

ABSTRACT

During the mid-nineteenth century, British journalists and British civilians in China and Great Britain were interested in the Taiping Rebellion. Their degree of confidence in the fulfillment of British interests in China influenced greatly their reports upon the Taipings, who were often represented as "Christian patriots". Before the Arrow War, a majority of British journalists cited and many British China-coast civilians, whose writings were frequently consulted by British journalists, abandoned hope in the Taipings as an alternative to Imperial Chinese rule. By 1856, many British journalists and other observers understood that British civilians could not travel legally throughout China and could not influence the Taipings in Nanking. The thesis examines British official and civilian materials and reports from China concerning the Taipings to determine the course of, and many of the influences upon, British public opinion concerning the Taipings.

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BRITISH PUBLIC OPINION AND THE
TAIRING REBELLION 1850 - 1862

by

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List of Abbreviations Used with Reference to Official Papers,
Contemporary Periodicals, and Missionary Records.

B.F.B.S.	British and Foreign Bible Society
B.M.	Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine
B.P.D.	Hansard's (British) Parliamentary Debates
B.P.P.	British Parliamentary Papers
B.Q.R.	British Quarterly Review
C.J.	Chambers's Edinburgh Journal
E.M.	Eclectic Magazine
E.R.	Edinburgh Review
F.M.	Fraser's Magazine

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PREFACE.

In the mid-nineteenth century, British journalists and British civilians interested in China wrote at length of their own interests in the treaty ports in China. These British civilians often recommended how their own particular interests could be accomplished in the interior of China. British official policy in China, particularly as it affected the activities of British civilians, was an important consideration of many of these public observers. Another important development, which attracted the attention of writers in Britain, was the Taiping Rebellion in China.

By mid-1853, there were many journalists in Great Britain and many British civilians in Great Britain and in China who were attracted by the idea of an alternative form of official authority in Peking. This new form of Government, if established and given the support of British officials, feasibly could promote foreign travel into the interior of China and receive representatives of British commercial, religious, intellectual, and political interests.

An internal rebellion had broken out in 1850 in Kuangsi Province. The Taipings, as the supporters of this political and religious insurrection were named, gathered supporters and after certain military successes in the immediate area of Kuangsi marched towards the Yangtze River Valley and the ancient Ming capital of Nanking. Before 1853, Taiping followers had multiplied, and Taiping chieftains and their armies had shaken local Imperialist officials and the Hsien-feng Emperor with a series of astonishing and frequently unopposed military victories. By April of 1853, the Taipings held Nanking, and rumours

were frequent in the treaty ports that the Taipings were planning military movements upon the coast and upon Peking. Sir George Bonham, the Supreme Plenipotentiary, believed it necessary to establish formal official British contact with the Taipings in Nanking.

What was surprising about reports that had been received before mid-1853 by British officials in China and had passed to civilians in Great Britain was that these native insurgents claimed to be Christians. These reports also emphasized that in an era of civil war, the Taiping armies attempted to control military excesses against Chinese civilians. However in 1853 reports, issued by the British China-coast press, British merchants, and British missionaries in China, were generally considered to be reliable by British journalists and by Sir George Bonham. James Legge, a British missionary in Hong Kong, openly admitted in 1853 that earlier reports of Taiping religious and moral character had been based upon the rumours of British missionaries.

Early in 1853, foreign civilians and a British official mission journeyed to Nanking. Several British accounts and a French account of the character and military aims of the Taipings were released to the British public. At the same time, information arrived in Britain concerning British official and civilian contact with the Triad and Small Sword uprisings in Shanghai and Amoy. These native disturbances on the coast were often confused with the larger uprising in the interior. Many journalists believed that 1853 had opened an era of internal dissension in China. They indicated in their accounts that the Manchu Emperor and his court would disappear and that the Chinese

masses would gladly absorb Western learning and British imported goods. Belief that the Chinese people were unopposed to such improvement was so common in Britain that a contributor to the Edinburgh Review found it necessary in October 1855 to explain to his British readers the difference between the Triad and Small Sword uprisings and the Taiping Rebellion.

In mid-1853, most British writers believed accounts available to them from British and foreign sources presented reliable information concerning Taiping religious and moral character, Taiping political reliability, and Taiping promises to foreigners. Chapter One of the thesis studies both favourable and opposing British public accounts of the Taiping insurgents. It does so without strict chronology in an attempt to re-create the atmosphere and nature of the British public debate concerning the insurgents. From mid-1853, this debate centred upon the religious, moral, and political worth of the insurgents. British writers prepared for the outcome of the civil war by inquiring in print if Taiping promises to foreigners were genuine and if the Taipings would tolerate British civilian activity in their kingdom. Chapter One indicates that British officials wanted similar information about the Taipings.

Knowledge of Taiping religious life, moral and political character, and Taiping promises to foreigners led a number of journalists and certain British civilians in China to conclude that the Chinese people wanted greater intercourse with the British settlements on the coast. These men understood that British missionaries and others were failing

during their travels to insurgent camps to come in contact with masses of Chinese who were eager to receive Western civilians. While the insurgents appeared to be victors in the civil war, these men believed that masses of Chinese were eager to accept British civilization and would come under the influence of Taiping rule. Even after Taiping chieftains had renounced British Protestant Christianity and Taiping armies were being defeated, these writers refused to give up hope that the Chinese wanted to buy British imports and read Western literature.

Chapter Two examines many British public materials dealing with the Rebellion. These consist of reports of leading authorities in China and extracts from popular accounts in Britain of the Rebellion.

A survey of these accounts indicates a near reversal prior to the Arrow War in 1856 of British public confidence in the Taiping insurgents. Before 1856, well-known British missionaries in China, their home organizations, and other British civilians with China interests began to express discouragement with native insurrection in China. Beginning with the commentary of the Edinburgh Review in July 1853, this attitude becomes particularly noticeable. By 1855 and before the Arrow War, the majority of British periodical and British civilian sources cited expressed confidence in British efforts to bring British civilization to the Chinese masses.

By 1856, these British journalists and British civilians in China had given up interest in the Taipings as an alternative to Imperialist rule in Peking. These public observers prepared for a renewal and

extension by war, if necessary, of British treaty privileges.

Why did British writers consider the Taiping insurgents as a viable alternative to Manchu political rule in Peking? What elements within reliable British and French accounts of the Taipings did British writers emphasize? And finally, what materials, reports available, and other considerations drew many British journalists and civilians away from the Taipings before the Arrow War?

Certain of these accounts had been written by MM. Gallery and Yvam and Abbé Huc, who were French Jesuits. Gallery and Yvam had evidently travelled unharmed into the interior of China and had established contacts in 1853 with the Taiping rebels at Nanking. A majority of British journalists and British civilians disagreed with the findings of these missionaries. British writers emphasized nevertheless that these Jesuits had travelled in the interior of China without a treaty arrangement with the Manchus. They had attracted Chinese converts and had published reliable accounts of the Taipings and the Chinese people of the interior.

Most British public observers were embarrassed that Gallery and Yvam had been able to travel throughout China and were able to release in July 1853 a book, Histoire de l'Insurrection en Chine, which told of their exploits. The British Government itself had only released Parliamentary Papers Relating to the Civil War in China in August of 1853. These Papers dealt with official correspondence relating to the mission to Nanking of Sir George Bonham and Thomas Taylor Meadows, a Chinese interpreter to the British consul in Shanghai. In mid-1853,

the British public did not have a reliable British civilian commentary of events in China to compare with that of Callery and Yvan.

Beginning in mid-1853, there appeared British writings concerning Callery and Yvan's work and other available materials concerning the Taipings. Many of these public accounts openly claimed that the Taipings would seize political authority and advised that British civilians should travel to Taiping-occupied areas and establish contact with Taiping chieftains. Chapter Two of the thesis draws attention to elements within Callery and Yvan's and other reliable accounts of the Taiping insurgents which influenced representatives of British public interests in China to examine the accounts of these French Jesuits and to search for more informative accounts of the inland Chinese. This chapter attempts to explain why many British civilians did not abandon hope that the Chinese were eager for British improvements, even after the Taipings had renounced their promises to foreigners.

A loss of British public confidence in the Taipings appears to have followed news of Taiping military defeats in 1854 to 1855 in the north of China and the reassertion of British endeavour in China. Before 1856 and the Arrow War, many British periodical and civilian sources were eager to prove that the concept of native insurgency could not succeed in China.

Certain writers had indicated that the Taipings lacked foreign sponsorship and guidance. Before the Arrow War, these men had decided that the Taipings had failed to take the capital, and that the Taipings had failed to supply the Chinese masses with the general material and

intellectual improvements which the Chinese people were demanding. These men advocated that British missionaries and British merchants should travel into the interior to promote British improvements. It was not merely coincidence that news of the failure of Taiping campaigns in the north was accompanied in some British accounts with reports describing the journeys of British missionaries into the interior and Chinese hospitality to these foreign visitors.

For these British civilians, native insurgent movements would fail in China until the Chinese people absorbed Western commercial gains, Western technology, Western religious and educational life and properly respected Western political ideology. These writers indicated that before a native insurgent movement could succeed in China, the Chinese must allow Western scholars and Western travellers into the interior besides exchanging the secrets of Chinese scholarship and natural resources for Western techniques.

By 1856, such observers concluded that the Taipings could not overthrow the Manchu regime and would not allow British missionaries and other civilians to direct Taiping religious and economic life. As the Taipings did not welcome British civilian guidance, these observers argued that China needed a period of relative political calm, during which British civilians could improve Chinese life. This interpretation does explain why a writer in Blackwood's in 1854 found the Chinese character to be anti-revolutionary and why another in 1856 wrote that the Chinese were indeed slow to make a revolution.

Writers who felt this way only mentioned the Taipings when they interfered with British civilian travel and when they resisted the efforts of foreign officials to travel to Nanking. In these public accounts, the Taipings did not receive any further favourable mention from 1856 until Rear-Admiral Hope's intervention against Taiping armies in 1862 outside of Shanghai.

By 1857, such British writers supported the British Government's policy to gain specific treaty privileges by force from the Imperialist regime in Peking. Beginning in 1853, British journalists recognized the value of a military campaign to win treaty privileges from the Manchus for British civilians. By 1857, these observers concluded that the type of military movement conducted by forces under the Superintendency of the Earl of Elgin made it imperative that the Imperialist Government survive the Second China War and that, if at all possible, British troops be kept away from the treaty ports. In an era in which the Taipings received little favourable public notice in Great Britain, Blackwood's recommended in 1859 that Imperialist officialdom in Peking be reinforced so that the Emperor could honour British treaty privileges of 1858.

This pattern of British journalistic and civilian opinion concerning the Taipings indicates that by 1856 and before the Arrow War, there were vigorous arguments for a more forceful official British official policy in China and for the expansion of British civilian relations with the Imperialists and the Taipings. The sources consulted also indicated that once British journalists and British civilians in China believed that only British endeavour would satisfy a Chinese demand for

improvement, native insurgency detracted from British efforts to influence the Chinese. Previous to this assertion of British effectiveness, the Taiping Rebellion in China had suggested to certain British civilians how Western civilization, represented in some form by the Taipings, would influence the Chinese people.

The crucial area of consideration in the body of the thesis becomes the point in time when each British writer discovered that British civilians could bring to inland centres in China British religious writings and British import goods. At this point in time, and shortly thereafter, a perceptible change in attitude concerning the Taipings can be detected in many accounts. The thesis concludes from materials cited in the text that enlightened self-interest was the major force behind British civilian and periodical loss of interest in native insurgency in China.

Although a body of British public materials were issued in 1860 and 1861 after a series of British missionary and official encounters with the Taipings, and although from the time of the Earl of Elgin's mission in 1858 to inland China, substantial public notice was given to British official contact with the Taipings, British public opinion had stabilized itself before the Arrow War against the success of native insurgency in China.

Certain twentieth-century Western scholars have argued that an official policy of neutrality characterized the at best complicated series of daily British official and civilian encounters with the Imperialists, the Taipings, the Triad, and Small Sword insurgents.

However both official and public British evidence establishes that strict "neutrality" was recognized to be inapplicable on the China coast.

Before 1856, British civilians in Great Britain and China openly recommended a renewal of armed hostilities between Great Britain and the Imperial Chinese Government. Public and official evidence indicates that both British civilians and British officials interfered throughout the period 1853 to 1862 in belligerent affairs. Many writers in Great Britain and British officials and civilians in China candidly admitted that British official intervention in the activities of the Chinese warring parties was the most equitable way to guarantee the survival of the treaty-port system and to further British interests outside of the foreign settlements.

This thesis is limited in scope to a study of the materials and forces responsible for the creation of British civilian opinion in Great Britain and China concerning the Taiping Rebellion. Study of twentieth-century Western materials relating to the Taipings is advisable as well.

British Parliamentary Papers relating to the civil war in China were available to the majority of British journalists consulted and were cited as major sources in articles dealing with China. From mid-1853, British writers often criticized, praised, or commented upon British China policy. Examination of official correspondence relating to the Rebellion, which British writers did cite frequently, indicates that a re-interpretation of British official and civilian relations in the period 1850 to 1864

with the belligerents is in order. British public and official materials were issued in the mid-nineteenth century which suggest that a British declaration of "neutrality" offered convenient justification for the type of official British policy which was enacted until 1862 by British civilians and officials. Moreover, it was widely recognized that British consuls were unable to prevent British civilians from openly conferring with belligerent authorities, and that British civilians in China exercised much initiative from 1853 to 1862 in establishing contact with the belligerents. How much freedom British civilians had to conduct relations with the Chinese belligerents has not been sufficiently established.

However, a critique of twentieth-century interpretations of British official and civilian relations with the belligerents and a study of British Parliamentary Papers relating to the civil war in China are somewhat outside the limitations of the thesis. These two areas of study have much assisted the author to comment upon mid-Victorian civilian materials which deal specifically with the Taiping rebels. As an independent unit of study, I have included in Appendix A a discussion of certain twentieth-century interpretations of British relations with the belligerents. This discussion makes reference to specific British civilian and official sources of the mid-nineteenth century. In Appendix B, using official sources, I have traced the outlines of British official relations from 1853 to 1862 with the belligerents.

British writers did frequently refer to the sources I have used in Appendix B. Moreover, the view of British official policy which I have

taken in Appendix B is corroborated in British public materials. Many of these public materials appear in Chapters Two and Three of the text. Appendix A and B are thus intended to explain in more detail certain British public reflections from 1850 to 1862 concerning British official policy in China.

It is important to understand that throughout 1853 many British public observers of the civil war and of British China policy wondered how Bonham's declaration of non-intervention would be interpreted by British consuls. Once these observers knew that British consuls did not prevent British civilian interference in belligerent activities, these observers freely investigated opportunities to pursue religious, commercial, political, humanitarian, or intellectual projects in the interior of China.

Certain objections can be made to my selection and extensive treatment of China materials in several periodicals, to the selection of the Times of London, and extracts from the British China-coast press. Other valuable and influential British journals and newspapers often included materials in this period on China. A wider selection of British quarterlies, weeklies, and other British journals might include the Westminster and Foreign Quarterly Review, the Economist, the Dublin University Magazine, and the North British Review. Other British newspapers which could be consulted are the Manchester Guardian, the Star, which included materials from Colonel Sykes of Aberdeen, and the London and China Express.

Without a suitable guidework, the process of research and investigation is often laborious. Certain articles and accounts which included materials dealing with China often ignored the subject of rebellion in China. Chambers's Journal, in particular, while informative and quite entertaining, requires a certain degree of patience from the researcher.

Yet one should emphasize the positive effects of this research. A thorough examination of a well-rounded selection of British quarterly and civilian materials which deal with the Taiping Rebellion from 1850 to 1862 should resolve the problem of first acquainting oneself with the body of British materials and sourceworks available. Periodical articles developed the specific China interests of the journal. One is often left to connect specific commentary of a British journalist on an issue to preceding and later commentaries of the journal on the same issue. Often to understand a writer's hostility to political dissension in China, one must investigate his particular interests in China noting his dissatisfaction, if present, with British official policy.

Moreover, to attempt at the master's level to gain a passing acquaintance with too wide a selection of influential British quarterlies and newspapers dealing with the Taiping Rebellion could lead to serious organizational difficulties. In any one article, a journalist might describe British official policy concerning the belligerents in China, take notice of the belligerents, and extend a series of recommendations for British civilians and British consuls in China to follow.

A journalist would often issue a concluding statement about the Taiping rebels which did not reveal the extent of his determination for

the success or failure of native insurgency in China. The British Quarterly Review and Blackwood's Magazine are examples of British journals which included remarks which, out of context, could mislead a reader.

Most individuals who wrote concerning the Taipings had particular China interests. Chambers's Journal and Blackwood's Magazine appeared to represent British intellectual and political interest in the interior of China. Commercial and religious interests were secondary concerns to these journals. The Edinburgh Review and Fraser's Magazine appeared representative of British commercial and political interest in the interior of China. British religious and intellectual interests were of secondary importance to these journals. The British Quarterly Review supported British Protestant interests in the interior of China. From 1853 to 1856, the journals also published materials with specific plans to further British political, intellectual, and commercial aims in China.

The Times has been consulted to show the enthusiasm of the British press in early 1854 for the improvement of Chinese life and to show the interest of the British press during the winter of 1853 to 1854 in the advance of the Taiping northern army towards Peking. With reports of Taiping military failure, the Times became a constant critic of native insurrection in China. *

J. S. Gregory is responsible for the groundwork in the field of

* J. S. Gregory, Great Britain and the Taipings (London, 1969), pp. 150-152.

British official and civilian attitudes concerning the Taiping Rebellion. In his recent book, Great Britain and the Taipings, Professor Gregory took a wide selection of British periodical materials and British missionary, merchant, and other accounts and considered them representative of British civilian materials which dealt with the Taiping Rebellion. Also cited in my Bibliography are his unpublished Ph. D. thesis, British Attitudes and Policy Towards the Taiping Rebellion, his articles in the Journal of Asian Studies and the Journal of Religious History, and his recent publication, Great Britain and the Taipings.

This thesis examines certain of the bibliographical materials used by Professor Gregory as well as other British periodical and civilian sources of opinion. A full treatment of certain of Professor Gregory's quarterly and civilian British materials indicates that certain British quarterlies did not follow throughout the period 1853 to 1862 as unilateral an approach to the Taiping rebels as he suggests. It is my belief that more careful treatment should be given to a series of articles dealing in the period 1850 to 1862 with specific China interests of the British Quarterly Review, Fraser's Magazine, the Edinburgh Review, Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, and Chambers's Edinburgh Journal.

Each British journal in this group wrote characteristically concerning the rebels. Without full treatment of certain articles by British writers dealing with the Taipings or the concept of native insurgency, one can easily misinterpret a change in attitude or

misleading concluding remarks in certain articles. This is certainly the case from mid-1853 to 1856 with articles in the British Quarterly Review, Blackwood's Magazine, and the Edinburgh Review.

Professor Gregory's investigation of British civilian sources in the period 1850 to 1864 is laudable. Yet other interpretations can be drawn from his materials, and other sources can be used.

Taking extracts from books reviewed by journalists in the Edinburgh Review and the British Quarterly Review and using them as a basis for extensive study of British civilian materials, one finds that certain British and foreign civilian materials dealing with the Taiping Rebellion had more influence upon British journalists who followed events in China than has previously been illustrated. Callery and Yvan's Histoire de l'Insurrection en Chine, Abbé Huc's The Chinese Empire, T.T. Meadows's The Chinese and their Rebellions, Commander Fishbourne's Impressions of China, and the writings of Walter Medhurst (Senior) should be more thoroughly examined.

Early chapters of T.T. Meadows's The Chinese and their Rebellions, which deal with Meadows's early contact with and criticism of reports of the Taipings, describe Meadows's opinions before mid-1853 concerning the Taipings. Later chapters of the work describe British and foreign encounters with the Taipings and Meadows's opinions after mid-1853 of the Taipings.

Moreover, in the period 1852 to 1862, Reports of the British and Foreign Bible Society from China illustrated the activities and opinions of British China-coast missionaries. Members of the London

Missionary Society in China were frequent contributors to these Reports. According to the Reports, many of these missionaries and their colporteurs were travelling before 1856 into the interior.

These Reports remain a useful source of information concerning the activities and writings throughout the mid-nineteenth century of well-known British China-coast missionaries, such as James Legge, Walter Medhurst (Senior), W. Muirhead, and Joseph Edkins. The writings and activities of these men on behalf of the London Missionary Society and the British and Foreign Bible Society indicate the extent of the influence a force of native insurgents, claiming to be Christians, could exercise upon many representatives of British China interests.

The thesis is limited to the period 1850 to 1862 for several reasons. 1850 appears to be the standard date for the inception of the Kuangsi Insurrection. Moreover, Rear-Admiral Hope launched his Thirty-Mile Radius campaign in January and February 1862 outside the Shanghai city limits to remove the forces of the Loyal King (the Chung Wang) from a radius of thirty miles from the city of Shanghai. Hope's military and naval intervention in co-operation with the Ever-Victorious Army under Frederick Townsend Ward has been studied in depth by contemporaries and twentieth-century historians. Professor Gregory believes Hope's intervention and subsequent approval of the British Government was the terminal point of an official British policy of "neutrality" towards the belligerents in China.

Beginning in mid-1853, British civilians were compelled for a number of reasons to take notice of the Taiping rebels in the interior

of China and of other insurgents on the coast. These public observers advised British readers to review interests in inland China according to the course such writers expected the native insurgents to pursue. However, by 1856 and before the Arrow War, the majority of British journals and British civilians cited had studied the Taipings and their own China interests, and it became apparent that the furtherance of British China interests predominated. British public support for native insurgency in China visibly declined at various times between 1854 and 1856. The key chronology and major emphasis of the thesis therefore falls upon the period 1853 to 1856.

1862 has also been chosen as a terminal point to emphasize that a majority of British journals cited and of British civilians in China were not visibly influenced by the appearance of certain British public materials in 1860 favouring the Taipings. From 1856 until 1862, British journals and British civilian sources cited had not changed their view of the Taipings. In 1854, a writer in Blackwood's openly suggested Chinese towns which should be opened to British commerce in the Yangtze, and a contributor to Fraser's Magazine could similarly advocate in 1857 that Nanking, the Taiping capital, would be a valuable entrepot for British officials to demand from the Imperialist Government. Understanding the calculations of British writers for a favourable treaty settlement and noting British civilian determination to strengthen the Imperialist Government so it could fulfil British treaty privileges of 1858 and 1860, it followed that favourable public and official accounts of the Taipings were out of keeping with British interests.

Understanding this situation, I have chosen to examine those forces producing strong British periodical and civilian opposition to the Taipings.

The bravery of certain young British missionaries and Issachar Roberts, an American Baptist missionary, in China is demonstrated by their relations during 1860 and 1861 with the Taipings in Soochow and Nanking. These missionaries published accounts of their travels in the British China-coast press and other sources, but their optimistic description of Taiping religious zeal and Taiping promises to foreigners did not appreciably alter British public observations, such as the opinion of W. Muirhead, of the Corresponding Committee of the G. L. S. and Foreign Bible Society in Shanghai.

By 1862, public opposition to these missionary reports of 1860 to 1861 appeared in the writings of Thomas W. Blakiston and R. J. Forrest. Opposition also followed in 1862 in the writings of Issachar Roberts and in 1863 in the writings of Joseph Edkins. The writings of Sir John F. Davis, Rev. Holmes, an American Baptist missionary in China, and of W. Muirhead typify British civilian observations from 1856 to 1862 concerning the Taipings.

Previous to the civil war, British writers and British civilians who took an interest in China had developed China interests. Before the first reliable accounts of the Rebellion had arrived in Britain, British writers and other civilians had already issued many accounts of the Chinese people. Examples of Chinese intransigence and illustrations of Chinese character affected British writers differently. Yet these

emphasized their own failure and that of British officials, British missionary bodies, financial groupings, and interested manufacturers to extend improvements of Western civilization to the Chinese people. The Chinese Government had not opened up the interior for Western travel and research.

The Introduction which follows describes a reaction of certain British writers and others to Britain's failure to convince the Manchus to accept Western civilization. This early public commentary is strikingly similar to that of many of these same observers when they realized they could not influence the Taipings to accept British improvements.

INTRODUCTION

After the Treaty of Nanking in 1842, British journalists, British civilians on the China coast, and other interested parties were troubled by the terms of the treaty settlement with the Manchus, by knowledge of Chinese bitterness in the treaty ports towards British civilians, and by the realization that British civilians could not legally travel in the interior of China. British writers stoutly defended notions of good faith with the Chinese people which the British Government had exercised when establishing jurisdiction over the foreign settlement areas of the five treaty ports and Hong Kong. These writers argued that this good faith had enhanced Chinese and foreign prosperity in China. During the period of the Taiping Rebellion, this avowal of good faith was to be stressed in many British public accounts concerning the Chinese.

Yet after the treaty settlement of 1842 to 1844, there were many Westerners in China who tried to convince the Chinese people to absorb the benefits of British civilization. Many members of the British civilian and official community were genuinely remorseful and uttered expressions of sympathy for the sufferings of Chinese local officials, soldiery, and the Chinese populace. These sufferings they believed had been inflicted upon the Chinese during the First Opium War by British naval supremacy and military efficiency.

However, many who were moved by these feelings ^{imagined} that the international community of European nations and perhaps humanitarian groups elsewhere were scornful of the treaty settlement of 1842. These writers never

identified in their writings concerning China the exact charge or critic that they were answering.

Shortly after 1842, British commentaries appeared which investigated Chinese community life, the Chinese Imperial political structure, and Chinese military preparedness for another encounter. Many writers wondered how Chinese society was affected in the First Opium War, and thereafter, by unwanted British aggression.

Thomas Taylor Meadows was an effective spokesman of these sentiments. His book, Desultory Notes, published in 1847, portrayed his personal disgust with the armed confrontation in the First Opium War between Imperialist soldiery and British troops:

"Now let the reader imagine to himself soldiers and officials deeply imbued with such doctrines as these, badly clothed, paid, and armed, with little or no prospect of pension in case of disability from old age or wounds, opposed to well-fed and well-clothed English troops, who know that their arms are the most efficient in the world, that they have all the advantages of a most perfect discipline, who moreover never doubt that if wounded they will be as sedulously cared for as circumstances will permit; and that, if disabled, they will receive a pension to enable them to live comfortable in their station in society; let the reader bring this fully before his mind, and he will not be surprised at the former being beaten into flight by the latter, after a mere show of resistance." (1)

Meadows's knowledge of the disgraceful conduct of the British Government in this affair prompted him to correct the assumptions of various interested parties that the First Opium War and a treaty settlement had exposed masses of Chinese to Western civilization. (2)

1. Thomas Taylor Meadows, Desultory Notes on the Government and People of China, and on the Chinese Language (London, 1847), p. 202.

2. Ibid., pp. 228-9. See especially the following:

In his China and the Chinese, published in 1849, Henry Charles Sirr, a former official of the government of Hong Kong, explored the effects of British warfare upon what he considered a peaceful and industrious Chinese civilian community. In a description of the commercial opportunities a new British settler could expect in 1849 in China, Sirr emphasized that the violence of British warfare during the First Opium War was a factor which new British settlers must understand influenced Chinese treatment after 1842 of British settlers. (3)

The British religious community also questioned whether their Government had treated the Chinese people fairly. Many missionaries in China were saddened that their own peaceful intercourse with the Chinese people had not prevented military conflict in China. After 1842, they inquired into the state of well-being of the Chinese people, into

"Those who saw us and felt us, though sufficient in number to populate a first-rate European kingdom form but a very small portion of the Chinese people; and the greatest body of the nation inhabiting districts and provinces that we have never yet reached, can only look on the late war as a rebellious irruption of a tribe of Barbarians ; who, secure in their strong ships, attacked and took some places along the coast"

3. Henry Charles Sirr, China and the Chinese (2 vols. London, 1849) I, p. 198. See especially the following concerning British occupation of Ningpo. Describing a Chinese attempt to capture Ningpo, Sirr wrote:

".... they were repulsed, but not without considerable sacrifice of life, on both sides, taking place; the slaughter was terrible, and an officer has informed us, that in a street adjoining the scene of assault, the dead, dying, and wounded, were lying in heaps, from the destructive, overwhelming fire of one cannonade of grape-shot."

See also Ibid., Vol. I, p. 141 for the attitude of a Buddhist priest of Amoy upon the destruction of a joss-house. Sirr's book enjoyed a certain renown. By 1850, it had gained the attention of the Dublin University Magazine and the Edinburgh Review. Blackwood's Magazine, for example, in articles in January and May 1854, used a similar illustration of the peaceful nature of the Chinese people.

the character of treaty-port life, into prospects of evangelization, and about extending missionary activities into the interior. Many missionaries were personally skeptical because the Chinese had not willingly given privileges to British missionaries. Instead, missionary communities were established in foreign settlements on the coast after the Treaty of Nanking. Later, other writers would question if British missionaries might have obtained a series of privileges from the Chinese Government without military conflict.

Rev. George Smith, appointed first Bishop of Victoria in 1848, was preoccupied soon after 1842 with the effects of the Opium War and the conduct of British soldiers upon the outcome of his mission of inquiry. He travelled to the five treaty ports and to Hong Kong to decide which of the five treaty ports was best suited for a mission station which the Church of England was planning for the China coast. Smith described the treatment he received from the Chinese populace of Canton:

".... the general excitement and curiosity were manifested in shouts from the congregated thousands. Mothers ran forth with their infant offspring in their arms shouting their offensive epithet, and holding them forward to gaze on the novel wonder of a barbarian woman. As the British troops had landed at these ports, after capturing and destroying the adjacent forts, and this portion of the suburbs had suffered severely in the war, we had reason to be thankful that curiosity rather than malignity, was manifested in the reception with which we were greeted."

Smith contrasted his sense of peril with a sense of well-being in the city of Shanghai. He concluded that the Chinese people were friendly to foreigners in Shanghai because British troops had not ravaged their

city during the First Opium War. (4) Rev. Smith continuously noted that certain Chinese civilians who had suffered personally because of the Opium War were hostile to British civilians. For these Chinese, having British civilians in their midst constantly reminded them that the loyal Imperial Chinese troops had been cowardly defeated by British soldiers. Smith was somewhat alarmed that a disgrace of this magnitude led certain Chinese, in the security of their own communities, to ridicule the victors:

"In the shops, several caricatures were to be seen of the English in military or naval costume, with grotesque figures, arranged by the artist so as to bring down ridicule on the foreigners. A European lady was represented in one of the caricature drawings, in a very inelegant position, evidently intended to excite merriment at the expense of foreign manners." (5)

Similar to many British China-coast missionaries of that period, Smith argued that if the Chinese would only willingly receive Christian missionaries, former Chinese grievances would disappear. Apparently, Christianity would relieve Chinese suffering during the Opium War period. (6)

After 1842, British journalists reviewed the conduct of their

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4. Rev. George Smith, Narrative of an Exploratory Visit to Each of the Consular Cities of China (London, 1847), p. 119, p. 139. See especially the following:

"The city suffered little, if any, damage during the disasters of the last war. It was captured by the British troops, but there was no destruction of property or life to any considerable extent. The most of the injury sustained was effected by the native rabble in their eagerness for plunder. Consequently there is but little exasperation of feeling, or dissatisfaction to the British on that account."

Smith further investigated the effect of British warfare. See Ibid., pp. 163, 202, 265, 272, 344. The anti-foreignism of the Cantonese population was not repeated by the Taipings in relations in April 1853 with the British mission. See Appendix B.

5. Ibid., p. 150. See also Ibid., pp. 53-4 for the commentary of A-tuh a dubious Christian convert who spoke of the nature of Chinese hostility to elements of British civilization. However from mid-1853, Taiping chieftains in Nanking were more cordial to British visitors. See Appendix B.

Government, of British troops, and of the British navy. They also examined the effect of British victory upon Chinese daily life and attitudes.

In 1852, Fraser's Magazine included an extract from Huc and Gabet's book, Travels in Tartary and Tibet, to show the impressions Tartar soldiers retained after 1842 of the British navy. (7) Reviewing the same work of Huc and Gabet, a contributor to the Edinburgh Review in April 1851 described how British aggression caused innocent and well-meaning members of the Chinese populace to suffer. This journalist believed that the Tao-kuang Emperor should be more pitied for his

- personal suffering than despised for his stubborn intransigence concerning

6. Smith, op.cit., p. 224. Speaking of a visit to the home of the deposed taitai of Ningpo and of the atmosphere of enforced cordiality, Smith narrated:

"The country of the men whom he now honoured as his guests, had been the occasion of his disgrace and ruin. The outward show of respect with which he had received our visit may have been utterly at variance with the individual feelings of his heart.

The cases of individual suffering which the British war has inflicted on many thousands of innocent victims in the Central Provinces of China render the precious boom of Christianity a debt doubly due from Britain to this benighted land."

In his book, History of the Church Missionary Society (3 vols, London, 1899), I, p.470, Eugene Stock pointed out that in a speech to the Commons of 3 April, 1843, Ashly, echoed similar sentiments. He viewed Christianity as the saving grace for the former evils of the British opium policy:

"That it is the opinion of this House that the continuance of the trade in opium and the monopoly of its growth in the territories of British India, are destructive to all relations of amity between England and China, injurious to the manufacturing interests of the country by the very serious demerit of legitimate commerce, and utterly inconsistent with the honours and duties of a Christian kingdom."

British missionaries who made frequent observations concerning the Taipings wrote in an earlier period of their determination to preach the Gospel among the Chinese. They did this in spite of missionary inability to influence the Manchus or venture legally into the interior. See the commentary in 1838 of Walter Medhurst (Senior) in Chapter Two, pp.139-142.

the opium questions

"It is known for certain that when the British force had reached Nanking and the Grand Canal in 1842, the Emperor so fully expected a visit at Peking that he stationed a force at Tientsin..... and made every preparation to decamp into Tartary himself. In the confusion of packing up, some dexterous persons contrived to rob the treasury of several millions and to this day the culprits have never been detected. The parties considered responsible, however, were with all their relations and connexions; made answerable for the restoration of the treasure to the third and fourth generation." (8)

In an article in 1848 entitled, "Visit to a Chinese Junk", a writer in Chambers's Journal ridiculed Chinese traditional life because he was unable to understand why on a dark night, during the Opium War, a band of Chinese soldiers exposed themselves to unnecessary danger by revealing the path of their retreat. (9) Moreover, in an article in Chambers's Journal of 14 September, 1850, entitled, "Celestial Intelligence", Thomas Wade, a Chinese interpreter for the British

7. Fraser's Magazine, Vol. 45, January 1852, p. 34. See the following:

"What can you do they said against sea-monsters? They live in the water like fishes; and when one least expects it, they rise to the surface and shoot their inflamed Si-Koua. As soon as one makes ready to shoot one's arrows at them, they plunge back into the water like frogs."

8. Edinburgh Review, Vol. 93, April 1851, pp. 404-405. See also Ibid. for the following:

"During the war with England, on the north-east coast, these ragamuffin troops were so dreaded by their own countrymen that, when the process of civilized warfare came to be known and understood by the Chinese people, the latter often welcomed us as deliverers and their satisfaction was increased when the public granaries were thrown open to them for nothing."

9. Chambers's Journal, Vol. 10, No. 235, 14 July, 1848, "Visit to a Chinese Junk", p. 41. In this instance Chinese lanterns had given away the position of retreating Chinese soldiers to British marines.

consular service and later first foreign customs inspector for the Provisional Customs System, appealed to humanitarian instincts of his readers. Wade explained that certain Chinese officials had not expected British resistance to be effective. According to Wade, British military efficiency during the Opium War led the Tao-kuang Emperor to disgrace the Imperial Commissioners, Lin Tse-hsu and Ch'i-shan.

Wade narrated:

"Lin forthwith with exuberant energy, drove the English to their ships, and got their smashing broadsides for his pains. His good intentions availed him nothing with the imperial court, and he was immediately suspended and recalled to Peking, to be tried for his life, but he escaped with banishment to Ili - somewhere between the deserts of Gobi (Gobi) and those of the Caspian Sea." (IO)

Prior to the Taiping Rebellion, there were individuals on the China coast and in Great Britain - lesser officials, members of the missionary community, British journalists, and others - who expressed a sense of guilt concerning the activities of British forces during the First Opium War and the after-effects of that war. Some of these men

IO. Chambers's Journal, Vol. 14, No. 350, 14 September, 1850, "Celestial Intelligence", p. 171. This was derived from Wade's pamphlet entitled, "Hong-Kong". Wade also noted the pitiable effect of the English war upon the career of Ch'i-shan, Lin Tse-hsu's immediate successor as Imperial Commissioner to Canton. Apparently the experience of defeat and subsequent demotion influenced Ch'i-shan's performance as a public servant. Wade narrated:

"In the spring of last year we find him accusing himself in a memorial to the emperor, and begging to be punished for the rather whimsical fault of sentencing a man to simple strangulation when he should have been beheaded, the latter death being reckoned the severer punishment in China."

Wade did not include commentary here concerning Ch'i-shan's diplomacy during the Opium War with Charles Elliot, the British Plenipotentiary. Had the terms of the agreement, signed in Canton by the two men, been acceptable to the British and Chinese Governments, Ch'i-shan might feasibly have found favour in Peking.

conducted daily relations with the Chinese officials and people. Others received reports from China telling of foreign settlement life and issued recommendations to improve treaty-port existence. They wrote with conviction about Chinese government, commerce, and religious tendencies and maintained a sense of aversion to the military campaign which allowed them the privileges and immunities of treaty-port life.

Strict belief in British Protestant ethics and in the benevolence of exporting these ethics to China led British missionaries to bring their religious writings to the Taipings, Imperialists, and the Chinese masses. Moreover, an almost evangelical belief in the superiority of British commercial techniques and in the virtuousness of sharing these gains with the Chinese caused many British civilians and journalists to recommend that the Chinese adopt British marketing techniques and buy British imports in inland China.

These factors were emphasized in the era of the Taiping Rebellion in British public accounts. In fact, from 1850 to 1862, news of the Taiping rebels often dramatically accentuated British public determination to further British interests in China. Others outside of Britain observed British civilian suspicions about the type of British official activity in China which had allowed British civilians, beginning in 1842, to penetrate the Chinese coastal area. These outsiders remarked upon public expressions of sympathy in Britain for Chinese sufferings.

The accounts of certain French Jesuits in China relied upon such expressions to discredit British public interests in China. With the appearance in mid-1853 of these and other reliable accounts of rebellions

in China, there began to appear a connection between the degree of British public confidence in British ability to influence the Chinese and the type of reports dealing with the Taiping insurgents which were published in many British journals and other public materials.

CHAPTER ONE

EVALUATION OF THREE AREAS IN WHICH BRITISH JOURNALISTS AND OTHER OBSERVERS ANALYSED THE TAIPING REBELS 1853 - 1862

I. Introduction

This chapter describes how British civilians and British officials in China reacted to news of native insurrection in the interior. In the period 1853 to 1862, certain British civilian observations concerning the insurgents were most pertinent references. My analysis of the trend of such observations does not follow strict chronological sequence and does not use ~~only civilian observations~~. (1) This method more closely resembles actual British public discussion from 1853 to 1862 concerning the Taipings. Three topics particularly interested British observers: Taiping religious and moral character, Taiping political reliability, and Taiping promises to foreigners. A discussion of these three topics follows this Introduction.

Throughout the thesis, the term "public opinion" is studied integrally; that is, apart from "official opinion" and "official policy". My treatment of British public opinion includes numerous British materials. There is a suitable variety of materials contemporary to the period of the Rebellion from influential sources, such as British missionary organizations, and materials in British journals. In addition, there are specific accounts of the Taipings by their British visitors.

Many writers examined the issue of rebellion in China within a wider study of particular China interests. British journalists

1. Refer above to Preface, p.iii.

frequently reviewed the activities in China of British officials and decided whether such activities retarded or advanced British civiliam interests.

The arrival of new reports from China did create much excitement. One must separate factual reporting from the journalist's interpretation of the Rebellion. For example, in late 1853 many writers anticipated the arrival in Britain of further favourable information from China concerning the rebels. Rather than simply detailing the actual events of a particular Taiping campaign, these writers cleverly made use of the information available to create a picture of political chaos in China. Particularly in 1853, it was difficult for a British citizen to construct an accurate and factual picture of the Taiping kingdom, its military campaigns, daily routine, and its effects upon the Chinese populace from the rather idealistic reports in popular British magazines and reviews. From mid-1853, many writers indicated that China would experience political, religious, commercial, and humanitarian revolution. They were anxious to see these enormous changes instituted in China by the Taipings.

The author of an article in Fraser's Magazine of November 1853 was especially conscious of accounts of the Taipings, appearing in Callery and Yvan's recently translated book, Histoire de l'Insurrection en Chine. He advised his readers to read the English translator's supplementary chapter to correct the prejudiced interpretations which these two Frenchmen included in their narrative. (2)

2. Fraser's Magazine, Vol. 48, November 1853, "The Insurrection in China", p. 596. John Oxenford, the translator in question, added the

It is often wise to remember the astuteness of Fraser's reviewer when examining civiliam materials on the Rebellion. A journalist, writing for the British Quarterly Review, hoped to discover masses of people in the Chinese interior who were eager to join the insurgents' revolution in 1853 against Manchu oppression. His article, entitled, "The Revolution in China", concerned the humanity of Taiping warfare:

"In most of the principal towns which the rebels had seized they found an abundance of treasures which had been provided for the Emperor's troops. It is worthy of observation too, that they continued to respect private property, limiting their hostility to public functionaries and the troops that resisted them."

From this, the author proceeded to assume that,

"by this means, they gained the respect and confidence of the inhabitants who witnessed with the most perfect indifference the tragical end of their oppressors, many of whom dreading the wrath of the emperor committed suicide. The order and discipline which pervaded the ranks of the rebels became one of the most formidable omens to the imperial party and one of the best pledges of their own success among the people."(3)

In a letter, dated 3 September, 1860, Griffith John of the London Missionary Society described to the Secretary of that Society the first Taiping military assault upon Shanghai. Again, one must balance Griffith ~~John's opposition to British intervention in August 1860 against the:~~

supplementary chapter to bring Gallery and Yvan's information up to date. See the following remark:

" M. Gallery as Mr. Oxenford informs us in his preface was once a missionary and afterwards interpreter to the French embassy in China. His coadjutor, Dr. Yvan, physician to the same embassy, has written a book of travels. Both gentlemen therefore may be considered well qualified for the task they undertook. But it is impossible for a Frenchman to cast his skin and we have been rather diverted at the decided French "tournure" which occasionally marks their narrative..... The latter gentleman (Mr. Oxenford) has also added a supplementary chapter in which he gives certain corrections afforded by recent information to the statements of the original authors."

Hereafter read F.M. for Fraser's Magazine.

fact that this British action occurred at a critical stage of his own negotiations at Soochow and later in Nanking with the Loyal King (the Chung Wang) and the Shield King (the Kan Wang). According to Griffith John,

"in fact the insurgents did not come down to fight but to open communications with the representatives of the foreign Powers at this port. Mr. Bruce, influenced I believe, by M. Bourboulon, and the latter influenced doubtless by the priests, would have nothing to say to them, but had decreed that they were to be replied to with shot and shell. They came entertaining the most friendly feelings imaginable towards all foreigners but they were treated by us, and our allies the French, in a way that reflects disgrace on our flag." (4)

Although many mid-nineteenth century British accounts of the Taipings were confusing, there were three distinct criteria by which British civilians in China, and at home, were judging the insurgents, the Imperialists, and their respective chances of survival. These were: the religious and moral character of the insurgents, their political reliability, and their promises to foreigners. British writers made use of all or perhaps only two of these criteria.

After British official and civilian missions to the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, confusing accounts of the Taipings often appeared in British journals. For example, the journalist's failure to objectively

3. Eclectic Magazine, Vol. 31, January 1854, "The Revolution in China", p. 104. This article was transcribed into the Eclectic Magazine from the British Quarterly Review of 1 November, 1853, Vol. 18, pp. 309-354. The Eclectic Magazine of New York often borrowed articles from such publications as the British Quarterly Review and Blackwood's Magazine. One can consult Eclectic Magazine in an attempt to determine the international acclaim and relative merit of contemporary British articles.

Hereafter read E.M. for Eclectic Magazine and B.Q.R. for the British Quarterly Review.

4. R. Wardlaw Thompson, Griffith John: The Story of Fifty Years in China (London, 1906), p. 143.

assess Taiping political achievements and promise was often dependent upon his judgment of Taiping moral and religious life. The extracts which I have selected from British quarterlies and other sources in the period from mid-1853 to 1862 show the confusion of interests which existed in much of the material concerning the Taipings. British civilian materials in 1853 suggest that a Taiping victory would contribute to the advancement of many interests of British civilians and journalists in Britain. The writings of certain British officials indicate that they too were interested in reports concerning the insurgents' religious, political, and moral life. Observers in Britain were anxious to have British civilians in China test the credibility of Taiping promises to allow foreign travellers into the interior and to welcome elements of Western civilization. The vision of a Taiping political federation replacing the Emperor and his officials prompted serious public inquiry and caused many writers to scrutinize Taiping professions and achievements.

The early years of the Rebellion were characterized by much enthusiasm for the insurgents among British observers. In November 1853, a contributor to the British Quarterly Review presented this series of observations:

"The voice of imperial authority though strained to its highest pitch has produced as little effect as oratory upon the tempest. The whole military force of the empire has hitherto evinced no more power to stay the insurrection than an embankment of sand against a deluge.

Meanwhile the attention of the civilized world has been drawn towards China with an intenseness of interest altogether unprecedented; for it seems as if a vast sector of the human family so long estranged from the common brotherhood... were about to shake hands with humanity and

enter the arena of universal competition and progress in equal terms."

Whatever may be the issue of the present revolutions as to the internal economy and external relations of this extraordinary country and people, our readers of every class commercial, philosophic, philanthropic, and religious cannot fail to be deeply interested in the facts of the case and in the progress which these show up to the present time, for in them are found the hopeful pledges and pregnant omens for the future of China." (5)

Similarly, in an editorial of 14 January, 1854, the Times of London contended that China was experiencing religious, commercial, and political revolution and drew attention to liberal feelings among the Chinese people. The Times concluded that the Chinese people would reject the evil authoritarianism of the Manchus and readily absorb the benefits of Western civilization:

"We wish for nothing from China but what the Chinese will find their own account in giving and what may be shared on equal terms by the rest of the world. The great object is to throw China open to European enterprise for the common benefit of itself and all; and this object is the more likely to be secured, if the Chinese, who are by no means deficient in political discernment, observe in our countrymen a disposition to let them conduct their own affairs in their own fashion."

"Much of the jealous spirit hitherto prevailing is said to be traceable to the traditions and views of the Mantchou dynasty which is now expiring, and although we should not be inclined to attribute that result to such a source, there can be no doubt that the total change of institutions will communicate a new tone to the foreign policy of that Government."

5. E.M., January 1854, Vol. 31, loc. cit., p. 91, p. 93. With enthusiasm for the revolutions he believed would be accomplished in China, the journalist continued:

"The Chinese evidently never were in a savage state. They believe their ancestors to have been a civilized people, and morally much better than themselves; and no doubt they are right, for it is highly probable that from the date of the dispersion to the present day, they have retained their primitive civilization but little altered or improved, their written and pictorial language, with considerable extension and refinement, but with probably no mixtures or importations from foreign tongues; and also their first form of government without any constitutional changes."

"Our own principle of action should evidently be non-interference. If we can convince Chinamen that foreigners mean them no harm, and can do them much good, the common sense of the people, quickened by the effects of emigration, may be safely reckoned to accomplish the rest." (6)

After nearly a decade, in 1863, Joseph Edkins, a British representative of the London Missionary Society, (7) produced an account entitled "Narrative of a Visit to Nanking". Edkins was discouraged by the Taiping chieftains' failure after their offensive of 1860 to 1861 to push for military victory. He found these chieftains and the majority of Taiping followers no longer adhered to previous religious or moral professions. Lacking a proper governmental structure or a body of British civilians to introduce Western civilization to China from Nanking, Taiping

6. The Times, 14 January, 1854, First Edition, p. 6. The Times was encouraged by the prospects of full contact of the Chinese populace with the benefits of Western civilization. Chinese emigration to the United States and to the West Indies had produced favourable results judging from this reports:

"The vast body of Chinamen who are thus poured into the possessions of England and America, after familiarizing themselves with English and American institutions, must carry back with them into their own country the ideas which they have imbibed and disseminate among the millions of their own brethren the knowledge of a world beyond their own."

And observing Chinese emigrants in Western nations, the Times commented that,

"though somewhat prone to violent combinations, they were troublesome only under peculiar provocation, and whereas their moneymaking energies were almost equal to those of genuine Anglo-Saxons, they nevertheless possessed such instinctive tastes for comforts and luxuries as led to a free distribution of their earnings."

The Times concluded that upon easy access of Western civilization to the unlimited resources of the Chinese interior:

"What national character, if it were allowed its full scope for development could be more conducive to commercial successes than this?"

See also Chambers's Edinburgh Journal, Vol. 16, No. 416, 20 December, 1851, for an article entitled "Chinese in California". This was another favourable account of Chinese emigration.

chieftains, such as the Kan-Wang, could not possibly promote Western civilization among their followers:

"The chief styled Kan-Wang is anxious to introduce among the Taipings a taste for European improvements. Near his residence we saw his printing office, where he has a staff of printers engaged in carrying through the press, with moveable types, works prepared by himself. The books are partly explanatory of the religion of the Bible, and partly political. They recommend various improvements in the constitution of the state, the institutions of social life, and in the arts. They describe the advantages of railways, of the electric telegraph, of a post office, of newspapers, and of steam machinery. These he would set on foot in China upon the re-establishment of peace."

"Unfortunately these visions of future prosperity indulged by some of the Taiping chieftains are not accompanied by the genius for conquest, and for government, which alone could afford the opportunity of realizing them."

"They live upon the plunder of the people and therefore the country is against them. They have no friends among peaceable citizens, and without extraordinary victories and unexpected turns of fortune, they can not drive out the Tartars or even reduce to an orderly state a single province. They would do better to busy themselves in forming an efficient government for the territory now under their power, than be dreaming of possible improvements when the present era of anarchy shall close." (8)

7. Alexander Wylie's commentary concerning the background and publications of many British and American Protestant missionaries in his book, Memorials of Protestant Missionaries to the Chinese, was originally published in 1867 by the Shanghai Presbyterian Mission Press. The attitudes of many British missionaries, involved in various works of translation and publication for Chinese converts and the general populace, affected missionary attitudes concerning the insurgents and the Imperialists. These attitudes are revealed in missionary publications as well as in their writings for the Home audience. Observations by the British missionary community, as it was affected by the success of ventures of translation and publication, remain a valuable field for later research. Wylie's commentary concerning Edkins's endeavours was characteristic of Wylie's writing in this work. See Ibid., pp. 187-191.

Many British missionaries were involved in a wider field of endeavour than their missionary duties alone would suggest. Before any generalizations concerning missionary effectiveness, case histories and publications of individual missionaries should be consulted.

"But the Taipings are not statesmen. They have a certain system and strong convictions regarding some great religious truths. They have entered upon a political enterprise too great for them. Under the influence of these convictions, and undaunted by difficulties which they cannot surmount, they are careless of the future, and indulge in imaginary creations of a re-constituted China, modelled by themselves or rather by some source of fate which is to mould the change for them." (9)

To Edkins, without a period of political tutelage under Western advisers and missionaries, the Taipings could not fortify their government, inculcate a Protestant ethic, adopt a true Western Protestant faith, or be trusted to keep their promises to foreigners. (10)

Besides British civilians, British officials again used the same three criteria to evaluate the insurgents. In a despatch of 6 May, 1853, Sir George Bonham, the British Plenipotentiary and Governor of Hong Kong, gave his impressions of Taiping governmental operations to the Foreign Minister, the Earl of Clarendon. Bonham had witnessed Taiping government from the deck of the British naval vessel Hermes off Nanking.

The despatches and material in Parliamentary Papers Relating to the Civil War in China, presented to the Lords on 5 August, 1853, indicate

8. Often accompanying British civilian condemnation of the chieftains for not understanding and absorbing the benefits of British civilization was a declaration of impatience with any Taiping gestures of modernization which lacked British sponsorship. Edkins's criticism of the Kam Wang was a case in point.

9. Joseph Edkins, "Narrative of a Visit to Nanking", contained in Jane R. Edkins, Chinese Scenes and People (London, 1863), p. 280.

10. Ibid., p. 305, p. 306. See especially the following:

"What then of the chiefs? Are they guilty of the anarchy that prevails and the immense destruction of life and property that occurs? This question must be partly answered by the result. Should they succeed in establishing an independent kingdom and reducing their territory to a state of order, their rebellion would become a revolution. At present

that Bonham's mission to Nanking was chiefly political. Bonham investigated the size of the Taiping army and the Taiping chieftains exercised over their followers. He wanted to find out if Taiping armies planned to move upon the treaty ports or upon Peking.

Like other British observers, Bonham relied upon factors besides political ones to assess Taiping political life. He criticized Taiping distortions of the political nature of his mission. From his account of the Taipings, one can infer that Bonham would have supported British diplomatic claims to freedom from outside distractions, such as the religious affiliations of those conducting relations. In their relations with Bonham, Taiping chieftains assumed a close connection between the official British mission which presented itself in April 1853 to them at Nanking and the adherence of British officials on the mission to the Christian religion. Bonham refused to allow Taiping claims of religious and political suzerainty over the British mission in Nanking:

their prospects are gloomy. They seem little likely to attain their object."

"But what efforts do they make to introduce a system of government? To this it must be answered that many among them wish it, but they want the skill and power to enforce it, and they have a vast amount of cruelty and lawless brigandage to answer for."

".... such men [referring to the Kam Wang] are grieved at the evils attendant on their system; but their standards are followed by an uncontrollable multitude, and they find it beyond their power to hinder the commission of countless crimes, crimes done by their people and in their name."

"And finally.... meantime while this man of strong and obstinate determination [referring to Hung Hsiu-ch'uan] is busy with the defence of his absurd religious pretensions, the people through the region held by the armed hosts are suffering heavily with feelings of the bitterest resentment against the authors of these wrongs."

or over British Christians in China to affect the mission's diplomatic purpose. (B) Reflecting about Taiping inability to conduct relations without introducing religious considerations which, if duly observed by the British, could alter the political objectives of his mission, Bonham suggested that Taiping hierarchy and political institutions were unreliable. (B)

Precedence given by the Taipings to religious concerns in their diplomacy with Bonham was a manoeuvre Bonham could not accept. These religious preoccupations seemed incompatible with a successful revolutionary movement in China:

"I found the insurgents had established a kind of Government at Nanking, consisting in the first place, of Taeping, the Sovereign Ruler, who is supposed by the believers of the new sect (if such do really exist) to hold position or rank, either spiritually, or in a corporal sense, of younger brother of Our Saviour." (II)

Bonham expressed impatience with the general favourable view of Taiping religious and moral life. He was determined, at least at this stage of his diplomacy, to discredit belief in Taiping political objectivity and moral capacities. He included in his report to Clarendon an unfavorable account of Taiping religious beliefs:

"As I stated already they have established a new religion which may be called a spurious revelation. The base of this structure is supposed to be founded upon the Old Testament and religious tracts, but they have superadded thereto a tissue of superstition and nonsense which makes an unprejudiced party almost doubt whether there is any real sincerity in their faith or whether it is not used merely as a political engine of power by the Chiefs to sway the minds of those

B. See Appendix B, pp. 276-278, 280-289 for a fuller discussion of Bonham's diplomacy in April 1853 with the Taipings at Nanking.

II. British Parliamentary Papers 1853, LXIX, Relating to the Civil War in China, presented to the House of Lords on 5 August, 1853, No. 5, despatch of Bonham to Clarendon of 6 May, 1853, p. 22. Hereafter for British Parliamentary Papers read B.P.P.

whom they are anxious to attach to their cause."

"For instance, he [Hung Hsiu-ch'uan] is stated to be taken up to heaven by God, who descended upon earth for that purpose, and from whom he received orders to rule the world by subverting the present Government, and propagating New Doctrines. In prosecuting this duty, Taiping's followers alleged that 25,000 Tartars, men, women, and even children at the breast were put to death at the capture of Nanking, and that he was only waiting for a mandate from heaven before taking his departure to Peking." (I2)

Part Two of the chapter studies each of the criteria which British civilians and officials used to judge the insurgents.

2. The Religious and Moral Life of the Insurgents

A. The Creation of a Religious and Moral Revolution

British civilian descriptions of the religious and moral revolution which was hopefully on the point of erupting in China were numerous. Reports that the Taipings were censuring Buddhist and Taoist religious practices were critical pieces of evidence. To British observers, the destruction of Buddhist and Taoist imagery and temples in areas under Taiping control was encouraging.

During the period of Taiping military resurgence, on 23 May, 1860, the Rev. Griffith John wrote to the Secretary of the London Missionary Society. He told of the impetus given to Christian plans for evangelization by Taiping abandonment of Buddhist and Taoist temples:

".... the people seem to have had strong faith in the sanctity of the place and in the omnipotence of the gods. This faith had been materially weakened by the recent demolition of the temples, the defacement of the gods, and the profanation of this holy ground. Whatever may be said of the Taipings, it is certain they have done a great deal toward shaking the confidence of the people in their false divinities...." (I3)

In 1853, a contributor to the British Quarterly Review mentioned

I2. B.P.P. 1853, LXIX, op.cit., despatch of Bonham to Clarendon of 6 May, 1853, pp. 22-3.

