these figures are it is believed that for any year prior to the first foreign war (1839-42) the totals would represent a liberal estimate of the revenue and expenditures of the Imperial Government, or that came under the purview of the Central Authorities. It is manifest that the revenue shown above is far out of line with the amount paid by the tax-payer but again quoting Mr. Parker: "In spite of her corruption, the population, even allowing 300 per cent on collected revenue for roguery and squeezes . . . has never paid 3 shillings a head in taxation, including local charges, against £3 a head in Western Europe."<sup>2</sup>

Generally speaking, government under the Manchus rested rather lightly on the Chinese. The greater part of the civil officials were Chinese, and where there was no violent disorder and the taxes were paid with reasonable regularity, the great mass of the Chinese were hardly aware of the Manchu in their midst. Considering the extent, population and wealth of the empire, the palace expenses of the Imperial family or families, were modest

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<sup>1</sup> Parker, *China Past and Present*, p.33.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p.63.

compared with the usual expenses of royalty. Even the incubus of 250,000 Manchu families of Bannermen, supported in idleness, but not in extravagance, was more annoying and irritating to the Chinese than costly. However, the positive, energizing functions of a Central Government to all intents and purposes ceased with the passing of the great Ch'ien Lung. Thereafter, with the exception of certain appropriations for Yellow River Conservancy, the Central Government largely abandoned its functions as such. The empire became a group of semi-autonomous provinces, each province providing largely for itself and each district within the province likewise. Thus the power of political cohesion was almost wholly lost, internal stresses arose that dissipated such power as the dynasty had left and foreign pressure did the rest. The dynasty that gave China more than one hundred and fifty years of greatness, brought the nation in the course of another hundred years to the utmost impotence and disunity. Not by oppression did the Manchus exhaust their tenure on the "Mandate of Heaven" but by the commonest of all processes in human affairs, senile decay.

### *E. The Army*

The military system prevailing in the Chinese Empire at the time the Taiping Rebellion arose, was essentially the creation of the great Emperor K'ang Hsi (1655-1723). It was an admirable system for the purpose in view, functioning smoothly under such men as K'ang Hsi and his grandson Ch'ien Lung. By 1850, however, it was not unlike a delicately contrived clock that lacks a mainspring and some other minor but necessary

components. It was designed for the prime purpose of dynastic security, to prevent combinations on the part of officials in the provinces. It was meant to respond only to the will of the Emperor. Moreover, it was designed as a defensive army and while both K'ang Hsi and Ch'ien Lung used it successfully as an offensive instrument, they were not ordinary men. After Ch'ien Lung the army became static, no new equipment was added or introduced, training and discipline disappeared and the martial spirit was not fostered. When a real crisis arose, first in 1839 with a foreign foe, and again in 1850 with a domestic one, the nation was protected by some 18 Chinese armies and numerous Manchu armies, none of them being able to justify their existence. The only recognizable feature remaining of the work of K'ang Hsi was the complete lack of power to combine. He had succeeded in a way he doubtless never dreamed, for not only had the Chinese army lost the power of combination but the Manchu army was just as bad if not worse.

There were two distinct armies in the military organization of the empire: the Manchu Army, organized into Banners and so commonly called the "Bannermen", which was the backbone of the military power of the empire; and the "Army of the Green Standard", an all-Chinese army. The Manchu Army was essentially the creation of Nurhachu (1559-1626), founder of the Ta Ch'ing Dynasty. After the successors of Nurhachu consolidated their position in China, recognizing the hopeless disparity of their numbers compared with the Chinese, they determined to preserve their dominant position by making the Manchus a military caste, supported by the state, required

## A GENERAL SURVEY

only to render military service, and discouraged from inter-marrying or entering into economic competition with the Chinese. While not all were on active service, all males of military age were considered available for active service when needed. This meant that the Manchus had nothing else to do, and the system bred all the spirit out of this proud and warlike people. When the great crisis came and the fate of the throne was imperilled it was found that the tenure of the dynasty rested not at all on the military power of the Bannermen, but on a moral force that antedated Nurhachu by nearly two thousand years, a force articulate in a far different institution,—the Chinese literary bureaucracy.

The policy of the Manchus was to concentrate the Bannermen in the general vicinity of Peking, small units being distributed throughout the empire. In China proper these detachments in the provinces were not numerous but were distributed at strategic points as a force in observation. About 1825 their numbers and distribution were as follows:<sup>1</sup>

<i>Location</i>	<i>Officers and men</i>	<i>Reserves, etc.</i>	<i>Total</i>
Peking Area	139,412	34,232	173,644
Other provinces	50,892	9,099	59,991
Manchuria	42,436	2,706	45,142
Turkestan	13,865	632	14,497
Total	246,605	46,669	293,274

Roughly three-fifths of the Bannermen were stationed in the metropolitan province of Chihli and one-fifth in the other provinces. There was a garrison in all places

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<sup>1</sup> Totals and distribution taken from Hail, *Tseng Kuo-fan and The Taiping Rebellion*, p.3.

where a viceroy was stationed except Yunnan-Kweichow. There was no Manchu garrison in Kwangsi, Hunan, Kiangsi, or Anhui. Garrisons were maintained at certain points along the Yangtze, the Grand Canal, and along the coast. The Tartar general at the seat of a viceroyalty out-ranked the viceroy and was directly responsible to Peking, but he had no functions other than military, and then only over the Manchu Bannermen.

The Chinese Army, or "Army of the Green Standard", was a volunteer force officered by both Chinese and Manchus, the Chinese predominating, and it was distributed throughout the eighteen provinces. In a sense it was a national army in that it came under the general supervision of the Board of War in Peking, but in effect it was eighteen provincial armies. In each province it was paid from the provincial treasury and was considered in every way independent from the army in every other province. The general in command in each province was called a "t'itu" and he was equal in rank to the governor but was subordinate to a viceroy where there was one. Thus there was a division of authority between the viceroy and Tartar general, and between the governor and "t'itu" that was considered to militate against any anti-dynastic combinations among the high officials. The governors did have a degree of control over the "t'itu" since they furnished the money for the army. In actual command the viceroys and governors exercised direct control only over their guards which seldom exceeded 5,000 men. The Chinese Army was distributed throughout the province, almost every hsien having a few. Under the "t'itu" or general, were officers called "tsungping", or

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major general, with rank corresponding to the intendants of circuit. It worked out that the army was more analogous to a police force than to a military organization. It could be of some use in minor affairs but in an insurrection it was practically worthless.

The number and distribution of the Chinese Army in 1850 was as follows:<sup>1</sup>

<i>Province</i>	<i>Divisions</i>	<i>Stations</i>	<i>Cavalry</i>	<i>Infantry</i>	<i>Garrison</i>	<i>Total</i>
Chihli	10	138	12,829	12,049	24,311	49,108
Shansi	3	53	4,496	7,469	13,668	25,633
Shantung	5	41	3,572	2,087	19,217	24,876
Honan	3	35	2,563	————	11,033	13,596
Kiangsu	8					
Anhui	2	89	4,126	10,433	31,251	45,810
Kiangsi	3	38	982	2,010	7,787	10,779
Chekiang	7	62	2,196	10,791	23,572	36,739
Fukien	11	78	3,786	24,869	32,780	61,435
Kwangtung	11	95	2,183	22,108	42,616	66,907
Kwangsi	4	47	1,505	8,222	12,805	22,532
Szechuan	7	79	4,036	11,511	18,289	33,836
Hupeh	5	42	2,572	5,218	14,262	22,052
Hunan	4	53	2,262	7,065	16,477	25,804
Shensi	7	92	12,390	17,589	12,085	42,065
Kansu	9	116	22,493	23,358	10,829	56,680
Yunnan	9	53	2,538	17,229	15,477	35,244
Kweichow	6	67	2,571	12,807	29,765	45,143
Total	114	1,178	87,100	194,815	336,404	618,319

Such was the strength according to the rolls, but it was notorious that the actual number of men was almost always short of the number paid for. Those serving in the smaller towns were usually local men, those in the cities were quite often men from other parts of the province and not infrequently of questionable character.

<sup>1</sup> Hail, *op. cit.*, p.11-12.

When an emergency arose it was customary to hastily recruit up to strength and even beyond the authorized number. There was little selection in the recruiting; often bandits and the worst elements were enlisted. Although barracks were provided in many places, the men lived at home and turned out on special occasions. They received practically no training, equipment was bad, and there was no such thing as morale. In the early days of the Taiping Rebellion, efforts were made to mobilize the Chinese army and bring together considerable bodies of troops. When the men were required to leave their homes they were in many instances a hopeless lot and often wept, certain that they would be killed. In the defence of the walled cities there were instances where they made a good showing, but many more where they ran away before the rebels arrived. It was found impracticable to combine units from different provinces, as they would not work together. The officers were dominated by jealousy. If one gained a success the others hated him, if one were defeated the others thought it a good joke and would hardly ever offer any assistance. There were interminable conflicts between the civil and military officials. To find a more demoralized military force when the Taipings swept through the land would have been hard indeed, unless it was the Manchu Banner-men.

By the time the Taipings reached the Yangtze the hopelessness of the military situation had been thoroughly demonstrated. The throne that had depended for support in such an emergency on the formerly invincible Banner-men, and to a less degree on the "Army of the Green

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Standard", found itself, with nearly a million men on the army rolls, absolutely helpless. Such a situation would be more understandable if the military had been disaffected and disloyal, or had been subverted by the rebels; but this was not the case. Some of the soldiers of the Chinese Army did join the rebels after they had lost even a pretense of organization and scattered over the countryside, but not so the Bannermen. The rebels killed every Manchu they found. Thus the army that under Ch'ien Lung had extended the sway of the Son of Heaven over more territory and over more people than any army in the history of China, was reduced in a little more than half a century to a state of tragic impotency.

It was at this juncture that certain Chinese civil officials stepped into the breach and raised a new army that, with little assistance from the regular establishments, saved the dynasty. The new army was called the "Hsiang Chun" or Hunan Army. Later on another force was brought into being called the "Hwai Chun" or Anhui Army, under the direction of Li Hungchang. In the "Hsiang Chun" and the "Hwai Chun" were concentrated the initial developments of a modern Chinese Army.

The Hunan Army was the creation of Tseng Kuofan. He got his inspiration from the effective work of a group of 2,000 volunteer militia under Chiang Chungyuan, in the early days of the Taiping Rebellion. Since it was the Hunan Army that carried Tso Tsungt'ang to fame, the organization and armament of this army is given in some detail.<sup>1</sup> The basic unit of the Hunan Army was

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<sup>1</sup> Data for this discussion of the Hunan Army is taken from the *Hsiang Chun Chi*, Vol. XX, pp.1-8.

## Tso TSUNGT'ANG

the *ying*, sometimes rendered as "Battalion". A *ying* was 5 officers and 500 men. The subdivisions were four *shao* or "companies", further sub-divided into *tui* or "squads"; and a bodyguard, also sub-divided into squads. The grades and number in each grade were as follows:

Ying Kuan	(Battalion Commander)	1	
Ch'in Chang	(Senior NCO, BC's Body Guard)		3
Shih Chang	(NCO, " " " " )		3
Ch'in Ping	(Battalion Commander's Body Guard)		60
Huo Yung	(Cooks " " " " )		6
Shao Kuan	(Company Commanders)	4	
Shao Chang	(Assistants to CC)		4
Hu Yung	(Orderlies, Runners, 5 per Shao)		20
Shih Chang	(NCOs, 8 per Shao)		32
Cheng Yung	(Soldiers, 84 per Shao)		336
Huo Yung	(Cooks, 9 per Shao)		36
		5	500

The *tui* or squads, generally consisted of 1 non-commissioned officer, 10 men and 1 cook. Each company consisted of one officer and 107 others, armed as follows:

### *Battalion Commander's Body Guard.*

2	Squads, armed with light mortar, 1 per squad	24 men	
1	Squad, armed with matchlocks	12 "	
3	Squads, half armed with swords, half with spears	36 "	
		72 men	

### *Companies.*

2	Squads, armed with gingals, 6 per squad, 2 men to a gingal	28 men	
2	Squads armed with matchlocks	24 "	
4	" half with swords, half with spears	48 "	
	Orderlies and cook	6 "	
	Company Commander's Assistant	1 man	
		107	

Four Companies 428 men

Total for Battalion 500 men

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The armament of a battalion thus consisted of 2 light mortars; 48 gingals; 90 matchlocks; 95 swords; and 95 spears. This was the theoretical number. Actually they were armed with whatever was available. Of all these weapons the gingal was considered the most effective by the British in the war of 1839-42. It was a blunderbuss weighing some twenty pounds and rested on a swivel in defence, on the shoulder of a man when in the field. It was charged with a handful of balls or pellets and at close range was a deadly instrument. The Taipings made heavy purchases of foreign arms some years before the government entered the market. The striking successes of the Taipings in 1857 and 1860 were largely attributed to their superior armament. In 1860 the government began buying foreign made arms and at the same time the British and French placed a ban on the sale of arms to the rebels. By 1864 every battalion of the Hunan Army had several squads armed with improved weapons. These squads were called "yang ch'iang tui" or "squads with foreign rifles".

In the Yangtze Valley during the period of the Taiping Rebellion, animal drawn or carried transport was not available. Where boats could not be used, men became the carriers for the ammunition, baggage, etc. Provision for carriers was made for each battalion as follows:

General carriers for the battalion as a whole	78
Mortar squads, 3 per squad	6
Gingal squads, 3 per squad	24
All other squads, 2 per squad	56
Company Commanders, 4 each	16
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Total Carriers for a battalion	180

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Carriers were enlisted in the same way as the combat troops and they were used to replace casualties in the ranks. There are indications that as the carriers became soldiers, they were replaced by local carriers in many instances, and these in turn became soldiers. By the end of the war there were many men serving in the Hunan Army who were not Hunanese. In fact it is quite certain that Tso Tsungt'ang enlisted many Taipings in this manner and later on when he was campaigning against the Mohammedans in Kansu and Sinkiang, hundreds of his soldiers were former Taiping rebels. A *ying* or battalion at full strength was always reckoned as 500 men but the total personnel of such a battalion was 688,—5 officers, 2 clerks, 1 judge advocate, 500 men and 180 carriers.

Above the *ying* there was no specified unit but from 2 to 10 *ying* formed the command of a "T'ung Ling", which may be rendered as "Brigadier-General". Two or more commands of a "T'ung Ling" formed the command of a "Ta Shuai", or a General, and was called a *chun* or Army. The system of recruitment was on a purely volunteer basis. A man was commissioned by the Emperor to organize an army, the number of *ying* being designated. He was then the General or "Ta Shuai". He selected from among his friends the men he wanted for brigadiers, they in turn selected the battalion commanders, and they appointed the company commanders and supervised the recruiting. Only men from among the village farmers were accepted as recruits. Ruled out were men from cities and towns and men who had ever worked around a yamen. It thus happened that a battalion was recruited

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from a few neighbouring villages and every man was known to every one else. A battalion was a very paternal organization, the battalion commander being the "father", the company commanders in the nature of "younger brothers", and the men were the "sons". Every applicant for enlistment had to be sponsored by someone in his village. They were required to be farmers, young, healthy, alert and of good report in their village. A register was kept by each battalion in which was entered every man's name, his parents' name, brothers' names and if he had a wife and children, their names also. Along with each man's name in the register was his thumb print.

The pay in the Hunan army was an all-inclusive term. The government furnished a uniform that was used in battle and on ceremonious occasions. Clothing, food, shoes, medicines, etc., were all included in the "pay". The battalion commander received 50 taels a month and an allowance of 150 taels for clerical hire, medical assistance, clothing, standards, etc. He also received the money allotted for the battalion. Reckoned on a per diem basis and for a 30 day month it was apportioned as follows:

Company commanders	9	taels
Assistants or "lieutenants"	6	"
Non-commissioned officers	4.8	"
Bodyguards	4.5	"
Soldiers	4.2	"
Cooks	3.3	"
Coolies or Carriers	3.0	"

The total allowance for a full battalion for a 30 day month was Taels 2,892.2, including the pay and allowance of the battalion commander. Pay was generally several

months in arrears. When funds were received and disbursements made for the necessary expenses, the battalion commander, though ever so honest, was obliged to hold on to any money left over, since he had no assurance when another pay-day would come. As a result the men were seldom paid, and never for a current month. A death gratuity was paid the family of a man killed in action, and for permanent disability there were certain minor benefits paid. The death gratuity of a soldier was 30 taels and it appears that whatever else was in arrears, such gratuities were always paid. Disability benefits were less certain.

An ordinary day's march was 10 to 13 miles, a forced march 20 miles. When encamped for any length of time, the camp was protected by an outer ditch, ten feet deep and eight feet wide, slightly wider at the bottom than at the top. Inside this ditch was a wall, eight feet high and ten feet wide; within this wall was another ditch, half the dimensions of the outer ditch, and another wall half the dimensions of the first one. Within the inner wall the men lived. Under ordinary circumstances the guard of the day was fifty men for a *ying*, doubled in time of danger. Watches were divided into two hour periods and the password was changed at midnight. All regular approaches to the camp were covered by obstacles. About 100 yards from the entrance to the camp a market was established where the country people and tradesmen could gather to trade with the command. Some of the regulations of the Hunan Army are not without interest. Opium was not allowed to be smoked, bought or sold near an encampment; gambling was forbidden; shouting

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and other loud noises were forbidden; women were not allowed to enter a camp and it was a capital offence to attack a woman anywhere; it was strictly forbidden for men to spread rumours or discuss supernatural phenomena; men were not allowed to hold a meeting unattended by an officer, to belong to secret societies or to follow strange religions; and the men were forbidden to wear bright or strange coloured garments.

It is said that at first Tseng Kuofan was inclined to be doubtful of the courage of these farmer soldiers, as the Chinese did not ordinarily associate martial courage with the tillers of the soil. However, they fought well and the farther away from home they were the more spirit they displayed. Tseng never had occasion to reproach himself on the courage of the Hunan Army. Soon their exploits were widely known and the Hunanese became exceedingly proud of their army. When volunteers were called for it is said that ten men responded for every one required. Tseng's method was to give long lectures to the higher officers on loyalty and patriotism which were passed on down to the men. Most of them were hardly aware that the world extended beyond the limits of their *hsien*. Gradually they gained concepts of which they had never dreamed, their self-esteem rose, they felt a pride in being soldiers, morale was created, and in course of time they became an Army.

It is rather difficult to arrive at the totals for the Hunan Army, since the name lasted longer than the Hunan personnel. In 1856 it is said to have numbered 60,000 men, and at this time it was probably wholly Hunanese. Later in the campaign against the Taipings, many units

of the provincial armies were reorganized and associated with the Hunan Army. Li Hungchang after several years of close association with Tseng Kuofan, developed the Anhui Army along much the same lines. Within the province of Hunan there were retained, throughout the war, large forces for provincial defence. It is doubtful if the total number of Hunanese serving outside the province at any one time exceeded 120,000 men. Its greatest importance was in its existence rather than its numbers; in the fact that it offered for years the only real focus of resistance to the rebels in the entire empire. Without the Hunan Army or the development of something similar there is no doubt whatever that the Taipings would have overthrown the dynasty. The two regular establishments were simply as straws in the wind before the onslaughts of the Taipings. In the new army it happened, as it ever happens in a hard fought war, that opportunities were opened for men of merit, and they gradually came forward. Not a few men from the villages of Hunan rose to fame. Several who could scarcely write a character rose to generalship in this land that placed so much stock on scholarship.

As a rule in the past the Chinese have not given a great deal of attention to the art of war. This is far from saying that they have had a peaceful history, that they have not been a contentious people. There has been as much warring on the soil of China as on any other part of the globe. Since the days of Confucius the more vocal elements of public opinion have tended to deprecate warlike exploits. Few if any of the celebrated poets of China have sung of arms and the man. In spite of this

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tendency the Chinese have warred just as frequently, just as bitterly, in just as deadly a fashion as any people, and more so than some. The Chinese have accumulated a voluminous literature on the subject of war. Probably the oldest treatise extant on the art of war is the "Commentaries of Sun-tze," dating from the 6th century B.C., and it can be purchased today in hundreds of book stalls throughout China. Another classic on the military art is "The Sayings of Wu-tze," dating from the 4th century B.C. These two books have been the standard of all subsequent ages to within a generation of the present day.<sup>1</sup> They are not without interest even now, as not a few points stressed by these ancient masters are just as vital today as they were 2,500 years ago. So little do the fundamentals change, even in so protean a field as war. As the centuries passed many others wrote on the art of war, so that there was no shortage of texts for the student of war in China. Still, it was hardly so fashionable to study the fundamental principles of war as it was to study the fundamentals of statecraft, despite the close interdependence of the two. Even so, it is not far out to state that down to the beginning of the period of the wars of the French Republic and Empire, the literature on the art of war in Chinese, were it well known, would compare favourably with that in any other language.

The great advances in military power that left the Chinese so far behind during the 19th century were due in large measure to the phenomenal developments in

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<sup>1</sup> See: *The Book of War*, by Capt. E. F. Calthrop, R.F.A., for an excellent translation of these classics.

technological accessories to the conduct of war, rather than to any notable improvement in the technique of handling the human factors in war. The pathetic demonstration given by the Chinese in their first military contacts with the West has led to many sweeping generalizations unfavourable to the Chinese in the matter of the conduct of war. It just happened that the wars along the China Coast tested the Chinese during a period when they were militarily most demoralized, and judgments were then formed, based on these experiences, as to the military capacity of the Chinese that will surely have to be revised in the not distant future.

## CHAPTER II

### TSO TSUNGT'ANG, YOUTH TO MIDDLE AGE

During the period of the Southern Sung Dynasty (1127-1280), a branch of the Tso family settled in the district of Hsiangyin, on the southern shore of Tungting Lake, Province of Hunan. Here the family continued to live in honourable obscurity for more than six hundred years. One of the early members of this branch of the family, Tso Taming, was a third degree graduate in the Sung Dynasty and served as a minor official in Chekiang. At the close of the Ming period, Tso Tienchun was a District Magistrate in Chihli and fought against the Manchus. No other member of the family during this long period made sufficient mark in the world to obtain special mention in the family annals. They were of the gentry—poor, honourable, but without distinction.

Tso Kuanlan was a first degree graduate and a teacher. Whether he aspired to higher degrees and officialdom but could not pass the examinations, or was simply content with the first degree and a life devoted to teaching, the annals fail to state. However, in Old China there was no calling more honoured than that of teaching. He was married to a girl from the Yu family and fortune favoured them with three sons and three daughters. The eldest

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son died before he was twenty-five. The second son succeeded in becoming a second degree graduate and a minor official. He gained a certain amount of note as a calligraphist, and poet, and for his interest in astronomy. He managed just to sustain the family traditions, but nothing more. The youngest son, born November 10th, 1812, was given the name of Tsungt'ang. He lived to become one of the most outstanding men among China's four hundred million and to show once again that the way of destiny with men passes understanding.

He was a sickly child, with a frail body and a big belly, and for the first two or three years of his life the prospects of his bare survival were slight. He became a favourite with his grandfather and the old gentleman was fond of predicting that "this son will bring fame and honour to our family." At the age of four he was started on the long, gruelling grind of Chinese studies under the tutelage of his grandfather. The following year his father moved the family to Changsha where he was teaching, and young Tso continued his studies under his father. As a rule Chinese fathers were reluctant to teach their own sons and where they could afford it they engaged teachers for them. The reason was that a father found it hard to be as severe with his sons as the system required of a teacher. In teaching, the Chinese believed strongly that to spare the rod was to spoil the child. Tso's father was too poor to engage a teacher for his three sons, so he taught them himself.

For the education of its youth no country has yet devised a system that demanded more persistent application or grinding toil than that of Old China. From the

## YOUTH TO MIDDLE AGE

very beginning it was an elimination test and whatever qualities it brought out in a man there was no gainsaying the fact that those who survived the test possessed fortitude. The first book that was given the young student was the "Santze Ching," or Trimetrical Classic, a small volume of 1,068 characters arranged in couplets of six characters. Written in A.D. 1060, for more than eight hundred years it was the primer on which millions of Chinese cut their literary teeth. It was an epitome of the legend and history of China and of the Confucian philosophy of life. The very first line contained, as Williams has said, "one of the most disputed doctrines in the ancient heathen world," which was that "Men at birth are by their nature good." This classic was memorized from beginning to end so thoroughly that it was not uncommon to find those who could recite it forward or backward. To the youthful mind it meant about as much one way as the other, since no attempt was made in the beginning to explain it. Years were to pass before the deeper meanings of this text would dawn on the student.

The Trimetrical Classic was followed by the "Hundred Names," a list, metrically arranged, of those characters used as surnames by the Chinese; and the "Thousand Character Classic," a text that contained exactly one thousand characters, no two being alike in form or meaning.<sup>1</sup> The theme supplemented in a general way the Trimetrical Classic. The next texts in the series were: "Odes for Children," a short collection of thirty-

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<sup>1</sup> Note: The discussion of the system of education and the examinations required is taken from Williams, *The Middle Kingdom*, Vol. 1, Chapter IX.

four verses of four lines each; "Canons of Filial Duty," a record of a conversation between Confucius and one of his disciples on the subject of filial piety; and "The Juvenile Instructor," a text written by the great Confucian philosopher, Chu Hsi. Of this last text Williams says that it was well designed to show "the ideas of the Chinese in all ages upon the principles of education, intercourse of life, and rules of conduct"; and he quotes a distinguished Chinese as saying: "We confide in the *Hsiao Hsueh* (Juvenile Instructor) as we do in the gods, and revere it as we do our parents."

All these texts were memorized so thoroughly that they were seldom forgotten, even in old age. It is well to note that none of the texts studied was written in the colloquial language of the country; but they were all in the classical literary language of the scholars, a language so concise and abstruse as to open to those who mastered it a separate world of their own and to make of them a class apart. Such was the mental fare set before young Tso Tsungt'ang at the tender age of four. In addition to the texts studied he began learning to write, tracing large characters on thin paper placed over models until a practiced hand was acquired. He must have done rather well, as at the age of six we find him entering on the study of the real foundation of a Chinese education: "The Analects of Confucius," "Book of Mencius," "The Great Learning" and "The Doctrine of the Mean," together constituting the "Four Books."

The "Four Books" were elaborately annotated by the celebrated philosopher and Confucian scholar, Chu Hsi, explaining the meaning of the text. The Commentary

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was as important as the text since it gave the orthodox interpretation of the Confucian philosophy. Moreover, without a commentary the original would be unintelligible to the average literate Chinese of the present age. The "Four Books" were followed by the "Five Classics," which taken together constitute the "Chinese Classics." The "Five Classics" were: "The Book of Changes," "The Book of Odes," "The Book of History," "The Canon of Rites," and "The Spring and Autumn Annals." The Four Books and the Five Classics were memorized with the occasional exception of The Book of Changes. Not infrequently the more ambitious students memorized the Commentaries as well.

The education of a Chinese boy was not all confined to memorizing the Classics. The hardest part was Composition and Rhetoric—learning to write in the terse, vigorous, epigrammatic style of the Classics. It required infinite pains, unending study and a ready memory to become a really competent penman and stylist. At nine Tso Tsung'tang started the study of composition. It was this part of the course of study that determined the aspiring scholar's success or failure in the examinations. He had to write numberless essays on themes taken from the Classics, similar to the ones that would most likely be given in the examinations. Penmanship and style were of the utmost importance and the thought must be in strict conformity with the Classics. To have expressed during examination a thought or opinion that ran counter to the Classics would have been fatal.

The routine of the student was exceptionally strict. Hours of study were from daylight to about 10 a.m., and

from noon to about 6 p.m. During the summer they were usually free in the afternoon but in winter, evening sessions were held. There was a month's vacation just before New Year and the common festivals were observed as holidays, but there were no Saturdays and Sundays off in the school year of Old China. The teacher was not troubled about method. It was as thoroughly standardized as the course of study. The student first read the assigned lesson with the teacher until he could pronounce the characters and get the rhythm. Then he studied aloud until called on to recite. He approached the teacher, gave him his book, turned his back to the teacher and recited. When satisfactorily done, a new lesson was assigned. Lack of diligence was promptly and severely punished. The usual punishment was sharp blows with a ruler on the palm of the left hand—never the right hand as it was the one used in writing and might be injured. Not infrequently this punishment was so severe that the hand would be swollen to twice the normal size.

Young Tso was rated an apt pupil, well in advance of other boys of his age, and he was exceptionally diligent. The name he went by among his associates and others of his generation was "Chi Kao", meaning the third son, the name Tsungt'ang was the one used only by his parents or those of an older generation. He had another name or *hao*, "P'u Ts'un", meaning "The Dependable One" which was used by his most intimate associates of his own age. Thus in keeping with the customary practice among his countrymen he had a formal name and two *hao* or familiar names. He was not popular among

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his associates in school as he was arrogant, boastful, conceited, and intolerant of the opinions of others,—traits that stayed with him as long as he lived. He liked to talk and expressed his opinions about men and things with a freedom that won for him many enemies. As a boy he had few friends, but they were good ones. Those who liked him at all, liked him exceedingly well.

At the age of fifteen he took the first preliminary examination. It was held by the District Magistrate of Hsiangyin and was the first of the elimination tests. One day was allowed for this examination and it was simply an exercise in composition. The students assembled in a hall near the Magistrate's Yamen, the Magistrate gave out the themes and they wrote their essays. Tso stood first in this examination and his name headed the list of successful candidates pasted on the wall of the Yamen. This honour was known as "hsien ming", "having a name in the District." The following year he entered the second preliminary examination which was similar in scope to the first one. He stood first in this examination but was awarded second place out of deference to another candidate who was much older than he. He was now ready to compete for the first degree examination. However, shortly after the second preliminary examination his mother died and inexorable custom required a period of mourning for twenty-seven months. This period had hardly ended when his father died and he was again in mourning. According to custom it was not permitted to one in mourning to participate in the business of government or public affairs unless specifically ordered to do so by the Emperor. Thus Tso Tsungtang was obliged

to wait until a later date to participate in the examinations.

He spent the time in intensive study and preparation. Although he had covered the required course of study in the Four Books and Five Classics, yet such was the nature of these works that one was never considered to have completed them. All examinations from the preliminary in the hsien to the highest before the Emperor, were based on the Four Books and Five Classics. They were the fathomless wells of wisdom that no amount of study and erudition could exhaust. The most distinguished scholar of any age would not have dared to presume that he understood them fully. So it was vitally necessary to stay with these books as long as there were examinations ahead. In addition, the candidates for the higher degrees were required to demonstrate a ready familiarity with Chinese history from ancient times to the end of the Ming Dynasty—the history of the contemporary dynasty was not a subject for examination or even critical discussion. Familiarity with Chinese literature and the ability to write verse were requirements. The system could hardly be expected to make poets but it could exact a mastery of certain stereotyped verse forms.

It was during this period of intensive study that Tso Tsung-t'ang became interested in the study of geography through two books, one a general treatise designed to assist students in the study of Chinese history, and the other on "The Geography of the Provinces of China," by Ku Yenwu. He became fascinated with the subject and read everything descriptive of the physical features of the country that he could find. He spent so much

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time in this study that his friends remonstrated with him, saying that he was wasting his time since only an elementary knowledge of Chinese geography was necessary for the highest examination. A neighbour, by the name of Ho, a former official, had an excellent collection of books. He became much interested in Tso and thought that he recognized in him a man with a future. He gave Tso free access to his library and encouraged his study of the geography and topography of China. Tso never forgot the encouragement and assistance he received from his friend Ho during these years. He was extremely poor and after his father died he studied in a school maintained in Changsha by the Governor for students in straitened circumstances.

In the fall of 1833, Tso Tsung'tang entered the provincial examinations for the second degree. According to established procedure, to enter this examination the candidate was required to be a first degree graduate. Tso had not been able to compete for the first degree owing to the long period of mourning for his parents. It was possible, however, under certain conditions, to purchase the privilege of competing for the second degree. Tso was now twenty-one and very much in need of a job. If he did not take the examination this year it would mean a delay of three years. So he raised the money and bought the privilege of becoming one of 5,000 competing for the second degree at Changsha.

In Peking and in the capitals of the more populous provinces, the examination halls contained several thousand small stalls. Each stall was about six feet long, four feet wide and somewhat higher than a tall man.

They were furnished with a stool and a board running the length of the cell, this serving as a desk by day and a bed at night. The candidate brought bedding, food, water, candles, ink, inkslab and brushes, entering the stall assigned him the night before the examination. Before they were admitted each one was carefully searched to make sure that he carried no books or notes to use in the examination. The rules were exceptionally strict and if a candidate were caught cheating or trying to cheat, he was disgraced, severely punished, lost degrees already won, and was never again allowed to compete in the examinations.

The examination began on the 9th day of the 8th lunar month, and there were three sessions. At daylight of the first day four themes selected from the Four Books were handed each candidate together with a supply of writing paper. The stall was then sealed and no one was allowed to enter or leave until all had handed in their papers. Three of the subjects assigned were written in prose, while the fourth was treated in verse. No one was allowed to write his name on a paper. Late that night the candidates were released and given the following day to rest. The papers were gone over by the examining staff and a large number rejected. On the 11th day the candidates reassembled and those rejected were not allowed to enter their stalls. Five themes were given from the Five Classics and the candidates were given two days to write their essays. They were then released and given another day's rest. They reassembled on the 14th day and the successful ones entered their stalls for the final test. Five themes were given,

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one of which was to be written in verse, but these themes were not all taken from the Classics. Historical subjects were given as well as a subject on law or government. The examination was concluded on the 16th day. The examining board had twenty-five days to go over the papers carefully and select the 70 or 80 to be graduated.

The Emperor issued instructions this year that the papers of all those passed over would be given a re-reading, which was fortunate for Tso Tsung'tang, as he had been passed over. In the second reading six names were selected to be added to the list and Tso was number one of the six. When the final results were published he was a second degree graduate or "chu jen", but he was sixth from the bottom of the list for the province of Hunan. A few of those standing at the top frequently got appointments to office, but those at the bottom had little chance. It was necessary for them to pass the third degree examination, held in Peking the following spring, to be in line for appointment.

Shortly after the examination was over, Tso Tsung'tang married a girl of the Chou family and went to live in the home of his father-in-law in Hsiangtan. It was somewhat unusual for a man to live with his wife's family but in this instance Tso's parents and grandparents were dead so he was not bound by the requirements of filial piety. Moreover, he had little or nothing in the way of worldly goods, while his father-in-law was a man of some substance. There are some indications that this departure from the traditional practice of the gentry irked him somewhat, though his relations with his wife's family appear to have been quite pleasant during the

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years that he remained largely dependent on them. He began at once to make preparations to go to Peking to take the examination for the third degree. In theory the government provided travelling expenses to Peking for worthy scholars who were candidates for this degree, but in actual practice it required "pull" to get such expenses. Tso was poor and had too few connections with influential persons to get any allowance. His wife gave him from her dowry a hundred taels for the trip to Peking. However, before he got away an aunt came to him in great distress and he gave her the whole of his hundred taels. Friends and relatives came to the rescue and provided him with sufficient funds for the journey.

The examination came off in the early spring and was similar in substance to that given for the second degree. The examiners were of more exalted rank and they were more exacting. Tso Tsungt'ang failed to pass. On his return home he wrote to a friend that he was through with examinations and was determined to apply himself to the study of practical affairs. The lure of officialdom was strong and in 1836 he was again in Peking for the examination and failed the second time. The following year he spent in writing a treatise on geography, his wife assisting him by copying the maps. It is not related whether or not this work was ever published.

He now had two children but they were both girls and certain indications led him to fear that he might not be honoured with a son. So in spite of his straitened circumstances and lack of prospects he felt himself constrained to take a second wife. A note in the annals states that

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this wife was from the Chang family, that she did nearly all of the housework, and that first and last she presented Tso with three sons and one daughter.<sup>1</sup>

For a time he taught school in Liling, a town in eastern Hunan. While he was in Liling he made an acquaintance that profoundly influenced his life and proved to be his first major break with a fickle fortune. It happened that the Viceroy of Liang Kiang, T'ao Shu, a native of Hunan, passed through Liling and for the reception prepared in his honour by the District Magistrate, Tso was asked to write a scroll. This scroll caught the attention of the Viceroy and he asked to see the writer. Tso made a most favourable impression on him and the annals state that they passed the whole night in earnest conversation.<sup>2</sup> Tso Tsung'tang had no friends in the upper reaches of officialdom and it meant much to him to make a favourable impression on so great a man as T'ao Shu. Unless a man had some well connected friends in the China of Tso's generation his chances of preferment were exceedingly slim.

He went to Peking again in 1838 and for the third time tried for the third degree, only to fail. He made up his mind that he would never compete in the examinations again and he never did, though twenty years later he changed his mind and actually started to Peking for the examinations but was turned aside to enter upon a distinguished career as a soldier. His failure to win the third degree undoubtedly embittered him to the end of his days. Later on in his career we find him decidedly

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. I, p.14.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p.14b.

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contemptuous of mere scholars in government and when it came his turn to raise men to position of power and influence he did so on the basis of what they could do and not on the degrees they held. Many of his most trusted generals held no degrees at all. Yet he was a thoroughgoing Confucianist and as such believed in scholarship, considered himself a scholar, believed in the system of examination that perpetuated the Confucian concept of government, and took every opportunity to encourage the pursuit of learning in others according to the more liberal Confucian concepts of his period. In a land where scholarship commanded a degree of prestige in the popular imagination it has held in no other country, it must have grieved a man of Tso Tsung'tang's temperament to fail to gain that hallmark of scholarship implied in passing the third degree examination. One may be led to speculate on whether or not his friends were right when they told him that he was wasting his time studying geographical texts, that it was diverting him from the main chance. It would be hard to say that this militated against his success in the examinations but there is no doubt whatever that it was of inestimable value to him when he came to lead armies. A "feel" for topography has been a positive characteristic of all great soldiers. For a great general to be lacking in this sense would be as anomalous as a great painter who was colour-blind. Tso Tsung'tang had an instinctive "feel" for topography and he cultivated it unceasingly from his youth. More than once was it said of him that he knew his field of operations "like the palm of his hand."

For a few months he taught in Peking and then returned

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to Hunan, going by way of Nanking where he visited his friend, T'ao Shu, the Viceroy. It seems that the Viceroy became extremely fond of Tso, as during the course of the visit T'ao proposed the betrothal of his only son, then about five years old, to Tso's eldest daughter and the matter was duly arranged. Two years later the Viceroy died. He arranged before his death for Tso Tsungt'ang to become his son's tutor and thus Tso was charged with the education of his future son-in-law.<sup>1</sup>

In the meantime, Tso became interested in agriculture and made an intensive study of farming, though he did not have a foot of land. Some years previously he had given his interest in the small estate left by his father to his eldest brother's son. He wrote a tract on farming. At the same time he continued his studies in geography. It might be noted that his interest in the subject was not in any sense world wide, hardly extending beyond the confines of the Celestial Empire, which to most Chinese of Tso's generation was about all of the world that mattered. But he studied his native land thoroughly and made copious notes on the mountains, rivers, passes, roads, distances, etc., running into several manuscript volumes. These notes he embodied in a descriptive work on China. It does not appear that he wrote with any thought of publishing his work, but rather for his own benefit in reducing to order the mass of data which he sifted. The annalist states that during this period he became aware of that haughtiness and contempt for others in his make-up which so effectively prevented most of

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<sup>1</sup> *Ch'ing Ch'ao Yeh Shih Ta Kuan*, Vol. 7, p.6.

those he met from becoming his friends. He studiously set about correcting these defects and made a special point of becoming more affable and friendly.<sup>1</sup> However, it does not appear that he had any signal success in his efforts.

He was twenty-nine when he became the teacher of his old friend T'ao's son. He moved into the T'ao home in Anhua, central Hunan, and continued to live there for eight years. It was a rare opportunity for Tso as the T'ao family were wealthy and there are indications that he was exceptionally well paid. From this time onward Tso was not troubled by the spectre of want and was freed from dependence on his wife's family. The late Viceroy left an excellent library with a splendid collection of maps made during the reign of Ch'ien Lung, and copies of all memorials that he had written during a long and distinguished career. Tso read and studied these memorials with much care and drew from them much wisdom and experience. One of T'ao Shu's daughters was married to Hu Linyi, a man fairly high in official circles who later gained great renown in the Taiping Rebellion. He was a man of rare talents, high in the favour of the throne and the closest friend and counsellor of the great Viceroy, Tseng Kuofan. Hu Linyi and Tso Tsungt'ang were the same age and from the first time they met became fast friends. It was a friendship that meant much to Tso Tsungt'ang during the long years he was waiting for a chance to enter officialdom. For all his determination to take no more examinations, hope still lingered.

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. I, p.17 (a).

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The first war with Great Britain was going on at this time and Tso followed events with burning interest. With each defeat that a handful of British administered to his disorganized and unprepared countrymen, Tso's mortification increased. He wrote many letters to friends and to the few officials he knew setting forth his ideas on how to win the war. He wrote to a Censor requesting that his ideas on the subject be presented in a memorial to the throne. In this letter he said: "Unless all those who advocate peace and all those who fail to resist the British to the last ditch are summarily executed, discipline will end, law will lose its force, the morale of the people will fail, and the prestige of the throne will be seriously impaired."<sup>1</sup> When he heard that the British had taken over Hong Kong he wrote four poems in which he expressed his grief and indignation; and when he heard of the final terms of the peace he was so overwhelmed that he thought seriously of retiring to some lonely mountain retreat for the rest of his days. The tenets of Taoism have their appeal to the Chinese no matter how strongly entrenched in Confucianism they may be. Instead of retiring to the mountains he decided to continue his work and at the same time do some intensive study. He was convinced in his own mind that in talent and scholarship he was ahead of the general run of officials but not quite good enough to meet the critical situation facing his country. He determined to make up the deficiency by hard study.

After he had been teaching in the T'ao family for two

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. I, p.20 (b).

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years he was able to buy a small farm of about twelve acres in the eastern part of Hsiangyin near where he was born. He called this farm "Liu Chuang" or "The Willows" and he was extremely proud of it. During the next few years he devoted himself to the education of his future son-in-law, to study and to farming. He read widely on agriculture and managed his little farm after the precepts of ancient China. He was credited with being the first to cultivate the tea plant in his native district and he devoted much attention to sericulture. It is said that by careful planning he was able to make every foot of his little farm productive. It was a considerable distance from Anhua, where he was teaching, to his home but he made frequent trips to visit his family and look after the management of his farm. Tso Tsungt'ang was keenly interested in farming and considered himself a good farmer. He never lost his interest in the subject, undoubtedly much to the disgust of his soldiers when he was campaigning in the western marches in later years. He was not an experimental farmer. Rather he sought for better farming methods in the records of the past, convinced, after the manner of his generation, that somewhere in the long history of China the very best possible in most fields of human endeavour had been achieved, much forgotten. In the vast agricultural literature of China he found what he considered the best in the way of method, much of it so old that it was new.

In 1848 and 1849 there was severe famine in Hunan. A long period of drought was followed suddenly by heavy rains and flood, and disease and starvation took a

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heavy toll. Tso Tsungt'ang had a keen sense of his civic responsibilities in such a disaster. He set up near his home feeding stations where he dispensed food to the needy. It is stated that the Tso clan gave from their reserve stocks 90,000 pounds of grain to feed the poor. Such money as he had he gave unsparingly for the purchase of medicines for the sick.

He went to Changsha in 1848 and opened a school with five pupils including his son-in-law whom he had been tutoring privately for eight years. But a storm was gathering in the south, in the province of Kwangsi, where the "Society of God-Worshippers" were perfecting their organization for the overthrow of the dynasty. It was soon to break in the great Taiping Rebellion that initiated a quarter of a century of disasters such as have been surpassed in no country in an equal period of time. From Changsha Tso noted this gathering storm and sensed the seriousness of the situation. He realized that it was not going to be a local, sporadic affair, and long before there was any general apprehension in northern Hunan, Tso and a neighbour, Kuo Sungt'ao, later China's first Minister to England, made a trip into the mountains to the east of Hsiangyin for the purpose of locating a hiding place for their families. They found a secluded spot which they prepared for future use. Two years later, when the Taipings were nearing Changsha, Tso moved his family to this hiding place, where they remained in safety until the rebel horde moved from Hunan down the river to Nanking.

When the Taiping Rebellion broke on China, Tso Tsungt'ang was thirty-nine. It had been eighteen years

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since he had won the second degree. No appointment to official position had come his way and none was in sight. It would hardly be correct to say that he had lost hope. He was still toying with the idea of entering for the third degree. However, to his neighbours it is likely that he was simply a scholar in modest circumstances, destined to spend his days in teaching and looking after his little farm—nothing more.

## CHAPTER III

### THE RISE OF THE TAIPINGS

A great many volumes have been written about the Taiping Rebellion, both by foreign writers and by Chinese, but there still remains much that is obscure about the movement, particularly in its early stages. Like many other movements that have become historic, it was started by obscure and humble men who developed exceptional capacity for leadership. It appears in the light of all that is known of the beginnings of the movement that the initial impulse was religious. However, as the founders began to realize the potentialities of the instrument they had created, other considerations became dominant and the movement developed into a political rather than a religious crusade. The objective became the overthrow of the reigning dynasty and in the pursuit of that objective a dozen of the richest and most populous provinces in the empire were devastated and a sum total of misery and death visited on the Sons of Han that passed all other similar national experiences.

The general situation that obtained throughout the Celestial Empire during the reign of the Emperor Tao Kuang (1820-1850), was such as to presage, in the minds of many thoughtful Chinese of the period, the early

collapse of the dynasty. There was not a year during this reign that was free from insurrection in some part of the great empire. In this rash of insurrection the province of Kwangsi was conspicuous. It is not certain that the authorities had the whole of the province thoroughly in hand at any time during the period, but the disorder was on such a scale in 1820, 1832-34, and in 1836, that it could not be concealed from the Imperial authorities in Peking. The second of these uprisings attained to considerable proportions and the leader, Chao Kinlung, had the presumption to dress himself in the Imperial yellow and had embroidered on his robe "Prince of the Golden Dragon."<sup>1</sup> All these affairs were put down, according to reports, but their steady recurrence would indicate that the authorities did not suppress them very effectively.

The conditions prevailing in the empire were favourable for revolt. The pressure of population on the land was acute. The population reached the highest point for the 19th century, according to Parker, in 1852 with a total of 432,000,000, or something like an increase of more than 200,000,000 within a hundred years. Population statistics for China are hazardous at best, but it seems to be quite generally agreed that from about 1750 to 1850 the number of people in China just about doubled. The amount of tillable land available showed no notable increase and it is not probable that there was any appreciable gain in the productivity of the land. Some have regarded the Taiping Rebellion in the light of an

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<sup>1</sup> Morse, *International Relations of the Chinese Empire*, Vol. I, p.440.

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agrarian revolt. Without attempting to go into this aspect of the situation, it might be observed that the system of land tenure in China did not tend to withdraw large areas from production after the manner of the landed estates in other lands, or to restrict the maximum productive capacity of the land. The question then, as now, would seem to be whether the available land could produce under any system of tenure sufficient to feed adequately the number of people dependent on it. While it seems well established that the poor became poorer, it has not yet been proved that the rich became richer in the China of pre-Taiping days. The pressure of population tended to produce a large mass of disinherited humanity that was predisposed to violence and insurrection, but the misery and want consequent on economic factors, though ever so predisposing, are not in themselves sufficient to make men fight. The economic factors in southwest China were not notably more acute than in many other sections where there were no uprisings, or at least, not until they were brought under the influence of the Taipings.

The populace of Kwangtung and Kwangsi, particularly Kwangsi, was not as homogeneous as that of central and north China but contained large groups of Hakka, Miao, and remnants of the aboriginal inhabitants of the country. A more lively hostility to the Manchus persisted in this section than in any other of the eighteen provinces. Since the reign of Ch'ien Lung, secret societies had flourished throughout the country and one of the strongest was known as the Triad. Members of this society were particularly numerous in Kwangtung and Kwangsi. This

society was founded during the reign of K'ang Hsi and was pledged to the overthrow of the Manchus and the restoration of the Mings. They assisted in the initial Taiping movement but dissociated themselves from it after a time though they were in rebellion during the whole of the Taiping period. There was another society that appears to have entered strongly into the origins of the Taipings, one alleged to have been founded by Dr. Gutzlaff, noted independent missionary and sinologue. "He founded in China, a sort of secret society called the 'Chinese Union,' the object of which was the conversion of the Chinese to Christianity by the Chinese themselves."<sup>1</sup> The exact relation of this society to the earliest phase of the Taiping movement is obscure, but in any event, the ideology of the Taipings was based on a peculiarly Chinese version of Christianity.

Another powerful factor in the development of the Taiping Rebellion in the southwest of China was the war with Great Britain during the years 1839-42. The force which Britain brought to Canton and which dealt a crushing blow to the Chinese Empire was a negligible one, considering its accomplishments. The Canton populace had long been unfavourably disposed towards the foreigners and when they saw the highest officials of the empire defeated and humiliated by a handful of the hated foreigners, the anti-dynastic sentiment long in evidence in this area became greatly intensified. The weakness and disorganization of the government was so plainly demonstrated that it had a markedly disintegrating effect

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<sup>1</sup> Callery and Yvan, *History of the Insurrection in China*, p.120.

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throughout south China. There was no leadership in the government, high or low, and the local officials, some of whom would doubtless have given an excellent account of themselves had they been vitalized by the impulse of leadership from a K'ang Hsi or a Ch'ien Lung, proved wholly incapable of meeting the problems that soon arose. The situation was extremely favourable for a rebellion on a big scale. A favourable situation, however, is not enough. Though circumstances be ever so favourable they must await the emergence of a leader or leaders to give form and purpose to a movement. Some years passed before the leaders emerged. Had the talents of these men been less the Taiping Rebellion would have been a minor, sporadic insurrection, like so many others that had been breaking out in various parts of the empire for years. Had their talents for combining and for government been greater, they most assuredly would have succeeded in overthrowing the dynasty. All the predisposing factors for rebellion were favourable, but the leadership was not equal to the opportunity and the movement degenerated into a ghastly failure.

It is usually related that Hung Hsiuch'uan, the central figure in the Taiping Rebellion, was an aspiring scholar but much embittered by repeated failures to pass the examination for the first degree. One day an itinerant Chinese preacher handed him a number of tracts on the Christian religion. Hung did not take the trouble to read them but he took them to his home, where they remained for several years. In the course of a severe illness he fell into a trance and saw Heaven opened. While in this state he had some marvellous experiences,

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and when he returned to his senses he was convinced that he had a divine mission in this world. He now read the Christian tracts which he had had so long and in them found a deeper realization of the meaning of his visions and of the urgency of his mission. So carried away was he that he came to believe himself the younger brother of Jesus Christ. And so he started out to preach and entered on the fulfillment of his mission.

One Li Shoucheng, who rose to fame during the last years of the Rebellion as the "Chung Wang," wrote an account of his experiences called "Taiping T'ien Kuo Shih Mo" or "From the Beginning to the End of the Heavenly Kingdom of the Taipings," usually called the "Autobiography of the Chung Wang." It was written while he was in prison awaiting execution by the Imperialists. As he was with the Taipings from Kwangsi to the fall of Nanking his account of the beginning of the movement is not without interest and may be taken as fairly accurate, at least as to what the Taipings believed about the matter. He says:

"I will now tell of the emergence of the T'ien Wang. The T'ien Wang came from Hwahsien, Kwangtung, and was the youngest of three brothers. The eldest was Hung Jenfa, the second was Hung Jenta and the T'ien Wang was called Hung Hsiuch'uan. They all had the same father but the two elder brothers were born to the first wife. The family were farmers. Hung Hsiuch'uan studied at home and his companion in his studies was one Feng Yunshan.

One day in the year 1837, the T'ien Wang became suddenly ill and for seven days was like unto one dead. After he recovered, all he talked about was Heaven. He exhorted all men to cultivate goodness and worship God. If they were willing to worship God no calamity or ill would befall them but those who did not worship God would be rent by serpents and tigers. Those who worshipped God must not bow to any other spirits, and if they did they would bring on themselves retribution. Therefore those who worshipped God did

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not dare later on to worship other spirits. Since the simple people all feared death and hearing him tell them that they would be bitten by serpents and tigers, who did not tremble? Therefore they followed him.

From Hwawsien he went to Kwangsi, travelling several thousand li and visiting Hsunhsien, Kweiping, Wuhsuan, Hsiangchow, Tengsien, Liuchuan and Popai. The T'ien Wang constantly remained secluded in the mountains. He taught men to worship God and of ten families, in some places three, others five and still others eight, followed him. However, students and scholars did not follow him. All those who became converts were the poorest of the farmer families and their numbers constantly increased. The leaders wished to set up a state and they formulated a well thought out plan to this end. Altogether there were six of them: The Eastern King, Yang Hsiuching; The Western King, Hsiao Ch'aokwei; The Southern King, Feng Yunshan; The Northern King, Wei Changhui; The Assistant King, Shih Takai; and the Supreme Minister of State, Ch'in Jih kang. Aside from these men no one knew that the T'ien Wang wished to set up a state.

The Eastern King, Yang Hsiuching, was from the district of Kweiping, tilled a farm in the hills and burned charcoal for a living. He was an ignorant man but after he became a worshipper of God he knew everything. Who does not see the will of Heaven in the transformation of this man? The T'ien Wang had great faith in him and in matters of state relied on him completely. He drew up the regulations for the army and clearly defined the rewards and punishments. The Western King, Hsiao Ch'aokwei, was from the district of Wuhsuan, and he cultivated both valley and hill land for a living. He married the younger sister of T'ien Wang and therefore had great influence. He was extraordinarily brave and in battle he always led the van. The Southern King, Feng Yunshan, was a student and his wisdom and understanding were great. Of the six it was the Southern King who conceived the founding of a state, and all the original work was his. The Northern King, Wei Changhui, was from the district of Kweiping. He had served in the yamen and was a first degree graduate. His wisdom was profound. The Assistant King, Shih Takai, was also from the district of Kweiping. He was wealthy and a scholar and had deep knowledge of both civil and military affairs. The Supreme Minister of State, Ch'in Jih kang, was from the district of Kweiping and was a labourer. He was not brilliant but was thoroughly loyal and trustworthy, and T'ien Wang had the greatest faith in him. The organization of the uprising and the conversion of men to the worship of God was all the work of these six men. At

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this time no one knew the title "T'ien Wang," but in all the villages and towns he was simply known as Mr. Hung.

The teaching of men to worship God continued for several years and there was no trouble. But about 1847 or 1848, there was much banditry in Kwangsi and disturbances arose in all the cities and towns. The people in the villages organized militia but the God Worshippers organized themselves apart from the rest. Much ill feeling arose as some villages were divided between the God Worshippers and non-worshippers, while other villages were wholly one or the other. When the time came for the uprising, pressure was brought on the non-worshippers and the numbers of the God Worshippers were greatly increased. In July 1850, in Chintien, Huachow, Liuchuan, Popai, and Paishashin, on the same day the uprising occurred."<sup>1</sup>

Many legends have grown up in connection with the T'ien Wang, as always happens with men of this stamp, so that it is extremely difficult to arrive at a clear appreciation of the man. It is related that when he was on his way to enter the examinations for the first time he met a fortune-teller who told him not to waste his time on examinations as he was destined for a great career in which the routine degrees would be of no moment to him and he should rely solely on himself in fulfilling his destiny. As time went on he came to put so much faith in his destiny that he made no effort whatever to shape the course of events. He had no comprehension whatever of the Cromwellian maxim "to trust God and keep your powder dry."

According to the Chinese account of the beginning of the Taiping movement that is given in the Unofficial History of the Taipings,<sup>2</sup> Hung Hsiuch'uan, after failing in the examination, began to reflect on the state of affairs then prevailing and he noted that the power of the

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<sup>1</sup> *T'ai P'ing T'ien Kuo Shih Mo*, pp.1-3.

<sup>2</sup> *Tai P'ing T'ien Kuo Yeh Shih*, Vol. 1, pp.1-13.

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Manchus was fast declining; that the officials were corrupt and hopelessly incompetent; and that the common people were destitute. Thereupon he conceived the idea of overthrowing the Manchus and founding a dynasty. He became intimate with a man by the name of Chu Chiuch'ow, who had organized a society called "Shang Ti Hui," or "The Society of God," outwardly devoted to the propagation of the Christian doctrines but in reality an organization for the purpose of restoring the Ming Dynasty. One is led to wonder what may have been the connection between this society and the "Chinese Union" allegedly organized by Dr. Gutzlaff. The two men became very close friends and Feng Yunshan studied with them. After a time Chu died and the members put Hung Hsiuch'uan in his place as leader. The authorities got wind of the organization and being hostile at that time to the propagation of Christian doctrines, moved to arrest Hung but he fled to Hong Kong. In Hong Kong he studied for a time with a British missionary and then he went with Feng Yunshan to Kwangsi. They stayed for a time at Penghuashan, where they made some converts. Hung was then given a place teaching in the family of Tseng Yuheng in the town of Kweiping. While he was in Kweiping he attached to his cause five men whose talents gave to the movement its greatest successes and landed the Taipings in Nanking with Hung Hsiuch'uan on the throne. They were Yang Hsiuching, Shih Takai, Hsiao Ch'aokwei, Ch'in Jihkang, and Wei Changhui. These men, with Feng Yunshan, became his trusted disciples and were initiated into the secret of his mission. Hung frequently went into trances in which he received

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marvellous revelations and he came to be regarded by his increasing group of followers as a supernatural being. Famine arose in Kwangsi and with it banditry on all sides. Feng and Wang organized the followers of Hung into a "Peoples' Bandit Protection Society," formed a militia and collected money for the cause. The District Magistrate of Kweiping became suspicious of Hung and arrested him some time during the year 1847 and at the time of the arrest seized nineteen books containing the registry of his followers. He recommended to the Governor the immediate execution of Hung, but the Governor was a mild mannered man and fearing violence he ordered the release of Hung. The Magistrate reluctantly complied saying it was the same as releasing a tiger.

The movement now began to develop more rapidly and openly. The following year several of the Triad leaders became associated with the God Worshippers but many of them disliking the severe discipline that was imposed, left it in disgust. Some of their leaders who stayed with the movement were Hung Tach'uan, later known as the T'iente Wang, Lo Takang and Lin Fenghsiang, the man who later carried the banner of the Taipings to within twelve miles of Tientsin. The God Worshippers now began to allow their hair to grow long and to wear the garb of the Mings. The authorities were alarmed but were reluctant for the truth about the situation to become known in Peking. The troops at their disposal, numerous on paper, were wholly ineffectual in handling the situation. In the summer of 1850, the provincial government began to concentrate troops in

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Pinglo, not far from the district of Kweiping. The God Worshippers then began to mobilize at Chintien, a village in Kweipinghsien, where in July, 1850, they openly defied the authorities. It is alleged that there were about 10,000 of them, but 10,000 is a figure so frequently applied to insurrectionists that it is to be taken with reserve. However, in an engagement with the government forces they inflicted a severe defeat, so severe that in August of that year the first official cognizance of the uprising was taken in Peking. The Governor of Kwangsi was recalled and troops sent from Kwangtung and Hunan. On January 1st, 1851, the God Worshippers severely defeated the government forces at Chintien, one of the Manchu generals being among the slain. The rebels now began seizing towns and requisitioning everything that suited them. They moved with considerable freedom and the government forces were nowhere a match for the well disciplined bands of the rebels. They moved northwest to Hsiangchow and after several engagements with the government troops they entered Yungan, September 25th, 1851.

In Yungan they formally set up their government, The T'ai P'ing T'ien Kuo, or The Heavenly Kingdom of Great Peace. Hung Hsuich'uan took the title of T'ien Wang or Heavenly King, and the other Wangs or Kings were designated as Tung Wang, Yang Hsiuching; Hsi Wang, Hsiao Ch'aokwei; Nan Wang, Feng Yunshan; Pei Wang, Wei Changhui; I Wang, Shih Takai; and T'iente Wang, Hung Tach'uan. The last Wang, T'iente, was not mentioned in Li Shoucheng's account quoted above, and he has come to be something of a mystery

man in the Taiping organization. It appears that at this stage of the movement, Hung Tach'uan was in fact co-equal in rank and power to Hung Hsiuch'uan. For some years following the outbreak of the Rebellion it was believed that the T'iente Wang and T'ien Wang were the same person—Hung Hsiuch'uan. However, the evidence is strong<sup>1</sup> that the T'iente Wang was received into the organization by Hung Hsiuch'uan at about the time when they first came into real conflict with the authorities; that he assumed the name of Hung Tach'uan at the time of his acceptance into the organization; that he was rated as equal or next to Hung Hsiuch'uan; and that he was largely responsible for perfecting the organization and giving direction to the movement. Callery and Yvan quote from an official report of an interview two government officials had with T'iente when they were sent to propose the surrender of the Taipings. In this report T'iente stated to these officials that he was a direct descendant of the Mings, the 11th generation from the last Ming Emperor Tsung Cheng, and that he was levying troops for the purpose of recovering his ancient heritage.<sup>2</sup> There is no record that Hung Hsiuch'uan ever claimed that he was a descendant of the Mings even though he affected the long hair and dress of the Ming period.

The government forces soon invested the rebels in Yungan and for a time it seemed that their situation was very critical. Li Shoucheng says that they were unable

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<sup>1</sup> Hail, *Tseng Kuo Fan and the Taiping Rebellion*, pp.50-74.

<sup>2</sup> *History of the Insurrection in China*, p.139.

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to get ammunition in Yungan and were reduced to such supplies as they captured from the government troops.<sup>1</sup> On April 6th, 1852, they made a determined attack on their besiegers and cut their way out. The government forces were disorganized by this defeat and although they followed the rebels, they were again defeated and late in April the Taipings laid siege to Kweilin, capital of Kwangsi. However, in getting out of Yungan, the Taipings suffered a heavy loss as Hung Tach'uan, the T'iente Wang, commanding the rearguard, was captured by the government troops. The circumstances under which he was cut off from the rebels were such as to give grounds for suspicion that he was abandoned in pursuance of a well laid plan among certain of the rebel leaders. He was taken to Peking under a heavy escort and there executed. Before his execution he was alleged to have made a confession in which he stated that his real name was not Hung; that he and Hung Hsiuch'uan had been co-equal in the Taiping organization; that he was not in sympathy with the religious pretensions of the rebels but subscribed to it because of its appeal in gaining and holding a following; that he had been the military organizer and instructor of the Taipings; that he had been much concerned about the T'ien Wang's lack of political vision, reliance on magical arts for assistance and his licentious habits; and that he had wished for the destruction of the T'ien Wang so that he could then become the sole ruler.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *T'ai Ping T'ien Kuo Shih Mo*, p.4.

<sup>2</sup> Hail, op. cit., pp.56-59, and Callery and Yvan, op. cit., pp.142-47. There is a slight difference in the two versions.

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It would appear that the original hierarchy of the God Worshippers suspected his designs and very cleverly eliminated the T'iente Wang. Later on they suppressed all mention of his early connections with the movement.

At the time of evacuating Yungan, the Taipings mustered about 12,000 armed men, according to the confession of the T'iente Wang, and together with the families accompanying them probably totalled between 40,000 and 50,000 souls. For a month they were before Kweilin and they exerted every effort to take the city. The walls were too much for the equipment they had and towards the end of May they abandoned their attempt and moved north into Hunan. At Kweilin they had seized all the boats on the river and moved them through the ancient canal connecting with the headwaters of the great Hsiang River of Hunan. They intended to descend this river by boat to Changsha. The Hunan authorities had collected a force of militia under Chiang Chungyuan for the protection of the border and Chiang Chungyuan made a stand at Soyi Ferry, near where the river enters Hunan. Early in June, 1852, the rebels en route down the river to Changsha encountered the militia stationed on both banks of the river and with barriers across it. For two days and nights they tried to force their way through but were defeated with heavy losses, including all their boats. The heaviest loss sustained by the rebels was the death of Feng Yunshan, the Southern King. Feng had been associated with Hung Hsiuch'uan since childhood and he was the original organizer of the movement. He was credited with exceptional wisdom and foresight, and was the most trusted of the original Wangs or Kings.

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The defeat at Soyi Ferry was the first major defeat the rebels had sustained in the open field.

With the destruction of their boats the rebels were forced to abandon their immediate descent on Changsha via the river route and they moved to the east into southern Hunan. They captured Taochow, Yungming, Kianghwa and Chenchow, the last city being on the great north and south road between Hunan and Kwangtung. It is said that in these districts of southern Hunan they enlisted about 50,000 men.<sup>1</sup> The T'ien Wang settled himself in Chenchow for a time while the Western King, Hsiao Ch'aokwei, and Lin Fenghsiang with a picked force moved rapidly north on Changsha, hoping to take the city by surprise. They all but succeeded, as their appearance before the south walls of the city on September 10th, 1852, was so sudden that they almost entered the city before the gates could be closed. All that saved the city was the fact that the rebels mistook the tower of the southeast corner of the wall for the south gate, and the delay consequent on this error gave the authorities time to man the gate.<sup>2</sup> In the engagement that followed the Western King, Hsiao Ch'aokwei, was killed. Hsiao was credited with being the most talented battle leader among the original Kings, and he was the strictest disciplinarian among a group that were conspicuous for Spartan discipline.

When the T'ien Wang heard of the death of Hsiao, he moved at once from Chenchow and closed in on Changsha with the entire rebel force. They had collected

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<sup>1</sup> *T'ai P'ing T'ien Kuo Shih Mo*, p.4.

<sup>2</sup> Hail, *op. cit.*, p.77.

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considerable war material in south Hunan and now made a determined attempt to capture the great and wealthy metropolis of Hunan. It does not appear that it was general practice among the Chinese of that period to invest a city on all sides and the Taipings did not closely invest the north side of Changsha. It probably had a moral effect on the garrison as they thus had an opportunity to escape. However, the defenders of Changsha had no idea of abandoning the city and they defended it with no little courage. The rebels mined the walls and made a breach on November 10th, but the garrison quickly closed it and repelled the rebels. On the 13th they again breached the wall but to no purpose. Finally on November 29th, they mined and breached an 80 foot section of the south wall and again stormed the city. The storming party was again repulsed and the gap closed by the defenders. The rebels were now finding themselves in a precarious situation. Troops from Kwangsi together with Chiang Chungyuan's militia were in a sense besieging the besiegers and had cut off their foraging parties, and the rebels were running short of food. On November 30th, 1852, they raised the siege and moved northwest to Iyang on the Tungting Lake. They intended to go to Changte in order to set up a state in northwest Hunan, but at Iyang they found several thousand boats, so they decided to use them and move downstream with the current.<sup>1</sup>

At the siege of Changsha, Tso Tsungt'ang entered into the chain of developments of the Great Taiping Rebellion.

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<sup>1</sup> *T'ai P'ing T'ien Kuo Mo*, p.5.

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As already mentioned, two years before the storm broke on Hunan he felt that a dangerous situation was developing and had located a hiding place in the mountains for his family. When the rebels broke into southern Hunan he moved his family into this retreat and prepared to await developments.

Chang Liangchi had been transferred from Yunnan to Hunan as governor of the province. Hu Linyi, Tso's great and good friend, was serving in Kweichow, and he wrote to Chang Liangchi, recommending Tso Tsung'ang as a man who could be of the greatest assistance to him in Hunan. Chang, then en route to Hunan, wrote to Tso asking him to come to Changte for an interview. Tso declined the invitation. A short time later, after Chang had reached Changsha and the rebels had invested the city, he again sent for Tso. Tso was with his family in his mountain retreat when the second invitation came and he decided to accept it. He arrived at the north wall on the night of October 8th, 1852, and using a ladder to mount the wall, entered Changsha. The governor took him into his yamen as a military advisor. He set to work at once and during the remainder of the siege, particularly during the storming operations of the rebels in November, attracted much favourable attention by his energy, coolness and courage. It is related that during the siege he scarcely slept, continually making rounds of the defences and taking note of every detail of the dispositions made. However, he had no command, no authority. All he could do was to note, point out and suggest.

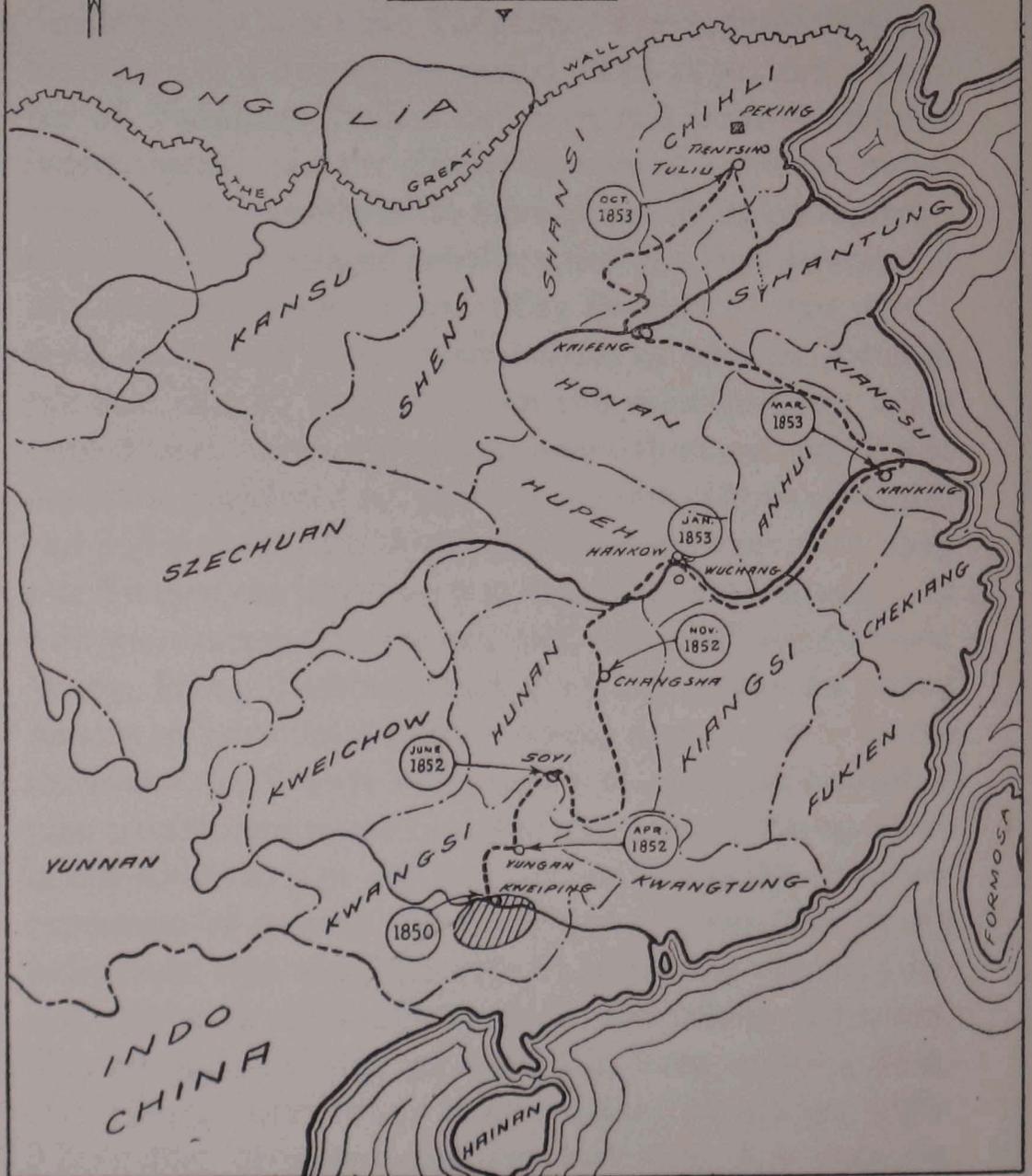
The raising of the siege of Changsha and the decision of the rebels to move down river was a critical point in

the course of the rebellion. Here for the first time was a significant sign of vacillation in the rebel plans, if we are to believe Li Shoucheng, who was present. As mentioned above, they intended to go to Changte and set up a state but finding a large number of boats at Iyang, the T'ien Wang apparently took it as an omen and so decided to go down the Yangtze. The organization had been perfected during the period 1847-1852, and a number of disciplined leaders and men had been thoroughly indoctrinated. In the closing months of 1851 the movement may be considered to have passed from an insurrection into a full fledged rebellion and the bare framework of a state had been set up. The decision to start northward on a burst of conquest instead of making Kwangsi the base and working out from this vantage point was a critical one. Kwangsi was a poor province and it was doubtless considered necessary to get into centres of wealth and population. Li Shoucheng intimates that when they left Yungan the intention was to go into Kwangtung. If such was the case the plan was doubtless that of the T'iente Wang, Hung Tach'uan, and it would appear for many reasons to have been a more logical plan. When it was found that the T'iente Wang had been captured, change of plan would tend to indicate that there was a strong party in opposition to him and that this move was the necessary expression of gaining the ascendancy. There are strong indications that the planning of the rebel organization was the work of Feng Yunshan and Hung Tach'uan. The rebels lost Hung on April 6th, Feng early in June, and Hsiao, their ablest troop leader, September 10th. The nature of such losses was such that they were far

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from being balanced by the gaining of 50,000 recruits in Hunan. The loss of these outstanding leaders was never made up and their passing definitely marked a new phase in the course of the Rebellion.

