

THE "BOXERS" IN 1898-1899, THE ORIGIN OF THE "I-HO-CHUAN" (義和拳) UPRISING, 1900

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I

The Boxer incident which occurred in 1900 must have appeared very strange from the Western viewpoint. The prime movers of the uprising, which aimed at the sweeping away from China of all Western people and their products including spectacles, clocks and so forth were groups of farmers, sailors, unemployed soldiers and city proletarians who believed in the magic effect of the so-called Shen-chüan 神拳 (god's fist, spiritual boxing) and who thought themselves invulnerable to gun-fire. The Empress Dowager, Tsu Hsi of the Ch'ing Dynasty, who was barely maintaining China's political independence after the defeat in the first Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895), ordered her imperial army to besiege the Peking legations together with the Boxers, and provoked the "war against the world" in June 1900. It is natural that Westerners were impressed by this "midsummer madness." From an outsiders' point of view this decision of Tsu Hsi was, indeed, beyond comprehension. But when one examines the original sources and the Chinese literature¹ on this event a little more closely, and considers the situation which confronted the regime in connection with the peculiar construction of Chinese society, one knows that the madness was inevitable even if indeed it was madness, and events which seemed a mere hazard were really possible in the situation of the time.

The Boxer incident was a climax and turning point in the modern history of China. On the one hand we may say that it was a movement with which traditional China endeavoured to defend and conserve her ancient standards, against the impact of the capitalist and imperialist West. But as it was the last, biggest, and most desperate effort to resist foreign and Christian influence, its failure inevitably brought about a great change in Chinese history.² Within the country, the conservative group in the court which overwhelmed the reform movement of 1898 completely lost leadership.

¹ Literatures and sources on this uprising, both Chinese and foreign, were recently (1951) compiled by historians of the Peoples' China, and published as "I-ho-tuan" 「義和團」中国近代史資料叢刊第九種 in 4 volumes.

² Clements P. H.; "The Boxer Rebellion", 1915, p. 15.

The Ch'ing dynasty itself began to show definite signs of collapse. To the foreigners it offered a chance to provoke the Russo-Japanese War (1904-5), which resulted in Japan's rapid expansion and advance into the north-eastern part of China. And so it was indirectly one of the chief movements that rouse the Chinese intelligentsia into action against foreign "Imperialism." This two-sidedness in its character, that while it had rather conservative and even reactionary intentions, it also had brought about, new currents of thought and events in China, was the result of the complex situation of the time.

The development of the disturbances since the spring of 1900 has been treated and included in many books, but the situation in 1898 and 1899 in which the movement originated has not been treated thoroughly enough.

The following essay aims to clear up these rather neglected points by using Chinese sources.

II

With regard to the genesis of the Boxer uprising, its relation to the Ch'ing government has been debated to this day.¹ There is no doubt that the Boxers had been recognized and protected as patriots since June 1900. But in 1898 and 1899, i. e. in the first stage of their development, some say that they were the militia organized by imperial decree under the supervision of the Manchu government, whilst others consider that the nature of the uprising was spontaneous and had no connection with the government and officials.

For instance, G. N. Steiger insisted that the Boxers were neither anti-governmental nor a religious secret society, but they were a corp of volunteers organized by the government in order to resist the invasion of the Western powers. He stressed the fact that the uprising originated not in middle and southern China, where the revolutionary trend was traditionally strong, but in the northern and northeastern areas where the people were loyal to the Ch'ing dynasty to the last even in the revolution of 1911. He further used data in European literature to conclude that the Boxers were organized according to a decree on the establishment of the Tuan-lien 團練 (village militia), which the Ch'ing government issued for Shan-tung, Chih-li, and Fêng-tien provinces on November 5th, 1898.²

On the other hand, Manabendra Roy judged that this incident was a reaction of peasant farmers to their poverty and misery caused by feudalistic

¹ R. Hart who was among the besieged in Peking, too, questioned this point ("These from the Land of Sinim" 1903, p. 150). It was also a object of discussion recently among the students of modern Chinese history in Japan ("1952 nen no Rekishigakkai, Shinmatsu Minsho" by Chujo Ichiko, "Shigaku Zasshi", No. 2, vol. 60, 1953).

² G. N. Steiger: "China and the Occident" 1927, p. 128-145.

exploitation. He asserted that the connection of the Ch'ing dynasty with the Boxers was just "fortuitous" and a "temporary" expedient even in the summer of 1900.³ Chujo Ichiko has another opinion. He considered the Boxers a religious and secret association, a branch sect and remnant of the Pai-lien-chiao 白蓮教 (White Lily Society) which was a group of rebels in the Chia-ching 嘉慶 period. Naturally its tendency was opposed to that of the Tuan-Lien, which was a semi-governmental police and military system for the suppression of revolutionary activities and the protection of the dynasty, gentry, and landlords.⁴

With regard to this, I should like to indicate a source which has not been previously quoted. A decree of May 23, 1898 included in "Tê-tsung Shih-lu" 德宗實錄, (Record of the period under Emperor Kwang-Hsü) reads as follows, "Decree for the grand counsellors: 'Send a telegram to Wan Wen-shao 王文韶 (the Viceroy of Chih-li). I learned by a telegram from Chang Ju-mei 張如梅 (the Governor of Shan-tung) that there appeared a group of people who call themselves without official sanction "I-min-hui" 義民會 (Society of the righteous), on the border of Shan-tung and Chih-li provinces, and who are distributing placards in Chih-li, An-hui, and Kiangsu provinces to prepare an attack against foreigners and Christians. There are many persons training in boxing in the prefecture of Tung-min-hsien 東明縣 in Chih-li and Kuan-hsien 冠縣 in Shan-tung, and we hear that they are spreading their cause through placards and notices. Taking advantage of this situation, brigands may cause disturbances. Order Wang Wen-shao, Chang Ju-mei, and Liu Shu-tang 劉樹堂 (the Viceroy of Honan) to send adequate men to the localities for precise investigation and to urge the local officers to prohibit their agitation. In Kiangsu province, distant as it is, there are a great mass of starvelings at present, so they may combine and make general unrest. Order Liu Kun-i 劉坤一 (the Viceroy of Liang-chiang provinces) to urge his men to investigate and prevent the further expansion of the disturbances.' Before long Chang Ju-mei reported as follows: 'As a result of our investigation, we learned that the body reported as "I-min-hui" was "I-ho-tuan" 義和團 (Society of I-ho boxers). There are no signs at present which indicate any trouble. When we have established Pao-chia 保甲 (neighbourhood) and "Tuan-fêng" 團防 (village militia) systems in these areas, we are going to include the Boxers in the "Hsiang-tuan" 鄉團 (village militia unit), and send competent men to take control of them in due time."⁵

This seems to me to be the oldest record about the Boxers in the Kwang-hsü period. According to this record, the body of Boxers had already been

³ M. N. Roy: "Revolution und Kontrarevolution in China" 1928, p. 144-146.

⁴ Chujo Ichiko: "Giwaken no seikaku" p. 245-267 (Included in "Kindai Chugoku kenkyu" compiled by Gakujutsu Kenkyu Kaigi, Kindai Chugoku Kenkyu tokubetsu-iinkai).

⁵ "Ta Ching Tê-tsung Ching Huang-ti Shih-lu" 大清德宗景皇帝實錄 vol. 418, p. 2B.

organized as a group training for pugilism and as an antiforeign movement in May 1898. It is no doubt wrong, therefore, when Steiger says that they were organized for the first time under the decree issued on 5th November 1898. But on the other hand, I cannot agree with Roy's opinion who believes that the Boxer activities were mainly due to economic exploitation and poverty, and Ichiko's who insists that the boxers had no connection at all with the government and militia system. The attitude of the boxers from the beginning was anti-foreign and anti-Christian, their concern international rather than internal. From the above-cited record it seems quite possible that they might have had some very intimate relation to the village militia, because the authorities of Shan-tung province have revealed their intention to accept the Boxers into the "Hsiang-tuan" to control them, and to this the Peking government, too, seems to have given tacit consent in May 1898.