I3. Thompson, op.cit., pp. 119-120.

signs of Taiping abandonment of Buddhist and Taoist religious practices. He neglected reports of "deplorable mistakes" and "mischievous delusions" in Taiping religious practices and cited this favourable Taiping religious development:

"it is a great and glorious truth to hear that they have recognized the fundamental truth of one personal Deity, and powerfully protested against polytheism and atheism; so that they are resolutely and entirely committed against all the old religious systems of their country, and neither spare the superstitions of the Taoists nor the idolatry of the Buddhists. Who but must have rejoiced to see, as the gentlemen on board the Hermes, when she was at Silver Island, the great river of China strewn with the wrecks of demolished idols, and Buddhas, twenty feet high floating in dishonoured crowds onward to the ocean, henceforth to be perches for the sea-birds, or mistaken for a new species of sea monster by some credulous or affrighted navigator? (14)

In 1853, a contributor to Fraser's Magazine criticized Taiping religious faith but still was impressed by the Taiping rejection of Buddhist and Taoist doctrine. Although the Taipings were teaching the Chinese a spurious faith, that faith included fundamental Christian beliefs:

"Our extracts from the rebel proclamations have contained eulogies of Confucius and denunciation of the opposing sects. The Trimetric classic (15) gives a spiritual governor to the material universe, adopts the scriptural history of our race, and acknowledges an expiatory sacrifice and a judgment to come." (16)

British supporters of religious and moral revolution in China pointed to evidence that there were certain scholarly Chinese, who had

14. E.M., Vol. 31, loc.cit., p.109.

15. This, often referred to as the Yellow Silk Document, was obtained in May 1853 by Meadows and Bonham in the Hermes off Nanking. See E.P.F. 1853, LXIX, op.cit., Enclosure No. 4 in No. 6, p.32 or Oxenford's supplementary chapter to Callery and Yvan's book, History...., pp.301-312.

16. F.M. Vol. 48, loc.cit., p.606.

become sincere Protestant Christians and who enjoyed the benefits of Western civilization. Some British observers believed that such men were defecting to Taiping ranks. A naval officer, writing from Amoy on 25 October, 1853, to the Times, was confident that a singular defection to the Taipings of a Chinese scholar was symbolic of general Chinese dissatisfaction with the Manchus:

"As might be expected there are large numbers of Chinese indifferent; they have nothing to lose and they are too ignorant to know they might have anything to gain; but there are numbers whose hearts are with the movement...."

In this same tract, this naval officer declared his confidence in Taiping morality and religious zeal. He believed certain of the literary Chinese were avidly seeking the very system of individual morality and religious doctrine propounded by the Taipings:

"There have been men among them sensible of the abounding evil, who from time to time preached of the prevailing vices, if they did not preach morality for its own sake, a morality such as was dictated by perverted and unenlightened conscience, but still valuable in its own way, as testifying that all is not as it ought to be; that the "flowery land" is not the best and wisest; as the forerunner of better, and stimulating to inquire after, "the better way". (17)

The Kan Wang, the cousin of Hung Hsiu-ch'uan, is an obvious example of a Chinese intellectual who was exposed for many years to Western civilization in Canton and later in Shanghai. He had received instruction and guidance from Issachar Roberts and James Legge. By 1860, the Kan Wang had joined Hung Hsiu-ch'uan as the Shield King. In an otherwise critical account, first published in 1861 by the North China Herald, R.J. Forrest, a member of the British consular staff at Shanghai,

17. The Times of London, 5 January, 1854, First Edition, "The Religious Movement in China", p.8.

injected an element of admiration for the religious fervour and intellectual ability of the Kan Wangs:

"I cannot help liking the Kan-wang. Often I have visited him, always on unpleasant business, as soon as business is finished, he is as friendly and open as ever. I must now bid him goodbye, wishing him well out of the difficult position he occupies, where to attempt reform is to place oneself in enmity with all other chiefs..... If all Taipingdom was composed of such men, China would be theirs in a short time, but Kan-wang unfortunately stands perfectly unique among the chiefs of Nanking." (18)

Joseph Edkins discovered in 1861 among the Taipings at Nanking only a few individuals whose faith in Taiping religious doctrines was unquestionable. Edkins wrote sadly of the strong faith of the rebel Huang:

"There is no doubt that he was constantly in the habit of reading this and other parts of the New Testament. He complained that the majority of the Taipings do not read either the publications of the insurgent chiefs or books given them by foreign missionaries. For himself, he stated, that he valued them too highly, not to read them."

Edkins was forced to conclude:

"Very few such men are found among them. Their presence cannot be held to have a powerful influence on the multitude of their fellow Taipings. Far from it. A few possess light, but it is light in darkness, and it fails to prevent the commission of the greatest atrocities." (19)

One factor in 1853, however, seemed to alert the British community to the potential religious and moral revolution in China. In a sense, the British missionary community felt responsible for the religious and moral character of the Taiping movement. Prior to 1850, certain Chinese

18. Thomas W. Blakiston, Five Months on the Yangtze: With a Narrative of the Exploration of its Upper Waters, and Notices of the Present Rebellion in China (London, 1862), p. 52. Forrest's accounts had been published as two papers entitled "Nanking and its Inhabitants Thereof" and "The Taipings at Home" in the North China Herald. See Blakiston, op.cit., p. 31.

19. Edkins, "Narrative", p. 282, p. 284.

had studied under British missionaries. These men later became Taiping chieftains.

In his book, The Chinese and their Rebellions, published in 1856, T.T. Meadows, the later British consul at Shanghai and Newchang and the former Chinese interpreter to the Canton and Shanghai British consulates, indicated that he believed that Protestant missionaries were responsible for the religious and moral developments at Nanking. Meadows described the connections of Hung Hsiu-ch'uan in 1847 with Issachar Roberts in Canton and showed that such connections had caused Hung to assume the leadership of the Godworshippers Society:

"Though Fung yun-sam was the founder of the society of Godworshippers, Hung seu tseuen's superiority was acknowledged by all. The belief in his divine mission now confirmed to himself by prospects of success, naturally caused him to assume a tone of authority which was supported by his greater knowledge of the Scriptures, acquired at Canton, and by the fact that he was the original converter of Fung yun-sam himself. Hence he was better able to introduce a rigid discipline among the variety of people who joined the congregations." (20)

Beginning in mid-1853, news of Taiping religious and moral life from China-coast missionaries was favourably received by many writers in Great Britain. These missionaries had passed what must have been months of holy and disciplined labour preparing and translating portions of Christian Scripture and religious tracts into various Chinese dialects. The British and foreign missionary community found evidence in reports and documents arriving in Shanghai of the Protestant nature of Taiping worship. They prided themselves that their labours had produced such

20. Thomas Taylor Meadows, The Chinese and their Rebellions (Academic Reprints Stanford m.d.-original edition London, 1856), pp. 87-88.

promising results for the whole missionary community. In a letter which received much publicity, Bishop Hobson of Victoria wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury on 23 May, 1853, describing what he considered the essentials of this revolution:

"These Christian tracts and books so long distributed by Protestant missionaries, often with very heavy heart, and desponding mind, among the listless multitudes in the streets and suburbs of Canton are at last bringing forth fruit, and God has been better to us than our own weak faith and hope. These little messengers of mercy have winged their flight into the far interior, as a testimony to the boundless power of the Christian press in China; and in the adjacent province of Kuang-si have given a character and impulse to what is likely to become the most important of modern revolutions." (21)

British observers often emphasized that certain Taiping chieftains at Nanking or Soochow had stated their willingness to acquaint those outside China with Taiping religious tracts. Bonham and Meadows obtained many religious tracts including the Trimetricall Classic. These are found in Parliamentary Papers Relating to the Civil War in China of 1853. Subsequently, these tracts were translated in entirety by Walter Medhurst (Senior). In a letter to the China Mail of 26 September, 1860, Issachar Roberts reported the willingness of the Chung Wang to communicate with Western kings through the Western press:

" I told him if he would write a letter to the English ambassador, I would translate it and circulate it through the newspaper system, so that the Western kings should see it and their subjects too - the very thoughts of his heart which he wished to communicate should be spread far and wide, and have their due effect in moulding public opinion in reference to him and his doings.

This seemed to be a new idea to him, at which he rejoicedly laughed

21. Charles Macfarlane, The Chinese Revolution, (London, 1853), p. 116, p. 124. Hobson's letter was subsequently published for the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel and for the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge by the Church Missionary Intelligencer. See E.M., Vol. 31, loc.cit., p. III.

heartily and agreed immediately to do so. He has written a letter which is now before me in the course of translation and will be ready for the press before I leave this place." (22)

British periodicals and other civilian materials contained reports from China of Taiping moral claims and practices. Bishop Hobson concluded that moral courage present in Taiping Christian faith caused them to express political dissent with Imperial Government:

"Unless they were Christians from sincere conviction, it is difficult to account for their embarking on a course so opposed to the prejudices of their fellow countrymen as that of associating a political movement with the profession and propagation of Christianity - a religion moreover connected in the minds of the Chinese with the despised name of foreigners."

British writers examined Taiping declarations against the opium trade. Bishop Hobson claimed:

"Nor can we on the supposition of any other feeling than honest sincerity of purpose imagine any more imprudent course in relation to foreigners than the extermination of opium-smoking, and stipulation for the total exclusion of the drug, forming alas! at the present time the principal item of the foreign imports and yielding almost three million sterling to our Anglo-Indian revenues." (23)

Evidence of Taiping barbarism in military operations was difficult for British writers to explain. British writers were either opponents or

22. Hansard, British Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 161, 12 March, 1861, Column 1852. In a speech to the House of 12 March, 1861, Colonel Sykes of Aberdeen commented concerning this letter:

"the letter alluded to by Mr. Roberts was a manifesto of the Taiping, addressed to the Governments of England, France, America, a copy of which was printed in the London Times, also in Paris and New York." See B.P.D., Vol. 161, Col. 1853.

Joseph Edkins mentioned in his Narrative... the Taiping warehouse containing the publications of the Taiping dynasty:

"... another house we visited, at a distance of a few streets, proved to be a warehouse for the publications of the Taiping dynasty. Here we found arranged on the shelves the complete New Testament, as printed by the insurgent chief, and the Old [Testament] as far as Joshua. His own

apologists concerning obvious examples of barbarism, such as the massacre of 20,000 Imperialists at Nanking by the Taipings. Taiping cruelties were justified on several grounds. If the Taiping kingdom was to survive after the failure of the Taiping northern campaign of 1853 to 1855, acts of barbarism were considered necessary. The Taiping military code was harsh. It demanded an officer execute a disobedient or cowardly soldier. Moreover, Imperialist officials in some towns invited wholesale slaughter by refusing to defend their cities.

The British Government did not ignore the issue of Taiping morality. In 1861, Lord Russell explained the Government's policy concerning the Taipings by debating previous British public assumptions of Taiping moral conduct. In reply to Colonel Sykes, Russell found that Taiping military forces had mistreated Chinese civilians:

"Everybody knew that at Nanking and other places the rebels had murdered a great number of the inhabitants, that they had laid the town half in ruins, and had made the country a desert.... I must say that the first advances of these forces did not give a favourable impression of what their conduct would be if they had taken possession of Shanghai. We are told of Jesuit priests who were at the head of a number of Chinese youths whom they were instructing. One of these priests was dressed in Chinese costume, and the rebels according to their custom of murdering everybody who obeyed the Emperor of China, murdered him and cut off the heads of these poor children." (24)

compositions, religious, fanatical, and political were all here, including those written by the Eastern King and by Kan-wang." See Edkins, "Narrative", p. 281. Hereafter read B.P.D. for British Parliamentary Debates.

23. Macfarlane, op.cit., pp. 122-123. Studying Taiping opium decrees in 1853, the Rev. James Legge was similarly confident of Taiping moral fervour. See E.M., Vol 31, loc.cit., p. 113.

B. The Potential of this Religious Revolution

British journalists and other writers took an active interest in the religious and moral character of the insurgents. Superstition, miraculous coincidence, and even strong religious faith were factors they used to explain the Taiping will to survive.

In 1853, a contributor to Fraser's Magazine showed how an element of superstition secured the loyalty of Taiping soldiers:

24. B.P.D. Vol. 161, loc. cit., Col. 1857-1858. Contrary to the opinion of certain scholars that British foreign policy could not be influenced by missionary concerns in China, (See J.S. Gregory, "British Missionary Reaction to the Taiping Movement", Journal of Religious History, Vol. 2, 1962-1963, p. 204, "But if God is on his side [that of the missionaries], History at the moment does not appear to be.", and Ibid., p. 214, "That the British Foreign Office or its representatives in China in these years were likely to be swayed in any major policy decision by missionary consideration is most unlikely."), one discovers that many British officials were well versed in the prevailing public discussion of Taiping religious faith and moral fervour.

For example, Colonel Sykes was able to obtain from Lord Russell a Governmental evaluation of Taiping religious beliefs. Even though Russell had energetically claimed that,

"I do not consider a proper subject for discussion here the question of what may be the religious doctrines held by these rebellious armies in China." (Col. 1856)

Russell concluded his address of 12 March, 1861, in this way:

"Whosoever wishes to know what their opinions are, and how totally their conduct is at variance with their professions, may obtain full information in the account furnished by Mr. Holmes, an American Baptist missionary, who lived some time among them and became entirely disgusted with them."

"Their doctrine is really a blasphemous parody on Christianity. They have added to the tenets of our faith an idolatrous religion of their own. Some among them claim to be sons and brothers of Christ, and governing according to their own cruel and profligate fashion, they call this Christianity. I have nothing to do with any comparison of their religion to that of the Tartars, or Chinese; but when my honourable and gallant friend asks me to back up these men because they are the national party and the disciples of Christ, I must say there does not appear to be a word of truth in such a statement. They are really idolaters and no better than the Chinese idolaters whom they profess to despise. See B.P.D., Vol. 161, loc. cit., Col. 1858."

" A miracle marked the first raising of the standard. The chiefs desired to celebrate the day by erecting a monument. In digging for its foundations the workmen came across a stratum of singular and very heavy pebbles. These proved to be lumps of argentiferous lead of surprising richness. And by this means the young Pretender at once paid his soldiers their hire and attached them to his enterprise by faith."(25)

In 1861, Colonel Sykes spoke of the mystical attraction of Hung Hsiu-ch'uan's character in an account of the Manchu military investiture of Nanking.(26) Writing on 8 October, 1860, to the North China Herald from the town of Tau Yung, while travelling to Nanking to take up residence, Issachar Roberts used an excerpt from Scripture to explain the mystical attractive forces of the Taiping leader, Hung Hsiu-ch'uan:

" But as we are told in the Scriptures, that Kings shall become nursing fathers in the Church of Christ, I would fain hope that the prediction will become as literally fulfilled as the destruction of their idols; nor do I think this improbable. And as to the revolution, I verily believe it will go on to consummation. If it be of God no device of man can put it down, if not more than likely it will have gone down ere this!"(27)

25. F.M., Vol. 48, loc.cit., p. 598.

26. B.P.D., Vol. 161, loc.cit., Col. 1842.

27. B.P.D., Vol. 161, loc.cit., Col. 1854. Roberts echoed almost verbatim the idealism of the Northern Prince in conversation in April 1853 with T.T. Meadows. Oxenford made direct reference to Meadows's account:

" He [the Northern Prince] recurred again and again, with an appearance of much gratitude, to the circumstance that he and his companions in arms had enjoyed the special protection and aid of God, without which they would never have been able to do what they had done against superior numbers and resources; and alluding to our declaration of neutrality and non-assistance to the Manchous, said with a quiet air of thorough conviction,

"It would be wrong for you to help them; and, what is more, it would be of no use. Our Heavenly Father helps us, and no one can fight with him." See Gallery and Yvan, History...., p.293.

Finally, in mid-1860, in a letter to the North China Herald, Griffith John and Joseph Edkins argued that a fervent religious commitment by Taiping followers to Taiping faith was the force perpetuating the Taiping kingdom :

" It is evident that the religious element enters very powerfully into this great revolutionary movement. Nothing can be more erroneous than the supposition that it is a purely political one, and that religion occupies but a subordinate place in it. So far is this from being the case, that it is on the contrary, the basis on which the former rests, and it is its life perpetuating source.... they feel they have a work to accomplish and the deep conviction that they are guided by an unerring finger, and supported by an omnipotent arm in its execution is their inspiration. Success they ascribe to the goodness of the Heavenly Father and defeat to his chastisements. The deity is with them, not an abstract notion, not a stern implacable sovereign, but a loving Father who tenderly watches over their affairs, and leads them by the hand." (28)

Certain writers in Britain believed they could account for the mysteries of the Taiping kingdom. One journalist interpreted events as proof of God's intervention in Chinese affairs through an agent, Hung Hsiu-ch'uan, to express His disapproval with the tone of mid-nineteenth century British life. In 1853, this writer apparently was convinced that every European nation had special claims to the Divine Being. The Deity had transferred His Grace and influence from the English Church and from English social activities to the Far East. Englishmen in 1853 were summoned by this writer to take heart from the appearance of the Deity in China and were to abandon their prevalent skepticism concerning religious matters. ~~When Englishmen had reformed their religious~~ ^{When Englishmen had reformed their religious} ~~life, God's presence would return to the English Church and people.~~ ^{life, God's presence would return to the English Church and people.} (29)

28. Thompson, op.cit., p. 133, p. 134.

From this account, at least, it appears that a body of civilians in Britain were eager for a Taiping rebellion or some other miraculous occurrence to restore the faith of their readers in a religious, disciplined, and standardized way of life. Many of these individuals questioned whether British religious and moral life was sincere and were attracted by a display of religious and moral fervour in China. Even British critics of the Taipings wrote of their desire for improvement of mid-nineteenth century British life.

Reports of a religious revival elsewhere was therefore an important reminder to some writers that all was not well in British social life. The mid-nineteenth century in Britain was the era of Newman and of the

29. F.M., Vol. 48, loc.cit., p.596. See the following:

"Wonders, discoveries, revolutions of all sorts, had thronged so thick upon it, that it was falling into the most fashionable apathy, blasé with its own work, skeptical almost of its own existence, turning with every vitiated appetite to every imposture which promised it an hour's enjoyment of mystery. Science was materializing the world; and the souls of men, yielding reluctantly to her dominion, rejoiced in any delusion, which were it but for a moment reminded them of their spiritual life. No thaumaturgist was too fantastic for popular credulity even while "Incredulus odi" trembled from every tongue."

"When suddenly from the far east, from that quarter whence it could least be expected, from that strange empire which had so long treated the rest of the world as barbarian-- came news of wondrous change, both political and religious, and in either respect of surpassing interest.... tidings at which England started from table-turning and spirit rapping; and almost halted her material triumphs to remember she still possessed a conscience and a faith."

For further examples of British supernatural and superstitious inquiry in this period, see Chambers's Journal, Vol. 14, 14 September, 1850, "The Medical Interpretation of Dreams", p.288, and C.J. Vol. 22, No. 35, 2 September, 1854, "Table Turning in China", pp.151-153.

Hereafter read C.J. for Chambers's Journal.

Oxford and Cambridge movements, and English theologians appealed to their congregations and their readers to return to the sacramental life of the Church of England and to participate more widely in the religious life of England. Consequently, the Taiping Rebellion was a timely reminder to these writers of the Gospel's potential and of what could be accomplished, even in China, with sincere religious conviction.

Prior to the destruction in 1864 of the Taiping kingdom, British supporters of the insurgents could have taken heart that even critics of the Taipings praised the efforts of Protestant churchmen and British missionaries in China to correct the religious heresy of Taiping leaders. British missionaries, such as W. Muirhead, Joseph Edkins and others, visited Nanking. Edkins's writings described the distribution in Nanking of Protestant Scriptures and religious tracts.

However, even British public opponents of the Taipings found no appreciable sign of Taiping willingness to adopt the Western Protestant interpretation of the Scriptures. R. J. Forrest drew attention to the doctrinal stubbornness of Hung Hsiu-ch'uan:

"doses of orthodoxy have been carefully administered to him by foreign missionaries but have not acted as was expected. Little doxologies have been furtively hurled at him and he has swallowed them all." (30)

Joseph Edkins even surpassed this expression of impatience with a declaration of the uselessness of Christian endeavour at Nanking:

"The presence of a foreign instructor, of judgment and experience, among the Taipings at the beginning of their religious excitement might have resulted in the establishment of a peaceful and healthy

30. Elakiston, op.cit., p. 43.

Christianity in the Kwangsi mountains, by the interposition of a counterpoise to the overpowering influence of the chief, by the training of these men in the legitimate use of the Scriptures, and by directing their aims to the realization of the true Christian life, Lacking this they were urged on wildly to a point where they were beyond the control of any human adviser, and now, when at last the way is open for Christian missionaries in China to enter on communication with the chief, he requires from them faith in his divine mission and a public acknowledgement of him as a sort of son of God."(31)

3. The Nature of Taiping Government

British reports were not limited to the religious and moral character of the insurgents. British writers examined reports from China concerning Taiping political life. British writers asked three questions concerning Taiping political activities. They questioned whether the Taipings would overthrow the Hsien-feng Emperor and Imperial officials in the provinces, whether the Taipings could win over the Chinese scholar gentry to their program, and finally what type of government did the Taipings establish at Nanking. Did the organization of Hung Hsiu-ch'uan and the other chieftains constitute a governmental agency which could be trusted?

British observers appeared to justify or negate political revolution in China by comparing their knowledge of the Taiping movement to their own impressions of what exactly should constitute revolutionary Government. According to these writers, two commendable political customs for an insurrectionary regime to establish were a settled populace under insurrectionary Government and relatively free relations with foreign officials.

-31. Edkins, "Narrative....", pp. 273-274.

A. Taiping Government: An Alternative to the Manchus

British civilians worried that the Chinese masses would be slow to accept Taiping authority if the Taipings replaced the Imperial Government in Peking. A naval officer, writing on 25 October, 1853, from Amoy to the Times, thought that 1853 was the moment for the Han peoples of China to overthrow the Manchus and that the Chinese people would only return to a life of political stability by supporting rebellion in China. Speaking of the Manchus, this naval officer wrote confidently:

"they might as well hope to turn the Yang-tse-Kiang and cause it to run up its source as to turn the tide of opinion which is flowing in over China.... Many people say or affect that the country would be long settling down under new rule. I think very differently. The greater part of the Europeans in China are influenced by their wishes. I fancy it would suit the views of some of those engaged in trade that the Imperialists should succeed, and as they do not stop out long, their turn would be served during the short reign they could continue. About what would follow, they do not care much to inquire." (32)

Nearly ten years later, Frederick Bruce, the British Minister to Peking, also wondered how much time would pass before the Chinese people returned to peaceful life. He too connected this crucial time element to the character of the regime at Nanking. Bruce denied that there remained any unity of interest between the Chinese people and the Taiping leadership:

"Any policy in China founded on the assumption (which is generally the true one in civil contests) that tranquillity will be restored as soon as one of the political bodies has triumphed over the other, is founded on a complete misapprehension of the character and composition of the Taiping insurrection. The experience of several years and the testimony of all foreigners who have been among them show that they are unable to govern.... I do not think that any grounds exist for assuming that a regular government can spring out of the anarchical and disorderly element which constitute the physical force of the insurrection. An impassable gulf separates it from the orderly and industrious part of the population." (33)

32. The Times, 5 Jan., 1854, op.cit., p. 8.

33. E.F.P. 1862, [3058], Further Papers Relating to China, despatch of Bruce to Russell of 10 April, 1862, p. 19. See J.S. Gregory, "British Intervention and the Taiping Rebellion", Journal of Asian Studies, Vol. 19, I, 1959-1960, p. 22.

Reports from China of the emphasis given in Taiping political life to religious matters created differing interpretations of the political stability of the Taiping kingdom. In his speech of 12 March, 1861, to Parliament, Colonel Sykes carefully indicated the difference between his own views on the subject and those of Frederick Bruce. Sykes spoke openly of the difference between the bias of Bruce against religious elements in political movements and his own views:

"Now he [Sykes] was not the apologist for the rebels, and he did not doubt but that the waste of life, the plunder, the burnings, and the anarchy spoken of by Mr. Bruce really occurred; but in civil wars exasperated by religious fanaticism, where the feeling is "to kill or submit to be killed", to attribute to one side only all the crimes committed is to forget history and become a partisan. At all times and among all peoples such wars have the same lamentable accompaniments.... the Taipings profess to have a command from God to extirpate idolatry, and to introduce Christianity into China, and to expel the foreign rulers the Tartars. It is war to the knife therefore between them...." (34)

Belief that the Taipings were a legitimate expression of national liberal revolution against Manchu tyranny was attractive to certain British observers. In 1853, Charles Macfarlane's observations exemplified this belief:

"The political principles put forward by the partisans seem to have been conceived in an English or Anglo-American spirit.... to say nothing of the republicanism and political zeal of the Americans, some of our own missionaries have been much excited by the love of liberty and by an aversion to all despotism and tyrannies, and we repeat that Christianity is not to be taught as we teach it without awaking a love of freedom and a desire of political reform." (35)

Macfarlane discovered a vital truth. A study of missionary writings on the China coast shows that certain British missionaries were confident that thorough indoctrination by Christian instruction and Scriptures of

34. B.P.D., Vol. 161, op.cit., Col. 1849-Col. 1850.

the Chinese masses would inevitably alert the Chinese against the political tyranny of the Manchus. Griffith John was an effective spokesman for these sentiments. In a letter of 2 February, 1861, to the Secretary of the London Missionary Society, Griffith John drew attention to the political upheaval in China and pointed out what he believed to be the impending political collapse of the Manchus:

"From the Manchus we have nothing to hope but everything to fear. They are sworn enemies to Christianity and civilization and they have set up their iron faces determinedly against both. They can do but little at present. The wonderful progress of the insurgents in the South during the last year and the repeated defeats and the complete discomfiture of the Tartar hosts in the North have thoroughly undermined Manchu power. It must fall. There is no power in China to uphold it.... the Manchus might as well attempt to blow the sun out of heaven as to quench this flame which their folly and tyranny have kindled...." (36)

In 1853, certain British observers accepted that the Taipings were agents of national liberal revolution against autocratic control

35. Macfarlane, op.cit., p.135. See also Ibid., p.137 as follows:

"We confess that we cling to the belief or hope that, however imperfectly, some seeds of the pure faith have been sown in China, great and happy results may be anticipated from them. At least this is clear, - the Chinese have had an awakening. Better almost anything than the dead sleep in which they have been lying for so many ages. Their condition, their vices, their government, their irreligion were all so bad that almost any change must be for the better. The empire was a gangrened, putrefying corpse. There is at least life in this insurrectional movement."

36. Augustus F. Lindley, Ti-Ping T'ien-Kwoh, A History of the Ti-Ping Revolution (2 vols., London, 1866), Vol. 2, p. 470. See also the letter of Bishop Hobson of 23 May, 1853, to the Archbishop of Canterbury in Macfarlane, op.cit., p.117 for similar conclusions:

"The general political aspect of China and the state of our international relations at this time are such as to suggest instability, expectation, and hope. This empire, the venerable relics of a system (it is to be hoped) is fast giving way, and doomed ere long to become obsolete, may be on the brink of great civil convulsions, or it may still continue for another generation immovable, more from its own superincumbent weight than from its inherent strength."

of Government. With a phraseology attractive to the generation which had lived through the European revolutions of 1848 to 1849, British journalists justified native Chinese insurrection as a natural expression of an enlightened populace.

While encouraged by the prospects of political revolution in China, a contributor to the British Quarterly Review was mystified by the tenacity and the long-suffering of the Chinese people.

"The mystery is how the rulers have continued to keep up the delusion age after age and how they have managed to keep down the spirit and the intelligence of a people so numerous, coming into contact, at least to some extent, with other nations, and to hold them so long in the equilibrium state, without either perceptible advancement or deterioration."⁽³⁷⁾

Though somewhat hesitant concerning the exact political plans of the rebels, a contributor to Fraser's Magazine incited enthusiasm for national liberal revolution in China by discovering an historical precedent for an anti-Manchu campaign.⁽³⁸⁾

B. Taiping Ability to Retain the Confidence of the Chinese People

To fortify an impression of a national liberal upsurge of the Han peoples against Manchu tyranny, certain British writers investigated reports of the Chinese people in Taiping as well as in Imperialist occupied areas. They were looking for signs of Chinese disgust or confidence in Taiping revolutionary platforms. Reports in mid-1853 of the Taipings assumed that for the Taipings to succeed, a vast body of the scholar gentry as well as of the populace had to join Taiping

37. E.M., Vol. 31, loc.cit., p. 90.

38. F.M., Vol. 48, loc.cit., p. 598.

camps. From mid-1853, reports from China must have been carefully examined to determine the effect of Taiping military manoeuvres upon various classes of Chinese. Soon after the Triad and Small Sword Society uprising of 7 September, 1853, in Shanghai, these bands of rebels had declared for Taiping Wang. The naval officer, writing in October from Amoy, anticipated a general alliance of insurgents against the Manchu overlords. He described an appeal by the Eastern Prince of the Taipings to the Shanghai insurgents.⁽³⁹⁾ Concerning the Shanghai insurgents, he reported as follows:

"there is a marked difference between the people here at Shanghai and those at Nanking; the former make no profession of changing their religion, though they state they are willing to take their law even on that point from the people of Nankin, and their liberal views seem to be the result of liberal intercourse with Europeans rather than from understanding the true principles of civilization."⁽⁴⁰⁾

Other British observers however chose to emphasize the social limitations of the Taiping movement. They described the exact social and regional background of the Taiping chieftains, with whom British civilians and officials would have to conduct relations upon the overthrow of the Manchus.⁽⁴¹⁾

39. The Times, 5 January, 1854, op.cit., p.8.

40. Ibid. The Times of 12 January, 1854, Second Edition, p. 7 was quick to correct this impression, in an article entitled

41. In the book, Historic Shanghai, published in 1909, C.A. Monalto de Jesus showed that class distinctions and relative economic livelihood could foment disgust for an insurrectionary movement. All he neglected to point out in the following passage was that the Triads and other bands were "hardly the stuff" for a national liberal revolution against tyranny:

Throughout the period 1850 to 1862, British observers allowed their own preconceptions of what social groupings should provide the motivating force for a national revolution to affect their observations. Certain British civilians wrote that British officials in China were prone to find the insurgents socially disagreeable. A "British Resident", who was presumably John Scarth, (42) claimed that Thomas Wade, a former British official of the Imperial Chinese Customs Service, wrote unfavourably of the Taipings. According to Scarth, Wade's despatches reflected his knowledge of the regional and social limitations of the

"The insurgent horde consisted mainly of Canton and Fokien junkmen and a good sprinkling of Ningpo braves. There were several foreign mercenaries, deserters from ships; also several straits-born Chinese speaking English fluently. Lew, the commanding chief, once a sugar-broker of Canton, was the founder of the Triad Society at Shanghai; whose adherents formed the main part of the horde, the next in importance being the Small Sword Society. Another leader had been a tea-broker. The most warlike of them was a former mafio of the British consull and other local residents, Chin Alin.

Among the petty chiefs figured a rich woman who herself equipped and led a gang out of revenge for an injustice whereby the mandarins had bereft her a relative. The insurgents all obeyed the law of the Triad Society implicitly. They were gaudily dressed and wore their long unshaven hair tied up in a knot as a token of hatred for the Manchus." See C.A. Monalto de Jesus, Historic Shanghai (Shanghai, 1909), pp. 60-61.

Robert Fortune took a similar attitude to the Triads and to native insurgency in China. See Chapter Two, p. 166. British journalists often remarked in articles dealing with British public interests in China concerning the social class of the belligerents.

42. John Scarth was a British civilian who lived in China for twelve years. He attempted to represent the body of mercantile opinion in Shanghai. He believed British merchants were critical of British consular officials in that port, of Sir John Bowring, and of the effects of the Earl of Elgin's mission at the close of 1858. The author of the account, "A British Resident", though unnamed, was presumably Scarth. Twelve Years in China was followed in 1861 by the book, British Policy in China, published in Edinburgh. Read [Scarth], op. cit., for "A British Resident", Twelve Years in China.

Taiping leadership. Wade was hostile to a petty-townsmen or peasant mentality. He seemed unaccustomed to relations with officials of less than bourgeois mentality and described the poverty of intellect in Taiping officialdom. Scarth used several extracts from Wade's writings to show that Wade was anxious to impress British official opinion with his interpretation of the social incapacity of Taiping leadership.(43)

By 1854, many British observers were anxious for a Taiping military victory which would win over the literati and landed gentry of China. An intended seizure of Peking in the winter of 1853 to 1854 by the Taiping northern army became the signal of victory that many British observers eagerly anticipated. The feasibility of such a Taiping victory made many British observers conscious of every reported movement towards the capital of the Taiping army.

43. [Scart], op.cit., pp. 268-271. See the following extracts from Wade's writings which described his relations with the Taipings:

".... all however high and low without distinction of province or degree crowded in to look at us. They became a dense mob and paid not the slightest attention to the commands of Hou and the other chiefs.... this part of our errand done, we took our leave, glad to escape from the pressure of this most disorderly mob, and the most offensive atmosphere they created. I have seen no Chinese community in a theatre or marketplace less respectable."

When translating a rebel document, Wade gave the impression that the document was less than a scholarly production:

"The writing within is mostly in Hephthemimer verse, of small literary pretension, and in indifferent handwriting - singularly indifferent, when it is borne in mind how generally the educated Chinese are found to write decently if not well."

Finally, Wade spoke of a Taiping chieftain as ill-suited for governmental office:

"Our host was dressed in yellow silk and curiously embroidered shoes. His costume on the whole was really becoming, but he was manifestly very ill at ease and I should say at any time a very commonplace person."

In a despatch of 26 March, 1853, to Rutherford Alcock, T.T. Meadows indicated that Chinese landowners through whose territories the Taiping northern army marched gave their political allegiance to the Taipings:

"It is said that great numbers of the landed proprietors have made submission as the Insurgent army has advanced northward by getting their title-deeds re-indorsed to them in the name of the new dynasty on payment of a fee to the civil Branch of the Administration."(44)

Moreover, throughout the early months of 1854, the London Times paid strict attention to correspondence from Hong Kong, Canton, and Bombay which gave any news of the Taiping northern army. In a letter of 27 December, 1853, the Times' Hong Kong correspondent was swift to interpret information concerning the effect of Taiping movements upon Peking:

".....at Peking the strictest measures were being taken in the way of searching for insurgent emissaries, who were numerous in the capital, and no doubt the insurgents will meet with powerful resistance before reaching the capital, and the severe cold of the season may retard their advance."

"..... at Canton all remains quiet, but the news from the north has produced some sensation and an uneasy feeling as it is generally supposed there is a strong party in the city in favour of Tae-ping-wang. It is generally feared if Peking falls there will be another outbreak."(45)

What elements of Taiping rule in occupied territory indicated popular confidence in Taiping authority? Here it often seemed that preconceptions of British observers prevented them from thoroughly investigating how for a period of over a decade, the Taipings retained control of the interior. Frequently scattered through British commentary,

44. B.P.P. 1853, LXIX, op. cit., Enclosure No. 3 in Bonham's despatch of 28 March, 1853, to Clarendon.

45. The Times, 13 February, 1854, Second Edition, "China", p. 10.

however, was momentary interest in elements of the Taiping political and religious program, which might have contributed to the permanence of Taiping rule. This was certainly the case with Joseph Edkins. He had to admit sadly that the institution of literary examinations, the use of patronage, and Taiping regularization of demands upon the populace were measures which did establish popular confidence at Soochow in Taiping rule:

"The distribution of responsible offices among the natives and the regular system of taxation, now introduced, have very much restored confidence in the neighbourhood of this important city, and trade is beginning to revive. Another measure, recently carried into effect by the insurgent leaders here, is the institution of literary examinations." (46)

Throughout the period 1853 to 1862, some British observers indicated that the permanence of Taiping authority caused inhabitants of occupied towns to return to their former dwellings and occupations.

An editorial in the North China Herald of 15 December, 1860, indicated:

"news has reached the city authorities from Tangkow near Soochow to the effect that the gentry and people, anxious to return to their homes, have given in their submission to rebel authorities and agree to pay tribute..... the submission to the insurgents is becoming pretty general now and a more settled form of Government is beginning to develop itself at Soochow and other places....." (47)

But this impression of popular support in occupied areas for the Taipings was factually challenged by many British observers. One of the most serious accounts during the civil war of the suffering of Chinese

46. Edkins, "Narrative.....", p. 249. Edkins commented continuously about what he determined to be the appeal of Hung Hsiu-ch'uan's publications:

"That the publications of Hung-sieu-tsiuen are used extensively as reading-books in the families of his followers is unquestionable. They are employed both for educational purposes and as guidebooks in conducting religious services and in communicating religious instruction....."

(p. 261)

47. B.P.D., Vol. 161, op.cit., Col. 1850.

civilians under Taiping martial rule was written by R.J. Forrest. He contemptuously dismissed optimistic impressions of Taiping rule: in the

"~~The country all the way from Paoying to Nanking is in a wretched condition. Ruined villages and burnt houses mark the fury of last year's war.....~~ all the able-bodied men are gone -- some were killed, but more enlisted in the Taiping army from whose ranks death alone will relieve them."

".....all the old women we saw were left in contempt by the Taipings to till the fields; all had lost some relations, and two of them sat down on a bank and cried sadly, one for the loss of her husband and two sons, the other for her husband and father." (48)

C. Taiping Government

British writers were most curious concerning the structuring of Taiping government. The Taiping invasion in December 1861 of Ningpo so interested Frederick Bruce that he pointed out in the following account many of the criteria that the British Government was using to characterize Taiping government. Bruce advised the British consul at Ningpo, Harvey, to observe carefully the nature of Taiping treaty-port government:

"Do they show any disposition to govern and organize the country? Do they wish to encourage trade? Are the orders of their leaders obeyed? Do the respectable and wealthy classes of Ningpo return to the city and resume their avocations? Are property and life respected, or is the city treated as an orange to be squeezed dry and then thrown away? In short is their administration a hand-to-mouth affair, or is it conducted so as to show they understand that to form a government, the wealth and industry of the country must not be destroyed? For information on these points, I look with anxiety." (49)

Notice had been taken earlier of Triad and Small Sword Society control of portions of the cities of Amoy and Shanghai. From mid-1853, British writers were interested in reports of the insurgents' respect for public and private property. For example, in his supplementary chapter

48. Blakiston, op.cit., p. 27.

49. J.S. Gregory, Great Britain and the Taipings (London, 1969), p. 107.

to Callery and Yvan's History, John Oxenford included a report of 18 May, 1853, from an eminent commercial firm at Amoy. This described the generous behaviour of the Amoy insurgents upon their conquest of that city:

"An hour or two later the garrison opened the gates and allowed the rebels to enter unmolested, so that the mandarins were quite helpless; but no desire to capture them seems to have existed; for while the four gates were thrown open, only by three did the rebels enter, the fourth being left open purposely to facilitate the escape of any who wished - a privilege they all availed themselves of." (50)

Periodical and other British public accounts found political and philosophical justification for Taiping governmental techniques. In 1853, many writers zealously searched through reports concerning Taiping political writings to find principles of government which had suitable counterparts in the Western European political tradition. Such was the approach taken by a writer in Fraser's Magazine. Commenting concerning the Taiping proclamation issued to counter the appointment of Lin Tse-hsu as Imperial Commissioner to contain the rebels, this author concluded in haste: that

"the austere precision of this document is worthy of Tacitus. The frank assertion of parity between the rebel and the usurper, the attribution of title to possession alone, coupled with the protest against proscription - taking and keeping are both alike - show a clearness both of aim and sight, which may well carry this owner to his mark." (51)

British commentary concerning Taiping political machinery was very often affected by the prejudice of the observer concerning the whole

50. Callery and Yvan, History...., pp. 319-320.

51. F.M. Vol. 48, loc. cit., p. 600. See Ibid., p. 599 for a translation of the Taiping proclamation.

panorama of the Taiping cause. Writing on 8 October, 1860, to the North China Herald from Tau Yung, Issachar Roberts enthusiastically described Taiping political operations:

"We speak of kings among the revolutionists but these titles are only about the same here as lords and dukes in England, and when one of them is commander-in-chief, as in the case of the Chung Wang, of course it increases his power if not his dignity; as in the case of Lord Elgin when appointed Ambassador; but each is accountable to his own Queen or Emperor, as much as any other subject under like appointment."(52)

In contrast was the approach of R.J. Forrest. He retained his own ideas of the proper organizational technique of an Eastern government as opposed to the British tradition. Forrest rejected Taiping governmental operations without reviewing either the function of Taiping government or its previous accomplishments. Of his visit in March 1861 to the Kam Wang's palace, Forrest summarily narrated:

"Coolies are sometimes visible in these rooms, and in the larger of them some three scribes are forever writing on yellow paper - these few men combining in themselves in all probability of the whole Six Boards. The Board of Revenue contained much coal while I was there and the Board of Rites had evidently been turned to a worse purpose. Above these Boards lives Mr. Roberts, who, at the back of all, has a shed for a hospital."(53)

British writers had strong preconceptions of how a governmental system should function. Joseph Edkins stressed the need for careful administration in any political process. He bitterly resented the inattention given by Hung Hsiu-ch'uan to a head-of-state's political responsibilities:

"The reason why the young prince was appointed to be arbiter in all matters of difficulty lay in the fact that Taiping Wang wished to

52. B.P.D., Vol. 161, op.cit., Col. 1854.

53. Blakiston, op.cit., p.49.

restricte his own duties as far as possible to the sphere of religion, while his son and intended successor controlled the ordinary affairs of government....It was to a boy of thirteen that he attempted to entrust the reins of Taiping administration...."(54)

4. Travelling Privileges in the Interior and The Receptivity of the Chinese People to Elements of British Civilization

Beginning in mid-1853, certain British observers became aware of additional factors of more immediate importance to them than the political or religious characteristics of native insurgents in China. Such men were encouraged by Taiping promises of uninterrupted foreign travel in the interior. They began to project a widening pattern of British civilian and official relations with the Chinese people, which would result from the agreement of Chinese officials with such promises. Secondly, the reports of these observers indicated that the Chinese people were willing to accept British travellers and projects in the interior of China. As Chapters Two and Three will indicate, the crucial factor for discussion becomes the exact moment when these British observers turned their attention away from Taiping promises.

Certain of these men began to enter the interior, implementing their plans for China and reporting how the widening pattern of relations between British and Chinese civilians increased the chances for British civilians to bring their civilization to the Chinese. What information did these writers have which caused such a change in perspective?

From mid-1853, the existing conditions for British travel and trade in the interior of China was a frequent complaint of many writers. British

observers in Great Britain and on the China coast were constantly attempting in their communication with the Chinese to establish comfortable passage into the interior. These observers expected that British travel would be unimpeded by transport suited alone for the Chinese or by the necessity of concealing British nationality or British pride. In an article of 1 February, 1853, entitled "Middle Age Travellers in the East", a contributor to the British Quarterly Review defended the romanticism of Middle Age travellers to the Far East, such as Sir John Mandeville or Marco Polo. Knowledge of the hardships medieval travellers were willing to endure to reach the East helped this writer to belittle the complaints of mid-nineteenth century travellers to the East and the attention given by European governments to these complaints. (55)

Even T.T. Meadows, characterized by many contemporaries, such as Augustus Lindley, as an avid supporter of the Taipings, wrote of his anxieties to travel without impediment into the interior of China. Prior to the Arrow War, Meadows was upset by the hardships of foreign travel in the interior. He meticulously provided for his own comfort

55. B.Q.R., Vol. 17, 1 February, 1853, "Middle Age Travellers in the East", p. 136. See the following:

"It was to turn back these ferocious hordes, the terror alike of Saracens and Christians, that the mighty army of Croisades set forth; and truly, those who in the present day are so loud in their complaints if the traveller in the East is even subjected to a temporary inconvenience - who thought it quite proper that China by the argument of cannonballs should be brought within the bounds of European civilization; and who are now satisfactorily watching the result of the same process against Japan - have little right to scorn that wild burst of enthusiasm, which with little selfish feeling sought to avenge the wrongs of our Lord in his own land."

on his first voyage in early 1853 into the interior:

" Were I a foot shorter than I am, I could by hiding my deep-set occidental eyes under a pair of broad-rimmed Chinese spectacles travel openly all over China with small risk of detection. But my length of six feet one inch, which is not common among ourselves, approaches the gigantic among the shorter Chinese race; it immediately attracts general attention and then the deep-set eyes, the beard however closely shaven, and even the short hair on the hands and wrists are all marks that unfailingly lead to detection. By adopting the Chinese tail and dress, and using a boat containing nothing foreign whatever, not even a penknife, I could, by shamming sick and keeping a sitting or lying posture when the internal Customs examinations were being made, travel through the country after the fashion of the Catholic priests; but that mode implies a certain amount of privation and as the Customs examinations are not many I hoped to be able to affect my purposes by fitting my boat up internally as comfortably as possible for an Englishman, externally as an ordinary Chinese boat of the same class." (56)

At different times from 1853 to 1862, individual British observers began to realize that a wider pattern of relations between British and Chinese civilians would follow unimpeded foreign travel into the interior of China. In an editorial which analysed Sir John Bowring's speech of Friday, January 13, 1854, to the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, the Times predicted

" a revolution which promises to bring three hundred millions of people into new and beneficial communications with the rest of mankind. That remote and secluded empire of China, which even Gibbon in his comprehensive survey of the civilized world thought himself justified in overlooking, will soon, in all probability, be open unreservedly to the missions and adventures of the West, and Dr. Bowring's speech in itself contains evidence that if we have much to teach, we shall undoubtedly find something to learn." (57)

A contributor in 1853 to the British Quarterly Review surpassed

56. Meadows, The Chinese, p. 204. See Chapter Two, pp. 16-165 and Appendix B, pp. 293-289 for discussion of Meadows's attitudes in the period 1853 to 1856 concerning native insurgency in China. Jesuit writings and Jesuit travelling privileges in the interior were factors which led to much British public discussion of the insurgents. Refer to Chapters Two and Four for a development of British public attitudes in this respect.

57. The Times, 14 January, 1854, First Edition, p. 6.

the enthusiasm of the Times. He argued that unimpeded legal access for foreigners to the interior of China should satisfy those who were planning political, religious, commercial, and intellectual projects for China. In fact, it seemed the Chinese people of the interior and the Taiping kings could not fail to be impressed with the virtuosity of British civilization. Like many observers, this journalist earnestly expected that other peoples would abandon their cultural heritage for British traditions and techniques:

"There seems a very strong possibility that the gates of this mighty empire will at length be thrown open to the rest of the human family, and that ere long China may become as free to European influences as India. The market that will thus be laid open to commerce cannot be calculated. The people are as yet proudly ignorant of the advantages to be derived from intercourse with other nations.

When once they have tasted its benefits, there is no doubt they will eagerly receive our visitors, our science, and all those superior embellishments and comforts of civilized life which will be liberally supplied to them from Europe and America.

What must be the effect of free trade with this vast empire upon our country, which has long been, and seems likely to be, the workshop of the world, no one can tell, but at any rate our commercial interests must in consequence be greatly extended.

To the philanthropist, however, and to the Christian the field is still more inviting. A people, so singularly emancipating themselves from the passive and stagnant state of mind in which they have been hopelessly bound for ages, is a cheering proof of the inextinguishable energy of our nature and of its innate aspirations after something better and higher than superstition and idolatry, or even its own idolized reason or self-developed philosophy have been able to attain."(58)

However, as discussed in the Appendix of the thesis, Taiping promises of unlimited foreign access to the interior and reports of Chinese willingness to tolerate foreign travel in the interior did not impress the Home Government or the British consular service. In the period 1853

58. E.M., Vol. 31, loc.cit., pp. 112-113.

to 1856, aside from a few exceptions, British officials were plainly applying old formulas to a series of relations with the belligerents.(59)

But reports of Taiping promises to fulfil British public interests in China aroused the curiosity of British civilians. The factors creating public curiosity concerning the Taipings concerning the Taipings will be explored in the following two chapters in detail.

59. Appendix A, Appendix B, and Chapter Two pp.53-62 contain observations about British official policy from 1853 to 1862 concerning the Chinese belligerents.

CHAPTER TWO
THE APPROACH OF BRITISH PUBLICATIONS TO
THE TAIPING REBELLION 1853 - 1856

I. Latitude Allowed to British Writers to Comment Concerning
British Policy in China and the Rebellion

The first chapter has indicated that many members of the British community wrote publicly concerning which of the belligerents would best satisfy British interests in China. In the same period, the Supreme Plenipotentiary conducted relations with the Imperialists, Taipings, and other insurgent groups. They did so in a manner designed to guarantee the survival of the treaty-port system.(B)

The Appendix indicates that by referring to "neutral status", British officials in China compelled Imperialists and insurgents not to interfere with British settlements in the treaty ports, to receive official British missions, and to grant the requests of British officials who conducted such missions. British officials and British civilians travelled to Chinese battlefields, and although Great Britain was officially "neutral", Chinese officials were obliged to welcome and respect British missions of inquiry. "Neutrality", in effect, simply allowed the British official community in China to pursue for a number of years its own policy. The Chinese could always be compelled during this period to recognize British unaggressive intentions by the use of British aggressive force.(A)

B. Appendix B examines British China policy from 1850 to 1862 concerning the belligerents.

A. See Appendix A, p. 280 for Bonham's despatch of 28 March, 1853, to Clarendon. Appendix A, pp. 248-268 and Appendix B, pp. 276-282 and pp. 292-299 examine British China policy from 1853 to 1862. These Appendices use official materials which were cited from 1853 by many British writers.

Throughout the Rebellion, British civilians in China and contributors to journals in Britain called attention to British official policy in China. From mid-1853, many realized the latitude in China for British civilian communication with the belligerents. From mid-1853, certain public accounts indicated that British officials interfered with the conduct of war outside of the foreign settlements in China and did not prevent British civilian relations with the belligerents. Even British official materials of the period suggest that British officials in China openly interfered in Chinese affairs in areas beyond British jurisdiction by treaty. By April 1853, T.T. Meadows and Sir George Bonham were curious about the Taiping kingdom and arranged a mission in late April 1853 to Nanking.

Rutherford Alcock, British consul in Shanghai, managed to communicate with the Triad and Small Sword insurgents after these insurgents had successfully seized on September 7, 1853, the walled city of Shanghai. As will be shown, the Earl of Clarendon, the Foreign Secretary, postponed his approval of Bonham's declaration of non-intervention of 28 March, 1853, (A) while Great Britain consulted with other major Western Powers in China about their respective attitudes to native insurgency in China.

There are official materials which support many observations of journalists in Britain and British civilians in China that British officials were indecisive and neglected to apply Bonham's declaration of non-intervention to British relations with the belligerents. Beginning in mid-1853, accounts from China indicated that British civilians

A. See Appendix A, pp. 250-251. See also Chapter Two, p. 61.

did not expect British consuls to oppose increased British civilian activities in the interior.

How did British officials respond to Bonham's declaration of non-intervention? What type of resistance to British civilian relations with the belligerents did British civilians and journalists in Britain expect from British officials in China and from the British Government? Although Bonham issued on 28 March, 1853, a declaration of non-intervention, he could not restrain his own curiosity concerning the Taipings. Previous to the declaration, he sent his Chinese interpreter in Shanghai, Meadows, on a preparatory voyage to investigate the interior, and finally in April 1853, he arranged a visit of the Hermes to Nanking.

Bonham was well aware he was contravening strict neutrality by arranging a mission to Nanking. In a despatch of 11 May, 1853, to Clarendon, Bonham clearly revealed the extent of his own responsibility for initiating relations with Taiping chieftains:

"It is needless to trouble your Lordship with a perusal of this production; [referring to a despatch from a military commander of one of the Taiping forts]; on its receipt I felt justified in despatching Mr. Meadows ashore, in order to seek the Chiefs and make arrangements for the interview."

Bonham also tried to relieve any anxieties of the Foreign Office by providing an assurance that he would not provoke a military encounter with the Taipings:

"....but it can easily be understood that the men who commanded the junks, and who had no knowledge of our intentions, took the steamer for an enemy, in the midst of all the confusion and excitement prevailing at the time." (I)

I.B.P.P. 1853, LXIX, Relating to the Civil War,..., No. 6, despatch of Bonham of 11 May, 1853, to Clarendon, p.24.

Bonham carefully justified his initiative for sailing without instructions to Nanking. He impressed upon Clarendon the urgent need by late April 1853 for a British mission to Nanking:

".... for leaving aside all considerations of prestige and historical associations connected with the ancient capital of China (considerations nevertheless, as your Lordship knows, of much weight on the Chinese mind), the fact of a strong body of armed men being in possession of so large and important a city on the banks of the Yangtze Kiang, in the very heart of the Empire close to the Grand Canal, with means of intercepting all communications and stopping the conveyance of grain to the capital, is not one to be easily overlooked nor carelessly glossed over; and to the Chinese as well as to ourselves, the next move of these forces becomes an interesting subject for speculation."(2)

Bonham described his mission as being limited, of only a week's absence, and one which was needed to correct rumours and false reports in the local press. Moreover, following American civilian interference, Bonham feared that further American shipping would find its way to Nanking.(3) These explanations, however, only served to conceal his own curiosity about the Taiping movement:

"In order, therefore, to reconcile as much as possible the contradictory accounts received daily, I caused Chinese messengers, known to interpreters, to be despatched into the country for the purpose of obtaining some reliable information...."(4)

Bonham's refusal of an unprecedented opportunity for personal communication with Taiping kings at Nanking shows his care in rendering his mission as agreeable as possible to the Foreign Office. Bonham intended to use the Hermes to support Meadows's diplomacy:

2. B.P.P. 1853, LXIX, op.cit., No. I, despatch of Bonham of 28 March, 1853, to Russell, p.1.

3. Ibid., p.2.

4. B.P.P. 1853, LXIX, op.cit., No. 4, despatch of Bonham of 22 April, 1853. Bonham sent these three messengers into the interior before Meadows's mission of investigation.

"...at all events it will enable me to convey Mr. Meadows safely close to the scene of action and prevent any possibility of his being detained on the way; and if I determine on sending him to the chiefs, the proximity of a man of war can only lend to a more favourable reception than he might otherwise obtain."(5)

In his book, The Chinese and their Rebellions, Meadows admitted that Bonham's mission of mid-1853 to Nanking was questionable in its motivation. Meadows understood the difficulty of justifying the mission and of explaining his and Bonham's initiative. Meadows found convenient justification. Responsibility for the mission in mid-1853 to Nanking did not rest with Bonham and himself: the presence of the Chinese Imperial fleet on the Yangtze below Chinkiang and behind the Hermes forced the British mission to sail on to Nanking. Meadows wrote of the action at Chinkiang:

"The lorchas [of the approaching Imperialist fleet] had all red flags, that at a little distance were not to be distinguished from a faded British red-ensign; and after false proclamations that had been issued about steamers, the Rebels naturally took the Hermes for the first of an attacking squadron. They accordingly opened fire on her, and as the fleet was rapidly nearing and a general action imminent, no course was left but to steam on at once to Nanking; which was done, after a note explanatory of the circumstances had been handed to a boatman for delivery to the Rebel Commanders."(6)

In fact, prior to Bonham's declaration in March 1853 of non-intervention, and his voyage in April to Nanking, Bonham and Rutherford Alcock seriously contemplated offering armed assistance to the Imperialists. Before Bonham's mission to Nanking, the British official community had little reason to support the forces of political insurrection in China. John Bowring, British consul in Canton, was discouraged by the revolutionary situation in the interior. Bowring

5. B.P.P. 1853, LXIX, op.cite., No. 4, p. 17.

6. Meadows, The Chinese...., p. 252.

mentioned pessimistic reports from certain China-coast missionaries about the Taipings:

"In May 1852 he told the Foreign Office that there had been for some time past reports of Christian inscriptions upon the banners of the insurgents, but quoted Protestant missionary opinion that rebel use of the term "Shang-ti".... referred not to the Christian God but to a Chinese god of war."(7)

In March 1853, Bonham and Alcock considered the alternative of offering the Imperialists British naval support to suppress the insurrection in the interior in exchange for favourable treaty revision.(8) After serious thought, Bonham rejected this idea with his declaration on 28 March, 1853. As he wrote on that day, the Taiping seizure of Nanking caused apprehension in Shanghai. Alcock however remained anxious to establish some co-operative plan with local Imperial officials, and during 1853 Bonham had to severely restrain Alcock's ambitions.(9) During 1853, the status of "neutral" provided sufficient protection for foreign communities in the treaty ports.(B)

A passage in the Appendix describes Alcock's destruction in April 1854 of the two Imperialist camps, opposite the foreign settlement, bordering on the racetrack. (A) After this venture, Alcock committed British forces to protect Imperialist forces who were rebuilding the two camps in another position. Triad forces were kept away on 7 April, 1854, from the Imperialist camps by British forces according to an agreement reached by Thomas Wade with local Imperialist officials.