Sketch  
showing  
The Advance  
of the  
**TAIPINGS**  
1850 - 1853



## CHAPTER IV

### THE TAIPINGS IN THE YANGTZE VALLEY

After raising the siege of Changsha on November 30th, 1852, and finding several thousand boats at the nearby city of Iying, the rebels crossed Tungting Lake and on December 13th took the strategic city of Yochow, overlooking the junction of the waters from Tungting Lake and the Yangtze River. Here they seized an enormous quantity of military supplies alleged to have been stored since the rebellion of Wu Sankwei (1674-78), or for about 175 years—probably a record in modern times for the conservation of military equipment. Moving down the Yangtze they came to the great Wuhan cities of Hanyang, Hankow and Wuchang, situated at the junction of the Han and Yangtze Rivers. Hanyang fell on December 19th and Hankow the following day. After burning Hankow the rebels crossed to the south bank of the river and laid siege to Wuchang. The resistance was negligible and the city fell on January 13th, 1853. The favourable location of the Wuhan cities made them the greatest trading centre in the empire of that period. Moreover, Wuchang was the capital of Hupeh and the seat of the viceroyalty of Hu Kwang,—Hunan and Hupeh. It was the greatest success the rebels had

yet scored and it threw the Imperial authorities in Peking into consternation. They expected an immediate march on Peking.

The signal success of the rebels in the Wuhan cities was due as much to the ineptitude of the authorities as to the skill of the Taipings. It is hard to understand why Wuchang was unable to put up the resistance that Changsha offered, even granting that the rebels had a liberal supply of munitions of war that had been in storage for 175 years. It is also difficult to understand why the rebels made no effort to garrison and hold the Wuhan cities as a base of operations. Instead, they gathered together thousands of boats and embarking the rebel host, said to have numbered some 500,000 souls including men, women and children, abandoned the Wuhan cities on February 8th, 1853.<sup>1</sup> They moved down the Yangtze, plundering a strip along both banks as they went, took the city of Kiukiang on February 17th; Anking, capital of Anhui on February 24th; and on March 8th were before the great city of Nanking. After a short siege of eleven days this important city fell on March 19th, 1853, and of the Manchus in the city, numbering some 20,000 including women and children, not one was left alive. On March 31st, Chingkiang, and on the following day Yangchow, on the north bank of the Yangtze, the two cities controlling the entrances to the Grand Canal, were occupied by the rebels with no opposition. Thus in the short space of 52 days the rebels had moved more than 400 miles down the Yangtze, through the

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<sup>1</sup> Hail, *op. cit.*, p.79.

## THE TAIPINGS IN THE YANGTZE VALLEY

very heart of the empire, and had taken every city along the river from Wuhan to the Grand Canal. Since leaving Changsha they had encountered no effective resistance and the farther they went the less effective the opposition became. By the time they were at Yangchow on the Grand Canal, it looked as though they were free to march through the length and breadth of the Celestial Empire without hindrance.

At Nanking a difference of opinion arose among the rebel leaders as to their future line of action. Some favoured an immediate march on Peking, while others were inclined to stay in Nanking. No attempt was made to reach the sea and take Shanghai. It seems to be the general opinion of all who have studied this period that had the whole body of rebels moved on to Peking no power that the throne could have put into the field would have stopped them; that the Manchus would have fled to Manchuria and the dynasty would have ended so far as China was concerned. However, the T'ien Wang liked Nanking and he decided to make it his capital. He compromised with the opposition by sending under Lin Fenghsiang an army, reputed to have numbered 75,000 men, to invade the north. This army performed one of the most spectacular feats of the war, moving through the provinces of Anhui, Honan, Shansi, and Chihli, again and again defeating the government forces sent to check them, and on October 28th, 1853, reached the village of Tuliu, scarcely 12 miles from Tientsin.<sup>1</sup> Here they were checked, as much by exhaustion and attrition as by force

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<sup>1</sup> Morse, *International Relations of the Chinese Empire*, Vol. I, p.446.

of arms. They were gradually forced back into Shantung where they were finally liquidated without having in the end exercised any positive effect on the final outcome of the war.

The capital of the "Heavenly Kingdom of Great Peace" was now established in Nanking—"the city of learning and pleasure," and having a population at the time of its capture of more than 500,000 souls.

"According to the estimation of the Chinese, nothing is beautiful, nothing is good, nothing is graceful, elegant, or tasteful, but what comes from Nanking or Suchowfu. Being essentially a people of *routine*, we French have only one city which gives the tone and sets the fashion; the Chinese have two. The "fashionables" of the Celestial Empire are divided into schools, one of which belongs to Nanking, the other to Suchowfu, and we know not which of the two is triumphant. As for Peking, the city of the Government, it has no voice whatever in matters of taste and pleasure, but merely enjoys a monopoly of *ennui*. Nanking is the residence of the *litterati*, the men of science, the dancers, the painters, the antiquaries, the jugglers, the physicians, and the courtesans of celebrity. In this charming city are held schools of science, art, and—pleasure; for here pleasure itself is at once an art and a science. . . ."

"The idle rich of every part of the empire go alternately to Suchowfu and Nanking. In these two cities they pass their days in the *ateliers* of painters, or the closets of *savants*, who, like us, are possessed with a mania for gossiping; go to applaud the actors of renown, and wind up in the evening in the company of poets and courtesans. The Kiang-Nan is to a certain extent the Italy of China, where the great business of life is love and poetry. Parents bring up their daughters to profit by their charms. Sometimes they sell them to rich mandarins, sometimes they turn them loose into the world, with their pretty faces and their talents, through which they become nearly the gayest women in the empire, always followed by a troop of lovers with full purses. The women of Nanking are not only the handsomest, but also the most elegant women in China."

". . . The Chinese have a decided taste for aquatic amusements, and never feel their enjoyment complete unless they are afloat. Hence these luxurious boats are inhabited day and night by persons who eat, drink, smoke, and sleep in them. For persons of inferior opulence

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accommodation of less magnificence is provided; but no one is really poor in this soil, which is always productive—under that glorious sky which is all radiant with light—or along those canals which flow beneath the shade of the bamboo, and are perfumed by the *olea fragrans*.”

“Hitherto the insurgents have made numerous recruits on their route; now they have reached the wealthy Kiang-Nan, they will gain adherents, but no more accomplices. Revolutionary attempts, whether for good or evil, have this unfortunate privilege, that they attract all kinds of desperate characters who expect that a change will bring some improvement in their condition; while on the other hand, in those favoured countries where comfort is generally diffused, an insurrectionary army seldom gains many followers. Hence the rebels, though they probably command the sympathy of the masses, must henceforth only reckon on the effective force of their troops, and will have to combat with energy not only the Pekin soldiers who are sent against them, but also the enervating influence of the focus which they have reached.”<sup>1</sup>

Such was the city selected for his capital by the T'ien Wang, or Heavenly King, a man, who in spite of the austerity he demanded in his followers, was himself licentious and pleasure loving. He at once shut himself up in his palace and limited his contacts with the world beyond the palace grounds, and while Nanking quickly lost the gay and pleasant characteristics so glowingly described, there are indications that the world in which the Heavenly King moved retained not a little of the atmosphere of the famous city.

The government, during this remarkable burst of force and power displayed by the Taipings, was practically paralyzed by the shock. The treasury was empty and the army, Manchu and Chinese, useless. The decentralizing tendencies that had long been growing in the provinces, now proved an insurmountable obstacle to the

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<sup>1</sup> Callery & Yvan, *History of the Insurrection in China*, pp.236-240.

Peking Government in concentrating a national army for the suppression of the rebellion and guiding it effectively from the Capital. The throne reacted in a manner characteristic of the times. Decree followed decree directing the officials in the provinces to gather their forces and move against the rebels, rebels who moved so rapidly that they had come and gone from some of the provinces before the Imperial Decrees could reach the despairing officials, and other decrees meting out dire punishment to the luckless officers of the empire followed fast and furious. "One High Commissioner or viceroy after another had fallen, not in battle, but under the awful judgment of an Imperial edict."<sup>1</sup> Not a few of the highest of these officials lost their heads, but no severity and no number of edicts from the Son of Heaven could stop the relentless march of the rebels. The throne was bankrupt not alone in money but in leadership. So complete was the dislocation of the government that it hardly seems possible that it could have survived.

In the initial or Kwangsi stage of the rebellion, the government had relied on the Manchu troops and the Chinese Green Banner, or Regular Army. All the generals sent into Kwangsi to suppress the uprising were high ranking Manchus. They drew from the forces regularly stationed in Kwangtung, Kwangsi, and to some extent from Hunan. The number brought into the field is a matter that it is difficult to determine. The data on troop numbers, both of the rebels and of the government forces, is so unsatisfactory that throughout this study army

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<sup>1</sup> Morse, *op. cit.*, p.447.

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strengths are not generally given and where figures are quoted they are in most cases simply approximations. However, an occasional reference to numbers is necessary in order to preserve a certain objectivity and as an index to the magnitude of the struggle. When the rebels reached Nanking they had passed through provinces that altogether disposed, on paper, regular soldiers to the number of 190,000 men of the Chinese Army and roughly 10,000 Manchu Bannermen, or say 200,000 men.<sup>1</sup> But these troops were distributed throughout the provinces and in each province were under a provincial official who was solely responsible for his province and concerned himself little with his neighbour's troubles. There was no officer who had the power to order the troops from Kwangtung to move into Hunan. Only the Emperor could do this, and when these troops did so move into other provinces they still remained under the command of their own officers as independent units. There was no commanding general who could mobilize a force of regulars gathered from various provinces and dispose of them in an effort to meet the rebels. After the rebels left Kwangsi each province had to meet them separately with no assistance from adjoining provinces. Thus the system fostered by the throne in order to prevent the military in the provinces from getting out of hand left it with nothing in the provinces to meet the situation when the people got out of hand.

The numbers of the rebels are even more uncertain. Meadows estimates the number in arms at the taking of

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<sup>1</sup> Hail, *op. cit.*, pp.4-12.

Nanking at between 60,000 and 80,000.<sup>1</sup> Callery and Yvan put the number at 50,000.<sup>2</sup> Both were contemporary observers and their estimates have weight. However, besides the troops that the rebels had organized and reduced to units, there were thousands of men who had followed them in their triumphant march from Kwangsi. The rebels had not had time or opportunity to organize and reduce them to military discipline. It appears that immediately upon the fall of Nanking they gave immediate attention to organizing these thousands into armies. The northern expedition is alleged to have numbered 75,000. Another army was sent back up the Yangtze to reoccupy the cities that had been taken and abandoned on the way down. Still another army was sent into the interior of Anhui, and another into Kiangsi. There was no limit to the man power that the rebels disposed of after the taking of Nanking. They were only limited by their ability to reduce them to form and provide arms and equipment. Such arms and equipment as they had were mediaeval, not to say ancient, but they were about as good as the government's equipment, while in discipline and in ability to handle large bodies of troops the rebels were far superior to the government. Discipline suffered after they left Kwangsi, as in their expansion practically every man in the army at the time of leaving Yungan, probably numbering 12,000, was made an officer. By the very nature of the case many of them were unfit for the higher duties and responsibilities.

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<sup>1</sup> *Chinese and Their Rebellions*, p.173.

<sup>2</sup> *History of the Insurrection in China*, p.220.

## THE TAIPINGS IN THE YANGTZE VALLEY

The northern expedition of the rebels gave an excellent demonstration of the military incompetence of the Manchus. There were disposed in the province of Chihli for the protection of Peking, roughly 140,000 Manchu Bannermen, and the Chinese regulars numbered roughly 49,000, while the provinces of Honan, Shantung and Shansi through which the rebels passed, had, on paper, another 62,000 Chinese regulars. Yet the throne had to call on the Mongol Prince, Senkolintsin, to bring his warriors from Mongolia for the protection of the capital. He is the one who is credited with stopping the rebels—within a hundred miles of Peking. The rebels were reinforced at least once<sup>1</sup> from Nanking, but the wastage on such a long march, continually harassed as they were by government forces, was naturally very great, and it does not appear that the Taipings gained recruits in North China as they did in the south and along the Yangtze.

At the close of the year 1853, the northern expedition was still holding its position just south of Tientsin; new armies from Nanking had over-run practically the whole of Anhui, all the cities on the river below Wuchang had been reoccupied, much of Kiangsi had been occupied and they were besieging Nanchang, capital of Kiangsi. During the year 1853, the government forces had not won a single battle and had only just managed to contain the exhausted northern expedition. In the field of revenue the disorganization and loss was on a scale comparable to the military debacle.

Since the central government was bankrupt in military

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<sup>1</sup> Hail, *op. cit.*, p.85.

power, leadership and in finances, it was left to the provinces to do the best they could to pull themselves together, effect some sort of a concert and restore the situation. In most cases the initial shock had proved too much for them and they did nothing for some time. In Hunan, however, the situation was conspicuously different. The government and the people rallied immediately, determined to do something about the matter, and by their energy and example saved the dynasty.

On the entry of the rebels into Hunan they were met by a force of 2,000 militia under Chiang Chungyuan that severely defeated them at Soyi Ferry, and later contributed heavily to raising the siege of Changsha. He had conclusively demonstrated that the militia were incomparably superior to the regulars, and it began to dawn on the provincial authorities and eventually in Peking, that if order was to be restored dependence would have to be placed on something other than the regulars and the Manchu Bannermen. The Taipings had left Hunan but in their wake the province was harried by a rash of banditry that broke out in almost every part of the province. Chiang and his small force of militia did excellent service in suppressing banditry and the provincial government raised other units that gradually restored a measure of control in the more important centres of the province.

At this time Tseng Kuofan was at his home in Hsiang-hsiang, central Hunan, in mourning for his mother. He had already established a reputation for scholarship, had gained considerable experience in the Boards at Peking,

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and was well and favourably known in the capital. He was totally deficient in military training or experience, but in Peking that was not considered to be any handicap, since he was a Hanlin scholar. So, toward the end of 1852, the Governor of Hunan received a mandate from Peking informing him that Tseng was in retirement in Hunan, and that he was to be directed, in accordance with the Emperor's will, to give his attention to the enlistment and organization of volunteers in Hunan for military service.<sup>1</sup>

Early in 1853, Tseng Kuofan set about the enlistment and organization of a volunteer army which eventually became known throughout the empire as the "Hsiang Chun" or "Hunan Army." It was not an easy task, as in the beginning he had to contend with the vested interests of the old army and with the general opposition inherent in anything new in an old country. But in the course of the year he made considerable headway. During the organization period the troops were given some excellent preliminary field work in bandit suppression. Tseng, being a Hunanese, was of the opinion that Hunan should be restored to order before the new army took the field against the Taipings. He realized that in order to keep this force in the field after it left the borders of Hunan he would have to depend on the province for replacements and funds. Throughout the year, Peking continually urged him to move eastward against the rebels, but Tseng stuck to Hunan until he was ready to move. Chiang Chungyuan with his small army had been sent

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<sup>1</sup> Hail, *op. cit.*, p.147.

## Tso Tsungt'ang

down the river to operate against the rebels in Kiangsi. He was then promoted to the post of Governor of Anhui and in action against the rebels early the following year he was defeated and committed suicide. Thus disappeared from the scene the only man who had so far shown any talent as a troop leader against the rebels.

Tso Tsungt'ang had served as a military advisor to the Governor, Chang Liangchi, during the siege of Changsha. Chang was promoted to Viceroy of Hunan and Hupeh, and Lo Pingchang became Governor of Hunan. After the rebels evacuated Wuchang in February 1854, Chang went to Wuchang and he took Tso Tsungt'ang with him. He recommended Tso to the throne for an appointment to office and as a result Tso received the honorary designation of Magistrate, but no post. The Viceroy stated that he only had three men, including Tso, on whom he could fully depend, and that Tso could handle any part of the work in a Viceroy's yamen. The Viceroy and Lo Pingchang together now recommended Tso for an appointment and he was offered an Independent Department, but he declined. In the fall of 1853, Viceroy Chang was transferred to Shantung and was succeeded by Wu Wenjung as Viceroy of Hu Kwang. Whether Wu did not want Tso to work for him or whether Tso did not care to stay is not stated, but in November he returned to his home in Hunan.

The annals do not give any reason for Tso's refusal of the appointment as chief of an independent department, but a letter written the following year to Liu Hsiahsien, secretary to Tseng Kuofan, would seem to explain the matter. He felt that he was too big a man for such a

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post. The reference to "Wu Hsiang Ho" is another name for Chu Keliang, a great hero of the Chinese. Tso always liked to think of himself as a Chu Keliang. The letter says in substance:

"I received your letter saying that Tseng is thinking of recommending "Wu Hsiang Ho" for an appointment as a Prefect. This is not an act of friendship. If I wished to become such an official, I could do it, but I do not want to be a Prefect. For twenty years I wanted to be a District Magistrate and I would have been a good District Magistrate. Although a Prefect is higher than a District Magistrate he has no authority and no contact with the people. I do not want such a post. No, a Prefect never has any contact with the people and though he has several officials under him they do not fear him. His responsibilities are great but his authority is not equal to his responsibilities. Therefore I do not want to be a Prefect.

Now, there are the posts of Viceroy and Governor, having power and authority over a whole province. Such a post would give proper scope for my talents. However, such posts are not easy to step into suddenly. If "Wu Hsiang Ho" were given a blue button, he would have to change his cap. If "Wu Hsiang Ho" were given a "Hua Ling," he would have to change his fan. "Wu Hsiang Ho" could hardly afford to do this because people would laugh at him. No, I do not approve of it. (Becoming a prefect).

I am sure that Tseng is a straightforward man and never of his own accord would have thought of this. It must have been Hu Linyi who proposed it to Tseng. Hu Linyi always likes to do things for people that he thinks will tickle their vanity. I have always said Hu Linyi did not understand me, and you can see from this that he does not. If the proposition of appointing me to a Prefecture is brought up I will be very much put out. In case the matter has already been dropped, do not say anything about it, but if it comes up again please explain carefully to Tseng how I feel about the matter.

I am not thinking of quitting. I am anxious to do something for my country. When this war is over, then we can talk more about prestige. However, if they insist on my becoming a Prefect I will indeed go home."<sup>1</sup>

When Lo Pingchang heard that Tso was unemployed he sent for him to enter his service as chief military

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<sup>1</sup> *Tso Wen Hsiang Kung Shu Tu*, Vol. II, p.28.

## Tso Tsungt'ang

advisor. Tso declined at first but when the offer was repeated he accepted. In the meantime, the Taipings, early in 1854, again raided northern Hunan. Apparently they had heard about Tso Tsungt'ang as they sent a party to search for him in his mountain retreat. Tso got word of their coming and escaped with his family to Changsha. He entered the Yamen of the Governor as Chief Military Advisor, April 5th, 1854.

While Tseng Kuofan was raising the new army not a little friction arose between him and the provincial authorities. Bandits all over the province were causing the Governor much worry and he authorized an expectant official, Wang Hsin, to raise a volunteer force for the defence of Changsha. Forthwith Wang and Tseng came into conflict. Tso Tsungt'ang and Wang Hsin were very good friends and it appears that in this conflict Tso became a partisan of Wang. It is even possible that Wang Hsin aspired to replacing Tseng as organizer of the Hunan Army, but in any event it is clear that Tseng had no use for Wang Hsin. It was not strange if this dislike tended to include Wang's friends. Hail says that during the operations around Changsha in the spring of 1854, Wang had a skirmish in which some thirty rebels were killed and which he reported as a great victory. "When the joint memorial was being prepared about military affairs, Tseng looked over the draft and approved it. But as to the final copy which was sent to the Central Government Tso Tsungt'ang added to and took away some of the sections, and among the changes thus made was an account of a false victory. This stirred Tseng to

## THE TAIPINGS IN THE YANGTZE VALLEY

great indignation."<sup>1</sup> It might be observed that at this stage of the rebellion the most trivial success would have appeared a smashing victory to a distraught government, and that the most common human tendency is to minimize the successes of those we dislike and magnify those that fall to the men we admire. It is most probable that the exploit of Wang Hsin appealed very differently to his friends than to Tseng Kuofan. It seems that Tseng never forgot this little affair. It was the beginning of the rift between Tseng Kuofan and Tso Tsung'ang that culminated ten years later after the fall of Nanking in a violent break between these two distinguished sons of Hunan.

The rebel forces moving up the Yangtze from Nanking captured Wuchang on June 26th, 1854. Scattered bands had been operating in Hunan for some months, giving Tseng and the provincial authorities all they could do to keep them in check. In April, Tseng tried his hand as a field commander but was defeated by the rebels and became so dispirited that he twice attempted suicide.<sup>2</sup> He became convinced that he was no troop leader and did not again try to lead troops in action. However, he continued as the head of the Hunan Army, and by the autumn had so far succeeded in clearing Hunan that he moved on Wuchang. This great city, together with Hanyang and Hankow on the north side of the river, was taken by assault on October 14th, 1854, and marked the first conspicuous success of the government in combating

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<sup>1</sup> Hail, *op. cit.*, p.157.

<sup>2</sup> Hail, *op. cit.*, p.164.

a revolt that had been going on for four years. Tseng now started for Nanking and the hopes of Peking were the brightest they had been for years. But the system which the government held to was too much of a weight for vigorous and successful military operations. Tseng was the commander-in-chief but his power was limited to his small Hunan Army and to such persuasion as he was able to exercise over the officials of the various provinces. It was almost ten years from the time Tseng left Wuchang before he was able to enter Nanking. It must be said to his credit, however, that he never lost hope or wavered in his determination.

Tseng Kuofan's objective was Nanking and he never lost sight of it. Again and again he was defeated by the rebels and his cause seemed hopeless but he refused to be whipped. His spirit and determination excite the greatest admiration, though such admiration can hardly be extended to his military talents. However, Tseng Kuofan never claimed to be a soldier but ever considered himself a civil official. In the course of the long drawn out effort to suppress the rebellion he came to be the symbol of resistance to the rebels and his personality became the rallying point of the loyalists. Down to 1860, when he was appointed Viceroy of Liang Kiang, embracing the provinces of Anhui, Kiangsi and Kiangsu, his position was somewhat anomalous. He was the generalissimo in a sense but his power was hazy and rested largely on his talent for persuading provincial officials to cooperate rather than the power to command them. In the beginning the government was apparently suspicious of him and sent the Manchu Kuan-wen to

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Wuchang to keep an eye on Tseng and his Chinese associates.

The course of military operations from the time Tseng left Wuchang until the fall of Nanking is a veritable jigsaw puzzle and well nigh beyond the grasp of a westerner. One of the features most difficult to appreciate is the fact that throughout this period government forces were hovering around Nanking, never far away, occasionally in close investment, but always there. Great armies of the Taipings came and went from Nanking, ravaging the provinces far and wide, inflicting disastrous defeats on the armies of the Central Government, and taking hundreds of walled cities. They defeated the forces investing Nanking several times but never succeeded in effectively scattering them. Always they quickly returned like flies around a jar of honey. The rebels, never lacking recruits, kept enormous bodies of men in the field for years, but their purposeful, concentrated, anti-dynastic movement gradually degenerated into nothing more than an excuse for plunder and robbery. The loss of the three great leaders in the first stage of their invasion into the heart of China began to be apparent in their lack of a constructive programme which should have followed their initial military successes. Morse says:

“The Taiping government is not known to have organized any form of civil administration, even in Nanking itself. Its process of levying taxes for the maintenance of the court and army was simplicity itself; it took everything in sight. It could live for a time on the money and food found in the public treasuries and granaries; but these supplies must some day be exhausted, and then the only resource was to draw on the personal wealth of the country. The armed forces of the Taipings captured and recaptured city after city, abandoning all except a few held for military reasons, but thoroughly pillaging

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each on each occasion of its capture; they spread in all directions over the country, and, in the years 1853-59, throughout the provinces of Hupeh, Anhui, Kiangsi, and the western part of Kiangsu, the portable wealth of the well-to-do was gathered up and carried to Nanking and the other cities held by Taiping garrisons; and what the Taipings may have spared was taken by the Imperial forces. The country was devastated; its wealth was dissipated; its life-blood was wasted; and the wild pheasant nested in the suburbs of what had been the wealthiest and most populous cities of the empire."<sup>1</sup>

Through these years of disaster, Tso Tsungt'ang remained on the personal staff of Lo Pingchang, Governor of Hunan. He held no substantive post, simply that of Chief Military Advisor to the Governor, and did not appear on the list of Imperial Officials. However, he managed to make himself a man of no little importance. He once said that at first Lo Pingchang watched him very closely but before the first year was out the Governor asked for his opinion about all matters that arose and usually accepted his opinion.<sup>2</sup> Liang Ch'i-ch'ao says that Lo Pingchang was a man of ordinary talent and little energy, that he was much addicted to wine and women, that he did not overly concern himself with the heavy duties of his office, and that to all intents and purposes Tso Tsungt'ang was the real governor of Hunan.<sup>3</sup> If such was the case the province of Hunan was fortunate as during this distracted period it was the best governed province in the empire. Under such circumstances it was natural that Tso Tsungt'ang should be very much disliked by an officialdom jealous of its prerogatives. His natural disposition did not help matters much and

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<sup>1</sup> Morse, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p.454-5.

<sup>2</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. II, p.3 (a).

<sup>3</sup> *Note on Chou Yinkun's collection of Tso's Letters*, 1914.

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it soon became noised about that Tso Tsungt'ang was a hard man to get along with. His fame reached the Emperor and he began to make inquiries about Tso. A Censor had strongly recommended him in a memorial to the throne saying: "If he were called to undertake the sole responsibility for the government of a province, his accomplishments would not be inferior to those of Hu Linyi (then governor of Hupeh) and others of similar ability."<sup>1</sup> Tso's old neighbour Kuo Sungtao had an audience with the Emperor and in the course of it the Emperor asked very closely about Tso Tsungt'ang, about his ability, his disposition, and why he did not seem to work well with others. Kuo gave Tso Tsungt'ang a high rating for ability, but reported adversely on his disposition. He said that Tso was dictatorial, overbearing, uncompromising and very outspoken; that he got along well with very few men, but seemed to do very well with Lo Pingchang. The Emperor indicated that he was favourably disposed toward Tso, despite his disposition, and would like to make use of him but hardly knew where he would fit into the general scheme of officialdom. He was also inclined to feel that as Tso was fast approaching fifty, he would soon be too old to be of much service to the government.<sup>2</sup>

Tso Tsungt'ang was in fact rendering the greatest service to his country during these years. He devoted every effort to supporting the Hunan Army which was operating under Tseng Kuofan in Anhui and Kiangsi,

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. II, p.14 (a).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p.15 (a).

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and during this period the province of Hunan was practically carrying on the war singlehanded. Tseng recognized his contribution to the cause, as in 1856 in a memorial to the throne he commended Tso for his zeal and assistance in supplying the army. As a result of this citation Tso was awarded the title of Senior Secretary of the Board of War and was given a peacock feather.<sup>1</sup> His old friend, Hu Linyi, never lost an opportunity to recommend him for position and often tried to use his influence with Tseng to get Tso a command in the field. But Tseng did not like Tso. The two men were so entirely different in temperament that it was inevitable that they should not get along well together. Tseng wanted tractable men in the new army and he knew Tso well enough to hesitate to give him a command. So Tso Tsungt'ang continued in the yamen of the Governor of Hunan.

However, in 1859, an incident arose that determined Tso to leave the service of Lo Pingchang. It happened that a worthless official had been cashiered through Tso's influence. He had accumulated a well assorted collection of enemies by this time and they used this incident to make representations to the throne that the Governor of Hunan was nothing but a tool in the hands of Tso Tsungt'ang. An investigation was ordered by the throne and Tso was ordered to Wuchang for the inquiry. It might have gone badly for Tso had not Hu Linyi been Governor of Hupeh and thus in a position to intercede directly with the Viceroy. Through his efforts the matter

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. II, p.19 (b).

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was dropped.<sup>1</sup> Tso Tsungt'ang now made up his mind that he would again go to Peking and try for the third degree. He left Changsha in February 1860, and, after spending a few days at his home in Hsiangyin, he set out for Peking. When he arrived at Hsiangyang, Hupeh, March 24th, he received a letter from Hu Linyi asking him to come to Tseng's headquarters, then at Susung, Anhui, for a conference. Instead of going to Peking, Tso returned to Hankow and went to Susung where he spent several weeks in Tseng Kuofan's headquarters.<sup>2</sup>

The conference Hu Linyi had mentioned was in connection with a projected drive on Anking. Tso Tsungt'ang offered to lead one of the columns that was to move on the city. Tseng refused to allow it and told Tso that sending him to command troops in the field would be like drawing legs on a snake.<sup>3</sup> However, the situation soon took a decided change for the worse. The rebels made one of their periodic assaults on the forces hovering around Nanking and scattered them. They then made a raid into Chekiang, gained some distinct successes in southern Anhui, and threatened Kiangsi. Moreover, the British and French were gathering for the campaign against Peking and the final phase of the Arrow War, 1856-60. The security of Szechuan was being threatened by the rebel leader, Shih Takai, the only survivor of the original Taiping Wangs. Tseng was harried during the spring of 1860 by repeated urgings from Peking to do something. Tseng was in a precarious

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. II, pp.31-2.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p.33.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p.33.

## Tso Tsungt'ang

position and he finally yielded to the urgings of Hu Linyi and authorized Tso to raise an army and take the field. In the meantime Hu Linyi had directly memorialized the throne on the subject and an Imperial rescript authorizing Tso Tsungt'ang to recruit 5,000 men in Hunan for service in Anhui and Kiangsi, and appointing him an assistant to Tseng Kuofan was received in Changsha, June 26th.<sup>1</sup> Tso left Susung and returned to Hunan, arriving in Changsha June 23rd, 1860.

He at once set about recruiting his army. He wrote to several friends asking them to join with him. He selected Wang Kaihua, a brother of Wang Hsin, to be his chief of staff, Liu Tien and Yang Ch'angchun as his chief Assistants. They enlisted men for the force as follows:

From Wang Hsin's old troops .....	1,440
Four <i>Ying</i> of 500 each .....	2,000
Four Special <i>Shao</i> , or companies of 320 men each ..	1,280
Bodyguard .....	200
Total .....	4,920

These men were mustered outside of Changsha on July 21st, 1860, and began a period of training.

At this time the government became very much excited about the situation in Szechuan and Tseng was asked whether or not Tso Tsungt'ang would be equal to the situation in that province. Just a year before there had been a similar scare over Szechuan and at that time the throne was on the point of sending Tseng there. The

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. II, p.35 (b).

## THE TAIPINGS IN THE YANGTZE VALLEY

same argument was now used to keep Tso from going. It was argued that Szechuan was a province of such wealth and population that it could easily take care of itself. In any event Tso and his 5,000 men would be of little use in Szechuan, while in Kiangsi they might be decisive. By the time it was decided that Tso would go to Kiangsi he had given his army two months' intensive drilling. On Sept. 22nd, 1860, Tso Tsungt'ang and his little army of five thousand moved out of Changsha for Nanchang, Kiangsi.

He was 49 years of age, according to the Chinese way of reckoning, 48 to use the western way, when he started on his career as a soldier—an age when it is considered by many that a general is superannuated.

## CHAPTER V

# TSO TSUNGT'ANG'S CAMPAIGNS IN KIANGSI AND CHEKIANG

The general situation in the Celestial Empire at the time that Tso Tsung'tang was leading his little army overland from Changsha to support Tseng Kuofan in northeastern Kiangsi was as hopeless as could well be imagined. The British and French were in occupation of Peking; the Emperor and his court had fled to Jehol, north of the Great Wall; in southern Chihli, Honan and Shantung a group of rebels called the Nienfei were running at large devastating the countryside and defying the government; the Taipings had made a wreck of central China and still held most of Anhui, much of Kiangsi, and practically the whole of Kiangsu and Chekiang; bandits and rebels with no particular affiliations were operating in Fukien, Kwangtung and Kwangsi to such an extent that the authority of the government extended scarcely beyond the walls of the provincial capitals; Yunnan was in the midst of the Great Panthay Rebellion; Shih Tak'ai, one of the most feared of the Taiping leaders, had broken away from the organization in Nanking and was in Kweichow, reputedly en route to Szechuan to set up an empire

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of his own; and there were rumblings in Shensi and Kansu presaging the great Mohammedan uprising that was to break out in fury a year or so later. The writ of the Son of Heaven had all but ceased to run throughout the length and breadth of China. Only in the province of Hunan had the government been kept intact by the loyalty, zeal and energy of a few men; here it had been able not only to look after itself without external aid, but had essentially assumed the burden of the war with the Taipings.

The particular situation in the struggle with the Taipings was better than it had been and but for the general dislocation of the empire would have been relatively favourable. However, the distractions elsewhere had given the rebels renewed hope and earlier in the year they had moved eastward into Kiangsu, a field they had neglected for nearly eight years. In all the province only Shanghai had escaped them, and that due entirely to the presence of European troops and warships. In Chekiang the provincial capital was still held by government forces, but with the exception of a few scattered walled cities, the whole of the province was overrun by rebels. In Anhui all the cities and towns had been taken and retaken so many times that it was scarcely worth fighting for. The Imperialist forces were still hovering about Nanking and one of Tseng's armies was closely investing Anking. In Kiangsi the province had been cleared earlier in the year, but by fall the rebels had again broken into the northeastern section and were threatening to overrun the whole province. In general, however, the theatre of operations with the Taipings had been restricted and no longer did the rebel armies wander quite so far afield.

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In so far as a plan of operations is discernible it appears that Tseng Kuofan aimed at keeping open as much of the Yangtze as he could, clearing and holding a wide strip on each side of the river, and gradually moving down river with Nanking as the objective. He tried to deny the country bordering on the river to the rebels, but he failed so repeatedly in this attempt that his operations almost lose a sense of sequence. The main battle ground up to 1860 had been Hupeh, Anhui and Kiangsi. Gradually Tseng's armies became stronger, these provinces became steadily less profitable territory for plunder, and the rebels then turned their attentions to Kiangsu and Chekiang.

On the rebel side there was a well defined plan of operations in the beginning and it seemingly persisted for about a year after they took Nanking. Thereafter, if they had any definite, concerted plan to consolidate their empire, their operations fail to show it. Under no reasonable military hypothesis does it become apparent why the Taipings, with the armies they had in the field, allowed the government to keep a force in being before Nanking for ten years. Moreover, the government forces were always more or less dispersed, their mobility much less than that of the rebels, and they were much inferior in numbers. It would appear that the opportunities were numerous for the rebels to have concentrated successively on the government armies and annihilated them in detail. Instead they captured, sacked and abandoned city after city; forced an entry or exit at Nanking, apparently at will; and repeated the process to no apparent purpose year after year and over much the same ground.

## CAMPAIGNS IN KIANGSI AND CHEKIANG

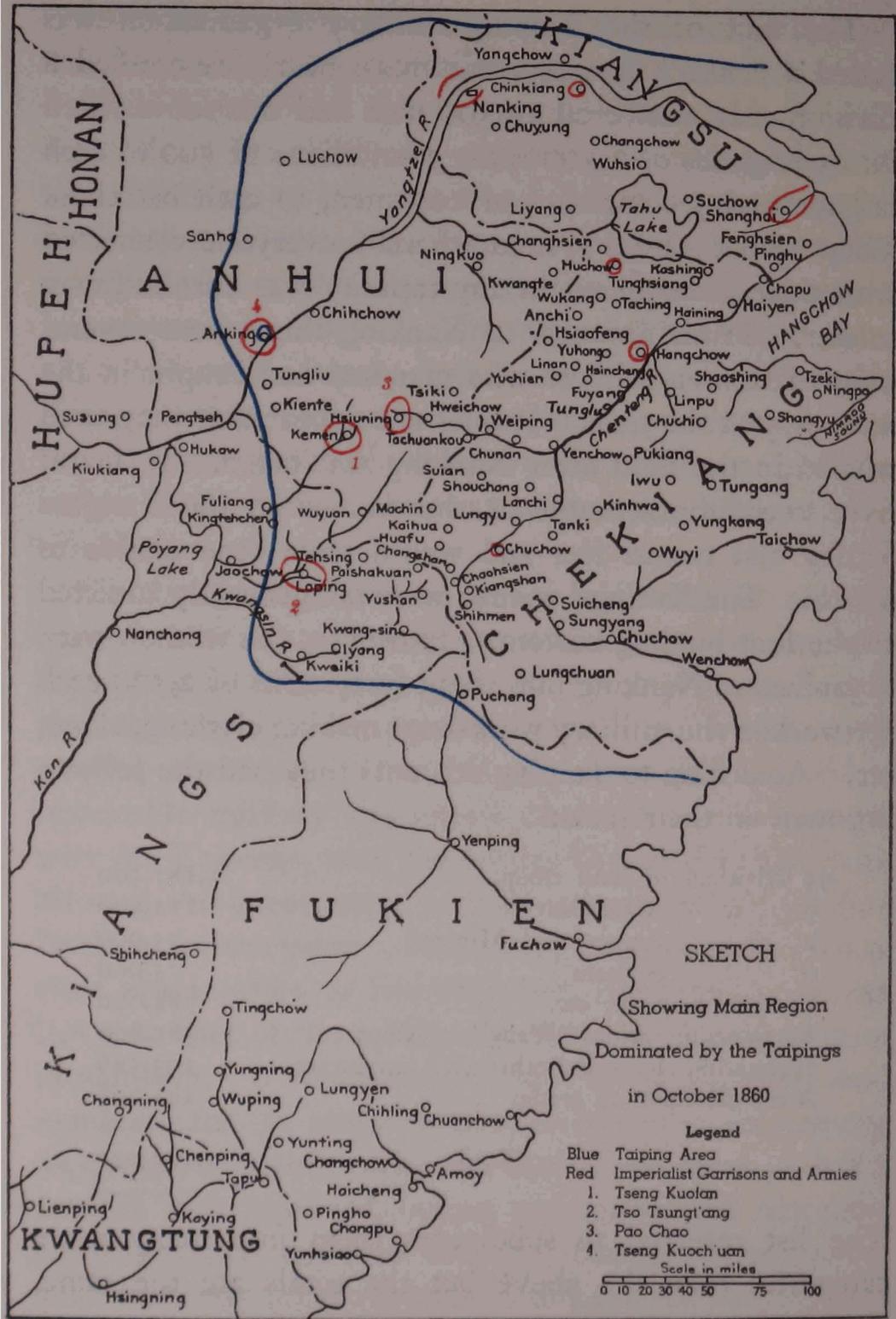
The unit of the Taiping military organization was called a "chun" or army, but more nearly resembled a division. It numbered 12,500 men and was sub-divided into 5 brigades of 2,500 each, 5 battalions of 500 to each brigade and 5 companies of 100 men, to each battalion. They tried to use a system whereby everyone connected with their government in any capacity was enrolled as a soldier. From Kwangsi to Nanking there were several units of women soldiers who marched and fought in the same way as the men. It does not appear that they used women in the field after Nanking was taken. It would have been impracticable as the women in the Yangtze Valley had bound feet and would have been unable to march. The Kwangsi women were not generally addicted to the foot binding custom. However, the women were organized in Nanking into about forty units of 2,500 each for work in the military workshops making clothing, shoes, etc. According to Taiping accounts they had the following men on their rolls:<sup>1</sup>

95 Divisions of land troops .....	1,187,500
9 ,, River Navy .....	112,500
2 ,, Sappers and Miners .....	25,000
6 ,, Artisans .....	75,000
Carriers, servants, etc. ....	784,000
Retainers of various "Wang" or Kings .....	585,800
Secretaries, clerks and other civil employees ..	193,526
Army officers of all grades .....	121,695
Total .....	3,085,021

The list referred to subdivides them into many more categories than the above but the totals are the same.

<sup>1</sup> *T'ai P'ing T'ien Kuo Yeh Shih*, Vol. III, p.63.

# Tso Tsung'ang



SKETCH

Showing Main Region

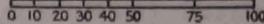
Dominated by the Taipings

in October 1860

**Legend**

- Blue Taiping Area
- Red Imperialist Garrisons and Armies
- 1. Tseng Kuolan
- 2. Tso Tsung'ang
- 3. Pao Chao
- 4. Tseng Kuoch'uan

Scale in miles



## CAMPAIGNS IN KIANGSI AND CHEKIANG

According to this list the land and river forces totalled 1,300,000 men. It is not believed that the Taipings ever had at any one time such a number of men in the field. If they did the outcome of the war is certainly a sad commentary on their leadership. In government reports the forces of the Taipings were generally given in tens of thousands but it is reasonably certain that their numbers were somewhat exaggerated.

During the summer Tseng Kuofan had moved his headquarters from Susung to Kemen, southern Anhui. In October Tso Tsung'ang arrived at Loping, north-eastern Kiangsi. Tseng's armies were then disposed about as follows: Tseng was at Kemen; Tso, at Loping; Pao Chao and Chang Yunlan, at Hsiuning, Anhui; and Tseng's brother, Tseng Kuoch'uan, investing Anking. Small garrisons held the principal cities to the west of the general line Anking-Kemen-Loping. However, the rebels were making another surge westward, captured Hweichow and Wuyuan, entered Kiangsi and were soon in the valley of the Kwangsin River threatening Jaochow.

Tso Tsung'ang divided his forces,—it was rather a hazardous step to divide 5,000 raw levies in the face of the enemy—and on November 11th sent 1,400 south to Kweiki. This detachment had three engagements with the rebels around Kweiki, driving them eastward toward Chekiang. Instead of going into Chekiang the rebels turned north to Tehsing. The Kweiki detachment returned to Loping and Tso moved in force on Tehsing, capturing it on Dec. 12th, and following the rebels, took Wuyuan on Dec. 14th. The rebels fled into Chekiang. Another force of rebels captured the towns of Kiente and

## Tso TSUNGT'ANG

Tungliu and, crossing into Kiangsi, captured Pengtseh, on the Yangtze. The Taipings now appeared south of Nanchang, on the western shore of Poyang Lake, at Fuliang, attacked the besieging force at Anking, and surrounded Tseng at Kemen. They seemed to be everywhere at once and in Kiangsi were led by the Chung Wang and the Shih Wang, two of the leading rebel commanders during the late period of the rebellion.<sup>1</sup>

Tso moved his force to Kingtechen, where he was attacked on December 25th. The rebels were repulsed and Tso occupied the neighbouring town of Fuliang. On January 4th, 1861, a body of the rebels moving from the west attacked Tso simultaneously at Kingtechen and Fuliang but were defeated. Tseng at Kemen was in a very tight place and for a few weeks about all that could be done was to keep open the line of communication between Kingtechen and Kemen, and give some support to Pao Chao who was operating against Kiente. In March the rebel pressure eased somewhat and Tseng recaptured Hsiuning on the 12th. The Shih Wang now turned his attention to Tso and on March 22nd besieged Loping. Tseng sent a detachment to hold Kingtechen and ordered Tso to move to Jaochow, where the rebels were in force. On April 8th he defeated them near the Lake and then moved on Loping. The rebels had left that place and moved on Kingtechen and Tso arrived at Loping about the same time that the rebels took Kingtechen. The Shih Wang then moved on Loping but was repulsed April 14th and returned to Kingtechen.

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. II, p.38.

## CAMPAIGNS IN KIANGSI AND CHEKIANG

Tseng started operations against Hweichow, April 13th, but was defeated on the 21st and forced to fall back on Hsiuning. The Shih Wang gathered all the rebels in the vicinity to Kingtechen and moved on Loping. Tso is credited with defeating them between Loping and Kingtechen April 17th, but the rebels were reinforced and he was soon surrounded in Loping. They made a determined attempt to take Loping on the 22nd and again on the 23rd but were driven off with heavy losses. In the meantime Tseng had sent Pao Chao to assist Tso and he seized Kingtechen. The rebels seem to have been discouraged by the loss of Kingtechen and by their heavy losses at Loping for they now began a general movement in the direction of Chekiang. Tseng moved his headquarters to Tungliu while Tso pursued the rebels through Tehsing as far as Kwangsin. Another group of the Taipings from Chihchow, Anhui, now made a sudden raid past Kiente threatening Kingtechen, and Tso hurried back to meet this threat, arriving in Kingtechen, June 14th. The rebels were soon driven back into Anhui and Kiente was recovered June 26th. They now evacuated Hweichow, going into Chekiang. That part of Anhui south of the line Anking-Hweichow was cleared for the time being. Tso left 1,000 men to garrison Kingtechen and on July 9th, 1861, established himself with the rest of his army in Wuyuan, a town covering an important approach to Kiangsi. He stayed in Wuyuan until November.

Tso Tsung'ang's first campaign was finished. Since he arrived in Loping in October of the year before, his little army of recruits had engaged the rebels more than twenty times and several of these engagements were in the class

of big battles in this war. The annalist says that he was successful in every engagement but the sequence of events on one or two occasions makes it seem rather probable that he suffered some minor reverses. But when it is considered that it was his first experience in the field in any capacity; that he was the product of a system of education not particularly conducive to the development of the martial spirit; and when the campaign is considered relative to the conduct of operations through ten years of this war, his standard of performance was particularly high.

It is alleged that the objective of the rebels in this demonstration into Kiangsi, was the raising of the siege of Anking. They thought that Tseng Kuofan would recall his army from Anking to assist in restoring the situation in Kwangsi. To this end they sent an army to attack Tseng's brother before Anking and at the same time poured into Kiangsi, attacking Tseng at every point at about the same time but nowhere in sufficient force to win a decisive battle. Since the government forces were divided by the Yangtze, and from the beginning the initiative was with the rebels, it would appear that the rebels might have readily concentrated the bulk of their forces on the north bank and overwhelmed the army investing Anking before Tseng could have rendered any assistance to his brother. There are occasions in war where a direct approach to the objective has its advantages.

Tseng left his brother to take care of himself before Anking while he sat tight in Kemen, kept his forces south of the Yangtze reasonably close together, held on to as much as possible and strove for local successes. It would

## CAMPAIGNS IN KIANGSI AND CHEKIANG

be labouring the case to try to adduce that Tso Tsung'ang played a decisive role in the operations or that he saved Tseng from certain capture at Kemen. Tseng would probably have held out until the rebels tired and left the area, even if Tso Tsung'ang and his little army had been in Szechuan. This raid does not appear to have been appreciably more serious than several others the rebels had made into Kiangsi. It was characteristic of the Taipings that they did not linger long at any point where resistance was determined and never demonstrated a long sustained effort toward any single objective. It does appear, however, that Tso Tsung'ang in this his first campaign, injected certain features into the conduct of the war that had not heretofore been particularly noticeable. His little army displayed a far greater mobility than had characterized the government forces through ten years of war, showing that the mobility of a force is in no small degree a function of the leader. He displayed on certain occasions a preference for meeting the rebels in the open field instead of around walled towns. He manifested a vigorous offensive spirit, an appreciation of the value of not waiting to be attacked but to seize the initiative and attack first.

Although Tseng Kuofan did not like Tso personally, he was not a man to allow personal prejudices to blind him to the usefulness of anyone who could contribute to his suppression of the rebellion and he was ready to recognize Tso's achievements. Though he did not like the man he liked his performance. He commended Tso very highly to the throne, and recommended him for promotion.

While Tso was in Wuyuan he suffered severely from

## Tso Tsungt'ang

malaria, a disease that is hard on generals, undermining as it does for protracted periods that vigour of mind and body so essential to the conduct of war. The Emperor Hsien Feng died in Jehol, August 20th, 1861, never having returned to his capital after the Anglo-French occupation. He had been interested in Tso Tsungt'ang during a period when few persons were, and was ready to accept the first intimation that Tseng Kuofan was willing to take Tso into his service. The passing of the Emperor was the occasion for a vicious Palace revolt over the regency for the infant Emperor T'ung Chih, who now ascended the throne. Thus at a time when the very existence of the dynasty was depending on the efforts of a few loyal souls along the Yangtze, the Manchus indulged in a palace row hardly in keeping with any serious concern for the welfare of the empire or designed to restore the waning prestige of the Son of Heaven. On the 30th of September, Tso's great friend, Hu Linyi, Governor of Hupeh, died in Wuchang. For more than twenty years he had known and believed in Tso Tsung-t'ang, had stood out for him when no one else would, had protected him in trouble, and was solely responsible for inducing Tseng Kuofan to give him a command. Well can we appreciate Tso's grief at the passing of Hu Linyi. It was a heavy loss also to Tseng Kuofan. During the long years Tseng had been trying to gain the upper hand in the rebellion, Hu Linyi had been his strongest support. In the extraordinary difficulties of raising troops and keeping them supplied, Hu Linyi had been a tower of strength and without his assistance during some of the earlier years Tseng could hardly have stayed in the field.

## CAMPAIGNS IN KIANGSI AND CHEKIANG

Hu Linyi was one of the few men who saw through Tso Tsungt'ang's many faults to his solid virtues. He called Tso "Chu Keliang", the name of the favourite hero of China and the man used by the Chinese as a standard of comparison for their great men. Tso was very fond of this nickname and liked to think of himself as the "modern Chu Keliang". On occasion in very intimate letters to his friends he would sign them "Liao-liang". About the time Tso was recruiting his army in Hunan, Hu Linyi wrote a letter to one Kuo Ichen, also a friend and associate of Tso, in which he said:

" . . . We have now called on Tso Tsungt'ang to raise an army of 5,000 men and I am much worried lest he runs into a lot of difficulties. In your letter you say: 'When Tso selects a man for a task he puts the greatest trust in him and though he makes a mistake in his selection, he will not admit it. Even when he knows he is wrong, he will still insist that he was right.' This is indeed unfortunate. How like 'Chu Keliang'! This spring when he was with us I declined to argue with him because he got angry so easily. Later on when he gains some experience in the field there are a few points I will argue with him. Among all the men I know there is no one that has his ability. When he acquires a lot of experience he will most assuredly make his mark. The Government is now thinking of sending Tso to Szechuan. Please ask 'Chu Keliang' what he thinks of it and write me at once."<sup>1</sup>

Hu Linyi lived long enough to receive some positive indications that in his estimate of "Chu Keliang" he had made no mistake. Tso's campaign in Kiangsi was undoubtedly a source of the keenest satisfaction to him.

On September 5th, 1861, Tseng's brother, Kuoch'uan, captured Anking. Tseng had long considered the taking of Anking a necessary preliminary to moving on Nanking with the Hunan army. He now moved his headquarters

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<sup>1</sup> *Pa Hsien Shu Cha*, p.63.

## Tso Tsungt'ang

to Anking and set about preparations for making a close investment of the Taiping capital. Early in November Tso Tsungt'ang moved from Wuyuan to Kwangsin to guard against the rebels moving from Chekiang into Kiangsi. He wrote to Tseng suggesting that every effort should be made to keep the rebels out of Kiangsi in order to preserve the province as a base of supply. Tso's experience while in Wuyuan had been particularly bitter. A letter written on August 31st, 1861, to his friend Kuo Ichen, gives a glimpse of the difficulties he faced and a singular insight into his character. A free translation of sections of this letter is as follows:

“ . . . I am in sore straits for money to feed my men. I dislike very much to annoy others about my difficulties over money. Since I was a boy I have been poor but I never talked about it. Now, I still dislike to talk about such things even when it concerns my need for army expenses. For five months my troops have not been paid. Tseng Kuofan gave me the revenues of Loping, Fuliang and Wuyuan, but these places are ruined and have no money in them. When I was in the governor's yamen in Hunan, no Hunan troops were ever hungry and when the generals needed money for their troops I saw to it that they got it. It was then that I was given the nickname of “Chu Keliang.” Was it inappropriate?

“ . . . Some time ago here at Wuyuan, with two thousand ill-fed and half sick men I defeated twenty thousand rebels, so you see what a loyal group of men I have. So far in my life I have had two particularly bitter experiences. The first was in 1848 when I was home at ‘The Willows’. It rained every day for so long that nothing could be planted and only grass was growing. There were twelve mouths to feed in my family and everyone was down sick at one time. Everything I had found its way to the pawnshop. The second such an experience is right now. I have 7,000 men, hundreds of them sick and no food. The two situations are similar except for this difference: Then I had my wife at my side to comfort me in my distress; now she is not here.

“ . . . In Hunan there are not a few men who do a lot of tall talking, but their actions don't square with their words. You must not believe them. The Chung Wang is now in Kiangsi. Pao Chao's

## CAMPAIGNS IN KIANGSI AND CHEKIANG

army can just defend itself and no more. In my army the number of sick is not as great as it was some time ago and I ought to be fighting. But, I have no food for the men and so cannot take the field. It is bitter indeed to know that the throne is expecting something from me and that I ought by all means to be doing it, but am thus reduced to inactivity.

"There is much more I would like to write you but I do not dare."

### POST SCRIPT:

"To find good officers is hard, but to find a good general is hard indeed. If the general is capable, good officers become superior, inferior officers become good, and even the incapable ones become of some use. This is a truism. Last year when I was organizing this force I told the Governor that I did not want any of his old battalion commanders. The men I selected were just ordinary men but in the many battles we have been through they have done as well as the officers in any Hunan army,—proof of the above truism!

"I will stop now for I fear you will accuse me of being egotistic."<sup>1</sup>

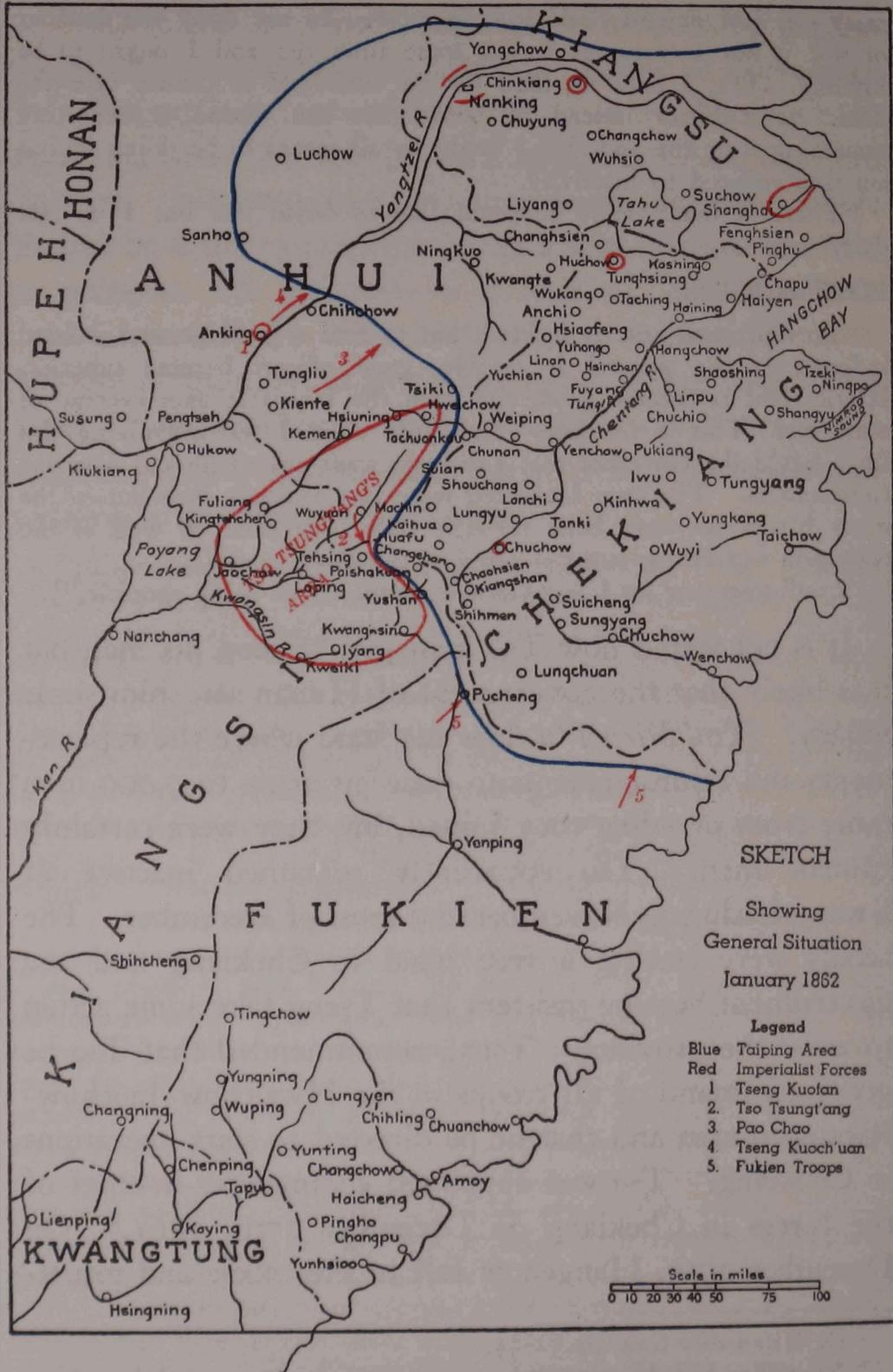
It is not stated how Tso managed to feed his men but it is likely that the government of Hunan sent him some money. The *Nien P'u* does not state where the replacements and reinforcements to raise his army to 7,000 men came from or when they joined, but they were certainly Hunan men. Tso apparently remained inactive at Kwangsin during November and most of December. The rebels were having a free hand in Chekiang and the government became insistent that Tseng take some action to assist the province. Tseng recommended that Tso be given command of all troops in the Hweichow-Jaochow-Kwangsin area and that he be directed to start operations in Chekiang. Tso was appointed commander-in-chief of the forces in Chekiang on December 27th, 1861.<sup>2</sup> On December 29th, Hangchow fell to the rebels and practi-

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<sup>1</sup> *Pa Hsien Shu Cha*, pp.52-55.

<sup>2</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. II, p.44 (a).

# Tso Tsung'tang



SKETCH

Showing  
General Situation

January 1862

## CAMPAIGNS IN KIANGSI AND CHEKIANG

cally the whole province was then in their possession. Tseng now recommended that Tso be made governor of the province and early in January, 1862, he was gazetted Governor of Chekiang. Thus, at one step he received an appointment that in ordinary times only went to men who had passed the highest examination and had a record of successful civil administration behind them. He wrote to his son saying that for ten months he had not taken a city, for which he felt deeply chagrined, and that his family should not feel elated at his new appointment but rather abased that he had done so little to merit the honour.<sup>1</sup>

During the interim between his appointment as commander of the Chekiang military forces and his appointment as Governor, he prepared a long memorial on the general situation and the particular situation in Chekiang. He began in the customary manner by stressing his incompetence for the task in hand; adverted to the fact that practically the whole province was in the hands of the rebels; that to drive the rebels from the province would take much time, money and energy, and that he intended to do battle with the rebels in the open field. He considered the general situation fairly favourable. Kiangsi and Hupeh were clear of rebels, in northern Anhui the campaign was progressing favourably, and the major concentrations of the rebels were in Kiangsu and Chekiang. In southern Anhui he considered the general line Chih-chow-Hweichow vital, and that operations should be pushed toward Ningkuo and Kwangte. In Chekiang the Hunan army should initially operate to relieve Chuchow,

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. II, p.46 (b).

## Tso TSUNGT'ANG

secure western Chekiang and push down the Chentang River while troops from Fukien should occupy southern Chekiang. In this way the roads to Kiangsi would always be open for the transportation of supplies. In regard to Chekiang in particular he said:

“ . . . The disruption of military affairs in Chekiang has been due to the fact that since the beginning of the war successive governors have used all the provincial funds to aid the armies at Nanking and southern Anhui, thinking that by such measures they would protect and screen themselves. But in the matter of training soldiers and selecting capable commanders they had given no thought whatever. After the collapse of the situation about Nanking and southern Anhui they collected large numbers of the scattered troops and supplied them on a lavish scale, hoping to restore them to action. In the end these soldiers increased to such an extent that supplies were exhausted, the soldiers refused to obey orders, scattered and their strength was completely dissipated. They could not or would not resist the rebels.

I have received your Majesty's orders to take over the direction of military affairs in Chekiang. It will be necessary to weed out vigorously the weak and incompetent among the forces that remain and restore discipline. It will be necessary to explain fully the matter of rewards and punishments, and give them the full amount of their pay. In addition it will be necessary to transfer men to the province, enlist others, move some of the detachments and reinforce others. But it happens that back pay has accumulated for so long that I cannot pay off those that should be eliminated. Money and supplies are not coming in and I am much embarrassed in not being able to make the necessary changes in personnel. I therefore request your Majesty to direct the Board of Revenue to order all provinces to assist Chekiang with grants in aid, and that Fukien and other adjacent provinces set aside a portion of the Imperial revenues in the form of supplies for the Chekiang army and send them to my base at Kwangsin where they can be used as needed. At the present time we hold Chuchow, the key point in the defence of Kiangsi and Fukien. I have now available about 8,000 men, which is inadequate for the task before us.”<sup>1</sup>

Chinese wars in general follow a pattern that makes the sequence of events somewhat confusing to a foreigner and

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. II, p.45.

## CAMPAIGNS IN KIANGSI AND CHEKIANG

the problem is further complicated by the strange personal and place names that are exceedingly difficult to differentiate and remember. As a general proposition most of such wars have the characteristics we usually associate with guerilla warfare. The rebellions of the past century fall wholly into that pattern. The Taipings established themselves in Nanking and thenceforward were like nothing so much as a giant octopus throwing out its tentacles in every direction and grasping for sustenance. It gave out nothing, only took in. Nanking was never a base of supply for the armies that rolled out from this focus and rolled back, generally loaded with plunder. The supply base of the Taiping armies was wherever they happened to be. They depended on nothing from Nanking except possibly a certain amount of inspiration. The scale of their operations was beyond anything we have ever associated with guerilla operations in western history but the character was essentially the same, and the only modifications those that can be attributed to mass and to walled cities. The government operations for the suppression of the Taipings down to 1860, and in some sectors to the end, followed much the same pattern.

A factor that has powerfully influenced military operations in China has been the prevalence of walled cities. The country is studded with such cities, hundreds of them even today, with walls in a fair state of preservation. The resources of rebellious elements have generally not been equal to taking such cities where any marked degree of spirited resistance was shown. All cities from *hsien* grade up were walled, and according to a custom of long standing, grain was habitually stored in walled cities

against times of famine. It was thus possible for a city to hold out almost indefinitely if the officials were men of energy and integrity. Against such offensive material as was available in China until rather recently, these walls, when in good repair, were exceedingly formidable, and the Chinese developed a technique in defending walled cities that in most cases could withstand everything except starvation and treason. In no branch of the military art were the Chinese so expert as in the defence of cities, and throughout their long and war-studded history they came to believe in walls as have no other people. This faith in walls has had a profound influence on their philosophy of war. The very nature of a wall makes it an instrument of defence and concentrates the military thought of the nation on the element of defence. The theory of the offensive, a fundamental doctrine in the western world, does not appear to have taken a dominant hold on Chinese military thought; and, probably will not so long as they continue to make repairs to their walls.

In times of rebellion the whole countryside of the theatre of disaffection was soon overrun by the rebellious elements but the walled cities generally held out for some time. Only when these cities began to fall did the authorities become genuinely alarmed. Even then the operations for the restoration of order were of a leisurely nature. Those cities surrounding the area were strengthened, efforts were made to relieve those that were hard pressed and to recover the more important ones that had fallen, then the less important, and finally, operating from these cities radially, the countryside was restored to order. The Taipings gained momentum so fast, once

## CAMPAIGNS IN KIANGSI AND CHEKIANG

they got well under way, that the government was completely dislocated. Every city in the Yangtze Valley below Changsha, except Nanchang and Shanghai, was taken one or more times by the rebels during the course of the war, besides many outside this area. Even Shanghai was not saved through the efforts of the Imperial government but because of the presence there of foreign warships. The big cities made some show of resistance but most of the *hsien* cities surrendered through sheer terror. The government then concentrated on trying to recover the big cities while the rebels wandered almost at will over the country.

With the advent of Tso Tsungt'ang in the field a new element is discernible in the conduct of operations. He was extremely sensitive to his communications as he did not believe in an army living off the country as it went along. In all his campaigns he struggled mightily to minimize the drain on the resources of the people in the theatre of operations, occasioned by the presence of his armies. He believed in denying to the enemy such areas as he recovered in order to give the people living therein a chance to recover from the ravages of war. From all his operations against rebels it is clear that he aimed at restricting the field of their activities, concentrating them so that he could deal a final annihilating blow, and trying to avoid scattering them far and wide over the country. He was not always successful by any means but such was his objective. Most of all he believed in a vigorous, purposeful offensive and he was gifted with the power to envisage the entire theatre of war with a clearness of

## Tso TSUNGT'ANG

perception that appears to have been denied any of his contemporaries.

The forces under his command were scattered from Hweichow through Wuyuan, Kingtechen, Loping to Kwangsin. His problem was to keep the rebels from entering Kiangsi from Kemen or Wuyuan while he battled for the recovery of Chekiang. He arranged for troops from Fukien to move into southern Chekiang and occupy the cities of Wenchow, Chuchow, Sungyang and Lungchuan. The general situation in the south of the province and along the coast was somewhat obscure. It does not appear, however, that there were any considerable groups of Taipings south of a general line from Kwangsin to Nimrod Sound, but this section was full of local bandits who had seized the opportunity of the Taiping invasion to ravage the country. But, whether bandits, Taipings or Triads, in any event south Chekiang was not under government control. This section of the province was wild and mountainous, relatively thinly populated, had very few towns of any considerable size, and consequently had no great wealth to attract the Taiping hosts. They were in force along the north coast from Ningpo to Hangchow, in the Chentang Valley, and particularly in that exceptionally productive district between Hangchow Bay and Taihu Lake.

The rebels appeared in force in the district of Suian and Kaihwa, obviously with the intention of dividing Tso's forces and moving into Kiangsi by way of Wuyuan. Tso sent a strong detachment to cover the main road from Chekiang to Kiangsi at Paishakuan, while he moved to Wuyuan with his main force. On January 18th, 1863, he

## CAMPAIGNS IN KIANGSI AND CHEKIANG

defeated the rebels in the Tayung mountains and they withdrew into Chekiang. His main body was in the Wuyuan district, his left at Hweichow, his right at Kwangsin, and he held the rear areas of Fuliang, Kingtechen, and Loping. The affiliation of the garrison in Kemen is not certain, but since Tso was repeatedly reinforcing it, the inference is strong that Kemen also was included in his command. The main supply base was Kwangsin, which was rather awkward since he had his main body in Wuyuan, but he did not intend to remain long in Wuyuan, planning to cross the mountains into Chekiang, where the advantage of basing on Kwangsin is apparent. It was the point farthest removed from a probable rebel thrust from Anhui and was on the great Chekiang-Kiangsi highway.

He moved from Wuyuan on February 13th, for Kaihwa. The rebels had constructed a line of stockades north of the town and were holding them with their main force. Tso made a frontal attack with his main body on the 18th, at the same time sending a detachment to make a wide detour and take the rebels in the rear. They fled from the stockades and from the town and Tso Tsung'ang occupied his first Chekiang town the same day.<sup>1</sup> The rebels in Chekiang were under the leadership of Li Shihhsien, known as the Shih Wang. He was in Kinhwa and when Tso Tsung'ang took Kaihwa, Li immediately sent large groups of rebels to push the operations around Chuchow. Tso soon received an order from Peking telling him to go at once to Chuchow and then to drive the rebels from Yenchow, as though all he had to do was to march from

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. III, p.1 (a).

## Tso Tsungt'ang

one city to the next. His reply to this mandate from the throne is not without interest as indicating his dislike for even so high an authority as the Son of Heaven telling him how to conduct his operations. In part he says:

“ . . . . When the rebels move on a strong city they invest it from a distance, wait until it is exhausted from lack of supplies and then take it. In operating against them it is essential to avoid at all cost being surrounded by them and to keep open a line of communication. We must first make sure that we are strong, then we can move forward, defeat the rebels and avoid being defeated. If I move at once into Chuchow not only will I be unable to defend the frontier of Kiangsi, but I will be completely surrounded and so of no ultimate benefit to Chuchow. I would be in a position where no supplies or reinforcements could reach me. In view of these circumstances the plan I have decided on is as follows: To enter Chekiang from Wuyuan, first destroying the rebels at Kaihwa and cleaning out the area between Kaihwa and Hweichow. Then the veteran Hunan troops at Paishakuan will seize the important points in the district of Hwafu thus covering Kwangsin and thereby strengthening the position of Chuchow. Fortunately Kaihwa is now clear of rebels and Wuyuan is not threatened. My main force is now at Kaihwa where I can certainly look after Chuchow. The success or failure, skillful handling or bungling, of military operations in Chekiang is my own personal responsibility and I will most assuredly not try to place the blame on others.”<sup>1</sup>

From Kaihwa Tso moved on Suian and on March 6th took that town after a battle in which it is alleged 10,000 rebels were slain. Not long after this battle Tso received a letter from a friend, Hsia Hsin, in which a pointed contrast was drawn between Tso Tsungt'ang and other generals then in the field. He said that other government armies operated very much like the rebels, taking a city and moving on with little or no regard for the fate of the inhabitants as the rebels came along behind them and again occupied it. But in Tso's operations from Loping onward the rebels had not retaken a single town and as a

<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. III, p.2 (a).