III

One of the Chinese sources which should be referred to for the genesis of the Boxer uprising is "I-ho-ch'üan Chiao-men Yüan-liu-kao," 義和拳教門源流考 (The origin of a secret society called I-ho-ch'üan) and its "Shu-hou" 書後 (postscript) compiled in October 1899 by Lao Nai-hsüan, a magistrate of Wu-chiao 吳橋, Shan-tung province.¹ Lao Nai-hsüan considers the Boxers nothing but a branch sect of the famous White Lily religion (Pai Lien Chiao) which was prohibited and oppressed as a dangerous revolutionary society by the Peking government since 1808. To show this in a concrete and historical way, he compiled decrees and memorials issued for the suppression of this movement extending from 1808 to 1815, and annotated and explained in the following manner. The I-ho Boxers of the early 19th century were a group of brigands, who conspired with lower officials in local government and rendered them a kind of police service, and trading on this, ran gambling houses and oppressed peaceful citizens in the areas of Ying-chow, Hao-chow, and Hsü-chow of Chiang-nan, Kuei-tê of Ho-nan, and Tsao-chow, I-chow, and Yen-chow of Shan-tung. They were almost cleaned up by 1815, but the superstition of magical boxing originally taught by them survived and those who believed and trained in it at last in 1898, taking advantage of the strong antipathy of the people against foreigners and Christians, fomented an uprising with anti-foreign and anti-Christian slogans.²

¹ "I-ho-ch'üan Chiao-men Yüan-liu-kao" (義和拳教門源流考), compiled by Lao Nai-hsüan (勞乃宣), is included in Vol. IV, p 433-9 of "I-ho-tuan" (中國近代史資料叢刊第九種義和團, 中國歷史學會) above-cited, and its "Shu-hou" (postscript) is in Vol. II, p 1A-4A of "Chüan-fei Chi-lue" (拳匪紀略) compiled by Chiao Te-sheng 僑哲生.

² Ibid. "I-ho-tuan" p. 433.

It is not easy to ascertain the relation between the Boxers at the beginning of the 19th century and that at the end of the century. But apparently there is a big difference in their behavior. According to the statement of Lao Nai-hsüan, Boxers in 1899 were above all exclusionists and nationalists. "Their party declares that they will only oppose foreigners and Christianity, and never cause any disturbance among peaceful people, or against the government and officials. So in areas where Christians and the common people were hostile to each other, the non-Christian people were finally misled and agreed to the movement, because they were impressed by righteous indignation, and overlooked its magical spiritualism or spell. Even government officials made no investigations and prohibition, but some of them went as far as to applaud the Boxers as patriots and righteous people"³ "Of course the Boxers were pretending that they were only protecting themselves by boxing, but under this cloak they kept the belief of the Pa-koa 八卦 religion. The plot of the rebellion and the origin of its magic cult are known only by some chief leaders. Not only outsiders but people introduced into the group are kept in ignorance except a few. Consequently both the cunning of the bad people and the foolish of the peaceful people followed the party. The Boxers thus contain gentry, and rich official families as well as poor and desperate people."⁴ "The party's slogan is to support the Middle Kingdom and to destroy Christianity. If the people who were deceived and oppressed by Chinese converts and foreigners, join this sect, they can resist and control them. So a great mass of people came to believe this, and called the society I-min-hui (Society of the righteous): this is proof that the people regarded them as just and not as wicked. Last year, a committee of Shantung province called on them for investigation and said in their report 'the purpose of their pugilism training is solely to protect their persons and property. Their talent and ability in boxing is very good. And yet they have caused no trouble hitherto despite their force and strong influence,' and also stated that 'They respect i-ch'i (義氣) and always show a frank and straight mind. When they see a person treated unjustly or any injustice happens before their eyes, they at once attempt to correct it, even at the risk of their own lives. So if by any means we can guide them and convert their private interest to public concern, and give their bravery a proper orientation, then we might expect them to be useful in a national emergency.' This is proof that they were respected as sound and righteous by the government officials."⁵

Of course there can be no doubt that the "I-ho" boxers were a kind of "Hui-tang" (secret society) and "Chiao-men" (heterodox religion), which

³ Ibid. "I-ho-tuan", p. 438.

⁴ "Chüan-fei Chi-lüe" part II, vol. 2, p. 2A.

⁵ Ibid. p. 2B.

have been watched constantly as a dangerous germ of revolutionary power by the central government. They organized their private association for armed practices. They propagandised and incited a magic cult. And depending on this private force, they took charge of the settlement of trouble, between farmers and converts or landlords and foreigners, without application of the state-law, which was quite incompetent and ineffective against the foreign invasion. They established a patriarchal order among themselves and their believers as "Ta-shih-hsiung" 大師兄 (Eldest teacher-brother), "Er-shih-hsiung" 二師兄 (Second teacher-brother) etc. Those are apparent traits which show that they were not at all different from the usual form of Chinese religious, secret and revolutionay societies.

Lao Nai-hsüan's as well as Ichiko's opinion that they were a branch sect of the Pai-lien or Pa-koa 八卦 religion, and also a group which could be politically dangerous to the Ch'ing government is quite right. But at the same time the Chinese government in 1898 did not try to suppress them in the first stage of their development; on the contrary, they even applauded and protected them. In the memorial of Chang Ju-mei presented in May 1898 as mentioned above, he stated "When we have established 'Pao-chia' (neighbourhood) and 'Tuan-fêng' (village militia) systems in these areas, we are going to include the Boxers in the 'Hsiang-tuan' (village umit)," and in the decree of June 6, 1900, we see "recently 'I ho-tuan' Boxers guarded their native towns with their skill and talent for self-defence. They have never caused any trouble hitherto."⁶ Also in the decree of June 29, 1900. "Before this, there was a kind of rebels (luan min) in the provinces of Shantung and Chih-li, who were training in boxing and cudgeling in each village, and to this, they added a mysterious doctrine. Owing to the local officers' negligence in investigation and observation, they instigated a general agitation which expanded over a very wide area within a short time."⁷ Judging from these statements, it is obvious that the Boxers were connived at or even encouraged by local officials in the beginning of their formation, and with this governmental support, grew very rapidly. And in this point I cannot follow Ichiko's opinion which assumes that the Boxers and the government were very much hostile to each other, and there could be no connection at all between "I-ho-tuan" groups and village militia because they had contrary orientations.

Of course there have been many writers like A. Smith and H. B. Morse, who thought that the Boxers had intimate connection with the government.⁸ But at the same time almost all of them attribute the establishment of

⁶ "Tê-tsung Shih-lu", Vol. 463, p. 5B.

⁷ Ibid. vol. 465, p. 3A.

⁸ A. Smith: "China in Convulsion", 1901, vol. 2, p. 165-180, 192. H. B. Morse: "International relations of Chinese Empire". 1918, Vol. III, p. 179-180; p. 186-189.

this close connection between the Boxers and government to the fanatic conduct of Yü Hsien (毓賢), a Manchurian official of reactionary and anti-foreign tendency, who served as the Governor of Shan-tung from December to March, 1899. For example, A. Smith charges that "if Yü-hsien had done his duty as the Governor of a great and populous province for the welfare of which he was responsible, that (Boxers') Society would have been put down by simply following up the crushing defeat which the Boxers had met (in October 1899) at Sên Lê Tien. The fact that he repudiated the success which his troops had won, and threw away its results, could only be accounted for upon the supposition that he had good reasons for his conduct, and in China no better reason for any act can be assigned than that it is commanded by the throne."⁹

But as we saw above this condemnation is only partly correct. The existence of the society was found by Chang Ju-mei who preceded Yü Hsien as a Governor of Shan-tung, and who was not especially anti-foreign nor anti-Christian in May, 1898. And Chang Ju-mei intended to induct the Boxers into the local police and militia system, because he was moved by the current of the time, and also the peculiar system of Chinese society made it inevitable.

