

# The Images of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom as Shown in the Publications in France, Germany, and Italy during the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century\*

Wong Ching Him Felix

The Chinese University of Hong Kong

## Introduction

Primary sources concerning the Taiping Tianguo 太平天国 (Heavenly Kingdom of Great Peace) were predominantly written in Chinese and English,<sup>1</sup> while a small number of them

\* I am very much indebted to the three anonymous reviewers for their insightful comments. I also wish to extend my profound gratitude to Dr Chu Kwok Fan for editing this paper.

<sup>1</sup> Primary Chinese sources discovered, collected, and edited by modern scholars, among others, include: Guangdong congshu bianyin weiyuanhui 廣東叢書編印委員會, ed., *Taiping tianguo guanshu shizhong* 太平天国官書十種 (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan 商務印書館, 1948); Jin Yufu 金毓黻 and Tian Yuqing 田餘慶, eds., *Taiping tianguo shiliao* 太平天国史料 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1955, 1959); *Taiping tianguo lishi bowuguan* 太平天国歷史博物館, ed., *Taiping tianguo shiliao congbian jianji* 太平天国史料叢編簡輯 (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1961–1963); idem, ed., *Taiping tianguo wenshu huibian* 太平天国文書彙編 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1979); idem, ed., *Taiping tianguo yinshu* 太平天国印書 (Nanjing: Jiangsu renmin chubanshe 江蘇人民出版社, 1979); Deng Zhicheng 鄧之誠 et al., eds., *Taiping tianguo ziliao* 太平天國資料 (Taibei: Wenhai chubanshe 文海出版社, 1976); Wang Qingcheng 王慶成, ed., *Yingyin Taiping tianguo wenxian shierzhong* 影印太平天國文獻十二種 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2004); For a comprehensive English translation of the Chinese sources, see Franz Michael, in collaboration with Chung-li Chang, translations by Margery Anneberg et al., *The Taiping Rebellion: History and Documents* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1966–1971), vols. 2–3. For a history of the collection and formation of Chinese primary sources, see Wang Qingcheng, *Taiping tianguo de wenxian he lishi: Haiwai xin wenxian kanbu he wenxian shishi yanjiu* 太平天國的文獻和歷史：海外新文獻刊布和文獻史事研究 (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe 社會科學文獻出版社, 1993). For a comprehensive catalogue of Western sources, see R. G. Tiedemann, ed., *Handbook of Christianity in China, vol. 2: 1800–Present* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), pp. 31–91, 115–92, 361–404.

are in French and German.<sup>2</sup> On one hand, the movement broke out when Britain was advancing her commercial interests in China after the First Opium War, and despite an explicit promise at an earlier time of upholding the principle of neutrality<sup>3</sup> in the civil war between the Manchu-led Qing authority and the Taiping insurgents, Britain, together with the United States, supported the Qing government during the early 1860s and refused to recognize the Taiping leadership as a legitimate regime, which was believed to be a strategic move to safeguard their own interests in the treaties signed with the Manchu after the two Opium Wars.<sup>4</sup> Important politicians, diplomats, military officers, and interpreters

<sup>2</sup> The most important work written in French is: Joseph-Marie Callery (1810–1862) et Melchior Yvan (1803–1873), *L'Insurrection en Chine depuis son Origine jusqu'à la Prise de Nankin* (Paris: Librairie Nouvelle, 1853). Theodore Hamberg (1819–1854), a Swedish Basel missionary, also left behind some German writings in *Magazin für die neueste Geschichte der Evangelischen Missions-und Bibel-Gesellschaften Basel*, recounting his missionary work with Karl Gützlaff (1803–1851) in Hakka regions. Hamberg expressed his heartfelt wish to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all towns and villages of the entire Hakka areas (Das Evangelium Jesu Christi in allen Städten und Dörfern des ganzen Hakka-Gebietes zu lassen). See *Magazin für die neueste Geschichte der Evangelischen Missions-und Bibel-Gesellschaften Basel* (Basel: Im Verlag des Missions-Institutes, 1847), 32er Jahresbericht der Evangelischen Missionsgesellschaft zu Basel, Viertes Quartalheft, S. 160. Karl Gützlaff hoped that Christianity would become state religion in China some day, just like the case in the Roman Empire in Late Antiquity (wie einst das spätantike Römische Reich). See Thoralf Klein, “Lutherische Mission und chinesische Kultur: Karl F. A. Gützlaff, Richard Wilhelm und Karl Ludvig Reichelt,” in Hans Medick, Peer Smidt, herausgegeben, *Luther zwischen den Kulturen: Zeitgenossenschaft—Weltwirkung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004), S. 377. However, the German writings of Theodore Hamberg and Karl Gützlaff only covered a small portion of the early history of the missionary work in the Hakka areas, but not the history of the Taiping movement as a whole.

<sup>3</sup> For the British policy of neutrality in 1853–1855, see J. S. Gregory, *Great Britain and the Taipings* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), pp. 11–46. As Thomas Taylor Meadows (1815–1868) pointed out, the visit of George Bonham (1803–1863) to the Taiping leaders was to notify the desire of the British government to remain perfectly neutral in the struggle between them and the Manchu. See Meadows, *The Chinese and Their Rebellions* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1856), p. 258.

<sup>4</sup> Augustus Frederick Lindley (1840–1873) was originally a Royal Navy officer, but later he supported and joined the Taiping troops in 1860, and fought under the leadership of Li Xiucheng 李秀成 (1823–1864). He publicly castigated Charles George Gordon (1833–1885) in the pages of *The Times* and denounced the British policy in China in his book published in 1866. See Lindley, *Ti-Ping Tien-Kwoh: The History of the Ti-Ping Revolution, Including a Narrative of the Author's Personal Adventures* (London: Day & Son, 1866), pp. 225–26. Christopher Alan Bayly noted that the Taiping episode overlapped with the Indian Rebellion at the turn of the nineteenth century. The Indian Rebellion of 1857–1859 began as a mutiny of the sepoys or indigenous soldiers of the East India Company's Bengal Army in May 1857, (*Continued on next page*)

who were engaged in the affairs in East Asia, such as Frederick Bruce (1814–1867) and Thomas Taylor Meadows, left behind vast writings either in official papers or individual publications.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, the Protestant missionaries who were actively preaching in China at that time were chiefly of British or American origin,<sup>6</sup> including

## (Note 4—Continued)

and the British became increasingly suspicious of these guild-like forces. On the other hand, colonial leaders discovered that they needed “leaders of the people” to maintain local control and bring in the revenue. “Judging that they had alienated too many landlords before 1857, the Indian Mutiny-Rebellion made the British yet more cautious and conservative.” This can be seen as another reason for the change of British attitudes towards the Taipings. See C. A. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780–1914: Global Connections and Comparisons* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004), pp. 151–54, 420–24.

<sup>5</sup> Official papers include those published by the British government. For example, Foreign Office of Great Britain, *Accounts and Papers*, vol. 46, *Correspondence Respecting Affairs in China, 1859–1860*, presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of her Majesty (London: Harrison and Sons, 1861); *Accounts and Papers of the House of Commons*, vol. 63 (Ordered to be printed, 1862); *British and Foreign State Papers*, 1853–1854, vol. 44 (London: William Ridgway, 1865), and so forth. Individual publications include: Meadows, *The Chinese and Their Rebellions*; Lindesay Brine, *The Taiping Rebellion in China: A Narrative of Its Rise and Progress, Based upon Original Documents and Information Obtained in China* (London: John Murray, 1862); Lindley, *Ti-Ping Tien-Kwoh*. Admiral Lindesay Brine entered the Navy in 1847. When his *Taiping Rebellion in China* was published in 1862, he was employed in Chinese waters.

<sup>6</sup> Rudolf G. Wagner noted that the Protestant missionaries in China in the first half of the nineteenth century were all elements of the Second Great Awakening of the Revivalist Movement (Bestandteil der zweiten Erweckungsbewegung). The character of the revivalists was strongly transnational. The missionaries of the first generation like Karl Gützlaff were free missionaries who raised funds for their projects from diverse sources in different places. See Rudolf G. Wagner, “China in der géographie imaginaire der Erweckungsbewegung des 19. Jahrhunderts,” in Jürgen Elvert und Michael Salewski, herausgegeben, *Staatenbildung in Übersee: Die Staatenwelt Lateinamerikas und Asiens*, HMRG Beihefte (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1992), Band 2, S. 173. Karl Gützlaff and Theodore Hamberg were of German and Swedish origin respectively, yet most prominent Protestant missionaries in China came from the English-speaking world. Moreover, as Wagner pointed out, among many of the revivalist missionaries there was a common assumption that the Holy Spirit would prepare the heathen for the message of the lord before the second coming and the last judgement. Expectations of this second coming were rife. Consequently, the missionaries assumed that the natives were in a way prepared for their message, and that it might even be possible for a few missionaries to effect a blitzconversion of entire areas or nations. A mighty outpouring of the spirit was expected to awaken China’s millions out of their idolatrous slumber. See Wagner, “Understanding Taiping Christian China: Analogy, Interest, and Policy,” in Klaus Koschorke, ed., *Christen und Gewürze. Konfrontation und Interaktion kolonialer und indigener Christentumsvarianten* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), S. 138.

the most prominent figures like James Legge (1815–1897), Walter Henry Medhurst (1796–1857), Joseph Edkins (1823–1905), Griffith John (1831–1912), Issachar Jacox Roberts (1802–1871), Samuel Wells Williams (1812–1884), Jesse Boardman Hartwell (1835–1912), Tarleton Perry Crawford (1821–1902), Elijah Coleman Bridgman (1801–1861), and many others.<sup>7</sup> Politicians and missionaries alike witnessed the movement at differing angles and not few of them even had direct contact with the Taiping leaders. At any rate, both parties contributed to the wealth of invaluable information on the Taipings available in English. *Western Reports on the Taiping*, edited by Prescott Clarke and John Stradbroke Gregory and published in 1982, is an excellent selected collection of these writings.<sup>8</sup>

The press in fact played a crucial role in spreading the news about the Taipings. Newspapers and magazines like *North China Herald*, *Overland Friend in China*, *Chinese Repository*, and so forth, have become inexhaustible mines of first-hand materials for

<sup>7</sup> For the Protestant missionaries in China, see A. Wylie (1815–1887), *Memorials of Protestant Missionaries to the Chinese, Giving a List of Their Publications, and Obituary Notices of the Deceased* (Shanghae: American Presbyterian Mission Press, 1867). Many articles or letters written by the Protestant missionaries were later published in the missionary magazines (maybe originally published elsewhere such as in *North China Herald* 北華捷報) like *The Evangelical Magazine and General Chronicle*, vol. 33 (London: Ward and Co., 1855); Church Pastoral-aid Society London, *The Church of England Magazine*, vol. 49 (London: William Hughes, Stationers' Hall Court; printed by Rogerson and Tuxford, J. Burns, July–December, 1860); London Missionary Society, *The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle* (London: Published by Directors of the London Missionary Society, 1860); American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, *The Missionary Herald, Containing the Proceedings of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions*, vol. 57 (Boston: Press of T. R. Marvin & Son, 1861), and many others. Individual publications of the missionaries concerning the Taiping movement include: Theodore Hamberg, *The Visions of Hung-Siu-Tschuen, and Origin of the Kwang-Si Insurrection* (Hong Kong: China Mail Office, 1854); William Robson, *Griffith John: Founder of the Hankow Mission, Central China* (London: F. H. Revell, 1888); Helen Edith Legge, *James Legge: Missionary and Scholar* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1905), and so forth. The work written by Theodore Hamberg was based on the information provided by Hong Rengan 洪仁玕 (1822–1864), who was the cousin of the Heavenly King Hong Xiuquan 洪秀全 (1814–1864). Hong Rengan became the Shield-King or Prince Gan 干王 in the late 1850s after he had successfully arrived at Nanjing and rejoined the movement after repeated attempts. The Chinese name of Hong Rengan was transliterated as Hung Jin 洪仁 (or Hung-jin, Hung Jen, Hung-jen in other publications) in Hamberg's book.

<sup>8</sup> Prescott Clarke and J. S. Gregory, eds., *Western Reports on the Taiping: A Selection of Documents* (Honolulu, HI: University Press of Hawai'i, 1982). See also Charles Anthony Curwen 柯文南 and Rolf Gerhard Tiedemann 狄德滿, “Guanyu Taiping tianguo zhi xiwen ziliao” 關於太平天国之西文資料, in *Taiping tianguo xuekan bianweihui* 太平天国學刊編委會, ed., *Taiping tianguo xuekan* 太平天国學刊, vol. 5 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1987), pp. 33–45.

historians for many years.<sup>9</sup> One of the most influential articles in the West reporting the Taipings was entitled “*Pamphlets issued by the Chinese Insurgents at Nanking*, to which is added a *History of the Kwang-se Rebellion*,” compiled by Walter Henry Medhurst. It was first published in *North China Herald* in Shanghai in 1853 and included in *The Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review* in the ensuing year.<sup>10</sup>

Reports on the Taiping movement in Continental Europe also appeared in profusion in newspapers, magazines, and books during the second half of the nineteenth century, notably in France, Germany, and Italy, although not all reports of this kind were proved accurate at later times. Most European writers, especially German and Italian, having no direct experience in the East, derived their images of the Taiping movement simply from publications prepared by others, namely the English writings of the politicians and missionaries as mentioned above. Historians usually neglect second-hand writings, particularly when the writers simply translated or copied verbatim from other sources with no new evidential support. What I seek to present in this paper is what most historians ignore. The significance of these second-hand sources in Western European languages does not lie in their correctness or originality as such, but their relevance to the minds of the Europeans in historical and religious contexts. We may observe, for instance, how European writers related the Taiping cause to the political problems in Europe and their religious ideology in the meantime.

<sup>9</sup> *Chinese Serial* 遷邇貫珍, the first Chinese newspaper in Hong Kong since the Treaty of Nanjing, has also reported news of the Taiping movement many times. A large number of these reports were included in *Taiping tianguo shiliao* 太平天国史料 published by Zhonghua shuju in the 1950s. As Matsuura Akira 松浦章 pointed out in the article “Modern East Asia as Depicted in *Kaji Kanchin*” 『遐邇貫珍』の描く近代東アジア世界, some materials in *Chinese Serial* concerning the Taiping movement could not be extracted from the newspaper and included in the series of *Taiping tianguo shiliao* during the 1950s. In this sense, one can say that the publication of the full version of *Chinese Serial* in the twenty-first century is very important: “以上の例からも明らかのように『太平天国史料』編集の際に抽出できなかつた『遐邇貫珍』の一覧表に見える他の号にも関係史料が掲載されていることが知られるであろう。その意味でも『遐邇貫珍』の全巻公刊は重要なことであると言えるであろう。” See Matsuura Akira, Uchida Keiichi 内田慶市, and Shin Kokui 沈国威, *Kaji Kanchin no Kenkyū* 遷邇貫珍の研究 (Suita-shi 吹田市: Kansai daigaku shuppanbu 関西大学出版部, 2004), pp. 46–50, esp. p. 50.