## CAMPAIGNS IN KIANGSI AND CHEKIANG

result he had given the inhabitants in the areas held by his troops a sense of security they had not enjoyed during the course of the war. He cautioned Tso not to forget his rear or move so fast that the rebels would again lay waste the districts he had recovered.<sup>1</sup>

Tso's success at Suian apparently decided him to try a change in his plans, and he must have had assurance that Chuchow was in no immediate danger of falling. In a memorial to the throne he said:

“ . . . .The situation in Chekiang is so confused that lines of communication must be selected with the greatest caution. If we start operations from Chuchow the great number of towns held by the rebels in force will impede our advance while the rebels in the Yenchow and Chuchow areas will harass my rear. For this reason an army acting independently and penetrating very deeply will have its communications cut and thus lose its independence of action. It would be worse still to conduct operations from Kinhwa as the rebels would surely surround us. A safer plan is to base on the department of Hweichow and operate along the road to Yenchow.”<sup>2</sup>

This brought Imperial sanction in the following mandate:

“ . . . .The plan ‘To base on the department of Hweichow and operate along the road to Yenchow’ is an excellent one; only, be it made known that in Tso Tsungt'ang's plans for offensive operations he must not disregard and forfeit opportunities for small gains.”<sup>3</sup>

However, Tso quickly found it necessary to change his plans. After the defeat at Suian, the Shih Wang moved large groups of rebels from Kinhwa through the Chuchow department, occupied Kiangshan and Changshan, threatened to take Kwangsin and invade Kiangsi. Tso left a garrison in Suian and on March 18th left for the

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. III, p.3 (a).

<sup>2</sup> *Kuo Shih Pen Chuan*, p.6 (b).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p.6.

## Tso TSUNGT'ANG

Chekiang-Kiangsi border. On March 20th he defeated the rebels near Changshan and the following day at Chaohsien. His supplies were running short and he hesitated to attack Kiangshan until this deficiency had been remedied. The advance on Kiangshan took place on April 13th. The rebels abandoned the town without offering any great resistance and Tso occupied it so promptly that in a brush with the rebel rear he came near to capturing the Shih Wang. The rebels moved south to Shihmen. Tso followed and on April 16th drove them from that place, but they counter-attacked on the 17th, driving Tso from the town. He managed to recover himself and in a battle on the 21st again occupied Shihmen. The rebels attacked on the following day, were repulsed, and on April 23rd the Shih Wang started back to Kinhwa. His troops scattered to Lungyu, Lanchi and Shouchang.<sup>1</sup>

Tso was now ready to drive the rebels from around Chuchow when news came that a large group from Anhui was moving on Suian. He moved to Kaihwa on April 30th, and sent Liu Tien with a detachment to find out what the rebels were doing. They were evidently not in the force reported as they withdrew into Anhui and went to Ningkuo. Tso spent May and June gathering together and reorganizing the scattered units of the Chekiang army. He put his main dependence on the Hunan army, but it was necessary to reorganize the Chekiang men on the same pattern. Toward the end of June he moved on the rebels in the Chuchow department. They had been investing Chuchow for months and had constructed several lines of

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. III, pp.3-4.

## CAMPAIGNS IN KIANGSI AND CHEKIANG

stockades some distance from the city walls. Tso captured 30 of these stockades on July 1st and the rebels abandoned the siege of Chuchow.

In other fields there had been some successes. The army of Tseng Kuoch'uan had arrived before Nanking on May 31st, 1862, and had started on the final siege of the Taiping capital. With British and French assistance, Ningpo had been recovered in May. However, in north Chekiang the city of Huchow was taken by the Taipings after a siege of two years. Huchow had been defended with rare courage and determination by Chao Chingsien. He was captured, removed to Suchow and executed, the certain fate of all government officials captured by the rebels. Had there been more officials with Chao's spirit the rebellion would hardly have gained such headway.

The next objective was Yenchow, located at the junction of the Singan and Chentang rivers, controlling the road up the Singan to Hweichow. Tso considered moving through the hills by way of Shouchang but decided to go down the Chentang valley instead. The first obstacle was Lungyu, a few miles east of Chuchow, held by a strong force of rebels. Tso moved on Lungyu early in July, but the Shih Wang gathered a large force and started for Suian. Tso feared that he would also try to move by Suian and Wuyuan into Kiangsi, so he sent 4,000 men to reinforce Suian and other detachments to Changshan and Maching to strengthen the small garrisons in these places. From July 14th to the 16th the Shih Wang attacked Suian in force but he was repulsed and returned to Kinhwa. Tso was not very successful in his initial attempt on Lungyu but during August he gradually

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invested the city. On September 22nd he tried an assault but was severely defeated. The next day a large body of rebels from Lanchi arrived to assist those in Lungyu. Tso did not wait to be attacked but moved at once against this threat. The annalist says that he led the van in person and for four hours was in the hottest of the fight. The rebels were defeated and returned to Lanchi. During the operations around Lungyu, probably in the battle of September 23rd, two of his generals, Lin Fuhsiang and Mi Hsingch'ao, were alleged to have fled before the enemy. He arrested them, and recommended to the throne the extreme penalty. It was approved and the two generals were forthwith beheaded. Such was the temper of the new Governor of Chekiang!

During September operations were undertaken from Ningpo in the general direction of Hangchow. Assisting the government troops were the "Ever Victorious Army" under Ward; a Franco-Chinese Force similarly organized but under French officers, and detachments from British and French warships. Tzeki, near Ningpo, was taken on September 21st, but the creator of the "Ever Victorious Army" was killed. Frederick Townsend Ward was a man of exceptional talents and surpassing courage. For half a century foreigners, even his own American compatriots, were inclined to refer to him half apologetically as an adventurer of doubtful motives. Books were written lauding the exploits of the "Ever Victorious Army" in which the name of Ward was referred to somewhat incidentally. Even yet in most general accounts of the Taiping Rebellion no little space is given to the "Ever Victorious Army" but Ward is usually mentioned paren-

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thetically, while the exploits of the "Ever Victorious Army" are associated with the name of a man who possessed but a fraction of his genius. Without Ward such an army would hardly have been thought of, certainly would not have been welded into such a vigorous and effective fighting force. He started out in 1860 with a detachment of some 200 foreigners, the riffraff of Shanghai. After his initial fight at Sungkiang where he was badly defeated, he changed his method. Selecting the best material from the survivors of Sungkiang as officers and non-commissioned officers, he began recruiting Chinese for a new army. He was remarkably successful in handling both an adventurous and unruly group of foreigners and the Chinese soldier. The force he built up was called by the Chinese "The Ever Victorious Army". He was gifted with an unusual talent for organization and was a sound tactician. Few foreigners have gained in so short a time the confidence of the Chinese or have been so fully trusted by them. His motives are a matter of purest speculation, but his achievements are a matter of record. They call for no apology—only regret that so promising a career was cut short so soon.<sup>1</sup>

After the death of Ward the "Ever Victorious Army" returned to Kiangsu, but the Franco-Chinese force continued in the Chekiang campaign and rendered excellent service to Tso Tsung'ang, contributing heavily to clearing the north coast of Chekiang and the taking of Hangchow. It was commanded at first by Le Brethon, killed at Shang-

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<sup>1</sup> Note: For a full account of Ward, see *A Yankee Adventurer*, by Cahill.

## Tso TSUNGT'ANG

yu, November 28th, 1862; then by Tardiff de Moidrey, killed a few months later in the campaign; and finally by Paul d'Aiguebelle.<sup>1</sup>

Tso Tsungt'ang continued his operations around Lungyu but with no conspicuous success. On October 17th he attempted a diversion on the nearby town of Tanki, where he was severely defeated. The annalist seldom mentions the government losses in these engagements. Of Tanki he simply states that the death gratuities amounted to over 7,000 taels. He succeeded in taking on November 1st a hill called T'aling which commanded Lungyu, and on the 8th he again attempted an assault but was repulsed with the loss of 700 killed. From a prisoner he learned that the Shih Wang had left Kinhwa and had gone to Liyang, Kiangsu. Possibly as a consequence of his going north, the rebels began to show great activity in southern Anhui. Pao Chao, who had taken Ningkuo some time before, was now driven out. Another group of rebels threatened Hweichow. Commanding a part of Tso's army at this time was the Chekiang Provincial Treasurer, Chiang Ili. In rank he was next to the provincial governor. The situation in Anhui greatly alarmed Tseng Kuofan, then in Anking, and he wrote to Chiang Ili to take his troops into Anhui to assist Pao Chao. Tso Tsungt'ang sent troops to reinforce Hweichow but he did not send Chiang Ili. Tseng wrote several times but Tso refused to allow Chiang to leave Lungyu. Finally he wrote to Tseng that Chiang Ili was needed in Chekiang. This did not improve their relations and Tseng's reply

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<sup>1</sup> Hail, *op. cit.*, p.259.

## CAMPAIGNS IN KIANGSI AND CHEKIANG

to Tso is an excellent example of the amenities of the Chinese under such circumstances. He wrote:

"I received your letter October 31st. I had no hope or expectation that Chiang Ili would come, but when Pao Chao and Chang Kuoliang were cut off I again wrote for him to come. It is a weakness of mine in times of great stress to ask what I know to be impossible. The late Hu Linyi had the same weakness. You do not have this fault. You never think of trying to do the impossible or writing to ask others to do it. Therein you are far superior to me."<sup>1</sup>

What was worrying Tseng most of all was the severe attack, lasting forty-six days, which was made at this time on his brother, then before Nanking. The rebels gave up their attempt to drive the besiegers from Nanking, and began to pour into southern Anhui. Tso had to ease up on his operations in Chekiang and send strong reinforcements to Hweichow, as the rebels were at the nearby town of Tsiki. Thus reinforced, the Hweichow garrison drove the rebels from Tsiki on December 19th, 1862.

While he was marking time before Lungyu, he found out that the rebels in Yenchow were feeling quite safe and taking few precautions against emergencies. He sent a force down the river, moving so swiftly that it surprised the rebels on the night of January 2nd, 1863, entered Yenchow, killed 2,000 of the rebels and occupied the city. The rebels in Anhui had captured Kemen and the road was open to Kingtechen in Kiangsi. Tso had to reduce his effectives to a hazardous point and send Liu Tien to Kingtechen to restore the situation. Possibly the example of the two generals who had lost their heads a short time before was having its effect, as Tso's general Wang Wenjui had succeeded in retaking Kemen before Liu

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. III, p.7 (a).

## Tso Tsungt'ang

Tien arrived on the scene. Liu Tien returned at once to Chekiang.<sup>1</sup>

At the same time as Tso was trying to reduce Lungyu he was also investing Tanki, between Lungyu and Kinhwa. Chiang Ili was in command of the operations at Tanki and after a few weeks he wanted to change from Tanki and try Kinhwa. Tso told him that he had made no impression on Tanki for three months; that he had not followed instructions; that it was time for him to do something; that he would stay with Tanki until it was taken, be the time long or short; and that after Tanki fell there would then be time to move on Kinhwa. Chiang Ili, thus admonished, got down to business at Tanki. He devised a strategem which appears to have been a little questionable but at any rate it worked. He invited a group of the rebels to parley on February 27th. As they came out of one of the gates, Chiang's men, conveniently hidden, suddenly rushed the gate and seized it before the rebels could close it. The army then poured into the town and slew Taipings to the number of 6,000.<sup>2</sup> The following day Tso Tsungt'ang stormed Lungyu and captured it. Chiang Ili moved at once on Kinhwa, but the rebels, disheartened by the reports from Tanki, abandoned the city and fled to Lungyu, not knowing that it had fallen. The remnants from Lungyu, left in ignorance of the fall of Tanki, fled to that place. Tso's forces were now in occupation of all three towns. He was not the man to allow such an opportunity slip to give the rebels a crushing blow as they were wandering between the three places.

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. III, p.8 (a).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p.8 (a).

## CAMPAIGNS IN KIANGSI AND CHEKIANG

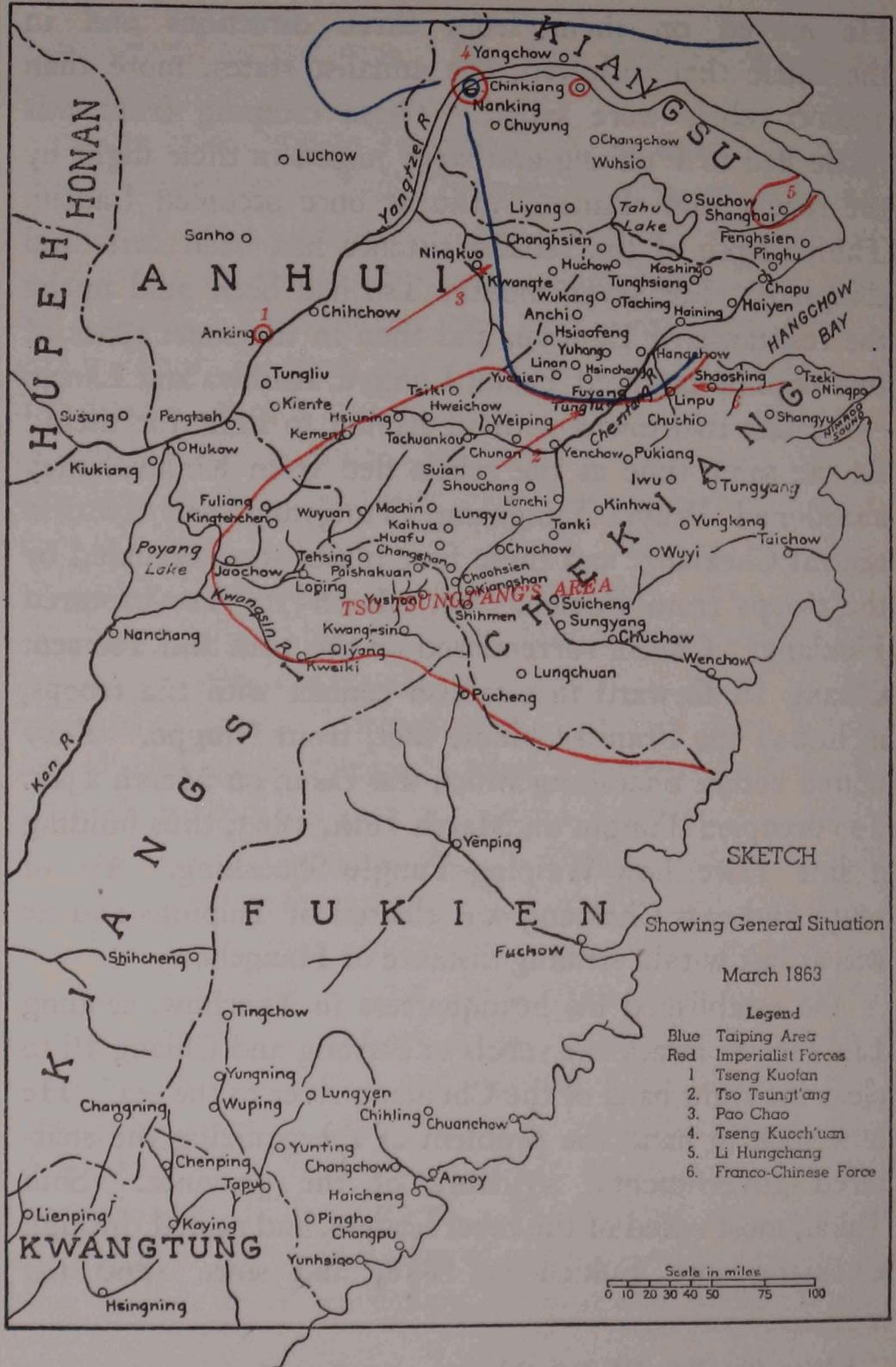
He moved on them from three directions and in the battle that followed, the annalist states, more than 10,000 rebels were killed. Those escaping from this battle fled to P'ukiang and were joined in their flight by the rebels from Lanchi. Liu at once occupied Lanchi. The collapse of the rebel resistance had been swift and complete. For seven months Tso had been held up by the resistance of Lungyu, and then in the short space of four days he captured Tanki, Lungyu, Kinhwa and Lanchi—the last two towns without having to fight for them.<sup>1</sup> At the same time as the rebels fled from Kinhwa, they abandoned Wuyi, Yungkang, Tungyang and Iwu in central Chekiang, and these four places were occupied by the troops from Fukien. On March 7th Tso captured P'ukiang. Chuchi surrendered on the 12th and Tso sent Chiang Ili forward to establish contact with the troops, including the Franco-Chinese unit, from Ningpo. They united before Shaoshing which was taken on March 15th. Tso occupied Tunglu on March 18th, 1863, thus holding a line Hweichow-Weiping-Tunglu-Shaoshing. All of south and east Chekiang was cleared of Taipings and he was at last within striking distance of Hangchow.

Tso established his headquarters in Yenchow, sending Liu Tien to attack the rebels in Fuyang and Chiang Ili to clear the right bank of the Chentang river to the sea. He now took in hand the problem of reorganizing the shattered governmental structure of the province. Shih Takai, most noted of the rebel leaders, had raided through Chekiang into Fukien in 1858, and since 1860 the

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. III, p.9 (b).

# Tso TSUNG'ANG



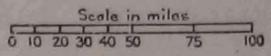
SKETCH

Showing General Situation

March 1863

**Legend**

- Blue Taiping Area
- Red Imperialist Forces
- 1 Tseng Kuofan
- 2. Tso Tsung'ang
- 3. Pao Chao
- 4. Tseng Kuoch'uan
- 5. Li Hungchang
- 6. Franco-Chinese Force



## CAMPAIGNS IN KIANGSI AND CHEKIANG

province had been over-run by the rebels. The problem of rehabilitation was also one of great urgency and Tso went about it with much energy. Wherever he was campaigning he always referred to himself as carrying conquest and rehabilitation hand in hand. It was no small task to get Chekiang reorganized in a civil way. Every *hsien* had been in the hands of Taipings or bandits, records had been destroyed, public buildings burned, and the whole had to be reorganized from the ground up. Some officials had fled and of these Tso had seventeen of the grade of prefect and intendant of circuit cashiered. Many of the officials had stayed at their posts and it is stated that in the province, first and last, the rebels killed or caused the suicide of 96 officials of the grade of magistrate and above.<sup>1</sup> There were only some 80 *hsien* or districts in the province, so it is apparent that Chekiang officialdom was largely wiped out. Tso asked for the appointment of civil officials to the province, submitting a list of twenty names of those that he particularly wanted. The question of finances was ever acute. He had to raise the money for his troops, as aside from intermittent grants-in-aid that were received, and a fairly regular contribution to the Hunan troops from the Hunan government, he had to raise everything for the army and the civil government as well.

Late in March the commander of the Franco-Chinese unit came to see Tso. A lot of trouble had arisen after the taking of Shaoshing as the French insisted on levying a contribution to cover arrears in pay and other perquisites.

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. III, p.14 (a).

## Tso TSUNGT'ANG

The annalist calls the French leader "Te k'e pei", which undoubtedly was d'Aiguebelle. Just how the Shaoshing trouble was settled the annalist does not say, but he does say that Tso and "Te k'e pei" got along well together. It does not appear that d'Aiguebelle had the quixotic temperament characteristic of the man Li Hungchang had to deal with in managing the "Ever Victorious Army" after Ward passed from the scene. In the first interview Tso had with d'Aiguebelle he said that the Frenchman dressed and acted as though he were in the French army. Tso was of the opinion that since he was serving the Chinese government he should, on ceremonial occasions such as calling on the Governor, dress as a Chinese official and conform to Chinese official etiquette. Whether intimations to this effect were made or not, Tso was quite pleased when d'Aiguebelle presented himself for their second interview, dressed as a Chinese officer and with his beard shaved. An agreement was drawn up in which the relations of this force to the Chinese army were set forth in great detail. Tso was not a man to leave anything in doubt that could possibly be foreseen in delimiting their respective functions. As a result it does not appear that there was any trouble whatever during the eighteen months that the Franco-Chinese force operated under Tso Tsungt'ang.<sup>1</sup>

He was opposed in principle to engaging foreigners to lead Chinese troops. He was particularly opposed to forming the Chinese into separate corps under foreign officers and making such a wide distinction in the rate of

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. III, p.11 (b).

## CAMPAIGNS IN KIANGSI AND CHEKIANG

pay, rations, arms and equipment between the men under foreign officers and those under Chinese. He considered that it was humiliating to his officers and made it more difficult for them to handle their men. He successfully opposed increasing the Franco-Chinese force beyond the 2,500 it had at Shaoshing, as he said the recruiting for this force was demoralizing to his army. Since this force received much higher and more certain pay, was better fed, clothed, equipped and armed with the best foreign arms, all his men wanted to join, and it encouraged desertion in the rest of the army. However, he disapproved the suggestion of the government that the force be disbanded as he said the enlisted men would forthwith become bandits or join the rebels, so it would be better to keep them and use them until a measure of control was established over the whole province. Love of adventure as a motivating force strong enough to make a man risk his life daily, was not within the range of Chinese concepts, and Tso, in common with other officials of the time, felt that the sole motivating force with these foreigners was the desire for money. But he never tried to cheat them and what he agreed to pay he paid. After the disbandment of the force several of the French followed him to Fukien and even to Kansu. He heartily admired their efficiency, especially in their handling of artillery, and no doubt he picked up not a few points on warfare from his contacts with the French.

By the end of March, Tso had captured Hsincheng and was developing his attack on Fuyang. The rebels attached the greatest importance to this place, holding it with great stubbornness. Throughout the *Nien P'u* there are scant

## Tso Tsungt'ang

references to the numbers of men in the various government armies. At this stage of the operations it says that Tso Tsungt'ang's army numbered altogether 30,000, including garrisons in the various towns he had recovered.<sup>1</sup> Early in April the rebels again became active in southern Anhui threatening to invade Kiangsi from the Kemen and Hweichow districts. Tseng Kuofan was still in Anking but it seems that his major preoccupation was keeping the Yangtze open and supporting his brother in the siege of Nanking. As Viceroy of Liang Kiang he had the provinces of Kiangsu, Anhui and Kiangsi under his immediate jurisdiction and in addition he was, in a loose sort of way, the generalissimo of the forces operating against the Taipings in all fields. In any event the forces he had in Anhui did not prove sufficient to deny the southern part of the province to the rebels and they raided into it at will.

When this double threat began to develop, Tso sent Liu Tien to Tachuankow to prevent the rebels from passing Hweichow and entering Chekiang down the Singan River. Other troops were detached to reinforce Fuliang, Kiangsi. The rebels began concentrating in the Kemen district and Liu Tien moved to Fuliang. He defeated the rebels near Kemen, April 27th, with the alleged loss of 8,000 killed, but the victory was not sufficiently decisive to drive them from the area and they held Liu Tien with 10,000 men for several weeks on the mission of preventing them from entering Kiangsi.

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. III, pp. 13-14.

## CAMPAIGNS IN KIANGSI AND CHEKIANG

The rebels from Hangchow took the offensive against Tso early in May, attacking him continuously at Hsin-cheng from May 8th to the 20th. Tso not only held his position at Hsinchong but Chiang Ili and the Franco-Chinese unit succeeded in crossing the lower Chentang and establishing themselves between the river and Hangchow. Early in June, 1863, Tso Tsung'tang was promoted to Viceroy of Min-Che (Fukien and Chekiang), but he was to continue concurrently as Governor of Chekiang. This greatly enlarged his power and gave him a much wider scope of action. He moved the supply base from Kwangsin to Chuchow and began drawing more and more from south Chekiang, the Ningpo area and from Fukien. His dependence on Kiangsi was lessened appreciably, though he still held his old garrisons in the province and Liu Tien still remained in the Kingtechen area. Liu Tien, during July and the early part of August, inflicted several defeats on the rebels and the situation in that sector cleared sufficiently for him to return to Chekiang late in August. Tso was quite sensitive to the scattering of his effectives. He wrote to Li Hungchang that the area he was holding was so extended that his position was very precarious.<sup>1</sup>

During the summer of 1863 the new Viceroy was sorely tried. The army before Fuyang was stricken with malaria. Tso himself suffered another very severe attack. The epidemic was so bad in his army that all operations had to be suspended. Barely enough men were available for duty to man the defences. Since the rebels were quiet

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. III, p.15 (a).

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during this period it is probable that they were suffering as badly as the government forces. In Formosa, now under his jurisdiction, a severe uprising occurred and Tso had to order strong forces to the island from Fukien to restore the situation. Tso did not have much confidence in the Fukien soldiers and less in their officers. In his orders to this army he stressed at length that every precaution should be taken to distinguish between the subversive elements and the "people". Care must be exercised that the people were not oppressed, so that they would not come to look on the army as worse than the bandits. He insisted that the function of the army was to restore confidence among the people; that if they failed to gain the confidence of the common people they were no better than the bandits, had failed in their mission and were of no use to the country.<sup>1</sup>

It was not until September 18th that Tso's position was such that he could launch an assault on Fuyang. He was supported by the Franco-Chinese force, their artillery doing great service. The attack was continued for two days and nights and at daybreak on September 20th the rebels left Fuyang for Hangchow. Tso followed them down the river to the defences of Hangchow. A strong force was sent across the mountain from Hsincheng to drive the rebels from Yuhang, a walled town some twenty miles west of Hangchow. The rebels attached the greatest importance to Yuhang, which was connected with Hangchow by a line of stockades, and it was defended by one Wang Haiyang, the K'ang Wang, a man that Tso

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. III, p.15 (b).

considered among the most capable of the Taiping leaders. By the end of the first week of October Tso had developed his operations to the point where he had Yuhang invested on three sides; a continuous line facing the rebel works from Yuhang to Hangchow; had driven the rebels from the south suburbs of Hangchow; and had established strong positions on the north, east and south sides of the city.

At this juncture the rebels in Anhui again distracted his attention as it was uncertain whether they were going to try to enter Kiangsi or sweep into Chekiang and harass his rear. Reinforcements were sent to Kemen while Liu Tien was again sent to Hweichow. Near Hweichow he defeated the rebels so severely that they returned north to Ningkuo. Tseng ordered Pao Chao from Wuhu south to Nanling, at the same time calling on Tso for more troops in southern Anhui. Tso refused, telling Tseng that for months he had been holding the rebels out of Kiangsi and Chekiang, that he was heavily engaged before Hangchow, where every man was needed, that he would continue to keep the rebels out of Chekiang and that Pao Chao had a strong army that should be adequate for containing the rebels in southern Anhui. He was now a Viceroy in his own right and could afford to take a strong line. He had been growing more and more critical of Tseng's conduct of the war, and he saw no point in holding on before Nanking so long as the rebels were running wild over the country. He was inclined to the view that the taking of Nanking at this stage of operations would serve only to scatter the rebels into other fields. He believed that so long as the T'ien Wang insisted on staying in

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Nanking, advantage should be taken of this to localize the rebels, and, by gradually drawing in on Nanking from all sides, he would there deal them the final annihilating blow. From the general conduct of operations it is not likely that such a plan, desirable as it might have been, could have been carried out by the government armies. It is doubtful if the strength of the government forces would have been sufficient to prevent the rebels from cutting their way out and scattering. Even had their strength been sufficient there was too marked a lack of concert between the various government armies, Tseng Kuofan, Tseng Kuoch'uan, Tso Tsungt'ang, and Li Hungchang, to have made such a scheme workable. The generalissimo was not the man to carry through such an operation. Had Tso Tsungt'ang been the generalissimo it is quite certain that he would not have carried on the eleven year siege of Nanking, but would have attempted to round up the rebels in Nanking for the final blow.

However, Tseng Kuofan had his heart set on taking Nanking, let the rebels scatter where they might. There is also just a suspicion that the achievements of Tso Tsungt'ang and Li Hungchang were beginning to cause him some apprehension lest they eclipse his brother, Tseng Kuoch'uan, before Nanking. Nanking was the big prize and meant much glory to the man who captured it. It was widely believed that the Taipings had unlimited treasure stored in the city, a prize well worth the efforts of an army. That Tseng was not insensible to this prize is indicated by his reluctance to call on anyone to assist before Nanking, and when this reluctance finally became so apparent that he consented to the sending of the "Ever

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Victorious Army" to support the Hunan army, he was very careful to specify the division of the prize money.<sup>1</sup> The "Ever Victorious Army" was not sent to Nanking, for various reasons, but later on, when Li Hungchang could easily have assisted in the reduction of Nanking he was astute enough to find reasons for not doing so, thus earning the deep gratitude of the brothers Tseng. Hail says: "However mixed Li Hungchang's motives may have been in this act of renunciation, it enabled Tseng Kuoch'uan to win the coveted honour of taking the rebel stronghold and bound Tseng Kuofan to him by a debt of gratitude for his courtesy and tact."<sup>2</sup> When the city finally fell no treasure was found—only glory.

Tso Tsungt'ang's refusal, in the autumn of 1863, to send the troops into Anhui at the call of Tseng Kuofan, would seem to border rather closely on insubordination. Tseng was the generalissimo, as such he supposedly had a plan of operations embracing the whole theatre of war, knew what he considered necessary to be done to implement that plan, and for its success or failure alone was responsible. In such circumstances the refusal of a subordinate to cooperate endangers the whole plan as envisaged by the chief. We can be reasonably certain that had their positions been reversed Tso would not for a moment have tolerated any excuses. However, it is necessary to look at the situation in the light of the peculiar circumstances of the times. The military organization was at best a very loose one. Custom was strong that each province, certainly each viceroyalty, was primarily

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<sup>1</sup> Hail, *op. cit.*, pp.260-1.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.288-9.

## Tso TSUNGT'ANG

concerned with its own security. Though Tseng was generalissimo, it is not certain that his power to command obedience extended beyond his own viceroyalty, and whether it did or not, he did not exercise it—rather he requested the assistance and cooperation of other provinces. It appears that he was much inclined to implore, to depend on reason to move his subordinates. Where the generalissimo is lax in exacting obedience, sooner or later a critical situation will arise when subordinates will fail. A growing tolerance for the errors of his generals brought so great a captain as Napoleon to Waterloo. While not offered as a justification for Tso Tsungt'ang's actions in this instance, it could hardly be shown that his failure to send troops into southern Anhui as requested by Tseng, tended to prolong the war or to have seriously jeopardized Tseng's plan, if he had a plan more comprehensive than taking Nanking. There is hardly any doubt that Tso's concept of the war as a whole was far clearer and more comprehensive than that of Tseng Kuofan. But it is well to mention again that the great Viceroy, Tseng Kuofan, never considered himself a great general, but rather a civil official and scholar.

While Liu Tien was in the Hweichow district watching the Chekiang frontier, one of his parents died and rigid custom required that he relinquish his command for the period of mourning. Tso sent Huang Hsiaoeh'un to relieve him. The rebels soon tried the mettle of the new commander. On October 20th a large group from Ningkuo suddenly appeared on the border, crossed the mountains by Changhua and got as far into Chekiang as Linan and two weeks passed before they could be turned back

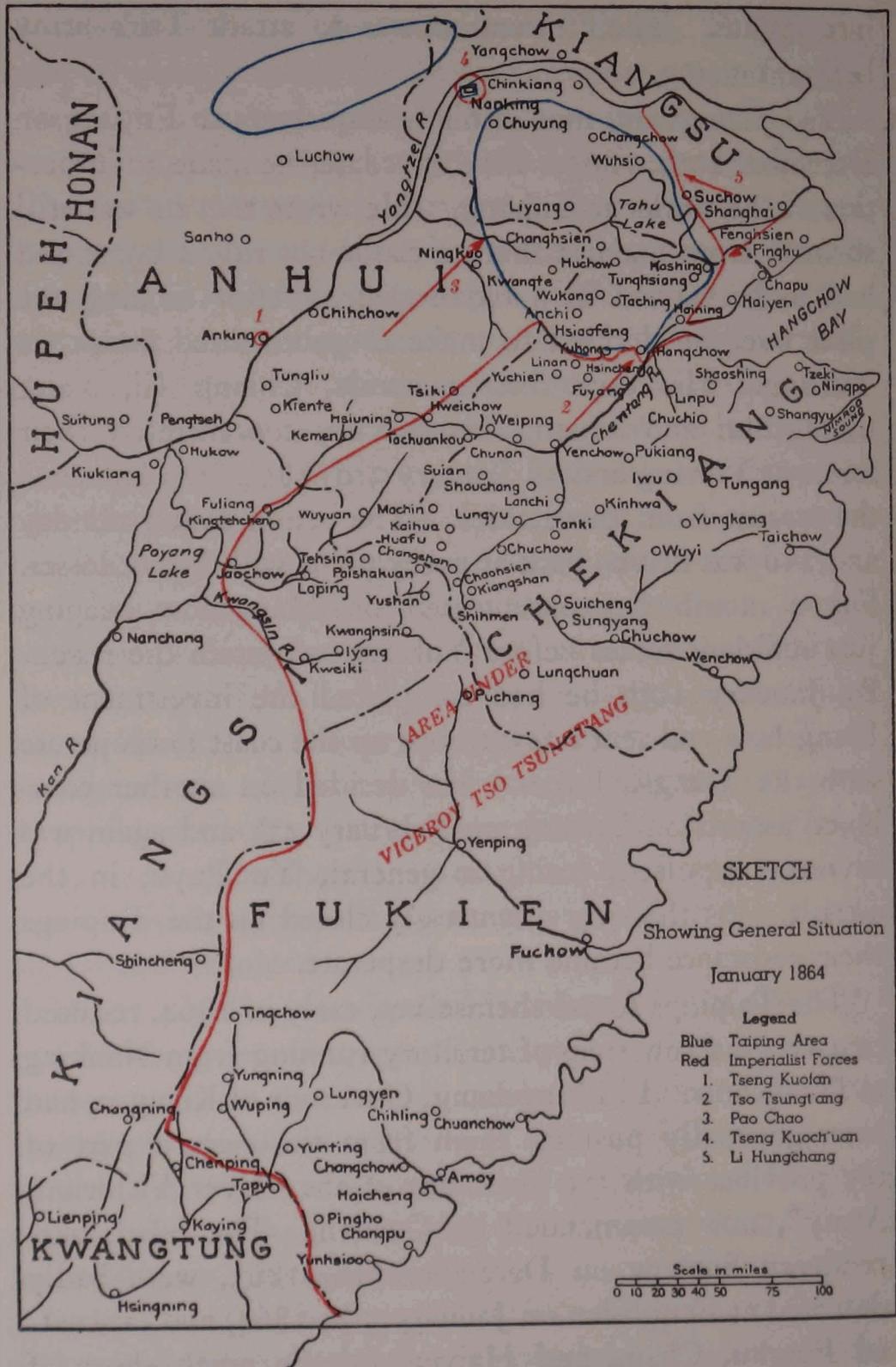
## CAMPAIGNS IN KIANGSI AND CHEKIANG

into Anhui. Their intention was to attack Tso's army before Yuhang.

Tso Tsungt'ang moved his headquarters to Fuyang on December 20th, 1863. Five days later he made an inspection of the works at Yuhang. He wrote that he was still so weak from malaria that he could not ride a horse and had to be carried in a sedan chair. After looking the place over he decided to make a concentrated attack on Yuhang. His three best generals, Chiang Ili, Yang Changchun and Huang Hsiaoeh'un, concentrated their forces at Yuhang and on January 3rd, 1864, Tso launched the assault from three sides. The action lasted all day and Tso was driven back at every point with heavy losses. For a month he concentrated on Hangchow keeping just sufficient forces before Yuhang to contain the rebels. By January 10th he had completed the investment of Hangchow and sent a few troops up the coast to cooperate with the Kiangsu forces. He decided on another combined assault on Yuhang on February 4th and again was severely repulsed, losing a general, Yu Puyu, in the assault. As the ring relentlessly closed on the Taipings their resistance became more desperate.

The Taipings found themselves, early in 1864, reduced to a very narrow strip of territory running from Nanking to Hangchow. Li Hungchang, Governor of Kiangsu, had been gradually pushing them from the eastern part of the province with the assistance of the "Ever Victorious Army", now commanded by Gordon. The rebels surrendered Suchow on December 6th, 1863, were badly defeated at Fenghsien on January 5th, 1864, and evacuated Pinghu, Chapu and Haiyen, on the north shore of

# Tso TSUNG'ANG



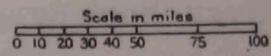
SKETCH

Showing General Situation

January 1864

**Legend**

- Blue Taiping Area
- Red Imperialist Forces
- 1. Tseng Kuolan
- 2. Tso Tsung'ang
- 3. Pao Chao
- 4. Tseng Kuoch'uan
- 5. Li Hungchang



## CAMPAIGNS IN KIANGSI AND CHEKIANG

Hangchow Bay. In Anhui the government forces had recovered Ningkuo. At Nanking Tseng Kuoch'uan was pushing the siege with about 50,000 land troops and 28 *ying*, or about 14,000 of the "River Navy" in several hundred war junks, under the command of Peng Yulin. Pao Chao held Ningkuo and Wuhu. His army with other troops in south Anhui altogether numbered probably 30,000. Li Hungchang in Kiangsu disposed of around 50,000 men including the "Ever Victorious Army" of between 3,000 and 4,000 men. In addition he had the powerful support of the British and French who gave active assistance against the rebels in the Shanghai zone. Tso Tsung'tang's army probably numbered at this time close to 40,000 men, including the Franco-Chinese contingent of between 2,000 and 2,500, but Tso's forces were distributed from Kingtchen, in Kiangsi, to Hangchow, and he was in effect covering more ground than all the others together. The rebels held Nanking, Chuyung, Liyang, Changchow, Kwangte, Huchow, Kashing and Hangchow. Tso Tsung'tang was struggling before Hangchow, ever worried lest the rebels sweep through southern Anhui and break into Kiangsi or west Chekiang. Li Hungchang was operating from Suchow toward Changchow and south of Taihu Lake against Kashing. Pao Chao was holding at Ningkuo and Tseng pushing the siege of Nanking.

Tso Tsung'tang considered Kwangte a particularly important strategic point as it offered the rebels a rallying point preparatory to rolling down through Anhui into Kiangsi when they finally decided to abandon the Nanking-Hangchow sector. He wrote to Tseng Kuofan suggesting a combined drive on Kwangte, offering to send

## Tso TSUNGT'ANG

a strong force from Hweichow to assist in the operation. Tseng declined to listen to the suggestion. Li Hungchang captured Wuhsi and he asked Tso to send troops to assist him in taking Changchow. The indications are strong that Tso was the only one of the outstanding leaders who saw beyond the collapse of the rebels in the Nanking-Hangchow area, and their dispersion to other fields. At this juncture Tso received a command from the throne to submit his opinion on the existing situation. He stated in substance that Nanking was weakening fast, but that the rebels still held a line Chuyung-Liyang-Kwangte; that when they left Nanking they would concentrate with other groups from Kiangsu and Chekiang at Kwangte; and that they would be in such force that the scattered government forces could not be brought to bear in time to prevent them from going where they liked, which would probably be Kiangsi and Fukien. He said that he had written three times to Tseng Kuofan suggesting that it would be better to give some attention to other points than to stay camped before Nanking. He felt that if an army stayed in one place, or considered its function to be the holding of a few important places, the officers and men soon acquired passive habits and forgot the offensive. The enemy soon take advantage of this passivity, go where they wished, and the war would never end. He urged an immediate joint operation against Kwangte.<sup>1</sup>

It appears that relations between Tseng and Tso were becoming more and more strained, and that about this time Tso wrote to Tseng in a highly critical vein, telling

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. III, pp.18-19.

## CAMPAIGNS IN KIANGSI AND CHEKIANG

him that he made poor use of men and opportunities. Tseng replied:

“ . . . . Some time ago there was a Tartar general by the name of Fu who wrote to a governor by the name of Tang Ichu, saying: ‘your employment of men is extremely injudicious.’ ”

“You are a noted scholar and delight in studying the careers of others. Not only do you study the men of old but your contemporaries as well. I see that you know General Fu,—in fact you and General Fu make an excellent pair. I honour you!”<sup>1</sup>

When Tso read this letter he was beside himself with anger and never again wrote a personal letter to Tseng Kuofan.

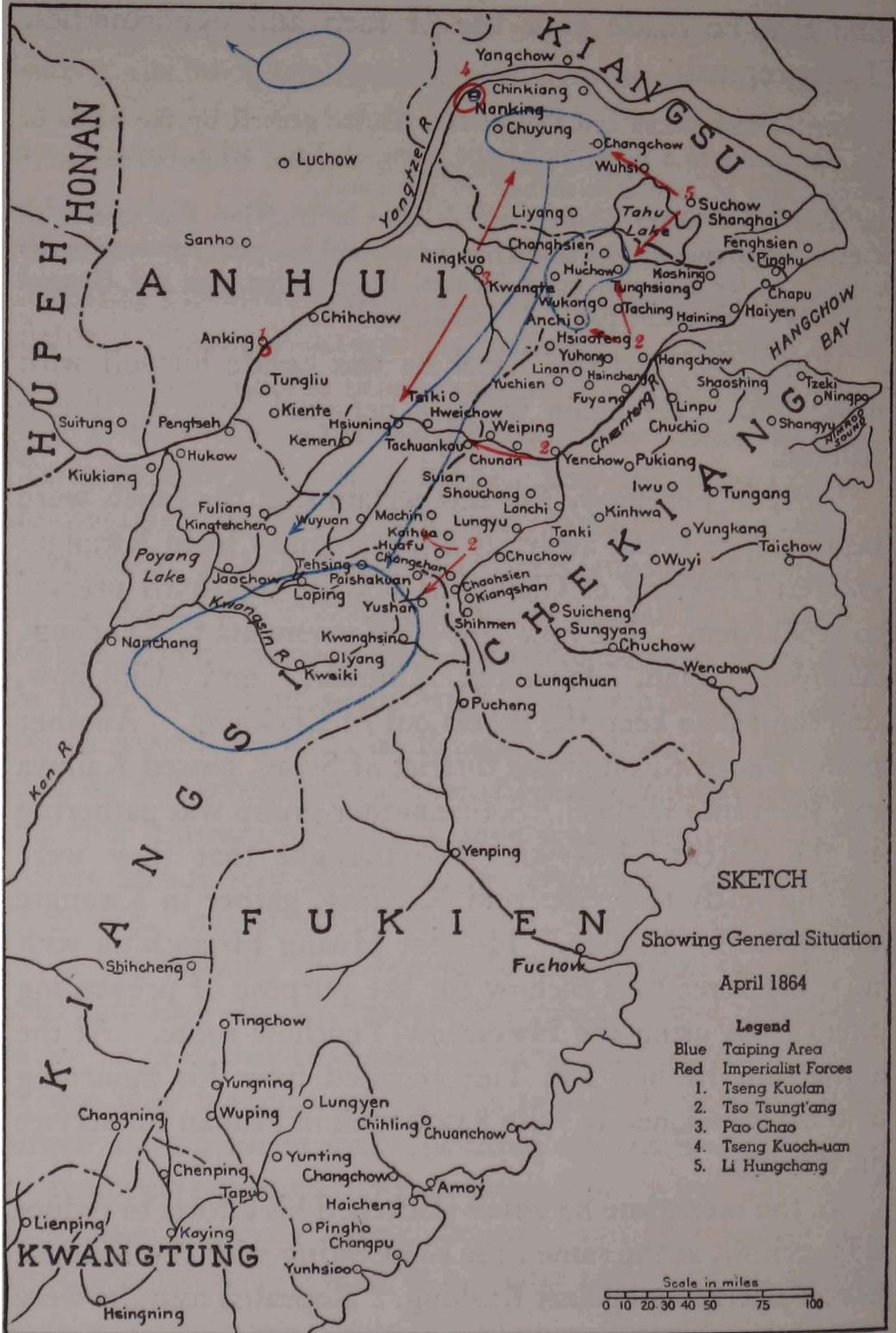
Early in February, Tso was certain that the rebels were beginning to break away, as a large group from Kwangte entered Chekiang at Changhua and he was hard pressed to repel them. He now sent reinforcements to Yenchow, Kinhwa, Suian, Weiping, Chunan, and Chuchow, determined to keep the rebels out of Chekiang. Another group passed through the district of Suian, passed Kaihwa and went into Kiangsi. Soon another group was gathering in the district of Tsiki. Tso thought that they were getting ready to break from Nanking, gather in Kwangte and make for Fukien. He sent Huang Hsiao-ch'un with a strong force to Yenchow for the purpose of preventing them from using the Hweichow-Yenchow route. At the same time he had Liu Tien recalled from his mourning and commissioned to raise 8,000 men in Hunan for service in Kiangsi.

In the meantime he never slackened his efforts to reduce Hangchow, at the same time cooperating with the Kiangsu forces operating against Kashing. Repeated assaults were

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<sup>1</sup> *Ch'ing Ch'ao Yeh Shih Ta Kuan*, Vol. VIII, p.74.

# Tso Tsung'ang



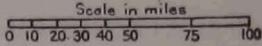
SKETCH

Showing General Situation

April 1864

**Legend**

- Blue Taiping Area
- Red Imperialist Forces
- 1. Tseng Kuofan
- 2. Tso Tsung'ang
- 3. Pao Chao
- 4. Tseng Kuoch-uan
- 5. Li Hungchang



## CAMPAIGNS IN KIANGSI AND CHEKIANG

made on Hangchow but only local successes were gained. Kashing fell on March 24th, releasing some of Tso's troops and he prepared to carry Hangchow by a combined assault. The final assault was delivered from all sides on March 31st. The rebels resisted with determination and gained a short respite in the afternoon during a severe storm, but the attack was quickly renewed and carried on into the night. At midnight the north gate was thrown open and the rebels began pouring from the city. At various other points the walls had been carried and Tso's army was in the city. Some of the rebels succeeded in cutting their way through the attacking force on the north side and escaped. On April 1st, 1864, Tso Tsung-t'ang was in occupation of his provincial capital. It was indeed a shambles, the annalist simply saying that the slain passed all reckoning. He says that before the rebellion the population of Hangchow numbered 810,000, and it was among the richest cities in the empire. When Tso Tsung-t'ang entered it there were scarcely 80,000 left and the proud city had little to show of its former magnificence.<sup>1</sup>

When Hangchow fell the K'ang Wang abandoned Yuhang and moved north. Tso led the pursuit of the K'ang Wang as far as Wukang. He then returned to Hangchow, sending Yang Changchun and Chiang Ili against the rebels in Wukang and Tching. These towns were captured on April 9th and 10th, the rebels from Yuhang, Hangchow and Kashing gathering in the Huchow district. But they did not stay long in Huchow.

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. III, p.22 (a).

## Tso TSUNGT'ANG

The Shih Wang led off with the first wave by way of Kwangte, Hweichow and Wuyuan, into Kiangsi. He was followed shortly by the K'ang Wang, who went by way of Kwangte, Hweichow, Suian, Kaihwa districts into Kiangsi. The Fu Wang, brother of the T'ien Wang, remained to hold Huchow, probably for the purpose of covering the flight from Nanking, now regarded as inevitable by all the Taipings except the T'ien Wang. The rebels held a solid line of stockades from Huchow to Anchi and behind this screen the waves of Taipings gained the shelter of the rough mountains along the Anhui-Chekiang border and poured southward. Not without reason had Tso been so concerned about the city of Kwangte.

Tso Tsungt'ang continued to press the rebels as he now had them out of all but the extreme northern tip of Chekiang. However, the rebels held the line Anchi-Huchow with desperation as if determined to hold Tso's army in Chekiang. Gordon had crossed the Lake and in conjunction with Pao Chao, operating from Ningkuo, had captured Liyang, garrisoned by some 15,000 rebels, covered by elaborate defence works and well stocked with provisions.<sup>1</sup> The Taipings were thus cut in two, holding the Nanking-Chuyung-Changchow area and the Huchow-Anchi-Kwangte area. After taking Liyang, Gordon and Li Hungchang closed on Changchow which fell April 30th; thousands of the rebels escaping through the Liyang district without any particular hindrance from the garrison, and gaining Kwangte. There they reorganized and

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<sup>1</sup> Boulger, *A Short History of China*, p.303.

## CAMPAIGNS IN KIANGSI AND CHEKIANG

moved on south into Kiangsi, making a five day attack on Kaihwa en route. Changchow was the last operation in which the "Ever Victorious Army" participated, as this force was disbanded shortly afterward. Li Hungchang now sent troops to assist Tso before Huchow. The Kiangsu forces operated from the north and Tso from the south.

The rebels were gathering in Kiangsi at a great rate, wave after wave coming from the bloody fields of Kiangsu and Chekiang. They swept across the unfortunate province in enormous masses, desperate, ruthless, vengeful. Some went as far as the Hunan border but the Hunanese had become the nemesis of the Taipings and they seemed to hesitate to enter the province and finally swept back toward Fukien. For three years Tso Tsung-t'ang had been the main protector of Kiangsi, but during these years he had contended only with raiding groups that intended returning to Kiangsu-Chekiang. Now they were leaving that theatre for good and in numbers far greater than he had previously been called on to resist. He might have contained them now had he been solely occupied with this mission, but he was a Viceroy and was concentrating on clearing Chekiang. He probably was also feeling quite put out with Tseng and very much inclined to let him look after his own viceroyalty. Moreover, he had established other sources of supply and Kiangsi was not of such vital importance to him as it had been earlier in the campaign.

Pao Chao had the task of trying to keep the rebels from fleeing through southern Anhui, but he was not equal to the task. He was a good fighter but his horizon was limited to the outposts of his army. There is a legend

## Tso Tsungt'ang

that Pao Chao had been a wandering vagrant in his native Szechuan. Despairing of life, one day he entered a restaurant and ordered a big meal, intending, when he had finished eating, to take poison and end it all. An attendant who suspected his intention knocked the cup of poison from his hand. Pao Chao, thus foiled, began to weep. The proprietor felt sorry for him, and noting his extraordinary physique asked him why he did not become a soldier. He gave Pao Chao a small sum of money and sent him on his way. Pao Chao took the suggestion, became a soldier and by his courage and hardihood rose to be a general, though he could scarcely write his own name.

Tso Tsungt'ang made such dispositions as he could to hold the fleeing rebels from entering western Chekiang and at the same time he pushed his attack on Huchow. He drove the rebels out of Anchi and gradually, through the summer, completed the investment of Huchow. Williams says that the rebels in Huchow numbered nearly 100,000 men and that they resisted the Chekiang and Kiangsu armies with desperate courage and energy. The city was covered by well-constructed defences at some distance from the walls and it was necessary to carry line after line of stockades. It was not until the end of July that the city was completely surrounded. On August 8th, 9th and 14th, Tso launched vigorous assaults on the south defences of the city, but was repulsed each time with heavy losses. After the repulse on the 14th, the annalist says that the army had no "ch'i" or breath. Anyone acquainted with the weather that prevails in that section during August can well appreciate the suffering the army had to

## CAMPAIGNS IN KIANGSI AND CHEKIANG

undergo. But Tso Tsung'tang was not in any mood for lack of breath to stop him and he drove his army on. On the 17th the attack was renewed and pushed steadily for ten days. The Franco-Chinese artillery was used with deadly effect and proved of inestimable assistance to the attackers. Fuyang, Hangchow and Huchow made of Tso Tsung'tang a great believer in artillery. On the 27th, fire broke out in many sections of the city and on August 28th, 1864, Tso Tsung'tang took Huchow by storm. Williams says that about half the rebels made their escape.<sup>1</sup> They fled to Kwangte and thence south into Kiangsi, and with them went the son and heir of the T'ien Wang, Hung Fut'ien, or T'ien Wang II. Kwangte had served the purpose, just as Tso had estimated, and it was abandoned as the last of the rebels left Kiangsu and Chekiang.

The long siege of Nanking had come to a bloody close on July 19th, some six weeks before the fall of Huchow. It is said that 100,000 rebels were killed on the fall of this city. The T'ien Wang had finally realized that his cause was hopeless and on June 1st he called some of his intimates and asked them if in the history of China an Emperor had ever been taken alive. No one answered. He then took poison—Boulger says it was gold leaf—and died a few hours later. He was buried secretly in the palace grounds and his son, a boy of sixteen, was made Emperor. He was not publicly proclaimed, as it was feared a panic would result from the news that the T'ien Wang was dead. When the city fell the palace was

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<sup>1</sup> *The Middle Kingdom*, Vol. II, p.621.

## Tso TSUNGT'ANG

defended to the last by Li Shoucheng, the Chung Wang. He managed to save the boy Emperor, cut his way out and escape from the city. The pair wandered in the country for a short time, became separated and the Chung Wang was captured. He was taken to Tseng's headquarters and held for several days during which he wrote the famous "T'ai P'ing T'ien Kuo Shih Mo", commonly called the "Autobiography of the Chung Wang". On August 7th he was executed by Tseng's orders, though according to legend Tseng allowed him to commit suicide and "officially" beheaded his corpse. The boy Emperor made his way to Kwangte and then to Huchow.<sup>1</sup> He escaped with the remnants from Huchow, going to Kiangsi. He was almost captured at Yushan on September 24th. At last on October 25th, 1864, he was captured at the village of Liuhsi, near Shihcheng, on the Kiangsi-Fukien border, by a detachment under Hsi Paotien. According to immemorial custom, prisoners with Imperial pretensions were required to be taken to Peking for the final rites, but T'ien Wang II was executed in Nanchang, allegedly out of Imperial consideration for the sensibilities of Tseng Kuofan.

The episode of the escape of Hung Fut'ien, T'ien Wang II, marked the final break between Tseng Kuofan and Tso Tsungtang. It appears that after the slaughter consequent on the fall of Nanking, it was reported to Tseng that the boy Emperor had been killed. Tseng believed it and so reported to the throne in a memorial. A few days later, Tso Tsungtang's spies reported to him that

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. III, p.25 (a).

## CAMPAIGNS IN KIANGSI AND CHEKIANG

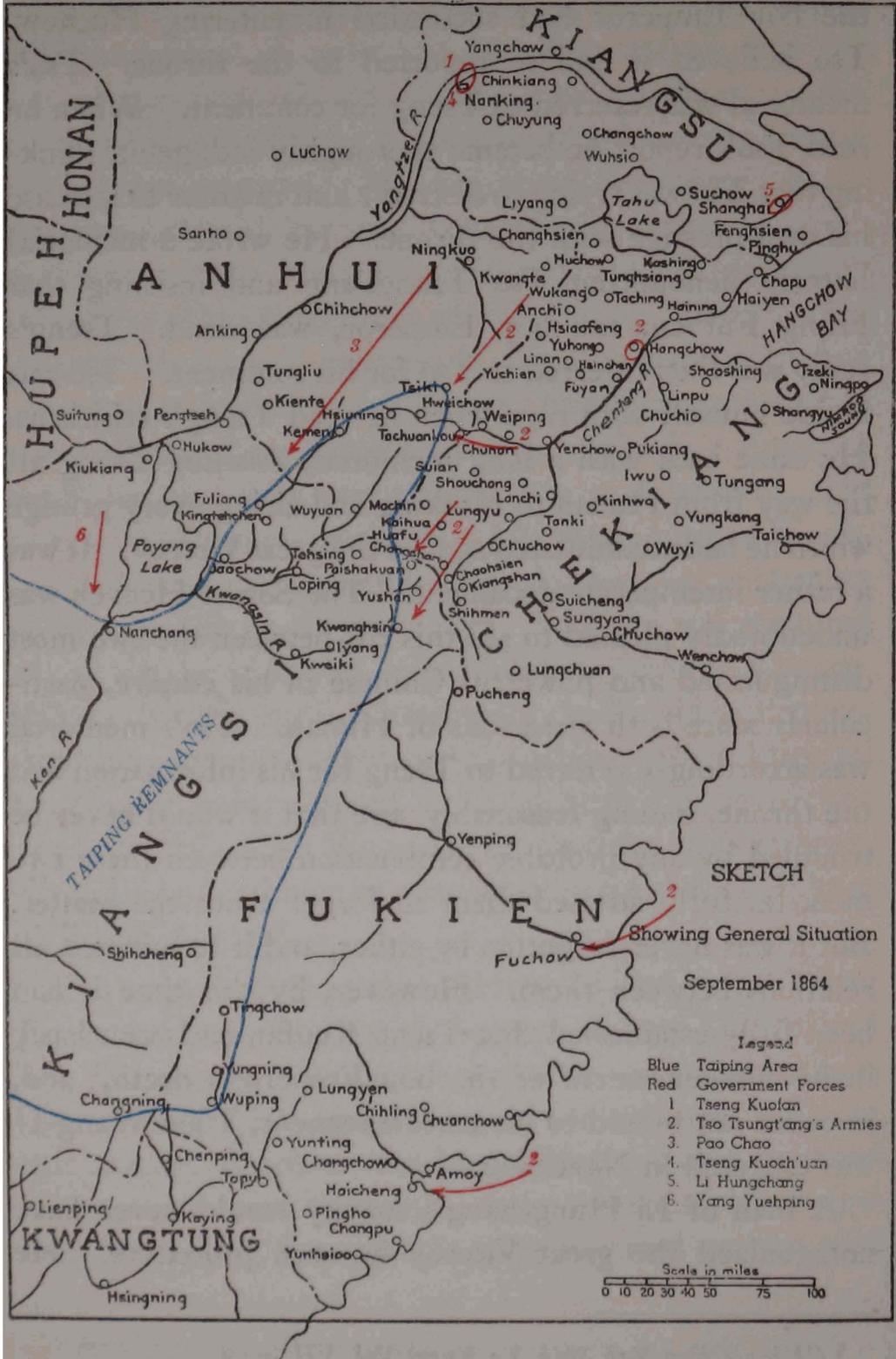
the boy Emperor had succeeded in entering Huchow. Tso believed it and so reported to the throne. Tso's memorial was referred to Tseng for comment. When he read Tso's report he became thoroughly indignant, thinking that Tso was trying to discredit him in order to increase his own prestige with the throne. He wrote a memorial bitterly denouncing Tso Tsung'tang and insisting that Hung Fut'ien, the boy Emperor, was dead. Tseng's reply was then referred to Tso for his comment. Tso was beside himself with rage when he read Tseng's criticisms. He came back with a long memorial, assailing Tseng all the way from Hunan to Nanking and airing every grudge which he had accumulated against the great Viceroy. It was a rather intemperate document. The Son of Heaven was undoubtedly pleased to see this rift between the two most distinguished and powerful Chinese in his empire, particularly since both were sons of Hunan. Tso's memorial was accordingly referred to Tseng for his information and the throne, feeling reasonably sure that it would never be troubled by any probable combination between these two men, tactfully advised them to forget about the matter. But it was never forgotten by either, and it terminated all relations between them. However, by this time it had been fully established that Tseng Kuofan had been hasty in his announcement of the boy Emperor's death,<sup>1</sup> and, in order not to add to his embarrassment, T'ien Wang II was executed in Nanchang.

A man of Li Hungchang's suavity would never have antagonized the great Viceroy by such procedure. He

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<sup>1</sup> *Ch'ing Ch'ao Yeh Shih Ta Kuan*, Vol. VII, p.74.

# Tso TSUNGT'ANG



would have let it go down in history that Hung Fut'ien perished in Nanking, probably would have advised Tseng, privately and discreetly, of his error, and thus would have earned his undying gratitude. But there was nothing smooth in Tso Tsung'tang's make-up. He called a spade a spade, never hesitating to argue a matter with anyone, no matter how exalted his rank. Moreover, he was already smarting under the numerous keen shafts Tseng had loosed at his self-esteem. It was rather unfortunate for the rising Hunan party that such a permanent rift should develop between their greatest leaders. It hardly operated to the prejudice of Li Hungchang, who had already gained Tseng's gratitude by his tact in the closing period of the siege of Nanking, and Li forged rapidly ahead. He became the leader of the Anhui party that was dominant during the last two decades of the century.

The rebels collected in Kiangsi by thousands and although Nanking had fallen, while Kiangsu, Chekiang and even Anhui had been cleared of Taipings, the rebellion was still far from being liquidated. Tso was instrumental in getting Yang Yuehping appointed commander-in-chief of the Anhui-Kiangsi armies with Liu Tien as his assistant. Yang Yuehping had been a non-commissioned officer in the original force organized by Tseng Kuofan. He had displayed a remarkable talent for handling boats and became famous as a leader in the "Yangtze Navy". He was not a scholar, but he was a man of uncommon courage and had no little talent as a leader of men. He was very successful in battling with the Taipings in Kiangsi and had recovered a large section of northern Kiangsi when he was promoted to Viceroy of

## Tso Tsungt'ang

Shen-Kan. From non-commissioned officer to Viceroy was a record unparalleled in the Ta Ch'ing Dynasty.

Chiang Ili followed the rebels south from Huchow, and, working in conjunction with strong detachments from Chekiang, rounded up and secured the surrender of 30,000 at Hweichow on September 18th, 1864. Among the arms turned in by this group were 7,000 rifles of foreign make. During the fall the rebels were gradually cleared out of Kiangsi and herded into Fukien. Liu Tien with his 8,000 Hunanese and numerous Kiangsi troops moved on to the Kiangsi-Fukien border to cooperate with Tso Tsungt'ang in the pacification of Fukien. Tso had been quick to realize that much trouble was ahead in Fukien and soon after the fall of Huchow he started moving troops by land and sea to Fukien. The land troops were ordered to concentrate at Yenping while those going by sea were sent to Fuchow and Chuanchow.

Tso requested that he be relieved of the concurrent post of Governor of Chekiang as he wanted to devote his full time to the rebels in Fukien. He recommended that Chiang Ili be made Governor and Yang Changchun promoted to Provincial Treasurer—appointments that were soon made. He took in hand the reorganization of the fiscal affairs of the province and systematized the *Likin*, now one of the most popular taxes with officials, so that once the impost had been paid goods were exempt from further taxation anywhere in the province. He secured the remission of back taxes and tribute, established measures to relieve persons of land taxes for certain periods as encouragement to those who restored abandoned land to cultivation, and readjusted the salt tax for the province.

## CAMPAIGNS IN KIANGSI AND CHEKIANG

Measures for rehabilitating the province were taken in hand and programmes prepared for the guidance of the officials. He had started clearing the wreckage of war in Hangchow within a few days after its capture, repairing streets, bridges, canals and public buildings and thus giving the shattered populace an example in the tremendous task of restoring the province after years of well nigh unparalleled devastation. Tso Tsungt'ang held to the theory that the greatest impetus that could be given to the recovery of a devastated area was to give the people a sense of security, and that it was up to the government to take measures designed to gain the confidence of the people and generate a feeling that their efforts would not be in vain. In one of his last memorials on the government of Chekiang, he said that he considered it of more consequence to stop abuses than to think of new schemes in government, and that in running a government men were of more importance than laws.<sup>1</sup>

Tso Tsungt'ang was rewarded by his Imperial Master with the much coveted "Huang Ma Kua" or "Yellow Jacket" after the fall of Hangchow. At the close of the Chekiang campaign he was made a "Po" a title roughly equivalent to that of an Earl. Tseng Kuofan was made a "Ho" or Marquis after the fall of Nanking. His brother Kuoch'uan and Li Hungchang were made "Po" and given the two-eyed peacock feather. This last honour was not given to Tso until more than a year later, after he had liquidated the Taipings in Fukien and Kwangtung.

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. III, p.29 (a).

## CHAPTER VI

# THE FUKIEN CAMPAIGN AND THE END OF THE TAIPING REBELLION

Tso Tsung'ang left Hangchow on November 26th, 1864, for Fukien. Moving slowly over the route by which he had advanced into Chekiang, he stopped at Yenchow, Lanchi, Kinhwa, Lungyu, Chuchow and other towns en route. For more than two years he had slowly fought his way down the valley of the Chentang River from the Kiangsi border to Hangchow. It does not look far on the map but it was somewhat longer than the distance from Washington to Richmond which was engaging the serious attention of Americans during these same years. Along the road he frequently stopped to talk with the few country people he met. He was deeply distressed at the misery and suffering he met with on every hand, and he noted that it was rather worse in the country than in the towns. Whole sections of this once teeming countryside were depopulated. "No chickens or dogs were heard," he wrote, using a Chinese expression synonymous with desolation. He was greatly concerned by the prevalence of banditry in the province, a situation he attributed in no small degree to his officials. Tso was a



TSO TSUNGT'ANG

About the period when he was Viceroy of Min-Che



## THE FUKIEN CAMPAIGN AND TAIPING REBELLION

firm believer in the theory that if officials treated the people properly, and gave them a good government there would be no banditry and disorder. It would be idle to assert that Tso's armies committed no excesses in Chekiang, but there were few such outrages where he was present and it is safe to say that his armies harried the people less than any other government army of the period. Throughout the campaign he used his soldiers freely to assist the people in making urgent repairs in the towns and not infrequently they assisted the farmers in getting their ruined habitations and wrecked irrigation canals into some semblance of repair. Tso Tsungt'ang fully appreciated that the prime function of soldiers was war, but he was obsessed with the idea that during interludes in a campaign they should be doing necessary work. His soldiers got little rest.

The destruction wrought in Chekiang is well described by the celebrated German traveller, Baron von Richthofen, who passed through the province in 1871, some seven years after the rebels were driven out. He says:

"The valleys, notwithstanding the fertility of their soil, are a complete wilderness. In approaching the groups of stately white-washed houses that lurk at some distance from underneath a grove of trees, you get aware that they are ruins. Eloquent witnesses of the wealth of which this valley was formerly the seat, they are now desolation itself. Here and there a house is barely fitted up and serves as a lodging to some wretched people, the poverty of whom is in striking contrast with the rich land on which they live. The cities which I have mentioned, Tunglu, Changhwa, Yutsien, Ningkuohsien, are extensive heaps of ruins, about a dozen houses being inhabited in each of them. Such is the devastation wrought by the Taiping rebels, thirteen years ago. The roads connecting the district cities are now narrow foot-paths, completely overgrown in many places with grasses fifteen feet high, or with shrubs through which it is difficult to penetrate. Formerly the valley teemed with population. The great

## TSO TSUNGT'ANG

number and size of the villages is evidence thereof, while the fine style of the houses, all of which were built of cut stone or brick and had two storeys, gives proof of the more than usual comfort and wealth that reigned here. The fields in the valley, as well as the terraced rice ground on the hillsides, are covered with a wild growth of grass, no other plants being apparently able to thrive on the exhausted soil. Plantations of old mulberry trees, half of them decayed from want of care, tell of one of the chief industries of the former inhabitants; in other places the ground is covered with perfect forests of old chestnut trees.

It is difficult to conceive of a more horrid destruction of life and property than has been perpetrated in these districts, and yet they are only a very small portion of the great area of country that has shared a similar fate. . . . I used to inquire in different places into the percentage of population that had escaped death by the Taiping rebels. It was generally rated at three in every hundred . . . . Most people died from starvation, in the recesses of the mountains to which they fled, but still the number of men, women and children killed by the hand of the rebels is excessively great.”<sup>1</sup>

Tso Tsungt'ang arrived at Pucheng, northern Fukien, on December 14th, 1864. The rebels were in occupation of the whole of southern Fukien under the leadership of the Shih Wang and the K'ang Wang. The Shih Wang was established at Changchow, with his groups scattered throughout southeastern Fukien. The K'ang Wang was on the Kiangsi-Fukien border, generally holding the southwest of the province. Altogether the Taipings were alleged to number 200,000 men. In addition they had been joined by all the bandit groups in the province. As banditry had been prevalent throughout Fukien for years it is not improbable that they numbered almost as many as the Taipings. At Changchow it was said that the Shih Wang had been able to buy a large quantity of foreign arms. He already had a considerable number and with this accretion there was no little anxiety

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<sup>1</sup> Richthofen's Letters, pp.75-6.

## THE FUKIEN CAMPAIGN AND TAIPING REBELLION

that he would be a more formidable adversary than he had been in Chekiang.

