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THE ROLE AND ORGANIZATION OF CHINESE SECRET SOCIETIES IN THE LATE CH'ING : A Reconsideration of Some of the Literature

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is concerned with the examination of southern Chinese secret society organization and role in the late Ch'ing (1870-1912), during which the Hung League or Triad group of societies predominated. The first chapter will deal with the orthodox and heterodox streams of Chinese thought and their relation to one another and to traditional society. This is followed in the next chapter by a discussion of the institutional frame-work in which Chinese secret societies operated, ending with a summary of the social conditions in the second half of the nineteenth century. Chapter III will enlarge on the method of research (alluded to in the Introduction) to be employed in this thesis, and the myth (with an interpretation) and the actual formation of a secret society (with an example from Tientsin.) Chapter IV will deal with the functions of the association for its members, and their activities in the larger society. Chapter V will discuss the social composition of the Hung League, showing the predominance of "outcasts" and slum proletariat in the leadership and the rank-and-file membership, despite the avowed "classlessness" of the recruitment principles. This picture will be shown to be true only of the period under discussion. Chapter VI will present first the Triads' principles of organization (their hierarchical structure) and an interpretation of their organization according to the method outlined in the third chapter. Chapter VII will summarize the initiation ritual in numbered note-form, and will attempt to interpret its meaning for the members in psychological and organizational terms. Chapter VIII will discuss briefly the relation of secret society "statutes" to state law; and also the extent to which the concerns of solidarity influenced the degree of severity and the type of penalties set out in the regulations. The concluding chapter will recapitulate briefly the historical connection of peasant rebellions with secret society activity and ideology from the earliest times. This will be followed by a characterization of the role of secret societies in the first stages of structural change in early Republican China. The thesis will end on a short discussion of the relevance of Chinese secret societies to understanding the phenomenon of their counterparts in other countries.

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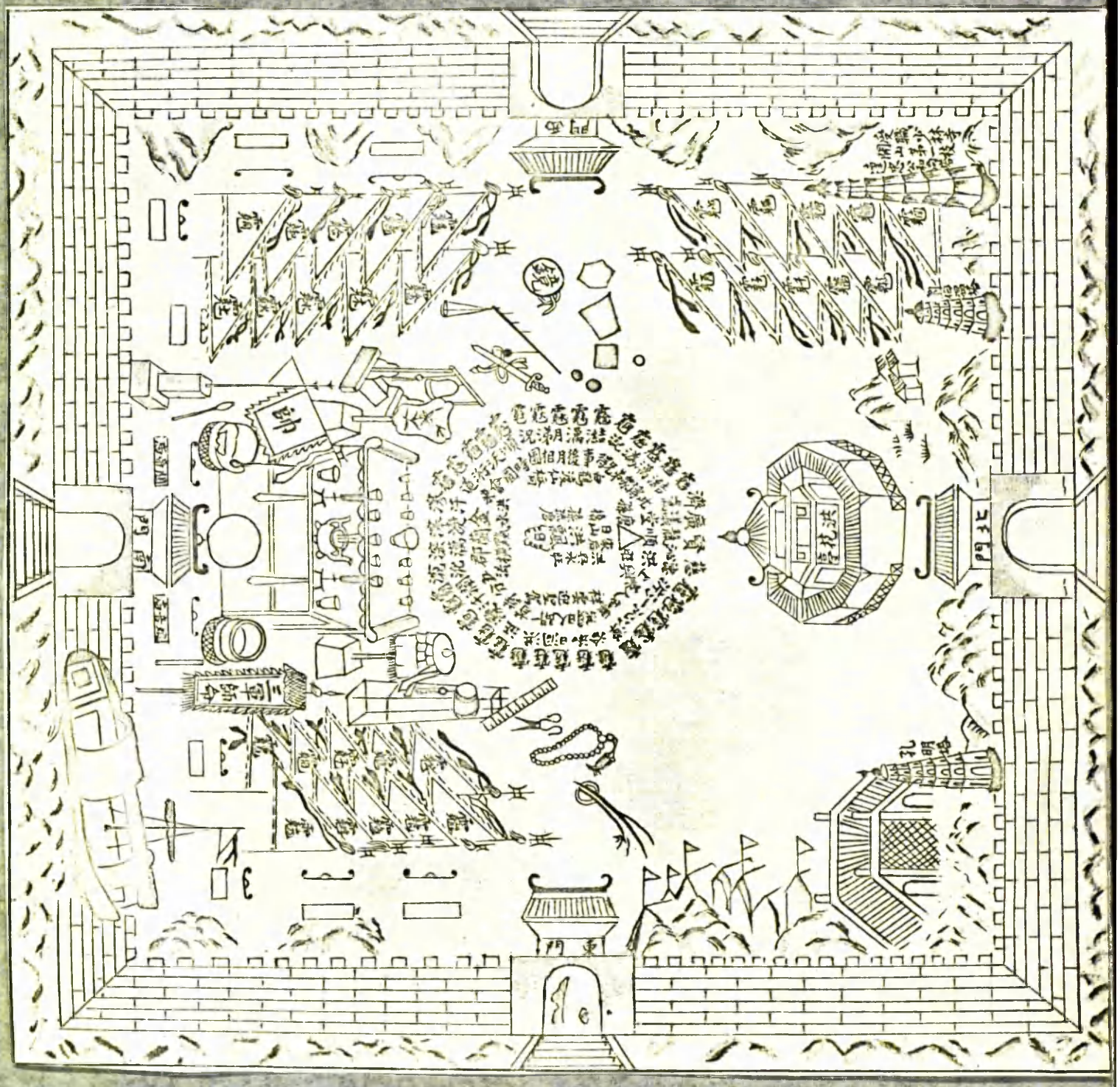

INTRODUCTION

The main problem in the study of secret societies is undoubtedly the dearth of first-hand information. Secret societies wish above all to remain secret, and betrayal of secrecy is drastically sanctioned, to the extent that even ex-members are unwilling to give information to outsiders.(1)

Despite these obstacles, a number of writers--sociologists, historians, political scientists, police-officers and missionaries--have already made considerable in-roads into this hazardous terrain. Georg Simmel laid the theoretical foundations for the sociological study of political secret societies.(2) C.H. Wedgwood followed with further definitions of the secret association according to its function and role within the larger society.(3) The historians E.J. Hobsbawm and Thomas Frost(4), link secret societies to primitive forms of political opposition, while political theorists such as Maurice Duverger(5) discuss "clandestine organization" within the context of different types of conflict in society.(6) Though there are a number

of accounts of particular secret societies, few theoretical or comparative discussions of their organization and role in society exist.

The sociological study of specifically Chinese secret societies tends to draw mostly on the work of Simmel and Hobsbawm. The studies by S.A. Lyman[7], C.N. Reynolds[8], and Maurice Freedman[9] concentrate on Chinese secret societies overseas, for example, in the United States Of America and Malaya, and not in China itself. Only G.W. Skinner[9a], in his study of Chinese market-places provides direct, though all too brief information on a Chinese secret society within China operating in the mid-twentieth century. Up to the time of writing, no sociologist has attempted a fuller and more systematic study.

This lacuna is understandable in face of the obstacles to fieldwork and the rapidly changing political scene in China. However, both Jean Chesneaux and Barbara E. Ward have recently written general historical surveys

of secret societies in China, and in addition, there do exist a number of useful historical sources: Chinese Republican histories, European missionary reports, English and Dutch colonial police records.(10) Given the scarcity of detailed sociological treatments of the subject, it is hoped that the present study will throw light on an important but neglected area of the traditional society in China.

This thesis will attempt to develop the discussion by focusing on the southern secret societies, known collectively under the name of the Hung League or Hung Men(11) during the late 19th century. I have chosen this particular group of societies, firstly, for their relative accessibility through library documents, and secondly, because the role of this League appears to have been decisive in the early stages of the transformation of traditional Chinese society. Owing to the absence of sufficiently detailed information about any one society in particular, a composite model of the southern type of secret society

will be constructed from the information available about these societies as a whole. It is hoped that such a discussion will help to confirm or modify the existing hypotheses on secret societies in general.

The purpose for the study of secret societies is two-fold. Firstly, in order to understand a society in its totality, it is crucial to investigate, not only the orthodox and easily "visible" institutions and culture (such as the administragive system, lineage, family, land-holding units, neighbourhood groupings, etc.) but also the "invisible" institutions regarded as heterodox, and "sub-cultural" to the larger society. It is then possible to discover how the relationship between the "visible" and the "invisible" institutions may constantly modify the over-all structure of a given society at a given time.

Secondly, all social groupings are, in a sense, secret societies; a family, a friendship circle, a professional or recreational club, a social class, each of which

develops certain peculiarities of behaviour, conscious or otherwise, which are only recognizable to the members themselves. Here, however, the "secret" element may be important, but not all-pervasive. Where the secret element is generalized within a social group, that group is bound to be organizationally and functionally distinct from the other groups. A study of the structure* and ritual forms of the secret society (Chapters VI and VII) will make possible a comparison with some less implacable institutions of everyday life.

This examination of the specific significance of secret societies of the late Ch'ing for the sociology of secret societies as a whole requires a provisional classification of the different types of secret societies to be found elsewhere. This is to prevent any confusion arising from a diffuse and undifferentiated use of

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* "structure" is used here in Raymond Firth's definition of the word as "principles of organization". "Organisation", in the sense of the operation of this structure in a particular place and time. See pp.28-40 in Elements of Social Organization, 3rd edition, 1961.

the concept--a danger already indicated by C.H. Wedgwood.[12] A secret society may be classified, as Wedgwood suggests, by function--both manifest and latent--[13], or as Lyman proposes, by "mode of adaptation" and "attitude toward larger society."[14] Lyman's typology distinguishes two "modes" of adaptation, the "instrumental" and the "expressive." The activities of an instrumental secret society have a definite political or social goal; those of an expressive secret society need no such justification, they have a ritual character. Lyman also distinguishes two "attitudes", the"conformative" and the "alienative," qualifying the modes of adaptation. A conformative secret society upholds or even intensifies the dominant values of the larger or host society, the alienative secret society rejects them. The following is a diagram of the schema, with Lyman's own examples:

A Typology of Secret Societies with Suggested Examples

Mode of Adaptation	Attitude Toward Larger Society	
	CONFORMATIVE	ALIENATIVE
INSTRUMENTAL	John Birch Society	Chinese Triad Society
EXPRESSIVE	Twentieth-century Freemason	African Mani

This typology is certainly elegant and goes some way to clearing up confusion in the concept of secret association. It has to be remembered that this typology should only be used to distinguish a secret society at any one time and place. For example, the Chinese Triads can only meaningfully be fitted into the "instrumental" and "alienative" box during certain periods and within China itself, as we shall see (Chapter IX). A more fundamental difficulty concerns the nature of the two dichotomies. Secret societies probably do tend to be either alienative or conformative in a mutually excluding manner (as we shall see this depends as much on the host as on the secret society itself.) However, the dichotomy of "expressive" and "instrumental" modes distinguishes not so much between different secret societies as between the different <u>levels</u> of the activity of a given secret society. It will be seen that the Triads were often both instrumental and expressive in their mode of adaptation (see Chapters VI and VII), at the same time.

The following will be a provisional and selective

synthesis drawing upon the hypotheses of Simmel, Wedgwood and Lyman; it will be used as the guide to the analysis of Chinese secret societies in the late nineteenth century.

Firstly, a secret society is a voluntary association; but "voluntary" in the sense that membership is not based on ascribed values, for membership may be acquired not only as a result of the individual's free will, but also as a consequence of social pressure.

Secondly, a secret society possesses a body of knowledge not accessible to outsiders. This may include its very existence, a language, ritual material and magical symbols, the identity of the members, and its ostensible functions. These are a protective shield against the outside society and a way of differentiating morally and politically the secret society from the outside society. This secret culture permits the members as a group to behave among themselves and towards outsiders in a manner normally considered criminal, unorthodox or merely eccentric.

Thirdly, a secret society is distinguished from other groups with secrets in that its is organized on the basis of its secrecy, and this secret can even become its raison d'etre. For secrecy determines the type of organization in two possible ways. It either creates the "cellular" type of organization in which there is a minimal identification of members with each other, as in an extreme form of gesellschaft (Tönnies); or it can give rise to the "protective" type which demands the maximal identification of members in a total involvement of common activities, as in an extreme form of the gemeinschaft. This demands in its turn a comprehensive structure involving a number of departments or specialized agencies. Here the danger of over-bureaucratization is modified by the necessity for structural flexibility and organizational mobility*-- so that the officer corps is expanded and reduced in accordance with the purposes or size or both of the secret society and not xxx vice-versa. This officer corps or leadership has usually a strong tendancy to hierarchization, and an unquestioned authority based on popular choice or consent or both.

* See note p. 111 below for definition of "structure" and "organization"

This consent may be withdrawn if the leadership consistently proves itself to be inadequate to the tasks to which the secret society has set itself. Unlike the "cellular" or religious type of association, the leadership is not required to be "invisible" to the members, this particularly applies to the Chinese Triads, where the identity of the leadership is required to be known to all the members. Moreover, the mobility demanded by secrecy entails a high degree of coordination of activities and excellent communication channels. This means that not only do agents pervade the internal organization of the society, but also the organizations outside it; thus, only by building an "outer" wall of protection can secret societies maintain their effective freedom of movement.

Fourthly, <u>thus a secret society may be a group of people who live, or act together.</u> It may own property in common, and it may be organized according to regulations upon which the members of the association have agreed, and which all members have consented to obey.

Fifthly, a secret society is as dependent for its existence upon non-members as upon members, it does not exist in a void. Therefore, a secret society may be conformative or alienative towards the wider society, and its mode of adaptation may be either instrumental or expressive, or both. A secret society may be typologically any of these at different times and in different circumstances and places.

This study of the changing role and organization of Chinese secret societies of the late Ch'ing will make possible an evaluation of the relevance and adequacy of the above hypotheses in this case.

It will be convenient to preface the detailed examination of the Hung League by a brief account of the society within which it existed. Such an account will help to make intelligible the ideology and internal organization of the secret society.

CHINESE SOCIETY 1840-1912

Chapter I : The Ideological Background

Confucianism was, up until the victory of the British in the Opium War of 1840-1, the unquestioned panacea for most, if not all, of China's moral and political ills. By a fortunate but not so strange coincidence, it was also the dominant ideology of the Chinese ruling class, the bureaucratic literati. Moreover, Confucianism, with its emphasis on worldly (rather than transcendental) affairs, its humanism, its paternalist pragmatism, was the ideal philosophy for a patrimonial, bureaucratic state. No other doctrine, as it happened, succeeded to the same extent in capturing the support of so large a majority of the Chinese population for so long.(1)

The persuasiveness of Confucianism lay in its confident assumption that man is perfectible; that human nature is, on the whole, good, that the highest expression of a human being was the chün-tzu, or cultivated man, who embodied in himself all the virtues of loyalty, chung, justice, i, benevolence, jen, wisdom, chih, and propriety, li.

Self-cultivation or Shen-hsiu in ethics and aesthetics was the means by which a man could attain perfection. The canonical literature stipulating the correct behaviour between kin, friends, social and political superiors and inferiors also formed part of the questions set in the Civil Service examinations, which were established formally as far back as the T'ang dynasty (618-907 A.D.) These examinations tested a candidate, not so much for his knowledge with regard to administration (though the object of most candidates was to ahhieve government office), but for his familiarity with the classic Confucian texts. These texts[2] formed the ethical basis for the division of authority, among other things, and this particular pre-occupation is summarized in the concept of "the rectification of names", cheng-ming, which exhorts people to carry out the duties required of them by their role or station in life. (It is no coincidence that cheng also mean "orthodox" or "correct"). This orthodoxy was sanctified by its reputed "antiquity", and antiquity was usually synonymous with China's "Golden Age." As the reflected light of the Golden Age,

Confucianism taught that government must be run according to the example of the past, of the Sage Kings, and the rulers must be prepared to set, at the same time, a personal example to posterity. Similarly, the subjects must be ruled by example and persuasion of the rulers, who act as fathers to the people, and not by physical coercion.

In return, the subjects must behave in a "filial" hsiao manner to the Emperor and his ministers. Filial piety, or strict obedience to one's superiors, thus came to be the main motors of Confucianism in action; both on the social (including kinship) and on the political levels. The Emperor himself was, logically, viewed as the"Son of Heaven" t'ien-tzŭ, and his actions represent those of the"Mandate of Heaven", t'ien-ming. It is less than surprising, therefore, to find that the district magistrate, who had the most onerous and varied duties, was called colloquially the "father-mother" official, fu-mu kuan.(3)

However, should the Emperor and his ministers become

enfeebled, degenerate or abused their authority, then the people had a right to "cut the mandate", ke ming, and rebel. When a ruler was killed in such circumstances, his murder would not be regarded as regicide but as tyrannicide. (Ke-ming has come to acquire the modern meaning of "revolution".)

After the humiliating treaties with Britain following the Opium War, there was a general feeling among the ruling class that China needed reform, but from within. As a result, a school of neo-Confucianism* came into prominance as an ideology of reform. This school believed that Confucianism had not lost its intrinsic value as a guide to political action, ti, but that it needed the applement of Western technology as an aid to the adaptation of China to the modern world. Thus Confucianism became the t'i, or "moral substance" to the "useful necessity", yung of Western technology.(4)

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* that of the Sung philosopher, Chu Hsi, of the Modern Text School, sometimes called "the materialists".

The reformers, led by the most brilliant scholars (Liang Ch'i-ch'ao, K'ang Yu-wei, for example) and generals of the day (Tseng Kuo-fan, Chang Chih-t'ung responsible for reorganizing the Imperial forces) won the case against the die-hard reactionaries of the Ancient Text School, who gradually dropped out of sight. Even the view that Confucianism was still a valid social philosophy in the context of a need for rapid industrialization was fundamentally myopic; it was to be the cause of China's backwardness in comparison, for example, with her neighbour Japan.

The reasons for the fundamental incompatibility of Confucianism with industrial progress along Western lines reside, first, in the desirability of a Confucian education above a specialist, professional one; that is, an education aiming at the creation of a perfect Confucian gentleman untainted by the need for anything except intellectual work. This work usually consisted of writing essays on history, or on philosophical and poetical subjects. Painting and calligraphy were also highly prized activities. On the other hand, anything that

smacked of specialization was regarded with aversion, distaste or even suspicion. Anything that implied the persuit of profit (li) was regarded as unethical and therefore to be discouraged. The net result of this logic was the raising of agriculture to be the second most important activity to intellectual work, and the down-grading of commercial occupations. The essentially civilian-bureaucratic bias of Confucianism in action, while possible and valid in the traditional context, was sadly inadequate in face of the combined threat of the population explosion and the economic invasion backed by military force from the West. Thus, in basing its authority on the possession of a dominant culture and land, and in relegating commercial ("parasitic") and Military ("destructive") activities to positions of inferiority, Confucianism represented everything inimical to capital development which was essential to industrialization on the Western model.(5)

The characteristics

At this stage, it is inevitable that the following question will have to be asked: how did Confucianism maintain its influence over the Chinese population for so long, despite the disillusioning effects of bureaucratic corruption and the growing impoverishment of the countryside, a process dating as far back as the late T'ang dynasty? After all, the persuasiveness of a particular ideology lies in its efficacy in action. One answer is of course, maintenance of control through education. Unfortunately for Confucian purists, this education did not only symbolize the hope for self-perfection (that is, moral perfection) but for self-advancement as well.

Indeed, a Confucian education was the only channel through which a man could achieve high social status and legitimate power. The Civil Service Examinations were established precisely for such a purpose, for recruiting reliable Confucian bureaucrats to the central government,(6) and to keep the ambitious within the bounds acceptable to the majority of the ruling class.(6) Other ideologies (Buddhism and Taoism) did not have the political and economic backing that Confucianism had; they had long lost the initiative to the latter ideology

and were fated never to regain it.

It is therefore not surprising to find that whenever the opportunity arose, both peasant and merchant alike, sunk whatever capital they had in obtaining an orthodox education for themselves and for their children. There were two types of schools, but only one was open to commoners. These schools were the non-government type, (hsüeh-hsiao) comprising academies (shu-yüan), charity schools (i-hsüeh) and rural community schools (she-hsüeh) founded and often financed by local "gentry" [7] from revenues produced by "school land" of the various wealthy lineages. The government schools (kuan-hsüeh) were limited to the children of the imperial clan, the Eight (military) Banners[8] and families bearing hereditary titles.

By the fourth decade of the 18th century, there were twenty one shu-yüan in the eighteen provincial capitals as well as others which mushroomed in the hsien (districts), cities and villages. It was rare that a prefecture or district did not possess a school of some kind. The Emperor Yung-cheng (1722-36) attempted to exercise greater control over them by means of subsidizing them from the Treasury.[9]

In addition to the education provided by the above schools (which consisted of the Five Classics and Four Books of Confucianism), there was a system of "extra-mural" education called the hsiang-yüeh lectures, literally "village-binding" lectures. Hsiang-yüeh was also the name given to the lecturer, who was usually the village head or prominant member of the rural community. These lectures were delivered on the 1st and 15th of every month, centering on ethical behaviour, and recorded the moral deeds or misdeeds of members of the local community. The material for these secular sermons came from three sources: the Six Instructions (1652) or Liu Yü compiled by the first Ch'ing emperor Hsun-chih, the Sacred Edict or Sheng Yü (1670), by emperor K'ang-hsi, and Amplified Instructions of the Sacred Edict or Sheng-yü Kuang-hsün, by Yung Cheng (1724). Generally referred to as the Sacred Edict, these texts formed a précis of the Confucian ethic, but expressed in a vernacular style to suit the semi-literate and illiterate minds of the majority of the rural population. The sermons, like any other kind of sermon, were not an unqualified success, being devoid of any aesthetic allure, and frequently delivered without any enthusiasm.(10) The main themes,

obedience to the government (especially in the matter of taxes) and cooperation with local authorities in keeping the peace in the countryside, were played over and over again, with variations.(11) It is, therefore, not difficult to see a connection between the hsiang yüeh system and the pao-chia or self-policing system.(12) Indeed, it was not unusual for pao-chia heads to act as chief lecturers, or yüeh-cheng.(13)

On a more modest scale, the family, of course also served as an educational unit, supplementing or substituting for a school. Thus, through a combination of moral inculcation and political lure, Confucianism was able to maintain its hegemony over the consciences and consciousness of the Chinese for about a thousand years.

But this hegemony was by no means uncontested, even though the contest, before the arrival of European ideologies, remained largely unequal. Buddhism and Taoism were the main contestants; the former being better organized posed a more serious political challenge.(13a) Even though both heterodoxies advocated passivity, the degree of passivity differed

in each case. Taoists believed in return to a Rousseauesque way of life, "back to the roots" (kuei ken), to the Way (tao) of Nature, which is effortless (wu-wei) and spontaneous (tzŭ-jan), like an uncarved block of wood (p'u) whose natural contours express pure and uncorrupted existence. Buddhism, however, advocated abstinence not only from the labours, but also the pleasures of living, and in this way break the painful cycle of existence. In order to achieve this transcendance of worldly pre-occupations, the Buddhist must fast, meditate and refrain from eating meat. As most of the population of traditional China were forced by necessity to do at least two of these things (fasting and vegetarianism), and as their lives were all too often a painful cycle of existence, it is not difficult to understand the appeal of the philosophy to them, the poor and under-privileged. It is no wonder that Buddhism became so closely linked with subversive organizations, and its advocates so frequently persecuted by the orthodox society and government.

The decline of Buddhism as a major religious force in the ninth century throughout East Asia coincided, in China, with the emergence of a strengthened form of Confucianism called Neo-Confucianism which re-established orthodox hegemony over the upper classes. As a result of the fall from aristocratic favour, Chinese Buddhism came to be increasingly identified with popular magic and shamanism traditionally associated with popular Taoism. In fact, Taoism and Buddhism became so successfully intermingled that it hasbeen impossible to distinguish the elements of the one religion from those of the other.

The popularization of both Buddhism and Taoism would not have given the central government any cause for concern had they been content to remain the "opium of the people." But,as it was, their advocates, the Buddhist monks and nuns, organized themselves into associations, and what was more, invented new myths of origin quite contrary to those put out by the Confucians.(14) Moreover, monasteries and nunneries were becoming increasingly notorious for their involvement with rebel organizations, if they were not rebel associations themselves.

This development culminated dramatically in the overthrow of the Yüan dynasty by a Buddhist monk, Chu Yüan-chang, who became the founding emperor of the Ming dynasty in 1368. The first word of the reign title Hung Wu, written thus, 洪 came to be the name of the largest and most powerful group of secret societies north and south of the Yangtze river, the Hung League or Family (Hung Men, Hung Chia). Indeed, the secret societies (both religious and secular) became so enchanted with their success during this period that their slogan or battle-cry during the Ch'ing dynasty was "Restore the Ming and Destroy the Ch'ing."

The Ch'ing dynasty was Manchu, and as warlike neighbours of the Chinese had come to appreciate the advantages to the ruler of the Confucian ideology; so that, if anything, the Manchu dynasty was more Confucian than the Chinese Confucianists. The Great Ch'ing Code added a number of amendments concerning the suppression of heterodoxy. The Supplementary Laws forbade heterodox assemblies of more than twenty male and able-bodied persons, forty older persons, though the number of female

persons were unrestricted.[15] Offences against the laws were punishable by death by strangulation. Further, in the Sacred Edict, there were exhortations forbidding the holding of processions, beating of gongs and drums, chanting sutras and spells in public, condemning such practices as inimical to peace and order in the countryside. Moreover, the Edict argued, such flamboyant displays of heterodox behaviour could only tempt the peasants to thoughts of idleness and discontent.[16] Finally, the fact that able-bodied men should spend their days in unproductive, and therefore, parasitic occupation (meditation and prayer) was criminally wasteful of labour resources which could be put to use for the enrichment of society and its rulers.[17]

This last argument appears to have had some success--to the extent that there was considerable contempt among the peasantry for Buddhist monks, frequently referred to as drones and parasites. So much so that one secret society found it necessary to remind its members not to treat monks contemptuously as their "founders" were, after all, also Buddhist monks.[18]

Not only were the heterodoxies associated with seditious monasteries, but monasteries were traditionally associated with the development of military arts. The reasons for this are not hard to find: in order to defend themselves against robbers, monks developed the art of weaponless self-defence, since they were prohibited by their religion to carry arms. Monasteries were often store-houses of great riches, either of their own, or of wealthy persons who had the custom of depositing valuables with monks for safe-keeping, either during travel or in periods of local unrest. One of the most famous monasteries for the art of weaponless self-defence, boxing, was the Shaolin, said to be in Fukien province, but no one seems to know its exact whereabouts. The Emperor K'ang-hsi, had, according to Hung League legend, asked for the cooperation of the Shaolin monks in driving out invaders from the north-west in the 18th century, but persecuted them ruthlessly after they succeeded. This injustice was given as a reason for the anti-Ch'ing attitude of the Hung League.(19)

Heterodoxies, for all the above-mentioned reasons, were condemned, ab initio, in the eyes of the central authorities. Christianity, when it came to China in a militant form, was no exception. The secret anxieties of the Ch'ing government about Christianity during the first decades of its reign turned into open hostility in the middle of the 19th century. For the adoption of the Ten Commandments by the Taiping "God Worshippers" who nearly toppled the Ch'ing dynasty in 14 years of civil war was the very incarnat embodiment of a Confucian bureaucrat's night-mare. These anxieties were later given more direct vent during the Boxer insurrection, initially directed both against the government and the Christians; but later was turned into a pro-Ch'ing movement under the influence of Prince Kung, (the brother of the emperor Kuang-hsü,) who is said to have been a member of the Boxers. The anti-Christian movement temporarily assuaged both the desperate xenophobia of the Boxers and the fear and hatred of militant heterodoxies ~~of~~ by the Confucian orthodoxy.

The success or failure of the government in suppressing heterodox movements depended as much on the applicability of Confucianism to reality as on the power of the government to enforce its laws. It became increasingly obvious in the second half of the nineteenth century that not only had Confucianism outlived its usefulness but also its ideological justification. A brave attempt by outstanding Confucians of the day to reform the Confucian bureaucracy from within after the Taiping Rebellion (1850-1864) failed because it was based on the stubborn assumption, against all evidence to the contrary, that Confucianism was as valid for late nineteenth century China as it had been for the earlier centuries.

The problems of continuing and explosive population increase, land scarcity, external political and economic threat combined with internal discontent[20] had grown to such proportions that "drop-by-drop" reformist solutions had no longer any relevance to the situation. The demoralization of the more politically conscious sections of the ruling elite undoubtedly weakened the

the self-confidence of the bureaucracy. This, moreover, encouraged the already widespread corruption within the bureaucracy weakening whatever control officials had at the local level, and strengthening the forces of rebellion. The growing helplessness of the Ch'ing government in face of discontent and revolt was accentuated by the triumphal entry of Christian and democratic ideas from the West, backed, all too often, by the economic and military might of the countries concerned. Some bishops, reminiscent of Renaissance Popes, lived like princes on vast ecclesiastical estates, while Chinese converts to this new heterodoxy were exempt from the legal jurisdiction of Chinese courts.(21)

This phenomenon of Christian militancy, embodied in the power of the Church and the wealth of its estates, first drew the admiration of Chinese heterodox movements. But later, when Christian representation began to encroach on the domain of the traditional heterodoxies, such as the conversion of the poor to become "rice christians"(22), heterodox associations, already hostile to the Manchu "foreigners", began to openly attack Christian churches and their Chinese converts. Moreover,

in the regions of the north-east (Shantung, Chihli, and Honan) where the Yellow River had burst its banks in the late 1890's, throwing thousands of peasants off their land, the unashamed wealth of the Christian churches was too bitter a reminder of Chinese misery exacerbated by foreign penetration; as a result, anti-Christian revolts broke out over three provinces. Foreigners were accused of causing the malevolent "wind and water" (feng-shui) disasters which were overtaking northeastern China. These revolts culminated in the Boxer Rebellion of 1900-1, which was probably the last rebellion of its kind; for the uprisings which followed began to show evidence of Western political ideas, uprisings which reached their climax in the overthrow of the Chinese monarchy in 1911, and the establishment, for the first time in Chinese history, of a republic more or less on European lines.

Notes

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1. Writing about the difficulties of research with specific regard to Chinese secret societies, G. Schlegel wrote: (The Hung League, Thien ti hwui, Batavia, 1866, p.vi)

> "Notwithstanding all our endeavours we could not induce a single Chinaman in this place (Batavia) whom we supposed to be a member to confess this...The greater part of the members, consisting of the lower orders of the population, are not sufficiently versed in theirownlanguage and history, or initiated into the secrets of the league, to be able to give any explanation of the symbols, etc.
>
> A second difficulty is found in the unwillingness of Chinese literati to investigate any book treating on this subject. If they are members, and are initiated into the secrets, they are afraid to tell thme for both in China and in the colonies, theleague is forbidden by severe laws. In the other case they are prejudiced against it by education and example, as the league is always represented in its blackest colours; and a Chinaman not belonging to the league cannot be induced to take up a manual or book treating of its rites--the looking on it being deemed already contaminating."

The great historian and sociologist Etienne Balazs testified in his book Chinese Civilization and Bureaucracy reprinted 1967, to the literati's lack of interest in anything not encompassed by the Confucian world-view, and this could include all associations and occupations of merchants, craftsmen and the traditional underclass. See p.56 of the Yale University Press edition.

2. The Sociology of Georg Simmel translated and edited by Kurt H. Wolff, New York, 1964.

3. Article in Oceania, volume 1, July 1930, No.2.

4. Primitive Rebels, Manchester, 1959 and Secret Societies of the European Revolution, 1776-1876, 2 vols. London, 1876, respectively.

5. The Idea of Politics, translated by Robert North and Ruth Murphy, London 1966, first published as Introduction à la politique, Paris 1964.

6. pp.151-155 (open conflict and hidden conflict), ibid.

7. The Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology, 1964, vol. 1.2 pp.79-102, "Chinese secret societies in the Occident..."

8. American Journal of Sociology, XL 5, 1935, pp.612-623, "The Chinese Tongs."

9. Comparative Studies in Society and History, III, 1, 1960. "Immigrants and Associations: Chinese in 19th century Singapore."

9a. Journal of Asian Studies, vol. xxiv, pp.3-43, 195-228, 363-399, "Marketing and social structure in rural China."

10. Les Sociétés Secrètes en Chine(19^{e} et 20^{e} siècles) Collection Archives, Juiliard 1965 by Jean Chesneaux; Secret Societies, edited by Norman MacKenzie, London 1967, "Chinese Secret Societies," by B.E. Ward; the Hsin-hai ko-ming (the 1911 Revolution), 8 vols., China 1957;to be referred to in this thesis as HHKM; Père Leboucq, Associations de la Chine:Lettres, Paris, vers 1880, also published with some modifications in Etudes Religieuses, "Lettres", Paris 1875, 19^{e} annee, Ve serie, VIII, pp.197-220, 641-664; W.L. Wynne, Triad and Tabut, A Survey of the origins of Chinese and Mohammedan Secret Societies in the Malay Peninsula A.D.1800-1935, Singapore 1941; William Stanton, The Triad Society, Hong Kong, 1900; G. Schlegel, Thien ti hwui. The Hung League, secret society in China and India, Batavia, 1866; W.P. Morgan, Triad Societies in Hong Kong, Hong Kong, 1960. See also bibliography.

11. See p.25 below and Chapter III.

12. Note 2, p.130, Oceania, vol.1, July 1930, No.2

13. Ibid.

14. Note 7, p.87

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1. See note 13a

2. The Five Classics: Shih Ching (Classic of Songs), Shu Ching (Classic of Documents), I Ching (Classic of Changes), Ch'un ch'iu (Spring and Autumn Annals) and the LiChi (Record of Rituals); The Thirteen Classics: as above, the Ch'un Ch'iu having added commentaries, I Li (Ceremoniesand Rituals), Chou Li (Rituals of Chou), Lun Yü (Analects of Confucius), Meng-tzu (Mencius), Hsiao Ching (Classic of Filial Piety), Erh Ya (glossary of literary texts, first Chinese "dictionary"); The Four Books: Li Chi (Record of Rituals divided into Great Learning, Ta-hsüeh, and Doctrine of the Mean, Chung-yung), the Lun-yü (Analects of Confucius), Mengtzu (Mencius).

   The "Thirteen Classics" system is merely another tradition of classifying the classics.

3. See below Chapter II, "provincial and local government"section.

4. See a detailed discussion of these concepts in Confucian China and Its Modern Fate, by Joseph R. Levenson, London 1958, pp.59-75

5. The characteristic features of a Confucianist society were: a) agrarian self-sufficiency b) dissipation of commercial capital in the persuit of status, for example, in the purchase of land and orthodox education c) bureaucratically controlled commerce:by means of monopolies on salt, tea, liquor, etc., maritime and internal customs duties, the new likin tax on goods in transit instituted in 1853. These taxes brought in government revenue 52 million taels out of a total revenue of 89 million taels in the early 1890's; (See p.327,FAMT) d) absence of a navy, a trained, efficient modern army equipped with modern weapons,capable of defending China's ports and inland water routes ,etc.

6. The Empress Wu (683-705) of the T'ang dynasty deliberately encouraged the development of a "meritocracy" to counter the power of the old T'ang aristocracy from northwest China. Under her, the bureaucracy developed from the system of paid advisors to becoming a ruling group in its own right.

7. Hsiao Kung-chuan, Rural China: Imperial Control in the Nineteenth Century, Seattle, 1960, p.235ff. See Chapter II, section c. below for definition of "gentry".

8. See Chapter II, section a. on imperial armies.

9. Hsiao K-c. op. cit., pp.236-7

10. Ibid. pp.196-8

11. Ibid. pp.187-8 summary of the Amplified Instructions.

12. See Chapter II, section b. on the pao-chia system

13. Hsiao K-c. pp.184-5 , op. cit.

13a. The fundamental weakness of both Buddhism and Taoism as a political ideology lay in their lack of concern with worldly matters. Both philosophies attempt to ignore, more or less specifically, certain areas of social and political existence in favour of a spiritual tranquility. Although Buddhistsand Taoists criticized Confucian society, they did not suggest a viable alternative guide for social and political action.

14. Confucianism, predictably, did not attempt to account for the origin of man, but it transmitted the belief in the Book of Changes (I-Ching), one of the Five Classics, that all natural phenomena (including man) were created through the interaction of the two principle forces Yin and Yang. (See Feng Yu-lan, A Short History of Chinese Philosophy, pp.138-142). The heterodox sects, however, had a number of explanations, the most synthetic of which was found in the Shou-yüan Sect of the Ming dynasty, whihh included nearly all the elements of previous sects in its system; it is therefore not surprising that it is called "Gathering Sources Sect". According to this society, "...at first there were no heaven and earth, no sun and moon. From the void emerged an old Buddha, by the name of Wu-chi t'ien-chen ku-fo,(withou-out limit heaven-arranging old Buddha) who arranged haaven and earth; and a goddess called Eternal Mother (Old Mother without Origin) who then took charge of heaven. There is no mention of where Eternal Mother came from and what relation she bore to Old Buddha. Mankind is said to have originated from Eternal Mother, who gave birth to the twins, Fu Hsi.. and Nu Wa..though brother and sister, they married and became the first parents of mankind, begetting sixty-nine hundred thousand children, who were sent to the East Land, i.e. China..."(See Chao Wei-pang's article

in Folklore Studies, 1948, vo. vii. "Secret Religious Societies in North China in the Ming Dynasty". (p.102)

15. Ta Ch'ing Leu-Lee, translated by Sir. G.T. Staunton London 1810, p.546

16. Maxim 7 of the Sacred Edict (see bibliography for the translations available in English)

17. see Baller's translation, p.83 of the Sacred Edict.

18. Oath 4 of Thirty-six Oaths of the Hung League, Schlegel, p.136, op cit.

19. See Triad 'myth of origin' in Chapter III

20. See conclusion to Chapter II.

21. See AMT, p.333

22. Ibid.pp.333-4

DIAGRAM TO SHOW THE STRUCTURE OF GOVERNMENT

Emperor

Cabinet | **Council of State**

1. Civil Administration (Six Boards divided according to function)	Military Administration (Five territories) "Chief Military Commissions"	Nine Chief Ministries (Nine Departments, the chief of which was the Imperial Censorate, divided into Six Offices of Scrutiny*
2. Provincial Government (9 Governor-Generals, 18 Governors)	Regional Military Commissions	Provincial Offices of Scrutiny (15 Circuits, (lowest level of Censors)
3. Prefectures (183)	Garrisons Guards, battalions, Companies	
4. Subprefectures		
5. Counties (1470)		
6. Village and Town pao-chia/li-chia	Militia	

*the functions of which corresponded to those of the Six Boards in the Civil Administration.

Chapter II : The Institutional Background

a) the central administration and the imperial armies

The Chinese state was formally organized as follows.(1) At the top of the political pyramid was the Emperor, flanked by his personal palace staff, eunuchs and ceremonial officials. Under the Emperor were two chief councils, the Cabinet (Nei-k'o), a policy-making body, responsible directly to the Emperor and the Council of State (Chun-chi ch'u), a consultative body, which also recorded the decisions made by the Emperor and made them known to the public. The Civil Administration was divided into Six Boards (Pu) or Ministries, each headed by two Ministers and two deputy Ministers, one Manchu and one Chinese. These were: the Ministries of Personnel (Li), of Revenue (Hu), of Rites (Li), of War (Ping), of Justice or Punishments (Hsing) and of Works (Kung). Independent of, though sometimes put in the same category with the Civil Administration were the Nine Chief Ministries (Ta Chiu Ching) , comprising the Imperial Censorate (Tu Ch'a Yüan or Yü Shih T'ai) which was the "eyes and ears" of the Emperor. The duty of the Censorate was to watch out for corruption and other mis

corruption and other misdemeanours among the civil administrators of all ranks, and report the culprits to the Emperor. In some situations the Censors travel from province to province acting as "judges at large", having authority to judge and punish corrupt officials before reporting them to the Emperor. The other eight Chief Ministries were the "Colonial Office" or Mongolian Superintendency (Li Fan Yüan), chiefly occupied by Manchu Bannermen or hereditary princes; the Office of Transmission (T'ung Cheng Ssŭ) in charge of transmitting memorials to the Emperor from the provinces; the Grand Court of Revision (Ta Li Ssŭ), responsible for supervision and administration of criminal law; the Han Lin Academy (Han Lin Yüan) engaged in literary and scholarly production; a Directorate of Astronomy, a Directorate of Parks, an Imperial Academy of Medicine and a National University.

Parallel to the Civil hierarchy was the Military Administration. This was divided into five Chief Military Commissions, corresponding in status to the

to the Six Ministries in the Civil Administration, but differentiated from one another according to territorial units rather than function. Each Chief Military Commission had jurisdiction over several Regional Military Commissions, stationed in each province and in addition in each of the three vital defence areas along China's northern frontier bordering Tibet and Mongolia. The Regional Commissions, in turn, had control over garrisons named, in descending order of rank as guards, battalions, and companies, most of which were concentrated at the frontiers.

Under the Ch'ing, this system was incorporated into the Army of the Green Standard (Lü Ying)[2] which served as auxiliaries to the Manchu Banner Forces.

The Banner Forces were brought into China by the founder of the Ch'ing dynasty, Nurhaci, and instituted as an army of occupation and consolidation of the Manchu conquest of China. Those Mongol and Chinese troops who had surrendered to the Manchus voluntarily were also incorporated in the Banner system.* Originally, the

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* By contrast, such "quislings" were originally excluded from membership of the Elder Brother Society, the central and western confederates of the Hung League.

Manchu forces were divided into companies placed under Four Banners (ch'i), yellow, white, red, and blue, which were also the names of the units. In 1615, the Four Banners were further divided into Eight, each bordered with one of the four original colours. By 1643, there were Eight Banners each of both Mongol and Chinese troops, making altogether Twenty-four Banners. Each company was composed of approximately three hundred men, located in garrisons (comprising approximately four thousand men) in various parts of the empire. The men of these garrisons were set apart with their families in their own fortified residential quarters of the garrison cities, and soon came to form a hereditary, privileged caste drawing stipends from the imperial treasury as well as having their own land to till.

Garrisons were established in twenty-five cities in Chihli province, as a protective screen around the capital Peking, in Manchuria and in Western and Northwestern China to guard these traditionally threatened frontiers. In China proper, the garrisons were located in three main sectors radiating westward and southward

from Peking: in the heavily populated areas such as Nanking, Chengtu, Hangchow, Foochow, Canton; the Yangtze valley, Hupei; and the Grand Canal at Chinkiang. Only Anhwei, Kiangsi, Hunan, Kwangsi, Kweichow and Yunnan provinces had no Banner Forces.

In 1644, there were two hundred and seventy-eight Manchu, one hundred and twenty Mongol, and one hundred and sixty-five Chinese companies, making an army of 169,000 men.(3) In 1825, there were 293,391 minimum personnel, including craftsmen, retainers and supernumeraries.(4) The figures fluctuated according to circumstances, reflecting the warlike or peaceful mood of the country.

The Hsün-chih emperor (1644-1661) or Nurhaci made another change in the organization of the Banner Forces by regrouping these forces under Imperial control. Originally, in Manchuria, each Banner was controlled by a prince, and the Emperor had direct command of only one Banner. Now the Emperor deprived the princes of

three Banners, giving them the title of the "Three Superior Banners" and placed them directly under his own command. The Emperor Yung-cheng (1723-35) completed the process of centralization by appointing his own officers over the remaining "Five Inferior Banners", thus depriving the princes of their direct command over them.

The remainder of the Ming military system, volunteers and local corps were incorporated into a constabulary called the Army of the Green Standard, formed for the purpose of keeping internal order. The officers of this force could be both Chinese or Manchu, though the enlisted men were Chinese, and recruited on a "volunteer" basis. The Lü Ying was divided into a Land Force (Lu-lu) and a Marine Force (Shui-shuai); the troops consisting of cavalry, infantry and garrison soldiers, scattered throughout China in small units. The majority of the troops were under the nominal command of the provincial commander-in-chief (t'i-tu), but each governor-general and governor was also allotted a detachment. The provincial command troops were divided into brigades

(chen-piao), territorial regiments (hsieh-piao), and battalions (ying). The battalions were further divided into smaller units like Right and Left Patrols, (tso, yu shao), then into posts (ssŭ). The Director-General of the Yellow River had his own command (Ts'ao-Ho p'iao) which was in charge of delivering grain tribute to the Capital andof garrisoning posts along the river.(5)

In the early 19th century, there was a total, according to statute, of about 640,000 men divided into 1202 battalions,(6) but the Tao-kuang Emperor (1821-1851) reduced the number of the troops to roughly 585,000 men by 1851.(7) The Green Standard or Lü Ying was under the ultimate control of the Board of War, and its finances under that of the Board of Revenue, both in the Civil Administration. The spreading out of responsibilities between both civil and military sections of the administration, and between the capitaland the provinces provided, theoretically, a system of checks and balances to the growth of personal command. The practice of transferring officers from one area to another (parallel to the circulation of magistrates from one hsien to another)

was also instituted for the same reason.

The sharing out of the top command between Manchus and Chinese was designed to meet the problem of giving high office to the latter without giving them supreme control, thus keeping the favourable balance of power in the hands of the conquerors.

By the 19th century, both the Banner Forces and the Army of the Green Standard had long declined as combat forces, and for the following reasons. On the one hand, once the power of the Manchu dynasty had been established, the role of the Banner Forces as an army of occupation had no longer any meaning. As a result of this, and with easy living, the Bannermen lost the incentive to fight, or even to keep in training. When the British attacked in 1840, they caught the imperial armies completely by surprise. On the otherhand, the decentralized and un-coordinated organization of the Green Standard did not permit effective mobilization in any one region at short notice. It had become, in fact, nothing more than a vast

constabulary engaged in the activities of crime prevention or detection, transportation of bullion, grain, prisoners, postal material, and of guard duties at the frontiers.(8)

The other reasons were common to both armies. The hostility of the political climate, as well as the effects of years of garrison duty debilitated the troops and weakened their morale. Corruption among officers (as among the bureaucrats) was rife, and enlisted men were irregularly and inadequately paid and fed. Training and weapons were antiquated, discipline lax or brutal. The Bannermen became privileged parasites, the Green Standard men bandits or worse. Their depredations in the countryside were more feared than those of the ordinary bandits.(9) The decay evident in the military structure was by no means an isolated phenomenon. Chinese society in the second half of the nineteenth century was undergoing a profound crisis, as will be seen in the discussion of the other aspects of traditional organization which follows. But the demoralization of the central armies contributed

more directly to the upsurge of secret society activity than the collapse of traditional institutions in the second half of the nineteenth century in that it propelled whole contingents of the under-employed, disaffected and ambitious men into the welcoming ranks of the secret societies.(10)

b) provincial and local government(11)

The Ch'ing government divided the fifteen Ming provinces into eighteen for administrative purposes. Shensi was broken up into Shensi and Kansu, Hukwang into Hunan and Hupei, and Nan Chih-li (Nanking Province) into Kiangsu and Anhwei. A single governor, the hsün-fu was placed over each province except Chihli and Szechwan. A governor-general(tsung-tu) or "viceroy" was assigned to every two provinces with few exceptions. In provinces where both the governor and governor-general held office, important matters for the attention of the Emperor had to come from them jointly. Two-thirds of the governor-generals were Manchus; governors, however, were mostly Chinese. Each had, as we have already seen, his own small force of men; but the chief provincial military force was normally composed of Bannermen commanded by a Manchu general.

Provincial government was composed of the Treasurer, and Head of the Provincial Service, the Provincial Judicial Commissioner, the Salt Controller and the Grain Intendant.* The first two officers were appointed by, and were directly responsible to the Emperor, whom they must visit at the end of three years, which was the period of the duration of their office. They served thus in the capacity of checks on the ambitions of the provincial governor. Another provincial official was the Literary Chancellor (hsüeh-cheng) whose duties consisted of supervising provincial examinations, and the punishment of titled scholars living in the province. Scholars could only be physically punished after the Chancellor had deprived them of their rank,

Below provincial government was the Circuit or tao, grouping two or more Prefectures (fu) according to purpose, such as supervising tax or military movements. The Prefecture was then divided into a number of Districts (hsien), the smallest unit in the administrative hierarchy.

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* The Chinese titles for each of these departments are: Pu-cheng-shih-ssŭ, An-ch'a-shih-ssŭ, Yen-yun-shih-ssŭ, and Liang Tao, respectively. The term for provincial government is Tu-fu-ssŭ-tao.

The larger Districts were sometimes called chou, while the smaller Prefectures were sometimes called t'ing. A smaller unit could be dependent on a larger one for decisions concerning both, if it was geographically viable.

The District Magistrate was the lowest official in the central government, and his office was both onerous and underpaid. He was never permitted to hold office in his home district, and was required to move every three years. The object of this exercise was the prevention of nepotism and the political entrenchment of a magistrate in anyone area. As far as the government was concerned, the function of the magistrate was to collect taxes, act as local constable and Justice of the Peace, post-master, and invigilator at district civil service examinations. The Magistrate was not permitted to use official taxes for defraying local administrative costs, and only he himself and his yamen (office) runners and clerks were paid from official funds.(12) As a result of this, an unofficial form of levy called "customary fees" (lou-kuei, literally, base custom) came into being. These"customary fees" were

extracted from the local inhabitants ostensibly for the purpose of meeting the cost of local administration, the payment of the Magistrate's secretaries (the mu-yu, friend of the host) his domestic servants, the collection and delivery of taxes to the central government. Since no control could be exercised over the collection of "customary fees" , they soon degenerated into an "accepted" form of official extortion.

THE PAO-CHIA SYSTEM

Below the level of the hsien, there was no formal village or town administration. Instead, government of these units was taken over by the local non-official gentry(13), except where a magistrate or prefect or provincial governor happened to be resident.

However, there did exist, in theory, a system of mutual surveillance inherited from the Ming called the pao-chia. This was originally instituted for the registration of persons within a given area (village or town) through a systematic grouping of households into larger units. The smallest unit of these was the p'ai composed of ten households, and ten p'ai were further grouped into

one chia, and ten chia into one pao. Each of these units had a head. An official compilation of the Ch'ing, the Ch'ing T'ung -K'ao (19/5024) set out the organization in 1644 as follows:(14)

> In the city and rural areas of the chou and hsien, every ten households institute a p'ai-t'ou (headman of the p'ai), every ten p'ai a chia-t'ou, and every ten chia a pao-chang (headman of the pao). A yin-p'ai (seal placard) is given each household, on which are to be written the namesof the adult males and other persons (that belong to it). If any one of these inhabitants goes away, his destination is recorded; if a person comes into the household, the place from which he comes is ascertained (and recorded).

Families of the gentry were not exempt from the pao-chia system, though they were expected, of course, to help the ti-pao, or head of the pao-chia in keeping the records straight. Large gentry lineages were sometimes organized into a pao-chia unit according to its size, with the head of the lineage acting as the unit head. The idea was to restrict the power of the gentry; and for this reason, heads of the commoner pao-chia were carefully appointed from among commoners with some qualification in literacy and land-ownership.(15) In the middle of the eighteenth century, the li-chia or grain and land tax system was incorporated into the pao-chia.(16)

The office of the ti-pao or ti-fang came into existence as a result of this merger.

> "The service performed by the ti-fang is most important. Each of the chou or hsien is divided into a number of ti-fang (agent) is in charge of a number of villages. He shares the responsibility for tax payments, disputes over land and homesteads, cases of litigation, occurrences of robbery and theft, and investigation ofmurder cases. Whenever there is any (government) service or undertaking, he is responsible for prompting the supply of the necessary implements and materials, and for supervising the drafted corvée labourers. If he makes any slight mistake or is slightly tardy in his action, flogging will be promptly administered to him.(17)

In the nineteenth century, the pao-chia system was also responsible for local self-defense, and some successful attempts were made to link it with the t'uan-lien or local militia bands[18] recruited from among the peasants. On the whole, however, the pao-chia was more or less a dead letter by the second half of the nineteenth century, and the only real function it retained was that of giving some system to tax collection. For one thing, the divisions of pao-chia units were completely arbitrary, and did not coincide with the boundaries of town and village. For another thing, the atmosphere of mutual suspicion fostered by such a system violated the deep-rooted loyaltiesof

neighbourhood, family and village, as well as militating against the privileged interests, especially in the matter of tax registration, of the gentry. For all these reasons, the ti-fang was not enthusiastic in the performance of his duties; for, whatever he did he would have provoked the hostility either of the officials in the government or of his fellow villagers and townsmen. His position was wholly untenable, and the only way out left to him would be to remain as passive as possible.