IV

The Boxer incident is a product of the imperialistic age when the western powers endeavoured to extract from defeated and helpless China any rights and interests which could be gained by any means. Diplomatic relations between China and the powers, as well as between the powers themselves, became complicated, and a deep antipathy grew between them.

And this feeling of antipathy, or the conflict resulting from this antipathy, made the attitude of the Western powers more and more aggressive, and this aggressiveness made the Chinese more and more obstinate and furious.

On November 1st 1897, two German Catholic missionaries were murdered at Chü-yeh in southwestern Shan-tung, and at once the Germans occupied Chiao-chow Bay according to a premeditated and prepared plan and this induced Russia to occupy Port Arthur (January, 1898), England to request the lease of Wei-hai-wei in the north, the non-cession of the Yangtze provinces in central China (February, 1898), and France to occupy Kuang-chow Bay in the South (April, 1898) to recover and maintain the "Balance of Power." These forcible policies of the Western powers, and the successive submissions by the Chinese government, were immediately followed by

⁹ A. Smith: *Ibid.* vol.I, P. 167-8.

the cession of Kow-loon peninsula to England and the Japanese demand for non-alienation of Fu-chien province (April, 1898). From December 1897 to April 1898, the powers requested and demanded incessantly, and China yielded and surrendered continuously, and then in May 1898 as said above, the first signs of Boxer activities were recorded in "Tê-tsung Shih-lu", the public record of the Ch'ing dynasty.

The successive concessions were inevitable because of financial embarrassment, corruption of the army, and the critical conditions of the public peace in the country after the Sino-Japanese War (1894—5). The situation became worse and worse in 1898. The military expenditure entailed by the War and reparations of 230 million taels led finally to utter bankruptcy. The prewar foreign debt amounting to 15 million taels grew to 200 million and this necessitated generous grants of shipping, mining and railway concessions to foreigners. In order to secure the redemption of debts, foreigners supervised the government revenue. "Chiao-shin-Ku-piao", a domestic loan of 100 million taels was issued in 1898, but only one half of the total amount was absorbed, though the government was ready to bestow official positions on those who subscribed, and also to coerce those who did not.¹ As the central government weakened, the transfer of revenue from local governments was delayed or stopped entirely. And when sent to Pekiug, it was not in real silver but in exchange drafts of "Shan-si Piao-hao" (Bankers association from Shan-si province) which very often were difficult to convert into cash. As regards the salt-tax and li-kin it was estimated that about fifty per cent were held up by local officials.² The tax burden on farmers and petty merchants increased, whilst the government faced a financial crisis.

The corruption and inefficiency of the military system at the time was already revealed by the defeat in the Sino-Japanese War. Among local officers and generals, vices such as Kung-ê 空額 (peculation of expenditure on fictitious number of forces), Ko-kou 剋扣 (peculation of expenditure through reducing the real payment and ration for existing forces), or Tan-pai 攤派 (imposition of military expenditure on towns and villages) became excessive,³ whilst on the other hand, the pay of the lower officers and men was reduced, delayed, or even stopped entirely. Soldiers were thus compelled to neglect military training, and engage in agriculture and industry, or combine with brigands and live on smuggling of salt or opium, gambling and other roguish

¹ "Tê-tsung Shih-lu", vol. 415, p. 7A (20 th d., IInd m., 24 th y. of Kwang-hsü).

² Ibid. vol. 441, p. 13A (30, III, 25 K.).

³ Ibid. vol. 414, p. 17B (26, I, 24 K.).

business.⁴

Through the experience of defeat, the dynasty had already learned that it was inevitable to westernize and modernize the equipment and training of the army. But this was financially impossible for the Peking government which felt difficulty to maintain even inefficient and poorly equipped forces. So attempts were made to raise money for new armament by reducing the number of soldiers and curtailing military expenditures (Tsai-ping Chie-hsiang 裁兵節餉).

A decree issued in December 1897 immediately after the German occupation of Chiao-chow Bay tells us, "For two years since the termination of the War, officials in and out of the court insisted upon a policy of military strengthening, whilst the international situation was getting more and more critical. Our negotiations with foreign countries always resulted in our defeat. It is because the powers, taking advantage of the weakness and corruption of our country, in alliance are looking for a chance of invasion. The essential point of national defence is the perfection of armament and military preparation. However, the financial unbalance between revenue and expenditure is too great at present. So I have severely and repeatedly admonished Governors, Viceroys, and Generals of the provinces to stop the exploitation of the likin-tax and to weed out superfluous soldiers.....and to inspect and prohibit fictitious amounts."⁵ A decree issued on Feb. 20 th, 1898, announces that "It is an urgent necessity to realize a reduction of soldiers and a curtailment of military expenditure. Repeatedly I warned Generals, Viceroys, and Governors to take positive action. Do not make excuses for neglecting your duty..... Perusing the successive reports from Wei Kuang-shou, Chang Ju-mei, and Wang Wen-shao I found that all of them stated they would need more time to fulfill their tasks because of some difficulties. Sometimes they insisted that there were no possibility to reduce the number of soldiers, and sometimes they realized so small a reduction that was almost negligible from our viewpoint. They did not repair the decadence of the officers, nor the fictitious number of soldiers. I was troubled and annoyed all day long, and drew a deep sigh.....feeding useless soldiers, giving power to degenerated officers....."⁶

To have a new army, to modernize the equipment, it was necessary to dismiss old men and to deprive generals and officers of their gains from illegal exploitation. Was there really a reduction of soldiers? According

⁴ "Tê-tsung Shih-lu," vol. 416, p. 3B. According to the report of Apr., 1898 from Kang-i who was specially despatched to central and southern China to investigate and to prohibit the exploitation by the official, "when the fixed number was five hundred, the real figure was almost always three hundred," that is three fifth of the military expenditure was regularly pilfered in the southern provinces.

⁵ Ibid. vol. 411, p 14A-B (25, XI, 23K.).

⁶ Ibid. vol. 414, p. 21A (30, I, 24K.).

to the reports in "Tê-tsung Shih-lu", the answer is yes. For example Shan-tung province reported on Apr. 1898, that they had reduced regular and volunteer forces by 30%, and that they were going to reduce the remaining soldiers by 20%.⁷ In the same month, Honan province reported a 70 % (!) reduction plan of the fixed number of soldiers.⁸ Chih-li province also reported that the discharge of 7,247 officers and men was performed in the spring of 1899.⁹

V

Meanwhile, this reduction of soldiers stimulated the development of the Boxer movement in two ways. On the one hand, groups of unemployed and wandering ex-soldiers (Yu-yung 游勇 or San-yung 散勇) appeared as a factor of social unrest, and on the other it became an urgent necessity for the Ch'ing government to strengthen public peace through the re-establishment of Hsiang-tuan 鄉團 (village militia) in the provinces.

"Chie-ping" or the "reduction of number of soldiers" was above all intended to do away with Kung-ê 空額 (fictitious members) and intermediate exploitation of revenue by governors and generals. But their interest was to dismiss real soldiers, especially those of honest and upright spirit, who would not easily obey the orders of their corrupt superiors, leaving the nominal members untouched as a source of their illegal gains. Inevitably the number of soldiers residing in the provinces was actually reduced, with a consequent lowering of garrison and police power, whilst the country became infested with unemployed soldiers who were neither old nor weak but always desperate to make a living.