<sup>10</sup> The original full title is: “*Pamphlets issued by the Chinese Insurgents at Nanking*, to which is added a *History of the Kwang-se Rebellion*, gathered from public documents, and a sketch of the connection between Foreign Missionaries and the Chinese Insurrection; concluding with a Critical Review of several of the above pamphlets,” compiled by W. H. Medhurst, Senr. Shanghai, printed at the office of the “*North China Herald*,” 1853. See “The Revolution in China,” *The Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review* 26, no. 2 (Philadelphia: Office of the Biblical Repertory, 1854), pp. 321–48.

## Attitudes towards the British policy in China

French and German writers in general shared a common discontent at the British policy in China, but the reasons behind may vary. Although British and French forces collaborated to wage war upon China from 1857 to 1860, the impression of the French on Britain, as reflected in the media and different publications, was not bound to be favourable. In 1860, Charles Hubert Lavollée (1823–1913), in *La Chine Contemporaine* (Contemporary China), complained that France was trailing behind England in their so-called cooperation. He criticized the expense of such a distant expedition, and could only see the probable problems of their intervention on the banks of the Celestial Empire.<sup>11</sup> Lavollée also realized that, for the past fifteen years, England, Spain, Holland, Russia, and even the United States all claimed their shares of benefit in the Oriental World, and by contrast, only France got nothing lucrative in return, except for the fact that some Catholic missionaries were dedicated to their propaganda in the region.<sup>12</sup> It is true that the governments in London and Paris were originally pursuing different interests. As noted by Teng Ssu-yü 鄧嗣禹 in his *Taiping Rebellion and the Western Powers*, “The main British interest was to improve trading conditions, while France’s was the protection of Catholic missionaries who needed to maintain good relations with the imperial government.”<sup>13</sup> But later, Paris became critical of Alphonse de Bourboulon’s (1809–?) handling of affairs in China, and he was temporarily replaced by Jean-Baptiste Louis Gros (1793–1870), while England appointed Lord Elgin (James Bruce, 1811–1863). It is on this foundation that Britain and France achieved successful cooperation in 1859 and 1860, and French interest in the Far East was not merely protection of Roman Catholics since then.<sup>14</sup> In 1863, Wolfgang Menzel (1798–1873), a literary critic and writer in Vormärz (pre-March or the Age of Metternich) and a historian later, said in his article “Die Taiping. Engländer in Peking” (The Taipings. The English people in Peking) published in *Allgemeine Weltgeschichte von Anfang bis Jetzt* (General World History from the Beginning to the Present) that Napoleon III

<sup>11</sup> “On se demandait ce que la France allait faire si loin, à la remorque de l’Angleterre! On critiquait les dépenses de l’expédition, et l’on n’apercevait que les embarras probables de notre intervention sur les rives du céleste empire.” See Lavollée, *La Chine Contemporaine* (Paris: Michel Lévy Frères, 1860), “Préface,” p. i.

<sup>12</sup> “J’ai vu, il y a quinze ans, l’Angleterre, l’Espagne, la Hollande solidement établies dans les mers de l’Inde et de la Chine, y possédant de belles colonies et prêtes à se partager les profits de la révolution inévitable qui doit tôt ou tard ouvrir au monde les marchés de la Chine et du Japon. En même temps le pavillon des États-Unis visitait tous les ports de ces régions, et l’on sentait déjà peser, du côté du Nord, la main puissante et mystérieuse de la Russie. – Seule, la France n’était nulle part. Un consulat sans nationaux, quelques missionnaires catholiques, pieusement voués à leur secrète propagande, voilà comment la France était représentée sur un terrain où tant d’intérêts européens se trouvaient déjà postés et armés.” See *ibid.*, p. ii.

<sup>13</sup> Teng Ssu-yü, *Taiping Rebellion and the Western Powers: A Comprehensive Survey* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 267.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

(r. 1852–1870) did not wish to assist the English people, but rather, to keep them under surveillance and share their political influence in China.<sup>15</sup>

It seems that German writers were disgruntled with the British on moral grounds in particular. Perhaps they gained more freedom to express their views, as German people were almost not involved in the political affairs in East Asia in the 1850s and 1860s. Richard Gosche (1824–1889), professor of the University of Halle-Wittenberg, went so far as to claim that the Opium War was indeed a shame to the European culture.<sup>16</sup> Among several important publications on the Taiping movement during the 1860s, *The Taiping Rebellion in China: its Origin, Progress, and Present Condition* (in a Series of Letters addressed to the “Aberdeen Free Press” and the London “Daily News”) written by William Henry Sykes (1790–1872) and *The Taiping Rebellion in China: A Narrative of Its Rise and Progress* (based upon original documents and information obtained in China) written by Lindesay Brine (1834–1906) were the most outstanding, and have exercised considerable influence in Germany for a certain period of time. The news of their publication was reported by a number of important German magazines or journals. Brine’s book, for example, was listed in *Zeitschrift für allgemeine Erdkunde* (Journal of General Geography)<sup>17</sup> in 1862 and *Bibliotheca Historica* (Historical Library),<sup>18</sup> *Neuer Anzeiger für Bibliographie und Bibliothekswissenschaft* (New Gazette of Bibliography and Library Science),<sup>19</sup> *Magazin für die Literatur des Auslandes* (Magazine of the Literature of Foreign Countries)<sup>20</sup> in 1863, while Sykes’s work was introduced in *Sitzungsberichte der königl. bayer. Akademie der Wissenschaften zu München* (Proceedings of the Royal Bavarian Academy of Sciences in Munich) in 1863<sup>21</sup> and in *Zeitschrift für die gesammte*

<sup>15</sup> “Napoleon III wollte den Engländern nicht sowohl helfen, als sie überwachen und ihren politischen Einfluß in China theilen.” See Menzel, “Die Taiping. Engländer in Peking,” in *Allgemeine Weltgeschichte von Anfang bis Jetzt*, Band 12 (Stuttgart: Verlag von Adolph Krabbe, 1863), S. 405.

<sup>16</sup> “Daher war der Opiumkrieg, an den freilich die europäische Cultur sich schämen mag zu denken.” See Gosche, “Wissenschaftlicher Jahresbericht über die morgenländischen Studien, 1862 bis 1867,” in Ludolf Krehl, *Zeitschrift der Deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, Supplement zum Bande 24 (Leipzig: In Commission bei F. A. Brockhaus, 1871), S. 189.

<sup>17</sup> Wilhelm Koner, herausgegeben, Gesellschaft für Erdkunde zu Berlin, *Zeitschrift für allgemeine Erdkunde*, Band 13 (Berlin: Verlag von Dietrich Reimer, 1862), S. 473.

<sup>18</sup> W. Müldener, herausgegeben, *Bibliotheca Historica, oder systematisch geordnete Uebersicht der in Deutschland und dem Auslande auf dem Gebiete der gesammten Geschichte neu erschienenen Bücher*, Jahrgang 11 (Göttingen: Verlag von Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1863), S. 94.

<sup>19</sup> Julius Petzholdt, herausgegeben, *Neuer Anzeiger für Bibliographie und Bibliothekswissenschaft* (Dresden: G. Schönfeld’s Buchhandlung [C. A. Werner], 1863), S. 164.

<sup>20</sup> Joseph Lehmann, herausgegeben, *Magazin für die Literatur des Auslandes*, Band 63, Januar bis Juni, 1863 (Leipzig: Verlag von Veit & Comp., 1863), S. 92.

<sup>21</sup> *Sitzungsberichte der königl. bayer. Akademie der Wissenschaften zu München* (München: Druck von F. Straub, 1863), Band 2, S. 251.

*Staatswissenschaft* (Journal of Politics and Socioeconomics) in 1864.<sup>22</sup> Richard Gosche once remarked that Theodore Hamberg, the Swedish missionary of the Basel Mission, gave authentic information of the origin of the Taiping itself, while the English commanders Brine and Sykes presented the whole movement more or less in full.<sup>23</sup> Sykes's work received much attention not because of his originality, but very probably because of his stance against the British policy and in favour of the Taiping cause. Sykes explicitly wrote the following:

Enthusiasts on the one side, and selfishly interested parties on the other, in their communications to the public, have disabled the lookers-on from forming even an approximately correct judgment of the origin, progress, and objects of the war-to-the-knife rebellion which has unhappily raged in China since the middle of the year 1850. . . . The Taeping Chief has been designedly represented as an ignorant Coolie, of base origin, and a blasphemer of the Christian religion.<sup>24</sup>

William Henry Sykes was a military officer, politician and ornithologist. He was elected president of the Royal Asiatic Society in 1858. As French geographer Louis Vivien de Saint-Martin (1802–1897) pointed out in *L'Année Géographique* (The Geographic Year), Sykes's work was not based on personal observation, but on the Blue Books, the local press of China, and the letters from his obliging friends who lived in the country. The character of this brochure was primarily, if not exclusively, political.<sup>25</sup> August Heinrich Petermann (1822–1878), a German cartographer, on the other hand, outspokenly gave a rather favourable comment in his renowned journal *Petermanns Geographische Mittheilungen* (PGM; Petermann's Geographic News). He asserted that Sykes's work, with the greatest knowledge of the subject and under closer examination of various statements

<sup>22</sup> Mitgliedern der staatswirtschaftlichen Facultät in Tübingen, herausgegeben, *Zeitschrift für die gesammte Staatswissenschaft*, Band 20 (Tübingen: Verlag der H. Laupp'schen Buchhandlung, 1864), S. 842.

<sup>23</sup> "Ueber den Ursprung der Taiping selbst gibt Hamberg authentische Mittheilungen; mehr oder weniger vollständig stellen die englischen Befehlshaber Lindesay Brine und Sykes die ganze Bewegung dar." See Gosche, "Wissenschaftlicher Jahresbericht über die morgenländischen Studien, 1862 bis 1867," in *Zeitschrift der Deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, Supplement zum Bande 24, S. 190.

<sup>24</sup> W. H. Sykes, *The Taeping Rebellion in China: Its Origin, Progress, and Present Condition, in a Series of Letters Addressed to the Aberdeen Free Press and the London Daily News* (London: Warren Hall & Co., 1863), pp. 9–10.

<sup>25</sup> "Cette notice n'est pas fondée sur l'observation personnelle, mais sur les Blue-Books, sur la presse locale de la Chine, et les lettres de quelques amis obligeants qui résident dans le pays. Le caractère de cette brochure est principalement, sinon exclusivement politique." See Vivien de Saint-Martin, *L'Année Géographique: Revue annuelle des Voyages de Terre et de Mer ainsi que des Explorations, Missions, Relations et Publications diverses relatives aux Sciences Géographiques et Ethnographiques*, Deuxième Année, 1863 (Paris: Librairie de L. Hachette et C<sup>ie</sup>, 1864), p. 196.

concerned, judged the Taiping movement and the British policy in China without national partiality. A book of this kind was very welcome, seeing that the news about the Chinese rebellion was extremely contradictory and confusing with regard to its character, its religion, its aim, and its relation with the Europeans. Colonel Sykes, as Petermann wrote, a member of the English Parliament and a former president of the Court of Directors of the East India Company, resolutely disapproved of the action of England against the Taipings both on moral grounds as well as strategic considerations, and put the exceedingly heavy charges that the English officials brought against the Taipings back to their proper dimensions.<sup>26</sup> For all that, we should bear in mind that German historians on the whole cherished an admiration for the history and constitutionalism of England roughly before the 1870s.<sup>27</sup> Eduard Fischel (1826–1863), an Anglomaniac as he called himself in his *Die Verfassung Englands* (The Constitution of England),<sup>28</sup> maintained that the recently published correspondence in reference to the Taipings, which Colonel Sykes contained in his book to accuse the British government, should be faked.<sup>29</sup>

## Revolution and Nationalism

As Joseph-Marie Callery and Melchior Yvan noted in their book *L'Insurrection en Chine depuis son Origine jusqu'à la Prise de Nankin* (The Insurrection in China since Its Origin

<sup>26</sup> “Bei den äusserst widersprechenden und verwirrenden Nachrichten über die Chinesischen Rebellen, ihren Charakter, ihre Religion, ihre Ziele, ihr Verhältniss zu den Europäern, muss ein Schriftchen höchst willkommen sein, das mit grösster Sachkenntniss die verschiedenen Aussagen näher beleuchtet und fern von nationaler Parteilichkeit die Taeping und die Englische Politik in China beurtheilt. Oberst Sykes, Mitglied des Englischen Parlaments und früher Präsident des Direktorenhofes der Ost-Indischen Kompagnie, missbilligt entschieden das Vorgehen Englands gegen die Taeping sowohl aus moralischen Gründen wie aus Klugheitsrücksichten und führt die schweren Beschuldigungen, mit denen Englische Beamte die Taeping überhäuft haben, auf ihr richtiges Maass zurück, . . .” See Petermann, *Petermanns Geographische Mittheilungen*, vol. 9, *Mittheilungen aus Justus Perthes' geographischer Anstalt über wichtige neue Erforschungen auf dem Gesamtgebiete der Geographie* (Gotha: Justus Perthes, 1863), SS. 196–97.

<sup>27</sup> Charles E. McClelland, *The German Historians and England: A Study in Nineteenth-Century Views* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), Part II: “The German View of England in the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Periods,” pp. 27–60; Part III: “Anglo-German Fraternity—The Middle Decades,” pp. 61–160.

<sup>28</sup> “Blaubücher, wie das über Affghanistan von 1839 lassen die von unseren Anglomanen gepriesene Oeffentlichkeit und bewunderungswürdige Durchsichtigkeit der englischen äusseren Politik, als bittere Ironie erscheinen.” See Fischel, *Die Verfassung Englands* (Berlin: Ferdinand Schneider, 1862), S. 435.

<sup>29</sup> “Auch die jüngst veröffentlichte Chinesische Correspondenz soll in Beziehung auf die Taeping Rebellen, wie Obrist Sykes, ein sehr ruhiger, gemässigter Mann, der Regierung am 19. März d. J. vorwarf, gefälscht sein.” See ibid., S. 436.

until the Conquest of Nanking) published in 1853, the insurrection in China was one of the most significant event of the time: politicians of the whole country observed with curiosity the progress of the invading army, which, for three years, went straight ahead with the avowed aim of overthrowing the Tartar dynasty,<sup>30</sup> and the press in Europe came to regard the overthrow of the Tartar dynasty as “possible” in the meantime.<sup>31</sup>

There is disagreement among historians about whether the term “revolution” or “rebellion” should be employed to describe the Taiping movement in China; and it goes without saying that the very definition of “revolution” in English and that of *geming* 革命 in Chinese are slightly different. Thomas Taylor Meadows, an English interpreter and intelligence officer, was adamant that the Taiping should be called a rebellion, as the uprising at the time was directed against the rulers; and no change of the governmental principles and forms is involved. His famous saying is that “of all nations that have attained a certain degree of civilization, the Chinese are the least revolutionary and the most rebellious.”<sup>32</sup> What I wish to point out is that the European writers in general were not so cautious in picking the right word in their reports as Meadows did. But they did have a *penchant* for the word “revolution,” or they did refer to “revolution,” although the choice of the word might not be exact. It is particularly the case when the movement was deemed promising at the early stage.