The T'ung-chih Restoration (Restoration of the Union for Order) in the 1870's was an attempt to put the clock back, and the government did its best to reactivate the pao-chia, but without any success. The increasing social disorder of the period and the foreign pressure on the government to build up a modern police force ultimately made the whole concept of the pao-chia not only unworkable but irrelevant.

GENTRY GOVERNMENT

In the villages and towns where there were no magistrates or other central government representatives, the non-official gentry normally took up the responsibilities of administration.

The term "gentry" (shih)[19] in the Chinese context had quite a different meaning from the term when applied to the rural land-owning group in English society. In nineteenth century China, the gentry were defined, first of all, by their title, and only secondly, by their ownership of land. Unlike the English gentry, their titles were not hereditary, but academic, acquired through examination. The lowest degree which admitted an individual to gentry status was the sheng-yüan degree, meaning "Government Student" (the popular name was usually hsiu-ts'ai meaning "Budding Talent"), which did not permit the holder to take up government service. The highest degree was the chin-shih "Metropolitan Graduate", on attainment of which, an individual could be more or less sure of at least the lowest government post--that

of the district magistrate--or the highest, that of an imperial minister. These office-holding literati were called shen-shih and were thus distinguished from the ordinary shih, meaning literally "scholar". Landowning was thus a usual, though not an inevitable, adjunct of gentry status. If a gentry member belonged to a wealthy lineage with office-holding members, he was likely to have greater opportunity of influencing local affairs than if he was a non-office holder and belonged to a poor lineage. The rewards of office were many and rich, though if one looked for them in a statute book, they would be hard to find. The officials and frequently wealthy gentry benefited from a variety of invisible advantages: they were able to evade tax registration and hence taxation, raise funds ostensibly for some public works project, speculate on monopolized goods, raise local militia for their protection against both the excessive "demands" of the local magistrate and those of the local population, and more, the list is too lengthy for repetition.(20)

Once a man acquired gentry status, he could at once, if he wished, enter a world of privilege and influence. Even the officials were accessible to him, they were his

social equals. This personal acquaintance with the local officials combined with their own intimate and long-standing knowledge of the area gave the gentry a powerful leverage both vis-à-vis the government and the ordinary people in the area. Their role as intermediaries between the magistrate and the local community rested in theory on their knowledge of the Confucian cannons and in practice on their social and kinship connections and their wealth, though of course the distinction is not absolute. In return for assisting the government in keeping peace in their local areas, the gentry were awarded the privileges of exemption from corvée labour, physical punishment, and in practice though not in theory, exemption from land and other forms of taxation.(21) In return for not cooperating with the government, the gentry member could be deprived of his rank by the Literary Chancellor and shorn of all his privileges.

If they were so inclined, the gentry could (and did) participate in all spheres of local government. In this

way they, too, became "mother-and-father" officials, though in an informal, unpaid, capacity. They took charge of general welfare, education, arbitration of disputes, the repair of temples, irrigation works, roads, dams and other public works, conducted fund-raising campaigns for local projects, and commanded the forces of local defense, the militia. In peace time, the gentry were the loyal supporters of the government, in times of disorder, they became a dangerous centrifugal force. As leaders of the hsiang-t'uan or t'uan-lien (local militia) they were as capable of being as destructive as secret societies.

THE MILITIA

T'uan-lien (regiment and drill corps), hsiang-tu'an (village militia) or hsiang-yung (village braves) were formed traditionally among the local inhabitants of a village, or a cluster of villages, or town, for common defense against banditry, or for the suppression of rebellion.(22) The militia was not, however, a permanently organized institution; but its members, like those of the secret societies, were locally recruited and disbanded according to need. The militia rank-and-file were usually peasants, trained, organized and financed by the local gentry or contributions from all those whose interests were in some way threatened. The central government, also, had, on a number of occasions, used the local militia for defense against invaders. For example, militia were deployed in Canton against the British in the 1840's(23) and against the Taiping and Nien rebels between 1850-67.(24) However, the militia is known to be most effective only when defending its own territory. This is understandable in view of the fact that the militia were mostly peasants, and as peasants,

had a deep-rooted and sometimes fierce attachment to their land, which after all, provided them with a livelihood and a sense of dignity--the dignity of honest labour. However, in areas where tenantry was high, for example, the southern provinces of China, the situation was bound to be somewhat different. It was unlikely that peasants would risk their lives defending land which they did not own, and for the produce from which they had to pay so dearly, [illegible] r. If they joined the militia, they often did so unenthusiastically, or as simple mercenaries, as "braves" (yung). Others [illegible] fled from the danger areas and hid until the storm blew over.(25)

The principle of militia organization seems to have been relatively simple compared to the government forces, and moreover, varied from region to region, both in practice and in nomenclature. Smaller units (those of dependent villages, or sections of a village) were commanded by t'uan-chang or lien-chang (regiment heads and drill chiefs, respectively) or t'uan-lien-chang, (regiment drill chiefs.) Larger units were commanded

by t'uan-tsung (regiment generals) or lien-tsung (drill generals).* The size of militia units was very elastic--comprising from ten, to twenty-five to a hundred men per company, presumably according to the size of the village, cluster of village or town. T'uan-lien chü (regiment-drill bureaus) were set up in the localities by the chü-chang (bureau chiefs, or by the shen-tung (gentry directors) to deal with finance, supplies, drill and other important matters relating to defense.(26) Sometimes, these bureaus even undertook to settle disputes among villagers, especially during and after the Taiping rebellion when the administrative and judicial system was out of action.

The chief feature of militia defense was the construction of wooden, mud or stone stockades around villages most threatened by bandits and external attack. These were called pao or yü, and were used to great effect by the Nien rebels in the north-east against imperial troops.(27)

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* The Nien rebels had no hesitation in adopting the same titles for their generals.

If we are to judge from the evidence available, the militia was not in practice wholly beneficial to its home community. As it has already been mentioned earlier, the militias came to be no more than the private armies of powerful lineages. Already, by the end of the eighteenth century, at the time of the White Lotus rebellion, the distinction between militia bands and rebel bands was dangerously blurred. In a memorial submitted to the Emperor in the second half of the nineteenth century (1863) by a government official is the following description of the t'uan-lien:

> The original purpose of setting up t'uan-lien and building walls or barricades in the various provinces to help local defense against robbers and bandits... But the t'uan, emboldened by the possession of these strongholds, frequently set their officials and superiors at naught, and arrogate to themselves the right to decide law-suits. Some of these gathered around themselves large numbers of persons and refused to pay the grain taxes. Others among them perpetrated armed conflicts to give vent to personal spite. The worst of them even harboured rebellious designs, occupying cities and murdering officials, such as Liu Te-pei of Shantung, Li Chan of Honan, and Miao P'ei-lin of Anhwei, who started insurrections one after the other."(28)

Pao Shih-ch'en, a well known observer of the nineteenth century, wrote a somewhat caustic account of the

"differences" between bandits, soldiers and militiamen in a letter to the famous reformer Wei Yüan as follows:(29)

> The chiao-fei(religious bandits) kill and plunder but do not violate women; soldiers kill, plunder, and violate women, but do not commit arson. Village braves indulge in all these things. Therefore, along with the White Lotus Sect, the people call government troops the 'Green Lotus Sect', thus giving rise to the joking term...'Three sects with one source'.

Another difference between bandits and militiamen (other than the fact that the latter were commanded by the gentry and the former,not) was that the militia operated openly, while the bandits could not. Bandits, if defeated, were exterminated en masse; but militiamen, if they had the support of the gentry, were usally permitted, faut de mieux, to continue their depredations. It would hardly have been politic for the government to alienate the determined opposition of a powerful group of local gentry.

Thus,at the level of local organization, the state left for itself much to be desired. The abrupt lacunae here made room for the organization of

heterodoxy and rebellion. These lacunae were paralleled in the other sub-structures of Chinese society: namely, in the class structure and the kinship system.

c) Class Structure

Social stratification in traditional China was rationalized, as were most of the institutions, in Confucian terms, and Confucianism classified people (that is, their status) according to their occupation. First, intellectual work as "pure" activity was considered superior to physical work, therefore, scholars were superior to farmers.(30) Second, "productive" work (that is, agriculture) was more important than "unproductive" work (that is, commerce), therefore, farmers were more important than merchants.(31) Manufacture came within the category of"productive" work, but because it is secondary to the primary production of agriculture, craftsmen were placed below the farmers and above the merchants.in the social order. The lowest category of persons, not included in the orthodox schema, was composed of the professionals or those

in service occupations (including entertainment), such as musicians, actors, prostitutes, domestic servants, slaves, yamen runners, beggars, doctors, other types of entertainers, and so on[32], sometimes also regionally defined. There was a simpler division of classes, which merely split the above into three larger categories: scholar-officials (shen-shih), scholars (shih), farmers (nung), artisans (kung), and merchants (shang), and, finally, the "mean people" (chien-min) or outcasts.*

Traditional laws formalized these divisions in meticulously defined categories covering every aspect of an individual's life. There were regulations specifying the type of food, clothing, ornament, houses, carriages, marriages, marriage ceremonies, funerals, ancestor worship, which should be adopted by each category of social persons.[33] These laws

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* This category is not usually mentioned in the Confucian canons, though it is in the laws.

were amended from time to time. For example, artisans and merchants were forbidden to take the Civil Service examinations during the Han, Sui, T'ang, Sung and Liao dynasties, but were permitted to do so in other periods.(34) By the 1720's, even the outcasts, traditionally excluded from the examinations, were allowed to enter in them provided they had been in the commoner class* for more than four generations. Exclusion from the examinations meant, of course, automatic exclusion from political office and gentry status.

However, inevitably, the hierarchical system was in practice never as clear-cut as the laws make it appear. On the one hand, traditional suspicion of the ruling class towards the merchants could be, and was often, overcome by the lure of ~~the latters~~' wealth. The great merchants frequently hobnobbed with the gentry and officials(35), and could, of course, in time buy themselves or at least their off-spring

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* This class comprised the non-official gentry, the farmers, artisans and the merchants.

gentry-status through the purchase of academic degrees, education, and/or by marriages of convenience. On the other hand, it was not unusual for the poor store-keeper trader and street hawker to be lumped indiscriminately together with the "low" or "mean"people. Similarly, both wealth and academic qualification determined the degree of influence of the scholars within the literati-gentry class; the lowest of whom, like the clerks in the Magistrate's yamen, had no prestige whatever. The only kind of influence which the lower gentry were able to achieve was in their capacity as advisers to the magistrate on local affairs, of which of course they had the superior and more intimate knowledge. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the lower gentry were able to distinguish themselves in the organization of the militia in the bandit-suppression campaigns. Powell(36) draws our attention to the fact that over half the new governors of provinces in the years following the suppression of the Taiping and Nien rebellions were originally militia leaders.

Moreover, the peasants at the higher economic level could with a little effort also buy a Confucian education

for their sons. But those at the lower economic level and the rural artisans were not able to do so. Their plight was particularly unhappy during the second half of the nineteenth century, when the economy had reached (in contrast to that of Great Britain for example) an unprecedentedly severe period of recession, especially in the countryside. The reasons for this are found in both the internal and external conditions: the disastrous suppression of the mid-century rebellions which laid waste vast tracts of cultivable land in the Yangtze valley, parts of the North China Plain, Kweichow and Yunnan, and the economic competition from the Western Powers at the height of their colonialist expansion. A contemporary eye-witness, a foreigner, T.W. Kingsmill wrote the following account of the physical devastation of the aftermath of the Taiping rebellion and its suppression which

> "...even altered the face of the country; destroyed its communications; deflected its rivers; broken down its sea defences. During its continuance smiling fields were turned into desolate wildernesses; 'fenced cities into ruinous heaps'. The plains of Kiang-nan, Kiang-si and Cheh-kiang, were strewn with human skeletons; their rivers polluted with floating carcasses...no hands were left to till the soil, and noxious weeds covered the ground once tilled with patient industry." (37)

Despite all this, population growth continued to exert its pressure on the land; floods, famine, drought,

epidemics and bureaucratic exploitation continued to undermine the security of the peasant, already hard put to it by the powerful economic penetration of the West.

It was possible, in some cases, for bright boys to be noted by a benevolent local gentry, adopted by them and given an education; but such cases were rare, and do not appear to have much statistical weight.(38) Poor peasants were thus seldom able to rise above their poverty except through luck. The impoverishment of the peasantry was expressed in the dramatic increase of banditry, the great swell of secret society membership and activity, and the progressive depopulation of the countryside in massive emigration to the towns and cities. Since land no longer symbolized security, the peasant saw no further reason for clinging to his meagre plot, too often mortgaged for a life-time, and seek his fortune in the cities, which were, after all, the traditional embodiment of wealth, leisure and social advancement.(39) No one, not even the gentry, could hope to better his economic position, let alone maintain it, by remaining in the countryside,(40) so

so bad had the conditions become. Once in the cities, the great majority of the immigrants took up the occupations of the slum proletariat; porterage (coolie work), petty trading, entertainment and other semi-legal and illegal activities.

The possession of wealth, then, was as important as the possession of academic qualifications in the struggle for upward mobility. And, as wealth was more easily gathered in the cities, the urban populations continued to increase, pushing the boundariesof the towns and cities deeper and deeper into the rural hinterland. Thus, the countryside became more and more dependent upon the town for its economic survival and could no longer maintain any semblance of the traditional self-sufficiency. The intensification of the urbanization of nineteenth century China could not but encourage the development of commerce as an increasingly desirable and even "productive" activity. On top of this was, of course, the commercial pressures of the West, who did not share the Confucian contempt for trading activities. The fact that the

Western Powers, and especially Britain, were prepared to go to war for trading rights was enough to impress the defeated Chinese* that commerce could not be kept down much longer by bureaucratic prejudice if China was to "modernize" herself.

Thus wealth was becoming in the late nineteenth century the single most important criterion for the determination of status and power in Chinese society. This breakdown of the traditional delicate balance between a gentlemanly education and wealth as determinants of individual value was accentuated by the rise to public attention of the importance of professionals.(41) The development of a new intelligentsia in response to the need for industrialization gradually pushed aside the old Confucian literati, whose "amateur gentleman's" ideals of education came to be regarded as increasingly irrelevant to the modern world.

This new class of intelligentsia was composed of, firstly the entrepreneurs who served as intermediaries between foreign and Chinese firms(42) and who have succeeded in

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* during the Opium War of 1840-1

acquiring for themselves and for their children some foreign education; and secondly, the sons of the reformist literati who were sent abroad (to the United States, Great Britain, the European Continent and Japan) to learn what there was to learn of Western technology; and thirdly, the growing body of Christian converts educated in the mission schools within the treaty ports[42a] and their hinterlands.

The new commercial class of treaty-port entrepreneurs developed side by side of course with the new intelligentsia. These "compradores"* as they were later called had their roots in an older occupation of commercial undertaking, and the nick-name for them in traditional society was ya-tzu or wu-tzu meaning "go-between". As a class they exploited both the peasantry and the merchants in the cities and were extremely unpopular with both. They were traditionally the only guild organization which had a government charter.[43] Their obviously disruptive

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* meaning "servants" in foreign firms, originally; the word is of course, Portugese. See also Fei Hsiao-t'ung American Journal of Sociology, 52 (July1946) p.14

potentiality won them the full fury of the new and virulent nationalism which broke out during the Opium War, in which thousands of them were massacred by peasants for being "Han traitors", or traitors to the Chinese.(44)

The establishment of European manufacturing and commercial firms in the treaty ports opened up new opportunities of work for the rural immigrants, and in this way, created a new wage-earning urban working class which had no precedent in traditional society. No figures are available before 1919, by which time, the number of workers (both male and female) had reached at least three quarters of a million.(45)

All of these three classes were formed out of the débris of the old society: discontented intellectuals (the reformist literati), or the ideologically alienated, the dispossessed, and the politically disqualified elements of the population. However, those who found employment as engineers, compradores and factory workers were only the more fortunate of the rural immigrants, the déclassé population. The

rest either fell into abject poverty and forced to beg for a living, or became bandits and membersof secret societies whose activities were to plague the forcesof Law and Order for another hundred years.*

The disintegration of the old social order thus became visible, not only in rebellions and corruption of the central bureaucracy, but also in the rise of these new social classes, a development intensified and protected by the presence of foreign establishments in China; The "dynastic cycle"(46) has at last been broken, and a new era had begun.

These changes in the class structure found their echo in the kinship system, in the challenge becoming increasingly effective,of the voluntary association to ascriptive association symbolized by the lineage and the extended family, most of all.

d) Kinship(47)

The basic unit of the Chinese kinship system was that of the primary or nuclear family, chia. It was normally patrilocal or virilocal, and patrilineal in descent. Its maximal size was about three generations, composed of grandparents, parents and children. The next unit in size was the extended family, referred to as "household" hu, with a maximum generational depth of five.

The extended family or household (which included moreover concubines, married siblings, adopted children and household servants) could be part of a larger system of segmentary lineage organization, sometimes with branches, fang, in other villages and towns. The lineage was called the tsu, possessing its lineage land as well as an ancestral temple, schools and tribunal which decided the activities and manner of their organization within the lineage.

As in all patrilineal societies, only males were permitted to inherit immovable property such as land and houses. But unlike many societies, all the sons

had equal shares in the family land; but sometimes the eldest son, who had the responsibility of caring for the ancestral temple, was given an extra piece of land specifically for the upkeep of the temple. The obvious danger to such a system of inheritance was the extinctionof the lineage as a corporate entity by the fragmentation of the land. This was, in fact, a cause frequently of the impoverishment of a lineage and its consequent political decline, which could of course be arrested by acquisition of new land by the lineage, and by the cooperative attitude of the married sons. Women could normally only inherit moveable property, sometimes serving as trustees for male minors.*

The corporate lineage was mainly a southern Chinese phenomenon, and could only be maintained when it had powerful (gentry or official) and wealthy members. Poor lineages could seldom maintain the lineage land or live corporately, especially if the members had to find work far afield. Wealthy lineages were able

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* Exceptions to this case were not unknown, especially if there were no suitable male heir. If the lineage council could be persuaded to accept a woman heir then the law could do nothing about it, or would even want to intervene.

to maintain their wealth not only by indirect investment, but through the acquisition of political influence. Official and gentry lineages were able to avoid paying taxes on land were exempt from corvée labour; they were able, though squeeze and "presents" from wealthy but less prestigious friends and neighbours, to continually increase their land-holdings; and judicious marriage alliances with another influential or wealthy lineage could only add to the many advantages they already possessed.

Poor families with no academic prestige were normally unable to keep together physically as a lineage, and could only be identified as belonging to one lineage by name. The process of down-ward mobility here, for the reasons mentioned above, was naturally more rapid than among the richer lineages. Not only lineages, but families, split up on the adulthood of sons who could not be accommodated on the meagre plot of family land. More often, poorer lineages only possessed a modest shrine and no common land. Lineages members would then gather together during festivals for common worship. Otherwise, the only corporate unit

of the poor was the primary family. Since the wealthy and the powerful formed only a minority of the Chinese population* , it goes without saying that the most widespread type of kinship organization was that of the primary family.

In the primary family, it was the conjugal relationship which was the pivot of the household, and not ,as in the extended family, the relationship of father and sons. Women usually played a more important role in poor families simply because more responsibility fell on their shoulders: not only did they look after the home, but they also frequently helped their husbands in the fields or traded in the market towns as a way of providing a supplementary income. Rich women, in contrast, were conspicuous for their uselessness, a condition expressed most eloquently in the little "lily foot" caused by the custom of foot-binding.(48) Youth, too, had a more responsible role in poorer

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* The literati gentry formed 1½% to 2% of the Chinese population and received 23% of the national income. See Franz Michael's article "State and Society in Nineteenth-century China" p.63 in Modern China edited by Albert Feuerwerker, New Jersey, 1964.

households for the same reason as the women's. The importance of women and youth in secret associations was probably indicative of the social and economic levels of the majority of their members.(49)

The lineage, like the village or town militia, was thus another adjunct of official and gentry power. It was in fact a state within a state, and as I have already mentioned, possessed its own courts of discipline, its schools, its welfare services, its temples, its organizational committees, even its own historical records, the tsu-p'u; surrounded by a high wall, crossed by streets, lined with houses, and physically and ritually centred in the ancestral hall. All cases of dispute between the lineage members, except those of murder and treason, were tried in the lineage courts, which, like the non-official gentry, served as extensions of the formal legal power.(49a) It was not unknown for lineage courts to defy the judicial decisions of the magistrate with impunity, as all too often the magistrate did not wish to alienate a potential supporter in the locality, or that he was too far away from the scene of the crime to do anything about it. In this way,

the lineage organization, as well as the militia, came to be the most powerful weapons of the gentry, and balanced all too effectively, in the secondhalf of the nineteenth century, the power of the local magistrates and their near defunct pao-chia.

e) Voluntary Associations

Although voluntary associations of the non-ascriptive type (that is, excluding provincial associations) were not part of orthodox Chinese society, they were, nevertheless, part of the external order in which the secret societies existed. Existing on the borderlines of orthodox society, voluntary associations like trade and craft guilds managed to steer, on the whole, a cautious path between government tolerance and government persecution.

However, as it was sometimes the practice of secret

societies to use guild organizations as "fronts" for their activities[50], such associations did not always escape the vigilance of the police. For this reason, innocent guilds would sometimes be forced to resort to secret society methods of organization. This made it impossible often for outsiders to differentiate between what might be called secret guilds and secret societies proper, though the functions of the two types of association were distinct.[51] The ties that developed between these two kinds of voluntary association and another, the religious association, must have created similarities in principles of organization among them. Thus, a brief account of the types of voluntary associations found in nineteenth century China would be relevant to the discussion.

According to Morse (1909)* there were at least four types of voluntary association (hui or kung-so): the religious fraternity, the craft guild, the merchant guild, the provincial club. According to Wou (1931),[51a]

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* see bibliography

there was, besides the craft and trade guilds (corporations de métier, de commercants), also a corporation of entrepreneurs, or "courtiers de commerce" called the ya-tzŭ, which I have already partly discussed in the section on class structure. This type of guild appears to have escaped the attention of the other writers on the subject, even though it appears to have had great importance in the economic life of the traditional society.

ENTREPRENEURIAL ASSOCIATIONS

Unlike all other voluntary associations, the ya-tzŭ were officially licensed by the government. Known in Peking as la-chien-ti (go-betweens), in Shanghai as t'an-chien-ti (entrepreneurs), and in Tientsin as p'ao-ho-ti(Yellow River runners), they formed a powerful groups of intermediaries who exbited in particular the opportunities presented by the simple craftsman or unwary merchant. They had no scruples about taking advantage of the bureaucratic inefficiency and economic decentalization either.(52) Their method of organization is as follows:

"La corporation des courtiers de commerce, jadis comme maintenant, n'avait point de culte ancestral, elles était très démocratique et entretenait les sentiments amicaux. Elle comprenait des collègues qui se consideraient comme des frères, ou comme des fils électifs quand ils se recommandaient à un membre plus âgé. Ils étaient classés selon leur âge; ils échangeaient leurs actes de naissance écrits sur papier rouge décoré de dessins dorés. Dès le jour de leur alliance, les frères prenaient le nom de frère accompagné d'un chiffre indiquant leur rang d'après leur âge: frère premier (le plus âgé), frère second, etc...

Les affaires étaient facilitées parce qu'independamment de la corporation chaque courtier pouvait avoir pour frère ou fils d'élection (Moung-sieou-ti et Yi-tseu) des marchands ou de riches paysans."(53)

The absence of an "ancestral" (founder) shrine and the possibility of having elective brothers outside the association are the two features which distinguish the entrepreneurial association from the guild and the secret societies. The evocation of the father-son tie was also alien to the other societies; though the"sibling"tie and the "democratic" organization* might be said to be characteristic of most voluntary associations in China.

Undoubtedly, these ya-tzŭ contributed to the formation of the modern commercial middle-class, along with the older merchant class, and the smugglers in monopoly goods.(54)

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* Wou does not specify what form this took.

CRAFT AND TRADE GUILDS

The craft and trade guilds appear to have developed not only out of the need for cooperation in work or trade, but also from the desire for mutual protection and friendship. According to Wou, the precursor of the craft guild, in particular, was the friendship association of pai-meng (literally: to bow and take oath), the members of which called each other elective brothers.

> "Ces 'frères d'élection' se soutenaient étroitement. Les chroniques mentionnent des exemples tout à fait frappants de dévouement réciproque. Ils allaient même jusqu'à sacrifier leur vie pour un ami. Et, pour bien établir le lien fraternel qui existait entre eux, au cours d'un jour de fête important, ils échangeaient leurs actes de naissance en guise de contrat. Mais n'ayant aucune consanguinité, ils n'avaient pas le droit d'hériter les uns des autres. Ces groupes restaient forcément restreints, comptant généralement moins de 20 membres. Ils se composaient d'hommes appartenant aux mêmes classés sociales et gagnèrent le peuple après avoir été en honneur seulement dans les couches superieures de la société."(55)

This type of association is reminiscent of the legend of the Brothers of the Peach Orchard, who swore an oath of brotherhood under the peach tree, promising to live and die together and restore unity to the chaotic China of the Later Han dynasty. This story, familiar to most Chinese from childhood,* was ritually revoked again and

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* taken from the Romance of the Three Kingdoms (San Kuo Chih Yen-i) a famous picaresque "novel" about the period of the Three Kingdoms following the break-up of the Han revised and edited by Lo Kuan-chung of the late Sung.

again by members of secular voluntary associations and certainly by Chinese secret societies.(56) One of the "brothers", Kuan Yü came to be deified as the God of War, and his portrait is to be found in all kinds of associations, both within China and overseas.*

Developing from this, or simultaneously with it, was the organization of artisans for a large project of work, such as building construction. This brings to mind, inevitably, the masons of mediaeval Europe, whose association brought into being the Society of the Freemasons. Wou reconstructs the organization of the craft association by putting together clues from the ancient Rites of Chou (1122 B.C.) and from her own observations of traditional builders at work:

> "Il en reste seulement une trace dans les moeurs locales qui caracterisent les groupements des travilleurs. Ils sont égaux entre eux, et autonomes par rapport au pouvoir central.
>
> ...Supposons que quelqu'un ait une maison à construire.

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* Images of the God Kwan can be found as far afield as Havana in Cuba to this day! See Appendix for "Notes on Chinese Associations in Havana, Cuba".

> Autrefois, le propriétaire du terrain fournissait les pierres,...la chaux, la terre, la charpente, etc..., et confiait l'oeuvre au maître-maçon (Wa-ts'ian-to) qui jouait le rôle d'architecte et dirigeait le travail comme le 'maître de l'oeuvre' dans la construction des cathédrales européennes au Moyen Age. Sous ses ordres s'organisait une veritable association d'artisans. Un contre-maitre, Kong-To, dirigeait la partie qui incombait à son corps de métier, et choisissait, lui-même, les compagnons dûment specialisés, ainsi que les apprentis et manoeuvres. Il y avait une division du travail parfaite; tous les travailleurs du batiment collaboraient, et ils le font encore à l'heure actuelle dans certaines régions de la Chine. On confiait encore aux maçons la direction des constructions les plus importantes; nous en avons été le témoin oculaire lors de l'édification de l'université de Lio-ning (Moukden) en 1909.
>
> L'entreprise de maçonnerie, qui appartenait au maître-maçon Tchao-Lao-Ki, réunissait plusieurs milliers d'ouvriers. Certains étaient des apprentis ou des anciens compagnons de Tchao Lao-Ki, les autres avaient été embauchés dans les maisons de thé (keou-tseu). (57)

The other writers* all support Wou's thesis that craft guilds (unlike Provincial Associations) were characterized by a spirit of egalitarianism and democratic government.

While there is relatively little systematized information about Chinese guilds, it is possible, nevertheless,

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* H. B. Morse, P.B. Maybon, J.S. Burgess, Père Leboucq

to extract certain common features of guild organization from the available material on late nineteenth century and early twentieth century associations. The main features may be summed up as follows:

Recruitment: membership open to all members of the same craft or trade, irrespective of birth orother ascribed status. Managers and workers in craft guilds were equal in status.

Election of officers: by unanimous informal consent of all members. Functions of officers limited to an administrative and book-keeping duties; individual ambition discouraged.

Management: democratic participation of all members, often compulsory rotation of offices to members--each tenure lasting one day, one week, one month, one year. Minimal hierarchization of officers, if any. Great variation in size of council and heads of guilds, and a tendency to have more than one head. Some societies had no heads at all, with one or more paid, literate secretaries responsible for the book-keeping and other paper work.

Sanctions: by group ostracism and economic boycott. Formerly corporal punishment was also used, the offender having been brought before the whole guild and punished. Other penalties included a) a fine of candles b)

for the temple (where festival services and meetings were often held); b) a dinner for ten or more people; c) a theatrical representation in guild hall or temple; d) cash fines. Sanctions also ensured that the primary loyalty of each member was to the guild, and not to the central government.

Purposes: may be summed up by Morse as follows:

"The Chinese trade guilds...fix prices and enforce cohesion; they settle or modify trade customs and obtain instant acquiescence; they impose their will on traders in and out of the gilds, and may even, through the measure known as the 'cessation of all business', cause the government to modify or withdraw its orders; and their end, that of having the absolute control of their craft is obtained by methods of which some are indicated above." (58)

Some elaboration of the above summary is necessary here. Writing about the structure of the trade and craft guilds in Peking on which he did field work, Burgess reports:

> "The organization of the Peking guilds varies greatly in form. There are the guilds with practically no formal organization and controlled for the most part by an informal meeting of the older heads of a few shops. The majority of the guilds, however, are controlled by boards of directors, standing committees, or other designated groups of a fixed number. In a few cases it is specifically stated that there is 'no board of directors'. The executive matters are handled by

the president of the guild or by the president and vice-president.

...

The usual organization...has some sort of group designated as 'the elders'. 'the group of officers', 'the board of directors', or 'the yearly committee'... These committees vary greatly in size. The Carpenters' yearly committee numbers twenty; the Cloth Pasters are controlled by sixteen elders; the Cloisonne Designers have a council of ten; the Shoe Stores have eight directors; the Mutton Shops are controlled by ten directors." (59)

Morse confirms this picture in an earlier study (1909)

"...gild government is...democratic. The Tea gild at Shanghai has at its head an annually elected committee of twelve, each committee-man acting in rotation for one month as chairman, or manager; no gild member may refuse to serve on this committee... The Millers' gild at Wenchow is composed of sixteen mill proprietors, who select annually from their number a committee of four, in such a way as to bring each gild member in his turn, on the committee; but the ruling price of flour for each month is settled by the entire craft in conference." (60)

A Swatow guild is cited in illustration of the system of rotation of office in practice:

"It is divided, territorially, into two divisions, each of which elects annually twenty-four firms as representatives, making a committee of management of forty-eight members. The routine business of the gild is managed by four clerks, nominated by four members of the committee, two from each division in rotation, the four serving as accountants and treasurers for one month. In important affairs the committee is advised by three secretaries, one to represent each of the divisions, and the third being the salaried literate secretary, whose qualifications and duties have been described in connexion with the provincial clubs. While the government is thus

> democratic, in practice a question affecting any branch of trade is first discussed among the principal firms whose interests are touched; having come to an agreement, the smaller firms concerned are taken into their council; and when all are agreed, then the matter is brought before the gild."(61)

The rotation system, it appears, was particularly in evidence in large groups:

> "...where different districts in rotation supply the committee in charge for the year...In another group, this principle is applied by the month, the different members of the executive committee or board taking charge during different months...As the work of the officers and the committeemen is purely voluntary, this scheme serves to lighten the burden on any one person or group of persons." (62)

Thus the rotation system dispensed with the need and expense of a separate and large administrative staff, and,moreover, permitted a more direct, therefore, more efficient system of cooperation in guild activities; not only did it avoid the divisiveness of electioneering, it also served as a system of sanctions or control over the members. Negatively, the rotation system provided checks against embezzlement of public funds and other forms of corruption endemic in Chinese bureaucracies; positively, it gave the members of the guild a sense of participation and responsibility in public decisions which could only strengthen the solidarity of the group. This was an advantage not missed in secret societies where the participation of all members in tribunals was required by the rules.(63)

The most effective form of sanction used against reprobates was group ostracism, boycott, or the permanent explusion of a member from the guild. As Morse puts it:

> "...the craftsman who is not a gild member is as one exposed to the wintry blast without a cloak... The result is that membership is open...on terms laid down by the gild, and these terms are readily accepted." (64)

Moreover,

> "Their (the guilds') jurisdiction over their members is absolute, not by reason of any charter or delegated power, but by virtue of the faculty of combination by the community and of coercion on the individual which is so characteristic of the Chinese race." (65)

Morse cites a specific illustration of this method of group control and the power it can exercise in the wider society:

> "When the gild wishes to enforce its decrees, there are no inflammatory placards and no riots; it would seem almost as if an aura pervaded the minds of members of the gild, leading them without preconcert, to do the same thing at the same time in the same way. A steamship company, in order to close a loophole for possible fraudulent claims, inserts a clause in its bill of lading without previous consultation with the gild. A few friendly, very friendly, hints are given, but there is no formal protest; only merchants, apparently without reason, cease to ship by the steamers of that company; a sugar refinery at another port, under the management of the same firm, suddenly remarks a serious falling off in itsorders; and when the loss in all directions has assumed serious proportions, the hint is probably taken and the abnoxious clause struck out of the bill of lading...

> There are no lawsuits, no even a reference to arbitration; the company finds its freights falling off and is soon brought to view that class of claims with a more lenient eye..." (66)

The election of officers was carried out, it seems, in the same unobtrusive way. Nomination of officers and their election appears to have been completed by a kind of "gentleman's" agreement", unanimously. Since officers carried a great load of responsibility but little individual power, there was unlikely to be much competition for office. However, election of officers must have been based on some criteria, however loosely that criteria might be interpreted by the electors. The chart shown below is a simplified version of Burgess's Table IX which gives the answers to the question "What type of men are elected to office?"(67)

Guilds	Age	Economic standing	Moral character	Capability	Fame
Craft (11)	4	3	4	8	2
Commercial (13)	3	8	1	7	3
Professional (7)	3	0	5	6	1
Total	10	11	10	21	6

Explanation: a) the numbers in brackets are those of guilds to whom the question "what type of men are elected to office?" was put b) the arabic numerals indicate the number of times each type or group of guilds chose the qualities set down in the questionnaire.

In general, we can see that "capability" ranked the highest of the five qualifications; next comes economic standing, then age and moral character; and finally fame. But the typical emphases of each group of guilds are somewhat different: the craft guilds held capability the highest qualification; the merchant guilds, economic standing with capability a close second; while the professionals rated, like the craftsmen, capability the highest. It is also interesting to note that craft guilds appear to cared little for fame, merchant guilds little for moral character, and professional guilds

nothing for economic standing!

PROFESSIONAL GUILDS

The "professional" associations (composed of guilds of actors, barbers, the blind, cooks, kitchen coolies, porters, waiters, storytellers, domestic servants, etc.) appear to have had the most elaborate forms of organization, and the most minute divisions of labour.(68) This was probably due to the fact that they formed the largest group of guilds. They were the largest (both in terms of guild units and in overall numbers) probably because their professions did not require as long periods of training or experience, as did the craft and merchant guilds; or because there was more extensive demand for their skills than for, say, a tent-maker's, or painters' or cloisonné designers' skills.

Burgess illustrates the habit of the minute division of labour in his description of the Barbars' Association in Peking:

> "There is the 'annual head of the guild', the 'monthly head', and the 'daily head'. The annual head is the chief director. The monthly head manages the monthly affairs, and the daily, one day's affairs. If the daily head does not finish his day's work, what is left undone is taken charge of by the head for the next day. In similar manner business may be carried over from one month to the next. If the monthly head has matters of great importance which he cannot transact, he refers them to the annual head. There are more than 100 heads." (69)

Tenure of office could also be permanent, especially in commercial guilds, for

> "It is evident that the commercial guilds generally tend to have greater definiteness with regard to official tenure and a more clear-cut organization than the craft and professional guilds." (70)

which is always true of all activities relating to economics, the very nature of which requires greater precision of organization.

PROVINCIAL ASSOCIATIONS

This type of association was based on ascriptive qualifications for membership, and cannot be termed voluntary associations, and will therefore not concern us directly here.

RELIGIOUS ASSOCIATIONS

While there are many studiesof Chinese philosophy and religion, very few scholars have turned their attention to religious (and especially, heterodox) institutions. One general reason may be the relative youthfulness of Chinese sociological research as compared to studies of the language, literature and history. A more specific reason may be the total absence of interest among official Chinese historians for thought and institutions not directly encompassed by the orthodoxy; and since Confucianism cannot be strictly termed a religion (in the European sense of the word,) nor indeed did the Chinese have a proper neutral term for it* , for a Chinese to study "religion" would have been tantamount to studying "superstition" or "false doctrines." Few self-respecting Chinese literati would have dreamt of polluting their intellectual purity with such lowly concerns.(71)

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* The word usually used to translate "doctrine" or "religion" is chiao, or "teaching," which can have no transcendental religious overtones at all. Hsieh hsin "depraved beliefs" or similarly value-loaded terms were the only ones which could be applied to heterodox religions.

Despite the scorn with which the orthodox historians regarded heterodoxy and its organizations, the bureaucratic literati were all too conscious of the power which organized heterodoxy could wield in fomenting and organizing political opposition.[71a] In order to awaken the people to the dangers of such associations, the government did not hesitate to apply the most unflattering terms to heterodox sects; for example, hsieh-chiao "depraved sects" (chiao also means institutionalized belief), yin-chiao "obscene sects", wei-chiao "pseudo-religious sects", and yao-chiao "perverse sects". Logically, members of such sects were nothing better than chiao-fei or "sectarian bandits", not so very different from members of secret societies who were called hui-fei or "society bandits".[72]

Of course, the bureaucratic literati were right, as the following quotation (among many others) testifies:[72]

> "Societies originally political became also religious with the addition of fresh blood or in new conditions, and vice versa; some died out or were persecuted into silence, to be revived perhaps under a new name and in another place, with or without modifications in

> doctrines and organization; large societies divided and the parts developed differently; while the literature was mostly in manuscript, and often had to be hurriedly destroyed...It is impossible to say how many of the sects still exist, but in 1896, they were said to average anything from 20,000 to 2,000,000 members per province." (73)

This continual transformation of religious sect (chiao-men) into political association (hui-tang)( ) was a phenomenon more common, probably, to the north than to the south, of China. In the north, the White Lotus Sect, the Eight Trigrams Sects, the Nien, the Boxers, etc. were known to be both secret and religious societies, indeed, the members of these sects when captured confessed as much.(74) In the south, however, secret societies tended to be relatively secular, taking their origins as much from the Brothers of the Peach Garden* as from the association of the five monks of Shaolin temple.(75) The religious elements in the southern secret societies were confined to the ritual and prayers, and only the form, rather than the content, of heterodox mysticism

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* see above pp. 82-3, and below in Chapter III

were retained. For example, the "clairvoyant" or ming-yen, who had a crucial role, in the northern sects,[76] was omitted from the officer hierarchy in the southern societies, and similarly, the "nine palaces" (chiu-kung) of the Buddhist Nirvana were forgotten, and nine grades of office took their place.[77]

Thus, it could be argued that northern secret societies derived their origin directly from the religious tradition of association, while the southern societies (represented by the Hung League or Triad Societies) derived their's from the secular pai-meng or mutual-aid or friendship association. Nevertheless, both types of secret society, as indeed all types of voluntary association in China, had a religious focus; some founder or "ancestor" or heterodox deity was usually invoked in the assembly of members.[77a] These were the patron gods or guardians of the particular associations. Burgess' survey of twenty eight Peking guilds in 1928 reveals that only four had no patron saint of any kind. Even now, in socialist Cuba, displayed in halls next to others showing portraits of revolutionary leaders*, were portraits of Kwan Kung, or of the latter plus his two famous brothers, certainly the most popular gods

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* see appendix

of Chinese associations anywhere. The more specialized associations had more professionally qualified saints, for example, Lu-pan, a deified craftsman, for the construction trade; Hua-t'o, a famed surgeon of the third century A.D. for the medical profession; and T'ien-hou (a chaste virgin and miracle-worker of the tenthcentury who appeared at sea to help sailors in distress) for the associations of sailors, and so on.

Religious associations came into being with the advent of Buddhism into China. Until that time, Taoism had barely an institutional existence, though there was a brief moment of glory at the end of the Han dynasty, when the Taoist spiritualist leader Chang Chüeh founded the first "church state" called the T'ai-p'ing Tao (The Way of Great Peace), originally a secret society.(78) This group came into power through a rebellion, known as the Yellow Turban rebellion, in East China, but which was eventually suppressed (though not very successfully) in the second century after Christ.(78) But it is generally believed that Buddhism was the

first organizer of religion in China, and inspired the Taoists to do the same.(79) Although the Taoist "church" was eventually destroyed as a centralized organization, the local "parishes" remained, each presided over by a local priest known as the Tao-shih (Teacher of the Way), who was supported by gifts called "banquets" and traditional tithes of "five pecks of rice" from his followers.(80) Other attempts to reunite the Taoist church failed, though temporary unity was sometimes re-established during the reigns of Taoistically inclined Emperors.

> "A more significant development was the appearance of sects, again under the influence of sectarian Chinese Buddhism. There came to be as many as eighty-six Taoist sects, including a 'Northern' sect, founded in the twelfth century and subsequently centered at Peking, and two 'Southern' sects. The second of the 'Southern' sects was controlled by a hereditary line of Taoist priests who claimed descent from Chang Ling. (Founder of Five Pecks of Rice cult around middle of the second century.) In 1019 a Chinese emperor gave a priest of this line a great tract of land in Kiangsi in South China and invested him with the traditional title of T'ien Shih (Heavenly Master). In the late thirteenth century the Chang family was accorded official recognition as the leader of the Taoist church and during the next century was given a certain degree of official control over the Taoist priests of the whole land. The so-called Chang 'popes' maintained their rich holdings and at least the theory of their leadership until 1927, when the

> last 'T'ien Shih, who claimed to be the sixty-third in lineal descent from Chang Ling, was ousted, apparently by Communists, from both his property and his title." (81)

The temples which were controlled by the state had the following hierarchy: first, the director; second, the hierophant; third, the thaumaturgist (for drought and inundation); fourth, ordinary priests.(82)

It is interesting to compare the above with the non-government heterodox associations of the White Lotus Society, a predominantly Buddhist sect: first, king; second, president (i-shih); third, section chiefs (fa-shih); fourth, decurions (hao-shih).(83) All the other northern secret sects also had four grades of membership. D.H. Porter reported, in 1886, that one group of northern sects had the following officers: first, president (chang-shih); second, registrar (hao-shih); third, fiscal (fa-shih); fourth, clairvoyant (ming-yen).(84) The Boxers of Shantung province substituted the last office by another, that of the "spirit-inviter" or ch'ing-shen.(85) There appear to be few significant variations from this

pattern and size of hierarchy, although the terminology varied somewhat from one society to another,[86] as did the degree of Buddhist or Taoist emphasis--though for most of the time the distinction between the two heterodoxies was not at all clear.

Most of the northern sects were organized according to the principle of the Pa-kua or Eight Trigrams, that is, into eight sections, four of which were "civil" (wen) and four "military" (wu).[87] Among the Boxers, the military sections were controlled by the t'uan-shou or military chiefs, and the civil sections by the kuan-shih-che or administrators.[88] The t'uan meant simply "band", the same term as that applied to the village militia. It is also a term for the basic unit of the Boxers, called t'an (literally "altar") in the cities, and could compose of anything from twenty-five to a hundred men. Under the military chiefs were the "masters" in three grades: Great, Second and Third. The "teachers" in the civil sections were graded similarly. (The Chinese terms are hsien-sheng and shih-hsiung, respectively.) Sometimes, the sects were also divided in sections according to the "Five Directions"(wu-fang), the "Five Elements" (wu-hsing) or the "Four Sides" (ssu-mian).[89]

The key functionary in the northern heterodox sects (whether open or secret) appears to have been the "Clairvoyant" (ming-yen) who had both sacred and porfane duties. Not only was he or she a medium between the spirits and men, but was also given the right of veto on recruitment and promotion.(90) Apart from this, the recruitment and election of officers appear to have been determined by ability and merit: when a leader failed to fulfill the expectations his electors (the rank-and-file members) had of him, such as bringing his troops to victory, then they had the freedom to "substitute another leader of supposedly greater magic powers to try again."(91) This was particularly true of the Boxers.

From this we can see that spiritual or magical power was sometimes regarded as indistinguishable from military expertise; this was probably the attitude adopted during rebellion. In peace-time, purely spiritual worth would do as well; as Père Leboucq reported in his Lettres, election of White Lotus officers was done by competition in fasting, the members who fasted longest had the "greatest"

spiritual powers. The frauds practised in such rivalries (such as hiding eggs and bread in ingeniously made pockets) were no less a test of the more profane abilities required in leadership.(92)

The above sects, with their principal emphases on heterodoxy and political opposition, could be distinguished from another type of religious association or "club" which stressed the aspect of economic mutual-aid. These were probably more open in character, resembling the funeral associations of other cultures. In his article "Buddhist Monasteries and Money-raising Institutions"* Lien-sheng Yang wrote:

> "Religious clubs known as i-i 義邑 or i-hui 邑會 existed as early as the Northern and Southern dynasties, when lay adherents organized themselves to finance religious activities in Buddhist monasteries, notably for the erection of stone monuments bearing images of Buddhas and Boddhisattvas. Monks and nuns might become officers or members of these religious clubs, or at least they were glad to work through patron groups. Inscriptions on the numerous steles which are preserved indicate how active these religious clubs were from the Northern Wei to the early T'ang.
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> According to references derived from late T'ang manuscripts found in Tun-huang, similar clubs known

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* in a collection of hisown essays Studies in Chinese Institutional History, Harvard-Yenching Institute Studies XX, Cambridge, Mass. 1961, pp.198-215.

as she-i or she financed activities like vegetable dinner parties given to monks and nuns, recitation and copying of sutras, popular sermons known as su-chiang 俗講, and printing of images of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. NABA estimates that in the ninth and tenth centuries there were usually ten to fifteen such clubs attached to one monastery and the membership of each club numbered about twenty-five to forty people.

Many of these religious clubs performed also social and economic functions. Contributions were made jointly to a fellow member to help him pay for a funeral or for travel. The practice was known as chui-hsiung chu-chi 追凶逐吉 'to follow up when there is a happy or unhappy event.' In such mutual financing associations, hereditary membership was naturally encouraged. Many circulars from club officers, known as she-ssu chuan-t'ieh 社司轉帖, to call meetingsor to ask for contributions have been preserved. NABA notices that many of these clubs had no clerical members and were no longer religious in nature. This he interprets as a sign of the rise of secular interests in the ninth and tenth centuries. This is certainly significant, but the facts that in some cases monks were also members of these mutual financing associations and that in most cases their meeting places were at monasteries nevertheless indicate a close connection between them. It is probably not far fetched to suggest that these mutual financing associations were offspring of the purely religious clubs."(93)

Maybon also mentions religious clubs which aided members on pilgrimages:

"La Chine a de nombreux sanctuaires, auxquels, à des epoques déterminées de l'année, se rendent des milliers de pélérins. Les plus célèbres sont 'Les pélérinages de quatre points cardinaux', aux montagnes Han-Chou, Hou-Chan et surtout à la montagne

du Tai-chan dans le Chan-Tong. Les provinces ont aussi souvent leurs sanctuaires bouddhiques, taoistes ou autres.

Comme ce déplacement, souvent à plusieurs dizaines de lieues, entraine des dépenses considerables, des associations mutualistes, dites: 'Sociétés des Montagnes', se fondent entre petites gens. Chaque membre verse tous les mois une certaine somme, le trésorier place les côtisations à gros interêt et au bout d'un an, deux ans ou davantage, si la caisse de la société contient, avec l'appoint des revenus au capital, une somme assez importante, on désigne par le sort ceux des membres qui prendront part au pélérinage: c'est la société de voyage...

Chaque ville, chaque village, chaque hameau, même de deux ou trois feux, à son association religieuse, qui tous les ans, se rend en pélérinage aux pagodas le plus renommés des environs. Ces associations portent le nom générique d'association des Aromates, du nom de l'espèce d'encens, fait d'une poudre d'écorce d'ormeau trempée dans l'huile et sêchée au soleil, qu'on brûle en petits bâtons dans tous les temples en l'honneur des dieux.

Ces sociétés, composées surtout de femmes, leur trésorière, leurs zélatrices. Les plus pauvres même possèdent une tambour et des cymbales pour accompagner les psalmodies aux jours de fête. Leurs membres visitent et soulagent les malades, prennent à leur charge les services de huitaine, et d'anniversaire pour les morts, reconcilient les familles brouillées." (94)

The recurrence of certain words like "mountains" being the foci of pilgrimages, of "incense associations", etc., in the above passage is interesting because these words also occur frequently in southern secret society parlance, especially in the Elder Brother Society (Kelao Hui). For

example, lodges were called "mountain halls" (shan-t'ang), and the initiation rite "open mountain rite" (k'ai-shan shih), while members of all southern secret societies were known as "incense", translated also as "fragrance" (hsiang) among other things.

Chinese religious associations had, however, very limited welfare functions as Morse[95] points out. Apart from helping members to carry out pilgrimages, build temples*, and bury their dead with a degree of respect which members could not afford individually, religious associations did not, apparently, give charity to outsiders at all. Such functions were sometimes taken over by specifically benevolent societies called "t'ang" or "kung-so", meaning "hall" or "public place" (the last also a generic name for guilds) which existed for the provision of "free coffins, for maintaining soup kitchens, for the rescue of stray dogs..."[96] and did not appear to have had strong religious connections.

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* temples were also erected by the superstitious rich with the hope of winning themselves a privileged place in the next world.

A strong characteristic of the heterodox religious society is the prominence of women members. Widows, repudiated wives, spinsters, virgins and even prostitutes[97] found consolation in heterodox cults to the extent proportionate to their lack of political, ritual and economic honour in the orthodox society. As Chinese women traditionally were disqualified from participation in politics both of the state and of the lineage*, and poor women disqualified from every kind of public activity outside the home, their preponderance and role in the heterodox organizations were therefore commensurately greater. Their free admission into secret societies and the importance of their role there are reflections of the general trend of the absorption of the under-privileged groups of orthodox society into organized heterodoxy.

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* Women were prohibited from ancestor worship in the lineage hall, and by this token, excluded from the process of decision-making undertaken by the lineage leaders. Women were never (unlike even the chien-min) permitted to take the Civil Service Examinations.

CONCLUSIONS

The foregoing discussion of traditional Chinese society discloses a recurring theme, and that is that the degree of an individual's influence depended directly on his social origins, and indirectly upon his wealth. This can be seen at every level of orthodox social organization: in the bureaucracy, in the informal government, in the class system, in the kinship structure of authority. In the nineteenth century, wealth increasingly became the direct determinant of status and power. The trend became visible in the unprecedented increase in the sale of offices, ranks and academic titles, and in the simultaneous decay of the Examination System.(98) It became concretized in the rise of the merchant and entrepreneurial classes to political prominance in the confrontation of China with European economic imperialism, which taught that trade was productive, not only of wealth, but of power, both military and political.

This upsetting of the delicate equilibrium between wealth and status in determining the influence which

an individual could exert in society, damaged the hegemony of the bureaucratic ruling class beyond repair. Suddenly, as it were, the vulnerable areas of the social structure were exposed as never before.

Increasing numbers of people, particularly the new merchants and foreign-educated intelligentsia, came to realize how the Chinese state had been little more than an instrument for the continued dominance of a small ruling minority over the majority, and the much vaunted Confucian "paternalism* no more than another device for perfecting this dominance. Thus, the greater part of the population, handicapped by a high rate of illiteracy and poverty, were politically impotent under strong rulers. It was only during periods of dynastic decline (with all their accompanying features of factionalism at court, bureaucratic inflation and corruption, and chaos in the countryside) that peasants could organize themselves,

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* or "benevolence" jen normally to be meted out by superiors to inferiors for the prevention and pacification of seditious sentiments among the discontented.

usually under the leadership of secret societies, for a rebellion. In less critical periods,

> "perdu dans le grouillement inoui des foules chinoises, l'homme de peu, qui est la grande majorité en Chine, serait vite la proie de la faim, de la maladie, de la misère, s'il ne reliait sa vie à d'autres vies aussi misérables pourtant que la sienne."(99)

These associations of mutual aid (craft and trade guilds, heterodox religious sects and secret societies) gave a degree of security to their members which the orthodox legal institutions were unable to provide.(100) As non-official organizations, they were periodically subjected to government persecution. It was the custom, therefore, for heterodox and popular organizations to keep themselves more or less within the limits of official tolerance by confining their activities to economic, religious and criminal spheres, and to avoid a wider political contest with their rulers. In periods of crisis, however, it was no longer, nor in their interest, to continue such a policy. When the centripetal forces were no longer in control, the centrifugal forces naturally came into their own. It

was at such moments that the underprivileged, sensing their freedom, surged through the breaches in the political structure, and forcibly took power.

