

## CHAPTER VII

### THE EMERGENCE OF TSĒNG KUO-FAN AND ORGANISATION OF A NEW FORCE

THE Tsêng family, from which the hero of the Taiping Rebellion sprang, is one of the half-dozen great families of China, for it had its origin in the philosopher Tsêng, who was one of the greatest disciples of Confucius. During the seventy generations which lay between Kuo-fan and his illustrious ancestor, his own immediate forbears had become farmers in the district of Siangsiang, Hunan, about sixty miles from Changsha. His family were in very poor circumstances financially, but their proud lineage entitled them to rank among the gentry of their countryside, and they aspired to continue the scholarly traditions of their ancestors by studying the classics in order to secure enrollment in the aristocracy of letters. Tsêng's grandfather was a practical man of affairs with a mind fixed on realities; his influence was powerful in the formation of the boy's character. His father was inclined to study, but without early success. He only secured the coveted B.A. degree in the year in which it was awarded to his eldest son—not an unusual occurrence, perhaps, and one that goes to show how great was the desire on the part of the Chinese for a literary degree.

Amid happy dreams and lucky omens Tsêng Kuo-fan was born in this poor country home on November 26, 1811. At the age of four he was set to work on his studies. Before his eighth birthday he had already studied the

five classics and was commencing to write compositions. Five years later, in accordance with Chinese custom, he was betrothed to a young girl named Ouyang, to whom he was married as soon as he was old enough.<sup>1</sup>

In 1826 he took his first examination and stood seventh on the list.<sup>2</sup> But it was not until 1832 that he appeared to compete for the B.A. degree, which he failed to secure at the first attempt, though he stood on the list of honor.<sup>3</sup> In 1833 he was successful and secured the degree at the same time that his father, after seventeen failures, also passed. The following year he went to Changsha for the M.A. examination, in which he was also successful, standing thirty-sixth on the list. The same year he went to Peking to try his luck in the national examinations for the doctorate, but in two examinations he failed. In some manner he found the means to travel extensively during the year 1836 in Kiangnan and Chekiang. Though his position as an M.A. gave him some prestige in the community, he was still not satisfied. It is related of him that while on this journey he discovered a set of valuable books, and borrowed a hundred *taels* with which to purchase them. With these books in his possession he repaired to his countryside, where he gave himself to a year of intense application in preparation for the third attempt.

At the beginning of 1838 he was ready once again to go to Peking, equipped as he now was with an additional year's preparation. No money was available for him, but

<sup>1</sup> The chief source for these earlier years is the *Nienp'u*, or "Annals" of Tséng Wen-chen, containing material taken from family records and his own writings.

<sup>2</sup> This was a sort of matriculation examination. Those who succeeded might compete later for the B.A. degree.

<sup>3</sup> This was not to belittle his scholarship, because the number of men entitled to receive the degree was fixed by the emperor for each province and district. A place on the roll of honor carried some prestige.

he was able to borrow thirty-two strings of cash for the journey, of which he spent all but three on the way to the capital.<sup>4</sup> In those days this was a long trip, requiring about a month of slow progress by boat and chair. The usual amount reckoned as necessary for expenses was about forty *taels*. Successful at last in the great examination,<sup>5</sup> he was shortly afterwards passed in the supreme test of Chinese scholarship and admitted into the Hanlin Academy on the twenty-third of June.<sup>6</sup>

Attainment of these honors conveyed the privilege of office, so he was now a part of the imperial service. Examinations were not yet over, however, for there were several grades in the Hanlin Academy. Kuo-fan therefore, after a short visit to his home, gave himself diligently to his new tasks, advancing rapidly from step to step, meanwhile receiving appointments to minor positions in the capital. His letters for the period show us a singularly attractive life among men of literary inclinations—colleagues in the Hanlin Academy—with disputations and friendly competitions in writing essays and poetry. His income was small and he constantly lived beyond it, though we have no details except that in 1842 his house rent cost fifteen strings of cash a month. Whatever he received he shared generously with his family or with needy Hunanese in Peking. His application to his studies was incessant, for he had plenty of leisure, and

<sup>4</sup> A string is 1,000 cash, the equivalent in theory of a *tael* of silver, but with a purchasing power greatly in excess of today's.