7. Gregory, Great Britain...., pp. 7-8. Bowring's commentary in 1852 concerning the Taipings was characteristic of a man who was generally discouraged with the state of British relations with the Chinese. For further citations of Bowring's discouragement with British China policy and for Foreign Office neglect of his recommendations, see Fairbank, op.cit., p. 402, p. 447f.

Alcock justified his attack outside of the foreign settlement by an appeal for the survival of British treaty-port jurisdiction. In fact, Alcock was so confident of his position that he appealed to Bonham for overall approval of any further military action that he might be forced to use to prevent further incursions by the belligerents upon the foreign settlement. In a despatch of 4 April, 1854, to the Foreign Consuls at Shanghai, he indicated:

"I am satisfied that under existing circumstances in China, there is less to be risked and lost by a firm and unhesitating resistance, whether the attacking party be insurgents or Imperialists, than must be inevitably incurred by any more temporizing or timid policy; and it will afford me a great satisfaction if in this view I am borne out by the concurrent opinion of my colleagues." (IO)

Receiving their approval, Alcock wrote on 13 April, 1854, to Bonham in a manner which indicates he expected Bonham to closely review his military activities but to fully concur with his objectives:

"I trust now that there has been time to estimate with greater certainty the probable results of these anxious and harassing efforts to make head against the dangers with which we were menaced, that Her Majesty's Government will see reason to approve of the whole course of action and its fruits and bearing in mind the very critical position in which the

8. Gregory, Great Britain...., pp. 12-14. See also E.R., Vol. 98, July 1853, "Political Disturbances in China", p. 129 for recommendations as to the course British officials should pursue towards the belligerents with the approach of treaty revision.

9. Gregory, Great Britain...., pp. 14-15.

A. See Appendix A, pp. 229-231 for an illustration of Alcock's activities in April 1854 during this incident.

B. For an examination of British official activities in China to guarantee the survival of the treaty-port system, see Appendix B, pp. 282-297.

IO. B.P.P. 1854, LXXII, [1792], Enclosure No. 3 in No. I, Circular addressed on 4 April, 1854, by Alcock to the Foreign Consuls in Shanghai, in Bowring's despatch of 18 April, 1854, to Clarendon, p. 5.

foreign community is being placed by the civil war at this point, that they will be prepared to sanction with their authority whatever further measures may be found absolutely requisite to maintain ourselves in security."(II)

But Alcock's aggressive diplomacy was not reviewed by Sir George Bonham, to whom he addressed his despatches. Sir John Bowring had just arrived from England as Supreme Plenipotentiary. Bowring justified Alcock's activities and did not remind him that the Supreme Plenipotentiary could exercise supervisory discretion concerning the deployment of British aggressive force at Shanghai. To Bowring, Alcock's long experience as a resident of Shanghai and his immediate access to the difficulties was ample justification for the use of British armed force.

Bowring hurriedly rushed off his letter of approval of Alcock's activities without deliberating concerning his responsibility as Plenipotentiary for civilian or consular relations with the Chinese belligerents. On 18 April, 1854, Bowring apologized for his incomplete review of Alcock's activities:

"the short period which has elapsed since my arrival in China, and my imperfect acquaintance with many details, and the variety of subjects pressing for immediate attention have induced me to confine myself principally to a re-iteration of the general views of Her Majesty's Government, trusting much to that knowledge of the local circumstances in which Mr. Alcock possesses for the application of those general views to the particular cases which may occur."

A day later, Bowring sent to England his complete approval of Alcock's activities:

II. B.F.P. 1854, [1792], Enclosure No. 1 in No. 2, Alcock's despatch of 13 April, 1854, to Bonham, in despatch of 19 April, 1854, of Bowring to Clarendon, p. 9.

"Of all the documents which the despatch contained [that of 13 April, 1854, of Alcock to Bonham] there is only time to forward copies of those that have been printed: of the remainder I must be satisfied with sending a synopsis."(12)

The British Government sanctioned this somewhat imprecise review by the Plenipotentiary of Alcock's initiative. The Foreign Office itself functioned under a system in which a variety of subjects pressed for immediate attention. For example, in early May 1853, Clarendon wrote his approval of Bonham's declaration of non-intervention. Clarendon waited, however, until the end of May to send it to Bonham. In the interim, discreet inquiries were conducted between the British, French, and Americans to learn their respective intentions concerning the Chinese belligerents.(13)

The indications from mid-1853 that British civilians on the China-coast interfered in the civil war outside of foreign settlement areas compelled Alcock to take stern preventative measures in an area outside of his jurisdiction to protect the foreign settlement itself. British consuls, such as Alcock, abandoned much discretion for British relations with the belligerents to British civilian enterprise. British civilians freely moved into combatant areas and took sides in the conflict. Although Great Britain was officially "neutral", the Supreme Plenipotentiary was not alarmed by Alcock's use of British armed force or by Alcock's diplomacy with Imperialist or insurgent officials.

12. B.P.P. 1854, [1792], LXXII, op.cit., No. 1, Bowring's despatch of 18 April, 1854, to Clarendon, p.1, and No. 2, Bowring's despatch of 19 April, 1854, to Clarendon, p.8.

13. Fairbank, op.cit., p.414, and Gregory, Great Britain...., pp.16-17.

Although the Earl of Clarendon approved of neutrality in China and issued instructions to the Supreme Plenipotentiary and British Minister to China to maintain British neutrality, within various levels of British government, it was not clear who was ~~primarily~~ responsible for the maintenance of a doctrine which was inoperable in China. As British official relations developed with the belligerents, British civilians in China established communication with the belligerents and pursued their own interests. Many writers in Britain wrote concerning the effect of a victory in the contest upon the continuing good health of British interests in China.

Surviving British civilian accounts of China-coast life in this period help to explain the activities and interests of the British community in China. Once British writers understood British China policy, they reviewed their own interests, and advocated a widening of British enterprise in China. They formed conclusions concerning why the British Government was committed to the China coast, and many British writers suggested a course for British officials to follow.

From 1853 to 1856, observers in Britain, reporting on events in China, had two major objectives. They studied how a victory of either belligerent would alter the life of the British community in the treaty ports, and they wondered how victorious Taiping or Imperialist officials would treat the requests of British citizens in China. (14)

Many British observers initially investigated whether British consuls

14. See the B.Q.R., Vol. 22, July, 1855, "The Insurgent Power in China", p. 139 for a revelation of the political interests of the journal and for notice of a tradition of rebellion in China.

restricted free civilian intercourse with the belligerents. Learning that consular resistance was ineffective, these observers captured the attention of British civilians with descriptions of the freedom allowed to civilian enterprise in China. Many never directly questioned "neutral status" nor the claims by British consuls that the Chinese were being fairly treated. For these writers, "neutrality" and "fair treatment" of the Chinese was acceptable terminology for a policy which allowed British civilians to interfere freely in Chinese affairs and sponsor private concerns outside of the foreign settlement areas.¹

In October 1855, a article in the Edinburgh Review, entitled "Political Disturbances in China", gave proof of British and foreign interferences. British writers, such as the author of the preceding article, recognized that British officials in China were restricted by treaty to limited authority over British civilians in the foreign settlement areas. From 1853 to 1856, these observers revealed that although British officials and civilians claimed that the Chinese received fair treatment, British civilians energetically supported belligerent campaigns, and British officials used British arms to accomplish their own wishes.² British writers admitted that the British community in China had pursued (or should) pursue the widening of British civilian enterprise. The writers of such accounts appear to have abandoned claims of fair treatment of the Chinese.³

In July 1853, a contributor to the Edinburgh Review called attention

to

"those circumstances connected with the internal and domestic state of China which in our view placed, and still place, special impediments in the way of extending its commercial transactions with foreign countries."

He openly suggested that British merchants in China did not uphold

the British reputation for fair treatment of the Chinese:

"... we have now to inquire whether we have in fact used our position in China to best advantage and harvested our mercantile opportunities with a wise and far-seeing policy."

The Edinburgh Review evidently was expressing some feelings of guilt which accompanied knowledge of an opium trade by British China merchants, which British officials did not control. Speaking of this trade, the writer was aware of

"very pernicious results to us by arousing the prejudice and suspicion of a large portion of the intelligence and virtue of the [Chinese] Empire."

He knew that British merchants had fostered the opium trade in China which

"has grown up in spite, or at all events independent of it." [the British Government in China]

Despite such apprehensions concerning British opium dealings, and although he observed that "an energetic campaign to promote British goods in China, will not be productive of any great self-satisfaction", the writer would not condemn the methods used by British merchants in China to attract a China market. He wrote:

"a little further inquiry will show us that in so far as our failures are attributable to our faults and jealousies, our position is yet retrievable and prospects hopeful."

In January 1854, the author of an account in Blackwood's Magazine offered an assessment similar to that of the preceding writer. The article in Blackwood's revealed why the journal was interested in a Chinese native insurgent movement and what factors influenced the journal's decision to urge British penetration of the Chinese interior. Russia's military operations on the Amur River and naval manoeuvres off the China coast caused the writer to fear possible Russian rivalry for the interior of China. He proposed a more favourable alternative for his readers:

"Russia is ever for despotism and exclusion, - Britain and America for freedom and toleration; and the latter powers will carry their point as far as China is concerned."

Finally an article of 14 April, 1860, in Chambers's Journal assessed British official activities with the belligerents and agreed in principle with the conclusions concerning British civilian activities in China of the previous two journalists. This journalist was interested in John Searth's account of British official policy from 1853 concerning the belligerents. On the basis of Searth's account, he concluded that British officials did not treat the Chinese people fairly. He explained that the lack of Chinese interpreters in the British consular service led to serious British official injustice to the Taipings and to the people of Canton under Imperialist control:

"According to Mr. Searth, we Europeans let slip a golden opportunity when we took the side of the effete and misgoverned Imperialists against the so-called Rebels, who, by comparison with their adversaries, he makes it appear were a civilized and well-conducted set of men. We did not know what we were about in the matter, nor is it likely that we shall know as long as we speak no Chinese, and they no English. The great evil of our position in China consists in our lack of good interpreters."

Having described this lost opportunity for good relations with the Taipings, this writer drew attention to the commentary in Scarth's book, Twelve Years in China, concerning British relations from 1856 with the Imperialists. This article in Chambers's Journal included an excerpt from Scarth which implied how poorly managed in 1857 was British communication with the Chinese populace of Canton. The British refused to govern the city or to establish close contact with Cantonese civilians. Such conduct in no way preserved the British reputation for fair treatment of the Chinese:

"In fact it is scarcely fair to enter into any great military operation against China while we have such a small staff of interpreters. There is no saying what the result of active warlike operations may be. Even when we took Canton, it was thought imprudent to govern it, and by putting the Chinese officers again in power, the chief moral effect of taking the city was lost. The attempt should have been made, even if all the Chinese had to be driven out.

As it was Chinese plunderers ravaged the city in all directions, and no one could tell who were the rightful owners of property that was allowed to be taken away. Of course the foreigners are blamed for all that was lost." (15)

2. The Awakening of British Public Opinion 1853

Beginning in mid-1853, certain materials, ~~dealing specifically~~ with reports of the Taiping Rebellion and of the Chinese people of the interior, arrived in Britain. From mid-1853, public attention grew with reports of the progress of the civil war in China. It is necessary

15. E.R., Vol. 98, loc.cit., p. 115, and B.M., Vol. 75, "The Past and Future of China", January 1854, and C.J., Vol. 33, No. 328, 14 April, 1860, "More Celestial Intelligence", p. 239. The remarks about British policy concerning the Taipings in Chambers's Journal in 1860 were cited in reference to the whole course of British relations from 1853 with the Taipings and are thus included in this section.

first to ascertain the substance of these reports.'

The materials, appearing in early 1853 in Britain, primarily discussed the progress and claims of the insurgents. Unlike previous Anglo-Chinese press accounts of the insurgents, these materials spoke of actual foreign encounters with the insurgents and offered opinions which were believed reliable by many British journalists. These materials stressed that events in the Chinese interior should interest British civilians and that there were opportunities for the introduction of British civilization outside of the foreign settlements. British consuls were not expected to interfere with the expansion of British enterprise.'

News of Bonham and Meadows's visit in late April 1853 to Nanking and of Humphrey Marshall's attempted visit in the same year in the Susquehanna, (16) provoked many highly emotional accounts of the revolutionaries in Nanking. A contributor to the British Quarterly Review who examined British Parliamentary Papers Relating to the Civil War in China of 1853 commented in November 1853 concerning Bonham and Meadows's diplomacy in April in Nanking. This writer agreed with Bonham that in March 1853 there was

"some danger of misunderstanding, owing to suspicions which existed in the minds of the rebels that the British were lending assistance to the Tartar cause."

The author considered the mission to Nanking was generally successful:

"everything was fully explained, or at least as far as it was possible to come to a clear understanding with a people who imagine themselves immediate viceregents of divine authority and who pretend to a commission from Heaven to rule all earth."

16. Robert Fortune, A Residence Among the Chinese (London, 1857), p. II.

British civilians in China enjoyed more immediate access than the British Quarterly Review to news of Bonham and Meadows's visit to Nanking. Charles Macfarlane mentioned an extract from Dr. George Hobson's letter on 23 May, 1853, to the Archbishop of Canterbury. This extract described the reaction of a British official in Shanghai to news of Bonham and Meadows's mission to Nanking. While this official did not emphasize Bonham's refusal to go ashore to conduct relations with the Taiping Eastern and Northern Kings, (B) this official was impressed by Taiping curiosity about foreign visitors:

"The steamer remained at Nankin some six days, during which time numerous visits were interchanged between the ship's people and the rebel chiefs, and thousands of people came to look at the vessel. They are Christians in every sense of the word, but they pretend to a new revelation, commissioning them to eradicate evil from the earth and restore China to the worship of the only true God."

However, this official was uncertain about Taiping religious practices.

In his letter to Hobson, he concluded, summarizing the visit of the Hermes to Nanking, that

"they [the Taipings] present a most astonishing compound of truth and error.... and the fact is, we scarcely know sufficient of them, even now, to judge what they truly are, and what they intend."

Before Hobson sent the letter of 23 May, 1853, to the Archbishop of Canterbury, the British chaplain in Shanghai also wrote to Hobson of the visit of the Hermes to Nanking. This chaplain had already determined that British missionary interests had not been properly

B. On the morning of 30 April, 1853, Taiping chieftains prepared to meet Sir George Bonham on shore and to take him to the residences of the Northern and Eastern Princes in Nanking. Bonham did not attend and sent an excuse of inclement weather. See Appendix B, p. 289.

represented on this mission:

"The Hermes had a good deal of intercourse with these men of a pleasant kind. They are quite willing we should trade with China, but by no means bring opium. Unfortunately, there was no missionary on board, and we are indebted to our good friend Captain Fishbourne for so much information on the subject of their religion." (17)

Parliamentary Papers Relating to the Civil War in China was presented on 5 August, 1853, to the House of Lords. It contained a collection of despatches between Bonham and Meadows and the insurgents, Bonham and Meadows's evaluation of the insurrection, and Walter Medhurst's (Senior) evaluation of various Taiping extracts. This body of materials was generally available to interested observers in Great Britain. Most British observers were briefly satisfied with this "Blue Book".

For example, in July 1855, an article in the British Quarterly Review cited an extract from Commander Fishbourne's book, Impressions of China. This extract showed that Fishbourne had access to materials contained in Parliamentary Papers Relating to the Civil War in China of 1853. Fishbourne mentioned that

"there is a remarkable passage in the letter which was written by the two insurgent generals or chiefs at Chin-Kiang-foo, in answer to the letter of Sir George Bonham."

After citing the extract from the Taiping chieftains, (B) Fishbourne

17. E.M., Vol. 31, loc. cit., p. 105; and Macfarlane, op. cit., p. 120. The issue of Taiping religious and political sovereignty over European nations, cited in November 1853 in the British Quarterly Review, probably referred to Bonham's impressions of the Yellow Silk Document in a despatch of Bonham of 11 May, 1853, to Clarendon. See Appendix B, pp. 224-225.

B. This extract was taken from a letter in April 1853 of Lo Ta-kang and Woo Joo-heaou, Chief Director of the Palace, and officer of the Boards and general in the Taiping army respectively to Sir George Bonham. See Appendix B, pp. 77-78 for an extract from the original despatch to Bonham.

continued:

"This argues an early appreciation and acceptance of the truths of Christianity....I was satisfied from the first that they were written by persons who better understood and more appreciated the scheme of Christianity than do people constituting the mass of Christendom."

In October 1855, the author of an article in the Edinburgh Review entitled "Political Disturbances in China" had examined the "Blue Book", Relating to the Civil War in China. Like the account in November 1853 in the British Quarterly Review, the author of this account was most specifically concerned with the Taiping claim to political and religious sovereignty over all peoples. While not commenting about other areas of Bonham and Meadows's diplomacy in April 1853 with the Taipings, the writer criticized this Taiping claim:

"it appears that, in the interview of the Chinese Secretary in Sir George Bonham's suite with the Northern Prince, it was explained in writing by that Prince to the English Ambassador that Taipingwang, the Lord of China, is the second son of God, and all people in the world must obey and follow him." (18)

Several British missionaries examined the Taiping documents given to Bonham and Meadows at Nanking. Walter Medhurst's (Senior) conclusions and his subsequent full translation of these documents became available

18. E.Q.R., Vol. 22, loc. cit., p. 129 and E.R., Vol. 102, October 1855, "Political Disturbances in China", p. 368. Further discussion of Fishbourne's observations concerning the Taipings follows below, pp. 156-158. See E.P.P. 1853, Relating to the Civil War...., Enclosure No. 1 in No. 6, "Conversation with two Officers, the bearers of a Mandate", in Bonham's despatch of 11 May, 1853, to Clarendon, p. 28. This Enclosure mentions two officials who on the afternoon of the 28th of April delivered

"an open and unsealed mandate concerning the forms to be observed by those who wished to appear at Court."

This despatch also contained the terminology, "the Lord of all Nations", and the "Lord of China" which the E.R. used in the October 1855 article.

shortly after Bonham and Meadows's mission in April. Bonham approved of Medhurst's translations and praised the

"able supervision of Rev. Dr. Medhurst, whose familiarity with these matters and just appreciation of the real meaning of the text I could depend on."

Medhurst repaid Bonham's attention by publicizing Bonham's interpretation of the religious and political claims of the insurgents. Like Bonham, he wrote of a

"suspicion that the Chief of the insurrection has arrogated to himself a direct connection with the Deity, in order to overawe his followers and make them subservient to his will."

Beginning in mid-1853, certain British writers credited Medhurst's translations with helping them form their opinions concerning the Taipings. In November 1853, a contributor to the British Quarterly Review wrote about the availability of Medhurst's translations:

"A supply of them [Taiping religious documents] was obtained by the parties who visited them in the Hermes as well as by other persons and these Dr. Medhurst has translated. Extracts from them have appeared so commonly in the newspapers that we shall merely attempt here a brief summary of their contents."

Moreover, in September 1853, an article in Chambers's Journal, entitled "The Rebellion in China", implied that both the "Blue Book" and Medhurst's translations had been relied upon to describe the religious life of the Taipings:

"We are now prepared to comprehend to some extent the news brought to us, from time to time, of the Chinese rebellion, coloured though it usually is by the party feelings of its transmitters. We are told for instance that the present dynasty should receive at least indirect support from England because of numerous benefits the Chinese have derived from it."

".... we are not aware, however, of any extraordinary success of the Protestant missionaries; although it would be no marvel if the Chinese went over, almost in a body, to some faith- for they can hardly be said to have one of their own."

"In the meantime, the rebels have already their classic of the new religion."

Having read the reports from China, the writer of this article gave an interpretation of the insurrectionary movement:

"The revolution is not the work of individuals but of public opinion, and this public opinion is the expression of the feeling of misgovernment."

".... how far this new faith has penetrated into the mighty population of China we cannot tell, but it does not look like a system that will yield readily to disasters in war or persecution after defeat."

It appears that British civilians in China gained access to Taiping religious documents almost immediately after Bonham and Meadows returned in early May of 1853 to Shanghai. The British chaplain of Shanghai wrote to George Hobson before Hobson's letter of 23 May, 1853, to the Archbishop of Canterbury. This chaplain formed the following opinions concerning Taiping Christianity after reading Taiping religious documents:

"The rebels are really a body of Christians! That is to say they have renounced idolatry, worship Jehovah and Jesus, and believe in the Trinity! I have several of their books now lying before me; one is the Book of Genesis; another is an almanac with all the Sabbath days marked."

".... the religion however of these men is, as we might expect, mixed up with much superstition and peculiar Chinese notions. They seem to hold a notion of supremacy all over the world."

James Legge also had access to the Taiping religious documents obtained by Bonham and Meadows. His letter in 1853 to the Hong Kong Register concluded:

"But one thing is plain, the latter works published, excepting the Calendar, are the most objectionable."

In November 1853, the British Quarterly Review presented more evidence that Legge based his opinions about Taiping religious character from a study of Taiping religious documents:

"It is observed by Dr. Legge that they [the Taipings] exult in the idea of immortality as but recently brought to light among them. How far they are practically influenced by the doctrine of future rewards and punishments remains yet to be ascertained." (19)

Beginning in mid-1853, Medhurst's translations of Taiping documents were more generally referred to by British writers than other British civilian accounts from China. Walter Medhurst's (Senior) appeal to the energy, finances, and manpower of the British home religious community was based upon careful analysis and full translations of Taiping documents. This appeal entitled "General Views of the Insurgents" was found in Parliamentary Papers Relating to the Civil War in China of 1853.

In this account, Medhurst fully accepted Bonham's interpretation that religious fanaticism attracted followers to the Taiping camp and determined their loyalty to the Taiping King. Medhurst nevertheless drew the British public's attention to examples of Taiping political

19. For the commentary of Bonham and Medhurst on p. 71, see B.P.P. 1853, LXIX, Relating to the Civil War..., No. 6, Bonham's despatch of 11 May, 1853, p. 25 and Enclosure No. 10, in No. 6, "General Views of the Insurgents", of Walter H. Medhurst, in Bonham's despatch of 11 May, 1853, to Clarendon, p. 42.

For the observations on pp. 71-73 which refer to Medhurst's translations and to Taiping religious documents, see Macfarlane, op. cit., pp. 121-122, the views of James Legge in E.M., Vol. 31, loc. cit., pp. 107-108, E.R., Vol. 102, loc. cit., p. 356, E.Q.R., July 1855, Vol. 22, loc. cit., p. 121, and C.J., Vol. 20, 10 September, 1853, No. 506, "The Rebellion in China", p. 165.

wisdom. Medhurst felt that this factor, if not discouraged by official foreign intervention, could lead to favourable political results in the nation:

"It would be sad to see Christian nations engaged in putting down the movement as the insurgents possess an energy and a tendency towards improvement and general reform (as witness their calendar) which the Imperialists never have exhibited and never can be expected to display." (20)

In July 1853, Callery and Yuan's book, Histoire de L'Insurrection En Chine, appeared in French. This work openly discussed issues on which British readers were sensitive. After careful examination of such issues, the authors implied that it would be unworthy for British civilians to extend British interests beyond the foreign settlement areas of the treaty ports.

First, referring to the First Opium War, Callery and Yuan did not understand how the British could claim to be treating the Chinese fairly.

Initially, they implied that the Tao-kuang Emperor's Chinese ministers were insensitive to inevitable political change following the dissolution in 1834 by the British Government of the monopoly of trading privileges of the East India Company in China:

"But when the moment for modifying ancient institutions has inevitably arrived, the exclusive attachment of this party [conservative elements in a nation] to things of the past becomes really dangerous.... the agents of Tao-kuang, thoroughly Chinese in their ideas and filled with a proud disdain for barbarian nations, involved their country in a disastrous war because they did not see that the moment was come when they should descend from that diplomatic elevation where their presumption and the endurance of Europeans had so long maintained them."

Insensitivity to political change occurred again in the early years of the reign of the Hsien-feng Emperor:

20. E.P.P. 1853, LXIX, op.cit., Enclosure No. 10, in No. 6, "General View of the Insurgents", p. 43.

"At a later period the same spirit of resistance to the exigencies of the time caused the insurrectional movement of which we are about to treat."

According to Callery and Yvam, Chinese insensitivity to political change was a primary cause of hostilities with the British Government and of native insurrection in the interior of China. They implied that the privileges of British civilians in China were won by a disgraceful naval and military campaign from 1839 to 1842. Callery and Yvam wrote:

"the fire-ships and the blazing gourd(bombs) made the enthusiastic populace [of Canton] think more coolly, and they stopped prudently at home."

Another section of their commentary implied that British civilian privileges in China were granted only after the British Government's disgraceful military campaigns.

"In spite of all the opposition of the 'Son of Heaven', the war in China against England resulted in bringing Chinese diplomacy, to a certain extent, within the compass of the political movement of the West, and the experience which cost Tao-kouang so dear afforded no instruction to his successor."

Callery and Yvam were particularly interested in British official and civilian conduct prior to the Opium War. They pointed out to their French readers the conduct of both British merchants and the former Superintendent of Trade, Sir John Davis. The obvious implication from their reading of events was that British complicity in the Chinese opium trade led in 1839 to the provocation of hostilities. Such hostilities inevitably resulted in treaty privileges in China for British civilians:

"The representatives of the Company [East India Company] were, for the most part, clever merchants, and nothing more, and the one among them, who has of late acquired the most celebrity- namely- Sir John Davis - was more distinguished for his literary attainments than his national susceptibility."

According to Callery and Yvan, the tone of Sino-British relations changed with the abolition in 1834 of the East India Company's monopoly:

"So long as the mandarins had to deal directly with agents of the East India Company, they could without danger assume a disdainful tone, for such a tone inflicted no deep wound on men devoted solely to their commercial interests. But when Lin [Lin Tse-hsu] came suddenly into contact with the representatives of a government jealous of its dignity, he struck against a rock which he little expected."

Callery and Yvan observed that French public opinion was critical of British civilian and ~~official~~ conduct prior to and during the First Opium War in China:

"In France, where ideas are not always correct, it is a settled point that the English were wrong in the opium war, and the cause of right suffered in the treaty of Nankin."

Though Callery and Yvan denied this impression, they cast doubt upon the propriety of legitimate British commerce on the China coast at a time when certain civilians in Britain were just beginning to anticipate the value of a wider Chinese market. Callery and Yvan implied that the French should regard British commercial activities in China in the same way as they regarded English smuggling activities off the French coast:

"The English carried on a contraband trade on the coasts of the Celestial Empire similar to the smuggling which takes place on the coast of France."
(21)

Secondly, Callery and Yvan noted the activities of Charles Gutzlaff and his Chinese Union to distribute the Scriptures and to evangelize Chinese civilians in the interior of China.

Charles Macfarlane's book, The Chinese Revolution, refers directly to an extract from Dr. Yvan. This extract suggests that Yvan understood, by the time of publication of Histoire de L'Insurrection en Chine, that

21. Callery and Yvan, History...., with a supplementary chapter by John Orenford, pp. 5-9, pp. 276-277.

Protestant missionaries in China might attract native converts in the interior if the Chinese people were convinced that the Taiping Rebellion originated from, or was influenced by, contact with Protestant missionaries, such as Gutzlaff and his China Union. Macfarlane illustrated:

"Dr. Yvan says, 'It is the Chinese Union, the Secret Society founded by Gutzlaff, that is still held up by the Chinese as the cause of the civil war - it is still Chang-ti, that is to say the Protestants, and they alone, who are accused of having first raised the standard of revolt.'" (22)

Gallery and Yvan (like Abbé Huc a year later) suggested that British Protestant Christianity had little effect upon Hung Hsiu-ch'uan and the Taiping chieftains.

Another extract from Gallery and Yvan's History, used by Macfarlane, showed that Gallery and Yvan understood that Protestant missionaries in China could further religious endeavours in the interior. According to Gallery and Yvan, there was a greater opportunity for Protestant missionaries to influence the Chinese because of the association being made in China between the teachings of Protestant missionaries and the continued success of Taiping armies. For Gallery and Yvan, any increase in Protestant missionary activities in the interior was deplorable:

"We cannot say how far these insinuations proceed from truth; but it would be very singular if the same fact produced itself at the same time in the whole world in effect, while the Roman Catholic nations seem to be dazing in Europe, the Protestant nations awake, increase, act, and take the greatest place in this vast universe."

Macfarlane implied from Yvan's commentary that:

"it is evident that he (Dr. Yvan) is not disinclined to believe (though he will not positively assert) that these Protestants have really given the rebellion its chief impetus."

Further examination of Callery and Yvan's History indicates that these Frenchmen had only minimal interest in the communication before 1850 between Hung Hsiu-ch'uan and other Taiping chieftains and Protestant missionaries.³ Callery and Yvan implied that good influences of Protestant Christianity did not impel Chinese civilians, such as Hung Hsiu-ch'uan, to seek the acquaintance of Protestant missionaries:

"The Chinese 'men of letters' at Canton, who had hitherto cared but little for the social organization of the West, wished now to be initiated into the manners and customs of their conquerors. For this purpose they made themselves acquainted with the Protestant ministers, whom they had hitherto neglected, and it was about this time that Gutzlaff formed his celebrated Chinese Union. From this time a number of disciples of Confucius became adherents of the Anglo-Saxon Chang-ti. Being thus members of the great Christian family they entered anew the Chinese catacombs, but they were now armed cap-a-pie to wage a double war against the authority of the Tartars."

For Callery and Yvan, Chinese native insurgency was rooted in political dissatisfaction with the policies from 1850 of the Hsien-feng Emperor.⁴ Callery and Yvan found, as has been shown above, that insensitivity to political change of the Hsien-feng Emperor's Chinese ministers was the factor which caused the Taiping Rebellion.

A second book, The Chinese Empire, which appeared in 1855 in English, supported the findings of Callery and Yvan. The author, Abbé Huc, had recently returned to Paris after travels throughout the interior of China.⁵ Huc concluded that the Protestant religious community should take no credit for the religious writings and beliefs of the Taipings:

"We do not, however, give the slightest credit to the alleged Christianity of the insurgents, and the religious and mystical sentiments expressed in their manifestoes inspire us with no great confidence. It is by no means necessary to have recourse to the Protestant propaganda to account for the more or less Christian ideas remarked in the

proclamations of the revolutionary Chinese."(23)

These claims were particularly offensive to many British journalists and to British civilians interested in native insurgency in China. Many of these British observers apparently felt that failure to correct the conclusions of Callery and Yvan and Abbé Huc might discourage citizens in Britain from supporting the efforts of British missionaries and other citizens in China to improve the economic and moral life of the Chinese in the interior.³

To such journalists and civilians in Britain, Callery and Yvan²⁴ and Abbé Huc's accounts indicated that Frenchmen did not believe in the value of British endeavour in the interior of China to advance British interests. The observations presented by these Frenchmen conflicted strongly with reports of the Taiping insurgents received beginning in mid-1853 from other sources.

From mid-1853, many British journalists and civilians examined available materials from China. Two major alternatives for British writers emerged. They could accept either the view of Callery and Yvan and Abbé Huc that the Taiping Rebellion was merely an expression of political dissent with the Manchu regime or the view of Walter Medhurst (Senior), James Legge, and other British civilians that the Taipings were a body of men who visibly represented masses of Chinese civilians eager to form contacts with British civilians and to partake of British civilized life. This latter alternative was a more convincing explanation of renewed Chinese civilian interest after 1842 in Protestant religious

23. For materials appearing on pp. 77-79 of the text, see Macfarlane, *op.cit.*, p. 85, Callery and Yvan, *History*, p. 277, and *F.M.*, Vol. 51, April 1855, "Huc's China", p. 412.

activities and of political rebellion from 1850.

Almost immediately after Bonham and Meadows's return to Shanghai with Taiping religious documents, British civilians in China concluded with satisfaction that Roman Catholic missionaries would be unwelcome in Nanking. In a letter to Hobson, prior to Hobson's letter of 23 May, 1853, to the Archbishop of Canterbury, the British chaplain in Shanghai commented:

"It is strange that the rebels do not seem to have any intercourse with the Romanists; they are most uncompromising iconoclasts."

Commander Fishbourne's Impressions of China also sought to minimize the amount of influence the Jesuits had with the Taiping rebels. Fishbourne wrote:

"I would not be understood to say that the Roman Catholic missionaries have not contributed towards the general result; because everything that tended to question the truth of their [Taiping] whole system-philosophical, social, religious- had that effect; but their influence was small in proportion; as they conformed or allowed conformity to heathen practice in their worship."(24)

By mid-1853, the new accounts from China and controversial works, including material about the Chinese in the interior and the insurgents, caused British writers to describe to their readers opportunities for British civilians to travel among the Chinese, impress that people with British Protestantism and the British political heritage, distribute British goods, and begin humanitarian projects.(25)

24. Macfarlane, op.cit., p. 121, and E.Q.R., Vol. 22, July 1855, loc.cit., p. 129.

25. F.M., Vol. 48, loc.cit., p. 606, and E.R., Vol. 102, loc.cit., p. 346. A wider discussion of the position of the Edinburgh Review and Fraser's Magazine follows of pp. 86-106, 110-112, 112-122.

At the same time, British journalists and other writers admitted that there was much within Taiping religious observances that was of a questionable nature.⁽²⁶⁾ They concluded that there were many examples of Taiping moral conduct which did not satisfy the individual discipline demanded of a convert to Western Protestantism.⁽²⁷⁾ With reference to Western political tradition in the nineteenth century, they also observed that Taiping political structures did not include many of the essentials of revolutionary government.

Gallery and Yvan's History gave many observers in Britain a precise picture of Taiping government. The following extracts from their History describe Taiping governments. Citing an account from a Chinese observer, they wrote:

"The cortege of the new Emperor recalled to my mind the scenes which are represented in our theatres and those pieces in which we see the heroes of ancient times who lived before we submitted to the Tartar yoke."

Having cited this Chinese account of the Taipings, Gallery and Yvan continued:

"Tien-ta, on the contrary, has organized his political system by so marshalling existing interests as to secure devoted agents. Affable to all, he has only one intimate adviser."

".... violence is foreign to the Pretender's character. He speaks on all subjects with moderation, and it is only with the greatest reserve that he alludes to the monarch whose rival he has become.... while his

26. See, for example, the Times of London of 5 January, 1854. Refer to the naval officer's article of 25 October, 1853, from Amoy. See especially the following:

"No doubt some of the rebels do the same ([consume opium] but this does not appear to be common among them. Opium was and is a luxury, and therefore never common among the poorer classes."

27. H.M. Vell. 31, loc.cit., p. 106 and p. 107 for the admission of James Leggs.

generals advance, conquering cities and acquiring new territory, he remains in the background, watching the position of the people of each district and organizing his political system." (28)

Nevertheless, from mid-1853 until the Arrow War, British writers favourable to the Taipings disregarded criticism of political, religious, and moral life in the Taiping kingdom. Instead, they directed British attention to the encouraging news that the Taipings were Eastern Christians. (29) These Taiping Christians promised to tolerate British civilian activities in their kingdom, to accept religious materials from British Protestants, (30) to accept British imports, and to permit foreign travel in the interior. (31)

In the Supplementary Chapter to Callery and Yvan's History, Oxford admitted, however, that after Dr. Charles Taylor's visit in June 1853 to Nanking, the Taipings could honour their promise of foreign travel in the interior only after the Taipings vanquished the Manchu regime. Oxford took this view from a conversation at Chinkiang of the Taiping general with Mr. Taylor:

"We suppose that you, gentlemen, [referring to Taylor's party who arrived on June 5, 1853] are well acquainted with the signs of the times, so that we need not enlarge on that subject; but while we, on our parts, do not prohibit commercial intercourse, we merely observe that since the two parties are now engaged in warfare, the going to and fro is accompanied with inconvenience; and judging from the present aspect of affairs, we should deem it better to wait a few months until we have thoroughly destroyed the Tartars, when, perhaps, the subjects of your honourable nation could go and come without being involved in the tricks of these false Tartars." (32)

28. Callery and Yvan, History..., pp. 41-43. See also E.M., Vol. 31, loc. cit., p. 106.

29. E.M., Vol. 31, loc. cit., p. 102, p. 108, p. 110.

30. See, for example, Macfarlane, op. cit., p. 122.

31. See, for example, E.M., Vol. 31, loc. cit., p. 105, p. 106.

32. Callery and Yvan, History..., pp. 327-328.

Despite Oxenford's evidence of Taiping reservations about British travel in inland China, many British writers encouraged British entry into the Chinese interior. They wrote accounts and some even conducted activities under the aura of what appeared to be almost certain Taiping military victory.⁽³³⁾

3. British Accounts of the Taipings 1853 - 1856

A. British Periodical Accounts 1853 - 1856

I. Introduction

Articles appearing in British journals, which took some notice of the civil war or the British position from 1853 to 1862 in China, require analysis in depth. In certain articles, concerning the Taipings, an author's concluding statement often had no connection with the materials and opinions he included in the body of the article. Occasionally, an objective criticism accompanied a passionate but well-reasoned argument for importing British civilization into the interior of China. Such articles often contained two opposing approaches to native insurgency in China. A reader of such accounts should be aware that well-meaning criticism from an editor or publisher and even the

33. For the enthusiasm of James Legge, see E.M., Vol. 31, loc. cit., p. 113. Bishop Hobson spoke of China as, 'her younger sister in the common family of Christendom'. See Macfarlane, op. cit., p. 120. Walter Medhurst (Senior) openly advocated British support for the Taipings. He suggested that

".... it is possible that European nations, if engaged on the opposite side, will be going to war with some people in some respects better than ourselves."

See E.P.F. 1853, LXIX, op. cit., Enclosure No. 10, in No. 6, "General View....", p. 43. Commander Fishbourne of the Hermes supported Taiping survival and British Protestant missionary endeavours. See B.Q.R., Vol. 22, loc. cit., p. 132, p. 133.

necessity to be in print before further accounts arrived from China were factors which might have influenced a writer to include contradictory statements about the Taipings. As two interpretations of the Taipings are possible in a single article, it is difficult to describe such a writer as an open supporter or a critic of the Taipings until more information becomes available concerning how the particular article was printed.

There are several examples of this type of article in materials consulted. The author of "The Revolution in China" in the British Quarterly Review worried that events in China would interrupt the plans, described in the body of his article, for British civilians to enter Taiping-occupied areas:

"The Christian public should however be cautioned not to expect the whole empire is disposed to sympathize in the religious views of the insurgents or prepared to renounce their superstitions."

One suspects this journalist was waiting for further news from China when his article appeared. He apparently reviewed his own findings and concluded:

"we suspect that the religious portion of the revolution is in great part, if not altogether, confined to the literati and the army." (34)

British journalists who argued that revolution was impossible in contemporary China also included short favourable mention of Taiping achievements. In an article in January 1854 entitled "The Past and Future of China" and in an article in May 1854 entitled "The National Life of China", a contributor to Blackwood's opposed any movement in

34. E.M., Vol. 31, loc.cit., p. 114.

January or May 1854 in China which might destroy the Confucian tradition..

He did however appear to assess the great opportunities during the disturbances in the interior for extending British influence beyond the treaty ports:

"A new religion and civilization now stand at the door and knock. And be it said, we know no country in the world where the people are so well fitted by their own native training to appreciate them."

"What if [China] has hitherto wanted its new ideas-- and now it is about to get them.... it is otherwise nowadays, and China is likely to benefit from change but now that her people have grown like sands on the sea-shore for multitude, and steam has become the peaceful, "Locomotive of principles", China is opened. Often as she has reformed herself before, the present is her true second birth." (35)

As in the case of Blackwood's in January or May 1854, some journalists did not support the political, religious, or economic plans of the Taipings, which disrupted Chinese life. Yet they did support equally disruptive British political, religious, or economic plans for the Chinese of the interior.

It is difficult to interpret either of the preceding journalists as a Taiping supporter or Taiping critic. Because one tends to interpret a specific journal as either favourable or hostile to an issue, such as revolution in China, it is a relief for the reader and enlightening that certain British journals in the mid-Victorian period published materials which were by no means opinionated or limited to one approach.

35. B.M., Vol. 75, January 1854, "The Past and Future of China", pp. 72-73, and May 1854, "The National Life of China", p. 608. R.H. Patterson was the author of both of these articles.

2. The Primary Article 1853

A. The Type of Commitment

How much support did British journalists express in late 1853 for the insurgents' campaign to seize political control in China?

In November 1853, an article in the British Quarterly Review was cautiously optimistic that the Taipings would succeed in China.⁽³⁶⁾ In the same month, an article entitled "~~The Insurrection in China~~" in Fraser's Magazine was less favourable to the political and religious elements of Taiping rule, but in the conclusion of the account, the success of the Rebellion was considered possible.⁽³⁷⁾

In July 1853, the Edinburgh Review published an article, "Relations of England with China", written by Joseph Beaumont. He expressed no definite support for the Taipings as agents of political and commercial change in the interior. He did take notice of Taiping political and commercial endeavours and was moderately interested in Taiping efforts to accomplish political and commercial revolution.⁽³⁸⁾ However this author wholeheartedly supported Sir John Davis's opinions. Davis later became a studious critic of Taiping endeavours.⁽³⁹⁾

36. F.M., Vol. 31, loc. cit., p. 99, p. 112.

37. F.M., Vol. 48, loc. cit., p. 599, p. 606.

38. E.R., Vol. 98, loc. cit., p. 99, pp. 103-105.

39. Ibid., p. 100, p. 107. See John F. Davis, China: A General Description of that Empire and its Inhabitants (2 vols. London, 1857), Vol. 1, p. 176 and Vol. 2, Appendix: The Tae-Ping Rebellion, for Davis's opposition to the Taipings, such as,

"it is possible, at the same time, that they have been impelled by fanaticism and began by deceiving themselves." (p. 413)

An article in Blackwood's Magazine, "The Insurrection in China", by Frederick Hardman evaluated the potential for survival of the Taipings on the basis of Callery and Yvan's work, which appeared the month before. Although curious about Taiping political and military endeavours in the civil war, the author was more critical than Fraser's Magazine in November 1853 of the Taiping political philosophy of revolution. He found errors in Taiping military strategy. He stressed that unlike Western revolutionaries of the mid-nineteenth century, the Taipings abandoned strategic centres on their march to Nanking and he believed that such action would prove a costly oversight for Taiping generals. (40)

The author of an article of 10 September, 1853, in Chambers's Journal attacked Taiping efforts to seize political authority. He attempted to correct a common assumption in Britain that rebellion was a novel occurrence in China by indicating that the Taiping Rebellion was only one of a series of dynastic disturbances, which were common in Chinese history. Like past uprisings, the function of the Taiping movement was to check the excesses of Imperial Government and then, according to tradition, vanish. According to this writer, although the Taipings would never gain control of China, their endeavours influenced the Emperor to appreciate Western political thought. (41)

In the early months of 1854, the Times of London gave generous attention to the Taipings. The Times particularly concentrated on news

40. B.M., Vol. 74, loc. cit., p. 211, pp. 214-215.

41. C.J., Vol. 20, No. 506, 10 September, 1853, p. 163, p. 166.

which affected the good health of the London and Manchester business communities.

For a time, it looked as though "rebellion in China" was the event needed to stabilize the British money market and many British China-coast enterprises. British merchants were left in Shanghai and other treaty ports with a negligible market for British import goods because of a general flight of Chinese civilians from the treaty ports. The demand for Chinese export goods remained high so that the supply of silver had to be replenished during 1853 from Britain. In issues of the Times in early 1854, news of the rebels from the Times' correspondents in Hong Kong, Amoy, and Bombay and from staff members in London suspiciously accompanied the closing diminished quotations of British import sales from Shanghai and Canton. Although Chinese export goods continued to arrive at the treaty ports from the interior, it was advantageous for correspondents to the Times to consider that Taiping campaigns were harming China's business life. As a result, the Times of early 1854 contained few objective reports of the Taipings. (42)

42. For notice of how rebellion in China affected an outward flow of silver to Shanghai and Canton and of the commercial health in July 1853 of the London business community, see the Times, 2 January, 1854, "Money Market and City Intelligence- Commercial Retrospect", p. 8. For a report on how the Rebellion affected the Cantonese trade of British merchants, see Ibid., 12 January, 1854, Second Edition, "Commercial Intelligence - Canton Market Report", p. 7, especially:

"Money is not so scarce and improvement would probably take place in the price of goods, if not checked by reported disturbances in the neighbouring districts."

See also the report of an observer in Canton in the Times, 20 January, 1854, Second Edition, p. 10 in an article entitled "The Contest in China". See especially the following:

In early 1854, there was one-favourable account in the Times of the Taipings. (43)

B. Why Periodical Material in 1853 on the Taipings

Most journalists knew by the end of 1853 why they supported or opposed the Taipings.

In 1853, a writer in the British Quarterly Review discussed specific plans to further Western Protestant Christianity in China. He argued that once Protestant missionaries gave the Word of God to the Chinese in Taiping-occupied areas, the Chinese in these areas would willingly receive British goods and welcome British scholars and travellers to their homes. (44)

He heartily advised his readers to support the New Testament scheme. He was confident that with necessary financial assistance from Britain, Protestant missionaries could supply the Taipings with Chinese Bibles, and that these native Chinese converts, once supplied with

"The southern band of rebels are now in the heart of the tea districts and may check not only the further exports for this season, but that for the next."

"... but the question arises will the capitalists risk their money in districts where the law is set at defiance, and where tumults only raise so many bandits to waylay property and seize it, if money, or levy blackmail, if produce."

"In imports we may look for little improvement in manufactured goods until confidence or peace is established..."

The Hong Kong correspondent was critical of Taiping promises to foreigners. See the Times, 28 February, 1854, Second Edition, "China", p. 10, but he too spoke of the commercial health of the China-coast settlement as it was affected by rebellion. See Ibid., 13 February, 1854, Second Edition, "Commercial Intelligence - Canton Market", p. 10 and Ibid., 28 February, 1854, Second Edition, "China", p. 10, especially:

"... and all [the British merchant community in Amoy] were anxiously looking forward to what the Chinese New Year would bring, being so much disappointed in their expectations of good business after the recapture of that city."

Christian literature, would improve Chinese political, commercial, and religious life. A million New Testaments had been published by the British and Foreign Bible Society and the London Missionary Society. These were ready for distribution, and these societies needed only eager subscribers. This writer indicated that the availability of New Testaments would create an intense Chinese demand for them. Such a demand could then be easily satisfied because of Taiping promises to open the interior to Western civilization. (45)

Moreover, he remarked that British Protestant missionaries were not advancing their faith in China to the fullest of their abilities. To meet what he saw as a clear demand of the Chinese masses for Protestant Christianity, Protestant missionaries should allow Chinese Christians to distribute Protestant tracts and conduct the evangelization of the masses in the interior. (46)

In November 1853, the contributor to Fraser's Magazine was less forthright about his interests than the writer in the British Quarterly Review. The journalist in Fraser's corrected Gallery and Yvan's argument that there was no connection between insurgent contact before 1850 with the Protestant missionary community and the later success of insurgency in the interior. Although the writer did not advise the

43. See the naval officer's report of 25 October, 1853, from Amoy, in the Times of 5 January, 1854, p. 8.

44. H.M., Vol. 31, loc. cit., p. 106, p. 110, p. 111, p. 114.

45. Ibid., pp. 110-111.

46. Ibid., pp. 113-114.

the expansion of Protestant missions in China, he did assume it was knowledge of the Protestant faith before 1850 which led Taiping leaders to seek political change. Fraser's Magazine, however, was chiefly interested in this rebellion as it created an opportunity for a possible extension of British commercial interests in the interior. In December 1854, another article in Fraser's was chiefly concerned with unlimited travel for foreigners in the interior of China and with the commercial revolution which should follow. (47)

In July 1853, a writer in the Edinburgh Review had reasons for not supporting Chinese insurgency. He pointed out the upcoming treaty revision, scheduled for 1854, between Great Britain and the Imperial Chinese Court. This writer suggested commercial concessions to be gained by the British Government in negotiation with the Imperialists. He felt that the legalization of opium would be most amenable to all parties. (48)

This writer recognized, as did the editors and correspondents of the Times in early 1854, that rebellion in China could influence the economic stability of Great Britain. (49) He advocated closer co-operation in the upcoming treaty revision ~~between~~ officials of Great Britain, France, and America. He emphasized that immediate access to Chinese markets in the interior should be the basic demand of British negotiators. (50) The

47. See F.M., Vol. 48, loc. cit., p. 598, especially the following:

"The men of letters" at Canton, easy and indolent, had hitherto neglected or despised the learning of the West. Our triumph in the opium war awakened their dormant curiosity. They sought the acquaintance of Protestant missionaries." See also Vol. 50, December, 1854, "Siam and its Distinguished Princes", p. 695.

48. E.R., Vol. 98, loc. cit., p. 129. For suggestions concerning the legalization of opium, see Ibid., p. 114, p. 117, p. 124, p. 129.

49. Ibid., p. 126.

Taipings" promise in April 1853 to accept British goods proved to this writer that the Chinese in Taiping-occupied areas wanted to establish regular trade with British merchants.

This journalist believed that British merchants were taking the wrong approach to potential China trade. What he felt was primarily needed was advanced Western marketing techniques, British supervision of a cottage industry in China, full adoption of Western technological innovations, and studies by British firms of Chinese marketing. (51)

He remained confident that British commerce would be the wedge to open up the Chinese interior to Western civilization. Politically, the Edinburgh Review of July 1853 was less ambitious. The imposition of a standard of honesty into the regime of the Emperor was considered sufficient political improvement. (52)

In August 1853, in an article entitled "The Insurrection in China", a writer in Blackwood's Magazine was unable to offer full support to insurgency in China. He was anxious for Western scholars to gain access to the secrets of the Chinese interior and to scrutinize Chinese historical documents. He was envious that Gallery and Ivan obtained access to the interior of China and to the Taipings before a British observer and wrote somewhat urgently in August 1853 to expose them.

50. For recommendations for closer co-operation among the powers, see E.R., Vol. 98, loc. cit., pp. 98-99. For awareness of the value of immediate British access to the interior, see Ibid., pp. 106-107, p. 110, p. 113, p. 119, p. 129.

51. Ibid., pp. 112-113.

52. For confidence, that British goods could open Chinese markets, see Ibid., p. 114, pp. 130-131. For recommendations concerning Chinese government, see Ibid., p. 103.

French prejudices to British readers. He commented specifically concerning the reliability of Callery and Yvan's account:

" when we add that both gentlemen, although at present in France, were long and lately resident in China, under circumstances peculiarly favourable to acquisition of sound information respecting its state and politics, and that they have had free access to the archives of their embassy.... the co-operation of one well-acquainted with the Chinese tongue [M. Callery] must have been invaluable and perhaps indispensable to Dr. Yvan."

The writer in Blackwood's recommended that his readers interpret carefully Callery and Yvan's writings. He noted that an extract from a Taiping Proclamation alarmed these two gentlemen. The Proclamation read in part:

"As to those stupid priests of Buddha and the jugglers of Tao-se they shall all be repressed, and their temples and their monasteries shall be demolished, as well as those of all other corrupt sects."

The writer in Blackwood's wrote concerning this Proclamation that

"MM. Callery and Yvan anxiously speculate as to who are designated by the words other corrupt sects. Was the proclamation drawn up by a disciple of Confucius, or by a member of Gutzlaff's Chinese Union? They [Callery and Yvan] admit that for the present it is impossible to answer the question." (53)

In August 1853, this journalist believed the Taipings would have no difficulty absorbing Western military techniques if these insurgents were capable of honouring their promises to welcome foreigners to Nanking. However the writer was eager to see the Chinese Imperial administration refashioned by the Emperor to follow Western political usages. (54) This journalist was as concerned as Fraser's Magazine in November 1853 to continue British Protestant missionary enterprise in China, and he did show interest in any movement for the legalization

53. B.M., Vol. 74, loc. cit., p. 203, p. 219.

54. Ibid., p. 211 for the journal's eagerness to promote Western military techniques. See Ibid., p. 204, pp. 211-212 for the political recommendations of the journal for China.

of opium in China.(55)

Another writer in Chambers's Journal was quite definite in his disdain for the Taipings. Although an article in Chambers's Journal of 30 July, 1853, expressed impatience with any nation who dared to isolate itself from the civilization of other nations,(56) this journalists attempted to honestly evaluate reports concerning the insurrection. He denied those which proclaimed that China was experiencing a national liberal revolution, and he could not believe the insurgents would awaken any religious sympathies in the Chinese masses. He observed that organized religious life and faithful religious service were simply not attractive to the Chinese.(57)

However in 1853 Chambers's Journal did argue for the interests of Western scholars. An article entitled "The Wax Insect of China" advocated that Western entomologists should travel to the interior of China to study Chinese natural phenomena.(58)

Articles in early 1854 in the Times should be analysed according to the interests of the correspondent. Writing on December 28, 1853, to the Times, their Bombay correspondent was unable to decide whether the Taiping northern army would survive a winter in the north of China. Although inactivity in Taiping camps and the cold were factors which could keep the Kuangsi men from Peking, this correspondent believed that

55. B.M., Vol. 74, loc.cit., p.216.

56. C.J., Vol. 20, No. 500, 30 July, 1853, "Chinaism in all Countries", pp.65-66.

57. Ibid., Vol. 20, No. 506, loc.cit., p.165.

58. Ibid., Vol. 20, No. 521, 24 December, 1853, "The Wax Insect of China", pp.414-415.

Taiping revolutionary fervour and political ambitions were factors which might push their armies on to Peking. (59) The Times' Hong Kong correspondent was eager to prove the worthlessness of Taiping promises to foreigners. He detected this factor in the De Bourboulon mission of 30 December, 1853, to 7 January, 1854, to Nanking. In his report on 11, January, 1854, this correspondent worried about the safety of the foreign settlement at Shanghai. (60)

C. The Political Significance of Revolution in China

In 1853, British journalists realized the political significance of events taking place in China. The major China article in 1853 of most journals tried to sort out the speculations from the news accounts received concerning the Taipings. Most journalists explained the factors in their judgment which either justified or nullified a projected political revolution in China. Often their evidence was presented with little enthusiasm or was qualified by references to the journal's former conceptions of Chinese life.

The social class of the original Taiping insurgents and the regional limitation to Kuangsi of the original Taiping uprising were frequently discussed by British journalists. The writer in the British Quarterly Review argued that the distance of Kuangsi from Peking had protected the Kuangsi men from the corrupting influence of Imperial politics. (61)

59. The Times, 28 February, 1854, Second Edition, "India and China", p. 10.

60. Ibid., Second Edition, "China", p. 10. Speaking of Taiping reports to De Bourboulon, this correspondent wrote:

"They stated that they had news from Peking that the gates of the city were invested by their adherents, and when it is taken they were likely to proceed to Shanghai."

61. E.M., Vol. 31, loc.cit., p. 99.

The writer in Fraser's Magazine enjoyed ridiculing Imperialists military inefficiency against the Miao warriors, who successfully employed the art of deception against Imperial troops. This writer believed that the hills of Kuangsi presented an ideal romantic background for revolution, but he was disappointed that Hung Hsiu-ch'uan was not, at the beginning of the Rebellion an official of some stature. (62)

While a writer in the Edinburgh Review did not apply his conclusions specifically to the Taipings, he was confident that Chinese officials were untrustworthy. (63) The contributor to Blackwood's was critical of a Chinese racial characteristic: the inability of China's generations to improve their technology. He also mentioned Chinese official deception (64) but had confidence in the military achievements and stamina of the Miao peoples. He noted signs of Taiping military and political genius. (65) As mentioned previously, the Times' Bombay correspondent feared that Kuangsi men in the Taiping northern army would be unable to withstand the winter of 1853 to 1854 in a northern Chinese climate.

Certain British journalists recognized in 1853 that a viable political revolution in China must attract the scholar and landed

62. F.M., Vol. 48, loc. cit., p. 599, p. 605. In this article, Fraser's did not differentiate between the Miao and Hakka peoples of Kuangsi.