The word “revolution” was used in the title of an essay published in the German magazine *Magazin für die Literatur des Auslandes* in 1853: “Die chinesische Revolution, die Engländer und das Christenthum” (The Chinese Revolution, the English people and Christianity). It was reported that, among other things, an English translation of the work of the French sinologists Callery and Yvan by Dr John Oxenford (1812–1877) was recently published.<sup>33</sup> In France, an article entitled “États Asiatiques—La Chine” (Asiatic conditions—China) and published in *Annuaire des Deux Mondes* (Yearbook of the Two Worlds) in 1854 reported that the European residents in China recognized that the revolt was becoming a revolution, and its triumph could open new perspectives to the policies of the Celestial Empire.<sup>34</sup> In the above two cases, just as the cases that will be discussed

<sup>30</sup> Callery et Yvan, *L'Insurrection en Chine depuis son Origine jusqu'à la Prise de Nankin*, p. 5.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., pp. 59–60.

<sup>32</sup> Meadows, *The Chinese and Their Rebellions*, p. 25.

<sup>33</sup> “Das Werk der beiden französischen Sinologen Ivan und Callery über den Aufstand in China haben wir bereits vor einigen Wochen in diesen Blättern (Nr. 102) erwähnt. Kürzlich ist dieses Buch auch in einer englischen Bearbeitung erschienen, deren Herausgeber, Dr. John Oxenford, noch Manches, nach dem dem Parlamente über denselben Gegenstand im August dieses Jahres vorgelegten offiziellen Aktenstücken, welche ebenfalls im Druck erschienen, hinzugefügt hat.” See Joseph Lehmann, herausgegeben, *Magazin für die Literatur des Auslandes*, 8 October 1853, Band 44, Juli bis Dezember 1853 (Berlin: Im Verlage von Veit & Comp., 1853), S. 481.

<sup>34</sup> “Ils reconnaissaient que cette révolte était en voie de devenir une révolution dont le triomphe pouvait ouvrir aux destinées politiques du Céleste-Empire des perspectives nouvelles.” See “États Asiatiques—La Chine,” in *Annuaire des Deux Mondes: Histoire Générale des Divers États, 1853–1854* (Paris: Bureau de la Revue des Deux Mondes, 1854), p. 889.

later, the word “revolution” does not necessarily convey the meaning of a change of governmental principles and forms very precisely, but it roughly refers to a forthcoming great change that was believed to be unprecedented. Sinibaldo de Mas (1809–1868), an eminent Spanish diplomat, wrote the following in his French work *L'Angleterre, la Chine et l'Inde* (England, China and India) published in Paris in 1858, which was quoted by *Отечественные Записки* (Patriotic Notes) in Saint Petersburg published in the same year: “The colossal empire of China is perhaps on the eve of the most profound change he has ever undergone since its existence, and the consequences that will come to the whole world from there are incalculable.”<sup>35</sup> It is known that the nineteenth century witnessed the rise of liberalism and nationalism in Europe; upheavals or revolutions were not infrequent, especially in France, Italy and Germany. Intellectuals in Europe who were supportive of

<sup>35</sup> “Le colossal empire de la Chine est peut-être à la veille du changement le plus profond qu'il ait subi depuis son existence, et les conséquences qui résulteront de là pour le monde entier sont incalculables.” See Sinibaldo de Mas, *L'Angleterre, la Chine et l'Inde* (Paris: Jules Tardieu, 1858), p. 162; “ПОСЛѢДНИЕ ГОДЫ КИТАЙСКОЙ ИМПЕРИИ (Recent Years of the Chinese Empire),” in *Отечественные Записки*, ТОМЪ CXVII (САНКТПЕТЕРБУРГЪ: ВЪ ТИПОГРАФИИ И. И. ГЛАЗУНОВА И КОМП., 1858), С. 187. Sinibaldo de Mas expressed similar ideas in another work in 1861: “All these reunited causes contributed to provoking and developing the current uprising called the Tae-pings, the insurrection which presented itself with characters so singular and unexpected. If it manages to win, it will bring in China the deepest change that this empire has ever experienced since its existence.” (Toutes ces causes réunies contribuèrent à faire naître et à développer l'insurrection actuelle, dite des Tae-pings, insurrection qui s'est présentée avec des caractères si singuliers et si inattendus, que si elle parvient à triompher, elle opérera en Chine le changement le plus profond que cet empire ait éprouvé depuis qu'il existe). See *La Chine et les Puissances Chrétiennes* (Paris: Librairie de L. Hachette et C<sup>ie</sup>, 1861), Tome 1, p. 163. In the aforementioned article “Recent Years of the Chinese Empire” in *Patriotic Notes*, it is claimed that the Manchurian authorities could not extinguish the revolt at its embryonic stage, when two or three easy victories would have stopped any further insurrection. From the very beginning, they could not disperse a small number of almost unarmed crowds of the rebels, who went out to the field against them nearly only with some sticks. Then, by now, the insurgents count their forces and there are hundreds of thousands of people; and their troops have had proper organization and excellent arms. It seems that one can have no more hopes already that the Chinese emperor would triumph over them by the strength of his own weapons (Если маньчжурская власти не сумели затушить мятежа въ его зародыши, когда двѣ-три очень-легкія побѣды, остановили бы всякое дальнѣйшее возстаніе, если онѣ не умѣли въ самомъ началь разсѣять немногочисленную и почти безоружную толпу мятежниковъ, которые вышли противъ нихъ чуть-ли не съ однѣми палками, то теперь, когда инсургенты считаютъ свои силы сотнями тысячъ, когда войска ихъ получили правильную организацію и прекрасное вооруженіе, нельзя, кажется, уже надѣяться на то, чтобы китайскій императоръ восторжествовалъ надъ ними силою своего оружія). See “ПОСЛѢДНИЕ ГОДЫ КИТАЙСКОЙ ИМПЕРИИ,” in *Отечественные Записки*, ТОМЪ CXVII, 1858, С. 205.

revolutions, as might be expected, would have a fairly good impression of the Taiping troops, which rose up against the despotic Manchu-led Qing dynasty, although the pictures among the Europeans on the Taipings might in fact be marred by distortions.

Rudolf G. Wagner reminded us that in the eyes of the Westerners, the conceptual model for China was essentially Greece. The Greeks had an old and free tradition, but they were enslaved by the pagan and despotic Turks. Lord Byron (1788–1824) was the representative of Romanticism in the Greek struggle.<sup>36</sup> In an article published several years later, Wagner continued that the Manchu tribes were normally referred to by the missionaries as “the Imperialists” or the “Tartar yoke.” “There was hardly any sympathy with this power in a generation which had seen an outburst of romantic feelings towards the Greek struggle for independence from the Ottoman Empire, an empire seen as being in the same league as the Qing: namely a decaying, militaristic, and dictatorial foreign occupant.”<sup>37</sup>

In 1860, Charles Hubert Lavollée wrote in *La Chine Contemporaine* to the effect that China suffered from numerous revolutions in the past, and she was then being tormented by a tremendous insurrection. Lavollée asked if one could illustrate this phenomenon by “the political language of old Europe.” Can we see the poor classes revolted against the wealthy; the employees accused their masters of avarice and greed; the peasants cursed the middle class; the proletarians armed themselves against the aristocrats? Lavollée’s answer was a definite negative.<sup>38</sup> It is beyond our scope to discuss if Lavollée

<sup>36</sup> Wagner, “China in der géographie imaginaire der Erweckungsbewegung des 19. Jahrhunderts,” in *Staatenbildung in Übersee: Die Staatenwelt Lateinamerikas und Asiens*, Band 2, S. 174.

<sup>37</sup> Wagner, “Understanding Taiping Christian China,” S. 134. In 1861, Stefanos Xenos (Στεφανος Ξενος, 1821–1894) recounted the heroic deeds of Lord Byron in his work *The Heroine of the Greek Revolution (Η Ήρωις της Ελληνικής Επαναστάσεως)*. “Who, as a Greek, was not running with tears to see that man who brought him back into the memory of the European by his honey-flowing poetry?” (Ποιος Έλλην δεν έτρεχε με δάκρυα να ίδη τον ἄνδρα εκείνον, όστις δια της μελιμρήτου αυτού ποιήσεως τον επανέφερεν εις την μνήμην του Ευρωπαίου;) Byron poured the mournings of the sounds of his lyric into the heart of slumbering Europe, and awakened it, mollified it, watered it with enthusiasm and sympathy for suffering Greece (όστις, χύσας τους πενθίμους της λύρας του ἥχους εις την καρδίαν της κοιμωμένης Ευρώπης, εξύπνισεν αυτην, την εμάλαξε και την επότισεν ενθουσιασμού και συμπαθείας δια την αξιοπόνετον Ελλάδα!!). See Στεφανος Ξενος, *Η Ήρωις της Ελληνικής Επαναστάσεως: ήτοι, Σκηναί εν Ελλάδι από τον έτοντος 1821–1828 (The Heroine of the Greek Revolution, that is, the Scenes in Greece by the year 1821–1828)* (ΕΝ ΛΟΝΔΙΝΩ: ΤΥΠΟΙΣ ΤΟΥ ΒΡΕΤΤΑΝΙΚΟΥ ΑΣΤΕΡΟΣ, 1861), ΤΟΜΟΣ Β, σσ. 45–46.

<sup>38</sup> “La Chine a subi de nombreuses révoltes; elle a été éprouvée à l’intérieur par de violentes crises; aujourd’hui même, elle est en proie à une insurrection formidable: aperçoit-on dans les causes qui ont amené ces convulsions aux différentes époques, ou dans les faits qui se sont produits, le moindre symptôme de soulèvement social, selon le sens que, dans le langage politique de notre vieille Europe, on attribue à ce mot? Voit-on les classes pauvres se révolter

(Continued on next page)

did have an accurate understanding of the Taiping cause or the social problems in China. The point here is that the French author obviously endeavoured to draw a comparison of the European model of “revolutions” with the situations in China, and in fact, not few of the writers in Europe at the time did the same thing.

It is widely known that Karl Marx (1818–1883) has formulated a set of ideas on the Oriental World, particularly India and China, concerning “the mode of production.”<sup>39</sup> As Karl August Wittfogel pointed out, Marx defined the two peculiar circumstances of Asiatic society, namely the government-controlled waterworks and the dispersed self-contained villages.<sup>40</sup> He referred to the Chinese court and its bureaucracy as the country’s ruling force, and pointed to the combination of small agriculture and small handicraft as the pivot or foundation of China’s economic order.<sup>41</sup> But all in all, as Wittfogel concluded, Marx’s comments on China provide few details, and their conceptual shortcomings are obvious.<sup>42</sup> With regard to the Taipings, Marx greeted the beginning of the revolutionary movement in East Asia in early years, but later his comment became increasingly castigatory.<sup>43</sup> He termed China as “this living fossil” (*dieses lebende Fossil*) in the article “Things Chinese” (*Chinesisches*) published in *Die Presse* in Vienna in 1862. He claimed that the purpose of the Taipings seemed to be nothing but destruction against the

(Note 38—Continued)

contre les classes riches, les salariés accuser l’avarice ou la cupidité des maîtres, le paysan maudire le bourgeois, le prolétariat s’armer contre l’aristocratie? En aucune façon.” See Lavollée, *La Chine Contemporaine*, pp. 161–62. A contemporary scholar has attempted to make comparisons between “old Europe” and nineteenth-century China. The Peasants’ War from 1524 to 1526 in northern Germany and the Taiping Rebellion of 1851 to 1864 in south and central China are two major cases of rural activism that sought to correct economic injustices inspired by millenarian religious beliefs. See Roxann Prazniak, “Popular Protest and Rural Activism: The Utopian Visions of Thomas Müntzer and Hong Xiuquan,” in Prazniak, *Dialogues Across Civilizations: Sketches in World History from the Chinese and European Experiences* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996), pp. 76–95, esp. p. 94.

<sup>39</sup> For Marx’s views on China, see Dona Torr, with an introduction and notes, *Marx on China, 1853–1860: Articles from the New York Daily Tribune* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1951); Donald M. Lowe, *The Function of “China” in Marx, Lenin, and Mao* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California, 1966); Choe Yoon Mok, *Karl Marx and Max Weber on Chinese Social Structure* (Amherst, NY: Council on International Studies, State University of New York at Buffalo, 1979), etc.

<sup>40</sup> Karl A. Wittfogel, “The Marxist View of China (Part 1),” *The China Quarterly* 11 (July–September, 1962), p. 4.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>43</sup> For a discussion of Marx’s views on China and the Taiping Revolution, see John Schrecker, “Marx and China from the Perspective of Traditional Chinese Social Theory,” in Kuo Heng-yü and Mechthild Leutner, eds., *Deutsch-chinesische Beziehungen vom 19. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart* (München: Minerva Publikation, 1991), SS. 43–82.

conservative marasmus in grotesquely abominable forms. However, the destruction was done without any germ of formation.<sup>44</sup> Perry Anderson asserted that in practice, neither Karl Marx nor Friedrich Engels (1820–1895) seemed to have been able to give Chinese history much study or thought.<sup>45</sup>

Some intellectuals came to realize that, similar to the case in Europe, nationalism was the core value of the Taiping revolution. René de Courcy (1827–1908), in his article reporting the origin and progress of the Chinese insurrection in *Revue des Deux Mondes* (Review of the Two Worlds) in 1861, sought to compare Hong Xiuquan with Zhu Yuanzhang 朱元璋 (r. 1368–1398), the founder of the Ming dynasty, as both of them proposed to expel the alien race that subjugated their country, and both were of obscure birth and humble beginning. Their difference resides in the fact that Zhu Yuanzhang grew up among the pagan monks, ignorant and corrupt, while Hong Xiuquan received Christian teachings from the missionaries.<sup>46</sup> This comparison demonstrates the typical supremacy of Christian faith in the eyes of the Westerners, as René de Courcy was forthright in speaking out: the Christian doctrines establish the greatness of the European civilization.<sup>47</sup> What is noteworthy is that the Europeans were misled to think that Hong Xiuquan had been made emperor and called Tiande 天德 (or Tien-ti, Tièn-tè, Tien-te, Teentih or other slight variants in different publications at that time); and he was a descendent of the Ming dynasty. Such a misunderstanding partly came from false reports at an earlier time, including the book of Callery and Yvan, added by a letter of Thomas Taylor Meadows. Callery and Yvan made a detailed comparison of Tiande and the Qing Emperor Xianfeng 咸豐 (“Hièn-foung” in the book of Callery and Yvan, r. 1850–1861) in their book published in 1853. They depicted Tiande as a young man not more than twenty-three, but he looked prematurely aged. He was serious and sad, and lived a very retired life. He did not communicate with the people around him except to give orders. He was taller than Xianfeng, but appeared less robust.<sup>48</sup> Callery and Yvan said that they circulated the picture of the chief

<sup>44</sup> “Einige Zeit bevor die Tische zu tanzen anfingen, fing *China*, dieses lebende Fossil, an zu revolutionieren. . . Ihre Bestimmung scheint keine andere, als dem konservativen Marasmus gegenüber die Zerstörung in grotesk abscheulichen Formen, die Zerstörung ohne irgendeinen Keim der Neubildung geltend zu machen.” See Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Werke* (Berlin/DDR: Dietz Verlag, 1961), Band 15, SS. 514–15.