According to the decree issued on January 21, 1899, a year after the successive decrees on the reduction of soldiers, it was revealed that "In so many places, the hungry formed mobs and brigands caused trouble," and that "certain officials attribute these disturbances to the insufficiency of military forces resulting from the too speedy discharges. Even high officials in local government make this excuse."¹⁰ There exists no doubt that conditions of general unrest furthered the development of the Boxer movement. The unemployed soldiers could not but join in secret associations or combine with groups of rascals to make their living, unless they were fortunate enough to be admitted into the newly organized Westernized army or into village militia units. In fact, They took the

⁷ "Tê-tsung Shih-lu". vol. 416, p. 21B (23, III, 24K.).

⁸ Ibid. vol. 416, p. 17B (26, III, 23K.).

⁹ Ibid. vol. 444, p. 4B (2, V, 24K.).

¹⁰ Ibid. 10/XII/24 (vol. 435, p. 14A).

leading part in many disturbances that happened in 1898—9. Moreover, after the demobilization in 1896, weapons and ammunition were often sold secretly and illegally by corrupt officers, and this made the unrest worse and more dangerous.¹¹

The soldiers were joining the Boxers, too. "Ping-yuan Chuan-fei Chi-shih" 平原拳匪紀事 a record of the Ping-yuan incident, at Nov. 1899, written by Chang Chie 蔣諧, a magistrate of this prefecture at the time, tells us that the Boxers included Buddhist priests and Taoist monks, but "almost all of them were strangers, and many of them were Yu-yung (游勇 unemployed and prowling ex-soldiers) and therefore good fighters".¹²

Another influence stimulating the early development of the Boxers was the strengthening of the village militia by the Peking government. Of course it was not the first time that the farmers were urged to organize themselves into village units (Hsiang-tuan) to protect their property against robbers or to fight against aggressors to support the dynasty. Because the Chinese bureaucracy which was organized by civil officials selected through literary examination (Ko-chü 科舉) lacked the spiritual foundation for chivalry and fight the Chinese officials in dynasty times were almost always very poor fighters, the Chinese army was almost always weak and corrupt. And it was necessary for the maintainance of public peace that the government raise fighting powers through levies and remunerations of these bodies; village militia organized by farmers, secret associations formed by monks, city proletarians, or scholars and their disciples. The White Lily society, a group of rebels in the Chia-ching period, and the Tai-ping rebellion in the Hsien-fêng age, were suppressed by militia who were not professional soldiers. So at the end of 1897, when the situation of Shan-tung province became critical following the German occupation of Chiao-chow, the re-establishment and strengthening of the village militia was insisted on repeatedly by certain high officials. For example, Hsü-tung 徐桐 in Dec. 1897, and Kang-yi 剛毅 in Apr. 1898, petitioned the Empress Dowager to "re-establish and combine village militias," and to "mobilize their forces for national defence." This was approved almost at once.¹³

Soon after, from the spring to the summer of 1898, the internal public peace was seriously disturbed by famines caused by the poor harvest in the preceding year, and by the general feeling of hostility against foreigners

¹¹ "Tê-tsung Shih-lu," 16/XII/25 (vol. 457, p. 1B), 20/XII/25 (vol. 457, p. 1B). An officer, Niu Shih-han 牛師韓 who received three thousand guns and three hundred thousand bullets from the government arsenal to go to the front in 1895 died before leaving. And his son had sold a part of the arms for a large sum of money. His cousin, Niu Shih-shiu 牛師修 became the leader in the Wo-yan (高陽) rebellion in Ang-hui as will be stated below. Ibid. 30/III/25 (vol. 441, p. 13A).

¹² Chiang Chie: "Ping-yüan Chüan-fei Chi-shih" (Ibid. "I-ho-tuan," vol. I, p. 356),

¹³ Tê-tsung Shih-lu, 25/XI/23 (vol. 413, p. 15B), 14/III/24 (vol. 416, p. 2B).

who were becoming more and more aggressive. Almost in every month anti-foreign and anti-Christian outbreaks were reported somewhere. Missionaries and converts were attacked and murdered, mission properties burned and destroyed.¹⁴ Especially in southern provinces, not only the local brigands, hungry farmers and anti-foreign groups were making trouble, but also the revolutionary movement led by Sun Yat-sen was reported.¹⁵ And because the local army and government forces were quite insufficient to suppress these "rebels", the militia was organized and their record was superior to that of the official army. As stated in a memorandum sent to the throne, "if there were any captives, these were brought in by the volunteers. Official soldiers always fell back although they laid claim to great merits in their fighting."¹⁶

Therefore, the government ordered on Sept. 5, 1898, that Kuang-tung and Kuang-si provinces establish militia units in every village within one month, and ordered the other provinces to do the same within three months. On November 5, 1898, the provinces were again urged to build up their militia, especially in Chih-li, Shan-tung, and Fên-tien provinces.¹⁷ It was on the basis of this second decree that Steiger mistakenly concluded that the society or Tuan 團 of Boxers was organized under the influence and the supervision of the central government.

But as I stated above, Chang Ju-mei reported their existence in Shan-tung already in the summer of 1898.¹⁸ So the Boxer movement was originally founded by the people themselves to protect their persons and property, and then Chang Ju-mei intended to induct the Boxers into the militia units which he was going to organize according to imperial decree. From September 1898 to the spring of the following year, provinces reported, one by one, the completion of a militia system to the throne. The report from Shan-tung province was received by the Empress in the autumn of 1898, and she appreciated that the officials and the gentry of this province transacted the business very well under Chang Ju-mei's leadership, and that they "did not betray my imperial trust."¹⁹

As Ichiko says, the village militia performed semi-governmental police service. On the other hand, the secret societies such as the White Lily, Big Swords and Boxers, were nothing but the object against which the

¹⁴ H. B. Morse: "The international relations of the Chinese Empire", vol. III, p. 161--168.

¹⁵ "Tê-tsung Shih-lu" 24/V/24, 10/VI/24, 19/VII/24 etc.

¹⁶ Ibid., 19/VII/24 (vol. 424, p. 18A).

¹⁷ Ibid., 20/VII/24 (vol. 424, p. 20A), 22/IX/24 (vol. 430, p. 8B).

¹⁸ Ibid. 4/IV/24. A report by Lao Nai-hsüan dated 28/VI/25 (Kuang-hsü) reveals that I-ho-tuan activities in Kuan-hsien, Shan-tung was conspicuous already in the spring of 1898. And the same report also tells us about a Wang Mu 王牧, a magistrate of Wu-chiao 吳橋, who had an anonymous placard to summon the Boxers to "the 18th tuan (unit) of Tung-chan-fu 東昌第十八團" to hunt and condemn Chinese converts. Ibid. "I-ho-tuan" vol. IV, p. 460--462.

¹⁹ "Tê-tsung Shih-lu" 12/X/24 (vol. 431, p. 12A).

service was maintained and directed. They They were two different kinds of organization with contrary purpose. Nevertheless, in the peculiar conditions of old China, it was quite possible that members of secret associations entered village units, and that those village units, including anti-dynastic elements, were mobilized for national defence or the maintainance of public peace.

The reason was that though the village militia was originally a function of village communities for self-defence, and thus a kind of brotherhood of the armed villagers, such closed unity of Chinese villagers had to be dissolved by constant interference from the central government which found it necessary to exterminate them for the security of the state. So eventually the former village communities changed into organs to serve the government of collecting taxes, arresting robbers, watching the villagers. Militia units developed into something of dull and obligatory character. In the later Ch'ing dynasty the personal militia service by the peasants was supplanted by the duty to pay special tax for the hiring of Hsiang-yung 鄉勇 or "volunteers from villages". And yet some vestige of olden days remained, and the militia men were stronger and more able than the regular army.