63. E.R., Vol. 98, loc. cit., p. 127.

64. B.M., Vol. 74, loc. cit., p. 205, p. 217.

65. Ibid., pp. 209-210. Blackwood's did not differentiate in this article between the Hakka and Miao peoples of Kuangsi.

gentry besides masses of the Chinese populace. The writer in the British Quarterly Review reported that the scholar gentry of Canton generally considered the Taiping Rebellion was only a "pilot-balloon" to test the opinion of the masses and to force the Manchu government to demonstrate its capacity for self-preservation. This journalist then gave evidence that the populace was going over in a body to the Taiping chieftains.⁽⁶⁶⁾ But a writer in the Edinburgh Review of July 1853 denied this allegation by presenting evidence that the scholar gentry and the landed gentry had not joined the Taipings.⁽⁶⁷⁾ The contributor to Fraser's Magazine was more aware of Taiping political sagacity than the contributor to the Edinburgh Review and discovered examples of popular support for the Taipings and of Imperialist injustice to the scholar gentry. These factors, he believed, should cause the scholar gentry to join the forces of rebellion.⁽⁶⁸⁾

The author of the account of August 1853 in Blackwood's Magazine took a similar position to that of the British Quarterly Review of November concerning expected mass Chinese support for the Taipings. He justified general resistance to political change prior to the Rebellion in China⁽⁶⁹⁾ and described the critical attitude of the Chinese to the disgraceful Treaty of Nanking. He implied that many Chinese who were dissatisfied with the ineffective conduct during the Opium War of the Manchu banners would be attracted to a revolutionary

66. E.M., Vol. 31, loc. cit., p. 103, p. 112.

67. E.R., Vol. 98, loc. cit., p. 102.

68. F.M., Vol. 48, loc. cit., p. 593, p. 600, p. 608.

69. B.M., Vol. 74, loc. cit., p. 204.

program. The reform ministers, such as Ch'ii-ying, had actually prepared the Chinese population for "practical progress". This element of progress had been interrupted by the Hsien-feng Emperor's disgrace of the reform ministers shortly after his accession. The writer in Blackwood's implied that the Hsien-feng Emperor's measure in turn increased the dissatisfaction of certain Chinese. (70) With the advent of rebellion in 1850, the Hsien-feng Emperor, his arch-conservative ministry, and the Manchu Banners caused further physical and economic suffering in China. Finally, the journalist related that Imperialist Volunteer corps, formed in towns of Kuangsi and Kuangtung, had to be disbanded by local officials for fear of a general movement to join the Taipings. (71)

Most journalists in 1853 wrote seriously about Imperialist political inefficiency and military ineptitude. Examples of Imperialist political corruption were given by many British journalists, who agreed that political evolution, if not revolution, was desirable. The writer in the British Quarterly Review could not understand how the Chinese people tolerated so great a degree of suffering and abuse without revolting. (72) Many journalists implied that the overthrow and disgrace in 1850 of the ministry of the Tao-kuang Emperor by the Hsien-feng Emperor brought down upon the new Emperor the evils of political and religious revolution.

The writer in Fraser's Magazine was proud that the First Opium

70. E.M., Vol. 74, loc.cit., p.205, p.207.

71. Ibid., p.211, p.217.

72. E.M., Vol. 31, loc.cit., p.90.

War forced the Tao-kuang Emperor to pay closer respect to English political customs. Political corruption and deceit in the ministry of the Hsien-feng Emperor prevented him from controlling the forces of internal rebellion.(73)

The writer in the Edinburgh Review went a step further. In July 1853, he attacked the British consular community in China and the British Government for having incited internal dissension by means of the disgraceful Opium War of 1839 to 1842.(74) He suggested that the maladministration of China from 1850 was a result of a series of natural disasters combined with obvious political hardships.(75) In his opinion, the inexperience of the new Emperor certainly contributed to rebellion in the nation. The writer in the British Quarterly Review also sympathized with the inexperience of the new Emperor.(76)

In August 1853, the writer in Blackwood's Magazine however refused to apologize for Imperialist political inefficiency or for English aggressive conduct in the Opium War, either of which might have provoked dissension among the Chinese masses. According to this journalist, Chinese officialdom threatened and abused the English mercantile community in China and the Chinese Emperor had not been visibly influenced in his political conduct by the Opium War settlement

73. F.M., Vol. 48, loc.cit., p.598, p.603.

74. E.R., Vol. 98, loc.cit., pp.100-102, p.104.

75. Ibid., p.102, p.119.

76. E.M., Vol. 31, loc.cit., pp.99-100, p.103, p.112.

or by discreet knowledge of "barbarian activities". The author of the account in Chambers's Journal also believed that the Tao-kuang Emperor was worthy of foreign contempt, and that he and his successor deserved to be tried by an internal dissension in China. (78)

Many British writers in 1853 were optimistic concerning the political future of China and were confident that Taiping armies would soon seize political authority. Their optimism was confirmed by military campaigns in which Taiping armies continued to win tactical and strategic battles from Manchu commanders and banner men who had lost confidence in their ability to put rebel armies to flight. This was the approach taken by writers in the British Quarterly Review and Fraser's Magazine. They selected from Gallery and Yvan and other materials evidence of Imperialist military incapacity (79) in the face of insurrectionary military confidence. (80)

The writer in Blackwood's pointed to Taiping audacity in cutting off their queues as a unifying symbol of national revolution. He took notice of the "great and painful sensation" produced by this act, "at the court of Peking". He found the strategy of Taiping guerilla warfare in Kuangsi to be brilliant and emphasized Gallery and Yvan's account of Viceroy Hsu Kuang-chin's (Sew) lack of confidence in his ability to put down insurgency. (81)

78. C.J., Vol. 20, No. 506, loc.cit., p.165.

79. E.M., Vol. 31, loc.cit., pp.93, 94 and F.M., Vol. 48, loc.cit., p.606.

80. E.M., Vol. 31, loc.cit., pp.102-104 and F.M., Vol. 48, loc.cit., p.599.

81. B.M., Vol. 74, loc.cit., p.208, p.209, p.213.

The naval officer writing on 25 October, 1853, from Amoy to the Times gave vivid illustrations of Imperialist military deceptiveness and ineptitude in the field at Shanghai and Amoy. (82)

There were British journalists who showed that the Taipings intended to establish a stable political regime. The writer in the British Quarterly Review determined that the political philosophy of Hung Hsiu-ch'uan was politically acceptable in China: Hung appeared to be influenced by the precepts of Confucius and Mencius. Taiping issuance of currency seemed to characterize their desire to establish a long-lasting political structure in the interior. (83) Confidence in the workability of regional government in China and in Taiping plans to set up a federated governmental structure under the suzerainty of Hung Hsiu-ch'uan occupied the attention of several British journalists. (84)

Disgraceful Taiping military conduct and their outright barbarism in the field, however, presented a problem for some writers. To counter charges of political unreliability and a lack of accord between Taiping religious and moral claims and their military conduct, British journalists quickly became either apologists for Taiping barbarism or disowned the Taipings as agents of British interests in the interior of China. The writer in the British Quarterly Review openly admitted Taiping military barbarism but tried to conceal the true nature of

82. The Times, 5 January 1854, "The Religious Movement in China", p. 8.

83. E.M., Vol. 31, loc. cit., p. 102, p. 105 and F.M., Vol. 48, loc. cit., p. 601.

84. E.M., Vol. 31, loc. cit., p. 112 and F.M., Vol. 48, loc. cit., p. 602.

Taiping military conduct by magnifying Manchu military atrocities.(85) Writers in Fraser's Magazine and Blackwood's preferred to emphasize Imperialist excesses.(86) The naval officer writing on 25 October, 1853, from Amoy to the Times described the sufferings of Chinese civilians and gave special attention to the depredations of the Imperialist soldiery.(87)

D. Reports prior to 1853 from China and Counsel for
British Policy

Many British writers assessed the reliability of information they had received throughout the year and previous to 1853 from the China coast. Careful observance was made of any consular restrictions concerning British civilian activities outside of the foreign settlement areas. Many writers described the policy the Government was pursuing concerning the belligerents and suggested an official policy the Government should pursue to meet the political situation in the

85. For evidence of Taiping barbarism, see F.M., Vol. 31, loc.cit., p.99, p.102, p.105. For evidence of Manchu military atrocities, see Ibid., p.103, p.111. According to the writer, barbarism was a key determinant of Taiping religious and moral reliability. There was contrary evidence which did prove Taiping forces could be humane. See Ibid., p.103, p.111. As Taiping religious errors were grievous- See Ibid., pp.108-109- so indeed illustrations of Taiping barbarism were evidently true. (Ibid., p.112)

Taiping barbarism could only be justified on the basis of their survival in the civil war. (Ibid., p.111) Yet, as the Taipings were proponents of the Christian faith, their barbarous military conduct was justified on the basis of their lacking Protestant Scriptures and missionary guidance. (Ibid., p.111)

86. F.M., Vol. 48, loc.cit., p.601, p.605 and B.M., Vol. 74, loc.cit., p.212

87. The Times, 5 January, 1854, "The Religious Movement....", p.8. The sufferings of the civilian population were also corroborated by the Times Hong Kong correspondent. See the Times, 12 January, 1854, Second Edition, "China", p.7 and 13 February, 1854, Second Edition, "China", p.10.

interior of China.'

A writer in the British Quarterly Review supported Bonham and Medhurst's conclusions of mid-1853 that religion helped the Taiping chieftains to guarantee continuing loyalty from their adherents.' This writer included an extract from the Church Missionary Intelligencer of September 1853, which contained part of George Hobson's letter of 23 May, 1853, to the Archbishop of Canterbury. In this particular portion of his letter, Hobson asserted that British consular restraint upon the planned visit of Dr. Medhurst to Nanking would be unwelcome. (88)

A writer in Fraser's Magazine did not believe former accounts of the Rebellion and observed that the only trustworthy evidence was that of accomplished facts. He heartily supported Sir George Bonham's accomplishments at Nanking but did not fully discuss Bonham's diplomacy in that city. (89) For this writer, Bonham's mission was important because it clarified the protocol to be observed by the insurgents in diplomacy with British officials.

In July 1853, the contributor to the Edinburgh Review suggested that Parliament's contemplated reduction of British import duties on tea was a meaningless gesture to the Chinese. The real issue at stake between the British and Chinese people was immediate insistence upon unlimited British and foreign travel in the Chinese interior. (90)

He recognized that British ignorance of Chinese social and political

88. E.M., Vol. 31, loc.cit., p. 109, p. III.

89. F.M., Vol. 48, loc.cit., p. 596, p. 605.

90. E.R., Vol. 98, loc.cit., p. 131.

life kept British civilians from opening up, 'that vast empire to the commerce, the arts, the civilization, and the religion of Europe'. From his own evaluation of Chinese social and political life, this writer was aware that that the Chinese people determinedly rejected and restrained British efforts to share their civilization with the Chinese. (91)

This man then boldly outlined an official policy which would appeal to British readers and interested parties. He justified intervention in the civil war whenever it became necessary to protect British commercial interests in China. He was confused by the lenient treatment of the Chinese in the Treaty of Nanking and lamented that there were

"350 millions or upwards of civilized, trading, calico-wearing human beings hitherto secluded from us."

He chastised British merchants for not

"measuring more carefully the immediate prospect of the improved condition of Anglo-Chinese relations." (92)

He maintained that the most suitable British China policy would forcefully open the interior of China to those ambitious to gain entry. Given the intransigence of China's officialdom and people, pursuit of such a forceful policy appeared to this writer to be the best approach. (93)

91. E.R., Vol. 98, loc.cit., p. 107, p. 112.

92. Ibid., p. 106, p. 111.

93. For the writer's support of a forceful policy, see Ibid., p. 119. For his rationale for these aggressive suggestions, see Ibid., pp. 120-121, pp. 127-128.

Encouraged by the forcefulness of his new approach,(94) this writer did not mention Bonham's declaration of non-intervention, nor judging from the tone of his account, could there be any doubts about the fairness of an aggressive policy.

In fact, he emphasized that Chinese officials in Shanghai had given in to British requests in 1848 after Alcock, on his own initiative, sent a British vessel to Nanking. The presence of the British navy in interior waters caused Chinese officials in Shanghai to immediately concede to Alcock's demands. By July 1853, then, this writer in the Edinburgh Review advocated a type of local aggression to secure consular demands which was utilized in 1856 at Canton by Sir John Bowring with disastrous results.(95)

A journalist in Blackwood's Magazine discounted Imperialist rumours in 1853 of political chaos among Taiping kings. He reminded his readers that Chinese officials were well-known for deception. In support of Gallery and Yvan's findings, he reminded his readers that British support of the Imperialists would be construed by the Chinese as a weakening of the British position.(96) There was no mention of the other alternative: an offer of British aid to the Taipings.

In September 1853, the writer in Chambers's Journal was disappointed with Anglo-Chinese press reports of the insurrection. The British China-coast press was partial to, and very ill-informed of insurgent

94. For his confidence in the advocacy of British privileges and claims, see E.R., Vol. 98, loc.cit., pp. 105-106, p. 114.

95. Ibid., pp. 121-123, p. 127.

96. B.M., Vol. 74, loc.cit., p. 215, p. 218.

sympathies concerning British civilians. The journalist believed that the insurgents were actively opposed to visits of foreign missionaries. (97)

3. Further Opinions of British Journalists 1854-1856

A. The British Quarterly Review

In 1855, the French account by Abbé Huc of the Chinese interior, its people, its social and political institutions appeared in Britain. In April 1855, a review of the work, The Chinese Empire, by a writer in the British Quarterly Review admitted that once the Chinese authorities allowed travel privileges to certain foreigners, such foreigners would be favourably treated by Imperialist authorities in the interior. Moreover, the reviewer understood that the opportunity for favourable communication, which Abbé Huc described, resulted from the willingness of French missionaries to endure the hardships of travel in the interior. Perhaps this journalist remembered the failure of British Protestant home religious organizations and of their missionaries in China to travel to Taiping-held areas and distribute Scriptures. The journalist also remarked concerning Huc's confidence in the self-sufficiency of the Chinese economy. (98)

In July 1855, an article entitled "The Insurgent Power in China" further qualified the China interests of the journal. A writer in the British Quarterly Review was compelled to re-assess the journal's support for Chinese native insurgency because of disturbing reports being received from the China coast. The journal remained cautiously

97. C.J., Vol. 20, No. 506, loc. cit., p. 163, p. 165.

98. B.Q.R., Vol. 21, April 1855, p. 571, p. 572.

optimistic for the insurgents' survival in the civil war and was still eager for a national liberal revolution under the Taiping banner. The journal still found evidence of Chinese desertion to Taiping ranks. (99)

But the writer was compelled to admit that Taiping armies had been defeated by Imperialist commanders. Moreover, the social class and regional background of the original insurgents now caused serious concern. (100) More care was taken in July 1855 by this writer to defend the journal's argument of November 1853 for Taiping victory from critics armed with increasing evidence of Taiping barbarism. (101)

In July 1855, the British Quarterly Review abandoned its confidence in Taiping Christianity as an outgrowth of British Protestant Christianity. Commander Fishbourne and others reported that Taiping chieftains engaged in strange heresies. (102) The writer had to re-state the journal's opinion concerning the insurgents' religious character and

99. B.Q.R., Vol. 22, loc. cit., p. 131, p. 138, p. 140, p. 142 for support of Taiping military survival. For support of national liberal revolution, see Ibid., p. 113.

100. Ibid., p. 112, p. 117.

101. The original Taiping leaders were further north and were unable to control and discipline the barbarity of individual bands of Taiping soldiers. See Ibid., pp. 117-118. Taiping barbarism was not answered for its own sake but was defended with confidence in the stern but just severity of Taiping moral codes and military discipline. (p. 119) Public attention was also drawn away from individual acts of Taiping barbarism with the re-assertion of the political ineptitude of Imperialist officials when meeting the forces of rebellion. See Ibid., p. 113, p. 115, p. 140, p. 142. Direct evidence was given of Imperialist atrocities in late 1853 at Amoy. (p. 116)

102. Ibid., pp. 120-123, p. 126.

the potential for religious revolution in China.

By July 1855, the writer indicated that the widest possible dissemination of Scriptures in the Chinese language was still desirable and that British missionaries should not interfere with Taiping efforts to convert masses of Chinese to Taiping Christianity. The religious fanaticism of the Taipings was justified with a Bowring-like expedient of allowing local circumstances in China and long experience there to shape the course of events. According to this journalist, Taiping chieftains had been able before this time to promote religious and moral discipline among the insurgents. However, Yang Hsiu-ch'ing, a Taiping chieftain in favour at the moment, tarnished Taiping Christianity with heretical beliefs. (IO3)

This unpromising situation in July 1855 prompted the writer in the British Quarterly Review to take an unprecedented step. He questioned both the nature of British China policy between November 1853 and July 1855 and the failure of British consular officials and British missionary and commercial organizations to further British interests in China. He understood that British officials intervened in the civil war to guarantee the safety of the foreign community or to prevent indiscriminate slaughter. Moreover, he recognized that a declaration of "neutrality" was only of paper value and would not prevent the interference of the British community in China with the

IO3. In April 1854, Bowring adopted suitable expedients to defend Alcock's activities. See Chapter Two, pp. 60-61. For discussion of the journal's interests, see B.Q.R., Vol. 22, loc. cit., pp. 128-131. For conclusions concerning the leadership of the movement, see Ibid., p. 135, p. 138.

belligerents. (I04)

The writer worried that Sir John Bowring was favouring the Imperialists in his Canton campaign. He criticized Bowring's insistence upon the collection of revenues from British merchants for powerless Imperialist officials. His account strongly implied that the British Quarterly Review would continue to anticipate eventual Taiping victory in the civil war as long as the Taipings could honour their promises to open up the Chinese market in the interior to British merchants. (I05)

He trusted that British public opinion, religious interests in Britain, and the British electorate would impress upon the Government a fuller awareness of why the British community was on the China coast. (I06)

He urged home religious organizations and British missionaries in China to cultivate the friendship of the Taipings. According to this writer in July 1855, conversion of the Taiping insurgents to Protestant Christianity appeared a foolhardy gesture: the Taipings were Eastern Christians with their own religious structures and beliefs. (I07)

I04. B.Q.R., Vol. 22, loc. cit., p. 117, p. 141.

I05. Ibid., pp. 141-143.

I06. Ibid., p. 143.

I07. Ibid., pp. 131-132, p. 135. The motivation for this about-face appeared to be a continuing anxiety to advise the British Protestant missionary community in China how best to extend their livelihood in China. The writer advised home religious organizations to allow more local initiative to missionaries in the field and to provide better training to missionary recruits who were being sent out. (pp. 143-144) He expected home religious organizations to object to these proposals and therefore advised individual churches in Great Britain to train and outfit missionaries. (p. 144)

Finally, a reviewer in the British Quarterly Review gave a preliminary sign of the journal's irritation with the failure of Taiping insurgents to promote British interests.¹ Bayard Taylor, a member of the American embassy, visited Nanking and Shanghai, and the reviewer of Taylor's account did not bother to amend Taylor's "low but just estimate" of Chinese life.¹ (108)

B. Fraser's Magazine

In December 1854, in an article entitled "Siam and its Distinguished Princes", a contributor to Fraser's Magazine expressed the journal's continuing interest in the Chinese interior.¹ The writer's chief concern was the commercial revolution to follow unlimited foreign access to the Chinese interior, which had been promised by the Taipings.¹ Western political influence in the treaty ports was considered by this writer to be the cause of successful political upheaval in 1853 in China.¹

With a passing reference to British consular policy in China, the writer in Fraser's carefully evaluated Bowring's relations with an eastern despot, King Mongkut of Siam.¹ Anticipating British commercial gains upon the return of Bowring's mission to Siam, the writer was very close to recognizing in December 1854 that direct British intervention in Chinese affairs would perpetuate British interests in China.¹ (109)

108. B.Q.R., Vol. 23, p. 256.

109. F.M., Vol. 50, loc. cit., p. 695. Western complicity in the Taiping Rebellion was overrated.¹ For the journal's position concerning British policy, see Ibid., p. 700.¹ Bowring studiously prepared his mission with an advance despatch of British commercial products to the King of Siam. This preparatory skill and Bowring's diplomacy were well rewarded for Mongkut studiously attempted to cultivate British influence. See Ibid., p. 700.

In April 1855, in an article entitled "Huc's China", a contributor to Fraser's Magazine drew attention to conclusions concerning Huc's evidence, similar to those which in the same month impressed the British Quarterly Review.¹ (II0)

There was frustration with a state of affairs in which French missionaries in China again gathered a body of reliable information which was unavailable to British observers. This frustration perhaps led the writer to abandon much of the journal's cautious support for the insurgents, expressed in November 1853 and December 1854.²

The writer returned to former well-tried impressions of the deception and corruption of the Chinese.³ (III) With knowledge of Huc's publication, this writer gave up the journal's earlier qualified support for religious revolution in China. He denied that the Taipings could overthrow the Emperor at this stage of Chinese social and political development. Although the Imperialist political structure was inefficient, the Chinese populace were a peaceful race and were commercially oriented. This writer still wanted Britain to tap the vast resources and markets of the Chinese interior.⁴ (II2)

II0. Jesuit missionaries attended their missionary labours and travels in the interior of China with zealous fervour and were rewarded with communication with the Chinese populace and with Imperialist officials. See F.M., Vol. 51, April 1855, "Huc's China", p.409, p.412, p.421. The writer suspected that legitimate foreign access to the Chinese interior would provoke a surprising degree of respect from Chinese officials for Western travellers. See Ibid., p.410, pp.412-413, p.421.

III. Ibid., p.411, p.413. The lack of innovative talent to improve earlier technological innovations of their Chinese ancestors was emphasized.

II2. For denial that China was experiencing religious revolution, see Ibid., p. 411. For denial that China was experiencing political revolution, see Ibid., pp.415-416. Perhaps to restore Foreign Office interest, the

In April 1855, this journalist was on the point of realizing that to further British civilian interests in the interior, British civilians and officials should travel to inland centres of the country and begin to improve Chinese life in areas in which they settled.

In November 1856, in another article in Fraser's entitled "Communications with the Far East", a journalist continued to press for ~~British sponsorship of commercial improvements in the Far East.~~ Opportunities for commercial intercourse were still unrealized, and he expressed disappointment with the small beginnings of the British Chinese trade.¹ He attempted to create interest in British sponsorship of their products in the Chinese interior by citing a conjecture of Mr. Anderson, Chairman of the East India Company:

"on the by no means improbable case of the people of India and China—about five hundred millions—becoming purchasers of British manufactures, each man to the extent of one shilling per year, and he calculates that even this seemingly insignificant amount would produce an annual increase of twenty-five millions of pounds in our exports." (II3)

C. The Edinburgh Review 1854-1856

The Edinburgh Review published two articles in 1855 dealing with British treaty-port communities and the Taiping Rebellion.

The first, written by Henry Rogers, appeared in April 1855 and was entitled "M. Hue's Travels in China".¹ The author complained bitterly of the lack of reliable British accounts of inland China. He showed his readers why British and foreign educated travellers

writer in Fraser's drew attention to commercial opportunities in several key towns on the Yangtze River. These were later cited by Elgin, Bruce, and Hope after the second treaty settlement as suitable for consular establishments.² See F.M., Vol. 51, loc. cit., p. 418.

II3. Ibid., Vol. 54, November 1856, "Communications with the Far East", pp. 574-575.

should have the right to travel in the Chinese interior:

"The Chinese character and manners cannot but be modified, at any of the five ports, by contact with foreigners. One must go into the interior to see Chinese manners in full bloom - in unadulterated purity." (II4)

He emphasized Huc's impression of his treatment in the Imperial capital:

"They entered Peking like beggars, stayed in it like prisoners, and were driven from it like thieves." (II5)

The journalist admitted that legal passage across China allowed a French cleric to publish another informative account of Chinese life,

"a picture of Chinese everyday life, a description, perhaps more accurate than any other that has yet appeared, of what this strange nation is at home, - that is in the heart of the empire." (II6)

Moreover, he was disgusted by the failure of the British missionary community in China to fulfill a religious responsibility of converting the masses and of providing authentic accounts of the interior:

"One would imagine that the happiest thing that could befall a missionary in China would be to come under the suspicions of the Chinese authorities."

He found the French accounts of inland China more informative than corresponding English accounts:

"Though we have several very instructive and popular works on China and the Chinese, - that of Sir John Davis, for instance, and the three volumes in the Edinburgh Cabinet Library are, both of them, excellent compilations - the volumes of M. Huc will be found not less instructive; in some respects, the fruit of greater opportunities of observation, more authentic, and assuredly not inferior in entertainment." (II7)

II4. E.R., Vol. 101, April 1855, "M. Huc's Travels in China", p. 418.

II5. Ibid., p. 418.

II6. Ibid., p. 417.

II7. Ibid., p. 418, p. 439.

This journalist confirmed the opinion of the Edinburgh Review in July 1853 by showing with reference to Huc that a self-assured refusal to meet Chinese official demands produced a marked change of respect for a foreigner from local Imperialist officials. Huc was able to give British readers useful information because of his willingness to submit in a nominal fashion to Chinese etiquette. Huc wore a yellow cap and red girdle with much enjoyment. The journalist found that in April 1855, local Imperialist officials appeared to yield to well-versed foreign demands. With this information, the journalist ridiculed the insufficiencies of Chinese character, Chinese institutional and social life, and Chinese cultural development. (118) He noticed that, "among the Chinese the Chinese we see not only much that is defective, but more that is abnormal." He found in China, "the extremes of civilization side by side" and discovered, "the most refined culture in combination with astounding ignorance, prejudice, and childishness". This realization led to a further racial attack upon the Chinese. (119)

Moreover, in April 1855, the writer in the Edinburgh Review drew attention to Abbé Huc's efforts to disguise his French nationality:

"They shaved my head, with the exception of the spot at the top, on which I have now been letting the hair grow these past two years; then they put me on a false head of hair, which they arranged in plaits, and I found myself in possession of a magnificent tail that descended nearly to my knees."

118. E.R., Vol. 101, loc. cit., p. 418, p. 439.³

119. Ibid., p. 422.³

This journalist was convinced that it was beneath the dignity of a British civilian to submit to a "toilette à la Chinoise":

"... we must show the reader the disguise he must submit to if he would study Chinese character - at his ease, we were going to say - but at least if he would penetrate the recesses of Chinese jealousy to advantage." (I20)

In its attitude, then, by April 1855, the Edinburgh Review seemed also on the verge of suggesting a policy of aggression in China to further British interests.¹ Speaking of Chinese political life, the journalist revealed, "the presence of all those characteristics which infallibly mark an empire in the last stage of decrepitude and decline and too surely prognosticate its approaching dissolution".² He implied that Chinese military resistance to an aggressive British policy would be minimal.³ He was amused by the timidity of a group of Chinese soldiers: "He [this particular Chinese soldier] needs an authentication by placard before the looker-on would suspect anything martial in his composition." (I21)

The writer therefore heralded political dissension in the interior as an expression of the collapse of Chinese social life. He noticed that Abbé Hué had contended that British missionary activity among the Chinese did not produce Chinese feelings of political dissent. Hué credited Roman Catholic efforts to distribute the Scriptures in the interior with inciting political changes:

"These books are diffused in great numbers throughout all the provinces, and it is more probable that the Chinese innovators have drawn the ideas in question from these sources than from the Bibles prudently deposited by the Methodists on the seashore."

I20. E.R., Vol. 101, loc. cit., p. 425. For similar commentary, see the observations of T.J. Meadows, p. 50.

I21. Ibid., p. 422, pp. 437-438.

The writer in the Edinburgh Review studiously corrected Huc's efforts to

"depreciate the probable influence of Protestant missions in diffusing the ideas which contributed to produce it." (I22)

It seems that faced with another series of French accounts, British support of British Protestant missionary endeavours on the China coast had to be reinforced. The writer felt that because, "the whole social and political edifice may be said to depend on it", [a reverence for books] he could not help

"wonder that the mere diffusion of Scriptures should do more in China than anywhere else even when unenforced by the living voice of the missionary."

"Protestant missionaries have zealously availed themselves of every opportunity of coming into contact with the Chinese mind, and constantly sought to add oral instruction to the silent teaching of the Scriptures and other religious books." (I23)

Political dissent in China, in any form, was a welcome change of events for the writer:

"Revolution has occurred and the ultimate auguries are assuredly bright, whether its immediate course be prosperous or adverse; whether it lead to the quiet establishment, at a comparatively early period, of a new and renovated empire, in which Christian and European ideas shall be predominant, or whether an epoch of political anarchy and religious fanaticism be destined first to intervene. One thing is tolerably certain: the exclusive and jealously-barred system of the ancient empire is effectually broken up. China is at length open, in the most effectual sense of the word; into it the elements of light, civilization, and Christianity will continue to flow." (I24)

As the account in April 1855 of the Edinburgh Review supported the principle of political revolution in China, an article was included

I22. H. R., Vol. 101, loc. cit., p. 439.

I23. Ibid., p. 441.

I24. Ibid.,

in October 1855, written by W.C. Milne, entitled "Political Disturbances in China". This article showed the extent of the journal's support for existing insurgent movements in China. The writer concluded that the journal's interest in Chinese insurgent movements was separate from the support of the Edinburgh Review for another type of political revolution in China: political improvement sponsored by Great Britain.

He did not support the Triad and Small Sword insurrections in Shanghai and Amoy. These insurrections proved to the writer that if the Chinese lived close enough to British communities, Chinese citizens would seek political improvements from Imperial officials who ruled Chinese communities. According to the writer, the dissatisfaction of the British community on the coast with these same Imperialist officials was plainly expressed in 1853 through local outbreaks of Chinese civilians. Notice of the social class and regional limitation of the insurgent leaders should dissuade British readers from sympathizing with such local insurrections. (125)

I25, E.R., Vol. 102, October 1855, loc. cit., p. 347. See the following:

"It will not escape observation that two of these seats of insurrection are ports opened by the Treaty of Nankin to foreign intercourse."

Reports of the social and regional limitation of insurgent bands were used to discount the Shanghai insurgent, the Canton insurgents, and even to discredit the rigid moral restrictions imposed upon Taiping female supporters. See Ibid., pp. 347-348, p. 356.

The Edinburgh Review revealed what intellectual abilities the journal expected to find in a Chinese official. The writer showed this in a manner similar that of Thomas Wade of the British consular service:

"In China a revolt to secure popularity must have the indispensable requisite of something like scholarship to command the respect of the million. But the deficiency of the insurgents on this score degrades them in the eyes of the educated classes." (p. 359)

See Chapter One for Scarth's commentary concerning Wade's reports of the insurgents.

The Shanghai insurgents were left to their fate, and this journalist saw no reason for complaint or commentary concerning interference in such insurrections on the coast by British civilians. The writer equivocated in a fashion typical of the British official community in China during that period. Neglecting British involvement from 1853 to 1855 in the Shanghai uprising, he spoke of

"the offensive tone which these rioters had assumed towards foreign authorities and the severe measures to which these authorities have felt themselves compelled to resort in defence of the honour and dignity of their flags."

Without reference to British intervention at Shanghai, he attacked a local initiative taken by the French admiral to suppress the uprising. According to the writer, British official conduct from 1853 in Shanghai was unimpeachable. In contrast, the French action was

"a departure from the system of non-intervention wisely adopted by other foreign States." (126)

Bowring's commitment during the winter of 1854 to 1855 of the British navy to assist the Imperialists in Canton was similarly overlooked:

"Fortunately the confidence of the citizens of Canton in the Imperial power has been restored, and both the native and foreign markets are revived. But had that city fallen into the hands of ruthless marauders, who can tell the scenes of disorder and calamity that would have entailed on a capital so large, rich, and populous?"

But the case of the Taiping rebels required a more exhaustive treatment than these "maritime disturbances". The journalist felt that the Taiping rebels had no claim to "universality", and he corrected the "erroneous impression" of many British journalists, "as to the

Original site of the outbreak". It was rather "the Kwangsee insurrection" as that province was, "the nursery of the uprising".

Initially, Taiping efforts to seize political control appeared promising to this journalist, (I27) but after October 1855 the continued success of Taiping armies appeared unlikely. By that date, the rebels had

"gone too far north.... for there nothing but a series of reverses awaited them. Their hitherto victorious bands now met with a continued series of defeats.... the same fate befell the southern and western detachments." (I28)

According to this journalist, by 1855 the Taipings could no longer be trusted to impress Western interests upon their followers. The Taipings could not accomplish national political change, and their religious observances were shown to be sincerely and clearly "a gross and blasphemous imposture". Furthermore, the author revealed that the Chinese populace was not deserting en masses to the Taiping ranks:

"Half a million of rebels is not an enormous body in relation to a population numbering above 300,000,000, especially as they are said to consist of idle vagabonds, ready at any moment for money and bread, plunder and booty, to join any leader who may call them to his standard."

He suspected that British civilians could pursue their political interests in China only after a period of

"complete disorganization of the empire and breaking up of China into a number of states never to be reunited under one sovereign; this however will be the work of years, and meantime foreign elements will be introduced which will only increase the complications already threatening." (I29)

I27. E.R., Vol. I02, Loc. cit., pp. 350-352.

I28. Ibid., pp. 352-353.

I29. Ibid., pp. 354-356.

Contrary to the reviewer of Huc's The Chinese Empire in the Edinburgh Review of April 1855, this writer argued along the lines of the contributor to Chambers's Journal in September 1853. Chinese social institutions and, in this case, filial piety would prevent the Chinese from joining political disturbances in inland China:

"The unfounded reverence of the son for his mother and the extreme jealousy of a husband or father will never tolerate the thought of joining a sect on such conditions." (I30)

Unsure that the Taipings could honour their promises to foreigners, this writer mentioned acts of Taiping savagery. Bonham's mission of April 1853 to Nanking was dismissed with the observation:

"superciliousness on the part of the rebel leaders.... placed the English deputation in a very difficult position."

Discussing De Bourboulon's mission of December 1853 to Nanking, the journalist was markedly irritated by signs of Taiping disrespect to an official French mission:

The writer fully agreed with Bonham and Medhurst's observation in mid-1853 that Taiping chieftains used religious observances to secure the loyalty of their adherents. He complained that Western

I30. M. R., Vol. 102, loc. cit., p. 356. In fact, insurgent demonstration of Han racial pride against Manchu determination to humiliate the Han race was abused by this journalist. The insistence of the Manchus that the Han peoples wear the queue

"only adopted the rule of almost all other dynasties in China at their foundation - the introduction of a slight alteration in the attire of the male population."

The basic revolutionary nature of the Taiping social program - its call to rebellion against physical and social humiliation - was rejected by this journalist.

Protestantism should not be sullied by contact with Taiping heresies and discounted the suggestion of Commander Fishbourne and the British Quarterly Review that Taiping religious fanaticism should be ignored." (I31)

Despite the religious fanaticism of Taiping chieftains, the journalist credited Protestant missionaries with influencing the Taipings with some progressive political ideas and a spirit of benevolence:

".... the originators of this insurrection have at one time, probably during the years of obscurity, been partially under the religious teachings of more than one Protestant missionary or at least have been in possession of Christian books from which they have derived their scriptural information and borrowed largely." (I32)

But the key to this critical October article in the Edinburgh Review was the writer's determination to separate Taiping from British evangelistic endeavours. The journalist remarked:

".... is it to be expected that the professors of these strange and mixed dogmas, when elated with success and confident of heavenly honours.... will listen with patience to statements by the minister of Christ regarding heaven and the way to heaven...? (I33)

This writer had only one logical solution: British civilians, the British consular community, and interested organizations on the China coast should further their own interests in inland China. He wrote:

"For a revolution to be effective in China, - effective in reforming every branch of government and in improving all classes of people- we believe it will have to call in the aid and influence of the foreigner." (I34)

I31. E. R., Vol. 102, loc. cit., pp. 361-362.

I32. Ibid., pp. 365-366, p. 371, p. 373, p. 374.

I33. Ibid., p. 375.

I34. Ibid., p. 376.

He pointed out renewed British efforts to bring British Protestantism to the inland Chinese. He noted the correspondence of 'an honoured and laborious missionary', who had discovered

"a growing disposition on the part of the mandarin authorities themselves to assist our countrymen in their excursions inland.... sometimes to the distance of one or two hundred miles.... in the foreign dress, sporting the English flag and preaching openly...."(135)

D. Blackwood's Magazine 1854 - 1856

In 1854, Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine published two thoughtful articles concerning the Taipings, written by Mr. R.H. Patterson. The first, published in January 1854, was entitled "The Past and Future of China". The second appeared in May 1854 in the same volume and was entitled "The National Life of China".

The first few paragraphs of both articles seemed to favour the Chinese insurrection. In January, the author wrote of

"a national movement on foot in China which is exciting the interest, and well merits the attention of the public of Europe."

He called it at once a

"political revolution, a struggle of races, and a revival of religion."

In May 1854, he reported meaningful contact between members of the British community and Chinese citizens. Chinese emigration was pictured as a device to hasten the absorption of Western civilization in China:

"The Chinese are coming out into foreign lands to meet us and we in turn are posting ourselves on their shores to become better acquainted with them."

It appeared that as long as the Chinese were receptive to British civilization under watchful British observers, this writer would support Chinese movements advocating political and religious changes.

"With a 'regular representation' of British, American, French, and Russian naval squadrons in her waters,

"China, the oldest and not least notable of existing empires, is actually revolutionizing and reforming herself under the eyes of leading representatives of the world's civilization." (I36)

However, commitment by Blackwood's to a Chinese political and religious movement was secondary to what the journalist considered to be the more important task of bringing British civilization to the Chinese interior.³ Support for the Taipings could change Blackwood's long-term views concerning the Chinese character and Chinese social and political institutions.³

The writer concluded in January 1854 that materials received from the China coast to date were rather poorly constructed and were not reliable.⁴ Public opinion was anxious for information from China but

"their anxiety to know has been very much greater than the actual amount of knowledge which has been placed within their reach."⁴

Speaking of "the making of books on China", he commented:

"it is done in such a narrow spirit and with such a bold defiance of facts, as seriously to mislead the unwary and wholly dissatisfy the reflecting... the best informed of our journals hardly ever diverge from the routine of retailing news without stumbling into mistakes or erroneous theories."⁵

The writer found political rebellion to be a recurrent phenomenon in

I36.³ B.M., Vol. 75, January 1854, "The Past and Future of China", p.74, and May 1854, "The National Life of China", pp.593-594.⁴

Chinese history rather than "the most extraordinary thing in the world". (I37)

The journalist did not inquire into the political or social programs of Taiping chieftains, nor did he discuss the factors determining Taiping survival in the civil war.³ He pieced political revolution seemingly erupting in mid-1853 in the interior of China into the pattern of Chinese dynastic decline and restoration:

"As a natural consequence of the misery of the country, bands of robbers arise in the provinces, which the Imperialist forces are unable to put down. By-and-by these robber bands attain consistency: some able chief puts himself at their head, and encouraged by the feebleness and contempt to which the Government has fallen, hoists the standard of rebellion."

According to the writer,

"The present rebellion is following the same course.... whether the country is to emerge from the struggle a still united empire, or to resolve itself into two great kingdoms will depend entirely upon the amount of power possessed by the chief of the insurgents."

He was skeptical of Taiping plans to divide the Empire into autonomous communities, each under the rule of a Taiping chieftain, and strongly argued that China could not be ruled successfully in fragments:

"....whether the empire continue united or not, the Chinese are so thoroughly homogeneous and clanish a race that they will ever hold together in bonds of the strongest national sympathy." (I38)

The writer discussed Chinese character and social and political institutions. He did not believe that China was experiencing political revolution. Thomas Wade was cited to prove that the Imperialist

I37. B.M., Vol. 75, Loccit, pp. 54-55.

I38. Ibid., pp. 71-72.

political system could be tolerant:

"A revolution would but transfer the present form of government to other hands, as the Chinese are unacquainted with the nature and merits of any other and complain neither of the present mode of government nor of the laws, which they are not stated to discern any defects, but simply of the abuse of them." (I39)

Like Wade, this journalist described

"an industrious but common-minded race, which strives stoutly to maintain its existence.... and which finds no heart to sacrifice life for glory, no time to postpone business for politics.... like all Orientals the people cleave with great fondness to their patrimonial acres."

He indicated that the Chinese were not devoted to the personality of their Emperor, and

"although they have at all times entertained a profound respect for their Sovereign, that regard had reference to the office, not the man, and is quite different from that chivalrous devotion which plays so prominent a part in the history of European struggles."

According to Mr. Davis and Mr. Lay, the Chinese were politically and socially affable rather than discontented. (I40)

In January and May 1854, the writer created an impression that Chinese history was characterized by centuries of bold authoritarian rulers in Peking who had allowed their subjects limited political autonomy. He believed that the reign of the Hsien-feng Emperor was a momentary disruption of this tradition in Chinese history, and he

I39. B.M., Vol. 75, loc. cit., p. 58, p. 70.

I40. Ibid., pp. 594-595, p. 597, p. 601. See p. 600 for the following observation of Mr. Lay: (Horatio Nelson Lay or G. Tradescant Lay?) (The Mr. Lay in question was not identified by Blackwood's.)

"No man can deny the Chinese the honourable character of being good subjects", and again, "apart from business the intercourse of the natives in China is made up of little acts of homage."

apologized for the political deficiencies of the present Manchu regime.

He found that, unfortunately, the Manchus had not revised the political philosophy of Imperial rule to fit its increasing dependence upon local bureaucratic rule and the growing demands of Chinese petty municipalities. In fact, in May 1854, the writer described specific Chinese laws which might bring the character of Chinese political life closer to that desired by Western observers. The writer felt that the potential of these laws had not been fully appreciated. These laws were :

"a clear concise series of enactments, savouring throughout of practical judgment and European good sense, and if not always conformable to our liberal notions of legislation, in general approaching them more nearly than the codes of most other nations." (I41)

The journalist did not encourage insurgent efforts to participate in an exchange of materials with the Western powers. China's self-sufficiency would always hinder business dealings with Western merchants. (I42) In May of 1854, the writer gloomily reported:

"with comparatively little commerce and no manufactures the empire has continued for centuries thriving and unshaken by intestine commotions the home consumers have maintained in comfort the home producers." (I43)

However, the writer maintained that for the Chinese, commerce

"was a pursuit so congenial to the national spirit that no exertions could succeed in putting it down."

This characteristic made him wary of Chinese commercial intentions. (I44)

I41. For examples of Chinese regional autonomy, see B.M., Vol. 75, 186-187, p.57, p.62, pp.64-65. For this Manchu political deficiency, see Ibid., p.63, pp.70-71.

I42. Ibid., p.55.

I43. Ibid., p.595.

I44. Ibid., p.596. It is important to understand that the writer opposed the recent exertions and competitive spirit of large scale capitalist enterprises in Great Britain. (p.595)

The writer's hesitations concerning the confused character of Western social customs and Western political management and concerning the lack of a benevolent impulse in Western educational techniques made him favour Chinese traditional life. (145) Having espoused the Confucian tradition, the writer could express little sympathy for a Chinese religious revolution. Speaking of Confucian literature, the writer suggested:

"these works.... are regarded by the Chinese with almost as much reverence as the Bible is by Christians.... and they are continually in the hands of all those who, while they wish to cultivate their intellect, desire also to possess a knowledge of those grand moral truths which mark the prosperity and happiness of human societies."

Native religious communities in China had been tolerated for centuries because they accommodated the "ascetic materialism" of the Chinese race and because, "a nation must worship something." (146)

However, this contributor to Blackwood's felt free in January and May 1854 to encourage British interests in China. He was unable to understand that the characteristics of Chinese intransigence and the continuance of Imperial rule, which he had discussed, might nullify British political, religious, commercial, and humanitarian endeavours in inland China. He had shown that such characteristics should prevent the success of Taiping political dissension in China. He believed that the British race was politically and culturally superior :

"Time, the destroyer, has been lenient in his dealings with China and all those revolutions which she has witnessed are nothing to the stupendous overthrows and regenerations of the kingdoms of the West. (147)

145. B.M., Vol. 75, loc. cit., pp. 64-65.

146. Ibid., p. 64, p. 69.

147. Ibid., p. 61. See also Ibid., p. 606 for commentary concerning Chinese painting and architecture.

He continued the appeal of previous writers in Blackwood's for the opening of the Chinese interior to Western scholars, and he repeated that only with foreign travel privileges could Westerners correct mistaken impressions of Chinese life:

"Superficial writers on China judge of the whole nation by what they see of the population at Canton, and are profuse in their charges of lying, treachery, and inhumanity.... the inadequacy of the ordinary data for judgment of Chinese character is at once perceived by the few travellers who have got glimpses of the interior." (148)

Blackwood's maintained that the great distances between the ruler and his representatives compelled the Chinese Emperor (as it compelled the British Foreign Secretary and the Supreme Plenipotentiary in China) to abandon much responsibility to local authority." (149)

In May 1854, the journalist saw the need for the reform of the Chinese political and economic structure. Like the Edinburgh Review in July 1853, this journalist was impatient with Chinese technical and administrative inability to develop maritime enterprise to meet China's economic requirements. (150)

In January and May 1854, like other journalists, this writer nearly concluded that British leadership and sponsorship of British interests in inland China was the only effective solution:

"A new religion and civilization now stand at the door and knock. And, he it said, we know no country in the world where the people are so well fitted by their native training to appreciate them."

Once again, two years before Bowring and the Arrow incident, a journalist indicated his support for a policy of renewed aggression in China:

148. B.M., Vol. 75, loc. cit., p. 599.

149. Ibid., p. 71.

150. Ibid., p. 596.

" But it is by sea that, whether peacefully or otherwise, the enterprise of England will most seriously infringe upon the seclusion of China, and if we are wise, we will direct our advancing steps not by Hong Kong and Canton into the mountainous provinces of the south-eastern coast, but by Chusan and Shanghai, up the magnificent artery of the Yangtse Kiang, into the great valley-region of China, fertile beyond measure, containing Nanking and some of the wealthiest cities in the empire.... Six hundred miles from the sea this immense river is nearly a mile in width and of sufficient depth to bear junks of considerable tonnage."

Despite his earlier warnings of prevalent "ascetic materialism" among the Chinese people, British Protestant missionaries were encouraged to "take courage" and, "our Bible societies [to] redouble their efforts". Along with Christianity would come "the stores of European knowledge and will confer upon them [the Chinese people] inestimable advantages, of which they will not be slow to avail themselves." (151)

For Blackwood's in January 1854, any campaign which might carry British civilians and officials into the interior became an upright and benevolent undertaking:

"Foreign powers stand at its gates [of a mighty revolution], watching the progress of events, deeply interested in the issue, and ready, if necessary, to take a decisive part in the struggle." (152)

In May 1856, in an article in Blackwood's, G.C. Swayne doubted whether the Taipings would survive the civil war. He was irritated by the slowness of China's revolutionary change but wrote:

"one thing is certain, that the form of government [at the end of the civil war] will still be imperial, as it has been ever since the creation of the world." (153)

151. B.M., Vol. 75, loc. cit., p. 72, p. 74.

152. Ibid., p. 73.

153. Ibid., Vol. 79, May 1856, "England's Political Future", p. 502.

For Blackwood's, May 1856 was obviously not the moment for political revolution in China.³

E. Chambers's Edinburgh Journal 1854-1856

In 1853, Chambers's Journal had been most critical concerning Taiping chances of survival.⁴ However, the September article in 1853 had not revealed the extent of the journal's anxiety for the furtherance of British interests in the Chinese interior.⁵

In an article of 18 March, 1854, entitled "Imitative Powers of the Chinese", a writer in Chambers's Journal observed that if British merchants could show the Chinese the obvious advantages of Western techniques, the Chinese would be more interested in British goods:

"No people are more ready to learn if it is likely to be attended with advantage.... they like putting an English name on their commodities and are as free with the word patent as any manufacturers in Germany." (154)

In an article of 5 May, 1855, entitled "Curiosities of China", a journalist commented on Hue's The Chinese Empire.⁶ Hue's account made him eager for any information that was "curious or authentic", particularly as former accounts of

"that country, its customs, and most extraordinary characteristics [were but] very imperfectly known to Europeans [and indeed] a great deal of what has hitherto passed for knowledge can now be shown to be a flagrant misconception."

The writer was not satisfied by "the vague purblind glimpses of them [the Chinese people] obtained from the wharves and outskirts of Canton." (155)

154. C.J., Vol. 21, No. 11, 18 March, 1854, "Imitative Powers of the Chinese", p. 176.

155. Ibid., Vol. 23, No. 70, 5 May, 1855, "Curiosities of China", p. 283.

Chambers's Journal wanted foreign scholars to have access to reliable accounts of Chinese social institutions in the interior. A desire for this type of information was obvious in an article of 1 September, 1855, entitled "A Chinese Garden of the Eleventh Century".

The author mentioned the

"social illustrations and allusions with which the most ancient of classical books of the Chinese abound.... [these were shown to be] as apposite and as significant to-day as when they were first written."

The writer expected to wait only "a few more years for something decisive". (156)

Unlike most British journalists cited in the period 1854 to 1856, this author accepted the authenticity of Abbé Hue's account of the Chinese interior:

"we meet with nothing to raise a doubt of their substantial truth."

Like other British journalists, he was impressed that Hue's right to travel through China led local Imperial officials to treat Hue with respect. (157)

In the article of 9 February, 1856, entitled "The Chinese Government, Humane and Inhumane", Chambers's Journal came as close to admitting as its many British counterparts, (except the British Quarterly Review) that a forthright insistence upon British privileges would win Chinese official approval. Before the Chinese official inquest in 1851 into a native's death, a Chinese deputation arrived and began to prepare for the inquest at the mission hospital of Dr. Lockhart in Shanghai.

156. C. J., Vol. 24, No. 87, 1 September, 1855, "A Chinese Garden of the Eleventh Century", p. 142.

157. Ibid., Vol. 23, loc. cit., p. 283.

This deputation did not send official notification of its intention to Lockhart. The writer in Chambers's Journal reported that Lockhart insisted upon immunity from this unwarranted interference:

"Mr. Lockhart coolly and resolutely ordered them to desist from these preparations, as he could admit no individual, of whatever rank, within his premises without the usual forms of etiquette."

The writer proudly narrated:

"[When the card] was forthwith handed in... the magistrate was received with due courtesy." (158)

Moreover in May 1855, after examining Huc's account, the author of "Curiosities of China" was suspicious of any religious movement in China. The Chinese people were plainly "materialistic" and were totally indifferent to all religious considerations. (159)

Similarly from 1854 to 1856, Chambers's Journal did not support a Chinese movement to accomplish political change. Like Blackwood's in January 1854, in August 1855 a writer in Chambers's Journal stated that native insurgency in China was not a novel occurrence. The Chinese people had not just discovered political revolution as a means to social and political change. In fact, in the eleventh century A.D.,

"great and knotty questions of political and social economy which are now in agitation in the West, filled all speculative minds in China and split into parties all classes of society....those people, who, in ordinary circumstances, seem quite indifferent to the proceedings of their government, on that occasion flung themselves passionately into the discussion of systems which aimed at immense social revolution."

158. C.J., Vol. 25, 9 February, 1856, "The Chinese Government Humane and Inhumane", p.95.

159. Ibid., Vol. 23, loc. cit., pp.283-284.

Moreover, like Blackwood's in 1854, this author suggested that one should forget present inefficiency in the Manchu regime and emphasized the glorious historical tradition of Imperial rule in China. (160)

In an article in February 1856, a contributor to Chambers's Journal reaffirmed his admiration for the Imperial political system in China with

"the impression that the original plan and aim was to constitute the imperial autocrat a nursing father, who should watch over the interests of his subjects and provide for their welfare, improvement, and advancement."

In his opinion, the legal institutions under the present Chinese Emperor functioned efficiently. (161)

He drew attention away from the cruelties associated with Imperialist rule by epigrammatically asserting that

"practice and profession are different things and often do not tally." (162)

On 2 August, 1856, another article in Chambers's Journal, entitled "Foundling Hospitals in China", again presented evidence in contrast to reported Imperialist acts of cruelty in the civil war. His proof of the benevolence of Manchu government was the operation of foundling hospitals. (163)

From 1854 to 1856, Chambers's Journal was another British advocate of the application of pressure upon the Imperialist Government to secure British China interests. In August 1855, a writer returned to a position

160. C.J., Vol. 24, No. 84, 11 August, 1855, "Chinese Socialism", p. 93.

161. Ibid., Vol. 25, loc. cit., p. 95.

162. Ibid., Vol. 25, 9 February, 1856, loc. cit., p. 94.

163. Ibid., Vol. 26, 2 August, 1856, No. 135, "Foundling Hospitals in China", p. 78. The writer was evidently taking advantage of the general public discredit of former British accounts of Chinese cruelty.

the journal took in July 1853. This article of 11 August, 1855, entitled "Chinaism at Home", expressed impatience with Imperialist political inefficiency by labelling the archaic state of English divorce laws, "China-like". The writer of the article was concerned about an English refusal to adopt Scottish legal observances:

"With all this staring us in the face, are we not entitled to regard England as a kind of China, which shuts itself up from all benefit from the example of other countries? Is it not in a manner worse than China, in as far as it ignored not the advantageous usages of outside barbarians, but of its own kith and kin." (164)

The article in February 1856 again reflected a desire for British official pressure in China by showing interest in any movement which might re-shape Chinese legal structures:

"If the administrators of penal law among the Chinese- their local judges especially- were under the salutary influence of precautionary measures to prevent collusion, malversation, and haste, it might be no extravagance to expect that China should become the best governed country out of the pale of Christendom." (165)

164. C.J., Vol. 24, No. 85, 18 August, 1855, "Chinaism at Home", p. 112.

165. Ibid., Vol. 25, loc. cit., p. 95.

B. British Civilian Accounts Supporting the Insurgents

1853-1856

I. Introduction

Extracts from British civilian or official writings concerning the Chinese people were useful to British journalists. To substantiate his own views, a journalist often quoted the opinions of a well-known "China-expert", such as Horatio Nelson Lay or Sir John Davis. Such men were frequently cited as experts in Blackwood's or the Edinburgh Review.

British civilian correspondence from 1853 to 1856 revealed the reactions of many well-known missionaries, merchants, former officials, and travellers in China to contacts with insurrection in China. Such study of British civilian opinion should help determine who should be credited with original argument concerning the insurgents or British policy. One may also ascertain the extent of an editorial staff's or author's responsibility for the final printed material and opinions which appeared concerning the Taipings or British policy in China.

2. Those Supporting Religious Revolution in the Interior 1853

I. The Letter of the Bishop of Victoria to the Archbishop of Canterbury 23 May, 1853

George Hobson, the Bishop of Victoria, was so impressed with news of the rebels that on 23 May, 1853, he sent a letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury. As one of the few members of the Church in China with sufficient authority, he felt obligated to alert British

religious organizations to consider the missionary community and events in China. Upon the return in early May, 1853, from Nanking of Bonham and Meadows, the British chaplain in Shanghai speedily informed Hobson of the religious character of the insurgents. Excited by this communication, Hobson sent an ambitious letter to the titular head of the Church of England.

Hobson stressed that news of rebel victories was welcomed by many members of the British community in China:

"The general impression here prevails, among every class of thinking observers, that this movement is the most important epoch in the modern history of China." (I66)

He looked to any agency in the Home Church which could assist missionary endeavour in China:

"We turn to our National Church - with her ample resources, her ancient seats of learning, and her numerous clergy. We appeal to the students of our universities, to come forth to our help and to the help of the Lord against the mighty."

He earnestly implored "the great missionary societies of Our Church to turn their attention towards the east..." and appealed to the Church Missionary Society and the Society for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts to concentrate their energies upon China. (I67)

He desired that those men creating political disturbance in the interior should succeed. He spoke of

"a political change which will affect one-third of the human race. May it be ours to take possession of this land in the name of Christ, and with an adequate force of missionary labourers to enter upon the fields white unto the harvest."

I66. Macfarlane, op.cit., p. 119, p. 121.

I67. Ibid., p. 123, p. 125.

Like other Churchmen who received news of rebel Christianity, he had specific recommendations for Protestant missionaries already in China:

"Our few missionaries at Shanghai, Ningpo, Foochow should seek to add to their knowledge of those local dialects and acquaintance with the mandarin dialect."

Hobson believed that his recommendations would improve the lives of many Chinese. He indicated to the Archbishop of Canterbury that Protestant missionaries should be permitted to travel to Nanking and spread Christianity among those who obviously needed religious guidance. He criticized British consuls for co-operating with local Imperialist officials to prevent such holy civilian endeavours:

"[Our few missionaries should] thus be ready to avail themselves of the probable removal, at no distant period, of those restrictions as to boundary regulations, by which British consular officials deem themselves now bound to co-operate with the Chinese mandarins in preventing our entrance to the interior?" (168)

Hobson's letter did not mention Bonham's declaration of non-intervention.

2. The Writings of James Legge 1853-1856

James Legge, a British missionary in Hong Kong was very interested in insurgent survival. In November 1853, the British Quarterly Review published several extracts from a letter of Legge to the Hong Kong Register in 1853 and concluded that

"If the missionaries gain access to the chiefs we shall soon acquire more certain and more complete information."

Legge was clearly surprised by the daring scheme of the Taipings to overthrow the Manchus and spoke of a "scale" of their general reliability descending, "on the side of generous appreciation". Admiring Taiping

168. Macfarlane, op.cit., p.114, pp.123-124.

political incentive, Legge apologized for Taiping barbarism:

"there is not a missionary in China who would not do his utmost to dissuade the rebels from putting to death the poor ignorant Taoist and Buddhist priests. But they have their own way of doing matters."

Legge considered that reports of Taiping barbarism should not alarm readers who were anticipating Taiping victory in the civil war. Legge honestly admitted:

"If they get the empire, the speedy doom of idolatry is sealed. And who will not rejoice in the result and hail the recognition of paradisaical institutions?" (169)

His letter to the Hong Kong Register told the story of Hung Hsiu-oh's arrival in Canton and of Hung's attempts to become a Christian while he was in that city. Legge concluded that Hung's experience with Western missionaries must have driven the man towards a revolutionary program. Speaking of Hung's possession of Liang A-fah's pamphlet, Good Words to Admonish the Age, Legge suggested:

"No one can look into it without seeing at once that its phraseology and modes of presenting the truth are repeated in the publication obtained at Nanking....so then, as the oak is in the acorn, the present great movement lay in one or more volumes of this compilation, Good Words to Admonish the Age."