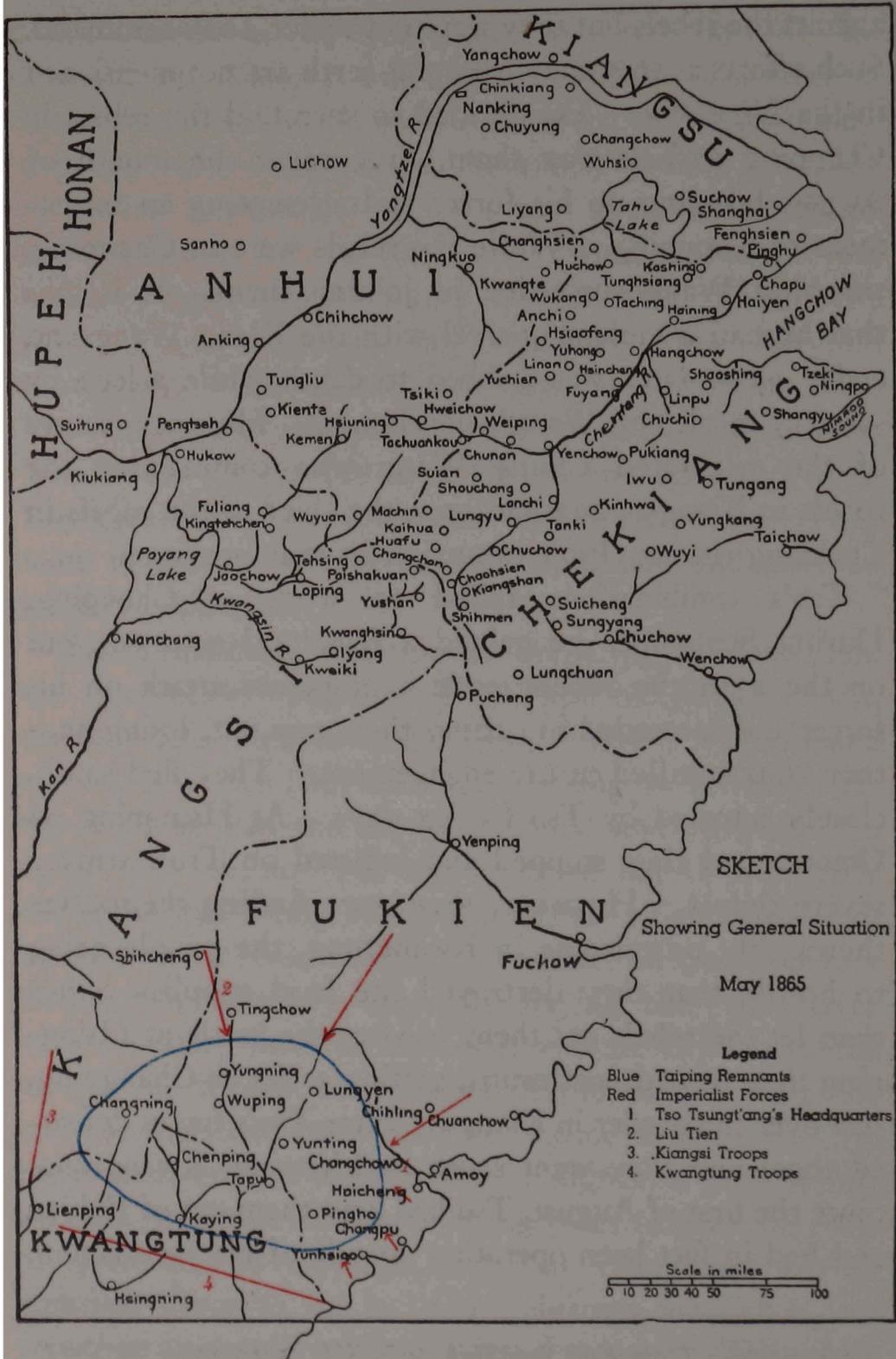
Tso established his headquarters at Yenping. Liu Tien with a strong force of Hunan and Kiangsi troops was to operate from the border in a southeasterly direction into Fukien. Those troops sent from Chekiang by sea were to reinforce Fuchow, Chuanchow and Amoy. Kiangsu sent 8,000 sea-soldiers to assist along the coast as Tso was much worried lest the Taipings attempt to take to the sea, go to Formosa or become pirates. These sea-soldiers were sent to Haicheng, near Amoy, and to Changpu. From Yenping a column was sent south through central Fukien. It appears that Liu Tien opened the campaign with a drive into Fukien that forced the K'ang Wang toward the sea faster than Tso had contemplated. He feared that if the two Wangs united in a determined effort to establish a base on the coast it would lead to an annoying situation. This probably accounts for the fact that Liu Tien's operations appear to have lagged for awhile and Tso concentrated his attention upon securing the coast. The troops in Amoy and Chuanchow started a drive in the direction of Changchow. Changpu had been occupied by a small group of rebels but they were driven out by an attack from the sea. Once established in Changpu, a column was started from this port north toward Changchow. Tso remained in Yenping for some four months, his long stay at this place doubtless being occasioned by the necessity for making thorough preparations to keep the rebels from raiding into northern Fukien. On April 11th, 1865, the column from Chuanchow defeated the rebels at Chihling with a loss of 4,000

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killed. He now shifted more troops to Haicheng and Changpu in order to bring more pressure on the Shih Wang at Changchow. On May 9th Tso arrived in Fuchow but he did not tarry long in the capital and in a few days he was on his way to the scene of operations. Changchow was carried by assault on May 15th and 10,000 of the rebels were reported killed. The Shih Wang's force appears to have disintegrated on the fall of Changchow, the remnants fleeing to join up with the K'ang Wang, and the Shih Wang was deserted, wandering through south Fukien for several months almost alone. The rebels concentrated in Pingho and Tapu, Kwangtung. In the Pingho district they were defeated on May 19th and 21st, the remnants fleeing to Tapu. Yunhsiao was taken by a sea force on May 23rd and the rebels were then completely cut off from the Fukien coast. Tso established his headquarters in Changchow on May 30th, 1865.

The rebels were now distributed along both sides of the Kwangtung-Fukien border from Tapu westward. Tso spent June and part of July consolidating his position along the coast and getting ready for further operations. The rough country of south Fukien made troop movements very difficult and it was especially trying at this season of the year. In July the rebels were forced out of Tapu and they made a determined attempt to reach Kiangsi. Liu Tien had moved south from Tingchow and he defeated them at Wuping on July 28th, turning them back from Kiangsi. On the 30th they were in Chenping, Kwangtung. It is evident that the Kwangtung provincial government had mobilized some troops

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against the rebels but they were not under Tso's command. Such efforts as they may have put forth are not mentioned in the *Nien P'u*. Tso decided to surround the rebels in Chenping and destroy them. He spent the month of August bringing up his forces and attempting an investment of Chenping. While the rebels were in Chenping, the Shih Wang succeeded in joining them. It is said that he had a violent quarrel with the K'ang Wang and a day or so later was stabbed to death while asleep by some of the K'ang Wang's henchmen.<sup>1</sup> He was a cousin of the celebrated Chung Wang who commanded the rebels in Kiangsu, and had been the chief of the rebels in Chekiang during Tso's campaign in that province.

Tso's combinations failed to work at Chenping. During September he gained a few local successes, but on the 27th the rebels made a desperate attack on his forces and succeeded in cutting their way out, losing another 10,000 killed in the engagement. They fled south, closely pursued by Tso for six days. At Hsingning on October 3rd they stopped and inflicted on Tso's army a severe defeat. However, they were finding themselves thoroughly unwelcome in Kwangtung, the people being so hostile that they destroyed the food supplies rather than let the rebels get them. After the battle at Hsingning they turned northward, getting as far as Changning, just over the border in Kiangsi. Here Tso's forces defeated them and they went south to Lienping, Kwangtung. Since the first of August, Tso had kept them out of Fukien and had in fact been operating outside of his jurisdiction.

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<sup>1</sup> *T'ai P'ing T'ien Kuo Yeh Shih*, Vol. XII, pp.20-23.

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In November he was made generalissimo of the Kwangtung, Kiangsi and Fukien armies. Tso was at Yungping, southwest Fukien, when he received his new appointment. The rebels apparently found Lienping altogether too hostile for them and they made another and final dash for the coast. Tso went to Pingho and began concentrating his forces to head them off from the coast. They occupied Kaying on January 10th, 1866, and moved on toward Chaochow, a city above Swatow. Tso had sent reinforcements to Chaochow to block their way. The rebels were defeated at Chaochow and returned to Kaying. Their position was indeed hopeless. They were in the midst of a hostile population and pursued by a relentless foe.

Tso Tsung'ang was rapidly preparing to deal them the final blow. He moved to Tapu on January 15th, sending Liu Tien toward Kaying. Liu Tien defeated the rebels on the 18th and began closing on Kaying. By the 26th he had the city surrounded and attempted to carry it by storm. He was repulsed but in the battle the celebrated K'ang Wang was killed. Tso brought up everything he could muster, and arrived in person before Kaying on February 6th. At Kaying the Mei River makes a sharp bend to the north and the city is situated on the north bank at the apex of the bend. Near the city the hills rise from the river valley so abruptly that they form on the western side a high cliff that is impossible to climb. It was a fitting place to give the *coup de grace* to the Taipings, and Tso Tsung'ang was in sufficient force to do it. On February 7th, 1866, he launched an assault on three sides of the city. The rebels

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defended themselves with desperation but the walls were carried and the rebels broke into the narrow plain. For this Tso was ready, and he rapidly closed in, forcing them against the cliff. The rebels tried to cut their way out but Tso Tsungt'ang was disposed in such depth that every way they turned they were thrown back. The annalist says that 16,000 were slain; 60,000 threw down their arms and surrendered. From the surrendered, 734 of the leaders were immediately executed and the rest were pardoned. None escaped.<sup>1</sup> It was the most signal victory in which Tso Tsungt'ang ever participated in person, a fitting end to a rebellion that for loss of life, destruction of wealth and general devastation is probably without parallel in history. Other groups of Taipings had made their way back into Kwangsi, where they continued organized banditry for years, but Kaying was the last great battle and the rebellion was at an end.

A complete and impartial study of this great uprising and its many ramifications has not yet been made, either in a foreign language or in the Chinese. The extraordinary amount of material in Chinese that is available for such a study has doubtless been the main reason why no foreigner has attempted or is likely to attempt the sifting of such a mass for a comprehensive and critical study. As for the Chinese they probably will make such a study in time and have in fact already done a great deal in that direction. Few mass movements in history have involved so many human beings as the Taiping Rebellion and a

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<sup>1</sup> *Ch'ing Tai T'ung Shih*, Vol. II, pp.415-6, and *Nien P'u*, Vol. III, p.40.

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critical account of the movement in all its major phases would be of great importance, but it cannot, just as other great movements cannot, be fully accounted for on the sole basis of materialistic concepts. The earlier accounts written by foreigners have, very naturally, centred about the participation of foreigners in the suppression of the rebellion, particularly the part played by "The Ever Victorious Army" under General Gordon. An idea thus got abroad that foreigners did in effect put down the Taiping Rebellion. But when it is considered that the rebellion lasted some fifteen years, completely devastating five populous provinces and partially ruined several others, and that the Taiping forces at one time or another carried death and destruction into some part of all the eighteen provinces of China; it seems rather extravagant to credit a force at no time exceeding six thousand men during its four years of existence, and at no time operating farther afield than a little more than 100 miles from Shanghai, with being the decisive factor in suppressing the rebellion.

The Chinese throughout the war made no great use of their seaports as bases of operations and it has been suggested that the government expected and depended on foreign nations to protect the chief seaports from the Taipings. It does appear that the Chinese government did rely on foreign powers in this respect, particularly at Shanghai, and they were not disappointed. However, the attitude of the Chinese derived in large measure from the fact that they had not, up to the Taiping period, awakened to an appreciation of the sea as a powerful factor in national affairs. The Taipings were even more

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lacking in appreciation of the value of the sea than the government. China was not sea-minded and the importance of sea-power was just beginning to dawn on the Celestial Empire. In all their former rebellions rebels forced to the sea were soon finished. It is not at all unlikely that had there been no foreigners on the China coast, the general pattern of the government operations would not have been essentially different. The influence of sea-power on history has been, up until the past century at least, far more potent in the West than in the Orient.

In the long drawn out operations that led to the overthrow of the Taipings it is not desired to advance the thesis that Tso Tsung'tang won the war. He did not, though he made a notable contribution to the Imperial cause. The judgment of the Chinese for the past seventy years has been that Tseng Kuofan won the war and in the light of such studies as have been made there is no point in trying to challenge that judgment. Tso Tsung'tang undoubtedly had a far more profound appreciation of the conduct of military operations than did Tseng Kuofan. Vital as the conduct of military operations certainly is, there are certain other weighty considerations entering into that broader generalization—the conduct of war. It is not to be forgotten that the Imperial Government in Peking was all but fatally slow in adjusting itself to the realities of the situation imposed by the rise of the Taipings. The Manchus had been bred up in a tradition of suspicion and fear of a powerful Chinese military leader. Wu Sankwei had been quite enough for the Manchus and thereafter they took pains

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that such a man should not again rise in Chinese officialdom. All the wars of the Ta Ch'ing Dynasty had been fought by Manchu generals, but when the Taipings produced the most serious threat to the dynasty since Wu Sankwei's rebellion it was very soon apparent that no Manchu general was equal to the occasion. Gradually the Manchus were forced into a grudging appreciation of the loyalty of Chinese officials and the absolute necessity for the dynasty to rely on the Chinese for its existence. But it came about slowly and required a man of Tseng Kuofan's temperament and talents to adjust the throne to the new conditions. A man of Tso Tsungtang's imperious temperament, though no one could have been more loyal to the throne, would doubtless have been more feared in 1853 by Peking than were the Taipings. Tseng Kuofan by his tact, patience and loyalty paved the way for the emergence of talented Chinese such as Tso Tsungtang, Hu Linyi, Li Hungchang and others, which would hardly have been possible without him. The question of whether the dynasty was worthy of such devotion is not, in the light of the traditions in which these men were reared, apropos. Their conduct can be justified in accordance with the highest Confucian precepts. The Manchus had passed the stage where they were capable of appreciating the power inherent in the Confucian concept of loyalty animating the bureaucracy. Whatever their other deficiencies were, the loyalty of the officials was notable, and was a most powerful factor in suppressing the rebellion. But with all the evidence of loyalty manifested, the Manchus persisted to the end in imposing a divided authority that inevitably prolonged the conflict.

The narrow view of the Manchus was strikingly brought out on the question of the distribution of honours after the capture of Nanking. It is said that the Emperor Hsien Feng made the remark sometime before his death that he would make the man who captured Nanking a "Wang" or Prince. Hsien Feng died three years before this great event but after the fall of the Taiping capital the question of honours came up. The two Dowager Empresses and the Manchu princes met in council to determine the rewards for the men who had saved the dynasty for a group that had contributed little blood and less talent to its own salvation. The verbal promise of the late Emperor was discussed but it was decided, at the instance of the Dowager Empress Tzu-hsi, that it would be bad policy to make a Chinese a "Wang" and that it would be sufficient to make such a number of lesser nobility as to be equivalent to one Wang. Thus it was that Tseng Kuofan was made a "Ho" or Marquis of the first degree, instead of a "Wang" or Prince.<sup>1</sup> This failure to comply with an Imperial promise saddened Tseng Kuofan to the end of his days. The shadow of the last Chinese Prince, Wu Sankwei, still lingered over the Forbidden City.

The attitude of foreigners toward the rebellion had a marked bearing, both on its duration and on the final result. Up to 1860 it would be difficult to show that they were of any assistance to the Imperial cause, rather the contrary. At first it was noised abroad that the rebels were Christians and no little sympathy was aroused in their behalf among the English speaking people. The

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<sup>1</sup> *Ch'ing Ch'ao Yeh Shih Ta Kuan*, Vol. IV, p.49.

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French were not sympathetic since all the French missionaries were Catholics and such indications as the Taipings gave of Christianity were of the Protestant brand. The British investigated the rebels in Nanking but, being unable to note any indications of a state policy, they reserved judgment and declared their neutrality. The Americans did the same. Not a few foreigners of an adventurous turn deserted from the ships on the China coast and took service with the Taipings. The rebels were able to buy foreign arms and they did so to such an extent that around 1860 they were better armed than were the government troops. After a few years, however, most of the foreigners in China were convinced that the Christian tenets of the Taipings were quite beyond the appreciation of the most liberal minded churchman and their sympathies cooled. After the Arrow War ended in 1860 with the British and French in occupation of Peking there was a marked change in the attitude of the Powers toward the rebellion. The British and French came out in open support of the Imperial Government. Various factors entered into this change of policy but it is probable that the most potent one was the knowledge that Russia had offered to give positive support to the reigning dynasty. The Russian offer was rejected, doubtless only after assurance was received that England and France would supply the need. Their contribution was of great value in the last stages of the conflict. They handled the customs collections for the government, thus providing the Chinese with some of the sinews of war. They used troops and warships in the Shanghai and Ningpo zones. They loaned officers to assist in

maintaining the Sino-foreign contingents that grew out of Ward's efforts. They sold arms and supplies, and probably loaned some, to the Chinese and practically imposed an embargo on such sales to the Taipings. All this assistance, if it did not win the war, certainly hastened its close.

But the main reason for the collapse of the rebellion was within the Taiping organization itself. It was in the total lack of constructive leadership. The Taipings failed to utilize the tremendous appeal which they made to the populace when they first entered the Yangtze Valley. If they had adopted a policy justifying the hopes aroused in the majority of the people in this populous region, and if they had possessed the talent to exploit constructively the enormous human energy thus released, the Will of Heaven would undoubtedly have been quickly manifested and the Ta Ch'ing Dynasty would have found itself without a Mandate. Instead, the longer the Taipings existed the less confidence they inspired. The evidence now seems to be that the movement was carefully conceived and splendidly organized—so well organized that it carried through more than twelve years of Imperial ineptitude on its initial momentum—but that the three key men in the organization were killed off before the rebels in force reached Changsha. They were never replaced. Thereafter they had not one really great leader. It is a singular feature of this vast movement involving such a multitude of men and with such great opportunities, that it could not, or did not, while in Nanking, produce one single man with a statesman's turn of mind, and this in a land that has been notable for its production of men with a talent for government.

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In the years that have passed since this great rebellion there has been considerable speculation as to why such men as Tseng Kuofan supported an alien and tottering throne, or why, with the power in his hands, he did not throw the Manchus out and set up a Chinese dynasty. Such would not have been in strict accord with the Confucian Way that animated the greatest of these men. There is a story in this connection that is of interest. One of the outstanding Chinese of the Taiping period was Peng Yulin. He had been a student but never entered the examinations. He joined Tseng in the beginning of the organization of the Hunan Army and gained great distinction in command of Tseng's Yangtze war junks. On one occasion Tseng Kuofan was aboard a boat that put in at a river port where Peng Yulin was staying. He sent Tseng a letter sealed in a heavy envelope and delivered by one of his trusted officers. Tseng was on deck when he received the letter and he retired to his cabin to open it. The letter was unsigned but was in the hand of Peng Yulin, and contained just twelve characters. It said in substance: "The South is now without a Master. What are your intentions?" Tseng Kuofan turned deathly pale, quickly put the piece of paper in his mouth and reduced it to pulp. He said to his close friend Ni Jenkai, the only one present: "What a despicable thing to do! Why should Peng Yulin try to tempt me?"<sup>1</sup>

The most noted of the Taiping leaders during the last of the war in Kiangsu and Chekiang was Li Shoucheng, or the Chung Wang. While he was a prisoner in Tseng

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<sup>1</sup> *Ch'ing Ch'ao Yeh Shih Ta Kuan*, Vol. VII, p.81.

Kuofan's headquarters awaiting execution, he wrote an account of the Taiping movement which has been referred to very often as "The Autobiography of the Chung Wang." This account was severely edited by Tseng and more than half of it was not published during Tseng's lifetime. Among the parts left out was the Chung Wang's reasons for the failure of the T'ien Wang to overthrow the Manchus. The reasons he gave are said to be as follows:

1. The T'ien Wang was no judge of men.
2. He depended too much on divine protection and not enough on his own energy and efforts.
3. The men he used were not capable.
4. He did not trust his generals, particularly the Chung Wang.
5. He was too much under the influence of his two brothers and they were hopelessly incompetent.
6. He failed to regulate the food supply of Nanking.
7. He recalled the Chung Wang from Sungkiang when that officer was on the point of defeating the government and their foreign allies.
8. When the Chung Wang suggested the evacuation of Nanking, the T'ien Wang grew angry, accused him of being disloyal and assured him that "The Lord would provide."
9. The T'ien Wang was jealous of his generals, and he recalled the Chung Wang from Sungkiang not because he was needed at Nanking but because it was feared that the Chung Wang would gain a great victory in Kiangsu.
10. When the situation was completely hopeless in Nanking, he still refused to leave, refused to allow the people to leave and when told that they had nothing to eat, he said that they could eat grass. As a result the people lost faith in him and many deserted.<sup>1</sup>

It becomes fairly clear that the nation would have had little to hope for with such a man on the throne. If the Manchu Dynasty had degenerated and had become

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<sup>1</sup> *Ch'ing Tai T'ung Shih*, Vol. II, pp.403-7.

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hopelessly inefficient, corrupt and demoralized, the man who presumed to replace them was even worse; and China was required to pay a frightful price for the privilege of choosing between two such alternatives.

After the battle of Kaying, Tso Tsungt'ang returned to Fukien and set about overhauling the provincial administration. The government was in a sad plight, with corruption and inefficiency on every hand. Tso removed many officials, replaced them with men who had proved their capabilities in other fields, overhauled the fiscal system and instituted rehabilitation measures. Bands of robbers were scattered through the province and he dealt with them so vigorously that the province was soon given a measure of security it had not enjoyed since long before the rebellion. He had become enthused with the idea that China must have a modern navy. He selected a site for a Navy Yard and started a work that should have resulted in greater benefit to his country than proved to be the case. On this question Tso's memorial written in June, 1866, is of interest as showing how a great Chinese looked at some of the problems facing his country. He said in substance:

“ . . . The future of the southeast is on the water, not on the land. From Kwangtung along the coast of Fukien, Chekiang, Kiangsu, Shantung, Chihli and Shenching we have a long and indented coast line. Besides the Yangtze and Yellow Rivers, all the waters of the country flow into this sea. If we are to consider the protection of our seacoast we must have ships. In time of peace we can use these ships for transporting tribute rice, and in the general trade and commerce of the coast they would be of benefit. In time of war they would be available for the transportation of troops and by their use the troops from Kwangtung could be quickly concentrated in a place as distant as Korea. Ships would make available the supplies of seven provinces. Not only must we have some ships to patrol the

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coast and suppress piracy but we must strive to understand something of modern naval warfare. The capital of the nation has been established at Peking and therefore, Tientsin and Taku are of utmost importance. Since we have had the experience of European nations with their warships and transports coming direct to Tientsin like a comet, and the barriers we had established there proved wholly worthless, it is clear that we must do something about a navy. I have selected a place for a Navy Yard at Lo Hsing Pagoda where docks can be constructed and channels dredged as the water is clear and the earth solid. However, we must send abroad and buy a complete set of machinery, large and small, and employ skilled foreign mechanics to come along with the machinery. In the beginning we can use these machines to make other machines and from small things proceed to bigger things. We can first make the parts and then a complete ship. Then we can train sailors to man the ships. By the time we have been working five years we should have a few small ships that we can use along the coast. We should be able to make other machines and apply what we learn to other kinds of work such as guns, bombs, shells, dredges, etc., even to things that will be of benefit in the daily affairs of the people. All this must of course be done by degrees. I estimate that during the initial period of five years the cost should not greatly exceed three million taels. If we get capable men to manage this enterprise, great benefits will certainly be secured."<sup>1</sup>

Tso undoubtedly expected to be able to supervise naval developments in Fukien personally, but in the fall of 1866, he was directed to go to the Northwest as Viceroy of Shensi and Kansu. It was a heavy blow to him. He had set his heart on reorganizing and rehabilitating the coastal provinces of Fukien and Chekiang, and on promoting the Chinese navy. He had the greatest confidence in his capacity as a civil administrator and he had great plans in mind. The new appointment meant only war, for Shensi and Kansu had been overrun by Moslem rebels for five years and were in a terrible state. But the throne was not inclined to allow such men as Tseng

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<sup>1</sup> *Kuo Shih Pen Chuan*, pp.11-12.

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Kuofan, Tso Tsungt'ang and Li Hungchang to settle down for long in peaceful surroundings where they might be tempted to indulge in idle dreams of power.

By December 10th, 1866, Tso Tsungt'ang was ready to leave Fuchow. He worked steadily up to the last hour of his stay and he said that in the last forty days he was in Fuchow he had written thirty memorials and more than forty letters of instruction on matters pertaining to Fukien and Chekiang. The Annals state that on the day of his departure the people crowded into the streets through which he was to pass and made such a demonstration against his leaving them that Tso had to postpone his departure and leave the next day unannounced.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE NIENFEI REBELLION

At about the time when the Taipings were moving north on their famous march to the environs of Peking, there arose in their wake a group of bandits who came to be known as the Nienfei. From 1853 onward their numbers increased and their depredations became exceedingly embarrassing to the government. In general their activities were along the Yellow River, in Honan, northern Anhui, Shantung and southern Chihli. During the whole of the Taiping period they raided continuously through these provinces. For some reason that is difficult to explain they never made common cause with the Taipings. Probably one factor in the situation was that the Nienfei were northern Chinese and as such were guided by that hostility animating most northern Chinese toward the Chinese from the south. The Taipings were almost wholly from south of the Yangtze. Tseng Kuo-fan was constantly worried lest the Nienfei join with the Taipings. After the British and French withdrew from Peking in the fall of 1860, Tseng induced the government to send the famous Mongol, Prince Senkolintsin, against them. For more than four years Senkolintsin campaigned against the Nienfei over the whole of eastern

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Honan, northern Anhui, western Shantung and southern Chihli. He made no notable progress in suppressing them and in May, 1865, near Ts'aochow, Shantung, he was ambushed and killed by these brigands.

The Nienfei were peculiar in that they seemed to have had no aims for establishing a government, were not particularly anti-dynastic, and made no attempt to consolidate themselves in any one locality. They were invariably mounted, armed with swords and spears, and possessed scarcely any firearms. As a result they were unable to take walled towns or cities, but they could harass communications and make conditions intolerable for the villagers. As they were mounted they were exceedingly mobile. When government forces were sent against them they wore them out by their greater mobility and if they were about to be cornered, they would scatter, assembling at some distant point. There were many leaders among them but the most outstanding one was Chang Tsungyu. After the Taipings lost Nanking, many scattered north of the Yangtze and joined with the Nienfei. From this time onward there was a notable increase in the use of firearms by the bandits. They ate little or no meat, but subsisted on flour made into dough-balls about the size of a walnut. They carried these balls with them and when ready to eat, would boil them in water or meat broth. They never bathed, but as a substitute would induce a profuse perspiration and rub down with a coarse towel.

After the death of Senkolintsin, the government ordered Tseng Kuofan to take charge of the campaign. Tseng was not very well pleased with this order but in June,

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1865, he left Nanking for Shantung with a force of 9,000 Hunanese and 22,000 Anhui men, altogether an army of 31,000 men. He was made generalissimo of all troops in Chihli, Anhui and Shantung.<sup>1</sup> For a year and a half Tseng tried to suppress the Nienfei, calling to his assistance many of his subordinates of Taiping days. He made no notable headway and early in 1867 was allowed to return to Nanking, leaving the command of field operations to Li Hungchang. Li Hungchang was given an Imperial Commissioner's seal for the conduct of operations which made his orders, within the limits of his commission, the same as the Emperor's personal commands. In addition to being an Imperial Commissioner, Li was also designated as Viceroy of Hu Kwang, but his brother carried on the duties of this office at Wuchang. The rebels were defeated in northern Hupeh early in the year, moving north into Honan. However, they soon began a movement to the west, toward Shensi, where the Mohammedans were in rebellion. The government became greatly alarmed lest they join with the Mohammedan rebels.

While Tso Tsung'tang was en route from Fuchow to take up his duties as Viceroy of Shensi and Kansu, he received an Imperial mandate on arriving in Nanchang, Kiangsi, directing him to make haste as the rebels were about to enter Shensi. He arrived in Hankow on January 31st, 1867; the troops who were following him from Fukien, arrived a month later. Tso realized that his first task would be to suppress the Nienfei before he

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<sup>1</sup> Hail, *Tseng Kuofan*, p.299.

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would be able to take up the problem of the Mohammedans. However, it appears that he thought the Nienfei would not amount to much, particularly in view of the fact that the government was using all the great leaders in the empire against them. In Hankow he busied himself in preparations for operations in Shensi and Kansu against the Mohammedans, the Nienfei not occupying his serious attention. He knew that the task before him was a monumental one which would take years to bring to a finish, and he had gained enough experience during the past few years to realize the importance of preparation for a campaign. He stayed in Hankow nearly two months, trying to gather together as much equipment as possible and to make arrangements for procurement and supply. In particular he wanted artillery. Tso Tsung'tang had not waited until he arrived in Hankow to make arrangements for supplies. He had sent agents ahead to start getting things ready and much had been done before he arrived. Several cannon, gun-carriages, mortars and shells had been made on his order in the ironworks at Hanyang. It is not certain when he got his first battery of Krupp guns, but it is likely that while he was in Hankow he gave an order for them. Tso was a great admirer of foreign artillery and realized that it could not be equalled in China, but he was sure the Chinese could make far more serviceable arms than they were then making. He engaged several foreign machinists to assist him. Mesny says that he had a shop in Hankow in which he did much work for Tso Tsung'tang; that he made gun carriages for several 12 pounders; cast shot, shell and mortars; and he says that Tso was so

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pleased with him that he wanted to take him along to Kansu.<sup>1</sup> He says that Tso offered him a commission and that he would have gone but for the objections of the British Consul.

Tso Tsungt'ang had been interested in the Northwest since the years when he was a poor student. He had read all the descriptive works on Kansu and Sinkiang that were readily available. He had made a careful study of Chinese wars in Central Asia, in particular the wars of K'ang Hsi and Ch'ien Lung in Zungaria and Kashgaria. According to the annalist those western lands beyond the extremity of the Great Wall held a peculiar fascination for Tso Tsungt'ang even from his boyhood days. He never missed an opportunity to learn more about this country, and when he met men who had served in the western lands, either as officials or as exiles, he would ask many questions about the country, roads, streams, mountains, etc., and any new fact gained he would at once write down in his notes. The information he had collected on the northwestern provinces and on Chinese Central Asia, was to prove of inestimable value to him.

In a memorial submitted while he was in Hankow he outlined his initial estimate of the situation and the steps he was going to take to pacify the Northwest. A free translation is given of parts of this memorial. He said:

“ . . . Many of those meritorious officers of my old army have been appointed to posts in the provincial government of Fukien, while many others are serving in extra-official posts without regular appointments. If I had ordered all these officers to follow me in this campaign, there would be cause for apprehension over the vacancies caused in

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<sup>1</sup> Mesny's *Miscellany*, Vol. IV, p.44.

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Fukien. Therefore, I have only brought along something over 3,000 men from my old army, and have ordered General Liu Tien to select another 3,000. From the beginning I have felt that the southern men would not be suitable for service in the Northwest, and so I have only selected a number of battalion and company commanders. When these men arrive in Shensi we will take such troops as are available in the Shensi and Kansu armies, weed out the unfit and reorganize the suitable material among the non-commissioned officers and men. These men must be redistributed, reorganized into battalions, given something to eat and their morale built up. Some of them I will take into my bodyguard, and the rest will be organized into escort, outpost and combat troops. In this manner I will be able to economize on rations and still be able to get them into shape to take the field. At the present time the Shensi and Kansu troops are starving and are not equal to the arduous duties of the field.

According to the topography of northern and western China, the most important sections are Chihli, Honan and Hupeh, while those west of the Shensi passes are of less importance. Therefore, in stamping out this rebellion, it is of the utmost importance to destroy first those rebels in Honan, Anhui and Shantung, and then take up the problem of the Mohammedan rebels. It is my intention to pacify the western frontier, but it will be necessary to clean out the rebels in the central sections so that later when the troops are operating in the west, they will not suffer anxiety about their homes and families; and, we will avoid the hazard of having our lines of communication cut.

It will be necessary to have some cavalry and I have sent agents north to buy Mongolian horses. After we have finished concentrating the troops that are to serve in Shensi they will move forward from Hsiangyung and Fancheng, Hupeh, through the Chingtzze Pass and Shangchow into Shensi. After we arrive in Shensi the cavalry will be organized and given some training. I am also making arrangements to organize a Military Colonists Bureau. This bureau will select a strategic location where water, grass, tillable soil and grazing are available, and will undertake the cultivation of this land with soldiers. Those worn-out Shensi soldiers who are weeded out of the active army and who desire to remain and become soldier-farmers, will be registered on the rolls and put to tilling the soil and tending the animals. Those who do not wish to remain will be paid off and sent home. As a result of such measures discipline in the army will improve, internal discord will be avoided, and the army will gradually accumulate a surplus of foodstuffs.

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In Kansu the Mohammedans greatly outnumber the Chinese. Lanchow, the provincial capital, is completely isolated. A strong force would be required to relieve the city. If we send a strong force to Lanchow, it will weaken the army in the field and we will not be able to develop our full force against the rebels farther to the east and destroy them at one sweep. I will lead my army into Kansu but I must first destroy all rebels east of Kansu and initiate rehabilitation measures in these localities. It will be more suitable to enter Lanchow after the general situation in the east has been cleared. Therefore, before entering Shensi we must clean up the rebels east of T'ungkuan Pass; before entering Kansu we must clear Shensi of rebels; and before we settle down in Lanchow, all the rebel-bandits to the east must be eliminated. In this manner our communications will always be open, and our continuous advance will not be interrupted.

In deciding all military matters the relative circumstances of ourselves and the enemy must be maturely weighed, and we must act as the situation requires. I cannot decide too far ahead on mere guess work. I have had no experience in military operations in the Northwest. The men of my army, though able-bodied, number many men from the south; and, they have not seen or heard anything of the peculiar tactics of either the Nienfei or the Mohammedans. If this campaign is not given the most careful consideration in advance, the outcome will be uncertain. It is my humble hope that your Majesty will give me a free hand and unlimited time in this matter. Although I will do my best, my capacity is limited, and I must make my plans in an orderly sequence in order to carry them through to a successful end. In all cases, whether operating against the Nienfei or the Mohammedans, we must ever adapt ourselves to the actual circumstances of the moment."<sup>1</sup>

While Tso was in Hankow his family came down from Changsha to see him. The annals state that his final parting with his wife was very sad. She tried to put on a cheerful front and Tso was so moved that he had the greatest difficulty restraining his emotions. His brother came to see him. Tso was much concerned about his brother, as the latter's health was bad and he was very

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<sup>1</sup> *Kuo Shih Pen Chuan*, pp.12-13.

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despondent. Tso tried to be particularly genial and on the occasion when they dined together for the last time, he read several poems his brother had written and over the poems consumed much wine. The aides were astonished at the behaviour of their chief as apparently they had never seen the Viceroy in such a light vein,—indulging in poetry and wine. He never again saw his wife or his brother, as both died while he was campaigning in Kansu.<sup>1</sup> Boulger, writing on Tso Tsungt'ang said: "He is also a woman-hater, whether from natural inclination, or from settled policy, . . . is not clear. But the fact is undoubted that he sent his wife back to her home many years ago, that her place has not been taken by anyone else, and that even his own mother, in the land of filial devotion, mourns in her Honan village over the coldness of her son."<sup>2</sup> The distinguished historian was singularly misinformed on the private life of Tso Tsungt'ang. Tso's numerous letters to his wife and repeated references to her, indicate that she held a secure place in his affections. As for his mother, she died in Hunan when Tso was sixteen. He was a high-minded family man, according to the highest concepts of his age and his people. He was forced by circumstances to live with his wife's family for several years, but thereafter he always made liberal provisions for his family. He was not addicted to women but it is putting it rather strongly to say that he was a woman-hater. A practical man with an exceptionally high concept of duty, Tso Tsungt'ang

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. IV, p.19.

<sup>2</sup> Boulger, *Central Asian Questions*, chapter on "Tso Tsungt'ang," p.383.

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considered that the conduct of such serious business as war and statecraft left little time for dalliance.

The Nienfei were making such a disturbance in western Honan and in eastern Shensi that the government became greatly alarmed. Tso received orders from Peking to move north at once and he left Hankow on March 29th, 1867. Besides his body-guard of 1,000 men and a small force of cavalry, his army numbered 7,500 men, divided into three divisions, commanded by Liu Tuanmien, Chou Hsiaotien and Yang Hokwei. These three divisions he ordered into Shensi, via the Chingtze Pass. Tso himself seems to have proceeded rather leisurely. He stopped for some time at Tean and Fancheng, and then went north to T'ungkuan, following the road on the Honan side of the border. He arrived at T'ungkuan on July 19th, 1867. Liu Tien was there with his army, and Liu Sungshan was in eastern Shensi with one of the armies that had been operating against the Nienfei for two years. The Nienfei were in Shensi in great numbers and Tso decided to keep them there by blocking the road into Honan. He ordered the troops then in south Shensi to proceed to the Wei River in order to keep the rebels from going south. The Shansi provincial troops were directed to hold the Yellow River and prevent the bandits from entering Shansi. The government's fears that the bandits would join the Mohammedans did not seem to bother Tso Tsungt'ang and his scheme of operations was such as to drive them right into the midst of the Moslems. Fully realizing the separatist tendencies of all the rebellious elements he probably considered it the best way of getting rid of them. At any rate his move-

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ments during the summer and fall were very deliberate. Shensi was already completely devastated so there was no special need for haste so long as he could keep the Nienfei from returning to their old haunts in the east. Their movements into Shensi had in fact simplified his problem. The rebel-bandits were now divided into two groups, the eastern group that was being hard pressed by Li Hungchang in Shantung, and the group in Shensi. This group in Shantung was liquidated toward the end of the year. During October and November the Shensi group was very active and raided as far north as Suite. They did not join with the Mohammedans and early in December were moving south along the right bank of the Yellow River. It was apparent that they were trying to cross into Shansi. They concentrated at Ichuan and crossed into Shansi, the annalist says, on the ice.

Tso now had to bestir himself. He left Liu Tien in command of the forces in Shensi while he crossed the river with the troops of Liu Sungshan and Kuo Paochen. He tried to surround the Nienfei but he found that they were a different breed of rebel from the Taipings. They moved so fast that they crossed south Shansi into Honan almost before Tso got started. He was greatly humiliated over his complete lack of success and in a memorial to the throne, he requested the heaviest punishment. He was stripped of all his rank and honours but retained in command. It was apparent that, with the forces of Li Hungchang in western Shantung and northern Honan, the rebels would have trouble crossing the Yellow River and going south, so the most likely direction for them to take was north into Chihli. Tso sent Liu Sungshan

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by a northern road leading across the mountains to Shuntefu, hoping to get north of the bandits. Tso with the rest of the army followed into Honan. He passed Hwaiking and had a few brushes with the bandits in the Weihwei district. The bandits then started north, moving so rapidly that they got by Shuntefu before Liu Sungshan arrived. He was close behind them however, and Tso was coming along from Weihwei as fast as he could. The army of Li Hungchang moved north from Shantung along the Grand Canal. The bandits had reached the environs of Paotingfu, eighty miles from Peking, before hastily collected troops stopped their northward march. One would think that with the thousands of Manchu Bannermen disposed about Peking, many of them mounted troops, they would have made short work of the Nienfei. But there was the greatest alarm in Peking. It was apparent that the throne placed little confidence in the Manchu warriors. The blame for allowing the bandits to approach so close to the capital fell on the high officials. The Viceroy of Chihli, Kuan Wenkung, a Manchu; the Governor of Honan, Li Honien; and Li Hungchang were all stripped of their rank. Tso had already lost his.

Early in February Tso arrived at Huailu. He soon contacted the bandits to the southeast of Paotingfu and in a series of seven successful engagements, drove them south of the Hut'o River. It is quite apparent that there was a decided lack of concert between Tso and Li Hungchang. Tso's men had made a long march from south Shansi and were doubtless exhausted. At any rate he did not push the bandits after they crossed the Hut'o

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and by the end of March they were east of the Grand Canal at Tungwang and Wuch'iao, near the Shantung-Chihli border. Operations lagged until soon the spring floods, heavier that year than usual, brought them to a complete standstill. But the bandits were surrounded in a restricted area and nothing but the most flagrant lack of cooperation between the government leaders could have saved them. In August, 1868, they crossed to the west of the Grand Canal and were soon brought up against the flooded T'uhsieh River. The famous Nienfei leader, Chang Tsungyu, was drowned in trying to escape across the river and his entire force exterminated. This was allegedly the last of the Nienfei. The Emperor, exceedingly pleased at the successful termination of the campaign, restored all honours and rank that had been taken from the various leaders. Mesny says that many of the Nienfei were enlisted by both Tso Tsungtang and Li Hungchang, and that later on those with Li Hungchang were known as "Li's Lambs."

Tso Tsungtang went to Tientsin for a few days and then to Peking. He was granted an audience with the Dowager Empresses. As a mark of Imperial favour he was allowed to ride his horse into the sacred precincts of the Forbidden City. As was usual on such occasions, the Empress Dowager, Tzu-hsi, conducted the audience. She asked Tso a great many questions about his campaigns and various matters. At last she got around to the question of the Mohammedans and abruptly asked Tso how long it would take for him to restore order in Shensi and Kansu. He was taken aback by the abruptness of the question and hesitated. Two years, three years

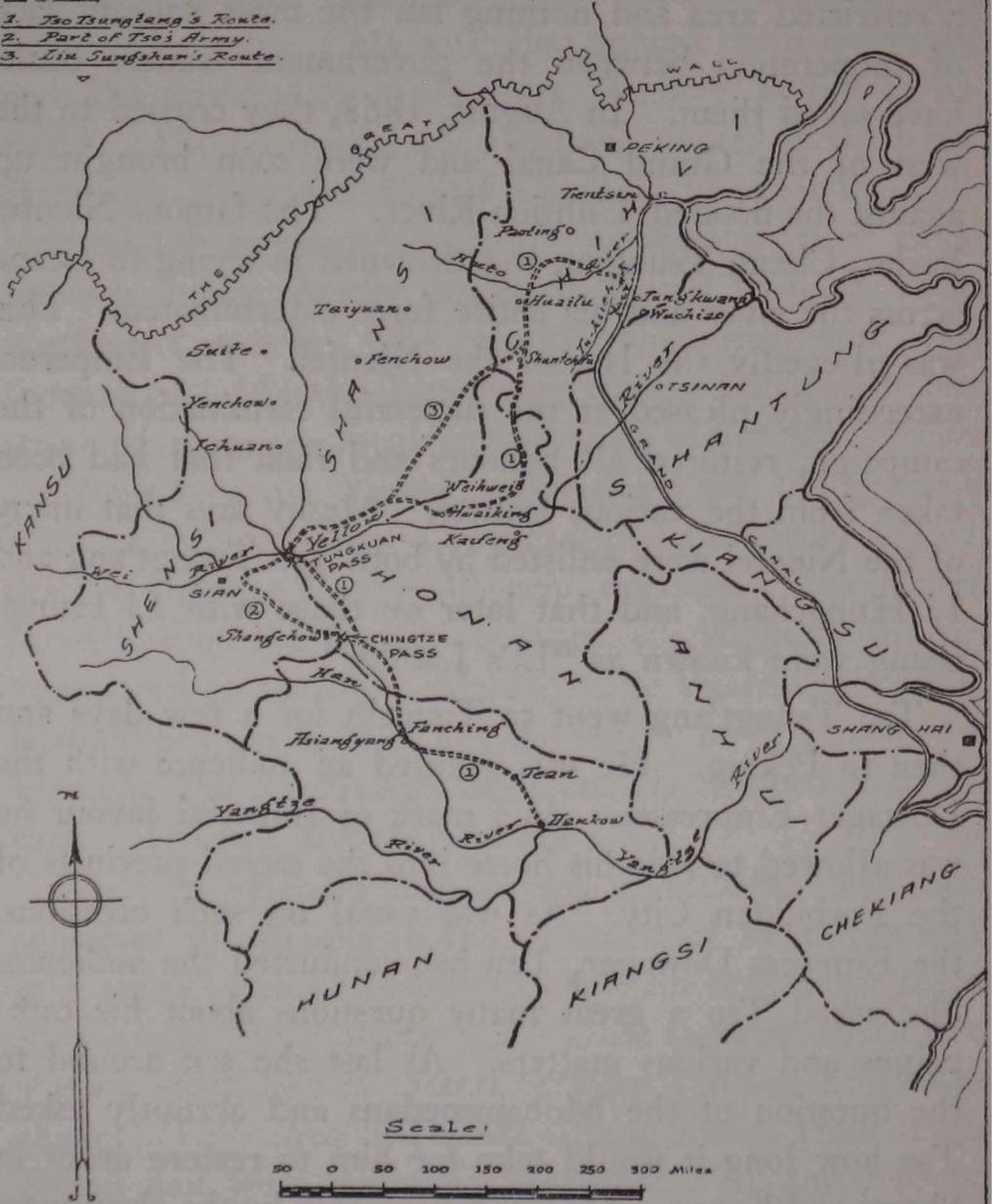
# Tso Tsung'ang

## Sketch of the NIENFEI CAMPAIGN

Showing Route of Tso Tsung'ang's Armies.

Legend:

1. Tso Tsung'ang's Route.
2. Part of Tso's Army.
3. Liu Sungshan's Route.



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he rejected quickly and then in his extremity he said bluntly, "Five years."

Tzu-hsi in a tone of mingled surprise and vexation said: "What! Five years! So long as that?"

Tso said that it was a very big problem and that he possessed little talent. That for such a task and such a man to handle it would require time. After the audience some of the officials laughed at Tso for his optimism in thinking he could put down the rebellion in five years. They were thinking of the sixteen years the Taipings had threatened the throne, of the fifteen years the Nienfei had wandered over the country, and of the seven years that the Moslems had already been in rebellion. Tso said that he had been taken unawares by the question and had to say something. Five years had occurred to him, and now that he had committed himself he would do it.<sup>1</sup>

Tso took advantage of his stay in Peking to press the question of the urgent need for money to carry on a war in the Northwest. He realized that his biggest problem was going to be lack of money. On October 1st he presented a memorial in which he set forth the situation in the provinces of Shensi and Kansu. In substance his summary was as follows:

1. The Northwest is wholly different from other parts of China. There is much waste land while the products of the country are few.
2. It is not possible to use water transport in the Northwest.
3. The Mohammedans and Chinese are all mixed together, are eternal enemies, and have been indiscriminately killing each other for seven years. Cultivation has stopped, old stocks of grain are exhausted, new crops if planted are destroyed,

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. IV, pp.48-49.

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- and there is nowhere the natives can go to escape the trouble.
4. Since the beginning of the rebellion more than half of the Mohammedans and Chinese have been killed, domestic animals have almost disappeared, young men for work in the fields are not to be found, there is no money to buy even seed grain, and the sources of all industry and trade have been stopped.
  5. The provincial troops on duty there draw a rate of pay that obtained when times were normal, provisions plentiful and cheap. Now food is scarce and everything much dearer than in any other part of China. The money allowed for the troops is hardly sufficient to buy grain. How are they then to be supplied with salt, vegetables, shoes, clothing, etc.? It can readily be seen how very difficult is their lot.
  6. In other provinces the land tax, likin and other levies can be diverted to special purposes, or in an emergency a special levy can be made. In Shensi the likin is far short of 100,000 taels a year, while in Kansu it is nothing. It is out of the question to think of levying extra or special taxes in these provinces. The war has been going on for years and all public and private enterprises have been ruined.
  7. In other provinces the problem of transport is relatively easy. There are roads, animals and carts; water routes and boats; and people are numerous and men can be hired for transport. In Shensi and Kansu the roads are mountain trails, rocky in places, sandy in others, and the distances are great. Animals and men are so scarce that they are almost non-existent. What is an ordinary problem in other places is magnified many times in Shensi and Kansu.
  8. In handling a rebellion of this kind there are two methods, force and amnesty. Or, the two may be worked in combination. To amnesty all these rebels is useless, and I see no way out but to destroy them. Even so, they are not all rebels. It is essential to establish colonies and provide the good people with animals and seed grain. While plans for this are being worked out it is necessary to feed and provide for these people. There is no way of knowing just now, how long it will take or how much money will be needed in such an undertaking.
  9. In Shensi and Kansu soldiers have been altogether too numerous, and they have been there for a long time. Since the uprising the cultivation of crops has ceased and it has been increasingly difficult to buy grain. The soldiers have been quartered in the villages and towns for the purpose of

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protecting the people. In the beginning they gave payment for such grain as they used. Then they began to make requisitions on the people, giving nothing in return. From this it soon became regular practice for the individual soldier to take whatever suited him. The people did not dare protest. Soon the people began to abandon their villages, move from place to place, and inevitably took to banditry. The Mohammedans took advantage of their condition, giving some of them food in return for their services. It was not that these people wanted to be rebellious or become bandits. There was simply no other way for them to live. It is essential to eliminate the rabble from the soldiery, and put the army on a basis of strict discipline and certain pay, so that there will be no excuse for robbing and maltreating the people.<sup>1</sup>

Such was the state of affairs in Shensi and Kansu, simply and forcefully stated, and not exaggerated in a single point. Tso asked for three-and-a-half million taels a year in addition to the present expenditures for military purposes, and an additional allotment for reconstruction expenses. The Board of Revenue decided to allow him an additional sum of one million taels for military expenses, nothing for reconstruction. He doubtless realized then and there that the Board of Revenue was going to be harder to handle than the Mohammedans, and it must have been with a heavy heart that he set out from Peking, October 4th, en route to Sian. Soon after the Nienfei had been eliminated he had started his troops moving back to Shensi, some being ordered into Shansi to await the general initiation of operations for the suppression of the Mohammedan Rebellion. Tso arrived in Sianfu on November 26th, 1868, and plunged at once into preparations for the campaign.

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. IV, pp.49-50.

CHAPTER VIII

THE MOSLEM IN CHINA

AND THE BEGINNING OF THE GREAT

REBELLION

Almost from the beginning of the Mohammedan Era, there have been followers of the Prophet in China. At the time of the advent of the new religion there was a well defined trade and travel route between Arabia and southwestern Asia, extending as far up the coast as the modern city of Canton. Arab traders were well known in the coastal cities and in the islands of the East Indies. It is not at all improbable that some of these traders were among the first converts to Islam. However, it is rather doubtful that there were genuine Mohammedans in China as early as the Sui Dynasty (581-618), according to the claim of the Mohammedan historians of China. Mohammed (567-632) only had a handful of followers as late as 610 and did not openly proclaim his mission until 616. While it is possible that one or two of these early converts reached China prior to 618, it is certainly not very probable. In any event, during the early T'ang Dynasty (618-905) the followers of the Prophet were fairly

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numerous in China. The first considerable group to arrive in the country came in about 757 A.D. when some 4,000 Moslem soldiers were sent by the Caliph of Bagdad, on the request of the Emperor Su Tsung, to assist in putting down a rebellion. After peace was established these soldiers elected to remain, took Chinese wives and became permanent residents of the country. Many Moslems entered China from Central Asia during the later T'ang period, and the infiltration continued, though to a lesser degree, during the succeeding Sung period (960-1278). During the Mongol, or Yuan Dynasty (1279-1368), intercourse between China and the Moslem countries of Central Asia was exceptionally free; thousands of Moslems served in the Mongol armies, others entered who had been attracted by the opportunities for trade, and a large Mohammedan population became well scattered over the entire country. They were accepted by the Mings (1368-1644) in just the same way as other Chinese and increased at a rapid rate, particularly in Kansu, Shensi and Yunnan. The Chinese, long distinguished for their tolerance of religious views, made no particular difficulties for the Mohammedans. They were admitted to the Imperial examinations and not a few held office. During the thousand years that China knew the Moslems, prior to 1644, there was no record of an insurrection or rebellion on the part of the Chinese Moslems. During the T'ang, Sung, Yuan and Ming Dynasties, there was no sign of trouble.

It seems that in the wars following the advent of the Manchus into China, the Moslems supported the Mings with no little vigour. It doubtless embittered the Manchus

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and had much to do with their subsequent treatment of the Moslems. From the beginning of the Manchu period there was trouble and the record has been a bloody one. The first uprising occurred in Kansu in 1648, when the Moslems killed the governor and commanding general in Lanchow. In 1650 there was a violent outbreak in the department of Kungchang, southeastern Kansu. These insurrections were vigorously suppressed and thereafter there was no more serious trouble until 1781-1785. Ch'ien Lung was then on the throne and he put down this insurrection with a heavy hand. There are indications that Ch'ien Lung seriously considered the systematic extermination of all his Moslem subjects. Earlier in his reign Ch'ien Lung had been very conciliatory towards the Moslems, and it is even said that he toyed with the idea of embracing the Mohammedan religion. The uprising during the next to the last decade of his reign embittered him toward Moslems in general and the Kansu Moslems in particular. Had he been a younger man at this period it might have fared ill with the Chinese Moslems throughout the empire. For eighty years the Moslems of the Northwest were fairly quiet and then they broke out in the great Mohammedan Rebellion of 1862-1877, sometimes called the First Tungan Rebellion. The suppression of this rebellion made Tso Tsungt'ang famous in the annals of China. Again in 1895-6 there was an uprising in Kansu and there has continued to the present day a dangerous tension between the Chinese and the Chinese Mohammedans in Kansu. The Moslems of Yunnan erupted in 1818; 1826-1828; 1836-1840; and finally in the Great Panthay

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Rebellion from 1855-1873.<sup>1</sup> In other parts of China there were no serious disturbances due to the presence of Mohammedans. During the period 1644 to 1896, or roughly two hundred and fifty years of Manchu rule, there were nine serious uprisings among the Moslems in China, with a total of some fifty years of insurrection and rebellion, some of it concurrent but entirely separate and distinct. It would thus appear that the Manchus were not wholly successful in handling their Moslem subjects.

The Moslems of China are by no means a homogeneous people. Racial types become more and more pronounced as one approaches Central Asia. In the eastern provinces the Mohammedans are not to be distinguished in type from the general run of the Chinese in the same locality. Westward there is a gradation from the Chinese to Turki and Mongol types. In the main the Chinese Mohammedans speak Chinese or variations of Chinese. In southwest Kansu there is a group of Salars speaking a Turki dialect while the Mohammedans of the Tarim Basin in Sinkiang speak Turki. In northern Sinkiang there is a mixture, some speaking Chinese, others Turki and Mongol. All these racial and linguistic differences have had a marked bearing on the conspicuous lack of success of all their uprisings. In a general way, all Chinese-speaking Mohammedans in Shensi, Kansu, western Mongolia and Sinkiang, are called Tungans, a word of uncertain origin; in the Tarim Basin the Turki speaking Mohammedans are called Ch'ant'us, or "those who wear a turban"; and in the Ili Valley there is a

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<sup>1</sup> Broomhall, *Islam in China*, pp.129 and 148.

group, originally springing from Kashgar, called Taranchi. Even within these three groups there has always been a notable lack of political and military cohesion, while there has never been any concert between Tungans, Ch'ant'us and Taranchi.

Aside from racial and linguistic differences a potent factor in their disunity has been sectarian differences, particularly among the Tungans. It is not clear whether the main line of cleavage follows the historic division of Moslems into Shiaite and Sunnite. If it does the connection is rather remote. The sectarian divisions among the Tungans appear to be based on matters of form or ritual, rather than on questions of theology. Fundamentally the line of division appears to be between those who are satisfied with things as they are and have been, and those restless souls who now and again want a change. The Chinese divide the Tungans into the "Old Religion" and the "New Religion", but a better designation is "Old Sect" and "New Sect". This is not an entirely satisfactory terminology since there were many New Sects, some of them short-lived movements, more often than not failing to survive the founder. The Old Sect represents the conservative element among the Tungans, while the New Sects have usually been more fanatical and belligerent. The leading protagonists of insurrection and rebellion have been the followers of the New Sects.<sup>1</sup>

These sectarian differences have arisen, according to all reports, over rather trivial matters. However, the Moslems of China have regarded them with a remarkable

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<sup>1</sup> Andrews, *The Crescent in Northwest China*, pp.50-52.

## THE MOSLEMS AND THE GREAT REBELLION

degree of seriousness, so much so that thousands of Moslems have been killed in their many sectarian feuds. It was an attempt to settle such a dispute in 1781 that led to the serious uprising of Ch'ien Lung's time. According to Tso Tsungt'ang's account of the origins of the New Sect that predominated in Kansu during the Great Rebellion, it was the same one that precipitated the trouble in 1781. He said that at that time two mullahs, by name Ma Mingsin and Su Ssu, came to Kansu from western Sinkiang, claimed that they had received a revelation regarding the true faith, and attracted such a following that violent disturbances arose among the Moslems. The government finally was forced to take a hand and then there was trouble with all factions of the Moslems that lasted some four years. But, he says, Ch'ien Lung failed to eliminate the roots of the trouble. Although he suppressed the New Sect, in the reign of Chia Ch'ing (1796-1821) two other mullahs, by name Mu and Ma Erh, revived the suppressed sect. By the time of the rebellion the New Sect had gained a phenomenal number of adherents and Tso claimed that they were scattered from Ili to Kirin, several thousand being in Peking. The differences between the Old and the New Sects, according to Tso, were as follows: The Old Sect in praying clasp their hands in front of the face and look upward, in reading their scriptures one man does the reading, sitting upright in a dignified manner, and in their funeral ceremonies the attendants wear shoes. The New Sect in praying hold their hands apart, read their scriptures in unison, at the same time swaying their heads and shoulders from side to side, and in their funeral cere-

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monies the attendants go barefoot. The great leader of the New Sect during the rebellion was Ma Hualung, son of Ma Erh, and the centre of the movement was at Chinchipu, a Moslem city on the right bank of the Yellow River, some fifty miles south of Ninghsia. It had been a Moslem centre for more than a thousand years. Ma Hualung was no ordinary individual and he possessed a marvellous power to sway his followers. One curious feature of the beliefs among the New Sect was that Ma Hualung could grant absolution. Tso further says:

“Those Mohammedans of the New Sect who have been interrogated in my headquarters stated that Ma Hualung has long possessed supernatural powers; that he is a holy man; that he could heal the sick; that if a man is without issue he can get Ma Hualung to pray about it and in due season the deficiency will be remedied. They said that if a man sinned he could confess to Ma Hualung who would give him a few lashes with a leather whip and pronounce his sins forgiven.”<sup>1</sup>

Tso Tsungt'ang considered Ma Hualung as the greatest imposter in the empire; that his motives were wholly mercenary; and that he had used his remarkable powers over the Kansu Mohammedans to amass an enormous fortune.

It is difficult to arrive at a probable figure for the Moslem population in Shensi, Kansu and Sinkiang at the time of the Great Rebellion in 1862. But an estimate can be arrived at indirectly. The slaughter among the Moslems during the course of the war was appalling. Tso Tsungt'ang says that in Shensi, nine Moslems out of ten perished from war, disease or starvation.<sup>2</sup> There

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. VI, p.2.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. V, p.33.

## THE MOSLEMS AND THE GREAT REBELLION

is an estimate that the population of Kansu was reduced from fifteen million to one million, and that of the Moslems, two out of three perished.<sup>1</sup> This estimate is manifestly defective somewhere because it is certain that the Moslem population was far greater than the Chinese, and if all the Chinese had been killed, which was not the case, the ratio of survivors in the province would be more than one to fifteen, if only two Moslems out of three perished. If the population of Kansu was fifteen million before the war, then the mortality was as great among the Moslems as in Shensi and nine out of ten perished, since from all accounts the population at the close of the rebellion did not greatly exceed one million. The rebellion of 1895-6, while not to be compared in destructive effect to the First Tungan Rebellion, at least retarded the recovery of the Moslem population. There has been no appreciable immigration of Moslems into the Northwest since 1860, but on the contrary there has been a considerable emigration to other parts of China. Broomhall, one of the most careful students of the Mohammedans in China, writing about 1910, gave a minimum and maximum estimate for the Mohammedans in Shensi, Kansu and Sinkiang at that time of 3,026,000 and 6,400,000 respectively. It is well to note that his maximum estimate is conservative compared with some other writers. Considering the various factors in the situation it is believed extremely doubtful that the Moslem population recovered by 1910 to much more than a third of what it was in 1860. Taking the mean of

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<sup>1</sup> Broomhall, *op. cit.*, p.155.

Broomhall's estimates as the probable number in 1910, a conservative estimate of the Moslem population in 1860 for Shensi, Kansu and Sinkiang would be about 15,000,000.

It is a common observation among the Chinese, and among foreigners familiar with the situation, that the Mohammedans are extremely peaceful in those localities where they are greatly outnumbered by the Chinese, but that when their numbers are more nearly equal, or they are in the majority, they become very intolerant toward non-Moslem Chinese. In any event, they have only caused trouble in those regions where there have been heavy concentrations of Moslems. It is also quite evident that the Moslems have come to feel that they have a prescriptive right to the Northwest, Kansu and Sinkiang in particular, and that they resent the presence of Chinese in that area. The growing resentment between Moslem and non-Moslem Chinese in the Northwest became more pronounced as time passed. The disastrous Taiping Rebellion and the war with France and Great Britain made it very plain that the government was weak, incompetent and corrupt; and that the dynasty was rapidly disintegrating. It undoubtedly dawned on the Moslems that if ever they intended to rid themselves of the Chinese the time was now at hand. The connection between the rebellious Moslems in Yunnan and in the Northwest is not at all clear but it is not to be expected that the Shensi-Kansu Moslems were unmindful of the successes gained by their co-religionists in Yunnan during the first few years of the Great Panthay Rebellion. The state of affairs reached such a stage that only an incident was

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necessary to precipitate a rebellion among the Northwest Moslems.

During the year 1860 a large body of bandits or rebels, some say they were Taipings, invaded southern Shensi. The troops in the province were not able to offer much resistance and the authorities began organizing a militia to repel the invaders. In this militia the Chinese and Moslems were organized into separate units. It was not long before dissension arose, each claiming that the other was not doing its share of the fighting. It is doubtful if there was a great deal of fighting done by either the Chinese or the Moslems. The invaders, after the manner of the Taipings, left south Shensi after a few months, but in their wake was the usual disruption and banditry. The militia organizations continued as a measure of local protection. A feeling grew up among the Chinese that the Moslems had secretly aided the Taipings and were in sympathy with the rebellion. The tension became dangerous and yet it is strange how trivial an incident precipitated the uprising. In the spring of 1862, it is said that some Moslems in the Department of Hwachow, eastern Shensi, cut some bamboo near a Chinese village without the permission of the owner. Complaint was made to the local Magistrate. The Moslems stated that the bamboo had been used to make lances for use in the common defence. The Magistrate was afraid to punish the bamboo cutters but instead is alleged to have suggested the massacre of the Moslems in a village near the scene of the bamboo cutting. The massacre was carried out and proved to be the spark that set off the rebellion. On May 26th, 1862, all the Moslems

in the vicinity of Hwachow rose in arms and for three days and nights there was indiscriminate slaughter. The few troops available were defeated and within a few days the whole province was ablaze. Chinese and Manchus were slaughtered wherever found, without regard to age or sex: only the Chinese Christians, numbering some 20,000, were spared. Although the Mohammedans in Shensi were greatly in the minority, the Chinese were paralyzed with fear and offered scarcely any resistance. The walled towns and cities were able to offer resistance and in most instances escaped the first outburst but in the villages the slaughter was appalling.

A singular feature of the uprising was the lack of leaders. It was simply a rising en masse and the leadership was purely local. There was no programme, no plan, no organization, no policy except to kill every Chinese, Manchu or Mongol that could be found. The provincial authorities were helpless and the Central Government already had its hands full with the Taipings, Nienfei and the Yunnanese. The uprising was so general throughout the province that the best the local authorities could do was to hold the walled towns; they had no force to send into the surrounding country. To complicate the situation still further, more than half the troops in garrison throughout the Northwest were Tungans. The first sign of disaffection occurred in Sian where a large body of the Tungan garrison left the city and joined their co-religionists. This caused the greatest alarm in government circles and, coming on top of the fearful slaughter of Chinese throughout the province, led to an Edict for the extermination of all Mohammedans in Shensi. A

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Manchu general, Tolunga, who had made a notable record under Tseng Kuofan, was detached from Tseng's army and sent to Shensi to carry the edict of extermination into effect. He went about it lustily, killing out of hand every Moslem, old and young, male and female, he could apprehend. But his force was wholly insufficient for the task at hand. The Moslems were beginning to come together in great bands and leaders for these groups began to emerge. Tolunga was soon forced to confine his operations to the immediate vicinity of the walls of Sian.

The rebellion soon spread westward into Kansu. By the end of 1863 the whole province, excepting the walled cities, was in the hands of the Moslems. From Kansu it spread into Sinkiang or Chinese Turkestan, which Ch'ien Lung had restored to Chinese sovereignty in 1760 and where Chinese rule had not been seriously challenged for upwards of a hundred years. Chinese policy had been on the whole a benevolent one in this region and there was not the marked hostility between Moslem and Chinese that prevailed in Shensi and Kansu. The garrisons throughout this region were Tungans, with a scattering of Manchu and Mongol soldiers. Headquarters of the Chinese Government in Sinkiang was at Kuldja. Events in Kansu soon unsettled the Tungans in the west and they rose successively in Hami, Barkul, Urumchi, Manass and Turfan, massacring the Chinese, Manchus and Mongols right and left. For a time Kashgaria and Ili remained quiet as the populace was largely Turki or Taranchi. Seeing the whole country to the east pass from the hands of the Chinese, they likewise rose in revolt, killed all the Chinese officials

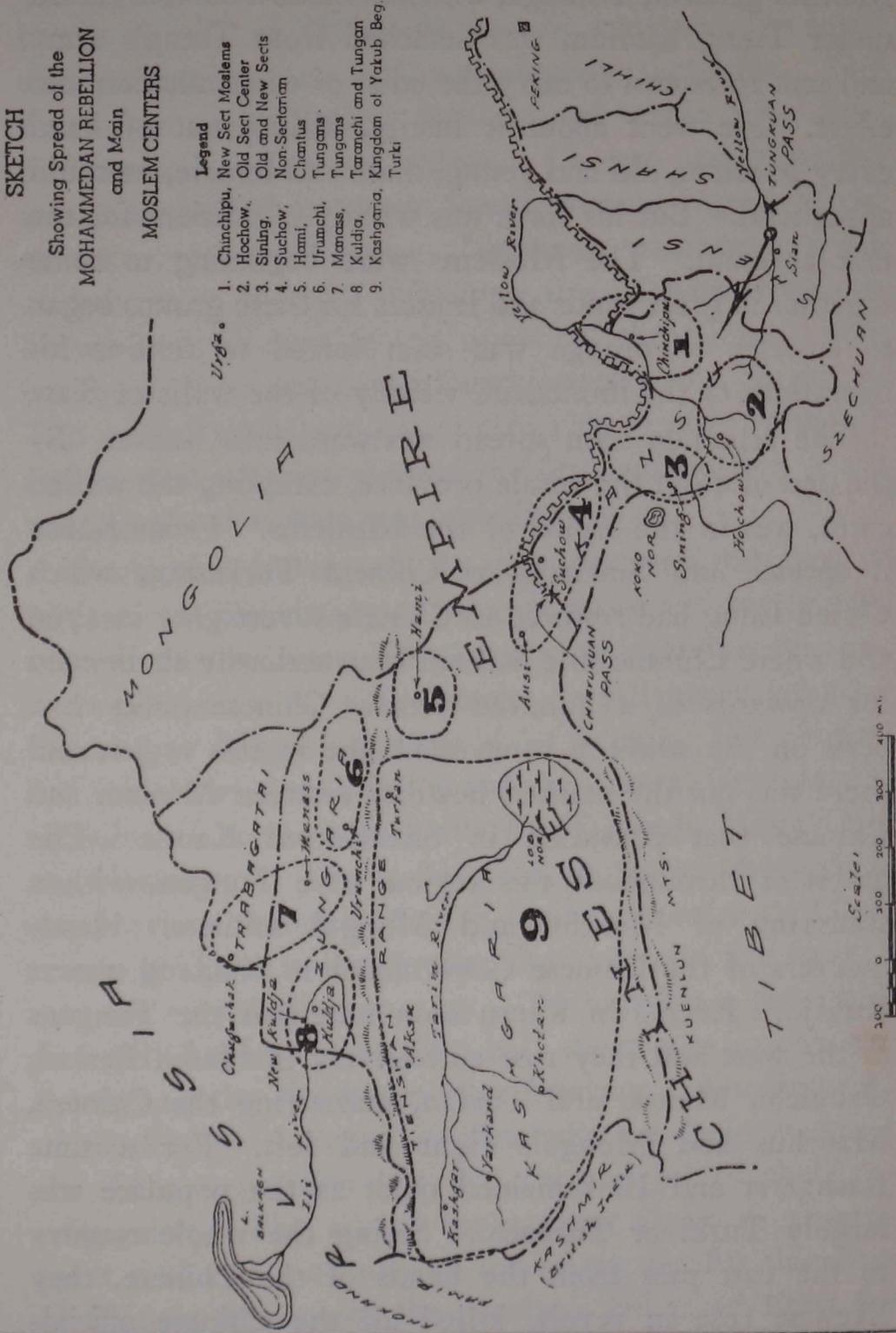
# Tso Tsung'ang

## SKETCH

Showing Spread of the  
MOHAMMEDAN REBELLION  
and Main  
MOSLEM CENTERS

### Legend

1. Chunchipu, New Sect Moslems
2. Hochow, Old Sect Center
3. Sining, Old and New Sects
4. Suchow, Non-Sectarian
5. Hami, Chantus
6. Urumchi, Tungans
7. Manass, Tungans
8. Kuldja, Taranchi and Tungan
9. Kashgaria, Kingdom of Yakub Beg, Turki



## THE MOSLEMS AND THE GREAT REBELLION

and all non-Moslem soldiers in the country. In the Ili Valley the slaughter was great, since there was a large Chinese, Manchu and Mongol population in this section. The new city of Kuldja, built by Ch'ien Lung and containing some 75,000 souls, was completely destroyed. By the end of 1864, Chinese authority from the T'ungkuan Pass to the Pamirs was restricted to a few walled cities in Shensi and Kansu; scarcely a vestige remained in the whole of Sinkiang.

In Shensi the war dragged on with occasional sallies from the walled cities. No progress whatever was made in suppressing the rebellion and in 1866 Tolunga was captured by the Moslems and beheaded. In 1864 the government sent Yang Yuehping to Lanchow as Viceroy of Shen-Kan. He had made a great name for himself on the Yangtze with Tseng Kuofan's River Navy. There he displayed uncommon courage in fighting the Taipings. He was not a scholar but rose from the ranks to be a Viceroy. However, he was evidently one of those men whose horizon is restricted to a subordinate position. As a commander on the Yangtze supporting the operations of land troops he was unsurpassed. As a Viceroy in Kansu, subordinate only to the throne in far away Peking, and with no one to depend on for plans or orders, he was lost. It was not long until he was recalled. A Manchu general, Mutoshan, commanding the Manchu garrison in Ninghsia was then made Viceroy. According to Andrews, Mutoshan was a vigorous and talented soldier,<sup>1</sup> but Tso Tsungt'ang considered him neither

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<sup>1</sup> *The Crescent in Northwest China*, pp.81-83.

## Tso Tsungt'ang

vigorous nor talented. Tso thought that Mutoshan was altogether too easy and allowed the crafty Moslem leaders to make a fool of him. Mutoshan did manage to hold Lanchow and it may be that his efforts at conciliating the Moslems tended to keep them from uniting under a single leader. However, one after another of the great walled cities fell to the Moslems until only Kanchow in the north, Lanchow, the capital, and Pingliang in the east held out. Such was the confused state of affairs that it is said the fall of Sining in western Kansu was not reported to Peking for three years.<sup>1</sup> It is quite certain that if Mutoshan had been making any showing against the rebels, he would not have been demoted. In the fall of 1866, Tso Tsungt'ang was appointed Viceroy of Shen-Kan and Mutoshan was reduced to Governor of Kansu.

It was more than two years from the time Tso Tsung-t'ang was gazetted Viceroy of Shen-Kan until he arrived in Sian. For a year and a half of that time he was engaged with the Nienfei. But when he crossed the Yellow River at T'ungkuan to take the field in person against the Nienfei, he had appointed General Liu Tien to take charge of operations in Shensi during his absence. Sometime later Tso secured the governorship of Shensi for Liu Tien. While Tso was chasing the bandits across Shansi, Honan and Chihli, Liu Tien was not idle. He cleared south Shensi and the Wei Valley from T'ungkuan west to near the Kansu border and the road to Sian from the east was secure. North Shensi was still over-run by

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<sup>1</sup> Prejevalsky, *Mongolia*, Vol. II, p.134.

## THE MOSLEMS AND THE GREAT REBELLION

rebels and along the Shensi-Kansu border they were in great numbers.