And so in 1898 the provinces were urged to strengthen the Militia, and many Boxers including prowling ex-soldiers or Yu-yung were inducted into it. Liu Shu-tang 劉樹堂, the Governor of Ho-nan, opposed the idea of strengthening the militia in one of his memorandum sent to the throne in Dec. 1898, stating, "if unemployed soldiers should hear of the order to enlist the members of the units (Tuan-ting 團丁), they will probably try to join it and to stir up others."²⁰ Of course the Peking government reprimanded Liu and ordered him to do as he was instructed, but real conditions must have been what he feared. In the Pin Yüan incident, next year, when Chang Chie was about to suppress the boxers, a member of the sect arrived from Ch'i-nan and said in public that "half of the two regiments of the Left wing are members of Big Swords society. The governor (Yü Hsien 毓賢) supports us, so how can the magistrate (Chang Chie 蔣階) be against us?" The Big Swords were a secret association for antiforeign activities and had some connection with the Boxers as will be seen below. The influence of the Boxers and of the Big sword Society had penetrated into the provincial army of Shan-tung.²¹

VI

Thus the Boxers were accepted into the militia, and the militia men became leaders in the antiforeign movement. Meanwhile a decree issued on

²⁰ "Tê-tsung Shih-lu" 15/IX/24, (vol. 433. p. 13A).

²¹ Ibid. Lao Nai-hsüan "Chüan-fei Chi-shih" ("I-ho-tuan", vol. I, p. 355).

Nov. 19, 1898 reads as follows; "Send telegram to Yu Lu 裕祿: 'In the borderland of Chih-li and Shan-tung, Boxers are fighting with Christian converts, and the situation is going from bad to worse.' According to a telegram from Yu Lu in reply 'Yao Lo-chi 姚洛奇, a Boxer living in Kuang-ping 廣平, together with brigands, quarrelled with native converts in the areas of Kuan-hsien 冠縣 and Wei-hsien 威縣. We have arrested and chastised him. But at present so many people are joining the society. If once they raised some slogan and started an outbreak, this cannot be easily subdued.' : Order Chang Ju-mei.....to suppress them severely. Order Yu Lu to give any aid needed and not to neglect his duties."²²

This decree shows a more cautious attitude of the Peking government than that shown in the decree of Apr. 1898. (p. 238) And this of course reflects a new situation on the Boxers' side. Yao Lo-chi began to combine "with brigands." Masses of peasants join them. Boxers were no longer a stationary and defensive group of villagers, doing pugilism training to protect themselves, but they became a consolidated body for antiforeign movement, sometimes actively attacking the converts, sometimes roaming about to avenge the strong-arm measures of foreigners and converts. But A. Smith, a missionary and author of "China in Convulsion" (1901), a book on the Boxers, who had been a resident in Pan-chüang, northern Shantung, living not far from Kuan-hsien 冠縣 and Wei-hsien 威縣, and who was also a correspondent in the province for the "North China Herald," did not report on Boxer activities in 1898 in his book above-cited nor in his correspondence. His statement about the Boxers started from the Ping-yüan incident in the next year. This does not mean that their activities were not yet conspicuous enough to arouse his attention but that Smith's knowledge about them was not thorough enough. Sometime between the summer and the autumn of 1898, there must have been a turning point.

Of course the Empress shared the general feeling of the time, After the lease of Chiao-chow to Germany, Port Arthur to Russia, Kwang-chow-wan to France, and Kowloon and Wei-hai-wei to England, the attitude of the Peking government changed at last. In June 1898, the Kan-su army under Tung Fu-shiang 董福祥, the most reckless of Chinese armies at the time, was summoned from the western border to Chih-li province to guard the capital against foreign aggression. In July, men of this force attacked missionaries and destroyed churches at Pao-ting-fu on their way to Peking, and then caused troubles against foreigners at Marco Polo Bridge and Chien-men-wai, Peking, in September and October, of this year.²³ The removal of Tun's troops from the vicinity of Peking in nine

²² Tê-tsung Shih-lu, 6/X/24, (vol. 431, p. 10A).

days was demanded by the foreign envoys, and though the imperial ministers yielded to this demand their feeling of antipathy deepened and the actual removal of the troops was postponed.²⁴ The "hundred days" reform by Emperor Kuang-Hsü under the influence of K'ang Yu-wei had just collapsed on 22 Sept., 1898. Empress Dowager Tsu Hsi resumed the regency by imprisoning the young emperor and expelling or decapitating the reformers. The reform decrees were reversed. Tsu Hsi was neither more nor less anti-foreign than the reformers, but wished to return to the traditional methods of government. Any radical alterations were checked. The principles of conservatism and traditionalism were reasserted. And this anti-westernism helped the anti-foreignism to strengthen rapidly in the provinces.

Moreover the concessions made in the spring of 1898 caused serious international strife everywhere. Especially Germans, engaged in the construction of the port of Tsingtao and surveying the inner area to investigate the possibilities for mining and railway enterprises aroused intense antipathy among the farmers, landlord, and gentry of Shan-tung province. At the end of 1899, three Germans prospecting on the way inland from Jih-chao 日照 in southern Shan-tung were attacked by a mob and narrowly escaped. At once the German authorities avenged this offence against their nationals by sending two hundred and fifty soldiers to burn two villages from which the mob had come. They also seized the town of Jih-chao to exact the punishment for the arrest and maltreatment of a German missionary there. Then they carried off, after holding the town for six weeks, five members of gentry to Tsingtao to secure the settlement of the case.²⁵

On February 28, 1899 Italy demanded the lease of San-men Bay in eastern Chekiang as a coal supplying port, and the establishment of a "sphere of influence" in the neighbourhood. And when the demand was refused by the Ch'ing government on March 4, 1899, Italy sent an ultimatum to Peking and despatched war-ships to the Yellow sea for demonstration.²⁶ This was immediately after most German demands for the settlement of the Jih-chao incident had been accepted. So the world expected China to make another submission, but she ignored the repeated demands and threats by Italy. And in October 1899, the Italian demonstration finished without effect.

I cannot go into the delicate circumstances which made Italy give up

²³ On Tung Fu-shiang and Kan-su army see A. Smith "China in convulsion" Vol. I. p. 163, H. B. Morse: "The international relations." Vol. III, p. 151—3, and Tê-tung Shih-lu 6/III/24, 6/V/24 etc.

²⁴ G. N. Steiger: "China and the Occidents" p. 123, 170.

²⁵ "Foreign relations of U. S." 1899, p. 154—178.

²⁶ H. B. Morse: Ibid "The international relations." vol. III, p. 124—5, 162—169, 175.

her demand. But Tsu Hsi's government showed an attitude of resolute resistance to the Italian aggression. It ordered the Viceroys and the Governors not to surrender to the foreigners even if threatened by war.²⁷ An instance may be mentioned (decree of Nov. 21st 1899). "Instruct the grand counsellors: the powers are looking with tiger eyes for a chance to penetrate into our country. In the present financial situation and with our armament it is hardly possible to start a war from our side. But there may be cases of emergency, in which we can do nothing but fight. If the strong enemy should invade our land and threaten us to yield a never acknowledgeable demand, viceroys and governors of those provinces shall stand together and fight for victory. The word "peace", must not be mentioned, nor must it be thought. With the vast extent of our land, the richness of our products, and a population of many hundred million, what enemy do we have to fear if only we have the spirit of loyalty to the emperor and to the state?"²⁸

From 1898 to 1899, the attitude of the Chinese government to the foreign powers seems to have changed rapidly. On the other hand, on March 15 1899, a decree was issued to give official status to the missionaries. Bishops were assimilated to viceroys and governors, the lower ranks of the Catholic missionaries to lower Chinese officials. The bishops were to send lists of their subordinates to the local officials, and missionaries were not to intervene in cases before the courts.²⁹ The principle of traditional Chinese government, to be superior and neutral over all parties as the worldly agent of the "Heaven", was applied and the Empress desired to protect her state (and the Dynasty) not by driving the missionaries out of the country but by absorbing Christianity into the Chinese body politic, and thereby depriving missionaries and their converts gradually of their extraterritorial status.³⁰

At the same time, the Empress repeatedly ordered Yü Hsien 毓賢, who served as the governor of Shan-tung from April to December 1899, to watch and suppress the rebellious activities under his jurisdiction. And she ordered Yuan Shih-kai 袁世凱, who succeeded Yü Hsien as governor of Shantung after the Ping-yüan incident, and who was an able leader of a new Westernized army, not to suppress the people's movement by mere force, but to enforce obedience by taking account of their feelings.³¹ As foreign envoys charged at the time, the Chinese government and its officials were lax in their measures against the anti-foreign movement. Yet

²⁷ Tè-tsunng Shih-lu 6/II/25, 8/IV/25, 18/IV/25, 6/V/25, 29/IX/25, 6/V/25, 9/X/25 etc.