Up until the second half of the nineteenth century, however, only the organizational* flaws of the government were apparent. No matter how great the dissatisfaction, these flaws were always successfully papered over once the guilty Emperor (considered morally responsible) had been dethroned, and his corrupt officials dismissed; the aims of all rebellions (as opposed to revolution) rarely go beyond reform. That is, the structural* and ideological assumptions remained intact. The causes underlying this traditional pattern of rebellion and reform lay in the traditional balance of land to population ratio.

Up until the eighteenth century, the peasant was able, on the average, to eke out a tolerable existence because the population was not critically disproportionate to the available cultivable land. The

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* the distinction here between "organization" and "structure" follows that of Raymond Firth's in Elements of Social Organization, London 1951, reprinted 1961, pp.28 ff.

impact of the centuries-old migration from the war-devastated areas of the north to the south had not yet made itself too painfully felt. Between 1651 and 1850, however, the population, having enjoyed two hundred years of relative peace and prosperity under the Ming, increased two hundred per cent, from about sixty million to four hundred and thirty million.(101) During a similar period, the land under cultivation had increased from sixty-seven million acres to only one hundred and thirty million acres.(102) This hopeless imbalance started a desperate scramble for land, with the result that wealthy landlords and rich merchants were able to appropriate the best lands to themselves, leaving the less fertile and fragmented holdings to the rest of the peasantry, who could barely subsist on their tiny plots. The average holding per capita in 1750 was 3.86 mou (1 mou = 1-37 acres), in 1833, 1.86 mou(103) so that large numbers of peasants became tenant farmers, agricultural labourers or paupers. It became quite clear that the comparatively slow expansion of the

cultivable land area through reclamation of unused territories in the southwest and elsewhere could not, to any useful degree, keep up with the dramatic rates of increase in population. The spectacular upsurge of banditry and rebellion in the late eighteenth and the whole of the nineteenth centuries testified to the unprecedented misery in the countryside.(104)

Close upon economic chaos came the defeats of the Chinese armies by foreign troops, which resulted in the signing away of large slices of Chinese territory to foreign economic and juridical domination. These "unequal treaties", as they came to be called, opened Chinese ports* not only to Western trade but also to the influence of Western religious and political thought. This formidable alliance of internal decay, external economic assault and ideological subversion, could no longer be resisted by the traditional armoury of bureaucratic reform and "mandarin" superiority; the tap-root of Chinese society was afflicted with a fatal atrophy, and revolution was only a matter of course.

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* see East Asia, the Modern Transformation by J.K. Fairbank, E.O. Reischauer and A.M. Craig, London 1965 p.339 for map of foreign encroachment on China.

Notes

from pages 37 - 113

1. The material for section a) is based mainly on the study by W.F. Mayers, The Chinese Government, written in 1877.

2. see below, p.42ff.

3. East Asia, the Great Tradition, by E.O. Reischauer and J.K. Fairbank, Boston 1958 and 1960, p.352. The book will, for the sake of convenience, be referred to as EAGT throughout the rest of the notes.

4. The Rise of Chinese Military Power, 1895-1912, by Ralph Powell, London, 1955, p.11

5. Mayers, op.cit., p.64

6. Lo Erh-kang, Hsiang-chün hsin-chih (Re-organization of the Hsiang Army), Shanghai 1938, p.1

7. Powell, op.cit., p.13

8. ibid.

9. Père Leboucq's contemporary eyewitness reports have some relevance here:

"En 1861 et 1862, (towards the end of the Taiping rebellion and during a White Lotus society rebellion) ayant en occasion de vivre pendant plusieurs mois au milieu des troupes impériales, chargées de combattre l'insurrection du Nénuphar, il me fut aisé de remarquer les sympathies des populations pour les rebelles. Partout, à peu près, quand nous n'étions pas assez nombreux pour intimider les villages qui se trouvaient sur notre route, on refusait même d'abreuver nos chevaux...Partout de vide se faisait autour de nous, tandis qu'à l'approche des rebelles, la population tout entier, hommes, femmes et enfants, se précipitait à leur rencontre, leur souhaitant la bienvenue comme à de vieilles connaissances, à des amis..." Lettres: Associations de la Chine, 27 fevrier, 1875, p.29.

This account reveals that the "social bandit" aspect of the rebels must have had some basis in practice, and their membership grown from a popular base.

10. See Chapter V below

11. The material for this section is based chiefly on the work of Ch'ü T'ung-tsu, Local Government in China under the Ch'ing, Cambridge, Mass., 1962, and Hsiao Kung-chuan's massive documentation, Rural China, Imperial Control in the Nineteenth Century, University of Washington Press, Seattle, 1960.

12. Ch'ü, op.cit. p.194

13. See below, p.53 for definition of "gentry" and p.62 for the position of the gentry in the social structure.

14. Ch'ing t'ung-k'ao: Ch'ing-ch'ao wen-hsien t'ung-k'ao 300 chüan. Shanghai 1936 reprint.

15. These are those men who have acquired an ability to read and write but have not passed the requisite number of examinations, or reached the level required for obtaining official jobs. See p.xiii in The Chinese Civil Service. Career Open to Talent? edited by J.M. Menzel, Boston, 1963 for a summary of the examinations and degrees available to candidates for office or gentry status (those who, among the latter, had no official appointment were called "commoners").

16. Ch'ü, op.cit. p.130

17. Ch'ing t'ung-k'ao, 19/5024

18. See below, p.57 for a brief account of Militia recruitment and organization.

19. see below p.62 for position of gentry in the social hierarchy, and p.49 above for their role in local government.

20. See Ch'ü, p.173-5 for a more detailed account of official and gentry privileges.

21. ibid.

22. Hsiao, op.cit. p.305

23. See Frederic Wakeman, Jr. Strangers at the Gate, Social Disorder in South China, 1839-1861, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1966, pp.22-8

24. Powell, op.cit. p.22-3; and Scarth (John), London, 1860, pp.155-6:

"During the progress of the Rebellion, we have seen that the Government soldiers have been of little use, and that the chief checks sustained by the rebels have been from bands of volunteers, induced, by the high pay of wealthy men, to engage themselves against the enemies of the Emperor. At Tient-tsin it was the volunteers who saved Pekin, whenit was almost in the grasp of the insurgents. It was these 'braves' who routed the Canton rebels, and inflicted their chief disasters..."

25. Hsiao reports a contemporary writer's description of peasant reluctance to join the militia as follows:

"...villagers were secretly concerned with their own safety, and were unwilling (to join t'uan-lien) when the danger was not yet personally experienced. Thus,while t'uan-lien (units were organized) to defend against the banditsand prepare for their coming, the units fell apart before the bandits had actually arrived." ~~ibid.~~ pp.301-2 op. cit

26. Hsiao, ibid. p.295

27. Chiang Siang-tseh, The Nien Rebellion, Seattle, 1954, p.32

28. Chang Sheu-yung (1876-1945), Hui-pien: Huang-ch'ao chang-ku hui-pien: nei-pien (Collection of Imperial Historical Records) 60 chüan, 1902,53/25a-b

29. Letter quoted in Chang Ch'in,Chung-hua t'ung-shih (History of China) 5 vols. Shanghai, 1934, V, 1391

30. In the Tso Chuan Chu-su, A confucian classic, chap. 30, p.16a, translated by Legge (James) as The Chinese Classics, London 1861-72, 5 vols. p.440, Vol.V, Part II. it is said (and repeated in different forms) that

"It is a rule of the former kings thatsuperior men should labour with their minds and inferior men labour with their strength."

31. Farmers were the "root" ken of society, while the merchants were merely the "branch" chih.

32. Ch'ü T'ung-tsu, Law and Society in Traditional China, Paris and the Hague, 1961, pp.129-130.

33. Ch'ü (1961), ibid., p.135 ff.

34. Ibid., p.129, note 2.

35. Ho P'ing-ti, "Aspects of Social Mobility in China 1368-1911" in Comparative Studies in Society and History I(June 1959) p.333

36. Powell, op.cit.p.33.

37. T.W. Kingsmill, "Retrospect of Events in China and Japan During the Year 1865" Journal of the North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, II (1865) p.143

38. Fei Hsiao-t'ung, American Journal of Sociology 52(July 1946), p.10 "Peasantry and Gentry: An Interpretation of Chinese social structure and its changes."

39. Chow Yung-teh, Social Mobility in China, New York, 1966, p.239

40. Chow, ibid., p.235-7.The novel Spring Silkworms by Mao Tun, a "naturalist" writer of the May 4th Movement of 1919, gives a stark picture of the life of the rural artisanate as it degenerated from a subsistence existence to desperate penury.

41. Professionals in the sense of "specialists" in any field whatever. As we have already seen above, professionals have unequivocally been put in the underclass of traditional Chinese society; only craftsmen connected with a secondary form of agricultural production, manufacture of silk, production of tea, cotton yarn and textiles, etc. were considered to have any respectability at all. Thus the rise of the professional class, particularly doctors and technicians (shortly to become engineers, scientists, etc.), was a revolutionary phenomenon in Confucian society whose ideal had always been the universal amateur and man of intellect.

42. see Chesneaux (J.), Le Mouvement Ouvrier Chinois de 1919 a 1927, Paris, 1962, pp.28-30

42a. See below p.113 note 104

43. See below p.80 for further discussion of the entrepreneurial association

44. Wakeman, op.cit. p.48ff has a detailed account of the massacres of the Han-chien and chien-shang, "traitorous merchants" in Canton during the Opium War of 1840-1

45. This figure was given by Chesneaux, ibid. p.83 varying from a half to three quarters of a million. In East Asia: The Modern Transformation, by J.K. Fairbank, E.O. Reischauer and A.M. Craig, London 1965 (to be known later in this thesis as EAMT), the figure was given as over a million. See p.660.

46. John Meskill, editing The Pattern of Chinese History, Cycles, Development, or Stagnation?, Boston, 1965-6, sums up the Chinese theory of the "dynastic cycle" as follows:

"During the Han dynasty (202 B.C.-220 A.D.), a theory of a cyclical process in all events in nature (and the world altogether) became influential in Chinese thinking. Beginning with the elemental forces of nature--the Five Agents--and extending to colors, directions, animals, planets, and other things mutual correspondences and sequences came to be used in explanation of events, even of the succession of dynasties and dominant virtues that came to be associated with them. An abridged chart of one arrangement of correspondences (not necessarily the same as those expressed in the selection below... might look like this:

AGENT	Fire	Earth	Metal	Water	Wood
VIRTUE	Wisdom	Faith	Right-eousness	Decorum	Benevolence
COLOR	Red	Yellow	White	Black	Green
DyNASTY or RULER	Emp. Yao	Emp. Shun	Emp. Yü Hsia dyn.	Shang dynasty	Chou dynasty"

Each cycle can be seen in these "five" phases or in "three" phases, and there are other variations. It is interesting to note that the secret societies (Triads) have also such symbols attached each of the "Five Lodges": see p. 151 for Chart of Lodges and Symbols.

47. Based mainly on Freedmans(M.) study of south-eastern China; Yang(C.K.), Chinese Communist Society: The Family and theVillage, especially the second volume dealing with the transitional period; Gamble (S.) Ting Hsien, A North China Rural Community, New York, 1954; Hu Hsien-chin, The Common Descent Group inChina and Its Functions, New York, 1948

48. See the discussion in EAGT, p.224-5 on feet-binding and the declining position of women in the late T'ang.

49. See below for role of female and juvenile members in secret societies, Chapter V.

49a. Outside the lineage juriédiction were cases dealing with land disputes, inheritance, marriage and divorce inter-lineage conflicts, village defence, welfare, etc. For a comprehensive and lucid discussion of lineage functions and juridical scope see S. van der Sprenkel, Legal Institutions in Manchu China, London 1962, 1966, Chapter 7, pp.80-9, Chapter 8, pp.97-8.

50. Maybon (P.B.) Essai sur les Associations en Chine Paris 1925, p.174; Wynne (M.L.) Triad and Tabut, Singapore 1941, p.2

51. See Chapter IV on Purposes and Activities below for comparison

51a. Wou Monpeng, L'évolution des corporations ouvrières et commerciales dans la Chine contemporaine, Paris, 1931

52. Wou, ibid., p.37-8

53. ibid., p.36

54. See Conclusions, Chapter IX below for discussion of the smugglers' connection with rebels and secret societies. See also Chapter IV

55. Wou, ibid., p.32

56. See Chapter III below

57. Wou, op.cit, p.34

58. Morse, H.B., The Gilds of China, London 1909,p.31.

59. Burgess, J.S., The Guilds of Peking, London, 1928, pp.133-4

60. Morse, op.cit. p.12

61. Ibid. pp.53-4

62. Burgess, op.cit. p.137

63. See Chapter VIII below

64. Morse, op. cit. pp.10-11

65. Ibid. p.27

66. Ibid. p.56

67. Burgess, op. cit. p.142

68. Ibid. p.135

69. Ibid. pp.135-6

70. Ibid. p.136

71. Not only did secret societies come under the contempt of the literati, but all "private institutions", as possible subjects of research. Balazs remarks in preface to a very interesting article on "Fairs in China"(Chinese Civilization and Bureaucracy, by Etienne Balazs, translated by H.M. Wright and edited by Arthur F. Wright, New Haven and London, 1964), p. 56:

"Chinese historical writings scarcely mention the ruled over classes--the peasants, the artisans, and the merchants--except insofar as their relations with the state were concerned, and even then no more than the bare minimum deemed worthy of note by the literati in their capacity as officials of the fiscal administration."

71a. See C.K. Yang, Religion in Chinese Society Berkeley, 1961, p.192ff.

72. Chesneaux, J., Les Sociétés Secrètes en Chine (19e et 20e siècles), Paris (Juilliard) 1965, p.83

73. quoted in Wynne (M.L.) Triad and Tabut, Singapore, 1941, p.2

74. See below Chapter III

75. See "myth of origin" in Chapter III

76. D.H. Porter, "Secret Societies in Shantung" in Chinese Recorder XVII, p.65 (Jan/Feb.1886).

77. ibid., see below chapter VI, section c)

77a. Yang, op.cit. p.34

78. EAGT, p.126; Max Weber, Religion of China, New York and London 1951 and 1964, p. 193ff. See also concluding chapter (IX) for discussion of history of heterodox rebellion

79. EAGT, p.146

80. EAGT, p.141

81. Ibid.,

82. Weber, op.cit.pp.194-5

83. Père Leboucq, Lettres: Associations de la Chine Paris, vers 1880, p.180

84. Porter, op.cit. p.7

85. I-ho-t'uan yun-tung shih-lun-ts'ung (Articles on the History of the Boxer Movement) Peking, 1956,pp.60-1

86. Tao Ch'en-chang, article "Chiao-hui yüan-liu k'ao" (Origins of Societies and Sects) reprinted in Chung-kuo Hsin-hai ke-ming (History of the Chinese Republican Revolution) to be referred to subsequently as HHKM(1957 pp.99-111.) p.109.

87. Porter, op.cit. p.6; Leboucq, p.15, op. cit.

88. Tai Hsüan-chih, I-ho-t'uan yen-chiu (Studies on the Boxer Rising), Taiwan, 1963 p.23

89. The "Five Directions" were North, South, East, West and Centre; the "Four Sides" were of course as above without the centre; and the "Five Elements", as have

already been described in footnote 46, p.118, were fire, earth, metal water, and wood, the five "basic" elements of Nature.

90. Porter, op.cit. p.65

91. Jerome Ch'en, "The Nature and Characteristics of the Boxer Movement" Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies. 1960 Vol.XXIII, part 2, p.297

92. Lebouc, p.36 op.cit.

93. Yang Lien-sheng, pp.204-6

94. Maybon, op.cit. p.170 ff.

95. Morse, pp.7-8

96. Ibid. p.9

97. Marjorie Topley discusses in some detail the specific appeal of heterodox and salvationist sects to the female population in Singapore in her Ph.D. Thesis: The Organisation and Social Function of Chinese Women's Chai T'ang in Singapore, London 1958.

98. By the late nineteenth century, one-third of the 1,450,000 gentry qualified only by purchase; while the kind of education which it tested was increasingly irrelevant with modern industrialization, etc. See EAMT, p.330.

99. B. Favre "Les sociétés de 'Frères Jurés' en Chine" in Toung Pao, 1920 xix, p.4.

100. The socially despised, the heterodox, the poor were de facto and sometimes de jure excluded from the protection of the state and lineage laws.

101. EAMT, p.89

102. Ibid, see also Kuo P'ing-chia, China. New Age and New Outlook, London 1956 and 1960, p.22

103. Hsiao Kung-chuan, op. cit. pp.382-3

104. Ibid., p.396 ff.

Chapter III : Origins and Formation of Chinese Secret Societies

Secret societies came into existence in China normally as a response to bureaucratic and ideological inadequacy or repression. As we have seen earlier, there were two main traditions of secret association: the heterodox secret sect (*chiao*), and the secular mutual-aid protective association (*hui*). However, it was easy for a religious sect to change into a political association and vice versa, depending on the circumstances. As a captured member of the White Lotus Society put it:

> "(In peacetime we preached that) by reciting sutras and phrases, one can escape the dangers of swords and arms, water and fire...Intime of confusion and rebellion, (we) planned for greater enterprises." (1)

By the nineteenth century, the distinctions between these two types of association had become considerably blurred, since they had both become political in aim and actions. The differences were mainly ritual. For example, the northern sects continued to practice

shamanism, spirit and medium worship and chanting sutras; while southern secret societies appeared to have indulged in magical or religious practices only during initiation ceremonies, and then only to the extent of "paying respects" (pai) to or invoking the witness of Taoist and Buddhist deities to their oaths.(2) The northern societies, moreover, did appear to ful fill both a religious and a political function, but the southern societies used religious practices for profane purposes such as group solidarity and control. Triad societies* required their members to swear allegiance to the founders (or "ancestors") of their group, while it was considered sufficient to merely "petition" (ping) the Taoist and Buddhist deities. It also appears that southern societies had, on the whole, a more elaborate structure of authority than northern ones: for example, the Triads and the Elder Brother Societies had nine grades of officers(3) at least, whilst the northern societies appear to have had only four,(4) though of course even this difference is not always without exceptions; the number of grades depended probably on the size of the groups rather than on any regional characteristics.(5) Thus, the

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* the popular name for the Hung League, see below p 127-130

differences between north and south were those of degree, rather than of fundamental structure, as will be seen in greater detail below.(6)

The shifting of the political arena from north to south in the middle of the nineteenth century(7) was reflected also in the shift to central and south China of secret society rebellions from their traditional theatre of operations in the north (see list -Appendix A- of rebellions associated with secret sects and societies). The continual flow of refugees from the war-devastated north China plain towards the rich and expanding cities of the south, especially to the booming "treaty ports" of Shanghai, Ningpo, Foochow, Amoy and Canton*, must have swelled dramatically the ranks of malcontents of which the secret societies were the most organized expression. While the anonymity of life in large cities provided excellent cover for secret society activities.

Up until 1868, when the last of the great northern rebellions was crushed, the pattern of concentration of the northern

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* The first of their kind, opened in 1842 by the Treaty of Nanking between China and the victorious British.

sects is given as follows:[8]

Name of Sect	Province of major concentration
Pai-lien chiao (White Lotus Sect)	Hupei, Huanpei (Anhwei), Honan
"Off-shoots" of White Lotus Sect:	
Pa-kua chiao (Eight Trigrams Sect)	Honan
Shen ch'üan chiao or I-ho ch'üan (The Boxers, also branch of the Eight trigrams)	Shantung, Chihli (Hopei area) up until 1900
Tsai-li chiao (Ethical Sect)	Shatung, Manchuria
Chai chiao (Vegetarian Sect)	Shantung, Anhwei
An-ching-tao-you (Blessed Way Sect)	Shantung, Anhwei

These are only some of the most famous northern sects then in existence (a list of other societies will be found inthe appendix E), though, some others, like the Big Knife (Ta-tao hui) and Small Knife (Hsiao-Tao hui) Societies became notorious, respectively, for attacking Roman Catholic missionaries (1898) and the German occupiers of Shantung (1897).

The southern secret societies, known collectively and among themselves as the "Hung League" or "Hung Family"*(Hung Men, Hung Chia), is popularly supposed to have "descended" from the White Lotus Sects during the first reign of the Ch'ing dynasty, about 1674.(9) But the first Triad (another name for the Hung League) rebellion did not occur until 1787, and then only in Formosa. In 1814, borrowing impetus from the White Lotus rebellion in the north, the Triads began to rebel in Kiangsi, Canton (in 1817), Hunan (in 1832). By the end of the 1860's, the southern societies had completely overtaken the northern sects in the leadership of rebellion; from then onwards, the south was to be the decisive area (the"south" including the Yangtze basin) for the enactment of the civil war which lasted into the early decades of the twentieth century.

The following table of distribution of southern secret societies may be said to apply properly only during

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* "Hung" is said to be derived from the reign title of the first emperor of the Ming "Hung Wu" who was believed to have been a Buddhist monk and secret society leader.

the nineteenth century, when their existence became visible in rebellion:*

Name of society	Province of major concentration
Hung Men, Hung Chia:- (The Hung League, the Hung Family)	
T'ien-ti hui (Heaven and Earth Society)	Fukien
San-tien hui (Three-dot Society)	Kwangtung, Fukien, Kiangsi
San-ho hui (Triad Society)	Kwangtung, Kwangsi
Kelao hui (Elder Brothers Society)	Hupei, Hunan, Szechwan
Ching Pang (Society of the Blessed)	Lower Yangtze region: hsien (counties) in Kiangsu, Anhwei, Chekiang, Kiangsi
Chiang-hu t'uan (Rivers and Lakes Band)	Trans-Yangtze region: counties in Anhwei, Kiangsu, Chekiang

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* compare this chart with that of Triad lodge distribution in map on p. 150

The Triads : the model of the hui

As the dearth of material precludes the possibility of a detailed study of any one secret society in any one region, it will be necessary to apply a more macroscopic method of analysis; that of making an ideal type from a synthesis of the information available on a number of societies. Indeed, it may be argued that this is the only way to approach the study of Chinese secret societies, for their mobile and decentralized organization make a microscopic study inadequate if not misleading. The frequent changes, dictated by secrecy, of location and disguise must have created a structure which was able to adapt itself to new circumstances and places. But this adaptability is nevertheless modified in form by the orthodox host society, which ultimately determines the structure of its opposing institutions. The resulting basic structure of the Chinese secret society will therefore be common to all the other societies, whatever their apparent (or "super-structural") variations might have been.

As this thesis is concerned chiefly with Chinese secret societies in the late Ch'ing period, the focus will naturally be on the southern political secret society, the "hui". Material from the northern secret sects, the "chiao" will be included when, and where it may be necessary. Geographical differences will be taken into account if and whenever the material is specific enough. But as physical mobility appears to be one of the chief features of secret societies and their members (see below p.276, I.8.i) these differences played less a part than size, for example, or purposes, in determing the structure of the societies. However, the geographical variations did, undoubtedly, affect to some extent the social composition of the membership. For example, around the Yangtze basin, members of secret

societies tended to be boatmen, river transport coolies and pirates.[10] Elsewhere agricultural labourers might predominate, and so on.

The group of societies on which this thesis is focused is the "Hung League", popularly known as "The Triads." According to Hsiao I-shan, the name "Hung" was used only among the members themselves.[11] This particular group of southern societies (there must have been others) is chosen because there is more information available on them than on any other group in the region. It is generally supposed that most southern secret societies were derived from the Triads, just as the Triads were supposed to be "off-shoots" of the White Lotus Society of the north. One of the most convincing arguments in favour of this is the Triad "myth of origin".

THE MYTH OF ORIGIN[12]

This legend traces the cause of the formation of "The Triad Society"* to the government persecution of Buddhist monks in the late seventeenth century, during the reign of the Emperor K'ang-hsi (1664-1722). These Buddhist monks, who lived in hidden seclusion in a monastery called Shaolin, in Fukien, had long been celebrated for their skill in the military arts.[13] For this reason, the Emperor asked for and obtained their help in repelling the fierce tribes of Eleuths menacing China's northern frontiers. After a brilliantly successful campaign, the monks returned to their monastery loaded with Imperial honours, having refused all offers of office in the Imperial government. Later, two Imperial ministers became jealous of the regard with which the Emperor held the monks, and suceeded in inciting the Emperor to destroy the monks with the argument that they had returned to their temple fastness only to foment rebellion, now that they had tested their strength in battle. Consequently,

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* sometimes referred to in the singular, this name usually covered a number of occasionally federating societies; see chapter VI below.

GENEALOGICAL TABLE.

KAO CHI TEMPLE
高祁廟

GREAT FOUNDING ANCESTORS
太始祖

YIN

YANG

TO-GETHER

CHANGE

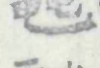
COMLETE

DRAGON

TIGER

TORTOISE

SNAKE


ASSEMBLE

太始祖	朱洪英	先祖
太祖高皇帝	萬英雲龍	南先生
近祖	南先生	朱洪武

ANCESTRESSES
母祖

庇氏	金氏	棹氏

GOLDEN LOTUS HALL
蘭金堂

MAN T'AO HALL
陶滿堂

FIVE ANCESTORS
五祖

胡德帝	方大洪	蔡德忠	馬超興	李色開
上歷代宗親祖位				

FIVE TIGER GENERALS
五虎將

李洪太歲	吳天成	姚必達	林永超
智色位			

FOUR GREAT LOYAL WORTHIES
四大忠賢

鄭田	韓福	韓朋	昌國

and with the treacherous connivance of a monk called "Number Seven" (in the boxing hierarchy), the Shaolin monastery was discovered and burnt to the ground by imperial soldiery, killing most of its occupants. With the aid of a magic yellow cloud* sent by Buddha, five out of the hundred and eight monks managed to escape. On the way, they found a magic censer with the legend "Overthrow the Ch'ing and Restore the Ming" (Fan-Ch'ing-Fu-Ming), and the injunction "Act According to the Will of Heaven" (Hsun-T'ien-Hsing Tao); grass which became joss-sticks when they lit them in the bowl; magic grass-sandals which carried them across a river after turning miraculously into a boat; a two-planked bridge under which were three stepping stones on each of which were written "Calm", "Sea" and "Floating" (Ting, Hai, Fou), by which they were able to evade the Ch'ing guards stationed on the bridge; a peach-wood sword which sprang out of the ground, and which were used by the wife and sister of one of the monks to kill persuing soldiery. These two heroic women killed themselves

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* probably a smoke-screen made of suphur already in use during the Three Kingdoms period (222-280 A.D.)

afterwards in order to avoid giving away the secret of the whereabouts of the monks under torture. Seeking shelter in a monastery in Kwangtung province, the monks were introduced to five rebel leaders ("horse-leaders" or "horse-traders") who were formerly officials of the Ming dynasty. These five men became the "Five After Ancestors" (hou-tsu) to the "Five Former Ancestors" (ch'ien-tsu) who were the five surviving Shaolin monks. The abbot of the monastery told them that a certain Chen Chin-nan of the White Stork Grotto (whereabouts unspecified) was raising troops for the overthrow of the Manchu dynasty of the Ch'ing. These monks then went to join Chen's grotto where they decided to go to Mu Yang City (City of Willows) in Fukien province to set up headquarters, and recruit patriotic citizens for rebellion against the Ch'ing. Shops were opened as covers for receiving recruits and their accommodation until the time was ripe for revolt. A powerfully built man called Wan Yun-lung who was fleeing the law for having killed a man, joined the party, and was later killed in an abortive rebellion, which took place in Fukien province. A young boy called Chu Hung-ying claimed to be the heir of the Ming dynasty, and was so accepted by the Triads, who

made him their "rallying point." After the failure of the rebellion (probably in 1674 or 1794)* the monks scattered and founded major lodges in the five major provinces of Fukien, Kwangtung, Yunnan, Hunan and Chekiang; while the other five men (known sometimes as the Five Tiger Generals) founded minor lodges in the adjacent provinces of Kwangsi, Szechwan, Hupei, Kiangsi-Honan and Kansu. (See map of Triad lodge distribution at the end of the chapter. p. 150) The major lodges were known as "The Five Former Lodges" (Ch'ien Wu Fang) the minor lodges were known as "The Five After Lodges" (Hou Wu Fang). (See chart of Triad lodge symbols at the end of the chapter).

Although the details of the legend are capable of great variation[14] and are a pot-pourri of historical facts, certain common features, taken in the context of the events of the early Ch'ing dynasty, may help to explain why there were renewed irruptions of secret society activity (aside from the socio-economic reasons) in connection with the religious problems of the Manchu reign. In the following pages, the main features of the myth are considered under these headings:-

* See p. 127 above

a) the restoration of the Ming dynasty

b) relations of the Ch'ing with other Mongol tribes (Eleuths and Tibetans)

c) persecution of Buddhist monasteries

d) rebellion against the Manchus

The collapse of the Ming dynasty under Manchurian pressure from the north-east in 1662, forced its supporters to flee to the south, where they took refuge largely in Buddhist monasteries. The Ming had been regarded by secret societies as being largely pro-Buddhist. The reasons for this belief lay in three features of the Ming dynasty: firstly, the founder of the Ming was a Buddhist monk; secondly, the White Lotus rebels who had led the rebellion against the Yüan (another Mongol dynasty)--which preceded the Ming dynasty--did not surface at all during the whole of the long reign of the Ming, which probably means that no serious persecutions of Buddhists took place during the Ming ~~reign~~; thirdly, the last rulers of the Ming were heavily dependent on the eunuchs[15], who being largely illiterate, were strong adherents of Buddhism.

This pro-Buddhist tendency of the Ming naturally led the persecuted Buddhists to identify themselves with the persecuted Ming remnants under the Manchu reign. The relentless persuit of the last Ming emperor to Burma where he was strangled by Manchu agents, merely heightened Chinese hostility towards the foreign regime, a hostility already intensified in the southern provinces by the memory of benevolent rule of the last Ming emperor before his flight. In the treaties following the peace with the Eleuths who were supporters of the "yellow" sect, as opposed to the "red" sect, of Mahayana Buddhism practised by most Chinese, K'ang-hsi was forced to give nominal preference to the Yellow Sect. This naturally brought him into conflict with the Chinese Red Sect followers. However, the official policy had a very good reason for opposing Chinese (rather than Mongol) heterodoxy. The Manchus had become convinced that Confucianism was the philosophy most conducive to successful despotism, and therefore were determined to allow of no other rival philosophy within the empire which might subvert its universal authority. As we have seen already in the introduction, edicts were proclaimed all over the

empire against the establishment of heterodox sects, culminating in specific denunciations of Ming Tsuen and Pai Yun sects in 1761, and 1775, respectively.(16) A White Lotus chief was banished to the province of Kansu at about the same time, where he proceeded to proselytize for his society's cause. (This probably accounts for the singular location of an "After" lodge so far away from the rest of the Triad lodges).
In the Ch'ing Code of 1810, Section CLVII of the Penal Laws, the Mi-le-so and the White Lotus Sect were specifically designated as perpetrators of sedition.(17)

Thus the persecution of the Buddhists became indissolubly linked with the overthrow of a Chinese dynasty in the popular Chinese mind. Here heterodoxy and a growing proto-nationalism came together* and the natural object of such an alliance had to be the eventual destruction of the Ch'ing. A third element which added force to this alliance was of course the coming of the Europeans, against whom the Ch'ing rulers were helpless. This weakness, coupled with the national humiliation of the Chinese, aggravated the burden of

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* a nationalism intensified by the Manchu monopoly of high offices, and their discrimination against the Chinese in dress and marriage laws, etc.

blame placed on the Manchus. A final factor, that of the social composition of the southern secret associations provided a cutting edge to the forces of opposition to the government, that of class opposition. Thisaspect will be discussed in greater detail in the Chapter on recruitment and social composition below.

The "sacred" origins of the Triads were ultimately not religious but ideological in <u>function</u>. The general belief that the Triads were "descended" from the White Lotus Sect stemmed not only from the slogan of "Overthrow the Ch'ing and Restore the Ming" which was common to both societies, but also from the inclusion of various Buddhist deities in the Triad ritual verses--such as Kuan-yin--and even Taoist deities--which abound in other northern secret sects, such as Wu-sheng-lao-mu, or "Old Mother without Origin"(18). Although it is quite probable that many of the Triad societies originated in heterodox religious sects, it is just as likely that heterodox religious deities were incorporated into the ritual of the Triads for political reasons--for disguise, for assertion

of honourable aims, and for distinguishing themselves from orthodox society. Unlike the northern sects the southern societies seem tohave been unaffected in their strucutral forms by Buddhism and Taoism; their officers, for example, were not known by religious names, and were functionally classified.(19) Moreover, they did not appear to have been organized according to Taoist cosmology, for example, according to the eight trigrams. The statutes of the Triad, too, emphasize the secular (economic and social) aspects of the association, and the fact that they even include exhortations not to "mistreat" Buddhist monks or "mock" them(20) shows that such irreligious practices were far from isolated incidents.

Having now dealt with the mythical and historical origins of the Triad societies, it would be useful to see how a secular, mutual aid secret society came to be <u>formed</u>. We are fortunate in having available to us an account by Commandant Favre who had personally observed the formation of a brotherhood among the

coolies gathered in Taku, near Tientsin, on the eve of their departure for France as China's contribution to the 1914-18 war effort. Although this society, the Society of the Golden Orchid, was formed in 1916, a period falling outside the scope of this thesis, its organizational principles were consciously taken from the tradition of the secular hui or pai-meng associations already described earlier.(21) Therefore, it would not be out of place to quote the article at some length here, particularly as it is the fullest, if not the only eye-witness account of the formation of a secular, non-guild type society extant:

> "Brusquement séparés de leurs familles, de leurs amis, inquiets de l'avenir inconnu, cinq voisins de baraque avaient échangé leurs noms, prénoms et âges et parle de l'aventure nouvelle. Et le plus âgé des cinq avait dit soudain: 'Nul ne sait le sort qui nous attend, quels dangers nous rencontrons; chacun de nous isolé succombera; réunis, nous pourrons lutter, nous soutenir. Imitons Huien-Te*, Kouan-Yu, et Tchang-Fei; jadis au temps des Trois Royaumes, dans le Jardin des Pêchers, ils s'adoptèrent mutuellementcomme frères. Leur avenir fut glorieux. S'ils n'avaient point fait cela, ils eussent succombé et la Chine fut restée en proie aux plus terribles malheurs'. 'Cela se fait partout,' dit un autre, 'il suffit qu'on se convienne. Je sais écrire et puis dresser le contrat. Ce soir nous nous réunirons et

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* reign title of Liu Pei, who became King of one of the Three Kingdoms, the Han.

> prononcerons le serment suivant les rites.'
> Ainsi fut fait. Sur le vapeur qui les transportait les cinq amis se lièrent avec d'autres ouvriers et procedèrent à des nouvelles initiations. En débarquant à Marseille, ils étaient 50 frères; chacun d'eux avait un carnet contenant la liste par rang d'âge de tous les frères. La, leurs craintes commencèrent. N'allait-on pas les séparer, envoyer les uns au nord, les autres a l'ouest. Mais leur serment existait toujours. En quelque endroit qu'ils fussent expediés, ils resteraient toujours frères. Et pour se reconnaitre mieux, pour se distinguer aussi des sociétés analogues qui s'étaient fondées autour d'eux, ils choisirent pour leur société un nom, un symbole de bon augure: 'L'Orchidée d'Or'..."

The word 's'adoptèrent' is significant, in that it expresses succinctly the "structural relationship"[22] of the association. In the orthodox kinship system, the absence of a male heir meant the extinction of the line, which was regarded as a disaster because there would be no male person to offer sacrifices to the ancestors of the household or lineage; it was believed that for this reason, the ancestors would be unhappy and withhold protection from their descendants. To prevent such ancestral discontent, a son was necessary, and the adoption of male children became customary.[23] Similarly, the brotherhood, deprived of real brothers, make up for this deprivation by

mutually "adopting" one another, a process always accompanied by the exchange of a written contract.* The fact that only the sibling relationship was taken into the association may be due to two factors: the rough generational equivalence among the coolies and their social equality. However, the initial ranking of members according to age may have been a matter of convenience rather than a belief that the oldest was necessarily the most able. Later, when leadership qualities were revealed in action, younger men might have acquired higher office or rank than older men; or conflicts among equally able contenders for power led to schisms within one society and the development of splinter groups.(24) In an association when all the old ties of origin become little more than a memory, only ability can ultimately decide the choice of leaders.

The Golden Orchid Society itself had only about 150 members (and it was not unusual to find a dozen such societies in a camp of 1,000 workers), who met once or twice every month sometimes more, depending on the circumstances. The purposes of the meetings were:

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* See p. 283 - 283a for description and illustration of the "written contract" of membership among the Triads.

initiation, festivals, listening to the reading of Romance of the Three Kingdoms and other such vernacular lore, the chanting or recitation of prayers, aid to a sworn brother in trouble, and so on, usually rounded off by a fraternal banquet.(25)

Such associations were sometimes known generically as mengs, or "oaths", and several mengs formed a hui or "meeting" or "association". But the names could be used interchangeably, according to size. However, a meng did not normally have a proper name, and would only acquire such when it was big enough. All the societies observed by Favre were characterized by initiation ceremonies, other rituals (enacted during religious festivals), hierarchization, and discipline. There were usually only four grades of membership: Big Sworn-brother (Ta-meng-hsiung), or Master (Ta-yeh); Second Big Sworn-brother (Erh-meng-hsiung) or Second Master (Erh-yeh); Elder Brother (Lao-hsiung), and Younger Brother (Ti?).(26)

In China itself, fraternal associations sometimes took

the form of permanent associations of outlaws (tsei)[27] which used secret society methods to hold them together. They were usually found in mountainous, wooded (and therefore, inaccessible) areas, and were typologically distinct from the ad hoc bands of robber bands whose membership fluctuated, some joining in for some raids and not others.[28] The outlaws came not only from the militia disbanded after the suppression of rebellion, but from the ranks of the Taiping and Nien armies.[29] As a contemporary Chinese observer remarked at the time of the Opium War:

> "If righteous braves assemble together, then they feed themselves from the rations of the militia; but when they dissolve, they form secret societies to lurk in the mountains and valleys, waiting to rob and plunder. The homes of the gentry are thus menaced...the high officials have nourished a cancer." (30)

Later, a governor of Kiangsi submitted a memorial on the same subject:

> "After the incident of Ling-shan (in Kwangsi, where the clash with the French troops took place in 1884), when the government forces were disbanded all weapons were not returned, (the soldiers) who became 'wandering braves', depending on their weapons to rob travellers and merchants...some of the robber bands numbered as many as tens of

> thousands. These 'wandering braves' robbed travellers only; they refrained from harming the native inhabitants. As a result, the latter became friendly to the bandits. When government troops searched for the marauders, they promptly hid themselves in the dwellings of the common people...coming out only after the troops had left the locality. Consequently, bandits existed virtually everywhere in Kwangsi province." (31)

Another document recounts how outlaw bands developed into secret societies in the late nineteenth century:

> "Hui-fei (society bandits) have been most rampant in Szechwan, Hunan, Kweichow, Kwangsi and Kwangtung. At first they were lawless wandering people who burned incense and organized societies. When their organizations have waxed strong and their members become numerous, they rely on their strength to tyrannize their neighbourhoods and victimize the good people. The humble people, being helpless, may join their societies for self-protection. Such societies assume diverse names, for example, Ko-lao (Elder Brother), An-ch'in (Contentment-affection), T'ien-ti (Heaven-earth), and San-tien (Three-dots). They operate in every chou and hsien. Each local unit numbers several dozen or several hundred men. All the units keep in touch one with another." (32)

Thus the southern hui was an institutional synthesis of all the religious, economic and political needs of those whom orthodox society largely ignored. In the second half of the nineteenth century, however, there was an increasingly heavy emphasis on the more "profane" needs, while the spiritual energies were channelled into the satisfaction of political honour.

Since the structure and organization are geared to the purposes and aims of the association, any understanding or analysis of the first aspect would be impossible without a knowledge of the second; therefore, we shall discuss in the next chapter the purposes and activities of secret societies as far as they can be known to an outsider.

Notes

from pp. 123-146

1. Chiang Siang-tseh, The Nien Rebellion, Seattle, 1954, p.15

2. See Chapter VII

3. See Chapter VI

4. See above p.100

5. The number of officers and grades might also have depended on the variety of purposes and activities a certain society took over for itself.

6. See Chapter VI

7. See list of rebellions associated with secret societies in the Appendix below.

8. List based on that of Tao Ch'eng-chang, vol. 3 of HHKM, pp.99-111

9. William Stanton, The Triad Society, Hong Kong, 1900, p.8; G. Schlegel, The Hung League, Batavia, 1866, p.4

10. See Chapter V

11. Hsiao I-shan, Chin-tai pi-mi she-hui shih-liao, Peking, 1935, vol. 1, p.4a

12. This paraphrase attempts to incorporate the elements of the legend common to all of the different versions given by Hirayama Shu, Stanton, Schlegel, Morgan, Tao Cheng-chang.

13. Especially their skill in weaponless self-defense, such as boxing. Indeed there still exists today a school of boxing called the Shaolin school, details of which could be obtained in a recent work called The Secrets of the Shaolin Temple Boxing, by Robert W. Smith, Formosa, 1964, based on material found in Formosa.

14. See above note 12

15. Eunuchs had always been a prominant feature of decaying dynasties, but none so much as during the end of the Ming, when the eunuch Wei Chung-hsien, backed by a small eunuch army and a network of spies and informers thoughout the empire, ruled the country by terror. The emperor was a half-wit who was only interested in carpentry.

16. Article I of the Fundamental Laws or Lü of the Ch'ing Code

17. in George Staunton's translation Ta Ch'ing Leu-lee, London 1810, p.175

18. In an article on "Secret Religious Societies in North China in the Ming Dynasty" in Folklore Studies, 1948, vol. vii, p. 102, Chao Wei-pang describes a religious society called the Gathering Sources Society Shou-yüan chiao which mentions this deity in a myth of the origin of the world:

"...at first there were no heaven andearth, no sun and moon. From the void emerged an old Buddha, by the name of Wu-chi t'ien-chen ku-fo (無極天真古佛), who arranged heaven and earth; and a goddess called Eternal Mother (無生老母) [Wu-sheng-lao-mu], who then took charge of heaven. There is no mention of where Eternal Mother came from and what relation she bore to Old Buddha. Mankind is said tohave originated from Eternal Mother, who gave birth to the twins, Fu Hsi (伏羲) and Nu Wa (女媧), though brother and sister, they married and became the first parents of mankind, begetting sixty-nine hundred thousand children, who were sent to the East Land (東土), i.e. China."

19. See Chapter VI

20. Oath 4, Schlegel, p.136 op. cit.

21. See above, p. 82

22. that is, the basic or pivotal relationship; term coined by Firth.

23. Female children were also frequently adopted, but for different purposes--such as that of serving as cheap domestic servants, or as future brides for male children.

24. Commandant Favre: "Les sociétés de 'Frères Jurés' en Chine", in T'oung Pao, 1920, xix, pp.1-40; quotation on pp. 140-1 in thesis taken from pp.6-7 of Favre's article; information on splintering process on p.14.

25. Ibid.

26. Ibid.

27. Frederick Wakeman, op. cit. p.122

28. Ibid, and Hsiao Kung-ch'uan, op. cit., p.462, makes a useful distinction between "professional" and "occasional" bandits:

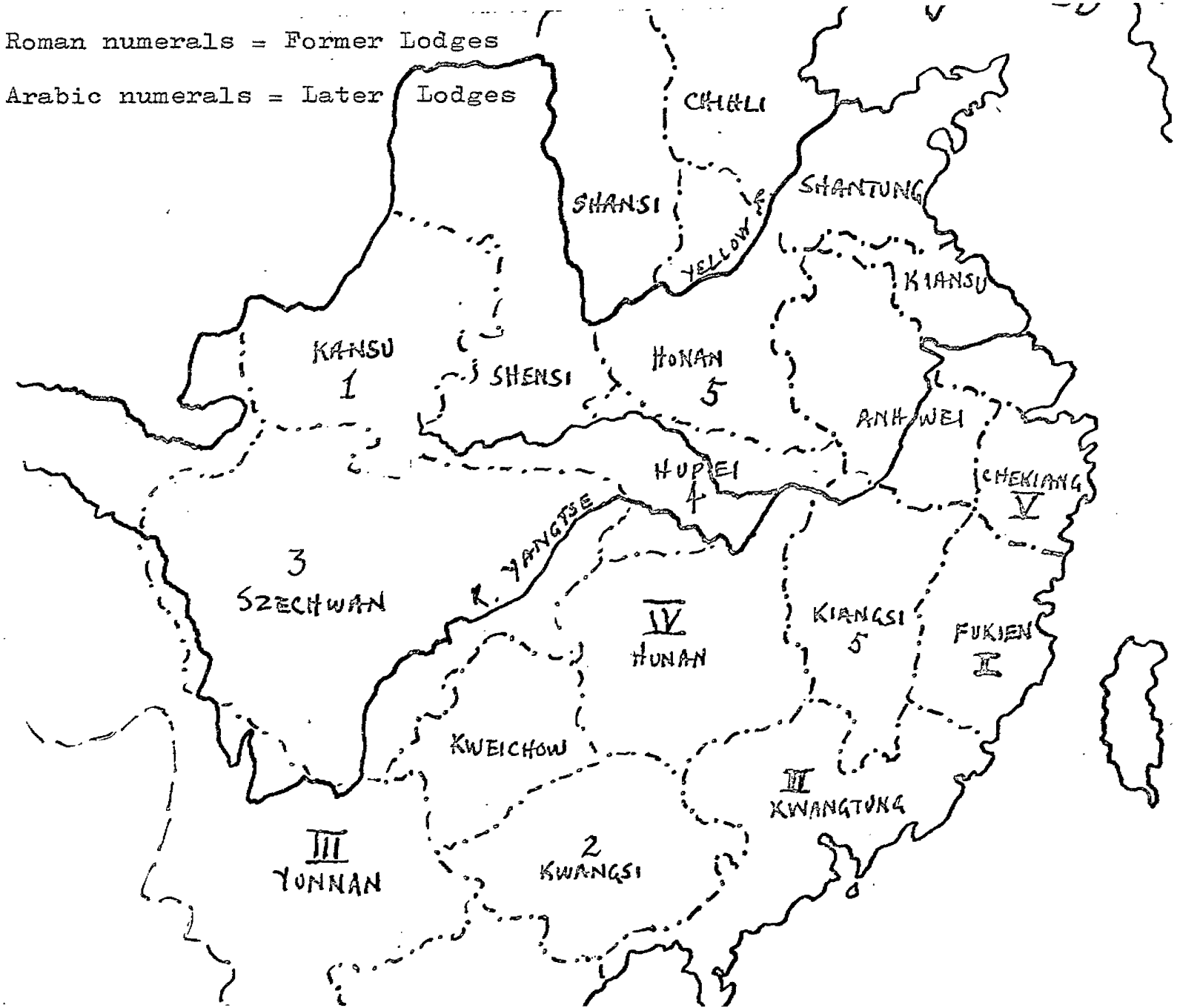
"The distinction between them is (a) that occasional bandits were often rural inhabitants compelled to join bandit groups for one reason or another, whereas professional bandits came from habitually predaceous, unruly elements of local communities; and (b) that occasional bandits were usually ready to return to peaceful occupations as soon as the compulsion which made them bandits were removed, whereas professional bandits engaged in robbery and pillage regularly and perhaps permanently."

29. See Chapter V

30. Hsia Hsieh: Yueh-fen chi-shih (A Record of the Noxious influences in Kwangtung, chüan 13, 1869, ch.1, 2a.

31. Quoted in Chih-hsin pao (The Reformer China), Macao, 1897-99, ch.82/2b

MAP OF THE PROVINCIAL DISTRIBUTION OF TRIAD LODGES.



SYMBOLIC CHART OF TRIAD LODGES

Former Ancestor 前祖	After Lodge 後堂	After Ancestor 後祖	Flags and Seals	DISTINCTIONS Animal	Rank	Cosmos	Season	Elements	Bases (ti)
Tsai Te-chung 蔡德忠	Kansu	Wu T'ien-ch'eng 吳天成	Black: rhombic "River" chiang 江 "Glorious Ornament" piao 彪	Dragon 龍	Duke 公	Yin 陰	Spring 春	Metal 金	二七 "One-nine" Green Lotus Hall Phoenices Prefecture
Fang Ta-hung 方大洪	Kwangsi	Hung T'ai-sui 洪太歲	Red triangle "Flood" hung 洪 "Long Life" shou 壽	Tiger 虎	Marquis 侯	Yang 陽	Summer 夏	Wood 木	十二 "ten-two" Hung Obedien Hall Golden Lotus Prefecture
Ma Chao-hsing 馬超興	Szechwan	Tao Pi-ta 陶必達	Carnation or Vermilion square "Flowing 汨 water" lui "union" ho 合	Tortoise 龜	Earl 伯	Union 合	Autumn 秋	Water 水	"nine" 九 Empress Hall Lotus Glory Prefecture
Hu Teh-ti 胡德帝	Hupei	Li Shih-ti 李式弟	White rectangle "tributary Ch'i" 漬 "Harmony" ho 和	Serpent 蛇	Viscount 子	Change 化	Winter 冬	Fire 火	兩九 "double-nine" Great Assembly Ha Embroidered Gallery Prefecture
Li Shih-k'ai 李式開	Honan	Lin Yung-chao 林永超	Green circle "Assemble" ts'ou 湊 "Together" t'ung 同	Assemble 肖	Baron 男	Complete 成	Seasons 季	Earth 土	四七 "four-seven" Metamorphosi Hall Properity Prefecture

Chapter IV : Purposes and Activities

So far I have only mentioned the activities and aims of the secret societies as shown in the origins and formation of the Chinese Triads--the religious and political pre-occupations. In this chapter, I shall discuss the other raisons d'être of secret societies. But before plunging into a detailed discussion of Chinese secret society functions, it may well be useful to begin with a survey of the purposes and activities of voluntary associations in general.

It may be agreed that the chief purpose of any voluntary association consists in providing for its members mutual aid or protection, whether it is religious, cultural, social, recreational, physical, economic or political. However, societies which combine all of these aspects (even when they exclude the last aspect initially) in their make-up becomes latently political.* This kind of development is illustrated in Weber's analysis of north German fraternities of medieaval times:

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* that is, prepared to seize power)

> "Such...protective associations had not been created primarily for the purpose of influencing political conditions. Initially they were substitutes for attachment to a clan with its protective guarantees for the members, an attachment missed with special frequency in the early medieval city. The services to the individual lost by the family were taken over by these protective societies including: help in case of personal injury or threat; aid in economic distress; the settling of disputes and exclusion of feuds between fraternity members by means of peaceful conciliation; the physical protection (banking) of moneys of the members...; and the provision of social occasions for fraternization by holding periodic feasts--a practice continued from pagan times. In their function as insurance associations the protective associations even took care of the individual's funeral and the participation of the fraternity in the funeral ritual guaranteed salvation of his soul through good deeds and secured for him indulgences and the benevolence of powerful saints through shared expenses. It goes without saying that such protection associations also represented joint economic interests." (1) (My emphases)

When such associations (or voluntary substitutes for the clan) comes into conflict with the central governmental authorities and are defeated by them, they will be forced to submit to these authorities, or go underground. When a society is forced into illegal opposition, it becomes of course a secret society.

Secret societies could disguise themselves as open associations like friendship clubs, or maintain both their existence and their functions in strict secrecy. Chinese secret societies tended to vary their ostensible

aims, activities and even to some extent, organization according to circumstances, usually in response to the strength or weakness of the central government. While rebellion claimed the attention of secret societies from time to time, there nevertheless existed a more permanent form of activity which may be described by "services to the individual lost by the family".

As the political aims of the Chinese Triads have already been discussed in the previous chapter in some detail, we need only to summarize them here. The political aims of the secret societies were reform of government ("restore virtuous government") and the national independence of China from alien (Manchu) rule ("Overthrow the Ch'ing and Restore the Ming"); while their main political activity was of course rebellion.