The situation in Kansu was very difficult to appreciate fully. All of the province was in the hands of the rebels except the cities of Pingliang, Lanchow and Kanchow. Still there was occasional communication between Lanchow and the east, while the route down the Yellow River to Paoto was open, although the river route passed almost under the walls of Chinchipu, the most powerful Moslem stronghold in Kansu. There were four main centres of Moslem power in Kansu. Chinchipu in the northeast was the centre of the New Sect and the leader of the New Sect was Ma Hualung. The second important centre was Hochow, southwest of Lanchow. The Hochow Moslems were mostly Old Sect adherents and were under the leadership of Ma Chanao. The third centre was Sining, west of Lanchow, and the dominant personality in this section was Ma Tosan. The fourth centre was Suchow, northwestern Kansu, where the leader was Ma Wenlu. The Sining and Suchow Moslems were mostly inclined to the New Sect. However, there was no notable concert among these four centres throughout the rebellion. The two main leaders in Kansu were Ma Hualung and Ma Chanao, but they were not on the best of terms. Such mutual assistance as was rendered among the various groups was spasmodic and of no great effect. Ma Hualung was the most outstanding leader among the rebellious elements, but his position is not easy to understand. It seems quite clear that he encouraged, aided and abetted the uprising for some seven years while making it appear to the government that he was friendly

and on the side of the Imperial cause. Mutoshan, while in Ninghsia, had evidently got to know him quite well and trusted him fully. Undoubtedly it was this fact that accounts for the Yellow River route from Lanchow remaining open for so many years. Just what he hoped to accomplish by playing both sides in such a manner is one of the most mysterious features of this great and bloody rebellion.

In Sinkiang the situation was much the same as in Kansu—in all those sections where the Tungans predominated. The main centres were Hami, Urumchi and Manass, but there was no concert among them whatever and they appeared wholly unmindful of events in Kansu. In the Ili Valley the Taranchi were just as bad and their internal troubles became so violent that the Russians made it the occasion for intervention and occupied the whole valley. Out of all this welter of rebellion extending from Shensi to the Pamirs and out of all the opportunities that the situation presented, only in the Tarim Basin did a political entity emerge. There Yakub Beg founded the Kingdom of Kashgaria. The Tungans made common cause with no one, but were hostile alike to Turki, Mongol, Manchu and Chinese. They raided far afield, burning Chuguchak in 1865, Uliassutai in 1870 and Kobdo in 1871.<sup>1</sup> There was great anxiety even in Urga and the Russians were called in to defend the city. It would be difficult to find in all history an uprising on such a scale and lasting so long as the Great

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<sup>1</sup> Prejevalsky, *From Kuldja Across the Tien Shan to Lob Nor*, pp.126 and 194.

## THE MOSLEMS AND THE GREAT REBELLION

Mohammedan Rebellion that was not motivated by political considerations or out of which so little in the way of political pretensions emerged. It does not appear that they made any declarations on what they hoped to accomplish. In the absence of such declaration and on such evidence as has so far been brought out, the great motivating consideration of this rebellion would seem to have been hate—a hate so deep and abiding that it completely repressed any constructive tendencies that might have been latent in the Chinese Moslem mind. Such was the great rebellion that spread devastation over seven hundred thousand square miles and caused the death of more than fifteen million human beings.



## CHAPTER IX

### THE OPERATIONS AGAINST THE MOSLEMS IN SHENSI AND EASTERN KANSU

Immediately on his arrival in Sian on November 26th, 1868, Tso Tsungt'ang started his final military preparations for the pacification of Shensi. The situation in the province at this time was about as follows: The whole of northern Shensi, except a few walled cities, was in the hands of Moslem rebels and nondescript bandits under several leaders who were said to number more than 100,000. In eastern Kansu and reaching east into the districts of Fenghsiang, Pinchow and Fuchow, were Moslem groups numbering more than 200,000 men. Government troops held the cities in west Shensi along the line Paochi, Lungchow and Pinchow. In north Shensi garrisons were still holding Yichun, Fuchow, Yen-an, and Yulin. Yulin, on the Great Wall dividing Shensi from Mongolia, was held by the Manchu general, Chin Hsun, who later attained great distinction under Tso Tsungt'ang. The forces under Tso's immediate command in the Wei Valley numbered 70 battalions and he had 50 battalions concentrated in Shensi under Liu Sungshan. Altogether his army numbered about 60,000 men.

## Tso Tsungt'ang

Tso's plan of operations was to send strong reinforcements to the garrisons at Paochi, Fenghsiang, Chienyang, Lungchow and Chenchow, to enable them to hold the rebels from advancing down the Wei River into central Shensi while he used the major part of his force to clear north Shensi. His plan for north Shensi was to advance into this area with four columns. Chang Yueh with a part of Liu Sungshan's army was to cross the Yellow River at Paote, move southwest roughly paralleling the Great Wall, relieve Chin Hsun at Yulin and continue on to the southwest. Liu Sungshan was to cross the river west of Fenchow, take Suite and move west on the great trade route crossing north Shensi. Kuo Yunch'ang was to move from Tungchow north through Yichwan to Yenchang and then west through Yen-an. The fourth column was concentrated at Yichun under three generals. It was to move north through Fuchow to Kanchuan, one general to turn west from Fuchow, one to garrison Kanchuan and the third to move westward from Kanchuan.

Tso Tsungt'ang was frequently charged by his contemporaries, most of them in Peking, with lacking energy and being too slow in his movements. Even Baron von Richthofen, writing from Sian in 1872, says that by common report Tso's campaign up to that point was conspicuous for its complete lack of success, and that he was slow and lacking in energy.<sup>1</sup> Tso arrived in Sian during the last days of November and in pursuance of the above plan, Liu Sungshan crossed the Yellow River west

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<sup>1</sup> Richthofen's Letters, p.105.

## OPERATIONS AGAINST THE MOSLEMS

of Fenchow, January 16th, 1869, and moved on Suite. Chang Yueh crossed about the same time at Paote in his drive on Yulin. The dates of departure for the two southern columns are not given, but it is evident from the general sequence of events that all four columns were on their way within a very few days of January 15th. It would seem quite evident that any general who could launch four columns from such widely separated places within some seven weeks of his arrival at the front, considering the nature of the terrain and the state of communications in west China at that period, was surely not deficient in energy.

The rebels massed near Suite and were defeated by Liu Sungshan with the loss of 6,000 killed. They abandoned Suite and fled westward. Liu pursued them closely, inflicting heavy losses on the fleeing masses. They brought up at Chenchingpu with Liu Sungshan so close on them that they offered to surrender. The main leader of this group was a Moslem named Tung, father of Tung Fuhsiang who was then a rising leader. Liu Sungshan offered amnesty to all who surrendered, and Chenchingpu yielded on January 30th, 1869. In the meantime Chang Yueh had driven the rebels from Yulin and pushed on toward Liu Sungshan's column. They moved on to Tingpien, where other groups, including Tung Fushan, followed the example of the Chenchingpu rebels. The annalist says that by February 5th Moslems to the number of 100,000 had sought and received amnesty from Liu Sungshan.<sup>1</sup> Tung Fushan entered

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. IV, pp.54-55.

the Imperial service, served his Imperial masters well and crowned a distinguished career by directing the Boxers against the Legations at Peking in 1900.

Liu Sungshan had scored a great success, but it was more apparent than real. Many of those who had tendered their submission were soon harassing his line of communication, or drifting further south, were contributing to the opposition the other columns were having. Liu left a garrison at Tingpian and returned to Chingpian. From Chingpian he pushed east to Anting, a point centrally located, to mop up north Shensi and cooperate with the forces marching north. It would seem that the hardest task of all fell to the column of General Kuo Yunch'ang. In a distant geological past, North Shensi and Kansu was a mountainous section that was covered with a deposit of loess to a depth of several hundred feet. A feature of this deposit is the manner in which it has eroded. Since it has a characteristic tendency to vertical cleavage, every stream and gully in the loess-covered region is faced with a vertical wall of loess not infrequently two hundred feet high. Away from the rivers and larger streams it slopes upward gradually in a series of terraces with perpendicular front faces. The original ridges and peaks have been weathered bare of loess. As a result all the roads follow the high ridges or the valleys, and the ridges are few and the valleys many. The valley roads after leaving the larger streams follow up the gullies, often but a few yards wide and for miles faced on both sides with vertical walls anywhere up to several hundred feet high. It is ideal terrain for guerilla operations and particularly difficult for an invading force that by the

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nature of the case is made up of men unfamiliar with this peculiar topography. Away from the wide valleys of the larger streams night marches are extremely hazardous even where no enemy is present. General Kuo's route was generally at right angles to the valley and gulch roads and too low to follow the few ridge roads. His progress was undoubtedly very slow. The fourth column from Yichun was more fortunate in that its route north as far as Kanchuan followed the great highway running from Sian to Yulin that had been used for more than three thousand years.

Before the systematic and relentless advance of these columns the rebels, after a number of engagements, were forced out of Shensi into Kansu. The campaign culminated on May 15th, 1869, at Pawan, where Wei Kuangt'ao advancing from Kanchuan surrounded several thousand Moslems and completely annihilated them. By the first of June, Shensi was cleared of all sizeable bodies of Moslems.

However, Tso had been beset by many troubles while his troops were clearing Shensi. He had established his headquarters at Chenchow, Shensi, on March 22nd. On the 25th a serious mutiny broke out among the Hunan troops of Liu Sungshan. It started among the troops on his line of communication in the vicinity of Suite. It is said that these troops, scattered along the road, were the victims of many Mohammedan agents who represented to them the hardships they were undergoing so far away from their homes, and that their troubles would be infinitely greater the farther westward they went. It spread to the detachment at Chingchien, where the

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mutineers killed General Kao Liensheng. Liu Sungshan hurried to the scene of the trouble from Anting and by vigorous action soon restored order. Not, however, before the news reached Peking, greatly exaggerated. It was made to appear that Tso's entire army had mutinied or was on the verge of mutiny. A Censor memorialized the throne saying that it was hopeless to think of using southern troops in the Northwest, that they should all be disbanded and northern men recruited for the war. Tseng Kuofan immediately took a hand in the matter. He was not friendly to Tso Tsungtang, but Liu Sungshan was his favourite and he defended him vigorously. He also resented any reflections on the Hunanese. He assured the throne that it could not be a very serious affair. Tso was called on for a full report, but by this time he was able to report that it was all settled. Seventy-seven of the ringleaders had been executed and the few disaffected units broken up and the men assigned to loyal battalions. It had furnished an occasion, however, for Tso's many enemies and they were slow to forget it.

Tso was greatly distressed over the death of Kao Liensheng. One night long after midnight he was in his headquarters writing something in the nature of an obituary for General Kao. A small bird flew into the room and perched near where he was sitting. An orderly caught the bird and put it outside. In a few minutes it came back. When the orderly put it out this time it held to his hand with its beak as if determined not to leave. Tso was much intrigued by this incident

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and in a letter to a friend he wondered if it was not the soul of General Kao come to visit him.<sup>1</sup>

Trouble soon arose with the Board of Revenue. The expenses of Tso's 120 battalions was running at the rate of 4,600,000 taels a year, of which, it is well to mention, 1,500,000 taels, or about one third, was for the item "transportation." Since the funds were coming from several provinces on allotment from the Board of Revenue, there was not much Tso could do about it if any province was slow in remitting or simply failed to remit. He had no power outside Shensi and Kansu. To solve this difficulty he requested the appointment of an Imperial Commissioner to be stationed at Sian to handle the money. Yuan Paoheng was appointed to this post to receive all funds and supervise expenditures for Shensi, but not for Kansu. Tso was charged with supervising expenditures in Kansu. An Imperial Commissioner was the very highest official in the empire but his authority extended only to the specific duties set forth in his commission. In this case he had nothing whatever to do with the civil or military government but was simply a fiscal agent. However, he spoke with the full authority of the Emperor and when he called on a provincial official to explain why he had failed to remit the designated sums for the army in Shensi and Kansu it was a serious matter. To disregard a Viceroy's request was of little moment but an Imperial Commissioner was altogether different.

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. V, p.4.

## TSO TSUNGT'ANG

With the Moslems cleared out of Shensi, Tso Tsung-t'ang was ready to move into Kansu. On June 28th, 1869, he advanced his headquarters to Chingchow, just over the border in Kansu. He now prepared for the very serious business of the pacification of the great Moslem stronghold. He regarded the Chinchipu centre as of first importance and determined to concentrate upon the reduction of the Moslems in that area. He had no illusions whatever about Ma Hualung, but was certain that he was the ringleader among all the Kansu Moslems and he determined to proceed on that basis. Ma Hualung was soon to find that he was confronted by a man of altogether different calibre from Yang Yuehping and Mutoshan. Tso Tsung-t'ang planned to advance west into Kansu with three armies, one up the Wei Valley, one along the old Imperial highway from Sian-Chingchow-Pingliang-Chingning-Anting-Lanchow, and one from north Shensi to Chinchipu. The northern army was the strongest and was to be the main effort for the first stage of the campaign.

The army held Ch'inchow, Lingtai, Chingchow, Pingliang, Chinyang, Ningchow, Chengning and Hoshui in eastern Kansu while all the cities in western and northern Shensi were strongly garrisoned. There were three lines of communication, one from Sian west along the Wei River for the southern army; from Sian along the Imperial highway for the centre army; and, from Fenchow in Shansi, through Suite and Chingpien for the northern army. It is not stated in the Annals how many men Tso had available for field operations in Kansu, but it was undoubtedly much reduced by the

## OPERATIONS AGAINST THE MOSLEMS

numerous garrisons he had to maintain and for his lengthening lines of communications. It is doubtful if he had more than 35,000 men available for active field service.

The general dispositions for carrying into effect his plan of operations were as follows:<sup>1</sup>

1. Liu Sungshan to advance along the road following the Great Wall to Lingchow and Chinchipu. Chang Yueh and Chin Hsun with a cavalry force to move down the right bank of the Yellow River as far as Tengkow, cross the river and operate south on Ninghsia.
2. The centre army was divided into three columns: Wei Kuangt'ao to move west from Chinyang, Liu Tuanmien to move up the Hwan River, and Lei Chengwan and Huang Ting to operate in the Pingliang district towards Kuyuan.
3. Wu Shihmai at Chinchow was to hold the Moslems from going down the Wei River into Shensi.
4. Ma Teshun was stationed at Lingtai with the reserve where he could support 2 or 3 in an emergency.
5. From the Kansu provincial troops Tso sent several battalions to Hweih sien in southeast Kansu, south of the Tsingling mountains, to prevent the Moslems from trying to cross the mountains to the Wei Valley.

The summer was spent in preparations. Probably the rains which make the roads in eastern Kansu almost impassable during the summer months had something to do with the inactivity of the various columns during this period. Liu Sungshan, who had the hardest part of the initial operations, moved to Hwamachi on September 2nd, 1869. He began his advance on the 6th and defeated a force of Moslems the following day west of Hwamachi. For some reason difficult to understand, he passed by Lingchow and occupied Wuchung on

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. V, pp.8-9.

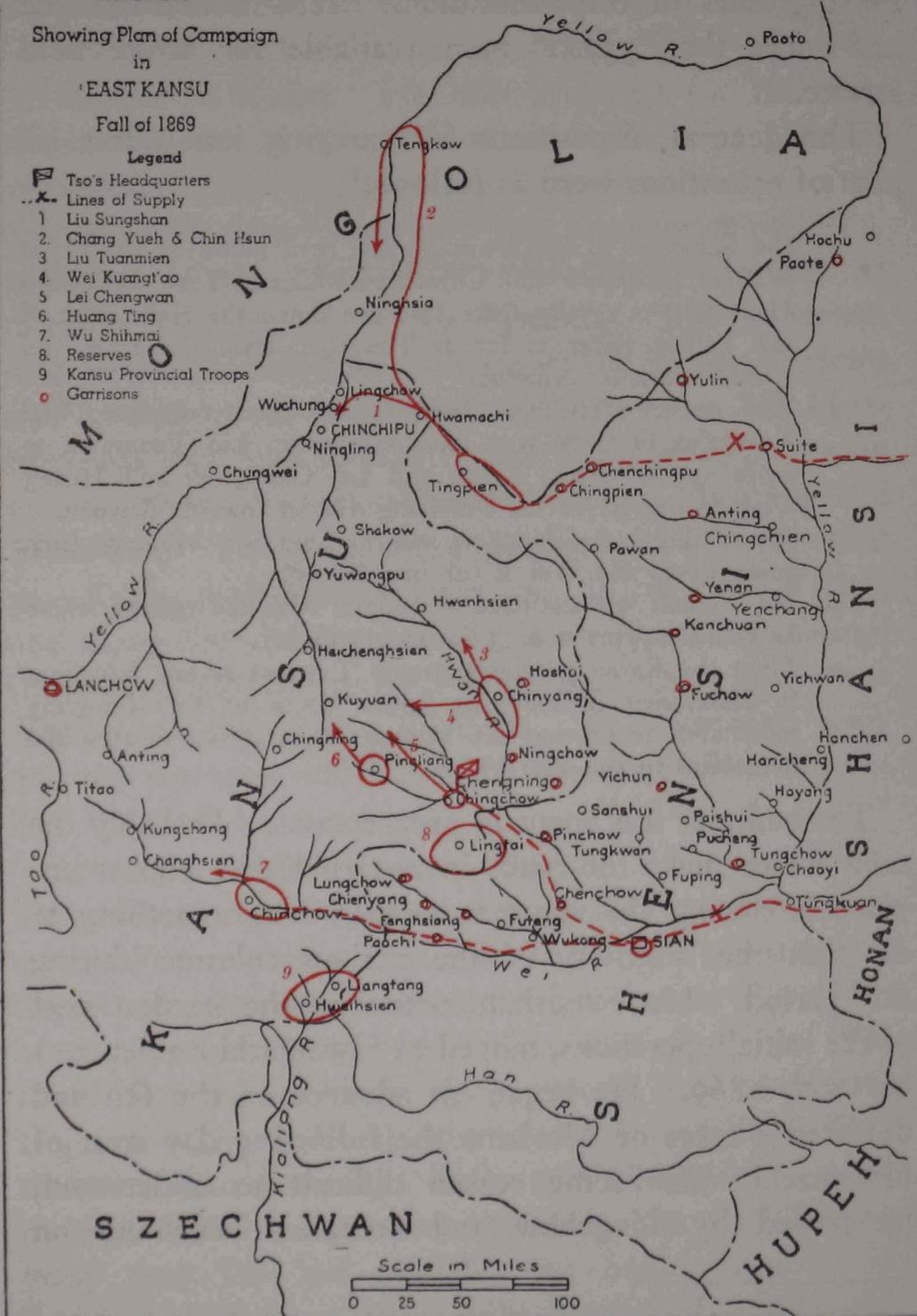
# Tso TSUNG'ANG

## SKETCH

Showing Plan of Campaign  
in  
EAST KANSU  
Fall of 1869

### Legend

-  Tso's Headquarters
-  Lines of Supply
- 1 Liu Sungshan
- 2 Chang Yueh & Chin Hsun
- 3 Liu Tuanmien
- 4 Wei Kuang'ao
- 5 Lei Chengwan
- 6 Huang Ting
- 7 Wu Shihmai
- 8 Reserves
- 9 Kansu Provincial Troops
-  Garrisons



## OPERATIONS AGAINST THE MOSLEMS

September 12th. Ma Hualung caused the country around Chinchipu to be flooded and sent detachments of Moslems to harry Liu's line of communications with Shensi. For almost a month Liu Sungshan remained more or less inactive in Wuchung. It seems that the wily Ma Hualung was bringing pressure to bear on Tso Tsung'tang and Liu Sungshan. He had friends, even in Peking, who claimed that he was not a rebel. Ma got the Tartar General in Kweihwa to memorialize the throne denouncing Liu Sungshan. He was charged with slaughtering the population, killing those who surrendered and with driving the peaceloving Moslems to revolt. Mutoshan, the Manchu governor of Kansu reported:

“ . . . Ma Hualung is a good man. Liu Sungshan is altogether too harsh in his methods and is driving the Moslems to rebellion. He is creating a situation extremely perilous to the Kansu army. Tso Tsung'tang's system is to defeat the Moslems and then try to reconcile them. As a result the Mohammedans have no confidence in him. I could not, knowing all this, fail to report it to your Majesty. Moreover, I have sent Hu Chianghui to Ma Hualung to reassure his people, to tell them not to fear but to have full confidence in your Majesty's benevolence.”<sup>1</sup>

These memorials were referred to Tso and he was directed to make an investigation of Liu's conduct and report in full. When Tso saw these attacks on his own policy, he was thoroughly aroused. He did not make much of an investigation as he was satisfied in his own mind that he knew all the facts. Of Ma Hualung he said in substance: He was the most dangerous man in the empire; that he was the ringleader of the rebellion; that he had seized the women and property of the

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. V, pp.18-19.

## Tso TSUNGT'ANG

Chinese, taking them to Chinchipu, where the women had been apportioned to his followers and the Chinese men forced to become coolies to the Moslems; that for a radius of several hundred li about Ninghsia and Chinchipu, scarcely a free Chinese was to be found; and that for months he had been fortifying Chinchipu, collecting arms and ammunition for war. Tso vigorously defended Liu Sungshan and as a crowning tribute he said: "Tseng Kuofan and I have disagreed on almost everything; but, on the courage, loyalty and ability of Liu Sungshan we are in complete accord."<sup>1</sup> The inference would seem to be that where he and Tseng could agree there could be no possibility of error.

Ma Hualung claimed that the Shensi Moslems were a bad lot, stirred up his peaceful citizens in Chinchipu and were beyond his control. Early in October, these Shensi Moslems made a violent attack on Liu Sungshan in Wuchung. Liu then took the offensive, driving generally southward toward Chinchipu. He was fortunate in intercepting on October 27th a letter from Ma Hualung to another Moslem leader in which a concerted drive by all Moslems against Tso Tsungt'ang was outlined. The chief importance of the letter, however, was the fact that it allegedly bore the seal of Ma Hualung as generalissimo of all the Moslems. The Chinese attach the greatest importance to seals and they made much of this letter. It was cited as positive proof of Ma Hualung's duplicity, and of his being the leader of the rebellion. Tso sent the letter by express courier to Peking and at

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. V, p.22 (a).

## OPERATIONS AGAINST THE MOSLEMS

the same time ordered Liu Sungshan to open operations full blast. The letter and seal evidently convinced the Son of Heaven, as an Imperial rescript was issued clearing Liu Sungshan of all suspicion and proscribing Ma Hualung and all his followers.<sup>1</sup>

Liu Sungshan now gave his attention to Lingchow and captured it on the night of November 2nd. On the 5th he resumed operations to the south. Chinchipu was located in the southern part of a small plain enclosed on the south, east and north by a range of hills and on the west by the Yellow River. The Lin River from the south cut through the hills and was diverted all over this plain for irrigation. It was an uncommonly productive plain and at the time of the rebellion supported an enormous population. There were three cities, Lingchow, Wuchung, Ningling and many villages. Over the whole plain was a network of canals, all the villages were fortified and the Moslems had erected numberless stockades covering every approach to Chinchipu. Chinchipu was a thriving trading centre, with hundreds of merchants engaged in the tea and salt trade with Mongolia. It was a purely Moslem city and no Chinese official was resident there. The officials lived at Lingchow.

During November and December Liu Sungshan made some progress, reducing the villages one by one, until by the end of the year he had approached to within some three miles of the city on the north and east. Chin Hsun and Chang Yueh had cleared the Ninghsia region above Tungkow and were in occupation of the entire

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. V, p.23 (a).

## Tso Tsungt'ang

Ningshia plain. In the south the central army had advanced during October as far west as Hweining and through Kuyuan north as far as Heichenghsien. The Moslems in this area were largely from Shensi, under the leadership of Pai Yenu, about the only Shensi Moslem leader of note. He had been driven to the southwest toward Titao. Ma Hualung requested Pai to return north and assist in preventing Tso from sending any troops north to the assistance of Liu Sungshan. Pai was joined by large numbers of Sining and Hochow Moslems and with this force returned north during January, 1870. About the same time a number of small bands of Hochow Moslems drifted eastward and concentrated in the districts of Chingchow and Chengning, causing Tso a great deal of annoyance. Other groups of rebels were sent by Ma Hualung into north Shensi, where they captured Tingpien and cut Liu Sungshan's grain road from Suite. A force was ordered from Suite to restore communications and at the same time the officials in Paoto were ordered to start sending grain across the Ordos to Liu's army.

Ma Hualung, finding himself proscribed and with Liu Sungshan steadily drawing near Chinchipu, realized that something had to be done and that quickly. He called on all Kansu Mohammedans to come to his aid and they responded in large numbers. If they had had a leader equal to their willingness to fight they would have driven Tso Tsungt'ang out of Kansu. It seems to be characteristic of Chinese insurgent strategy to strive to distract the attention of the enemy at a threatened point by making a counter threat in great force against some other

## OPERATIONS AGAINST THE MOSLEMS

and relatively distant point. During the Taiping and Mohammedan Rebellions the rebels rarely tried to bring the enormous numbers they had available to surround and annihilate the government forces at critical points, but almost always essayed a diversion. It is rather hazardous to try to deduce a plan of operations from the seeming hodgepodge of movements detailed in the Annals that form the basis of this account, since one is apt to read into the situation something that probably never occurred to the participants. However, it seems that at this juncture Ma Hualung planned to throw all the available Moslems into Shensi in the expectation that Liu Sungshan would be recalled to that province. But, late in January he began to worry about the northward drive from Tso's central army and he ordered the various groups of Moslems to hold the passes leading across the mountains from Kuyuan to Chinchipu.

Tso's first major objective in Kansu was the Moslem centre of Chinchipu and he probably thought that his northern army was nearer the capture of Chinchipu than was actually the case. He ordered Lei Chengwan up the Hwan River and Huang Ting from Kuyuan via Yuwangpu, both columns to join Liu Sungshan before Chinchipu. Liu had been reducing the fortified villages and stockades to the north, east and south of the Moslem stronghold during January and early February and was nearing the city walls. His army was animated by his own indomitable spirit and while progress was slow it was certain. On February 14th, 1870, Liu Sungshan delivered an assault on the fortified village of Mawuchai, about a mile south of the walls of Chinchipu. In the

heat of the action, Liu Sungshan, who was always in the thick of a fight, was fatally wounded. Two of his generals who saw him fall rushed to his assistance but Liu told them to go on about their business and not to waste their time on him. The annalist says that his men were so enraged at the loss of their leader that they carried the village with a rush. Whether they carried it or not, they did not long hold it. With the death of Liu Sungshan the army ceased to be an army, becoming instead a group of detachments. All cohesion was lost and not one among the numerous generals could pick up the threads and unite them.

Ma Hualung took instant advantage of the confusion caused by the death of his great enemy, made a vigorous attack to the east and cut the northern army in two. Those to the north fell back on Wuchung and were surrounded. The force at Mawuchai was driven south. They tried to recover at Niutowshan, were again defeated and fled south to join Huang Ting's column. In the meantime Lei Chengwan had met with a reverse at Shakow, but had by no means abandoned the attempt to push through. The disaster at Chinchipu greatly inspired the Moslems and they attacked Lei with such vigour that he was surrounded and Tso had to send a force to extricate him. Lei Chengwan, Huang Ting and a portion of Liu Sungshan's army, all retreated to Kuyuan and the rebels occupied the strategic town of Yuwangpu. Chin Hsun and Chang Yueh had tried to move down from the Ninghsia district to aid the army at Chinchipu but they too were defeated and forced north. Thus in the course of a few days Tso Tsungt'ang suffered the

## OPERATIONS AGAINST THE MOSLEMS

greatest disaster of his entire career. From Kuyuan, where he had a shattered army, to Wuchung where he had another closely invested, the whole of eastern Kansu was wide open. Had Ma Hualung enjoyed a reasonable talent for generalship along with his many other endowments, he doubtless could have driven Tso Tsungt'ang out of Kansu, perhaps from Shensi as well, and delivered an irreparable blow to the Imperial cause. Moslem enthusiasm was high and their temper just right for a leader to weld them into a united force. But the opportunity soon passed and not again in this war were the circumstances so auspicious.

Ma Hualung depleted the forces in the Chinchipu sector and sent them into Shensi through the districts of Kanchuan, Fuchow, Hancheng and Hoyang. The rebels who had held Tso's central army from sending aid to Chinchipu, were joined by others from Hochow and by the scattered bands in eastern Kansu, and the whole mass rolled into Shensi through the districts of Sanshui, Tungkwan, Pucheng, Fuping, Tungchow and Chaoyi. The Moslems were thoroughly familiar with the country and most of them being mounted they moved with incredible swiftness. It was apparently the move Ma Hualung had been wanting to make for weeks. Probably he thought by this manœuvre to draw Tso hurrying out of Kansu. Some men doubtless would have lost their balance by such a succession of disasters, but not Tso Tsungt'ang. He had no intention of leaving Kansu, and Ma Hualung would have been better advised to try forcing him out rather than drawing him out.

# Tso Tsung'ang

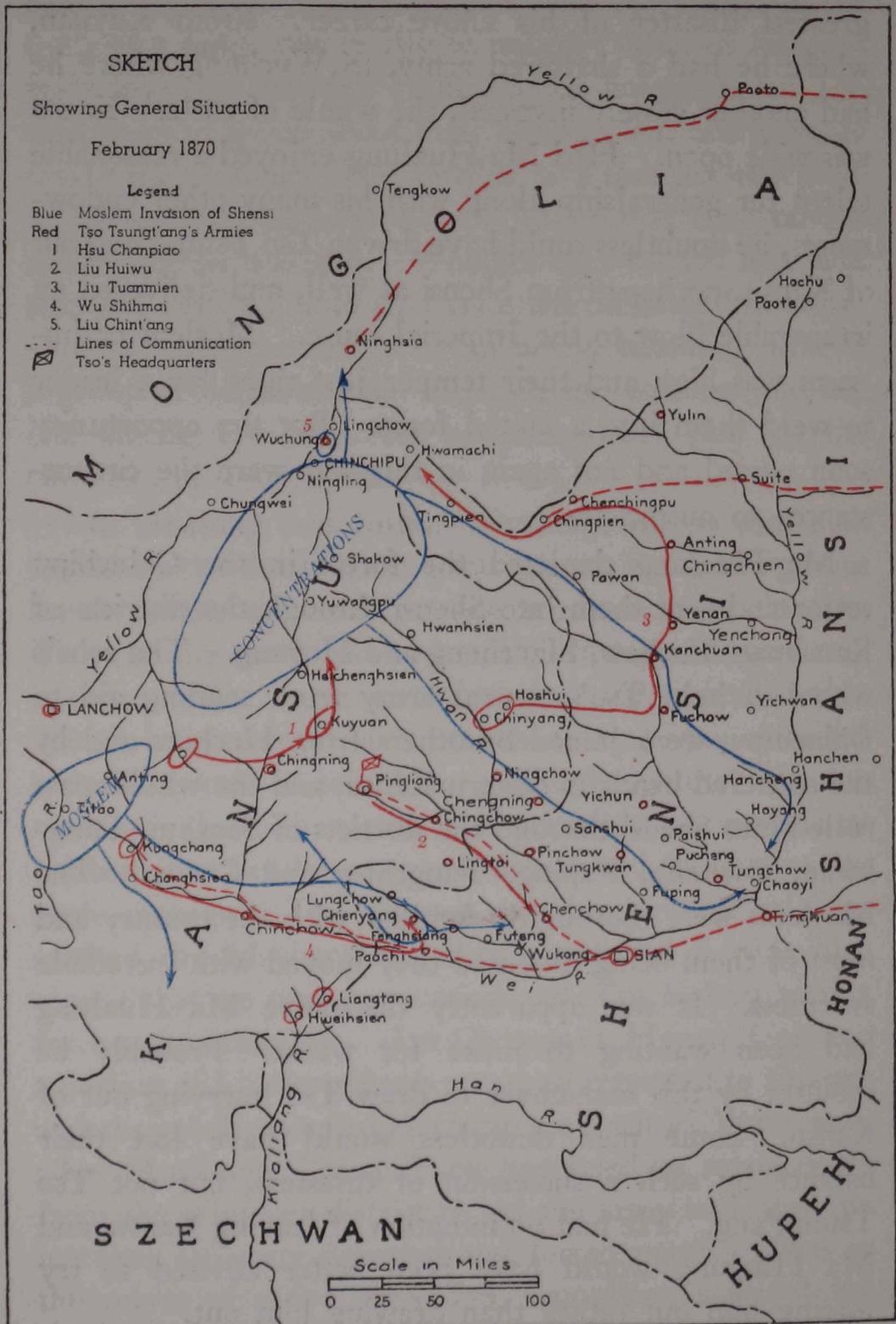
## SKETCH

Showing General Situation

February 1870

### Legend

- Blue Moslem Invasion of Shensi
- Red Tso Tsung'ang's Armies
- 1 Hsu Chanpiao
- 2 Liu Huiwu
- 3 Liu Tuamien
- 4 Wu Shihmai
- 5 Liu Chint'ang
- Lines of Communication
- ☐ Tso's Headquarters



## OPERATIONS AGAINST THE MOSLEMS

The diversion into Shensi had more effect in Peking than it had in Pingliang, where Tso's headquarters had been established since December 3rd. The government was distracted by this series of reverses and Li Hungchang with his well trained army was ordered to Shensi to restore the situation. This turn of events doubtless bothered Tso Tsung'ang more than did the Moslems. Although there seems to be no record of any particular differences between Tso and Li, it is fairly certain that Tso had no great liking for Li Hungchang.

The annalist does not go into much detail on Tso Tsung'ang's measures to meet the situation raised by the thousands of Moslems who had swept through his loosely knit Kansu front into Shensi. It appears that he ordered Hsu Chanpiao, who was operating on the Imperial road in the Hweining area, to return to Kuyuan, take over command of the forces in that district, and start an offensive to the north toward Chinchipu. He sent two columns into Shensi under Liu Tuanmien and Li Huiwu. Liu Tuanmien moved east from the general vicinity of Chingyang, defeated scattered bands of Moslems in the Fuchow and Kanchuan districts, turned north to the Suite-Lingchow-Ningshia road, and west along this road to Tingpien and by the end of March had opened the road from the Yellow River to the Kansu frontier. Li Huiwu moved into Shensi over the Imperial highway, defeated the rebels at Wukeng and Fufeng, and reopened communications between Tso's headquarters and Sian. On the south road strong bands of Moslems from Titao and Hochow swept eastward on both banks of the Wei River and gave General Wu Shihmai a lively time. He

defeated those south of the river at Changhsien and succeeded in driving them across the Tsingling mountains into south Kansu. Those north of the river entered Shensi about the end of March via Lungchow and Ch'ienyang, and defeated Tso's forces at Paochi. After the battle at Changhsien, Wu Shihmai moved rapidly into Shensi and defeated the Moslems on April 14th, near Chienyang. After this defeat the Moslems divided, one group going eastward into the districts of Pucheng and Paishui, and the other group going northwest through the Lungchow district to Kansu. Tso then sent another column to Shensi under Chang Fuchi, apparently along the Pingliang-Sian road, and Wu Shihmai returned to Kungchang. Hsu Chanpiao moved north from Kuyuan and reoccupied the important centre of Yuwangpu, March 10th. Most of the Moslems in this area had gone off to Shensi and General Hsu doubtless had no great difficulty in his advance from Kuyuan to Yuwangpu. The annalist says nothing about what happened in east Shensi where the two great waves of Moslems sweeping out of east Kansu undoubtedly converged, or came near to converging, between Tungchow and the Yellow River. He simply says that they returned to Kansu, group by group, most of them through the district of Ningchow into the Kuyuan area. Wei Kuangt'ao in Ningchow and Hsu Chanpiao in Kuyuan handled them so roughly that they were unable to form any notable concentrations and the remnants escaped westward to Titao and Hochow. By early May Shensi was clear of all large groups of Moslems, and they were back in Kansu very much scattered; the sudden burst of power, cohesion and enthusiasm of

## OPERATIONS AGAINST THE MOSLEMS

February thoroughly dissipated through the lack of intelligent and purposeful leadership. Ma Hualung had lost his great opportunity.

Baron von Richthofen visited Sian early in January, 1872, and in his account of the Mohammedan rebellion gives some interesting sidelights on the situation in Shensi during the spring of 1870. He mentions the signal reverses of Tso Tsung'ang and says that by common report the situation in the early spring of that year was worse than at any time during the entire rebellion. In this emergency the government ordered Li Hungchang to Shensi and Kansu, and he came from Wuchang with forty battalions, or 20,000 men, all armed and equipped with foreign made weapons and equipment. However, he had scarcely arrived when he was ordered to Chihli on account of the Tientsin massacre.

“He (Li Hungchang) left his troops in Shensi, and gave the command of them to General Liu, who has held it since then. The fame of Li Hungchang (or perhaps, of his foreign arms) is so great, that the rebels withdrew immediately on the approach of his troops, never engaging in a fight with them. Not one of the soldiers of that army whom I met has ever seen a rebel. The whole province of Shensi was at once cleared of organized rebels, without bloodshed, none but stragglers remaining. The main body retired into Kansu, where they were received by their co-religionists, although these are said not to be in complete harmony with the Mohammedans of Shensi.

Since the spring of 1870, peace may therefore be said to be comparatively restored in Shensi. . . . Proceeding now to the province of Kansu, which is the present theatre of war, I must first state the astonishing fact that General Liu did not follow up his enormous advantage, but contented himself, during the last eighteen months, with guarding the frontier of Shensi toward the Kansu side. He left all the fighting in Kansu to Tso Kung-pau, with whom he was evidently not on terms of harmony; and though second in military rank to him, he never assisted him in the severe struggles which the army of Tso had to undergo, sometimes in close vicinity. Tso Kung-

## Tso Tsungt'ang

pau is said to have the immediate command of about two hundred battalions, or about one hundred thousand men, nominally, (not counting Liu's troops), which are nearly all in Kansu. It appears that Tso Kung-pau, although no go-ahead man, and lacking energy, is a cautious and prudent general, and that his want of success is due to the fact that his troops are much inferior in fighting capacity to those of Li Hungchang, and were originally badly armed. In the course of time they have received a great many foreign arms; but most of these are said to have been taken by the rebels, Tso's troops not being accustomed to their use. A new supply was sent a short time ago to Kansu, but the rebels caught the whole train, killed the escort and took possession of the arms and ammunition."<sup>1</sup>

The distinguished traveller had been in Sian about a week when he wrote the above observations, and it is apparent from other remarks he makes in the narrative that his information was drawn almost wholly from Li Hungchang's officers. It is thus not strange that he formed a rather unfavourable opinion of Tso Tsungt'ang. It is unfortunate that Richthofen was unable to make his projected trip into Kansu and see at first hand something of Tso Tsungt'ang and his work. His observations would have been most illuminating since of the many foreign writers on China and things Chinese few indeed have combined the remarkable power of observation and the facility of expression of the great German.

The Annals say that Li Hungchang arrived at T'ungkuan during July, and that immediately on arrival he was called north, never entering Shensi. While it is reasonably certain that at least some of his troops preceded him, it is just as certain that none arrived before the trouble was over, and that the fame of Li Hungchang and his army, though ever so great in foreign circles,

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<sup>1</sup> Richthofen's Letters, pp.105-6.

## OPERATIONS AGAINST THE MOSLEMS

had nothing whatever to do with the clearing of Shensi. As mentioned before, the annalist does not give very much information about the events of the spring of 1870, hardly enough to preserve clearly the sequence of events, but from such data as has been given and from the general situation prevailing at the time a plausible deduction may be made of Tso's estimate of the situation and of the steps he took to restore his position in Kansu. He doubtless considered that his numerous garrisons in Shensi would be able to hold the important walled cities, that Shensi was already so thoroughly devastated the Moslems could do no very great damage in over-running the countryside, that it would be hopeless for him to try to round up the fast travelling Moslems by following them into Shensi, that beyond opening and securing his lines of communications there was nothing much to be done, and that the surest way to get them out of Shensi was to pick up the threads broken at Chinchipu by the death of Liu Sungshan and concentrate all effort on that Moslem stronghold. He was convinced that Ma Hualung was the paramount Moslem leader in Kansu and doubtless thought that if he convinced the wily Moslem that he had no intention of leaving Kansu but on the contrary was firmly determined to take Chinchipu, Ma Hualung would himself order the rebels out of Shensi to assist him in Kansu. The rapid move of Hsu Chanpiao north from Kuyuan to Yuwangpu, the determined resistance of Tso's army under investment at Wuchung, in sight of Chinchipu, and the drive of Liu Tuanmien restoring communications from the Chinchipu sector to the Yellow River, undoubtedly convinced Ma Hualung

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when it was too late that he needed the Moslems in Kansu, not Shensi. It seems that only on the hypothesis that Ma Hualung called the rebels from Shensi can the rapid evacuation of Moslems in the spring of 1870 be reasonably explained. But when they returned to Kansu, they had lost their cohesion and were of no great use to Ma Hualung. Seasoned and well disciplined troops can, for a few times, make such wild and fruitless manœuvres and still retain some effectiveness, but not loosely organized irregulars. The Moslems, instead of dislocating Tso Tsungt'ang, had dislocated themselves. It is believed to be a reasonably safe assumption that Tso Tsungt'ang in late February estimated the situation exactly as it turned out. He knew the Moslems better than they knew themselves.

What troubled Tso more than any other phase of the situation was the loss of Liu Sungshan. That general had had a distinguished career, rising from the ranks in Tseng's original Hunan army. At the time of his death he was barely thirty-nine, yet he had been in the field almost continuously for seventeen years. It is said that when the Taipings entered Hunan, Liu Sungshan was engaged to a girl in Nanyang, Honan, but became so busy campaigning that he had no time to get married. Immediately after the Nienfei were suppressed in 1868, Tso gave him leave of absence to go to Honan for his wedding. Liu was with his bride but two weeks when he was ordered to proceed immediately to his command in Shansi and start the invasion of north Shensi. He was not a scholar, in fact was almost illiterate, but he was a singularly able leader of men. In the course of his

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career he had campaigned in the provinces of Hunan, Hupeh, Anhui, Kiangsi, Kwangtung, Fukien, Honan, Shansi, Chihli, Shensi and Kansu, and he held the rank of Kwangtung T'i Tu, or general of the Kwangtung Army. Tso Tsung'ang was strongly attached to Liu personally, besides he had handled the northern campaign to Tso's complete satisfaction, and Tso depended on him more than on any general in his army. The annalist says that the old warrior wept when Liu Sungshan's death was reported.

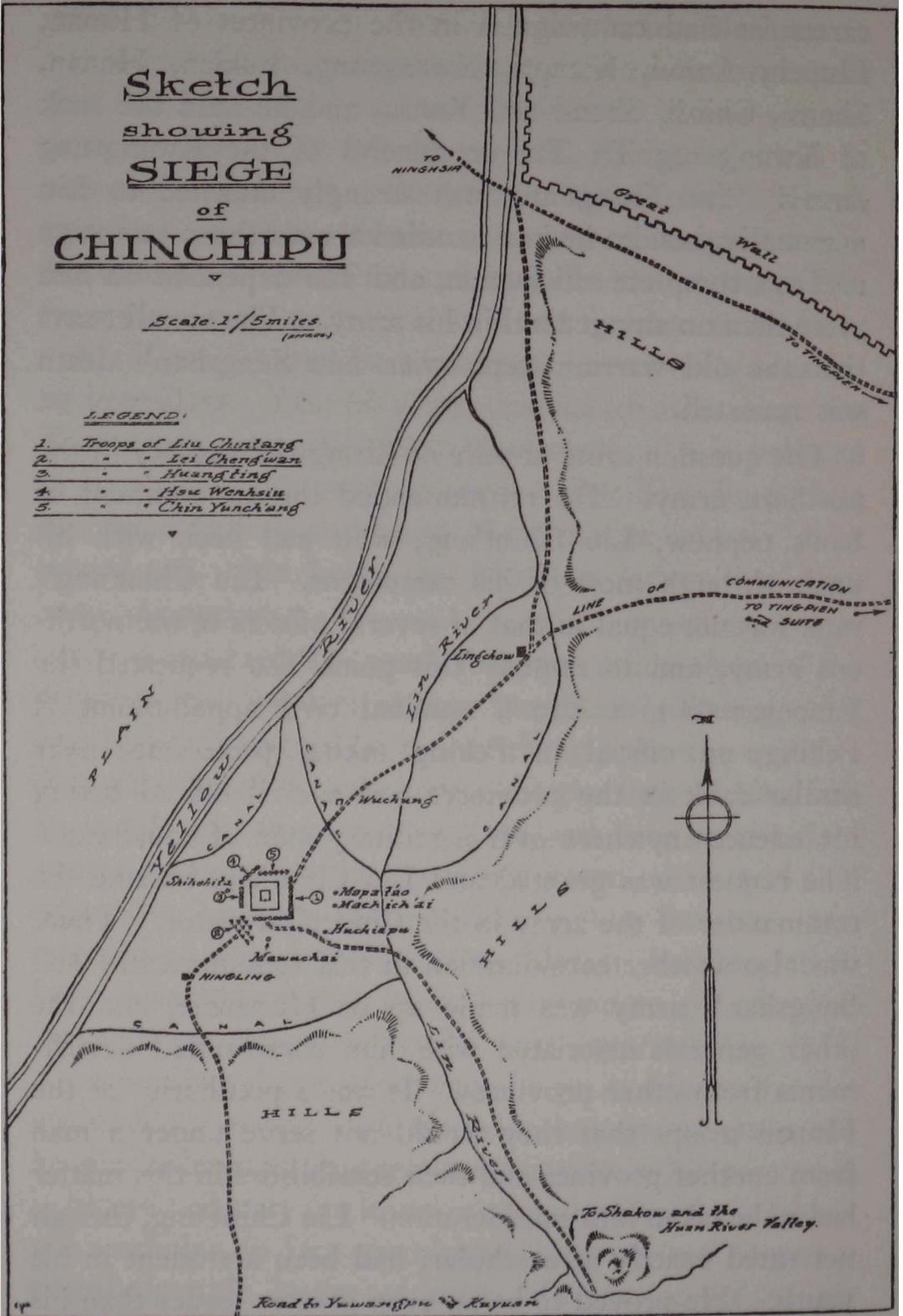
The question arose at once of filling the vacancy in the northern army. Tso recommended the appointment of Liu's nephew, Liu Chint'ang, who had been with his uncle through most of his campaigns. Liu Chint'ang's rank was not equal to that of several officers in the northern army, and to remedy this point Tso requested the Emperor to give him a nominal civil appointment in Peking, an official in Peking taking precedence over similar rank in the provinces and a civil official taking precedence anywhere over a military man of equal rank. The request was granted and Liu Chint'ang became the commander of the army in the Chinchipu sector. There was also another consideration in this appointment. Liu Sungshan's army was made up of Hunanese, and the other generals associated with him commanded detachments from other provinces. It was a peculiarity of the Hunan troops that they would not serve under a man from another province and their sensibilities in this matter had to be taken into consideration. Liu Chint'ang, though not rated exactly as a scholar, had been a student in his youth. He proved to be an even greater leader than his

Sketch  
showing  
**SIEGE**  
of  
**CHINCHIPU**

Scale 1/5 miles  
(approx)

LEGEND:

1. Troops of Liu Chia'ang
2. " " Lei Chengwan
3. " " Huangting
4. " " Hou Wank'ing
5. " " Chin Yunch'ang



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distinguished uncle. Tso Tsungt'ang rarely, if ever, made a mistake in selecting officers for command. It was one of his strongest points.

Through March and April, Liu Chint'ang got the situation so well in hand at Wuchung that he was able to push out and enlarge his field of activity. No doubt a contributing factor was the absence of many Chinchipu Moslems in Shensi. Ma Hualung late in April approached Liu Chint'ang asking for amnesty, saying the season was getting late and it was necessary for his people to plant their crops. The matter was referred to Tso and he said that Ma Hualung must first surrender all his arms and horses. Ma declined this condition and the matter was dropped. Early in May, Chin Yunch'ang with reinforcements joined Liu Chint'ang from north Shensi. With this addition the operations shifted from the defensive to a distinct offensive. Ma Hualung again tried harrying the Suite road but Tso now had this line sufficiently organized and the rebels had no success. During June and July, Liu made slow but sure progress recapturing the many fortified villages that his uncle had taken the year before and that had been reorganized by the Moslems. On the east he occupied after fierce resistance the villages of Mapat'iao, Machichai and Huchiapu. Chin Yunch'ang advanced on the north to within a mile or so of the walls of Chinchipu. In August, Tso got three columns through from the south under Lei Chengwan, Huang Ting and Hsu Wenhsiu, and all roads leading to Chinchipu were closed. Tso sent a strong detachment to Shakow to garrison this important pass and keep the road open from Pingliang to Chinchipu.

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One after another of the strongly fortified villages close to the city was taken until the troops operating on all four sides of Chinchipu were linked up forming a continuous line around Ma Hualung's stronghold. On the northeast of Chinchipu there was a second wall enclosing the commercial section of the city, called Tungkuan. Liu Chint'ang breached this wall on September 12th and carried the section by assault. Tungkuan was burned, destroying some three thousand stores and trading establishments. The army was now put to work digging a ditch around the city some 800 yards from the wall. It was said to be 30 feet wide and 20 feet deep, filled with water and designed to keep the Moslems from making a break from the city. This ditch was completed September 26th, representing an amount of labour that might probably have been better utilized.

On other fronts Tso had restored the situation completely. The army in the Wei Valley had advanced west and in June captured the important city of Titao on the T'ao River. Tso ordered this force to consolidate their position in Titao and make no effort to advance further to the west. In the centre he cleared out the country as far west as Anting and Hweining. His front roughly corresponded to the line Titao-Anting-Hweining-Haicheng-Chungwei. It appears that he abandoned the line of communications across north Shensi and concentrated on the line from Pingliang to Chinchipu. On this road he stationed thirty battalions to keep it open. Every man that could be spared was sent to Chinchipu and at the close of the northern operations he had 71 battalions around Chinchipu. His battalions by this time

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had been appreciably reduced in size and it is doubtful if there were many more than 25,000 men before Chinchipu. He was beginning to make more and more use of the Kansu provincial troops and placed them under the command of Chou Kaihsi, a Hunan general. They had operated in that part of Kansu south of the Tsingling range of mountains and some had assisted in the taking of Titao. There were normally more than 50,000 men in the Green Standard Army of Kansu but at this time it was certainly greatly reduced, probably to half that number.

Tso's problem was somewhat complicated by the number of Shensi and Kansu Moslems who had surrendered and had received amnesty. He had to look after these people and was never quite sure they would not rise again. He had tried the plan of segregating them and as there were no difficulties about abandoned land in the Kansu of this period he had considerable success in locating them in villages where there was no one but Moslems, and a small garrison. His memorial on this subject is of interest. He said in substance:

"In suppressing rebellions the Taipings could cut their hair, and the Nienfei abandon their arms and horses, and return to ordinary pursuits. Those from a distance could be given a small sum of money and told to go home. Those restless spirits who had no home to go to could be enlisted in the army and reduced to discipline. But with Mohammedans it is different. From of old the Chinese and Mohammedans have been enemies. They never inter-marry, are fundamentally different in temperament, and when thrown together they want to kill each other. They spring from different roots. They have different features. If you place a single Chinese Moslem in a crowd of Chinese, any native can pick him out at once and out of a hundred trials will not err once. There are some Mohammedans who would like to be peaceful but they are forced to follow the lead of those

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who are hostile. If the peacefully inclined Moslems wish to settle down in peace the others use every effort to prevent it. If they are settled among Chinese they are at once discriminated against and often killed. A great many of them simply want to live and they will be with us or with the rebels, anything just to live. They can not be scattered like other rebels as there is no place for them to go.

Formerly the Mohammedans were very numerous in the Northwest, but now, aside from twenty or thirty thousand in Sianfu, none are in Shensi. What from war, disease and hunger, nine out of ten have perished. If we try to take the Shensi Moslems and put them back in that province, the Chinese who have suffered so much from their hands will raise a storm. It is indeed a difficult proposition. I have been directed many times not to refer to the people in these parts as Chinese (*han jen*) and Mohammedans (*hui hui*), but to differentiate them as loyal subjects and rebels. I fully understand your Majesty's benevolent intentions in this matter. However, it is not that many among the Mohammedans do not understand and do not react favourably to conciliatory treatment, but that they are surrounded by enemies, are living in ever increasing misery, have no place to go where they can make a living, and, they do not know when or how it is all going to end.

A decision must be reached at once on what we are going to do with these people. The waste and abandoned land that is being reclaimed under the direction of our garrisons may be used and plans worked out for settling the remnants of the Shensi Mohammedans on it. Already in the Pingliang and Tachakow districts we have experimented with this method and have now settled several thousand on the land. We can use this system, giving them animals and settling all of them on the land, making it plain to them that it is a manifestation of your Majesty's great benevolence."<sup>1</sup>

The Moslem raid into Shensi had brought down on Tso a wave of criticism from the mighty all over the empire. As the investment of Chinchipu continued into the fall of 1870 it began to look in Peking as though Tso was getting nowhere at all. Early in October he received the following in a rescript from the throne:

“ . . . The Mohammedans of Shensi and Kansu have now been in revolt for several years, and the empire has used the greatest

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. V, pp.34-35.

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exertions to pacify these provinces. We have ordered Tso Tsung'ang to take charge of this campaign and destroy the rebels. Each year We have uniformly spent more than eight million taels. We have generously complied with the said general's requests for troops, money, etc., and moreover, We have given him Our fullest confidence. Since he has been in Kansu he has reported many victories, yet the rebellion has not been suppressed. An insignificant place like Chinchipu for many days has not been taken and the rebel leader killed. When will this war end?

From South and East We have drawn on the provinces for revenue until they are exhausted, and We have used this revenue to support the campaign in the west. In this manner, year after year, We have spent enormous sums. How can We continue such expenditures! The said Commander-in-chief should place his hand on his heart and ponder: What am I doing for the empire?"<sup>1</sup>

Tso was rather restrained in his reply to this rescript and it is quite apparent that the implications contained in the Emperor's message deeply wounded his pride. He went into the question of Chinchipu at some length trying to show that it was far from being an insignificant place. He said that the Moslems had been gradually adding to the strength of Chinchipu since Ch'ien Lung's time, that they had covered the approaches to the town with strong defences and that with the fortified villages, dykes, canals and stockades surrounding it, an advance was necessarily slow. From Lingchow to Chinchipu alone there were more than four hundred fortified villages and stockades. The walls of Chinchipu were strong and the water was so near the surface that mining operations were impossible. There was no way to breach these walls except by pounding away with the limited artillery he had available. The Moslems had resisted with such vigour and their fire had been so heavy that his losses had

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. V, p.38.

## Tso TSUNGT'ANG

been very great, many of his best officers being among the casualties. In regard to the report of victories he said that there had been many and he wished to make it particularly clear that he had reported no battles that had not actually been fought, and no gains that had not been made. He regretted that the Emperor was disappointed with the progress made but he was doing the best he could and his army was doing all that could be expected of it under the circumstances.

Throughout December the shelling of Chinchipu was said to have been continuous, though the volume of fire could not have been very great. Tso had a few Krupp guns but the ammunition supply was limited and it appears that his artillerymen were not very expert at this stage. Even so, he gave these guns a big share in the credit for reducing the city. In order to forestall any attempt by Moslems from other parts of Kansu to relieve Ma Hualung, Liu Chint'ang and the other generals before Chinchipu dug another ditch completely surrounding their positions. It was 30 feet wide and 20 feet deep, and filled with water. Liu Chint'ang finally succeeded in throwing up a gun position near the east wall that overtopped the outer wall of the city, and got his guns into position about January 1st, 1871. From this position he brought such a fire to bare on the Moslems that their resistance crumpled. Already hundreds had died of starvation and the people were eating human flesh. Ma Hualung with a single servant went to the great ditch opposite Liu's headquarters on January 6th, and asked to see Liu Chint'ang. He was brought before the Chinese General where he prostrated himself, asked that

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all the blame for the resistance at Chinchipu be placed on him and his people spared. Liu Chint'ang called in all his generals for a council of war. Several were for killing Ma Hualung then and there. However, in the end they decided what they knew all along the decision would be—to refer the matter to Tso Tsungt'ang. Ma Hualung was held in Liu's headquarters under heavy guard but otherwise well treated. In the meantime the battle had ceased on Ma's surrender. Liu Chint'ang went into the city, where he found a desperate situation. The able-bodied defenders had been reduced to about a thousand men. The populace had abandoned their houses and were living in dugouts, so reduced by starvation that many could hardly walk. The men were put under guard, the women and children removed beyond the outer ditch and given food. Thus Chinchipu, which had resisted Tso Tsungt'ang so vigorously for a year and a half and had by so doing greatly impaired his prestige, came to a rather unspectacular end.<sup>1</sup>

There was no massacre such as took place in later stages of the Kansu campaign. Tso was undoubtedly getting anxious to bring the war to a conclusion. He had considered Ma Hualung the chief of the rebels and he now undoubtedly expected the Moslems throughout Kansu to give up. He directed Liu Chint'ang to have Ma Hualung write to the various Moslem leaders counselling their surrender. Some letters were written but their effect was not notable. Altogether some 19,000 Shensi Moslems were sent to the Pingliang area, 8,000

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. V, p.42 (a).

## Tso Tsungt'ang

Moslems from other parts of Kansu were moved to Pingliang, and 12,000 Chinchipu Moslems were moved to the Kuyuan area. The Moslems surrendered 4 large iron cannon, 4 large brass cannon, 28 small cannon, 20 light mortars, 293 gingals, 180 foreign rifles, 1,030 shot-guns, and 2,418 swords and spears. Liu Chint'ang made a preliminary search of the ruins and found over 200 foreign rifles, while a closer search brought out over 1,000 more. The finding of so many foreign made arms led the Chinese to suspect that some country was secretly aiding the Moslems. The Annals, however, fail to mention what country was suspected.

Ma Hualung was closely questioned for days on the matter of the foreign arms but he declined to state where he got them. It is likely that they had been accumulated over a period of years in trading operations through Mongolia and that no particular political significance could be attached to them. If, as Richthofen says, the Moslems had captured many foreign arms from Tso's army, it would easily explain the matter. One would think, however, that if they had been captured arms the Chinese would have readily recognized them. Probably they did, but it looked better in official reports not to admit such a situation. On March 2nd, 1871, Ma Hualung and twelve members of his family were executed by the slicing process, while some eighty of the lesser Moslem leaders were beheaded.

The whole of eastern Kansu was now under control. Tso Tsungt'ang's front was narrowed by almost half, but Kansu was still far from being pacified. It was necessary to maintain garrisons in the Ninghsia-Chinchipu sector,

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but it freed the major part of his combat force for operations elsewhere. Seventy-one battalions had been necessary to reduce Chinchipu and his losses had been heavy. The total losses are not given by the annalist, but in an account of the part men from Changsha played in the Hunan Army, are listed the names of twenty-three battalion and company commanders who were killed before Chinchipu.<sup>1</sup> The districts making up the city of Changsha certainly furnished only a part of the Hunan Army in northern Kansu, while there were troops in this sector who were not Hunanese. From this bit of evidence and the fact that the Commander of the northern army, Liu Sungshan, was among the killed, one can gain a fair indication of the sanguinary character of the operations.

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<sup>1</sup> *Shan Hua Hsien Chih*, Vol. XXV, pp.1-25.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE PACIFICATION OF KANSU

When the Moslems swept out of Kansu into Shensi during the early spring of 1870, Tso Tsungt'ang was reduced three degrees in rank. Almost a year later when Chinchipu was taken his honours were restored. However, his final success in the north seems to have been little noted. Instead, criticism that had been growing steadily during the year broke with particular bitterness in the spring of 1871. He became the victim of what may well be styled a barrage of criticism. Such a phenomenon as a successful general becoming the butt of violent attacks close on the heels of a great victory has happened in other lands. In American annals General Scott was ordered to face a court of inquiry in Mexico City and General Grant was relieved of his command for a short time after Shiloh. Tso Tsungt'ang was charged with being a complete failure, with having reported victories when no battles had been fought or, if fought, had been defeats. It was said that he was in his dotage, that he did not understand the Mohammedans, that he was so ruthless in his methods that he was driving the people in the Northwest to revolt, that he was pouring out the country's treasure to no purpose, and that it was hopeless to depend on him to bring the

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rebellion to an end. About the only charge that was not brought against him was peculation. Tso Tsungt'ang's bitterest enemy was never able to say that he ever diverted a copper cash from the public funds to his own use. Such situations will arise, in the Orient as in the Occident. It is simply a manifestation of one of the common denominators of human nature.

Tso Tsungt'ang felt this criticism keenly. Early in the spring of 1871 he wrote to a friend, Wang Tzeshou, that he was sure the Kansu campaign would be the end of him. He said that his health was bad, his hair completely white, and that he had lost most of his teeth. He knew that men were saying harsh things of him and charging that he was getting nowhere. He said that he did not mind so much what was being said but that he was worried lest he die before the job was finished. If he died before he could complete the subjugation of the rebels he knew that his memory would be traduced, and he asked his friend to write a book on his life, doing him justice.<sup>1</sup> In another letter he mentions the state of his health and said that he had never recovered from malaria and dysentery contracted during the Chekiang campaign. He said he knew that people were saying he was too old to be of service and that others would be pleased to hear of his death. However, he could not allow himself to take such things to heart since the country was in a critical state and it was his duty to serve to the end.<sup>2</sup>

It had been a difficult period in Tso's life. During the

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. VI, p.3.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. V, p.4.

## Tso TSUNGT'ANG

spring of 1870, in addition to his trouble in Kansu and the death of his favourite general, his wife died in March. Thus ill health, bereavement, defeat, disruption of his plans, and violent criticism all fell on him at once. It was enough to test his mettle but he never showed the least sign of becoming dislocated under the strain. He was discouraged but not in the least upset. Through it all he held stubbornly to his plan to take Chinchipu and he persisted until it was realized. His plan was sound and he had correctly estimated Ma Hualung as the most dangerous leader in Kansu. The elimination of Ma did not bring peace to Kansu by any means but it was a big step in that direction.

Early in 1871, the Kansu provincial troops in south Kansu mutinied. There were 5,000 of them involved, in the district of Minhsien. Tso had never held a high opinion of the provincial troops and this affair lowered it still further. He put down the mutiny ruthlessly, executed all the leaders and those suspected of being leaders, and disbanded several units. His general in command of these troops was Chou Kaihsi, though he had been in command but a short time when the mutiny occurred. There was no little criticism of Chou and he was charged with being too hard on the men. General Chou wanted to resign but Tso assured him that he was thoroughly satisfied with his management of affairs and he must continue in command. Whether the mutiny had anything to do with the case or not, General Chou did not long survive, dying of disease in south Kansu in July. He had been associated with Tso Tsungt'ang in Fukien and Tso held him in the highest esteem.

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The Son of Heaven again became impatient with regard to the duration of the war and made some pointed inquiries as to why matters were not moving more rapidly in Kansu. His inquiries gave some evidence of being based on unofficial or extra-official information about Kansu affairs. Tso was beginning to get sensitive about the charge of slowness in the campaign and he replied to the throne in a long memorial, that in Ch'ien Lung's time would doubtless have gone hard with the memorialist. Tso said that in Kansu he had found it exceedingly difficult to secure accurate information on all that was going on. He had about come to the conclusion that scarcely any report from a place more distant than 100 li (30 miles) from his headquarters could be believed. He thought perhaps that in a place so distant as Peking it would be even more difficult to make an accurate appraisal of the situation in Kansu from rumours and unofficial reports. Continuing, he said:

“ . . . I must depend on your Majesty not being influenced by rumours. Then I can bear my responsibilities, perform my duties and complete the pacification of Kansu without allowing my apprehensions to alter my judgment. ‘Even though the mother of Tseng Shen believed implicitly in her son, repeated rumours made even her doubt his innocence’. ‘Yueh Yeng in the end brought a great campaign to a successful conclusion and when he returned his Emperor gave him a chest full of letters denouncing his conduct of operations, and which the Emperor had refused to read.’ These incidents are from our ancient history and I would hardly dare to use them as illustrations in my own case. However, I feel very strongly that in war one of the things most to be feared is reliance on rumours. The danger is inherent in the fact that rumours spring on the one hand from ignorance and on the other hand from malice. I have commanded in the field for more than ten years. My defeats I have reported more promptly and my victories with less haste than is common practice. When I have taken a place it has seldom been necessary to return and repeat

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the operation. In regard to my slowness and lack of skill in the conduct of military operations I can only point to the results. They speak for themselves."<sup>1</sup>

In the same memorial Tso mentions the fact that he had repeatedly received inquiries on matters that had been fully reported, giving rise to the suspicion that his reports, if read at all, were given a most casual reading.

Tso Tsungt'ang was not a man to allow ill health, family trouble or bitter criticism to alter his plans or cause him to lose sight of his objective. As soon as the Moslems had been cleared out of Chinchipu he began to prepare in his careful, methodical way for the reduction of the second great Moslem stronghold, Hochow. The Hochow Moslems were under the leadership of Ma Chanao, head of the "Old Sect". They were not so fanatical as the "New Sect", but were just as formidable in battle if not more so. As the campaign had pressed slowly westward, remnants from Shensi and Chinchipu sought refuge among the Hochow Moslems and the total number of rebels in this area was quite formidable. There were innumerable small bands of rebels moving about in east Kansu and it was practically impossible to prevent these small groups from filtering into Tso's rear areas. About the best that could be done was to keep strong detachments at strategic points and strive to prevent the concentration of these groups. This used up a large part of his army and the bands hovering along his lengthening lines of communication made a further drain for line of communication troops. Moreover, he had segregated thousands of Moslems in various sections of eastern Kansu. They had

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. VI, pp.6-7.

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to be watched, since there was always a possibility of their rising and joining with the roving bands of rebels. During the spring and summer of 1871 he devoted most of his attention to mopping up and clearing the small groups from the eastern districts. At the same time he attended to building up a reserve of supplies sufficient for several months. By late summer he had been so successful in clearing the Moslem bands from his rear that he could begin concentrating for the Hochow campaign. Late in August he established his headquarters in Chingning for a few days and then moved into Anting on September 16th, 1871.

There was a road from Anting almost due west to Hochow and the distance as the crow flies was about 80 miles. Roughly half way the road crossed the T'ao River at the village of Kangchayen, located on the right bank of the river. Between the T'ao and Hochow was a range of mountains rising over 3,500 feet above the T'ao valley. The road to Hochow went west up a narrow valley and through a pass guarded by the fortified town of Taitzesu, about midway between Kangchayen and Hochow. Ma Chanao had realized for more than a year that he would sooner or later have Tso Tsungt'ang's army on his hands and he had made preparations to defend the approach to Hochow. On both sides of the mouth of the small mountain stream opposite Kangchayen he had erected a fort and had mounted in these two forts a number of antiquated cannon. About four miles from the river crossing was the small walled town of Sanchachi, where the little valley narrowed to a canyon. This town was fortified, while between the river crossing and Sanchachi, Ma

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Chanao had established three lines of stockades extending all the way across the valley. From Sanchachi to the fortified town of Taitzesu was about fifteen miles, the road following a small mountain stream walled on both sides by high mountains. Numerous stockades were all along this road. From Taitzesu there was a sharp spur running east for about five miles along the north of the main road. A less frequented road branched off from the main road at the eastern tip of this spur and running along the north side rejoined the main road at Taitzesu. This spur, called Tungchashan, was considered the key to Taitzesu and the pass, and was strongly held by the Moslems. Thus Ma Chanao prepared to meet Tso Tsungt'ang and stop the Chinese Army from reaching Hochow.

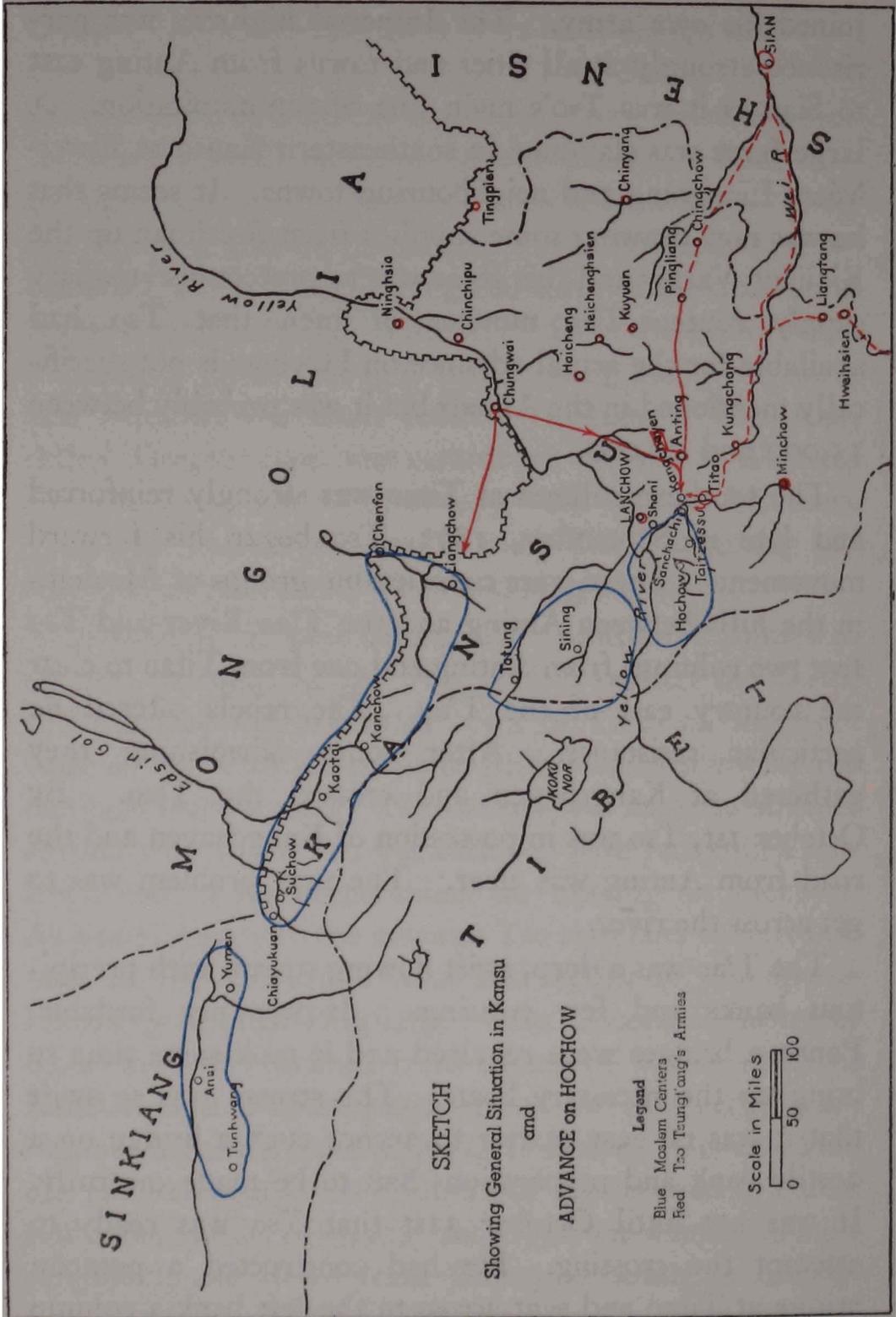
In June of the year before, Tso's southern column had reached the head of the Wei Valley, crossed the divide and captured the important town of Titao on the right bank of the T'ao River about fifteen miles south of the Anting-Hochow road. No attempt was made to advance further west while Tso was occupied with reducing Chinchipu and in his preparations for moving on Hochow. As a preliminary to the advance Tso stationed some 5,000 men in the Chinchipu area and 9,500 in Chungwei-Haicheng-Kuyuan-Pingliang. Hsu Chanpiao's army of 6,000 men was ordered from Chungwei to the relief of Kanchow and to operate against Suchow, thus keeping the Suchow Moslems from assisting Hochow. General Hsu did not accompany this column but was ordered to take a composite outfit of 5,500, mostly from Huang Ting's command, and move from Chungwei south to Anting. Soon after his arrival in Anting he returned north and

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joined his own army. The Imperial highway was garrisoned strongly at all cities and towns from Anting east to Sian as it was Tso's main line of communication. A large force was stationed in southeastern Kansu at Hweihsien, Liangtang and neighbouring towns. It seems that he was now drawing some supplies from Szechuan up the Kialiang Valley and this force was to protect his auxiliary supply route. The number of men that Tso had available for the actual advance on Hochow is not specifically mentioned in the Annals but it was probably between 15,000 and 20,000.