<sup>45</sup> Perry Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State* (London: N.L.B., 1974), p. 494.

<sup>46</sup> “Tous deux se sont proposé, dès qu'ils ont vu leur fortune grandir, d'expulser la race étrangère qui opprimait leur pays; Tous deux sont d'une naissance obscure et ont humblement débuté. Seulement l'un a grandi parmi des moines païens, ignorans et corrompus, tandis que l'autre a reçu d'un missionnaire chrétien ou puisé aux sources mêmes de nos croyances, dans l'Évangile et la Bible, ces doctrines admirables qui ont fait toute la grandeur de notre civilisation.” René de Courcy, “L'Insurrection Chinoise: Son Origine et ses Progrès,” in *Revue des Deux Mondes*, Tome 34 (Paris: Bureau de la Revue des Deux Mondes, 1861), p. 359.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Callery et Yvan, *L'Insurrection en Chine depuis son Origine jusqu'à la Prise de Nankin*, p. 41.

of the rebels with a view to giving people an idea of the hairstyle and the costume borrowed from the Ming dynasty;<sup>49</sup> and for the entire year, Tiande rested in the shade, and his supporters merely spread the rumour that he was a descendant of the Ming.<sup>50</sup> Another French work, *L'Inde et la Chine* (India and China), authored by Auguste Ott and published in the same year, also claimed that the chief of the insurgents, “Tae-ping-wang” or “Tien-ti,” had taken the title of emperor.<sup>51</sup> Thomas Taylor Meadows, on the other hand, in a letter to Consul Rutherford Alcock (1809–1897) dated 26 March 1853, wrote the following:

After giving the above general conclusions, as to which I entertain no doubt, I may subjoin a few details, the accuracy of each of which I could not vouch for, but which appear credible.

The person of whom we heard as claiming the Imperial throne, under the title of Teentih, died some time back. His surname was Choo, that of the Mings, the last Chinese dynasty, of whom he declared himself a descendant. His son, a youth of two or three-and-twenty, is now the acknowledged head of the insurrectionary movement, claiming the throne under the title of Tae-ping. He is assisted by a number of able counsellors, chiefly literary gentry, who found their legitimate

<sup>49</sup> “Nous pensons qu'en faisant circuler cette effigie les chefs des rebelles ont eu surtout en vue de donner au peuple une idée de la coiffure et du costume renouvelés du temps des Ming.” See *ibid.*, p. 68. The portrait of the emperor Tiande was deliberately circulated by the rebels as rigorous revolutionary propaganda. The identity of Tiande Wang (T‘ien-te Wang 天德王) was an object of heated debate. Some scholars assert that Tiande Wang was Hong Daquan (Hung Ta-ch‘üan 洪大全), who was originally named Jiao Liang (Chiao Liang 焦亮, 1823–1852), a chief of the Heaven and Earth Society (Tiandi Hui 天地會). See Teng Ssu-yü, *New Light on the History of the Taiping Rebellion* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1950), pp. 20–24. Scholars like Yu Dagang 俞大綱, Xiao Yishan 蕭一山, Rong Mengyuan 榮孟源, and so forth, believe that Hong Daquan is a real historical figure. But Luo Ergang 羅爾綱 refutes outright the existence of this legendary character. See Luo, “Hong Daquan kao” 洪大全考, in Luo, *Taiping tianguo shishi kao* 太平天国史事考 (Beijing: Sanlian shudian 三聯書店, 1955), pp. 75–185. Some scholars maintain that members of the Heaven and Earth Society at that time called all their emperors as Tiande. See Deng Zhicheng et al., eds., *Taiping tianguo ziliao*, vol. 1, the first picture at the beginning of the book. Some point out that Tiande was the reign title of the anti-Manchu leaders like Lin Wanqing 林萬青 in 1851 and Huang Wei 黃威 in 1853. See Li Chongzhi 李崇智, *Zhongguo lidai nianhao kao* 中國歷代年號考 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2001), pp. 233–34.

<sup>50</sup> Callery et Yvan, *L'Insurrection en Chine depuis son Origine jusqu'à la Prise de Nankin*, pp. 68–69.

<sup>51</sup> “Le chef des insurgés, Tae-ping-wang ou Tien-ti, avait pris le titre d'empereur.” See Auguste Ott, *L'Inde et la Chine* (Paris: Imprimerie de Dubuisson et C<sup>e</sup>, 1853), p. 188. See also Charles MacFarlane (1799–1858), *The Chinese Revolution, with Details of the Habits, Manners, and Customs of China and the Chinese* (London: George Routledge and Co., 1853), p. 49.

path to distinction barred by the mal-administration of the Manchoos, and also ex-Mandarins, who had conceived themselves unfairly deprived of their rank.<sup>52</sup>

Based on the information above, a German author said in *Magazin für die Literatur des Auslandes* that the head of the insurrection, a young man named “Tien-te,” presented himself as a descendant of the Ming dynasty; and according to the interpreter Meadows, “Tien-te” had already died some years ago. The German author judged that Callery and Yvan had apparently confused the son with the father, and considered the two as the same person. He also quoted the opinion of some people that, “Tien-te,” whose name in Chinese meant “heaven-earth” (Tiandi 天地), was merely a symbolic name for the father of the throne pretender, who claimed to be the younger son of the God.<sup>53</sup> Here, we can notice that the German author simply used the words of Meadows to correct the viewpoint of Callery and Yvan; and he wrongly took the meaning of the word “Tien-te” as “heaven-earth.” According to the book of Callery and Yvan, it is clearly written that the word stands for “heavenly virtue” (vertu céleste).<sup>54</sup> Both the misunderstandings that Tai-ping-wang was “Tien-te” and was a descendant of the Ming continued in Europe in later years, as reflected in some important academic publications, including reference books like *Dizionario di Erudizione Storico-Ecclesiastica da S. Pietro sino ai Nostri Giorni* (Dictionary of Scholarship of Ecclesiastical History from Saint Peter to the Present Day) published in Venice in 1860.<sup>55</sup> In 1863, Wolfgang Menzel also said that the insurgents

<sup>52</sup> British and Foreign State Papers, 1853–1854, vol. 44 (London: William Ridgway, 1865), pp. 482–83.

<sup>53</sup> “Den Herren Ivan und Callery zufolge, ist, wie wir in unserem früheren Artikel erwähnten, das Haupt der Insurrection ein junger Mann, Namens Tien-te, der sich als Abkömmling der Ming-Dynastie darstellt. Nach einem Schreiben, welches der englische Dolmetscher Meadows unter dem 26. März dieses Jahres an den Konsul Alcock gerichtet, ist jedoch Tien-te bereits vor einiger Zeit verstorben. Sein Beiname war Tschu, wie die Mings Alle ebenfalls genannt worden. . . . Allem Anschein nach haben die Herren Yvan und Callery den Sohn mit dem Vater konfundirt und Beide zusammen für Eine Person angesehen. Wieder Andere sagen jedoch, Tien-te, welches auf Chinesisch so viel als Himmel-Erde heiße, sey blos ein symbolischer Name für den Vater des Thron-Prätendenten, der sich für den jüngeren Sohn Gottes ausgebe.” See Joseph Lehmann, herausgegeben, *Magazin für die Literatur des Auslandes*, 8 October 1853, Band 44, S. 481.

<sup>54</sup> Callery et Yvan, *L'Insurrection en Chine depuis son Origine jusqu'à la Prise de Nankin*, p. 71.

<sup>55</sup> “Un personaggio misterioso, ancor poco conosciuto, che talvolta chiamano Tien-te, altre volte Tae-ping-Wang, *Principe della pace* (poi ciò rettificherò), s’è dichiarato pretendente alla coronaimperiale della Cina, dapprima in qualità di discendente ed erede legittimo della dinastia de’ Ming, detronizzata alcuni secoli sono dalla dinastia tartara, attualmente regnante, . . .” See Gaetano Moroni (1802–1883), *Dizionario di Erudizione Storico-Ecclesiastica da S. Pietro sino ai Nostri Giorni*, vol. 98 (Venezia: Tipografia Emiliiana, 1860), p. 102.

named themselves “Taiping,” the men of general peace, and Hong Xiuquan named himself “Tien-te,” that is, the heavenly virtue.<sup>56</sup>

Philarète Chasles (1798–1873), professor of Comparative Literature at the College of France and librarian of the Bibliothèque Mazarine, associated the Taiping cause with multiple fabulous figures in Western literature. He labelled Hong Xiuquan as *Figaro chinois* (Chinese Figaro) or *Panurge chinois* (Chinese Panurge) in his *Orient: Voyages d'un Critique à travers la Vie et les Livres* (The Orient: Voyages of a Critic through His Life and His Books).<sup>57</sup> Figaro is a symbolic figure struggling against the aristocracy in the French play of Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais (1732–1799), *Le Mariage de Figaro* (The Marriage of Figaro). This play, written in 1778 and not allowed to be premiered until 1784, denounced aristocratic privilege and was considered as foreshadowing the French Revolution. Charles Nodier (1780–1844), a distinguished romantic novelist and academician of *L'Académie Française* (The French Academy), noted in his *Souvenirs de la Révolution et de l'Empire* (Memories of the Revolution and the Empire) that two dramatic works had the honour of the great initiative to influence the French Revolution substantially, and *Le Mariage de Figaro* was the first of the two.<sup>58</sup> Panurge, on the other hand, derives from an ancient Greek word Πανούργος, meaning “ready to do anything, wicked, knavish.”<sup>59</sup> Panurge is one of the principal figures in *La Vie de Gargantua et de Pantagruel* (The Life of Gargantua and of Pantagruel) of François Rabelais (c. 1494–1553) in the sixteenth century. Etienne-Jean Delécluze (1781–1863), a French painter and art critic, said in his work *François Rabelais, 1483–1553* that “Panurge, a crook and sycophant, is coward and boastful. It's hideous.”<sup>60</sup>

Conferring both honourable and pejorative titles on Hong Xiuquan in the same sentence, Philarète Chasles concluded the paragraph by pointing this beautiful Chinese

<sup>56</sup> “Sie nannten sich die Taiping (Männer des allgemeinen Friedens). Hung-siu-tsien selbst aber nannte sich Tien-te, die himmlische Tugend.” See Menzel, “Die Taiping. Engländer in Peking,” in *Allgemeine Weltgeschichte von Anfang bis Jetzt*, Band 12, S. 403.

<sup>57</sup> “Je continue l’histoire de ce Figaro ou de ce Panurge chinois, fils de paysan, qui, essayant une informe parodie de l’Evangile, secondeant les barbares, ouvrant passage aux idées occidentales et chrétiennes qu’il ne comprend même pas, appelant à lui les mécontents et les insurgés, commençant par la fraude son travail de résurrection ou de destruction, a créé l’armée des Taë-pings.” See Philarète Chasles, *Orient. Voyages d'un Critique à travers la Vie et les Livres* (Paris: Librairie Académique, Didier et C<sup>ie</sup>, 1865), p. 275.

<sup>58</sup> “Ainsi le théâtre influa sensiblement sur la révolution, qui n’influa pas sur lui. Deux ouvrages dramatiques, en particulier, eurent l’honneur de cette formidable initiative. Le premier, c’est *Figaro*.” See Charles Nodier, *Souvenirs de la Révolution et de l’Empire* (Paris: Charpentier, 1850), Tome 1, pp. 384–85. See also Claude Petitfrère, 1784, *Le Scandale du “Mariage de Figaro” : Prélude à la Révolution Française?* (Bruxelles: Editions Complexe, 1999).

<sup>59</sup> Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 9th ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940), p. 1299.

<sup>60</sup> “Panurge, escroc, courtisan, lâche et vantard. C'est hideux.” See Delécluze, *François Rabelais, 1483–1553* (Paris: Imprimerie de H. Fournier et C<sup>ie</sup>, 1841), p. 77.

enterprise to the boldest European booksellers, who would probably make huge profits thereby and become great Chinese civilizers, and would be placed naturally between Lycurgus of Sparta (Λυκοῦργος in Ancient Greek, c. 800 B.C.–c. 730 B.C.) and Triptolemus (Τριπτόλεμος in Ancient Greek).<sup>61</sup> Lycurgus is a legendary Spartan legislator. His military reforms were directed towards three Spartan virtues, that is, equality, military strength, and austerity.<sup>62</sup> Triptolemus, according to the ancient people of Attica, was taught by Ceres the art of agriculture, and it is he who educated the Greeks to sow corn and make bread.<sup>63</sup> We can see that Philarète Chasles, as a professor specializing in literature, displayed both an extensive knowledge and a playful attitude in commenting on the great insurrection in the East. By contrast, British critics appeared to be more sarcastic in creating images. The author of the radical *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* disparaged the Taiping insurgents as the “the Vikings of the East.”<sup>64</sup>

Judging from the nineteenth-century European history as a whole, we have good reason to believe that it is Germans and Italians who were the most sympathetic towards nationalism and revolution of the Taipings. In an article published in *Zeitschrift der Deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft* (Journal of the German Oriental Society) in 1856, Richard Gosche reported that the fluctuations of the revolution in China sparked the interest of the readers of the German newspapers, and a German edition of Évariste Régis Huc's (or Abbé Huc, 1813–1860) description of the Chinese Empire (It refers to Huc's masterpiece *L'Empire Chinois: faisant suite à l'ouvrage intitulé Souvenirs d'un Voyage dans la Tartarie et le Thibet* [The Chinese Empire: Following the Book *Memories of a Journey through Tartary and Thibet*]) was prepared in Leipzig in an attempt to provide more information to the public.<sup>65</sup> When Gosche looked back and re-examined the whole progress of the Taiping movement in 1871, he indicated that what interested them most

<sup>61</sup> “Je signale cette belle entreprise chinoise aux plus hardis de nos libraires, qui réaliseraient par là de beaux bénéfices, deviendraient de grands civilisateurs chinois, et se placeraient naturellement entre Lycorgue et Triptolème.” See Chasles, *Orient. Voyages d'un Critique à travers la Vie et les Livres*, p. 286.