Reports of Taiping religious fantasies and heresies influenced Legge to justify an active role for British missionaries in China. As Legge indicated, "with no one to direct and help him", Hung began to confuse "the ideal with the real, so that to this day he seems to see visions and hear revelations". Unlike many interested observers at that early stage in 1853, Legge qualified his initial enthusiasm for the Taipings by honestly admitting:

169. H. M., Vol. 31, loc. cit., p. 107, p. 110, p. 113.

"there is not knowledge nor influence in the camp to correct what is wrong and arrest what is dangerous. It remains to be seen who will have the boldness and the honour to be the future guides and instructors of the host." (I70)

Legge was not to be a future guide and instructor of the Taipings. Information in the Fifty-second Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society for the year 1856 showed that Legge instead organized efforts of British missionaries and native colporteurs to distribute New Testaments to the people of southern China. Speaking of this endeavour, Legge wrote:

"according to the statement now submitted to you, nearly 6,000 were distributed by the four colporteurs, employed in connexion with our Corresponding Committee."

Having expressed some anxiety about the safety of two colporteurs, Legge stated they had returned safely in October 1855:

"they had got quite away from the line of communication with Hong Kong, having been travelling through most of the districts of Tsangshing.... the districts of Sin-gan, Tung-kuan, and Tsangshing, in Kwang-chow-foo, with portions of Weichow, have been traversed over by our agents. They have brought with them various letters and poetical effusions addressed to them by parties who had evidently conversed with them freely and read considerable portions of the New Testament."

In his contribution to the 1856 Report, Legge implied strongly that the forces of Chinese insurrection in the interior offered unwelcome interference to British-sponsored efforts of conversion:

"Two other colporteurs proceeded in April to the department of Weichow, lying eastward along the coast, from that of Kwang-chow, and met with a favourable reception from the people, till they were swept back by a wave of rebellion from the northeast." (I71)

2. The Writings of Walter Medhurst (Senior) 1853-1856

Walter Medhurst (Senior) was a well-respected British missionary of the Church of England in Shanghai. As such, British writers

I70. E.M., Vol. 31, loc.cit., pp. 104-108.

I71. Fifty-second Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society for 1856, pp. cxlvi-cxlviii.

considered him a valid source of British Protestant missionary opinion on the China coast prior to his departure for England in 1856 and his death in 1857. As mentioned before, Bonham chose Medhurst to translate and comment upon Taiping documents received during the mission to Nanking.

To appreciate Medhurst's original support in 1853 for the forces of political and religious revolution in the interior, his former publication should be consulted. Medhurst's China: Its State and Prospects, published in 1838 in London, was discouraged by slim prospects for Christian evangelization of the Chinese and by the stubborn refusal of the Chinese government and people to adopt civilization. He described

"Chinese atheism and polytheism" and suggested:

"How truly affecting and heart-rending is it, therefore, that so large a portion of the human race should be shut up together, under one tyrannical government, whose exclusive policy forbids all intercourse with foreigners, and whose proud self-sufficiency imagines their native institutions fully adequate to all the requirements of the present and future world." (172)

By 1838, Medhurst understood that his own future plans for China depended upon the establishment of meaningful intercourse between China's political hierarchy and Protestant missionaries. He sincerely believed:

"if measures could be adopted that would influence the ruler of so vast an empire, the whole mass of his subjects would, in great measure, be affected thereby...."

Medhurst knew in 1838 that foreign missionaries required unlimited access to the interior of China. In 1835, he had travelled in an opium

172. Walter Medhurst (Senior), China: Its State and Prospects (London, 1838), pp. 72-73.

ship along the China coast to Shantung provinces, distributing religious materials to the Chinese populace and conferring with Imperial officials. The process of conversion however was one of slow and patient intercourse with the Chinese people. A voyage in an opium ship limited a missionary's freedom to communicate with the Chinese.

Medhurst wrote that

"although he [a missionary] may pay for his passage, to and fro from the place of destination, yet that would not entitle him to the use of a boat or the boat's crew on all occasions, or to the moving of the vessel from place to place to suit his convenience."

Although Medhurst took advantage of the opportunity to visit the coastal area, he resented the connection between himself and the opium trade:

"the opium trade would most likely be extended to a province in which it had been before but partially known, and should the missionary's aid in interpreting between the voyagers and the natives be called in, he would be contributing in some measure to the further spread of a mischief...." (I73)

In 1838, Medhurst's book appealed to the resources and manpower of British Protestant Christendom to take up the challenge of evangelism in China. A stimulus from home would encourage present missionary efforts of translation of the Scriptures into Chinese and increase recruits to the China field. (I74) He saw the value of a religious and educational federation of Western missionaries and teachers to convert the Chinese populace, particularly as by 1838,

"The establishment of schools in the empire of China has been found to be difficult, if not impossible, but among the emigrants, extensive efforts have been made to benefit the rising generation."

I73. Medhurst, op.cit., p. 77, p. 273.

I74. Ibid., p. 534.

This appeal in 1838 to the British religious and educational community lacked Chinese support, and Medhurst himself admitted: "Where shall we begin, or where can we hope to end the Herculean task?" (175)

But in mid-1853, Taiping promises to allow foreign travellers in inland China and to receive the religious tracts and communications of British Protestant missionaries suggested to Medhurst and the British Protestant religious community in China that perhaps this native insurgent band could perform "the Herculean task". Certainly this Taiping proposal invited British Protestant missionary sponsorship and guidance.

Concluding his review of Taiping religious tracts given to Bonham and Meadows in Nanking, Medhurst renewed his appeal to the religious and educational community in Great Britain not to abandon an unprecedented opportunity for religious conversion in China. He added the promising substance of Taiping Christianity to his former appeal of 1838:

"There are some things good, very good, in the productions before us, leading us to infer that the authors were divinely taught, and to cherish hope that not a few will, through the medium of these truths, find the road to Heaven.... one thing is clear that a considerable knowledge of Christianity exists among the insurgents, and could wise

175. Despite his admission, Medhurst was unable to give up his ambitions for an educational revolution to accompany the religious conversion of the masses. He wrote:

"Beginning with half a dozen and going through all the drudgery of scholastic business, for the first few years, the educational agent may, in the course of time, succeed in training a number of vigorous and intelligent young men, whom he may appoint over different seminaries, and then commencing the work of superintendence, he will find himself at the head of a range of schools, from which hundreds of well-taught children may proceed, to enlighten and bless the generation."

See Medhurst, op. cit., p. 74, p. 541, p. 543.

instructors effect a residence among them, the good might be fostered and evil repressed." (I76)

Translating Taiping religious documents, Medhurst was able in mid-1853 to fit Taiping religious heresies within his personal scheme for conversion of the Chinese. Reports of religious heresy at Nanking indicated to Medhurst that both Christians and religious fanatics were present in Taiping camps:

"Which [of these two Taiping religious factions] preponderates or which is likely to prevail, it is impossible without long and personal intercourse with the people themselves to say." (I77)

However, even in mid-1853, Medhurst stoutly maintained for his readers a separation between British Protestant and Taiping efforts to influence the masses. Describing Taiping sacrificial offerings, he suggested:

"It is evident from this the insurgents are neither Jews nor Mohammedans, or they would not offer unclean animals to God."

He ridiculed any imaginative fancy he observed in examples of Taiping religious fanaticism, also nullifying

"representations of the Divine Being far different from what we have been accustomed to in Christian Scriptures."

He wrote concerning a Taiping religious pamphlet that

".... the individual who conceived it is himself possessed of a vulgar mind. The language in which the pamphlet is drawn up is also excessively colloquial and in some instances provincial." (I78)

From 1853 to 1856, Medhurst's writings betrayed the enthusiasm

I76. B.P.P. 1853, LXIX, Relating to the Civil War in China, Enclosure No. 10, in No. 6, "General View....", in Bonham's despatch of 11 May, 1853, to Clarendon, p. 43.

I77. B.P.P. 1853, LXIX, op.cit., Enclosure No. 10, in No. 6, p. 43.

I78. B.P.P. 1853, LXIX, op.cit., Enclosure No. 10, in No. 6, p. 43.

of a man near the end of his life for the fulfilment of his lifelong goals. Medhurst would have Christian conversion of the Chinese of the interior by any non-objectionable means. His letter in November 1853 to the North China Herald bitterly complained of the barbarism of the Manchu army in the field. From this letter, it appears that the Imperialists were obviously not the force to advance the religious and educational interests of the man.¹⁷⁹

Medhurst understood that Taiping religious errors continued unchecked. A writer in the British Quarterly Review of July 1855 commented concerning an "Official Statement", which had been translated and despatched to Great Britain by Dr. Medhurst, "touching these supposed revelations", of the Taipings. Medhurst must have been very disheartened by the extent of sacrilege and religious heresy implicit in the following extract of his translation:

"The Northern Prince then came to the Eastern Palace to listen to the sacred commands of the Heavenly Father, who had come down into the world."

Medhurst probably understood from his own translation that Taiping chieftains lacked political training and political experience. In this extract, "the Heavenly Father" told female officers of the Celestial Court to advise Taiping Wang to the best of their ability:

"At present you must take advantage of his original goodness of nature and, as you have opportunity, instruct him, that he may get accustomed to what is correct and become an example to all the empire that all the nations of the world may take pattern by him."¹⁸⁰

In a letter to a China-coast newspaper, Medhurst described the political and religious fervour of a Taiping adherent who had

179. Edgar Holt, The Opium Wars in China (London, 1964), p. 185.

180. H.Q.R., Vol. 22, loc.cit., p. 123.

interrupted a service at a London Missionary Society chapel in Shanghai. At the time this letter was written, (1854?) Medhurst was impressed by the social class and the intelligent appeal of this Taiping rebel and admitted:

"a considerable amount of useful information was delivered and as such would serve to promote the objects we had in view, in putting down idolatry and furthering the worship of the true God." (181)

However, ~~as this letter indicates~~, Medhurst returned to his original plan for British sponsorship of British religious and educational interests in the Chinese interior. Again, British missionary endeavour was foremost in his thoughts. For Medhurst, only British efforts could accomplish in the interior necessary religious and political changes, which the Taipings were unable to complete in their own camps:

"... this is a class of men that can with difficulty be controlled. They must for a time be allowed to go their own way. It may not be in every respect the way which we could approve, but it does not appear to run directly counter to our objects. In the meantime we can go on in ours and inculcate such truths as they may forget or state correctly what they fail to represent aright. The Taiping-wang may thus prove a breaker-up of our way and prepare the people for a more just appreciation of divine truth..." (182)

Until his departure to England in 1856, Medhurst worked energetically to establish a colporteur system and to continue the voluminous printing and distribution of the Scriptures in Chinese. The Fifty-first Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society described the

181. B.Q.R., Vol. 22, loc.cit., pp. 136-138. The British Quarterly Review did not identify the date Medhurst's letter appeared in the China-coast newspaper.

182. Ibid., p. 138.

activities of the Corresponding Committee of that society in Shanghai:

"The Corresponding Committee of Shanghai are proceeding with the printing of 115,000 copies of the New Testament - the portion assigned to them of the quarter of a million that was, in the first instance, agreed to be prepared."

Medhurst wrote enthusiastically of his own endeavours on behalf of the Society:

"Of the edition of 5000 Gospels and Acts in the large type, we have not one remaining. Of the 18,000 New Testaments printed, we have not 1,000 in store. (183)

By 1856, Medhurst was totally committed to achieving the maximum possible distribution in the interior of Christian tracts. He wrote to the Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society in London:

"I have forwarded a bound copy of the entire Bible in Chinese, from Genesis to Revelation. I hope it will reach you in safety and produce as much gratification in the reception, as we experience in the sending."

He wrote like a man about to see the fulfilment of his plans for China:

"I cannot allow this opportunity to pass, without expressing my gratitude and that of my brethren towards your Society, for the liberality and generosity displayed by them to us, in upholding our hands when we were beset with difficulties and in so largely circulating both our Old and New Testament Versions."

Finally, in 1856, Medhurst wrote of his journey with Rev. Joseph Edkins and Rev. R. Cobbold into the interior to direct the distribution of Scriptures:

"Our journey lay directly through that port (Ningpo) to Tshuen Fuae, where we visited a number of celebrated monasteries and imparted to them the word of life so far surpassing, as it does in value, all their own shasters."

Medhurst found that the inland Chinese were eager to receive Christian

183. Fifty-first Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society, for the year 1855, p. cxi.

Scriptures:

"We found the priests very civil, some of them intelligent, and all of them eager for books."

By the time of this Report, local Imperialist officials did not prevent Medhurst's travels as they had previously halted Issachar Roberts and Dr. Charles Taylor in August 1853 on their way to Nanking:

"We travelled over 500 miles of country, through seven Chinese cities, over hills 4,000 feet high, and were everywhere well received; no hindrance or annoyance was experienced from the Mandarins nor annoyance from the people, and the journey was performed in European dress with ease and safety." (184)

Impressed by Chinese eagerness for Christian Scriptures and by what appeared to be unlimited access to the interior of China, Medhurst neglected to mention the Taipings in this Report.³ (185)

4. Activities in China of the British Foreign Bible Society and the London Missionary Society 1853-1856

The activities before 1853 of these two religious organizations in China influenced the opinion of many of their members in China

184. Fifty-second Report of the B.F.B.S., for 1856, pp. cxlii-cxliiv.

185. Objections could be made to the inclusion of a series of extracts concerning Bible distribution in the interior of China.

This material on the distribution of Bibles in the interior and Medhurst's journey to the interior is included to emphasize that Medhurst, as a respected British Protestant missionary in China, had given up hope in the Taipings. His antipathy to native insurgency was expressed in his activities as well as in his writings prior to his return in 1856 to England. Relating to his activities, this material emphasized the contrast between his support of native insurrection in his "General View of the Insurgents" in 1853 and his reports in 1855 and 1856 to the British and Foreign Bible Society. This material does typify British enthusiasm in China to further British religious interests as opposed to British enthusiasm for native Chinese to accomplish similar objectives without British guidance.

concerning the rebels. The entire Protestant missionary community in China at some stage was involved in, or took and interest in, works of translation and publication of the New Testament in Chinese. By 1852, stocks of New Testaments at Shanghai had been overproduced and imaginative projects for further publication were contemplated. Walter Medhurst wrote:

"The Secretary of the local Committee of the London Missionary Society's press states that as they are able to print cheaper than was first anticipated, they are willing to deliver 8,000 instead of 5,000 entire New Testaments, in addition to 5,000 copies of the Gospels and Acts already published, for the sum placed at their disposal by the Corresponding Committee, which will be an average of 4 d. for each copy of the New Testament in smaller type."

Without an actual promise of converts to receive the newly-printed Word, Medhurst wrote of an "experiment to print a smaller edition of the New Testament in Manchoo and Chinese in parallel columns". He conjectured abstractly concerning the results he hoped for from this experiment:

"there are many Chinese and Tartars partially acquainted with both languages, who would be very glad to obtain books printed in this manner, when otherwise they might not give attention to them." (186)

In 1853, however, the distribution of these New Testaments was found to be a rather slow and patient endeavour. The Corresponding Committee at Shanghai

"[had] not, indeed, to report so largely as they could have wished of actual distributions."

Corresponding Committees in China projected in 1853 that serious political upheaval in inland China could affect the pace of distribution

186. Forty-eighth Report of the B.F.B.S., for 1852, p. cxiii.

of Scriptures:

"Political movements and important changes are taking place in that empire (China), which may lead, it is hoped at no distant day, to a more abundant diffusion of the true light over its vast regions of moral and spiritual darkness." (187)

As already observed, in mid-1853, religious organizations in Britain were attracted by reports of religious change in China, and British journalists believed Taiping promises to allow foreign travel in inland China. Both of these factors induced vast financial support for the New Testament scheme, involving a campaign to finance the publication of one million New Testaments for distribution in the interior of China. In November 1853, a contributor to the British Quarterly Review reported the efforts of Corresponding Committees in China to extend the distribution of the 4d. New Testament (mentioned by Medhurst a year earlier):

"One mail brings us the intelligence that China is being revolutionized by a set of men who possess only a part of Genesis in their own language, but who recognize the whole Bible as their religion, though they read it only in fragments, and the next mail brings to this country the first completed copy of the New Testament in their language, as remarkable for its cheapness as for its beauty."

"The London Missionary Society has the honour of supplying the men who have made the translation and cast the type, while to the Bible Society is due the honour of affording pecuniary aid towards the requisite machinery."

This writer gave more information about the advocates of the New Testament scheme in Britain:

"The project advocated by Rev. J.A. James of supplying gratuitously a million copies of the New Testament is a noble one and worthy of Christian magnanimity that has so auspiciously commenced it and will no doubt see it accomplished." (188)

187. Forty-ninth Report of the B.F.B.S., for 1853, pp. cx-cxi.

188. E.M., Vol. 31, Loc. cit., p. 110, p. 114.

With financial assistance from the religious community in Great Britain, Corresponding Committees of the British and Foreign Bible Society were jubilant in 1854. It was reported that

"The extraordinary movement there taking place, from which, if successful, the most favourable results to the cause of revealed truth may be hoped for, and the very remarkable effort which has originated in this country to take advantage of the new and enlarged effort for China have engaged much of the attention of your Committee."

The Shanghai Corresponding Committee was given £400: £ 250 from the British and Foreign Bible Society and £ 150 from a grant made by the London Missionary Society, "for the same purpose to continue the work of publication". (189) With such financial assistance, and Taiping promises to allow foreign travel in the interior (which had already been seriously discounted by Dr. Charles Taylor, as has been shown), further efforts were started towards publication and distribution.

By 1855, enthusiasm for mass distribution of New Testaments through Taiping-occupied areas vanished. The Corresponding Committee was forced to admit that the Taiping rebels had not seized political authority. The Committee now felt that only representatives of the British and Foreign Bible Society in China could make the intended distributions, already fully financed from home. The Corresponding Committee at Shanghai admitted that previous Taiping promises to permit foreign travel and to study missionary tracts could not be trusted:

"... the Bishop of Victoria and the missionaries on the field of labour are strongly of opinion that it is undesirable to hasten forward the printing of large numbers of Scriptures, which the country is not yet open to receive, or not in possession of adequate agency to disseminate. The books would inevitably be injured, if not destroyed by damp and insects."

What is important about this is that by 1855, British Protestant missionaries connected to the British and Foreign Bible Society had concluded a debate concerning why they were in China. Their conclusions rejected federation with Taiping insurgents and reasserted that it was a British responsibility to convert the masses of the interior. For the Corresponding Committee, the work of Scripture distribution could only be a devout British endeavour:

".... this important project is chiefly contingent on the opportunities that may occur by the country being opened to Bible circulation - also on the supply of agents to effect it - for which our main dependence must be placed on the missionary staff already in the country." (190)

These conclusions were essentially similar to Medhurst's original appeal in 1838 to the British religious and educational community.

In 1856, the Corresponding Committee in Shanghai apologised for their earlier, mistaken support of this native insurrection. They explained their original belief was that

"the large funds [resulting from the New Testament scheme and "the earnest zeal", the "sympathy", and the "liberality" of British Christians] placed at their disposal could [not] be very rapidly appropriated."

"All the bright hopes that were excited have not been realized. All the facilities anticipated for diffusing, far and wide, the Scriptures, have not been presented. The issue of the great movement is still problematical, nor can your Committee ascertain how far the so-called rebel chiefs are aiding by their own efforts in the printing and circulation of inspired Scriptures." (191)

A self-perpetuated Chinese religious movement could not, in the Committee's opinion, advance British efforts to convert the inland Chinese:

190. Fifty-first Report of the B.F.B.S., for 1855, p. cv.

191. Fifty-second Report of the B.F.B.S., for 1856, pp. cxl-cxli.

"Hitherto it must be remembered the rebellion has retarded rather than promoted the work of your Society, and it is only by a gradual process that the sphere of operation will enlarge."

But as the funds were already committed to the work of conversion, a British endeavour of further publication and distribution would not replace the former commitment of the Corresponding Committee to the forces of native insurrection. The Committee wrote that their aim was: "to advance the work to the utmost practicable limits.... believing the version (of the entire Bible in Chinese) prepared by the Delegates to be a faithful translation of the inspired oracles, your Committee have authorized the printing of 50,000 copies. The work is being executed at Shanghai and will be carried through the press with all possible speed." (192)

The Committee, of which Medhurst was a member, reported that the inland Chinese welcomed British missionaries and were willing to receive Scriptures in Chinese:

"Missionaries and native converts have traversed large and remote districts of country without experiencing injury or insult. They have visited thronged cities through whose streets foreigners have never before passed and with every instance have been received with marked courtesy and respect, clearly proving that the barriers of a haughty policy are swept away, - that the people are prepared for intercourse with men of other nations and ready to receive at their hands that sacred volume, which is destined in the purposes of the Most High to overthrow the fabric of Chinese superstition."

Finally the Committee was able to report that the Rev. Joseph Edkins and Rev. Henry Reeve were able to visit in mid-May Kwin-shen and Chang-shih near the city of Loohoo and Keang-yin on the Yangtze, 'within 70 miles of the camp of the insurgents and 150 from the mouth of the Shanghai River', and managed to distribute about five hundred New Testaments. Medhurst finalized the Committee's findings:

"No interference occurred from the Mandarins, and it would seem by means of this magnificent river, the Yang-tsze Keang, which is about thirty miles near the mouth, entrance may be gained into the country for much greater distances when the scene of war shall be removed from Chim Keang and Nanking." (193)

Before the Arrow War, Medhurst and the Corresponding Committees gave British writers evidence that the inland Chinese and British travellers could live peaceably.

B. British Civilian Accounts Supporting the Insurgents

1853-1856

3. British Political Writings Supporting the Taipings

There were British writers uninterested in religious matters. These hoped that the Taipings would further British political interests or that the movement would mean China's deliverance from the Manchus.

Charles Macfarlane's The Chinese Revolution, which appeared in 1853, uniquely portrayed the Taiping insurrection. He described the Taipings as another representation of a national Liberal political movement of oppressed peoples. The book reflected his own support for political revolutions in mid-nineteenth century Europe and Asia. His knowledge of Taiping victories caused him to predict the restoration of a Han dynasty in China:

"The vulgar are incredulous of the extinction of old royal races; it is never certain that their last representative is in his tomb.... the legitimacy of the Tartar dynasty and the necessity of substituting for it a national one were publicly discussed. The machinery of revolution was ready-made: the secret societies spread the reports, and many thousands of the members of various political clubs suddenly disappeared." (194)

193. Fifty-second Report of the B.F.B.S., for 1856, pp. cxliii-cxliv.

194. Macfarlane, op. cit., pp. 43-44.

Macfarlane popularized what Legge and Medhurst concluded earlier in 1853 on the China coast: a movement of native Chinese insurrection, which was obviously succeeding, owed its political philosophy and its impetus to previous connections with Protestant missionaries. Macfarlane wrote:

"It has been hinted that Gutzlaff, besides teaching the Christian faith, taught many natives the elements of political science and encouraged their aspirations after better government and more freedom than they or their ancestors had ever known."

Macfarlane maintained:

"Christianity is hardly to be taught without infusing notions of liberty and good government. They are in the very essence of the faith."
(195)

Although expressing little confidence in Anglo-Chinese press reports concerning the insurgents, much of The Chinese Revolution commented about the findings of Gallery and Yvan. (196) Macfarlane argued that British missionaries should travel to Nanking and was confident that

"the necessary information [concerning Taiping religious beliefs] will come to us by degrees, as the English and Americans in China extend their intercourse with the victorious party."

Macfarlane's single volume contained many of the early reports of the insurgents which were released during the year 1853 to British readers. It did stress the reliability of Taiping promises of unlimited foreign travel in the interior. He wrote:

"We are assured that many European missionaries are scattered over the provinces in the heart of the Empire occupied by Tien-ta, and that not one of them has suffered the slightest molestation." (197)

195. Macfarlane, op.cit., p. 81.

196. Ibid., p. 222. See p. 88, p. 99 for examples of direct borrowing from Gallery and Yvan.

197. Ibid., p. 94.

The effect in August 1853 of John Oxenford's translation of Gallery and Yvan's Histoire de l'Insurrection en Chine has already been discussed. Oxenford's supplementary chapter to the work contains interesting reservations and insights.

In the supplementary chapter, Oxenford attempted to draw attention away from Meadows's preliminary mission in early 1853 into inland China. Oxenford found this mission, "did not lead in the first instance to any important result". He was one of the first British civilians to indicate that Bonham and Meadows's visit to Nanking was a British diplomatic initiative which needed public support. He wrote that, "this fact seems to have escaped the attention of MM. Gallery and Yvan". He had the following impression of Bonham and Meadows's missions

"Having informed the Princes in writing that any injury to British property at Chang-Hai would be resented, Sir George Bonham left Nanking." (198)

Oxenford denied that the Taipings were Eastern Christians.

Writing in 1853 of the Trimetrical Classic obtained by Bonham and Meadows, he asserted:

"The above document gives no reason to suppose that the insurgents are otherwise than orthodox Confucians with a superstructure of spurious Christianity." (199)

These "orthodox Confucians" were politically attractive to Oxenford.

He emphasized that British citizens should understand that Taiping

198. Gallery and Yvan, History..., with a supplementary chapter by John Oxenford, p.289.

199. Ibid., p.296, p.312.

armies were seizing gradual political control of China:

"In their opinion of the magnitude and importance of the rebellion MM. Gallery and Yvam have proved themselves admirably correct.... the insurgents or as the Anglo-Chinese papers now call them, the "patriots", have not only retained possession of Nankin but on the 18th of May captured Amoy...."

In the Postscript to the book, Oxenford continued this favourable impression:

"The insurrection is making steady progress, and the popular hatred of the mandarins appears to be universal...."(200)

The reports of Commander Fishbourne were also considered to be reliable. Fishbourne was an adamant supporter of British Protestant missionary endeavours in China. He was the author of a book, published in London in 1855, entitled Impressions of China, and the Present Revolution, its Progress and Prospects. In July 1855, a contributor to the British Quarterly Review used several extracts from Fishbourne's work as the major source for his article, "The Insurgent Power in China". This writer had only one major complaint with Fishbourne's work: "there is great want of skill in presenting the material of which it consists." (201)

Fishbourne's reports were extremely useful to this writer. Despite decreasing enthusiasm in Britain for the Chinese insurrection, Fishbourne remained definitely committed to the Taipings. He drew evidence, which supported the initial enthusiastic reports in November 1853 of the British Quarterly Review, from his own contacts with Taiping chieftains. Fishbourne's book was a collection of his own observations

200. Gallery and Yvam, History..., p.316, p.323.

201. B.Q.R., Vol. 22, loc.cit., p.III.

throughout the period 1853 to 1855 concerning insurgent chances of survival.

He recorded that he was encouraged by reports in January 1854 of despondency in Peking. He mentioned the report in the Peking Gazette of a censor and imperial inspector of the central part of the city of Peking. This censor wrote that, "we learn that the capture of that city and the fall of the Tartar dynasty is but a question of time". Fishbourne was confident that the Manchu Imperial regime was near collapse:

"If they are not popular there [Peking], where can they be supposed to be? It is quite clear that their fall would scarce be the subject of regret to a single Chinese." (202)

Fishbourne bravely contradicted prevailing notions of Taiping barbarism with proof that the Chinese populace were attracted back to their homes in Taiping-occupied areas:

"Again we saw many people as we passed along carrying back their furniture, as they did at Shanghai, confidence having returned."

He was a skillful apologist for Taiping barbarism and for the severity of discipline in Taiping military operations:

"The code of morals is ~~quite sanguinary~~, but it is no doubt administered with justice and mercy.... and it is probable that a law of such character is necessary for the low and depraved state in which China is at present." (203)

Despite the aversion by 1855 of the British Protestant missionary community to any suggestion of federated Protestant-Taiping evangelism, Fishbourne "stoutly maintained his hopes for Taiping Christianity. While

202. B.O.R., Vol. 22, loc. cit., pp. 114-115.

203. Ibid., pp. 119-120.

remarking upon a Taiping communication in April 1853 to Bonham, Fishbourne asserted:

"I was satisfied from the first that they were written by persons who better understood and more appreciated the scheme of Christianity than do people constituting the mass of Christendom." (204)

Fishbourne openly contested the prevalent opinions of many British Protestant organizations and a majority of British journalists. The Taiping movement, he found, from the beginning was limited:

"they do not attempt to invent a Bible or add anything to, or take from, the word of God. We have thus a common standard of truth, though they, owing to education and the difficulties of language, draw somewhat different conclusions and unwittingly mix up much that is unsatisfactory and incongruous with their statements of truth, but they, not perceiving this incongruity, publish it and still insist that our religion is one and that we are brethren."

He pleaded for a renewed British commitment to the Taipings:

"are there not many who are as wide, or nearly so, from the truth, far wider on some points, and yet we do not take ~~that~~ sufficient ground upon which to question their sincerity or to refuse political intercourse?"

Fishbourne wondered about the fundamentals of Christian belief.

He questioned whether a properly instructed Christian, leading a Christian life, could conscientiously incite political dissension in other human beings. Fishbourne concluded:

"it were unwise to wish that they [the Taipings] had been better instructed... had they been better instructed in the principles and precepts of Christianity, in all probability they would not have been found raising the standard of revolt." (205)

204. B.Q.R., Vol. 22, loc.cit., pp. 128-129. See pp. 69-70, p. 80 for further extracts from Fishbourne's account.

205. Ibid., p. 133.

C. British Writers Opposing the Insurrection 1853-1856

I. Early Civilian Materials Opposing Taiping Claims 1853

To determine what sources many British journalists used to counterbalance optimistic and ambitious reports of political and religious revolution in China, one should consult early civilian materials which were critical of the Taipings.

In November 1853, a contributor to the British Quarterly Review dealt severely with a pamphlet written by Rev. James Rule. The journalist found the pamphlet to be "disheartening" though not "unseasonable". Rule had contradicted early reports and claims of British missionaries and discovered "absurd and blasphemous opinions which are mixed up with the important truths in the books of the insurgents."

Like Gallery and Yuan, Rule indicated that the Taiping movement was rather, "an affair of the Jesuits". Rule's pamphlet however forced the writer in the British Quarterly Review to confess:

"There has not been enough time for them [British Protestant missionaries in China] or anyone else to form ~~anything~~ like a calm and complete judgment of the whole case."

However, Rule's pioneering criticism was rejected with the discovery of, "some strong prejudice of his own against rebellions and revolutions of all kinds". (206)

Rule and Fishbourne were conjecturing that pure Christianity in its Western Protestant form was anti-revolutionary, pacific, and incapable of, "producing any good", as the British Quarterly Review admitted. Most British journalists and observers however were keen

to support British Protestant missionary endeavours on the China coast. The suggestions of Callery and Yvan and Abbe Huc that internal political dissension in China and Roman Catholicism, rather than British Protestantism, caused native Chinese to seize political authority were troublesome. Indirectly, these French observers wondered how true were the claims of British Protestant missionaries that they were treating the Chinese people fairly. Such Protestant missionaries did live under the jurisdiction of representatives of the British Government in China. If the British liberal tradition could tolerate the pomposity and international disgrace surrounding the First Opium War, how trustworthy was the British Protestant tradition? How could the Chinese respect missionaries who owed their privileged position to a treaty signed under duress, and who lived in the same community as representatives of the British Government?

To deny in 1853, as Ryle and others would do, that Protestant Christianity should provoke liberal sentiments and to question the character of liberal traditions in England was a challenge to the integrity of the British public. Such questions might cause an interested British observer to question why he, or his Government, or Great Britain, was in China at all? Such an observer might criticize prevalent ideas in Britain of "enlightened treatment of fellow men" and finally would conclude that the most reasonable course was the advancement of his own personal interests. Thinking along these lines encouraged many British writers to look again for opportunities for British enterprise in China.

Charles Macfarlane's The Chinese Revolution included an anonymous letter to the China Mail of an individual taking the penname, "Conservative". The "Conservative" offered an alternative to Rule and Gallery and Yvan's suspicions. The "Conservative" wondered why Christian theologians in China could express support for the Taiping movement. The Taiping campaign to take political control of China resulted in frequent atrocities of which a true Christian could never approve:

"God has given us His Holy Word by which to judge of the conduct of men. In it there is no principle more explicitly declared than this, that we may do no evil that good may come, neither may we approve of it or rejoice at it when done by others."

He indicated that it was sinful and destructive for the Taipings to alter the essentials of Protestant Christian faith and to gather their followers into armies which ravaged the countryside:

"I cannot regard the prostitution of the sacred name of Jehovah and His blessed Son our Saviour by this murderous band of iconoclastic marauders, in claiming to be sent of God and declaring that he miraculously aids them in warfare, but with the deepest abhorrence and regret."

Without referring to organized British religious life in China, he strongly implied that a true Protestant would not instigate political unrest in a nation:

"But what are these outward forms and observances [referring to Taiping religious ceremonies] where the internal grace and spirit of the Gospel, which is "peace on earth" and "good will to men", "Love to enemies", "the patient observance of persecution", are wanting. By its fruit the tree is known." (207)

2. The Writings of Thomas Taylor Meadows 1853-1856

It has been assumed that T.T. Meadows continuously supported

the Taipings. Taking the approach of the "Conservative" that, "by its fruit the tree is known", one discovers that Meadows's support for the Taipings should be more cautiously evaluated. In particular, his writings prior to the Arrow War should be consulted. At Nanking in mid-1853, Meadows asserted the fairness of British diplomacy. However, he aggressively demanded privileges from the Taipings in mid-1853 without prior negotiation with them. Both he and Bonham forced Taiping chieftains to accept the "impartial" right of British officials to interfere in the civil war by threatening to use British armaments at Nanking. (B) "Neutrality" did not keep the British from Chinese battlefields and in effect became a responsibility of the Taipings at Nanking and of the Imperialists in the treaty ports to comply with British official wishes.

As a British official in China, Meadows could perhaps be said to have taken excessive interest in political and religious dissension in the interior.

His book, Desultory Notes on the Government and People of China, praised the Confucian tradition of government by scholar gentry:

"... the finest doctrines can obtain no influence on the minds of the poor and ignorant, or the unthinking classes, and that even those most consonant to human feelings may gradually lose the hold they may have gained, unless they be constantly inculcated by the example and instruction of some respected body."

He admired traditional Chinese understanding of this concept and explained that

B. See Appendix B, pp. 283-289.

"in all their writings on government, we find the sentiment continually recurring that the best laws are of no use, if not enforced by the wise and talented...."(208)

Meadows consequently appears diametrically opposed to social and political change which could disturb the traditional Confucian legal framework. Meadows focused upon the connection in the Confucian tradition between scholarly achievement and official appointment by emphasizing this factor in his book, The Chinese and their Rebellions.

In 1856, Meadows was proud that his Desultory Notes in 1846 and his letter written, "a year before the event", predicted political insurrection in China. He obviously believed in Macaulay's dictum that "long experience" and "immediate access" to the China problem were the best criteria to determine the relevance of official or civilian reports from China. (B)

He considered that British observers of China affairs in Great Britain lacked experience in the China field:

"...the erroneous conclusions arrived at by the intellects of the first order has proved to me that the public in the West has not yet the data necessary to the formation of independent judgments in Chinese and (therefore) Anglo-Chinese affairs."

Finally he defined his occupational role as

"a political meteorologist who, when anxious to gain attention to his opinions on the present state of the political atmosphere and the measures which it demands, points to the fact that he has succeeded in foretelling coming convulsions of the political elements." (209)

From 1853 to 1856, Meadows was not emotionally committed to the Taipings like Charles Macfarlane or Commander Fishbourne. Meadows

208. Meadows, Desultory Notes...., p.153.

209. Meadows, The Chinese...., p.189.

B. See Appendix B, pp.274-275, pp.282-283 for development of this dictum.

instead apologized for existing political dissent in China with a psychological explanation of Taiping Wang's appeal to native Chinese:

"... the origination, if not the ultimate triumph of religious movements, whether conversions or revivals, rests largely on the merely sympathetic affections."

Meadows seemed only pleasantly surprised by the number of Chinese who were attracted to Taiping camps. In 1856, he still held movements based upon religious fanaticism in contempt, especially if they threatened the basis of social stability in a nation. He spoke of

"the temporary success of even these religious movements that are both intellectually and morally, decidedly of a retrograde or downward character as compared with the state of the general society in which they appear." (210)

Meadows was obviously committed to support British policy by his official position of Chinese interpreter to the Shanghai British consul. He had apparently not evaluated the means which he and Bonham used decisively in mid-1853 to force the Taipings to respect British privileges and diplomatic immunities. In italics, he could still define the state of "non-intervention" without evaluating his own contribution in 1853 to official policy:

"That no nation has the right to aid, by actual force or intimidation, one of the contending parties in any other nation, unless it is to counterbalance the aid given to the opposite party by a third nation." (211)

As a consular "meteorologist", Meadows explained the deviation of British policy in China from declarations of neutral intent. He did so in a manner characteristic of explanations offered in 1853 by himself

210. Meadows, The Chinese, ..., pp. 89-90.

211. Ibid., p. 467.

and Bonham, by Alcock from 1853 to 1855 in Shanghai, by Elgin prior to his mission in 1858 to the interior, and by Rear-Admiral Hope in 1862 following British armed intervention. Defence of British official commitments, "the British position", and "the legitimate interests of British civilians" were paramount considerations of officials who drafted such explanations. Meadows wrote in 1856:

"If, therefore, any one of the nations connected with China is directly attacked in its legitimate interests by the Chinese then full liberty must be accorded it to obtain redress by force.... in matters of religion they [foreign nations] may act together in so far as protecting to the same extent the missionaries of their respective countries is concerned." (212)

The preceding statement contains no mention of Taiping or Imperialist belligerent rights. Nor does the preceding statement indicate that Meadows gave unlimited support to native insurgents, as was claimed by British observers, such as Augustus Lindley.

3. The Commentary of Robert Fortune

From 1853 to 1856, British journalists often referred to Robert Fortune's commentaries. Fortune performed valuable service for the London Horticultural Society and for the East India Company in India and China. He was the author of two books entitled Wanderings in China, published in 1847 in London, and A Journey to the Tea Countries of China, published in 1852 in London. These works described his researches into Chinese teas and Chinese botany and gave reliable information to British readers concerning the possible means of travel into the Chinese interior.

212. Meadows, The Chinese..., pp. 469-470.

His later book, A Residence Among the Chinese, published in 1857 in London, listed many of his observations made during the preceding years in China. He was one of the first British observers in China who after gaining access to the interior, expressed irritation with the forces of political insurrection. As well as producing panic among his Chinese assistants in Shanghai, the presence of an insurrectionary force in the interior or on the coast hindered his investigations:

"On returning to Shanghai, I found no progress whatever had been made, and indeed men's minds were so full of rebellion raging in the country at that time that little else could have been expected." (213)

On more than one occasion, Fortune criticized the social class and regional limitation of insurgent bands. For example he described the beginnings of the Kuangsi insurrections:

"... Hundreds of thousands of fields were lying uncultivated; the communications were in the hands of the outlaws, so that the supplies of the government could not travel." (214)

4. Conclusion

In the period 1853 to 1856, British observers wrote about the Taipings and British policy in China. From mid-1853, most observers took notice of the Taipings after they had examined reliable materials concerning the insurgents.

The resurgence of British plans and of British interest in the Chinese interior was more important to British writers than the religious

213. Robert Fortune, A Residence Among the Chinese (London, 1857), p. 118.

214. Ibid., p. 8. See also Ibid., p. 121 for illustration of Fortune's bitterness to the Triads at Shanghai.

and moral life of the insurgents, insurgent political reliability, or Taiping promises to allow unlimited foreign travel into the interior upon the formation of a Taiping dynasty. In 1853 and 1855, a more critical awareness of events in China was reinforced by Gallery and Yvan and Abbé Huc's accounts of their travels in the interior. Their accounts and those in mid-1853 of British critics of the Taipings challenged the nature and assumptions of British political and religious institutional life.

Beginning in July 1853 with the Edinburgh Review, British observers strongly began to favour greater development of British interests in China. By 1856, most British religious organizations, journalists, and interested observers were convinced that their objectives would be achieved by war, if necessary, with the Chinese Government.

When the Taipings and other insurgents began to lose the advantage of continuing victories over the Manchus, most British publications withdrew former optimistic reports about the Taipings. Instead, they criticized what they discovered to be Taiping religious, moral, and political deficiencies. At the same time, British officials, earlier attacked by British writers for taking a pro-Imperialist bias, were advised before the Arrow War by many of these same publications to promote British interests by war, if necessary.

Notable exceptions to this pattern were the British Quarterly Review and Commander Fishbourne who in 1855 believed the Taipings could still be worthwhile to British missionary endeavours in China.

For these observers, the Taipings still represented British interests in the interior.

From 1853 to 1856, British observers recognized that a British policy of neutrality in the civil war was inoperative. British officials and civilians were interfering in belligerent affairs.

With such official interference, British observers felt that British civilian interests should be extended in China. In 1856, Bowring's commencement of hostilities was merely an enactment of British official policy, which most British writers previously promoted. In 1856, local aggression in Canton suited the recommendations in January and May 1854 of Blackwood's Magazine.

As will be shown in Chapter Three, British civilian attitudes concerning the Taipings were affected by Bowring and Parkes's renewal of hostilities in 1856. With the approach of another treaty settlement, a native Chinese force of insurgency was given secondary notice.

CHAPTER THREE

BRITISH PUBLIC OPINION AND THE TAIPINGS

1856 - 1862

This chapter extends the analysis of British periodical and civilian commentary concerning the Taipings into the period of the second treaty settlement of China with the foreign powers. With an understanding of British civilian attitudes before 1856 concerning the insurgents and concerning the furtherance of British interests in China, it is not difficult to follow the development of public attitudes to the Arrow War and to the continuing presence of the Taipings in the Chinese interior.

After 1856, the majority of British journalists cited did not offer further support in their writings to the Taipings. Many British journalists focused upon Bowring's writings and also upon T.T. Meadows's book, The Chinese and their Rebellions. In actuality, the majority of British writers cited implied before the Treaty of Tientsin in 1858 and before the Convention of Peking in 1860 that because British victory over the Imperialists was imminent, and because "legal status" was about to be granted to British travellers in inland China, the Imperialist regime had to be strengthened. Once British victory in China appeared certain, some British writers found they had to re-evaluate Chinese character. For these writers, native insurrection in China became anti-Christian, politically anti-traditional, and a hindrance to the fulfilment of British treaty privileges.

Following news of the commencement in 1856 of hostilities in Canton, and with the General Election in 1857, a series of articles appeared in British journals. These dealt specifically with the China interests of the particular journal. From 1856 to 1862, certain British journals simply solidified their position concerning the Taipings and concerning native insurrection, which they had observed prior to 1856. Whenever the fulfilment of British treaty rights was affected by the Taiping presence in the interior, British journals, such as Chambers's Journal, Fraser's Magazine, and Blackwood's, gave fragmentary but critical attention to the Taipings. Reports of Taiping acts of barbarism or of Taiping destruction of symbols of Chinese traditional life, such as the Porcelain Tower of Nanking, created critical discussion of the Taipings.

But as noted in Chapter Two, many British writers and civilians, including contributors to the journals mentioned above, were confident by 1856 of the advancement in the interior of British interests. Accounts in such journals gave no further favourable mention of the Taipings. Other favourable British accounts in 1860 to 1861 of the Taipings did not weaken such opposition to the Taipings.

A series of articles appeared in the early months of 1857 in British journals, attempting to establish the China interests of the journal in view of the hostilities in 1856 at Canton. Although the individual reaction to Bowring and Parkes's activities in Canton varied, the British Government's decision to renew hostilities with the Manchus and to support Bowring and Parkes in China was generally

applauded by most writers. British public interests in China were fully discussed, and after a reading of British periodicals accounts of the Arrow War period, one concludes that civilians in Great Britain were anxiously awaiting the treaty settlement. By 1857, news of the Taipings became of secondary importance to British writers.

Most journalists cited previously had abandoned hope before 1856 in the Taipings as a viable alternative to the Manchus. The renewal of British hostilities in 1856 with the Manchus agreed with earlier recommendations concerning British policy by many writers. It appears almost certain that from 1856 to 1862, British accounts concentrated upon the Manchus and upon treaty privileges to be exacted from Manchu officials for British civilians.

In April 1857, in an article entitled "British Relations with China", a contributor to the Edinburgh Review described Bowring and Parkes's diplomacy and the renewal in 1856 of hostilities in Canton. Viceroy Yeh Ming-oh'en's stubborn refusal to surrender unconditionally to British demands upon him was described as a threat to British commerce: "the flag of every foreign nation only grants rights or security in so far as a Chinese official sees fit to allow it, and the first consequence would be to strike a whole class of vessels, forming part of our navigation and essential to our trade as recognized by treaty, out of the list of those we may legitimately employ and protect." (1)

Drawing support from the writings of Bonham and Meadows, the writer plainly abandoned any claims of benevolence towards the Chinese. He stressed that British troops were obligated to forcibly teach the Chinese to treat foreigners with respect:

I. E.R., Vol. 105, April 1857, "British Relations with China", p. 519.

"There is undoubtedly a difference in our mode of dealing with Easterns generally and with the great Powers in Europe.... England puts up with more injury and insult in a single month from such a Power as China.... than she would tolerate for a single day under circumstances of nearer equality...."

".... the inaptness of the Chinese to learn or profit by any means of better information which continued intercourse brings within their reach is one of the most discouraging of the conditions attending all efforts of improvement."

The writer claimed that Chinese political intransigence had led to the Canton incident. Bowring and Parkes's unenviable position was seen as

"a miscalculation either as to the enemy's position and means of resistance or as to their own means of coercion." (2)

This writer remained quite confident of the proper solution to the difficulties in China. He returned to the proposals and assessment of the China situation, contained in the July article in 1853 of the Edinburgh Review:

"submission, endurance under wrong, and patience under insult have invariably led to the aggravation of all these evils, while on the other hand, in no one instance, has a well-considered and determined resistance to treatment in every way unjustifiable failed to ensure a greater respect and forbearance of their part."

"Commerce and religious propagandism are in a great degree incompatibly objects in China - if you will not relinquish either, one must be kept subordinate to the other, but do not attempt anything so irrational as to pursue both at the same time under conditions calculated only to be mutually destructive." (3)

In June 1857, in an article entitled "American Explorations - China and Japan", a contributor to Blackwood's Magazine continued that journal's disapproval of native insurrection. In January and May 1854,

2. E.R., Vol. 105, loc. cit., p. 521, p. 523, p. 525.

3. HRQ, p. 525, p. 549.

a previous writer in Blackwood's criticized the Taipings. Already by June 1857, the writer of "American Explorations - China and Japan" justified Imperialist cruelties against the Canton insurgents, and by so doing, he attempted to rebuild the confidence of British readers in the Imperialist regime:

"It would be unfair to brand the English people of the last century with the stigma of cruelty, atrocity, and bloodthirsty-mess, as it is now to fix upon the dealings of Yeh or any other governor of the empire with regard to the rebels as proof of the savage and tiger-like character of the Chinese. Bad as they may be in many respects, we see no good purpose to be served by making them appear worse than they are." (4)

In December 1858, in an article entitled "A Cruise in Japanese Waters", a contributor to Blackwood's approved of British treaty privileges, although Blackwood's did not support in 1857 Palmerston or Sir John Bowring:

"Henceforth thanks to allied arms and allied diplomacy, China was open to the enterprise of the missionary, traveller, or merchant, and the ships of England might not only visit her seaboard and enter her harbours but were at liberty also to penetrate her farthest borders, by means of that noble stream the Yangtse-Keang, which flows by and through her richest and most secluded provinces."

Like the writer for Blackwood's in January 1854, this journalist described Shanghai as

"in fact the Liverpool of China and likely still more to rise in commercial importance as the results of the Treaty of Tientsin develop themselves." (5)

In November 1859, a writer in Blackwood's had less enthusiasm for the renewal of aggressive activity than other British journalists.

4. B.M., Vol. 81, June 1857, "American Explorations - China and Japan", p.

5. Ibid., Vol. 84, December 1858, "A Cruise in Japanese Waters", p. 635, p. 636.

He recognized that the Imperialist regime must survive to guarantee the treaty settlement with Britain. There was no mention of the Taipings: in January 1854, Blackwood's had rejected native insurrection as an unsuitable alternative to Imperialist rule. In this article of November 1859, the writer completely discarded any claims of benevolence towards the Chinese people of the interior:

"We cannot, we dare not, forego our right to punish the Emperor Hien-Fung for his treachery, but for a thousand reasons the punishment must be short, sharp, and decisive and at the same time not remorseless. We must not force the Emperor to extremities; we must not kill the goose that has commenced to lay us golden eggs." (6)

The journalist honestly admitted he feared Jesuit and French official competition in the interior of China:

"Low indeed must England have sunk, if she needs French aid to punish China."

He saw the French allies as potential competitors for the attention of the inland Chinese:

"We go to war with China for purely commercial reasons; she wants neither us nor our trade; we insist she shall accept both. "France goes to war for an idea", that happens in this case to be the right of her priesthood to go wherever they please, and seeks converts to a faith, a firm belief in which renders every Chinaman a rebellious subject." (7)

At this point, Blackwood's appeared to have accepted the contention, made in 1853 by Gallery and Yvan and in 1855 by Abbe Huc, that only Chinese converts to the Roman Catholic faith could instigate political dissension in China. In the preceding extract, the writer suggests that Chinese converts to Roman Catholicism would be "rebellious". In other

6. B.M., Vol. 86, November 1859, "On Allied Operations in China", p.631.

7. Ibid., pp.630-631.

words, the peaceful Chinese village community, pictured in January and May 1854 in Blackwood's, was endangered by Jesuit interference in the interior. In August 1853, Blackwood's was one of the first British periodicals to draw attention to Callery and Yvam's travels.

In May 1860, in an article entitled "War and Progress in China", a contributor to Blackwood's expressed satisfaction with Elgin's second mission to China. The Machiavellian pursuit of British interests was justified in the following extract because Chinese rulers would not openly accept British civilization in inland China:

"You cannot open China but as an armed man - victorious. You cannot teach the rulers of China to respect their political engagements with a foreigner except through fear. It is because we wish to open China, to see our import trade to China as flourishing as the export trade from China that we urge an armed exploration of her seaboard and interior, and we cannot help thinking that those who are now declaiming against such measures on the plea of humanity consult rather their ledgers than their consciences in desiring to prevent the introduction, now that an opportunity occurs, of a better civilization and purer creed amongst the many millions who long for our coming but who are forbidden to hold intercourse with us by the edicts of the Brother of the Moon." (8)

Again, a writer in Blackwood's openly accepted further aggressive activity in the north of China and was guided in this decision, as Walter Medhurst (Senior) had been in 1852, by inaccurate and whimsical suggestions that the inland Chinese would defy their local rulers and welcome British citizens in their communities.

In February 1857, in an article entitled "The War with China", a contributor to Fraser's Magazine supported Bowring and Parkes's aggressive activities in Canton. He determined that British aggression at Canton advanced the commercial interests of the journal. Fraser's

8. E.M., Vol. 37, May 1860, "War and Progress in China", pp. 525-526.

commercial interests in the Chinese interior was fully described by articles in December 1854 and in 1855. With hostilities at Canton, the furtherance of British commercial interests in China was diametrically opposed to Fraser's support in November 1853 for native insurrection. In February 1857, this writer gave little further attention to the Taipings and instead admired the action of Bowring and Parkes:

"Any temporary inconvenience to commerce that may be caused by decided action on our part to ensure the observance of treaties is sure to be far more counterbalanced in the long run by the additional security to trade that will be obtained by making the Chinese Government understand that we will not suffer it to be tampered with."

He returned to the argument used effectively in July 1853 by a writer in the Edinburgh Review.⁹ According to this argument, British officials had been too lenient with the Imperialists in securing the privileges and immunities of the first treaty settlement. The Treaty of Nanking and the Treaty of the Bogue were plainly

"far from securing all the advantages to British trade that might have been expected, considering that we were triumphant and China utterly vanquished in the recent struggle." (9)

Moreover, the writer in Fraser's wished the Chinese were consuming a greater quantity of British goods:

"By far the bulk of the present exports to China consist of cotton manufactures, which are highly appreciated there, and yet the quantity we send, great as it is, scarcely amounts to a quarter of a yard for each individual annually. We feel assured that our negotiators will do everything in their power to break down the barriers which at present confine us to the five ports...."

Even before the Manchu Government granted travel privileges to foreigners, this journalist so entirely gave up interest in the

9. F.M., Vol. 55, February 1857, "The War with China", pp. 239-240.

Taipings that he seriously recommended Nanking as a future entrepôt to be demanded from the Imperialists:

"Great care would, of course, have to be exercised in selecting the exact place, though it would seem most desirable that it should be situated on the Yang-tse-Kiang, or be in or near the fertile and populous province of Keang-soo. Probably Nanking itself, the ancient capital of the empire (now however in the hands of the rebels), would be of all places most desirable for the purpose." (10)

The British Quarterly Review was one journal in July 1855 which maintained qualified support for the Taipings. In 1856, in a book review of Bayard Taylor's travels to Shanghai and Nanking, a contributor to the journal expressed some disappointment with the Taipings. The outbreak of hostilities in China, however, caused the British Quarterly Review to radically alter its views of the Taipings. The author of the journal's first article in 1857 chose from two alternatives. He could back the Whig Government and press for a widening of privileges and immunities for British missionary and commercial endeavours, or like previous journalists he could support the Taipings.

The author of the July article in 1855 reported that the Taipings had not continued to win battles and were not attractive to the organized religious community in Great Britain. In 1857, with the balloting for the election beginning in late March, (11) a contributor to the British Quarterly Review was apparently attracted by another possible treaty settlement. He chose to abandon the journal's former criticism of Sir John Bowring by admitting:

"It may be that Sir John Bowring is a vain, self-sufficient man, without sound judgment, but be this as it may, in his intercourse with the

10. F.M., Vol. 55, loc.cit., p.248.

11. Douglas Hurd, The Arrow War: An Anglo-Chinese Confusion 1856-1860 (London, 1967), p.79.

Chinese, the Tartars -in name and nature - not he were the aggressors, and no sufficient reparation having been made it surely is no great marvel that the occurrence of a recent insult should have been the occasion chosen to seek redress for ancient wrongs...."(12)

The impetus in 1856 of a second Opium War helped this writer to abandon any claim of benevolence towards the Chinese people of the interior. Following the election in April 1857, a contributor to the British Quarterly Review focused attention in July 1857 upon T.T. Meadows's book, The Chinese and their Rebellions, and discredited the Taiping insurgents. The writer examined and approved the diplomacy in April 1853 of Bonham and Meadows at Hankow. Referring to the Taiping claim to political supremacy, he asserted:

"in the plenitude of their [Taiping] simplicity they asserted that their leader Tse-ping Wang, the true Lord, was not merely Lord of China, but Lord of the whole earth, the Lord of John Bull as well as of the insurgent Chinese.... Sir George Bonham contented himself with a brief notification that if the persons or property of any of his fellow subjects should be injured, the wrong would be promptly resented."

It appears that with the election of Palmerston and Russell, who were committed to the pursuit of a firm China policy and with the possibility of the extension of British civilian privileges in China, this journalist decided that support for the British Government in China was more enduring than support for the Taipings. He warned that lacking the advantage of continuing victories, the Taipings were unwise to claim political supremacy over European nations:

"Is it not amusing to find that the foolish old croquet of supremacy, which has been more effective in excluding foreigners from China than the Great Wall in arresting the Tartars, can be turned to account by the rebels as if they were already in possession of Peking and the Imperial crown?"(13)

12. B.Q.R., Vol. 25, April 1857, "Sir John Bowring's Siam", p.421.

He argued that Meadows had been too accomodating in his book concerning the Taiping claim to sovereignty, and he admonished his readers:

"But who does not know that the most solemn declarations of fraternity may issue from the very lips which affirm the justice of slavery or be suscribed by the same hand which dyes the lash in a fellow creature's blood?"

The writer then used the same argument as Blackwood's used in January and May 1854 to discredit the worth of native insurrection in mid-nineteenth century China. He declared the Chinese character to be tollerant rather than emotional and that the passive political nature of the Chinese people would hinder any national movement of political revolution:

"It is not a light thing, however, which will drive the Chinese to revolt. They are not fond of fighting.... the celestial military, though by no means so cowardly as sometimes represented, is far from exhibiting any professional enthusiasm for war."

He severely chastised Chinese character. He ridiculed Chinese inability to develop a more Western military technology and military strategy:

13. B.Q.R., Vol. 26, July 1857, "The Chinese- their Rebellions and Civilization", p. 52, p. 53. Reviewing Meadows's conclusions, the writer apparently forgot that the Taiping claim of political supremacy was made in 1853 when the Taipings were apparent victors in the civil war. Although the British Quarterly Review had access to Parliamentary Papers Relating to the Civil War in China, in November 1853 the journal had apparently overlooked Meadows's diplomacy in Nanking. Moreover in November 1853 and in July 1855, the journal issued articles which gave strong support to the Taipings. It seems, then, that in 1857, the British Quarterly Review abandoned support for the Taipings and were influenced in this decision by the war in China and by the appearance of Meadows's book, The Chinese and their Rebellions.

"Just as the Chinese appear to be insensible to the real genius of gunpowder - do they seem to be destitute of any lofty conceptions of military art. They have no notion of getting a contest over by a bold and masterly movement, by a prompt and dashing employment of the resources at their command. Their fight is a kind of squibbing; the soldiers are employed rather as human crackers than as genuine pieces of artillery."

The Chinese scholar gentry's failure to join the insurgent camp was a mark of insurgent failure. The journalist admitted:

"But as yet the bookmen have not sided with the insurgents."