<sup>5</sup> The doctorate was highly prized. The family from which a doctor came usually hung up a red sign above the door with the two large characters "Tsin Shih." Even today one sometimes sees above some humble country house these evidences of distinction, and it is easy to imagine the thrill of pride that greeted the news of Kuo-fan's success when it reached his family.

<sup>6</sup> This corresponds in the main to membership in the national academy in European countries, except that membership in China is gained through public competitive examination instead of election.

thereby he was able successively to rise in rank until we read of a special examination in 1843 at the Yüan Ming Yüan palace in the presence of the emperor himself, where out of one hundred and twenty-three members of the academy, Tsêng was ranked in the sixth place, at the head of the second group. This gave him the chance to enter into a high office in the academy. In his letters home he tells his parents that he is the third Hunanese to achieve this honor during the Ch'ing Dynasty.<sup>7</sup>

In the same year he was sent to Ssuch'uan as examiner, and during that year and the following received honorary titles and duties in the palace. None of these flattering promotions brought him much financial advantage, and even the thousand *taels* which he received as an honorarium for the examinership at Ch'engt'u was spent to aid poor relatives. His annual expenses amounted, in the year 1842, to about six hundred *taels*, and were probably about the same in the other years.<sup>8</sup> In Ssuch'uan Tsêng found the social side of his task most irksome. In addition to the duties that fell to him as an examiner he complains that he had to do too much entertaining; that he was called on to write scrolls on which he inscribed flattering comparisons between Hunan and Ssuch'uan; that many came to borrow money, and whether they sought or received much or little or none, there was endless palaver; and that endless calls were to be made and received.<sup>9</sup> Long before this Tsêng had complained of the irksomeness of social intercourse at Peking, where he was comparatively free from the need of doing more than he cared to, and had resolved only to seek friendship with those who could help him correct his faults and go forward to a better life, not to call on men of rank simply to gain a favorable reputation.<sup>10</sup> Therefore the inescapable

<sup>7</sup> *Home Letters*, April 22, 1843.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, January 20, 1843.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, June 27, 1844.

<sup>10</sup> *Home Letters*, March 31, 1842.

social strain at Ch'engt'u was doubly trying, especially because of the heat and his own indisposition.

In 1847 Tsêng took the final examination that brought him the promotion to cabinet rank. No other Hunanese had gained that place at the age of thirty-seven since the Ch'ing Dynasty came to power, and of late years only two others of any province had gone up from the doctorate to the cabinet within ten years.<sup>11</sup> He was appointed a vice president in the Board of Rites.<sup>12</sup> The ceremonies in connection with the death of the empress in 1849, followed by that of the emperor the following year, kept Tsêng, as a member of that board, well occupied. In the awards distributed as a result of these occurrences, Tsêng's family for three generations shared in the honors that were granted him.

From the Board of Rites he was transferred to one board after the other until he had served as a vice president in each of the six. In 1852, after the rebels had made their escape from Yuigan and news of the disaster reached Peking,<sup>13</sup> it fell to his lot to deliberate with others in the Board of Punishments as to what should be done with Wulant'ai and Saishanga, who were held responsible for the disaster to imperial arms. Feeling that military matters were of the gravest concern, Tsêng urged that the severest penalties be inflicted, but the emperor overruled the decision of the board. Perhaps the emperor was on safer ground at a time like this when good generals were so scarce, but the incident enables us to understand something of the stern spirit of the man who was

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, July 29, 1847.

<sup>12</sup> Each of the boards had two presidents, a Chinese and a Manchu, and four vice presidents. This was a very high place for so young a man in China.