In peace-time, and even simultaneously with rebellion, the purposes of the Triad societies appear to have resembled those of ordinary protective associations as described by Weber. On its role as a substitute

clan, on

clan, the secret societies were highly explicit:

> "To-night we pledge ourselves, and vow this promise before Heaven, that the brethern in the whole universe shall be as from one womb; as if born from one father, as if nourished by one mother; as if they were of one stock and origin..."(2)

When Weber pointed out--most illuminatingly--that the need for a substitute clan sprang from the separation of individuals in the cities from their kin in the countryside, he neglected to note that the economic factor also motivated voluntary association. For individuals poor in material resources are nearly always deprived of influence in the ~~[illegible]~~ lineage if not of its very existence for him. As Maurice Freedman has observed(3), the <u>size</u> of a corporate kin group in China depended on its wealth in land and other immovable property; that is, the larger the corporate group, the greater its wealth tended to be. Poverty not only broke up lineages and families* but could physically exterminate them, especially during periods

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* for example when individuals were forced to leave their families and search for work elsewhere, or when there was no corporately owned lineage land, and the holdings were scattered in small parcels over a wide area.

of famine or other disaster, when the possession of material reserves became the decisive factor in survival. Finally, poverty denied the right of an individual to legal protection under most circumstances, and rendered him excessively vulnerable to corrupt official exactions. Certainly, in the Chinese case both urbanization and poverty are relevant to an explanation of the individual's need for membership in a surrogate kinship group.

In every way, the Chinese secret societies resembled the north German fraternities in their purposes and activities. For example:

a) help in case of personal injury or threat,

> "...When a brother is summoned before a tribunal, or a price is set upon him, and he cannot remain longer in the place, the powerful must help him to escape, and the less powerful pay his travelling expenses. This is helping him out of danger, like taking a fish out of a dry place, and it is saving him from difficulties, like liberating a bird out of a closed net."(4)

> "...If brethern of the Hung-league travel or sleep together, and it happens during their passage that wicked people wish to injure them, they ought to assist each other. If the one does not care for the other, and, knowing it fortuitously beforehand, escapes the danger, but suffers his brother to be injured by them, he shall be punished with 108 heavy blows." (5)

This help should also extend to the members of the "Brother's" family:

> "If a brother of the Hung-league, seeing that the wife or children of a deceased brother are insulted or ill-treated by others, and, though dwelling next door, remains looking at it with his arms sleeved up, and, designedly, does not inform the brethern of it, that they may avenge them, he shall be punished with 21 blows."(6)

b) aid in economic distress:

> " If brethren in times of distress and difficulty have no money to escape, you must assist them with passage money, no matter how much..." (7)
>
> "If a brother's father or mother die and he has no money to defray the funeral expenses, he must ask the brethern to subscribe and none must refuse..." (8)
>
> "When a brother is dead, and there is no money to bury him, all the members ought to unite themselves and contribute money to help. In this way the charity of the Hung-league will appear..." (9)

c) the settlement of disputes, etc.:

> "When brethern of the Hung-league have serious or trifling dissensions, the council is there to decide upon them according to justice, but it shall not be allowed to bring the case before the magistrates..." (10)

> "...If a brother breaks the laws, let all the brethren come and settle the matter in public, without, by using cross words and crooked language in front of the Incense Master, adding fuel to the fire..." (11)
>
> "If a brother of the Hung-league sees that another brother disputes or quarrels with a member of his own family, he ought to intervene and enjoin them to leave off. He who helps his own relation and, wantonly, beats his brother, shall be punished with 108 blows." (12)
>
> "If brethern of the Hung-league have gone together to a brothel, and dispute about a prostitute or 'little friend' (catamite), so that they become foes, and are railed at by others, they shall be punished each with 36 blows. He who has helped the one brother to beat the other brother, shall be punished with 72 blows."(13)

d) the physical protection of moneys of the members: there is no recorded evidence that a bank or banks had existed among the Triads, though, as we have seen earlier in the section on voluntary associations, Buddhist monasteries have long been centres of traditional banking.(14) As secret societies appear to have had close connections with monasteries, especially in the north, it would not be inconceivable for banking practices to have been incorporated into Triad activities. If the money and goods of

individual members were not actually "banked" then they were at least physically protected by severe sanctions (cutting off ears, and even death) against robbery, swindling and betrayal of the financial trust. Even though such severe punishments were not always meted out, or less painful penalties substituted, it was in the common interest (that of mutual confidence) to prevent both insiders and outsiders from getting at the common and private funds of members:

> "If a brother...is sufficiently bad and wicked to steal the money, clothes or possessions of another brother, he shall be punished...with the loss of one ear." (15)
>
> "If a brother..., knowing that another brother has been killed by strangers, secretly purloins his money and goods, instead of informing the brotherhood of it, that they may avenge him, one of his ears will be cut off." (16)
>
> "If a brother entrusts another letters to take over the seas to his family, and if this brother purloins the money or letters,or change the goods, he will lose one ear." (17)
>
> "If a brother...has found out that another brother will pass, with much gold, silver or goods, along a certain place, and he conspires secretly with other people or with the police to rob him of it, he shall be put to death." (18)
>
> "...if you have to keep guard or watch over a place, you must not steal, nor allow others to steal..." (19)

e) the provision of social occasions for fraternization and feasts, etc.:

All initiation ceremonies and festival assemblies were occasions for fraternization, as well as their inevitable culmination in feasts, at which were served the food first offered in sacrifice to the gods.or founders.(20) As not only were a large number of fowls decapitated during the act of initiation, but sometimes even horses and oxen were slaughtered asthe final offering, there was no lack of reasons for feasting. Moreover, the wine drunk with the blood during the initiation would require that any intoxication of members should be contained by the partaking of solids. It would not do for members to be released to the outside world too soon after the intake of alcohol, in case it has loosened their tongues. According to Morgan, the twentieth century Triads in Hong Kong feasted whenever there was a promotion of a member or official to office or higher office, the provision of such feasts itself being the supplementary promotion fee.(21) Besides feasting at festivals and after initiations, the Triads also celebrated their"birthday"

on the 25th of the 7th month (by the lunar calendar) when, according to the myth, the first Triad general Wan Yun-lung was elected by the first assembly of recruits to the presidency.(22)

f) The arrangement for funerals and the participation of members on these occasions:

As we have noted above, rules existed which required members to contribute towards the funeral expenses of members and their immediate families, but rules also existed which required <u>attendance</u> at the funerals of the <u>parents</u> of members:

> "If a brother of the Hung-league, knowing that the father or mother of a brother has died, remains on the burial day quietly at home and, designedly, does not attend the funeral, he shall be punished with 108 heavy blows." (23)

There is, however, no mention of the necessity to attend the funeral of a <u>fellow member</u>. This may be explained by two things; firstly, by the fact that funerals of non-member relatives were public affairs, and a good attendance would reflect well on the "cover" personality of the Triad member, for the prestige and

hence influence of a Triad member in the outside world could depend to some extent on the number of "relatives" he could muster up as mourners at a funeral, and particularly at his parent's funeral. Secondly, the attendance at a fellow-member's funeral was both dangerous and unnecessary. Dangerous, because death of secret society members, if ascertainable, could not always be explained away in terms of "natural causes". It was hardly politic to try and provoke the authorities into action by a public display of secret society weakness. The frequent disappearance members on active service, no matter how long, could not always be due to death. Hence, as long as the funeral expenses were paid, the Triads did not insist on the fulfillment of normal "brotherly" duties in every letter. No doubt that if a member chose to imperil himself by attending a fellow member's funeral it was his own look out.

g) Representation of joint economic interests:

It was unlikely that secret societies owned much immoveable property owing to their highly mobile character. When necessary, they hired halls for meetings, or met in the numerous houses of entertainment

which they controlled, and in which they had trusted lieutenants.(24) Père Leboucq reports, however, that the northern White Lotus Societies owned land and palaces which were inhabited by "kings".(25) But this appears to have been an exception, as there is no record of such properties in the hands of the Triads as such. It is probable, if not certain, that houses or buildings were owned by individual members of the societies in trust for the league. Personal residences, as well as the back rooms of tea-houses and brothels, were used as secret meeting places,(25) by the Kelao Societies, and undoubtedly by the Triads as well. The practice of moving from one meeting place to another (temples were also favoured retreats) was followed by both republican revolutionaries and later by communist revolutionaries, and indeed, logically by any clandestine organization which could be called professional.

Besides the control of criminal establishments, Triads also disposed, of course, of a common fund consisting

of membership fees, festival, funeral and other contributions, a fluctuating income from extortion, blackmail, robbery, smuggling, piracy, assassination and so on.

Describing the economic power of the Szechwan Kelao Society in the Republican revolution, an eyewitness and well-known writer Li Chieh-jen wrote:

> "The Kelao controlled the boatmen on the River (Yangtze), the craftsmen and small shopkeepers, the manure collectors and water carriers and sedan chair carriers, but they also had adherents among the merchants, the pawnbrokers, the landlords, and now the students. The managing of public cloacae was in their hands, for the 'manure head', or headman of those who collected the manure, was a Kelao member, and this was a source of revenue for them." (26)

As Jean Chesneaux had pointed out, the liaison of secret societies with smugglers, "cette couche originale et marginale de la bourgeoisie naissante dans les sociétés proto-capitalistes" was probably a significant contribution to the primitive accumulative process, a point normally ignored by social historians.(27)

In a sense, secret societies did "own" land in that they disposed of "territories" of control, for which

they feuded among themselves with such violence that gang-warfare was inseparably associated with secret societies in the public mind.(28) In the same way as crops were produced on land, so were profitable "business" there in the territory for the cultivation and reaping. William G. Skinner illustrates this kind of territorial control in his essay on the Chinese market town in Szechwan in the republican period:

> "...the secret societies collectively known as the Ko-lao-hui wielded supreme power at all levels of rural society--and the standard marketing community was no exception. It was in fact, a most crucial unit, for lodges of the society were organized by, and limited in almost every case to, a single standard market community. There were two lodges organized within the standard marketing community centered in Kao-tien-tzu, one 'clear' and one 'muddy',* both had their headquarters and held their meetings in tea houses in the town. A majority of male adults belonged to one or the other, and on almost every market day members were able to conduct business with the officers of the lodge,

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* According to Hutson(29), the "clear-water womb-brothers" (ch'ing-shui-pao-ko) belonged to the Benevolence or Senior lodge, while the "muddy-water womb-brothers" (hun-shui-pao-ko) belonged to the Justice lodge, made up apparently of the "lawless elements" from the Chengtu area, and its members address those of the "clear" lodge as "uncle".

> who could be found in a particular tea-house. In Ko-tien-tzu, as in many other market towns of the Szechwan Basin, the market itself was controlled by one of the secret society lodges. The positions of grain measurers, pig weighers, livestock middlemen, and certain other commission agents were reserved for society members, and a portion of each agent's fees was claimed for the coffers of the lodge." (30)

It has to be remembered that at this point the phrase "supreme power at all levels of rural society" applies ~~in particular~~ to the republican period, during which secret societies operated openly and without official hindrance. The reasons were that China throughout the period was in a state of civil war* and moreover, because of their important part in making the Republican revolution a "success", the Kelao Societies, as well as others, were given free rein to carry on their activities in a chaotic China.

During the period preceding the revolution, however, secret societies were largely unequal to the forces of order, however weak they had become. One symptom of this inequality was the need for secrecy; the other was of course, the still powerful presence of rural and urban lineages of the officials and gentry.

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* war not only between the republicans and the communists but also between war-lords, between central and local forces and between large and powerful lineages, especially in the south.

Writing of a period as late as 1948, Skinner points out that many market towns were controlled by either "several founding villages" (that is, by their representatives, the gentry lineages), or by a "single composite lineage" or "great branch" located in a village outside the market town.(31) This somewhat contradicts Skinner's earlier statement that the Kelao wielded "supreme" power at "all" levels of society, and even during a period when secret societies flourished.

The relationship of secret societies to lineages will have to be discussed here, especially as Maurice Freedman has suggested in his study of southeastern lineages that they might have been "functionally connected" in some way. I quote:

> "In south-eastern China, therefore, there would appear to have been two alignments of conflict which cut across each other. In some contexts lineages were ranged against lineages; in other contexts lineages, or class sections of them, were united in their common hostility to the state. It may be that the disturbances in Fukien and

> Kwangtung in the nineteenth century were less productive of general chaos than they might have been precisely because this twofold alignment of conflict prevented la guerre à outrance in either direction...
>
> The provinces of Kwangtung and Fukien were remarkable in China for three things: large-scale lineage organization, inter-lineage fights, and secret societies of the Triad type. We may well suspect that these phenomena were not randomly associated, but that in fact they were functionally connected. Alliances against the state formed by the secret societies counterbalanced the opposition generated between lineage communities when agnatic organization was carried to a high pitch. To test this hypothesis we should need to look in detail at the way in which both large-scale lineagesand 'lodges' of the Triad were distributed through the two provinces. If we could establish that these two types of organization flourished together we should be much nearer an understanding of the importance of the Triad in the south-east." (32) (My emphasis)

The main points of this passage appear to be:

a) that south-eastern Chinese society in the nineteenth century was prevented from entering into a guerre à outrance by ties cross-cutting lineage conflict among "class sections" of lineages which were absorbed in common opposition to the state

b) that these "cross-cutting" ties were none other than secret society ties, because the secret societies united the poor in opposition to the state (andpresumably gentry and official privilege)

c) and that, hypothetically, where secret societies and lineages flourished together in equal strength, there would be a "balance" of the inter-lineage and anti-state conflict, leading to a reduction or aspension of hostilities; in this way, secret societies and lineages were functionally connected.

As the last point is the key to the hypothesis, I shall begin discussing it first. As we have established earlier political associations of a voluntary kind were traditionally always "substitute lineages". Chinese secret societies may also be described as such because of the over-all functions performed by them for their members. The assumption underlying the need for a substitute lineage is that its members either lacked influence within their real lineage, or did not possess any lineage ties at all. There would be no advantage for an individual with influence in his lineage in joining a secret society because, besides the absence of any guarantees for relatively greater influence there, the lineage provided him with all the advantages of a protective society

and more, for membership of a large lineage (which usually means that it was a wealthy one) was prestigious, while membership of a secret society was both illegal (or socially despised) and dangerous. Assuming that legality, prestige and orthodoxy were desired by the majority, it would be difficult to see how individuals with a stake in lineage organization would be drawn into secret society membership.

For secret societies to be "functionally connected" with lineages, or to be linked by cross-cutting ties, there would have to exist conditions which made it possible for an individual to maintain both kinds of ties equally. This could only have been possible (the reasons will be discussed next) if the lineage was also a secret society, and vice versa. As we have seen in the previous chapter, there was only one such example--the exception that proves the rule--in nineteenth century China, the Nien,(33) in the north.*

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* This is not as remarkable as it might first appear, since the most widespread type of kinship organization in China was not the lineage (in the sense of a corporate group) but the family.

The reason for this may lie in the fact that both lineages (corporate lineages) and secret societies demanded absolute allegience from their members. The appeal to any other kind of loyalty by a member--especially in the embattled secret societies--would be regarded at best as naïvete, at worst, betrayal. Indeed, the first thing a candidate for membership in a secret society had to recite was an oath disavowing all kinship loyalties(34); it is interesting to note that the word for lineage tsu never occurs during the whole ritual of the initiation, only the word chia (family), and when it does occur it is expressed in a very rude term ma t'ung, translated by Matthews as "commode", and literally means "horse tub". This conspicuous verbal absence of one of the most important units of social organization may be an indication of how great the separation was between the secret society and the lineage. Thus, the parallel existence of powerful secret societies and powerful lineages in one and the same areas within south China could not have been logically possible--where a lineage was strong, a secret society was bound to be better suppressed, for the militia (or the military arm

of powerful local groupings) was bound to be better equipped and trained. Where a lineage was weak, the secret societies were bound to be stronger than their counterparts in areas controlled by powerful lineages. Thus, it may be more useful to view the lineage-secret society relationship as a "see-saw" of two kinds of forces, than as unwitting partners in the activity of preventing total, disruptive war, ("guerre à outrance").

Therefore, secret societies were only stopped (and only temporarily) from plunging central and south China into total chaos by the ultimate alliance of government forces and local gentry organizations against them (a two-to-one political ratio), and by the inability of secret societies as such to produce an alternative ideology or theory of social organization to that of orthodox society. When this theoretical gap was filled by republicanism and Western liberal democratic ideas, the old society was overthrown. The fact that secret societies failed to unite themselves together was also a factor in the creation of a stalemate. But the stalemate could not be permanent

and could not be used to explain the importance of the Triads in the south. The importance of secret societies in China lay, rather, in their destructive potentialities with regard to the Confucian society, and in their revolutionary affirmation of the development of the voluntary association in opposition to the ascriptive association of birth, in other words, in their opposition to class and lineage organizations. These points will be developed in the next chapter.

To return to the matter of secret society activities, about which we have already had some indication from an examination of the regulations of the Triad, the most obvious as well as most permanent type of activity was obviously in the criminal spheres. But the type of crime controlled by secret societies depended of course on the particular area of operation. For example, those societies concentrated in the Yangtze Basin tended to be involved mainly in smuggling

government monopolies such as tea, liquor, salt and silver, and in the transportation of illicit goods as well as simple piracy. Those concentrated on the coast dealt in international contraband, in extortion of wharf labourers, gambling, prostitution and female and child slavery.* Inland societies normally specialized in highway robbery, insurance, blackmail, sale of human manure, profitable bureaucratic subversion via yamen underlings, and so on.

Morgan's account of the twentieth century Triads in Hong Kong may serve as a further revelation of the normal activities of Chinese secret societies in general:

> "In circumstances such as then existed (after the war); of uncertainty, shortages, and hardship, the Triad societies have always excelled themselves. Robbery, housebreaking, burglary, and petty larceny were among the more obvious of the evils indulged by them. They quickly obtained control of sections of the black market and engaged in blackmail of actual

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* See Chapter IX for further discussion. There appears to be little evidence regarding the role of secret societies in male slavery; there is no evidence that they dealt in it commercially. In fact, slaves (for example in Cuba) formed secret societies among themselves along the lines of the Triads in China, taking even the name (Hung Men) as well asthe rituals of the latter. See attached report in the Appendix on Chinese association in Havana.

> or alleged collaborators of the Japanese; <u>but most important of all were their activities in the vice and labour fields</u>...opium divans supplied and controlled by Triad members sprang up and became centred for a major portion of all criminal activity in the colony. In them the criminals met, planned, disposed of stolen property, and shared out their proceeds.
>
> Prostitution had been openly encouraged by the Japanese and continued to flourish, catering not only to the normal population but also to members of the Allied Occupation Forces. In some districts whole streets were mainly devoted to this vice, and such were the profits involved that the various societies jealously guarded their particular territoriesand viciously resisted any infiltration by other societies or groups. Practically all thewomen engaged in this trade were protected by one or other of the societies and any interlopers were liable to be beaten and have their establishments destroyed.
>
> On the labour front, Triad control was concentrated at the coolie level...
>
> Hawkers, that vast band of kerb side merchants selling at fractional profits, paid protection money or suffered personal injury and destruction of their stock." (35)

Their importance in the labour field is as significant as their role in creating (albeit unintentionally) a nascent bourgeoisie; for the only "trade unions" which existed in traditional China were the guilds and the secret societies, the one operating in the open but on a relatively small scale, the other in secret on a much larger scale, specializing in

illegal trade. When Western style trade unions were formed in the first decades of the twentieth century, secret societies were employed by the Nationalist government to subvert them,(36) and finally put them out of action in the wholesale massacre in July 1927 of the largest and most militant trade union of the time, which was in Shanghai.*

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* See Chapter IX, p.362

Notes

pages 152- 176

1. Max Weber, The City, Translated and edited by Don Martindale and Gertrud Neuwirth, New York and London, 1958, p.114

2. Schlegel, op.cit. p.133 (Art.5); see also pp. 136 (Art. 9), p.137

3. Freedman, Maurice, Lineage Organization in Southeastern China, London 1957, p.17; see also note on Gamble.

4. Schlegel, op. cit. p.139; Stanton, William, The Triad Society, Hong Kong, 1900. p. 64 (Art.27)

5. Schlegel, ibid., p.155 (Art.27)

6. Ibid. p.160 (Art.67)

7. Stanton, op. cit. Appendix, p.119 (Oath 7)

8. Schlegel, op. cit. p.119 (Art.7)

9. Ibid. p.164 (Art.19); p.157 (Art.45) p.138 (Art.11)

10. Ibid. p.163 (Art.14)

11. Stanton, op. cit. p.64 (Oath 33), also Oath 34

12. Schlegel, op. cit. p. 154 (Art.20)

13. Ibid. p.140 (Art.22); p.161 (Art.3) concerns disputes with outsiders

14. See p. 104

15. Schlegel, ibid. p. 153 (Art.6)

16. Ibid. p.154 (Art.15)

17. Ibid. (Art.17)

18. Ibid. p.158

19. Stanton, op. cit. p. 62 (Oath 15)

20. See below chapter on ritual (VII)

21. Morgan,W.P., Triad Societies in Hong Kong, 1960 Hong Kong, p. 273

22. See above p. 133

23. Schlegel, op.cit. p.157 (Art.44)

24. See quotation from Skinner below p.165; see also an observer's account in Han Suyin, The Crippled Tree, London, 1965, p.95, of China in the 1890's. See also p. 250 on use of fairs as meeting places for planning insurrection, p.251 on temples as another favoured meeting place

25. Leboucq, op. cit. p. 15:

"La societe du Nénuphar (White Lotus) a sa maison royale dans chaque province; on dirait qu'elle tient à l'ancienne division de la Chine et regarde comme non avenues la réunion des principautés et les conquêtes des empereurs, qui, pour le Nénuphar, ne sont que des tyrans.

Je connais le petit roi nénupharien de la province du Tcheli; son logis, son village eurent jadis ma visite et j'y reçus un accueil bienveillant. Le prince du Tcheli est aujourd'hui un vieillard de soixante-huit ans, d'un embonpoint remarquable. Ses revenus ont augmenté d'une manière considérable depuis quelques années. Quand il fut constitué, il y a quelque vingt ans "Grand Orient", il avait à peine quelques arpents de mauvaise terre en friche; aujourdhui, il possède au soleil plus de douze cents arpents de terre labourable qui lui rapportent un revenu annuel de huit ou dix mille francs. Sa fortune immobilière est, dit-on, immense; mais la prudence lui conseille de ne pas trop attirer l'attention publique; d'ailleurs, il est tenu de garder en dépôt de grosses sommes d'argent pour le jour ou ses sujets devront s'armer de nouveau et tenter les chances de la revolte."

26. Han Suyin, op.cit. p.249 (Li Chieh-jen was known as the Chinese Maupassant)

27. Chesneaux, op. cit. p.109 (1965)

28. For account of feuds among Chinese secret societies in Malaya see M.L. Wynne, Triad and Tabut, Singapore 1941, p.245, Chapter VII.

29. Rev. James Hutson, Chinese Life in the Tibetan Foothills, Shanghai, 1921, p.82

30. "Marketing and social structure in rural China" in Journal of Asian Studies, vol. xxiv, p.37

31. Skinner, ibid.

32. Freedman, op. cit.pp. 124-5

33. See discussion of Nien and clan alliance in pp.45-8, Chiang Siang-tseh, The Nien Rebellion, Seattle, 1954: "What surprises us is that the big clans provided the Nien with a tremendous number of leaders. Analogies cannot be found in other contemporary rebellious groups." Chiang goes on to analyze types of gentry leaders of the Nien, most of whom belonged to the lower degree holder group, if they had degrees at all; while most of the Nien leaders held no degrees at all. (p.50) There appears to be two main reaons for the Nien association with lineages in the north, and these are, firstly, that the Nien societies had been hereditary bandit groups, and appear to have been unique in this practice in China; secondly, that the northern lineages were, unlike the southern ones, neither strong nor rich and were therefore unequal to the power of the central government (which was besides too close for comfort, being situated in the north in the province of Chihli now called Hopei). Their relative weakness in comparison with their southern counterparts, as well as their closeness to the capital (Peking) could have been a strong factor in deciding them to join with the Nien rebels.

34. See next chapter (V)

35. Morgan, op.cit. p.73-5

36. For a contemporary account of the work of secret societies in trade unions see Harold R. Isaacs' article "Gang Rule in Shanghai" in Five Years of Kuomintang Reaction reprinted from China Forum, May, 1932, Shanghai.

Chapter V : Recruitment and Social Composition

In principle, membership of the Triads was open to all, irrespective of class, sex or age. A Triad verse sums up the system as follows:

> "Before the Hall of Loyalty and Justice, there
> is no great or small
> It does not cheat the rich, nor the honoured
> nor the poor." (1)

Another verse confirms this:

> "Inside the Red Flower Pavilion* there are both
> high and low." (2)

These verses appear to signify that the distinctions which normally prevented people from different classes of society from mingling together in the outside world became irrelevant once a man was initiated into the Triad society. Here a brothel-keeper might keep company with a literatus, a murderer with a policeman. It also meant in principle that a murderer could be an officer of the local society, and the literatus merely an ordinary member, according to his length of "service" to the society or merit, and not, as was usually the case, according to his social origins. This

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* the initiation room

refusal to admit the old class loyalties in secret society recruitment was reinforced in the denial of the other most important loyalty held by the orthodox society, loyalty to the family:

> "Once having entered the Hung doors, there is no kin, no history;
> The unjust may not enter here." (3)

and the answer to the question, "Who are you?" is met with the reply:

> "I am a stranger, without parents, brothersor sisters, therefore I entreat that you will henceforth be to me in their stead." (4)

In the earlier verse, the only impediment to membership was a moral one, "the unjust may not enter there", which is a vague enough objection; however, it must be noted that secret society ethics were often in direct opposition to those of the orthodox society, as the statutes of the Triads will show.(5)

The blotting out of social distinctions, and the denial of relationships which were so crucial to the organization of the wider society had two major implications: that loyalty to the secret society

must be placed above all class and family interests and that service to the aims of the secret society was therefore to be the supreme merit, whether it be economic, social or military.

These implications are made more explicit in the rules against the harbouring of class prejudice and the betrayal of secrets to one's family:

> "When any Hung brethren are away from their homes, no matter whether scholars, husbandmen, mechanics,* merchants, or travellers (literally, "guests of the rivers and lakes") come to you, you must receive them and give them one night's lodging and two meals. If any, forgetting the feeling of relationship (bonds of solidarity) and pretending not to know, look on them as outsiders, may they die beneath ten thousand knives." (6)

> "Of the internal affairs of the Hung family a father must not inform his son nor a son his father, nor a brother his brother, nor may any inform their nearest relations of it; and they must not speak of the books, certificates or secret words, nor secretly, through greed of money, teach others; may those who do so die beneath ten thousand knives." (7)

In contrast to this Triad absence of class prejudice, the Elder Brother Societies (Kelao Hui) made some

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* Stanton's translation of the word kung, which is normally rendered as "artisans" and later as "workmen".

stipulations against admitting "dishonourable people" (sheng-chia pu ch'ing-pai) into their ranks. These were the barbers ("shaving disciple" sao-ch'ing sheng), porters ("weighing-scales disciple" t'ien-p'ing sheng), and actors ("spring-board disciple" t'iao-pan sheng). But this rule was broken by the beginning of the twentieth century, when musicians (classed together with actors in the despised category of entertainers) were admitted to membership.(8)

In practice, inevitably, strict adherence to the recruitment principle of the Triads was difficult. On the one hand, the illegality of secret association automatically converted a man into an outlaw on recruitment. Therefore, in normal times, applications for membership of secret societies tended to come from those who were already outlaws, or aspired to illegitimate power. In other words, those deprived of the normal legal means of effectively persuing or protecting their interests were susceptible to the lure of the advantages of secret association. This would logically disqualify the ruling class

as a major recruiting category, although some of the unsuccessful and disaffected members, that category of "frustrated intelligentsia" frequently joined secret societies:

> "That the leading members of these organizations (secret societies) have always been recruited from the unemployed literati there can be little question. In fact, without the co-operation of literati no Chinese society, could reduce its motives to writing, construct its formulae, compile its rituals, and prepared the manifestoes."(9)

This passage may be somewhat exaggerated about the role of the literati in secret societies as we shall see below.(10) The employed and successful literati of course could afford to look down their noses at the secret societies and dismiss them as hives of vulgar superstition and sedition.(11) The government attitude towards secret association is well known:

> "...the officials are uniformly suspicious of the people. The last state of mind is well warranted by what is known of the multitudinous semi-political sects, with which the whole Empire is honeycombed. A District Magistrate will pounce upon the annual gathering of a temperance society such as the well-known Tsai-li...and turn over their anticipated feast to the voracious 'wolves and tigers' of his yamen, not because it is proved that the Tsai-li society are treasonable, but because it has been officially assumed long since that they must be so. All secret societies are

> are treasonable, and this among the rest. This generalized suspicion settles the whole question, and whenever occasion arises, the government interposes, seizes the leaders, banishes or exterminates them, and thus for the moment allays its suspicions. (12)

Not only were secret societies persecuted, but also those officials who were seen by others to have neglected the punishment of secret society members. However ineffectual the laws might have been in practice, their power of deterrent against "respectable" people joining secret societies must have been felt, or Chinese secret societies would have developed along modern Freemasonry lines.(13)

Moreover, membership of secret societies entailed a limitation on individual liberty which was extreme, even in Confucian terms: once a man joined a secret society, he joined for life.(14) Any change of decision on the part of a recruit during or after initiation could bring upon him death or mutilation.(15) A secret society, existing within the tolerance of the state was less powerful than the state, and required therfore greater devotion and discipline from its members. Without the aboslute

Without strong loyalty and strict discipline among its members, a society could not hope to survive. The necessity for solidarity created a traditional (and probably justified) suspicion of literati or gentry candidates for membership among secret societies. The fact that members of the gentry (however disaffected) were linked to their class by ties of kinship and social and cultural interest, laid them, more than any other social class, open to the temptations of betrayal. Père Leboucq, in commenting upon the recruitment bias of the White Lotus supports this view:

> "Les chefs de recrutement se défient, en général, des lettrés, surtout de ceux qui ont un patrimoine et une reputation d'honnêtété. D'ailleurs, comme leur but est de renverser l'autorité, les titres honorifiques accordés par l'empereur, soit aux examens littéraires, soit aux concours militaires, ne sont point de nature à leur inspirer de la confiance envers ceux qui les portent. On ne refuse pas ouvertement leur admission mais on les méprise et on se défie d'eux. Je connais un bachelier plein de talent et d'ambition, qui, après avoir réussi à se faire délivrer le diplôme de simple agrégé* , n'a pu obtenir encore le moindre titre, pas même celui de décurion.** (16)

Sun Yat-sen, the future President of the Chinese republic confirmed this picture of secret society

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* ordinary member and leader of ten, respectively. "Bachelier" is probably a translation of the lowest academic degree, the hui-tsai, which is often translated in English too, as "bachelor" degree

recruitment in his frequent dealings with the Hung league:

> "Then Hung-men societies, operate in the profoundest secrecy, carefully avoiding all contact with officials and even the intellectuals whom they regarded as the eyes and ears of the Chinese government." (17)

It is thus not surprising that in an official list of captured Triad leaders of Canton, reproduced below[18], only 1 out of 39 leaders had been a gentry member.[19]

Thus the literati class as a whole, was weakly represented in secret society membership. An old proverb sums up the situation neatly:

> "The mandarin draws his power from the law, the people from the secret societies." (20)

What social groups or classes then dominated the membership of secret societies? And in what proportion? Obviously, the first question is easier to answer than the second, since precise statistics are nearly completely unobtainable, and for the reasons outlined in the introduction.

A recent study of the social composition of secret societies in the second half of the nineteenth century by Wang T'ien-chiang[21], a Chinese historian, reveals, through the local gazettes and official documents of the time, that the bulk of the secret society members was composed of six main types of social persons:

1. Dispossessed peasants (p'o-ch'an nung-min)
2. Dispossessed and unemployed artisans (p'o-ch'an shih-yeh) shou-kung-yeh che)
3. Small traders (hsiao-shang jen)
4. Small owner-managers of various land and water transport vehicles (ch'uan-yun-kung jen)
5. Labourers, porters (pan-yun kung-jen)
6. Disbanded soldiers (san-ping you-yung) of the Taiping and Imperial forces.

According to Chesneaux, smugglers, sorcerers, geomancers, victims of floods, droughts and other disasters were also numerous in secret societies.[22]

The feature common to all these categories of people were of course their relative poverty and mobility.

They came to be known as "the floating population" or you-min (literally,"wandering people"), and as such, were highly susceptible to official harassment, for example,"vagabondage" was punishable by death,(23) while any attempt at organizing themselves into voluntary associations of a non-familial type was threatened with indiscriminate offfical persecutions of the type mentioned earlier on page 184.* Thus, while kinless-ness was seen as a dangerous social quality in orthodox society, it was regarded quite differently within the secret society; indeed, if we can judge by the Triad rules at all, it appears to have been a positive advantage for a candidate to have no kin.

The easy mobility (geographically speaking) of these kinless persons was also the result of poverty arising from misfortune during wars or natural calamities. Kinlessness and poverty appear to be parts of a vicious circle in traditional society; one state usually led to the other, and vice-versa. A number of popular sayings at the end of the Taiping rebellion illustrate the conditions of the you-min of the time: some had "no fields to plough", or

"no skills with which to earn a living", while others such as disbanded soldiers had "no family to go back to", and even if they had, their families were usually hundreds of miles away from where the soldiers found themselves after the civil war. Dispossessed merchants and artisans were forced to "close doors, stop work"; unemployed "scholars became wandering scribes"; impoverished"farmers turn into wandering braves (you-yung)", and most of them became "society bandits" (hui-fei).(24)

Obviously, the proportion of the different categories of the you-min to one another within the secret societies depended on the location of the latter; that is, how near were the headquarters of the secret society to a communications or transport centre (for example, the Yangtse Basin); or a former battle ground (for example, that of the Taipings); or large industrializing, commercial or maritime cities (for example, the Treaty Ports); or their hinterlands. As an illustration of the influence of the geographical location of secret societies upon the social composition of secret

their members, we may look at the Yangtze region. The Elder Brothers Society appears to have dominated this area during the second half of the nineteenth century, originating as the "Fourth" lodge of the Triad,* and recruiting the majority of its members from among the disbanded soldiers of the Army of the Green Standard and the Hunan Army, which was raised specifically for the purpose of crushing the Taipings.(25) But the Elder Brothers Society had also strong piratical origins; they were known formerly as "Society of the Rovers of the Rivers and Lakes" (Chiang Hu Hui),(26) the euphemism for pirates. The lodge officials of the Elder Brothers were sometimes known as "Helmsmen" (to-pa-tzu,)or "Anchorage Heads",(ma-t'ou); while the lodges were, as we have seen earlier, divided into two main sections, styled, respectively, "Clear-water" and "Muddy-water womb-brothers"; and their secret documents were labelled "Book of the Sea-bottom" (hai-ti shu), collectively.

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* The name "Elder Brothers" (Kelao) is believed to have derived from the practice of the Triads in sending their senior officials "elder brothers" to infiltrate the Imperial armies and recruit members from among them, to form a new group of societies independent ofthe Triad group.(27)

Besides disbanded soldiers, boatmen, water-carriers, coolies and other riverine people, the Elder Brothers also recruited, in the Szechwan Basin (see above p. 164) "several thousand miners of the Pure True Mountains beyond Kuanhsien", charcoal-burners, wood-cutters, timbermen, a pawnbroker, a supervisor of schools, who became Dragon Head Grand Master, or President of the Szechwan association.(28)

The Triads tended to be strongest in the provinces of Fukien, Kwangtung and Kwangsi.(29)

It is impossible to give an accurate estimate of the proportionate numerical strength of one social category to another. According to Wang T'ien-chang, there were approximately "sixty to seventy per cent" of the Green Standard and Hunan Armies in the secret societies during the 1860's.(30) On the eve of the Taiping Rebellion (1850) there were approximately 585,000 men in the Green Standard Army, and in 1856 roughly 60,000 men in the Hunan Army.(31) There

were of course the local militias also; and these, disbanded, must have increased the bulk of the secret society membership even more. The Rev. F.H. James estimated that by 1896, there could have been anything from 20,000 to 200,000 members in each province. According to Li Chieh-jen, a participant in the 1911 revolution in Szechwan estimated that there were altogether 15,000 Elder Brothers in the province at the time, and this figure does not include other secret societies members operating there.(32)

According to a list of Canton Triad leaders captured by the government in 1855,(33) each social category was represented as follows:

Salaried workers	10
Small traders	8
Farmers	6
Fishermen	5
Artisans	5
Mendicants	2
Smugglers	1
Small government employees	1
Gentry	1
Total	39

This list of course reflects the bias of the Canton "branch", where the urban working class formed one quarter of the secret society leadership. Unfortunately, no figures are available for the size of the labour force in Canton at this period, but it must have been relatively large. Assuming that industrial and population growth did not fluctuate wildly from the middle of the nineteenth century to the first decades of the twentieth century, we may cite the figures of 1919 as a rough guide: the total labour force then stood at about 50,000 to 75,000, or 0.5% of the population of China.(34) But this working population was concentrated mainly in the six major industrial regions of China, where they formed a significant section of people. These areas were, 1) Shanghai and its hinterland and the Yangtze estuary, 2) Hong Kong, Canton and their hinterlands, 3) the Hupei-Hunan region, 4) central Shantung, 5) north-eastern Chihli, 6) south of the North China Plain.(35) By 1926, the working class population in Canton stood at 55,000 persons(36), while the city's total population

at about the same period (1931) stood at approximately 1,200,000 persons.[36] Which means that as In Shanghai (1919), the working class population formed 20% to 21% of the urban total,[37] or 1/5 of the citizenry.

The predominance of workers, small traders and ex-peasants in the secret societies in the Canton region may be accounted for by the fact that artisans, and professionals had their own traditional forms of association (for example, the craft and beggar unions, smugglers' bands, etc.) which not only admitted the well-to-do, but also the more humble practitioners of the craft or profession. In contrast, the merchant guilds were becoming, by the nineteenth century, more and more dominated by the big merchantsand compradores who were in the process of being absorbed into Western-type chambers of commerce. The small trader, usually represented by the itinerant salesman of food and small consumer items, found himself being edged out of the new developments. The urban workers, many of whom were originally peasants, had not as yet discovered

the concept of the modern trade union, and were still a relatively new mass phenomenon--as industrial workers--on the Chinese scene.(38) The high figure of farmers or peasants too, was due to the general impoverishment of the countryside brought about by urbanization, concentration of land in the hands of a small wealthy minority, and the growth of tenancy in the south.(39)

The list quoted above may only reflect the leadership pattern, and could only be a very rough indication of the composition of the rank-and-file of the Triads. In addition to the six categories of social persons mentioned earlier, we might add the following urban professionals: barbers, café-owners, bicycle-repairers, carpenters, jewellers, black-smiths, employees of the Maritime Customs, servants, and others created by the invasion of the West.(40)

The other categories of people not yet discussed were of course the women and youth, who also formed a significant proportion of secret society membership. Their role

in the secret societies was probably more a reflection of their position in orthodox society than of the conscious liberalism of secret society policy. As we already know, women in rich households played an insignificant part, normally, in the political and economic life of orthodox society; their function was to rear children and serve as moral and aesthetic ornaments of their husband's family and lineage; and the more conspicuous leisure they enjoyed, the greater was the prestige of their spouses. Poor peasant women however, were forced to take a greater part in the upkeep and economic survival of the household, thus earning for themselves a more "equal" position in family decisions. The same might also apply to the children and youth of poor families. The Catholic Pere Leboucq has some colourful opinions on the role of women in secret societies of the north:

> "J'ignore si en Europe les Sociétés secrètes admettent les femmes en leur sein; mais en Chine, ce sont les harpies du Nenuphar qui tiennent le haut du pavé dans la Société; ce sont elles qui raniment et encouragent les pusillanimes. Que la Société du Nénuphar vienne jamais à instituer un Comité de Salut Public, une commune...elle est assurée que les pétroleuses ne lui manqueront pas.

> La Chine a bien voulu ne donner à la femme, même à la mère de famille, qu'un rang d'esclave ou tout au moins un rang infiniment inferieur à celui de l'homme, c'est une raison pour les maçons du Nénuphar de lui donner considération qui, en excitant sa vanité et son amour-propre, l'attache ainsi à la cause commune."(41)

Further, women were able to fulfill roles in the secret society never permitted them in orthodox society:

> "La femme mariée est-elle agrégée au Nénuphar, elle doit promettre par serment de ne jamais en faire l'aveu à son mari ni à ses parents, à moins qu'elle ne sache de source certaine qu'eux aussi en font partie; dans ce cas, <u>les deux époux ont le droit de se disputer la préséance et l'autorité dans l'interieur du ménage comme dans la société dont ils sont membres</u>; si l'admission de la femme est anterieure à celle du mari, elle est dès lors la maitresse du logis pour ce qui regarde la direction domestique." (42)

An explanation for this may also be that women, made independent from men by choice or circumstances, were frequently to be found in the religious sects, some of which were made up of women entirely. Marjorie Topley's thesis of 1958 on women's religious associations in Singapore is worth consulting on the reasons for women's need to join religious associations.

However, despite the honourable treatment accorded to them by the secret societies

> "...ne sont pourtant pas admises aux dignités ni

> aux emplois: mais on sait toujours les dédommager de cette exclusion aparente en leur donnant des missions et des postes de confiance qui les consolent largement de leur obscurité officielle." (43)

The Rev. D.H. Porter did not go into as much detail as Père Leboucq about the role of women in the Shantung secret societies he studied, but there are two points worth noting, he wrote:

> "Inasmuch as men and women meet together upon equal terms this has been a source of wide scandal..." (44) (My emphasis)

and in support of this may be Porter's statement that

> "If the candidate be a man he is received by a man, if a woman or girl, she is admitted by a female member." (45)

In the south, too women appear to have played a strong role in the secret societies; the Rev. Hutson reported:

> "Women play a large part...; leading women being called nu-kuang-kun (女光棍) or 'female polished sticks'...Many are sworn members, and the mothers and wives are often able assistants of male members. They spy out theland, hide the booty and screen the guilty. It is a rare thing for a woman to be put to death for implication in robbery..." (46)

Those mothers and wives who were not sworn members served as an outer wall of protection for the inner sworn group. Probably in order to avoid political conflict with male members, women often split off, and formed autonomous all-female associations like

those of the Green Lanterns (Ch'ing-teng-chao), and the Blue Lanterns (Lan-teng-chao), both of which were associations of widows, and affiliated to the Boxers.(47) Their supreme leader called the Yellow Lotus Holy Mother (Huang-lien Sheng-mu), was originally a procuress accredited with tremendous magical powers.(48)

The youth generally acted as guards and scouts in the adult societies, but also had societies of their own; referring to the Elder Brothers Societies, Hutson wrote:

> "Youths have a juvenile society organized on the model of the adult Society and known as the pang (棒) hui or Cudgel Society. They exchange cards, make vows, conduct fights and organize petty persecutions of those whom they dislike." (49)

Such juvenile gangs also existed among the Boxers and might be of interest to us here:

> "The Boxers include not only boys of from 12 to 15 but girls of the same age, and they form separate branches. The branch in (sic) which the girls belong is known as the Hung Tang Chiu* (红燈照) or Red Lantern Shines; they carry about with them red lanterns...The boys' branch is called the I Wo Tuan* (義和团)..." (50)

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* these transliterations are the Cantonese pronuncations for teng-chao and I-ho-tuan, meaning, respectively, "lanterns" and "bands of justice and harmony," the last is usually translated as "the Boxers".

These youthful adherents to the secret society cause appeared to have proved themselves remarkably trustworthy and useful; the reason was that they

> "reçoivent une education nénupharienne si soignée qu'ils deviènnent les colonnes de la Société, ses agents et ses émissaires les plus discrets et les plus infatigables." (51)

while the young girls, once they had been initiated into the secret society, "rarement y sont infidèles."

It may be stated in conclusion that the majority of the southern secret society members (including the leaders) were composed of people belonging to the lower levels of the social and economic hierarchy. Specifically, those without prospect of swift legal upward mobility, without legal protection (owing to the heavy cost in time and financial outlay), without effective family or lineage support, and those who were regarded as inferior social beings owing to their female sex or tenderness of age. In brief, members (or potential members) of secret societies tended to come directly from those classes of society conspicuous for (identifiable by) their poverty, their despised occupation, and their inferior ascriptive status, which also implied an absence of effective kinship ties.

This picture of the social composition of secret societies largely held true for the nineteenth century. But after the republican revolution of 1911, the structure of orthodox society, though far from being annihilated, had nevertheless lost both its official sanction and sociological justification. However, though the old ruling classes had been discredited, the new ones had not yet crystallized, that is, officially recognized. This new freedom and social fluidity plunged all sections of society into a state of near anarchy. Secret societies, now basking in the honour of their considerable participation in the Revolution, were able for once to operate openly without interference from the army or police. Consequently, those who had been hitherto been deterred by the fear of the law and dishonour from making contact with secret societies, now joined them with a view to turning them to their own advantage. Rich landlords and the discredited literati gentry were now to be found at the head of many twentieth century secret societies, many of whom undoubtedly contributed to the development of "warlord"

armies, those twentieth century successors of the "Warring States" of pre-Ch'in, late Han and post-Dynastic times.(52) In order to avoid confusion it must be remembered that the reports concerning the predominance of powerful and wealthy land-owners and gentry in secret society leadership are confined to a specific historical period, the mid-twenties and the late forties of the twentieth century.(53)

Methods of recruitment

Members were recruited to the Triads in a number of ways: by voluntary enlistment or persuasion, or, failing this, sometimes by blackmail, physical threat or kidnapping. Schlegel wrote:

> "New members for the Heaven and Earth Society (another name for the Triads or Hung societies) are go in several ways. If the initiated are not able to seduce the people to enter the league by an enumeration of the griefs against the Tartar sway and, in this way, excite them to throw off the dominion of the hated usurpers, recourse ishad to threats. A person may find some day in his house a chit of paper, stamped with the seal of the society, by which he is ordered to betake himself, at a certain hour, to such and such a place; under menace that if he dares to disobey, or breathe a word of it to the authorities, he and his whole family will be murdered, and his house or possessions burned down. Sometimes, too, he is stopped on the road by an unknown who gives him a similar order.

V Violence is also used. One of the affiliated insults a person on the road by giving him a slap on his face. Of course the insulted pursues the offender, who leads him, in this way, to an isolated spot or suburb. Here, at last, he stands at bay, but the scuffle has scarcely begun when, on a signal or whistle given by the initiated, several brethern appear who knock the man down. The victim is then thrown into a bag, and carried away to the place where lodge is held.

Those who have got the mysterious warning to the appointed rendez-vous are, in the meantime, trembling for their life, for already they doubt the fate which is awaiting them, and they know, too, that it would be useless to try to escape it; as the justice of the secret society is relentless and speedy.

So, on the appointed day, the warned goes to the place which is indicated to him. He does not, however, see anybody there, as the affiliated are hidden amongst trees or behind old walls to see that he is not followed by either policemen or soldiers.

Already the man begins to breathe more freely and thinks that all danger has passed, so that he prepares himself to return home, when all at once, an affiliated appears and beckons him to follow..." (54)

As for kidnapping, those most easily recruited this way were obviously children. The advantage of recruiting children lay in the fact that children were more easily trained than adults. Père Leboucq describes how the agents of the White Lotus society

"courent les campagnes à la recherche de ces petits conscrits, et malheur aux enfants qui se

> sont aventurés dans la plaine! Les commis-voyageurs du Nenuphar tombent sur cette proie facile, font leur choix parmi ceux qui sont trop jeunes encore pour se souvenir du nom de leur village, et s'enfuient à la faveur de la nuit. Les enfants volés au Chantung sont emportés au Ho-nan, ceux du Ho-nan au Chan-si ou au Tche-ly, souvent même pas plus loin; et comme la police chinoise se fait de la manière la plus inepte, les crimes sont rarement découverts."(55)

In Singapore Chinese secret societies of the nineteenth century, the methods appear to have been on the whole much harsher, probably because the Chinese population was smaller, and more easily fall prey to secret society power. The Hikayat Abdullah reports:

> "People unwilling to join they tortured, impaled, or locked up in confinement, and if still unwilling, they at once put them to death." (56)

In China itself, the methods of secret societies could be much more subtle. For example, being fully aware that government soldiers were in the habit of plundering villages, secret society policy was to do the opposite, and buy goods from the peasants at good prices, and in this way persuade the latter of their good intentions, ultimately building up both active and passive peasant support in the countryside.(57) This element of "social banditry" in secret association in China is one of the chief distinctions of the latter as

seen in comparison with secret societies overseas.(58)

For the discussion on the ceremony of recruitment or initiation, see Chapter VII below.

Notes

from pages 180 to 206

1. Lo Erh-kang, T'ien-ti hui wen-hsien lu, (An Account of the Ritual of the Heaven and Earth Society), Shanghai, 1948, p.34

2. Morgan, op. cit. p.110

3. Lo, op. cit. p.34

4. Newbold, Lieut. T.J., and Wilson, Maj.Gen.F.W., "The Chinese Secret Triad Society of the T'ien-ti-hui" in Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society vol. VI, 1841, p.136) See also the Hikayat Abdullah, pp.184-5

5. See below Chapter VIII

6. Stanton, op. cit. p.118 (Oath 3)

7. Stanton, ibid. p. 119 (Oath 5)

8. Hirayama Amane (Shu), Chung-kuo pi-mi she-hui (A History of Chinese Secret Societies), Shanghai, 1935, p.86

9. Brinkley, Capt. Frank, China, Its History, Arts and Literature, Boston and Tokyo, 1902, p.228

10. See table on p. 193

11. T'ang Leang-li, The Inner History of the Chinese Revolution. London 1930, pp.5-6; Schlegel, op.cit. pp. vi to vii.

12. Smith, Arthur H., Chinese Characteristics, London 1892, p.257

13. That is, that the members are drawn from the highly respectable members of society, and the orientation of the society has become purely expressive.

14. Morgan, op. cit. p.263:

"This question (of the possibility of the revocation of membership) was discussed with leading Triad officials in Hong Kong and all stated categorically that once a person has been initiated into the Hung Mun only death can release him from his membership. At the initiation ceremony the member mixes his blood with those of other initiates and once they have sipped of the mixture they all become blood brothers, a fact which no power can alter. What can happen is that a member may be expelled from his particular branch society but such expulsion applies only to that branch and not to the Hung Mun itself. The situation may be likened to the 'black sheep' cast out of a family. He is still a member of the family but no longer recognised by it. Unlike some 'black sheep' however, he cannot withdraw from the family of his own volition. Once he has accepted membership he is bound to obey the instructions of the society leaders and failure to do so renders him liable to whatever punishment the leaders consider appropriate."

15. See the Hikayat Abdullah, p.184-5 for description of the punishments meted out to the recalcitrant recruits.

16. Leboucq, "Lettres" in Etudes Religieuses, Paris 1875, 19e annee, Ve serie, VIII, p.203

17. Sun Yat-sen, Memoirs of a Chinese Revolutionary London, 1927, p.191

18. See p.193

19. See Wakeman, Frederick, Jr. for further discussion of role of officials in secret society membership, Strangers at the Gate, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1966, p. 122.

20. Martin, Bernard, Strange Vigour. A Biography of Sun Yat-sen, London 1944, p.47

21. Wang T'ien-chiang, "Shih-chiu shih-chi-hsiah-pan chi Chung-kuo-ti pi-mi she-hui" (The Secret Societiesof the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century in China) in Li-shih Yen-chiu, Peking, 1963, no.2, p.83 ff.

22. Chesneaux, 1965, op. cit. p. 105

23. Tan Ssu-t'ung ch'uan chi. (The Collected Works of Tan Ssu-t'ung) Peking, 1954, pp.63-4

23 (contd.) This treatment of vagabonds in China was motivated by the same kind of fear which all governments have faced with a vast and growing mass of the unemployed; during the 15th and 16th centuries in Europe, vagabonds created by the land "enclosures" acts were treated as "voluntary" criminals. An act in 1530 in England gave licenses to beggars too old to work, but sturdy vagabonds were to be tied to the cart-tail, whipped until theblood streamed from their bodies, then forced to swear an oath to go back to their birth-place or to where they had lived the last three years and "to put themselves to labour". In 1537, the amendments to this statute stipulated that for the second arrest for vagabondage the whipping was to be repeated and half the ear sliced off; but for the third relapse the offender was to be executed as a hardened criminal and enemy of the common weal. These acts, with additions of branding vagabonds with a"V" if found wandering about for more than three days in 1547, continued to be enforced throughout Western Europe despite protests from Thomas More and others. In France, for example, the Ordinance of July 13th 1777, ruled that every man in good health from 16 to 60 years of age, if without means of subsistence and not practising a trade, was to be sent to the galleys.