The southern column at Titao was strongly reinforced and late in September, 1872, Tso began his forward movement. There were considerable groups of Moslems in the hills between Anting and the T'ao River and Tso sent two columns from Anting and one from Titao to clear the country east of the T'ao. The rebels offered no particular resistance. After some skirmishing they gathered at Kangchayen and crossed the T'ao. By October 1st, Tso was in possession of Kangchayen and the road from Anting was clear. The next problem was to get across the river.

The T'ao was a deep, swift flowing stream with precipitous banks and few crossings. It was not fordable. Pontoon bridges were required and it took some time to bring up the necessary boats. The stream was so swift that it was no easy matter to anchor such a bridge on a hostile bank and preparations had to be made carefully. It was not until October 31st that Tso was ready to attempt the crossing. He had constructed a pontoon bridge at Titao and sent across to the left bank a column



SKETCH

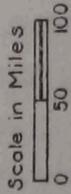
Showing General Situation in Kansu

and

ADVANCE ON HOCHOW

Legend

- Blue Muslim Centers
- Red Tso Tsung'ang's Armies



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which was to move down the river and assist the main crossing at Kangchayen. His artillery had no trouble in demolishing the two Moslem forts covering the crossing. The bridge was thrown across and the army started over, with the column from Titao covering the crossing by a vigorous attack on the Moslem flank. The Moslems put up a stiff defence and Tso's bridge builders had underestimated the force of the current. With only a portion of his troops across, the bridge parted and the boats were swept down stream. Many men were drowned when the bridge broke. The Titao column was forced back and the men who had crossed, being unsupported, were forced into the river. Those escaping the Moslems were drowned, scarcely a man returning to Kangchayen. Among the dead were two "Tsunping" or Major Generals. The Hochow campaign thus opened with a major defeat.

The disaster at the T'ao crossing might have been partially retrieved had Tso's artillerymen understood something of the tactical value of this arm in such a situation. We know that he had a few pieces of late German make and a number of recent Chinese manufacture. Tso said that his men did not understand the use of the new artillery and it is clear that he himself did not have a full appreciation of its possibilities. The new artillery was largely thought of at that period as an instrument for use against walls, buildings and fixed targets. It does not appear that its use against large masses of men had been given much attention by the Chinese. The real cause of the disaster, however, was the breaking of the bridge, rather than any tactical mistakes. Proof of this was given two weeks later when, other boats having been brought up

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for a new pontoon bridge, Tso renewed the attempt at the same place and in the same manner. A stronger column was sent from Titao and on November 13th, the bridge was thrown across. This time the bridge held and after desperate fighting Tso established himself on the left bank of the T'ao. Some three days were spent in organizing a position and bringing over more troops. He then started on the reduction of the three lines of stockades covering the walled town of Sanchachi. By the 19th he had surrounded the town and at daybreak on the 20th an assault was launched from all sides. The Moslems fought well and the attacking columns were repeatedly forced back from the walls. It was not until mid-afternoon that an entrance into the town was gained. By nightfall Tso's army was in possession and the Annals state that thousands of the Moslems were slain. Ma Chanao, however, cut his way out and escaped to Taitzesu.

The advance was resumed up the narrow valley on Taitzesu but there was so little room for deployment that it was slow going. On the 26th, the Moslems suddenly retired for some distance and Tso's advance units rushing hastily forward were caught in an ambush and almost annihilated. This reverse slowed down the operations and it appears that during December the army just held its own. The Moslems made a heavy attack on Tso's army on January 5th, 1872. They were repulsed and a counter-attack secured a lodgement on the eastern end of Tungchashan. The following day the entire spur was occupied and Tso was within striking distance of the fortified town of Taitzesu and the pass leading to Hochow. At this juncture bands of Moslems sent by Ma Chanao

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crossed the river near Shani and, sweeping south through the hills, thoroughly demoralized the line of communication between Anting and the T'ao River. The effect of this diversion was so marked that more rebels were sent into this area and communications were cut, not only between Anting and Kangchayen, but between Anting and Titao as well. Tso rushed every available man from the east and spent the rest of January clearing the country east of the T'ao.

Ma Chanao made an attack on Tso's position near Taitzesu on February 11th, but was repulsed. The next day Tso's army tried to advance and failed. On the 15th the army again attacked and was repulsed with heavy losses. The Annals state that Tso now became concerned about the possibility of rebels driving him from the important position of Tungchashan. He ordered that special efforts must be made to hold it. On February 19th, 1872, there was a terrible wind and dust storm of the kind that often lasts for several days in northwest China. The Moslems made two vigorous but unsuccessful attacks on Tungchashan during the day. That night a third attack was made. Panic seized Tso's army and it fled. The Annals are singularly silent on how far the army fled and the losses sustained, but they must have been notable. It simply says that General Hsu Wenhsiu was killed in the action, that Tso summarily executed six officers, and that he ordered the army to renew the advance at once.

The annalist forgot to mention the local results obtained by the advance that Tso ordered, but he says that the general effects were decisive. Ma Chanao was so impressed by this exhibition of determination that he

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sent Ma Chun to Tso's headquarters and offered to surrender. Tso was sceptical of this offer, thinking that Ma Chanao was trying a ruse on him. However, he sent some officers to Hochow to see what the situation was. They reported that Ma Chanao was in earnest and that all the Mullahs had sworn to their good faith with their sacred books on their heads. As a further proof of his sincerity, Ma Chanao sent his son, Ma Anliang, to Tso as a hostage. Tso Tsungt'ang was evidently feeling rather conciliatory about this time as he chivalrously returned the boy, telling Ma Chanao that he relied on his word. Details were arranged on March 2nd, and on the 6th Ma Chanao delivered 3,000 horses and 6,000 arms. A detachment of Tso's army entered Hochow on March 18th, 1872, and the second stage in the pacification of Kansu was brought to a close.<sup>1</sup>

Ma Chanao was made a general in the Chinese Army and he rendered Tso invaluable service in bringing about the submission of all Moslems in south Kansu. The Moslems were not removed from the Hochow area but the Chinese who had been forced to submit to the Moslems were absolved of their obligations and several hundred were removed to other parts of Kansu. A careful census was made of the Moslems and strong garrisons stationed at Taitzesu and Hochow.

Andrews gives an account of the Hochow campaign based on Kansu sources that is of interest. He says:

"On arriving at Anting, eighty miles east of Lanchow, General Tso sent his troops against the Hwei-Hwei in the Hochow district, himself

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. VI, pp.13-18.

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remaining at Anting. The two armies met in battle at the little town of San-kia-chi in the Tihtao district. Here the Moslems under the leadership of Ma-chan-ao inflicted a terrible defeat on the Chinese troops, of whom they killed several thousand, several thousand more being drowned in trying to cross the Tao river, which lay in the rear of the Chinese army.

Stories of that day are still in common circulation and the old inhabitants of the district tell how the waters of the Tao ran blood-red for several days. This was one of the great battles of the campaign and, contrary to historical records, resulted in a severe defeat for the Chinese troops. Survivors of that great fight—and there were many impressed Chinese serving in the Moslem ranks—tell how that at its close Ma-chan-ao gathered his troops together and addressed them. He pointed out how that the district was devastated by war, that no proper farming had been possible for seven or eight years and how that once the Central Government became thoroughly aroused to the situation they could not hope for success. With such a signal victory as they had gained that day they could do no better than enter upon peace negotiations with General Tso. Some two days later, Ma-chan-ao in company with his son, Ma-An-liang, then a youth in his teens, proceeded to Anting, where he tendered his submission to Tso Tsung-t'ang, who having received so marked an exhibition of their prowess, was pleased to treat them with due leniency and respect. Upon Tso inquiring of Ma the number of Moslems in the Hochow district, the latter, evidently with the idea of impressing the General with the large number of troops he had under his command, greatly exaggerated the number. Building upon the number quoted, General Tso inflicted an indemnity which actually worked out to several thousand cash per head. The money thus received enabled the Kansu government to redeem its paper currency at one percent of the face value.

The submission of Ma Chan-ao and his son virtually ended the rebellion. . . .”<sup>1</sup>

There was another very important factor in Ma Chanao's submission. The Sining Moslems had been assisting him in great numbers and after the battle of February 19th, they apparently thought the war was over and returned to Sining. Ma was no doubt impressed by the course of events at Chinchipu and realized that, even

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<sup>1</sup> Andrews: *The Crescent in Northwest China*, pp.85-6.

## Tso Tsungt'ang

though he had won a great success, Tso Tsungt'ang's determination was not in the least shaken. Ma was astute enough to know that better terms could probably be secured then than later in Hochow. Tso was also inclined to a more favourable view of the "Old Sect" Moslems than the "New Sect". He never treated with a single "New Sect" leader but executed every one that fell into his hands.

Tso Tsungt'ang entered Lanchow on August 18th, 1872, almost six years from the date of his appointment as Viceroy of Shen-Kan. Although the backbone of the rebellion had been broken with the surrender of Ma Chanao, there was still much campaigning to be done. The rebels still held the important centres of Sining and Suchow. Moreover, beyond Kansu was Sinkiang, where Chinese authority was still to be re-established. He was confronted with the staggering task of reconstruction in Kansu and smoothing out conflicting interests among the hostile elements in the province. He was nearing sixty, sixty-one according to the Chinese way of reckoning age, and before him lay ten more years of arduous labour in the great Northwest.

In September he sent Liu Chint'ang to reduce the Moslems of Sining and the surrounding country. Liu Chint'ang had not participated in the Hochow campaign, as he had returned to Hunan during the summer of 1871 with 5,000 Hunanese who were to be discharged, and to enlist more Hunan men for service in the Northwest. The annalist does not say how large a force was sent to Sining, but the great Russian traveller, Prejevalsky, who was exploring in the country north of Sining during the

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summer and fall of 1872 says that the Chinese force was 25,000 strong and that the Moslems defending the city of Sining numbered 70,000. Liu Chint'ang had no great trouble in reaching Sining and after a few minor engagements he was able to invest the city. Sining fell on November 19th, 1872, completing the third objective of Tso Tsung'ang in Kansu.

Prejevalsky gives some interesting sidelights on the Sining operations. The Chinese had four European field-pieces which struck terror into the Moslems. He says:

“Each of these guns was drawn by six mules caparisoned in silk, and none durst approach them under fear of immediate death. They were furnished with grapeshot and small shells which were of greatest service to the Chinese.” After the Chinese had taken a section of the wall of Sining, he continues: “At this juncture, news was received of the marriage of the Emperor of China. Siege operations were immediately suspended and a theatre was built by the soldiers to celebrate the auspicious event. The rejoicings, fireworks, and theatrical representations were continued for a week, during which time most of the officers and soldiers were drunk or insensible from opium smoking; and this went on close to a still unconquered enemy. If the Dungans had only had 100 men of any pluck among them, they could, in a night attack, have slain 1,000 Chinese soldiers and dispersed the remainder. But not even a handful of brave men were to be found among the cowardly defenders of Sining. They knew very well that as soon as the Chinese had once taken possession of the town, they would receive no grace, but yet they could not muster up courage enough to profit by a singularly favourable opportunity which thus presented itself. This is an example of the complete moral degradation of the East. . . .

Having celebrated the marriage of the Emperor, the Chinese troops recommenced military operations and soon took Sining. Then commenced a wholesale butchery of the vanquished. We were told by eye-witnesses that the Chinese soldiers, wearied with slaying the people with cold steel, collected them into bands, without distinction of age or sex, and drove them to the mountains, where they pitched them down precipices; in this way 10,000 were put to death.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Prejevalsky, *Mongolia*, Vol. II, pp.135-6.

## Tso TSUNGT'ANG

It is to be remembered that the distinguished explorer wrote from what he heard, not what he saw; and it is extremely doubtful that the Tungans had the remarkable opportunity to disperse the Chinese troops that he mentions. Liu Chint'ang was not that kind of a general. The Emperor Tung Chih was married on October 16th, 1872, so it is quite probable that the event was celebrated in grand style but not with the total abandon which Prejevalsky was led to believe. His account of the fate of the Moslems of Sining is probably substantially correct.

Tso Tsungt'ang remained in Lanchow for a year and, aside from pressing the campaign against the Moslems in the Sining and Suchow areas, he completely reorganized the government of Kansu, recasting the boundaries of districts and departments. He carried out the far-reaching measure of segregating the Moslems in Kansu. Andrews says:

"Tso Tsungt'ang proved himself a good and able administrator as Viceroy of Kansu. He instituted many wise reforms and did much to hasten the recovery of the province after so many years of civil warfare. One wise step he took was the segregation of the Hwei-Hwei in the districts which they populate to the present day. His memory is lovingly revered in Kansu. . . ."<sup>1</sup>

Long before he arrived in Lanchow he had decided to build an arsenal in the city, mainly as a preliminary measure for the Sinkiang campaign. After many difficulties he succeeded in getting modern equipment from Europe and transporting it—no mean feat—to Lanchow. He brought mechanics from Ningpo, Fukien and Canton, and during the year he was in Lanchow got the arsenal under way making rifles, cannon and shells. He said himself

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<sup>1</sup> Andrews, *op. cit.*, p.86.

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that the products turned out at first were somewhat crude but that they worked. A skilled mechanic from Canton named Lai Ch'ang was made Superintendent of the arsenal with the rank of a major-general. Later on Tso brought to Lanchow machinery for a woollen mill. It was a small mill but he said it was for experimental purposes and that if he could train men to spin yarn and weave the cloth, then heavier machinery would be installed. There was a great deal of wool grown in the Northwest and Tso had visions of developing a great woollen industry in Kansu. He saw no reason why the Chinese could not learn to make as good cloth as the Europeans and thus save having to import it. As the raw material was near at hand in Kansu, that was the place to start the industry. He instructed his agent in Shanghai, Hu Kuangyung, to buy a well-drilling machine and a steam dredge and send them to Kansu. The dredge was used in the Pingliang department for work on irrigation canals. He established in Lanchow a mint which in addition to making copper cash turned out a silver ten-cent piece which became so popular in Kansu that he could not supply the demand.

Tso Tsung'ang was always extremely proud of the fact that he was a good farmer and he took particular interest in promoting the agricultural development of Kansu. He established schools for Moslem and Chinese alike. Since all books had disappeared during the war, he established a printing plant in Sian and had blocks cut for a complete edition of the Four Books, paying for it out of his own pocket. He firmly believed that the people should drink from the fount of Confucian wisdom and he insisted on the Moslems studying Confucius and

Mencius in his schools. He also occupied himself with improving the city of Lanchow, effecting changes in the appearance of the city that attracted the attention of travellers long after the great Viceroy had passed from the scene.

His interests and preoccupations went far beyond the limits of his viceroyalty. He was much disturbed about the Russian encroachments and deeply interested in the new developments going on in Japan. The Russians had occupied Ili during 1871 on account of the disturbed conditions in that section and had informed the Chinese government that their purpose was solely to hold it in trust for China until such time as the Chinese were in a position to maintain order in that section. Early in 1873 the Tsungli Yamen (Foreign Office) wrote to Tso asking his advice on the Ili question. Tso's reply was in substance as follows:

“From what the Russians have written it is perfectly clear that they intend to stay in Ili indefinitely. The Tsungli Yamen has handled the matter in a reasonable manner and it should have silenced the Russians and taken much from their pretensions.

From of old nations have carried on their relations according to reason or according to circumstances. In this case it is necessary for us to consider the circumstances. At the present time the military strength of China has not sufficed to suppress the Moslem. How could we prevent the Russians from occupying Ili? In Europe the action of Russia in this matter has not been approved but no European country is sufficiently interested to challenge Russia on the question. The Russians have said that their occupation of Ili is only temporary but all the world knows that they have no intention of ever giving it up. I am afraid that the tongue and the pen will not be enough to induce them to restore Ili to us.

The Manchu generals, Jung Ch'uan and Ching Lien, are now in Tarbagatai with a large number of men. Even if the number of troops they have were according to the rolls they would be insufficient, and they are actually far short of the number credited. Moreover,

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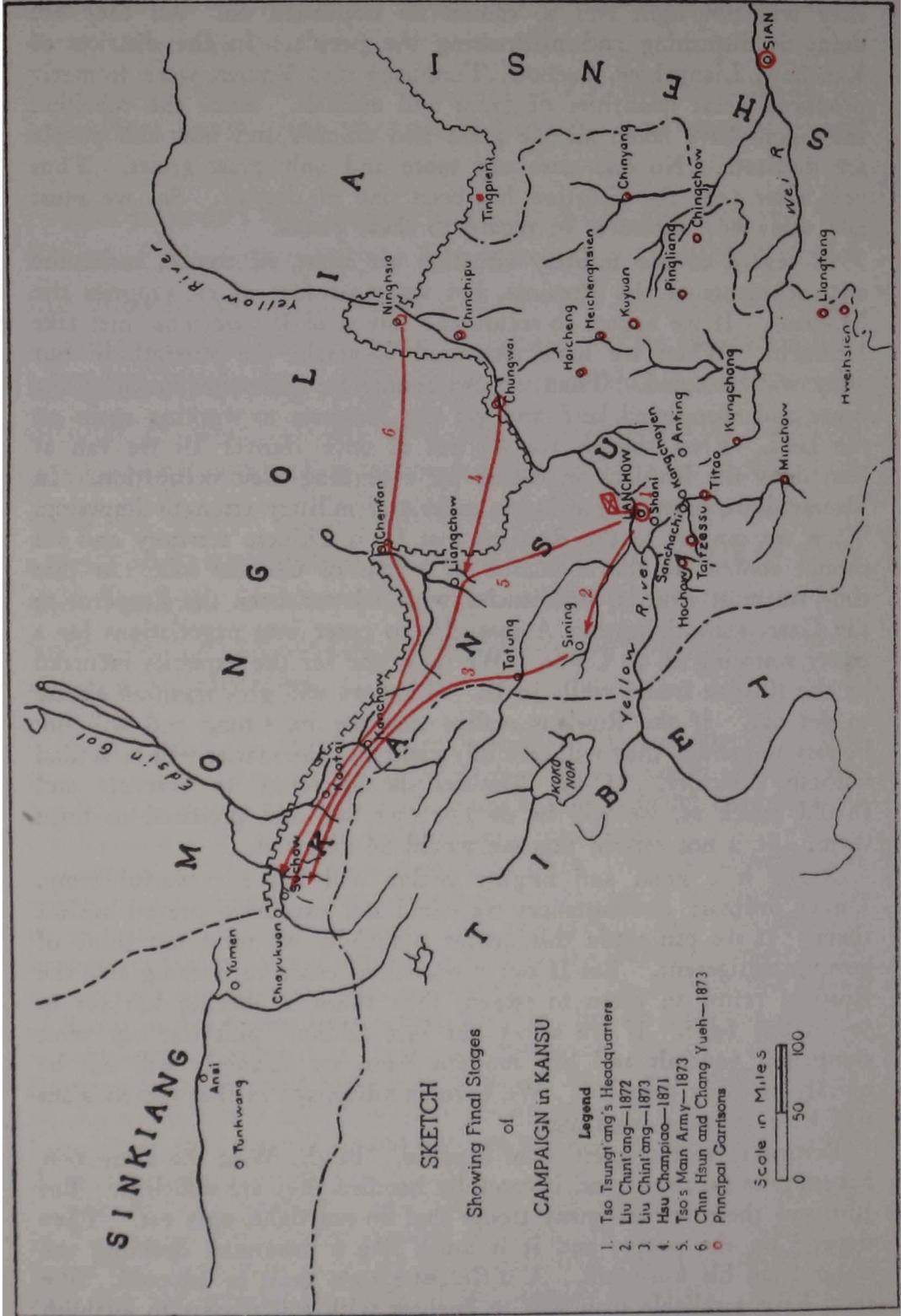
they will not fight and so cannot be depended on. All they are doing is disturbing and maltreating the people. In the districts of Kanchow, Liangchow, Suchow, Tunhuang and Yumen were formerly produced great quantities of grain and animals. Since the rebellion the troops have taken all the grain and animals and now the people are destitute. No one sows any more and only grass grows. Thus year after year the situation has been one of despair. So, we must take some new measures in regard to these places.

In regard to the military situation we must, of course, resist the encroachments of the Russians, but we must first of all suppress the Moslems. If we expect to secure the return of Ili, we must first take Urumchi. When we have recovered Urumchi the strength of our army will be noted. Then we can restore to cultivation much of the waste and abandoned land and get the Moslems to working again on the land. Even though we do not at once recover Ili we can at least deny the Russians an excuse for extending their occupation. In Urumchi we must take pains to make our military strength imposing. Then we can say to the Russians that Ili is Chinese territory and we cannot consent to the alienation of a foot of Chinese soil. At that time we must send an Ambassador with a letter from the Emperor to the Czar, authorizing our Ambassador to enter into negotiations for a treaty restoring Ili to China. We must pay for the expenses incurred by the Russian troops while in Ili. Thus we will give them an excuse to get out. If the Russians realize that we are strong and will not be easy to handle, they will certainly yield and the matter will be settled without difficulty. If the Russians should refuse to evacuate and should attack us, we will be on our own soil and prepared to resist them. It is not certain that we would be defeated.

Russia is a great and mighty nation and has a powerful army. Under ordinary circumstances we could not expect to prevail against them. If we can settle this matter peacefully we must not think of getting belligerent. But if our negotiations come to nothing and the Russians refuse to listen to reason, then there is nothing left for us to do but fight. If we select our best soldiers, pick out our most competent generals and buy modern arms, we certainly will not be quickly or easily defeated. We have an advantage in that the Russians will have to come from afar.

Returning to the question of supplies. In the West the army now has supplies furnished and if carefully handled they are sufficient. But just now there are too many troops that do not fight, only eat. They depend on the people and it is much like a fisherman draining the water from his fish-pond. A different system must be adopted. We must have a reliable man sent to Suchow with full powers to establish

# Tso Tsung'ang



## SKETCH

Showing Final Stages

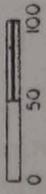
of

## CAMPAIGN in KANSU

### Legend

1. Tso Tsung'ang's Headquarters
  2. Liu Chunt'ang—1872
  3. Liu Chint'ang—1873
  4. Hsu Champiao—1871
  5. Tso's Main Army—1873
  6. Chin Hsun and Chang Yueh—1873
- Principal Garrisons

Scale in Miles



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a supply depot. All army supplies must be placed under his control and he should have power to decide what soldiers are worth feeding. There must be honest muster-rolls and the old and worthless men discharged. Supplies must be contracted for at a fair price. But the most important change is that there must be only one commander-in-chief, not a group of independent generals reporting directly to the throne. This is the very first consideration.

At present we must not think of going to war with Russia. We must first consider the problem of finding officers fit for high command. Ili is not the place to look at now but Urumchi.”<sup>1</sup>

In a letter on the Japanese, Tso noted their rapid westernization, particularly in regard to their navy. He strongly advocated free and unrestrained relations with the Japanese, and in general, the cultivation of intercourse with all Western nations. He believed that it was necessary to go forward and meet the foreigners, and assert a position of equality in order to preserve a semblance of the nation's prestige.<sup>2</sup> He never lost interest in the Navy Yard he had started in Fuchow, and kept himself informed on all developments there. Again and again he urged on the government the necessity of building a modern navy. He even suggested that the province of Fukien retain a large portion of the funds that were supposed to be sent to his army in Kansu, and use them for furthering the naval programme. The range of his activities and interests indicate something of the prodigious energy of the man, more especially when it is remembered that he had passed his sixtieth year.

In Suchow the Moslems of Kansu made their last stand. One by one their strongholds had fallen and as each one fell many survivors escaped to other centres. Even in

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. VI, pp.33-5.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p.12 (a).

## Tso Tsungt'ang

Hochow there were many Moslems who were dissatisfied with Ma Chanao's submission. They went to Sining. After the fall of Sining many of the survivors scattered into the country north of Sining and for a time Tatung was a centre of Tungan activity. The heavy snowfall in this mountainous section made operations very difficult but Liu Chint'ang pressed north and gave the Moslems little rest. Ma Kweiyuan, leader of the Sining rebels, surrendered at Tatung in February, 1873, was sent to Lanchow and there executed by the slicing process reserved for particularly serious offenders. In the spring thousands of remnants from all over Shensi and Kansu appeared in the Suchow area. Late in the fall of 1871 Hsu Chanpiao had rejoined his army of 6,000 that had been sent from Chungwei for the relief of Kanchow. During 1872 he had advanced from Liangchow to Kanchow, and having received some reinforcements after the fall of Hochow was able to advance into the department of Suchow. In the fall of this year he had a hard time with the noted Shensi Moslem, Pai Yenu. Pai Yenu must have been an unusual man. He harassed Tso's army from Shensi to Kashgar. Through ten years of bitter struggle he never tried to defend a city, never allowed himself to be surrounded, but always cleared out before an investment was completed. He left Sining when he saw that a siege was inevitable and went north to harass Hsu Chanpiao.

During February, 1873, Tso Tsungt'ang began moving troops to the Suchow sector on a large scale. Chin Hsun advanced west from Ninghsia to Suchow. Chang Yueh was stationed at Chenfan, north of Liangchow. Sung

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Ch'ing, Yang Shihchun, T'ao Shenglin and other generals went forward over the great Imperial highway through Liangchow, Kanchow and Kaotai, which had been the main artery of Chinese power and influence into Central Asia since the Han Dynasty. Hsu Chanpiao was able during the spring to block the roads leading to Suchow, thus cutting off all supplies. In May, Sung Ch'ing arrived at Suchow and the forces were then sufficient to complete the close investment of the city. The walls of Suchow were unusually strong and were surrounded by a wide moat more than forty feet deep. On the east side of the city was a walled annex called Tungkuan, and Suchow was peculiar among Chinese walled cities in that there was no west gate. General Hsu succeeded in battering down a section of about 100 feet of the wall guarding the annex, and tried to carry the place by assault on July 13th. His preparations for the assault were faulty. He had not arranged for getting his men across quickly and he was repulsed. Hsu then set to work and filled a broad section of the moat with earth and rock and piled up a causeway leading to the shattered section of the wall. On July 30th he stormed Tungkuan with the assistance of Chin Hsun and Sung Ch'ing. It seems that the Moslems closed the gate leading to the main city and left the defenders to fight or die. They did both. After a desperate hand to hand battle Hsu Chanpiao carried the annex and the rebel chieftain, Ma Techen, and all his men were killed. General Hsu was badly wounded in the left foot during the action. Gun emplacements were now built up on the walls of Tungkuan overlooking the main walls of Suchow and they made it so hot for the Moslems

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that a desperate attempt was made to recover the annex on August 19th. Hsu Chanpiao was all but driven out and only the prompt arrival of reinforcements saved him. The annalist says that he bound up his wounded foot very tightly and in spite of the pain led his men throughout the attack.

At this juncture the peculiarities in the Chinese system of command came to the fore and threatened to slow down the operations around Suchow. Chin Hsun was a Manchu general, one of the very few who got along well with Tso Tsungt'ang, but as a Manchu he was not directly subordinate to Tso. In theory he took his orders directly from the throne. He liked Tso and never on his own account caused any trouble. However, Pai Yenu appeared to the west of Suchow at Tunhwang, with a large raiding party. The Emperor ordered Chin Hsun to proceed to the west against Pai and at the same time ordered Tso to furnish this column with all necessary supplies and transport. Tso advised the Emperor that he was not in position to spare Chin Hsun and in any event could not keep his column supplied. He said that there was no use to worry about Pai Yenu who was always flitting from place to place, and that if Chin Hsun moved to Tunhwang, Pai would doubtless be far away by the time the column got there. Chin Hsun did not move west but it injected an element of uncertainty into the situation for some weeks that needlessly made the conduct of operations more difficult.

Tso decided that he was needed in person at Suchow and he left Lanchow on September 10th, arriving at Suchow on October 3rd, 1873. He made a personal inspection of all

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the works around the city on the 4th. The annalist says that when Ma Wenlu, head of the Suchow Moslems, saw Tso's flag moving around the city he lost all hope. The following day he sent a man to propose the surrender of Suchow provided he would be taken into the Chinese Army, and he offered to lead the Suchow Moslems against the rebel Pai Yenhu. Tso flatly rejected the proposal. A grand assault was made on the 6th but was repulsed at every point. Hsu Chanpiao had started mining operations at two points on the east wall and at the southwest corner. One of the mines on the east was set off on October 7th, breaching the wall, and Sung Ch'ing tried to enter through the breach. He was repulsed with heavy losses, the dead including Chang Ling, a major-general. The other two mines were ready by October 10th and were set off simultaneously. Storming parties were ready and tried to carry the two openings thus made. General Yang Shih-chun and five hundred men were left dead in the southwest breach while the assaulting column on the east wall was thrown back with heavy losses. Tso Tsungt'ang decided that storming operations were altogether too costly, and that, as time was on his side, he would starve the rebels into submission. He ordered the construction of trenches and forts around the city, making them so strong that "even a bird could not get out".

The Moslems were in a sad plight. Since midsummer food had been scarce and now starvation was taking a heavy toll on the populace. Tso's artillery kept up a steady bombardment. He had sent his expert Lai Ch'ang to Suchow some weeks before to advise on the employment of his guns. Here he tried out the guns and ammunition

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that he had been making in Lanchow. Tso said that he used 2,400 shells made in Lanchow and he was very much pleased with their quality. Liu Chint'ang arrived from Tatung on October 30th and Tso's forces were now so overwhelming that he began considering another assault. On November 4th, 1873, Ma Wenlu went alone to Tso's headquarters and surrendered. Tso told him directly that he could surrender but he would not be pardoned. Tso then ordered all the Kanchow, Sining, Hochow and Shensi Moslems to come out of the city and they were distributed among the various forts. He selected 1,573 of the more outstanding men among these Moslems and ordered their execution. Ma Wenlu and eight others who were considered the ringleaders, were dispatched by the more refined slicing process. On the 12th Tso's army rushed Suchow and put 4,000 Moslems to the sword. Old men, women and children to the number of 900 were spared.<sup>1</sup> The foregoing numbers are according to the Annals but it is generally believed that the number of Moslems perishing at Suchow far exceeded these modest figures. The annalist says that formerly there were 30,000 non-Moslem Chinese living in Suchow but at the time of the fall of the city, only 1,100 were left. All the survivors among the rebels were transported to eastern Kansu and not a single Moslem was left in Suchow. At that time the Great Wall was the northern border of Kansu and it ended at Chiayukuan, some twenty miles west of Suchow. To the north was Mongolia and west of Chiayukuan was Sinkiang.

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. VI, pp.36-41.

## THE PACIFICATION OF KANSU

With the taking of Suchow the Mohammedan rebellion in Shensi and Kansu was at an end. When Tso Tsung-t'ang told the Empress Dowager Tzu-Hsi on September 25th, 1868, that it would take him five years to pacify Shensi and Kansu, he made a singularly close guess. From his arrival in Sian on November 26th, 1868, to the final stand of the Moslems in Suchow on November 12th, 1873, was just two weeks short of the estimated period.

## CHAPTER XI

### SINKIANG, KASHGARIA AND YAKUB BEG

During the first century of the Christian Era the distinguished general Pan Ch'ao carried the arms of China into Kashgaria and Bactria, establishing for the first time in history Chinese power in Central Asia. This power receded with the collapse of the Han Dynasty and for several centuries the soldiers of China were not seen in Central Asia. The T'ang Emperors reasserted Chinese authority as far west as the Pamirs but again it receded with the declining fortunes of the dynasty. The Mongols brought China and Central Asia under a common mandate for a few decades, and then for four centuries others disputed for those Central Asian wastes where Pan Ch'ao and Ghengis Khan had led conquering armies. It remained for the great Ch'ien Lung to reassert once again the power of the Chinese Empire in Central Asia. Ch'ien Lung took in hand a conquest that was initiated by his grandfather, K'ang Hsi, later abandoned by his father, Yung Cheng, and carried it to completion in 1760 by annexing Eastern Turkestan as far west as the Pamirs and making a vassal state of Khokand, to the north and west of the Pamirs.

A notable feature of the geography of Asia is the lofty region in Central Asia known as the Pamir Plateau, the Pamirs, or "The Roof of the World". From the Pamirs radiate great mountain ranges that extend more or less connectedly to the extremities of the continent. The Hindu Kush range bears in a southwesterly direction through Afghanistan to the Plateau of Iran and during the 19th century formed in a general way the barrier between British and Russian power in Central Asia. To the north of the Pamirs the Tienshan, or "Heavenly Mountains", bear northeast and then east onto the uplands of Mongolia. From the view-point of historical geography, if not strictly according to physical geography, the northeast thrust of the Tienshan range is carried onward by the Ala Tau, Tarbagatai, Great Altai and Sayansk Mountains and formed the barrier during the same period between the vigorous, growing power of Russia and the domains of the Chinese Empire. The Kun Lun range extends from the southern Pamirs in an easterly direction into the heart of the Chinese Empire and it separated eastern, or Chinese Turkestan from Tibet. The great Karakorum Mountains also branch off from the southern Pamirs in a southeasterly direction and with the Kun Lun delimit a large part of the Tibetan Plateau. South of the Karakorum are the mighty Himalayas and India. Somewhere in that desolate expanse between the Himalayas, Karakorum and Kun Lun—a great no man's land—the might of the British Raj ceased to rule and the shadow of the Son of Heaven likewise ended. In a sense the Pamirs may be considered, during the 19th century, as the meeting point of three mighty forces—British, Russian and Chinese—

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that divided continental Asia in three great segments. As a consequence of the Mohammedan uprising Chinese power receded in the Chinese segment from the Pamirs into Shensi and was only restored during the period 1868-1881, through the genius of General Tso Tsungt'ang.

The armies of Ch'ien Lung advanced from Mongolia over the Urga-Uliassutai-Kobdo road and brought under control that great region north of the Tienshan between Mongolia and Lake Balkash, commonly known as Zungaria. Trouble soon developed with the ruler of Kashgaria who was supported by the Kingdom of Khokand. The Chinese armies brought all of Kashgaria under subjection, invaded Khokand as far as Tashkent and forced the Khokandians to recognize the overlordship of Ch'ien Lung. Boulger says that Ch'ien Lung's forces for this conquest numbered 150,000 men. Eastern Turkestan actually included only the region between the Tienshan and Kun Lun ranges and extending from the Pamirs to the east of Lob Nor. This country was also called Kashgaria. The northern part of Zungaria was formed into the district of Tarbagatai and all of the conquest was given the name of Sinkiang, or "The New Dominions". Eastern Turkestan became Chinese Turkestan and this designation was frequently applied to the whole of Sinkiang. The New Dominions were bounded on the north by Russia and Mongolia, on the east by Mongolia and Kansu, on the south by Tibet and Kashmir, and on the west by Afghanistan and Khokand. They embraced an area of more than 500,000 square miles,

but the population, even before the rebellion of 1864, probably never exceeded 3,000,000.

The Tienshan extended from west to east through Sinkiang, forming a great barrier that divided the country roughly into one-fifth north of the mountains and four-fifths to the south. The southern portion was almost wholly a desert, known as the Tarim Basin, and fringed with scattered oases, more numerous on the west and north, in which were concentrated the population of Eastern Turkestan. The more important centres of population fringing this basin were, beginning on the south, Khotan, Yarkand, Kashgar, Aksu, Kuche, Korla, Turfan and, to the east, Hami. There were no frequented routes across the Tarim Basin from north to south except at the eastern and western extremities. North of the Tienshan the country was divided into two sections—the eastern part, or Zungaria proper, and the Ili Valley to the west. In the eastern section the main centres were Barkul, Kucheng, Urumchi and Manass. The Ili Valley was extremely fertile and supported a considerable population. The main cities were Old and New Kuldja, about twenty-five miles apart and on the Ili River. New Kuldja was built by Ch'ien Lung and was the administrative centre for the whole of Sinkiang. At the time of the rebellion it had a population of some 75,000. A strong garrison was maintained in this city and it became a noted place of exile for officials from the rest of the empire. Down to the end of the Manchus in the present century the Ili Valley continued to be a penal settlement and a place of exile. In Zungaria proper the population was made up of Tungans, or Chinese Moslems, and Mongols. In the Ili Valley

there was a mixture of Tungans, Taranchi, Mongols, Chinese and Manchus with the Mohammedan Taranchi and Tungan elements predominating. The government was similar to that in all special areas on the fringe of China proper. In the Tarim Basin the populace was mostly Turki, a Moslem people closely related to the peoples farther to the west. In this area the Chinese ruled through the head men of the various cities and towns. No attempt was made to modify the language, religion or customs of the Turki and Chinese rule rested very lightly on these people.

From China proper there were two main roads leading to Sinkiang. One was the continuation of the Imperial highway from Peking to the western extremity of the Great Wall at Chiayukuan just west of Suchow in Kansu. This road led from Chiayukuan to Ansi-Hami-Turfan-Aksu-Yarkand-Kashgar and on to the cities of Western Turkestan. There was also a less frequented route leading from Ansi along the southern edge of the Tarim Basin to Khotan and Yarkand. This was the route followed by Marco Polo when he visited China in the 13th century. The other main road to Sinkiang was from Kweihua and Paoto to Barkul-Kucheng-Urumchi-Manass-Kuldja and on into Western Turkestan. This was the route of the great camel caravans. There were two main routes across the Tianshan, connecting these two great east to west roads. In the east, there was the road from Hami to Barkul and further west the road from Turfan to Urumchi. Other passes across the Tianshan were few and infrequently travelled. From the fact that one of the great highways followed along the north side of the Tien-

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shan and the other along the south side, they became known as the Pei Lu, "Northern Road", and the Nan Lu, "Southern Road". In course of time these two designations became associated with the country to the north and south of the Tienshan and northern Sinkiang was commonly called Pei Lu while that section between the mountains and the Tarim River was called Nan Lu. Whichever road was taken from China to Sinkiang it was necessary to cross a wide stretch of desert and the problem of maintaining an army in Sinkiang thus became a monumental one.

When Ch'ien Lung's armies occupied the Tarim Basin about 1760, the Kingdom of Kashgaria came to an end and the royal line of the Kojas fled into Badakshan and later found refuge in Khokand. For many years there was little hope of a restoration of the Kojas in Kashgar. About 1812 the ruler of Khokand ceased paying tribute to Peking and this was taken as a sign in Central Asia that the grip of China was weakening. It encouraged the Koja pretenders to the throne of Kashgar to hope for a return to power and the rulers of Khokand favoured their pretensions in every way short of openly declaring war on China. In 1826, 1831, 1845 and 1857, the Koja pretenders organized expeditions in Khokand and succeeded in raising minor insurrections in western Sinkiang. The country had prospered under Chinese rule and there was little desire on the part of the populace for a change. As a consequence there was no great difficulty in sending troops into this area and order was soon restored. It is worthy of note that the troops used in suppressing these insurrections, as well as the garrison troops throughout

Sinkiang, were almost entirely Tungans. The Imperial Government used these Tungans for so long and with such good purpose that their loyalty was never questioned, even when it came to operating against their co-religionists. As the insurrections in the Kashgar area were repeated the Chinese became more rigorous in their suppression and a feeling of hostility to them was soon developed in the populace. The uprising in 1857 was led by the Koja pretender, Wali Khan, and for a time it assumed serious proportions. The Chinese practice in garrisoning the cities of the Tarim Basin was to erect strong forts immediately adjacent to the towns but never in them. It was the habit of these garrisons to retire into their forts when serious trouble developed and wait for reinforcements. Wali Khan occupied several towns in the Kashgar area and appeared to be growing formidable. But on the approach of strong reinforcements for the garrisons his followers became discouraged and his pretensions collapsed.

In 1862 the Moslems in Shensi initiated the Great Mohammedan Rebellion that soon spread all over the province and over Kansu. It was infectious and before long the Moslems in Sinkiang likewise rose in rebellion against the Chinese. The Tungans in the various garrisons turned against their masters, and Chinese, Manchu and Mongol were slaughtered wherever found. The first uprisings occurred in Hami and Turfan where the Tungans, though in the minority among the Turki, seized the power. Urumchi and Manass, predominantly Tungan, followed the lead of their co-religionists and set up local governments under the lead of their Mullahs. For a

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time western Sinkiang remained calm but, seeing all the country to the east pass from the power of the Chinese and into the hands of Moslems, it too rose in rebellion in 1864. The garrison troops joined in the insurrection and soon Chinese authority was at an end. Only in Kashgar and Yangihissar were the Chinese able to hold out, probably because the troops in these places were Manchu and non-Moslem Chinese. There they retired into their forts and waited to see what would happen. In the Ili Valley the uprising during the same year was particularly violent, since there was a large non-Moslem element in the population. The city of New Kuldja was destroyed and the Chinese, Manchu and Mongol throughout the valley were massacred. It was not long before the Taranchi and Tungans were quarrelling among themselves and soon were fighting as viciously as only sectarians of the same faith can fight.

In the Tarim Valley the Tungans from Turfan swept along the Nan Lu and soon were in control of all the country as far west as Aksu. In Kashgar, Yarkand and Khotan local factions were striving for dominance with no one trying to bring the whole country under control. A Khirgiz robber chief, Sadic Beg, aspired to control in Kashgar but the opposition was so great that he finally sent a messenger to the Khan of Khokand requesting that he send the Koja pretender, Buzurg Khan, cousin of Wali Khan, to Kashgar to assume the throne.

Khokand at this time was in the greatest difficulties. Internally the country was split into rival factions contesting for the throne. Externally the Russians in their vigorous drive into Central Asia were pressing the

Khokandians relentlessly. It happened that the chieftain who was paramount at the moment was Alim Kuli and he was in Tashkent preparing to continue resistance to the Russians when the request of Sadic Beg was received. He was not in a position to give Buzurg Khan much assistance, but he gave him his blessing, some money and, most important of all, loaned him one of his officers, Mohamed Yakub.

Mohamed Yakub was born about 1825 at Pishkent, Khokand, the son of a minor official who had long dabbled in the stormy politics of his troubled land.<sup>1</sup> Later in life Mohamed Yakub claimed descent on his mother's side from the great Tamerlane. He married a sister of the Governor of Tashkent and through this connection became directly involved in Khokandian politics. He entered the army and first gained notice by his gallant but unsuccessful defence of Ak Musjid against the Russians in 1853. Thereafter he became involved in the intrigue that was going on among several leaders for the throne of Khokand, shifting from one to another and back again according to which one was in the ascendancy. Thus, while he was recognized as a man of considerable talent, particularly in military matters, he was not trusted by any of the chief figures in Khokand. He was at Tashkent nursing his wounded pride after a severe defeat by the Russians, when the request of Sadic Beg reached Alim Kuli. It was well understood that the withdrawal of the Russians at that time did not mean that they had relinquished their

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<sup>1</sup> NOTE.—The following account of Yakub Beg is based largely on Boulger's "The Late Yakub Beg of Kashgar" in *Central Asian Questions*.

## SINKIANG, KASHGARIA AND YAKUB BEG

designs on Khokand, but rather that they would soon return. They did return and occupied Tashkent the following year. Yet, in spite of this, it appears that Alim Kuli was glad to rid himself of the most capable soldier he had by loaning him to Buzurg Khan for the Kashgar venture. Shortly afterwards Alim Kuli was killed in a battle with the Russians and Khudayar Khan, whom Yakub had twice deserted, became the Khan of Khokand. Doubtless it was just as well for Yakub that he had become associated with Buzurg Khan for it is probable that Khudayar would have dealt harshly with him. By the time that Khudayar Khan had established himself in Khokand, Buzurg and Yakub were well on their way to Kashgar.

The two men left Tashkent late in the summer of 1864. In the city of Khokand they were joined by 62 hardy adventurers and early in January, 1865, this little band crossed by the Terek Pass into Kashgaria. They met with no opposition but when near Kashgar they were joined by Sadic Beg, who now tried to dissuade Buzurg Khan from the enterprise. It appears that the situation had become more favourable to Sadic Beg and he repented of his invitation to the Koja pretender. No attention was paid to Sadic Beg's representations that the Chinese would soon return and throw the invaders out. Buzurg Khan entered Kashgar and was proclaimed ruler of the kingdom of his ancestors. The country was completely dislocated. The Tungans held all the Nan Lu east of Aksu, factions were struggling for local control in all the cities of western Kashgaria, and the Chinese garrisons were still in existence at Kashgar and Yangihissar. Sadic Beg at once turned against the Khokandians and their first task was to

eliminate him. Yakub soon defeated Sadic Beg, driving him into the mountains between Kashgaria and the Ili Valley. Buzurg Khan was then induced to stay in Kashgar and turn over the conduct of military operations to his general, Yakub Beg.

It seems that no particular attention was paid to the Chinese garrisons at this stage in the operations. They had confined themselves to their forts and in their peculiarly fatalistic way were simply onlookers waiting to see what would happen. Yakub Beg's first move after the elimination of Sadic Beg was on Yarkand, passing by the Chinese garrison in Yangihissar. After some initial successes in the Yarkand area the Yarkandians rose and defeated him. He managed to extricate the main part of his force and fell back to Yangihissar. Here he was joined by some adventurous spirits from Badakshan and he decided to reduce the Chinese garrison. After a siege of forty days the Chinese agreed to surrender on the promise that their lives would be spared. The promise was disregarded and the whole garrison, numbering 2,000, were put to the sword. This success led to a number of scattered bands joining the banner of Yakub Beg.

The Tungans now assumed a threatening attitude and assembled in great numbers at Maralbashi. Yakub decided to let them take the offensive and he awaited their attack in the Yangihissar oasis. In the meantime Buzurg Khan joined him with some reinforcements and they met the Tungans in battle near Yangihissar. The initial stages of the battle went so decidedly against Yakub that Buzurg Khan, thinking defeat certain, fled from the field with his retainers. Yakub Beg rallied his men by stirring appeals

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to their orthodoxy as followers of the Prophet, and, a large group of Tungans deserting to his standard at a critical moment, he turned defeat into victory and routed the Tungans. It was a decisive battle in so far as Kashgaria and Yakub were concerned. Buzurg Khan was so mortified by his own precipitate flight and by the sudden gain in prestige of his general that he gave Yakub scant thanks for saving the day. A rift started between king and general that soon ended disastrously for the king.

They returned to Kashgar and the cities and towns of western Kashgaria, including Yarkand, hastened to make their submission. The Chinese garrison at Kashgar was taken in hand. By means of substantial offers Yakub Beg succeeded in securing the defection of almost the entire garrison of 3,000 men under a man called by Boulger "Kho Dalay", but probably the same man who was referred to by the Chinese as "the renegade, Ho Puyun". They announced their adherence to Islam and joined Yakub's army. The Chinese general, Chang Ta, seeing himself thus deserted, gathered his family and the few loyal followers remaining, and entered the magazine of the fort. As Yakub's troops were entering the fort Chang Ta touched off the magazine and went to his reward in a manner that was in accord with the traditions of the Chinese bureaucracy. Thus the last symbol of Chinese government in Kashgaria was extinguished in September, 1865. Buzurg Khan and the various petty chieftains who had attached themselves to him, became thoroughly distrustful of Yakub as his power increased. They intrigued against him, a man who was himself a master of Central Asian intrigue, and soon brought matters

to such a pass that Yakub Beg arrested the King of Kashgar. Shortly afterward Buzurg Khan was exiled to Tibet and the Kojas ceased to be a factor in Kashgarian politics. By the end of 1865 Yakub Beg was master of western Kashgaria. In less than a year he had laid the groundwork for a kingdom, not for others, but for himself.

Boulger says that 2,000 Chinese, probably not all soldiers, were massacred at Yangihissar, and that 3,000 went over to Yakub at Kashgar. The other garrisons had defected or had been massacred earlier in the rebellion. It would seem, however, that there must have been more than 5,000 men whose loyalty stood the strain for longer than a year. Although a full account of all that happened in Kashgaria during this confused period is not available, from the little that is known one is led to speculate as to what a vigorous and talented general might have accomplished with 5,000 men had he brought them together and taken the field—had he attempted vigorously to direct the course of events instead of shutting himself up in a fort, waiting to see what would happen and finally indulging in the heroic gesture of blowing himself into eternity after he saw what had happened. If Yakub Beg and sixty odd Khokandian adventurers could found a kingdom in Kashgaria it would not seem extravagant to assume that a few thousand, properly led, could have held it for the empire. But talent and character are not necessarily associated in the same clay and General Chang Ta, Amban of Kashgar, at least had the character to pay with his life for his lack of energy and skill.

Yakub Beg was now a power in the land and he set about consolidating that power. He became known as

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the Athalik Ghazi, or "Champion Father"—a title conferred on him by his friend the Amir of Bokhara. He brought about the subjection of Khotan by the simple expedient of having the local leader, Habidulla, assassinated. Yakub Beg then turned his attention to the Tungans in Aksu. He collected a formidable force, attacked Aksu and drove the Tungans out. Advancing east, he captured Kuche after a bitter campaign and by the end of 1867 was in complete control in that area. The cities of Karashar, Korla and Turfan tendered their submission and for a time escaped the weight of Yakub's hand. Difficulties arose in this section and in 1871 he advanced with his army and brought these places definitely into his kingdom. He pushed east of Turfan as far as Pichan and by 1873 he was master of the whole of the Tarim Basin from the Pamirs to Lob Nor. He organized a government that was much admired by the British Mission to Kashgar in 1873 for the peace and security it enforced throughout the land.

The new ruler of Kashgaria was not a man to hide his candle under a bushel. He made himself known throughout Central Asia and beyond. He assumed a leadership of all Moslems in this area and soon was attracting much attention in India as well as in London, St. Petersburg and Constantinople. The Sultan of Turkey at the instance of powerful Moslem influences, conferred on Yakub Beg the title of Amir of Kashgaria in 1873. In that year the British, with an eye on Russian pretensions in Turkestan, sent the Forsyth Mission to Kashgar to make an estimate of the situation in that sector of Central Asia. It gave a great deal of encouragement to Yakub Beg but promised

# Tso Tsungtang

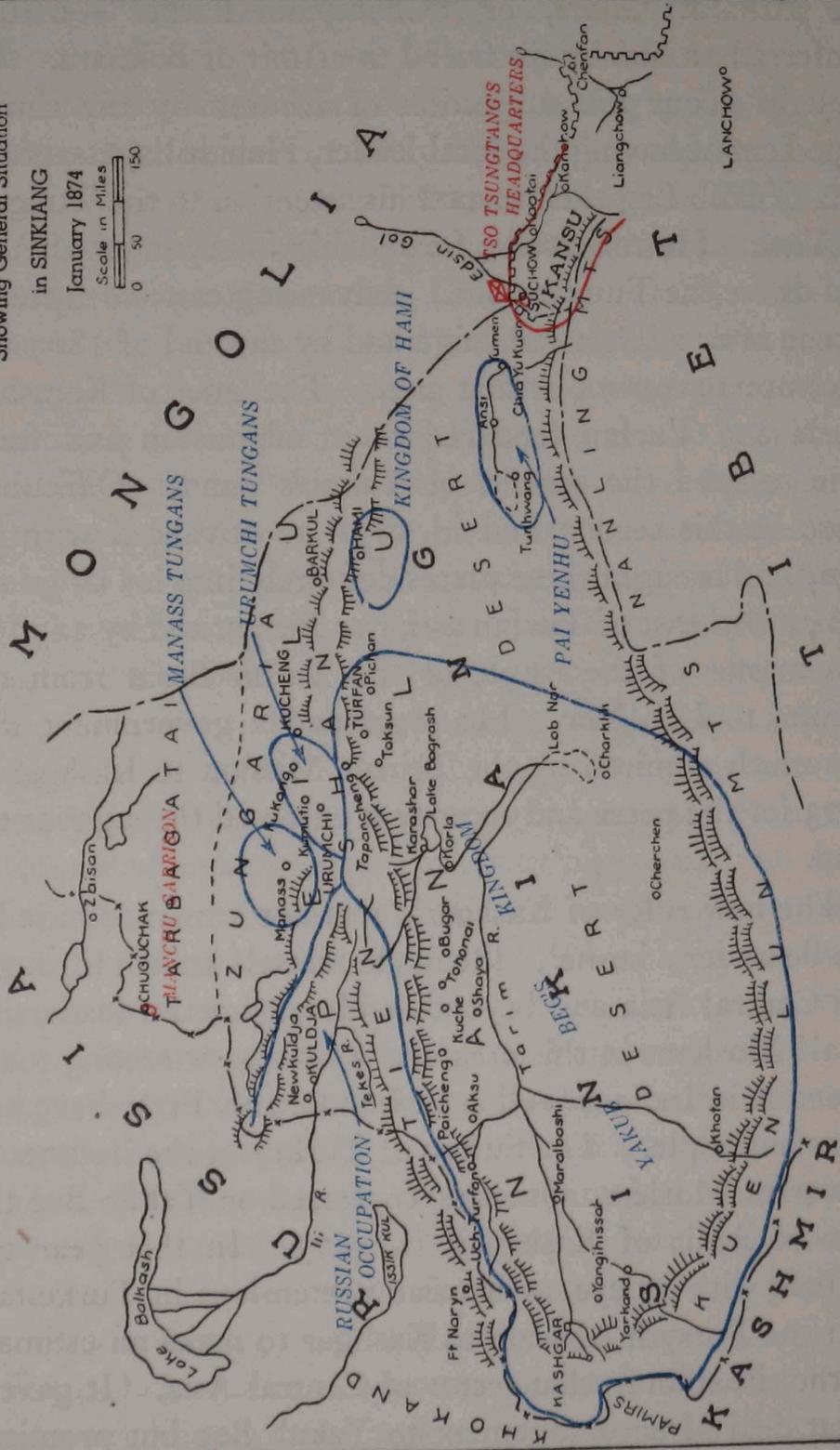
## SKETCH

Showing General Situation

in SINKIANG

January 1874

Scale in Miles  
0 50 150



him nothing. The British gave Yakub Beg no little publicity as a coming power in Central Asia. Officially, however, they saw clearly that his power was going to be short lived, but it is clear that they miscalculated the quarter from whence his undoing would come. The Chinese were hardly considered by the British, Russians or even by Yakub Beg himself. The main purpose of the Forsyth Mission was to examine the approaches to India from the Kashgarian area and to see whether Russian penetration there would add to the problem of defending the Indian frontier. The report showed that the approaches to India from Kashgar were so uncommonly difficult that there was little to fear from that quarter whoever held Kashgar. As a consequence the Indian Government took no more than an academic interest in the fortunes of the Athalik Ghazi.

Yakub Beg apparently made some effort to conciliate the Tungans in Urumchi and Hami but was unsuccessful. He had handled the Tungans too roughly at Aksu and Kuche for them to forget. As for the Chinese it does not appear that Yakub Beg so much as considered the probability that they would ever cause him any trouble. While he had assumed the role of leadership among the Moslems of Central Asia this leadership was not generally concurred in by the various states in that area. His immediate neighbour to the west was Khokand and the ruler of that state was Khudayar Khan. Khudayar Khan had no friendship for Yakub Beg and the relations between Kashgar and Khokand were never particularly cordial, notwithstanding the identity of their interests in the face of the relentless Russian advance. It was with Russia

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that Yakub Beg had his greatest difficulties. He did not like Russians either personally or officially. He had been against the Russians since 1853 when he had unsuccessfully defended Ak Musjid against General Perofsky. In various engagements with the Russians Yakub had always been defeated. Now that he was ruler in his own right he was still against the Russians. From the beginning of his Kashgarian adventure he took a line of action against Russia that would certainly have ended his power in Kashgaria had not Tso Tsungt'ang appeared on the scene and ended Yakub's pretensions before the Russians got around to it.

Although the Russians were by no means unmindful of the advantages of Eastern Turkestan to their Central Asian programme, they were much more interested in the region to the north of the Tienshan, particularly in the valley of the Ili River. Schuyler, who visited this valley in 1873, said that it was the richest section that the Russians had recently occupied in Central Asia and he was of the opinion that it was the only section that would ever repay the expenses bestowed on it.<sup>1</sup> The Russians, moving down from Semipalatinsk, first occupied the Trans-Ili region as far as Vierny in 1853. The Chinese had a shadowy claim to the lower Ili Valley and to Lake Balkash as a result of the conquest by Ch'ien Lung about the middle of the 18th century. By the treaty of 1860 the Chinese Government, out of consideration for the supposed assistance of the Russians in getting the British and French out of Peking, agreed to a rectification of the

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<sup>1</sup> Schuyler, *Turkestan*, Vol. II, p.198.

Sino-Russian frontier. In the Far East this rectification made the Amur and Ussuri Rivers the border, thus giving Russia the Maritime Province and the territory claimed by China down to the mouth of the Amur. In Central Asia the rectification gave to Russia most of the territory that was later to become the province of Semiretch, and the Ili Valley west of Koibyn became Russian. Although the Russians were not participants in the Arrow War (1856-1860) they made notable territorial gains as a result of that conflict.

As mentioned before, Chinese claims to Zungaria and the Ili Valley grew out of the conquests of Ch'ien Lung. It is said that in the course of this conflict natives to the number of some 600,000 were exterminated or fled the country. It was resettled by transporting various racial elements into this region from other parts of the empire. Among those so moved were about 6,000 families from Eastern Turkestan, who became known as the Taranchis or "The Toilers". Their position was decidedly an inferior one and justified their new name. Coming from Eastern Turkestan they naturally were Mohammedans. During the century preceding the Mohammedan uprising the population in the Ili Valley increased until it numbered about 350,000 in 1862. It included 100,000 Chinese, 80,000 Manchus, 60,000 Tungans and the remainder was made up of Taranchis, Kalmucks, Kirghiz, and Torgots.<sup>1</sup> Schuyler does not give the Taranchi population before the rebellion, but it must have been more than 50,000. In 1873 he said the population was estimated at the highest

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<sup>1</sup> Schuyler, *op. cit.*, p.197.

to be 130,000 of which 40,000 were Taranchi, 10,000 Torgots and less than 500 Manchus. The nomad population was said to have suffered relatively little during the rebellion.

In the city of New Kuldja where the Governor-General of Sinkiang resided there was a Manchu garrison of 5,000 while another 1,000 Manchu soldiers and 3,000 Chinese troops garrisoned other points in the valley. For such a frontier region a force of 9,000 men would appear to be rather small, but it is to be remembered that a large part of the populace were known as military colonists and as such formed a sort of militia that was subject to call at any time. The real uprising among the Tungans of the Pei Lu occurred in the summer of 1864 when they seized Urumchi and massacred 130,000 Manchus and Chinese in that area. An army was gathered together in Ili and sent against the rebels but was severely defeated in the vicinity of Manass. This was followed by an uprising in the Ili Valley. Even then it does not appear that the officials would have had any great difficulty dealing with the rebels had they acted with vigour. The Tungans were at odds among themselves and the Taranchi showed no indications of taking part in the trouble. But the Chinese and Manchu officials acted in the same manner as those in Kashgaria. They stayed in their garrisons and waited for the rebels to attack. Some 8,000 troops were collected in New Kuldja, and, as in Kashgar, they waited to see what would happen. The Tungans finally persuaded the Taranchi to join them and an attack was made on New Kuldja. It was beaten off with no great difficulty. Shortly after this affair the Governor-General was

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relieved and his former subordinate, the Amban of Chuguchak in Tarbagatai, was appointed to succeed him. The new Governor-General made a hasty attack on the rebels in an entrenched position near the capital and was disastrously defeated. The rebels gathered about New Kuldja and started a desultory siege and at the same time they surrounded all the other smaller garrisons in the district. One by one the outlying garrisons were taken, the Taranchi peasantry joined in the revolt and by the end of 1865 only the capital, New Kuldja, held out. During the year the Tungans in Chuguchak rose, massacred the garrison and all the Manchus and Chinese in the city. All communication was thus cut off between the Ili Valley and China except such messages as were sent through Russia. In his extremity the Governor-General repeatedly called on the Russians for assistance, just as the Chinese called on the foreigners for assistance in Taiping days on the lower Yangtze. But the Russians remained strictly neutral.

The main part of the city was destroyed and only the strongly walled garrison part remained in which the populace sought refuge. Food was soon exhausted, typhus broke out among the crowded masses and the suffering was frightful. About the middle of January, 1866, just when Tso Tsung'tang was preparing to deal the final bloody blow to the Taipings at Kaying, Kwangtung, the rebels breached the walls of the fortress of New Kuldja and the last outpost of Chinese power in the west disappeared from the scene. A Tungan who claimed to have commanded at the taking of the city acted as guide for Schuyler in showing him over the ruins of New Kuldja in 1873. In his

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account of the final operations he said: "We besieged the town for two years; at last we took it. That morning there were in it 75,000 people with the army; that evening not a soul was left alive."<sup>1</sup>

It was not long before the Tungans and Taranchi were in open hostility. In April, 1867, the decisive battle was fought near Old Kuldja and the Tungans were routed. Then began a slaughter of Tungans as terrible as had been that of Chinese, Manchu and Mongol. For a time there was a succession of chieftains among the Taranchi, but Abil Ogla, also known as Ala Khan, finally gained the supremacy. He took the title of Sultan, but peace was by no means restored in the Ili Valley. Robber bands of Kirghiz harried the frontier toward Russia and caused the Russians much annoyance.

General Kaufmann, an empire builder of the old school, became the Governor-General of Russian Turkestan in 1867. After settling with Samarkand he turned his attention to Khokand and the eastern districts. Ala Khan made several overtures to the Russians, but they would have nothing to do with him. Yakub Beg began to entertain designs on the land to the north of the Tianshan. When he moved his army into Turfan in 1871 it was generally considered that he was going to make an attempt to annex the Tungan districts of Urumchi and Manass and take over the domains of the new Sultan of Kuldja. At any rate the Russians assumed that such were his intentions and they did not want him in the Ili Valley. They occupied the northern approach to the Muzart Pass in

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<sup>1</sup> Schuyler, *op. cit.*, p.164.

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order to discourage Yakub Beg from sending troops into the valley by that route. Disorder continued in and around Kuldja. Old Kuldja had become the capital of the Taranchi Sultanate, and the border continued to be raided by robbers. General Kaufmann decided to end this state of affairs and in the summer of 1871 a force was collected east of Koibyn for the pacification of Kuldja. General Kolpakofsky was in command and, after minor resistance on the part of the Taranchis, Abil Ogla surrendered and Kuldja was occupied on July 4th, 1871. It is said that the occupation of the Ili Valley was carried out on the initiative of General Kaufmann and that the Government in St. Petersburg was much displeased at this development. The Russian Foreign Office hastened to inform the Chinese government that the occupation was purely temporary and that the territory would be restored as soon as China sent sufficient force to take it over and preserve order.<sup>1</sup>

It seems fairly certain that the reason for the occupation of Ili was that the Russians were slightly worried over the pretensions of Yakub Beg and his anti-Russian attitude. He refused to allow the Russians to trade in his dominions and when certain Russian merchants with powerful official support came into Kashgaria he bought outright their entire stock and sent them back to Russia. It appears that Yakub Beg for all his anti-Russian attitude was very anxious to secure Russian recognition and that he tried a high-handed policy hoping to impress them with his power. But he erred sadly in his estimate of General

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<sup>1</sup> Schuyler, *op. cit.*, pp.185-8.

Kaufmann. The Russians had consolidated their position in the mountains between Issik Kul and Kashgaria by establishing Ft. Naryn in 1868. This displeased Yakub very much and he countered by fortifying Aksu very strongly. General Kaufmann tried to enter into direct relations with Yakub in much the same manner as he was dealing with Khokand, but it seems that Yakub wanted to deal directly with St. Petersburg. General Kaufmann then tried to induce Khudayar Khan, ruler of Khokand, to assert his alleged suzerain rights over Kashgaria, move into Kashgar and expel Yakub Beg. Although Khudayar Khan disliked Yakub Beg he declined this suggestion. A letter was then sent to Yakub informing him that unless he entered into friendly relations on the same basis as Khokand and Bokhara, his treatment of Russia and Russians was going to be severely punished. To General Kaufmann's letter Yakub replied:

"The last envoy who brought your letter was not a Russian, not because there was no Russian to send but because you seemed to think Khokand and Bokhara only worthy of this honour. If the Russians believed in my good wishes they would send me one of their men, which would show me their kind intention, and which I would consider a proof of their good disposition toward me. If your words be really an expression of goodwill toward me, let some one come to us of more account than your merchants. Send me some Russian, or even a Tashkent Sart, though he be only a shepherd, and I will send back to you an envoy of my own."<sup>1</sup>

Baron Kaulbars, who many years later commanded an army in the Russo-Japanese War, was sent on a mission to Kashgar to conclude a commercial treaty with Yakub. At the same time the Russians began to move troops and supplies on a large scale to Ft. Naryn. A treaty was

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<sup>1</sup> Schuyler, *op. cit.*, p.321.

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signed on June 10th, 1872, and Yakub was greatly pleased that he was thus recognized as a sovereign by the Russians. He asked and received permission to send an envoy to St. Petersburg. In the summer of 1873 this envoy was received by the Czar and treated with much consideration.<sup>1</sup> The treaty failed to have any notable effect on trade relations as Russian merchants were still denied freedom of action. Military preparations continued and the Russians would probably have invaded Kashgaria in 1873 but for the presence of the Forsyth Mission there. Yakub derived no little comfort from this mission and it encouraged him to take a stronger tone than ever against the Russians. But the Kaulbars Mission had taken the measure of Yakub Beg and the force he had at his disposal. They gathered an army of 20,000 men under the great Skobeleff, and made ready early in 1875 to eliminate Yakub Beg. At this juncture an insurrection broke out in Khokand that threatened to involve the greater part of Russian Turkestan. The army for service in Kashgaria had to be withdrawn and used in other fields. Yakub Beg had a narrow escape.

Notwithstanding the fact that he assumed a leadership of the Moslems in Central Asia and that the uprising of 1875 gave him an opportunity to prove his leadership in a general struggle with the Russians, Yakub Beg failed to lift a hand in support of his co-religionists in their resistance to the Russians. He must have known that if he ever intended to fight the Russians that was his opportunity. His conduct in this crisis is probably best

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<sup>1</sup> Schuyler, *op. cit.*, p.322.

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explained by the supposition that he had begun to hear rather disquieting rumours about what was going on to the east of his kingdom, at Suchow in Kansu, where General Tso Tsungt'ang in his careful, methodical way was preparing for the re-conquest of Sinkiang. Before the Russians had restored the situation in Russian Turkestan to the point where they cared to take Kashgaria in hand, Tso Tsungt'ang's army was in Kashgaria and Yakub Beg was no more.

## CHAPTER XII

### PREPARATIONS FOR THE CAMPAIGN IN SINKIANG

Before Tso Tsung-t'ang left Hankow in the spring of 1867 he realized that the difficulties with the Moslems would not be ended with the pacification of Shensi and Kansu. Few if any of his contemporaries had the singular gift for grasping a situation in its totality and the still rarer faculty for giving each phase of a problem its proper weight in the general scheme of things which Tso Tsung-t'ang displayed. There can be little doubt that in the back of his mind he determined, even at that early date, to restore the authority of the empire once again to the foot of the Pamirs. It does not appear to be on record that he said anything about it at that time, as he was not the man to fix his attention so closely on a distant objective that he failed to appreciate the more immediate problems, but from the interest he manifested in seeking information on Sinkiang it is reasonably certain what he had in mind. Sinkiang was his goal and as time went on it gradually came to the fore. As he advanced slowly westward through Shensi and Kansu it appeared more than once to his contemporaries that he would never suppress the Moslems in these provinces, much less reach

Sinkiang. But Tso Tsungt'ang never doubted for a moment that he could pacify the Moslems. The only anxiety he ever showed about the matter was whether or not he would live long enough to finish the task he had set for himself.

It would almost appear that the authorities in Peking were so preoccupied about other matters that they had forgotten Sinkiang entirely. Then, in the summer of 1871, the Russian Foreign Office notified Peking that Russian troops had occupied Kuldja and the Ili Valley as a friendly gesture to China. Immediately the Chinese became very much concerned about Sinkiang and began to consider ways and means. The attitude of the Chinese was well illustrated in the case of Tarbagatai. The Tungans had occupied the city of Chuguchak in 1865 and they tried to enter into friendly relations with the Russians. The Russians treated them rather coldly and about a year later a rumour was circulated by Chinese fugitives on the Russian side of the border that a Russian army was en route to occupy Chuguchak. The Tungans were thrown into a panic, abandoned Chuguchak and retired to Manass. The whole country was practically abandoned for several years. One is led to wonder at the restraint of the Russians in not occupying Chuguchak or the whole of Tarbagatai. But in 1871, when the Chinese awoke to the situation in the distant west, they sent an expedition through Mongolia that reoccupied Chuguchak and restored a measure of authority in part of Tarbagatai. The Manchu general in command, Jung Ch'uan, made no appreciable effort, however, to extend his authority into the areas held by the Tungans.

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It was mainly in preparation for the campaign in Sinkiang that Tso Tsungt'ang established an arsenal in Lanchow and he did it far enough ahead to try out the products of that arsenal and test its capabilities in supplying munitions for a long campaign. He had in mind the question of supply when he was making such heroic efforts to get the Moslems located on the land in Kansu and using large numbers of his troops to assist the people in restoring the land to production. He fully appreciated the fact that it would be folly to attempt a long, hard campaign with a devastated area at his back and into a country that would be thoroughly wrecked by the rebels as his army advanced. He saw that it would be necessary to get the province of Kansu into food production before attempting an advance into Sinkiang.