In July 1857, he gave up the journal's reliance upon Fishbourne's arguments, and the writer's opinions concerning the Taipings were similar to those in October 1855 in the Edinburgh Review:

"The wonder is not that the little twinkling light which Hung-seu-tseuen acquired at Canton should have been carried away to Kwang-se in a clumsy lantern of his own making, but in spite of the thorny medium through which it shone, it should have lit up whole provinces with its discoloured beams."

Although it was revolutionary for the Taipings to replace the Five Classics and Four Books with the Bible, as the work to be studied by Chinese scholars, this journalist accentuated the inconsistency of Taiping creeds:

"Unfortunately, as Hung-seu-tseuen studied the Scriptures in a fragmentary form, and by means of the imperfect translations, many errors have crept into his creeds. Nor should it be forgotten that the Tae-ping law giver had been deeply drilled in Chinese philosophy before he succumbed to the Western faith." (14)

The Taipings could be easily abandoned by the British Quarterly Review because of the upcoming treaty settlement. However, in July 1857, the journal's desire to expand Protestant endeavours in China was magnified. Unlike the Edinburgh Review, the writer was unable to

14. B.Q.R., Vol. 26, loc. cit., p. 53, pp. 56-57, p. 59.

subordinate British religious interests to British commercial interests in China. He candidly admitted:

"That the blessings of religion are infinitely superior to the blessings of a good trade we presume no one will dispute.... Ought we then to be so fearful of offending, that we cannot request them (the Chinese) to listen to the Gospel or to sanction the presence of its proclaimers?"

"Why assure that traffic and Christianity are incompatible pursuits? The Chinese are undoubtedly a jealous and exclusive race. So far as the Imperialists are concerned, the partial adoption of Western faith by the Insurgents must have undoubtedly exhibited it in a somewhat hostile light. But in truth, the Bible is not a book of revolt. Christianity is certainly not an insurrectionary creed. The Chinese may be ignorant of the fact, but if we have been at such pains to teach them much they did not understand, why not take some little trouble to enlighten them on a point of such surpassing interest to 360 millions of men?"(15)

It appears from this extract that the British Quarterly Review had carefully considered the type of question Gallery and Yvan, Abbe Huc, and Rev. Hulse suggested in materials which appeared in 1853 and 1855. Former articles in 1853 and 1855 by contributors to the British Quarterly Review implied that in Taiping camps, Protestant writings were responsible for political dissent against the Manchu regime. The journal in July 1857 however ceased to find any value in further association between British missionaries and the Taipings.

In April 1860, in an article entitled "China and Japan", a contributor to the British Quarterly Review took a position similar to that of Joseph Edkins and Thomas Blakiston. This contributor confirmed the hostility of former writers in the journal to native insurrection. He claimed the Taipings were destroying symbols of Chinese antiquity:

15. B.Q.R., Vol. 26, 100. art., p. 62.

"Certain it is that the porcelain Tower of Nankin has fallen before the Vandalism of these "long-haired men" as the Taipings are called by their enemies from the heretical aversion to the tail."

In the same article, the writer spoke of a Taiping offer, after Elgin's silencing of the Taiping forts, (B) to form an alliance with their "younger brethren", and the writer praised Elgin's diplomacy in the interior. He referred to, "an offer which was of course respectfully declined". (16)

Finally, in April 1861, in an article entitled "Our Commerce with China", the author adopted a tone as critical of the Taipings as many other journalists. Such British writers finally concluded that the continued presence of an insurrectionary force was an obstruction to foreign transit on the Yangtze. The writer found the Taipings an obstruction and as such, he ventured Taiping chances of survival in the civil war were minimal. He reviewed the current military campaign between the belligerents:

"That dynasty is hardly to be called "rebel" any longer.... it appears to be in possession of nearly half of China. Its territory indeed is hardly determined de facto any more than it is de iure, for it is perpetually shifting with the oscillations of fortune in each encounter of the rival armies, although it does not appear that either army seriously designs the extirpation of the other." (17)

B. Refer to Appendix B, pp. 294-297 for discussion of the mission to the interior in 1858 of the Earl of Elgin.

16. B.Q.R., Vol. 31, April 1860, "China and Japan", pp. 477-479. Chambers's Journal and Thomas W. Blakiston, for example, referred to the Taiping destruction of the Porcelain Tower of Nanking. See Blakiston, op.cit., p. 28 for the following:

"Now it (the Porcelain Tower) is a white hill of ruins. Two immense walls, divided by a narrow aperture, are the only portions of the wall now standing.... every ship that has touched at Nanking has made a looting expedition to the white heap, and boat-loads of porcelain bricks have been carried away in triumph."

17. B.Q.R., Vol. 33, April 1861, "Our Commerce with China", p. 472.

Throughout the period 1853 to 1862, Chambers's Journal definitely opposed the Taipings and the principle of native insurgency in the interior of China. From 1856 to 1862, it reinforced its criticism. With the arrival of news of the Treaty of Tientsin until 1862, writers in the journal discovered that unlike the Taipings, masses of Chinese civilians in the interior were peaceful and industrious. Previous to 1859, contributors to Chambers's Journal emphasized examples of Chinese deception and barbarism. Like Blackwood's in January and May 1854, the journal decided by 1859 that Chinese character was anti-revolutionary. Such an observation buttressed the journal's hostility to the Taipings.

On 2 May, 1857, in an article entitled "Low Value of Life in China", Chambers's Journal reprinted an extract from Sir John Bowring's writings. Bowring indicated that Chinese character could be much improved by absorption of humanitarian virtues. From his observations of the Chinese, Bowring indicated that the Chinese race was barbaric, and that native insurrection in China contributed to the cruelty of the race:

"While so many elements of vitality are in a state of activity for reproduction and the sustenance of the human race, there is probably no part of the world in which the harvests of mortality are more sweeping and destructive than in China, producing voids which require no ordinary appliances to fill up. Multitudes perish absolutely from the want of the means of existence - inundations destroy towns and villages and all their inhabitants.... the late civil wars in China must have led to the loss of millions of lives. The sacrifices of human beings by execution have been frightful." (18)

On 27 November, 1858, in an article entitled "Crystal Palace of

Nanking", a writer in Chambers's Journal related evidence of the desecration of China's traditional way of life. For this writer, the Chinese monument, the Porcelain Tower of Nanking, symbolized the longevity and the value of traditional Confucian ethics. As such, the monument was an architectural marvel for the Chinese as well as the rest of the world. The Journalist wrote:

"The Nan-king prodigy has doubtless been a pet with the Chinese people themselves, for they have not failed to ornament it within and without."

A major portion of the article described the monument as if it existed in 1858 in Nanking, untouched by mankind. In the opinion of this writer (and of other British observers from 1856), Taiping inattention to public works was a shameless act of treachery. The case of the Crystal Palace of Nanking merited British attention:

"At last, to conclude, which we do with great reluctance, we have to tell a sad truth of the history of our Nan-king pagoda during the past twelve months. We confess we approach the tale with disrelish. We have lingered about the "spiritual fane" (another name for it) as if it was now and was to be. But, as on every other occasion of admiration in, and out of the Celestial Empire, there is written on it "vanity of vanities". During its existence of 1600 years, storms have swept over it, and some have swept down its dome; thunders have rolled over it, and lightning struck its iron-coiled cupola to the ground, and the ruthless hands of brigands have defaced various parts of the structure; but to the eternal disgrace of the "rebels" who have occupied Nan-king for the last five years, they first defaced the whole of the interior by fire and then blew up the entire edifice with gunpowder, scattering its famous bricks.... to the four winds of heaven." (19)

Dismayed by this devastation, and with news of the Treaty of Tientsin, Chambers's Journal adopted a different interpretation of Chinese character. On 18 June, 1859, in an article entitled "Celestial

19. C.J., Vol. 30, No. 256, 27 November, 1858, "Crystal Palace of Nanking", pp. 351-352.

Agriculture", a contributor to the journal had obviously consulted available information to assess the character of the inland Chinese. He wrote about Robert Fortune's evaluation of these civilians as peaceful and industrious:

"So says Mr. Fortune in his Wanderings, but 'our own correspondent' who assures us that the best way to see the agriculture of the country is to shoot over it and so gather pheasants and a knowledge of crops at the same time - tells us that there is per contra to this state of felicity and that, 'these happy fields are overrun by extortionate mandarins, pillaging soldiers, marauders who in small bands are called robbers and in large bands aspire to be rebels, and occasionally swarms of locusts who darken the sun.' We cannot wonder at this: it would indeed be an exception to all experience, if a mighty nation, with a population of one hundred and sixty millions, far advanced in material civilization, had not some grievances to stir it into more determined action and to remind its people that there is an earthy humanity, after all, in their celestialism." (20)

In June 1859, the Taipings seemed to the writer of this passage the manifestation of Chinese 'grievances' against existing authority. The "robbers in large bands who aspire to be rebels", he described, did not adjust into a population known for "proverbial and continuous ingenuity and industry". (21)

On 14 April, 1860, Chambers's Journal reviewed John Scarth's Twelve Years in China. As shown previously, the writer of this account tacitly agreed with Scarth that the British reputation for fair treatment of the Chinese was tarnished by British relations with the Taipings and in 1857 by the lack of British relations with the people of Canton. (22)

The writer found Scarth's account to be of more immediate

20. C. J., Vol. 31, No. 285, 18 June, 1859, "Celestial Agriculture", p. 400.

21. Ibid., p. 399.

22. See Chapter Two, pp. 65-66.

significance because Soarth, a British merchant, presented observations about the Chinese, which could be trusted. The reviewer called Soarth's book

"the only one that has been written by a mercantile person in relation to this subject."

and remarked at the end of his review that

"Mr. Soarth bears a rather uncommon testimony to the general honesty of the Chinese, which, from one of his position, ought to be valuable." (23)

The writer felt he could rely on Soarth's observations to be impartial and practical because of Soarth's status as a British merchant:

"Most of the books upon China have been written by men of official position - by missionaries, and by persons who have seen but little of the natives in daily general intercourse: the official stands upon his dignity and goes through the tedious forms of stiff diplomatic visit now and then; most of his information is derived from people who are devoted to the mandarins; the missionary has better opportunities; mixes more with the people, and his informants are less connected with the ruling authorities, but, from his position, he sees China in a different light to most other observers." (24)

Twelve Years in China described how Soarth gained access to the interior of China because he was willing to undergo physical hardships and submit to a change in his national identity:

"My object being to see the country as well as could be without interruption, and to penetrate as far as possible into the silk-districts; I adopted the Chinese dress and after getting fairly under-way, metamorphosed myself into a Chinaman, set the barber to work to make a clean sweep of my hair, and attached to my cap, wore a thoroughbred tail of some son of Han, shaded the natural colour of my barbarian eyes by a large pair of tea-stone spectacles, and marched forth without fear of recognition." (25)

In April 1860, it is clear that Chamber's Journal was attempting

23. C.J., Vol. 33, No. 328, "More Celestial Intelligence", p. 237, p. 240.

24. Ibid., p. 237.

25. Ibid.

to re-establish public confidence in the general passivity of the Chinese masses. Similar to Blackwood's in 1859, the writer in Chambers's Journal was skeptical of the French as an ally in China. However he wrote primarily to re-establish confidence in the Chinese people:

"The intellectual virtues of the Chinese are far from high, being confined from the study of certain usually turbid metaphysics among their students and to practices to little more than ingenuities. In this latter respect, they remind one of a more civilized nation separated from us by a narrower sea."

Even in April 1860, this contributor still found useful the commentary of Gallery and Went:

".... generally we learn throughout this volume [of Sparrh] that wherever mandarin authority prevails, there is dullness and barbarism, and where the people are more left to themselves, intelligence and quiet." "An ordinary Chinese", says M. Gallery of the French Legation, "lies often; a mandarin always lies." (26)

After the Convention of Peking in 1860, Chambers's Journal issued a series of articles which described the China interests of the journal. Writers of these accounts generally viewed the inland Chinese as being particularly commercially-minded. Like Blackwood's Magazine in 1854, Chambers's Journal emphasized Chinese social virtues and Chinese family relationships. With such emphasis on Chinese traditional life, the Taipings were described as anti-traditional and anti-commercial. For Chambers's Journal, the Taipings were simply an impediment to British travel and British commerce in inland China.

On 5 January, 1861, in an article entitled "Chinese Commerce", a contributor to Chambers's Journal forthrightly reviewed British commercial interests in China. He apologized for Britain's policy from 1856

in China and stressed that the ordinary Chinese citizen, like the ordinary British citizen, was motivated by commercial interests:

"And right is the modern reading of the phrase, better is it to produce than to ravage and burn, better to be a nation of shopkeepers than of idle beggars, of moonstruck dreamers, or of brigand soldiery.... But if the original reproach had been thrown in the teeth of John Chinaman instead of John Bull, even by the bitterest foe, and in the heat of the sternest struggle, the expression would have been smirkingly accepted as praise, pure, unalloyed praise."

".... it is only of late that we Outer Barbarians have begun to get a glimpse of the extraordinary vitality of Chinese commerce, of the wonderful stir and hum and bustle of that enormous human hive." (27)

He then surveyed the opportunities in January 1861 for British commerce in the interior of China. Like Blackwoods's in January 1854, the writer was afraid of Russian interference with British markets and indicated that, "the Chinese land-traffic is in most peril from the encroachments of Russia." He sympathized with Chinese preference for native goods and admitted that

"this mighty aggregate of human beings may be pardoned for believing that commerce, like charity, begins at home, and that a third part of Adam's progeny can find plenty of buyers and sellers there."

Like Fraser's Magazine in 1856 and 1857, he eagerly reviewed the prospects for the entrance of British imports into this Chinese market:

"It is the home-trade which absorbs the chief industry of the non-agricultural portion of the community. This is no insignificant traffic, no petty transfer from right hand to the left. Three hundred and more are the millions who have to be fed, clothed, bought, sheltered, amused, and buried within Cathay."

".... the great arteries of commerce in China are those gigantic rivers the Hwang-ho and the Yang-tze-Kiang, which with their tributary streams supply an amount of watercarriage unequalled in the world. But all this wonderful organization has felt the decay inherent in the fatal Manchoo policy." (28)

27. C.J., Vol. 35, No. 366, 5 January, 1861, "Chinese Commerce", p.4.

28. Ibid., p.6.

Like Gallery and Yvan in 1853, this writer determined that Chinese commerce had been damaged by recent Manchu political decay. He found that the Taipings were particularly worthy of scorn because they impeded the free flow of commerce on the Yangtze River. Examples of Taiping barbarism accompanied instances of Taiping plunder of legitimate commerce:

"Before the sanguinary insurrection of the Taipings scourged the land, the porcelain trade alone required thousands of junks; Nankin had a million of operatives employed in the potteries, and another million of skillful workers toiled at Kihoung-tcheou-fou to fabricate jars and vessels of every pattern.... but Celestial Virtue and his plundering hordes have held Nankin for more than two years, have ruined its trade, and butchered its people, have wasted Kihoung-tcheou, and have made desolate that smaller rival of theirs, Song-tcheou-fou, where the most delicate fabrics of porcelain, silk, paper, and cotton were wrought by the most cunning hands...."

"Every branch of industry, from the coal-pits and petroleum wells of the north, to the vineyards of Yun-nan, has suffered from the civil war, for the Taipings burn and destroy but produce nothing, and even the industry of careful practical China languishes under the withering blight of this strange army."(29)

Confidence in Chinese commercial virtues encouraged the writer to recommend some form of public pressure to remove the Taipings and to prevent other impediments to the free flow of goods from China:

"The Chinaman knows his art and mystery well. He has anticipated the choicest doctrines of political economy. Save him from Taiping, and pirate, from mandarin 'squeezes' and servile wars, and he will pay his way and pursue his course, fat and content as Dr. Pangloss himself, with what is to him the best of all worlds."(30)

Finally, on 1 June, 1861, a contributor to Chambers's Journal showed that British civilians were satisfied by treaty privileges won from the Chinese. This article entitled "Two Days at Canton" proudly claimed

29. C.J., Vol. 35, loc. cit., p. 7.

30. Ibid., p. 8.

that British treaty privileges were being observed with little disturbance, even in Canton

"We [the British party referred to in the article] now entered the city by the western gate, which before 1856, no barbarian had ever passed through, or if he did enter that city, never came out alive. (31)

We soon came to the great pagoda of Canton, nine stories high, and each story twenty feet - a wonderful structure, said to be seventeen hundred years old. It was predicted at the time of its building that whenever the top fell in, some great misfortune would befall the city. In August 1856, the top fell in, and in September, the English were in possession of Canton. We next passed through the Tartar general's yamen or palace, which is now a French barrack.... near this was the great temple of Confucius, which contains the only image of this great man in China. This temple bears marks of the bombardment of Canton, and one cannonball is lodged right at the feet of Confucius."

In June 1861, it appeared that Chambers's Journal was so confident that the Manchus would observe British treaty privileges that this writer was not horrified by Manchu cruelty to Taiping prisoners:

"We walked through the prison - a most wretched place. Some prisoners were chained to large stones; others had huge boards around their necks, which hindered them from resting in any position, and this some of them had worn for months. Many had their arms or legs broken or distorted with the application of torture. Here we saw the mother of the great rebel Tie-ping-wangs." (32)

Earlier in the civil war, the British consul at Amoy forcibly intervened to prevent wholesale slaughter by the Imperialists of insurgent prisoners.

From 1856 to 1862, British journalists frequently cited the evidence and opinions of Sir John Davis, Laurence Oliphant, Griffith

31. This statement was not exactly true. Rev. Issachar Roberts in 1844 had opened a mission in the city of Canton outside the restricted "factory area". See Yuan Chung Teng, "Rev. Issachar Roberts and the Taiping Rebellion", Journal of Asian Studies, I, Vol 23, November 1963, p.55.

32. C.J., Vol. 35, No. 387, 1 June, 1861, "Two Days at Canton", p.352.

John, Alexander Wylie, Joseph Edkins, John Searth, and Thomas W. Blakiston. These men admittedly were only a few of the authors of outstanding China materials which appeared.

In the period prior to 1856, British civilian materials dealing with British civilian interests in the interior of China often contained descriptions of Taiping activities. Under the influence of a second China War and treaty settlement, many civilian accounts took a very decided and colourful view of the Taiping rebels.

John Searth's Twelve Years in China was typical of many emotional accounts by British civilians. Writing of the Earl of Elgin's mission in 1858 to inland China, Searth expressed strong discouragement with the British Government's policy:

"His lordship's conduct in this case deserves to be condemned in much stronger language than I choose to use. As for learning more about the rebels, it seems to have been lost sight of in a fruitless attempt to look for commercial openings in ports which were closed, and had it not been for the friendly disposition of the rebels, whenever they were communicated with, the probable result of the expedition would have been that British arms would have been profaned to quench the only spark of religion and progress that has glimmered in China since we had any connexions with that most important country."

Searth was an open supporter of native insurrection in China and was emotionally committed to the Taipings' survival, "as a spark of religion and progress that has glimmered in China". He wrote in 1860 as a merchant who recognized that British interference in the civil war could endanger Taiping survival in the interior. He felt his duty was to publicize injustices being committed in China against the Taipings:

"Whether the rebellion sinks or fails, or rises into greater importance, it has deserved more attention and consideration than has been given to it.... it is a dangerous thing to meddle with the government of a nation counting four hundred millions of souls, particularly dangerous when we have so few men at all acquainted with the language! "

Prior to the Convention of Peking in 1860, Scarth advised British officials to be cautious in their communication with the belligerents:

"We may boast of our might, but it would dwindle into insignificance when scattered over the land, in the fiery plains of the south, or the frozen rivers of the North of China. There is a more mighty power watching over the destiny of China, and as one of the rebels said to Mr. Meadows at Nankin, six years ago - "If it be the will of God that a Tai-ping prince shall be the sovereign of China, he will be the Sovereign of China; if not, then we will die here!"(33)

Scarth recognized that social discrimination against the Taipings was used by many British writers critical of the Taipings. Twelve Years in China emphasized why the Triad insurgents in Shanghai, or why any force of native insurgency in China, only drew support from the lower orders of Chinese society:

"When speaking of the class of men that are rebels it must be taken into account that there is no class in China corresponding to our gentry; all are either workmen, tradesmen, or in official employment. The literati rank as officials than as a distinct profession. They are all expectants. It will be seen, therefore, that it must be the lower classes who become rebels, the majority of whom have little to lose.

The disaffected and dissolute of the Shanghai and Ningpo men joined the ranks, but the force was recruited chiefly by Canton and Fokien adventurers. Many of the wealthy Canton and Fokien men who remained outside were anything but neutral and aided the rebels in many ways....

They were something like the Chartists of England, with this exception, that the class from which they sprung is relatively much larger in China than the Chartist class at home. One thing is to be remarked, the people made no active opposition to them."(34)

33. [Scarth], op. cit., p. 276, p. 277.

34. Ibid., p. 196.

Searth's favourable account of Chinese insurgency directly contrasted with most British accounts of the Taipings which appeared after 1856. Although Searth accounted for the prejudices found in reports concerning the insurgents, obtained by Alexander Wyllie, Laurence Oliphant, Thomas Wade, and other members of the Earl of Elgin's mission in 1858 to inland China, Searth's account lacked the advantage of close personal contact with Taiping chieftains in Nanking.

Thomas W. Blakiston and R. J. Forrest visited Taiping chieftains in Nanking during the first mission in March of 1861 of Rear Admiral Hope to Nanking. In Blakiston's book, Five Months on the Yangtze, the reports of R. J. Forrest concerning Taiping religious life, morality, and chances of survival countered existing favourable British civilian accounts of the Taipings. Forrest hoped to prepare British civilians for the eventual defeat of the Taipings. The advantage of Blakiston and Forrest's account resulted from the immediate access in 1861 of these two civilians to Taiping chieftains and to the city of Nanking.

Unlike Searth, Forrest maintained that British officials should continue to communicate with Taiping chieftains. Forrest, a British consular official in Shanghai, criticized prior civilian interference at Nanking, which might alter the effectiveness of the British mission of March 1861 to Nanking:

"On the 26th of February the steamer "Yang-tsze" belonging to the firm of Messrs. Dent and Co., arrived at Nanking, having on board the representative of that house at Shanghai; she was then sailing under American colours, and, as the time of those on board her was valuable, she only remained one day, and then proceeded up the river to establish agents at the new treaty ports."

"She had thus the honour of being the first merchant-vessel at Hankow, and I believe Mr. Webb received from the Viceroy some of the favours which were intended for Admiral Hope." (35)

Blakiston and Forrest presented evidence contradicting favourable reports of the Taipings presented in 1860 by Griffith John, Joseph Edkins, and Issachar Roberts.³ Forrest emphasized the excesses of Taiping military campaigns and portrayed the Taipings as an impediment to the free flow of commerce in China. He spoke of

"the gaudy colours of the dresses of both men and women, being a striking contrast to the sombre blue and grey of the inhabitants of settled districts. These colours and the textures of the silks and satins from which they shone told tales of plunder and robbery - of fire and the sword - of Sho-chow and Hang-chow; they showed why the waters of the Grand Canal cease to be ploughed by deep-laden craft, why China requires to be fed by the war of Siam, and they scented of a government become rotten." (36)

Much of Forrest's report in Blakiston's Five Months on the Yangtze typified the emotional response to the Taipings of those writing after 1856 of British public interests in China. The vehemence of Forrest and Blakiston against the Taipings can be explained. Although Blakiston's account was originally written following Hope's first voyage in 1861 to Nanking, the book was not published until after Hope's armed intervention in February 1862.⁴ Blakiston made it clear in his Preface that

"Late events in China and the policy adopted by the present Government have changed our attitude towards the Taiping rebels, but as that of Imperial power remains the same, both in respect to the Taipings and other insurrectionists in the interior, any remarks on the state of rebellion are as applicable as when they were written." (37)

35. Blakiston, op.cit., p. 15.

36. Ibid., p. 13.

37. Ibid., p. v.

Like Chambers's Journal in 1858, Forrest's eye-witness report indicated that the Taipings were neglecting public works in Nanking:

"Here, too, are the remains of a large granite wharf and dock with water-gate leading into the city canal. The whole was magnificently made, but neglect soon ruins even granite walls."

Roots of trees have raised the stone slabs from their places, Taiping rapacity has rudely forced away the iron rings and bolts, the bridge has been partially destroyed, the gate built up, and the entrance to the canal in the city choked up with stones, furniture, and mud, lest "imps" should force their way into the Heavenly capital by that entrance."

The Taiping's brutal management of the Nanking civilian population was a factor which Forrest emphasized:

"And on comes a field of labourers who have been to some ruins for the purpose of extracting tiles to build a house for some city magnate. A man accompanies them with a drawn sword to see that they are not lazy or mutinous, so they walk along sulkily and silent, having no hope of better days, getting no money and but indifferent rice."

Forrest was conscious of the senseless waste of manhood and of the degree of suffering of such Taiping civilians:

"Speaking them and you will perceive that they are utterly cowed, scarcely daring to draw breath, and talking in a low suspicious tone of voice like people whose lives are in constant danger. All the chatter and laughter that so eminently distinguishes the coolie in other parts of China is wanting under Taiping rule." (38)

Writing in 1861, Forrest obviously implied that the extirpation of the Taipings was imminent. Just as Sparrth believed his duty was to publicize foreign abuse of native insurrections in China, so Forrest's task was to disassociate British humanitarians, British Christians, and British merchants from any support or interests in the Taipings. For Forrest, the Taiping Rebellion was politically significant because it showed that

the inland Chinese were dissatisfied with the Manchu regime. Forrest advocated that British interference in the civil war would serve no purpose:

"And yet it [the Taiping Rebellion] is but the beginning of a chasm in which trade and commerce, prosperity and happiness must for a time sink, but only to rise again more flourishing and glorious than ever. Heaven forbid that England or France should ever make confusion worse, confounded, by interfering in the internal struggle now raging!"

Forrest urged his readers to disassociate themselves from active support of the insurrection:

"Things are governed in China by rules we don't understand.... it would be best to look at the present crisis in a broader light than we are inclined to at present and see it merely Chinese fighting Chinese, righting, or attempting to right, their injuries in their own peculiar way. It will not do to look at it in the light of the spread of Christianity against Heathendom, as some people would have it, nor will it be well to consider altogether the individual and temporary damage done to foreign commerce."

He preferred the viewpoint of T.M. Meadows in his The Chinese and their Rebellions, or that beginning in 1859 of Chamber's Journal, or that in January and May 1854 in Blackwood's, or that in July 1857 in the British Quarterly Review. These sources of British opinion were convinced that the Chinese character remained anti-revolutionary and the Confucian way of life would insure the existence of a united Chinese nation. Forrest observed:

"The springs of vitality, which have enabled China to trace her way through political convulsions as bad as present and to exist as a powerful empire through a series of years as makes our European dynasties look small enough, are not yet exhausted."

Forrest realized that indifference to human suffering and willful destruction of property was a difficult attitude for many of his readers to tolerate, but he stressed:

"When such serious difficulties are being solved such losses must stand in abeyance and we must be witness to much human misery and tears to the loss of much life and property." (39)

Sir John Davis was a renowned "China expert", whose writings were frequently consulted by British journalists. The Edinburgh Review and Blackwood's frequently cited his works.

In the new 1857 edition of his two volume work, China: A General Description of That Empire and its Inhabitants, Davis responded to the Rebellion with a colourful picture of the Taipings. Many of his pronouncements criticized the Taipings and contributed to the emotional, skeptical, and very opinionated British public accounts after 1856 of the Taipings.

Like Walter Medhurst (Senior) in mid-1853, Davis compared Taiping religious codes to other religious codes of the mid-nineteenth century:

"The hopes of the Christian world were at first raised by the news that the heads of the revolution were Christians, but they were in fact as unlike Christians as Mahomet was like a Jew."

His comments about Taiping religious fanaticism were quite similar to Sir George Bonham's in April 1853 in Nanking and to Lord Russell's on 12 March, 1861, in Parliament, in reply to Colonel Sykes. Davis wrote:

"They might admit the same historical Scriptures, but one leader in the intoxication of success, called himself the brother of Jesus, while another subsequently assumed to be the third person of the Trinity."

Like many British observers, Davis was anxious to trace any Christian dogma or moral codes found in Taiping religious materials to Taiping associations prior to 1850 with Protestant missionaries. Even in 1857,

Davis concluded that Jesuit influence upon the Taipings was negligible:

"With all their blasphemous extravagances, they denounced idol-worship, having learned their first lessons (however subsequently perverted) from a Protestant missionary and hence it was that a Romish mission in China viewed them from the first with an evil eye." (40)

Davis decided in 1857 that the Taiping movement would not succeed:

"Their [Taiping] strange and hybrid profession of faith boded them little success, for Confucianism has not yet lost its hold on the Chinese mind."

Like the Edinburgh Review in July 1853, he decided that the British community in China created conditions which led in 1859 to the outbreak of native insurrection:

"There can be no doubt whatever of the existing insurrection in China having been the result of our own war. A Mantchou general in his report, distinctly stated that, "the numbers of robbers and criminal associations is very great in the two Kuang provinces (Kuang-tung and Kuang-se) and they assemble without difficulty to create trouble, all which arises from that class having detected the inefficiency of the imperial troops during the war with the English barbarians." (41)

There were still British civilians who supported the Taipings.

Young British Protestant missionaries, such as Griffith John, who communicated in the period of Taiping military resurgence from 1860 to 1862 with Taiping chieftains in Soochow and Nanking, continued supporting the Taipings. British Protestant religious organizations in China however committed themselves in 1855 to a Protestant conversion of the Chinese masses. In that year, the Shanghai Corresponding Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society dismissed Taiping efforts to convert the Chinese. Consequently, encouraging reports of the Taipings from a few British missionaries and from Issachar Roberts,

40. Davis, op.cit., Vol. I, p. 176.

41. Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 412.

who was domiciled from 1860 to 1862 in Nanking, did not alter the attitudes from 1856 to 1862 of the home religious organizations or of the Corresponding Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society in Shanghai.

As mentioned in Chapter One, Griffith John and Joseph Edkins's favourable report in 1860 concerning the Taipings was given public attention. Extracts from their account appeared in the North China Herald:

"Many proofs offered themselves of the activity and vigour of the revolutionists. Large bodies of them move daily between the cities in their occupations. They have the energy which their religious principles and an active life induce. That they possess far greater physical and moral vigour than the Imperialists seems to account fairly for their great advance this year in power and numbers."

"The country people offer an ineffectual resistance to these large bodies of men. Their bands for self-protection, hastily organized and consisting of agricultural labourers unpractised in war, cannot make head against the tried warriors of the T'ai-ping party."

"...the rebel chiefs are most of them open and communicative. They make no secret of their intention to go to Shanghai. But they wish to maintain amity with their brethren of the western oceans." (42)

British Protestant missionaries in China however did not give whole-hearted support from 1856 to 1862 to the Taipings. The Corresponding Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society plainly worried in 1857 that Bowring's aggressive activity at Canton might slow their distribution of Scriptures in the interior:

"Most earnestly do your Committee trust that the recent hostilities at Canton may not revive the repugnance to intercourse with men of other nations which has operated as the great barrier to Christian efforts in China." (43)

42. Thompson, op.cit., p. 132.

43. Fifty-third Report of the B.F.B.S., for 1857, pp. clxxi-clxxii.

In 1858, Rev. W. Muirhead replaced Walter Medhurst on the Shanghai Corresponding Committee. He concurred with the conclusions of the Committee of 1855 to 1856 that insurgent religious fanaticism might interfere with the conversion of the inland Chinese:

"Our anxieties point to the future, - to what extent Bible Colportage operations will be facilitated in China. The religious element connected with the rebellion excites the ill-will of those in authority, and of the higher classes informed on the subject in relation to Christianity...."

Although in 1860 and 1861, Rev. Griffith John and Rev. Joseph Edkins momentarily supported the Taipings, together, in 1858 they visited Soochow to distribute Scriptures. In 1858, they were definitely committed to the Corresponding Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society's endeavours and to the establishment inland of mission stations.

The religious endeavours of the Taipings proved to be of only secondary importance to young missionaries in China, such as Edkins and Griffith John. These men believed in the supreme benevolence of conversion of the Chinese masses to Protestant Christianity. This attitude was expressed in their writings and by missionary travels in the interior of China.

During the journey in June of 1858 of Edkins and Griffith John to Soochow, both men were fully occupied with the work of Protestant conversion. Edkins wrote:

"This vast city [Soochow] must have, at least, 1,200,000 inhabitants and therefore the casual efforts that we are able to make there to supply the population with the Word of God cannot for a long time to come equal the demand. We were so far successful as to enter the city by two gates and gave away Testaments along some of the most crowded

thoroughfares. It is unnecessary to say that they were eagerly received."(44)

In 1859, however, in his Religious Condition of the Chinese, Edkins took a different view of the Taipings. Discouraged by reports of Taiping political and religious life, Edkins indicated that there was in Nanking an

"original nucleus of earnest, religious, or fanatical men, through whose enthusiastic courage Tse-ping-wang won so many battles and took so many cities."

Like the British Quarterly Review in July 1855, Edkins accounted for Taiping religious heresy by explaining that later converts of Taiping Wang diverted the original religious faith and moral discipline of Taiping ranks:

"Multitudes have since joined them, of a far inferior mould of character, some impressed by fear, other invited by hope of good pay. The Christianity of such men is of course insincere, and they are not fair examples of those who began the movement, nor are they such good soldiers."(45)

In 1859, Edkins offered little hope that the Taipings could re-establish fervent religious and moral discipline in Nanking. The original leaders of the rebellion had nearly all perished:

"Many of the first adherents of this party have died. Those whose hair has not been shaven for seven years, who were the private friends of the chief at the beginning, who joined him in religious meetings and marched with him to the field before he shut himself up in his present seclusion within the walls of his palace, and knew him intimately, have mostly disappeared."

Like Blackwood's in January and May 1854, and like the British Quarterly Review in July 1857, Edkins in 1859 doubted reports of

44. Fifty-fourth Report of the B.F.E.S., for 1858, p.cli, p.cliii.

45. Joseph Edkins, The Religious Condition of the Chinese (London, 1859), p.274.

Chinese people deserting en masse to the Taipings. By 1859, Edkins had taken quite a determined stand against the Taipings:

"The Christian insurgents in China have never had the confidence of any part of the nation. The religious character was one reason of the unpopularity of their cause."

"....but they [the Taipings] chose for their religion one that must of necessity be extremely distasteful to most of their countrymen.... the profession of Christianity has not obtained for them any better reputation among those who give the tone to society and have influence and property."

Edkins objectively reviewed opportunities for native insurgents in China to influence the masses with a foreign religious creed and was forced to conclude:

"with a religious creed coming from a foreign source, and introduced by the barbarians themselves at Canton a few years back, they resign, in the estimation of their countrymen, all title to be considered patriots." (46)

Edkins's The Religious Condition of the Chinese continued the opinions of Walter Medhurst (Senior), maintaining, as Medhurst had previously done, a well-defined distance between Protestant and Taiping efforts of evangelization in China.

Griffith John's favourable observations in 1860 and 1861 concerning the Taipings also demonstrate only a momentary interest. His momentary concern with the Taipings and his relations with the Chung-Wang and the Kam Wang in Soochow and later in Nanking did not influence bitter criticism of the Taipings, present in Reports from 1860 of the British and Foreign Bible Society in China. By June of 1861, Griffith John was again occupying himself fully with the work of Protestant conversion

46. Edkins, The Religious Condition...., pp. 274-275.

and planning for a mission station in Hankow. He and Mr. Willson, a colleague, went up the Yangtze in the Hellespont

"leaving Shanghai on June 9 and arriving at Hankow on the twenty-first."

Griffith John explained his activities in June 1861 in Hankow:

"Our object in visiting the place was to see whether it was desirable and practicable to establish a mission station here in the present state of the surrounding country. We had not remained here many days before we became impressed with its importance and convinced of the desirability of its being occupied by us without delay. I know of no place in China that has a stronger claim to prompt attention of the Society." (47)

In June of 1861, Griffith John was preparing to establish a mission station at Hankow, a city supposedly beyond the influence of Taiping chieftains.

From 1858 to 1862, the Reports of the British and Foreign Bible Society from China continue to indicate the opposition to the Taipings of Corresponding Committees in China. Before the Arrow War, the Corresponding Committee of Shanghai strongly opposed the Taipings. After 1856, it did not retract this opposition. Describing the Treaty of Tientsin and Elgin's diplomacy, the Corresponding Committee wrote in 1859:

"Long has the Church of Christ waited and prayed for the opening of this stupendous country, in its length and breadth, to the introduction of the Gospel.... the jealous isolation which to so great an extent has severed China from the community of nations appears to be at an end, and if the faith of a solemn compact is not exceeded or broken, a sphere of labour will be opened to the zeal and enterprise of the Christian Church."

Alexander Wyllie accompanied the Earl of Elgin on his mission in 1858 to inland China. The Corresponding Committee used Wyllie's

47. Thompson, op.cit., p. 162, p. 163.

observations in 1858 concerning the insurgents in their Report:

"The utmost ignorance on the subject of Christianity appeared to prevail. Although the New Testament is in their possession, it is comparatively an unknown book, and there is reason to fear greater antagonism from them in the matter of Christianity than from the Imperialists or the people at large." (48)

Wylie's observations were similar to those in 1853 of James Legge, to those from 1854 to 1856 of Walter Medhurst (Senior), and to those in 1859 and 1863 of Joseph Edkins.

In 1860, the renewal of hostilities in the north of China alarmed the Corresponding Committee:

"The hostile collision with the Government and the constitutional apathy of the people may be considered the principal obstacles in the path of those who have sought to circulate the Scriptures." (49)

In the Fifty-seventh Report in 1861 of the British and Foreign Bible Society, Rev. Muirhead stressed the need for spreading Protestantism in China and candidly discussed alternative methods which the Protestant missionary community in China might adopt:

"It is believed that the rebel chiefs are sincere in the desire to promote Christianity in the country, while they do not themselves profess to understand it. And it may be that in this way the Gospel is to be advanced in the land. Yet it is scarcely our duty to prognosticate as to the future. In any case, whether Lord Elgin does aught with the rebels or not, we must judge as to which of the belligerents offer the most inviting sphere of labour, the Imperialists, as compelled by the terms of the treaty, or the Insurgents, as spontaneously promised by them in the present condition of things." (50)

In 1862, the Corresponding Committee openly supported British interventions

48. Fifty-fifth Report of the B.F.B.S., for 1859, pp. 224-225, p. 230.

49. Fifty-sixth Report of the B.F.B.S., for 1860, p. 125.

50. Fifty-seventh Report of the B.F.B.S., for 1861, pp. 160-162.

" But as long as rebellion continues and the horrors of war are experienced, laying waste on otherwise fruitful land and calling into activity the worst passions of the people, all action for good seems well nigh paralysed and the voice of God speaking in His holiness is altogether unheeded....Wherever the influence of the Rebel Chief prevails, blasphemy, tyranny, and misery but too clearly depict his assumption of power, his despotic sway, and the desolation which marks his course...."

"It is to the region beyond the range of this rebellion that Mr. Muirhead looks with the eye of anxious expectation."

Muirhead wrote that Taiping control of the central Yangtze River valley interrupted the plans of the Corresponding Committee for the conversion of the inland Chinese:

" Were the country at peace, it would be an unparalleled means of communication, and the number of inhabitants equal to what we have all along been led to expect. At present a bar is in our way. Vessels will go up. Consular and mercantile arrangements are in progress. The Missionary and Bible Colporteur must advance too, but all is uncertainty. The rebels are ravaging the central districts and changing the whole into a wilderness. Fire and sword are the order of the day with them, and the people will not be induced to settle down under their rule." (51)

51. Fifty-eighth Report of the B.F.B.S., for 1862, pp. II4-II5.

CHAPTER FOUR
CONCLUSION

In the period 1853 to 1862, British journalists and British observers in Great Britain and China focused upon the civil war in China. In the opinion of many, the Taipings were an attractive alternative to Imperialist government in China.

In mid-1853, certain materials relating to the Rebellion began to appear in Great Britain. These were generally considered to be reliable accounts of the Chinese interior and of the insurgents. Materials, such as Galloway and Yvam's History of the Insurrection in China, Walter Medhurst's "General View of the Insurgents", British Parliamentary Papers Relating to the Civil War in China, and Abbe Huc's The Chinese Empire described British and French expeditions to the interior and British and French impressions of the inland Chinese. These materials were at least partially responsible for awakening British commercial, religious, humanitarian, and political interests in inland China. Before the Rebellion, British plans to influence the Chinese remained dormant in British civilian minds in China or had been given a very passing chance of success. One remembers primarily Walter Medhurst's religious and educational ambitions for China.

The materials which appeared in mid-1853 created interest in China because of the political and religious challenge such materials presented to British civilians and to British writers.

These materials stated that the Taipings promised travel privileges

to British civilians once the Taipings vanquished the Manchu overlords. Throughout 1853, certain British writers and the Times considered Taiping military victory imminent.

Certain of a Taiping victory, they envisaged the breakup of the Chinese empire. Such writers were confident that British mercantile interests in China, British religious interests, and the British consular community would be compelled to conduct relations with autonomous Taiping chieftains. The Edinburgh Review and Chambers's Journal were notable exceptions to this type of political speculation.

The materials which appeared in mid-1853 also described the religious fervour of the insurgents, and portrayed them as a band of God-fearing Christians, who lived by a code of rigid military discipline and stern morality. Well-known British Protestant missionaries in China believed that the Taipings were eager to read missionary tracts and to receive foreign missions. Yet Dr. Charles Taylor indicated that Taiping promises, made in April 1853 to Bonham and Meadows, of unlimited foreign travel in the interior would only be honoured if the Taipings won the civil war.

From mid-1853, however, apologies for Taiping military cruelties, other moral insufficiencies, and Taiping religious fanaticism continued to be made by eminent Protestant China-coast missionaries, such as Walter Medhurst (Senior), James Legge, George Hobson, and other clergymen. As James Legge strongly implied in 1853, as missionary enterprise would be extended in China when the Taipings won the civil war, British missionaries could overlook Taiping moral insufficiencies

and religious fanaticism. The Taipings increased the interest of the Protestant religious community in China by promising to permit missionaries to distribute Scriptures and communicate with Taiping leaders. That conversions of countless Chinese would be the end result of such unlimited missionary access to the interior was the confident assertion of writers in the British Quarterly Review, Fraser's Magazine, Blackwood's, and most British observers. The success of Chinese emigration had indicated that the Chinese were well-suited to Western life.

The materials which appeared in 1853 cited examples of the political reliability of the Taiping, Triad, and Small Sword insurgents. The Taipings possessed a command structure attractive to British observers. A writer in the British Quarterly Review felt that Taiping political philosophy should be attractive to the Chinese because that philosophy reminded him of the tenets of Confucius and Mencius. John Oxenford found that the Taipings had a religious bias which was no more than a superstructure of orthodox Confucianism. The Taipings reminded other observers of the ~~national liberal~~ revolutionary enthusiasm experienced in 1848 to 1849 by European nations.

James Legge declared that the Taipings were attempting an enormous and a daring task. In mid-1853, this reason alone caused the Taipings to win much enthusiasm and public support in Britain as agents of Western liberalism in China. According to reports, the Taipings tried to establish a permanent political structure. They had issued a system of currency and were busy storing military supplies along the Yangtze

River. They knew the importance of attracting the Chinese scholar gentry to their camp and conducted civil service examinations for their supporters. To British observers, it seemed the Taipings were founding a totally new ruling elite to replace the Manchus. British observers noted the revolutionary elements of Taiping political philosophy, such as an appeal to the Han nationality and an appeal for the restoration of the Mings. Reports concerning the Taiping revolutionary program were either extremely attractive to British observers, such as the naval officer writing from Amoy to the Times, or were criticized by observers, such as W. C. Milne of the Edinburgh Review.

Materials that appeared in mid-1853 praised insurgent bands for controlling the excesses of their troops in the field. Oxenford, for example, claimed that Chinese officials were allowed to escape in 1853 from Amoy before that city fell to the insurgents. From the time of Bonham and Meadows's visit in mid-1853 to Nanking, insurgent bands evinced a healthy respect for British civilian life and property in the foreign settlement areas on the coast. The Shanghai and Amoy insurgents proved willing to allow British civilians to intervene in their affairs. In the period 1853 to 1862, medical missionaries, illicit traders of arms, and soldiers of fortune frequented both insurgent and Imperialist camps.

Optimistic news of Taiping religious and moral beliefs, political reliability, and promises of travel privileges for foreigners was not the greatest concern of certain British observers. Beginning in mid-1853,

certain accounts received from China also underlined the dormant state of British interests in the treaty ports on the coast. These accounts seriously questioned the value of British religion, political life, and social institutions.

The French Jesuit missionary community in China was represented in Britain by the reliable and informative accounts of MM. Callery and Yvan and Abbé Huc. Huc obtained legal status for his journey through the Chinese interior. These French missionaries presented valuable information concerning the social life and political habits of Chinese civilians and of the insurgents in the interior. Moreover, Callery and Yvan's account appeared in July 1853, a month before the "Blue Book", Parliamentary Papers Relating to the Civil War in China was presented to the Lords.

British journalists realized that a French missionary body obtained travelling privileges in the interior because of its willingness to surrender in a nominal fashion to Chinese etiquette. Moreover, Jesuit willingness to endure the hardships of travel in the interior, in the Chinese fashion, enabled them to fulfil their Christian duties and obligations. The objectionable legal status of a "criminal" being transported through the Chinese Empire allowed Abbé Huc to confer freely with local Imperialist officials.

The willingness of these French Jesuits to undergo personal indignities and to endure hardships of travel in the interior nevertheless made possible the appearance of two valuable accounts of the Chinese interior. These were much envied by British observers, as these

French accounts contained much useful information about Chinese life and about the insurgents. Huo's book, The Chinese Empire, was cited, even in 1860, by British writers.

British observers frankly conceded by 1855 that this type of information was unavailable to British missionaries, merchants, or consular officials. British observations were confined to knowledge of the Chinese whom they had observed in Canton, the views of well-known British China experts, and the observations of British civilians and officials who had ventured illegally into the Chinese mainland. British entry into the interior was not condoned by Imperialist officials.

It embarrassed British observers that French missionaries preceded a British mission of inquiry to Nanking and obtained much novel information on the Chinese. These observers were anxious for the same type of "legal access" to the Chinese interior. They were determined to produce or obtain a similarly instructive work concerning the Chinese insurgents and the insurgents.

During the period prior to the ~~Arrow~~ ^{Arrow} War, continuing British interest in the changing fortunes of the Taipings, (for which the British public often had to rely upon foreign accounts) prompted many British journalists and observers to determine why they were originally interested in the treaty-port settlement and in the Chinese interior. The existence of Taiping insurgency proved to many British interested observers, such as the organized Protestant religious community, that the inland Chinese were searching for improvement in their

political, religious, and economic life, which the Taipings could not provide.

The writings of Callery and Yvan, Abbé Huc, and British critics concerning the insurrection touched British observers and journalists in yet another more sensitive area. Callery and Yvan and Abbé Huc observed that the contact of Hung Hsiu-ch'uan and other Taiping chieftains with Protestant missionaries, such as Issachar Roberts, Charles Gutzlaff, and the China Union, and Taiping reading of Protestant Scriptures and tracts did not lead the Taipings to express political dissent with the Manchu regime. According to these French missionaries, Taiping military successes and Taiping moral fervour were not the direct result of Protestant deposit of Scriptures along the coast.

Callery and Yvan, James Rulle and Abbé Huc stated that the insurrection gained its moral and political impetus from long-term influences and contact with the Jesuits by the peoples of the interior. According to Callery and Yvan and Abbé Huc, Jesuit missionaries were already established in the interior of China and had converts numbering in the thousands.

British observers interpreted this French observation as a particularly barbed attack upon organized Protestant religious endeavours in China. It was also indirectly an attack upon Britain's official China commitment and upon the basis of British institutional life in the mid-nineteenth century.

Callery and Yvan and Abbé Huc tried to undermine a principle

which was close to the hearts of many Englishmen. With reference to the concrete examples at hand - the British China commitment and a force of "Christian" insurgents in China - Gallery and Yvan implied that full knowledge of, and a sincere belief in, Protestant Christianity would not cause a Protestant convert to express liberal political sentiments. In the opinion of these French missionaries, a nation educated in Protestant precepts would not appreciate what Charles Macfarlane and a contributor to Fraser's Magazine spoke of in 1853 as "principles of political science". It seemed illogical to Gallery and Yvan for a nation inspired by Protestant principles to inevitably turn to political revolution to remove tyranny from government.

To suggest, as Gallery and Yvan had done, that Roman Catholicism (in its Jesuit form) was more provocative of liberal political sentiments than Protestant Christianity was a clever attempt to sever the powerful traditional connection between organized Protestant religious endeavours in Great Britain and liberal political principles.

Such a connection had been firmly established from the time of the Restoration of Charles II and the Glorious Revolution of 1688. Victoria, the crown head of England, was the nominal head of the Church of England.

Gallery and Yvan attacked in yet a more specific way this long-time bond between the forces of British Protestantism and the liberal political tradition. They appealed to prevailing humanitarian sentiments in Great Britain and France by presenting a critique of British diplomacy in China. As discussed in the supplementary section of the thesis,

an assumption that British officials were treating the Chinese fairly continued during British official relations with the insurgents and the Imperialists until the full effects of the Treaty of Tientsin and the Convention of Peking became well-known in Great Britain. In 1862, Rear-Admiral Hope and Frederick Bruce attempted unsuccessfully to perpetuate for the British public their own official view of the fairness of the Thirty-Mile Radius Campaign. However most British writers before 1856 stopped writing about British benevolent plans for the Chinese. They rather wished for the fulfillment by war, if necessary, of British interests in China.

Many British humanitarians, such as Rev. George Smith, and local officials, such as T.T. Meadows, were plagued with a sense of personal remorse concerning British naval and military humiliation of the Imperialists in the First Opium War. As Macaulay and other observers concluded during the First Opium War, the nature of British commitments leading to the First Opium War did no credit to Britain's reputation for fair dealings. British military and naval pressure on the Chinese was justified on the basis of advancing British mercantile and official interests in China. Both the Whigs and the Tories had condoned the opium trade for a number of years until 1839. (B)

In 1853 and 1855, Gallery and Yvan and Abbe Hue continued in the tradition of many British humanitarians and local officials in China, and magnified the shamefulness of the First Opium War. By so

B. For extracts from Thomas Babington Macaulay's speech during the Great Opium Debate in 1840, see Appendix B, pp. 274-275, pp. 282-283.

doing, they implied for their British and French readers that the British China commitment was based upon avarice and self-interest. They conjectured that surely such an avaricious and self-interested Government and people could not be trusted to engender liberal political principles and Christian benevolence among the Chinese people. They implied that British Protestantism would retain little hold upon the religious and moral sympathies of the Chinese people in the interior, if British Protestants persisted in the closest of ties to an immoral political system.

British critics of the Taipings appeared shortly after British public notice in August 1853 of Gallery and Yvan's work. Discussing moral and religious shortcomings they observed in reports concerning the Taipings, these critics cautioned that the purity of organized Protestant religious life must not be endangered by contact with Taiping religious fanaticism and barbarous soldiery. They too advanced the same doubts as Gallery and Yvan and Abbé Huo. By implying that it was unchristian for British missionaries to ally themselves with a force of native insurgents in China, these British critics, such as James Rulle and "Conservative", also questioned the foundations of British institutional life. During a period of adamant public support for the Taiping "patriots", these British critics denied the value of any British commitment to native insurgency in China. These critics, then, challenged the propriety of civilian schemes to travel outside the foreign settlement areas. Many British civilians were confident that the Chinese belligerents would co-operate with such plans.

From 1853 to 1856, this French and domestic critique of British institutional life was instructive to many British observers. Gallery and Yvan and Huc's accounts revealed that Frenchmen did not believe in the fairness of British diplomacy in China. These French accounts indicated that Frenchmen did not credit with benevolent intentions British civilian, commercial, political, religious, or scholarly projects for China.

This attitude was menacing for British journalists and interested observers. These French observations emphasized the failure of the British consular community, organized religious forces in Britain and China, and British merchants to further British interests in China. Above all, British journalists knew that French civilians were successful in obtaining entry into the interior whereas British and Protestant missions to the interior had failed.

British missions to the interior had failed to gain legal recognition from the Chinese Government because British observers, such as T. T. Meadows in 1853, Joseph Edkins in March 1861, Walter Medhurst (Senior) in 1835, James Legge from 1853 to 1856 refused to surrender national pride or surrender the immunities and customary comforts of Western-style travel. The British Quarterly Review drew attention to this national trait in the article in early 1853 entitled "Middle Age Travellers to the East".

From the time of Bonham and Meadows's visit to Nanking, British official missions to inland China compelled a sufficient degree of respect from insurgents and Imperialists alike. Still, the British

were unable until 1860 to gain travelling privileges in the interior of China. British officials plainly forced their entry until 1860 by British naval and military armament.

By 1856, most British journalists had discarded claims of benevolence towards the Chinese people, had abandoned their admiration for the Taipings, and frequently listed their grievances with the terms of the Treaty of Nanking and the Treaty of the Bogue. Except for the British Quarterly Review, most British journals cited by 1856 were close to recognizing that the Chinese should be compelled to promote British interests in the interior.

The presence of native insurgency in the interior of China and on the coast, the religious pretensions of the Taipings, and Taiping attempts to represent Western civilization in the interior awakened and perpetuated waning and sometimes fanciful interests and schemes of British civilians in the treaty ports. One thinks particularly of Medhurst's scheme in 1852 to promote the publication of the Scriptures in two Chinese dialects side-by-side. Medhurst told of his plans but had no real promise of converts to accept these newly-published Scriptures.

It irritated many British civilian observers that French missionaries gained travelling privileges in inland China and attempted to take credit for feelings of political unrest among the inland Chinese. These French missionaries blatantly neglected to mention that British officials also travelled to Nanking. One could not ignore however that French missionaries could possibly, with Imperialist favour, impress

the inland Chinese with a French view of British civilization.

British feelings of remorse concerning British conduct in the First Opium War and concerning the failure of British missionaries and merchants to more favourably impress the Chinese were accentuated by news of French Jesuit achievements in China and by knowledge of French skepticism concerning British interests in China. British journalists and interested civilians felt obligated to abandon claims of benevolence towards the Chinese people.

Most accounts however argued that it was for the material good of the Chinese that British commercial interests and marketing techniques be applied in the interior. This was the approach of writers in July 1853 in the Edinburgh Review, in January and May 1854 in Blackwood's, and in December 1854 in Fraser's Magazine. According to many British journalists, for the sake of the welfare of later generations, the Chinese should allow British scholars access to Chinese historical documents, Chinese botany, Chinese tea plants, and Chinese grass-cloth. This was the view taken by Chambers's Journal. And according to a writer in February 1856 in Chambers's Journal, the Chinese people would only understand and respect a forceful insistence upon British privileges.

In mid-1853, the majority of British observers cited showed major interest in Taiping religious claims, political promise, and commercial reliability. When it appeared that the Taipings might no longer win the civil war, Taiping promises to foreigners, and the inconsistencies of Taiping religion, morality, and Taiping political

structures were severely scrutinized. As James Legge indicated in 1853, Taiping inconsistencies were only acceptable if the Taipings replaced the Manchus in Peking.

As soon as the British China-coast press told of Taiping military reverses in 1854, the organized Protestant community and many British journalists gave up hope that the Taipings could accomplish the "Herculean task". The British observers accepted that British interests could only be fulfilled by following the example of Gallyer and Yvan and Abbe Huc. And so by 1860, a writer in the British Quarterly Review, and the Corresponding Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society in Shanghai were convinced that converts to the Protestant faith should not take part in movements of political unrest in China.

Prior to the Arrow War, British plans for the Yangtze Valley were openly discussed. Possible points of commercial entry were carefully examined in British journals and aggression to obtain travel privileges for British civilians in inland China was sanctioned. The British people were psychologically prepared for a renewal of hostilities with the Chinese from the time of the July 1853 article in the Edinburgh Review. The daily welfare of the Taipings was a topic of discussion in early 1854 in the Times of London but soon lost its relevance when British observers understood that only British officials and civilians in China should promote British interests in inland China.

This thesis has attempted to explain what happened in China, what happened to the attitudes of certain British writers and journalists because British officials did not consistently keep those under their jurisdiction from wandering beyond the foreign settlement areas. All too often, the question of whether the insurgents would co-operate fully with British missionaries, merchants, and officials determined the writer's approach to the Taipings. After 1853, there were few objective British studies of Taiping, religious, moral, and political life. Most British accounts were influenced by an almost unchallenged public belief that the inland Chinese would welcome British imports and British writings. It was also commonly assumed before 1856 that local Chinese officials were preventing British civilians from reaching masses of Chinese who were eager for improvement in their lives.

Bowring's aggression at Canton could be interpreted as the response in 1856 of the British Supreme Plenipotentiary to local Chinese official intransigence at Canton. His aggressive activity certainly gained a measure of approval from British journalists who from the mid-1853 to 1856 advocating such a policy. Before 1856, certain writers indicated that the physical barrier of Taiping-occupied territories and the stubbornness of Taiping chieftains were factors also preventing British civilians from reaching masses of Chinese.