24. Wang T'ien-chiang, op. cit. pp.84-5

25. Ibid,pp. 85-6
26. Ibid., p.88
27. Hirayama Amane, op. cit. p.12. The political aims of the Kelao Hui were identical with those of the Triads.

28. Han Suyin, The Cripplied Tree, London 1965, p.249

29. Wang, op. cit. p.87

30. Ibid., pp.85-6

31. Powell, Ralph, The Rise of Chinese Military Power, 1895-1912, London, 1955, pages 13 and 24 respectively.

32. Han Suyin, op. cit. p.255

33. Chesneaux, J., op. cit.(1965) p.101

34. Chesneaux, J., Le Mouvement Ouvrier Chinois de 1919 à 1927, Paris, 1962, p.83

35. Chie

35. Chesneaux, ibid. p.78

36. Ibid. p.81

36a. Wakeman, F.,op. cit. p.14

37. Chesneaux, (1962) op. cit. p.83

38. Even as late as 1926-35, 52% to 79% of urban workers were of peasant origin, see Chesneaux's article in the Studies on Modern Asia and Africa Series 4, The Economic Development of China and Japan edited by C.D. Cowan, London, 1964,pp. 111-113 on social origins of the workers.

39. See Hsiao Kung-chuan, Rural China, Imperial Control in the Nineteenth Century, Seattle, 1960, pp.383-4. In atable drawn up by Western writers in 1888, it is revealed that in nineteenth century China, tenants formed up to approximately 50%, 70%, 75% and 80% of the populations of Fukien, Chekiang, Kwangtung and Kiangsu respectively; while it was not uncommon for tenants to pay their landlords (ti-chu) 50% to 70% of their produce for renting buffaloes, carts, seeds and fodder.

40. See Coulet, Georges, Les Sociétés Secrètes en Terre d'Annam, Saigon, 1926, pp.197-292

41. Leboucq, Études, etc. p.203

42. Ibid.

43. Leboucq, Lettres, etc. p.19

44. Porter, D.H., "Secret Societies in Shantung" in The Chinese Recorder, XVII, 1886, p.8.

45. Porter, bid. p.65

46. Hutson, J., Chinese Life on the Tibetan Foothills, Shanghai, 1921, p.87

47. Chen, Jerome, "The Nature and Characteristics of the Boxer Movement", in Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, 1960, Vol.XXIII, part.2, p.298

48. Ch'en Chieh, I-ho-t'uan yun-tung shih (History of the Boxer Movement), Shanghai, 1931, p.27

49. Hutson, op.cit. p.87

50. Wynne, M.L. Triad and Tabut, Singapore, 1941, p.35

51. Leboucq, Lettres, etc. p.15

52. During periods of dynastic decline, China traditionally collapsed into a feuding agglomeration of independent states led by a prince or general. It was only when an effective hegemon emerged that China was re-united into one state. The disintegration of Chinese society in the late nineteenth century once more re-created, rather, revived the old regional divisions, and gave free rein to the centrifugal forces. It is not surprising that secret societies in the north associated themselves with feudal anarchy, and the Three Kingdoms period, see note 25, p.178 and Chapter III above.

53. I am referring, of course, to Isabel and David Crook's book Revolution in a Chinese Village, Ten Mile Inn, London, 1959, p.16, as well as to Skinner's article which I have already discussed above in chapter IV. The secret society described by the Crooks in Ten Mile Inn village was, during the twenties, completely taken over by the Nationalist Party (Kuomintang) and made its village branch. Incidently, it was this secret society, the Green Circle Gang, which became notorious in the late 'twenties for its brutal participation in the massacre of unarmed workers in Shanghai (1927) under the leadership of Tou Yu-seng, one of the "Advisers" to the Nationalist Government. (See below Chapter IX for further discussion of the Secret Society-Kuomintang (the ruling party of Republican China) alliance). The government patronship of secret societies in the Republican period naturally gave impetus to other powerful groups and individuals to follow their example.

54. Schlegel, op.cit. pp.57-58

55. Leboucq, Lettres, etc. p.14

56. in Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society Malayan Branch, Vol.28, 1955, p.180

57. See Hsiao Kung-chuan, op. cit. p.475-7

58. Overseas Chinese secret societies tended to recruit all members, all classes of Chinese population and served frequently as convenient administrative units for colonial governments for example in Malaya, Singapore and Thailand. There the heads of secret societies were nearly always wealthy and respected leaders of the community, or were the "capitans" to the colonial administration, exchanging relative order among the Chinese community for non-interference by the government in Chinese affairs. The separation of Chinese and colonial communities reduced the traditional anti-official sentiments of the secret society members, while the truly mixed class origins of the membership made any conflict between different classes within the Chinese community less relevant than it was in nineteenth century China.

Chapter VI : Structure and Organization

A. STRUCTURE

a) Provincial lodges

The Hung League or Triad Society was, as I have stated earlier, a collective name for the southern type of secret societies. However, many of the societies also had their own particular names which they changed from time to time, either for mutual distinction (naming societies by their region was not easy, since secret societies were highly mobile), or as a means for confusing the authorities.

According to the Triad documents, all members of the League were directed from their "headquarters" in Fukien province. There were altogether ten lodges, five "former" and five "after" lodges, each one dominating one or more of the eleven or twelve provinces of central and south China. (See map on p.150, and Triad chart on p.151). One gathers from this that the "former" lodges were the senior lodges (as they were founded by the "first" ancestors, the five monks), and "after" lodges the junior lodges, in

the same way as the Kelao Hui (Elder Brothers Society) had a "clear-water" and "muddy-water" group of lodges, and where the custom was for the members of the latter group address those of the former "Uncle". But there does not appear to be a corresponding custom among the Triads of this distinction of address. It is not clear what the distinctions of "former" and "after" lodges entail for the members, and one can only conclude that the terms were historical rather than structural, that is, that they merely indicate the relative"age" of secret society activity in particular provinces. It is also possible that this schema of Triad lodge distribution served, in times of rebellion, as a guide for making alliances of a inter-provincial type, since "former" and "after" lodges tended (with the exception of two provinces Kansu and Honan) to be adjacent to one another geographically.

There appearsto be no evidence or Triad indications for the number of lodges within each province, and the only document, belonging to a Mr. Lo Han(1) throws ambiguous light, to say the least, on the problem.

Nevertheless, for the sake of documentation, I shall make a literal translation of it here:

"Five men each province divide lodges
Former After Five Lodges one (plus) nine cities
Leaders (Yang-yüan) assemble to shake mountains and rivers
Leopard, tiger, tortoise and snake to crush the great Ch'ing
Yin and Yang (male and female?) harmonize... the four-nine (members)
Three two nine five*assemble the brothers
Fukien, Shensi open two, seven
Kwangtung and Hupei (Ch'u) complete three, eight
Kwangsi and eastern Kuei-chow convene four, nine
Yunnan, Szechwan (Hsi Shu, formerly one of the Three Kingdoms 221-263 A.D.) recruit five, ten
Ho...Kiangsu (Tung Wu, another of the Three Kingdoms 222-280 A.D.)...
The Ten Principles (shih-ti) make up the certificate of membership (literally "waist purse")
Five men take power, rebel, hide well
To re-assemble later and reveal their true feelings."

The one consistency in the numbers appears to be the consecutive order of 2-7, 3-8, 4-9, 5-10, and presumbly the last provinces mentioned (could one be Honan?) would follow with 1-6 to complete the sum of 10. Whatever the precise meaning of this enumeration is, it is doubtful that they could have applied to the number of lodges within each province. The general significance to be drawn, that the sequence of numbers corresponds to the geographical neighbourhood of the provinces (Fukien-Kwangtung, etc.), is all we can hope to glean from this

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* possible the date of the first meeting in cryptic style.

Triad verse. Nothing else exists or is available on the provincial organization of the lodges. In section B, I shall discuss this problem in terms of organization with reference to the Nien experience in particular, with the hope of arriving at a reasonable explanation of the Triad schema.

b) Local lodges

Both the Triads and the Elder Brothers' Society classified their membership in two distinct but complementary categories: by grades, and by function. There were normally only nine grades, the number having traditionally a Buddhist significance. For example the Chinese pagoda was always built with nine storeys, which represented the nine kung or "palaces" of the ascent to Nirvana (City of Willows), a method of ranking adopted wholesale by the Shantung secret societies described by Porter. Indeed, according to quite a different source, southern Shantung secret societies called their local village lodge a kung, which comprised not less than ten members. Smaller kungs affiliated themselves to a neighbouring kung with more than ten members.(2)

Among the Triads, the nine grades were grouped, for the purpose of meting out punishments, into three larger grades, thus:

1. Lao-ta-ko	Big Brother	
2. Lao Erh	Second Elder	I. Lao-ta-ko, or Shang-san, Top Three
3. Lao San	Third Elder	
4. Lao Ssu*	Fourth Elder*	
5. Lao Wu	Fifth Elder	II. Erh Ko, Second Elder Brothers or
6. Lao Liu	Sixth Elder	Chung-san, Middle Three
7. Lao Ch'i**	Seventh Elder	
8. Lao Pa	Eighth Elder	III. San Ti Third Younger Brothers or
9. Ta-chiu, Hsiao-chiu	Ordinary Members Big Nine, Small Nine	Hsiah-san, Lower Three

Sometimes, there was an extra category of membership, composed of a fprmerly prohibited group of people who had surrendered to the Manchus voluntarily, and, as a

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* a taboo grade, normally not filled by officers--"four" or ssu being the homonym for "death"
** Also a taboo grade, "seven" being the rank of the treacherous monk who had betrayed the foundersof the Triads to the Imperial soldiery.

result, had been rewarded both rank and emolument; this group was occasionally included but not graded. These were called ta-ma, hsiao-ma, ta-yao, hsiao-yao, ch'i-p'ai, pa-p'ai, meaning literally Big-small, small-small, Big-bit, Small-bit, Seven-card, Eight-card, respectively.(3) Like their counterparts in the Elder Brothers Society, this category of people had been prohibited from joining the secret societies (owing to their unpatriotic behaviour), but as time went on, had gradually been allowed to enter the Triads and even achieve promotion into the wu-t'ang (literally, "five halls") or ordinary membership if they proved themselves worthy. This category of membership may be described in more familiar terms as "associate" as opposed to "full" membership, and undoubtedly formed an outer protective wall of membership together with the non-member families of the Triads.(4)

This breaking up of the nine grades into three may at first suggest that the Triads had adopted a cellular system of organization. Maurice Duverger has the hypothesis that clandestinity forces all such groups to adopt the same kind of structure:

> "What characterizes this type of organization is that it is broken up into basic groups that are as small aspossible (three to five men, usually), and that there is rigid separation between these basic groups. At every level only the leader of each group is in contact with level above. In this way, leakages are reduced to a minimum: if one member of the organization is arrested and tortured, he can only denounce very few people; this is true also if the police introduce spies into the movement."(5)

However, this system does not appear to have been applied in the Chinese secret societies, and there is evidence against such a theory. For example, the new recruits did not only have to produce a birth certificate (keng-t'ieh) on admission, but they also had to have their names "given to the hearing of all the brethern".(6) Election of officers was by "public vote" (kung-chü), and the names of all the new officers were pasted up in the meeting hall (t'ang) of the local lodge (fang) for "public" scrutiny.(7) Secret society operations, unlike those of the French Resistance movement, had as their basic unit 10 to 100 men(8), and many larger-scale activities, such as riotsand rebellions, mobilized several thousands of men.(9) Within a particular secret society at least the members knew each other, members of other lodges or societies could only identify them by their position in the hierarchy,

conveyed by hand and body signs or cryptic phrases. It is doubtful, incidentally, that even within a particular society the members remember the names of all their comrades all of the time, particularly in groups numbering several thousand members. The Vanguard and the Incense Master (sometimes called the Keeper of the Books in northern religious sects) guarded the register of names as well as the Book of the Sea-bed (Hai-ti Shu), which consisted of the secret literature of the Elder Brothers Society; the Triad name for this is "Clothes" (shan), usually meaning the secret language of the societies. It is not known whether ordinary members had unrestricted access to society registers and other documents.

The classification of members by function was somewhat variable in relation to the grades. In some accounts, the President, in other accounts the Incense Master, was given Grade I; while in others yet again, the latter was given only Grade II; similarly, the Vanguard could fill grade IV or V, while the Punishments Officer or Red Cudgel, could be given either grade V or VI. However these divergencies are relatively minor, and may be explained by the particular orientation or interests of

the particular society; whether it was, for example, more "civilian" (wen) or "military" (wu) in emphasis, in other words, whether they were more criminally or rebelliously inclined.

The model for the functional hierarchy will be that given by Gustave Schlegel, and variations on this model will be cited in the later discussion of the functions assigned to the various officers of the Triads:

I. Ta-ko or Hsiang-chu -- President (literally, Big Elder Brother of Incense Master)

II. Erh-ko -- vice-Presidents (2), (Second Elder Brother)

III. Hsien-sheng -- Master, (a title used for addressing a teacher, or for ordinary polite address like "Mister")

IV. Hsien-feng -- Vanguard, (2)

V. Hung-kun -- Fiscal, (Red Cudgel)

VI. I-shih -- Councillors (13) including a treasurer, a receiver and his deputy (kuei-shih, shou-kuei)

VII. Ts'ao-hsieh, Wan-ti, T'ieh-pan, T'ou-shang-yu-hua-che, -- Agents, Messengers, (literally, Grass Sandals, Night Brothers, Iron Planks, Those-with-flowers-on-their -heads, respectively)

VIII. Tai-ma -- Recruitment Agents, (Horse-leaders)

IX. Ssu-ta -- Summoners, (The Big Four)

For convenience of exposition, I shall group the officers along the Triad divisions of three groups of three.

"The Top Three" (Shang-san, Lao-ta-ko):-

The first three grades were normally composed of the President, vice-Presidents, Incense Master, and Master (sometimes translated as Instructor). The President and his deputies had a number of other names. They were Lao-ta-ko, Dragon Head (Lung-t'ou),* Great Superintendant (Ta Tsung-li)[10], and Commander-in-Chief (Cheng-chui)[11]. In Canton and Hong Kong, he was sometimes known as Mountain Chief (Shan-Chu)[12] and even as Red Cudgel (Hung-kun), because the President was sometimes chosen from among the "fighter officials" or as Schlegel has it, "fiscals", of whom there must have been more than one at the least, especially when the society had several thousand members. Sometimes, the President was also the Incense Master, as Schlegel shows. It is possible that during an operation when two lodges cooperated the President of the stronger lodge became the Grand Master of both lodges, hence the title Chief Dragon Head (Cheng Lung-t'ou) and Deputy

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* normally used by the Elder Brothers Society.

Dragon Head (Fu Lung-t'ou).[13] The functions of the President appear to have consisted of co-ordination of activities within the fang (lodge) or t'ang (hall or local branch), as well as presiding over all general meetings of the Council, including trials of members[13a] and initiations, and making the final decisions on general policy. The crucial role of the President as the focal symbol of secret society loyalty cannot be over-estimated; the responsibility of success or failure must ultimately have lain with him, as we can see in the practice among the Boxers of replacing magically dubious leaders by others thought to have greater efficacy.[14] Coulet, in his discussion of Vietnamese secret societies (modded on the Chinese), stressed the importance of personal loyalty to the leader,[15] but this does not mean that the leaders did not have to be worthy of such loyalty.

The vice-Presidents appear to have acted in the capacity of advisers and deputies. In one society they were called the Sheng-hsien , or literally, "Wise Worthies", and had the function of Ts'an-chün, or "Military

Councillor

Counsellor".[16] This counsellor normally shared Grade II with the temporary Incense Master, temporary in that he appeared only during initiations and not at any other time.[17] Such temporary Incense Masters were a feature of overseas Chinese secret societies particularly, as W.L. Blythe noted of the Malayan Chinese societies.[18] The reason for this was undoubtedly the shortage of men qualified to carry out the immensely elaborate "theatricals"* or ritual ceremonies of Triad initiations. If the Malayan paractice is any indication, then there were itinerant Chinese professional Incense Masters too, who travelled from one society to another conducting initiation ceremonies for a fee. Thus if a society could retain an Incense Master permanently, it would not be surprising that he became the President also, as in the case of the Triad society described by Schlegel. Indeed, in some cases, the Incense Master was nicknamed "Mother" (ama), and the initiates (in the Cantonese lodges) had to crawl between the legs of this officer as a symbol of his rebirth in the initiation ceremony.[19] The ritual importance of the Incense Master made him ideally suited to the role of

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* Triad cant for rituals in general.

supreme leader of a lodge.

The Master (Hsien-sheng) has often been confused with the Incense Master (Hsiang-chu), and the reasons may be found in the fact that the latter could, in some societies, be chosen from among the former, also known as White Fan (Pai-shan)or White Paper Fan (Pai-chi-shan) in Canton. Such was indeed the case with Morgan's Triads in Hong Kong.(20) Thus, it is highly probable that Masters deputized for Incense Masters when the latter were indisposed or absent, which means that the former were trained to some extent, if not completely, by the latter in the job of holding initiation ceremonies. Stanton's translation of Hsien-sheng by "Instructor" may be significant also, in that it was also the Master's responsibility to instruct other members in the secret culture of the society. In twentieth century Triads of Hong Kong, the Master was the "planner" and general administrator of the society, a kind of all-purpose bureaucrat.(21)

"The Middle Three" (Chung-san, Erh-ko):-

These grades refer of course to the Vanguard(s)--individuals-- or Introducers (Hsien-feng), the Red Cudgel or Fighter Official (Hung-kun), and finally, the Councillors who comprise among others, the Treasurer (Kuei-shih), Receiver (Shou-kuei) and Deputy Receiver (Tai Shou-kuei).

The Hsien-feng , also known as Red Flag (Hung-ch'i), or in Canton, Ti-t'ou (Local Head)[22] was the officer who worked most closely with the Incense Master during initiation ceremonies; for he was normally the officer who provided, on behalf of the candidate, the appropriate ritual responses to the questions of the Incense Master. His responsibilities outside the initiation hall were concerned with investigation of potential recruits, and expansion of the societies, and sometimes the only officer besides the Incense Master or President with the right to open branch lodges without having to consult first with the latter officers.[23] His duties are thus reminiscent of those of the Section Chiefs (Fa-shih) of the northern secret sects--namely the

White Lotus Societies--who made twice-yearly tours investigating potential recruits and making propaganda for their societies.(24) It is likely that there were more than two Vanguards within a large lodge, especially if one Vanguard had to be absent for part of the year, and another became indisposed. In one account, it is reported that the Red Flag shared some of his more exalted duties with the New Deputy (Hsin-fu), described as a secret society equivalent of an Imperial Censor (see p.37 above) or the Provincial Governor (Hsun-fu) (see p.46 above), who also made circuits of inspection in the manner of their orthodox counterparts. The post of the New Deputy was given the Grade III and that of the Red Flag, Grade V, the fourth grade having become "obsolete", meaning that it was tabooed.(25)

The Red Cudgel (Hung-kun), or Blue Flag (Lan-ch'i) was undoubtedly the"strong-arm man" of the Triads, and explicity concerned with physical punishments and military operations.(26) Sometimes, the responsibility for punishments was delegated to a specialist, the Tsui-chu who occupied Grade VII, though Red Cudgel occupied GradeIV.

occupied normally Grade V. But as Grade VII was once again "obsolete," or explicitly tabooed[27], the responsibility for punishments was normally given to the Red Cudgel or Blue Flag alone. The number of Red Cudgels within one society again would be determined by the size of the society or its immediate objectives. The Red Cudgel's main military duties consisted in organizing fighting units--of 10, 50 or 100 men each--and in training them in the arts of warfare, such as how to fight with irons, chains, swords, clubs and bare fists.[28] A ritual verse describes the "eighteen military arts" as follows:

> "I am skilled in the use of the sword and chain-bullet;
> I handle the lance as well as Tsz-lung*
> My cudgelling is not different from that of Hui-ying;
> And my single club is better than (the two of)
> Wei-chi-kung...(29)

Besides Schlegel and a nineteenth century journalist called Fred Boyle, no other writer mentions specifically the existence of a council.[30] According to Boyle, eight of the thirteen councillors formed a quorum. The number of thirteen, like eight, was symbolic: it represented the "thirteen" Ming provinces of China which had been expanded to eighteen under the Manchus. The number "eight" may refer to the Eight Trigrams, according to which some northern secret societies were organized.[31]

It is obvious that these Councillors dealt with problems beyond the individual competence of the officers and those directly involving all members of the society.(32) They could also have acted as the tribunal before which offenders against Triad laws were tried.(33) In other accounts, it appears that all the members have to be present in cases of trials of members,(34) and not only the leadership. The Triad described by T'ao Ch'eng-chang made no mention of a council, but did refer to a Treasurer cum Store-keeper (literally, Comptroller of Finance and Provisions), who occupied the"obsolete" grade IV, which function was taken over by the New Deputy.(35)

"The Lower Three" (Hsiah-san, San-ti):-

These grades include of course the Agents, Messengers, Recruitment Agents and Summoners to meetings. Schlegel's account does not grade ordinary members, elsewhere, they occupied the ninth grade.

The Thirty-third Oath of the Thirty Six Oaths of the Triad Societies stipulate that

> "These men are destined to go about everywhere, and they live in all places. If there are public affairs (that is, matters concerning all the members of the society), they are sent to transmit the reports." (36)

These agents, whether working for members privately for a fee, or for the society were entitled at all times to claim travelling expenses and board and lodging.(37) In times of rebellion they worked as liaison officers between societies or lodges, making or breaking alliances. Their crucial role of a "secret society within a secret society," as well as their subversive activities in government agencies could have determined the survival or extinction of their particular association.

The Summoners ("horse-leaders", horse ± member) performed the physical function of guiding a candidate (or kidnapping him, as the case may be) to the secret place of initiation, as well as that of informing members of future meetings.

It is not clear what the role of the "flower" official was; it is possible that they were ritual menials, or that they were, like the "Double Flower" officials described by Morgan, officials of the middle and lower grades honoured under the "numerical system"(38)

for special ability and/or length of service to the society.(39)

c) Election of officers

Before proceeding to a discussion of the organization of the Triads, it seems appropriate to give first an account of the principles of election and promotion of officers as well as some attempt to understand how they worked in practice.

As Commandant Favre reported, initial election of officers were done on the basis of age or seniority, and this is borne out in Hirayama'Amane's version of the Triad myth of origin(39a). But as the society developed and acquired knowledge of its members, choice of officers came to be made on the basis of merit and length of membership.(40) It is stated in the Oaths that:

> "After entering Hung doors, on the completion of ten months, you are eligible for a minor office and after two years for the office of Vanguard. Those who are loyal in bringing in members must not accept bribes. May thunder from all points annihilate those who disobey this injunction."(41)

The required term of membership required for qualification to office appears to vary from account to account: from 10 months (Stanton) to 1 year (Schlegel), to 3 years (Morgan). Morgan adds, however, that the three-

ELECTION NOTICE 231a

天運　年義興公司欲立上長　月　日錄照

大哥、
二哥
先生
先鋒
紅棍
議事　櫃匙　收櫃　代收櫃
草鞋

茲本公司內衆兄弟欲立諸人爲上長今議定着理宜聲明。倘諸上人若有違法不公平不宜立爲上長祈諸會弟務必出頭阻止。方無後患而後可以改換別人。

是爲告白

TRANSLATION.

„List of the Chiefs whom the I-hing-Society wishes to elect for the year (the year expessed by the cyclical term) of the Heavenly motions, the month, the day.

President (the member) X.

Vice-presidents (the members) X. X.

Master (the member) X.

Introducers (the members) X. X.

Fiscal (the member) X.

Counsellors (the members) X. X.

Treasurer (the member) X.

Receiver (the member) X.

Acting receiver (the member) X.

Agents (the members) X. X.

The brotherhood of our society having now decided upon appointing the above mentioned men as superiors and chiefs, it is right that we make their names public.

If there are amongst those men some who offend the law or act unjustly, being unworthy of the rank conferred upon them, we pray all the brethern of the society, each in particular, to come forward and prevent later troubles. They can then be changed and other men be appointed. — Advertisement."

The functions of the Master and Vanguard are sufficiently described in the Catechism. (1)

The fiscal keeps in his hands a red staff, with which the criminals are punished. (2)

The agents are, also, called *Night-brethern* (3) or *Iron-planks* (4): they are sent about every where, and make reports to the brotherhood. They travel at the expense of the society and, besides, are allowed a fee for the commissions with which they are intrusted by members of the league.

The Council appoints them, and the following diploma is given to them as a warrant of their nomination. This paper is about eight inches long and four inches broad; the colour of the paper is peach-red, and of this form and purport ——

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(1) See part. IV, s. 1.

(2) See Catechism. Q. 315—316.

(3) 晚 弟

(4) 鐵 板 Compare the 33d article of the Oath. P. IV, s. 1.

CERTIFICATE OF OFFICE

231c

50

乙巳年九月廿日

合衆兄弟公舉

許襄兄爲草鞋之職任理公司政事務要

公行正直不得私心妄爲付帖存憑

義興公司

花紅帖

TRANSLATION.

„On the twentieth day of the ninth month of the year *Yih-sze* (1845)
all the brethern have publicly nominated the brother *Hü-nang* to the office of grass-shoe (agent). In the management of the affairs of the society he ought
to act fairly and straight-forwardly, and not be selfish and act falsely. We give him this paper as a warrant.

The society *Rise of the patriots*'s red diploma."

On the red seal are engraved the characters *I-hing-kung-sze*, „Society of the rise of the patriots."

year rule was seldom put into practice, and that by 1960, it was not unknown for members to be both admitted and promoted at the same ceremony. The deviation from the rules depended, no doubt, on the conditions of the time (war or peace,) type of office sought, and the type of candidate put forward. A well-known militia leader who had recently joined a secret society might be recommended for immediate promotion to a high post (say, the Vanguard or Red Cudgel), particularly if the society was in revolt. A relatively unknown member might have had to wait much longer for recognition.

According to both Schlegel and Stanton, the election of officers was done publicly (kung-chü), that is, thrown open to all members' votes. There appears to be no specific law governing the method of nomination of candidates for office; and the only attempt to do so applied only to the nomination of the Vanguard, which must be done by the Incense Master.(42) From this clue and Morgan's account, we may understand that nominations were generally made by senior officers, and then approved by the rest of the members. In order to acquire a sponsor, the candidate probably had to pay a high fee as well as

to provide a worthy feast for all the members, a practice much favoured in the twentieth century Hong Kong societies.(43) The "vote" or public election was therefore probably nothing more than a public confirmation of a fait-accompli, and the only influence the ordinary members could wield on such occasions would be that of objection supported by strong evidence that the candidate was ineligible, as can be seen in a slightly different situation reported in A Chinese Testament by T'an Shih-hua:

> "...one of those seated around the table got up... He spoke of someone who wanted to be admitted into the membership of Golao. He vouched for him asfor himself. He expressed a hope that the da-ge would support his request before the assembly. But before father (of the author) had a chance to say a word, a short, fat man rose in front of the bespectacled speaker...He looked like a merchant...
>
> 'He must not be admitted!..Only new born babies do not know his wife fools around with actors who often come to his house to give performances while he is away on his business trips...
>
> Everybody warned him--get a divorce, get a divorce, send your wife to her parents. But he is so weak he goes on keepingthis two-legged disgrace in the house. He ismade of wax, and a member of Go-Lao should be cast in iron...I am against his admission." (44)

The northern societies method, according to Père Leboucq,

of officer election (in Ningching, Shantung) was based on competitive fasting, a ritual carried out every three years,(45) Other northern societies, like the Boxers, determine a candidate's suitability according to the degree of his faithful observance of the rules, sincerity in worship and purity in life:

> "...this merit is known by the Ming Yen (clairvoyant) who watches their ascent through the 'Nine Heavens' until they enter the 'Nine Palaces' ...of the blessed. All the Shih (Teachers) must have passed the lower and middle grades of progress before aspiring to the rank of a leader. All aspirants to the positionsmust be known by their fellows as virtuous, and the Ming Yen must inquire of the spirit as to his fitness for office..."(46)

Those with money but without qualifications among the Elder Brothers Society were permitted to buy honorary offices called <u>hsien-pai</u>, meaning "Leisure grade" or <u>mao-ting</u>, "Cap-top",(47) which distinguished them from the real officers, and prevented the disabling effects of having incompetents in office. It is possible that the Triads also had such sinecures, but there is no record of them.

The usurpation ofpower was severely sanctioned; according to the Ten Prohibitions on Appointing Meetings,(48) the usurpation of the Incense Master's office would cost the culprit either one ear and 108 strokes, or his life. An Incense Master who held meetings without informing members by circular would be guilty of holding clandestine assemblies and would be punished by death.(49) (The discussion of the role of the council, where found, in the judicial processes of the secret society will be found on p.257 and p.308ff below).

From the above account of the hierarchies of functionaries, we have obtained some ideaof the degree of variation to be found in the Triads and Kelao societies in the nineteenth century. It is clear that the small differences arose out of organizational requirements of particular societies situated temporarily in a particular place at a particular time; while the basic similarities of structure were dictated by the societies' necessarily nomadic style of existence and by their essential need for secrecy and disguise.

The mobility of Chinese secret societies was the single most important feature which opposed them to the Chinese bureaucratic state which was founded upon, and perpetuated according to, the principle of permanence. Unlike the secret societies described by Georg Simmel, Chinese secret society structure rarely imitated that of the state, and this despite the pressure of the habit of organizing according to kinship principles. A few other features of the orthodox society were found, however, though not always in a direct form, among the secret societies. For example, the symbolic use of the sibling relationship, the solidarity of the family, "memorialism"(50), the "incest" taboo, and certain forms of penalties stipulated;(51) these points will be discussed next.

One of the features which distinguishes secret society structure specifically from orthodox state structure was the method of stratification of the officers and members. The relatively flexible ordering of the ranks and functions within secret societies contrasts strikingly with the rigidly codified and invariable system of

hierarchization in the central government. Unlike the latter, civil officers of secret societies did not invariably takeprecedence over military officers, nor penal officers over economic functionaries, as was usually the case in the wider society. The ranking of officers in the secret society depended on its immediate objectives, whether criminal ("civilian") or rebellious ("military"); in other words, there was much more interaction between "structure" and "organization" within the secret society than existed in the orthodox state, the growing unreality of which during the nineteenth century was a cause of its downfall in the twentieth century.

Moreover, the electoral democracy of the Triads opposed them diametrically to the authoritarianism of the state, whose officers were chosen theoretically and practically by the Emperor and his ministers, despite the Examination System.(51) The people were traditionally passive spectators of power, and their only opportunity for political action resided in the doubtful "right" to rebellion against "tyrants".(52) In secret societies

the political participation of the rank-and-file members was a fundamental part of official policy; and the final responsibility for the choice of leaders lay with the whole body of members, and not merely confined to the few powerful men at the top.(53)

The drawback to a democratic method of election lay obviously in the increased opportunities for betrayal to the police, owing to the exposure of the members' identities. But this vulnerability was reduced by three factors: firstly, the severe sanctions against betrayal(54); secondly, the individual vulnerability of the betrayer living in constant fear of exposure and the knowledge that the police could not protect him once he was discovered; and thirdly, the very many social, economic and political ties members of secret societies shared with each other, ties which could not regained once they forfeited their right to common trust; nor could these bonds be replaced for the majority of the members by orthodox means since it was the very absence of such means which

in the first place drove them to join secret societies. Even if they did find their orthodox connections, they could not go back on their oath of membership (which was for life) without risking the avenging wrath of the abandoned secret society.

The formal simplicity of southern secret society hierarchies also differentiated them from those of the state. Within each secret society, there appears to have been only one hierarchy, combining within its competence the two-and-a-half of the State--the civil, military and censorial organs. However, like the central administration, secret societies had usually nine grades. But the government grading system applied only to the bureaucracy;* the secret societies normally included everybody in the system, not merely the leadership. While the orthodoxy categorized and graded the rest of society according to their ascriptive and economic status, secret societies graded their members according to their ability and length of service to the association, and this sometimes even included the acceptance of members made unacceptable

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* this includes the military and censorial hierarchies

by their voluntary subservience to the foreign conquerors.(55)

The relatively small size of the leadership in relation to the members--the adaptability of the size to the circumstances--within the secret society also contrasts with the ponderous complexity of the state bureaucracy, which not only inhibited action but, as events in the nineteenth century showed, rendered the administration impotent vis-a-vis not only its internal problems, but those posed by external military threat as well. Secret societies had none of these problems--their constant mobility under government persecution ensured that no secret society remained in one place long enough to nourish a bureaucracy too large and complex for use.

Perhaps the most dramatic contrast between secret society and state principles of organization is the recognition of the essential equality of individuals making up the secret society. Whereas in the state relationships were often predicated upon those of a father and his sons, in the secret societies, significantly the prototype relationship was that between brothers.

This ideal of brotherhood tended to diminish the "naturalness" of one man's intrinsic superiority over another's, making them morally, if not politically equal. In the societies the political "seniority" of certain members was achieved, and not given, as it was within the kinship system; and to some extent in the state, that is, to the extent the Examination System served as an objective gauge of ability.(56) Usually, the emperor and his officials were assumed to be morally superior until they were proved otherwise, for example, by evidence of corruption and public discontent and even rebellion.

The fictive bond of brotherhood did, of course, also give rise to other symbolic bonds, for example, the bond of "sisters" (female members), or "sisters-in-law" (wives of fellow members), "nieces" (daughters of fellow members) and "nephews" (sons of fellow members) and "uncles", and so on, creating a kind of surrogate family, and conforming to the incest taboos practised in the orthodox society within such prohibited degrees.(57) This prohibition of sexual relationship between members and their immediate kin implies the recognition of

the two-generational family only. Although one of the thirty-six oaths exhorted members to "honour" their parents, there was no mention of the grandparents anywhere; and of course, the lineage was only acknowledged once in the secret Triad vocabulary, and that only in the most disrespectful terms. The explicit emphasis on the "fraternal" bond inevitably weakened the genuine kinship ties contracted outside the secret society; for the primary, absolute loyalty was to the "brotherhood" and nothing else, and both the Oaths and the Regulations testify to this.(58)

Though the emphasis in secret society relationships was on equality, this did not rule out an intense loyalty to one's chosen leaders. The ideology of equality would tend, if anything, to reinforce the authority of the leadership, since it was the common choice of the members which brought them to their positions of authority, and not, as in the state, the sole and unquestioned choice of the Son of Heaven. This sharing out of the political responsibility undoubtedly added strength to the ties arising out of common interest and common weaknesses. This participation in the political process, and the opportunity to exercise choice in

the judicial sphere of the secret society member must have contrasted dramatically with his near total impotence as an individual without kinship or economic support in the "outside" world. The remarkable resistance shown by secret society members under police torture[59] testified to the reality of the secret association as a powerful and incalculable force in nineteenth century Chinese society.

B. ORGANIZATION

So far we have only discussed the principles of organization (the structure) and not the organization itself. This part of the discussion has its obvious problems, there being no precise figures or other detailed information available. Some of the problems can be solved by the use of comparative material in a careful relating of northern experience (on which we are more precisely informed) to southern structural indications.

This method would require approaching the subject from a different point of departure. Instead of assuming

that secret socities started off with a formal structure as I had in the first part of this chapter, I shall now assume that there was none to begin with. In this way we may be able to follow more accurately the formation of a southern secret society and its development up to the point when formalization was required.

This approach was suggested to me not only by Favre's article on the coolie societies formed in Tientsin, but also by the excellently documented study of the Nien rebels by Chiang Siang-tseh, who traces the changes in organization as the Nien developed from single or federated bands into a powerful pan-Shantung movement under the leadership of one individual. In order to begin discussion, we must glance over the Nien experience, and see what possibilities it has for us in illuminating the Triads' organizational methods as shown rather elliptically in their documents and ritual.

The most comprehensive form of the organization of a secret society is obviously the military one; for it mobilized all the able-bodied members of the association, and not only the specialized agencies

required in criminal enterprises. This last aspect will be discussed directly afterwards.

There is a justifiable reason for choosing the Nien experience for comparison, and that is that the final stage of the Nien organization resembled the formal schema of the Triad societies: the division of the Nien into five segments under five banners and five generals and five colours bears striking resemblance to the structural pattern of the Triads as shown in their symbolical chart.(60) This makes it highly probable, though of course not certain, that the Triads followed along similar lines of development. The cross-fertilization of organizational ideas as well as ritual appears to have been frequent(61), which is hardly surprising when one remembers that voluntary Chinese associations share a common fund of ideas expressed in magical numbers and cosmological signs as well as colours.

Initially the Nien were roving bands of robbers, smugglers and so on who had come together spontaneously for common action. Later, they adopted the "southern" system of the t'ang-chu ("Chief or host of the Hall or Lodge"), who, having gathered around him a band of men, proceeded to carry out the normal criminal and officially subversive activities in his local or surrounding area.(62) These bands came to be known generically as nien meaning a"twist" or a "knot". Two features which were characteristic of the Nien were firstly, their great mobility, and secondly, their elasticity of size--one nien may compose anything from three to a hundred to several thousands of men.(63)

Next, the various bands would combine into a single larger unit under a "Nien Head" (nien shou), after having made sacrifice to a flag or banner (ch'i). This was apparently a common practice in the initial stage of a rebellion.(64)

> "Sacrifice to a flag implies not only that the disunited and disorganized Nien had rallied under one standard, but that they were pledged to a greater enterprise--rebellion; that is, they bade farewell to such petty offenses as drinking, gambling, smuggling, local fighting, kidnapping, and robbing."(65)

This system, however, did not function as well as the participants had hoped as they suffered severe reverses against the local militia of peasants led by gentry. But by 1856, four years later, the Nien had begun in earnest to build up a more systematic organization calledthe "banner system", imitating the practices of the other secret "religious bandits" of Shantung province. (The Nien base was north of the Huai tributary of the Yellow River). The system of the northern religious secret sects was (with the exception of the Eight Trigrams*) the division of the forces into five major sections under five banners--called the five "larger" banners--according to the "Five Elements" and their "five" accessory colours, or to the "Five Directions" (centre, north, south, east, west), or to the"ten heavenly stems", which could be correlated to the Five Elements in pairs.(66)

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* Porter, op. cit. p.6 reports that the Eight Trigrams were divided into eight sections according to the eight positions of the tongue in the mouth, which contains eight apertures for the egress or ingress of the soul.

Each "larger banner" was in turn divided into five "smaller banners", each of which assembled two to four thousand men, so that one "larger banner"'s maximum size was twenty-thousand men strong.(67) In line with the innovation, the nien units were called ch'i or "banners". The five major banners were each given a colour and a direction: yellow-centre, black-north, red-south, blue-east, white-west; the five minor banners were similarly coloured, and then bordered on the four sides of the square or rhomb with the colours of the remaining other four colours. When the Nien forces were increased, new and more complicated colour flags were introduced including a new variety of shapes.(68)

The paramount chief of all the banners was given the title of "Lord of the Sworn (Oath or) Alliance", (meng-chu.) The remaining four chiefs were called the "Four Banner Lords" (ch'i-chu), or "Vice-Banner Lords" (fu-ch'i-chu). Leaders of the minor banners were called "Nien-Heads" (nien-t'ou). From the chart given by Chiang(69) the five major banner chiefs were called"Duke","Marquis", "Earl", "Viscount" and "Baron", just as in the Triads' symbolic chart.

The concrete basesof power of the Nien rebels were in the village "earth walls" (yü or chai)which served as extremely effective protection against the enemy troops.(70) Several such earth-wall villages would band together, some fighting in the vanguard, some in the rear and some raiding the lines of communications and provisions of the enemy. The Boxers made a distinction between their "town" and "country" bases, known respectively, as t'an and t'uan, the former probably representing urban wards as well as towns in large cities.(71) The Shantung religious sects called their basic units (usually representing a town or village) "palaces" or "mansions" (kung) which coalesced along the Nien lines.(72)

From this summary of Nien and northern methods of organization in general, we are able to understand the Triad symbolic chart better; this obviously served not so much as a historical record of Triad organizational development, but as a guide for future action, that is, concerted action. The only difference appears to lie

(that is, the difference between the northern and southern charts) in the Triad correlation of "former" and"after" lodges with provinces. Although both "former" and "after" lodges shared one flag and the same cosmological symbols, they did not share the same provinces but those adjacent to one another, with one exception, the provinces of Fukien and Kansu. This insertion of the provincial consideration may be less confusing than it may first appear. We have to remember that the Nien operated within one province, hence the "directions" in their chart applied in fact to that province only. The Triads' chart applies to the whole of central and south China, including at least eleven provinces. This grandiose view is suspect in organizational terms simply because, even at the height of Triad collaboration,* the Triads were only able to muster the societies within Canton and some in Hong Kong. In terms of ideology, however, this panoramic view is consistent with the Triad political aims of freeing China from its alien rulers and corruption

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* during the Republican revolution of 1911-12

and restoring the country to its former glory and virtue. In other words, the Triads were more ambitious politically than the Nien, hoping to sweep the whole of central and south China before them, rather than one province only; and in the event of such an opportunity, the Triads would be prepared and would know how to coalesce.

As for the local and intra-provincial coalitions, they must have, if the general pattern of the symbolic chart is any indication, followed the principles of the northern organizations; the principles of spontaneous federation, and its systematization, ~~of the spontaneous federation.~~ In this type of development we get two stages: the evolution of the patron-client relationship (between a stronger and weaker band) to the relationship of hegemon and satellite groups. There are echoes in the division of Triad forces into five sections of the "Five Chief Military Commissions" of the state, and in the banner system, the Manchu Banner Forces with their "Superior" and "Inferior" Banners under the command of the Emperor.(73) However, the basic

unit appears to have been influenced by militia units rather than by the Imperial Army divisions; from ten to one hundred men per unit.(74)

Not only were secret societies able to coalesce but they were able to disperse when necessary, usually in peace time, or when the common enemy was defeated or no longer present. This ability to assemble and disperse according to circumstances is reminiscent of the guerilla tactic of dispersing before a strong advancing enemy, and reassembling to attack when the enemy's strength is worn out. The direct parallel can be seen in the "disappearance" of secret societies during periods of strong central rule, and their "reappearance" during dynastic decline.

When secret societies dispersed, they normally concentrated their attention in organization of the members for criminal activities, as well as for the smooth-functioning and perpetuation of the association. It might be somewhat formal to describe the different spheres of Triad orgaization as "departments", as it is

unlikely that they resembled the governmental organs with their rigidly defined areas of rights and privileges and competence. There appears to have been "departments" in the more general sense of the word, but they seem to have worked in close consultation with one another, and often over-lapping each other's work, closely guarded by a network of internal and external liaison agents. Each functionary of the Triads headed a department and staffed by the members. The ritual, educational, and the intelligence departments were of course headed by the Incense Master, Instructor and Grass Sandals/Iron Planks Agents, respectively. Not only did the ritual department required a small battalions of menials for the upkeep of the hall, the setting out of the ritual paraphernalia, costumes and preparation of the animals for sacrifice and feasting, but it also required at least four, or sometimes eight guards for each of the four "entrances" or "gates" of the lodge.(75) The organization and timing of the most important ritual, the initiation ceremony, must have been a formidable task, for serious mistakes in the preparation could have a disturbing psychological effect on the recruits, while loss of the secret objects

of the lodge could lead to police raids and wholesale arrests and executions. Indeed, the loss of books, etc. by members was punishable, according to Triad rules, by death.(76)

The "education" department obviously concerned itself with the teaching of secret language and ritual culture as well as the moral and practical rulesof the society. The importance of this department can be gauged when it is realized that a mastery of the secret language and regulations could mean the difference between life and death. Hence the need for a "wise and discerning" teacher, that is, the Master or White Fan Instructor, as exhorted in an election rule. All the literate members had a role to play here, not only in assisting the Master in the coaching of members, but also in acting as his deputies in his absence. Besides acting in a directly educational capacity, members of this department probably occupied themselves with the printing of notices, circulars, manuals, membership tickets, the drawing up of documents, as well the invention of new crytograms if and when necessary.

The intelligence department ~~obviously~~ functioned for the purposes of internal control and external liaison. The agents for this department were sometimes called "wind-follower" (hsun feng). One of the main duties in internal control was the thorough investigation of the background and character of the new recruits:

> "If a brother, at the times that a lodge is held, wishes to introduce a new member to be affiliated, he ought to inform himself well. If this man (the new member) has been formerly the cause that a brother...has lost his life, then he himself, and the person who has introduced him, will both be slain." (77)

The sponsors of new candidates for membership would undoubtedly have gone to the agents for assistance, since they have the best facilities and experience at their disposal for such investigations. The law against the accidental or deliberate admission of the enemy (the police) into Triad meetings is very clear:

> .."When a fair*is held, all persons must be carefully examined, so that no serpents mix themselves with the dragons.
>
> He who, knowing it, does not give notice ofit, shall be punished with 108 blows. He who hasbrought clandestinely policemen within the precincts, in order to show them the secrets, shall be killed together with the spy or spies." (78)

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* hsü is Triad cant for secret meetings.

The other functions include the infiltration of government departments, in particular, the local yamen or magistrature, such as bribing or recruiting the clerks and prison warders; infiltrating rival societies; and keeping systematic contact with the underworld. The success of these undertakings depended obviously on thorough training and sophisticated methods of disguise. Agents frequently travel as doctors, hawkers of food and other normally itinerant professionals; they also get themselves employed as yamen underlings, body-guards and servants to the local officials and gentry; the varieties of disguise must be endless.(79)

There were of course departments dealing with the financial and disciplinary aspects of the secret society. The council, when it existed, appears to have mediated between these two departments; for the treasurers could be part of the council;(80) while the council also must have served as a tribunal of sorts in arbitrating disputes among members and in handing out sentences of punishment. In other societies where the council was not formally instituted, the whole body of the members

appear to have served as the"jury."[81] Since the council does not appear in most of the reports, while the other officers do in one form or another, we may assume that its role was supplementary rather than essential to the secret society, particularly in its judicial capacity, which could easily be taken over by the leadership acting as a committee, supported by the ordinary members.

If the treasurers and occasionally a council took charge of the finances of the secret society, then the Red Cudgel organized the department of punishments (which was also the military department). The responsibility of the Red Cudgel included the supervision of guard duties, training men in the fighting skills, stock-piling of weapons, and occasionally even manufacturing them.[82]

From the above discussion of secret society organization, it is clear that every aspect of it was underlined by the necessity for internal solidarity and secrecy. The details of the economic organization were not set down and there does not appear to be any great anxiety

on that score, except in so far as the members' subversion of each other's financial enterprises--this has less to do with economic organization than the recurrent problem of solidarity.(83) This obsession with betrayal is understandable in the light of their embattled situation; not only were secret society members constantly in danger of exposure, but they were also psychologically and socially crippled by the rejection of orthodox society. This weakness could be considerably reduced if the lure of social respectibility could be side-tracked or replaced by an alternative kind of "respectability". This last is precisely what the Triads created, and it was expressed in both the rituals and the sanctions (a kind of Honour Code) of the societies; and I shall discuss the role of ritual in Triad organization first.

Notes

pages 213 - 258

1. Canton Journal (Kwantung Hsüeh-pao), January 1, 1937, no pagination

2. Wang Yu-chuan, "The organization of a typical guerilla area in south Shantung" in Carlson, E.F., The Chinese Army: its organization and military efficiency, New York, 1940, p.105

3. Hsiao I-shan, Chin-tai pi-mi sheh-hui shih-liao (History of modern secret societies), Peking, 1935, Vol.2, p.9b.

4. Georg Simmel, op. cit. p.367 writes à propos this kind of membership:

"The contrast between exoteric and esoteric members, such as is attributed to the Pythagorean order, is the most poignant form of this protective measure. The circle composed of those only partially initiated formed a sort of buffer region against the non-initiates. It is everywhere the dual function of the "middler" to connect and to separate, or, actually, rather to play only one role which, according to our perceptual categories and our viewpoint, we designate as connecting or as separating. In the same way, the real unity of superficially contradictory activities is here seen in its clearest light: precisely because the lower grades of the order mediate the transition to the center of the secret, they create a gradual densification of the sphere of repulsion which surrounds this center and which protects it more securely than could any abrupt and radical alternative between total inclusion and total exclusion."

5. The Idea of Politics, London, 1966 (translated from Introduction a la Politique, Paris, 1964), p.154-5

6. Schlegel, op. cit. p.55.

7. See pp 231 a, b, c for facsimiles of notice of election of officers.

8. the only two units mentioned in the Triad vocabulary see Appendix B, pp. 380-386

9. Stanton, op. cit. pp.8-24 for history of Triads' role in rebellions.

10. T'ao Ch'eng-chang, op. cit. p.110; Stanton, op. cit., p.42.

11. Stanton, op. cit. p.42

12. Morgan, op. cit. p.96

13. Hirayama Amane, op. cit. p.82; these terms were normally used by the Elder Brothers Society.

14. Ch'en, Jerome, op. cit. p.297

15. Georges Coulet, Les Sociétés Secrètes en Terre d'Annam, Saigon, 1926, p. 279

16. T'ao Ch'eng-chang, op. cit. p.110

17. Ibid.

18. Seminar Paper given at University College, London, 1966 in the Department of Political Economy

19. Stanton, op. cit. p.42; indeed, as we shall see in the chapter on ritual, the whole initiation ceremony was a symbol of rebirth.

20. Morgan, op. cit. p.100

21. Ibid.

22. T'ao, op. cit. p.100

23. Morgan, op. cit. p.97

24. Leboucq, op. cit. p.19 (Lettres)

25. T'ao, op. cit. p.100

26. Ibid.

27. Hutson explains the taboo among the Elder Brothers in terms of the sound similarity between the Chinese words for "seven" and "to slice" ch'i. The real explanation is more likely to be that of the Triads, which makes "Number Seven" stand for the traitor monk who was seventh in the boxing hierarchy; and the cock decapitated at the ceremony of initiation as a warning to potential traitors is known in Triad slang, in fact, as "Number Seven" (Ah-ch'i).

28. Morgan, op. cit. p.100

29. Schlegel, op. cit. p.62

30. Boyle, Frederick, article in Harpur's Magazine of September 1891, pp.601-2

31. Porter, op. cit. p. 6

32. Schlegel, op. cit. p.164 (Art.21)

33. Schlegel, ibid. p.140 (Oath 22), p.142 (Oath 29), p. 163 (Art.14) (Art.15). These articles of the Twenty-one Regulations state categorically:

"When brethern of the Hung-league have serious or trifling dissensions, the council is there to decide upon them according to justice, but it shall not be allowed to bring the case before the magistrates. If anybody should not observe this law, the council will decide the case effectually, and, besides, will punish the plaintiff with 108 blows.

"When there are public affairs, and the brotherhood is invited to deliberate upon them, and if they are intrusted to the council, it shall not be allowed to injure the equity by boisterous speeches. Neither shall it be permitted to carry sharp weapons, or to have sticks or cudgels in one's hands.

The offender shall bepunished, according to law, with 72 blows."

34. Stanton, op. cit. p.64 (Art.33)

35. T'ao, op. cit. p.110

36. Schlegel, op. cit. p.143 (Oath 33)

37. Stanton, op. cit. p.118 (Oath 3)

38. By which officials were known to each other by a symbolic number. Only Comber (L.) Chinese Secret Societies in Malaya (Survey of the Triad Society from 1800 to 1900), New York, 1959, p. 17, and Morgan, op. cit. p.101 mention this system of ranking.

Comber's report gives the following:

1. Incense Master	989	or	489
2. White Fan	983	or	415
3. Vanguard	992		
4. Red Staff	426		
5. Grass Slipper	415	or	432

simplified further, we get:

1. President	108
2. Officer	72
3. Recruit	36

Morgan's report is more detailed in the explanation of the numerical symbols (pp.101-104), and his table is set out as follows:

1. Shan Chu (President)	489
2. Fu Shan Chu (vice-President)	438
3. Heung Chu (Incense Master)	"
4. Sin Fung (Vanguard)	"
5. Sheung Fa Officials (Flower)	"
6. Hung Kwan (Red Cudgel)	426
7. Pak Tsz Sin (White Fan)	415
8. Cho Hai (Grass Sandals)	432
9. Ordinary Member	49

The ritual repetition of the simplified table by Comber in the number of strokes to be applied to society miscreants, adding only 21, says something interesting about the application of the punishments.