<sup>62</sup> For the life of Lycurgus, see William Smith, ed., *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology* (London: Taylor and Walton, 1846), vol. 2, pp. 850–58.

<sup>63</sup> Charles Anthon, *A Classical Dictionary: Containing an Account of the Principal Proper Names Mentioned in Ancient Authors* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1855), p. 1356.

<sup>64</sup> “These ‘vikings’ of the East occupy every creek between Canton and the borders of Cochin-China.” See “Progress in China, Part II: The Taepings and their Remedy,” in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 93, no. 568 (Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1863), p. 148.

<sup>65</sup> “Die Schwankungen der Revolution, welche das stabile Reich der Mitte ergriffen hat, haben bei den Lesern der stillen deutschen Zeitungen solches Interesse gefunden, dass, um das Publicum zu orientiren, in Leipzig eine deutsche Ausgabe von des Missionars Huc Beschreibung des Chines. Reichs veranstaltet worden ist.” See Gosche, “Wissenschaftlicher Jahresbericht über das Jahr 1856,” in Brockhaus, *Zeitschrift der Deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, Band 11 (Leipzig: In Commission bei F. A. Brockhaus, 1857), S. 272.

was the development of the Taiping Revolution as an expression of a seemingly autonomous being. It was not a well-programmed political action, nor was it a misunderstood Christian movement. Rather, it was rooted in the contradiction between the Manchu and the Chinese.<sup>66</sup> Gosche here laid an enhanced emphasis on the irreconcilable tensions of the two races so as to justify nationalism. Karl Friedrich Neumann (1793–1870), a German Orientalist of his time and teacher of Thomas Taylor Meadows at the University of Munich,<sup>67</sup> sympathized with the Taiping movement from the very beginning. In his *Geschichte des englisch-chinesischen Krieges* (History of the Anglo-Chinese War), he lavished praise on Theodore Hamberg's book *Visions of Hung-Siu-Tschuen and Origin of the Kwang-si Insurrection* and wrote the following: "These visions of Hong not only fill a major gap in the history of the Prophet [i.e. Hong Xiuquan], his companions and the rebellion, but they also enrich our knowledge of the life of East Asian peoples. Mr. Hamberg has unconsciously written an excellent history of Chinese village, which deserved more to be fully translated than many other eastern works."<sup>68</sup>

In 1856, Neumann, in *Gelehrte Anzeigen* (Scholarly Notices) published by Königlich Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften (Royal Bavarian Academy of Sciences) in Munich, exhibited his admiration towards the uprising of Hong Xiuquan, and claimed that the Taipings could be compared most fittingly with the philosophical schools of antiquity and the clubs during the time of the first French Revolution.<sup>69</sup> He even proposed that the ruling dynasty in China should be destroyed, and all Chinese should be united and

<sup>66</sup> "Am meisten interessierte uns in jenen Kämpfen die Entwicklung der Tai-ping-Revolution als Ausdruck eines scheinbar autonomen Lebens. Sie war, wie wir jetzt immer deutlicher sehen, weder ein politischer Act nach einem bestimmten Programm noch eine missverständlich christliche Bewegung. Sie wurzelte vielmehr in dem berührten Widerspruch zwischen Mandschuthum und Chinesenthum." See Gosche, "Wissenschaftlicher Jahresbericht über die morgenländischen Studien, 1862 bis 1867," in *Zeitschrift der Deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, Supplement zum Bande 24, SS. 189–90.

<sup>67</sup> Thomas Taylor Meadows has recounted his early years of studying Chinese at the University of Munich and attending lectures of Karl Neumann in the Preface of *The Chinese and Their Rebellions*. See Meadows, *The Chinese and Their Rebellions*, "Preface," pp. vii–viii.

<sup>68</sup> "Diese Visionen des Hong ergänzen nicht blos eine große Lücke in der Geschichte des Propheten, seiner Genossen und der Rebellion; sondern sie sind auch eine Bereicherung unsrer Kenntniß des ostasiatischen Völkerlebens. Herr Hamberg hat, ohne es zu wollen und zu wissen, eine vortreffliche chinesische Dorfgeschichte geschrieben, welche es, mehr als viele andere östliche Werke, verdiente, vollständig übersetzt zu werden." See Karl Friedrich Neumann, *Geschichte des englisch-chinesischen Krieges*, zweite vermehrte Auflage (Leipzig: Teubner, 1855), S. 363.

<sup>69</sup> "Sie möchten am füglichsten mit den philosophischen Schulen des Alterthums und den Klubs zu den Zeiten der ersten französischen Revolution verglichen werden." See *Gelehrte Anzeigen, der Königlich Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften*, "III. Nr. 23," 5 November 1856 (München: Druck von I. G. Weiß Universitätsbuchdrucker, 1856), S. 177.

renewed into a gigantic whole under a new religion and a native ruler.<sup>70</sup> In fact, in the preface of his early translation work *History of the Pirates Who Infested the China Sea from 1807–1810*, he clearly stated that conquerors are deemed successful robbers, while robbers are unsuccessful conquerors. If the founder of the dynasty of the Ming had failed in his rebellion against the Moguls, history would have called him a robber; and if any one of the various robber-chiefs had overthrown the government of the foreigners, the official historiographers would have called him the far-famed, illustrious elder father of the new dynasty.<sup>71</sup> According to Neumann, robbers and pirates are the opposition party in the despotic empires of the East; and their history is far more interesting than that of the reigning despot.<sup>72</sup> We can easily learn from his words that revolutionaries could eventually become highly respected legitimate rulers as long as they succeeded in their revolutionary careers. He described the nature of the Taiping revolution in *Geschichte des englisch-chinesischen Krieges* as follows:

It is the war of the greedy businessman against seclusion, which obstructed him from exploiting the manifold natural products of East Asia and exchanging them for goods. It is the war of lots of missionaries from various Christian churches who want to establish the teachings of Christ on the ruins of the Chinese religions. It is the war of consuls, managing directors, and ambassadors, who, on behalf of their governments, register complaint on this and that, and demand this and that even on those things already granted. It is the war of inevitable progress, and the war of the foreigners craving for innovation against the ossified Chinese system. Finally, it is the war of the native tenant farmers against the system of Mandarins, from which comes the foreign domination. Their weaknesses are manifest to all peoples, as revealed in the Great Peace in Nanking, in the granting of the subsequent trade, and in the treaties of friendship.<sup>73</sup>

<sup>70</sup> “Die regierende Dynastie soll vernichtet, alle Chinesen sollen unter einer neuen Religion und einem einheimischen Herrscherhause zu einem grossen Ganzen vereinigt und erneuert werden.” See *ibid.*, S. 178.

<sup>71</sup> Yung-lun Yüan and Karl Friedrich Neumann, *History of the Pirates Who Infested the China Sea from 1807 to 1810*, translated from the Chinese original (London: Printed for the Oriental Translation Fund, 1831), “Translator’s Preface,” p. v.

<sup>72</sup> See *ibid.*, p. vi.

<sup>73</sup> “Es ist der Krieg des gewinngierigen Kaufmanns gegen die Abgeschlossenheit, welche ihm versagt, die mannichfachen Naturzeugnisse der östlichen Asiens auszubeuten und sie gegen Fabrikate umzutauschen. Es ist der Krieg einer Menge Sendboten der verschiedenen christlichen Kirchen, welche auf den Trümmern der chinesischen Religionen Christi Lehre aufbauen wollen. Es ist der Krieg der Konsuln, der Geschäftsführer und Gesandten, welche im Namen ihrer Regierungen über dies und jenes Beschwerde erheben, zu dem Gewährten noch dies und jenes verlangen. Es ist der Krieg des unvermeidlichen Fortschritts und des neuerungssüchtigen Beispiels der Fremden gegen das verknöcherte Chinesenthum. Hiezu wird endlich noch der Krieg der einheimischen Landsassen gegen das Mandarinewesen und die von ihm getragene

(Continued on next page)

Added to this, Neumann had occasion to criticize Evariste Régis Huc with regard to the understanding of the notion of “revolution.” Huc, in his *L'Empire Chinois*, recorded his experience of discussing with Édouard Drouyn de Lhuys (1805–1881), a French statesman and diplomat who became the first Foreign Minister of the Second French Empire (1852–1870), about “revolutions” in history. Huc held Drouyn in high esteem and said that in the midst of civil dissensions in France, Drouyn always knew how to retain respect and admiration from all parties. The two men talked about the old civilizations of Asia, whose history was so little known in Europe. These civilizations themselves must have undoubtedly been shaken by profound revolutions, and disrupted by major social crises.<sup>74</sup> Huc, a devoted Catholic, abhorred revolutions and claimed that it is China who came to inoculate the virus of revolution into the Mongols, who could no longer contain themselves. The Mongols thus needed upheavals and had to drown nations in blood and to devastate the world.<sup>75</sup> Due to their conservative attitudes, Drouyn and Huc were denounced by Neumann as a pliant man at the king’s court and a docile missionary in the preface of his book.<sup>76</sup>

Nonetheless, Neumann was by no means a friend of China. He believed that even if the Taiping insurgents managed to assume power in China, the leaders and their supporters would not recognize the unequal treaties formerly signed between China and the Western powers. The use of armed violence, he was convinced, was therefore necessary.<sup>77</sup>

Laurence Oliphant (1829–1888), a private secretary of Lord Elgin and a travelling writer by himself, remarked in his *Narrative of the Earl Elgin's Mission to China and Japan in the Years 1857, '58, '59* that, while India and China had successively occupied

(Note 73—Continued)

Fremdherrschaft kommen, deren Schwäche, im Frieden zu Nanking und in der Gewährung der nachfolgenden Handels - und Freundschaftsverträge, allem Volke offenbar wurde.” See Neumann, *Geschichte des englisch-chinesischen Krieges*, S. 358.

<sup>74</sup> “Peu de temps avant de commencer ce travail sur l’empire chinois, nous avions l’honneur de nous entretenir avec un de ces personnages, si rares aujourd’hui, qui, au milieu de nos discordes civiles, ont toujours su conserver l’estime et l’admiration de tous les partis. Nous parlions de ces vieilles civilisations de l’Asie, dont l’histoire est si peu connue en Europe, et qui, sans doute, avaient dû être, elles aussi, agitées par des révoltes profondes, bouleversées par de grandes crises sociales.” See Huc, *L'Empire Chinois: faisant suite à l'ouvrage intitulé Souvenirs d'un Voyage dans la Tartarie et le Thibet* (Paris: Librairie de Gaume Frères, 1854), Tome 2, p. 82.

<sup>75</sup> “Ces fortes et vigoureuses populations, en qui la Chine venait d’inoculer le virus des révoltes, ne pouvaient plus se contenir; il leur fallait des bouleversements, des nations à noyer dans le sang, un monde à ravager.” See ibid., p. 84.

<sup>76</sup> Neumann, *Geschichte des englisch-chinesischen Krieges*, S. v.

<sup>77</sup> “Wird die königliche Bruderschaft, werden ihre Minister und Anhänger, wenn sie einstens Herrn sind des Mittelreiches, die von England, Frankreich und den Vereinigten Staaten mit dem chinesischen Staate geschlossenen Verträge anerkennen? Ich bin überzeugt, sie werden diese Verträge, ohne Anwendung von Waffengewalt, nicht anerkennen.” See ibid., SS. 373–74.

the public mind for two years, the people at that time were absorbed in watching the destinies of Italy.<sup>78</sup> It obviously refers to the Italian unification campaign here. As everyone knows, Germany and Italy were then fighting for independence and were eager to shake off the fetters of Austria. Oliphant seemed to be talking about “revolution” in the West in one sentence and that in the East in another on the same page. What strikes our mind in particular is that, in the Italian translation of Oliphant’s work entitled *La Cina e il Giappone: Missione di Lord Elgin negli anni 1857, 1858 e 1859* (China and Japan: The Mission of Lord Elgin in the Years 1857, 1858 and 1859) published in 1870, an appendix concerning Taipings in China (Cina: I Tae-ping) was newly added at the end, which was absent in the original English version.<sup>79</sup> In this appendix, the author made a more discernible effort to correlate the revolutions in the West with those in the East. It is so written: “In these two latest volumes, Oliphant touched on the secret sects and the rebellions several times that agitate the authority of China today. [These secret sects and rebellions are] not fewer than [those in] our Europe.”<sup>80</sup> The author also remarked that there were in fact many secret societies in China with the names so varied and bizarre, similar to the case in Italy before 1848 and after 1866.<sup>81</sup> When starting to narrate the story of Hong Xiuquan and his attempt to topple the Qing government by utilizing Christian ideology, the author did not forget the struggle of the Italian antimonarchist Angelo Brofferio (1802–1866) against the aristocrats and the adventure of the Italian national hero Giuseppe Garibaldi (1807–1882): “Who does not know how much audacity is worth in the country of Brofferio and Garibaldi? Therefore, there is no need to be astonished when he [Hong Xiuquan] managed to establish a religion and to disintegrate the empire, that is, to face up to a phantom, scary only for those who dared not face it.”<sup>82</sup> The author emphasized that the Taipings, with the unwavering aim of demolishing the old building of China, spoke first of all in the name of nationalism, and then of the highest and least vague principles.<sup>83</sup> He

<sup>78</sup> Laurence Oliphant, *Narrative of the Earl Elgin's Mission to China and Japan in the Years 1857, '58, '59* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1859), vol. 2, pp. 480–81.

<sup>79</sup> Lorenzo Oliphant, *La Cina e il Giappone: Missione di Lord Elgin negli anni 1857, 1858 e 1859* (Milano: Corona e Caimi Editori, 1870), vol. 2, pp. 333–41; idem, *Narrative of the Earl Elgin's Mission to China and Japan in the Years 1857, '58, '59*, vol. 1, pp. 451–92; vol. 2, pp. 482–96.

<sup>80</sup> “In questi due ultimi volumi si toccò più volte delle sètte secrete e delle ribellioni che oggi sommovono la Cina, non meno dell’Europa nostra.” See Oliphant, *La Cina e il Giappone: Missione di Lord Elgin negli anni 1857–1858 e 1859*, vol. 2, p. 333.

<sup>81</sup> “. . . che v’abbia tante società secrete e con nomi così varj e bizzarri, quanto in Italia prima del 1848 e dopo il 66.” See ibid., p. 334.

<sup>82</sup> “Nel paese di Brofferio e Garibaldi chi non sa quanto valga l’audacia? non si stupirà dunque se riusci a fondar una religione e a scassinar l’impero, cioè affrontare un fantasma, spaventoso soltanto per chi non osasse affrontarlo.” See ibid., p. 335.