From 1853 to 1856, the Taiping insurrection suggested to British observers that a transference of British civilization to the peoples of the interior was possible. Independent British agencies, such as the Corresponding Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society

in Shanghai, and British journals, such as Fraser's Magazine, stopped supporting the Taipings after several consecutive realizations.

Primarily, British observers realized beginning in mid-1853 that they could bring their imports and their writings to Chinese inland centres of trade.

Secondly, British writers realized that British civilians in China failed to communicate meaningfully with the insurgents. They knew that British civilians did not have travel privileges which the Manchu Government had given to other foreigners. At the same time, reports arrived from China that the Taipings had not continued to win victories. It appeared to certain British writers that the Taipings could not honour their promises to foreigners.

Consequently, certain British writers decided to look for future concessions from the Manchu Government. These men decided that British officials should insist that the Chinese Government legalize foreign travel in inland China.

Finally, in 1855 and in 1856, there were encouraging reports from China that local Chinese officials were dutifully allowing foreign travellers to journey freely inland.

Once British observers became aware that British civilians might best further their own interests in China, once they had won the financial support or at least the vigorous enthusiasm of the British public, and once they had been persuaded that Imperialist officials would yield again to aggressive foreign civilian demands, a native

insurrection in China became a burdensome annoyance to British research and travel in the interior. This point was clearly illustrated in 1857 by Robert Fortune.* Most British civilians observers of the Taipings had completed this process of evaluation before the Arrow War.

* See above, p. 166 for extracts from Fortune's writings in 1857.

APPENDIX
INTRODUCTION

Certain twentieth-century scholars have studied British relations from 1850 to 1862 with the Chinese belligerents. British periodical and British civilian materials of the period 1853 to 1862, cited in the body of the thesis, often strongly differ with the approach taken in the twentieth century by Professors Gregory, Banno, Mary Wright, and J.K. Fairbank concerning the operation and existence after mid-1853 of a policy of neutrality between Great Britain and Manchu officials, Chinese civilians, and the Taipings.

These scholars have had access to Chinese materials and to British Foreign Office materials. Their selection of materials has contributed to their respective assessments of British relations from mid-1853 with the belligerents. But to date, writings by these scholars have not examined systematically and thoroughly a full series of British periodical materials which revealed the China interests from 1850 to 1862 of British journals. One therefore could not expect that these scholars would be that concerned with the British public's assessment of British official and civilian relations with the Taipings. In the mid-nineteenth century, British writers often evaluated British China policy, and many of their materials have been consulted for this thesis.

Appendix A shows that British journalistic and civilian sources, which deal specifically with British interests in China from mid-1853, do not agree with or correspond to twentieth-century interpretations.

Appendix B examines British relations from 1850 to 1862 with the belligerents. This section cites official Parliamentary materials which were available to many British journalists and civilians and which dealt specifically with the relations of the British community in China with the belligerents. Conclusions which result from this study in both Appendix A and Appendix B much clarify and support the view of British relations with the belligerents adopted from 1853 to 1862 by many British journalists and British civilians in China.

Appendix A

The Concept of Neutrality or of Non-Intervention

I. The State of Current Research concerning the Question of Non-Intervention

I. The Conclusions of Masataka Banno

In his work, China and the West 1858-1861: The Origins of the
Tsungli Yamen, published in 1964, Masataka Banno presented observations
concerning British official policy during the civil war in China. Banno's
research found evidence of co-operation between the foreign powers to
strengthen the Manchu government. He pointed out the effect of this
co-operation upon the Peking political climate after the Treaty of
Tientsin. Later, he traced the eventual emergence of Prince Kung and
the Empresses Dowager and the formation of the Tsungli Yamen. Banno
implied that from 1853 to 1860, a British declaration of neutrality was
only a segment of what he expressed as the joint policy of the foreign
powers in China concerning the Imperialists. (1)

I. Prior to his analysis of British and French official attitudes to
the Taiping Rebellion, Banno described French, British, Russian, and
Manchu diplomacy and the attitudes of the Manchu Government and of
the foreign powers to the Treaty of Tientsin and the Convention of Peking.
See Masataka Banno, China and the West 1858-1861: The Origins of the
Tsungli Yamen (Cambridge, Mass., 1964), pp. 10-42.

Banno compounded British and French diplomatic objectives with reference
to Elgin's despatch of 13 July, 1858, to Malmesbury:

"Elgin and Gros purposely avoided trying to 'extract money directly from
the Imperial Government in the north', because being aware of its penury,
they felt it would be unwise to drive it (the Manchu government) to
despair and perhaps to extreme measures of resistance by putting forward
pecuniary claims which it could satisfy only by resorting to measures
that would increase its unpopularity and extend the area of rebellion
in the Empire." See Ibid., pp. 48-49.

Banno's conclusions concerning British official policy from 1853 reflected his characteristic approach. He looked ahead to the co-ordination after the Treaty of Tientsin of British objectives with those of other foreign powers in China and applied his observations to a stage when this joint co-operation between the powers was not yet apparent, on more than a consular level.

Working on his assumptions of a wide co-operative spirit between the Plenipotentiaries of the foreign powers in China, Banno implied that a British policy of neutrality in the civil war existed in 1853. According to Banno, British officials began in 1854 to adopt an Imperialist bias. His suggestions of this bias somewhat presume that until 1854, British consuls in China were fulfilling the obligations of a neutral power. Banno assumed the existence of co-operation beginning in 1854 among the representatives of the treaty powers and the Imperialists, these men constituting the only de facto and de iure political force in China.

Banno's judgments serve as an introduction to the conclusions

Banno noticed the degree of similarity of French, Russian, and American hesitation in 1858 and 1859 to enforce the demand of a resident minister in Peking. See Ibid., pp. 51-52.

Banno then implied that British China policy suited the designs of other foreign ministers and the policy objectives of the Imperial Commissioners. As he suggested, one of the Earl of Elgin's reasons for agreeing at Shanghai not to exercise the right of permanent residence was his appreciation of Kwei-liang's and others' argument that ".... in the present critical and troublesome state of our country, this incident would generate, we fear, a loss of respect for their government in the eyes of her people."

See Ibid., p. 52.

of other scholars concerning British policy from 1853 to 1862 in China. The body of the thesis has shown that there were many writers and civilians interested in the character of British relations with the belligerents. The authors of many accounts also had access to Parliamentary materials which related to the Rebellion. British periodical and civilian materials indicate that British writers had definite knowledge of British official activities during the civil war period. How does the assessment of British policy in China by twentieth-century scholars compare with that of mid-Victorian civilians?

Banno began the section of his book entitled "Foreign Attitude towards the Taiping Rebellion" by observing that

"the attitude of the Western maritime powers towards the Taiping Rebellion may be said to have been determined by their calculation as to which of the two sides in China's domestic strife would be more likely to contribute toward the creation of a relatively stable and advantageous market." (2)

Rellegating the foreign policy of the treaty powers to mercantile expediency, Banno observed that in 1854, British officials in China acted as if they favoured victory of the Imperial Government in the civil war. Taking support from the conclusions of Ueda Toshio, John S. Gregory, W.C. Costin, and H.B. Morse, (3) Banno established a concept

2. Banno, op.cit., pp.42-43.

3. Ibid., p.26. If Banno cited the following materials of Ueda Toshio: "Taishiran to gaikoku", published in three parts in Kokka gakka zasshi, 62.9:464-494 (September 1948), 62.12:669-687 (December 1948), and 63.1-3:31-78 (March 1949) and "The International Relations of the T'ai Ping Rebellion", Japan Annual of Law and Politics, No. 2:119-148 (1953).

He also referred to the article of J.S. Gregory, Journal of Asian Studies, 19:1. 11-24 (November 1959), to the book of W.C. Costin, Great Britain and China: 1833-1860, and to Volume I of the book of H.B. Morse, International Relations of the Chinese Empire.

of "benevolent neutrality" by Great Britain and the other powers to which he discovered to be operating, "into the Arrow War period".(4)

Banno then presented his evidence to support the preceding statement. He assumed that direct co-operation by British consular and other foreign officials with the local Imperial officials in Shanghai was an indication of their willingness to co-operate with one another and of their desire to establish firm relations. To Banno, events in China appeared to demand resolution at this stage through direct contact. British China-coast officials were forced to deal with local Imperialist officials. Through these dealings, according to Banno, the basis of a "benevolent neutrality" towards the Manchus was established. Banno isolated three areas of Sino-British relations in 1854 as points establishing the basis of "benevolent neutrality".

First, he pointed to British, American, and French co-operation in 1854 to protect the foreign settlement from incursions. He observed that the military operations of British and American forces in co-operation with the French military intervention against the Triads were conducted in an "anti-Taiping rather than an anti-Ch'ing spirit". (5)

However Banno did not specify what elements should constitute a policy of "neutrality", nor did he examine in detail British relations from mid-1853 with the belligerents to ascertain if a policy of neutrality was being observed by the British community in China.

4. Banno, op.cit., pp.43-44.

5. Ibid.

Banno's observations of a neutral policy being replaced by a "benevolent foreign neutrality" towards the Manchus appear applicable to the complex local treaty-port relations from 1853 to 1855 in Shanghai among the British consul, Rutherford Alcock, the British community, other foreign consulates and communities, and Local Imperialist officials. Such local Imperialist officials as Wu Chien-chang and Chi-er-hang-a were trying to retain Imperialist supremacy over what came to be known as the "Foreign Settlement". The Triad and Small Sword Society rebels retained control of the Imperialist city of Shanghai and its inhabitants until 1855 when they were annihilated by French and Imperialist forces.

Correspondence Respecting the Attack on the Foreign Settlement at Shanghai presented in 1854 to both Houses of Parliament demonstrates Banno's idea of co-operation between British consuls and local Manchu officials. Despatches in the Parliamentary Paper described the invasion in April 1854 by Imperialist forces of the foreign settlement of Shanghai and Alcock's response to renewed British aggression.

In Sir John Bowring's despatch of 18 April, 1854, to the Earl of Clarendon, Bowring included Rutherford Alcock's despatch of 5 April, 1854, to Sir George Bonham, the previous British Plenipotentiary. Alcock at that time presented Bonham with a fait accompli. He described to Bonham the details of an invasion on 3 April, 1854 by Imperialist soldiery. He told of the Imperialist assault upon various members of the British community, his exasperation and that of the military commander, Captain O'Callaghan, with Imperialist incursions into the foreign

settlement area, and the natural response of himself and that military officer - the destruction of two Imperialist camps bordering on the racetrack. (6)

Alcock wrote that Imperialist officials could not control the excesses of their troops and that consequently Imperialist soldiery made constant forays into the foreign settlement. In this despatch, Bowring also included a "Notification" by the British consulate on 5 April, 1854, to British civilians, in which Alcock stated his impatience and that of the foreign community with such interference:

"Unfortunately the much-tried forbearance of individuals and the reluctance of the civil and military authorities of the Three Treaty Powers to involve their respective countries in acts of hostility towards either the belligerents in the civil war have equally failed to avert the dangers which menaced the foreign community.... An open rupture with the Imperialist soldiers has at length taken place, and the Chinese authorities have long declared their inability to exercise any efficient control over them. From that quarter, therefore, little assistance is to be looked for in the endeavour to apply a remedy to a state of things altogether unprecedented."

The destruction of the Imperialist camps by British and American marines, supported by the Shanghai Volunteer Corps, apparently compelled Imperialist co-operation with the foreign consuls. Alcock described the intransigence of Chi-er-hang-a - the Judge and Special Commissioner - to remove the two offending Imperialist encampments to another area not threatening the foreign settlements:

"This morning April 4, 1854 I wrote to Keih... requiring, in the interest of both parties and more especially for the security of the Settlement, that he should move the encampments resting on the race-course, advising him that the senior naval officer had taken and would hold possession

6. B.P.F. 1854, LXXII, [1792], "Correspondence Respecting the Attack on the Foreign Settlement of Shanghai, Enclosure No. I, in No. I, Alcock's despatch of 5 April, 1854, to Bonham, in Bowring's despatch of 18 April, 1854, to Clarendon, pp. 2-3.

of the Imperialist fleet, for the present, as a security against further aggression against the soldiery. The judge having answered in a negative sense before the hour fixed in my letter...."(7)

Then, Alcock narrated proudly the change in attitude of Imperialist officials following British destruction of the camps and the loss of life:

"Last night after these camps were all fired, no further disposition was shown to molest us, and as Woo-Taoutae has been with me this morning, and the judge Keih has expressed a desire that no further hostilities should take place, I am led to believe that it may not be their desire to see this untoward state of hostility continue, in which case the only danger will be in the disposition of the uncontrolled bands, beleaguering the city, to recommence a raid upon the Settlement - perhaps by night!"(8)

In Bowring's despatch of 19 April, 1854, to Clarendon, Bowring included Alcock's despatch of 13 April, 1854, to Bonham. Alcock showed that with the destruction of the Imperialist encampments and British and French co-operation with the Imperialists, who on 7 April, 1854, were rebuilding their camps, military discipline reasserted itself among Imperialist forces engaging the Triads. (9)

Banno's second proof of "benevolent neutrality" towards the

7. B.P.P., 1854, LXXII, [1792], op.cit., Enclosure No. 2, in No. 1, "Notification" of the British Consulate of 5 April, 1854, and Ibid., Enclosure No. 1, in No. 1, Alcock's despatch of 5 April, 1854, to Bonham, in Bowring's despatch of 18 April, 1854, to Clarendon, p.2.

8. B.P.P., 1854, LXXII, [1792], op.cit., Enclosure No. 1, in No. 1, Alcock's despatch of 5 April, 1854, to Bonham, p.2.

9. B.P.P., 1854, LXXII, [1792], op.cit., Enclosure No. 1, in No. 2, Alcock's despatch of 13 April, 1854, to Bonham, in Bowring's despatch of 19 April, 1854. Refer to the following:

"Both parties in the course of skirmishing occasionally crossed within our limits but were speedily warned off by small parties of British and American marines, conveniently posted for that purpose. After stating that the Imperialists had disguised themselves as city men and crossed our guard to attack, he [Lin A-fuh, an Imperialist commander in the city] adds that they had all been shot, very properly and therefore warns his true men to take care and not run the same risk."(p.9)

the Imperialists was British and foreign dealings with the Imperialists concerning the re-establishment of the Imperial customs service. Again, Banno appeared to assume a great deal concerning a complex series of specific treaty-port relations between British citizenry of Shanghai, the British consulate, foreign consuls and their communities, and Imperialist officials. Discussion of British official relations concerning the collection of customs duties in Shanghai does not relate directly, in many British public accounts, to the formation of British public attitudes concerning the Taipings. Banno suggested however a connection between a British policy of "benevolent neutrality" towards the Manchus and the diplomacy which eventually established the Provisional Customs Service in Shanghai. Specific incidents concerning the collection from 1853 to 1854 of customs dues in Shanghai bear full investigation to test Banno's observations. (10)

For Banno, the attempted renewal in 1854 of the Treaty of Nanking, the Treaty of the Bogue, and the Treaty of Wanghsia also exemplified a co-operative spirit among local representatives of the treaty powers and the Imperialists. According to the terms of these treaties, both the Treaty of Nanking and subsequent treaties with the Manchus were up for revision in 1854. Robert Mc Lane, a special Commissioner of the United States, arrived in 1854 to conduct negotiations with the

10. Refer to Banno, op.cit., p.43. See also J.K. Fairbank, Trade and Diplomacy on the China Coast: The Opening of the Treaty Ports 1842-1854 (Cambridge, Mass., 1964), and Monalfo de Jesus, Historic Shanghai (Shanghai, 1909), for studies of the specifics of customs negotiations and for the establishment of the Imperial customs service under foreign management.

the Imperialists for renewal of the American Treaty of Wanghsia. In the autumn of 1853, however, Bonham wrote to Clarendon:

"....treaty revision also must wait - since a treaty with the Imperialists would involve active support of them and better terms might eventually be got from the rebels if they were victorious."

Clarendon replied on 3 October, 1853, that treaty revision was "optional not necessary at the moment". (II) After conducting relations with Imperialist officials, and after an ineffectual visit to Nanking, (I2) Mc Lane returned home without a re-negotiated settlement.

Banno focused upon Malmesbury's instructions of 1 March, 1859, to Bruce and emphasized that 1859 was a critical point. According to Banno, from this time, British officials in China could grant armed support to Imperialist commanders. Banno explained:

"The instructions concerning the civil contest in China which were given to Bruce by Malmesbury, the British foreign secretary, on March 1, 1859, stated that if the rebellion was so locally limited as to be easily suppressible by foreign naval forces, Great Britain could assist the imperial government, with the previous understanding that her allies would collaborate. "In the present state of our knowledge", Malmesbury went on to say, "it would be not proper for you to encourage any expectation of material assistance on our part." " (I3)

Banno added:

"....Malmesbury was cautious enough, however, to leave to the discretion of Bruce, as the man on the spot with superior local knowledge, the conduct of all matters with which he might be called upon to deal."

One could imply from Banno's isolation of this one despatch when coupled with his remark about "trends in the attitudes of foreign

II. Fairbank, op.cit., p. 414.

I2. Meadows, The Chinese...., pp. 316-317.

I3. Banno, op.cit., p. 44.

authorities" (14) that Banno attached particular significance to the year 1859 as the critical turning-point towards the Manchus of British official policy in China.

The body of the thesis has shown that Beginning in 1854, many British journalists and other observers with interests in China started to doubt that the Taipings would seize political control of China. By 1856, the majority of British journalists and British civilians in China, consulted, advocated policies which they believed would guarantee the advancement of British interests in China. To achieve their aims, they were prepared to sanction a war, if necessary, against the Chinese Government.

From 1853, many of these same journalists and British civilians reviewed the activities of British officials in China. An article in July 1855 in the British Quarterly Review, an article in October 1855 in the Edinburgh Review, and Scarth's Twelve Years in China are all examples of British public accounts which testified that British "neutrality" was ~~China's~~ ~~operative~~ in China.

After initial inquiries in mid-1853, the majority of British journalists and British civilians cited wrote as if British consuls should not interfere with their plans for inland China. Such writers revealed that there were many British officials and civilians in China who from 1853 to 1862 ignored Bonham's declaration of non-intervention. It remains the opinion of many British writers that, contrary to Banno's observations, relations of the British community in China with the belligerents were unaffected by Bonham's declaration of non-

14. Banno, op.cit., p.44.

non-intervention."

2. The Conclusions of John S. Gregory

John S. Gregory concluded that British officials in China from 1853 to 1862 applied what he specified as a policy of "armed neutrality". According to Gregory, the extent of "armed neutrality" was limited. In his view, a breach of neutrality occurred only when British forces were used to assist one of the belligerents. Such a decision required official approval from London. Gregory carefully outlined the limitations of his approach to British official policy:

"On the eve of the outbreak of the second opium war in China, therefore, British policy towards the Taiping rebellion was in a rather peculiar position which defies definition in simple and usual terms. Fundamentally it remained in intent and application what it had been since 1853, a policy of armed and limited neutrality, limited in the sense that it was not prepared to permit either side to bring the main treaty-port areas into the field of conflict." (15)

Gregory cited the following interpretation of international law to support his contention that in the mid-nineteenth century, a nation's official military contribution to a belligerent, and that alone, could remove that nation from a neutral position. Gregory referred to the works of L. Oppenheim, entitled International Law (7th

15. Gregory, Great Britain..., pp. 74-75. Yet often throughout his book, Gregory had to account for the departures of British officials in China from the pattern of "armed and limited neutrality" he envisaged. Note, for example the following referring to British relations immediately prior to the Arrow War:

"Yet the limits of this neutrality had been extended in such a way as to make British policy one which might, in certain very possible circumstances, work in favour of the Manchu government, while on the other hand there was explicit rejection of the idea of offering direct aid to the government." (pp. 74-75)

edition) and of G.H. Hackworth in the Digest of International Law, the seventh volume, in the following extracts:

"Since neutrality is an attitude of impartiality it excludes such assistance and succour to one of the belligerents as is detrimental to the other.... (It) is not incompatible with sympathy with one of the belligerents and disapproval of the other, so long as these feelings do not find expression in actions violating impartiality."

"Again [it].... does not compel [neutrals] to remain inactive when a belligerent in carrying on hostilities violates the rules of International Law." (I6)

Gregory's writings concerning the question of neutrality indicate that by using such legal observations, one could condone any manner of interference from 1853 by British officials or civilians in belligerent affairs in China. For Gregory, neutrality existed as long as the objective in view was the protection of British treaty-port interests, and as long as one of the belligerents in China violated a concept of "international law". He believed this interpretation of neutrality characterized British official dealings throughout the period with either belligerent. (I7)

I6. Gregory, Great Britain...., p. 213 f.25, 26.

I7. Ibid., pp. 22-23. See the following extract which in Gregory's estimation expresses the degree of latitude in military operations permissible during a British policy of "neutrality":

"Britain's right to defend them [the foreign settlement areas] was based simply on her actual occupation of them and on her capacity to do so as a power militarily stronger than either of the two combatants in the civil war...."

This is a sample of Gregory's reasoning which indeed described the spirit of China-coast relations between British officials in China and the belligerents. British public materials, as cited in the body of the thesis, often took the same view of British official relations with the belligerents but declined to classify British relations as a "neutral" policy. From 1853 to 1862, many of the British public materials were candidly partial to one of the Chinese belligerents. In fact, as

Gregory's conclusions concerning British official relations with the belligerents become self-evident with an understanding of this legal framework supporting his arguments. He argued that from March or May 1853 until February 1862, there was no definable breakdown in the operation of his concept of "armed neutrality". For example, after describing why in February and March of 1861, Rear-Admiral Hope and Harry Parkes led the first British expedition up the Yangtze River, Gregory commented:

"this official British expedition of February 1861 was certainly not planned as reconnaissance preparatory to intervention against the rebellion." (18)

After describing British relations in 1861 with the Manchus and the insurgents, Gregory concluded:

"British policy was thus strongly weighted in favour of the Manchus during 1861, but was still one of neutrality in the sense there was no active intervention against the rebellion." (19)

Gregory's writings state clearly that from 1853 to 1862, Great Britain observed a policy of "armed neutrality" in China:

"Despite the change in treaty relations with the Manchu government, British policy at the beginning of 1861 remained essentially what it had been since the early years of the rebellion, one of armed neutrality." (20)

follows below, one can imply from Parliamentary materials available to many British journals and other sources of public opinion that British officials in China did not fulfil a "neutral's" responsibilities. These British officials, such as Sir George Bonham, T.T. Meadows, Rutherford Alcock, Sir John Bowring, and the Earl of Elgin, interfered openly in belligerent affairs or supported British interference in belligerent affairs.

18. In this period, the possibility of British reconnaissance was common knowledge. For example, see Blakiston's irritation concerning suggestions that the British expedition, one of exploration of the Yangtze, was preparatory to the establishment of a land route between North East India and Shanghai. See Blakiston, op.cit., pp. 302-303.

19. Gregory, Great Britain...., p. 96, p. 105.

He considered that British neutrality was abandoned in February 1862 when Rear-Admiral Hope cleared the rebels from an area of thirty miles radius with the assistance from the Ever-Victorious Army under Frederick Townsend Ward. (21)

Not mentioning Professor Banno's observations concerning Malmesbury's instructions on 1 March, 1859, to Bruce, Gregory drew attention away from this one area of instructions. Taken at face value, this despatch might have indicated a change in direction in British official relations with the Chinese and in the very character of "armed and limited" neutrality. Gregory explained:

"such a change had, it is true, been contemplated at the beginning of 1859 when the Instructions to guide Frederick Bruce as the first Minister Plenipotentiary to China were being drawn up in mistaken anticipation of the Treaty of Tientsin."

With equal caution, Gregory interpreted Malmesbury's suggestion of armed intervention against the Taipings in co-operation with the other treaty powers as an alternative which was not meant to be taken seriously.

(22)

20. J.S. Gregory, "British Intervention Against the Taiping Rebellion", Journal of Asian Studies, 1959-1960, Vol. 19, pp. 13-14.

21. Gregory, "British Intervention...", p. 15. See the following:

"In mid-January their forces, under the Chung Wang, advanced on that port, overrunning the countryside around it without attempting to storm the walls. Their object, Hope believed, was to deprive the city of supplies and to foment a rising from within. In February, therefore, he began to use British forces available, in co-operation with the French, Ward's force, and some Imperialist troops to clear approaches to Shanghai along the Woosung river."

"In threatening to defend all the treaty ports against rebel attack and not simply the foreign settlement areas attached to them, Hope was going far beyond any instructions received from the government at home up to the end of 1861."

22. Ibid., p. 12. See the following:

"But Malmesbury insisted that such aid should be offered only on the condition that it did not involve the commitment of large British

Gregory admitted that "official neutrality" in 1861 was of a very questionable variety. He observed that the "main concern" of British officials in China and at home was

"simply to get the treaties operating assfully as possible, with the active co-operation of the rebel where necessary, but without actively intervening in the dynastic struggle."

However, he qualified this remark with the suggestion:

"there was also a strong tendency towards helping change the situation by aiding the Manchus in some way..."

Gregory indicated that British policy was "experimental and uncertain" during 1861.(23)

He mentioned British intervention in August 1860 against the first Taiping invasion of Shanghai, but he indicated:

"But this action did not become the starting point for a sustained policy of intervention in favour of the Manchus, as did a similar action in January 1862 and did not mark any decisive change in British policy." (24)

Describing Hope's expedition in March 1861 to Nanking, Gregory wrote:

"for the time being a satisfactory arrangement had been reached on the basis, as Hope expressed it in his report on the expedition, "that in districts of the country of which they hold possession, the Taiping authorities must be regarded as those of the de facto government and must be dealt with accordingly." (25)

Gregory attempted to correct the observations of other scholars, such as Lo Erh-Kang, C.P. Fitzgerald, and Holger Cahill, concerning:

forces, that it could be effectively concentrated against the rebel strongholds, and that it had the support and co-operation of other Western powers with interests in China. The tone of his instructions to Bruce at this point suggests that he did not think interference practicable though it might be a desirable policy."

23. Gregory, Great Britain...., p.87.

24. Gregory, "British Intervention....", p.14.

25. Gregory, Great Britain...., p.97.

British policy from 1850 to 1862 in China. He questioned the approach of W. Eberhard, C.P. Fitzgerald, F. Leger, and Hu Sheng. (26) In other words, he was highly critical of conclusions reached by certain scholars of Chinese history and of those who took an anti-British position. Such scholars suggested that after the conclusion of the Arrow War, the British joined their companions-at-arms, the Manchus, and directed their energies and forces to annihilate an early representative of national liberal revolution in the interior.

Although Gregory adroitly avoided an ideological interpretation of the insurgents, he determined from a factual basis that British forces in China were not significantly increased until just prior to the moment of Hope's intervention in 1862. After stating statistics from British military and naval estimates, Gregory seemingly left his readers to assume that the ideological conclusions of certain scholars of Chinese history and that the anti-British sentiments of Holger Cahill were without factual basis. (27)

26. Gregory, "British Intervention....", p. II.

27. Gregory, Great Britain...., pp. 88-89. See the following:

"The argument of some writers that large forces used to defeat the Manchus were kept conveniently at hand, first to ensure that the Manchus observed the treaty and then to help crush the Taipings, is one of those less than half-true arguments, which seem convincing enough at a distance (after a hundred years there is not much difference between 1860 and 1862) but which hardly tally with the dull but relevant day-to-day administrative facts and figures of the time of which they refer."

See Ibid., pp. 88-89 for a full development of these British naval and military estimates.

This evidence can not be questioned on its own account. But it seems somewhat misleading to argue that the Foreign Office was unable to give a thorough review to daily developments of China-coast relations with the belligerents and then refer to naval and military estimates (of a Government which neglected China affairs) which had to be approved in

Examining British intervention from February 1862 until the annihilation in July 1864 of the Taipings, Gregory again found instances proving the limited nature of British armed intervention against the rebels. He observed:

"limited intervention, in any case, was all that was possible with the military forces Britain had available in China by 1862. Although her naval forces in the station were increased by a third on what they had been in March 1861, her military establishment in China remained around the five-thousand mark and was not increased in the last years of rebellion. There was however a very considerable relative increase in the British forces stationed in Shanghai." (28)

Gregory did make general observations concerning the motivations of the Home Government in drafting their approval in May of 1862 of Hope's thirty mile radius campaign:

"Considerations of economy were very important as were considerations of domestic politics. In 1857 the first Palmerston government had won an election precipitated by the outbreak of the Arrow war in China, and Palmerston's second government launched the campaign in 1859-1860 after the Taku repulse. For this government to become embroiled so soon in yet another large-scale war in China was likely to prove too much even for John Bull himself to carry off successfully with parliament and the electorate." (29)

London by the British Parliament. He used these naval and military estimates to show that the British Government, at least, was not acting in a conspiratorial fashion towards the Taipings from the time of the ratification of the Convention of Peking.

It seems illogical to show that there was no Home Governmental responsibility for local developments of British China-coast policy in 1861 and show, in this particular area, that the Government was making a desperate effort after 1860 to prove itself responsible for no further China incidents by their control of finances which supported British military and naval forces in China.

See Ibid., p. 225ff. for the conclusions of Holger Cahill.

28. Gregory, Great Britain...., p. 118, p. 119.

29. Gregory, British Intervention...., p. 20.

According to Gregory, Britain would not support a full-scale military intervention, (30) because her military and naval intervention was necessary in 1862 only to tip the balance of military operations. With British intervention, the Imperialist armies could capably extinguish the Taipings, and Sino-British relations would resume their normal state. Gregory mentioned the long-term designs of Frederick Bruce to strengthen Peking's control of Chinese provincial officials (31) and described the failure of these designs. He emphasized nevertheless that Bruce, as H.M. Minister to Peking, maintained the limited character of British intervention. Bruce described his intentions in April 1862 in a despatch to Staveland, the commander of British forces in Shanghai:

"Whatever the risk to our trade it had better be incurred than that we should fight the battles of this Government for it, or afford it more than casual or temporary assistance, which is all that will be required to enable the Imperialists to triumph, if they can be induced to turn their own resources to proper account." (32)

A probable object of Professor Gregory's research was to prove

30. Refer to Mary Wright, The Last Stand of Chinese Conservatism (New York, 1967), p.26 for an extract from the North China Herald, reviewing the year 1860, which supported Gregory's observation:

"He who next plunges the country into Chinese war without first making every admissible effort to avert it will find it easier to face a Tartar army than an indignant British public....it will in every point of view, be a wise policy, on part of those who have the management of British interests in China, to concede something at the same time to public opinion at home and to Chinese feeling here, by trying the effect of an equally firm, though more conciliatory policy than heretofore pursued."

31. Gregory, Great Britain...., pp.113-114.

32. Ibid., pp.114-115.

that British officials in China frequently acted independently. One might imply as a consequence of local British official autonomy in China that from 1860, certain British officials in China anticipated their Government's approval of the offer of armed support to Imperialist commanders.

Gregory included a few despatches and notations of Palmerston and Russell, from which one might infer that these two gentlemen were ill-informed of Chinese affairs. Palmerston supported Hope's aggressive diplomacy during Hope's second mission in December 1861 to Nanking despite the misgivings of Undersecretary of State Hammond and Chinese interpreter Harry Parkes. Palmerston concluded:

"These Rebels are Revolters not only against the Emperor, but against all laws human and Divine, and it seems quite right to keep them away from the Treaty Ports."

On 26 November, 1862, Russell wrote to Bruce and used a turn of phrase which would not suggest a studious review of China policy:

"Horrible as the proceedings of the Taepings are, murdering as they do men, women, and children wherever they go, it is for the Imperial authorities, and not H.M.S., to protect the subjects of the Emperor from Taiping atrocities. You will be careful therefore to distinguish those cases in which we have neither." (33)

3. The Conclusions of Mary Wright

Professor Mary Wright adopted much the same approach as Masataka Banno concerning British official relations with the belligerents. Her observations concerning British China policy in the 1850's looked towards evidence of a co-operative era throughout the 1860's between

33. Gregory, "British Intervention....", p.15, p.23 f.

British consuls in China, the British Government in London, and Imperialist officials. During the 1860's, British officials in China refused naval support to British missionaries and merchants in inland China and refused to still the growing anti-foreign sentiment of the Chinese in the interior. Many Wright interpreted British intervention in 1862 against the Taiping rebels to be a critical indication of British restoration of confidence in the Imperial regime. She uncovered in her study examples showing that British officials and British civilians in China had lost interest in the Taipings. She was confident that British and foreign intervention in 1862 against the Taiping rebels belonged to the era of her co-operative policy:

"The important point is that foreign governments in the 1860's took a different view: revolution and conquest were both abhorrent; both were to be avoided at all costs. They could only hope that the Restoration would be successful, and that from a revived Chinese conservatism policies acceptable to the rest of the world would develop." (34)

34. Wright, op.cit., p.20. See also Ibid., p.22 for a general observation concerning the nature of British official relations in the 1850's with the belligerents and for her applying British hesitation in the 1850's concerning the insurgents to the co-operative policy of the 1860's:

"A decade earlier the British had been searching for a policy, but as long as the Ch'ing government appeared hopelessly weak and inept, British counsels were divided; some favoured negotiations with the Taiping authorities; others preferred negotiation backed by force with whatever provincial leaders were immediately in control of a given area."

To depend on this type of generality without investigation of the nature of British relations in the 1850's with the belligerents and with just a passing commentary about the formation of China policy in the Foreign Office, leaves one to imply that if such co-operation was in evidence in the 1860's, the roots of this co-operation reached back further than British intervention in 1862 to the 'divided counsels' that she commented upon.

Somewhat before this era of co-operation in the 1860's between the powers and the Imperialists, (35) she referred to Frederick Bruce's anxiety for a strong central Imperialist government in Peking. (36) Like Masataka Banno, she indicated that by 1860, British official policy concerning the belligerents had changed. She did this without investigating carefully British activities in China.

Again, like Banno, she mentioned Foreign Office instructions to a British official in China, the Earl of Elgin. She found that Russell conjectured for Elgin's benefit:

"Abandoning his capital upon the advance of the European troops, condemned to admit the superiority of powers whom the court of China, in its fatuity, has hitherto treated with contempt, the Emperor would suffer greatly in reputation."

"The rebels would take heart; the great officers of the Empire might find it difficult to maintain the central authority; the Governors of the Provinces might hardly be able to quell insurrection. In short the whole Empire might run the risk of dissolution."

"Her Majesty would see with great concern such a state of things. It might even portend a great catastrophe, and the bonds of allegiance, once loosened, might never again be firmly united."

Without further investigation of Britain's China policy, she contended that from the time of this despatch, the direction of British relations with the belligerents suffered a 'nearly complete reversal':

"foreign governments were prepared to use force on behalf of and at the request of the Chinese government, but they now became extremely reluctant to use force on their own behalf." (37)

To explain this 'nearly complete reversal' of British policy in China towards the belligerents, she drew attention to a demonstration

35. Wright, op.cit., p.25, p.28.

36. Ibid., p.26.

37. Ibid., p.27.

of humanitarian sympathy by a Foreign Office spokesman in the House of Commons. This man expressed sorrow for the Chinese nation, which had been downtrodden in a second China War. (38)

Finally, Mary Wright observed that British officials in China did have ideological sympathies. She affirmed her 'co-operative policy' throughout the decade of the 1860's by referring to the sinicization of foreign diplomats who were exposed to Chinese life for long periods. Her conclusions are like the observations of John Searth concerning the prejudices of Thomas Wade. She declared that certain Western diplomats who were exposed to the Confucian way of life, such as Wade, Robert Hart, or Bunlinghame, were influenced by what seemed a "mystique" concerning the longevity of Imperial Chinese rule. (39)

4. The Conclusions of John King Fairbank

While not specifically tracing the development of British relations from 1850 to 1862 with the belligerents in China, Professor Fairbank's Trade and Diplomacy on the China Coast adopted an approach similar to Masataka Banno's and Mary Wright's. Fairbank assumed an official British policy of "neutrality" in the civil war was in existence from 1853 to 1854 without evaluating his own critical evidence of the application in China of that "neutrality". What he implied to be an official British policy of "neutrality" was severely violated by dealings

38. Wright, op.cit., p.25.

39. See Ibid., p.40 for commentary about the Imperialist prejudices of Wade. See also the following extract:

"Peking had exercised upon foreign representatives a sort of unholy glamour. They have been bewitched. Some have fallen down and worshipped before its scholastic and historical traditions; others have treated the great city as a sort of gigantic "curio"; optimism has been the bane of all."

of British civilians with the Triad Society rebels in Shanghai and in official relations of Alcock, Bonham, and Bowring with local Imperial officials and with British merchants in Shanghai. In 1853 to 1855, the China-coast did require some acceptable system of customs' collection. (40) Fairbank described British relations from 1842 to 1854 with Chinese officials.

Like Gregory, Fairbank tended to emphasize the local autonomy of British officials in China. Fairbank emphasized that British officials in China conducted a series of relations with Imperialist officials beyond the review of the Foreign Office in London, and that events taking place outside of London influenced the China policy of the Foreign Office. He noted that the Foreign Office devoted a large part of its time to British responsibilities elsewhere than China. Consequently, a wide scope of initiative was left to British officials in China, subject to the eventual approval of the Foreign Office. Although Fairbank emphasized this wide degree of British consular autonomy in China, he did not conclude that the operation of British 'neutrality' in China might have been influenced by British consular autonomy.

Although Fairbank presented evidence in his Trade and Diplomacy on the China Coast that British civilians and officials were interfering in belligerent affairs, like Gregory, he stated that Great Britain was neutral from 1853. The following extract indicates the extent, in Fairbank's

40. Refer to Fairbank, op.cit., pp. 428-431 for the development of a civilian breach of foreign neutrality in the civil war. See Ibid., p. 420 for Bonham's referral of the customs difficulty to London and for Alcock's collection of customs duties for Imperial officials in Shanghai.

opinion, of British consular autonomy in China:

"From the foreign point of view there could be no thought of allowing the taotai to re-establish himself within the limits of the foreign settlement, much less collect duties on a trade he could not protect. In the military crisis Rutherford Alcock became the dictator of Shanghai and under the banner of neutrality preserved both the British trade and the Provisional System which he had designed to protect it, against much opposition and in the midst of constant danger." (41)

Fairbank, then, argued that British foreign responsibilities elsewhere, particularly in the Crimea, considerations of domestic politics, and the retrenchment in British expenditure prevented the Foreign Office from a thorough review of British consular and civilian activities in the treaty ports. (42)

2. A Re-Interpretation of British Neutrality

An assessment of the operation of British policy from 1850 to 1862 in China can be strongly supported by examining British public accounts of events in China. (43) In this supplementary section of the thesis, I have made use of both official and public materials concerning the Taipings.

The approach I have taken to British China policy during the civil war does not attempt to stretch the limits of British impartiality. Neither does this approach attempt to divert attention from critical incidents, such as Bowring's intervention in the winter of 1854 to

41. Fairbank, op.cit., p. 420.

42. Ibid., p. 394, p. 402. As Fairbank admitted, although Bowring was anxious in 1852 for some resort to force because of the potential Bowring saw in offering British assistance to the Manchus to quell the insurrection,

"The China policy of the Foreign Office in this period remained profoundly quiescent."

1855, with overall conceptions of the nature of British relations with the belligerents.

This approach does not generalize concerning complex treaty-port relations throughout the mid-nineteenth century. There are certain ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ ~~fact~~ ^{fact} ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ ~~previous~~ ⁱⁿ ~~scholarly~~ ⁱⁿ ~~judgments~~ ⁱⁿ ~~and~~ ⁱⁿ ~~commentaries~~ ⁱⁿ concerning British relations with the belligerents. Absolute judgments or interpretations of this aspect of British China policy can leave the reader of British official and civilian correspondence in the period 1850 to 1862 with troublesome hesitations and qualifications.

I suggest that a declaration of neutral intent, or a declaration of non-intervention, was not observed by local British officials in China. British consuls did not take measures to ensure that British civilians did not interfere in Chinese belligerent activities. British officials were curious themselves as to the resources and military skill of the belligerents. British officials and civilians in China continued to inquire into the survival of either belligerent. From

See also the following:

"In December 1852 Lord John Russell became foreign secretary in the Aberdeen ministry but soon gave up that post to save his health and work for parliamentary reform, having written hardly a despatch to China. The Earl of Clarendon succeeded him on February 22, 1853. The difficulties over the Holy Places which eventually were to lead to the Crimean war had already begun; England was in Clarendon's own phrase, "drifting into war".... this was no time for him to think of aggression in China."

43. Chapters Two and Three in the body of the thesis trace the development of many British public observations concerning native insurgency in China. Such observations were very often closely connected to observations concerning the nature of British policy in China.

mid-1853, observers in Britain consistently supported British missionary, official, commercial, or inquisitive journeys into the interior. For several contemporary historians who rely heavily upon isolated despatches and incidents to suggest a change in direction in British China policy, declarations of neutral intent appear to be sufficient proof of British neutrality.

One notes the decision of Sir George Bonham to apply a policy of non-intervention in the civil war after he received the invitation of the Governor of Kiangsu, the Shanghai taotai, and the Governor of Szechow to contribute British naval vessels to Imperialist fleets. These Imperialist forces were defending Nanking and soon would be defending the whole Yangtze River valley against Taiping armies. On 28 March, 1853, Bonham wrote to Lord Russell of his intention to apply a policy of non-intervention. Bonham wrote that as he was

"confident that any such interference on my part could only prolong the struggle, though in the first place it might appear to have a totally different result,"

he directed that

"the following annexed reply be given by the Consul [Rutherford Alcock] stating that if the Governor-General of Nankin wished to communicate with me, I was now in Shanghai, and he might address me personally when I should give the application my best consideration, though as stated above, my intention is not to interfere in any way, unless compelled to do so for the protection of British subjects of Shanghai, not by any means a likely contingency. This reason I have reason to believe has met with general approval from the foreign community at this port." (44)

On 31 May, 1853, Clarendon, who replaced Russell as head of the Foreign Office, sent to Bonham the Government's approval of Bonham's

44. B.P.P. 1853, LXIX, op.cit., No. I, Bonham's despatch of 28 March, 1853, to Russell.

decision. He praised Bonham's determination

"pending instructions from home, not to interfere in any shape in favour of the Chinese Government. Her Majesty's Government approve your determination in that respect which is entirely in conformity with their wishes and intentions." (45)

Moreover, a British citizen, Augustus Lindley narrated that this declaration of the Government's 'wishes and intentions' was not seriously altered until the moment of Hope's intervention in 1862. He discovered that the last order to British officials in China prior to armed intervention in February 1862 was a despatch of the Foreign Office on 8 August, 1861, advising:

".... neutrality between the two contending parties, save British subjects from punishment, but otherwise you should abstain from all interference in the civil war."

As Lindley pointed out, Rear-Admiral Hope wrote in December 1861 after the fall of Ningpo, describing British policy concerning the Taipings: "We cannot afford to quarrel with them, as at any moment they might stop the whole trade of Shanghai." (46)

British declarations of neutrality nevertheless were inconsistent with the results in China of what appeared to be simply a lack of responsibility for a close review of daily developments in British official and civilian relations with the belligerents. In Sir George Bonham's despatch of 20 April, 1853, to the Earl of Clarendon, Bonham included for Clarendon's perusal a personal despatch of 11 April, 1853, to Commander Fishbourne (who shortly accompanied Bonham to Nanking as

45. B.P.P. 1853, LXIX, op.cit., No. 2, despatch of Clarendon of 31 May, 1853, to Bonham.

46. Lindley, op.cit., Vol. 2, p. 446, p. 455.

commanding officer of the Hermes). On 28 March, 1853, Bonham adopted responsibility for non-intervention of British naval forces and of British civilians in the civil war. However, on 11 April, 1853, he denied his official responsibility for a daily review of British relations with the belligerents at Shanghai. He commended the commander of the Hermes (and the later adviser of the Shanghai Volunteer Corps) to the immediate review and control of Consul Alcock. Bonham took particular caution to define the extent of his responsibility and the character of that 'neutrality' itself:

"From personal communication you are aware that it is my desire that we should be completely neutral in the struggle for power at present carried on between the Chinese Government and these armed forces, and that the only decided part we should take is to prevent that the locality set apart for the settlement of foreigners at this port be interfered with in any manner likely to endanger the lives and property of our countrymen. "

Bonham then defined for Fishbourne the extent of Bonham's responsibility, as Plenipotentiary, for his former declaration of 28 March:

"I shall of course be happy at all times to communicate with you on any subject on which you may wish for my opinion; but in matters of detail, it will be more convenient for you to apply directly to Mr. Alcock, who, in his capacity as Her Majesty's Consul, is the executive officer at this port and who from long experience, is doubtless better qualified than I can be to render you prompt assistance in the settlement of minor questions." (47)

In this capacity, it seemed that "long residence" and "local experience" would have been sufficient to guarantee that a British official would preserve the "wishes" and "intentions" of the Government for non-intervention at each of the treaty ports. These "wishes" and

47. B.P.P. 1853, LXIX, op.cit., Enclosure No. I, in No. 3, Bonham's despatch of 11 April, 1853, to Fishbourne, in Bonham's despatch of 20 April, 1853, to Clarendon, p.9.

"intentions" were clearly defined by Bonham and approved by Clarendon. Local British officials, such as Rutherford Alcock, however were personally concerned with the effect of the survival of either belligerent upon the perpetuity of their own treaty-port operation. They consistently conducted relations with either belligerent with this objective in view.

In a despatch of 13 April, 1854, to Sir George Bonham, Alcock expressed impatience with Imperialist efforts to recapture the walled city of Shanghai. Alcock also was partial to an Imperialist re-conquest of the walled city. He was anxious for the survival of Imperialist military forces at Shanghai and was disappointed with the Imperialists' military campaign:

"The Imperialists, I hear, expect a further re-inforcement of 3000 men: from these we should be more likely to have trouble than those who know us better, but I am disposed to hope the past will be some guarantee against similar events in future."

"As to prospects of Imperial forces taking the city, I look upon that prospect as remote as when the first detachment sat down before it. They have no officers to lead, and cities are not to be carried by assault in China any more than elsewhere when there is no one to lead. Some Manila men were introduced last month to head an attack, and followed by twenty or thirty Chinese, they actually got possession of the walls for a moment, but the rest allowed this forlorn hope to be all butchered without attempting to follow and support the scaling party. Nothing can be more hopeless, I conceive, than the capture of this city by force of arms, with such a wretched and unofficered rabble as is now collected under the Imperial flag." (48)

It remains difficult to accept the interpretations of Professor Gregory and other scholars, without inquiring in depth into their research materials and into other materials available. For example,

48. B.P.P., 1854, LXIII, [1792], op.cit., Enclosure No. 1, in No. 2, Alcock's despatch of 13 April, 1854, to Bonham, in Bonning's despatch of 19 April, 1854, to Clarendon.

why should an interpretation of International Law by Oppenheim and Hackworth force contemporary scholars to limit accordingly their studies of nineteenth century British relations?

It is difficult to describe British policy from mid-1853 to February 1862 in China as a policy of neutrality. Clearly, Alcock was unwilling to adopt stern measures to prevent British civilians in Shanghai from trading with the belligerents. Alcock was thoroughly aware of the extent of British contraband activity with the belligerents:

"There were acts of foreigners at Shanghai - in which some at least of the parties concerned were merchants, and persons of more or less repute - for which it is impossible to set up any valid defence in the eyes of the Chinese, or indeed of any impartial person - some acts springing from licentiousness.... others helped the people for profit, and thus open sympathy, counsel, food, guns, ammunition passed daily from a foreign settlement, held sacred from the intrusion of imperial troops in the grounds of absolute neutrality, into a blockaded city, with the professed object of prolonging the defence against the Emperor's troops." (49)

It is equally difficult to accept the argument of Professor Gregory and other historians that the British Government in London had only minimal responsibility for the creation of British China policy. With reservations, one could question the effectiveness of a Government which, while remaining confident that it exercised full responsibility for the nature and direction of China policy, recognized its inability to devote a fuller measure of its time to the daily developments of that policy. It seems somewhat pointless for a historian to claim that the British Government was neutral in China during the civil war for a period of nearly ten years and then

49. Fairbank, op. cit., p. 432.

painstakingly show the inability of the British Government during that period to review carefully China policy considerations. In this area, Professor Gregory remained a studious apologist for the incapacity of the Home Government. (50)

50. See Gregory, Great Britain...., p. 168 for the following:

"British policy throughout the rebellion was very much the creation of government officials, with those in Whitehall by no means always in control of the process. The influence of interested groups outside the official circle appears to have been minimal, at best corroborative rather than creative, but the influence of the official on the spot, military and naval as well as consular, was often decisive, determining what British policy was to be in fact in a new situation well before the British government at home, or even the British minister in Peking, could lay down what it ought to be in principle. Such locally inspired changes of policy in detail, had, of course to be consistent with the main course of British objectives, which were laid down by Whitehall."

After study of British Parliamentary Papers specifically relating to native insurgency in China, it seems incomprehensible that the Earl of Clarendon limited his commentary concerning Bonham's well-developed account of his mission in April 1853 to Nanking to the following observation:

"Her Majesty's Government have read these accounts with the greatest interest and they entirely approve of your proceedings as reported in your despatches." See B.P.P. 1853, LXXIX, op.cit., No. 7, Clarendon's despatch of 3 August, 1853, to Bonham, p. 44.

It is also incomprehensible that Clarendon could limit his commentary concerning the destruction in April 1854 of two Imperialist camps to an equally unimpressible observation on 16 June, 1854:

"I have to state to you that H.M. Government entirely approve of Mr. Alcock's proceedings and they consider he displayed great courage in circumstances of no ordinary difficulty." See B.P.P. 1854, LXXII, [1792], op.cit., Clarendon's despatch of 16 June, 1854, to Bowring, p. 18.

Minimal observations by the Foreign Office in these cases seem evidence of Governmental incapacity to review China policy in detail. Even these observations told of the Government's determination in 1853 and 1854 to appear responsible, by some form of association at least, for local British initiatives in China. Replies from Clarendon to these China-coast materials appear unimpressible, given the attention to detail and long passages of personal justification for a series of encounters with the belligerents from Sir George Bonham, Sir John Bowring, T.T. Meadows, and Ruthenford Alcock in this Parliamentary correspondence.

If British relations throughout the period 1850 to 1862 with the belligerents did not receive a thorough review by the Government in London, responsibility for such British relations evolved upon British officials in the China-coast community. Moreover, if British consular officials, such as Rutherford Alcock, continued to actively support the survival of the Imperialists and show their disagreement with any lack of progress, and if such officials refused to prevent obvious British civilian relations with either belligerent, and if the Supreme Plenipotentiary abrogated his overall responsibility for a policy of non-intervention, then a degree of ultimate responsibility for British relations with the belligerents rested with the British civilian community in the treaty ports and in Hong Kong.

Chapter Two of the thesis shows how reliable foreign and British civilian accounts of the belligerents encouraged the British China-coast press, British journalists, and observers in Great Britain and China to discuss the insurrection and British policy in China. Beginning in mid-1853, many writers pointed out the opportunities for British enterprise outside of the foreign settlement areas of the treaty ports.

It remains equally difficult to accept certain observations in Frank H.H. King and Prescott Clarke's book, Research Guide to China-Coast Newspapers 1822-1911. These observations tried to dispel any claim that during the civil war, British civilians in China could manage an impartial recounting of events. King and Clarke mentioned biased reporting concerning the Taiping Rebellion by British civilians

in China. If not considered in detail, these observations can convince the reader that the mid-Victorian China-coast community was generally irresponsible and regionally oriented.

This type of implication is very debatable. British periodical and civilian materials consulted, which dealt from 1853 with the Rebellion, indicate that observations of the British civilian community in China were more reliable than has been previously emphasized. British writers in the Edinburgh Review and the British Quarterly Review did not refrain from citing materials in the British China-coast press. Missionary reports concerning the inland Chinese were given special attention in 1855 by a contributor to the Edinburgh Review.

King and Clarke, however, claimed that the speed of events in China and the character of the China-coast community and of China-coast journalism were factors which prevented China-coast editors from evincing a sense of responsibility for their editorial judgments:

".... the editors wrote in the idiom of their time; they made harsh judgments, but these require some translation if we are not to be sidetracked by the apparently grotesque phrases, by the unfamiliarity of tone.... the small size of foreign communities, even in such a great city as Shanghai, tended to cause constructive comment on issues to degenerate into criticisms of personalities." (51)

51. Frank H.H. King (editor), and Prescott Clarke, A Research Guide to China-Coast Newspapers 1822-1911 (Cambridge, Mass., 1965), p.6, p.7. See also p.11, and p.22 for the following:

"Newspapers could, of course, have used individual Chinese informants systematically. But it is far to add that editors, even Sinologist editors, lacked the background in contemporary China to use such informants effectually.... the larger newspapers had the co-operation

According to King and Clarke, regional limitations of China-coast journalism accounted for the poor character of China-coast reporting:

"News from England was at first slight owing to the speed with which merchant houses were able themselves to disseminate news from correspondence and from European papers arriving by the same mail ship. Efforts to beat the distribution of British newspapers were made, and eventually there was a sufficient demand for specialized reporting from England."(52)

King and Clarke focused upon the post-Taiping era and the appointment in 1866 and 1873 of editorial staff. These dates, they considered, demarcated the beginning of an era of responsibility in China-coast journalism.(53) They determined that previous to 1866, because editors of the North China Herald and the China Mail had to rely upon any available reports from merchants and missionaries in the interior for news concerning Taiping activities, information in these newspapers concerning the Taipings was unreliable.(54)

Issachar Roberts, Griffith John, and Walter Medhurst (Senior)

of foreigners throughout China and many contributed articles which provide a unique insight into the changes being wrought in the late Ch'ing period. But these contributions were irregular, separate, feature-type articles, and their appearance cannot be predicted or their worth judged well in advance."

"The Friend of China, however, was less dogmatic than most of its contemporaries in its condemnation of the Chinese people, and its support of the Taiping rebels indicated its anti-Manchu bias."

52. King and Clarke, op.cit., p.10.

53. Ibid., p.8, p.10. See the following:

"Between 1866 and 1868, the Hong Kong Daily Press was edited by Alfred Percy Sinnett, former editor of India's Pioneer. In 1873 William Curtis left his inherited Brighton Gazette to edit and publish the Hong Kong Times, Daily Advertiser, and Shipping Gazette. These men may well have been the first editors in China with any significant journalistic experience."

54. See Ibid., p.9 and p. 10 for observations, such as the following:

however were among the many missionary contributors of relevant information concerning the insurgents. Sir George Bonham did not consider Walter Medhurst's opinions unreliable when he needed an official translation and commentary concerning Taiping religious documents which he obtained in mid-1853 at Nanking. (55)

Certain scholars, then, have explored and extended an good deal of emphasis to the character and development of the British and foreign China-coast community. By so doing, the exact responsibility of individual members of the British Government in London and of its representatives in China for China policy has become confused. Drawing attention away from the responsibility of the British Government for China policy, these scholars have neglected information in British civilian materials relating to China policy. Nor have they clearly defined or traced from Parliamentary Correspondence relating to the civil war in China the sizeable area of British civilian responsibility from 1850 to 1862 for British relations with the belligerents.

"Since an editor was not always in a position to check the accuracy of his contributions, much of the content of early newspapers was beyond his control and must be judged accordingly."

".... during the Taiping Rebellion, newspapers depended upon missionaries with the Taipings for their stories of the Heavenly Kingdom itself. When other ports supported their own newspapers, the custom of re-printing abstracts was generally practised, although the presence of special correspondents might be continued."

55. Chapters One, Two, and Three of this thesis contain British missionary reports from 1850 to 1862 concerning the Taiping rebels. These reports were frequently found in the North China Herald and in the China Mail. See also Chapter Two, p. 71 for Bonham's support of Walter Medhurst's translations and pp. 142-147 for Medhurst's observations in the period 1853 to 1856 concerning the Taipings.

Several cases of British interference in belligerent affairs help to clarify who exactly was responsible in China for British policy concerning the belligerents. British local assistance was given in May 1861 to Imperialist officials and civilians defending the Imperialist city of Ningpo from an impending Taiping invasion:

"In May 1861, naval forces under Captain R. Dew were sent to Ningpo to help reorganize the defences of that port. Although British forces were still not committed beyond the defence of British subjects and property, advice was given to Imperial authorities as to the best use of their resources, guns were mounted on the walls, and Imperialist soldiers trained in their use. Acting on instructions from Hbpe, Dew also obtained a promise from the rebel chiefs in the vicinity that they would not attack Ningpo." (56)

Augustus Lindley however felt that British naval support and demonstrations of good feeling were noticeably absent in December of 1861 during the Taiping invasion of Ningpo:

"At the capture of the former city no British force was present, and although the seven days grace so cunningly obtained from Ti-Ping leaders seems to have been employed in endeavouring to raise a sufficient force to oppose their entrance, this in the shape of H.M.S. Scout and other vessels arrived too late, having reached Ningpo some hours after its fall." (57)

At the crucial moment in December 1861 when the Taipings invaded Ningpo, the British navy did not interfere. But such an obvious lack of good faith with the Imperialist defenders of Ningpo was not repeated at Canton during the winter of 1854 to 1855. At that time, Bowring committed British naval forces to support the Imperialists. A combined foreign naval action prevented the insurgents from seizing the port of Canton. John Scarth described this incident in his Twelve Years in China:

56. Gregory, Great Britain...., pp. 102-103.

57. Lindley, op.cit., Vol. 2, p. 455.

"All the willing assistance we gave to the Chinese Government, by protecting its coasts and by preventing the rebel blockade of Canton, told far more against the insurgents than the unwilling warfare at the Peiho and Canton told in their favour."