39. Morgan, ibid. p.101

39a. see Hutson's selected translation in China Journal, November 1928, "The Heaven and Earth Society", p.219

40. Favre, op. cit. p.14

41. Staton, op. cit. p.63 (Oath 26)

42. Ibid, p.122 (Art.21)

43. Morgan, op. cit. p.266

44. Translated and edited by Tretiakov p.55

45. Leboucq, Lettres etc. p.37

46. Porter, op. cit. p.65

47. Hutson, op. cit. p.

48. Schlegel, op. cit. p.165 (Art.2)

49. Ibid, p.153 (Art.12), p.162 (Art.9); Stanton, op. cit. p.67 (Art.5)

50. Freedman, op. cit. p.84

51. Although the Examination System came in more recent centuries to symbolize the triumph of merit over birth and wealth, in deciding the redistribution of power, its formal institution in the 7th century by the Empress Wu had no such "democratising" motive behind it. The incorporation of the system into bureaucratic selection was geared to the Empress's own political ambitions: she brought in the lesser known literate nobility from the outlying areas to counter the influence of the Imperial princes in the capital. Her success in installing the Examination System as a ladder to power was as much the symbol of the final surrender of the old aristocracy (with its military bias) as of the rise of the lesser nobility and its literate members to power; moreover it represented a new alliance between the throne and the bureaucracy, which was to bring them both greater power over the other ppolitical forces in the country, the commercial classes for example.

52. Mencius, IIb.8. VIIb.14.

53. The extent to which this electoral democracy was put into practice is of course open to question; but if hierarchization is incompatible with democratic elections, then the Western democracies must also be condemned as unworkable, since they,too, combine to a high degree these two principles.

54. See Chapter VIII below.

55. See above pp.217-8

56. For a thorough examination of this problem see The Chinese Civil Service: Career Open to Talent? edited and introduced by Johanna M. Menzel, Boston, 1963 (Problems in Asian Civilizations)

57. See Chapter VIII below; also Freedman, op. cit.pp.43,123

58. Ibid.

59. Hutson, op. cit. p.88 writes:of the Elder Brothers Society members when caught:

"If any of the gang should be caught, there is danger that secrets may be let out; but some of Lan Ta-shun'sbands will defy torture and scorn death. No officials can get their secrets either by torture or cajolery; and no severities used on them seem to have any moral effect on the rest of the gang; indeed it sometimes seems as though the more are killed the more the membership grows." Heckethorn, C.W. Secret Societies of all ages and countries, London 1897, Vol.II, p.136 supports this picture of Triad omerta:

"In November, 1891, a famous Ko Lao Hui leader named Chen-kin-lung fell into the hands of the Chinese government... His examination was conducted with the greatest secrecy by the magistrate and deputiesof the Viceroy and the Governor...Three examinations were held, but Chen preserved the strictest silence. Torture was employed but in vain; the only words that could be extracted from him were 'Spare yourselves the trouble and me the pain; be convinced that there are men ready to sacrifice their lives for the good of a cause which will bring happiness to this country for thousands of generations to come.'.Then more gentle words were used, but with what result is not known.".

60. See above, p.158

61. Chiang, op. cit. p.18

62. Ibid. pp.18-20
63. Ibid. p.20
64. Ibid. p.21; See also Hutson's selected translations of Hirayama Amane in China Journal, November, 1928, p.219

65. Chiang, ibid.

66.

The "Ten Heavenly Stems": (Shih t'ien-keng)	"The Five Elements": (Wu Hang)
chia, i	mu (wood)
ping, ting	huo (fire)
ching, hsing	chin (metal)
yin, kuei	shui (water)
wu, chi	t'u (earth)

67. Chiang, op. cit. p.27
68. Chiang, ibid. p.30

69. Chiang, ibid. p.31
70. Chiang, ibid. p.32
71. Ch'en, Jerome, op. cit. p.297

72. Carlson, E.F. The Chinese Army, N.Y. 1940, p.105

73. See above, p.42

74. In the Triad cant, 10 men were called i-liang (one ounce) and 400 men were called i-p'ing-ma (one standard weight horse).

75. See diagram of Triad Lodge in next chapter, p. 274a.

76. Stanton, op. cit. p.68 (Art.5); but this is exceptionally severe, Schlegel's documents, op. cit. p.163 (Arts. 11,12) stipulates the loss of both ears, or 72 blows

77. Schlegel, op. cit. p.155-6 (Art.31)

78. Schlegel, ibid. p.163 (Art.10)

79. Wynne, op. cit. p.30

80. See above, p.226

81. Stanton, op.cit. p. ,(Oath 34):
"...If a brother offends, let all the brethren discuss his case and punish him, and if he harbours resentment or disobeys this injunction, may the gods look down and punish him."

82. See Morgan, op. cit. p.74-5 for illustrations of weapons manufactured by the Triads themselves in Hong Kong.

83. Unlike other associations like the guilds, which organized themselves for a specific economic purpose, secret societies appear to have organized in order to be organized; for a tight-knit organization is protection in itself. The message of secret organization appears to be "without solidarity, you can have no organization; without organization you can do nothing."

Chapter VII : Ritual

The initiation ceremony formed, of course, the crucial and most spectacular part of the Triad ritual. Promotion ceremonies, if performed separately at all, were kept very brief.(1) Other ritual, carried out, for example during seasonal and semi-religious festivals(2) appear to have been largely confined to practical purposes; such as the planning of raids, criminal enterprises or rebellions, and normally taking place at fairs or the rural and urban market towns, when the crowds assembled during such occasions were larger than usual and provided excellent cover for unorthodox activities.(3) There is no record of the rites performed during such festivals, but one may assume that they did not differ too radically from the usual kind of worship--memorialism, accompanied by the requisite display of esoteric hand and body signals.

It is quite another case with the initiation ceremony, the records of which exceeed anything else produced by the secret societies, and have excited the most

開香帖式

日裡紅七衣裡來　義兄早七到香檯
小弟親臨來候駕　桃園結義理應該
年　月　晚　洪　順　堂
　　川口　開
　　井于　期
頃爲通知

拜

TRANSLATION.

Form of a circular for holding lodge.

In daytime all is red (light), so come at nighttime;
Come, my pledged brethern, early to the incense-table:
I, your humble servant, will come myself to wait upon you;
For it is right and proper that we pledge fraternity in the peach-garden.

The year, month, night,
in the „Hall of obedience to Hung" a market will be opened (?).

The Hung-brother X presents his respects.

(SEAL OF THE SOCIETY I-HING.)

Please to communicate this further.

In one of the copies, also, is found a form of circular as is used in Siam. (?)

The verse at the head of that circular is different, namely:

具帖敬板移玉趾
望求指示坐將檯
今晚洪門大放開
義兄移步上將檯
晚弟親臨候台駕
桃園結義理當該

(?) The characters 川口 and 井于 are mutilated forms of the characters 洪順堂 (the name of the 2d Lodge) and 開期, to open a market, i. e. to hold lodge. Comp. p. 25.

(?) 暹羅國開香帖式

interest among scholars, and other writers. This chapter will attempt to summarize the main features of the ritual and then to interpret them in the light of Simmel's hypothesis, and in relation to the existence and organization of the secret society itself.

Despite the relative wealth of details on the theatrical aspect of the initiation ritual, there does not exist any commensurate information on the more mundane sides of the action, such as for example, how often did they meet, and when. The only record extant applies to the Hong Kong Triads of our century. But as they claimed themselves to be the "Second Lodge" of the Canton Triads, we must take their word for it, and assume that the mainland societies were not radically different in their practices from the Hong Kong societies. According to Morgan's informant, the Hong Kong Triads usually met for the initiation ceremony at intervals of the '3rd' and '8th' of the lunar month;(3) Morgan adds:

> "The official days for opening the Lodge are:- 3rd, 13th, 23rd, 8th, 18th, 28th. The 5th and 10th days of the month may be used for emergency purposes. The 4th, 14th, 14th, and 9th, 19th, 29th can also be used although the dates are not quite as auspicious as those embodying the numerals 3 and 8. The 1st, 11th, 21st, 2nd, 12th, 22nd, 16th, 16th, 7th, 17th, 27th, should never be used." (4)

Whether the societies in fact adhered to these dates of meetings in a systematic way is open to question, but it is clear that number magic plays a considerable part in deciding when members met. This obsession with auspicious numbers and dates is not unique to the secret society practice; all traditional rites whether of marriage, birth or death were dominated by this concern with choosing the right date. If a child happened to be born on an inauspicious day, something would be done to his name which would ward off the misfortune predicted by the date.(5) As initiations were for the members of the secret society "birth days" of new members, it is hardly surprising that the symbolic aura should be right from the start. Nevertheless, the intervals of these dates do have a practical side to them; they appear to be spaced for the most part at ten day intervals, which corresponded to the typical spacing of market days in traditional times.(6) Hence we have the Triad cant for "initiations--"fair" (hsü), or "market" (shih).

In order to exercise the maximum influence on the in-coming candidate, initiations must be comprehensive and thematically simple, that is, complex enough to inspire awe, but simple enough to elicit understanding for the main cause. Triad initiation rituals have both these qualities, and in order to save themselves the trouble of re-enacting the complicated ritual too often, it was normally the practice to wait until a reasonable number of candidates presented themselves, for example, fifty men or so, before a full-scale ceremony was staged. Sometimes, by necessity or in cases of emergency, smaller scale ceremonies were held in private houses or member's homes, with only one or more of the principal officers of a lodge present.(7)

Large-scale initiations were usually held in a hall rented or secretly owned by a lodge, or in a pre-selected and secluded temple(8), sometimes known scurrilously as "dumb brothels" (ya-pa yao-tzu).(9) The lodge was symbolically named "The City of Willows" (Mu-yang Ch'eng), which was the Buddhist name for Paradise;* or simply "Mountain Hall" (Shan-t'ang),

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* see Plan of Triad Lodge, p. 274a

where the President was known as"Mountain Master" (Shan Chu). This City of Willows contained within it an inner sanctum called "The Red Flower Pavilion" (Hung Hua T'ing), in which the essential part of the initiation took place, and where the secrets of the society were revealed to the recruit.(10) In a short domestic ceremony only the Red Flower Pavilion part was enacted.

In a full-scale ceremony, the ritual was divided into three main stages. The first stage consisted of the recitation and dramatization of the Myth of Origin in the main hall of the lodge. This was called "performing the play" (tso-hsi) and "watching the play" (k'an-hsi) depending on whether one was an active or passive participant; or "releasing the horses" (fang-ma). (Horses= recruits, or new recruits; hsin-ting (new tops) was another name for new recruits). The second part of the ritual consisted of theoath-taking ceremony in the Red Flower Pavilion, the issuing of the certificates of membership, and the exhibition of secret documents, furniture and objects of the lodge to the new members. The feast and theatricals of celebration

which followed after a few days, formed the third and final part of the initiation.

The whole ceremony was referred to as "opening a fair" (k'ai-hsü), or "opening a market" (k'ai-shih).*

Before entering a lodge, it is stipulated that a candidate must be clean or freshly washed, and wearing a white cotton coat and trousers. His right arm, shoulder and chest must be bared. The left leg of the trousers must be rolled up above the knee. He must be wearing a pair of grass sandals, and a strip of red cloth (the Chinese word for "red" is pronounced in the same way as the word for Hung in Hung League) tied around his head.(11) This may symbolize the Triad connection with the Red Turbans (White Lotus Society) rebels who brought the Ming dynasty to power. It should be remembered that the Ming dynasty is the Chinese dynasty which the secret societies vowed to

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* sometimes the lodge is also known as "The Market of Great Peace" (T'ai-p'ing Shih).

restore, after having overturned the foreign Manchu dynasty of the Ch'ing. As if to emphasize the point, the officers of the society dressed up in Ming costume and head-gear for the occasion.

As the initiation ceremony is too long and complicated to be reproduced in its entirety here, it may suffice us to summarize the main stages of it. The following summary is taken from Schlegel's documents which supply all the verses as well asmany of the important expressions in Chinese and in translation; this version appears also to be closest to that presented in Chinese by Hsiao I-shan who based his research on the British Museum MS Oriental 2339, and the longest version extant. I have chosen the Schlegel version in preference to the others by Stanton, Ward and Stirling who have rendered the Chinese into verse or idiomatic English without providing the Chinese characters as fully as Schlegel had; moreover, the latter's version combines textual accuracy and convenience of length.

Candidates were initiated in groups of fifty or so men together, entering the initiation room in pairs. They were instructed in certain simple responses to questions put to them by the Guards at the front gate. These questions dealt with the names and ages of the candidates, which were then registered in a book.

I.1. The Vanguard orders the Guards to form the "bridge of swords" (ch'iao-tao) for the ceremony of "passing the bridge" (kuo-ch'iao), during which the candidates are led by an affiliated member under an arch of swords.

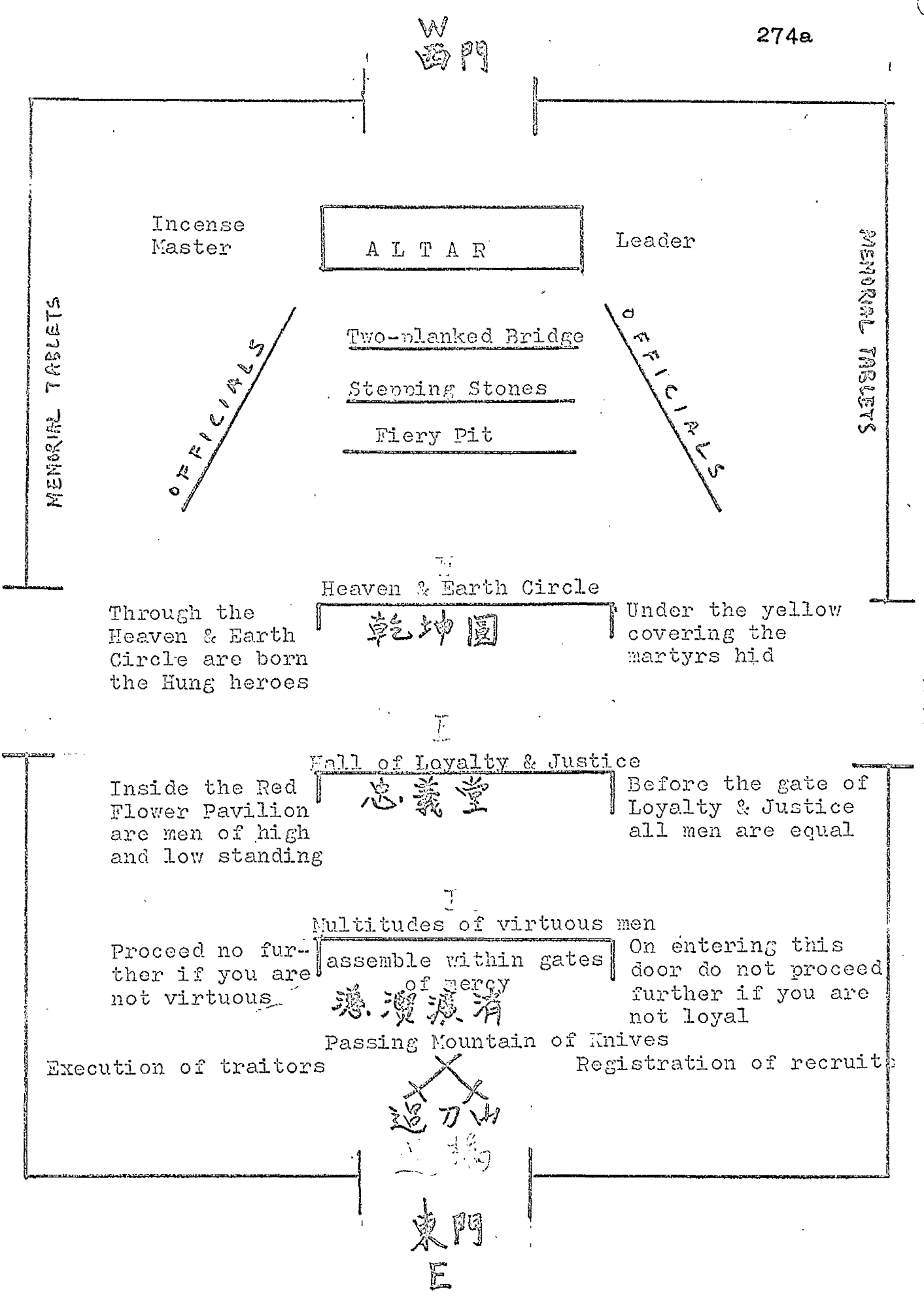
I.2. The candidates each pay an entrance fee of 21 cash, which is received by the "Fruit-seller" who was in fact a recruitment agent.

I.3. The candidates now enter the Hung Gate (Hung Men) an ante-room guarded by two "generals" who demand the names of the "new horses", and then permission from the Master for the recruits to pass.

I.4. Candidates now enter the Hall of Fidelity and Loyalty, (Chung-i t'ang), guarded by another two "generals" who demand their names again. Here the

CITY OF WILLOWS 水楊城

(2)



recruits are instructed in the political aims of the society, and the reasons for the society's opposition to the Ch'ing government. The story of the origins of the Triad society is briefly alluded here. Threats of death are levelled against those who refuse now to go through with the ceremony.

I.5. Candidates enter the Heaven and Earth Circle (T'ien-ti yüan), also guarded by two "generals".

I.6. Candidates cross the "moat" or "ditch" and reach the East Gate of the City of Willows, or the lodge proper. This gate was guarded like the others. The guard leads them to the "Lodge of Universal Peace" (t'ai-p'ing chuang) where the Council sits, guarded by another two men.

I.7. The Vanguard greets and is greeted by the "generals" (guards of the Council Room) who ask him his mission. The Vanguard asks to see the Councillors (the "Five Founders"), and the guards request permission from the Master for the Vanguard to enter.

I.8. The Vanguard enters the Council Room and greets the Master, who proceeds to ask him to answer a number of questions[12] regarding: a) the symbolic identity

of the Vanguard, b) the purpose of his visit, c) the purpose of the candidates in requesting admission to lodge, d) the historical role of the Vanguard, his knowledge of the 18 military arts, of the educational and moral principles of the society, of the history of the founding of the society, and the various magical persons and objects encountered by the Vanguard on his voyages of recruitment. Among the persons and things he "saw" on his voyages were:

i) the recruits: "They are far off at the horizon; they are near before my eyes. They roam about the world without a fixed residence."

ii) three roads, of which the Vanguard took the middle

iii) white herons flying past

iv) eight priests, each holding eight precious objects: a fan, a pear-shaped censer, a sword, a flute, two castanets or jade, a sceptre, and a floating bridge on which stood the last monk. (These are the Eight Spirits (Pa-hsien) of Taoist mythology)

v) a woman, wearing a bamboo hat (a peasant head-gear) a white dress, on a white horse, holding a flower basket and sceptre, who entered the "Grove of Firs and Cypresses"--another name for the secret society. The woman is evidently some kind of a deity, and is given the title of "Princess" (kung-chu)

vi) the temple of Ling-wang (lit. Spirit King) who is the "protecting deity" of the Hung faithful. Here the daughter of the Dragon King of the Seas was "gathering mulberry flowers" (a password).

vii) a mountain, called the Black Dragon Mountain, with many caves, and acryptic legend describing different types of rain (drizzle, summer showers, hoarfrost, etc.)

viii) the Hung Ferry Boat (Hung-t'ou-ch'uan) at the bottom of the mountain. The Ferry Boat was manned by three men on the top deck, the skipper (shao-kung) on the fore part, his wife (shao p'o) aft. On the lower deck or "great ship-hold" were the Hung Brethern. There were five (sometimes, eight) compartments in the ship, eachcontaining red wood, red rice, son of the chief (chu-tzu), weapons, and the members.

The verse explains:

"The true seat of the lord is in the middle of the ship
The military and civilians assist to support the sun and moon (these two words combine to make the word Ming)
The silken sails are hoisted high and the wind is fair
We roam like clouds over the four seas to pacify the world."

The ship had 21 holds, five sails, 21 deck-boards, 3 kinds of wood (peach on the left, plum on the right and red-wood in the middle...)

A number of deities, the God of Fire (the Chinese equivalent of Pluto), the "All-hearing Ear", the "All-seeing Eye", Kuan Yü (the God of War and voluntary associations), famous generals of the Three Kingdoms period--including the last deity--Chang-fei, Liu Pei (A.D.168-256), the Holy Mother Queen of Heaven, the Goddess of Mercy (Kuan-yin), the 18 chief disciples of Buddha (lo-han), etc. The ship was further described,and the symbolic numbers were re-iterated. The destination of the ship was the Market of Great Peace.

ix) the three rivers (san-ho) which unite at one source (symbol of the Triad society uniting China).

x) the Market of Great Peace, containing 3 markets

xi) two-planked bridge, (erh-pan ch'iao), on which stood the members, peac and plum trees, 3 Buddhas, a young man, a young woman, seller of Hung fruits, etc

I.9. Recapitulation of the initiation ceremony, the dramatis personae, description oflodge and furniture, as streets, shops, wells, pagodas, ponds, orchards, trees, houses, (only 5 out of the 108 were inhabited), casernes, fields, crops, the Hung lamp, the "highest thing in the city", the volcano, (or pit of fire), the Red Flower Pavilion.

End of Catechism.

I. I.10. Recruits who refuse to join the society at this stage are now led out of the West (or traitors') Gate to be executed by decapitation; the others are handed over to the Vanguard.

II.1. The Initiation. The recruits enter the Red Flower Pavilion, led by the Vanguard.

II.2. The queues of the recruits are cut off, symbolizing the severance of their loyalty to the Manchu dynasty.(13)

II.3. The coiffure is then changed to the Chinese or Ming style (kai-t'ou-fa), with the sides shaved, and the hair combed backwards and tied into a knot.

II.4. The recruits wash their faces (hsien-mien), in order "to do away with corruptness and perversity" and to "wash clean the dust of Ch'ing."

II.5. The recruits are stripped of their upper garments (kai-i), and put on white robes of Ming style (ch'uan pai-i) and red kerchiefs round their heads (pao t'ou-pu), or a white sash for the waist (chua-yao). Their shoes are taken off and straw shoes (normally worn in mourning or by the poor; white is also the colour

of mourning) are put on in their place.

"Our feet tread on straw-shoes, step by step
no one would question the poor and miserable on the road.
don't say grass-sandals are useless
you received them in oath in the folower pavilion."

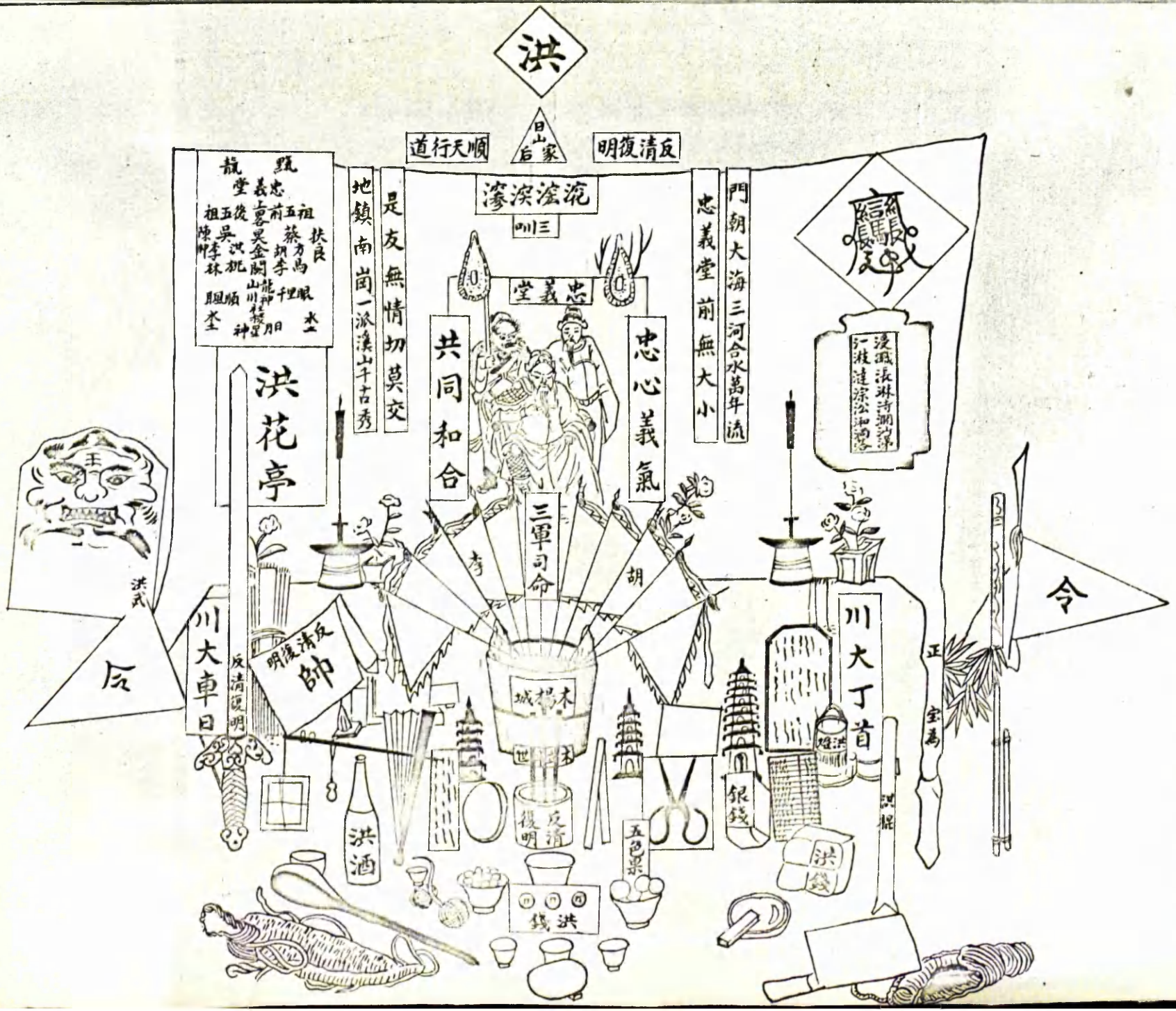
End of First Part of Ceremony.

II.6. The recruits are now led to the altar, where the Master again questions the Vanguard, now about the political aims of the society summarized in the slogan "two dragons contending for a pearl" (dragons = emperors) and "overthrow the Ch'ing and restore the Ming."

II. 7. The recruits "take grass instead of incense" (nien ts'ao wei hsiang) in commemoration of the manner of pledging brotherhood by the five founding monks of the society.

II.8. Incense is then distributed (p'ai hsiang) and offered to the altar gods; the formulary of the oath is placed over the incense bowl. The blades of grass are then inserted one by one into the censer (chin hsiang).

II.9. Two dry-wood candles are now lit (tien ku-mu) followed by the lighting of a red candle (tien hung-chu); while libation to the gods are made with 3 cups of wine, one for Heaven, one for Earth, and one for the Society (hsien-chiu).



THE ALTAR

280a

II.10. The Lamp of the Seven Stars is lighted (tien Ch'i Hsing teng)

II.11. The Imperial Lamp is lighted (tien Yü Huang teng)

II.12. The Hung Lamp is lighted (teng Hung teng)

II.13. The prayer "inviting the gods as witnesses" (ch'ing shen ppiao wen) is read out in a slow and solemn voice, reiterating the purpose of the meeting and of the brotherhood. The prayer ends as follows:

> "All brethern who are brought hither are faithful and loyal: they all are iron-galled and copper-livered... From the inexhaustible metamorphoses are born millions of men, who are all of one mind and one will. All these of one affection in the two capitals and thirteen provinces have now come together to petition Father Heaven and Mother Earth; the three lights, sun, moon (and stars); all the Gods, Saints, Spirits and Buddhas, and all the Star Princes, to help all present to enlightenment. This night we pledge ourselves, and vow this before Heaven, that the brethern in the whole universe shall be as from one womb; as if born of one father, as if nourished by one mother; as if of one root and origin; that we will obey heaven and act according to its ways; that our loyal hearts shall not change, and never alter. If the august Heaven will protect and assist in the restoration of the Ming, then happiness will have a place to which to return."

II.14. The recruitsrise from their knees, and fall again prostrate on the ground, during which the following verse is recited:

"First, we worship Heaven as our father
Second, we worship Earth as our mother
Third, we worship the Sun as our brother
Fourth, we worship the Moon as our sister-in-law
Fifth, we worship the Five Venerable Worthies
Sixth, we worship Wan Yun-lung
Seventh, we worship our brothers
Eighth, we worship the fragrance of ten thousand years."

II.15. The Thirty-six Oaths (Hung Chia San-shih-liu Che) are then read out by a member to the new recruits who remain kneeling. (See Appendix C.)

II.16. The recruits now drink tea as a token that they have imbibed the aims of the association--"drunk the water of the three rivers (yin san-ho shui)

II.17. The recruits prick their middle fingers (or a white cock) andlet the blood drop into a large communal bowl of wine, which isthen drunk by all (yin hsieh-chiu)

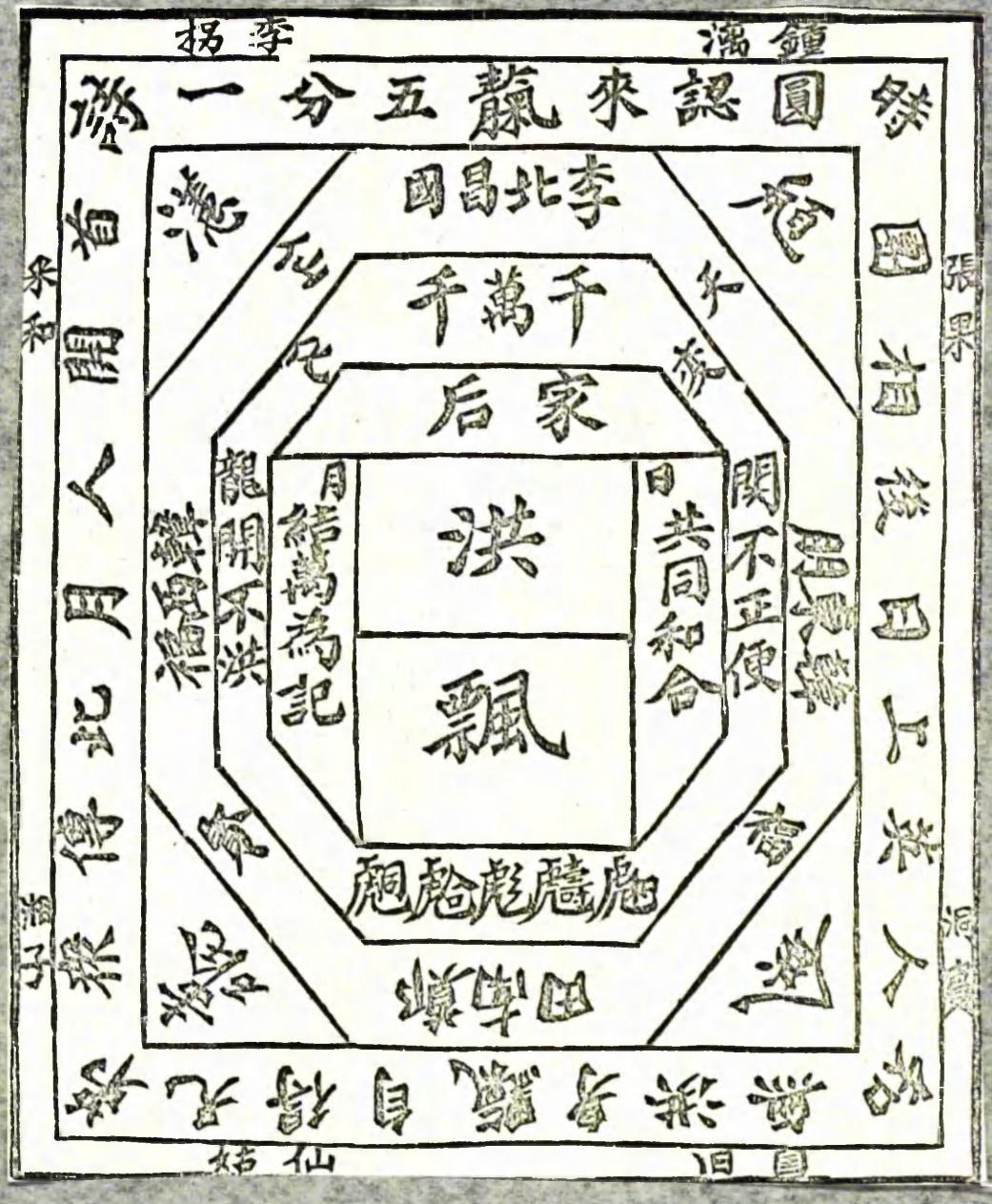
II.18. A white cock is decapitated by each new member as a warning to all potential traitors (chan ya-ch'i pai chi). After which, the following execration (shuo-chou) is solemnly pronounced:

"The white cock is the symbol that we have shed blood and sworn an oath
The disloyal and unrighteous shall perish like the cock
The faithful and righteous shall be dukes and marquises for ten thousand generations
We have drunk the wine, confirmed the oath and pledged to raise (the standard of) justice
Traitors and traducers shall die under the sword
Their heads severed from their bodies, and their flesh and bones dispersed everywhere."

(This last threat refers to the belief that the soul will never rest, and will become a"hungry ghost" as long as the body remains incomplete.) The recruits are now led outside the West Gate where the written oaths are thrown on the fire and burned in the belief that they would reach the gods, who would then punish those who have perjured themselves.

II.19. The diplomas of membership (Hung-tan, Hung-p'iao or Yao-p'in) are now distributed. They are usually pieces of linen cloth, each decorated with a quatrain and the name of the recruit in cryptogram; for example, Hsü-hsiang 許 襄 is written as Yen-wu-ya-nung 言午亞裹 . The diploma is worn on the person (hence its name "waist-belt," "purse") as a protection against the rash pirates and robbers of the league who might not otherwise distinguish their colleagues from outsiders. Copies of the secret book containing oaths, laws, regulations of procedure during meetings, secret signs, vocabulary and pairs of daggers are distributed to all the new members. The daggers can be easily concealed in the wide sleeves of the Manchu costume.

MEMBERSHIP TICKET



II.20 This is the time for paying the account; for

a)	"clothes" (documents, etc.)	360 cash
b)	"purse" (diploma)	108 cash
c)	"Instructions" (the Oaths)	72 cash
d)	"traitor" (the decapitated cock)	36 cash
e)	fruit	21 cash
f)	Hung Cash (Three Hung Cents)	3 cash
	Total	600 cash

The Hung Cash also is to be carried about on the person as a sign of mutual recognition.

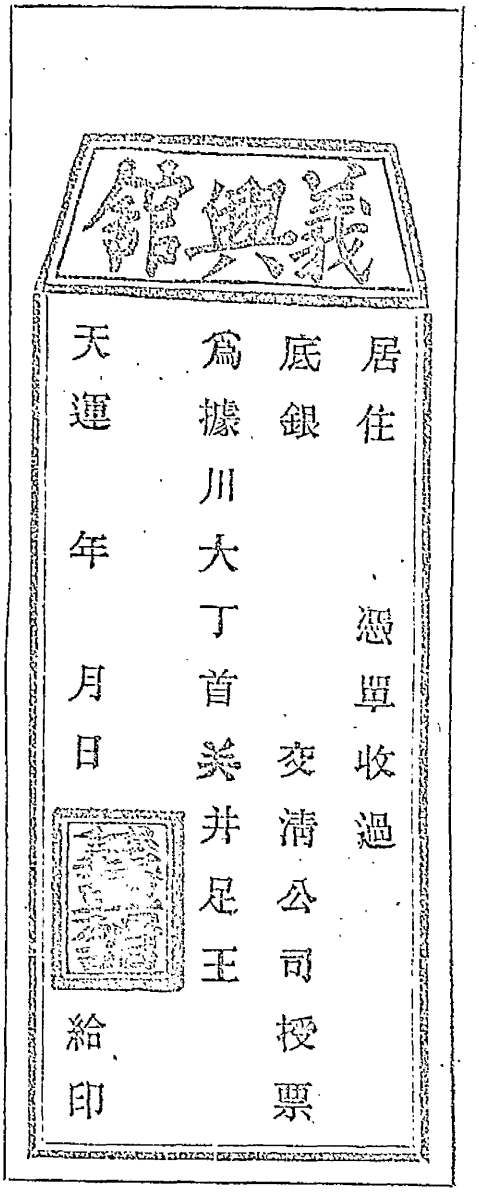
End of formal ceremony

II.21. The new members are now led around the lodge and shown the furniture, objects and flags of the society; then the Hung Bushel (Hung tou) is raised and a verse recited, after which the Army flags are raised, and consecrated by a libation of three cups of wine and a prayer for vicfory is offered to the deities of Heaven, Earth, land, grain, mountains and the three rivers.

III.1. A white horse and a black ox are slaughtered and spear-heads are dipped in their blood; after which

RECEIPT FOR CONTRIBUTIONS 284a

The society gives receipts for these contributions, which are entered in a book kept for the purpose, wherein the revenues and expenses of the league are carefully registered. These receipts are printed on orange-coloured paper, about eight inches long and 3½ inches broad, and of the following form and purport:


義興館

居住　底銀　爲據　天運
住　銀　據　運
憑單收過　交清公司授票
單　清　司　票
收　公　授
過
川大丁首奚井足王
年月日
給印

TRANSLATION.

I-HING-HALL.

Settled at (the name of the place) — receipt; received from (the name of the member)

the sum of (quantity of money expressed), paid. The society gives this ticket

as a proof. Obey Heaven and act righteously! The passes are open the road is clear! (1)

The year (expressed by the cyclical characters corresponding to that year) of the Heavenly motions, the month, day.

Given under our seal.

(the seal of the society) *I-hing-kwan*, „I-hing-hall."

(1) Here again we have mutilated characters: these eight characters being abbreviated from the characters 順天行道，關開路現 Compare p. 40, note 1, and p. 41, description of the flag fig. 7.

the animals are taken into the kitchen and a feast is prepared for all to partake. During and after the banquet, theatricals are put on for the guests--an invariable feature of all ceremonies. This lasts till dawn when the members don again their Manchu costume and disperse to their homes.

Simmel's ideas on ritual in secret societies have particular force for the interpretation of the role of ritual in the southern Chinese Triads; for this reason, I shall reproduce them in paraphrase here:(14)

1. Secret societies are voluntary, and therefore "artificial" associations, not pre-determined by historical precedent like families, but built up from its own basis. Therefore, the use of elaborate ritual becomes necessary as a substitute life-totality, creating external forms around the purposes of the association. Thus, the substitute life-totality is able a) to make a <u>total</u> claim upon the individual member, both objectively and subjectively, and b) to <u>protect</u> the purposes of the association. In this way, ritual secrecy can sometimes

be emphasized at the expense of the secrecy attached to the purposes, and becomes, like the process of hierarchization, an end in itself.

2. Secret societiesnecessarily exist within a larger, encompassing structure, and therefore cannot but imitate the form of this structure.* In order to distinguish itself from this encompassing structure, and reduce its subservience to it, the secret society seeks to create an alternative totality by setting up a contrasting image (in its ritual) to the official world. Only in this way can the secret society bind its members strongly to itself.

Chinese secret societies certainly reproduce these features with remarkable explicitness. The creation of a new life-totality at every stage of the Triad ritual involves both an "external" or physical aspect, and an "internal" or psychological dimension, expressed in the symbolic meaning of the ritual act. Stage 1, the entry of the candidate into the City of Willows and his introduction to the purposes and meaning of

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* see above p.236ff

the secret association, gives the candidate a detailed (almost unnecesarily, repetitively so) re-creation of the society members' collective past in the form of versified history. Needless to say, the verses contributed as much to the ease of memorizing the history as to their meaning, and exercised a hypnotic effect on the listener, creating a psychological climate favourable to his further and deeper conversion. It is therefore quite logical that those who stubbornly resisted this hynotism, or the force of Triad arguments in favour of political sedition, or both, should be led out and executed beyond the traitors' gate. Besides, they already know too much for their own and the society's good. The need for roots or for a collective experience is thus satisfied in those who now proceed to the main part of the ceremony, the initiation.

The second stage is further divided into two parts: the disengagement of the candidate from orthodox and legal society (II.1 - 5), that is his "death", symbolized by his change of hair-style and clothes and the face-washing ceremony ("washing the face" in

Triad terminology means "to kill"); and the candidate's "re-birth" ("to be born" ch'u-shih means "to enter the society") into a new life, (II.7 - 21).

In this part of the ceremony, the collective experience is alluded to by enaction of key ideas unfolded in the first ~~part~~ stage of the ritual. For example, the "changing of the clothes" refers specifically to the discarding of orthodox values and adopting the new ones of the secret society--"clothes" as we know mean the documents and secret culture of the Triads. "Cutting off the queue" has already been explained as the cutting off of the allegiance to the Manchu dynasty which had imposed this humiliating coiffure on the Chinese. "Donning the red kerchief or turban" alludes most unequivocally the connection of the Triads with the Red Turban (White Lotus) rebellions which overthrew an earlier foreign dynasty (the Yüan) and hence, the clear support of the society for future rebellion against the Ch'ing dynasty. Indeed, this particular rite is accompanied by the following verse which leaves no one in doubt as

to Triad political ambitions:

> "A red kerchief of brand new colour
> wound round the head to summon troops
> when we have assembled a thousand armies and ten-thousand horses
> we shall exterminate the Ch'ing dynasty and protect our imperial lord." (The Ming heir).

The second half of the second stage is concerned with the actual "metamorphosis" (pien-hua) of the candidate. The rite "offering grass for incense"(II.7) symbolizes the change of the status of the candidate from that of inferiority ("grass" has the general connotation of inferiority, rusticity, coarseness, uncouthness) to one of superiority ("incense" being normally associated with refinement, superior quality--as in hsiang p'in,--and culture). Indeed the word "incense" or "fragrance"(hsiang) has become synonymous with "Triad member".

This metamorphosis goes one stage further in the "distribution of incense" (II.8) and the "offering of incense" (II.8), accompanied by the recitation of a verse which explains that

> "To-night new incense is blended with the old incense..."

indicating that the older members are now willing to accept the new ones into the fold. The various candles

lit after this (II.9 - 12) symbolize the illumination that has now taken place in the dark world of the candidates now that they are being transformed. The gods are then invited to witness this transformation by prayer, which also affirms the new ties of brotherhood formed between the members. The "drinking of the bloody wine" (II.17) is the seal of the new relationship. The decapitation of the cock, coming after so much benevolent new feeling and the imbibing of alcohol, must have a sobering effect, if not a traumatic one, depending on the psychological constitution of the members. After this, all is over, tension is released and the new members see themselves regaled in new raiment, and armed with the written confirmation of society protection as well as the concrete tokens of its trust: the distribution of the daggers. Their willingness to pay must be enhanced by the evidence of so much love. The commensality which follows is a further symbol of the benefitsand mutual satisfaction to be derived from membership of the remarkable fellowship.

Like the secret societies of Europe* the Chinese Triads, too, created for themselves a collective "counter image" to that of the orthodox society; they opposed the universal kinship loyalty by the loyalty to the society, they replaced the allegiance to the state and officialdom ("lepers" feng-tzu, or "enemy" tuei-t'ou, or "official bandits" kuan-fei) by the absolute allegiance to the Brotherhood; and it was "public interest"(15) to cheat, steal, rob outsiders for profit, but "criminal" to do so to a fellow member of the Triads. Further, the election of leaders by the members denied that the orthodox method (of appointing officials from above) had unique validity or any validity at all; and instead of the corrupt official being forced to commit suicide by order of the Emperor, in the secret society he was forced to do so by the general consensus of the members.(16) Finally, they replaced the Confucian and orthodox world-view by a synthesis of the different heterodox views of Buddhism, Taoism and popular magic. The peculiar

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* for example, among the Carbonari of the early nineteenth century, the counter image of the official religious views was expressed in the ritual of Pontius Pilate and his two assistants Caiaphas and Herod "pardoning" Christ. See Thomas Frost, Secret Societies of the European Revolution. 1776-1876 London 1876, pp.213ff. for a comparison of the Carbonari ritual with Triad ritual.

character of this synthetic world-view lies in its fundamental pre-occupation with the purposes and solidarity of the secret society. This pre-occupation took the explicit form of the ritual of initiation which may be analysed under two distinct but complementary heads: the "passive" and the "active".

In its passive role, ritual becomes the myth of origin, the ideological and aesthetic repository of the secret society. In the first place, the ritual served as the explanation or justification for the political (that is, rebellious) aims of the society. The reasons given by the myth are already discussed in the chapter on origins and formation of the Triads, but which may be summed up briefly here as: a) the tyranny of the foreign government in persecuting Chinese Buddhism; b) the corruption of officialdom; c) the humiliation and misery of the victims within this political frame-work. Hence, it was a point of honour for the "descendants" (17) of these victims to avenge their "fore-bears", and the Hung League was formed for this purpose, as well as that of restoring a virtuous and native government to China.

Revenge for the sake of justice and honour was the moral vindication of the secret society hostility towards the wider society; which meant that any compromise with the latter could only be interpreted as capitulation to moral corruption and dishonour.

Needless to say, to those suffering from acute injustices arising from inequalities of status and wealth endemic in traditional society, such an argument had all the force of divine truth. Thus, the myth of origin became the political manifesto of the secret society.

In the second place, the language used in the ritual--the "gutter" vocabulary, the eccentric phrases, the display of cryptograms on the sacred objects of the lodge, as well as the hand, body, cup, bowl, and other secret signals--functioned as an alternative and contrasting idiom of communication to that used in the outside world.

In the third place, if the myth of origin could be

called the "point of honour", then the oaths and statutes were the "code of honour," of the secret society, which might be compared to "thieves' honour". This last aspect will be discussed in the next chapter.

The combination of myth, secret language, oaths, and laws of the secret society constituted an efficacious, alternative culture to that of orthodox society. In this passive form, ritual served as a point of reference for the individual member who could consult it when or if in doubt.

Ritual in the active form had a more direct psychological and perpetuative function.* The somewhat abstract idea of "association" was realized in ritual action. In this, the emphasis has shifted from the necessity for association to the practical consideration of strengthening the association; that is, the necessity for internal unity in the survival of the secret society, and in the prolongation ~~and strengthening~~ of its existence.

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* like all rites de passage

The myth of origin, when physically re-enacted, became the living manifestation of the reality and solidarity of the association. The rootlessness, the geographical separateness and mobility of individual members were compensated for by the dramatic evocation of the '"City of Willows", with its constituent streets, pagodas, temples, shops, trees, wells, and sonon, creating a secret, magical and surrogate gemeinschaft within the individual solitude of the gesellschaft.

Thus, like all the other features of the secret society, ritual was orientated towards the maintenance and strengthening of solidarity among the members. Like the organization and the corporate activities, but unlike the sanctions, ritual is more an affirmation of the unity within the society than a negation of the outside world. Its weapon is persuasion--by logical argument, and by magic (or psychological manipulation): for the myth provides the argument, the dramatization the magic, and the whole ceremony the sense of honour which binds together and protects the physical and moral person and interests of each member.

Notes

pages 267 - 295

1. Morgan, op. cit. p.266

2. Schlegel, op. cit. p.52 writes:
"The meetings are generally held on the 25th of the month, in commemoration of the day of the foundation of the league; besides the common Chinese festivals are celebrated by the brotherhood, as:
The Lantern-festival (k'an hua-teng) on the 15th of the first month, when each member contributes 360 cash.
The Grave-cleansing festival (ch'ing-ming) and the festival of the Gods of the land (t'u-ti t'an), when each member contributes 108 cash.
The Dragon-boat-festival (P'a-lung-ch'uan) in the fifth month, to which each member contributes 36 cash.
The Birthday of the God Kwan (Kuan-ti t'an), to which each member contributes 72 cash.
On the 15th of the 7th month each member contributes 72 cash.
On the 25th of the 7th month, the anniversary of the society, each member contributes 36 cash.
On the 15th of the 8th month each member contributes 21 cash for fruits, and sun and moon-cakes (rih-yueh ping) for the autumnal festival (ch'iu chi).
The amounts (360, 108, 72, 36 and 21) correspond to the number of blows to be inflicted on miscreant members of the society, and may not have more than a ritual or symbolical signficance for the real sums paid. Poorer members could not be charged the same amount as the more wealthy ones, add the amounts had to be changed accordingly.

3. The use of restaurants (which contained private rooms), brothels, teahouses, etc. in the market places was normal, for "business" deals of every kind.

4. Morgan, op. cit. p.194 verse and note.

5. For example, if the horoscope indicates that one of the Five Elements was missing on the birthday of the child, it was usual for the parents to insert that missing element (fire, water, earth, metal or wood) in his name.

6. EAGT, p. 27

7. Stanton, op. cit. p.42

8. Hirayama Amane, op. cit. p.86

9. Ibid.

10. Stanton, op. cit. p.40

11. Wynne, op. cit. p.118; Stanton, ibid. p.43

12. couched thus:

"Where do you come from?"
"I come from the East"
"How can you prove it?"
"I can prove it by a verse..."

the verse, which is the pass-word, follows every answer of the candidate as represented by the Vanguard.

13. John Scarth, writing about Triads he had observed in Shanghai, described their hairstyle as follows:

"The hair was long, and gathered up into a knot on the crown, in a similar way to the ancient style in China, before the Tartar conquerors forced the Chinese to adopt the tail. It is said that the Tartars took this extraordinary mode of showingtheir power over the Chinese from policy, that the Chinese might not be able to see how few Tartars were among them, and be led to attempt revolt, bothpeople being made to dress alike." Twelve Years in China, Edinburgh, 1860, p. 194.

John Davis gives another explanation for the Manchu imposition:

"Many are the changes which may be made in despotic countries, without the notice of or even the knowledge of the lower portion of the community; but an entire alteration inthe national costume affects every individual equally, from the highest to the lowest, and is, perhaps, of all others, the most open and degrading mark of conquest."

14. Simmel, op. cit.pp.358-360

15. Schlegel, op. cit. p.159

16. See next chapter

17. According to Morgan's account, op. cit. p.46, members were given a Triad surname on admission to the society which indicated the position of their "generation" beginning from that of the Five Ancestors.

Chapter VIII : Sanctions

Triad sanctions included not only "penal laws", "laws" of procedure", but also a "moral code." However, the distinctions expressed here did not exist in the Triad terms of reference, just as they did not exist in orthodox Chinese laws.(1) G.W.F. Hegel, with an insight remarkable for his time, has already summed up for us the essential characteristics of Chinese law:

> "The laws of the state are partly civil ordinances, partly moral requirements; so that the internal law--the knowledge on the part of the individual of the nature of his volition, as his own inmost self--even...is the subject of external statutory enactment...moral laws are treated as legislative enactments, and law on its part has an ethical aspect." (2)

Although it was usual for the Triads to put its moral code within what they call the "Thirty-six Oaths", it also happened that ethical rules were sometimes included in the "Laws and Supplementary Laws" (lü-li)(3) of the secret society. To make a rough analogy, we may say that the lü-li corresponded to the Ch'ing Code (or Penal Code of the Ch'ing), while the Oaths (che) corresponded to the Sacred Edict.(4)

As Ward and Stirling put it, the Oaths were used to

> "inculcate the moral teachings of the Triad society and for the most part...are really a cursing formula, similar to the ceremony in the Western Church known as the Commination Service, held on Ash Wednesday." (5)

This last point is borne out in the use of magical threats couched in the following forms:

> "If any disobey this rule and forget the proper feeling (of brotherhood), they will be considered to have broken the oath, and may thunder from all points annihilate them." (6)

or, "may those" who break the moral code "die beneath ten thousand knives", be eaten by tigers, drowned, otherwise punished by the gods, and so on. This "cursing formula" did not of course exist in the Sacred Edict.

The Triad <u>lü-li</u> or laws varied in length and complexity from society to society. Some, like the twentieth century Triads described by Morgan, did not have these at all, confining themselves to the use of the Thirty-six Oaths; while the Elder Brothers' Society described by Hirayama Amane had only "Ten Commandments", only eight of which were recorded.(7) Schlegel has by far the most complex collection of rules which include the "Twenty-one Rules" (<u>Li Erh-shih-i t'iao</u>), the "Ten Prohibitions"

(Hung-hsün-t'ang k'ai-lu shih-chin)--regulations for the conducting of meetings--and an amplified set of laws called the "Seventy-two Articles of the Hung Code" (Hung-chia Ch'i-shih-erh t'iao Lü-li) which[8] probably drew some inspiration from the Great Ch'ing Code (Ta-Ch'ing Lü-li).

These "laws" concerned themselves (as did their orthodox counterpart) with the setting out of different kinds of offences and their appropriate punishments--so many blows, loss of ear(s) or death, by decapitation usually. The Triads did not go into the unpleasant refinements used by official law such as death by strangulation, by piece-meal execution, by burying alive and so on. There were also no laws punishing miscreants by exile or expulsion, though according to Morgan and Wynne, these rarely were the favourite forms of punishment among Hong Kong and Malayan Triads.[9]

It is certain that the rules were not applied by the secret societies to the letter for the simple reason that if they had been applied, the secret society membership would have been drastically reduced if not totally destroyed, without any police interference.