<sup>13</sup> The defeat was April 6 and 7. The news reached Peking April 29, *Nienp'u*, I, 30b.

destined eventually to reorganise the military forces and suppress the rebellion.<sup>14</sup>

For several years Tsêng had wished to get home for a visit, but his poverty and the loss of opportunity to win promotion had prevented him from doing so. True, he had had visits from some of the members of the family, and for some time Kuo-ch'üan had lived with him in Peking, but he had a great desire to be in the quiet countryside with his relatives and old friends. The opportunity came when, in July, 1852, he received appointment as examiner in Kiangsi, and secured a sixty days' leave of absence to make the visit to his home. While he was on the road from Peking to Kiangsi, the news met him that his mother had died on the twenty-eighth of July. Inexorable custom demanded that he give up the appointment and retire at once for a period of mourning; Tsêng therefore started at once for Hunan with the intention of remaining at home twenty-seven months.<sup>15</sup>

At Wuchang (September 26) he learned that Changsha was undergoing the long siege from the Taiping rebels. He therefore avoided that city, leaving the river at Siangyin and passing through Ningsiang. On October 6 he was at home. His mother was buried on the twenty-fifth of that month. Tsêng remained at home until the rebels had left Changsha and were far down the river on the way to Nanking.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup> *Nienp'u*, I, 30b.

<sup>15</sup> *Nienp'u*, I, 31b. Theoretically the period of mourning for parents was three years, but actually twenty-seven months were observed. This was considered important enough to justify a high official leaving his post, though sometimes, under circumstances of great stress the emperor might order the period shortened.

<sup>16</sup> Pott, *A Sketch of Chinese History*, states that Tsêng Kuo-fan was governor of Hunan and that through his defence of the city it was not captured, forgetting that under the Manchu dynasty no man could serve as governor in his home province and that Tsêng was not in Changsha at all.

It will be recalled that the only victories thus far won against the insurgents had been by Kiang Chung-yuan with his small company of country militia. One must not fail, either, to give credit to the now discredited and cashiered Saishanga for first recognising the need of this type of warriors and for employing thirty thousand of them in Kwangsi. During the siege of Changsha, Kiang and his two thousand had proved far more useful than any other equal number of men.<sup>17</sup> The Taiping rebels were no sooner departed than local bandits arose everywhere and the governor was at his wits' ends to cope with them. In addition to the two thousand followers of Kiang Chung-yuan, another thousand or more were organised under Lo Tse-nan and Wang Hsin. The desirability of these militia for putting down local bandits became apparent when Kiang promptly suppressed an uprising of that character in Paoking.<sup>18</sup> Tsêng himself was impressed with the value of these village companies of volunteer militia, which he believed ought to suffice for keeping order in the country places, though he was not so sure that they would do against those who had been infected with the poison of the Taiping principles and had thrown off the teachings of Confucius.<sup>19</sup>

About the end of the year the governor received a mandate from Peking informing him that Tsêng Kuo-fan was in retirement in Siangsiang and ordering him to transmit the emperor's command that Tsêng should give his time to the recruiting and drilling of Hunan troops from among the village volunteers throughout the prov-

<sup>17</sup> See chapter IV.

<sup>18</sup> His force was called the *T'su Yung*, while those of Lo Tse-nan were called *Siang Yung*, alternative designations of the province of Hunan, though the character "T'su" might with equal propriety be used of Hupeh.

<sup>19</sup> *Nienp'u*, I, 33a. In spite of the high position Tsêng occupied at Peking, he was now in his retirement only a private citizen. Communications must pass through the governor.

ince.<sup>20</sup> At first this mandate, which reached Tsêng about the twenty-second of January, did not meet Tsêng's wishes. He considered that he ought to complete his mourning, but even if under the pressure of public danger he should undertake the task and the point regarding the mourning should be waived, there was still the great difficulty of attempting what was certain to meet with much opposition on the part of the gentry on whom he would have to call for aid. He foresaw two parts of success with eight parts of trouble.<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless he was open to persuasion and some of his influential friends went to his home and begged him to consent. The fall of Wuchang and the consequent unrest everywhere proved very strong arguments, and Tsêng set out from home on the twenty-sixth of January for a conference with the governor. It was his idea to use the new army first against local bandits and afterwards against the Taiping rebels.<sup>22</sup>

He threw himself at once into the task which now had the aspect of an imperative duty. On the thirty-first of January he submitted his plan for transmission to Peking. Seeing that Hunan was threatened by rebels and that the soldiery available for its defence was weak, he proposed setting up a great camp at Changsha, with recruiting agencies in all the districts. Those who had already undergone some training as militia in the country were to be enrolled, sent to Changsha for adequate training, and then employed for a time in various parts of Hunan against the robber bands. In the same document he renewed his request for permission to return to the country to complete his period of mourning.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>20</sup> *Nienp'u*, I, 33b.