Scarth included an extract, which was attributed to Bowring, from the first number of the Cornhill Magazine:

"In 1854, an application was made by Yeh to this effect: he feared a rupture of the public peace, and feeling himself too weak to protect Canton from the invasion of the rebels, he asked for assistance of the naval forces of the treaty Powers."

"Sir John Bowring accompanied the admiral and the British fleet to the neighbourhood of that city, and in co-operation with the Americans, took such effectual measures for its security, that the intended attack was abandoned, and general tranquillity remained uninterrupted."

"This intervention was gratefully acknowledged by the people of Canton, but there is reason to believe that the commissioners represented our amicable intentions as an act of vassalage, and the assistance rendered, as having been in obedience to orders issued by the Imperial authority." (58)

Professor Gregory explained this direct naval support by another qualification. He apologized for British interference at Canton but argued that really 'neutrality' was not effectually broken because the insurgents lacked the military ability to seize the city, and because in 1856 Bowring was unwilling to grant naval support to a contemplated joint Anglo-American mission to press for the opening of the city of Canton. Discussing Bowring's commitment of British forces at Canton, Gregory wrote that 'neutrality' was, 'effectively biased in favour of the Imperialists'. He continued:

"it is unlikely however that this denial of belligerent rights was a major reason for the failure of the very diverse and poorly integrated rebel forces attacking Canton to take the city. No direct or substantial British aid was given to the Imperialists any more than at Shanghai or Amoy." (59)

58. [Scartth], op.cit., p. 278.

59. Gregory, Great Britain...., p. 36, p. 74.

British civilians, besides Rutherford Alcock, were responsible for the formation in April 1853 of the Shanghai Volunteer Corps. On 20 April, 1853, Bonham explained in a despatch to Clarendon the degree of civilian initiative for the formation of the Corps. He commented about the excitement and alarm among the residents, based upon impressions, "some correct and others unfounded". Bonham did not criticize Alcock for establishing the Corps without prior consultation, nor does the following extract indicate that Bonham considered that the existence of such a civilian defence force might precipitate serious conflict between the British and Chinese civilian communities in Shanghai:

"The community have accordingly determined on forming themselves into a body of Volunteers for the better protection of their dwellings and property and have made further preparations under Commander Fishbourne's superintendence for the defence of the foreign locality.... in short raising on the unprotected side of the settlement a line of defences capable in strong hands of protecting the residences for a long time against any attack made by robbers or other rabble, if not deterring them altogether from molesting us." (60)

During a public meeting of British subjects held on 8 April, 1853, at the Shanghai consulate, Alcock supported British civilians who wanted to form a corps and stressed that if British civilians decided to take some measure to defend the community, Bonham would have no objections. Alcock wrote:

"While the naval authorities on the one hand and the civil on the other were each in their several spheres doing what lay in their power to guard against injury to life or property, the residents themselves, he was sure, were not disposed to be idle. He understood the expediency of organizing a Volunteer corps had already been under consideration. In the

60. B.P.P. 1853, LXIX, op.cit., No. 3, Bonham's despatch of 20 April, 1853, to Clarendon.

event of a measure of this nature-being contemplated, and any question arising as to the sanction and co-operation of the civil authorities, he was instructed to state that Her Majesty's Plenipotentiary saw no objection whatever to the step, but on the contrary, he would be glad to promote the formation and efficiency of such a corps by every means in his power." (61)

The Volunteer Corps became noted for acts of bravado. Strong feelings characterized many of its activities. This characteristic was well documented by an article in Atlantic Monthly entitled "An American Soldier in China", written by Augustus Allan Hayes. Hayes wrote with admiration of his service in the Shanghai Volunteers:

"I myself served several times at the defence of Shanghai in the company of as brave and as good a set of fellows as ever lived, the Shanghai Volunteers. In as much as we were primarily men of peace, and the treaties guaranteed us protection, we thought it hard that we must defend the miserable Chinamen as well as ourselves but I am sure we were all proud of having done so." (62)

In fact, although Alcock in April 1853 fully instructed the Volunteer Corps as to its conduct, (63) he was compelled, a year later, to remind British civilians and the Volunteer Corps of their subservience to regular military and naval units:

"In the event of any hostile operations by the naval force taking place, British subjects, not enrolled in the volunteer corps, are especially enjoined, if they persist in risking themselves by proceeding to the spot with arms, to fall in with the rear of the regular armed force and take the orders of the commanding officer, remembering that this is by military law the absolute condition of all men mingling with organized troops on active service and one very essential to the safety of both the amateurs and the regular force." (64)

61. B.F.P. 1853, LXIX, op.cit., Enclosure No. 2, in No. 3, Proceedings of a Public Meeting of British subjects of 8 April, 1853, in Bonham's despatch of 20, April, 1853, to Clarendon, p.9.

62. Augustus A. Hayes, "An American Soldier in China", Atlantic Monthly, Vol. 57, February 1886, p.195.

63. B.F.P. 1853, LXIX, op.cit., Enclosure No. 2, in No.3, "Proceedings....", p.10.

64. B.F.P. 1854, LXXII, [1792], op.cit., Enclosure No. 2, in No. 1, Notification of 5 April, 1854, to British civilians in Shanghai, in Bowring's despatch of 18 April, 1854, to Clarendon.

Reference has been made in this section to Alcock's collaboration in the destruction on 4 April, 1854, of the two Imperialist camps opposite the race-track in Shanghai. To what extent, then, were Alcock and other foreign officials responsible for the action taken on 4 April, 1854, by British and American forces? To what extent were British civilians in Shanghai responsible?

Alcock claimed that Captain O'Callaghan supported his conviction as consul to

"adopt some offensive measure against the camps to punish the authors of such outrages and deter them from renewing attempts of like nature."

He was careful to buttress his decision for some offensive measure with that officer's entire "concurrence"

"as to the course to be followed for the security of the settlement." (65)

On 4 April, 1854, he attempted to justify an offensive action against the Imperialists by writing to the foreign consuls in Shanghai:

"....the camps resting upon the edge of the race-course, where large numbers of lawless rabble beleaguering the city under Imperial authority are permanently located, have been a constant, and latterly an increasing source of danger to the occupants of the foreign settlement, it became obvious that without their removal from the immediate proximity there could be no longer any security.... however deplorable the sacrifices which their compulsory removal has entailed, they are small compared to those which awaited the whole community, had any hesitation been shown in proving our determination to put a stop to unprovoked aggression of so dangerous a character." (66)

Alcock previously separated official from British civilian responsibility for incidents which precipitated incursions by Imperialist soldiers

65. B.P.P. 1854, LXXII, [1792], op.cit., Enclosure No. 1, in No. 1, Alcock's despatch to Bonham, in Bowring's despatch of 18 April, 1854, to Clarendon, p.1.

66. B.P.P. 1854, LXXII, [1792], op.cit., Enclosure No. 3, in No. 1, Circular addressed by Alcock on 4 April, 1854, to the foreign consuls, in Bowring's despatch of 18 April, 1854, to Clarendon, p.4, p.5.

into the foreign settlement. In a despatch of 17 November, 1853, to the British community of Shanghai, he declared that although he understood that British civilian trade with the Chinese warring parties caused an Imperialist invasion of the foreign settlement, and although he understood that such illicit activity by British civilians was not the intention of the British Government, he would take no action as consul to prevent such illicit trade. He decided that the majority of British civilians in Shanghai should keep unruly elements from wandering outside the settlements. He continued:

"The general interest demands the greatest prudence, as well as good faith on the part of foreigners, and it is vain that all the foreign powers who have treated with China combine in a declaration of strict neutrality in their policy, if individuals, in pursuit of their own exclusive advantage, may pursue a line of conduct in manifest contradiction. Neither can there be any doubt as regards this point - unless the foreign settlement is to be made a battlefield for insurgents and Imperialists to the imminent danger of life and property - that it must be free and guarded from intrusion by either side." (67)

(68)

Like Augustus F. Lindley, Professor Gregory concluded that Rear-Admiral Hope was solely responsible for British armed intervention in 1862 at Shanghai against the Taipings. Hope neglected to inform Bruce of his intentions to divert and scatter the Taiping army away from Shanghai. Referring to Bruce, Gregory claimed that, "the idea was certainly not his, and he was later very critical of it". (69) Referring to Bruce's despatch of 11 December, 1862, to the Foreign Office and to

67. Despatch of Alcock of 17 November, 1853, to the British community in Shanghai, in the Times of London, of 13 January, 1854, Second Edition, p. 8.

68. See Lindley, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 448, p. 449 for W. H. Medhurst's despatch of 19 February, 1862, to Hope and for Hope's despatch of 21 February, 1862, to the Admiralty.

69. Gregory, Great Britain, . . . , p. 121.

British Parliamentary Papers Relating to the Affairs of China of 1864,

Gregory claimed:

"Bruce later repudiated all responsibility for the thirty mile scheme and insisted that," Admiral Hope had embarked on it before I was consulted and I consented to it on certain conditions which were not observed." (70)

The fact that Bruce declared that he did not plan Hope's campaign of 1862 and the fact that Gregory supports Bruce's innocence does not answer who was responsible for the superintendence of British armament in China. This question had in fact arisen during the First Opium War period and shortly thereafter among Admiral Parker, Sir Hugh Gough of the military, and Sir Henry Pottinger, first Governor of Hong Kong. These men had appealed to London for advice concerning which local representative of the British Government in China-- the civilian official, the naval commander, or the military commander -- should direct British armed forces. Parker and Pottinger had been unable to decide how to use British armed forces to implement their separate instructions from London. The decision of the Earl of Haddington of the Admiralty, at that time, and of Lord Aberdeen of the Foreign Office placed this power with the Supreme Plenipotentiary-- the civilian official. The admiral's duty in China was to administer the Supreme Plenipotentiary's wishes. (71)

70. Gregory, "British Intervention....", p. 16.

71. Vice-Admiral Augustus Phillimore, The Life of the Admiral of the Fleet: Sir William Parker (3 vols. London, 1879), Vol. 2, pp. 541-545. John Barrow, the Secretary of the Admiralty, in a despatch of 29 August, 1843, to Parker (included with Aberdeen's despatch of 24 August, 1843), separated the specific area of responsibility of each section of government:

"....you may expect from time to time to receive from Sir Henry Pottinger intimation of the objects he is desirous of securing by naval aid and protection, and of particular points or places he may require to

This decision set a useful precedent for determining, in cases of conflicting interpretations, which British official was responsible for the use of armed force in China.

It seems, then, in the case of Hope's Thirty Mile Radius Campaign in February 1862 that there was no real conflict between H.M. Minister to China, Frederick Bruce, and H.M. naval representative in Shanghai, Rear-Admiral Hope. The actual conflict developed later over who was responsible for the intervention they both intended. Gregory has shown

he watched and it will remain for you, having due regard to the additional necessary demands upon you, from other portions of the station under your charge."

On 29 August, 1843, Barrow wrote these instructions to Sir William Parker. Aberdeen in the Foreign Office was quite assured of who exactly had preponderant responsibility for the determination of policy in China. On 24 August, 1843, he made a conclusive observation in this regard in his despatch to the Earl of Haddington:

" But in the same manner as the Secretary of State intimates to the Board of Admiralty the views of Her Majesty's Government as to the amount of naval force which should be maintained....leaving it to the Board of Admiralty to decide upon arrangements and details which the execution of those views may involve - so it was the intention of Her Majesty's Government that Sir Henry Pottinger should have authority over Her Majesty's naval forces to that extent...."

Barrow found that in 1843 British ships of war in China were "under the management" of the admiral. It was Parker's duty to submit to, "objects pointed out to you by Sir Henry Pottinger."

The British Plenipotentiary in China appeared in the period of the Taiping Rebellion to have maintained the right of British civilian authorities in China to supervise the activities of British naval officers in China. Bonham's despatch of 11 April, 1853 to Fishbourne clearly directed Fishbourne to conduct activities under the British consul Alcock's supervision. See above, p. 252.

that Hope's assessment of Taiping political life was similar to that of Frederick Bruce, (72) and that their intentions concerning intervention during the first few months of that policy were equally similar. (73)

Professor Gregory declares also that the original British decree, sent in 1856 to Sir John Bowring, which allowed him latitude to intervene in cases of insurgent invasion of Imperialist-occupied areas of the treaty ports, was simply forgotten. According to Gregory, a new series of instructions and approval from the Home Government were devised to deal with the first Taiping invasion in August 1860 of Shanghai. (74) To assume that Bowring's official latitude to intervene was forgotten by the Government was not the import of Russell's reply on 12 March, 1861, to Sykes. Drafting new instructions could feasibly have revealed a Governmental desire to appear responsible for local British initiatives in China. (75)

3. Conclusion

Certain scholars have emphasized the local autonomy from 1850 to 1862 of the British China-coast community. From their observations, it appears that British consuls and British civilians in China were the

72. Gregory, Great Britain...., p.99, p.103.

73. Gregory, "British Intervention....", p.16.

74. Gregory, Great Britain...., pp.72-73, p.94. This refers to Clarendon's instructions of September 1856 to Bowring and to the formation of new instructions to meet the Taiping attack of August 1860.

75. B.P.D., Vol. 161, op.cit., reply of Russell to Sykes, Col.1857-1858.

only agents responsible in this period for British relations with the belligerents. Some of these scholars focused upon Hope and Bruce's Thirty Mile Radius Campaign and upon the British Government's inability in London to review daily developments in China. The responsibility of the British Government for the conduct of its officials in China has escaped the notice of many of these scholars. Other scholars have advanced abstract definitions of neutrality or have assumed that British policy from 1853 to 1862 in China concerning the belligerents was indeed neutral. Such definitions and assumptions of British neutrality are often accompanied by an examination of British consular and civilian relations with the belligerents.

The body of the thesis has indicated that there were many British writers, not cited by these twentieth-century scholars, who noted the Rebellion when writing about their interests in China. Many of these civilian accounts from 1853 to 1862 testify to the British official community's inability in China to maintain a policy of neutrality.

APPENDIX B

Characteristics of British Official Policy in China 1853-1862

Appendix A presented evidence and questioned current interpretations concerning the concept of British "neutrality" during the civil war in China. A pattern of British activity during the civil war did emerge. Scholars who have observed this pattern have also been interested in the British and foreign civilian communities in China. They have perpetuated notions of British "neutrality" and yet have found evidence of the regional autonomy from 1850 to 1862 of the British China-coast community.

British consuls were responsible for the implementation of Sir George Bonham's declaration of non-intervention. This declaration was approved in May 1853 by the Foreign Secretary. The Supreme Plenipotentiary's declaration did not advise British consuls how they were to implement non-intervention in the foreign settlements on the coast of China. In April 1853, Bonham strongly implied that he was unconcerned with local procedures adopted by British consuls to maintain British neutrality. At that time, Bonham advised Fishbourne, the naval commander at Shanghai, to obtain further instructions from Rutherford Alcock. Bonham stated that the British consul was responsible for British relations at Shanghai with the Chinese warring parties.

The civil war disrupted normal treaty-port relations among local Imperialist officials, Chinese civilians, and the British community. Civil war forced upon Alcock a pattern of diplomacy and the assumption of what previous to the civil war were Imperialist official responsibil-

ities. Alcock's decision not to adopt stern measures to keep British British civilians in the foreign settlement appears characteristic of an attitude adopted by many British officials in China. Generally, such officials were pessimistic concerning what they could accomplish in the treaty ports by their own jurisdiction. Many of these officials, such as Alcock, relied upon British armaments rather than administrative procedures to settle disputes during the civil war between Chinese officials and British civilians.

The Supreme Plenipotentiary and Rutherford Alcock had differing ideas of who exactly was responsible during the civil war for the observance of British "neutrality". Bonham stated in April 1853 that Rutherford Alcock was responsible for the observance of British neutrality in Shanghai. Bowring supported Bonham's interpretation, by claiming, on 18 and 19 April, 1854, that the "man on the spot" would best know how to deal with Chinese incursions into the foreign settlement. Alcock did not take such responsibility seriously, and, as follows below, in November 1853, he directed the majority of British civilians in Shanghai to govern where he had failed by keeping unruly British civilians from insurgent and Manchu camps.

As has been shown in Appendix A, although local British officials frequently supplied their superiors with information concerning insurgent religious, moral, and political life and concerning Taiping promises to foreigners, their superiors demonstrated little interest in such information and approved of decisions taken by these local officials.

Initially, few members of the British Government were well-informed concerning Taiping political structures or religious life. In 1861, however, there was renewal of Governmental interest in the Taipings. The Manchus were observing the Convention of Peking, and in August 1860, Frederick Bruce and T.M. Meadows used British troops to prevent Taiping forces from seizing the Chinese sector of Shanghai. As shown in Chapter One of the thesis, the member of Parliament for Aberdeen was critical in March 1861 of British intervention in August 1860 at Shanghai. Lord Russell explained the Government's position concerning the rebels to Sykes.

Later in 1861, the British Minister to Peking wanted a thorough report concerning the Taipings from the British consul at Ningpo.⁽¹⁾ Colonel Sykes and Lord Russell both cited information concerning Taiping religious and moral life to support their interpretations of Taiping reliability. Frederick Bruce wanted a full report concerning Taiping administrative techniques in Ningpo. Each illustration indicates that by 1861, these men were demanding accurate information concerning the Taipings.

How much information concerning the Taipings did officials in Britain have before 1861? Which official sources in China provided this information and how reliable was this information? Descriptions of British official communications from 1853 to 1862 with the insurgents help to answer these questions.

1. See p. 45 of the thesis. Only two months before Hope's intervention in February 1862, Bruce wanted more information from the British consul Harvey about the newly-established Taiping government at Ningpo.

British consuls had almost daily encounters with the Chinese belligerents. The Supreme Plenipotentiary and the Minister Extraordinary to China communicated with Taiping officials during British missions to inland China. In communication with the belligerents in the treaty ports or in the interior, British officials did continue to assert two major points of view.

British officials customarily cited the number of occasions since 1842 in which the British Government maintained its good faith with the Chinese Government without obtaining full treaty privileges. Chinese unwillingness to open Canton to British civilians was a frequent grievance. Secondly, British officials decided that both Imperialist and insurgent officials should observe British official privileges and immunities.

A. Fair Treatment of the Chinese

From first contact with the Taipings, British officials emphasized that a declaration of neutrality expressed British intentions of treating the Chinese people fairly during the civil contest. These officials sidestepped their intervention in belligerent affairs and their use of British armament during communications with the Chinese belligerents by claiming these activities were just privileges of a "neutral" power which was treating the Chinese people fairly. (2)

2. A development of these conclusions with specific reference to the policy in mid-1853 of the Supreme Plenipotentiary, Bonham, to the policy from 1853 to 1855 of Rutherford Alcock in Shanghai, and to the policy of the Envoy Extraordinary to China, the Earl of Elgin, follows. See p. 277 and pp. 283-297.

To clarify such a contradictory development in British policy, one can refer to an earlier but more honest attempt to evaluate British policy in China. In a major speech in the Great Opium Debate of April, 1840 in Parliament, Thomas Babington Macaulay indicated that a British official could easily conceal unfavourable developments of British China policy, such as British official support of the opium trade and British official authorization of aggression against attempts by Lin Tse-hsu to restrain the trade, by claiming that Chinese officials prevented British officials from treating the Chinese people fairly. Macaulay suspected that the British Government had allowed the British Plenipotentiary in China to further British commercial interests and decide what should be done, if Chinese officials objected.

Macaulay recognized in 1840 that the claims by the Whig Government of Melbourne and Palmerston to fair treatment of the Chinese were not particularly credible. Macaulay admitted that the British Government did not send instructions to Charles Elliot, the Superintendent of Trade, to quash the British trade in opium. But Macaulay also recognized that both the Tory Government, of which Sir James Graham was a member (Graham issued a motion of censure upon the Whig Government which precipitated this debate), and the Whig Government refused to act. Because the China trade was very profitable for Britain, Macaulay explained:

"Was it not notorious when the right honourable Baronet [a reference to Sir James Graham, then First Lord of the Admiralty] was in office that British subjects carried on an extensive contraband trade with

China? Neither the Baronet nor the Duke of Wellington gave the Superintendent Instructions to put down the trade...."

Macaulay then explained that the situation by 1839 on the China coast - the weakness of the Imperial regime but its determination to suppress the opium traffic - provided the British Government with the necessary leverage to further its political and commercial aims in China and soon obtain a series of privileges by aggressive activity.

In the case of the First Opium War, the British Government could claim that Chinese officials mistreated British civilians when these officials took measures against the opium trade:

"The Emperor of China had a perfect right to keep out opium and to keep in silver if he could do so by means consistent with morality and public law. If his officers seized a chest of the forbidden drug, we were not entitled to complain, nor did we complain."

"But when finding that they could not suppress the contraband trade by just means, they resorted to means flagrantly unjust, when they imprisoned our innocent countrymen, when they insulted our Sovereign in the person of her representative, then it became our duty to demand satisfaction." (3)

Macaulay argued in 1840 that it was naive for members of Parliament to continue believing that the British Government could, by a simple decree of intention, guarantee that British officials and civilians in China would treat the Chinese people fairly. He warned that local interests and the speed of events in China would lead British officials, such as Captain Elliot, to act independently. In 1840, members of Parliament concurred with Macaulay's opinions (and those of the Whig Government) by defeating the motion of Sir James Graham to censure the Government.

3. The Complete Works of Lord Macaulay in Twelve Volumes, Vol. XI: Speeches, Poems, and Miscellaneous Writings (London, 1898), p. 645, pp. 652-653.

Throughout the period of the Taiping Rebellion, the British Government and a majority of its China-coast officials allowed a myth of British righteous conduct to pervade official policy. British officials in China acted as if the decisions they adopted in China were in the best interests of the Chinese people. As representatives of a "neutral" power, British officials freely journeyed to areas beyond their jurisdiction to confer with insurgent officials and either interfered with the conduct of war or threatened to bring British armament into insurgent-occupied areas.

British officials who did communicate with the belligerents failed to consider that they could observe "neutrality" and treat the Chinese combatants fairly by keeping British civilians away from Chinese armed camps, and by preventing British naval vessels from interfering with Chinese warfare. Such British officials acted as if "neutral status" guaranteed them total immunity from interference from Chinese fortifications, and as if it was justifiable for a "neutral" power to threaten Chinese belligerents with reprisals to achieve British demands.

In an extract from Sir George Bonham's despatch of 11 May, 1853, to the Earl of Clarendon, Bonham revealed ~~one of the preconceptions~~ ~~which~~ he allowed to influence his diplomacy with the insurgents:

"It is difficult to obtain anything like an accurate statement on these points, as the Chinese are so prone to exaggerate the number to hundreds of thousands, but I think the numbers above stated are not very far from the truth." (4)

4. B.F.P. 1853, LXIX, op.cit., No.6, Bonham's despatch of 11 May, 1853, to Clarendon, p.25.

In this case, Bonham considered that Chinese information invariably was untrustworthy and that independent assessment of this information was necessary.

One might find justification for Bonham's precautionary attitude in mid-1853 concerning the Taipings. In memorials sent in late April 1853 to Bonham and Meadows at Nanking, the Taipings adopted a typically Chinese and Imperialist approach to their communications with British officials. As Gallery and Yvan indicated, the Taipings were eager to present themselves as a body of Chinese civilians who during the ~~First~~ ~~Opium War~~ recognized the justice of British claims. The Taipings claimed that adherents among their community had freely offered support during the ~~First~~ ~~Opium War~~ to British troops. In his despatch of 11 May, 1853, Bonham included the letter of Lo Ta-kang, Chief Director of the Palace and Woo Joo-heau, officer of the Boards and general of the Taiping army. In their communication, Taiping chieftains demonstrated their understanding of the Confucian maxim of cultivation and absorption of the barbarian. Lo and Woo observed:

"We humbly conceive that when the will of Heaven is fixed, man cannot oppose, and when views and feelings are correct, corrupt imaginations cannot interfere therewith; hence it is that honest birds select the tree on which they roost, and that virtuous ministers choose the sovereign whom they intend to serve."

".... on a former occasion, your honourable nation with upright views marched into our territory, for which you had doubtless good and sufficient reason; but the impish Tartars opposed your entrance, which the inhabitants of China viewed with displeasure; but now our royal master has received the command of Heaven to punish offenders, to show kindness to foreigners and harmonize them with the Chinese, not restricting commercial intercourse nor levying transit duties, while he leads forward his martial bands to the number of hundreds of myriads, overcoming every opposition; from which it is clear that the period has arrived when both

Heaven and men unite in favouring his design, and faithful warriors exert themselves on his behalf."

".....we remember, moreover, how on a former occasion we, in conjunction with Bremer, Elliot, and Wankin [?] in the Province of Canton erected a church and together worshipped Jesus, our Celestial Elder Brother; all these circumstances are as fresh in our recollection as if they happened yesterday." (5)

After the second appeal within twenty years by British officials for armaments to redress an insult to the flag, certain individuals in Britain expressed doubts whether a second military campaign in China would result in fair treatment for the Chinese people. These men expressed sympathy and concern for the insurgent segment of the Chinese population. In their opinion, the British Government in 1857 diverted Bowring's Canton campaign and conducted a limited war in the north with the Imperialists to obtain a more satisfactory arrangement for British officials, merchants, and missionaries. The British consular community continued to maintain existing treaty-port privileges and immunities and with a pretence of "neutrality", protected the Imperialist position on the coast. (6)

As previously shown, such individuals were not the first to recognize that British officials in China did not implement the Government's request during the Chinese civil contest for strict British neutrality. From 1858, these critics continued to investigate British China policy and published observations concerning the diminishing worth of Britain's reputation for fair dealings.

5. B.P.P. 1853, LXIX, op.cit., Enclosure No. 6, in No. 6, Bonham's despatch of 11 May, 1853, to Clarendon. Bonham included this despatch of Lo and Woo for Clarendon and declined comment upon it.

6. See, for example, the observations of Colonel Sykes, p. 280.

A British mercenary who served in the army of the Chung Wang, Augustus F. Lindley, believed that European nations would seriously question British honesty because of British intervention in February 1862 against the Taiping rebels. In August 1861, the British Government instructed British officials in China to observe neutrality. According to Lindley, Hope's intervention amply demonstrated the inconsistency of British word to the belligerents. (7)

In his Foreword, Lindley indicated that his personal involvement and military service in China obligated him to

"join the small army of those who strive to arouse their countrymen from what may prove a fatal lethargy.... it cannot fail to be seen that England has not been the most backward in violating the above true principle of international law, nor the least guilty in following up unjustifiable impositions upon unoffending belligerents by actual force."

Lindley hoped that, "further light may be thrown upon two remarkable phenomena which now puzzle this nation". These phenomena he defined with reference to the work of A. G. Stapleton, entitled Intervention and Non-Intervention:

"1. That the reign of force, without any real moral antagonism, is now established throughout all four corners of the globe.

2. That Great Britain is no longer honoured and trusted as she was, her

7. Lindley, Ti-Ping...., A History...., Vol. 2, p.457. See the following:

"Upon these grounds British faith was dishonoured and a murderous war waged against the unfortunate Ti-pings. Admiral Hope continued the work of destruction with his artillery and rifles from a safe distance, until his recall to England. Violation of good faith, misrepresentation, and partial aggression became superseded by regular hostilities, without any previous declaration of war or even statement. What would such manner of warfare be denominated in Europe?"

statesmen having lost that moral influence which, quite as much as physical fear, serves to restrain unscrupulous governments in a career of wrong-doing." (8)

On 12 March, 1861, in a speech to the Lords, Colonel Sykes referred to the British campaign in 1860 in the north of China and to the British repulse in August 1860 of the Taiping advance upon Shanghai. He openly questioned British official intentions for China:

"We were at war with the Tartar Government, and at the very moment that our army was advancing upon Peking, and that British officers were being tortured to death with the sanction of the Emperor of China, we were by means of our own officers collecting the customs duties at the port of Shanghai amounting to about 900,000 and even more per annum and handing them over to the Tartar officials to be employed in war against ourselves and against the national party."

"We manned the walls of the Imperial city of Shanghai and repulsed the attacks of the rebels with great slaughter..... moreover we had demanded from the Tartars payment for the services rendered by our troops in the shedding of blood - making our troops mercenaries - a proceeding which left almost indelible stain on our honour." (9)

Sykes did not abandon his shrewd analysis because of a lack of Parliamentary attention. In his letter published on 28 December, 1865, in the London Star, Sykes continued his critique of British China policy:

"These two testimonies, standing unscathed in a desolated city, will fall gratingly upon the memories of those who, with British bayonets and British shot and shell, in violation of a commanded neutrality, have aided a Government, which has been characterized for its constant perfidy and cruelty, to defeat a national party, in which, as we see, was not only a germ of Christianity, of probable development into a rich harvest, but which party also had constantly manifested a desire to cultivate friendly relations with foreigners, with a view to the introduction of Western science and art...." (10)

After the civil war, the editor of the North China Herald

6. Lindley, op.cit., Vol. I, p.ix, p.x.

9. B.P.D., Vol. I61, 12 March, 1861, Col. 1848. See also Col. 1855 for his concluding remarks.

10. Lindley, op.cit., Vol. 2, p.818.

complained that by 1868, the British Home community was supervising the activities of the British China-coast official and civilian community. For this editor, the period when China-coast officials and civilians independently conducted relations with the Imperialists and insurgents was over. This editor observed that before initiating hostilities with Chinese officialdom, the British community in China had to comply with British Governmental and European intentions to treat the Chinese people fairly:

"Whether we like it or not, public opinion in Europe is a power shaping our destinies without asking our leave, and it must be clear that within the last few years, the political feeling against foreign conquest, foreign possession, and intermeddling in the affairs of foreign nations has been on the increase.... in the present temper of public feeling in England, we conceive that there would be a strong dislike to war and perfect horror of any policy of annexation.... so that our Ministers and Consuls will probably be instructed to adopt a more and more cautious policy." (II)

Moreover, even in 1864, this editor understood that the British Government expected British consuls in China to obey instructions to treat the Chinese people fairly. London was now exercising the initiative in British relations with the Imperialists, which was enjoyed previously by the local consular and civilian community. (I2)

II. Wright, op.cit., p.26.

I2. Ibid., p.28. See the following referring to the settlement of a case of murder of a British soldier by a Chinese:

"A few short years ago, such an occurrence, whether explained or not, would have produced a storm of indignation. The inquiries set on foot would have been looked on as blinds to draw attention from the real perpetrators of the outrage. The explanations offered would have been rejected disdainfully, and a war might finally have been cooked from the materials thus supplied."

B. The Preservation of British Jurisdiction in China 1853 - 1862

Beginning with Bonham's mission in mid-1853 to inland China, members of the British consular service in China communicated with the belligerents in a manner calculated to preserve British jurisdiction in China.

If a British official in China thought he was not obligated to keep British civilians within foreign settlement areas, and if he assumed that Chinese belligerents should willingly receive British missionaries, merchants, and officials because of Britain's 'neutral' status, then he could seriously argue that the fairest policy towards Chinese combatants was to insist that both Imperialist and insurgent officials observe British demands. It appears, as a result of such logic, that the responsibility of British China-coast officials for the observance of 'neutrality' was transferred to the belligerents in the treaty ports or to the Taipings whenever a British mission arrived at Nanking.

British foreign settlements were situated between two contending parties for the Chinese throne. It appears, consequently, that both British treaty privileges and British claims of virtuous conduct could only be maintained in China by a precise ordering of British diplomacy. In communications with either the Taipings or the Imperialists, British officials sought to maintain British treaty privileges and a reputation for fair dealings.

In a speech already cited, Macaulay urged members of Parliament to decide why British officials were originally sent to China. He

He described the type of communications British officials had in China with the Manchu Government and with members of the Foreign Office in London. In April 1840, Macaulay understood the wide discretionary powers entrusted to the British Plenipotentiary and expressed confidence that British officials in China would not abuse these discretionary powers. Macaulay indicated that a British official who had lived for a long time in China and who was close to events would be able to more accurately respond to an incident than officials in London. (13)

Thirteen years later, the British Plenipotentiary was not under Home Governmental scrutiny when officially visiting the Taiping Kingdom. Bonham's communication of 28 April, 1853, to the insurgent chiefs instructed Taiping officials that the British community on the coast engaged in peaceful trade with Chinese civilians. He described treaty-port life in the foreign communities and assured the Taipings

13. Macaulay, op. cit., p. 638, p. 639, p. 642. See the following extracts:

"And the case which we are considering has this peculiarity, that the envoy to whom the Ministers are said to have left too large a discretion was fifteen thousand miles from them."

".... but that constant and minute control, which the Foreign Secretary is bound to exercise over diplomatic agents who are near, becomes a useless and pernicious meddling when exercised over agents who are separated from him by a voyage of five months."

".... the Duke of Wellington, grown old in the conduct of great affairs, knows better than anybody that a man of very ordinary ability at Canton is very likely to be a better judge of what ought to be done in an emergency arising at Canton than the greatest politician at Westminster can possibly be. His Grace, therefore, like a wise man, as he is, wrote only one letter to the Superintendent...."

John Bowring's reaction to Alcock's aggression in April 1854 in Shanghai was strikingly similar to the preceding passage. See p. 60, p. 61 of the thesis.

that in 1842, his government obtained privileges for its civilians by a legal transaction with Imperialist officials. Bonham was obviously worried by reports that Taiping armies might advance upon the coast.

He explained to the Taiping chieftains:

"Our nation, the British, have had commercial dealings with the Chinese at the port of Canton for upwards of 200 years, and about ten years back a Treaty of Peace and a set of commercial regulations were agreed on whereby British merchants and other British subjects are entitled to erect houses and dwell with their families at the five ports of Canton, Amoy, Foochow, Ningpo, and Shanghai and on due payment of tariff duties to carry on an unrestricted commerce without let or hindrance."

"At each of the five ports, British consular officials are stationed, specifically charged with authority over British subjects, and I have the honour to receive instructions from my Sovereign, whereby I am stationed at Hong Kong, with the general control of British subjects and affairs at the five ports, and it falls within my province to arrange all international questions that arise between the two states."

"...but our nation has a large establishment at Shanghai of dwelling houses, places for public worship, and warehouses, while the port is frequented by numbers of our vessels. You, on the other hand, have now reached Nanking, at no great distance from Shanghai, and we hear it reported that it is the intention of your forces to proceed to Soochow, Sung Keang, and the neighbouring places."

"Under these circumstances it becomes desirable to know by what spirit you will be actuated in your measures having relations to the British, in the event of your proceeding to Shanghai." (14)

Without prior treaty commitments or official relations with the British, the Taiping chieftains at Nanking presumed that British Christians in the treaty ports and their official representatives, Sir George Bonham and T. T. Meadows, should be subservient to the Taiping state.

14. B.P.P. 1853, LXIX, op.cit., Enclosure No. 3 in No. 6, Bonham's despatch of 28 April, 1853, to the Insurgent Chiefs, in Bonham's despatch of 11 May, 1853, to Clarendon, p.30, p.31.

Bonham disagreed with these pretensions which were part of a Taiping official communication entitled the Yellow Silk Document. Without treaty commitments or prior official relations with the Taipings, Bonham demanded they respect British treaty-port privileges and immunities. If they rejected this demand, the Taipings would face the British navy.

"I have received your communication part of which I am unable to understand and especially that portion which implies that the English are subordinate to your Sovereign. Owing to its contents, I am now compelled to remind you that my nation, by Treaty entered into by the Chinese Government, has obtained the right of trading at the five ports of Canton, Foochow, Amoy, Ningpo, and Shanghai, and that if you or any other people presume to injure in any manner the persons or property of British subjects, immediate steps will be taken to resent the injury in the same manner as similar injuries were resented ten years ago, resulting in the capture of Chinkeang, Nanking, and the neighbouring cities and in the Treaty of Peace, the conditions of which you will have learnt from the copy sent you the day before yesterday." (15)

From the outset, then, British representatives endeavoured to suggest a position from which they could manoeuvre belligerent relations so that British magnanimity and the British reputation for fair dealings could be observed. Bonham and Meadows established a precedent for a series of official British encounters with the Taipings. They maintained that the Taipings had to allow British officials to communicate with them whenever British officials arrived at Nanking. In actuality, such communication entailed the loss of the Taipings' right as belligerents to non-interference from foreigners or foreign official deputations. It seems the Taipings lost this right because of

15. B.P.P. 1853, LXIX, op.cit., Enclosure No. 5, in No. 6, Bonham's commentary concerning the Yellow Silk Document, in Bonham's despatch of 11 May, 1853, to Clarendon.

a situation they were unable to control - the defeat in the First Opium War of the Imperialists. Lastly, the Taipings were forced to meet the requests of British representatives who would otherwise clarify unsatisfactory relations by naval and military reprisal.

The folly of British policy concerning the Taipings remains that Taiping chieftains and military leaders were never bound by treaty or precedent to accept British claims and pretensions or official British missions. They did so, one could at least imply from Bonham's mission, on their own account and perhaps out of a sense of curiosity concerning foreigners.

Bonham and Meadows initiated several guidelines, which British officials observed in later diplomacy with insurgent communities. In April 1853, both men refused to tolerate any manner of insubordination which they detected in Taiping verbal and written communications. Meadows related his response, as Bonham's Chinese interpreter, and that of Lieutenant Spratt to commands of Taiping soldiery and of the Eastern and Northern Prince at a house in a northern suburb of Nanking:

"Two persons clothed in yellow silk gowns and hoods then appeared at the threshold, and the soldiers about called on me to yield. This I refused to do but advanced and, uncovering, told the two persons that I had been sent by her Majesty's Plenipotentiary to make inquiries and arrangements respecting a meeting between him and the chief authorities at Nanking....while the summons to kneel was being continued and Mr. Spratt was called on by words and gestures to lay aside his sword, I after recommending that gentleman to disregard the requisition, deemed it advisable to follow the Chiefs without awaiting invitation." (16)

16. Meadows, The Chinese...., p.257.

Meadows and Bonham remained quite confident that their mission was a selfless one, explaining British impartiality in the civil contest. Bonham emphasized this in his despatch of 6 May, 1853, to Clarendon:

" But I must add that to every person of respectability and otherwise, who daily crowded the decks of the Hermes, I caused to be conveyed a full explanation of the motives which had prompted the visit of a steamer to Nanking and an assurance that our part was altogether a neutral one." (17)

Through Meadows, Bonham did send the Taipings a copy of the Treaty of Nanking, to prove that he, the highest British civilian authority in China, had to be accorded certain privileges of rank and protocol which Meadows, as interpreter, did not require in his interview on 28 April, 1853, with the Taipings. Some confusion remains as to who originally thought of sending the Taipings a copy of the British treaty, Bonham or Meadows? Both their respective writings clearly stated they demanded the Taipings observe British 'neutrality' by granting their mission the same privileges and marks of respect as local Imperial officials had been doing since 1842.

Bonham reported the return on 28 April, 1853, of an objectionable letter to the Taipings:

" Towards the evening two Chiefs made their appearance and after some conversation produced the accompanying paper which, owing to the improper mode in which it was couched, was returned to them with a strong expression of dissatisfaction at the very objectionable manner in which that document was written. It was further stated to them in plain terms that productions of this nature could not for an instant be tolerated by the British authorities, and I now wished it to be conveyed to the chiefs that the British Government had a treaty

17. B.P.P. 1853, LXIX, op.cit., Bonham's despatch of 6 May, 1853, to Clarendon, p.21.

with the present dynasty, and that in order to enable them to learn the conditions of that treaty and the true position of the English nation, I sent to the Chiefs a Chinese version of that treaty." (18)

Meadows described this incident with emphasis upon his individual initiative in this manoeuvre. Meadows retained nevertheless the same air of innocence concerning this British mission and concerning demands which he assumed Taiping officials should obey. (19)

Bonham and Meadows also decided on 28 April, 1853, that they did not have to negotiate with the Taipings to obtain from them the privileges due a British Plenipotentiary, which had been obtained in 1842 from the Imperialists. The Taipings did not seriously challenge this claim for several years and arranged a proper interview between Sir George Bonham and the Eastern and Northern Princes. On 29 April, 1853, Meadows previously rejected an encouraging Taiping entreaty to

18. B.P.P. 1853, LXX, op.cit., No. 6, Bonham's despatch of 11 May, 1853, to Claremont, p. 24. For the phraseology of the document and Taiping assumptions of British political subservience, see Meadows, The Chinese, p. 262.

19. Meadows, The Chinese, p. 262. Speaking of the Taiping assumption of universal political supremacy, Meadows explained:

" It was manifest.... that we could not too soon begin to disabuse them of it. I accordingly returned the message to the senders, conveying in the plainest possible terms our own views of full national equality with any and every state. I may here mention that I was not, in any of the conversations I had with the Taipings, cramped by mere interpreting. Sir George Bonham did not of course intend seeing any officials of secondary or lesser rank and did not, it so happened, see any of the higher men. Hence though I was the expounder of his views as to neutrality...., I was free to select my own arguments and phraseology, unfettered by purely English ideas and idioms. On the present occasion, in order to make those two officers clearly aware of our independent position hitherto at Hong Kong and the Five Ports, I got out my copy in Chinese and English of our treaties with the Manchoo Government, and at the request of the Plenipotentiary, it was eventually sent by their hands to their superiors in his name."

to confer in Nanking with anyone from the Hermes:

"I replied that such an arrangement might do well for myself and others, but that Sir George Bonham was an officer of high rank in Her Britannic Majesty's service and could certainly not proceed to any meeting unless it were previously settled where, by whom, and how he was to be received." (20)

Taiping chieftains apparently agreed to this stipulation. Bonham described his conversation of 29 April, 1853, with a Taiping chieftain, Lae, the Keen-teem (or second minister), in this way:

"He[Lae] at once apologized for the tone of the mandate of the preceding day saying it had been drawn up by persons ignorant of the fact that "Wae-heung-te", foreign brethren, could not be addressed in the same style as native brethren."

"...after this was settled that Lae, or a lesser officer Leang, who accompanied him, should be in attendance at the landing place on the following day, at 11 A.M., with a sufficient number of chairs to convey Her Majesty's Plenipotentiary, his suite, and some naval officers to the residences of the Northern and Eastern Princes." (21)

Bonham considered he could refuse to negotiate in person once the Taipings accepted British claims to treaty privileges and immunities and apparently were convinced of the righteous intention of his mission. Bonham passed up an opportunity for unprecedented personal communication with Taiping political leaders with an excuse of inclement weather. He sent Meadows as his replacement with a written communication and explained frankly to Clarendon:

"Next morning the weather being exceedingly boisterous, I sent an excuse to the Princes. I had in the meantime thought over the matter and I was apprehensive lest some difficulties in the way of ceremonial might interfere with the good feeling then apparently existing." (22)

20. Meadows, The Chinese, ..., p.260.

21. B.P.P. 1853, LXX, op.cit., Enclosure No. 1, in No. 6, Conversation with Lae in Bonham's despatch of 11 May, 1853, to Clarendon, pp.27-28.

22. B.P.P. 1853, LXX, op.cit., No. 6, Bonham's despatch of 11 May, 1853, to Clarendon, p.24.

Shortly after Bonham and Meadows's mission to Nanking, Rutherford Alcock, British consul in Shanghai, had difficulty applying Bonham and Meadows's interpretation of British "neutrality". In November 1853, Alcock debated whether it would be acceptable for him to threaten or to use force against the Imperialists or insurgent soldiery, who were menacing the foreign settlement.

Alcock was more aware than many British officials on the China-coast that he could not compel British civilians under his jurisdiction at Shanghai to be neutral. In November 1853, after a British force removed an Imperialist invasion force of several hundred men from the foreign settlement, Alcock indicated that he would not administer a neutral policy. He recognized that Shanghai was threatened unless British civilians voluntarily agreed to stay in the foreign settlement. He also understood that a strict observation of British neutrality at Shanghai would have meant compelling his civilians to not enter Chinese camps. In a communiqué of 17 November, 1853, to the British community of Shanghai, Alcock warned of the danger caused by continued British civilian interference in Chinese campaigns:

"The policy thus asserted, where so much both in trade and revenue is at stake must therefore be considered by Her Majesty's Government most consistent with treaty obligations, and the rights secured by treaties may become null and void where Governments manifest either total inability to compel this fulfilment by all who owe allegiance and claim their protection."

In this despatch, Alcock indirectly sympathized with the anger of Wu Chien-chang and Chi-er-hang-a towards the British community. British merchants and other interested parties were indulging in illicit trade

with the various belligerents:-

"There are nevertheless British subjects at this port, it is alleged by the Chinese authorities and apparently with too much reason, (23) who do not hesitate to enter into transactions, contrary alike to the public engagements entered into by their Government and subversive of its policy - although claiming protection and loud in their demands for the strict fulfilment of all treaty engagements entered into by China."

Alcock complained of his inability to restrain these illicit activities and suggested that he might withdraw official protection from such merchants. He appealed to honest members of the British mercantile and missionary community to intercede for him with those civilians engaged in questionable ventures:

"If it be doubtful whether an effective remedy may at all times be found in legal measures which involves the interest and personal security of the whole foreign community at Shanghai, there can be the less question as to the moral character of these acts, or of the official reprobation they merit; and although such parties may deem themselves entitled to risk their own property, at whatever peril to others, or that of their constituents who supply these particular consignments, a different opinion would probably be held who possess the Liberty of Action, by those who intrust investments of a more legitimate kind to the same hands; and were publicity given to names, self-interest might be found effective where other means of restraint and higher motives had failed." (24)

In November 1853, then, Alcock revealed to the British community in China (and to those who read his communiqué in the Times of London of 12 and 13 January, 1854) that he was unable to treat the Chinese community of Shanghai fairly. Unlawful commerce and relations by

23. A Mr. Reynolds was captured smuggling goods to the Taipings and was later released after an effective civilian demonstration of sympathy by European mercenaries in the Imperialist fleet. See the Times of London, 12 January, 1854, Second Edition, "India and China", p. 7. For more information concerning British illicit mercantile activity in November 1853 with the insurgents, see Fairbank, op. cit., p. 431f.

24. The Times, 13 January, 1854, Second Edition, "China", p. 8.

British civilians with either belligerent necessitated British armed intervention to prevent Imperialist soldiers from invading the settlement. In November 1853, Alcock doubted that his application of force in Shanghai expressed the good faith of Her Majesty's Government. He issued this reprimand to offending British civilians at Shanghai:

"To such persons, whoever they may be, Her Majesty's Consul has only to say if they feel themselves at liberty to dispute the policy of their Government, and, in disregard of its authority, to commit acts calculated to render that policy impracticable and to call its good faith or ability to control them into question, it is clear that as far as they are concerned, they can neither claim protection nor indemnity for any loss or prejudice that may accrue to them in consequence, whether in property or in person, and beyond this lies the further question of responsibility for all the loss and injury that may accrue to others." (25)

In November 1853, Alcock accepted Bonham and Meadows's contention that Chinese belligerents should respect British treaty privileges and immunities. Only as a measure calculated to protect the foreign settlement area could Alcock justify using the Volunteer Corps and British marines to keep out offending belligerent soldiery. (26) He indignantly threatened British civilians who were interfering in belligerent affairs but did not actually prohibit illicit British British communication with the belligerents in Shanghai.

25. The Times, 13 January, 1854, Second Edition, p.8.

26. Ibid. See especially the following:

"Neither can there well be any doubt as regards this port- unless the foreign settlement is to be made a battlefield for insurgents and Imperialists to the imminent danger of life and property - that it must be held free and guarded from intrusion by either side."

" Fortunately a strong squadron gives the means of enforcing this measure of self-defence, while a clear right to resort to it results from the declared inability of the Imperial Government to supply the requisite protection and the evidence afforded by the belligerents that such neutrality of ground within certain circumscribed limits is the only means of guarding against the perpetual risks of spoliation."

Local British officials consequently decided that insurgent and Imperialist officials must not take advantage of civil conflict to intervene in areas under British jurisdiction or to avoid granting treaty privileges to the British community. In Alcock's view, the Imperialists would continue to observe a British right to non-interference on the coast, and in Bonham and Meadows's view, the Taipings should fulfil treaty privileges granted to the British by the Chinese Government. In this way, British representatives in China could guarantee equal treatment of insurgent and Imperialist officials.

Bonham's declaration of non-intervention and Clarendon's approval contained no instructions how British officials could continue their jurisdiction in foreign settlement areas, support civilian enterprise in these areas, protect British civilians from the incursions of Chinese soldiers, and still maintain their Government's intention to treat the Chinese combatants fairly. Alcock was one of the very few British officials who from 1853 to 1855, admitted that he could not achieve neutrality in Shanghai. He recognized that during the period of civil unrest in China, he could only achieve the limited objective of continuing British jurisdiction in Shanghai.

From mid-1853 to 1862, most British officials in China, unlike Alcock, did not publicly express doubts that they could administer a policy of neutrality. Treaty-port privileges and immunities for British officials were blandly demanded from Taiping chieftains. British officials recognized that they could compel the Imperialists, the Taipings, and other combatants to observe British 'neutrality' by

threats to enforce Chinese compliance by British military and naval force. An article in October 1855 in the Edinburgh Review and John Scarth's Twelve Years in China were examples of British public accounts which clearly described such a tendency in British China policy. Credibility in the justice of such British official activities was supported by an explanation that British treaty stipulations, obtained from the Imperialists, gave British officials in China increased opportunities to bypass Taiping belligerent rights.

In November and December 1858, this was certainly the approach taken by the Earl of Elgin to justify his mission to inland China. Elgin believed that the British Treaty of Tientsin, obtained in 1858 from the Chinese Imperial Commissioners, permitted him to organize an expedition and travel into the interior. He hoped to explore possible sites for three consular establishments, and felt that his voyage would impress upon the natives the prowess of his expedition and accustom them to British forces in the interior.

On 5 January, 1859, Elgin wrote to the Earl of Malmesbury to explain his mission. He first indicated that Taiping belligerent rights might have interfered with his plans for the mission:

"The Treaty right to navigate the Yangtze and to resort to ports upon that river for purposes of trade was also made contingent on the re-establishment of Imperial authority in the ports in question; because as we have seen fit to affect neutrality between the Emperor of China and the rebels, we could not, of course, without absurdity, require him to give us rights and protection in places actually occupied by a Power which we treat with the same respect as his own."

But the same despatch indicates that Elgin proceeded to ignore the conditional nature of the treaty stipulation concerning the right to

British travel and the establishment of consular missions. He ignored his original suggestion of Taiping political sovereignty. He indicated that having obtained the treaty privilege from the Imperialists, he possessed a full complement of military and naval forces to enforce Chinese observance of the treaty privilege. Elgin was sincerely convinced that he would do no harm to Chinese combatants in inland China:

"Nevertheless it is important that it should be known to the Chinese and foreigners that the Empire has conceded in principle the opening up of the river; and I have long thought that if I could contrive to go up it in person, with consent of the Imperial Government, under the plea of selecting the ports which would be most suitable for foreign trade, it would be a very effectual way of tendering to the public the required assurance on this point."

"... it was therefore essential to the proper appreciation of our position as regards our newly acquired rights in that quarter that we should obtain, at the earliest period, some more accurate information than we possessed as to the situation and prospects of the parties to the civil war ranging on the river and on its banks. Nothing could be more vague than the rumours prevalent on this subject in the ports open to foreign trade on the coast, or more contradictory or confusing than the reports which reached them through Chinese channels."

"And lastly, if for reasons already given, it was advisable that we should endeavour to obtain further knowledge of the political state of the river before proceeding to discuss with the Chinese authorities the conditions on which the ports upon it were to be opened to trade, it was hardly less so that fresh inquiries should be previously instituted into the facilities and difficulties incident to its navigation." (27)

In planning his mission, Elgin took a position similar to Rutherford Alcock's. On 4 April, 1854, Alcock tried to justify destruction of two Imperialist camps by stating he had support for this

27. B.P.F. 1859, XXXIII, Relating to the Earl of Elgin's Mission to China and Japan 1857-1859, No. 228, Elgin's despatch of 5 January, 1859, to Malmesbury, pp. 440-441.

venture from a British military officer, the British merchant community, and foreign consuls in Shanghai. Elgin sought justification for his mission to inland China by appealing for support to Baron Gros of France and Mr. Reed of the United States. (28)

According to Scarth, Elgin and Wade sacrificed the impartiality of their mission by refusing to inform Taiping military forces of their arrival:

"In all the previous visits of foreigners, the insurgents had distinctly stated that if a boat was sent in to communicate, there would be no danger of collision; but notwithstanding this, Lord Elgin insisted on passing without sending in to explain, though his ships came out of the Imperial fleet investing the place, and even when opposition was shown, still made no attempt to prevent bloodshed but was prepared to force a passage and, not contented with that, returned next day to destroy the rebel defences." (29)

The Earl of Elgin's private secretary, Laurence Oliphant, found justification for British aggressive activity in late 1858 at Nanking. Elgin chose to exercise the treaty stipulation of full travelling privileges at an inopportune moment. Apparently, in the midst of a serious battle between the Taipings and the Imperialists investing a Taiping fortification, Elgin gave little thought to the fact that Taiping soldiers would fire upon any ships approaching from the midst of the Imperialist fleet. Elgin allowed his ships to cross the Taiping range of fire. (30)

Oliphant emphasized the wanton violence inflicted upon the

28. B.P.P., 1859, XXXIII, op. cit., No. 228, Elgin's despatch of 5 January, 1859, to Malmesbury, p. 441.

29. [Scarth], op. cit., p. 276.

30. It is apparent that in 1858, Elgin did not proceed with the same cautious attitude characteristic of Bonham's first encounter with the Taipings. See Chapter Two, p. 55 of the thesis.

the British by this manoeuvre: -

"By this time we were passing through the fleet of Imperialist junks, which formed the advanced position of the force then investing Nanking. At last as the Lee seemed beyond the reach of the furthest fortress, the red flag was run up on all forts, and from the lowest a round shot was fired, which whistled over the Lee and caused her to run up smartly the flag of truce. So far, however, from this signal producing the desired effect, it had not floated three minutes at the fore before seven shots were fired at it in rapid succession. Lieutenant Jones, true to his orders, not returning the fire until he saw the "engage" signal flying from the masthead of the Retribution...."

According to Oliphant and those in command there was no question of Taiping belligerent rights. The Taipings violated a British treaty stipulation and an international symbol of neutrality and therefore deserved punishment for this disrespect. (31)

Conclusion

As shown in Appendix A, certain twentieth-century scholars have published observations concerning the Taiping Rebellion. Many have accepted at face value the existence from 1853 until Hope's intervention in February 1862 of a British policy of neutrality in China. Professor Gregory has defined the concept of British neutrality and has qualified his definition to fit events in China during the period examined.

From 1853 to 1862, the Foreign Office advised British officials in China to maintain a policy of neutrality. This decree however was managed to the advantage of both the British consular community and

31. Laurence Oliphant, Narrative of the Earl of Elgin's Mission to China and Japan in the Years 1857, 1858, and 1859 (2 Vols. London, 1860), II, pp. 310-311. See especially the following:

"Captain Barker in consultation with Captain Osborn then decided that the impertinence of the rebels in offering resistance to our progress up the river, in the exercise of our treaty right, and firing upon a flag of truce, ought not to go unpunished. In this Lord Elgin fully concurs...."

and British civilians in China.

Throughout the period 1853 to 1862, a declaration of neutrality, in effect, permitted British officials and British civilians in China to interfere in the civil war to satisfy their curiosity and further British humanitarian, mercantile, and political interests and religious endeavours. Above all, a declaration of neutrality allowed certain British officials to continue British jurisdiction in China. It became the duty of both the Imperialists and the Taiping, Triad, and Small Sword insurgents to permit British official and civilian interference in the civil war and to accept British official missions, who claimed they were treating both sides fairly. British consuls in China continued to defend their civilians and property from abuse and made little or no attempt to restrain their own curiosity or the interference of British civilians in the civil war.

As shown in Appendix A, J.S. Gregory and J.K. Fairbank focused upon the China-coast community and the wide discretionary powers given to British officials in China. They have neglected to emphasize the responsibility of the British Government for the policy of its officials in China. To apologize for the Foreign Office's failure to review developments of China policy, and to apologize for the assumption in London and on the China coast of the belief that British officials could support British civilian enterprise, continue British jurisdiction, and still treat the Chinese combatants fairly diverts attention from who was responsible for the review of the activities of British civilians in China: the British Government, the Foreign Office, and its

representatives in China.

From 1853 to 1862, the Foreign Office, the Supreme Plenipotentiary, and individual British consuls in China could not decide who exactly was responsible for the maintenance of Bonham's declaration of non-intervention. Bonham clearly did not intend to supervise British civilians or British naval officers and passed the responsibility on to individual British consuls. British consuls were curious concerning belligerent warfare and in the case of Rutherford Alcock decided that only a majority of British civilians in Shanghai could supervise unruly civilians who wandered into Chinese camps. Much initiative for the formation of British policy concerning the belligerents was abandoned to British civilians in China.

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