²⁸ Ibid. 19/X/25 (vol. 453, p. 5A—B).

²⁹ H. B. Morse: Ibid. "The international relations", vol III, p. 160.

³⁰ H. B. Morse and H. F. MacNa' r: "Far Eastern international relations" 1931, p. 454.

³¹ Orders to Yü Hsien, "Tè-tsunng Shih-lu" 19/X/25, 26/X/25, and to Yuan Shih-kai, Ibid., 23/XI/25.

the watchfulness of the Peking government increased gradually, because the situation in the provinces became more and more dangerous to foreigners, missionaries and converts, and also to the government and to the Dynasty itself.

VII

The activities of Boxers in northern Shan-tung developed rapidly between 1898 and 1899. In April 1898, as stated above, Chang Ju-mei, the Governor of Shan-tung, felt it reasonable to induct the Boxers into village militia units and to make use of them as an instrument for local government and national defence. In November, 1898, Yao Lo-chi 姚洛奇, a Boxer leader was reported to have rallied a great number of "brigands," and the danger of their engaging in anti-dynastic activities began to be feared by the Peking government. In fact, in October 1898, they were no longer stationary and defensive groups for the pugilistic training of villagers, but moving, growing bodies of anti-foreign and anti-Christian conviction held together by their belief in magical boxing and their hatred of foreigners and converts. Father Isorè wrote in his letter of October 25 1898, that "at six o'clock in the morning I was informed of the uprising of the 'Ihonokien' (I-ho-chuan or I-ho-kien in Shantung dialect). The rebels have as their insignia a sort of turban and boots; their weapons are muskets or lances; their ensign, a yellow flag with black border, carrying the motto 'Obedience to the Tsing, Death to the Europeans'"³²

In the Ping-yüan 平原 incident, of November 1899, the Boxers were led by Chu-hung-tung 朱紅燈 (Li Weng-cheng 李文成) and Pen-ming Hu-shiang 本明和尚 who pretended to be the descendants of the late Ming 明 emperors. Thousands of Boxers carrying red banners, muskets and swords with red emblems, fired two cannons and fought against the regular army.³³ Their attacks were directed no longer only against christians and converts, but also they robbed and despoiled the persons and property of landlords, gentry, and officials. The number of Boxers who banded together increased rapidly, and the number of bands which they formed also increased. Leaders, like Hu-shiang Wu-shiu 和尚武修, a monk, Chang Tê-cheng 張德成, a sailor, Tsao Fu-tien 曹福田, a gambler, Hoang-lien Sheng-mu 黃蓮聖母, the daughter of a grand-canal boat-man, emerged from the lower classes and joined the movement. Disturbances expanded from the south to the

³² In "Chine et Ceylan", a collection of letters from Jesuite fathers, cited by Ste'ger in "China and the Occidents", p. 132.

³³ Chan Chie; Ibid. P. C. C. S.

north, and by the end of 1899 they reached the outskirts of Peking and Tien-tsin.

The domestic and the international situation acceleratively bred a general unrest and hostility against foreigners. But there was a third factor which stimulated the movement to develop more rapidly after the autumn of 1898. That was the economic condition in northern China; above all, poor harvests and famines in Kiang-su, An-hui, Shan-tung and Ho-nan in 1897, 1898, 1899, and abnormally dry weather in Chih-li in 1899 and 1900.

Of course sudden changes in the economic condition as the opening of Tsing-tao as a free port, and the influx of foreign capital and merchandise into the interior also affected the living standard of farmers of Shantung. For example, A. Smith who was a resident of the province at that time describes the result of German economic invasion as follows;

1 Appearance of a new kind of foreigners, i. e. "promoters," whose interests and behavior differ from those of old type foreign residents, who had been government officials, merchants, and missionaries. Rapid increase of their influence accompanied by capital inflow.

2 Unemployment caused in the native labour market by imports of machine-made goods such as cotton yarns, matches, and kerosene, and by the construction of railways and progress in inland water navigation. The lack of elasticity in the local labour market made the situations still more unbearable.

3 The increasingly evil influence of opium smoking and opium trade, which penetrated the interior through the increase of import and the beginning of opium poppy cultivation in Shan-tung.³⁴

Regarding (1), The subsidiary treaty on commerce between China and Japan signed at Peking on July 21, 1896, embodied the Japanese right to carry on trade, industry, and manufacture at any of the treaty ports, and this was at once shared in by all treaty nations through the "most favoured nation clause". So as soon as Chiao-chow was occupied, and a German sphere of influence was established in Shan-tung, German capital began to flow into the interior seeking coal, iron, gold-mining, and railway concession. The "promoters" entered a land where "nobody knows and cares anything about 'progress'" (A. Smith).³⁵ They built up roads, factories, and railways, utterly ignoring Chinese respect for "Feng-sui" 風水 (geomancy). They bought compulsorily or made the Chinese government purchase farmlands at cheap prices sometimes selling them

³⁴ A. H. Smith; "China in Convulsion", vol. I, p. 88-101

³⁵ A. H. Smith: Ibid. p. 89

again at a profit.³⁶ Hostility against the foreigners was thus aroused by those capitalists and their agents. Of course the German investments in Shan-tung, as those of the Russians in Manchuria, did some good to the peasants of Shan-tung. Masses of landless or poor peasants from the interior of the province, from Shanghai and other southern ports, gathered in Tsingtao seeking high wages.³⁷ Nevertheless the scale of foreign investment was not so big as to settle the problem of poverty among Chinese farmers. On the contrary, as we shall see below, the population movement from south to north, partly because of the famine in Kiang-su in 1897 and 1898, stipulated the development of disturbances in Shantung.

Regarding (2), the railway that had been built in North China before 1899 were only two short lines (i) from Tan-shan 唐山 to Tien-tsin 天津, and (ii) from Peking to Chêng-ting 正定. Inland water navigation, to which the right was given to foreigners in 1898, had hardly anything to do with the Boxers because there was no river in north China which allowed foreign steamship navigation except Pai-ho 白河 connecting Tien-tsin with the Yellow sea. But imports of machine-made foreign goods, especially of cotton yarns and of petroleum, rapidly increased before 1899 (Table I, II), and affected the peasants' living as Smith said, "in some villages every family has one or more looms, and much of the work is done in underground cellars, where the click of the shuttle is heard month in and month out from the middle of the first moon till the closing day of the twelfth. But now the looms are idle and the weaving cellars are falling in the ruins.....Many of the innumerable sufferers from this steady advance of 'civilization' into the interior of China have no more appreciation of the causes of their calamity..... Yet there are many others who know perfectly well that before the foreign trade came in to disturb the ancient order of things, there was in ordinary years enough to eat and to wear, whereas now there is a scarcity in every direction, with a prospect of worse to come. With an experience like this, in many different lines of activity, the Chinese are not to be blamed for feeling a profound dissatisfaction with the new order of things."³⁸

The foreign trade in northern ports were showing a big growth between 1897 and 1899. Imports and exports to and from Tien-tsin, Chefoo, and Newchwang increased rapidly, but at different rates of increase. In Chefoo and Tien-tsin, the growth of imports was far more rapid than that of exports, and a balance of payments was maintained by a heavy out-

³⁶ Many troubles occurred concerning the lands in Tsingtao and Tientsin and also about the church properties in interior. "Tê-tsung Shih-lu" 6/IX/24, Chinese Maritime Custom; Decennial Report 1892—1901, 1904, vol. I, p. 91, Lord Beresford: "The Break-up of China," 1899, p. 59, p. 77.