<sup>83</sup> “Fatto è che i Tae-ping, crollando l’edifizio annoso della Cina, parlando dapprima a nome della nazionalità, poi di principj più alti e meno vaghi, . . .” See ibid., p. 340.

likened removing the Tartars from China to removing the Austrians from Italy in the conclusion: “That revolution, in which one sought to stir up the sentiment of nationality, talking about removing the domination of the Tartars like removing that of the Austrians from Italy, continues even today to agitate the Middle Kingdom.”<sup>84</sup> “Revolution” did not exactly mean the same thing for the people in France, Germany, and Italy during the nineteenth century. For the latter two, “revolution” could be connected with nationalism; but for the former, a class struggle against the privileged was particularly stressed. When the Europeans reported the Taiping revolution in China, they did show an attempt to relate the movement to the real situations in their own countries, although they might not be certain about the correctness of their images of the East. In a way, we can say that the originally unsure pictures might be further blurred by their own wishful thinking. The question of whether the Taiping movement was rebellious or revolutionary in nature appeared to be less important.

### Images of the Taiping Religion

Religious people have a propensity to underscore religious factors when they endeavoured to account for the success or failure of the Taiping insurgents. In 1863, Albert Ostertag, a German author of the Evangelical Missionary Society in Basel, claimed in the magazine published by his own society as follows: “There is hardly a distressing phenomenon in our days in the pagan areas for the missionaries that can be compared with the political and religious conditions of the Taipings. If in early years we pinned easy and not entirely unjustified hopes on this half-Christian and national political movement, then we must now admit that these hopes are completely dashed.”<sup>85</sup> Ostertag stressed that during the beginning of the movement, the seeds there were all promising, hopeful, and noble, but with the passage of time, everything deteriorated at an alarming rate, and “Tien-wang” (Tianwang 天王), the head of the Taipings, published two documents concerning their religious ideology, which appeared to Albert Ostertag to have dealt a fatal blow to this originally glorious action.<sup>86</sup> In 1867, Maurice Block (1816–1901), a statistician and economist of Prussian origin, stated in his *Dictionnaire Général de la Politique* (General Dictionary of Politics) that the Taiping insurgents were reckoned as a sect of Christianity

<sup>84</sup> “Quella rivoluzione, a cui si cercò mescolare il sentimento della nazionalità, parlando di rimuovere la dominazione dei Tartari, come dall’Italia rimoveasi quella degli Austriaci, continua anche oggi a sommovere l’impero di mezzo, . . .” See *ibid.*, p. 341.

<sup>85</sup> “Es giebt in unsren Tagen kaum eine betrübendere Erscheinung auf den heidnischen Missionsgebieten, als die politischen und religiösen Zustände der Taipings. Wenn in früheren Jahren sich leise und nicht ganz unberechtigte Hoffnungen an diese halbchristliche und politisch-nationale Bewegung anknüpften, so muß man jetzt bekennen, daß diese Hoffnungen völlig im Zerrinnen sind.” See Albert Ostertag, *Evangelische Missionsgesellschaft in Basel*, herausgegeben, *Evangelisches Missions-Magazin* (Basel: Im Verlag des Missions-Comptoirs, 1863), S. 164.

<sup>86</sup> See *ibid.*, S. 165.

for a time, and this view was widespread in Europe around 1860, which had earned them some sympathy among the Westerners. Nevertheless, after a more thorough examination, the Westerners drew back from their illusions at last.<sup>87</sup>

As early as in the 1850s, some European reports believed that the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom spread genuine Christian ideas. It was a gift from the God on the Chinese people, as an article in *Göttingische gelehrte Anzeigen* (Göttingen Scholarly Notices) so wrote.<sup>88</sup> Later, however, the majority view in the West held that the religion of the Tai-pings was by and large a strange mixture of superstitions or a distorted form of Christianity, in spite of the fact that the reform of Hong Rengan in the late 1850s and early 1860s might have polished the eyes of the Westerners for a short period of time. The Protestant missionaries gave much credence to the words of this new prince, as reflected in their letters and articles, which were later cited in some publications like *The Church of England Magazine* and *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*.<sup>89</sup> Sinibaldo de Mas, in his French

<sup>87</sup> “TAIPING, nom des insurgés chinois qui ont tenu en échec, pendant tant d’années, le gouvernement de l’Empire céleste et qu’on a considérés un moment comme une secte chrétienne. Cette opinion, répandue en Europe vers 1860, leur avait valu une certaine sympathie dont on est revenu après plus ample examen.” See Maurice Block, *Dictionnaire Général de la Politique* (Paris: Chez O. Lorenz, 1867), Tome 2, p. 990.

<sup>88</sup> “Nur das Eine, daß Christenthum, dieses vornehmste Element aller wahrhaften Bildung, wird es nicht von sich weisen; bereits hat es begonnen, sich dieses anzueignen, nicht aber als ein Geschenk der Fremden, sondern als eine Gabe Gottes an das chinesische Volk.” See Königliche Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, *Göttingische gelehrte Anzeigen* (Göttingen: gedruckt in der Dieterichschen Univ.-Buchdruckerei, 1856), Band 3, S. 1690.

<sup>89</sup> For Hong Rengan, See So Kwan-wai, Eugene P. Boardman, and Ch’iu P’ing, “Hung Jen-kan, Taiping Prime Minister, 1859–1864,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 20, no. 1/2 (June 1957), pp. 262–94; Yuan Chung Teng, “The Failure of Hung Jen-k’an’s Foreign Policy,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 28, no. 1 (November 1968), pp. 125–38; Jen Yu-wen 簡又文, “Ascendancy of Hung Jen-kan (1859–1860),” in Jen, *The Taiping Revolutionary Movement*, with the editorial assistance of Adrienne Suddard (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1973), pp. 351–76; Xia Chuntao 夏春濤, *Cong shushi, Jidutu dao wangye: Hong Rengan 從塾師、基督教徒到王爺：洪仁玕* (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2007). An article in *The North China Herald* about Hong Rengan was written as follows: “Sir, in No. 520 of your paper, a few remarks were made on the revolutionary movements of the Tai-pings. It was stated that Hung Jen had arrived at Nanking, and was promoted to the rank of king; that his knowledge of Christianity, foreigners, and foreign affairs, must be far more extensive and correct than that of his relative the chief; that his position would enable him to do much towards correcting error, and promoting the cause of truth; and that we should possibly find that some of the books which have been recently published evince a deeper insight into and a more comprehensive view of the true nature of the Christian religion.” See Church Pastoral-aid Society London, *The Church of England Magazine* 49, p. 395. An article written in response to the Proclamations of Hong Rengan published in *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine* is as follows:

(Continued on next page)

work *La Chine et les Puissances Chrétiennes* (China and the Christian Powers) published in Paris, was dubious about the sincerity of Hong Rengan. He pointed out that this beloved man of the Protestant missionaries still kept a harem; and according to Hong Rengan himself, he did so in order to avoid offending the feelings of his less enlightened brothers.<sup>90</sup> Albert Ostertag remarked as follows:

We also remember how much hope we attached to Hung-jin, the Shield-King, who once seemed to stand in the true Christian faith and have been active as a catechist at the London Missionary Society; and [we remember] how confidently we expected that by his arrival in Nanking and with his influence upon the Taiping Emperor, his intimate friend, a new better future among the rebels will be carved out. But the words of the missionaries were not heard and they were all finally expelled from Nanking. Hung-jin himself was carried away by the torrent of ruin.<sup>91</sup>

Some Europeans had a predilection for the religious terms specific to the history of Christianity to interpret the Taiping religion in China. They, for instance, introduced the concept of “apostasy” in commenting on such a distorted form of Christianity. Charles Dupin (1784–1873), a distinguished French Catholic mathematician and engineer, wrote the following under a small subtitle “Un apostat mystérieux” (A Mysterious Apostate) in his long introduction of the emperor-ordered work *Exposition Universelle de 1851: Travaux de La Commission Française sur l'Industrie des Nations* (Universal Exposition of 1851: Works of the French Commission on the Industry of the Nations):

---

(Note 89—Continued)

“Very probably some men might consider these five paragraphs to be charged with blasphemy, or evil speaking, with misrepresentation, or superstition; but the statements are identical with the creed of the Churches of England, Scotland, and Ireland; of the Free Church and United Presbyterian Churches of Scotland, and the English and Irish Presbyterian Churches; of the Baptist and Independent Churches of England; of all the different Methodist churches of England and the other kingdoms; of the Waldenses of Italy; the Huguenots of France; the Lutherans of Germany and Scandinavia; the Calvinists of Geneva and Holland; the reformed churches of the Continent; and the numerous Presbyterian churches of America, counted no longer by hundreds but by thousands.” See *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine* 27 (Edinburgh: Sutherland & Knox, 1860), p. 565.

<sup>90</sup> Sinibaldo de Mas, *La Chine et les Puissances Chrétiennes*, Tome 1, p. 242.

<sup>91</sup> “ . . . auch erinnern wir daran, wie große Hoffnungen man auf den Schildkönig Hung-jin setzte, der einst im wahrhaftigen Glauben zu stehen schien und als Katechist bei den Londoner Missionaren thätig gewesen war, und wie man zuversichtlich erwartete, daß durch seine Ankunft in Nanking und durch seinen Einfluß auf den ihm innig befriedeten Taiping-Kaiser eine neue bessere Zukunft unter den Rebellen sich anbahnen werde. Allein die Missionare wurden nicht gehört und endlich ganz aus Nanking vertrieben; Hung-jin aber ward selbst in dem Strom des Verderbens mit fortgerissen.” See *Evangelisches Missions-Magazin* (1863), S. 171.

Having read the important writing I have just transcribed, I cannot help thinking that there is a European apostate among the ignorant Taipings in their operation who is responsible for spreading the biblical phraseology and reconciling the parody of the Saint Scriptures with bloodthirsty and predatory ambition of the devastators. Perhaps this apostate made the insurgents hope that by using the magic of this language, they would catch the attention of the formidable foreigners. But the point the insurgents forgot was that the mistake of the foreigners could not last long.<sup>92</sup>

As we all know, one important factor accounting for the heretic nature of a sect of Christianity in Western religious history is the negation of the concept of *Trinity*. In this sense, the Taiping Christianity was beyond doubt a real heresy.<sup>93</sup> Filippo Manetta wrote that the character of the religious belief of the Taipings was still “imperfectly known,” yet he could tell that the insurgents were “Christian iconoclasts” in the strictest sense of the word. They worshipped only one God, unique and true. They called him the solemn Ruler, the supreme Lord; almighty, omniscient, and omnipresent. He was the Governor of all things according to his own will.<sup>94</sup> The Taipings regarded Jesus as the first-born Son

<sup>92</sup> “En lisant l’écrit important que je viens de transcrire, je ne puis m’empêcher de croire que les ignorants Taï-ping ont à leur service quelque apostat européen, chargé d’étaler la phraséologie biblique et de concilier la parodie des Saintes Écritures avec l’ambition sanguinaire et spolia-trice des dévastateurs. Peut-être cet apostat faisait-il espérer aux insurgés qu’en ayant recours à la magie de ce langage on capterait les redoutables étrangers. C’était oublier que l’erreur de ceux-ci ne pourrait pas être durable.” See Charles Dupin, “Introduction: Force Productive des Nations Concurrents, Depuis 1800 jusqu’à 1851,” in *Exposition Universelle de 1851. Travaux de La Commission Française sur l’Industrie des Nations*, publié par ordre de l’Empereur (Paris: Imprimerie Impériale, 1860), Tome 1, Troisième Partie, p. 564.

<sup>93</sup> Wang Rongsheng 王戎笙 and Gong Siren 貢嗣仁, “Taiping tianguo de Shangdijiao” 太平天国的上帝教, in Beijing Taiping tianguo lishi yanjiuhui 北京太平天国歷史研究會, ed., *Taiping tianguo xuekan*, vol. 2 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985), pp. 4–5; Luo Ergang, “Xin Yizhao shengshu, Qinding Jiu Yizhao shengshu, Qinding Qian Yizhao shengshu ba”《新遺詔聖書》《欽定舊遺詔聖書》《欽定前遺詔聖書》跋, in *Taiping tianguo xuekan bianweihui*, ed., *Taiping tianguo xuekan*, vol. 3 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1987), pp. 117–20.

<sup>94</sup> “Il carattere del loro *credo religioso* è tuttora imperfettamente da noi conosciuto. Essi sono CRISTIANI ICONOCLASTI nel più stretto senso della parola, ed adorano un solo Dio *unico e vero*, che chiamano coi nomi di *Reggitore augusto, Signore supremo, Onnipotente, Onnisciente, onnipresente, e Governatore di tutte le cose secondo il suo beneplacito ed il suo volere*. Essi considerano Gesù come il primogenito del Padre Celeste, e come il fratello superiore degli uomini di tutte le nazioni sotto il cielo; e perciò riguardano gli uomini di tutte le nazioni come membri di una sola ed universale *confraternita*; ma non riconoscono l’egualanza del Figlio col Padre, né l’esistenza del Paraclito, come risulta dal Nuovo Testamento.” See Filippo Manetta, “Cose della Cina: I Tae-Pings o la Ribellione Cinese,” in *Rivista Contemporanea*, vol. 34 (Torino, Italy: Stamp. Dell’Unione Tipografico-Editrice, 1863), p. 134.

of the Heavenly Father and the top brother of the men of all nations under heaven. For this reason, they viewed the men of all nations to be members of a single and universal brotherhood, and yet they did not recognize the equality of the Son with the Father, nor the existence of the Holy Spirit, as the New Testament said.<sup>95</sup> Taiping religion was thus considered apostate and heretic in Latin Christianity. The British and American missionaries, as pointed out earlier, also became disenchanted with the Taiping's religion in later years.

The antagonism against Taiping Christianity was particularly vehement in countries like France and Italy, where Catholicism constituted a dominant influence. A French writer emphasized in 1854 in *Annuaire des Deux Mondes* that while the catechism of the Taipings contained numerous reminiscences of the Bible, one could not say, just as the Protestant missionaries asserted from the outset, that the insurgency was inspired by Christian principles.<sup>96</sup> Charles Hubert Lavollée wrote an essay on "the Jesuits in China" in 1856 in *Revue des Deux Mondes* and jotted down a few sentences about the Taipings from the perspectives of the Catholic missionaries, namely Father Nicolas Brouillion and Évariste Régis Huc. The former was a member of the Society of Jesus while another was that of the Congregation of Saint-Lazare.<sup>97</sup> The books reporting their own journey in China were successively published in Paris in the early 1850s.<sup>98</sup> Both of them agreed that corruption as well as negligence of the Tartar government were the origins of the insurrection, and they declared that the religious doctrines preached in the proclamations of the Taiping leaders did not originate directly in Catholicism or Protestantism, as they had thought at the beginning of the battle. It was certain that the drafters of the bizarre books of the Taipings had numerous fragments of the Bible before their eyes, yet the travesty of the Christian dogma in Taiping's religion was so crude and vulgar.<sup>99</sup> Brouillion, according

<sup>95</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>96</sup> "États Asiatiques—La Chine," in *Annuaire des Deux Mondes: Histoire Générale des Divers États, 1853–1854* (1854), p. 898.