<sup>21</sup> Letters of different dates, January 24-30, 1853.

<sup>22</sup> Letter of February 4, 1853.

<sup>23</sup> This request was simply *pro forma*, a demand of Chinese etiquette.

Lo Tse-nan now led three *ying*<sup>24</sup> of his braves to Changsha, and they formed the nucleus of Tsêng's new army, which is henceforth known in Chinese history as the Siang Chun, or Hunan Army. Tsêng drew up an elaborate set of regulations for their observance, strict rules indeed, since Tsêng was thoroughly alive to the necessity of careful discipline in his armies, lest they become as useless as those of the regular establishment. Kiang Chung-yuan's *T'su Yung* were more than ever a source of inspiration to him, for at this precise time a band of ten thousand rebels under the leadership of a certain Chow Kuo-yu raised their standard in Liuyang, but were utterly defeated by Kiang in a single battle.

Opportunity soon came to try the mettle of Tsêng's new recruits. Word reached Changsha on March 1 that rebels were collecting in Leiyang and Changning, and threatening Kiahoh as well. Eight hundred recruits of both the *T'su* and *Siang* armies were sent against them, who, at Hengshan-hsien, inflicted defeat on them easily.<sup>25</sup>

Opposition was to be expected from the regular military officials to this new venture, and civil officials who had to help bear the expense of its maintenance could scarcely give more than lukewarm support. But the value of such an army was so apparent at Peking that the viceroy and governor both received mandates to further this new enterprise by establishing recruiting stations and securing funds for maintenance, this mandate reaching Changsha on March 12.

But it was from another direction that Tsêng's most serious problem arose. In the wake of the Taiping rebels bandits were rising here and there, and the people of the country districts looked with hostile eyes on the re-

<sup>24</sup> A *ying* in the new army was five hundred men, and I assume that number here.

<sup>25</sup> *Nienp'u*, II, 16.

cruiting of hundreds and even thousands of their volunteers for service outside the province at a time when they were so needed at home to protect their own villages from marauders. These bandits were moving unchecked over the country and until they were suppressed it would be difficult to persuade the men or the officials to leave Hunan thus unguarded.

In still another quarter Tsêng felt pressure, for the imperial government was urgently calling for haste in drilling and sending out these men to meet the Taipings, who were by this time a national danger. Tsêng could not disregard either this or the local feeling; yet he sought to find a way in which to meet the well-founded desires of both sides. In a memorial of March 24, he laid before the emperor the wisdom and necessity of first destroying the bandits in Hunan. In addition to those calling themselves "T'ien Ti Hui," who had for the most part joined the Taipings<sup>20</sup> or represented their cause in Hunan, there were many other brotherhoods with curious names, such as "United Sons," "Red and Black," "Half-penny," "One Sniff of Perfume." Such societies gradually formed themselves into large bands which entered the hilly regions to become dangerous outlaws, particularly in the southeastern and southwestern parts of the province. The authorities, though perfectly aware of their existence, dared not put them down, since they had been allowed to flourish unchecked so long that they were too formidable. They differed somewhat in their purposes, some having religion, others fraternal obligations, and still others robbery as their motive.

These dangerous societies had recently been suppl-

<sup>20</sup> "Add Brothers Society." This is explained by the Chinese as being a different way of expressing T'ien Ti Hui, Heaven and Earth Society, which was a designation of the Triads. My opinion is that Chu was a member of this society, probably of the real Heaven and Earth Society.

mented by another sinister throng, the great numbers of deserting soldiers who had turned vagabond, since they were without funds to return to their homes and without camps where they might reënlist. And of course the perennial source of vagabondage, poverty, had swelled the number of wanderers during the recent upheaval. The ideal way to deal with these various disturbing groups would be to go with the entire force to each district, remaining there until it had been reduced to order, and moving on to the next. In this way a tranquillised Hunan could be left behind. Under the circumstances he was dealing with the problem by setting up a court for examining and awarding the necessary punishments to them according to the gravity of the offence committed by such bandits as were captured. The comment of the emperor in reply to this memorial was to recognise the need for dealing thoroughly with local bandits until they were exterminated.<sup>27</sup> Tsêng's court did actually bring to justice a large number of these offenders, in addition to those visited with punishment in the out-districts affected.