In the same year that Tso brought the Kansu rebellion to an end the Great Panthay Rebellion in Yunnan was finally suppressed. Thus, for the first time in twenty-five years, a reasonable degree of authority was established throughout China proper. The fact of ending two rebellions in the same year greatly stimulated Peking and as soon as the news was received of the fall of Suchow the Emperor ordered Tso Tsungt'ang to advance at once beyond the Great Wall and bring Sinkiang under control. Tso was not given to sudden bursts of enthusiasm but always approached a proposition in a cool, methodical manner. He was not to be stampeded into Sinkiang until he had provided for all probable contingencies. He advised the government that there was much to be done in the way of preparation before taking in hand the actual reconquest of the New Dominions. He took a full

measure of time and it was more than two and a half years before he was ready to launch the final campaign. It was one of the most difficult periods in his entire career. To make the preparation that Tso insisted was absolutely necessary, required a great deal of money. It cost a great deal just to feed the large army Tso had in Kansu. They were not maintained in idleness during this long period by any means but to the officials in other parts of the empire, continually receiving requisitions for funds for Kansu, it appeared that they were simply supporting an idle army. They began to object and to memorialize the throne on the useless expenditures that were being made for an objective that month by month came no nearer to realization.

Aside from the troubles he had with a government unable to understand the reasons for his heavy expenditures, the physical difficulties of the problem of taking an army into Sinkiang were enough to test a commander to the utmost. The distances to be traversed were enormous and the route of march ran from oasis to oasis with stopping places few and far between. Water was scarce over the entire route and it was wholly out of the question to depend on purchasing supplies along the road or even in the most populous centres. From Suchow to Kashgar the distance along the Nan Lu was about equivalent to the distance from Kansas City to Los Angeles. There was no choice of roads as far as Hami and from Hami there were only two roads, one running to the north of the Tienshan and one to the south. From Suchow to Ansi was about 150 miles and from Ansi to Hami, 225 miles. The Ansi-Hami section was across a part of the

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Gobi Desert and water was so scarce that at no stopping place was it sufficient for any considerable number of men or animals. From Hami there was a road crossing the mountains to the north to Barkul on the Pei Lu or North Road, and the distance was roughly 90 miles. Along the North Road from Barkul to the first town of importance, Kucheng, was some 200 miles, and from Kucheng to Urumchi, the first main centre of Tungan power on the Pei Lu, was roughly 110 miles. Along the Nan Lu or South Road from Hami to Turfan, eastern centre of Yakub Beg's kingdom, was 250 miles. Thus in order to get at the easternmost part of the Kingdom of Kashgaria in the Turfan area, Tso Tsung'ang had to move his army some 625 miles over desert country; and to strike the Tungans in the Urumchi area he had to move about 775 miles. Such were the distances he had to cross in order to begin the campaign against the more formidable rebel concentrations.

At that period the province of Kansu ended a few miles to the west of Suchow at the fortified town of Chiayukuan, westernmost gate of the Great Wall. With the fall of Suchow the pacification of Kansu was complete, but west of Chiayukuan, in Yumen, Ansi and Tunhwang districts, there was a large Moslem population and the celebrated Shensi Moslem leader, Pai Yenhu, with several thousand followers was in this section. In the great Hami oasis the Moslems had set up an independent kingdom under a local Mohammedan leader who was King of Hami. On the Pei Lu it does not appear that the Moslems attempted to establish themselves strongly in Barkul or Kucheng, though they devastated these



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districts and left the towns almost uninhabited. There was thus a great deal of preliminary work to be done before attempting to reduce the Kingdom of Yakub Beg.

Tso's plans for the reconquest of Sinkiang may be summarized as follows:

1. The complete reorganization of his army, weeding out the unfit and equipping the combat force with the best that his circumstances permitted.
2. Clearing Pai Yenhu and the Moslem rebels from the Yumen-Ansi-Tunhwang area, and organizing the whole country from Liangchow to Ansi as an enlarged base of operations.
3. The formation of a great base of supplies at Suchow with sub-bases at Yumen and Ansi.
4. The occupation of Hami, Barkul and Kucheng, and the organization of advanced bases in these three places. Barkul was to be the main base of supply for operations on the Pei Lu or North Road, and Hami for the Nan Lu or South Road. The very minimum force was to be used in these operations in order to reduce the strain on his transport.
5. When a sufficient reserve of supplies was accumulated at the advanced bases and the transport was so organized as to maintain a flow of supplies to the advanced bases, to move the army from Suchow into Sinkiang via Hami-Barkul-Kucheng, reduce the Tungan centres of Urumchi and Manass, then recross the mountains south of Urumchi and cooperating with a column from Hami, destroy the Kingdom of Yakub Beg.

In the reorganization of his army he said that he discharged 20,000 men and had 141 battalions left, or about 70,000 men.<sup>1</sup> But it seems that the forces of Chin Hsun, 10 battalions; Chang Yueh, 14 battalions; and Hsu Chanpiao, 13 battalions, were in addition to Tso's own 141 battalions. The grand total was 178 battalions, or 89,000 men. The bulk of this army was distributed throughout the province of Kansu with the main con-

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. VII, p.13 (b).

centrations at Suchow, Kaotai, Kanchow and Liangchow. He aimed at so distributing them that subsistence could be procured locally and thus he would be enabled to use all his transport for building up a reserve of supplies and supplying the columns operating beyond the Great Wall.

In the spring of 1874 Chin Hsun and Chang Yueh moved west of Chiayukuan. The Annals state that Chin Hsun was given one Krupp field gun, and that Chang Yueh was given a Krupp field gun, 10 of the new mortars, or "P'i Shan P'ao" (literally, mountain-splitting cannon), made in Lanchow, and 10 German-made seven-shot magazine rifles. Nothing is said about the fighting that took place in this section, but it is simply recorded that by midsummer Chin Hsun was in Ansi and Chang Yueh in Yumen. However, the Russian traveller, Dr. Piassetsky, passed through Ansi during the summer of 1875 and he said:

"We knew of course that Ansi had suffered from the war, but the destruction we now beheld surpassed anything I could have imagined. Nothing remained of this big town but a heap of stones, fragments of walls and ruined temples. In the midst of this vast site a few aged inhabitants had built huts; with slight exception, nothing was to be seen but an abundance of grass."<sup>1</sup>

Late in the summer of 1874, Chang Yueh advanced to Hami. The advance from Ansi had to be made in small detachments adjusted to the capacity of the watering places. As a unit would arrive at a watering place the preceding unit would move forward. Eleven days were allowed a detachment to reach the Hami oasis. Nothing is said in the Annals about Chang Yueh's operations in Hami, but again the account of Piassetsky throws some

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<sup>1</sup> *Russian Travellers in Mongolia*, Vol. II, p.226.

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light on the matter. A year after Chang Yueh's arrival, he was in Hami and of the city he said:

"A town so utterly ruined that it was impossible to judge what it might have been before the war. Properly speaking, the new town was only an encampment of the Chinese army."<sup>1</sup>

After Chang Yueh had securely established himself in Hami, Chin Hsun was sent forward to Barkul, arriving in January, 1875. In the spring Hsu Chanpiao was sent forward from Ansi to Barkul. On his arrival in Barkul, Chin Hsun advanced to Kucheng and occupied that town. Tso Tsung'tang was then in occupation of eastern Sinkiang and could begin the accumulation of supplies in these advanced positions for the army he was grooming to send into Sinkiang proper. It would seem that with this demonstration Yakub Beg and the Tungans in Urumchi and Manass would have realized that it was time to do something about the matter. If they had combined forces they might have made it very difficult for Tso. They did nothing but wait. However, had they made an attack on Tso's advanced positions they would have found a situation far different from any previous experience they had had with Chinese troops. Tso had 5,000 men in Kucheng, 6,500 in Barkul and 7,000 in Hami and the generals in command were not the type that wait to see what is going to happen, but the type that make things happen when an enemy is near. The Tungans alone could not have made any notable impression on Chin Hsun and Hsu Chanpiao. Had Yakub Beg decided to make an attack on Chang Yueh the distance he would have had to cover was just

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p.239.

## Tso Tsungt'ang

about as great as that required for reinforcements to reach Hami from Ansi. It would seem that Tso made a most careful estimate of the requirements. The force was ample for all emergencies and not so large as to strain his service of supply. A large part of each of the advanced units was cavalry and was thus prepared to deal with small raiding parties.

Frequent references are found to Tso Tsungt'ang's agricultural army. In fact the scant mention of Tso Tsungt'ang that is found in foreign accounts, almost always associates his Sinkiang campaign with the story that his army advanced from oasis to oasis between crops and that at each oasis a halt was made to grow grain for the next advance. After the manner of legends this story will doubtless long continue to be associated with the name of Tso Tsungt'ang, and like such legends there is a small element of truth in it. It is, however, far from being the whole truth. Few generals in any country have had to solve a more difficult supply problem than did Tso Tsungt'ang. It would be hard indeed to find one who has solved such a problem more successfully. Through Shensi and Kansu he campaigned over a country that had been ravaged by a civil war unsurpassed in its destructive effects. It was devastated long before he appeared on the scene. Contrary to some opinion, Tso Tsungt'ang's armies were not destroying armies. The ruins that littered the wake of his armies were made by the rebels or were such only as were incident to actual combat. He was no ruthless destroyer, rather a great builder. He was rigorous but never vengeful. As soon as he occupied a place constructive work was started at

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once. The transportation problem was a monumental one where he was campaigning and everywhere he exerted the greatest efforts to reduce the transport strain by getting production started in the rear of his armies. In order to do this he made use whenever possible of his soldiers. He used soldiers and animals to plough and sow thousands of acres of land but he did not always harvest it. It was his practice to turn over such land to the owner if he appeared to claim it, or if the owner could not be established he would turn it over to anyone who would promise to carry on the work. When the grain was harvested he would buy it and always paid a fair price. His prime purpose in so using his troops was to encourage the people to return to the land. In some cases he reclaimed waste or abandoned land, and there was no shortage of such land in Kansu after the rebellion, by using old and slightly incapacitated soldiers who were unsuited for field service. They usually sowed and harvested, but even then, if he could get people to go onto this land he would turn it over to them and move the soldiers to other waste land. Tso Tsung'ang was under no illusions about the difficulty of making farmers out of soldiers. He once compared it to trying simultaneously to draw circles with one hand and squares with the other.<sup>1</sup> The year before he launched the campaign in Sinkiang he directed his generals not to put their best soldiers to work in the fields but to select the indifferent and inferior ones for such work. Still, it is evident that the mere thought of an idle soldier was

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. VII, p.43.

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painful to Tso, and when actual operations were not imminent, he never failed to find work for them to do—something that would save the government money. He said that the work done by the army on reconstruction work in Kansu saved the government many millions of taels.

In the country from Liangchow west to Suchow and even in the valley of Yumen and Ansi, the production of grain in normal times was notable. This section was almost depopulated by the rebellion, and Tso put his men to work in the fields, ploughing, sowing, repairing irrigation ditches and in general bringing the land into production. At the same time he did everything in his power to encourage people to enter this area and settle. He gave a great stimulus to settlers by buying every pound of surplus grain they could grow and paying them a fair price for it. He did not believe in levying a contribution on the people but insisted that the government should pay them for supplies furnished. It was in this manner that he was so remarkably successful in the rapid rehabilitation of the ruined province. The actual amount of grain grown by his troops was of no great moment in supplying his large army but the stimulus it gave to the people to grow grain did become a very big factor in supplying his troops.

When Chang Yueh advanced into Hami, Tso gave him detailed instructions on restoring grain production in the Hami oasis. He must conciliate the people, try to keep them from abandoning their homes and use special measures to encourage those who did abandon the district to return. The lands of all those who returned were

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to be restored at once and every effort made to give the people a sense of security. As soon as order was established every soldier and every animal that could be spared was to be put to work repairing irrigation canals, ploughing and sowing. In case animals were not sufficiently numerous to do the ploughing, soldiers were to be used—three soldiers to equal one mule for pulling a plough. If at any stage of the operation the owner returned, the land was to be restored to him on his assurance that he would continue the cultivation. The question of ownership was not to be made a matter for argument but a simple claim would be sufficient provided the claimant would promise to work the land. No distinction would be made on the basis of religion. Troops were to be assigned to plots of land by companies, a native employed to advise each company on local cropping procedure, and a spirit of emulation among the various companies was to be encouraged. Battalion and company commanders were to be held responsible for the performance of their units and notation was to be made on their official records as to the manner in which they discharged their farming duties. Tso listed the advantages to be derived from this system. It would save the government money; save transportation; keep the soldiers busy and in good physical condition; and it would encourage the people to return to their farms since they would find them improved and a crop started.<sup>1</sup>

By the summer of 1875 Chang Yueh reported that besides the vast amount of abandoned land that had been

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. VII, pp.2 and 6.

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restored to cultivation he had reclaimed more than 3,000 acres of waste land. He must have been uncommonly successful in getting the people to return to the land as Dr. Piassetsky, passing through Hami that same summer, commented on the people he saw working in the fields but said nothing whatever about seeing any soldiers at work on the land.

Chang Yueh was a man of extraordinary physical strength, a splendid horseman and a good soldier. Tso Tsung'tang became exceedingly fond of Chang, aside from regarding him as one of his most capable commanders. The career of Chang Yueh has in it some of the elements of a fairy tale. He was born in Peking and was an ordinary labourer. He worked as a ricehuller and was so strong that it was said he could carry six hundred pounds on his back where an ordinary worker did well to carry one hundred. One day he became involved on the street in a quarrel between an old woman and her widowed daughter-in-law. The old woman was trying to force the daughter-in-law to marry again. Chang Yueh said this was contrary to custom and in the argument he lost his temper, threw a sack of rice at the old woman and killed her. He fled from Peking to Honan where the Nienfei were causing the villagers a lot of trouble. The Nienfei were not given to the use of firearms in the early stages of their operations and in their kind of fighting, Chang Yueh's courage and strength were worth a dozen men to the villagers in their brushes with the bandits. He became the leader of a group of villagers and his fame spread even to the capital, Kaifeng. He wandered into Kushih-hsien in the



*Drawn by Dr. Piassetsky, 1875*

CHANG YUEH



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extreme southeast of Honan. While he was there the Nienfei surrounded the town and besieged it so long that hope was almost abandoned. The District Magistrate was a scholar and he had a daughter who was noted locally for her beauty and for her literary attainments. In his extremity the Magistrate posted a proclamation to the effect that to the man who would defeat the rebels and save the town, he would give his daughter in marriage. Chang Yueh came forward and offered his services. With a hastily gathered group of 300 men he went out at night and made a vigorous attack on the bandits. The contest was very much in doubt but the element of luck was with him. It just happened that the famous Mongol, Prince Senkolintsin, came along and the bandits fled. The Magistrate did not quibble over technicalities and the marriage was duly celebrated. The Prince took a great fancy to Chang Yueh. He recommended his appointment as a District Magistrate. The endorsement of so distinguished a man as Senkolintsin was worth more than a literary degree and Chang Yueh was so appointed.

Chang Yueh was wholly illiterate but his wife assisted him and they did so well that after two years he was promoted to be the Fant'ai, or Provincial Treasurer of Honan. This was altogether too much for the Censorate. A Censor, Liu Yunan, memorialized the throne saying that Chang Yueh did not know a character and could not even sign his name! How then could he discharge the duties of a provincial treasurer? He lost his post as treasurer but was given an appointment as a military mandarin with the rank of Tsungping, or major-general.

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Chang was very much disgruntled at this turn of fortune and he sulked. He became so indifferent to his duties as a general that only the energy of his wife kept him from getting into serious trouble. She made him start studying, taught him herself and by her uncommon energy and persistence got him to the point where he could read and write a little.

During the Nienfei campaign Tso Tsungt'ang heard of Chang Yueh, and, intrigued by his past, requested the government to assign him to his army together with the troops he normally commanded. He was transferred to Tso's command and ordered to proceed to Shansi to join Liu Sungshan in the invasion of northern Shensi. Chang Yueh made no move to carry out his orders and they were repeated. This was rather unusual as Tso Tsungt'ang was not in the habit of repeating orders, which makes it likely that they originated in Peking. Still Chang made no move until his wife took a hand, addressing him in effect: "You think you are an extraordinary fellow but you will see. The Emperor will have your head for this insubordination." She finally got him under way and, once started, he went far. His courage in battle was uncommon. He feared no one in the world except Mrs. Chang Yueh and Tso Tsungt'ang, and it is not certain that he feared Tso. Piassetsky was very favourably impressed by Chang Yueh and his army when he saw them in Hami. He made a sketch of the general that pleased the latter immensely. Chang ordered it to be framed at once but was told that no glass was available. There happened to be a mirror at hand which

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he ordered to be scraped of the tinfoil and used to cover his likeness.

Tso Tsung'tang extended his efforts to step up the agricultural production to the whole of Kansu and Shensi. He took particular interest in stimulating the growing of cotton, which was quite as essential to his army as food. Aside from the use of the cloth for clothing, it was used to pad the winter uniforms of his soldiers. Every pound of cotton that could be grown in the northwest saved him that much transportation. He personally wrote two tracts on cotton growing: "Ten Important Points to Observe in Planting Cotton", and "Cotton". He established a bureau charged with teaching the people how to make thread and cloth. Soldiers were used to plant cotton and to assist the villagers in planting it. He urged the people to plant cotton where they had formerly planted the opium poppy.

On poppy cultivation Tso was unyielding. In all districts the farmers were called to the local yamen and made to sign or indicate their assent to a pledge not to plant the opium poppy. Punishment was swift and certain to those who broke the pledge. Opium had secured such a hold in Kansu, however, that it was not easily brought under control. In some districts soldiers were sent into remote places to destroy the poppy crop in the fields. In the army there were rigorous regulations against the use of opium. It would be useless to state that there was no opium smoking in Tso's army, but there was certainly no heavy smoking and no one dared indulge in even an occasional pipe when Tso was in the vicinity.

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Tso was favoured during the years 1874, 1875 and 1876 with exceptionally favourable weather conditions and the crops of Kansu, especially from Liangchow to Suchow, were bountiful. When possible he purchased on contracts made months before the grain was harvested and in this way he kept prices level, adjusting his purchases in such a way that no hardship was worked on the people. He was careful to see that the farmers did not sell all their grain at harvest time and then later in the year have to buy their food supplies at a much higher price. His magazines were filled in Suchow and transportation to Hami and other advanced posts was established. He bought several thousand camels in Mongolia and hired every cart and animal that could be found. The road to Hami and the Nan Lu was feasible for carts. He sent agents to Kweihwa, Paoto, Uliassutai and Kobdo to buy grain for shipment by camel caravan to Barkul and Kucheng.

The Russian traveller, Sosnowsky, arrived in Lanchow on June 15th, 1875, en route to Russia. Soon after his arrival he called on Tso Tsungt'ang. After the introductions were over Tso asked him directly what were the prospects of buying grain in Siberia for delivery at Kucheng. Sosnowsky, having served in the province of Semipalatinsk and knowing something of the prospects, promptly made a deal to deliver 25,000 tchetverts of grain, roughly 150,000 bushels, at Kucheng for 30 roubles a tchetvert. It was somewhat cheaper than buying in Kweihwa, where it cost 8 taels per hundred chin (133 lbs.) delivered in Barkul, while Tso said he contracted with the Russians for three million chin

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delivered in Kucheng at 7.5 taels per hundred chin. Sosnowsky was exceptionally well pleased with his deal, as he had charged what his companions thought was an outrageous price. He defended himself by saying that Tso had not argued about the price and had said that he had plenty of money but could not feed his soldiers with money. The contract between Tso and Sosnowsky is given by Piassetsky. It says:

“Captain Sosnowsky, Staff Officer of the Great Empire of Russia and Tso, Military Tsoundy and Governor of all Western China.

Agree to this: In consideration of the military expedition against the Tartars in Western China, whence arises the necessity of providing food,

Captain Sosnowsky, influenced by strong friendship for China, undertakes to furnish bread to the Chinese, for the sum of thirty roubles the tchetvert, lowering the price should it not be so dear in the district of Zaisan.”<sup>1</sup>

The Russians were intending to stay for a month in Lanchow before continuing their leisurely journey to Russia, but Tso was in a hurry and he gave one of Sosnowsky's Cossacks an escort to travel by rapid stages to Zaisan with Sosnowsky's instructions to get the grain shipments under way. By April, 1876, the Russians had not only delivered the three million chin at Kucheng but an additional million as well. By the spring of 1876 Tso had accumulated grain reserves as follows: Hami, 10,000,000 “chin”; Barkul, 5,000,000; Kucheng 8,000,000; which totalled up to more than 15,000 tons. In addition he had brought together enough transport to maintain a steady flow of supplies to these bases and at that time he had another 1,000 tons on the road. At

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<sup>1</sup> Piassetsky, *op. cit.*, p.153.

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the main base in Suchow he probably had about 30,000 tons, besides a large quantity in Ansi. In all his various depots he had supplies on hand sufficient for a year and a half of campaigning.

The problem of arming and equipping the army was monumental. Tso determined that the army which he was going to send into Central Asia must be a good one, because it had to do something more than reduce the Tungans and destroy Yakub Beg. It had the additional mission, in Tso's plans, of inspiring respect. This was one of the main reasons he spent so much time in preparation. He could have advanced into Sinkiang proper at least a year earlier than he did, with a force sufficient to defeat Yakub Beg and suppress the Tungans, but the final results would not have been nearly so impressive and probably would not have been achieved any more quickly than they actually were. He determined to modernize his army. A great many foreign-made arms had been bought for his troops but the latter were far from being completely outfitted. His arsenal worked for four years on arms and munitions for his army. Naturally some time was lost getting started and many mistakes were made but by the end of 1873 it was producing very satisfactory material.

A letter written by Tso to the Tsungli Yamen or Foreign Office in 1874 on the subject of arms is of interest as showing his attitude toward modernization. He said in substance:

"In European armies the infantry are drilled in straight lines, the movements are precise and in perfect unison. It is very different from our way. Their arms and ammunition are also far superior to the Chinese. Their battle formations are superior to ours.

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During the Taiping and Nienfei campaigns a great many officers forged to the front and not a few of them showed a real talent for war. All of these officers had a decided preference for foreign arms but they did not fully understand their use and they did not understand the foreign formations. Liu Sungshan and Chang Hots'ai understood a great deal of modern tactics. They were invincible against the Taipings and Nienfei and I believe they could have held their own against foreigners. I personally saw both of these men in action and know that they were capable.

Now about artillery. The best is the Prussian. They use breech-loading, rifled field guns. For small arms they have a breech-loading, seven-shot, magazine rifle that is the very best made. German artillery has always been good and now that they have changed to new types it is indeed unsurpassed. They use elongated conical pointed projectiles. It is only recently that the foreigners have used rifled arms. Formerly their artillery and small arms were smooth bore and they used round projectiles. The new arms have much greater range and are much more accurate.

The new method is to load from the breech and the cartridge chamber is larger than the bore. At the muzzle of the piece the bore is just slightly less in diameter than the projectile. In both small arms and artillery this greatly increases the range and accuracy because the projectiles do not have any play in the barrel and all the force of the explosive charge is brought to bear on the projectile. The jacket of the projectile is lead or a soft metal and being softer than the barrel it yields in passing through the barrel and does not injure it. When the projectile emerges from the barrel it does not wobble as in smooth bore guns and it has far greater accuracy.

In our arsenal here at Lanchow we can make all kinds of ammunition, cannon and small arms. We have studied the German models in both artillery and small arms. We are changing the Chinese light mortars to a new model. We are also changing the Cantonese gingals. We are using a three-legged mount for the light mortar. In modifying the gingals we are making them lighter, breechloader and carrying one projectile. Our workmen are all from Ningpo, Fukien and Canton. The chief is Lai Ch'ang and he has the rank of a major-general. The Manchu, Ch'ung Chih, a brigadier, is in charge of training the men in the use of the new arms. All the workmen also understand how to handle the new arms. The men armed with these weapons are taught the functions of the various parts, how to clean them, take them down and reassemble them. Formerly a light mortar required 13 men to handle it but now 5 men are sufficient. Two gingals formerly needed 5 men to handle them but now 4 men can

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do it. The rate of fire of these weapons is far more rapid than formerly.

I am trying to combine the good in the Chinese system with the good in the foreign system. Whether in defence of forts or in the field we must hereafter depend on the new arms. Moreover, we must be like the western people, continually trying to improve these instruments. Although we are not so good as the foreigners we have already made great improvements. If we make use of officers and men who know how to handle these instruments and who have an appreciation of topography, we can win. The arms we are making are not just nice things to look at and of no use, and in what I have said I have not exaggerated in the least.”<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Piassetsky, who was with Sosnowsky when he passed through Lanchow; has given some very interesting side-lights on Tso Tsungt'ang. The Russian lived in Tso's headquarters as his guest for a month and saw him almost every day. He visited the arsenal on Tso's invitation and says:

“We visited a gunfactory, a foundry for cannon worked by steam, and without a single foreigner in the establishment. . . .

The commander of the arsenal, a native of Canton, came to meet me and take me into a tent where tea was served . . . I suggested that we should go and see the shooting. The chief of the arsenal showed me four steel rifled-barreled breechloaders which had been turned out in his workshops. These were put together with great care and were of various sizes, the biggest was a No. 9 barrel.

The modest director of the arsenal . . . Would accept no praise, having but little confidence in his own science and capacity, and frankly admitting the superiority of Europeans. He contemplated his own creations with loving eyes as long as they were not loaded. Directly a charge was put in he fled to a distance . . .

The soldiers worked skillfully and had no fear . . . The shot went off and the cannon did not burst. They fired off the same gun several times and then the others. The firing was not bad as a rule.”<sup>2</sup>

Tso Tsungt'ang's comment on the visit is interesting. In a letter to a friend he said:

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<sup>1</sup> *Tso Wen Hsiang Kung Shu Tu*, Vol. XIV, p.48.

<sup>2</sup> *Russian Travellers in Mongolia*, Vol. II, pp.156-157.

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"I told Sosnowsky that we could make arms that were equal to the Russian make. He thought it was a great joke and laughed outright, but he said nothing. I sent them to see the arsenal and they were much impressed . . . They asked me where the steel came from. I told them it was Chinese steel but I could see that they did not believe what I said."<sup>1</sup>

The Hungarian traveller, Count Szechenyi, visited Tso Tsungt'ang in Suchow during the summer of 1876 about the time that his army was just coming to grips with the Tungans near Urumchi. Tso showed him a needle gun made in his Lanchow arsenal and this Szechenyi pronounced a "very serviceable weapon indeed." He said that Tso's cavalymen were armed with a carbine and a sword, while the infantry were armed with rifles and all presented a "clean and soldierly appearance."<sup>2</sup> Dr. Piassetsky saw Tso's troops all the way from Lanchow to beyond Barkul, and he commented favourably on their discipline, morale and general bearing, and on Tso's control over them even when they were hundreds of miles from his headquarters. Tso furnished the Russians with animals and an escort for several days journey north of Barkul, and according to the Doctor, Sosnowsky was a hard man to get along with. He was in a great hurry to get to Zaisan in order to look after his grain contracts and he tried to travel faster than his animals were able to go. On one occasion when the animals were spent and Sosnowsky insisted on continuing, the officer in charge of the escort informed him that the animals belonged to the Chinese government and that he was responsible to General Tso Tsungt'ang for their proper care and that

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. VI, p.16.

<sup>2</sup> Boulger, *Central Asian Questions*, pp.358-9.

## Tso Tsungt'ang

they would not go any further that day. Captain Sosnowsky stormed and threatened but to no purpose. They camped.

During the summer of 1874, Ching Lien, a high Manchu official, arrived in Suchow as an observer, and to advise Tso on details for the coming campaign. Ching Lien had once been stationed in Kucheng and was therefore presumably very familiar with local conditions in Sinkiang. Tso did not like this turn of affairs at all. He felt that Ching Lien's main mission was to spy on him and make confidential reports to Peking that would only complicate his already heavy task. Moreover, Tso did not want Ching Lien or any one else to advise him on any matter touching the campaign. He was always ready and anxious to seek information from anyone, but never advice. His confidence in himself was unlimited and given the simple facts in a situation, he was never at a loss for a decision. If he was ever in doubt about any matter no one ever knew it. His subordinates were always consumed with admiration at the rapidity and certainty of his decisions.

About the same time as Ching Lien arrived, Yuan Paohung, who had been appointed Imperial Commissioner for supervising the service of supply in Shensi for several years at the beginning of Tso's campaign, was ordered to Suchow in a somewhat similar capacity. In some memorials Yuan had submitted to the throne he had criticized Tso's supply arrangements. It appears that he saw no point in accumulating a large reserve in Barkul and Kucheng but considered Suchow as the proper place. Tso stoutly defended his position and the argu-

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ment became very bitter. Finally Tso requested the Emperor to revoke Yuan Paohung's orders as he had no use for him in Suchow. But Yuan had many friends and among them was the great Li Hungchang. Late in the year Li Hungchang entered the lists against Tso and advocated the complete abandonment of the campaign. He characterized it as a hopeless task, a waste of money, and said that even if the campaign were successful, Sinkiang could not be securely held. Li Hungchang was a power to be reckoned with and he wanted the money that was being "wasted" on the preparations for the campaign in Sinkiang to use under his supervision on naval construction and coast defences. Many other high officials were of the same opinion as to the futility of the expedition to Sinkiang and the provincial governors were objecting strenuously to Tso's requisitions for funds. Tso said that his requirements for the year 1873 were eight million taels and for 1874, after discharging 20,000 men, seven million taels.<sup>1</sup>

The government was, however, in arrears in his remittances by more than a year. His estimates were based on 141 battalions for 1874 and if, as seems to be the case, the battalions of Chin Hsun, Chang Yueh and Hsu Chanpiao were in addition, the total outlay for the Northwest would have been increased by about one and a half million. Even so it was not an extravagant outlay for such a large force. On the basis of 2,892.2 taels per battalion, which was the allotment for pay, rations, clothing, etc., per month, the 141 battalions cost taels

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. VII, p.31 (a).

## Tso Tsungt'ang

4,893,602.4 for maintenance for a year. This left slightly over two million for equipment and other expenses. Tso saved considerable sums on the army while it was in Kansu by making it in a large measure self-supporting and the savings went into equipment, transportation, etc. To cover the arrears in his receipts he borrowed, mainly from the Shansi bankers. The credit of Tso Tsungt'ang was exceptionally good in the Northwest.

Tso took the position that unless China assumed a strong stand and recovered Sinkiang, the Russians would take it over and then would take the whole of Mongolia and Manchuria. He believed as heartily as anyone in building a strong navy. In fact he was probably the original proponent of the idea. But he could see no point in concentrating on the exposed sea front while leaving a longer and equally exposed land front wide open. He said that the nation was faced with the necessity to defend both fronts, to recover Sinkiang and build a navy as well. He was inclined to minimize any danger from European nations provided the Chinese could make a reasonable show of resistance. The Europeans were mainly interested in trade and profits; war was an expensive proposition and very detrimental to trade; so, if China were able to make a war far more costly than probable trade advantages would be profitable, the Europeans would not lightly attack China. He considered it wholly unprofitable to colonize a country capable of putting up enough resistance to necessitate the retention of large bodies of troops in it and that nations whose main concern was trade would hardly undertake such a

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venture. But with Russia and Japan he considered the situation was entirely different, since both had territorial designs on China. Therefore it was necessary to build a navy to contain Japan and an army to contain Russia. One was as important as the other. Both were absolutely essential.<sup>1</sup>

Under pressure of the opposition to the Sinkiang expedition the Dowager Empresses, who were again in control after the death of T'ung Chih, became much concerned about the matter. An Imperial rescript was sent to Tso Tsungt'ang recounting in some detail the arguments for and against the expedition. Tso was asked to state clearly whether or not he could recover Sinkiang with the forces he had then at his disposal, and whether or not he could successfully direct operations from so great a distance as Suchow. The question of Yuan Paohung was then brought up. The throne could see no reason why Tso could not make use of such a valuable official as Yuan. Tso was given a certain amount of praise for his great services to the country and for his capabilities as an official and then the rescript entered upon his shortcomings as they appeared to the Imperial eye. He had shown throughout the Sinkiang discussions as well as on many other occasions a conspicuous narrow-mindedness, he was unduly severe on his subordinates, he favoured his fellow provincials, and he made it extremely difficult for other officials who shared in the running of the empire, to cooperate with him. The document was of such urgency that it took only nine days to reach

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. VII, p.18.

## Tso Tsungt'ang

Lanchow from Peking and was received by Tso on March 19th, 1875.<sup>1</sup>

Tso Tsungt'ang's reply to this rescript covers nineteen double pages of text. He was thoroughly at home in an argument, undoubtedly liked to dispute with anyone not under his command, and he was so thoroughly convinced of the correctness of his position and of his power that he hesitated not at all to state his position even to the throne. He reviewed every phase of the discussions arising out of the projected Sinkiang expedition. All the objections that had been raised were demolished completely. But the gist of this long document was simply: There is only one side to the argument and that is mine; Yuan Paohung has no place whatever in the scheme of things in the Northwest; the preparations for the campaign are well under way and I intend to see it through; it is up to the government to find the money required, regardless of other commitments made or that may be made; and interference only tends to delay but not to alter the programme.<sup>2</sup>

The question of abandoning all claim to such a large area as Sinkiang made no appeal to the articulate portion of the nation, and, aside from those officials directly concerned with raising the funds, the expedition was generally approved. Criticism of Tso on account of his age and incapacity had largely subsided and the opinion seemed to prevail that if any one could recover Sinkiang he was the man. Moreover, the question of the legiti-

<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. VII, pp.15-17.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.17-36.

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macy of the Imperial succession was disturbing the minds of many and the difficulties of the Regency would not have been lessened by taking a defeatist attitude on the Sinkiang question. It would have been even less politic at this juncture to take the direction of the campaign from the control of the doughty Viceroy of Shen-Kan, who was also a Grand Secretary, the highest official designation in the empire open to a Chinese. The result was that on May 2nd, 1875, another Imperial rescript was issued in which all of Tso Tsungt'ang's contentions were conceded. Yuan Paohung and Ching Lien were recalled; and Tso Tsungt'ang was appointed Imperial Commissioner for all Sinkiang affairs. His commands as such became those of the Emperor, and all officials connected with Sinkiang affairs, whether Chinese or Manchu, were subordinated to him. It was the power that he had long wanted. He had long seen the weakness of having officials in the Northwest who were empowered to report directly to the throne without his knowing anything about it. This was now stopped and Tso Tsungt'ang became the Supreme Lord of the Western Marches.

It is not at all unlikely that he had been carefully shaping the course of events to the end that he would be given supreme power before he advanced into Sinkiang proper. He was not unmindful of the fact that delicate situations might arise with the Russians when the campaign got well under way and that a divided authority could easily precipitate a situation that would completely wreck his carefully prepared plans. With full and complete authority in his hands he could go forward confidently and the tempo of preparations stepped up

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appreciably after his appointment as Imperial Commissioner. During the greater part of the period of preparation his headquarters were in Lanchow and from this city he directed the numerous and widely dispersed activities connected with the effort to restore Sinkiang to the empire.

As the year 1875 drew to a close Tso Tsungt'ang found himself about ready for his greatest campaign. His advanced bases were secured and stocked with a liberal reserve of supplies. Transportation was well organized to maintain a flow of supplies to his field army. He had enlarged the wells at the watering places across the desert, established emergency depots of supplies and collected fuel at the stopping places. His army was reasonably well trained and was equipped in a manner fairly approximating Western standards of the 1870's. Liu Chint'ang was to command the army in Sinkiang. Liu Tien, who had been with Tso since the summer of 1860 when they organized the little army of 5,000 men in the environs of Changsha, was brought to Lanchow as Governor of Kansu, and Tso prepared to establish his headquarters in Suchow. Only one thing was lacking—money. Tso decided that before committing his army to the wastes of Sinkiang he must have a liberal supply of money in hand. He requested the government to borrow ten million taels in Shanghai and remit it to him in a lump sum. He thought this loan could be made from the foreign banks in Shanghai. He asked that his old friend Shen Paochen, the governor of Fukien, be empowered to negotiate the loan.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. VII, p.47.

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Almost the whole of officialdom came out in opposition to this loan, and to Tso's surprise and vexation, Shen Paochen turned against him. Many memorials were submitted and it was contended that it would be better to drop the campaign then and there than go to such an expense. Apparently the high officials were not accustomed to thinking of ten million tael advances. Tso had to go through once again the struggle for funds that had caused him so much trouble from the day he had started for the Northwest. He said that he, too, was opposed in principle to borrowing money, especially from foreigners, but there were times when there was no other way out and this was such a time. He observed that in England and America the governments were able to borrow from their own citizens and thus the money and the interest payments remained at home, but Spain, on the other hand, borrowed abroad and the interest naturally went abroad. It was unfortunate that China was in the same category as Spain when it came to borrowing money, but since the Chinese of one province took so little interest in what happened in another, there was little prospect of floating a domestic loan large enough to meet the situation. Finally he said there were many causes more potent in wrecking a nation than borrowing money abroad.<sup>1</sup>

Once again the opposition was silenced and Tso got the ten million taels. During the period that Tso Tsung-t'ang was rising to fame and power, Prince Kung was the most powerful Manchu in the government at Peking. He was the last of the Imperial line with a reasonable

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. VIII, p.2-3.

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claim to distinction as a statesman. During the period of his ascendancy, (1860-84) indications were not wanting that the Imperial Power was on the up grade. It seems that he, more than any other man, was responsible for placing capable Chinese in posts of power and influence. It is more than likely that it was the influence of Prince Kung that gained for Tso the requisite Imperial support for the loan.

Chin Hsun, Chang Yueh and Hsu Chanpiao had been reinforced until they had 20 battalions each. Liu Chint'ang with 32 battalions left Lanchow on February 22nd, 1876, for Suchow. Tso Tsungt'ang left Lanchow on March 16th, and arrived in Suchow on April 7th, 1876. Liu Chint'ang's army was divided into three sections for the forward movement and the first section left Suchow on April 26th. Tso's parting instructions to his general were to reconnoitre carefully, attack vigorously; Liu was to make sure that all necessary supplies were in Kucheng and then strike hard and fast.<sup>1</sup>

The armies in Hami, Barkul and Kucheng were ordered to reconnoitre carefully and cover the line of march in order that Liu Chint'ang's army should not be slowed down en route by having to take undue security measures. By July 15th, Liu Chint'ang's entire force was assembled in Kucheng, not in a worn and disorganized condition but fit and ready to take the field. It had been moved through close on 700 miles of extremely difficult country and over a single road in 80 days. Tso Tsungt'ang then had a total of 92 battalions or 46,000

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. VIII, p.5.

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men in Sinkiang, distributed as follows: 10,000 in Hami, 10,000 in Barkul, and 26,000 in Kucheng. In Kansu he had between 40,000 and 45,000 men in garrison on which to draw for the support of the army in Sinkiang in case of an emergency. The generals in Sinkiang were relieved of all responsibility for the line of communication east of Hami and Barkul and could concentrate their full attention on operations to the west.

Tso Tsungt'ang's plans had been long in maturing but he was at last ready. He had not been particularly worried about his ability to subdue the Tungans and Yakub Beg. He had an exceptionally well organized intelligence service and he knew about the resistance that might be expected. But he was concerned about the standard of performance his army was about to give. He knew that it would be noted in Russia and to a less degree in India and England. He knew that it was going to be a difficult proposition to get the Russians out of the Ili Valley, knew better than any Chinese living that China could not afford to go to war with Russia. He was also fully appreciative of the fact that a vigorous demonstration of military power had its uses as an aid to diplomacy. He believed that on the demonstration he gave of military efficiency in Central Asia would depend in large measure whether or not the Russians would adhere to their promise to restore Ili, would depend China's success in recovering peacefully this strip of occupied territory. He believed that if he could give such a demonstration, even in so remote a place as Eastern Turkestan, of the renaissance of Chinese arms, it would be noted abroad and would create an atmosphere favourable

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to his harassed country in its foreign relations. It was thus that he regarded his mission—to restore Chinese sovereignty in Central Asia and to do it in such a way as to increase the sadly diminished prestige of his country abroad. Only on the basis of this concept of his mission can a fair appreciation be gained of the infinite pains in his preparations and of the stature of Tso Tsungtang as a soldier and statesman.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE SINKIANG CAMPAIGN AND THE RESTORATION OF THE ILI VALLEY

The army that Tso Tsungt'ang had assembled in Sinkiang was the finest that the empire had put into the field in a hundred years. Probably the units that composed this force would not have made much of a showing on the parade grounds of many countries and there was undoubtedly much of the potentialities of their arms which they did not fully appreciate. But they had that something which distinguishes an army from an aggregation of armed units. They had morale, *esprit de corps*, spirit and something more. They had that subtle something which made every man, regardless of how humble a place he held in the scheme of things, to feel in his heart that he stood in some sort of a personal relationship to the old commander-in-chief far away in Suchow. They were proud to serve in his army. They trusted him so fully that it never occurred to them that he could make a mistake. Such was the nature of this confidence that they trusted the men whom Tso indicated he trusted to lead them. It was a bond that lingered in the memory and warmed the soul of the lowliest soldier to his dying day, when he recalled with pride that he

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had served in Tso Tsungt'ang's army. Few experiences that can fall to men are so animating or so long treasured in memory as being closely identified with a truly great soul. It is a factor that in war becomes one of the greatest of the so-called imponderables or elements that cannot be gauged with any degree of accuracy until long after it is too late.

Although Tso Tsungt'ang was a long distance from his combat troops, his spirit guided them every step of the way to the foot of the Pamirs. He had no telegraph or radio, and the Chinese did not even make use of the carrier pigeon for communication. Fast riding couriers carried all dispatches between Tso's headquarters and the generals in the field. But his instructions were simple and complete. He knew every one of his generals thoroughly; he had observed them through years of hard campaigning and knew just what they could do. Moreover, they knew him very well, knew what he would and would not tolerate. He was uncommonly sensitive about his orders. He differentiated between his orders and their performance only in point of time, and not too much time. His generals were so thoroughly familiar with his requirements that they probably never went to the trouble to speculate on whether or not he might, on occasion, be wrong. It would have been useless speculation because he never admitted that he was wrong. But he trusted his officers and they went forward in Sinkiang knowing exactly what he wanted, and what he expected of them. Rapid communication is no great substitute for such mutual understanding and confidence.

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Liu Chint'ang moved out of Kucheng on July 21st, 1876, hardly a week from the time his army was assembled on the Pei Lu. On the 28th he entered the town of Fukang, to the northwest of Urumchi. The Urumchi Tungans were under the leadership of Ma Jente and with him was the Shensi leader, Pai Yenu, who always managed to be in the general vicinity when combat was imminent. There were rumours afloat that Yakub Beg was sending an army to assist the Tungans. No attempt was made by the Moslems to resist the Chinese army between Kucheng and Fukang. Some fifteen miles to the west of Fukang they hurriedly threw up some defences and made ready to oppose the march on Urumchi. On August 10th Liu Chint'ang made a night attack on this position and the rebels retired southward to the walled town of Kumuti. Here they decided to make a determined stand.

Liu Chint'ang surrounded Kumuti on August 12th, brought his artillery into action and started in to breach the walls. A force of Tungan cavalry, said to number several thousand, suddenly appeared from the north, probably from Manass, to assist the Tungans in the town. Liu sent his cavalry to meet this threat and the Tungans were dispersed. The heavier guns soon made several gaps in the walls and the light mortars were so effective in shelling these breaches that the rebels were unable to repair them. After the northeast section of the wall was destroyed, fire was concentrated on the south gate and preparations made to storm the town. The cavalry formed a loose skirmish line some distance from the walls to intercept any who might attempt to escape and

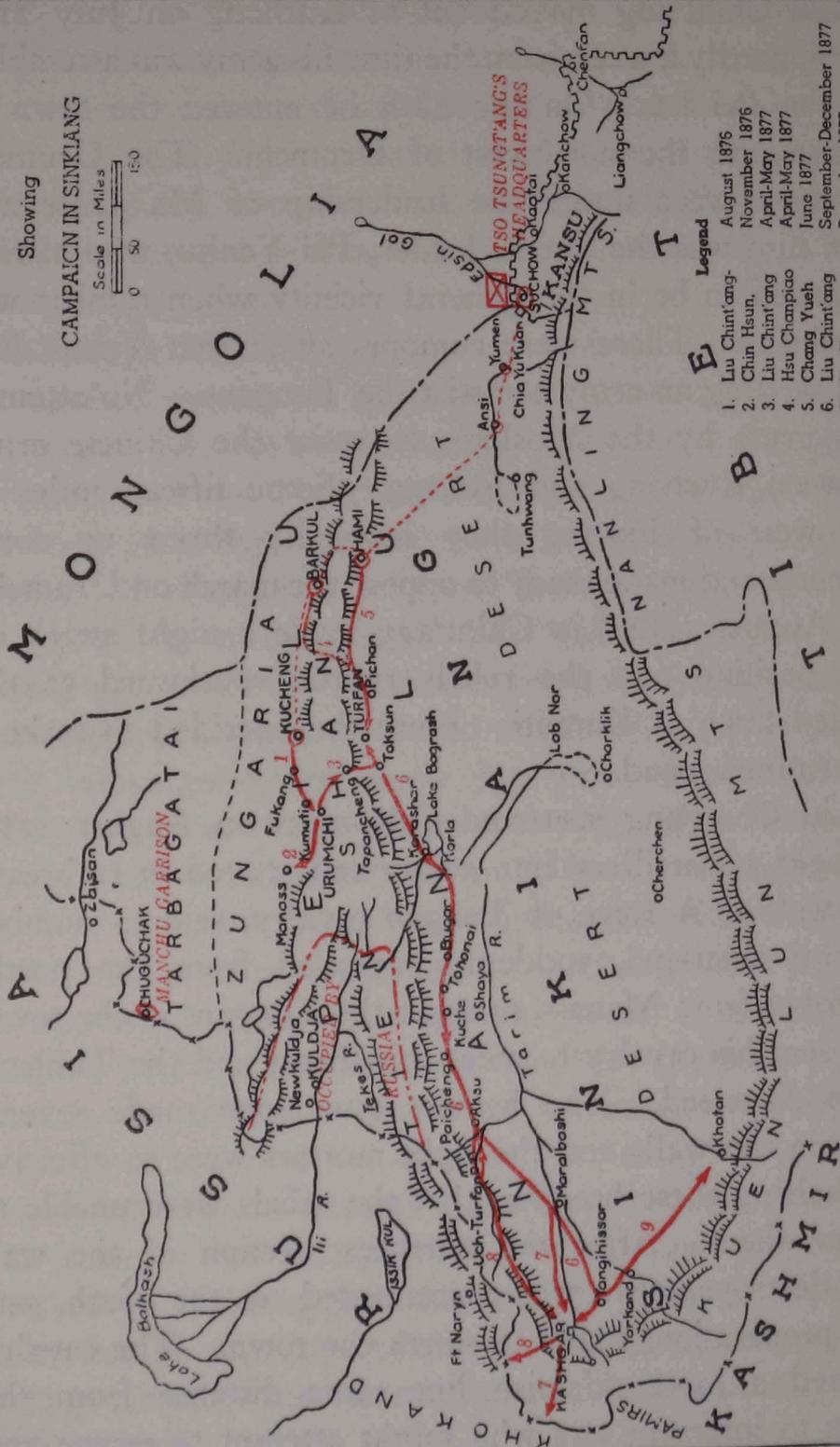
# Tso Tsungt'ang

## SKETCH

Showing

CAMPAIGN IN SINKIANG

Scale in Miles  
0 50 100



### Legend

- |                   |                         |
|-------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Liu Chint'ang- | August 1876             |
| 2. Chin Hsun,     | November 1876           |
| 3. Liu Chint'ang  | April-May 1877          |
| 4. Hsu Champiao   | April-May 1877          |
| 5. Chang Yueh     | June 1877               |
| 6. Liu Chint'ang  | September-December 1877 |
| 7. Yu Yuen        | December 1877           |
| 8. Huang Wangpeng | December 1877           |
| 9. Tung Fu-tsung  | January 1878            |

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the infantry filled quantities of sand bags to throw into the moat, forming causeways for the storming parties to cross. Just before daybreak on August 17th, the south gate crumbled and Liu Chint'ang gave the signal for the assault. The action was short and more than 6,000 Tungans were killed. As for prisoners, the annalist simply says that a few hundred Moslems from the Nan Lu were taken and put to the sword. It does not appear that a man escaped. Ma Jente and Pai Yenhu had returned to Urumchi after the initial fight on August 10th. It was only about fifteen miles from Kumuti to Urumchi but the Moslem leaders made no effort to assist their co-religionists. Instead, on hearing of the fate of Kumuti, the two redoubtable chieftains gathered their women and children and fled south. Liu Chint'ang entered Urumchi on the morning of August 18th, encountering no resistance. His cavalry pursued Ma Jente and Pai Yenhu for some distance and claimed to have killed over 600 of the Moslems. Almost within a month from the arrival of the army at Kucheng, Liu Chint'ang was master in Urumchi and the first stage of the campaign was over.

Yakub Beg moved a large force to Tapancheng, a walled town guarding the northern approach to the pass between Urumchi and Turfan. Boulger says that his army numbered 17,000 trained troops and 30 field pieces. In addition he had about 10,000 Tungan irregulars. Deserters from the Indian Army made up a considerable portion of Yakub Beg's officers.<sup>1</sup> Three strong forts

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<sup>1</sup> Boulger, *Central Asian Questions*, p.418.

## TSO TSUNGT'ANG

were built to defend Toksun, where Yakub Beg established his headquarters, and he began to make a show of preparations to resist the Chinese. But Liu Chint'ang made no move to advance south on Yakub Beg. Tso's orders were to clear out the Tungans on the Pei Lu before moving on Yakub Beg. Accordingly Liu Chint'ang contented himself with making a thorough reconnaissance of the country to the south and west of Urumchi, and sent Chin Hsun to reduce the Tungan centre of Manass. Tso Tsungt'ang was highly pleased with the Urumchi phase of the operations. With the forward movement on Manass his concern again showed and he repeated his orders to use the greatest care in any contacts that might occur with the Russians, and that any question coming up regarding the Russians must be referred to him for decision.<sup>1</sup>

The Tungans in the Manass area put up a much stiffer resistance than was encountered at Urumchi. Chin Hsun arrived in the vicinity of Manass early in September and met with such vigorous opposition that he had to call on Liu Chint'ang for reinforcements. Liu Chint'ang sent 6,000 men to assist in the Manass operations and with this addition to his forces Chin Hsun was able to invest the city of Manass early in October. Mining operations were started on the walls and several sections were breached. The Tungans repulsed the storming parties and were able to repair the major damages to their walls. The leader of the Manass Moslems, Han Hsingneng, was killed on October 17th,

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. VIII, p.15.

but the rebels continued a spirited resistance. Chin Hsun pressed his attack with such vigour that on November 4th the rebels offered to surrender. The annalist says that on November 6th, 1876, several thousand Tungans came out of the city, ostensibly to surrender. As they were all armed, Chin Hsun suspected a ruse. He sent word to their leaders to have the men throw down their arms at once, but instead they opened fire on the Chinese. Chin Hsun closed on them and the Tungans were cut down to the last man. Manass was occupied the same day. The Mohammedans claimed that the massacre occurred after the Tungans had surrendered. In any event, there was a massacre, and after the fall of Manass few Tungans were left alive on the Pei Lu. Within ninety days from the first engagement the pacification of Zungaria was completed.

The army was fired with enthusiasm by this series of successes and Tso's generals thought the time opportune to call on the Russians to get out of the Ili Valley. Tso rejected the suggestion at once and said that the question of Ili must wait until he was through with operations in the Tarim Basin. He knew that the Russians were not going to restore the valley on a simple request, but he said that he did not want to spare the troops that would be required to garrison Ili and it was very uncertain what resistance Yakub Beg might offer. His demonstration of Chinese power was going according to his plans, but it would not be complete until his army was in Kashgar. Only then would he consider that the conditions laid down by the Russians in 1871 would be fulfilled and the circumstances favourable to call on Russia

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to redeem her promise by restoring Ili. When the successes of Urumchi and Manass were reported in Peking, the government ordered Tso to advance at once on the Nan Lu. He informed Peking that winter was on and there was no point in trying to operate in the extreme cold and heavy snow of Sinkiang. He would continue in the spring.

At this time a complication arose in regard to Yakub Beg. The British Minister in Peking, Sir Thomas Wade, approached the Tsungli Yamen with the proposition that Yakub Beg would surrender to the Chinese if he were allowed to keep his kingdom under the over-lordship of China. The government was cool to the proposal and Sir Thomas did not press it. The matter was reported to Tso, and in a letter to Tseng Yuanfu, he said:

“Yesterday I received a letter from the Tsungli Yamen saying that Sir Thomas Wade had stated that he was authorized to arrange the surrender of Yakub Beg. It is the first intimation I have had that Yakub Beg wants to surrender. If the British make such a proposal there must be some reason for it.

Let us examine the circumstances. When I wanted to borrow money in Shanghai the British would not loan me any. A Shanghai paper said that the Sinkiang campaign should by all means be abandoned. This paper even reported that my army had been defeated and driven back through the pass at Chiayukuan. These circumstances throw some light on the British proposals.”<sup>1</sup>

The annalist says that the British Government took up the matter with Kuo Sungt'ao, Chinese Minister in London, representing to him that it would be a good thing for China to set up a Moslem state in Central Asia and intimating that the Kingdom of Kashgaria would be ideal for the purpose. Kuo Sungt'ao seemed to be

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. VIII, p.17.

rather favourable to the idea but when the matter was referred to Tso he bristled all over. He informed the Tsungli Yamen that the matter of Yakub Beg was purely a domestic question and that neither England nor anyone else had any concern whatever with it; that if Yakub Beg wanted to surrender he should come to Suchow, where he would be treated as one in rebellion against Chinese authority; that the question was entirely outside the province of the Tsungli Yamen and solely within his own jurisdiction; and that if England wanted a Moslem kingdom set up in Central Asia she should furnish the territory of which she had an abundance in northern India.<sup>1</sup>

Kuo Sungt'ao was Tso's old neighbour in Hsiangyin, Hunan, but Tso never forgot his part in the matter of Yakub Beg and the British. It is said that many years later Tso met Kuo Sungt'ao at a public function in Peking. The moment Tso saw him he opened up and he told Kuo in no uncertain terms and for the benefit of all present just what he thought of a Chinese who became so carried away by the blandishments of foreigners that he forgot the interests of his own country. Tso Tsungt'ang never forgot either a slight or a favour and he was as quick to remind a man of one as the other.

He wrote to Liu Chint'ang during the winter giving him some advice on how to get along with Europeans. He said:

"The westerner's disposition is such that if you have no strength he will take a strong stand with you, but if you are strong then he will treat you with respect. They like a man who deals in a straight-

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. VIII, pp.18 and 27.

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forward manner. If we are strong they will respect us and if we are straightforward they will like us. . . . You will some day be called to high position in the empire and it is well for you to know in advance about such matters.”<sup>1</sup>

During the winter Tso sent 5,000 men to Liu Chint'ang for use as a garrison in Urumchi. The plan for the spring campaign was for Liu Chint'ang to advance from Urumchi to Toksun and Hsu Chanpiao to cross the mountains near Barkul and advance on Turfan from the northeast. After taking Toksun, Liu was to turn to the northeast and join Hsun Chanpiao before Turfan. Liu's army was about 16,000 men and Boulger says he had 30 pieces of artillery. The *Nien P'u* does not state anything about the number of guns Tso had in Sinkiang. It is not likely that Liu Chint'ang had 30 field guns, but he undoubtedly had a number of light mortars, which were called “mountain-splitting cannon”. In Taiping days each battalion of the Hunan army had two.

Liu Chint'ang left Urumchi on April 14th, 1877, and advanced on Tapancheng. He thought to surprise the garrison by a long night march and take it with a rush on the night of April 17th. Tapancheng was surrounded by irrigated land that the Moslems had flooded, and Liu's men got mired down and failed to reach the town until after daybreak. The garrison was aroused and Liu had to prepare to take the place by assault. The artillery arrived and was placed in position on the 18th. Spies informed Liu that the garrison was going to flee during the night—an event that would have been welcomed in the early Taiping days, but not now. Tso Tsungtang

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. VIII, p.18.

had progressed to annihilating tactics. To discourage the flight of the garrison great bonfires were built about the town, while men with great torches were kept moving to and fro all night. Early on the 19th the artillery opened on Tapancheng. The bombardment had scarcely started when a shell landed in a powder magazine. The annalist says that the explosion shook the earth over a radius of several hundred yards like an earthquake, causing great loss of life and throwing the garrison into a panic. Liu Chint'ang at once ordered the assault. The town was quickly taken; 2,000 Moslems were slain and several thousand surrendered.

Liu Chint'ang sent two columns of 1,500 each to reconnoitre toward Turfan, while he advanced on Toksun with 7,000. While en route he learned that Pai Yenhu and his Shensi-Kansu Tungans were pillaging the place, and taking the cavalry, he hurried forward to seize Toksun before it was completely destroyed. He had evidently been misinformed about the rebels getting ready to flee, as before he had advanced very far he found himself surrounded by a large force of Moslems and for a time was hard pressed. The infantry came up and the Moslems were routed, "the ground was heaped with slain rebels." The Tungans set fire to Toksun and fled. The Chinese entered the city on April 24th, and local Moslems to the number of 20,000 surrendered.

Hsu Chanpiao, advancing from Barkul, captured Pichan on April 25th. After a few days he continued west toward Turfan. Liu Chint'ang moved from Toksun on Turfan. The Moslems, seeing themselves caught

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between two armies, lost heart and offered slight resistance. Some scattered, making their way to the west, and the rest surrendered. The two armies entered Turfan on May 16th, 1877. Large quantities of food supplies and ammunition gathered in Turfan by Yakub Beg were captured. Chang Yueh was then ordered to move from Hami to Turfan. Supplies were started from Barkul and Hami to Turfan, which then became the forward base of supplies for the Nan Lu.

The much publicized Yakub Beg put on a sorry show when he came to defend the kingdom he had laboured thirteen years to build. He had concentrated his army in the Turfan area and it was generally believed that he would make a determined effort to resist the Chinese. When it became apparent that the Chinese would soon move from Urumchi into his domain, he left Toksun and went to Korla. Boulger, in his account of Yakub Beg, says that after he was driven out of Turfan he engaged in a running fight with the Chinese to Toksun, where he was severely defeated and forced to flee to Korla. According to the Chinese version, Toksun was taken some three weeks before Turfan was occupied and nothing is said about meeting with Yakub Beg in any of the engagements. It is not likely that such an omission would have been made had they engaged a force under the immediate command of Yakub. It appears quite certain that he was in Korla during the entire operations of the Chinese army from Urumchi to Turfan. Prejevalsky arrived in Korla on April 25th, 1877, from Lob Nor, and Yakub Beg was then in Korla. That was the day following Liu Chint'ang's occupation of Toksun. Prejevalsky had an

interview with Yakub Beg on April 30th.<sup>1</sup> He was probably the last European to see Yakub Beg, as, late in May, sometime after the fall of Turfan, Yakub Beg committed suicide by taking poison. Boulger says he was assassinated,<sup>2</sup> but the Chinese seem to have had no doubt about Yakub Beg taking his own life.<sup>3</sup> So far as the Kingdom of Kashgaria was concerned, the war was over with the fall of Turfan, and it had taken Tso Tsungt'ang's army just thirty days to explode the myth of Yakub Beg's power.

A son of Yakub Beg, called by the Chinese, Hai-ke-la, was in Korla when his father died. He directed the remnants of the Kashgarian army to retreat to Kuche, turned Korla over to Pai Yenu and his Tungan irregulars, and started for Aksu with the remains of his father. On the way he was assassinated by Yakub's eldest son, Huli Beg. The body of Yakub Beg finally reached Kashgar, where it was buried for a time. When the Chinese army arrived there late in the year it was disintegrated and destroyed. For many years a great gaping hole was pointed out to the few travellers who passed that way as the place where Yakub Beg, the Athalik Ghazi—the man who dreamed of being another Tamerlane—had been buried.

Huli Beg went to Kashgar and tried to make himself the successor to his father. Conflicts had broken out in all the cities of Kashgaria as soon as the news was received of Yakub's end. Within a few weeks the situation was

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<sup>1</sup> Prejevalsky, *From Kuldja Across the Tien Shan to Lob Nor*, p.127.

<sup>2</sup> *Central Asian Questions*, p.394.

<sup>3</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. VIII, p.22.

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as disrupted as it was in 1864, when Mahomed Yakub had appeared on the scene. Huli Beg seemed to be oblivious to the approach of a conquering Chinese army, and he struggled in vain with local factions for a power of which not even a shadow remained. In the midst of all this strife the people anxiously waited the arrival of the Chinese Army. So complete was the dislocation of the Kashgarians that Tso Tsungt'ang considered Pai Yenhu and his Tungans the only enemy of any consequence on the Nan Lu.

Although the situation was extremely favourable for Tso's army to advance to the west, it remained strangely inactive in Turfan for four months. The annals give no reason for this delay. It is likely that Tso, ever cautious about his supplies, wanted to accumulate a big reserve before continuing the advance. It may also have been due in part to a conflict of opinion that developed in Peking as to whether or not it was advisable to continue the conquest of Sinkiang. There was a group of officials in Peking who thought that since the Chinese had recovered Sinkiang north of the Tien Shan and Turfan on the south, it would be well to rest with that and let the remainder of Sinkiang go. They doubtless were obsessed with fear that the British representations about a Moslem kingdom in Central Asia meant that a further advance might bring about complications with England or Russia. Tso Tsungt'ang was thoroughly aroused at this development and he expressed himself freely in a vigorous memorial. He said in substance: that it was inexplicable to him how, on the very threshold of a magnificent opportunity, there were those who would

stop the advance of his army; that in the Urumchi-Turfan area there was no natural frontier; that China had held sway in Sinkiang, with a few interruptions, since the Han Dynasty and so had a prescriptive right to the country; that Sinkiang was essential to the protection of Mongolia and Mongolia was essential to the security of Peking; that Ch'ien Lung had been severely criticized for wasting money on the reconquest of Sinkiang but that his work had preserved the frontier of the empire intact for a hundred years; that if they stopped now the opportunity would be lost for showing Russia and England what the Chinese could do; and, he wound up by saying in effect, that he was going ahead with his plans regardless of what was said in Peking.<sup>1</sup>

There was also a practical result that grew out of this period of inactivity, though it would doubtless be straining a point to say that it was so intended. The conflicts that arose in the various cities became so vicious that the populace became extremely anxious for the Chinese to arrive and restore order. When the army did advance it was welcomed almost everywhere by the majority of the populace. As Tso reported, "Aside from the city of Kashgar, the people in all the other cities may be likened to one who has escaped from the jaws of a tiger and is now resting in the arms of a compassionate mother. There is not the slightest colour of resistance to us."<sup>2</sup>

When the capture of Turfan was reported to Tso, he sent a group of civil officials to Sinkiang to start work on the restoration of civil government. He wrote to

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. VIII, pp.23-24.

<sup>2</sup> *Kuo Shih Pen Chuan*, p.26.

## TSO TSUNGT'ANG

Peking for all the old registers and reports on the organization of former Chinese governments in Sinkiang in order to study them in preparation for making his own plans for the complete reorganization of the government of Sinkiang. It was reported to Tso that there was an Englishman in Kashgar on a mission for his government. Shaw had been in Kashgar some years before but he was not there at this time. Tso issued instructions to Liu Chint'ang and Chang Yueh that when they got to Kashgar they were to treat the Englishman with every consideration, but if he asked any question they were to say to him that they were there in obedience to orders, nothing more. If the Englishman wished to discuss any matter relating to Sinkiang, they were to inform him that such matters were discussed only in Suchow.

Shortly after the capture of Turfan, Hsu Chanpiao was ordered to return to the Pei Lu and take over the direction of the garrisons in Barkul and Kucheng. Chang Yueh took his place in Turfan. Chin Hsun was made governor of the Ili Valley area and western Zungaria after the fall of Manass. His authority was wholly nominal in Ili, being the expression of a hope rather than a realization. Liu Chint'ang moved his army of 16,000 men to Toksun and about the middle of September, 1877, he started on the final stage of the campaign in the Tarim Basin. Chang Yueh, with a column of around 5,000 men, was to follow Liu on October 1st.

It was expected that Pai Yenhu would offer stiff resistance at Karashar and Korla. But, except for flooding the country between Lake Bagrash and Karashar, and denuding the country of supplies, he made no

resistance. Liu Chint'ang entered Karashar on October 7th, finding the town flooded and all the shops wrecked. He pushed on to Korla, where he arrived on the 9th. Pai Yenu had driven all the people to the west and Korla was completely deserted. The Chinese waited for a few days in Korla for the supply trains to arrive from Turfan. While waiting they began digging about Korla for hidden supplies. Within two days thousands of pounds of grain were found. The Turfan supplies began to arrive on October 12th and Liu Chint'ang resumed his march to the west, going ahead of the main body with a force of 2,500 cavalry. At the town of Bugar, on the night of October 15th, he surprised a group of about 1,000 Moslems and killed more than 100 of them. On the following day, a short distance to the west of Bugar, he overtook several thousand of the people from Korla who had been forced by Pai Yenu to leave their homes. They were travelling in considerable confusion and were loaded with such of their belongings as they had been able to bring away with them. An escort of about 1,000 armed horsemen accompanied them. The escort tried to make a stand but was quickly scattered by the Chinese cavalry. Liu Chint'ang rounded up the refugees and told them to return to their homes. The annalist says that in the district of Bugar some 10,000 "Mongol Mohammedans" submitted to Liu Chint'ang.

Information was received that Pai Yenu and his entire force was at Kuche, some distance to the west. The next day at a little place called Tohonai, the Chinese found an encampment of Moslems that mustered several thousand armed horsemen ready for a fight. Liu

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Chint'ang formed his army for battle with the main body in the centre, a strong body of cavalry on the flanks and somewhat in advance of the centre, and a detachment of infantry on the outer flank and slightly in rear of the two cavalry detachments. The Moslems charged and were met by the Chinese cavalry. The cavalry was hopelessly outnumbered and soon was forced back to the line of the infantry. For a time the issue was somewhat in doubt, but the Moslem second in command, Ma Yupu, was killed, and the rebels, seeing their leader fall, lost heart and fled, leaving more than 1,000 dead on the field. The annalist forgot to mention the Chinese losses.<sup>1</sup>

Pai Yenhu fled west, only stopping long enough in Kuche to destroy everything in the way of supplies he could find. He did not have time to round up all the people and drive them westward, for Liu Chint'ang arrived and entered Kuche late on the evening of October 18th. The Chinese were heartily welcomed by the populace, but so great had been the destruction wrought by the Tungans that Liu Chint'ang had to bring up supplies from Turfan to feed many of the people. Tso had issued strict instructions that the people were to be well treated and if they were without food the army was to feed them to the limit of the supplies available. The people so fed were to be put to work repairing the roads and irrigation system in preparation for the next year's crop.

The next place of any consequence west of Kuche was

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. VIII, p.30.

## SINKIANG CAMPAIGN AND RESTORATION OF ILI VALLEY

Paicheng, distant about 60 miles. When Pai Yenu arrived in the vicinity of this town he got into an argument with the head man of Paicheng over the question of evacuating the people further west, and in the heat of the argument Pai Yenu killed him. The people were so enraged that they closed the gates against the Tungans. Pai tried to force an entrance, and, failing to enter the town, burned and pillaged all of the nearby villages. When Liu Chint'ang arrived at Paicheng on October 21st, the Moslems opened the gates and welcomed him. But Liu did not tarry long. He left a small detachment in the town and pushed on that same night in pursuit of Pai Yenu.

About 20 miles west of Paicheng Liu Chint'ang came up with the Moslems, said to have numbered 20,000, but there was a swift river between the two forces and this Liu had to cross. The Moslems put up a stiff fight and Liu Chint'ang forced a crossing with the greatest difficulty. The annalist says that the "river was filled with the slain," but fails to state whether they were Moslem or Chinese. Since the Chinese were doing the crossing it is a safe presumption that the bulk of the slain were not Moslems. The Moslems retired a few miles. Pai Yenu was in favour of continuing the retreat but his officers told him he must stand and fight. They probably thought that the Chinese had suffered so heavily in crossing the river that they would be too dispirited to put up much of a fight. Pai Yenu divided his Tungans into two columns and attacked the Chinese. The date of this engagement is not given but it evidently took place on October 23rd or 24th. The action was fierce

but short. The leader of one of the Moslem columns was killed and the whole column fled, followed shortly by Pai Yenhu and the second column. Liu Chint'ang pursued the rebels for several miles and killed several thousand of them.<sup>1</sup>

When the rebels reached Aksu they divided, part going to Yarkand via Maralbashi, while the rest with Pai Yenhu took the Kashgar road west through Uch-Turfan. Liu Chint'ang entered Aksu on October 25th. On the 28th he was in Uch-Turfan, where he had one more brush with Pai Yenhu. After this defeat Pai Yenhu sent all his treasure to Russia and with the remnants of his Tungans went to Kashgar. Liu Chint'ang was about spent, and he followed Pai only some 30 miles west of Uch-Turfan. By November 6th Liu was back in Aksu. A Moslem tribe living south of Kuche at Shaya had fled into Russian territory on the approach of the Chinese. On his return to Aksu, Liu Chint'ang learned from spies that this group had returned, apparently by way of the Muzart Pass, and were planning to attack him. He took 2,000 cavalry and on November 12th, near Aksu, surprised and completely annihilated them. The Chinese had a suspicion, amounting almost to a certainty, that the Russians had given some encouragement to this group.

The son of Yakub Beg, on his return to Kashgar established himself in that city, after a fashion, through the aid of a renegade Chinese, Ho Puyun. The people in Khotan, soon after they heard of Yakub's death,

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. VIII, p.31.

decided that it would be well to ingratiate themselves with the Chinese and they deposed their old officials and declared for China. Huli Beg went to Yarkand and organized an expedition against Khotan. He captured Khotan, killed a number of the leading citizens and returned to Yarkand. In Kashgar the situation became so confused that it is not certain how events developed, but when Pai Yenhu approached the city the head men caused the gates to be closed against him and permission was refused for Pai to enter the city. News had reached Kashgar of the rapid advance of the Chinese army and Ho Puyun decided it was time for him to do something to gain their favour when they arrived. He gathered sufficient followers to seize the so-called Chinese city in Kashgar. When Huli Beg heard of the state of affairs in Kashgar he hurried to the city and made common cause with Pai Yenhu. Ho Puyun found himself in a tight place. He was besieged in a section of Kashgar and his prospects of holding out very long were exceedingly slim. He sent a messenger to Liu Chint'ang at Aksu informing him of the situation in Kashgar and urging him to send a column to occupy the city.

Chang Yueh had arrived in Aksu in the meantime, and Liu Chint'ang was preparing to advance on Yarkand before going to Kashgar. When he received the information from Ho Puyun on the state of affairs in Kashgar he changed his mind. He sent two cavalry columns to Kashgar, one from Aksu by way of Maralbashi and the other direct from Uch-Turfan. They were to unite before Kashgar by December 18th. On the 17th these two columns were within 20 miles of each other, one to

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the north of Kashgar and the other to the east. Huli Beg and Pai Yenu decided not to make a stand for the defence of the city. Instead they contented themselves with killing a number of the people who were fleeing in panic, and then they took the road to Russia. A short distance to the west of the city they separated, Yakub Beg's son and heir taking the road west through the Terek Dawan Pass, and Pai Yenu with the last of the Tungans taking the road to the northwest through Turugart Pass. The Chinese columns commanded by Yu Yuen and Huang Wangpeng entered Kashgar on December 18th, 1877.

