

they should be expended. Needless to say, such an arbitrary and irresponsible system promotes dishonesty among officials, and is regarded by the people with distrust; for they can never be freed from the anxiety of having their savings extorted from them under some pretext or other.

A third circumstance, a negative one, removing as it does the chief bulwark against revolution, is the absence of any strict moral principles founded on religious belief. For, after all, it is religion, and religion alone, that can control the impulses to rebellion among the masses. The Chinaman has no religion properly so called, and the gross superstitions that take its place are made use of by imposters to lead him into all manner of crimes, under the specious pretext of obedience to the gods.

But the chief source of revolution in China, as it is in any country, is the existence of a great number of secret societies, the offspring of poverty, discontent and superstition. The Chinese population is organized into immense brotherhoods having their challenges and countersigns, their peculiar superstitious rites, and their secrets, the violation of which is followed by the most severe penalties. The true aims of many of these societies are rarely fully known, but all are revolutionary in character. Despite their legal condemnation, these confraternities have greatly multiplied within the last few years. Some of them, the *Pai-Lien-Kiao* (Brothers of the White Lotus) for instance, count millions of adherents in every province of China, and even in every part of the civilized world.

It is not difficult, therefore, to understand how populations so poor that they have nothing to lose by any change; discontented with their hard lot; exasperated by the extortions of mandarins, prefects and vice-roys; and members of vast and oath-bound conspiracies, may, upon the secret word of command, rise up in rebellion; and in fatigues by the absurd promises of their leaders, kill, plunder and burn without fear or pity.

Even general revolutions may be thus brought about. From 1851 to 1864 we find the whole of China upset by the revolution of the *Tai-Ping* (Great Race), the object of which was to overthrow the *Tsing* dynasty and re-establish the *Ming* family upon the imperial throne. This revolution deluged China with blood, and was put down by armed intervention of England and France in 1860, and only finally crushed by the victories of General Gordon in 1864. Since the *Tai-Ping* rebellion, some fifty revolts have taken place in different parts of the country, and in every instance torrents of blood were shed before they could be suppressed. In one of these outbreaks, thirty thousand Mohammedan Chinese were slain by their Buddhist countrymen.