Meanwhile, as will be recalled, Kiang Chung-yuan had been sent with his force down the river and had gone to Nanchang to help drive out the Taipings from that back door to Hunan.<sup>28</sup> He took occasion on the way to write to Tsêng, insisting that in his opinion there was but one certain way of defeating the rebels, namely, by uniting the provinces of Kiangsi, Hupeh, Hunan, and Anhui in the task of building hundreds of boats to be manned by several thousand men from Kwangtung and Fukien. After these had succeeded in pacifying the Yangtse River regions, Nanking could be attacked, together with Yangchow and Chinkiang, and the rebellion quickly put down. This was good advice, for had there been an adequate

<sup>27</sup> *Dispatches*, II, 6, 7a.

<sup>28</sup> See chapter IV.

naval force on the river the rebels would never have been able to reach Nanking. Moreover, they were making use of the waterways at that very moment with practically no opposition. Yet for the moment the advice was received somewhat coldly on Tsêng's part, because it would result in much delay where haste seemed necessary.<sup>29</sup>

Nevertheless he carefully weighed the suggestion. To adopt it would bring about an embarrassing delay, but if it would make the expedition stronger there was no reason why he should not delay, for a premature start would result in nothing save disaster. Moreover, time was necessary to get the land forces ready and to clear Hunan of rebels and bandits. The delay involved in providing the flotilla ought not to be very great. Other letters from Kiang, after he had seen the power of the rebels, urged Tsêng not to forget that no permanent advantage could be gained over the rebels so long as they were free to come and go on the rivers. The flotilla was necessary.<sup>30</sup>

The first suggestion made was that large war junks should be sent by sea from Kwangtung to the Yangtze River, there to be joined by the smaller *k'wai-hai* and *t'o-ku* vessels which, from the inner waters of the same province, could be brought from Wuchow, carried across the short land portage, and floated down the Siang River. Tsêng and the governor jointly requested this of the emperor.<sup>31</sup>

Before a reply could come trouble had arisen, as was almost inevitable, between the new militia and the regulars. On August 17 the Siang army and the *t'ituh's* command came to blows. Tsêng in person reproved the

<sup>29</sup> *Hatsuzoku Ran Shi*, p. 23.

<sup>30</sup> *Nienp'u*, II, 6b. Tsêng in a letter to his father said that while the 'braves' had thus far given a good account of themselves, he would require about 10,000 of them in one compact army, all fired with military ardor.

<sup>31</sup> *Nienp'u*, II, 6b, 7a.

militia, but on the sixth of September a second riot broke out between these two groups, which Tsêng asked the general to settle by martial law. This was not done, and two nights later the regulars of the offending division set out to attack T'a Chi-pu, who had command of a portion of Tsêng's men, and who barely got away with his life by hiding in the grass behind his house. Having burned the house, this lawless company set out to attack Tsêng Kuo-fan himself. The governor, hearing of the uproar, went on foot to the scene and persuaded the soldiers to desist from their purpose.<sup>32</sup>

Long before this occurrence Tsêng had thought that it might be well to drill his own forces in different places, and this untoward incident led him to carry out the idea. He moved his headquarters to Hengchow and distributed his new soldiers among the various towns along the eastern and southern borders of Hunan to suppress bandits and guard against a possible invasion of Taiping rebels from Kiangsi.<sup>33</sup>

In his memorial of the fifteenth of September Tsêng explains his move, giving as his reasons the depredations of the local rebels, which compelled him to distribute his forces for effective police duty, and the desirability of his being closer to the different scenes of trouble than was possible at Changsha. There were four roads by which rebels might enter the province from Kiangsi—one through P'ingkiang, which connected with the strategic city of northwestern Kiangsi named Ining; a second through Ch'aling, and Yu-hsien, leading to Kian; a central road to Shuichow, passing through Liuyang, and a fourth way to Yuanchow and P'inghsiang through Liling. He had sent no troops to P'ingkiang, because that road was somewhat roundabout, but was guarding the