³⁷ Chinese Maritime Custom; "Decennial Report 1892—1901", vol. I, p. 57, p. 100

³⁸ A. H. Smith: *Ibid.* "China in convulsion", p. 90—91

Table I
Foreign Trade in northern ports 1894—1899
(1,000 H. K. Taels)

	Tientsin		Chefoo		Newchwang	
	Imp.	Exp.	Imp.	Exp.	Imp.	Exp.
1894	4,551	6,605	1,684	632	864	1,534
1895	5,367	8,919	2,150	776	—	—
1896	6,651	8,776	3,119	1,119	1,886	3,555
1897	9,169	10,192	3,685	1,388	1,641	5,547
1898	9,110	10,277	6,283	1,720	1,453	7,181
1899	14,255	10,871	6,539	2,075	5,279	8,691

ward drains of gold and silver. In Newchwang, a Manchurian port, imports could not catch up with exports, which increased greatly by the entrance of Japan as a buyer of beans and beancakes.

Table II
Import of cotton yarn and petroleum to China
1894—1899 (1,000 H. K. Taels)

	Cotton Yarn	Petroleum
1894	21,299	8,005
1895	21,104	6,615
1896	31,835	9,083
1897	34,272	13,299
1898	39,048	11,914
1899	54,607	13,011

Academia Sinica : *Ibid.*, p. 46

The great increase in imports to Chefoo and Tientsin was due to imports of cotton yarn and petroleum. Japanese cotton yarn found a big market in north and north-eastern China after the Sino-Japanese War, and rapidly replaced Indian and British goods in the provinces by lower prices, easier transportation, and its suitability to native weaving machines.³⁹

A silver influx was recorded in Tsingtao as a result of German investments, but in Chefoo and Tientsin a net outflow took place, and the silver stock in the interior seemed to have gradually diminished (Table III).

Regarding (3); the quantity of foreign and native opium imported

³⁹ Maritime Custom : "Dec. Rep." 1892—190 vol. I, p. 49—50

Table III
Import and export of Silver via Maritime Custom
1895—1899 (1,000 HK. Taels)

	Chefoo		Tsingtao	
	Imp.	Exp.	Imp.	Exp.
1895	2,440	2,630	0	0
1896	1,440	5,643	0	0
1897	2,420	5,763	0	0
1898	3,495	6,679	134	—
1899	5,379	8,313	622	173

(Decennial Report, 1892—1901, Vol. I, p. 56, p. 92)

through Tsingtao in 1898 and 1899 was very small,⁴⁰ but its import via Chefoo was showing a big increase in the same period (Table IV). The

Table IV
Foreign opium import via Chefoo 1896—1899

	Quantity (Piculs)	Value (1,000 H.K. Taels)
1896	355.	209.
1897	319.	202.
1898	497.	333.
1899	1,413.	928.

(Dec. Rep. Ibid. Vol. I, p. 54)

import of opium into Chefoo increased more than four times both in quantity and value by comparison to that of 1897. But even this rapid increase could not meet the rapidly increasing demand for cheaper and coarser kinds of opium. Therefore, the cultivation of poppies expanded rapidly all over Shan-tung, especially in the western prefectures of Chi-ning 濟寧, Tsao-chow 曹州, and Yen-chow 兗州.⁴¹ It is interesting to note that these centers of opium cultivation coincide with the regions where activities by Big Swords and Boxers were repeatedly reported. Opium cultivation decreases the acreage for food crops, and so reduces the self-sufficiency of farmers. Also opium production and trade always tend to invite an influx of smugglers, gamblers, and adventurous ex-soldiers.⁴²

⁴⁰ Ibid. vol. I, p. 98

⁴¹ Ibid. vol. I, p. 54—55

⁴² Chi-ning, Tsao-chow, and Yen-chow were situated along the grand canal which connect Chihli and Shan-tung with the Yang-tse provinces, and originally served as a main route of transportation of tribute rice to Peking. But since the steamship navigation began to transport the rice from Shanghai to Tientsin by sea, so many boatmen lost their jobs. As A. Smith adduced, there were so many boatmen mixed among Boxers, but their unemployment were not, as he assumed, solely caused by the introduction of railway and inland water steamship transportation. See "Chin-shi-kao" 清史稿, Shi-huo 3, 食貨三, Tsao-yun 漕運. And also Sakai Tadao: "Gendai Chugoku no himitsu-Kessha ni tsuite" (included in "Kindai Chugoku kenkyu" by Kindai Chugoku-kenkyu Tokubetsu-iinkai, 1949, Tokyo) p. 148

So there is no doubt that every item mentioned by Arthur Smith as the result of foreign economic invasion had an impoverishing and disturbing effect on the situation in North China in 1898—1899. But this does not suffice to explain why the development of the Boxers suddenly increased after the autumn of 1898. From this viewpoint, the famines of 1897—1899, and the growth of the hungry and wandering masses and their movement northward to Chih-li had perhaps far more important and direct influence.

VIII

In the spring of 1897, there was a heavy drought in northern Kiang-su 江蘇, especially in the Hsü-chow 徐州, Hai-chow 海州, Fêng-yang 鳳陽, and Huai-in 淮陰 districts, regions directly contiguous to Shan-tung. The germination and the growth of wheat and barley were hindered, and a very poor harvest followed. In the summer of the same year, prolonged rains caused floods at Sha-wo-ho 沙窩河 and at Huai-ho 淮河, and the rice crop, too, diminished sharply.⁴³ So at the beginning of December 1897, already, a great many vagabonds tried to enter the southern provinces across the Yangtze from Koa-chow 瓜州, and when refused entry by the local officials, turned into a mob and attacked the yamens.⁴⁴ By the spring of 1898, the numbers of vagabonds had rapidly increased. A hundred thousand hungry people moved about from place to place, crying for food. In the summer of this year, the river Huai-ho repeatedly flooded eastern An-hui 安徽 and northern Kiang-su. More than five million refugees were reported to have left these districts.⁴⁵ Therefore, when the existence of Boxers was first reported in northern Shan-tung the Peking government feared that they might combine with the hungry refugees in Kiang-su.

In 1898, a big flood of the Yellow River occurred. The Yellow River had overflowed at Tung-wa-hsiang 銅瓦廂 in Honan in 1855, and began to take its present northern course. After this overflowing and the change of its course, the repairing of dykes was left to villagers along the river, because the government was busy suppressing the Taiping rebellion. As a result, the engineering lacked any consolidated plan, and the width of the river at Ch'i-nan 濟南 was made too narrow to admit the running water. Since then the Yellow River has flooded almost yearly and become indeed

⁴³ "Tê-tsung Shih-lu" 23/VII/23 (vol. 407, p. 18B), 22/IX/23 (vol. 410, p. 12B), 28/X/23 (vol. 411, p. 18B).

⁴⁴ Ibid, 16/XI/23 (vol. 411, p. 8B).