The Chinese generals started at once in pursuit of the Moslem leaders, one following Huli Beg and the other following Pai Yenu. The group with Huli Beg was encumbered by baggage and were overtaken several miles east of the frontier. It is reported that 1,500 of them were slain, but the son and heir of Yakub Beg, well mounted and travelling light, had preceded his escort and was safe in Russian territory. Pai Yenu also succeeded in getting into Russia, where he was disarmed by the Russian frontier guards. He was pursued so closely that the annalist says that the Chinese arrived at the Russian outpost while Pai Yenu was being disarmed. Pai Yenu had harassed the Chinese all the way from Shensi to the Russian frontier and for ten years had been on Tso Tsungt'ang's proscribed list. Tso was deeply disappointed when he learned that Pai Yenu had escaped. Had Pai's talents been equal to his persistence he might have become the great leader for whom the

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Moslems of China had been waiting for so many centuries.

With the fall of Kashgar the Sinkiang campaign was virtually at an end. Liu Chint'ang followed his advance columns to Maralbashi and when he heard of the fall of Kashgar he went to Yangihissar. From this point he sent Tung Fuhsiang to Yarkand and Khotan. The people were happy to have the Chinese with them again and little trouble was encountered in these cities. Liu Chint'ang went to Kashgar, arriving on December 25th, 1877. Retribution fell heavily on the city of Kashgar, the only city in the Tarim Basin where the Annals report any penalties. Liu Chint'ang executed 1,166 persons in Kashgar who had been connected with the rebellion.

It was normally 49 stages, or days' journey, from Turfan to Kashgar by way of Yarkand, which could hardly have been more than five days longer than going direct from Turfan to Kashgar. Couriers could make the trip much more quickly but this was the time for ordinary travel among the Chinese. It was about 95 days from the time Liu Chint'ang left the Turfan area until his advance guards entered Kashgar. Considering the nature of the terrain, the difficulty of supply, and the fact that several sharp engagements were fought en route, to move an army of 16,000 men this distance in the time that was taken was an exceptionally creditable performance for any army, in any country and in any period. Tso Tsung'ang had spent much time in preparation, but it was largely compensated for by the speed with which his army was able to move when it did start. In conception, preparation, execution or in any light one

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cares to consider it, the operations in Sinkiang during 1876 and 1877 were notable. Tso Tsungt'ang had exploded the old Chinese maxim, "When provisions have to be moved 1,000 li (about 330 miles) the troops are defeated by starvation."

When the report reached Peking of the occupation of Kashgar there was great rejoicing in official circles. Tso Tsungt'ang at once became the outstanding man in the empire. Many of those who had said seven years ago that he was in his dotage now changed their tune. He had achieved the most spectacular feat that had fallen to Chinese arms since the days of Ch'ien Lung. He was acclaimed throughout the land as China's foremost soldier, which indeed he was. The question arose in government circles of a suitable reward for such a general. Some thought he should be made a "Wang" or Prince, but the weight of opinion, and it seems that Prince Kung shared this view, was that he should be made a "Kung" or Duke. The Empress Dowager Tzu-hsi vetoed these suggestions. She said that it would not be suitable to give Tso Tsungt'ang a higher reward than had been given to the great Tseng Kuofan, and that it was not even suitable that anyone should receive the same reward as Tseng. So, Tso Tsungt'ang was made a "Ho", or Marquis, but of the second degree. Tseng was a first degree Marquis.<sup>1</sup>

Tso Tsungt'ang was extremely pleased with the results of the campaign. It had worked out just as he had planned and was a fitting climax to a long and arduous career.

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<sup>1</sup> *Ch'ing Ch'ao Yeh Shih Ta Kuan*, Vol. IV, p.49.

## SINKIANG CAMPAIGN AND RESTORATION OF ILI VALLEY

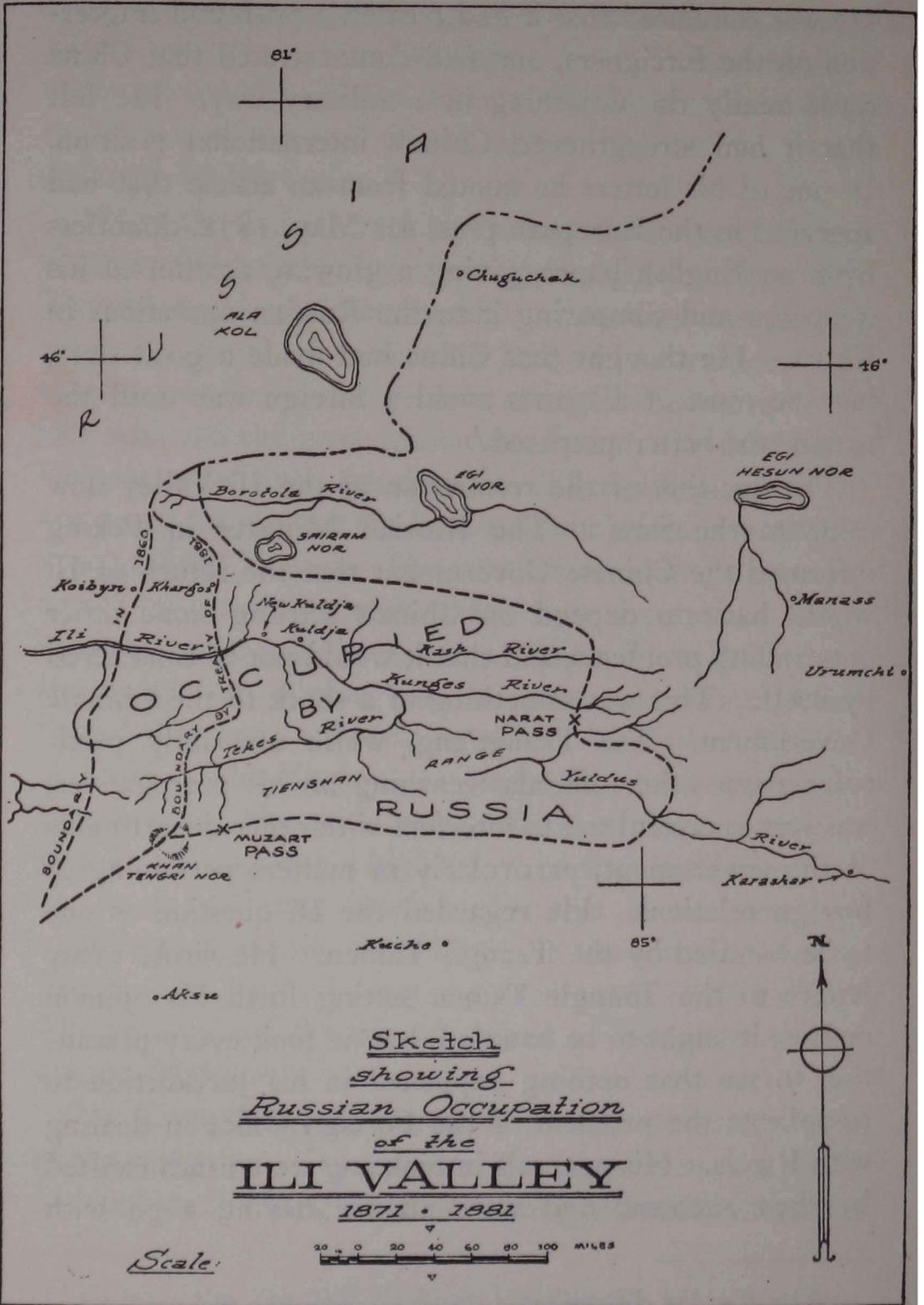
He was convinced that it had created a profound impression on the foreigners, and had demonstrated that China could really do something in a military way. He felt that it had strengthened China's international position. In one of his letters he quoted from an article that had appeared in the European press for May, 1878, doubtless from an English paper, giving a glowing account of his campaign and comparing it to the Russian operations in Khiva. He thought that China had made a good start, but she must at all costs avoid a foreign war until the nation was better prepared.<sup>1</sup>

The question of the restoration of the Ili Valley now came to the fore. The Russian Minister in Peking informed the Chinese Government that the return of Ili would have to depend on China's settling some other outstanding problems, and that it would not be considered by itself. This was something of a shock to the Chinese Government. Tso Tsung'ang, while unusually particular about other officials trenching on his prerogatives, was just as careful not to interfere with other departments of the government, particularly in matters pertaining to foreign relations. He regarded the Ili question as one to be handled by the Tsungli Yamen. He wrote many letters to the Tsungli Yamen setting forth his opinion on how it ought to be handled, but he took every precaution to see that nothing happened in his jurisdiction to complicate the problem of the Foreign Office in dealing with Russia. His generals in Sinkiang were much exalted by their successes and were all for having a go with

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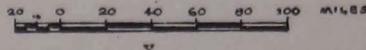
<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. IX, pp.1-2.

# TSO TSUNGT'ANG



Sketch  
 showing  
Russian Occupation  
 of the  
**ILI VALLEY**  
 1871 - 1881

Scale:



Russia. Chin Hsun, who held the post of presumptive governor of Ili, wrote to Tso saying that the time was opportune to throw the Russians out of Ili, as many of their troops had been withdrawn from that region on account of the Turkish War. Tso informed Chin Hsun that, in the first place, the troops available were not sufficient, and in the second place, China must exhaust all peaceful means of getting the Russians out of Ili before any hostile measures would be considered. Moreover, even though they could take Ili by force just then, it must be borne in mind that the Turkish war would not last long and then the Russians would be on them with a force that China could not contain at that time. He told Chin Hsun to be careful and under no circumstances make any overt move toward Ili.<sup>1</sup>

Liu Chint'ang wanted to request the Russians for permission to send troops into the Ili territory after Pai Yenhu, who had made his appearance in that area. Tso informed Liu that he must not think of such a thing. He said that it was of the utmost importance to hold the Russians to their promise, but to give them no excuse to say that China had violated territory occupied by Russians.<sup>2</sup> Tso then wrote to the Tsungli Yamen and asked that Russia be requested to arrest Pai Yenhu and deliver him to the Chinese. Russia ignored the request. He urged the Tsungli Yamen to push the negotiations with Russia as rapidly as possible, since the Russians were encouraging groups of Moslem refugees to cross the

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. VIII, p.29.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. IX, p.3.

border and commit depredations that kept his frontier troops continually on the move. He could not hope for such a state of affairs to continue for long without an incident arising.

The government saw that it was necessary to send an envoy to Russia to negotiate the Ili question, and Ch'un Hou, a Manchu, was selected for the task. He was the man who had been sent to France to apologize for the Tientsin affair of 1870. He arrived in Russia in April, 1879. Ch'un Hou was homesick for China from the day he arrived in Russia, and the Russians were quick to note this fact. They dallied with him until he could stand Russia no longer. They proposed discussing the matter under three headings. First, a commercial treaty; second, a boundary settlement; and third, the expenses for maintaining their garrisons in Ili since 1871. The Russians wanted a trade route opened from Hankow via Suchow, Hami, Urumchi and Chuguchak; and they wanted to establish consulates, together with the necessary consular guards, in Suchow and all the principal cities of the Tarim Basin. As for the boundary settlement, they insisted on holding the upper part of the Tekes Valley which gave them control of the Muzart and Narat Passes leading to the Nan Lu. They set at ten million roubles their garrison expenses. Ch'un Hou's instructions were not very definite and he was not skilled as a diplomat. Moreover, he was in a hurry to get home. He saw nothing of great importance in the trade arrangements, and, knowing little of the geography of the region, he considered the Tekes Valley of even less importance. But he knew money and he balked on the ten million

roubles. The Russians wrote the treaty. They satisfied themselves under the first and second headings and reduced the expenses for their garrison to five million roubles. The treaty was signed at Livadia late in the summer and Ch'un Hou, without waiting for permission from the Emperor to return, hurried home, arriving in January, 1880.

When the provisions of the treaty of Livadia were known in Peking there was the greatest indignation in government circles. Ch'un Hou arrived at his beloved Peking to find himself disgraced and sentenced to be beheaded. The British Government interceded in his behalf and the sentence was remitted. The Chinese Government rejected every article in the treaty except the payment for the garrison expenses.<sup>1</sup>

Tso Tsung'tang thought that five million roubles was too much. In a letter to the Tsungli Yamen he quoted from an English paper of 1877 in which it was stated that the Russians expected to get two and a half million roubles. He thought their raising the price and the haggling over the money question was more suited to a temple fair than to the decorum of diplomacy. He was deeply disappointed over the treaty and said that there was nothing left to do but make strong military preparations in Sinkiang and try to negotiate another treaty. He said he would go to Hami, get his army into the best possible shape and concentrate it at Aksu and Manass. He suggested that if Russia showed any signs of yielding a little it would be well for China also to yield a few

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. IX, pp.26-32.

## TSO TSUNGT'ANG

points. However, if the Russians remained obdurate and refused to give any satisfaction in the matter, there was nothing else to do but take Ili by force and stand by the consequences. He would so arrange matters that the onus of the attack would be on the Russians and then he would do the best he could.<sup>1</sup>

Most accounts of Chinese affairs at the period of the Russian negotiations over Ili state that Tso Tsungt'ang was the leader of the war party, the group in the Chinese government that advocated taking the Ili Valley by force and bringing on a war with Russia. There seems to be something of a general impression in foreign accounts that it was the extremely clever diplomacy of Li Hungchang that avoided a war with Russia and secured the restoration of Ili. Li Hungchang had an undoubted talent for dealing with the Russians, but it seems evident that the advantages arising from his diplomacy were generally on the side of Russia, rather than China.

A careful examination of Tso Tsungt'ang's pronouncements during this period shows clearly that he had no intention whatever of seeing China involved in a war with Russia. But Tso had an instinctive appreciation of the value of an army as an aid to diplomacy. He was far more familiar with the situation in Central Asia than any of the officials in Peking. He knew that his recent operations had given his army much prestige among the native population in Turkestan, among those people whom the Russians were bringing under their control but who were not yet reconciled to Russian rule. He knew that

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol, IX, p.36.

the Russians realized a war with China would be a signal for another uprising among the people of Russian Turkestan, and that such a development would be inconvenient for their programme. He believed that if the Chinese put up a strong front against Russia they would have the moral support of England. He was convinced that the situation was particularly opportune for bluffing and that if China could make a convincing show of her willingness to fight, the Russians would yield. He used all his influence to keep the government from taking a defeatist attitude. But it is fairly certain that if the Russians had refused to yield an inch, Tso Tsung'ang would in the end have advised his government to accept the original treaty of Livadia. He believed that a bluff would work and the events justified his estimate of the situation.

The Chinese entrusted the re-opening of negotiations with Russia to the Marquis Tseng Chitze, son of the great Tseng Kuofan. He was then Minister to England and was rated as a gifted diplomat. There was some doubt as to how Tseng would be received in Russia and it is likely that the British used their good offices to smooth the way for him. He arrived in St. Petersburg in June, the same month that Tso Tsung'ang arrived in Hami. Tso had left Suchow on May 26th, 1880, and arrived in Hami on June 15th. It was his first trip to Sinkiang, the great region that he had recovered for China and that had been making great strides to recovery from the rebellion under his administrative genius.

The Chinese troops in Sinkiang had been reduced by at least half. It is not stated in the Annals whether

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Tso had favoured the reduction or not, but it is likely that he could not get the funds necessary for reconstruction work and a large army also and had cut down on the army. Liu Chint'ang in the Kashgar region had 8,570 infantry and 1,500 cavalry; Chang Yueh at Aksu had 4,500 infantry and 500 cavalry; Chin Hsun to the west of Manass had 1,500 infantry and 500 cavalry; and there were 12 battalions, or 6,000 men, scattered in the Turfan, Urumchi and Kucheng areas. Altogether there were 20,570 infantry and 2,500 cavalry. There were undoubtedly other troops in Hami, Barkul and some other places not mentioned by the annalist. The annalist says nothing about artillery and it is not clear whether he considered it a part of the infantry force or whether it was in addition. Tso imparted much enthusiasm to his little army by his appearance in Hami and gave his generals a feeling that he was going to fight. Regardless of numbers, these men were anxious for a fight and only the authority of Tso Tsungt'ang restrained them. Preparations were started in all centres on the Nan Lu and Pei Lu and this activity was not unnoted by the Russians.

The certainty that there was going to be a war spread all over Sinkiang and soon became the talk of the bazaars beyond the borders of Sinkiang. It is not to be forgotten that in 1875 the Russians had estimated Yakub Beg as being sufficiently formidable for them to concentrate a force of 20,000 men of all arms on the border of Kashgaria when they were planning to eliminate him from the Central Asian scene. It is not reasonable to suppose that they estimated Tso Tsungt'ang could be

disposed of with a handful of men. The Turkish War had been won by Russia by the beginning of 1878 at a cost of much blood and treasure, and then lost in the Congress of Berlin during the summer of 1878. The Congress ended with the Russians feeling deeply humiliated and convinced that they were faced by a hostile sentiment in two of the most powerful states in Europe, England and Germany. Russian credit was none too strong at this time and the government had in mind projects for expansion and modernization in railroads and in their army that demanded much money. The terroristic plots aimed at the life of the Czar were beginning to cause grave anxiety. They continued through 1879, 1880 and culminated on March 13th, 1881, when Alexander II was killed. Under such circumstances Russia had no desire to become involved in hostilities in Central Asia that were reasonably certain to develop into widespread insurrection throughout Russian Turkestan and probably involve England and maybe Germany.

It may be mooted that Tso Tsung'ang did not know of all the trouble that Russia was having. It would be to err, because there was not a man in the government of China who had a surer grasp of the major tendencies in the West than did Tso Tsung'ang. He was also fully cognizant of trends in Central Asia. It is not desired to advance the thesis that Tso could have defeated the Russians, particularly if their attention had not been distracted by some other power. He could not, and no one knew it any better than he did. But he more than once advanced the theory that if the prospects of war could be made to look sufficiently expensive to a power,

it would not lightly engage in it for small gains. Russia had openly and voluntarily announced to China and the world that she would restore Ili when the Chinese were able to look after it, and now these conditions were fulfilled. He was certain the Russians would not go to war over Ili.

Tseng was favourably received in St. Petersburg and it soon became evident that Russia was willing to enter into negotiations for a new treaty. When it became known that the Russians would modify their terms, the war clouds lifted. Tso had advised his government to make visible preparations for war on the Amur River as it was particularly desirable that a show of strength be made in more than one sector. But he wrote to the Tsungli Yamen saying that war was much like a game of chess; so much depended on the skill of the guiding hand that one could never tell in advance how it would come out.<sup>1</sup> Tseng secured a new treaty that was signed in February, 1881. It restored the Ili Valley, including the control of the passes and the Tekes Valley essentially as claimed by the Chinese. The consulates were cut down to two, one at Chiayukuan and one at Turfan. The expenses of the occupation were raised to nine million roubles. It was accepted by the Chinese at once.

The significance of this treaty lies in the fact that it was the only notable diplomatic success achieved by the Chinese during the 19th century, a period that was characterized by defeat, encroachments and humiliations on all fronts. By comparison it becomes a notable

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. X, p.16.

triumph for the Chinese. It was the only instance during the century where a great power receded from an advantageous position in Chinese territory. The credit for this achievement has been apportioned to others, and where Tso has been given any connection with it the inference has been that his uncompromising, warlike attitude was a hindrance to the settlement. But the *sine qua non* to the recovery of the Ili Valley was the prior reconquest of the rest of Sinkiang and Tso Tsung'tang did this magnificently. He handled border relations with the Russians so skillfully after the occupation of Sinkiang that not the slightest incident arose to complicate the Ili question, and his leadership of the so-called war party was all that prevented the Chinese government from accepting the treaty of Livadia. The recovery of the Ili Valley from Russia in 1881 was almost wholly the handiwork of Tso Tsung'tang. Not by swashbuckling, but by vigorous action based on a profound appreciation of the realities of the problem, did Tso achieve this result.

During the years following the fall of Kashgar in December, 1878, Tso Tsung'tang was busy in the reorganization and reconstruction of Sinkiang. He redistricted the country, resurveyed the farmland, repaired villages and towns, established schools, reformed the currency, recast the fiscal system, tried to introduce sericulture, stimulated agricultural production, and gave the region an administrative system that was based on the revival and systematization of the use of native headmen in dealing with the people. It was organized into a new province in 1884, and the administrative system

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perfected by Tso Tsungt'ang survived the revolution and the overthrow of the Manchus. In some of the districts of Sinkiang it is still in effect. In the schools which he established the study of Chinese was encouraged but not forced. The study of Chinese was encouraged for the purpose of increasing the contacts of the people with the Chinese officials and not in an effort to displace the local speech. The entire system was cast after a thorough and appreciative study of the habits, traditions and peculiarities of the people, and it was designed not to change their customs and peculiarities but to give them a government which they could understand and under which they would live in peace and contentment.

The destruction wrought by the rebellion was excessive in all districts of Sinkiang but was relatively worse on the Pei Lu than in the Tarim Basin. Also Tso dealt with the Tungans somewhat more ruthlessly than he did with the Turkestani. An indication of the severity of the rebellion may be gained from the report that before the rebellion there were in Urumchi and the villages of that district 23,780 households, whereas after the rebellion there were but 6,260. On the basis of 8 persons to a household, which was a rule of thumb reckoning among the Chinese, it made 190,240 persons before the rebellion and 50,080 after peace was restored.<sup>1</sup> Schuyler reports that in the Urumchi area the Tungans slaughtered 130,000 persons.<sup>2</sup> The destruction of property was on a greater scale than the destruction of life.

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. IX, pp.8-9.

<sup>2</sup> *Turkestan*, Vol. II, p.178.

## SINKIANG CAMPAIGN AND RESTORATION OF ILI VALLEY

As the summer of 1880 advanced it became evident that the Russians were willing to reopen the negotiations over Ili and were in a conciliatory frame of mind. This was sufficient basis for the Chinese government as they too were willing to make concessions. Tso Tsungt'ang was ordered to round up his affairs in the west and proceed to Peking. The Imperial command was dated August 11th, 1880, and it stated that the problems facing the government were of so serious and far-reaching a nature that the Emperor felt the need of a man of the greatest practical experience in matters of war and government as a high adviser to the throne.

Liu Chint'ang was appointed commander-in-chief in Sinkiang and Chang Yueh was appointed second-in-command. Liu was summoned from Kashgar and he arrived in Hami on November 8th. On the 14th, Tso Tsungt'ang left Hami for Peking. He arrived in Lanchow on December 22nd, and after a few days rest he resumed his journey on January 3rd, 1881. The news had spread rapidly over Kansu that the Viceroy, Tso Houyeh, Marquis Tso, was leaving the scene of his triumphs. He was in his seventieth year as the Chinese reckon, and it was reasonably sure that the great Viceroy was leaving Kansu forever. The annalist says that in all the cities and towns, even the remotest villages of Kansu, his departure was the sole topic of conversation for days. Moslem and Chinese regarded his departure with anxiety. The Moslems could hardly be expected to look on Tso with affection, but they did trust him, and his presence gave them a sense of security and confidence. The day he left Lanchow all business stopped and the whole city

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turned out to bid farewell to the man they had learned to fear, trust and respect. The Annals state that for more than thirty miles the road was lined with people "kow-towing" as he passed, and in every town and city along the road the populace appeared to greet the man who had brought peace, order and prosperity to the great Northwest. He arrived in Peking on February 24th, 1881, at about the same time as news was received of the final treaty with Russia restoring the last corner of Sinkiang to China.

## CHAPTER XIV

### LAST YEARS

When Tso Tsungt'ang arrived in Peking he found himself in a world little suited to his forthright character and temperament. Even before he entered the city he encountered a manifestation of that degeneracy and corruption which had engulfed the court and vitiated all efforts to administer the affairs of the nation in a business-like manner. A practice had arisen of requiring all high officials coming to Peking at the end of their term of office to pay a contribution at the gates of the city. It varied with the person and the position in the provinces he had held. For those who had just quitted exceptionally lucrative posts it sometimes was as much as a hundred thousand taels. When Tso arrived at the gates of Peking, he was held for a contribution of forty thousand taels. He refused to pay it. He said that the Emperor had ordered him to come to Peking, he had come, and if it required a contribution to enter the nation's capital to report to the throne the government would have to pay it. As for himself he would not pay a copper cash. He waited outside the gate for five days while the matter was adjusted, but he did not pay.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Bland and Backhouse, *China Under the Empress Dowager*, p.510.

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On the day following his entry into the city he was presented in audience to the Empress Dowager. It happened at that time the Empress Dowager Tzu-hsi was ill and the Empress Dowager Tzu-an held the audience. Whether it was due to the strain of his long journey from Hami to Peking, the strangeness of his surroundings, the kindly reception accorded him by Tzu-an, or a combination of causes, Tso Tsungt'ang for once in his life lost his composure. He wept. The Dowager Empress Tzu-an was a woman of rare charm and was gifted with the sympathetic touch. She manifested such kindly concern for Tso and all the hardships he had suffered that he was completely disarmed. For a man steeled by continuous opposition and criticism through a long life, such compassion was, under the circumstances, too much for him.

The Empress Dowager, noting his tears, asked in a kindly way what was the matter. Tso said that his eyes were weak and had been irritated by the wind and dust of his long journey. She asked what he was doing for them. He said that he usually wore dark glasses. Tzu-an told him to put them on. It was not considered good form to wear glasses at an audience and Tso demurred. Tzu-an insisted. Tso fumbled in his pocket for his glasses and in his agitation dropped and broke them. Tzu-an told a eunuch to fetch the dark glasses that had been used by the Emperor Hsien Feng and give them to Tso. He emerged from the audience with the spectacles of an Emperor, a gift that was soon to cause him the deepest humiliation.

After the audience, Prince Kung presented Tso to the dignitaries assembled at the palace. Tso had recovered his self possession in the meantime, and among the first

men introduced was Kuan Wen, the Manchu who had been Viceroy of Hunan and Hupeh in the early stages of the Taiping Rebellion. Kuan Wen had been highly critical of Tso in those days and had repeatedly referred to him contemptuously as "that clerk", Tso being on the personal staff of Lo Pingchang, the governor of Hunan. Tso said: "Ah, you remember me surely. I am that clerk who used to be with Lo Pingchang."

Kuan Wen was so confused that he knew not what to say, while a feeling of uneasiness quickly spread among those present. Prince Kung saved the situation by quickly calling Tso to meet another man of importance. When the introductions were over Tso looked for Kuan Wen, but the distinguished Manchu had absented himself from the assembly.

Tso was appointed High Adviser to the Throne, Head of the Board of War and Adviser to the Tsungli Yamen. It seems to have been customary to deliver the commissions to high appointments in Peking by eunuchs and the recipient was supposed to give the eunuch a handsome gratuity. When Tso's commission was presented to him he gave the eunuch one hundred taels. He registered such surprise that Tso probably thought he was overwhelmed by his generosity, so he gave him an additional fifty taels. The eunuch then asked about the spectacles of Hsien Feng. The significance of the remark escaped Tso entirely and he dismissed the matter with some inconsequential remark.

A few days later a son of Tseng Kuofan, who was on better terms with Tso than his distinguished father had been, told Tso privately that the question of Hsien Feng's

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glasses was becoming the talk of the palace and it would be well for him to satisfy the requirements of the eunuchs. Tso did not think much of the proposition but casually asked what was expected. Tseng said that the eunuchs thought so unusual a gift as an Emperor's glasses justified a consideration of 100,000 taels but that they probably could be satisfied with 10,000. The suggestion struck Tso Tsung'tang as so fantastic that he refused to take it seriously and laughed it off as ridiculous.

Some time passed and Tso heard nothing more about the matter. One day in conversation with Tseng he adverted to the preposterous suggestion Tseng had made and remarked something to the general effect that one should not take the eunuchs and their expectations too seriously. Tseng said in substance, "Oh! I forgot to tell you. Prince Kung got worried over the row the eunuchs were making, and to avoid embarrassment all around he settled with them for 8,000 taels."<sup>1</sup>

Such incidents may be but legends that have grown up about the name of a noted character, but they are typical of the conditions that existed in the Forbidden City and of the hold which the eunuchs had gained in the official world of Peking. Tso was soon convinced that he did not fit into the scheme of things in Peking. He was an inconvenient sort of man to have in the capital and his presence annoyed the palace sycophants.

A few days after his first audience with the Empress Dowager Tzu-an, she died. Her death came with unusual suddenness and she was commonly believed to

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<sup>1</sup> *Tseng Tso P'eng*, Vol. V, pp.1282-3.

have been a victim of her associate, the more ruthless and dominating Tzu-hsi. It had been known that Tzu-hsi was seriously ill and some doubt had been entertained of her recovery. When it was announced that the Empress Dowager was dead it was at first assumed in the city that it was Tzu-hsi. Not a little surprise was occasioned when it became known that Tzu-an was dead. Tso Tsung'ang arrived at the palace in the evening following her death, and when informed of the fact he blurted out:

“I saw her at audience today and she spoke with her usual vigour; I cannot believe that such a death can have been natural.”<sup>1</sup>

He stamped about the courtyard in rising anger and expressed his opinions with a freedom that would have cost a lesser man his head before another sun went down. Prince Kung hushed him with difficulty but a eunuch had quickly reported his remarks to Tzu-hsi. If she had ever been partial to Tso Tsung'ang, thereafter she was not, and not many months passed before Tso was needed in the provinces. He was too completely out of joint with court life in Peking.

The Empress Dowager Tzu-an has been so completely overshadowed by her associate Tzu-hsi, that she is generally mentioned only parenthetically, and then as a mild-mannered, colourless person who kept very much aloof from the troubled politics of the court. But it is not at all improbable that her influence was greater than has been credited. She and Tzu-hsi jointly ruled the empire almost continuously from the death of Hsien Feng in

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<sup>1</sup> Bland and Backhouse, *Annals and Memoirs of the Court of Peking*, pp.484 and 489.

## Tso TSUNGT'ANG

1861, to 1881. It is commonly reported that during the greater part of this period she carried the death-warrant of Tzu-hsi which had been signed and entrusted to her by Hsien Feng when on his death-bed. During this period of twenty years the Taipings, the Nienfei, and the Moslems in Yunnan and the Northwest were suppressed, Ili was recovered from Russia—all definite signs that a nation able to pull itself out of such tremendous difficulties was far from being moribund. Prince Kung was in the ascendancy during this period, which was marked by a growing tendency to use Chinese in high places. From the advent of the Manchus to the Taiping Rebellion seven out of ten of the viceroys, governors, commanders of provincial troops and generals in the Green Standard Army, had been Manchus. There was then a change and Chinese officials came to the fore. At one time during this period, for three years, there was not a Manchu viceroy or governor in China proper. It is not without significance that the most substantial achievements of the Manchu Dynasty after the death of Ch'ien Lung, occurred during the twenty-year period Tzu-an was one of the Dowager Empresses and Prince Kung was the most powerful Manchu in the land. Three years after Tzu-an's death Tzu-hsi "dropped the pilot" and Prince Kung was disgraced. The proportion of Manchus in high places throughout the provinces steadily increased until in the end it was not greatly different from the time when the Taipings came into notice. In international relations there was scarcely a humiliation that the nation did not suffer. About the only tribute that has been paid to Tzu-an was made by Boulger. Writing in 1893 he said:

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“The successful course of recent Chinese history was largely due to her firmness and resolution.”<sup>1</sup>

In October, 1881, Tso Tsungt'ang was appointed Viceroy of Liang Kiang, the most desirable of the viceroys in many ways. He was not seeking position. He was old, ill and weary, and he wanted to retire to his old home where he could end his days in peace. His prestige was so great in the land, however, that he was forced by considerations of duty to carry on to the end.

Before assuming office he visited his ancestral home in Hunan. After a short stay he continued on to Nanking where he arrived on February 10th, 1882. The year before there had been a disastrous flood in the lower Yangtze region and suffering was still acute. Tso at once initiated large-scale conservancy work on the Hwai River. He made a tour of inspection through the devastated area and then continued down to the mouth of the Yangtze, inspecting the defensive measures on the river. In the course of his inspection he went to Shanghai. Tso was given a great reception by the Foreign Settlement and received a salute of thirteen guns. In one of his letters he says that it was the first time the foreigners had honoured a Chinese official with a gun salute.<sup>2</sup> He was doubtless misinformed on this point but the fact that he believed it is an indication that it was not common practice to salute Chinese officials, at least in Shanghai.

By the end of 1882 Tso Tsungt'ang was quite spent. In addition to his other infirmities he had completely lost the use of his left eye and the other one was failing. He

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<sup>1</sup> *Short History of China*, p.346.

<sup>2</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. X, p.25.

asked to be relieved on the grounds that he could not properly handle the heavy duties of his office. He said that his memory was failing and that often when he had finished reading a letter or a document he could not remember the contents. He was given three months leave of absence from his yamen but was required to remain in Nanking. In the fall of 1883 he was called to settle a threatened uprising in southern Shantung. Quelling uprisings was Tso's speciality and he soon had the situation thoroughly in hand. In January, 1884, although he was so ill that he could hardly stand, he made a personal inspection of the entire section of the Grand Canal in his jurisdiction.

Relations with the French became acute over the question of Annam and there was much war talk in Peking and in the provincial yamens. On the question of frontier defence Tso summarized the whole thing very neatly in one of his memorials:

"Since ancient times it has been said that the defence of the frontiers is embraced under these three precepts: FORTIFY, FIGHT, NEGOTIATE. The important point to remember is that you must first fortify, then you can fight; and, when you can fight you are in a position to negotiate."<sup>1</sup>

He again requested to be relieved of his duties and allowed to return home. He was given four months leave but it was cut short and he was ordered to Peking. He arrived in Peking on June 13th, 1884, and was put in charge of all military affairs in the empire. The decree read in part: "Tso Tsungt'ang has rendered such extraordinary service to his country and as he is now past

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<sup>1</sup> *Kuo Shih Pen Chuan*, p.29.

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seventy years of age, he will be excused from daily attendance at his yamen. He will only be required to attend when matters of the greatest urgency arise. He will also command the Manchu Bannermen and his orders to them will not require the prior approval of the throne."<sup>1</sup> The last provision was a distinction that was probably never enjoyed by any other Chinese official in Peking.

The hostile activities of the French greatly intensified, though war was not declared. They raided the Fukien coast and blockaded Formosa. Admiral Courbet, who had passed the forts at the mouth of the Min River in peaceful guise and anchored below Fuchow, opened fire on the Chinese on August 23rd, 1884, destroyed the war junks in the river, the little navy yard at Pagoda Anchorage, and, taking the forts in rear, demolished them. The throne now turned to Tso Tsungt'ang and in spite of his age and decrepitude he was appointed High Commissioner for Fukien. Had he been ten years younger he would doubtless have made it extremely expensive for the French, but the sands of life were running too low.

Tso left Peking on September 15th, 1884, and arrived at Fuchow on December 14th, just twenty years to a day from the time when he first entered Fukien in pursuit of the last of the Taipings. The peace party was in the ascendancy after Tso left Peking and there was not a great deal he could do in this undeclared war with France. He had opposed yielding an inch to the French. Yielding was simply not in his nature and he preferred to take the

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<sup>1</sup> *Kuo Shih Pen Chuan*, p.30.

## Tso Tsungt'ang

chance of a stiff beating to giving up without a fight. French pressure was greatest in Formosa and Tso succeeded in sending a number of troops to reinforce the Chinese on the island in spite of the blockade. In the spring negotiations were resumed with the French and in June Li Hungchang signed the treaty.

It must have been a sad experience for Tso to return to Fuchow and see how little had been done to implement the great plans he had conceived some eighteen years before for the building of a Chinese Navy and the development of Fuchow as a great shipbuilding centre. The Navy Yard below Fuchow which he had initiated and which had shared his interest through all the years he was campaigning in the Northwest, was in ruins. After eighteen years of talk and the writing of hundreds of memorials on the subject, the Chinese Navy was just about where it was at the end of the Taiping Rebellion. Some men would have been overpowered by a sense of the futility in his years of heroic effort. But Tso Tsungt'ang was a follower of the teachings of Confucius and gained comfort in the realization that duty is an end in itself and bears no relation to apparent success or failure.

After the treaty was signed Tso was ordered to Peking. From the way he was shifted during these last years one may hazard a suspicion that Tzu-hsi did not forget his outburst over the sudden death of Tzu-an. He asked permission to visit his home en route to Peking. It was granted, but he was not able to undertake the journey. On September 5th, 1885, Tso Tsungt'ang died in Fuchow.

When it was known in Peking that Tso Tsungt'ang was dead an Imperial Rescript was issued recounting his great

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virtues and his services to the throne. A free translation is given as showing the nature of the final honours and rewards that the Son of Heaven bestowed on a faithful servant.

“The Grand Secretary, Tso Tsungt’ang, was a scholar and skilled in the management of public affairs. He was honest and upright by temperament and of the utmost loyalty in the performance of his official duties. After passing the second degree examinations he was appointed a junior official in the army and participated with great success in suppressing rebellion. The Emperor Wen Tsung Hsien (Hsien Feng) promoted him rapidly to high rank and during the reign of Tung Chih he fought against the Taipings, Nienfei and Mohammedan rebels, gaining great renown. The Emperor Mu Tsung I (Tung Chih), depended on him absolutely, gave him command in many places, added to his rank, made him Viceroy of Shen-Kan, Imperial Commissioner and Commander-in-chief of the army. His strategy was sound and he uniformly gained victories. He was a man of exceptional merit. He was assigned many tasks that no one else could have accomplished so successfully. Since We (Kuang Hsu) ascended the throne he was ordered to lead the expedition beyond the Wall and pacify the frontier. He brought peace and order to all the Moslem regions in the empire. This service was so well performed that We raised his rank from a “Po” (earl) to that of “Ho” (marquis), and ordered him to Peking to take charge of the Board of War, head the Staff, and, concurrently, act as Adviser to the Tsungji Yamen. In all these assignments he applied himself wholeheartedly and with a high degree of success. Later he was appointed Viceroy of Liang Kiang where he devoted himself to the welfare of the people and furthered the interests of the nation. He had wide experience in dealing with matters relating to foreign nations and in this, as with everything he did from the beginning of his career to the end, he was guided solely by the interests of his country. A year ago he was ordered to Fukien to take full charge of military affairs in that area. Although he was ill and suffering from exhaustion, he did not hesitate to go. For some time he had been suffering acutely and he had repeatedly requested to be relieved of his duties. As often as he requested it leave was granted. Finally, he was relieved of his duties as Imperial Commissioner in order that he might return to his home and seek relief. It was hoped that his health would be restored and that he would continue to be the recipient of the Imperial favour. To Our surprise he was unable to undertake the homeward

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journey and suddenly he was dead. Now, as We look on the last memorial that he wrote, Our grief is great indeed.

Tso Tsungt'ang is now made a T'ai Fu. According to the practice of the Grand Secretariat, the sum of three thousand taels is appropriated for funeral expenses, to be paid from the Fukien Provincial Treasury. Public sacrifices are ordered in his honour, and Ku-Ni-Yun-Pu will proceed to Fukien to represent the throne at the sacrifices. He is now given the posthumous title of Wen Hsiang. Memorial tablets will be placed in the Chao Cheng Ssu and the Hsien Liang Ssu. In his native Hunan and all provinces where he has served, memorial temples will be erected. In the record of public services, all mention of punishments or reprimands which he may have received during his lifetime, will be struck from the record. The customary emoluments to his family will be taken care of by the proper yamen and a report made to the throne.

When his remains are removed to his home, all officials along the way will take every measure to assist the funeral party. His son, Tso Hsiaok'uan, will be given a promotion. His second son, Tso Hsiao-hsun, a first degree graduate, will be made a "Chu Shih". These appointments to become effective on the termination of the period of mourning. His third son, Tso Hsiaot'ung, will be made a second degree graduate and he may come to Peking for the next examination for the higher degree. In regard to the hereditary title of Marquis, it is directed that Yang Ch'angchun make an investigation immediately of the three sons and report to the throne which one is recommended for the title. The foregoing measures are taken as a manifestation of the regard We hold for the memory of a loyal Minister."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. X, pp.34-35.

## CHAPTER XV

### CONCLUSION

Tso Tsungt'ang saw China through a period of unusual turmoil. The terrific strain of rebellion and foreign complications taxed the resources of the empire to the utmost and in bringing the nation through this extraordinary dislocation no man in the empire made a greater contribution than did Tso Tsungt'ang. Peace was restored and for a time there were prospects of better days for the Chinese Empire. A reaction set in during his last years, when he was too old and spent to impose his will on the course of those events which soon set the course of the empire definitely and finally to dissolution. No one in high place had the clearness of vision, energy, courage and will to carry on after Tso Tsungt'ang passed from the scene. It is not without significance that every major national enterprise with which he was associated was brought to a successful end. The trouble with the French is excepted because it is not in the nature of human affairs to expect a man well past three score and ten, ill, exhausted and with his faculties failing, to exercise any notable influence on territorial struggles. In contrast to this record every other major effort essayed by the Chinese Government from 1800 to 1911, except the crushing of the revolt

in Yunnan, failed to prosper. The inference is rather strong that his was the most dominating, constructive influence in the Chinese Empire during the 19th century.

As for his place in Chinese history it would be absurd for a foreigner with scant acquaintance with that history to attempt such an appraisal. The history of China is too long, too replete with distinguished names, and too little known abroad in its vast sweep, for one to indulge in such speculations. The Chinese themselves seem to be rather leisurely about such matters and leave to the severest of all critics—time—the determination of the greatness of a man. But to narrow the time to a small compass relatively, and consider a single dynasty—the Ta Ch'ing (1644-1911)—some indulgence may be allowed for observations of a comparative nature. The canons of distinction vary among peoples but it is a reasonably safe assumption that a man's own people will, in course of time, come nearer to a correct estimate of him than will those of an alien culture. The tendency seems to be strong throughout the preliminary estimates of the Chinese to consider Tseng Kuofan the greatest man of his generation, and the foremost Chinese of the Ta Ch'ing period.

Tseng Kuofan was a type of man with a stronger appeal to the Chinese than a man of Tso Tsungtang's stamp. First of all, Tseng was among the foremost scholars of his day. Moreover, he was honest and upright to a degree uncommon in his age; he was possessed with physical, and above all, moral courage; and, his ability was beyond dispute. He was a genial man, considerate of others and of the utmost loyalty. It is

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no difficult task to find something in a man's life and work, particularly from the vantage of seventy years, to criticise; but it is not given to a westerner to appreciate fully all the circumstances under which he laboured. If we could the wonder would grow that he achieved so much.

The train of circumstances that led to the estrangement of Tseng Kuofan and Tso Tsung'tang was unfortunate—for the country and for them personally. They regretted it and it is clear that each in his heart had the highest regard for the other. No one could apportion the blame in their difficulties because no great amount of blame attached to either. It simply was a case of incompatibility, and it is noteworthy that their differences never degenerated into a feud. Tso's repeated references to Tseng indicate clearly the high esteem he held for the great Viceroy. When Tseng died in 1872, Tso responded as if they had been lifelong friends. It would also appear that their estrangement was more keenly felt by Tso than it was by Tseng.

Tseng was more sensitive to their differences than Tso. On one occasion a man appeared in Nanking with a letter of recommendation from Tso. Tseng did not even bother to read it but wrote on the cover something to this effect: "I once knew this man favourably but now that he comes bearing a letter of recommendation from Tso Tsung'tang, I have changed my opinion of him." However, shortly before Tseng's death he was in Suchow and met a high official, Lu T'engchih, who had recently returned from Kansu. They conversed at length on the situation in Kansu and Tseng adverted to his differences with Tso. He said: "I have always been fair in dealing with men.

## Tso TSUNGT'ANG

All my life I have been straightforward. Tso Tsungt'ang reported to the Emperor that I had made a false report about the death of the T'ien Wang's son. I was angered and fell out with him. But, tell me frankly, without evasion or courtesy, what do you think of Tso Tsungt'ang?" Lu said that Tso was careful in all his work, abstemious and self-denying, loved his country and, in his opinion, there was not an official in China who could replace him. Tseng brought his hand down on the table and said: "Exactly. If Tso Tsungt'ang should leave Kansu not only could I not take his place but even Hu Linyi, were he alive, could not do it. You say that there is no official in China who is his equal, but I say that there is not a man in all the empire who is his equal."<sup>1</sup>

Tseng's remarks were spread about and brought forth much favourable comment. Men said that it showed clearly that Tseng was indeed a "superior man." Although he greatly disliked Tso he could recognize his ability and his great worth to the country. The expression which is usually rendered "superior man" has a much deeper meaning than can well be translated. It is the highest tribute that can be paid a man in Chinese as the attributes of a "superior man" were defined by Confucius.

Tseng's estimate of Tso Tsungt'ang is worthy of note. He knew Tso as few men did and his opinion is generally shared by the Chinese. They consider Tso Tsungt'ang the greatest Chinese general of the Ta Ch'ing period. But in scholarship and all-round human appeal it seems that he was not equal to Tseng Kuofan. Although he

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<sup>1</sup> *Ch'ing Ch'ao Yeh, Shih Ta Kuan*, Vol. XII, p.74.

## CONCLUSION

was a competent scholar he was not considered a great scholar. Tso Tsungt'ang's temperament was unusual among eminent Chinese and was of a cast that grated on Chinese sensibilities. His brusqueness of manner ruffled the cultured Chinese, while his penchant for argument gained for him few friends. His readiness to speak out and express his opinion regardless of time, place or subject was wholly out of keeping with the spirit of the age. Always inclined to be talkative, in his late years this trait verged on garrulity. To such a degree did he monopolize a conversation that in Peking other officials came to avoid him on this account. Very naturally his conversation turned mostly on the Northwest, and Peking officialdom was not tremendously interested in the Northwest. Men admired his achievements and respected his ability but they did not warm up to him personally. Peking was ruled by intrigue and Tso did not understand the subtleties of court politics. He was uncomfortable in such an atmosphere and his presence made it distinctly uncomfortable for the official world in the capital.

The transition from the Northwest, where Tso Tsungt'ang had been a satrap, to Peking, where he found himself honoured but with no great power, was a little too much for a man past seventy to adjust himself to readily. In the Northwest his word had been the law of the land and he became thoroughly accustomed to being implicitly obeyed. In Peking he was not in his element. It is in the Northwest that we can best see the real Tso Tsungt'ang. There he found scope for his talents.

His capacity for work was enormous. Aside from the vast administrative work that he supervised in great

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detail, it was his habit to write all his numerous memorials himself, carry on a very extensive correspondence, write comments on all reports coming to him in his own hand, write an occasional poem, and daily refresh himself by reading something from the works of Confucius and Mencius. Yet the Russians who were with Sosnowsky gathered the impression that he was not unusually busy. He had time for many lengthy conversations with them and during the month they lived as his guests in his yamen he nearly always took his evening meal with them. Dr. Piassetsky gives a great many interesting sidelights on Tso. Of their first meeting with Tso he says:

“Our Chief had posted us also, according to rank, in a line opposite the door, which shortly admitted the governor, followed by about twelve mandarins in uniforms, he himself only wearing the official hat.

He was small and stout, and could not be more than sixty.<sup>1</sup> His countenance reminded me somewhat of that of Prince Bismarck, except that he was dark. He had barely three hairs in his beard, but his moustache was rather thicker. His movements were full of affectation, and perhaps intended to produce a strong impression. . . . He gave a kind of general and almost imperceptible salute on entering, and then stopped short, as if something had suddenly occurred to him, but he said nothing, advanced another step and then stopped short to look at us.”

One day he questioned Sosnowsky closely about various European countries. Piassetsky says:

“He was delighted to hear that England was always hostile to Russia, ever seeking to do us harm and to encourage our enemies. It was just what he had thought himself. He could come to no other conclusion, and to demonstrate the crooked disposition of the English he bent his fingers quite double.”

It would appear that Tso and the Russians had something of a love-feast discussing the English. He then

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<sup>1</sup> NOTE:—He was actually sixty-three.

## CONCLUSION

asked Sosnowsky who would win if Russia and China should go to war? Sosnowsky tried to avoid an answer, saying that such a situation was unthinkable. Tso insisted on hearing an opinion and told Sosnowsky not to hesitate for fear of hurting his sensibilities. Sosnowsky then said that in case of such a war Russia would prevail. Tso appeared to be very much taken aback and he put the same question to each of the Russians present, getting the same reply. Piassetsky says:

“The old man did not expect this answer and it perplexed him sadly. In the simplicity of his heart he thought China was quite in a position to make headway against Russia, and even to conquer her. I was really sorry for him; it seemed as if he must have had some cherished design against us.”<sup>1</sup>

In the course of a general conversation the Doctor says:

“He could not agree to the possibility of forgiving one’s enemies.

‘Is it not better for instance,’ said I, ‘to forgive one who has struck you?’

‘No,’ said Tso, ‘it is better to return the blow.’

The conversation turned on natural science. He knew but little about it and did not want to know more.

‘We do not require telegraphs and railways; the first would corrupt the people and the second bring them loss of work and consequent starvation.’

On another occasion he spoke of supernatural apparitions, and among them of flying dragons.

‘There are big and little dragons with yellow heads. I have myself seen one flying towards a temple dedicated to it.’

In saying these words he looked hard at us to see the effect produced.

Turning to Sosnowsky he asked if any were ever seen in our country.

‘No,’ replied the chief, ‘in our country angels fly about.’”<sup>2</sup>

Piassetsky was much surprised by Sosnowsky’s reply and he wondered what opinion Tso must have formed

<sup>1</sup> *Russian Travellers in Mongolia*, pp.133-134.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.154-155.

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of Russia and Russians in general. He made a sketch of Tso and while the work was going on several of the onlookers were commenting on the picture.

"Tso could not resist getting up and coming to have a look. He was extremely pleased but remarked that I had made him look too young, and that I had not drawn the two-eyed peacock's feather on his hat. Now these feathers fell back from the hat and could not be seen in a front view. But Tso declined to understand anything of this and implored me to depict this sign of his rank. . . . When the portrait was finished, Tso and his mandarins set to work to examine it closely, or at a distance through their hands. At length Tso sent for his binoculars, a microscope and a stereoscope to have a look at it through these three instruments."<sup>1</sup>

The Russians were given the freedom of the city and were allowed to go anywhere their curiosity might lead them. During the last visit they had with Tso he proceeded to tell them what he thought about China. The Doctor says:

"Tso gave us to understand that he considered his country the equal, if not superior to, any other in the world, which increased my good opinion of him. Drawing comparisons between China and other countries, he added that if Europeans distinguish themselves by new discoveries, the Chinese discovered fresh things in their very antiquities and in their writings, still far from being well known or sufficiently brought to light."<sup>2</sup>

When the Russians left Lanchow no notice was taken of their departure. They were rather upset at this lack of attention, and felt that Tso, on this occasion as on several others, had intentionally slighted them. One is led to wonder what might have been the hospitality furnished a man of similar rank in the Chinese army had he been visiting Tashkent, the capital of the great empire builder, General Kaufmann. Of their treatment

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<sup>1</sup> *Russian Travellers in Mongolia*, p.161.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p.173.



Drawn by Dr. Piassetsky, 1875

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in Lanchow, Piassetsky says: "Quantities of favours had been heaped upon us, but no honours."

In the same year that the Russians were in the Northwest the Margary Incident occurred on the Yunnan-Burma frontier. The British put great pressure on the Chinese in their efforts to arrive at a satisfactory settlement. It gave rise to many rumours about the country and among them it was said that the British and Russians were getting together for the partition of China. The Tsungli Yamen wrote to Tso about Sosnowsky, as they had suddenly become much concerned about him. Tso was informed that it was common report that Sir Thomas Wade, British Minister in China, had had a hand in Sosnowsky's expedition in the Northwest, and that in all probability he was making a reconnaissance to see how weak the Chinese were in that section. Tso was directed to keep them from seeing anything. Tso wrote to the Tsungli Yamen that it was ridiculous to connect the Russians in any way with the Margary affair, since they did not know anything about it until they arrived in Lanchow. He said Sosnowsky claimed the purpose of his trip was to examine the possibilities of a shorter tea route between China and Russia than the old one through Urga and Khiakta, and he saw no reason to doubt that he was telling the truth. All the world knew the Northwest had been desolated by years of war. It could not be concealed and he saw no reason why it should be. He then told the Yamen that he made no effort to keep anything from the Russians but on the contrary showed them everything he had.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. VII, p.37.

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In a letter to Shen Yutan, written soon after the visit of the Russians, Tso expressed himself on Russians and foreigners in general. He said:

“Some Russians arrived here a short time ago. A great many Chinese say that they have only come here to see how weak we are. The newspapers say that the British and Russians are getting together in their designs on China. Someone even submitted this idea in a memorial to the Emperor. The Russians who came to Lanchow lived in my yamen for a month and I saw nothing suspicious about them.

The Emperor of Russia and the King of England are related but they do not seem to be on very friendly terms. The British are jealous of any indication that Russia and China are drawing close together and the Russians are equally jealous when they think that matters are improving between England and China. If China were a powerful nation neither the British nor the Russians would harbour designs against us. If we continue weak and helpless we must suffer from the encroachments of both nations in equal measure, and will in effect cease to be a nation.

Since the day we signed the treaty with the British when their troops were in Peking in 1860, it has been clear as day to all Chinese that the most urgent matter before the nation is to arm and make ready to defend ourselves. Unfortunately, it is also just as clear that since 1860 we have not gained any confidence in ourselves, have not advanced a step, and are just about where we were then. How long will China have to wait before she is again strong and able to take care of herself? It is grievous to think of our unprepared state and to know that it is wholly due to the incompetence and venality of our official class.

The British rely heavily on their newspapers to deceive the Chinese. Many Chinese are able to read these papers and they say to themselves that they understand the West, that they know something of European politics. As a matter of fact all they know comes from British newspapers and the British are deliberately fooling them. A great many Chinese have lived in close contact with Englishmen for long periods and they have gradually come to see everything from the English viewpoint. They have lost the Chinese point of view. A good example is Hsu Yuanhu. He is a well known man and a scholar. Yet, he has come under the influence of the West, finds it good and follows after them. Such men become dazzled and lose their sense of perspective. The people of China must depend on the few

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really superior men we now have to stop this evil and save the empire from being a reproach to the teachings of Confucius.”<sup>1</sup>

About the same period he wrote to Tung Yunching a personal letter giving some of his observations and a free translation is given as showing how a great Chinese viewed some phases of the contemporary scene. He said:

“China’s situation is today most critical. If the most worthy men of ancient times were to return to life they would be perplexed by the magnitude of the problems confronting our country. Still, if the Government and the provincial governments would pull together, even though our ship is tossed violently by the storm we could come out of it and make a safe port.

Most of our contemporaries see the splendid armaments of the West and they give up right away and say that we can never hope to come up to them; and, like a man turning to wine to drown his troubles, they grasp at temporary expedients without thought of tomorrow. I am at a loss to understand such behaviour.

The people of the West have specialized in the industrial arts and in the field of war they have specialized in mechanical contrivances. In the life of a nation as well as in war these specialities are but parts of the whole, not by any means the whole. It is evident that in these two lines of effort, industrial development and mechanical implements of war, we are most assuredly not equal to the West. We must study them and apply to our uses their strong points. However, if we are to think that by studying their industrial arts and their engines of war our education will be complete, then wherein lies the advantage? The objective of our studies must be the great and lasting fundamentals of social order and government. A wide range of knowledge and a skillful mechanical technique do not in themselves satisfy the Confucian Way of Life. There are times when it is better to do little things in a thorough manner than to try to follow too many roads at one time. This straying from the fundamental concepts of the Sages has led men to make light of the Confucian Way. It is the fault of the scholarly class, not the fault of the philosophy.”<sup>2</sup>

The government was much occupied with the question of coast defence and all the viceroys along the coast were

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. VII, p.39.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. VII, p.37.

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called upon to submit plans and recommendations on the subject. In a general way each Viceroy viewed the matter from the standpoint of his own jurisdiction and the autonomous heritage of each area stood out conspicuously in the reports. They were referred to Tso Tsung'tang in Lanchow for his criticism and opinion. In this he was right in his element and he went into the matter carefully and exhaustively. The essence of his report was that above all things there must be a unified command in order that responsibility could be placed where it belonged. All effort would be wasted if each vice-royalty were to have its own navy and system of coast defence, if the whole were not coordinated. He said that there should be at least three large ship-building yards with the very best equipment obtainable; that a careful survey should be made of the entire coast in order to locate the most suitable naval bases; that the main points to keep in mind were Tientsin, Shanghai, Tinghai and Formosa; and, that the system of coast defence must be completely recast, based on careful surveys and the forts located with a view to their maximum utility. He said that the most probable enemy on the coast was Japan and preparations must be speeded up because it would be fatal for China if the Japanese struck first in the existing hopeless condition of Chinese defences. But he particularly urged that the government should not consider that a navy alone could safeguard the country. There must be a complete reorganization and rearmament of the army along European lines. He said that the Chinese were

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. VII, pp.7-8.

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as good soldiers as any in the world if they were well equipped and properly handled.<sup>1</sup>

Among the many memorials that were submitted after his death in which his works were praised, a few selections are given from the memorial of Yang Ch'angchun, a man who had been associated with Tso from the days in 1860 when they were drilling Tso's first army outside Changsha. He said in substance:

“In leading troops in the field, Tso Tsung'ang was ever watching for opportunities. He was ever ready to face the hardest task or suffer any hardship. The sureness of his judgment in any situation was extraordinary. In the 7th year of Tung Chih at an audience he said that the western rebels could be pacified in five years. Many who heard this laughed at him but within the time he estimated the rebels were pacified. When he captured a city or occupied a district one of his first acts was to detail an officer to look after rehabilitation measures. He used men according to their capacities and not according to their rank or title. In his yamen he adapted his work to the circumstances and the exigencies of the moment, and he was never insistent on a rigid routine. In external appearance he was stern and forbidding but in his heart he was sympathetic and kindly. Always he carried sternness and sympathy hand in hand. In his handling of any situation it was always done fairly and justly. In his relations with men he was charitable, dependable, and was trusted absolutely by all who had any dealings with him. He was honest and was never heard to say that he was poor and needy. No matter how hard or how long he laboured no one ever heard him say that he was weary. During the more than ten years that he was an Imperial Commissioner he was never known to pay the least personal item from public funds. From his salary he gave freely to needy officers and men, friends and relatives. He liked to compare himself to Chu Keliang. It was evident to all who knew him that in his heart he coveted neither riches nor honours. In everything that he did he was painstaking in the extreme, never spared his strength, and he devoted the whole of his life to the service of his country. It can be said of him, as of Chu Keliang, that through the whole of his life he never deviated from the path of rectitude.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Kuo Shih Pen Chuan*, pp.32-33.

## Tso Tsung'tang

One of the most illuminating documents on the character of Tso Tsung'tang is a letter which he wrote to his sons during the last years he was in the Northwest. It says:

"Our family for many years has been poor and unnoticed. Now we have risen to a position of power and prestige. However, I must again repeat my earnest instructions to you. You must not affect the customary habits of officialdom. Although I have frequently urged this on you, my household expenses continually increase. When I consider the style of living you indulge in, it is, by the nature of the case, useless to talk of saving money. Now, I do not intend to spend all my salary on my family. I have other obligations—to friends, relatives and to needy officers who have served under me. I have saved little or nothing and you must start early to 'prepare yourselves to make your own way in life. I have little indeed to leave you. All that I have I intend to divide into five equal parts. One part will be used to buy land in our home district, and each of you will receive one part, but no one will receive as much as five thousand taels. The land that is so bought, will fall to the one designated to receive my title as Marquis, and the usufruct of this land will be applied to general family expenses such as taking care of the family graves, family festivals, etc.

Formerly my object in life was to till the soil and study. After taking the examinations three times I lost interest in becoming an official. Then came the Taiping Rebellion and I rose rapidly from a secretaryship. I never expected that the Emperor would take note of me. But, I became a Viceroy, Marquis, and Grand Secretary, and have brought credit and honour to our family. Moreover, I have the distinction of being one of the few who have risen to high place without having passed the customary examinations. In my wildest dreams I never expected such a turn of fortune.

If my sons and grandsons study my system of farming, my habits of study and my way of living, I shall be very happy. But if you think to seek the reputation, rank and position of your father and grandfather, it will be a big mistake. My case has been very exceptional and the combination of circumstances that has made it possible is not likely to occur again. If you think to take the examinations and enter official life solely for the purpose of making an easy living or amassing a fortune, thus avoiding the tilling of the soil and earnest study, you will be making fools of yourselves."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. IX, pp.36-37.

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There are few descriptions of Tso Tsungt'ang by foreign observers because, unlike Li Hungchang who was almost continually under the observation of foreigners, few men from the West saw Tso Tsungt'ang. Boulger says of him:

"Short and corpulent of person, there is nothing in Tso's appearance to strike the casual observer. But a more careful survey shows that he is no ordinary individual. A pair of small, crafty eyes brightly light up a countenance remarkable for its rough-cut but wasted features, and a moustache still more black than grey only partially conceals the firm lines of the mouth. The hair is scanty and the whiskers, which in idle moments he has a habit of twirling, consist of only a few thin hairs. As has been said, he owes everything to his own merit. The cause of his extraordinary success seems to have been his never suffering contradiction from any of his subordinates. For him to order a thing done was tantamount to its being executed. If his influence was due in the first place to fear, it was extended and recognized without demur by officials and people, because experience showed that his plans were always ratified by success."<sup>1</sup>

There is another picture of him that is worth noting:

"In private life the man was genial and kindly, of a rugged simplicity; short of stature, and in later years stout, with a twinkling eye and a hearty laugh; sober and frugal in his habits, practicing the classical virtues of the ancients in all sincerity; a strict disciplinarian, and much beloved by his soldiers. He delighted in gardening and planting of trees. Along the entire length of the Imperial highway that runs from Hsian (capital of Shensi) to Chia-Yu-Kuan beyond the Great Wall, thirty six days' journey, he planted an avenue of trees, a stately monument of green to mark the red route of his devastating armies. One of the few Europeans who saw him at Hami records that it was his habit to walk in the Viceregal gardens every afternoon, accompanied by a large suite of officials and Generals, when he would count his melons and expatiate on the beauty of his favourite flowers. With him, ready for duty at a word, walked his Chief Executioner."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Central Asian Questions*, Essay on Tso Tsungt'ang, p.353.

<sup>2</sup> Bland and Backhouse, *China Under The Empress Dowager*, pp. 508-9.

## Tso Tsungt'ang

The point has been somewhat emphasized that Tso Tsungt'ang in suppressing the Mohammedan rebellion almost exterminated the populace in the Northwest and the inference has been implied, where it has not been stated, that he was a ruthless, bloodthirsty man. Tso Tsungt'ang was a realist and he was called to a task that could be settled only on the basis of stern realities, not sentiment. When a rebellion has been going on for years and has degenerated into a carnival of blood the only known way of dealing with it successfully is by measures commonly dubbed ruthless. Men in whom sentiment is the dominant note in their judgment, have not been conspicuously successful in settling such affairs. They have always been settled by men of sterner mould. Some who have figured in the annals of war have been ruthless in the worst sense that the word implies, but not all by any means. Tso Tsungt'ang was in no sense a cruel man. He was not insensible to human suffering and took no pleasure from the bloody side of his work. Rather his greatest pleasure was in healing the wounds necessitated by his operations. Methods vary as to time, place, and the character of the people involved. If there were better methods of handling such situations as Tso Tsungt'ang faced, his people had failed to evolve them in the fullness of their four thousand years of experience.

Most references to Tso Tsungt'ang in Western accounts label him as being conservative, a fire-eater, anti-foreign, and opposed to progress. It depends on the point of view whether he was any of these or all of them. He was a conservative in that he was unable to see that a thing was bad just because it had been used with varying

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degrees of success for many ages, or that something else was good simply because it was in vogue in some other land. He was a fire-eater in that he held to the simple proposition that it was better to fight than to suffer being imposed upon, that an imposition unresisted would be followed by another, but that a humiliation, even though imposed by force, would not necessarily be followed by another if the first one was resisted with a high degree of vigour. Doubtless he was wrong but he believed it anyway. The term "anti-foreign" is one that has been much abused. It seems to have acquired a connotation peculiar to the Orient. All extant records of contacts that foreigners had with Tso Tsungt'ang agree that they were treated with courtesy and consideration. For the sake of accuracy it may be mentioned that there exists some slight doubt as to what happened to the American, Burgevine, who seems to have been caught while trying to join the Taipings in Fukien. That was rather a special case and after all there is no valid reason for his receiving different treatment from that accorded the Taipings. In general foreigners fared well with Tso Tsungt'ang but in principle he was not disposed to favour their telling him what was good for him or for his country. His attitude was not far different from that of all outstanding leaders in all ages and in all countries toward influences coming from abroad. As for his being opposed to progress, it depends on what one's own definition of that term is. He was one of the first proponents of a modern navy for China; advocated unceasingly the reorganization and rearmament of the army, did rearm his own force, introduced machinery in the Northwest, tried

to develop a woollen industry in Kansu, was the greatest builder in the China of his period, and laboured unceasingly to improve the lot of the people under his jurisdiction. References in the Annals are too numerous to things that he noticed in foreign papers to escape the inference that he regularly received such papers. The assumption would be that he had someone on his staff to read them for him. He was much interested in a newspaper account of a new torpedo developed in Germany and at once wrote to the Tsungli Yamen telling about this torpedo and urging that a group of capable young men be selected and sent to Germany to learn how such things were made and above all, how they were employed. When he heard of the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War he wrote to the Tsungli Yamen suggesting that China offer her good offices in settling the dispute—less, doubtless, that he thought it would do any good towards stopping the war, than as a manifestation that China was aware of what was going on and was determined to break into the so-called international concert and participate in the affairs of the world, instead of holding aloof and being a victim.<sup>1</sup> He favoured sending envoys abroad but he was not always satisfied with the way they represented China. The inference would seem to be strong that Tso Tsungt'ang was not an enemy of progress in the broader sense of the word.

In the field of war Tso Tsungt'ang had no peer among his countrymen during the 19th century and the period could probably be pushed back several more centuries

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<sup>1</sup> *Nien P'u*, Vol. V, p.37.

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before one was found. He had an instinct for organized warfare as distinguished from the guerilla warfare that has been rather prominent in China. The greatest of all the characterizations of the art of war says that it is in "making the most of the means at hand to attain the object in view." He was probably not familiar with the dictum of the great von Moltke, but during the eighteen years he directed operations in the field he certainly made the most of the means at hand to attain the object in view. There is no special point in trying to compare Tso Tsung'ang with great captains of other lands. Too many components would have to be taken into consideration and the results would depend rather heavily on personal interpretation of the weight given these components. However, there are certain characteristics that in all ages have been associated with great captains. Tso Tsung'ang possessed strength of will and determination that never showed the slightest sign of wavering under the severest tests. He had physical courage and his moral courage was conspicuous. He had the utmost confidence in himself—not conceit, because he could, and did, justify his opinion of his own ability. He could estimate a situation, bringing all the main factors in and assigning each a proportionate weight with a readiness and a sureness of touch that was uncommon. He could make a decision with speed and finality, imparting to it that rare quality that precluded any doubt as to its correctness among his subordinates. Loyalty was his most dominating characteristic and it extended to his subordinates as well as to the throne. In discipline he was severe but just, and he inspired the utmost trust throughout his

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army. His judgment of men was notable. The Singiang campaign is a remarkable example of his ability to select men, work them in harmony and inspire them with his spirit. There may be some question as to his appreciation of the element of time in war. His movements were rather deliberate but again it is well to remember that in none of his operations did the outcome hinge on a question of hours, days, or even weeks. A criticism of his concept of the time element in war would only be valid if it could be shown that any of his combinations failed on this account. He made a great point of the necessity of adapting oneself to the circumstances of the moment, and the presumption may be allowed that if a situation had arisen wherein the question of speed and promptness of movement had been a major factor, Tso Tsungt'ang would have risen to the occasion. He possessed the rare faculty of being able to give to a body of men a sense of cohesion, unity, a something that may be called a collective soul. Moreover, he had the offensive spirit and in all his operations was never more than momentarily on the defensive. Such were some of the characteristics of Tso Tsungt'ang—qualities which, combined in one man and stimulated by opportunity, result in a capable general, if not indeed in a great captain.

Tso Tsungt'ang's claim to fame rests not alone in the field of war. He was a great civil administrator. He was trained from youth up in the art of government and he was a master in this field of human endeavour. Rarely indeed in any country does one man combine exceptional talents for war and government. It is in this combination that Tso Tsungt'ang rose to true greatness. He could

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conquer and he could restore the ravages caused by war. If the field be extended even beyond the borders of the Celestial Empire, it is still rather doubtful if any contemporary achieved such signal distinction both in war and in government. Some of his distinguished contemporaries in other lands did not have the opportunity to prove their talents in both fields but some who did were not conspicuously successful in the field of government.

The education and training that he received in youth and early manhood were not of the kind that fitted a man for warlike pursuits. In the literary circles of his day which he tried to enter because they were the governing group, the profession of arms held no honoured place. No great merit was attached to achieving distinction in war. His military training was secured in the field and it began at a time in life when the careers of many of the world's greatest captains were finished. Rare in the extreme is it for a man nearing fifty, with no previous military experience of any kind, to achieve distinction in war. It is almost unheard of. Yet by the sheer force of his genius he triumphed over all obstacles, including age, and rose to a well merited fame.

Although Tso Tsungt'ang brought to the fore many men of talent who could have been notable figures in the nation, such was the nature of the political trends in the empire that few were given the opportunity after Tso passed from the scene. Hunan men had been conspicuous in the government of the empire for more than thirty years, then Manchus again began to assume the positions of power and responsibility throughout the land. Of Tso's generals not much was heard after his death. Liu

## Tso Tsungt'ang

Chint'ang became the Governor of Sinkiang and held that post until 1889. He returned home and died in 1894. Chang Yueh became the Governor of Shantung and died in 1891. Liu Tien died in 1878 while Governor of Kansu some years before Tso left the Northwest. Yang Ch'angchun became Viceroy of Min-Che, and later of Shen-Kan. He died in 1895. Other generals held minor posts for a while and gradually disappeared from public life. The master hand was gone. Probably they depended too much upon his spirit and inspiration.

Tso Tsungt'ang was a man of true greatness of soul. He was a great general, a great administrator, and a great man. He is not generally known abroad and not so well known in his own land as he should be. From a careful study of his life and his works much of value might be gained by his compatriots. He loved his native land, was proud of the long record of achievements of his countrymen, honoured the Sages and ever tried to follow their precepts. He gave his strength and talents unsparingly to the service of his country, and believed fiercely that his people could of their own efforts and in their own way solve all the problems of the country. Tso Tsungt'ang is indeed a glory to his land and to his people.

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