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 7a b.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 7b.

others as well as he could with his small force,<sup>34</sup> and all these things could be managed better from Hengchow. Magnanimously, or his detractors might say prudently, he refrained in his memorial from condemning the regulars or their officers, nor did he mention the attacks made by them. r'

The rapid spread of the Taiping movement at that time, northward and up the river to Kiangsi and Hupeh, caused the emperor to send mandate after mandate, urging haste in setting out. After receiving several of these, Tsêng drafted a lengthy reply in which he pointed out that he was attempting to create a flotilla. A few vessels had come from Kwangtung, and with these as models, Hengchow builders were trying to make boats capable of carrying cannon weighing a thousand catties.<sup>35</sup> The emperor's reply was practically a reproof, and urged Tsêng to make greater haste because of the peril threatening their cause, particularly since the rebels were overrunning Anhui and ascending the river.

As a result of this impatience in Peking Tsêng again patiently drafted a lengthy memorial, in which he laid bare the great difficulties which prevented his speeding up the work. His defence contains five points. First, owing to the blockade of the road to Kwangtung by bandits at Yunghsing and other places, only eighty-three cannon had arrived. In addition, the building of the required number of new boats and the necessary repairs to the old ones would require about eighty days beyond the New Year. Second, although Anhui and Hupeh were in difficulties, Tsêng could not go down the river without stopping to dislodge the rebels as he went and consolidate his positions. Three thousand Human soldiers had

<sup>34</sup> *Dispatches*, II, 10 f.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 17-20, under date of December 26, 1853. A catty is about 1½ pounds avoirdupois.

already gone forward under Kiang Chung-yuan, his brother, and another general, and these might be called on for any emergency.<sup>36</sup> Third, Tsêng had been in correspondence with the governor, with Kiang Chung-yuan, and with others regarding the possibility of uniting the strength of several provinces to hold Hupeh firmly. The three Wuhan cities<sup>37</sup> were the most strategic places in the middle Yangtse, commanding the passage to Ssuch'uan, Kwangtung, and the north. The aim of the rebels in crossing Anhui towards Hwangehow and Pa-ho was to secure and hold Wuchang. Control of this point, giving command of the river all the way to Nanking, seemed far more important than the immediate expulsion of rebels from Anhui. His suggestion was that the forces of Hunan and Hupeh unite to prevent the rebels from recapturing Wuchang; then step by step they could be dislodged from the several points along the lower river, and if after that the power of Anhui and Kiangsi could be mobilised, the rebellion could be eventually crushed. He had worked out this plan in consultation with men like Kiang Chung-yuan, Lo Ping-chang (the governor), and others. Fourth, Hunan was overrun with bandits. Hengehow, Ch'enchow, Yungchow, and Kweiyang in the southeast were in their power; many were coming over from Kiangsi to Ch'aling and Anjen; Changning, Kiaho, Lanshan, and Yunghsing were also suffering from their depredations, and troops had been dispatched in all these directions. Could he recall them now, leave his unfinished and unarmed boats, and go half prepared while chaos reigned behind him? Fifth, the question of financing the expedition must be arranged. It was already a drain on the Hunan treasury,

<sup>36</sup> He had also sent 200 gunboats and 200 other boats to Kiang in Anhui. *Nienp'u*, II, 13a.

<sup>37</sup> Wuchang, Hankow, and Hunyang.

and the question of its support must be settled before it should leave the province.<sup>38</sup>

The memorial thus summarised affords us some insight into the character of Tsêng Kuo-fan and his level-headedness. He was wise not to hurry off without adequate preparation, for in that case the fate would almost certainly overtake him that had brought Kiang's promising career to its sudden and tragic end. His concentration on the essentials of the problem revealed a trait that was to appear again and again when higher officials and even the emperor's ministers lost their heads and tried to find palliatives that would serve for the immediate crisis. Tsêng appeared always to take a more far-sighted point of view than any other man associated with him. In this particular matter the eventual winning of the war was the chief question and this could not be accomplished without far more complete preparations than were yet made. Tsêng's ability to think the problem through was coupled with a singular degree of patience, which enabled him to persist until all the obstacles were overcome, and with a remarkable shrewdness in finding the ablest agents through whom to bring these things to pass. When we consider such frenzied appeals as these from the emperor, and his impatience at times, we can but wonder that this exalted personage was willing to repose continued confidence in a servant who, though eventually successful, was very long in bringing about the desired results.