<sup>97</sup> Lavollée, "Les Jésuites en Chine," in *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 1856 (Seconde Période) (Paris: Bureau de la Revue des Deux Mondes, 1856), Tome 1, p. 534.

<sup>98</sup> Évariste Régis Huc, *Souvenirs d'un Voyage dans la Tartarie, le Thibet et la Chine pendant les années 1844, 1845 et 1846* (Paris: Librairie d'Adrien le Clere et C<sup>ie</sup>, 1850); idem, *L'Empire Chinois, faisant suite à l'Ouvrage institué Souvenirs d'un Voyage dans la Tartarie et le Thibet* (Paris: Librairie de Gaume Frères, 1854); Nicolas Brouillion, *Missions de Chine: Mémoire sur l'état actuel de la Mission du Kiang-Nan, 1842–1855* (Paris: Julien, Lanier et C<sup>ie</sup>, 1855).

<sup>99</sup> "L'opinion des missionnaires catholiques sur le caractère de ce mouvement est intéressante à connaître; le père Brouillion exprime à cet égard un avis conforme à celui du père Huc. Les deux prêtres . . . sont d'accord pour attribuer à la corruption et à l'incurie du gouvernement tartare l'origine de l'insurrection, et pour déclarer que les doctrines religieuses prêchées dans les proclamations des chefs ne procèdent directement ni du catholicisme, ni du protestantisme, comme on l'avait pensé au début de la lutte . . . et il est certain que les rédacteurs de ces livres bizarres ont eu sous les yeux de nombreux fragmens de la Bible; mais le travestissement des dogmes est si grossier, qu'il n'y aurait ni honneur ni profit pour le christianisme à

(Continued on next page)

to Lavollée, originally thought that the overthrow of the old order might pave the way for Catholicism, and that if Oriental paganism was shaken and ruined by this final jolt, the Cross would rise triumphantly in China at long last.<sup>100</sup> This idea was proved unrealistic, but here at least we may observe that the Catholic French did not defend the Manchu dynasty unreservedly at the very beginning. Another Catholic preacher, Just-Jean-Étienne Roy (1794–c. 1871), on the other hand, emphasized in his *Un Français en Chine pendant les années 1850 à 1856* (A French in China during the years 1850 to 1856) that the Protestant preachers might consider the insurrectional movement as being inspired by the principles of Christianity, but for the Catholic missionaries, they were not to be deceived for a moment. As he noticed, each victory of the insurgency brought disorder, pillage, and massacre.<sup>101</sup> In fact, an essay in *Annuaire des Deux Mondes* in 1855 reported that the enthusiasm of the Protestant missionaries cooled down partly because of the customs and superstitious practices of the Taiping supporters.<sup>102</sup> The appalling atrocities committed by the Taiping troops considerably distressed the Westerners and further strengthened the belief of the missionaries that the religion of the insurgents was heretic in nature. In 1859, *Berliner Revue* (Berlin Review) reported that the destruction of the old regime in Nanking was first practised in conjunction with cruelty. The heads of 20,000 Manchu Tartars of all ages and sexes in the city were relentlessly hewn down by the Taiping troops after the conquest of Nanking.<sup>103</sup>

Modern commentators pointed out that Victorian England (1837–1901) was one of the most religious that the world has ever known.<sup>104</sup> Nevertheless, the fundamental

---

(Note 19—Continued)

s’attribuer une part considérable d’initiative ou d’impulsion dans le mouvement révolutionnaire.” See Lavollée, “Les Jésuites en Chine,” in *Revue de Deux Mondes*, 1856 (Seconde Période), Tome 1, p. 534.

<sup>100</sup> “ . . . il pense que le renversement du vieil ordre de choses aplanira les voies au catholicisme, et que sur les ruines du paganisme oriental, ébranlé par cette dernière secousse, la croix s’élèvera triomphante.” See *ibid.*, p. 535.

<sup>101</sup> “Pour nous autres missionnaires catholiques, nous n’y avons pas été trompés un instant, et nos frères protestants n’ont pas tardé à revenir de leur illusion, en voyant la conduite des insurgés dans les provinces conquises par eux, conduite fort peu en harmonie avec les principes du christianisme. Chaque victoire amène le désordre, le pillage et le massacre.” See Roy, *Un Français en Chine pendant les années 1850 à 1856* (Tours: Ad Mame et C<sup>ie</sup>, 1862), pp. 176–77.

<sup>102</sup> “États Asiatiques—La Chine,” in *Annuaire des Deux Mondes: Histoire Générale des Divers États, 1854–1855* (Paris: Bureau de la Revue des Deux Mondes, 1855), p. 872.

<sup>103</sup> “Die Vernichtung der alten Herrschaft wurde in Nanking zuerst mit Grausamkeit betrieben. 20,000 Mantschu-Tataren jeden Alters und Geschlechtes, die sich in der Stadt befanden, wurden nach der Eroberung mit kaltem Blute und in aller Ruhe bis auf den letzten niedergehauen.” See *Berliner Revue*, Drittes Quartal, 1859 (Berlin: Verlag von Ferdinand Schneider, 1859), S. 457.

<sup>104</sup> R.C.K. Ensor (1877–1958), *England, 1870–1914* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936), pp. 137–38; (*Continued on next page*)

religious difference of Britain and France could scarcely be reconciled. In 1857, when the two countries collaborated in the war against China, a German writer in *Unsere Zeit* (Our Time) wrote an article entitled “Die gegenwärtigen Aufstände des chinesischen Reichs” (The Current Revolts of the Chinese Empire) and displayed much pessimism concerning the relation of the two countries. He found it impossible for Britain and France to come to an understanding since “an agreement that emerges from *Politik* and from the pressing relations of those in power cannot resolve the inner fundamental conflict of different peoples.”<sup>105</sup> What is the inner fundamental conflict? As the German author pointed out, The Roman Catholic French wanted to build churches in China, while Protestant England sought everywhere to establish a home for gospels in Asia based on modern culture. North America stood on the side of the latter. The corollary is that the British and American people tended to support the Taiping insurgents, although their Christianity was highly flawed. This explains why the conservative Roman Catholic France ultimately preferred the pagan and oppressive Manchu to the seemingly Christian insurgents, while individual English and American people favoured the Taipings. The Anglo-Chinese press, with very few exceptions, obviously sympathized with the rebellion.<sup>106</sup> The German writer for *Magazin für die Literatur des Auslandes* elaborated Lindesay Brine’s argument that the religion of the Taipings was markedly different from the Christianity of the British church, and had no special connection with Catholicism either. The Taiping insurgents originated

## (Note 104—Continued)

D. C. Somervell, “The Victorian Age,” in W. N. Medlicott, ed., *From Metternich to Hitler: Aspects of British & Foreign History, 1814–1939: Historical Association Essays* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963), p. 84.

<sup>105</sup> “Werden sich aber Engländer und Franzosen über die Parteiergreifung im Mittelreiche verständigen können? Wir halten dies für unmöglich. Eine Einigung, hervorgegangen aus der Politik, aus den drängenden Verhältnissen der Machthaber, kann die innern grundsätzlichen Zwiespalte verschiedener Völker nicht wegräumen.” See *Unsere Zeit. Jahrbuch zum Conversations-Lexikon* (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1857), Band 1, S. 690.

<sup>106</sup> “Die römisch-katholischen Franzosen gehen darauf aus die Chinesen für ihre Kirche zu gewinnen; das protestantische England strebt allenthalben in Asien dahin, aus dem Fundamente der modernen Cultur dem Evangelium eine Heimat zu errichten. Nordamerika und die evangelischen Christen des Continents stehen ihm helfend zur Seite. Die nothwendige Folge dieses principiellen Widerspruchs ist die Neigung des englischen und amerikanischen Volks, vorzüglich der einflußreichen Frommen im Lande und der Missionare, für die Taiping und ihr wenn auch höchst mangelhaftes Christenthum. . . . Der römisch-katholischen Kirche sind aber die heidnischen, verfolgungssüchtigen Mandschu und ihre Mandarine am Ende noch lieber als die Rebellen, welche die Heilige Schrift von Staatswegen in ihrem Himmlichen Reiche verbreiten. Katholische Franzosen waren es, welche den Aufstand in Schanghai niederschlugen und die Stadt den Mandschu auslieferten, während einzelne Engländer und Amerikaner den Rebellen Vorschub leisteten und leisten. Die anglochinesische Presse steht, mit seltenen Ausnahmen, auf Seite der Taiping.” See ibid.

in the overthrow of Buddhism and they were powerful iconoclasts.<sup>107</sup> But in the eyes of Brine, Catholicism, in terms of external manifestation, bore a striking similarity to Buddhism. This is why Brine, a typical British, believed that if the Taiping Christianity could be purified little by little, it would perhaps be in harmony with the popular Anglo-Saxon race.<sup>108</sup>

Some observations can be made in this regard. As I noted earlier, German authors relied quite heavily on the information provided by Lindesay Brine's book during the 1860s notwithstanding that they might not accept his viewpoints entirely. As Catholicism did not absolutely preponderate over Protestantism and other Christian denominations in Germanic areas, the opinions of the German and the British would possibly concur on the question of the Taiping religion. This explains in part why the German author here was willing to recount the points of the Brine's book. Another explanation is that, as cited in a footnote above, the Protestant missionaries in China were elements of the Second Great Awakening of the Revivalist Movement, and the character of the revivalists was strongly transnational. The analogy of the Taipings as a part of a worldwide outpouring of the spirit, as Rudolf G. Wagner wrote, remained a powerful conceptual tool and expectation among evangelical missionaries.<sup>109</sup> However, it is ironical that the revivalists were considered to have left the sphere of legitimate Christianity, and their sympathy with the Taipings only reflected to what degree they had detached themselves from mainstream Christianity.<sup>110</sup>

On the other hand, it is true that the Taiping insurgents did destroy Catholic churches in Jiangnan 江南, since the Catholics revered Virgin Mary and a number of other saints;<sup>111</sup> and admittedly, the insurgents were also friendly towards the Anglo-Saxon Protestant missionaries in particular.<sup>112</sup> But as far as I am concerned, it is unwise to state that Catholicism and Buddhism were similar in terms of iconolatry. In Roman Catholicism, the status of Virgin Mary and various saints (so-called "idols" in Brine's sense) can never be compared with that of the Almighty God, while in vulgarized Buddhism, the situation is vastly different. It is evident that the "idols" in Catholicism and Buddhism are not parallels, not to mention that Brine had in fact no deep understanding of the Buddhist philosophy. The Roman Catholics supported the despotic Manchu authority in the end not only because the

<sup>107</sup> Joseph Lehmann, herausgegeben, *Magazin für die Literatur des Auslandes*, Band 63, S. 93.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid. See also Lindesay Brine, *The Taiping Rebellion in China*, pp. 351, 354–55.

<sup>109</sup> Wagner, "Understanding Taiping Christian China," SS. 139–40.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., S. 141.

<sup>111</sup> Jen Yu-wen, *Taiping tianguo dianzhi tongkao* 太平天国典制通考 (Hong Kong: Jianshi Meng-jin shuwu 簡氏猛進書屋, 1958), vol. 3, pp. 1827–31.

<sup>112</sup> As Eugene Powers Boardman pointed out, to judge from the nature of the terms that the Taipings borrowed and from their iconoclastic attitude toward the use of images it seems certain that the Taipings took their so-called Christianity not from Catholic sources but from the first generation of Protestant Christian missionaries to reach China. See Boardman, *Christian Influence upon the Ideology of the Taiping Rebellion, 1851–1864* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1952), p. 41.

Taipings hysterically destroyed Catholic churches and idols, but also because the Catholics had indeed a grave fear of revolutions of any type. As mentioned above, the existing authority could probably provide effective protection for the Catholic missionaries. Furthermore, both the European and American governments ultimately supported the Manchus as they wanted to maintain the post-war treaty system.

It is by now nearly a scholarly consensus that, although the New Testament and the traditional Chinese classics such as *Shangshu* 尚書 (Classic of Documents) also played a part,<sup>113</sup> the religion of the Taiping insurgents was influenced strongly by the *Pentateuch* (The first five Books of Moses) of the Old Testament.<sup>114</sup> This point can be easily seen in the jealous and violent nature of the God, the unswerving determination in the destruction of idols and rival gods, as well as the upholding of the Ten Commandments in Taiping Christianity. As early as in the mid-nineteenth century, Karl Friedrich Neumann already identified the government form of the Heavenly Kingdom as a pure theocracy grounded on the model of the Old Testament.<sup>115</sup> As an Italian article written by Filippo Manetta in *Rivista Contemporanea* (Contemporary Magazine) stated, like the Israelites under the leadership of Moses, the Taiping troops believed that they should act under the guidance of the only leader who was raised by the Almighty as the executor of his divine will on earth.<sup>116</sup> Filippo Manetta thought that more or less the Taiping Christianity bore a resemblance to Judaism because they observed the Sabbath as a day of celebration, but what makes the difference is that, as far as he knew, there were no places of public worship, nor were there proper ministers of the Gospel and Christian doctors.<sup>117</sup>

One interesting point worthy of note is that the Europeans at the time intentionally established various curious images on the religious character of the Taipings. These images in a way divulged the paucity of the understanding of the subject on the part of the Europeans, although their judgements were not entirely ungrounded; and more importantly, the Europeans were prone to associate the false Christian nature of the Taipings

<sup>113</sup> Jen Yu-wen, *Taiping tianguo dianzhi tongkao*, vol. 3, pp. 1773–78, 1788–98, 1816–24; Wang Qingcheng, *Taiping tianguo de lishi he sixiang* 太平天国的歷史和思想 (Beijing: Zhongguo renmin daxue chubanshe 中國人民大學出版社, 2010), pp. 235–41.

<sup>114</sup> Boardman, *Christian Influence upon the Ideology of the Taiping Rebellion, 1851–1864*, p. 54; Xia Chuntao, *Cong shushi, Jidutu dao wangye: Hong Rengan*, p. 89.

<sup>115</sup> “Die Regierungsform des himmlischen Reiches, —so nennen die Gläubigen in Hong am liebsten ihren Staat—, ist eine reine Theokratie nach dem Muster des alten Testaments.” See Neumann, *Geschichte des englisch-chinesischen Krieges*, S. 371.