For example, 22 out of the 72 offences cited in the amplified laws were punishable by death, while the number of heavy blows stipulated could mean the same thing as a death penalty. According to Hutson(10) "a few tens of blows may be sufficient to cause death." Again, the appearance of the ritual numbers 108, 72, 32, 21(blows) makes it highly likely that they served to categorize the degree of seriousness of particular offences than to provide an accurate guide for meting out punishment.

Thus the severity of Triad laws must have, presumably, served some other purpose, and this purpose could only be the internal unity and ideological harmony of the secret society. In other words, the sanctions were the negative complement to ritual as the ideological glue of society unity and security. Ritual affirmed the solidarity of membership by the method of dramatizing the common culture of the secret society; while sanctions ensured it by both the discouragement of intra-society conflict and the negation of the validity of the outside world.

One example of the way in which sanctions were used to discourage, if not prevent internal conflict is shown in the rules forbidding sexual relations between spouses of members, and between the daughters of members and other members.(11) Homosexual relations, in particular pederasty, were forbidden for the same reason. In fact it was an "incest taboo" forbidding sexual relations between "blood brothers". The following are some examples of the way in which these rules were worded:

> "...If a lawless fellow seduces the wife or daughter of a brother, he shall, if detected, be punished with the loss of his life." (12)

Wife-robbery through use of force, as well as accessory to adulterous relations were also punishable with death.(13)

> "If a brother...disputes with another brother about a young and fair boy, or commits unnatural sin with a younger brother, he shall, if detected, be put to death." (14)

> "If a brother...has introduced a 'little friend' into the league, and they do not amend afterwards, but go about as before, and bring in this way disgrace upon the reputation of the Hung-league, both of them shall be put to death." (15)

The seduction and subsequent trafficking in slaves, children belonging to a fellow member were similarly punished:

> "If a brother...seduces with specious words and seductive language the wife and children of a brother who has gone abroad, or of a deceased brother, to go with him to another place, and if he sells them to others as slaves, he shall be slain under a shower of blows." (16)

> "If a brother...ravished the male and female slaves, or the children and daughters of another brother, or carries off his oxen and horses, and sells them in another district or place, he shall be put to death." (17)

Another method of controlling internal conflict lay in the prohibitions of economic exploitation of fellow members. Such exploitation included: betrayal of fellow member to authorities for a reward(18); sale of society secrets to outsiders(19); robbery of a fellow member in conspiracy with outsiders during a journey(20); robbery with murder (by poison and hired assassins) of a fellow-member(21); embezzlement of society aid-funds(22); living on a fellow-member(23); cheating fellow members at gambling(24), and so on. There is, moreover, a rule prohibiting the usurpation of power, and others warning against the abuse of power by the leaders of the secret societies.(25)

The sanctions attempted to deny the validity of orthodox society with the introduction of the death penalty for the following types of offences: introduction of police spies into the initiation ceremony(26); betrayal of the President and Master to magistrates(27);

sabotage of communications between lodges[28]; introduction of the murderer of a fellow-member into the society[29]; betrayal of secret society activities leading to the arrest of fellow-members[30]; betrayal of fellow-member to the authorities after he had killed a man on society orders[31], and so on.

Thus, as we can see, all offences to do with "incestuous" behaviour, with economic exploitation and political treachery were punishable by death. Others were not so severely penalised, this is clear from a close examination of all the different documents and versions available of the oaths and rules.

As for the physical punishments employed, there were three kinds: "light" or "heavy" blows by the bamboo--the small bamboo was called the ch'ih, and the larger bamboo, the chang--though the "lightness" or"heaviness" of the blows were not always stipulated; loss of one or both ears; and death by decapitation or drowning. Any of these three methods of punishment could be combined such as the loss of one ear and so many blows, or so many blows first followed by death.

The number of blows stipulated could vary as follows: 18, 21, 36, 72, 108, 360. As I have already mentioned earlier, these numbers were probably more an indication of the gravity of the offence than of the real number of blows applied in practice.[32] It is interesting to note that there is another symbolic significance in these numbers, the fact that they are divisible by three, which signified in Chinese semiology the union of Heaven, Earth and Man, the Triad, in fact; hence the interchangeability of the name San-ho Hui (Triad Society) with T'ien-ti Hui (Heaven and Earth Society). The Chinese state laws did not, however, use these numbers, but graded their beatings by fives and tens of strokes.[33]

The types of punishment could be modified according to the rank of the victim. As we have noted in the Chapter on structure and organization above, the nine grades of the Triads were divided up, for purposes of measuring out punishment and for convenience, into three larger grades.[34] The "Upper Three" (shang-san) if they offended against the rules requiring the death penalty[35] were required by the whole society to commit suicide "voluntarily," just as high officials in the orthodox state were required to do so by the Emperor.

The "Middle Three" (Chung-san), however, like their orthodox superiors, were required to commit suicide under the orders of the President. Only the third group were executed, and this task was usually carried out by the Red Cudgel or Red Flag officer.

On the whole, the internal sanctions served as a negative control of internal conflict. The theme and argument of the sanctions were--like those of the ritual--mutual interest and protection depended on solidarity among the members, for solidarity was indispensable, nay, crucial, to any kind of effective concerted action. The sanctions served thus as a warning, against members' taking their individual interests (whether sexual, economic or political) too far. In the secret society, as in all other beleaguered minority groups, there was no room for indulgence in individualist eccentricities at the expense of the collective. Life and death often came too close togther to allow a comfortable, relaxed attitude towards the common interest; thus the implicit motto of a secret society might be, "all, or nothing at all."

The role of the Council (I-shih) as a separate organizational element within the secret society structure does not appear to have been crucial, since we have noted earlier there were only two instances of the existence of such a council.(36) As a tribunal for arbitration of disputes it was useful, but the officers of the society could just as well have acted in its place, assisted by the ordinary members as a vast supporting jury. It is probable that the size of secret societies determined whether a separate tribunal exists or not. In most societies where the existence of such a council might be too unwieldy:

> "...If a brother breaks the laws, let all the brethren come and settle the matter in public, without, by using cross words and crooked language in front of the Incense Master, adding fuel to the fire..." (37)

and,

> "After entering the Hung doors, traitors and turn-coats are cudgeled, but the loyal and patriotic are not beaten. If a brother offends, let all the brethren discuss his case and punish him, and if he harbours resentment or disobeys this injunction may the gods look down and punish him." (38)

It is absolutely clear that, whether a tribunal existed independently of the body of officers or not, it was the unique "court of appeal" for the members:

> "When brethern of the Hung-league have serious or trifling dissensions, the council is there to decide upon them according to justice, but it shall not be allowed to bring the case before the magistrates. If anybody should not observe this law, the council will decide the case effectually, and, besides, will punish the plaintiff with 108 blows." (39)

This rule obvioulsy applied to cases of dispute within the secret society, and could not have applied in cases where members were involved in litigation with outsiders or non-members. In such cases, there would not have been any question of leaving the members to the vagaries of official justice, and it would have been a matter of course for the society to attempt to bribe the lower official employees, or sometimes even the magistrate concerned, to set the members free; failing this, more forceful methods of freeing the prisoners would be adopted.(40)

The "judge" of the secret council was obviously the President or Incense Master, who was also the supreme

arbitrator, so much so that in the Elder Brother Society described by T'an Shih-hua, he had the right to send a substitute to the authorities to be executed in place of another (presumably more valuable) member.(41) The rules stressing the evil of abusing great power bears out this point:

> "The President and Master of the lodge ought to manage affairs honestly and equitably. They shall not, on account of relationship, be unjust, and neither shall they take bribes and wrong the brethern.
> ...
> May the offender be unhappy and unprosperous... An old adage says: 'If the emperor transgresses the law, he is a criminal as well as a man of the people.' He who disobeys this shall, therefore, be punished with death." (42)

There is no available account of how secret society trials were conducted. It is not unreasonable, however, to suppose that they might have borne some resemblance to those of the guilds, rather than to those of the state, the inefficacy and unpopularity of which had become legendary. Moreover, secret societies shared a common heterodoxy with the guild organizations, besides exchanging identities and methods with them in cases of emergency.(43) I shall quote a brief passage describing a trial conducted by a Peking guild as a possible indication of how secret

society trials were handled:

> "The committee, the interested parties and their witnesses met in a temple. There the goods concerning which the case had arisen were set in front of the committee, and each side briefly gave its testimony. The witnesses were heard and after a short comference the committee gave its decision. This was accepted as final, both parties rose, bowed to the committee, and to each other and the matter was closed. A half hour sufficed to settle satisfacorily a case which, if taken before the official (magistrate) would have meant at least a day's travel for all the parties concerned, besides possible delays and inconveniences." (44)

There would have been two points of differences between the secret society and guild trials, if the above could be taken as a guide, and they are, a) the decisive role of the secret society President, who had great personal power in comprison with the guild President who appears to have been in principle little more than a chief spokesman of the guild; and b) the absence of choice for the parties concerned in the secret society to take their case before the magistrate. But the simplicity and efficiency of the guild courts are consistent with what we know about secret society organization, so that it is highly probable that trials conducted by secret societies were not dissimilar to those by the guilds.

Despite the existence of a tribunal for deciding disputes and for meting out punishment in "public", justice, in cases of emergency, could be quite rough, and carried out by the officers of the society without consultation with the committee or members. T'an's account of the despatch of two traitors of the Elder Brothers Society may be characteristic: (the following is a conversation overheard by the author cited in his father's house between two members of the Society)

> "'And are there no traitors in the union?', asked our friend with the warts. 'There are two. One of them was stabbed. The other was thrown into the Yangtze with a rock round his neck. This was exactly three hours after they had reported (to the police) on the meetings in my house." (45)

It is fairly conclusive that the Triad sanctions bear little resemblance to the state judicature. There appears to have been highly conscious, explicit, even systematic expressions of defiance and subversion of state structures. This defiance is of course most systematically, most specifically expressed in the rules of the societies. Here, not only was the validity of official justice

denied, but that the activities it had forbidden as criminal were for that very reason, both acceptable and desirable in the eyes of the Triads. However, many elements of the morality underlying the official laws were retained by the Triads; for example, the necessity for treating one's parents respectfully, for sexual distance between people bound together by "blood" ties, for sympathetic cooperation between members of a community, and for restraint in the exercise of power within the secret society.

Metaphorically speaking, the relationship of the Triad society to its rules may be seen as that between the inhabitants and protective walls of a beleaguered city; the sanctions were the walls ornamented with spikes, bristling with guards, and menacing illegal entry and exit. It is therefore no surprise to find the Triads in fact illustrated their lodge in this way--a walled "City of Willows" guarded by eight warriors at the four gates (corresponding to the four cardinal points), and the pass-words serving as spikes on which incautious traitors and strangers might impale themselves.

Notes

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1. See Sybil van der Sprenkel's chapter on codified law (pp. 56-65) in her sociological analysis of the Legal Institutions in Manchu China, London, 1966, especially pp.64-65 for a summary of the peculiar features of Chinese law.

2. The Philosophy of History, (lectures delivered during 1830-1), translated by J. Sibree, New York, 1956, p.113, "The Oriental World".

3. See G.T. Staunton, Ta Tsing Leu Lee, being the Fundamental Laws and a selection from the Supplementary Statutes of the Penal Code of China, London, 1810, p. and quoted in van der Sprenkel, op. cit. p.59:

"The Leu or Fundamental Laws, are those of which the Penal Code upon its formation soon after the accession of the present dynasty appears originally to have consisted, and which, being, at least nominally, permanent, are reprinted in each successive edition, without either alteration or amendment.

The Lee, or Supplementary Laws, are the modifications, extensions and restrictions of the Fundamental Laws, which after undergoing a deliberate examination in the Supreme Councils, and receiving the sanction of the Sovereign, are inserted in the form of clauses at the end of each article or section of the Code, in order that they might, together with the Fundamental Laws, be equally known and observed. They are generally revised every fifth year, and subjected to such alterations as the wisdom of the government determines to be expedient."

4. see above, p.21

5. Ward (J.S.M.) and Stirling (W.G.), The Hung Society, London, 1925-6. 3 vols. p.65 vol. 1.

6. Stanton, op. cit. p.118 Appendix.

7. Hirayama Amane, op. cit. p.106 which gives the following rules: (my translation)

One, do not cheat elder brothers, oppress younger brothers
Two, do not bully your father and mother
Three, do not raise the wick of the lamp and seize the fire
Four, do not permit the great to oppress the small

Five, do not deceive Heaven and blame the sea
Six, do not stir oil into other(people's) soup
Seven, do not be unjust and unkind
Eight, do not levy taxes (?) and dabble in business...(?)

8. respectively, Schlegel, op. cit. p.161ff,p165ff, and p.152ff., Stanton, op. cit. p.67, p. 68.

9. Morgan, op. cit. p.263 states that expulsion was only possible from the branch societies, not from the Hung Men itself, for, once a person was initiated into the society, he was a member for life and only death could release him from his membership. The use of boycott is, however, spare, and the Hon g Kong police had only found one document specifically dealing with the expulsion, (see p.265). In Wynne, op. cit. p.257, is a verbatim report of the proceedings of the Penang Riot Commission of 1868 (page 4); where a Triad member answers the"Question: What is the punishment for disobedience?
Answer: The member is excommunicated.
Q. What is done to him on excommunication?
A. If the order is of importance he is flogged, if of no importance, he is beheaded. But this is never done in this country.
Murder as a punishment is, as we know, of commonplace occurrence amongst secret society members in Malaya."

It is also likely that murder was the preferred method of punishment and solution of the problem posed by life-membership.in Hong Kong.

10. see Hutson, J. Chinese Life in the Tibetan Foothills, Shanghai, 1921, p.92.

11. Stanton, op.cit. p.67 (Art.2), p.68 (art.1); Schlegel, op. cit. p.158 (Art.53), p.161 (Art.71) and below

12. Schlegel, ibid. p.152 (Art.2)

13. See above note 11 Schlegel

14. Schlegel, ibid. p.154 (Art.21)

15. Schlegel, ibid. p.161 (Art.70)

16. Schlegel, ibid. p.159 (Art.54)

17. Schlegel, ibid. p.155 (Art.29)

18. Schlegel, ibid. p.153 (Art.5); Stanton, op. cit. p.67 (Art.4)

19. Schlegel,ibid. p.154 (Art.18), p.159 (Art.61)

20. Schlegel, ibid. p.158 (Art.50)

21. Schlegel, ibid. p.158 (Art.52, 55, 57)

22. Schlegel, ibid. p.159 (Art.58), Stanton, op. cit. p.68, (Art.18)

23. Stanton, ibid. p.68 (Art.20)

24. Stanton, ibid. p.121 (Art.22)

25. Schlegel, p.153 (Art.12), p.160 (Art.68); Stanton, op. cit. p.122 (Oath 24)

26. Schlegel, p.163 (Art.10, 11), p.166 (Art.5)

27. Schlegel, p. 154 (Art.13)

28. Ibid. Art.14; Stanton, op. cit. p.121 (Art.21)

29. Schlegel, ibid. p.155 (Art.31)

30. Schlegel, ibid. p.158 (Art.49),p. 162 (Art.8)

31. Schlegel, ibid. p.159 (Art.59)

32. see above 301

33. S. van der Sprenkel, op. cit. p. 61ff., it is interesting to note here that "cutting off the ears" do not form part of the "Five Punishments" (wu-hsing) of the State.

34. see above p.217

35. sometimes called the "Ten Articles" (Shih-t'iao shih kuan), for example in Hsiao I-shan work cited, p.9b, though not specified, probably refer to those crimes I have mentioned of "incest", economic exploitation and betrayal.

36. mentioned by G. Schlegel and F. Boyle

37. Stanton, op. cit. p.64 (Oath33)

38. Ibid. Oath34

39. Schlegel, op. cit. p.163 (Art.14)

40. Schlegel, op. cit. p. 139 (Oath 15):
"...when a brother is summoned before a tribunal, or a price is set upon him, and he cannot remain longer in the place, the powerful must help him to escape, and the less powerful pay his travelling expenses. This is helping him out of danger, like taking a fish out of a dry place, and it is saving him from difficulties, like liberating a bird out of a closed net."

41. Tretiakov, S. op. cit. p.52

42. Schlegel, op. cit. p.164-5 (Art.21)

43. and methods of organization when required; see above p.79

44. Gamble, S. Peking: A Social Survey, London 1921 p. 194-5

45. Tretiakov, op. cit. p.49

Chapter IX : Conclusions

A full analysis of the role of any institution in society requires two kinds of approach: the static or synchronic, and the dynamic or diachronic. The former involves the study of the role played by the institution in the social structure as such, and the latter, the investigation of its role in social change. This distinction is of course analytical.

The discussion of the structural role of secret societies in China and elsewhere, moreover, presupposes a further analytical distinction between the political, economic and social facets of the system, even though each one of these facets necessarily contains reflections of the other two.

The Political

We begin then with the political role of the secret societies in the traditional Chinese society. Since, however, the study of politics demands some knowledge

of the ideologies or value-systems prevailing in the society under discussion, wI shall summarize these first.

Perhaps the most concise description of the political role of the secret societies in traditional China is the proverb already quoted:

> "The officials derive their power from the law, the people from the secret societies."

It is a sentence which sums up the centuries-old gap between rulers and ruled, rich and poor, privileged and unprivileged. If it presents a view that is in fact too simple, it is nevertheless illuminating, for it does appear that there have long been two distinct major ideological currents in Chinese society: the patriarchal, authoritarian and insistently classificatory current normally summed up in the term "Confucianism," on the one hand, and the anarchistic, individualistic, egalitarian, and equally insistently non-classifying current which is associated with Taoism and Buddhism. As dynasties rose and fell, as technological developments provoked new trends of thought, the relative significance

of the two currents also changed. It would not be pushing the image too far to describe them as alternating in their positions as main current and undercurrent in the general flow of social existence. But because Confucian orthodoxy was more suited to the demands of centralized government and an agrarian economy, it retained its hold upon the upper reaches of society (from which were recruited the bureaucratic functionaries) and through them maintained an enduring influence upon the ideal patterns of traditional family organization, the traditional evaluation of the division of labour (which ranked intellectual activity, agriculture, manufacture, commerce and finally, the service industries, in that order) and upon the traditional patrimonial bureaucracy itself.

In contrast, Taoism and Buddhism had, by the ninth century A.D. become what Max Weber has dubbed "heterodoxies," associated not with the ruling classes, but with the retired, the aged, the female, and eventually, the poor. As the heterodoxies became increasingly associated with these categories of the population, so heterodox thought

itself changed, becoming more and more tied to their particular psycho-social needs. Salvationist and charitable doctrines replaced the emphasis upon pure withdrawal from social life; organized monasteries and nunneries replaced the solitary quest for truth; economic concerns (banking, the provision of credit, egalitarian views of land-redistribution) out-weighed spiritual passion. Thus heterodoxy created a new political ideology, or at least the beginnings of one, which was ready to hand, so to speak, for the leaders of the peasant rebellions when they arose.

Future developments were already discernable at the time of the first recorded rebellion against the state of Ch'in in B.C. 203, the first centralization of China. It was probably no accident that this rebellion coincided in time with the development of a new form of "spiritualism"(1) --later to become incorporated into both Taoism and Buddhism--summed up by the Japanese Yuji Muramatsu as, first, a belief in a Spirit or spirits whose will governs social and political events; second, an associated belief in omens and portents that reflect the will of the

Spirit(s) and foretell the future course of events; and third, a belief in the ability of human intermediaries (mediums) to decipher the concealed meaning of the omens.(1)

The rebellion of B.C. 203-9 was followed by a series of others whose leaders are known to have gathered large followings by claiming successfully to possess "spiritual" and curative powers. Such a one was Chang Chüeh, leader of the famous Yellow Turban rebellion in 184 A.D. in the area which is now Hopei. This was the rebellion whose outcome was the dissolution of the Later Han dynasty and the breakdown of the once unified polity into three separate states known to historians as the Three Kingdoms period (220-280 A.D.) It is probably not without significance that this is the period chosen by nearly all later secular voluntary associations in China as their date of origin.

More rebellions led by the descendantsof Chang followed, and though Chang Lu surrendered to the Han State (one

of the Three Kingdoms) in 212 A.D. as a semi-independent ruler in the (now) Szechwan area, his state continued to be a source of anxiety to the Three Kingdoms for thirty years.(2) As time went on, these semi-political, semi-religious movements began to acquire millenarian aims, especially in the areas which are now the provinces of Shantung and Hopei where Buddhism first took root. Both Taoist and Buddhist sects adopted the Maitreya or Mi-lo, a Buddha of the Future, whose appearance after a Buddhist eon (kalpa) would coincide with the occurrence of an apocalyptic change, as their patron. A rebellion in 515 A.D. began with the slogan:

> "A new Buddha has appeared! get rid of the old devils."

A number of other quasi-religious and spiritualist practices also became associated with rebellious groups: vegetarianism, mystical sexual cults, sutra-chanting, incense-burning, shamanism, and elements of Manichaenism. The "Five Elements" of early Chinese thought came to be seen as the cosmic principles on which the transfers of secular power were to be effected:

the succession of the elements was held to reflect and to influence the successive changes of rulers, presumably the succession of dynastic houses, referred to by Chinese historians as the "dynastic cycle".(3) Of course, heterodox priests, as distinct from heterodox thinking, were constantly alert to the opportunities of winning the personal favour of Emperors, and were therefore regarded by the orthodox ruling groups with a mixture of contempt, suspicion and fear--fear arising from the prospect of priestly entrenchment in the royal household, and fear of the priests in organized association if their ambitions were thwarted. The Triad myth of origin is thus an excellent illustration of this situation: the Emperor K'ang-hsi employed the Buddhist priests of Shaolin monastery to fight his invaders, but his ministers advised him to persecute the monks lest they became too intoxicated with Imperial favour.(4)

The heterodox priests, like unorthodox intellectuals in other societies, were thus a nagging source of anxiety for the Chinese bureaucratic officials. Along

with the merchants, they came to be condemned as "unstable" elements, intervening between the government and the people. Being also the only other social group to be literate (the ability to read the sutras and to transcribe them being one important means by which the largely illiterate population could be influenced) they threatened the very basis of the orthodox literati (and thence, bureaucratic) hegemony founded on a specifically Confucian literacy.

In the ninth century (late T'ang) two new ingredients were added to the mixture of rebel ideologies: ethnocentrism (or "proto-nationalism") and egalitarianism, both explicit themes of the Triad manifesto. The former arose out of the background of foreign invasion, and was given impetus during the southern Sung (c.1125) by the Mongols Genghis and Kublai Khan, who established a dynasty of Mongols called the Yüan dynasty in China in 1279. Egalitarian trends in rebel thinking were simultaneously provoked by the unrestrained development of the private ownership of land, and the increasing concentration of the latter in the hands of the rich. This was formalized in the liang-shui or Double Tax(5)

system initiating the process of the pauperization of the peasantry. This process was hastened by the evasion of taxes by the wealthy and influential families, so that the burden of the taxation fell on those, the middle and small peasants for example, who were least able to bear it. In 993 (Northern Sung dynasty), the rebels Hsiao-po and Li Shun declared that they were

> "sick of the inequality which exists between the rich and the poor, and wanted to level it off for the benefit of the people." (6)

Similarly, the rebellion of Fang La in 1120-1 (which inspired the episodic novel Water Margin or All Men Are Brothers) insisted that there should be no distinction in status between rich and poor, or even between male and female. A White Lotus leader who revolted against the Yüan dynasty in 1351 announced that

> "Heaven has dispatched a spiritual army to wipe out inequality (pu-p'ing)." (7)

During most of these centuries, the government monopolies (8) on salt, tea and liquor created widespread smuggling*, sometimes accounting for as much as 50% of the total trade. This, in turn, caused prices to rise and reduced further

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* piracy in Triad slang is called "going on a cruise."

the spending power of the poor. In such conditions, it is not surprising to discover that both the rebels Hsiao and Li were bankrupt tea-traders, suffering simultaneously from the effects of government monopoly and the crippling taxes on the mohopolized goods;(9) while Fang La was a bankrupt lacquer producer suffering similarly from government restrictions.(10) The increasing official exactions were the result of an unrestrained growth of the bureaucracy, which, in turn, increased administrative costs and inefficiency; while open corruption and intrigue used up what credit the government had retained with the people. Thus, dispossessed traders and peasants found powerful common cause against the government as well as against the wealthy families who, owing to their advantageous association with functionaries within the bureaucracy, were able to benefit from the unhappy state of affairs.

It is not certain how many of these early rebellions were in fact led by secret societies, but it is nevertheless highly probable that the leaders of peasant revolts should have at least <u>begun</u> their revolts in secret

association, however open the rebellions subsequently became. In any case, the similarities between these rebellions and the later ones for which we have clearer evidence of secret society participation and leadership (for example, in the nineteenth century) are enough to justify reference to them, the more so since the myths of the later, better known societies (the Hung League, for example) themselves so often hark back to their earlier beginnings in the seventeenth century.(11) Whatever the details of the relationship between secret societies as such and particular peasant revolts, those taking part in them tended to share a common "heterodox"ideology.

It is well known that the appearance of rebellion and secret societies tended to coincide at the periods of dynastic decline. If we look at the list of rebellions generally associated with secret societies, we will find that nearly all of them occurred at the end of a particular dynasty.(12) The "first" rebellion occurred at the end of the Ch'in, the Yellow Turban revolt at the end of the Later Han, the Fang La revolt

at the end of the Sung, the Red Turbans towards the end of the Yüan. However, the millenarian Buddhist revolts in 515 and at the beginning of the T'ang could not be included in the category of "peasant" revolts, and were largely provoked by the persecution of Buddhists launched by the Northern Wei, Northern Chou and the T'ang emperors in 446, 547, and finally, in 841-5 when the Buddhist age came to an end in the whole of Asia, coinciding in late T'ang China with a rising tide of xenophobia.(13)

In the nineteenth century, the sporadic and regional revolts testify less to dynastic decline than to the increasing unpopularity of the monarchic principle, and it is, therefore, no surprise to find that secret societies substantially aided the overthrow of the monarchy and the establishment of a republic.

This consistent coincidence of the appearance of secret society activity and peasant revolt throughout the centuries must indicate some kind of cooperation, or at least, parallel movement between the two forces,

both of which were dedicated to the same aims: the overthrow of corrupt officials and emperors and the establishment of virtuous rulers. Both forces were composed (at least during revolt) of desperate individuals of society driven by circumstances to take the law into their own hands.(14) Thus it would not be surprising if secret societies, with their skills in organization and warfare, should frequently be found at the head of rebellious peasant movements. These skills, it might be added, could also be used by other forces or individuals rich or powerful enough to persuade the leaders of secret societiesto join them in oppressing the peasantry. However, this Mafia-like function was logically less in demand (since there existed already the army and the personal militia and mercenaries for the use of the wealthy and powerful) before, rather than after, the political parties came into being in the twentieth century. For the development of "modern" political parties, particularly the parties in opposition to the government, deprived the secret societies of their traditional political function as

the sole, organized, oppositional force in the orthodox state and society, leaving them in the twentieth century, only the social and economic functions of a surrogate lineage for the protection of the despised, the poor and the criminal members of society. At this confused period (1912-1949), Chinese secret societies appear to have played an equally confused role, acting both as the oppressive arm of the powerful centrifugal forces (local gentry families, new merchant tycoons, and so on) likethe Sicilian mafia, and as the protectors of the "floating population" in the war-torn society as "social bandits."(15)

Before the twentieth century, however, the traditional role of the Chinese secret societies expanded and narrowed according to the developments in the wider society: in periods of dynastic decline, they led or shared the leadership of regional or national peasant revolts; in periods of relative stability, they confined themselves to the functions of protecting the socially and economically underprivileged, and profiting from the endemic administrag

the endemic administrative weaknesses of the Confucian bureaucracy. Secret societies saw as their particular political function the weeding out of corruption in the Chinese government, and the restoration of power to Chinese rulers; they had no ostensible revolutionary ambitions.

Seen from a historical vantage point, however, the political role of the secret societies was more ambiguous than they themselves realized. On the one hand, they were the fomentors and perpetrators of discontent; on the other hand, they were a safety valve, from the government's point of view, for popular dissafisfaction. In the latter role, they kept the basic foundations of the traditional Chinese society immune from destruction. While they protected the "dangerous classes" of society, they also "contained" their obviously revolutionary power. Secret societies were forced, thus, historically, to play the supporting cast to the orthodox drama, precisely because they lacked a coherent political and economic programme. For the same reason, the heterodoxies of Taoism and Buddhism failed to compete with the Confucian orthodoxy as a national

dominant state ideologies. Like the heterodoxies, secret societies might be said to form the "dark" (Yin) thought not necessarily quiescent stream of Chinese life; just as the orthodox organizations, like Confucianism, might be said to form its "bright" or "active" (Yang) expression. Secret societies were therefore no more independent of the orthodox society than the latter was of them; but the dependence of secret societies on the larger society was relatively greater--it was not, and could not be an equal partnership--the balance of both economic and ideological power was normally in favour of the Confucian establishment. Thus, secret societies lived a parasitic and restricted existence inside the state framework, the dominant political force of which kept the initiative. It was precisely the inability of the secret societies to take the political initiative that limited them to their ancillary, reformist role. A revolutionary organization should, in contrast, be able to wrest the initiative from the government, and by a combination of bold, informed and concerted strategy, a persuasive political and economic programme, and well-timed tactical manoeuvres.(16) The funadmental political "passivity"

relatively speaking, of the secret societies is also reflected in their loose and anarchical methods of alliance, which were not conducive to action on a national scale, especially if such action was already rendered difficult by regionalist sentiment.(17)

In the role of a reformist and, therefore, non-revolutionary force, secret societies were both inimical and integral to the state, holding the balance between the forces of "order" and those of "chaos". For as long as there were no external or internal pressures which the ruling establishment couldnot resist, secret societies were able to continue in this ambiguous but necessary function; but as soon as the internal balance of power broke down, (see discussion below on the economic aspect of secret societies) and the external pressures* became, both independently and as a result of the internal disorder, irresistible (as they did at the end of the nineteenth century), then secret societies were given a clear choice: join the revolution under a different type of leadership and organization, or withdraw from the political stage. Though Chinese secret societies chose both, they were ultimately forced to take the latter course.(18)

The Economic

In considering this aspect of the secret society role in traditional society, it will be necessary to take into account first the relationship between the bureaucratic institution and the material sub-structure of a "subsistence" economy. As David Lockwood[19] points out, structural change arises from within a society not only as a result of the conflicting interests of the groups within the total system, but also as a consequence of a fundamental "lack of fit" between the "core institutional order" (in China, the patrimonial bureaucracy)[20] and "its material base" (the economic system).

Lockwood's convenient simplification of Weber's thesis runs as follows. There are three characteristics of a bureaucratic system. First, the pre-condition for the unchanged, continuing existence, if not establishment, of a "pure" bureaucratic administration requires at least a partial development of a money economy. Second, a large bureaucracy requires a system of taxation, geared to the maintenance of the

bureaucratic machinery and its personnel. Third, it follows that the strategic problem lies in maintaining a taxation system that can effectively offset the material needs of a bureaucracy in the context of a "subsistence" or "near-subsistence" economy. Thus, "the focal point of strain is taxation capacity relative to bureaucratic needs." This point of strain usually actuates a process of political decentralization.

In some cases, such political decentralization is the result usually of the disproportionate growth of the bureaucratic body in relation to its material resources, that is, the taxation capacity of the rest of the population. This disproportionate growth (nourished by the sale of offices, ranks, imperial favours, etc.) may create large numbers of officials with sinecures, who, in the absence of work and/or inadequate income, appropriate to themselves in compensation, the economic, as well as the political resources of the office at the expense of the bureaucratic

body itself. (In the Chinese case, this was done both by changing the tax registers, but also by "customary dues" or squeeze.)

Meanwhile, all large landowners (whether office-holders or not) may seek to gain exemption from taxation by usurping fiscal and political functions on an increasingly large scale, provoking increasing resistance from the peasantry.

The evolution of Chinese secret societies is an obvious example of the third stage of development in the decentralization of the state. Decentralization in China normally occurred at the end of about two to three hundred years (or the "dynastic cycle"), when the"point of strain" became intolerable. The inevitable outbreak of peasant revolts provoked in their turn a chain of other misfortunes: the breakdown of the irigation system, which led to drought, locusts and epidemics, and so on. Vast sections of the population would be wiped out, sweeping away the old bureaucratic and landowning families. The creation of new officials

would initiate a new "dynastic cycle", the founding emperor of which would be ruling over a reduced population, temporarily solving the land scarcity problem. The inevitable re-distribution of land, relative economic stability and an efficient bureaucracy normally followed, until the next stage of dynastic entropy began.

These "cycles" were, however, not merely repetitive; they were accumulative, both in terms of the old and new political and economic problems, created, for example, by foreign conquest, or invasion. The apparent (and frequently remarked) immutability of Chinese society is therefore deceptive. Secret societies, in their function as the sounding-board, or danger-signal for orthodox misrule, were also evolving and adding new dimensions to their political role in response to the problems within the larger society.

By the nineteenth century, the effects of the introduction of Buddhism into China, the increasing commercialization of land, and foreign conquest had almost altered the

original aims of the secret societies almost beyond recognition.

Perhaps the most significant single contribution of secret societies to Chinese economic life (besides the organized resistence against taxation on agriculture) was their encouragement (albeit unintentional) of the development of an entrepreneurial and commercial bourgeoisie independent of official patronage by the organized resistance against monopoly and commercial taxes. These were the illegal "businessmen", the salt, tea and liquor, and even horse, smugglers[21] who had, ever since the first introduction of government monopolies on salt and iron in the seventh century B.C. evaded taxation by defying the law.[22] The legal traders, in contrast, were subject, not only to taxation on monopolies, but also to customs duties on the principal trade routes within China, culminating in the notorious nineteenth century likin tax, from which foreign traders were exempt.[23] City markets, moreover, were supervised by government officials,[24] often merchants with aspirations to gentry status.[25]

Because of this relative independence from government control, the illegal"bourgeoisie" were able to develop faster, swelling their own ranks and the ranks of the new land-lord or official families called kuan hu, and growing fat on the highly inflated prices caused by the monopolies and their consequent abuses. This parvenu middle-class (already conspicuous by the Sung dynasty), lacking the minimal restraint of a Confucian paternalism, did not hesitate to exploit the very people who provided them with their wealth--the rank-and-file of the secret societies, and the peasantry who were forced to buy their goods. It is no surprise that Triad rules so often warn against oppression of the poor by the rich, the weak by the powerful within the society.(26) Undoubtedly, as the parvenus became more acquainted with officialdom or more "respectable", their incentive for remaining within the illegal secret societies would gradually disappear, and other hungrier, less successful smugglers took their place.

The economic egalitarianism of the secret societies became visible around the end of the T'ang dynasty,

when the ancient Chinese ideal of the equal distribution of land (the ching-t'ien or "well-field" system) was officially declared irrelevant.(27) After the revolt of 993 A.D., the rebels Hsiao and Li assembled the rich and influential people of the area, registered their grain supplies, confiscated any surplus above their immediate needs, and distributed it to the poor.(28) This example was followed by Fang La in 1120, by the White Lotus leader Liu Fu-tung in 1351, and by the Nien and Taiping rebels in the middle of the nineteenth century. Thus the egalitarian strain in secret society thinking is a nostalgic reminder of the ancient Chinese economic concept, discarded by the state, and retained by the heterodox as testimony to the extent to which their rulers had strayed from both the principles and practice of the Golden Age.

In the urban areas, the economic role of secret societies took another form: the organization and management of and participation in the entertainments and service industries. These included the "services" of prostitution, which was apparently a rich source of municipal income. Brothels were run also by the state in order to sell their monopolized liquor, on which a heavy tax was placed.

For example, in the Southern Sung dynasty, in Hangchow the great commercial city, the government built about twelve brothels near military barracks.(29) Since prostitution was an accepted part of Chinese urban life at all levels*, and closely associated with the "underworld" elements, it is not surprising that secret societies had a hand in the enterprise. While there are no first hand accounts of secret society participation in the business of prostitution in China itself, Morgan gives us a fairly detailed picture of how the Triads organized the prostitutes in Hong Kong in the twentieth century:

> "In some districts whole streets were mainly devoted to this vice, and such were the profits involved that the various societies jealously guarded their particular territories and viciously resisted any infiltration by other societies or groups. Practically all the women engaged in this trade were protected by one or other of the societies and any interlopers were liable to be beaten up and have their establishments destroyed." (30)

This picture is confirmed by the government Commissions' findings in Malaya and Singapore in 1869(31); in an amendment by a F.S. Brown to the Penang Commission report, it is stated that the secret societies not only

controlled prostitution, but also actually formed "companies" for the "importation and hiring out of prostitutes from China," which meant that, in China, equally, there were "export companies" shipping women out to Malaya and elsewhere for prostitution. Amoy, alone, in Fukien, from which province the greatest of people usually emigrate, had in 1861, 3,658 brothels, with 25,000 prostitutes out of a total population of 300,000 and the female population exceeded the male by at least twenty times.(32) When one remembers how desperately short of women were the overseas Chinese communities, such a traffic could not but be immensely profitable. The League of Nations report of 1933 testifies to this appalling commerce, mentioning in particular the sale of female children, between the ages of two and three, to Hong Kong, Dutch East Indies and elsewhere for training as prostitutes.(33)

Extortion, gambling, blackmail were the other economic activities of the secret societies; though the only occupation, that of gambling, had any "function" at all in the state economy, and that could only contribute

at the most to the circulation of moneys in the traditional economy.

To sum up, the economic role of the secret societies was only"positive" in the sense that they encouraged the rise of an independent commercial middle-class, and the circulation of goods and money when bureaucratic interference threatened to keep the economy within the anachronistic framework of a purely agricultural economy. As "organizers" of the criminal world, they saved the government the trouble. As long as the secret societies did not encroach too much on the political domain, the local authorities were prepared to turn a blind eye to their activities in the criminal sphere; indeed, the government authorities had no choice, frequently, in the matter. The indirect profits in the form of bribes or even dividends to the officials notdoubt lent charm to the blindness, not to mention the pleasures to be found in the "flower lanes" and "pleasure grounds." (34)

The Social

As I have already discussed earlier, the vast majority of the secret society members were without benefit of lineage protection because of their poverty and/or social dishonour; and as we have seen in the chapter on purposes and activities, secret society functions coincided exactly with the functions of the lineage. This made the secret society a kind of surrogate lineage, providing for its members all the political, economic, religious and social benefits which other individuals in China might have enjoyed by right of birth or wealth. The very phenomena of the secret society as a voluntary association was an implicit challenge to the values of ascriptive organizations. The challenge lay in the possibility of voluntary associations replacing ascriptive groups altogether, and in this way, denying the paramountcy and even the necessity of Confucian social imperatives--those of the "natural" order of things.

Not only was it not disgraceful to lack kinsmen, but that the latter could be replaced as beneficially by friends and comrades; moreover, authority need not reside in the paternal role by right of birth or seniority. Such appears to be the implicit message of secret societies.

Other voluntary associations, like the religious, craft and trade guilds, did not have the same degree of comprehensiveness. They did not cater nearly in the same way to the totality of an individual's needs. Each of these other associations had a more or less narrow concern which is indicated more or less by their generic name. Even monasteries and nunneries, which came closest in function to the secret society were restricted by government laws governing the conditions of association.(35) Not only did these laws restrict the size (and hence, to some extent, the power) of religious communities, they also restricted their life--by eliminating the possibility of biological continuity (in the strict segregation of men and women). It was only when religious societies turned secret, that

their possibilities as comprehensive institutions could be realized.

Thus, secret societies inserted themselves into the total social system as a alternative to the lineage and family organizations; and, as an alternative, posed a number of dangerous questions as to the superiority or even acceptibility of the orthodox principles of social organization. Indeed, it may be suggested that it was by advocating voluntary association and the recognition of moral equality among men that the secret societies made their greatest and most significant contribution to the principles of social relationship and organization in traditional China. Thus, they paved the way for the Republican and democratic revolution of 1911-12, which contained, predictably, many of the aspirations of the secret societies.

Finally, before launching into an account of the role of the secret societies in the Republican revolution, and social change, we must remember that secret societies

were a force to be reckoned with militarily, and were capable of breaking the balance of power between the state and the local gentry lineages. While secret societies were only capable of breaking this balance temporarily by rebellion in the past, they broke it permanently in the late nineteenth century by throwing themselves behind the republican revolution. This semi-"revolutionary" character of the nineteenth century secret societies reflected their last stage of political development before their final regression or degeneration into purely criminal associations.

Social Change

In the earlier part of this chapter, I have examined the causes of structural conflict in traditional Chinese society; now it is time to summarize the process of the structural change, and the role of the secret societies within this development.

The "misfit" between the core institutional order and its economic base was in China the result of the arrival of new economic, political and environmental problems foreign to Chinese experience, problems the traditonal ruling class were unable to control; for the strangeness of the new problems had rendered inadequate and ineffectual the familiar safety valves and methods of reform and repression.

It is necessary at this point to retrace our steps in the historical process back to the time when Chinese society was fundamentally different from that of the nineteenth century, previous to the Sung. These, differences

were the result of a number of developments which began roughly around the late T'ang and Sung times. The unification of north and south China in the Southern Sung period into one national economic area, was merely the formal recognition of a process which had long been in evidence since the late T'ang. Migrations due to wars, invasions from the north and the lure of fertile lands to the south added continuous impetus to this union of the two hitherto separate economic areas of China. In this way, the shift of the geographical centre of Chinese civilization from the North China Plain to the Yangtze valley continued into the nineteenth century, by which time south China had already achieved the status of the major focus of commercial and industrial enterprise.

The long, relatively peaceful period of Ming rule, together with the concentration of the population in the centre and south, permitted a rapid increase in population, the figures for which have already been given above.(36) As population increased, the problem

of land scarcity, already aggravated by the concentration of land, was becoming a continuous source of peasant unrest which was becoming daily more and more uncontrollable. The peasant problem (pauperization, growth of tenantry, unemployment, etc.) was exacerbated by the penetration of foreign goods and industries into China. This in turn compounded the difficulties the merchants were already encountering under the bureaucratic controls. The continuing expansion and corruption of the bureaucracy did nothing to improve matters, but predictably, made them worse by vacillating and self-righteous leadership and ignominious capitulation in the face of armed foreign threat. The subsequent humiliating defeat in the Opium War (1840-1) opened new rifts within the ruling class itself creating factions which were to paralyze the bureaucracy entirely.

Moreover, foreign technology and modern commerce were changing the material basis of Chinese society, and so widened implacably the gulf which already was opening between it and the core bureaucratic institution, and

Foreign ideology, too, was making its presence felt in the most vulnerable areas of the society: among the disaffected intelligentsia, the youth and even the peasantry. The Taiping rebellion (1850-64) was the most dramatic expression of the effect of Christian beliefs upon a native heterodox movement. The incorporation of certain egalitarian Christian ideas into the rebel ideology nearly converted a rebellion into a revolution.(37)

The lessons of the Taipings were not lost on the new foreign-educated intelligentsia, who were to turn them to effective account.

The suppression of the Taiping and its contemporary Nien rebellions by the government with the aid of foreign armies, was the most brutal and devastating event in modern Chinese history. The destruction, as we know, was immense and incalculable, sowing great bitterness in the memory of the survivors, vast numbers of whom had been dispossessed and separated from their kin, especially those who had borne the main brunt of

of the civil war. Many of them emigrated to the Americas, some as indentured labourers, and formed associations for the overthrow of the Ch'ing.(38) Others remained behind and joined in the general mêlée which had been temporarily held back by the admirable but short-lived Restoration of the "Union for Order" (T'ung-chih) in the 1870's. This restoration was carried out by those members of the government on whom some of the lessons of the rebellions had not been lost, but who were far from perceiving the central problem which only the later and revolutionary leaders were able to understand.

The fluidity of the Chinese state and society in the third quarter of the nineteenth century made room for the rising forces of opposition represented by the more socially and politically conscious secret societies and the new Republican revolutionaries who took "democracy" and "national reconstruction" as their battle-cry. All that was needed at this juncture was a national leader who possessed a talent for rhetoric, a plausible revolutionary programme and a good sense of timing to overthrow a monarchy which had outlived its relevance and use.

Sun Yat-sen, an enthusiastic Christian and republican, had all the qualities of such a leader, and, moreover, was alert to the political potential of the secret societies of which he became a member.(39) In Honolulu Sun formed on November 24, 1894, a republican association called the Hsing Chung Hui (Revive China Society), which took as its aims the restoration of the integrity of the nation and the expulsion of the foreign invaders.(40) The rules of the party provided for a president, vice-president, two secretaries, nine directors, and two minor deputies. Weekly meetings were to be held which must be attended by either the president or the vice-president. Decisions were to be arrived at by majority rule. The membership fee was five dollars and was to contribute towards the "aid the country" fund. New recruits must be introduced by a member of the society. The operational base of the Hsing Chung Hui soon shifted to China, or rather, more accurately, to Hong Kong in 1895. There the organization elaborated itself and its activities, setting up as the Head-quarters of the Chinese Hsing Chung Hui, with the object of forming branches all over China of not less than fifteen members each. There were to be yearly

elections of officers, who comprised a chairman, a vice-chairman, a treasurer, one Chinese-language, one English-language secretary, and then directors; decisions were to be made on the basis of full agreement among the directors and five members; the membership feeswas five dollars, and new members were to be admitted upon the sponsorhip of two members. Finally, such enterprises as newspapers and schools were to be provided to educate the masses.(41)

In the same year, contact was made with the leaders of the Canton Triads who promised to support a revolt planned for 1895 with 3,000 men.(42) But this rebellion, planned for October 26th,never took place--news ofthe plans having been leaked out to the Ch'ing authorities. The leaders fled abroad. Sun himself went to Japan on November 12th, and the Hong Kong Hsing Chung Hui's activities came to an abrupt end. A Yokohama branch of the society was founded but with little success; the Chinese community there, like that of Hawaii, was fundamentally conservative, and displayed little enthusiasm for Sun's anti-Ch'ing activities.

However, at about this time, Ch'en Shao-pai, one of the founders of the Honolulu and Yohohama, Hsing Chung Hui, joined the Hong Kong Triads; while an Elder Brother Society "Dragonhead" Pi Yung-nien simultaneously joined the Hsing Chung Hui in Japan in 1898. Pi kept Sun informed of the state of secret society activity in central China. In 1899, Pi and Hirayama Amane (sometimes called Shu) a Japanese adventurer and Sun's friend, were sent to investigate the true strength of the central Chinese secret societies. Their report was highly favourable and Pi succeeded in securing the support of the Elder Brother Society leaders in Hunan and Hupei. In November 1899, Pi brought a group of seven Elder Brother leaders or Dragonheads to meet Ch'en Shao-pai and the leaders of the Hong Kong Triads. The outcome of this meeting was the formation of a new society called the Hsing Han Hui (Revive Han Society), with Sun as president.(43) In this way, Sun's influence was extended from south to central China. This alliance, however, did not last long, owing to strong competition

from a rival pro-Ch'ing group of societies, the Pao Huang Hui (Protect Emperor Society) which succeeded in drawing away the Hunan and Hupei Elder Brother Societies.

In 1900, another revolt in Kwangtung (Waichow) failed when aid promised by Japanese sympathizers did not materialize. Returning to Hawaii, Sun found that all the members of the former Hsing Chung Hui had deserted to the pro-Ch'ing group. Sun thereupon joined the local Honolulu branch of the Triads known as the Chih Kung T'ang(44) (which is the name used throughout the Americas for Chinese secret societies) as Red Cudgel or Fighter Official. Sun had therefore direct access to other Chih Kung T'angs in the Americas, from amongst whom he attempted to recruit members for the Hsing Chung Hui. From the American societies he succeeded in getting a hearing but only one recruit, Huang San-te, a leader of the San Francisco society. The popularity of the Pao Huang Hui, the conservatism or indifference of the American overseas Chinese to problems of the mother country,

together with the influence of the American and Hawaiin environment, explain Sun's failure in recruiting overseas members to his society at this time.

It was not until 1905 (after the defeat of Russia by Japan) that the republican movement got under way. The increasing support of the modern, foreign-educated intelligentsia for the republican and nationalist cause was favourable to Sun, who had been despised by Chinese intellectuals as being not one of their class--the prestigious Confucian literai of traditional society. Sun's association with secret society elements had been sufficient to brand him as a leader of brigands, and therefore "contaminating" to his betters. But the nationalist tide (increasing in response to the deepening penetration of China by the foreign powers) and the rapid decay of literati prestige, eventually brought the young intelligentsia and students to Sun's side.

Some time before this in 1903, however, Huang Hsing and other nationalists went to Kwangtung and Kwangsi

to link up with the leaders of the various Black and White gangs of the Triads, and the result was the formationof the Hua Hsing Hui (Flourish China Society), the aim of which was mainly to collect money and buy arms. This society, established mainly by returned students from Japan formed the second major group, next to Sun's Hsing Chung Hui, in the new United League or T'ung Meng Hui which Sun founded in 1905 in Japan.

The United League was a revolutionary party, and was therefore sometimes known as the Ke-ming Tang, the name used of the Chinese student societies in Europe founded by Sun during one of his numerous tours. Another group, formed in Hangchow, led by T'ao Cheng-chang and Shen Ying called the Lung Hua Hui (Dragon Flower Society) and consisting of Triad leaders from Fukien, Chekiang, Anhwei, Kiangsu and Kiangsi, was absorbed into the Ke-ming Tang, at this time.(45) T'ao Cheng-chang's other party called the Kuang Fu Hui (Restoration Society) founded in Shanghai in 1904, also joined the United League. (There is evidence

that this society may have been a modified version of the Dragon Flower Society, being composed ofboth students and secret society members mainly from Anhwei and Chekiang.[46]). Anarchists, educated in Paris, also joined the League.[47]

The United League or Revolutionary Party, was thus composed of both the old and the new forces of Chinese rebellion: the secret societies and the foreign- (mainly Japanese) educated students returning to China with newly absorbed ideas of republicanism and revolution current in Japan and the West at the time. It goes without saying that there was little love lost between the two forces; but Sun did his best to weld them together and argued that both "destruction" (represented by secret society activities) and "construction" (represented by student militancy) were necessary complements of a national revolution. Naturally, the League advocated republicanism, equalization of land rights, and resistance to foreign aggression. The League was the immediate precursor

of the Nationalist Party, the Kuomintang.

The role of the Kuomintang in the Republican revolution need not detain us here, as a great number of studies on the subject already exists.(48) The fact is established that secret societies contributed substantially to the republican nationalist movement headed by Sun Yat-sen, who, in a characteristic tribute to the part played by the secret societies in the 1911 revolution, marched in solemn procession to the graves of the Ming emperors and "informed" them of the success of their victory over the Manchus. As a reward for their support, the secret societies were permitted to operate openly for the first time. This freedom, needless to say, fundamentally changed their functions and nature: they bore, for the remaining decades of the Republican period, a close resemblance to the Sicilian Mafia, operating as terrorist syndicates, and shedding what elementsof "social banditry" they once possessed. Their continued and mutually profitable liaison with the Kuomintang

during the nineteen twenties and thirties earned them the reputation of having been the hired assassins of unarmed workers (Shanghai, 1927), and agents of the most corrupt and reactionary elementsof the Nationalist Party.(49) Their notorious connections with the latter, and with the Shanghai massacre as well as with the subversion of trade unions(50) won for their leaders reputations*(in the Who's Who of the 1930's) as philanthropists, businessmen and respected "Government Advisers."(51)

Those who remained faithful to their "social bandit" origins were persuaded to join the Communist Party; the most prominant of these groups was the Hunan Elder Brother Society** , to whom Mao Tse-tung sent an open letter of appeal.(52) The appeal had not been in vain, but references in Mao's writings reveal that their traditional habits (consorting with prostitutes, opium smoking, etc.) often stood in the way of revolutionary progress.(53) Their role in the Red Army as "bandit

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* For example the Green Gang leader Tou Yu-seng was responsible for running arms through the foreign concessions to Chiang's troops, and hunted the workers throughout the city like animals. The working class movement never recovered from this blow.

** the same group which played a key role in the Republican revolution

elements" was not efficacious, and it was only when they were completely ideologically transformed that they were able to be of any use. Their proportion in the Red Army was probably not as large as they had been in the Republican armies, whose links with the peasantry had been,at most, tenuous. The Red Army, on the other hand, was composed of mainly peasantry who completely outnumbered the representativesof the other classes of Chinese society. The "popular" character of the Army is generally recognized as the main reason for its eventual success.(54)

From the above discussion, it is clear that secret societies contributed at least as much as the republican revolutionaries to the overthrow of the centuries-old political order, and as such became the direct agents of structural change.