⁴⁵ "Tê-tsung Shih-lu," 12/III/24 (vol. 417, p. 7A), 3/VI/24 (vol. 421, p. 3B).

the sorrow of the farmers of Shan-tung.⁴⁶ In August, 1898, the river overflowed the four breaches on either side in the neighbourhood of Tung-a 東阿, and the flood covered almost all the Shan-tung plain. The submerged area on the south coast was 2,600 square miles, while that on the north side was estimated to be larger than that.⁴⁷ The collection of land-tax and rice tribute was postponed or cancelled. Relief activities by local governments were urged by imperial decrees. But the growth of wandering groups of hungry peasants, noted already at the beginning of October, became more and more serious in the course of the winter. The mob passed through the western part of Shan-tung, together with the vagabonds from northern Kiang-su, and marched towards Honan province. But in Honan, too, roaming peasants were rapidly increasing, owing to the bad crop of the previous season.⁴⁸ In Peking, 1898 was the year of the hundred days' reform by Emperor Kuang-hsü, and of Empress Dowager Tsu Hsi's coup d'état against the reformers. While they fought and struggled with each other for the supremacy at court, the situation in Kiang-su, An-hui, Shan-tung and Ho-nan went from bad to worse.

Meanwhile, from November 1898 to February 1899, two disturbances broke out in eastern Shan-tung and northern An-hui, which must be touched upon to make clear the sequence of events which led to the Boxers' uprising. One was the Jih-chao 日照 incident in Shan-tung, and the other the Wo-yang 窩陽 rebellion in An-hui. Both of them resulted directly from the political and economic situation described above, and both determined the form and progress of Boxers' rebellion.

The Jih-chao incident was one of the anti-foreign and anti-christian uprisings that were constantly reported all over China between 1897 and 1899. It is important for our purpose because it occurred in Shan-tung province, and because there must have been some intimate connection between it and the Boxer movement. On November 8, 1898, three American missionaries from I-chow-fu 沂州府, traveling to Chu-chow 諸州, suddenly found themselves in the center of disturbances which had already broken into violence. They reported repeated attacks against Christian converts and missionary property by farmers from the villages in Jih-chao county. As the report stated the names of the villages, dates of the attacks, and designated the persons who were the principal ringleaders, the American envoy demanded in February 1899 that the Peking government arrest and punish these ringleaders.⁴⁹ The government ordered the

⁴⁶ "Ching-shih-kao", Ho-chü-chih I, 清史稿, 河渠志一, p. 17A, Ibid, III, p. 14B, Ibid, IV, p. 6A.

⁴⁷ "Dec. Rep." vol. I, p. 60-61; "Tê-tsung Shih-lu", 6/VII/24 (vol. 423, p. 7A). 16/VII/24 (vol. 424, p. 13A).

⁴⁸ Ibid. 21/XI/24 (vol. 434, p. 9B), 8/XII/24 (vol. 435, p. 10B).

⁴⁹ "Foreign relations of U. S." 1899, p. 154-178, and above all, No. 142, incl. 1, incl. 6, incl. 9.

Governor of Shan-tung to issue proclamations to persuade the people to stop the hostilities and to be friendly to the foreigners. But the attitude of the government was fundamentally neutral. The proclamations said repeatedly that "her treatment of foreigners and of Chinese is the same."⁵⁰ And while no steps were taken to suppress the unrest by force, or to settle the quarrels between churches and farmers which arose constantly over some piece of land, the trouble continued to spread, bands of armed "ruffians" swarmed in, and the villagers armed themselves with medieval weapons.

At last, because a German missionary was attacked in November 1898, and because of attacks on three German engineers in the spring of 1899, Germany sent the troops, burned two villages from which the mob had come, occupied the town of Jih-chao for six weeks, and carried off, at the end of May, five members of gentry as hostage to Tsingtao to secure the settlement of the case. Their claims were honoured and the case was settled.⁵¹

The Wo-yang rebellion was staged by "Tu-fei" 土匪 (local brigands), according to the "Tê-tsung Shih-lu." Niu Shi-shiu 牛師修, the chief of the rebels, was a cousin of Niu Shih-han 牛師韓, an army officer who died and whose supplies of ammunition had thus fallen into the hands of the rebels. In December 1899, Niu Shih-shiu rallied the hungry people and rose in rebellion.

The general unrest and increase of vagabondage favoured uprising. The rebels established a stronghold at Mt. Shih-kung 石弓山, and attacked and plundered towns and villages. The Peking government ordered Yu Chang 裕長, the Governor of Honan, Tung Hua-hsi 東華熙, the Governor of An-hui, and Liu Kun-i 劉坤一, the Viceroy of Liang-chian 兩江, to cooperate in surrounding the rebels, and at the end of February 1899, they were suppressed completely.⁵²

These two regional uprisings were suppressed, but their motives and intentions were bequeathed to the Boxers who succeeded them. By occupying and holding the town by force, taking members of gentry as hostages, expelling inhabitants, burning villages, and imposing heavy reparations on the people of Jih-chao, the Germans could suppress the anti-German activities only apparently. The hatred and the hostility of the people against them actually became fiercer, deeper and more relentless. If, as reported by Arthur Smith and others, the Big Sword society led the movement, the sectaries would have fled from southern Shan-tung, and

⁵⁰ Ibid. "For. rel." 1899, p. 158.

⁵¹ Morse and MacNair: "Far Eastern international relations", p. 457.

⁵² "Tê-tsung Shih-lu", 3/XII/24, 6/XII/24, 10/XII/24, 11/XII/24, 14/XII/24, 18/XII/24, 20/XII/24, (vol. 435, p. 4A, 5B, 7B, BA, 14B, 15B, 21A; vol. 436, p. 3B, 7A, 16B).

sought another chance for revenge against the foreigners. The distinction between Ta-tao-hui 大刀会 or Big Swords and Boxers is clearly stated in no sources. Perhaps we can assume that they were secret societies, with a similar purpose and with overlapping membership.

The Wo-yang rebellion was subdued forcibly, the ringleaders put to death, the fortresses destroyed. But the economic situation which gave rise to the rebellion, was not improved. An imperial decree antedating the suppression of the rising reads as follows. "In the border region of An-hui and Ho-nan, there have been famines year after year. Among the rebel there must be those, who being on the verge of starvation, stole food, feared arrest, and joined the gangs. Of course we should not be lenient toward the law-breakers, but we feel pity toward 'foolish people,'".⁵³ Destruction by the rebel, must have made the situation in the district more terrible still. The population of the area moved north along the grand canal, and inevitably helped the growth of Boxers.

These may be considered as the reasons why the Boxer movement developed suddenly between the autumn of 1898 and the spring of 1899.

After the summer of 1899, the disturbances spread rapidly to Chih-li 直隸. North China, afflicted with flood in 1898, suffered from drought in 1899. In Shan-tung, the heavy drought was accompanied by locust damages.⁵⁴ In Ho-nan, the lack of rain made it impossible to sow wheat. In Peking, the Emperor Kuang-hsü repeatedly entered the Takao-tien 大高殿 to pray the Heaven for rain, but from April to November 1899, not a single drop of rain fell on Chih-li province.⁵⁵ Famines and mobs of vagabonds spread from south to north.

Famine inevitably raised the price of foods. The decline in the value of silver since the abolition of Bimetallism in western countries continued. The salaries of Manchu soldiers or bannermen 八旗甲兵 were paid 80% in silver and 20% in rice. So the sudden rise in the price of rice, and the constant diminution of the purchasing power of silver pressed down their standard of living. Poverty, dissatisfaction, and unrest advanced from countryside into the city. Rumours were spread intentionally to attribute the responsibility for the drought and famine to foreigners, foreign mechanisms, and to the christian faith. Railways, telegraphs, medicines and even eye-glasses were thought to be something accursed and harmful to the orderly and peaceful processes of social life. Belief in spiritual Boxing spread. The followers of the sect increased. And the Chinese government, the fundamental theory of which was to act as the agent of the Heaven,

⁵³ Ibid. 11/XII/24 (vol. 435, p. 15B).

⁵⁴ Ibid. 21/XI/25.

⁵⁵ "Tê-tung Shih-lu," 11/IV/25, 2/IX, 4/IX/, 6/IX, 20/IX, 9/XI.

had to respond to the people in a manner that the people liked, and was therefore unable to resist the current of the time.