<sup>116</sup> “I loro governo è una *teocrazia*, . . . Al pari degli Israeliti sotto la guida di Mosè, essi si credono sotto la guida di *Uno* che è stato alzato dall’Onnipotente per essere l’esecutore della sua volontà divina sulla terra, . . .” See Filippo Manetta, “Cose della Cina: I Tae-Pings o la Ribellione Cinese,” p. 131.

<sup>117</sup> “Osservano il Sabato come giorno di festa, al pari degli Israeliti, ma da quanto consta, non hanno luoghi di pubblica adorazione, né ministri del Vangelo, né Dottori cristiani, propriamente detti.” See *ibid.*, p. 134.

with other “rival religious characters.”<sup>118</sup> One of the most prevalent impressions of the insurgents among the Europeans was Islam. They thought that the Heavenly King was another Muhammad (c. 570–632), which implies that the Heavenly King was a prophet and his dogmas were harsh and radical.<sup>119</sup> This point is rarely presented by contemporary Chinese scholars. In the early 1850s, Stanislas Clavelin (1814–1862), a French Jesuit who had been appointed to accompany an expedition to Nanjing, wrote in a letter that Hong Xiuquan seemed to indicate the successor of Muhammad, and the characteristics of the doctrine of the Taipings resembled Mohammedanism.<sup>120</sup> René de Courcy wrote that the doctrine of the Taipings was obviously the work of a man who had only received incomplete lessons of Christianity. Without proper spiritual guidance, the man got lost in the apparent contradictions presented in the New and Old Testament. It was first of all the work of an impostor, who was less skilful but more daring than Muhammad.<sup>121</sup> An article published a year later in *Feuille Religieuse du Canton de Vaud* (Religious Paper of the Canton of Vaud) in Lausanne articulated a similar point: The rebels themselves did not have a well-determined religious system, and some people feared that the Heavenly King might become the second Muhammad.<sup>122</sup> Philarète Chasles claimed that, just like Oliver Cromwell (1599–1658)<sup>123</sup> and Muhammad, the Heavenly King demanded severe and

<sup>118</sup> Rudolf G. Wagner also claimed that the Western perception of and attitude towards the Taiping rebellion in China was determined through a debate concerning the most appropriate Western analogy for this movement, not through an empirically based analysis of the character of the rebellion itself. See Wagner, “Understanding Taiping Christian China,” S. 132.

<sup>119</sup> In 1853, a writer signing himself as “Conservative” linked the Taipings to the Mormons in America as well: “The history of the Mormon impostors and fanatics in America, notwithstanding Joseph Smith’s blasphemous claim to be the prophet of the Lord, and to see visions and work miracles, . . . states that their observances of the *outward* ceremonies and forms of Christianity, and their acquaintance with and professed belief of the Christian scriptures, were exemplary.” See “Conservative,” “The Religious Character of the Insurgents,” *China Mail*, 1853, quoted in MacFarlane, *The Chinese Revolution*, p. 133. Nevertheless, this analogy was seldom used among European writers.

<sup>120</sup> Nicolas Brouillion, *Missions de Chine*, pp. 382–84.

<sup>121</sup> “Sa doctrine est évidemment l’œuvre d’un homme qui n’avait reçu que des leçons incomplètes du christianisme, et qui, faute de guide spirituel, s’est perdu dans les contradictions apparentes que présentent le Nouveau et l’Ancien Testament. C’est avant tout l’œuvre d’un imposteur, d’un imposteur moins habile, plus hardi que Mahomet, . . .” See René de Courcy, “L’Insurrection Chinoise,” p. 354.

<sup>122</sup> “Les rebelles eux-mêmes n’ont pas un système religieux bien décidé. Quelques personnes craignent que le roi céleste, comme on nomme le chef des rebelles, ne devienne un second Mahomet.” See *Feuille Religieuse du Canton de Vaud* (Lausanne, Switzerland: Au Bureau de la Feuille Religieuse, 1862), p. 36.

<sup>123</sup> William Alexander Parsons Martin (1827–1916) linked the Chinese Insurgents to Cromwell in a letter dated 2 May 1856: “The Chinese Insurgents are not fighting for freedom in the Roman sense; but that they are fighting for what they believe will insure the prosperity of China, no

(Continued on next page)

absolute morality of his followers.<sup>124</sup> Just-Jean-Étienne Roy, on the other hand, offered a very inspiring comparison by judging that Hong Xiuquan was actually stronger than Muhammad, since the former could communicate personally with God immediately while the latter merely received messages through the intermediary of the angel Gabriel.<sup>125</sup> Some critics contended that the ascetic style of the Taipings resembled that of a Puritan. The Puritans were hostile towards all religious authorities on earth, notably the institutions of Roman Catholicism; and their ascetic way of living also distinguished themselves quite sharply from the Protestants, despite the fact that there were indeed some common grounds shared by the two groups. Rudolf Wagner said that the association with the Puritans was a regular way of denouncing the revivalist enthusiasts.<sup>126</sup> On 8 October 1853, an article published in *Magazin für die Literatur des Auslandes* said that the insurgents had a truly puritanical character, as they did not drink alcohol, nor did they smoke opium and respect property; they said a fervent prayer before every meal.<sup>127</sup> Here, the Puritans can be considered as another example of so-called “rival religious groups” in the eyes of some Europeans. To establish images of these rival religious groups for the Taipings is, in a sense, a good reflection of the religious ideology of the Europeans in the meantime.

As no unique, omnipotent, omniscient, and omni-good God comparable to that in Christianity or Islam could be found in Chinese religions, added by the fact that creation story or creation myth did never prevail in China, the Europeans were eager to learn more about the religious life of the Chinese people when the two distinct cultures confronted with each other during the nineteenth century. They wondered how Chinese people dealt with the typical religious issues such as afterlife, eternity, the absolute value of justice, the final judgement, the Apocalypse, and so forth. To put it more precisely, they were particularly concerned about how Chinese people prepared themselves psychologically in face of inevitable tragedy in life such as death or even complete destruction of the existing world.

(Note 123—Continued)

one who has given their publications a candid perusal, will venture to deny. Cromwell was not fighting for liberty in the Roman sense, when he executed the king, turned out the parliament, and subjugated the United Kingdom with a strong hand, yet few who had read the pages of Carlyle will deny that he was a lover of his country, and knew above most men what his country wanted.” See Martin, “The State and Prospects of the Belligerent Parties in the Chinese Empire,” considered in two letters to the Hon. Caleb Cushing, Attorney General of the United States, Letter II: Ningpo, May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1856, in *Shanghae Almanac for the Bissextil or Leap Year of 1856, and Miscellany* (Shanghae: Printed at the “N.-C. Herald” Office, 1856).

<sup>124</sup> Chasles, *Orient. Voyages d'un Critique à travers la Vie et les Livres*, p. 277.

<sup>125</sup> Roy, *Un Français en Chine pendant les années 1850 à 1856*, p. 171.

<sup>126</sup> Wagner, “Understanding Taiping Christian China,” S. 141.

<sup>127</sup> “ . . . dies trug natürlich nur dazu bei, das chinesische Volk der Armee der Insurgenten geneigter zu machen, die einen wahrhaft puritanischen Charakter hat, weder Spirituosen trinkt, noch Opium raucht, das Eigenthum achtet und vor jedem Mahle ein imbrüstiges Gebet verrichtet.” See Joseph Lehmann, herausgegeben, *Magazin für die Literatur des Auslandes*, 8 October 1853, Band 44, S. 481.

As an article in *Magazin für die Literatur des Auslandes* remarked, the Europeans still knew too little about the inner spiritual life of the Chinese as well as the history of the country. “For the time being we have no hopes of learning even a little bit more certain about the East or constructing a correct image by combining the reports available.”<sup>128</sup> Therefore, their judgement was often a result of a combination of scarce information and reasonable imagination. In 1863, when the insurrection was about to end in failure, a French writer in *Le Correspondant* (The Correspondent) still claimed that Hong, full of Confucianism in his mind that he could hardly repudiate completely, unfortunately remembered the first God he knew was the God of Confucius, unique and almighty, creator and controller of the universe, who rested beyond the Christian God.<sup>129</sup> But the fact is that Hong Xiuquan did not regard the God of Confucius as an almighty creator of the world that outshined the God of Christianity. Hong Xiuquan, inspired by the pamphlet of Liang Fa 梁發 (1789–1855), merely thought that the God of the West was equivalent to *Shangdi* 上帝 mentioned in the Chinese classics, especially in the document “Yixun” 伊訓 in *Shangshu* and in the poem “Huangyi” 皇矣 in the category of “Daya” 大雅 (Major Festal Songs) in *Shijing* 詩經 (Classic of Poetry).<sup>130</sup> After the conquest of Nanjing in 1853, Hong decreed that the books of Confucius and Mencius should be put into flames, and the temple of Confucius be turned into a slaughterhouse.<sup>131</sup> Moreover, contemporary views hold that in Chinese philosophy, *Shangdi* can be a controller of the world in some ways, but is not an anthropomorphic creator as depicted in the *Pentateuch*.

## Conclusion

Journalism continued to flourish in nineteenth-century Europe. The Europeans in the second half of the century were kept well informed about the great movement in the Celestial Empire based chiefly on English sources. In a sense we may assert that intellectuals in countries like Germany and Italy were passive readers of the news of the Taiping movement, which swept through sixteen provinces in China and caused the deaths of over twenty million at the minimum. As emphasized at the beginning of the paper, the writings

<sup>128</sup> “Vorläufig dürfen wir nicht hoffen, auch nur etwas annähernd Genügendes darüber zu erfahren, oder aus den vorliegenden Relationen durch Combination das Richtige herauszufinden—dazu sind wir Europäer überhaupt noch zu wenig mit dem inneren Geistesleben der Chinesen, der Geschichte und den Zuständen ihres Landes bekannt, . . .” See Joseph Lehmann, herausgegeben, *Magazin für die Literatur des Auslandes*, Band 63, S. 92.

<sup>129</sup> “Mais, trop imbue du confucianisme pour l'avoir complètement répudié, Hong se souvient malheureusement aussi du premier Dieu qu'il ait connu, du Dieu de Confucius, unique et tout-puissant, créateur et régulateur de l'univers. Ce dernier déborde ici sur le Dieu des chrétiens.” See *Le Correspondant: Recueil périodique: religion, philosophie, politique, sciences, littérature, beaux-arts*, Tome 59 (Paris: Charles Douniol, 1863), p. 257.

<sup>130</sup> Wang Qingcheng, *Taiping tianguo de lishi he sixiang*, pp. 215–20, 230–34.

<sup>131</sup> Luo Ergang, *Taiping tianguo shi* 太平天国史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1991), vol. 3, p. 1659.

of the Europeans with regard to the Taipings may not be original in every respect, and it is not a rare phenomenon that they relied quite heavily on the English materials at hand. However, it is erroneous to suppose that the European writers confined their work to merely copying or translating their sources. As revealed extensively in various publications in Europe in the meantime, the considerations and attitudes of the writers on the Continent differed in some ways from those in the English-speaking community, although I do not deny outright the existence of the common grounds they might share. My principal concerns in this paper encompass the new images established by the creative and resourceful Europeans in cultural context on one hand, and the ways by which they related the Taiping movement to their own political issues and religious principles on the other.

Finally, as we all know, in the course of the nineteenth century, a group of Western scholars were particularly enthusiastic about the socio-economical conditions as well as religious philosophy in China. Given the limited availability of resources at the time, they attempted to integrate their ideas into theoretical frameworks with the aim of establishing principles deemed applicable to human history as a whole and giving systematic interpretations of the fundamental differences between the developments of the Oriental and the Occidental World. Auguste Comte (1798–1857), Karl Marx, Pierre Laffitte (1823–1903), and Max Weber (1846–1920) were among the most affectionately remembered. Although these theoreticians were not experts themselves on this Chinese revolutionary movement, and their views on China may originate from diversified sources (Laffitte, for instance, mentioned the Jesuits and the French sinologist Abel Rémusat [1788–1832] in the first place),<sup>132</sup> the Taiping revolution did stimulate their thoughts in many ways that helped to shape the final form of Marxism and contribute to the birth of modern sociology.<sup>133</sup>

<sup>132</sup> Pierre Laffitte, *Considérations Générales sur l'Ensemble de la Civilisation Chinoise et sur les Relations de l'Occident avec la Chine* (Paris: Chez Dunod, 1861), pp. 2–3.

<sup>133</sup> For Marx, see above. For Auguste Comte and Pierre Laffitte, see Georges-Marie Schmutz, *La sociologie de la Chine: Matériaux pour une histoire, 1748–1989* (Berne, Switzerland: Peter Lang, 1993), pp. 69–81; for Weber, see *ibid.*, pp. 95–105.

# 十九世紀下半葉法國、德國及意大利刊行的書刊雜誌中所見太平天国的形象

(中文提要)

黃正謙

關於太平天国，第一手資料絕大部份乃中英文所撰。中文的不必多說，英文的原材料，一部份是由英美的政治、軍事、外交人物所撰，一部份是由當時在華的新教傳教士所撰。

本文論法國、德國及意大利刊行的書刊雜誌中所見太平天国的形象。首先，法、德、意三國（德、意兩國在 1871 年統一），基本上可代表十九世紀西歐大陸最重要的國家，與當時以海權見稱的遠東殖民者大英帝國不同，亦與大西洋對岸的民主國家美國不同。十九世紀的西歐，政治上是一個動盪不安的年代；第二，三國之中，以德國及意大利對太平天国運動的親身理解最為薄弱，少數法文著作還算是第一手材料。德、意兩國對太平天国的認識，大部份來自英文報道。雖然西歐三國的報道未必是第一手資料，有些報道甚至是以訛傳訛（例如認為洪秀全是「天德」皇帝，為明朝皇室後裔），對考證太平天国史事本身，價值微乎其微；但這些報道並不止於翻譯而已，多少反映了三國的作家對太平天国的印象。這些印象，與三國當時的政治和宗教背景是分不開的。研究西歐三國對太平天国的印象，就是探索在十九世紀的歷史語境下，西歐如何理解東方大國這次反對異族專制政權、卻又摻雜基督教教義的農民運動。易言之，本文旨在探討在「第二次西學東漸」期間，西歐如何將太平天國的政治運動及宗教形態，與西歐的固有觀念聯繫起來，例如歐洲作家特別用西方宗教史的「叛教」觀念，評論太平天國，並為太平天國建立種種「敵對宗教人物」形象，當中以穆罕默德最為突出。當然，最後一點無可置疑：太平天國對馬克思主義及現代社會學，有很大的啟發意義或催生作用。

**關鍵詞：**西歐 太平天國叛亂 太平天國革命 太平天國基督教 洪秀全

**Keywords:** Western Europe, Taiping Rebellion, Taiping Revolution, Taiping Christianity, Hong Xiuquan