To conclude, it will be necessary to sum up the main features of Chinese secret societies in general terms--combining the findings of the Chinese case with those of Simmel, Wedgwood and others. ~~A definition of a Chinese secret society may be as follow:-~~

A definition of Chinese secret societies may be as follows. Chinese secret societies in the nineteenth century were voluntary associations, possessed of a secret sub-culture, were corporate in that they owned moveable and immovable property (meeting hall, commond funds, spheres of economic activity) in common, and were dependent for their existence on an oppressive wider society. Although Chinese secret societies were both "conformative" and "alienative" (55) in their attitude towards the larger society, they tended in periods of chaos to be "alienative", and in periods of peace "conformative". Similarly, the extent to which they were "instrumental" or "expressive" in their mode of adaptation to the orthodox society depended also on the condition of the times in which they existed. When they became "alienative" in attitude and "instrumental" in expression, it reflected a break-down in the central government control, and the out-break of rebellions normally had secret society leadership or participation.

This correspondence of secret societies with social

disorder may be explained by their connection with the "dangerous classes" of Chinese society, whose members formed the bulk of the secret societies. Thus, as long as the social conditions which gave rise to such classes--such as economic exploitation, social, judicial, political and educational inequalities--continued to exist, secret societies were ineradicable.

The degree of the alienative power of Chinese secret societies was determined by two specific factors: the type of secret society organization; and the degree to which the central bureaucracy was disorganized. If the central administration became too burdensome to be supported by the resources of its material base (the taxation capacity of the population) the alienative power of the secret societies would manifest itself in rebellion. If the above weakness was combined with foreign economic and ideological penetration, then the power of secret societies became, as it did in 1911, alienative to the point of revolution.

However, secret societies' basic structure did not

permit them to be a revolutionary alienative force except in combination with an explicitly revolutionary party; for they lacked two essential elements--a coherent, alternative social and political programme upon which to act, and a centralized organization. These two elements tend to be reflections of one another. The dispersed or decentralized character of secret society organization, their haphazard and impromptu style of federation reflect the parochialism of their traditional concerns; while their "nationalism" meant often no more than xenophobia.

Their strengths, in contrast, lay in more modest spheres of action: convention rebellion and mutual protection for the members. For the successful implementation of these aims, the ability to <u>survive</u> was most important. Secret societies developed this ability to its highest point. They evolved an adaptable, compact style of organization, deploying ten men, at the least, to about several thousand men at most. The leadership was hierarchical, was popularly elected, and disposed of great authority over the lives and actions of the members.

Nevertheless, its size was determined by the necessity for adaptability to unforeseen circumstances, and thus the danger of over-bureaucratization was reduced. The needs of internal security were fulfilled by the ritual, sanctions, and most important of all, by the functions of protection for the members. It was these functions which distinguished Chinese secret societies from clandestine associations requiring the cellular method of organization. Chinese secret societies replaced the near-total anonymity of members to each other by the near-total identification of members with each other. So much so that the Triads saw themselves as not only members of one "family" but also members of one "body", and the injury to one "limb" was seen as affecting all the other "limbs" equally.(56) The external security of the members was ensured by a deployment of numbers of agents in disguise, creating a favourable climate among the local peasantry towards the secret societies by a combination of effective propaganda and a strict policy of non-interference with the property of local inhabitants unless provoked.

This intelligent policy stood in striking contrast to the policy of the Imperial armies which won the bitter enmity of the population by their scorch earth policy in the merciless suppression of the Taiping rebels, and others. The protective "outer" wall of active or passive local support was essential to the survival of the secret societies.under government pressure.

Thus, although Chinese secret societies were not, as such, a revolutionary force in an immediate sense, their role in "bridging" a conventional type rebellion to a revolution was indispensable. Moreover, the Republican revolution might not have taken place so soon without their aid, nor could it have"taken root", so to speak, so effectively in the popular consciousness without their active participation, for the notion of republicanism was totally unfamiliar to most Chinese, and indeed to most secret societies at the end of the nineteenth century.

The active support of a few powerful secret societies for the republican cause naturally contributed to a more rapid acceptance of it by the majority after the fall of the monarchy in 1912.

More generally speaking, the role of secret societies may be determined by the following conditions: firstly, as Simmel had suggested, secret societies can only exist where there is political oppression; but, as we have seen in the Chinese case, they may not necessarily be capable of destroying that oppression by themselves. They may be capable of restraining it only, particularly if that oppression exists within a society where there is no developed institution for expressing political dissent or protest. Secondly, secret societies which are also surrogate lineages or socially and economically protective associations, can only survive when the legal or orthodox associations of protection (kinship, class or caste) are monopolized by the privileged groups, leaving the underprivileged sections of the population (usually in the majority) without <u>legitimate</u> means of self-protection. Thirdly, the development of secret societies towards a near- revolutionary role, bridging the traditional heterodox religious sects and the appearance of modern ideologically explicit opposition political parties, can only arise when there is a profound structural fissure within the traditional social system itself--a fissure which

creates an irreconcilable opposition between the organizational principles of government and its economic base. Thus secret societies are the symptoms or embodiment of endemic conflict between the rulersand the ruled within societies where the majority have no voice; and they do not create the conflict so much as organize it, and though extinct in China today, they are likely to appear in societies where conditions similar to those of traditional China persist. For example, the Mau Mau insurrections in Kenya in the 'fifties, the Broederbond in South Africa during the period of English dominance which lasted up to 1948, and going back further in time, the Union Shoe in the sixteen century, the Carbonari in Italy of the early nineteenth century, the Nihilists in Russia in the middle of the nineteenth century,*, the Blanquist "familles" in France of the same period, some early socialist communities in the United States during the last century, and no doubt many others.(57)

Conversely, it goes without saying that secret societies of the Chinese type would not appear in a society where

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* Dostoevsky's novel The Possessed gives an eloquent and vivid account of their methods of organization and activities

political protest or opposition could be expressed effectively through legal channels of the state, and where specialist institutions of the government have taken over the essential tasks of the family and lineage for the majority or all of the population. This does not include, of course, those "open" societies where freedom of political expression is only nominal and where certain opposition parties are, nevertheless, by law proscribed. When this happens, the parties may go "underground" and may, in some situations, be forced to adopt some of the methods of organization of the Chinese type of secret society.

Notes

from pages 318 - 370

1. in Confucian Persuasion, edited by A.F. Wright, Stanford, 1960, "Some themes in Chinese rebel ideologies", p.243

2. Ibid. p.244-5:

"Chang Lu's power was based on the political and religious system he built up in his territory, in which he was spiritual "master" (shih-chün) of the "Rice" sect as well as secular ruler. The newly converted commoners were supervised by priests and grand priests, who served also as local officials in the civil administrative syatem. The people were taught to believe in the Way of the Spirit (kuei-tao) and to worship the Spirit. The population was controlled through a well-organized penal system. Persons guilty of misdeeds were punished bybeing assigned to road-building and similar tasks. "Public cottages" (i-she) were established along the highways, and free food was supplied to travelers. The five pecks of rice, which underChang Ling and Chang Heng had been occasional payments for cures, presumably later became regular taxes collected on fixed dates."

3. See above p.72 and note 46.

4. See above p.131ff. for summary of the myth of origin

5. The Double Tax system was instituted in 780, and was levied in the sixth and eleventh months of each year on land areas, regardless of ownership, rather than on the peasants as individuals, replacing the ancient "Equal Field" (chün t'ien) system, which assumed that land had been divided equally among the farmers. The new tax system recognized for the first time the inequality of land-holdings. The abuses arising from the Double Tax system are obvious: powerful land-lords altered the registers to make their land appear both small and poor, or omit to declare land-ownership altogether. Poorer farmers, without this power, were forced to pay all the taxes on their produce and land as they were registered by the local gentry land-lords. The new system also saved the administration a great deal of paperwork, as there was no longer the need to register each household working on the land. The development of tenantry allowed

landlords further opportunities for evading the burden of the taxation by shifting it to the shoulders of their tenants in the form of exorbitant rents and squeeze. Moreover, "Because local officials were responsible for collecting a fixed amount of tax from a certain area, the expansion of such privileged land-holdings inevitably increased the burden on the common farmer. Many hard-pressed farmers sold their land at a nominal price to the kuan-hu and became tenants; some registered their land under the kuan-hu's name, after paying a fee for the privilege; t'ou k'ao, "seeking protection," became more and more popular, and many farmers fled from their homes to become tenants or hired hands on the large estates. Still others joined outlaw bands." Muramatsu, op. cit. p.259; see also p.81-2 for a brief summary of the Double Tax system and p.186 in Chinese Thought and Institutions, Chicago, 1957 for a summary of the Equal Field System.

6. Chung-kuo Nung-min Ch'i-i Lun-chi (A Collection of Essays on Chinese Peasant Rebellions) Peking, 1954, pp. 76-84

7. Muramatsu, op. cit. p.257

8. During the southern Sung, taxes on salt (50%), alcohol (36%), tea (7%), tolls, customs, commercial tax (7%), gave the government 90% of its total revenue.from taxation.

9. Muramatsu, op. cit. p.259

10. Ibid.

11. see above, p.131

12. see list of rebellions associated with secret societies in the appendices

13. EAGT, p. 174-5

14. See Chapter V, above

15. See E.J. Hobsbawn, Primitive Rebels, Manchester, 1959, Chapter II, pp.13-29 for an elaboration of the concept of "social banditry."

16. For a detailed discussion of the methods of revolutionary organization by a successful revolutionary, see V.I. Lenin, What Is to be Done? Chapter 4, beginning with the section on "Workers' organization and revolutionary organization."

17. Franz Michael's study of the Taiping rebellion notes the conflict between the Punti and Hakka societies. A more systematic study of the content of regionalist sentiments in action may reveal, however, that their strength could be reduced by the appeal to class sentiment, or indeed, their strength, in some cases, was created by local class resentments.

18. See below, pp. 353-361

19. in Explorations in Social Change, Boston, 1964, edited by G.K. Zollschan and W. Hirsch, "Social Integration and System Integration."

20. See Max Weber, The Theory of Social and Economic Organization, edited with an introduction by Talcott Parsons, New York and London, 1964, 1966, pp.346ff, for an exposition of the concept of patrimonialism.

21. According to the Sung Shih (Official Sung History) 198, 2b-4a, the State had pre-emptive rights over the purchase of horses. The appearance of "horse-leaders" and "horse-dealers" in Triad ritual and myth may not be totally eccentric.

22. It is no surprise to find in the Triad slang that the term for "salt" is chin-hsing, "enter prosperity", and that for "wine" is "the family in harmony and prosperity" chia-ho-hsing.

It is probable that smuggling also extended to exports of textiles (silk), porcelain, silver, gold, lead, tine as well as imports of incense, all of which formed the basis of a very profitable overseas trade. Certainly references to the above are very frequent in Triad ritual and slang.

23. EAMT, p.326-7. In the early 1890's likin (including native opium likin) brought in 15 million taels out of 89 million taels of silver in tax, in the early

1900's likin brought in 14 million out of 103 million taels.

24. Balazs, op. cit. p.58; 61 EAGT, p.222

25. EAGT, p.222

26. Schlegel, op. cit. p.136 (Oath 3), p.161 (Art.2) p.164-5 (Art.21)

27. see above note 5

28. Muramatsu, op. cit. p.257

29. Balazs, op. cit. p.97. Officials, on the other hand, were punishable by 60 bamboo strokes if they were caught in a house of prostitution according to law; but this was obviously a dead letter. See G. Schlegel, La Prostitution en Chine, 1880, p.6-7

30. Morgan, op. cit. p.74

31. Wynne, op. cit. p.

32. G. Schlegel, op. cit. (1880) p.37

33. G. R. Scott, Far Eastern Sex Life, London, 1943, Chapter V.

34. G. Schlegel, op. cit. (1880) p.6

35. See above, p.25ff.

36. See above p.112

37. , Christian Influence on the Taiping Rebellion

38. The associations in Havana, Cuba, for example, even joined in the movements for independence against Spain. See the appendices for further discussion.

39. See below, p.357

40. G.T. Yu, Party Politics in Republican China - The Kuomintang, 1912-1924, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1966, p.16; the oath aimed at driving out "the Manchu Barbarians, restore China to the Chinese, and create a republic."

41. ibid.

42. ibid. p.17

43. ibid, p.27; Hirayama in China Journal, Jan.1929, p.14

44. Yu, ibid. p.28

45. China Journal, Jan. 1929, p.16

46. Yu, op. cit. p.48

47. R.A. Scalapino and G.T. Yu, The Chinese Anarchist Movement, Berekely, 1961

48. See Yu, op. cit. bibliography

49. Han Suyin, A Mortal Flower, London, 1966, pp.70ff

50. H.R. Isaacs, "Gang Rule in Shanghai", in Five Years of Kuomintang Reaction, reprinted from the special May edition, Shanghai, 1932

51. Han, op. cit. (1966) p.70

52. S.R. Schram, The Political Thought of Mao Tse-tung, New York and London, 1963, p.189

53. Ibid, p.201, where Mao describes the military limitations of the "roving insurgent" mentality as well as its traditional love of city life and "eating and drinking."

54. "Popular" in the sense that it was dominated by the peasantry after the second half of the 'thirties period; the peasantry of course formed something like 80% of the population. See Chalmers A. Johnson's study of Peasant Nationalism and Communist Power, Stanford and Oxford, 1962 1966, for a lucid and informative account of the development of the Red Army. The you-min or declasse elements did, according to Mao, dominate the Red Army in the late 1920's; but not all declasse elements need have been secret society members. For a fuller discussion of the social composition of the Red Army, see The Political Thought of Mao Tse-tung by Stuart R. Schram, p.196; and for an account of the relationship between Mao and the secret societies in the revolution, see Schram's article in the China Quarterly, No.27, pp.1-13.

55. see above, p.9ff.

56. see above, p.281; Morgan, op. cit. p.157 (Oath 1); Stanton, op. cit. p.124 (Oath 36)

57. see, for example, Thomas Frost, Secret Societies of the European Revolution, 1776-1876, London 1876, and the bibliogrpahy given in Eric Hobsbawm's cited work.

Appendix A

REBELLIONS AND SECRET SOCIETIES

Date	Rebellion	Secret societies
B.C.		
209	"First" rebellion against the Ch'in, the first unified empire, led by Ch'en Sheng and Wu Kuang who believed in "political" spiritualism.	
A.D.		
184	Yellow Turbans, led by Chang Chüeh, a Taoist faith-healer, and thirty six generals. Suppressed by the Peach Garden Brothers, Liu-Pei, Kuan-yü and Chang-fei. Began in eight provinces of the North China Plain, then west-wards into the states now known as Szechwan province. Descendants of Chang built up tributary "church" state in Szechwan to the Wei state under Ts'ao Ts'ao, one of the three rulers of the Three Kingdoms--Liu Pei ruled over Shu Han, and Sun Ch'üan over Wu.	Taiping Tao Five Pecks of Rice Sect.
515, 713-41 1047	Millenarian revolts led by "new" Buddhas or Matreyas	Chai-hui, Pai-yun and other vegetable eating secfs.

Date	Rebellion	Secret Societies
A.D.		
1120-1121	led by Fang-la, Sung-chiang and Lu Ch'un-i in the marshes of Shan-tung	Hundred-and-Eight Outlaws of Liang Shan-Po
1344-1382	Red Turbans, led by Han Shan-tung, then Han Lin-erh, finally Chu Yüan-chang, a Buddhist monk who finally overthrew the Mongol Yüan dynasty and became first emperor of the Ming dynasty	White Lotus Sect
1761...	Small revolts by mill-enarian Buddhists	Ming Tsun, Pai-Yun etc.
	in 1775, a chief of the White Lotus was sent to the province of Kansu in exile	
1787	Rebellion in Formosa led by Lin Shuang-wan, etc.	Triads
1794-1804	led by Liu Chi-hsieh in an abortive attempt to restore Ming dynasty	White Lotus
1814	led by Chung Ti-kang in Kiangsi; Hu Ping-yao and seventeen others from the Triads attempted to set up Mao-li Chu as a pretender to the Ming	Triads, Pure Water Society (a branch of the Triads)
	led by eunuchs in Peking a palace coup	White Lotus, Eight Trigrams, Three Incense Sticks, White Feathers
	revolts in Honan, Shan-tung and Kiangsi	Rationalists(Tsai-li) Triads

Date	Rebellions	Secret Societes
1815	revolts in Shensi	White Lotus, Triads
1817-1827	revolts in Canton	Triads
1832	in Kwangtung, Kwangsi, Hunan with Yao tribes, Fukien	Triads
1849	Amoy, Shanghai (Shantung)	The Daggers (Ta Tao Hsiao Tao)
1850	Kwangtung, Kwangsi	Triads
1850-1864	Taipings, led by Hung Hsiu-ch'üan, began in Kwangsi and ended in Nanking	Christianized Taipings Triads
1853-68	Nien in Shantung	Nien, White Lotus
1886	Kwangtung, Weichao prefecture, 3000 men	Triads
1891	anti-foreign riots in Yangtze Basin	Elder Brothers (Kelao)
1892	riots to free captured leaders	Elder Brothers
	Kwangtung	Triads
1893	Hunan, Hupei, Szechwan	Elder Brothers
1900	at first anti-Manchu, then anti-foreign riots round Peking and in Shantung	The Boxers (I-Ho-t'uan)
1911-12	Republican revolution led by Sun Yat-sen	Elder Brothers, some Triads

List complied from the works of Stanton, Hirayama Amane, Yuji Muramatsu, Yang (C.K.), EAGT, Morgan, etc.

Appendix B

Triad Vocabulary

List by Stanton, 1900 (pp.93-96) with my revised translations of the Chinese words

meaning	cant
a lodge	Red Flower Pavilion
to join society	enter the circle respect the orthodox be born
to hold a meeting	open the stage let loose the horses
a member	fragrance Hung hero hero
a non-member	wind, or son of a leper partridge
a new member	new top
to attend a meeting	see a theatrical performance
secret books of the Society	little jacket
certificate of membership	purse (money-belt) eight-cornered sign (plaque) eight trigrams
exhibit a sign of membership	hang out a plaque
hair	green silk
hog	hairy melon
pork	smooth melon
roast pork	golden, or red melon
beef	great vegetables
salt beef	one item vegetable

meaning	cant
goose	number six
fowl	number seven
duck	number eight
dog	mosquito
fish	wave-plunger, tail-shaker
salt-fish	salt sprout, slave girl
vegetables	girl servants
rice	sand
boil rice	beat sand
boil congee (gruel)	beat waves
eat congee	plough waves
raw tobacco	raw ginger
prepared tobacco	cooked (ripe) ginger
opium	travelling clouds
smoke tobacco	bite ginger
smoke opium	bite clouds
tobacco pipe	Hung bamboo, green dragon
tea	green lotus, red water, green water
wine	family harmony
water	three rivers (san-ho)
oil	obedience to Hung
chopsticks	gold bamboo slips
tea-cup	lotus bud
wine-cup	lotus seed
bowl	lotus flower
plate	lotus leaf
incense	cassia twigs

meaning	cant
candles	dwarf trees
betel	Honan
betel leaf	fodder-ions
lime	marshall
mosquito curtain	lantern
Ming jacket	Buddhist robe
trousers	water chestnut
shoes	iron-soles
cap	cloud-cover
hat	bamboo (coolie) hat
large bamboo hat	cane shield
umbrella	Hung-head, one-leg, black-cloud
handkerchief	white-cloud, twelve-taels
lamp	mosquito curtain
oil lamp	Hung-lamp
road	thread
travel	walk-the-thread
house	beginning of the sixty-year cycle
ancestral hall	privy
market	great peace (t'ai-p'ing)
table	square plane
stool	four-legs
sleep (v)	dry
bed	drying booth
sit	drop

meaning	cant
junk (boat)	wooden shoe
ship	plane
to board a ship	walk the plane
sword	orange-board, silk crepe
dagger	young lion
cannon	black dog
powder	dog-shit
report of cannon	dog's bark
silver dollars	melon seeds
cash	sesame
a string of 100 cash	blade of grass
" " "1000 "	a rope
hand	five-clawed dragon
ears	follow-the-wind = favourable wind; (in Shanghai) pig's ears
cut off the ears	lower the favourable wind
cut off a head	wash the face
murder by drowning	wash the body
sea	great sky
drown in the sea	lower into the great sky
the lodge club	the three-foot-six, dwarf pine
the fan	crescent moon
the bushel (t'au)in which the flags and other paraphernalia is placed	Willow City
the needle, used for pricking fingers at initiations	iron-headed prince

List by Schlegel (1866) of words not found in Stanton's list

meaning	cant
magistrate	enemy; official bandit (p.142)
police	wind-draft (breeze)
government troops	wild wind
there are outsiders	there is wind
man	horse
ten men	one ounce
hundred men	one hundred-tael horse
double sword	bridge planks
agent	iron-plank shoe
	night-brother
	grass-slipper
lamp-wick	dragon of the dawning east
lime	marshal
lime spatula (to smear lime on betel leaves)	weapons
eat rice	beat gravel
beef	great multi-red cloth
salt	enter prosperity
rice	heart of a mirror
cooked mirror	broken mirror
eye	lantern
wine	family in harmony and prosperity
vinegar	Hung obeys Heaven
oil	hemp water

meaning	cant
chopsticks	green twigs
bowl, basin	lotus cup
tea-cup	blue (green) lotus drum
wine-cup	a drum
dog	military post (pissing place)
fish	grass-flower piercing the waves
prepared tobacco	Hung-braves cloud travel
books	clothes
clothes	study (hsüeh)
breeches	River Ch'a
a man	one cash
rich	slow-to-take
poor	desirous-of-taking
highway robbery	shoot partridges
plunder a ship	eat ducks
plunder pawnships	pull out the ear-pick
plunder a village	make the big cruise, circuit
charge with gun-powder	plant peaches
to go, to do	cold work
kill	wash the body, ears
cut off an ear	off with the fair wind
sleep in an inn	rest in a room
girl or woman	long-grass-leather-seven
open the lodge	make theatricals
enter the society	be born
diploma of membership	purse

meaning	cant
the fiscal	red cudgel
laws and statutes	little jacket
lodge	Willow City

List by F. v. Faber, colleague of Schlegel

an elder brother	adopted uncle
a colleague of the same rank	adopted brother
a younger brother	sworn younger brother
silver (money)	white
gold	yellow
cash	pierced-heart
grain	yellow husks
wealthy man	great ginseng
drink tea	swallow green
government troops	cursed-cuckolds
good man	a wasp
attack the provincial capital	beat a big ring
a hundred men	one hundred-tael horse
smoke opium	chew clouds

Abbreviations ofr names of lodges are:

1st lodge Green Lotus Hall 青蓮堂 ㄊㄛ 月車ㄩ
2nd lodge Hung Obedience Hall 洪須堂 ㄊㄛ 氵川ㄩ
3rd lodge Empress Hall 家后堂 ㄊㄛ 豕ㄩㄩ
4th lodge Assemble Heaven Hall 參天堂 ㄊㄛ 彡大ㄩ
5th lodge Metamorphosis Hall 宏化堂 ㄊㄛ ㄙㄨㄚㄩ

The Thirty-six Articles of the Oath
Hung Chia San-shih-liu Che*

Art. 1. From the moment that you have entered the Hung League (Hung Men), you must quietly fulfill your duties, and keep to your own business. It has, always, been said that filial love is the first of all virtues; therefore you must respect and obey both your parents, and obey and venerate your superiors. Do not resist your father and mother and, so, violate the laws of the Hung-league. He who does not keep this command, most surely, will not be suffered by Heaven and Earth, but he shall be crushed by five thunder-bolts! Each of you ought to obey this.

Art.2. When you have entered the Hung-league, you ought to keep secret everything from your wife and family, for fear that something might leak out before strangers; even so that, as a father, you don't tell it to your son, as an elder brother, you don't tell it to your younger brother. Do not betray the secrets (Yang-seh, literally, Yang Colour) of the Hung-league! He who does not keep this command--may Heaven not suffer him; but may he die and become a headless ghost! When it is found out that a brother has betrayed the secrets to strangers, one of his ears will be cut off and he will, besides, be punished with 108 blows.

Art.3. After having entered the Hung-league, you must consider all the members of the league, the four higher classes, as earls, marquises, generals and ministers, as well as the four middling classes, asscholars, husbandmen, artisans and merchants, and the lower classes, as vagabonds and mendicants, of which rank or station they may be, as brothers. You shall not, trusting to your riches, insult the poor, or, relying upon your power, oppress the good and honest. He who does not

* from G. Schlegel, op. cit. pp.135-144

keep this command, is a false swearer and a perjurer. May he die in a foreign country! May serpents bite him, and tigers devour him!

Art.4. After having entered the Hung-leauge, you shall not insult any any more the Buddhist or Taoist priests; for the five founders, originally, were priests, and we venerate them as the founders: are we not, then, disciples of priests? He who does not keep this command--may he die a wretched death! This crime is not easily to be forgiven, and, therefore, the offender will be punished, according to the law, with 72 blows.

Art.5. After having entered the Hung-league, you ought to be faithful and loyal. You must consider the father of a brother as your own father; his mother as your mother; his sister as your sister; and his wife as your sister-in-law. Do not lie or speak evilly. When you marry the daughter of abrother you ought to employ go-betweens, and marry her with the prescribed ceremonies; and it shall not be allowed to you to come together unlawfully; neither shall you seduce the wife or concubine of a brother. He who does not keep this command--may he perish in a river or lake, may his bones sink to the bottom, and his flesh float on the surface! Besides, if the brethern discover it, one of his ears will be cut off, and he will be punished with 108 blows.

Art.6. After having entered the Hung-league, you ought to persevere till the end; let not your mouth say Yes and your heart say No. Do not, on account of a small gain, cause discord between brethern; or, on account of a private promise, cause father and son to be at variance. Do not speak slanderously, and disturb the harmony between husband and wife. He who does not keep these commands is an infamous villain; most surely he will die in an unknown land, and be buried in the stomachs of swine or fishes! Besides, he will be punished by the law, according to circumstances.

Art. 7. After having entered the Hung-league, you ought to consider the affairs of the brethern as your own

affairs. If one of them has smuggled, or escaped the duties, or has some secret affairs, or trades in smuggled goods, or cheats strangers or the police, you must keep it secret, and not let it leak out. He who does not keep this command, but betrays it, so that the secrets and the affairs of the brethern become known to other people--may he perish under thousands of swords, and may his head be severed from his trunk!.The punishment for this crime is not fixed, but it shall be dealt with according to circumstances.

Art.8. After etc...you ought to consider fidelity and loyalty as the foundation. When brethern travel to and fro they have a badge as a sign of recognition. (kua-p'ai wei hao) If they have not found, either in the morning or at night, a place to rest or pass the night, you ought to receive them, and not feign not to recognise them. He who etc... is one who has violated his vow in the Red-pavilion. May he never be happy or prosperous, but may he die without posterity.

Art.9. After etc...you ought to live in peace and harmony with the brethern, and separate yourselves according to the grades. You shall not, relying upon your strength, oppress the poor, or commit man-slaughter in drunkenness, or speak wantonly, insulting or vilifying father and mother, or lift up your hands for a scuffle; for that is violating the duties of the brethern and the concord between hands and feet. We who belong to this league, either in the two capitals or the thirteen provinces, are all one body: so we may not make a difference between mine and thine. We may not ask if we are kindred, but we must act as if we were so. He who does not keep this command shall, surely, die at the way-side. Besides, he will be punished, according to law, with 108 blows.

Art.10. After etc...you must always remember your oath sworn in the Flower-pavilion, and not forget that bloody oath. You must live and die together, and be attached to each other as if you were born from one womb. Do not give out untruth or fruth and deceive the brethern; neither shall you conceal the police and betray the

the trust of the brethern. You shall not help a stranger who abuses or beats a brother, and, so, violate the concord. He who does not keep this command--may he perish by cannon-shots. Besides, one of his ears will be cut off, according to law.

Art.11. After having etc...you must adopt the name of Hung, and you must then be (attached) like hands and feet; but, as wealth and indigence are unequally divided, and death and life have a fixed time; so, when the parents of a brother have died, or a brother has died himself, and there is no money to bury the corpse properly, we all must come together and deliberate about it: he who hasmuch, may give much, he who has little, may give little; but all of us ought to unite our forces. When other people see this, they will remark the charity of the Hung-league. He who, etc... may he perish in the deep mountains, or on wild peaks, and be buried without coffin or shroud. Besides, according to law, he will be punished with 72 blows.

Art.12. After...etc. you having pledged yourself before heaven: so do not say that providence doesnot avenge, for three feet above our heads are invisible spirits. You must tell your age according to truth, and not give out untruth...and so deceive the five founders. When you have returned, you shall not pray before other altars or in other temples for absolution from your present oaths and vows. He who does not keep this command, is a traitor and perjurer; may he be hacked in thousands of pieces and perish. Besides, both his ears will be cut off; he shall be cast out of the brotherhood, and never be allowed to enter it again.

Art.13. After, etc...you are bound by a bloody oath. You have become one gall and one heart. So when you see that a brother quarrels or fights with other people, you ought to advance, and examine fairly. If the other people are in the wrong you must, certainly, help him with all your might and strength; but if the brother is in the wrong, you must exhort him to desist; in this

way the equity of the brotherhodd will appear. You shall on no account pretend not to have known it. He who...etc. beguiles indeed his own heart, and deceives himself. Most surely he shall not be happy or prosperous, and his children will not live in harmony.

Art.14. After...etc. you ought to remember the oath sworn in the Flower-pavilion. Amongst the members of our brotherhood, some are functionaries, others are vagabonds: each of us has some employment, but we are not all of equal rank. So if fire is set to a place, or robbery is perpetrated, or a ship is plundered, or highway-robbery is committed, we ought to look well to the flags or signals before we set to work; for brethern are not allowed to act wantonly, and violate the harmony between hands and feet. He who...etc. may he perish under thousands of swords and become a headless ghost.

Art.15. After etc....though you ought to consider benevolence and justice as the first,and courteousness and faith as the basis, still you are, as brethern, members of one family, and you ought to help each other disasters and misfortunes. When a brother is summoned before a tribunal, or a price is set upon him, and he cannot remain longer in the place, the powerful must help him to escape, and the less powerful pay his travelling expenses. This is helping him out of danger, like taking a fish out of a dry place, and it is saving him from difficulties, like liberating a bird out of a close net. He who, etc... may he perish at the way-side, may the swine devour him, and the gods bite him, and may he never return in this world again.

Art.16. After etc...you must be faithful and honest; for all things have an owner. Don't take anything without asking, or instigate strangers to steal the property or riches of a brother. Ifyou know that a heavy price is set upon a brother, and you do not think about saving him, but betray him...to the troops of the government; or if you give yourself the thread in hands,

or lead the way, to make him prisoner, and injure, in this way, a brother--may you be struck by thunder-bolts, or perish in the flames, or come to an end in the ocean, and your corpse remain floating. This[18] the heaviest crime according to our law; therefore theoffender shall ~~xxxx~~ be killed, and his head shall be severed from his trunk.

Art.17. After, etc...remember then that since the ancient times happiness and misfortune have no fixed gates, but that man draws them upon himself:

Heaven has ~~inex~~haustible winds and clouds;
Men have misery and happiness for morning and evening!

So, when a brother has incurred adversities or misfortunes by his own fault, he ought to suffer them himself, and, on no account, shall he be allowed to implicate the other brethern in his misfortune, in order to extricate himself. For such a one, most surely, will become a headless ghost after his death. If it is discovered, both his ears will be cut off, he shall be cast out of the brotherhood, and never be allowed to enter it again.

Art. 18. After etc...and passed the bridge laid before the Hung-gate and the fair has been opened (k'ai-hsü), you can be promoted, after a year to the grade of Introducer. After two years you can become Vanguard. After three years you can become Incense-master, if at least, there is a vacancy. When you wish then to open a fair, you must first send round a circular (see above p.267a) to inform the brethern of it. He who etc...but himself opens a market, commits a great sin against the five founders. May his head be severed from his trunk and he perish. May the swine devour him, and the dogs rend him to pieces.

Art. 19. After...etc. the members will elect the chiefs by public vote (kung-chü). There will be a President, a Master, a Fiscal, Treasurers, Agents, and those who have flowers on their head. They shall deliberate fairly and act justly; they whall not, trusting to their greatness, oppress the little, or, relying upon their strength, crush the weaker. Those who selfishly take bribes, or make no difference between right and wrong on account of their relations, but are only bent upon violence and tyranny, shall, most surely perish in an unknown country.

Art.20. After, etc...if a brother gains his livelihood abroad, and he intrusts you with family letters, you must take care of them. But if you think that you can not take charge of them, you ought first to inform (the head of the lodge) of it, and not neglect it when the time has already come (for delivering them). Or, if you perceive that there is money in these letters, you shall not pocket that yourself, or remit less money than there is, for such a one is a swindler who shall perish, most surely, by the sword. If it is discovered, he shall...be punished with 108 blows, and he shall completely reimburse the goods or money.

Art.21. Afterhaving entered the Hung-leauge, you shall not secretly show the statutes and diploma of the lodge to strangers, for they are the most important things of the Hung-league. He who covetously sells them secretly to others, is one who has forgotten his duties and perjured his oath. He shall, most surely, perish by the mouth of a tiger in a deep mountain. If it is discovered both his ears will be cut off, he shall be punished with a 108 blows,and be cast out of the brotherhood.

Art.22. After having entered the Hong-leauge, if one of the brethern has disputed, quarreled or fought, you shall on no account inform the authorities of the case, whether it be serious or trifling; but a council will be held, which will judge and decide equitably, and give verdict according to the more or less importance of the case. It shall not be allowed to you to act yourself, and to inform the the authorities of it. He who does not keep this command, but disobeys the law, most surely shall perish under countless swords and according to the laws of the five founds, and his head and trunk will be severed for the functionaries of the Ch'ing dynasty and of the Hung-league are each their own master.

Art.23. After, etc...you may not remember or cherish old grudges or new enmities. He who does not keep this command--may he perish at the wayside, and may nobody bury him. According to the law, he will be punished, besides, with 72 blows.

Art.24. After, etc...if your own brother or a relation of yours, or a friend, and a brother of the Hung-leaugge,

quarrel, brawl, or fight together, you may give a signal in order to exhort them to leave off. But if you separate them forcibly, and help them (the strangers), it is a crime of conspiring with the police--may you then perish in a wretched country.

Art.25. After etc...if one of the brethern has a difference with strangers,and he is perhaps accused before a tribunal, you shall, on no account, give evidence for these strangers in such a case,no matter if you know them or not. For those who do this are guilty of the crime of conspiring with the police--may they perish on the roads and wayfares.

Art.26. After etc...if you see that a brother possesses lands, you shall not conspire with strangers to rob him; for if you conspire with strangers, it is manifest that you injure him wilfully, and you offend the statutes of the Hung-league. He who, etc... may he die unburied. If it is discovered, he shall be punished,besides, according to law, with 108 heavy blows.

Art.27. After etc...if the master has appointed a meeting, you shall most surely not conceal policemen within the precincts, in order to show them secretly the secrets. To conceal them is to mix serpents amongst dragons. This is a heavy offence against the statutes of the Hung-league--may such people perish by the point of the sword, and may five thunder-bolts crush them.

Art.28. After having entered the Hung-league, you ought to be attached to each other as brethern, and consider each other as kindred. If other people have stolen the money or properties of a brother, you must search for it, that people may see the equity of the Hung-sect, Most surely you shall not pretend not to know anything about it, and not inform him, but, on the contrary,conceal and keep it for these strangers; form in the first place, you will be rallied by other peoplefor your perjury, and, secondly, you violate the purity of our harmony and concord. He who does not keep this command, is one who has forgotten his duties. Most surely he will not die a natural death, but shall perish under countless swords.

Art. 29. After, etc...if there are great or small cases coming before the society (kung-ssu), all the brethern shall range themselves according to the higher and lower grades. The council of the Hung-league then shall decide equitably, and not, trusting to their power, oppress the weak, or, relying upon their majority, oppress the single ones. It, also, shall not be allowed to cry or to be obstinate; neither shall it be allowed to bring along sharp weapons, or carry secretly sticks or clubs. They who don't keep this command--may they perish by a sharp sword.

Art. 30. After having entered the Hung-league, you must observe the etiquette of this society, and keep its regulations. When the wife of concubine or a brother passes you on the road, you shall not address her rudely or dally with her; for this is a heavy offence against propriety. He who etc...may he never be happy or prosperous, but perish in a bare and sterile country.

Art. 31. After having entered the Hung-league, if you have had some words with a brother in a moment of passion, you shall not remember them and think of revenge; neither shall you speak improper words, or insult his parents with low and vile expressions. He who, etc...may he perish at eh wayside. According to the law he shall be punished besides, with 72 blows.

Art. 32. After, etc...if one of the brethern is involved unexpectedly in a lawsuit, or gets implicated with the false authorities (kuan-fei = official bandits), and is, prevented (from escaping) on account of his wife and children--then he who, being able to do so, receives his wife and children, is a charitable man. But if there is nobody able to do this, the case ought to be reported to the brotherhood, who shall deliberate about it.

Art. 33. After, etc...if the brotherhood has elected somebody to the rank of agent (grass-slippers) his name shall be night-brother. He shall, also be called Iron-plank. These men are destined to go about every where, and they live in all places. If there are public affairs, they are sent to transmit the reports. The brethern shall not turn them off; they have free nourishment and travelling expenses; but, for private affairs for the brethern, they must be paid, besides,

according to the tariff. If a brother refuses to pay him--may he die of sword-wounds, or perish by the mouth of a tiger.

Art.34. After having entered the Hung-leauge, you count the years of your age from the moment of your reception. You must celebrate the birthday of the holy Kwan-ti, the Grave-cleansing festival (ch'ing-ming) and the All-souls festival (ch'i-yüeh). You must contribute cheerfully to the expenses of these festivals, yes, you must even give money gladly and not, pretending to be poor, refuse to contribute. He who does not keep this command--may he be unfortunate and unprosperous.

Art.35. After, etc...if there are great or small affairs amongst the brethern, either fortunate or unfortunate, you ought to remain in harmony and concord. The joy of the Hung-leauge will then be seen. He who, etc...may he be unfortunate and unprosperous.

Art.36. After having entered the Hung-leauge, you must love each other as your own flesh and bones, and be attached to each other as if you were children from the same womb. It has always been said: "If one enters a house, one must observe its rule." So you ought to persevere till the end, and be benevolent and just. You must remember and obey the oaths from the first to the thirty sixth one; then your children will be prosperous, and you will be happy for numberless generations; for in ancient times it was said: "A family who hoards up virtues, most surely will have abundance of blessings." You must all obey and observe this.

Appendix D

Chinese Associations in Havana, 1967-8

These notes are the result of a month's visit to Havana (December 1967 to Janauary 1968), and are therefore highly impressionistic. I visited three out of a purported "thirty-six" associations in Havana, and attended a Sunday lunch-time meeting of the Dragon Ridge General Association (Lung-keng Tsung Kung-so). I also visited the "China town" in general and the offices of one of the two Chinese language papers in Havana about which I shall write shortly. A young French anthropologist and I were escorted by a teacherof Chinese at the University of Havana called Mr. Feng, who kindly explained certain details regarding the Chinese community in Havana.

According to the publisher of the Kwong Wah Po (Enlightened China Daily), there are at present about 10,000 Chinese in Cuba, of whom 1,500 are in Havana itself. They comprise mostly small traders, herbalists, bar-keepers, restauranters, cane-juice store-owners, launderers, and some farmers in Oriente

province. The Chinese population outside Havana itself is highly diffused among the Cuban population; but in Havana, they live largely within the area designated as China Town. Those who still spoke and understood Chinese appeared tobelong to a generation well above forty years of age, and to know no Spanish, other than the simplest words and phrases. The dialect spoken appears to be a cross between Cantonese and Fukienese, a kind of lisping Cantonese which may be close th the Amoy dialect, for their ties with Amoy began in 1864, when a large number of Chinese were shipped to Cuba as indentured labour. Even today, they read the Amoy (Ao Men) Daily, but no other place is China is as specifically represented. Many immigrants also came from Kwangtung province, Hong Kong and Macao. Between 1847 and 1874, it has been estimated that between a quarter and a half million indentured labourers and had been shipped from these regions in China to Cuba, Peru, Chile and the Sandwich Islands. In 1864, 4,479 men were shipped from Macao, in 1865, 5,207; and during the same years,

2,716 labourers were transported by sea from Canton by Cuban agents acting under the French flag.(1) Of the 23,928 men shipped from Hong Kong, 3,342 died on voyage of the conditions on board.(2)

These indentured labourers were composed of the remnants of the Taiping rebel armies, "prisoners

> taken in the clan fights...of the province of Kwangtung, and who are sold by their captors to Chinese or Portuguese man-buyers upon the interior waters; villagers or fishermen forcibly kidnapped along the coast;...and...individuals who are tempted by prowling agents to gamble (in Macao)...and who on losing...surrender their persons in payment according to the peculiar Chinese notions of liability in this respect."(3)

Macnair adds,

> "The 'crimps', as the collecting agents were called, received from seven to ten dollars a man delivered to the coolie depots, or barraccons in Macao; here the coolie "signed" a 'contract' for eight years of service; on reaching Cuba the surviving coolieswere put up at auction with their contracts and sold for an average of seventy-eight pounds. The legal right of the coolie to appeal to the Spanish courts for enforcement of his rights in case of ill-treatment or lack of payment was assured him but 'no instance is on record of such a proceeding." (4)

This "reluctance" or lack of opportunity for the Chinese labourer to appeal to the Spanish courts gave rise to the creation of mutual-aid associations, and according to a unique local record(5), these associations were at first "fraternal associations with religious overtones", and only became illegal "later." But their illegal activities never reached the level of intensity ~~xx~~ of their counterparts in the United States.

The first societies were founded in Havana itself, comprising the former inhabitantsof Kwangtung, Kwangsi, Fukien. They were formed initially to combat the oppressive contract labour system, which has been described by a contemporary observer as follows:

> "I believe the coolie slave trade to be as bad as that of the negroes. During the passage, which is always horrible, the latter perhaps suffered rather more; but, once arrived at their destination, the slaves found in the very interest of their proprietor a guarantee of comparative well-being. The coolies have not even this advantage; and they tell me that their fate is the more lamentable because they belong to a race which is more civilized and more intelligent (sic) than the negroes."(6)

A report submitted to the Chinese Foreign Office (Tsungli Yamen) in 1874 goes into greater detail about the treatment of Chinese labourers on arrival in Cuba:

> " On arrival at Havana they were sold into slavery... During the past years a large number have been killed by blows, have died from the effects of wounds, and have hanged themselves, cut their throats, poisoned themselves with opium, and thrown themselves into wells and sugar caldrons...On the termination of the contracts the employers, in most cases, insist on a renewal of engagements, which may extent to even more than ten years...Almost every Chinese met by us was, or had been, undergoing suffering and suffering was the purport of almost every word we heard."(7)

Later, some of the associations, on the abolition of slavery, became the instruments of the foremen in attacking the liberated slaves. Sometimes, they fell into the hands of the "contratistas" or slave entrepreneurs and aided them in their work. The Cohongs in Canton attempted to protect the coolies against the contratistas by giving their considerable support to the other coolie associations.

There had been altogether three "waves" of Chinese

immigration into Cuba: that of 1847-1874, that of 1870-1900 from the United States as a result of the racial violence; and that after the 1920's from China, consisting of free labourers. The first wave formed the Chieh I T'ang in 1867, and the Jen I T'ang in 1868, the two oldest associations known, but no longer exist under the same names. The Hakkas from ~~Fukien and~~ Amoy formed the I Sheng T'ang. The American Chinese brought their Chih Kung T'ang with them; whilethe Hung League (which still exists in name, though combined with the "Democratic Party") had, during the nineteenth century asmany as 2,000 members.

I visited the last association, called in full Hung Men Min-Chih T'ang, once a secret society. It owns a large building in China Town with a high-ceilinged window-less great initiation hall very impressive in its austerity and sombreness. It is entered via a vestibule which is decorated with photographs of

past and presumably prestigious members. At the end of the t'ang or hall is a raised dais and bare altar, separated from the wall by a space in which the Incense Master formerly stood during ceremonies. On the wall behind the altar are four portraits framed like the photographs painted in oil. One is of the Great Ancestor Wan Yun-lung, the other of the first Master Ch'en Chin-nan, and the other two are obviously portraits of the local founders, one of whom is in European dress, but neither of them are specifically identified. Above the portraits is a striped flag, each stripe the colour of one of the Five Triad loges, and superimposed on the stripes is the masonic sign of an inverted V superimposed on another V. Apparently there had been some cooperation between the Hung League and the Freemasons in Cuba. Along the walls are placed heavy mahogany chairs. The impression of austere power and wealth is accentuated by the photographs of well-dressed men in European clothes and chorus girls during some Hung celebration. There is no other furniture in the room.

The Dragon-ridge General Association appears to be at the head of a group of Five associations, one of which I also visited, is called the Lin (or Lam in Cantonese) West River Association, all of the members of which are surnamed Lin. At the New Year Sunday meeting, there were about forty people assembled mostly men over sixty years of age. There were four women, only one of whom appeared to have wholly Chinese features, and she had her two young daughters with her. At the head of the cloth covered table sat the five former and present Presidents of the Association. There were enthroned on elaborately carved, chairs of wood, curiously ecclesiastical in design, probably reflecting the influence of the Freemasons. All the presidents looked very senior in age, probably in their seventies; the other members were also mostly over their sixties; only a few looked younger. This may mean that only men over a certain age could be elected president. All the presidents made speeches followed by amicable applause. The atmosphere was relaxed and definitely familial. Some other members also spoke from the floor, while others drank tea and nibbled at the snacks (hsiu-

mai) and highly coloured sponge-cakes laid out at intervals on the long tables. On the walls hung the portraits of José Marti (the hero of the Cuban war of independence against Spain)[8], Sun Yat-sen and Mao Tse-tung. The meeting did not last longer than an hour, after which the members shook hands with each other and the newly arrived visitors from associated Kung-so and dispersed.

The shrine room, located on the first floor above the meeting hall, was dominated by a large, carved, brightly coloured image of Kwang Kung, the God of War and of Associations. Behind the idol was a glass box containing a piece of silk embroidery depicting the Three Brothers of the Peach Garden accompanied by a fourth called Chao. It appears that this art-work had more than a purely ritual significance in that it represented the surnames of the members of the association who are all called after these of the Three Brothers, Liu Pei, Chang Fei and Kwan Yü, as well as Chao. As we were examining the altar, a Chinese woman was smilingly telling fortune

to some of the younger members who had come up to the shrine out of curiosity. She very good-humourdly shook the bamboo cylinder with the bamboo slips in it, while an older member read from the Book of Changes.

It is very clear after my visit to the other association (Lin Hsi Ho Kung So) that surnames serve as a rallying point for association rather than place of origin. This is confirmed by the long lists of members' names given in the New Year issue of the two Chinese newspapers in which the associations announce their new year "officers." Simmel's thesis that secret societies could come to make hierarchies for their own sake seems to be supported by the evidence of the Havana associations, whose lists of officers contain sometimes nearly a hundred names. As an example of this development, the Dragon Ridge General excels the others. It boasts 16 Administrative Officers, 1 Chairman, 3 Deputy Chairmen, 8 Expectant Administrators, 8 Examiners, 1 Head Inspector, One Private Secretary

to the Examiners, 8 Expectant Examiners, 1 Treasurer, 1 Organizer, 1 Propagandist, 1 Auditor, 1 Public Relations or Liaison Officer, 1 Documents Officer, 1 Chief Charity Association Officer, and each of the last six officers have a deputy and two clerks; 13 Councillors or Committee Members, 1 voluntary Doctor of Medicine, 1 voluntary Lawyer, and 1 representative from the Hong Kong Association. This is then followed by a list of representatives in various cities and ports throughout Cuba, numbering 29 altogether.

A General Association recently coordinated all the societies in Havana or Cuba under its aegis. Its origins is shown in the large portrait of Mao Tse-tung and the Red Flags festooning one wallof a huge salle, in which is installed a large polished wood table on which can be found all the Chinese newspapers available in Cuba. These are the Jen Min Jih Pao (Peoples' Daily), the Ta Kung Pao, the Amoy Daily and the local newspapers the Kuang Hua Pao and the K'ai Ming Kung Pao of the Hung

League and Democratic Party. The former is published by the General Association and is explicitly Maoist in inspiration; it contains news about the cultural revolution in China and its progress in concrete terms. The K'ai Ming Kung Pao, however, besides looking decidedly more conservative both in face-type and illustration (the other paper is not illustrated) contains popular fiction serialized from day to day as well as news from Hong Kong, from Prensa Latina and from Canton. In one page of the New Year edition (p.7) there is even a corner devoted to the Freemasons announcing its financial takings for the year, for each week and each month, locally and from abroad. The sums are however, extremely modest, 26 pesos (dollars) 4 cents for the year.

Even in the General Association, there exists a small, albeit rather chaotic shrine to Kwan Kung, strewn with fortune papers and stale offerings of the local fare--cakes and fried plantain bananas.

Lying on the floor were the inevitable bamboo slips, a great many printed tickets with the verses from the I Ching (Book of Changes) accompanied by pai-chieh or "explanations" printed on them, and a pair of ritual wooden clappers. Along the passage is the General Association library and reading room which the Cuban lawyer attached to the Association has his office.

The general impression gained from the visits to the associations is that the majority of the members, despite the rather grand accommodation and furnishings, have been, and still are, living at a "subsistence" level. The food served at the Dragon-Ridge General and that sold in the shops bear this out. The only decent Chinese restaurant is located in the Havana equivalent of London's Mayfair district, and is normally frequented by the white, ex-bourgeoisie; it is thus not inappropriately called the"Mandarin." However, the standard of living does

not appear to be much below that of the average Cuban in Havana who is still suffering from the effects of the massive American political and economic blockade.

It is obvious that the associations serve no other purpose that that of friendly societies, providing facilities for recreation outside the home. Moreover, the younger generations have lost much of their Chineseness, unable either to speak or read Chinese, and having, in most cases, Cuban mothers. The kung-so represent the last cultural residues of the Chinese in Cuba, and soon, they too, will lose their function as the younger generation become more and more absorbed into Cuban society. The Chinese community in Cuba is thus a "world on the wane", and its isolation is made the more poignant by the fact that no Cuban anthropologist or social scientist has thought it worthwhile to make the Chinese community his study throughout the hundred years of its existence. It is nevertheless remarkable that so many elements of Chinese culture have survived under slavery, and amid the upheavals of a revolutionary society.

Notes

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1. H.F. MacNair, The Chinese Abroad, Shanghai, 1924, p.210.

2. Consular letter cited by H.B. Morse in Vol.II,p.171, The International Relations of the Chinese Empire, 3 vols. London, New York and Shanghai, 1910, 1918.

3. MacNair, op.cit. p.211.

4. Ibid.

5. Juan Luis Martin, The Chinese in Cuba, Havana, 1939

6. Baron von Hübner quoted in Morse, op. cit. p.176.

7. Morse, ibid. p.179-180.

8. The Taiping exiles were involved in the war of Independence against Spain in 1895-98, in which their participation was far from negligible.

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Szu Hsi T'ang "The Four Western Halls" in Szechwan

Hsi-pei lao-jen t'ang "West-north old-men hall" in Kweichow, pro-Manchu society

Wu Fu T'ang "Five Happinesses Hall" in Taiwan, also Chung I T'ang "Loyal Just Hall"

Hung Pang "Hung Gang" in Chekiang and Kiangsu
Ching Pang "Green Gang" in Hopei, originally known as the San Yuan T'ang "Society of Three Origins" included the Yen Hsiu "Salt Owls" and the Kuang Tan "Smooth Eggs", which attempted to control the Grand Canal and the grain routes; when grain transport was transferred to the sea route and carried by steamers members of the above societies were left destitute. They then resorted to the smuggling of salt under a man named P'an, and became an associated branch of the Elder Brother Society.

Other names of the Triad or Hung societies are:

Ch'ing-shui Hui "Clear Water Society"
Pi Shou Hui "Dagger Society"
Shuang Tao Hui "Double Knife Society"
Po-tzu Hui "(Begging) Bowl Society"
KaoHua Hui "Reform Society"
Hsiao Hung Ch'i "Little Red Flag Society"
Chien-tzu Hui "Sword Society"
Chih Kung T'ang "Justice Society"