It was during this winter of preparation that Tsêng had differences of opinion with some of the men asso-

<sup>38</sup> *Dispatches*, II, 23-27. In regard to this point Tsêng had already secured permission to sell honorary official ranks (from the sixth to the ninth grades) in return for substantial contributions. Offices had been opened for these sales in all the districts throughout the province and much money had thus been secured. Kiang's death five days before this was not yet known to Tsêng.

ciated with him, in particular a certain Wang Hsin. For the defence of Changsha Wang had suggested that an army be raised, and the governor and provincial treasurer had assented, and asked this Wang to raise a force of three thousand men. His original programme sounded well, but the men and their preparation seemed very insufficient to Tsêng. They had had previous disagreements about sending men to the aid of Kiang Chung-yuan. But in the spring of 1854 Wang had a skirmish with some rebels and killed about thirty of them. This he reported as a great victory. When the joint memorial was being prepared about military affairs, Tsêng looked over the draft and approved it. But as to the final copy which was sent to the central government Tso Tsung-tang added to and took away some of the sections, and among the changes thus made was an account of a false victory. This stirred Tsêng to great indignation, since he detested the propensity of officials to make false claims like this for selfish purposes.<sup>39</sup>

Whilst Tsêng Kuo-fan was in Hengchow, the governor sent Lo Tse-nan with two *ying* of soldiers to put down some bandits, and they passed through Hengchow on January 5. Here the two men in conference drew up the principles according to which the new army was to be organised and governed.<sup>40</sup> The unit of the new force was to be a small regiment or *ying* of 500 soldiers, with an addition of 180 others serving in various capacities. Each *ying* was to be divided into four companies called *shao* and these into eight *tui* (in the guards a *shao* was to be divided into six *tui* only). These regulations were drawn up in great detail, and formed the basis on which all other Hunan armies were organised.

In order to make more rapid progress, additional boat-

<sup>39</sup> *Home Letters*, November 4, 1853, and May 16, 1854.

<sup>40</sup> *Nienp'u*, II, 14a.

yards were set up in Siangtan to supplement those in Hengchow. Three types of boats were prepared, the largest being the *k'wai-hai*, the second the *ch'ang-lung*, and the third converted fishing boats each mounted with a small gun. To these three varieties were now added several tons of *sampan* and smaller boats.<sup>41</sup>

By the end of February Tsêng's preparations were so far advanced that he was able to report to the emperor his intention to start for Hupeh at an early date.<sup>42</sup> From this dispatch we learn that his entire flotilla consisted of one large flagship of the *t'o-ku* type, and 360 other vessels, of four kinds, all fitted to be used as gunboats:

1. Forty of the *k'wai-hai* type, carrying thirty-six oarsmen and scullers and six others.
2. Fifty of the *ch'ang-lung* type, carrying twenty oarsmen and scullers and six others.
3. One hundred fifty of the *sampan* type, carrying a crew of ten.
4. One hundred twenty remodelled fishing boats, probably manned as the *sampans*.

In addition to their crew each of these boats carried gunners.

It proved a difficult task to enlist the necessary marines for this water force, because, except for the river population accustomed to navigate these waterways of the interior, the villagers feared to venture on this new life, unaccustomed as they were to the winds and currents. When at last they were secured, Kwangsi gunners were

<sup>41</sup> The addition of the smaller boats was due to the suggestion of a certain Hwang Mien, who came to see his boats and who told him that the rebels moved about in small boats that were able to escape into creeks and small channels off the rivers and lakes, where they were well concealed. With nothing in the flotilla but the large *k'wai-hai* and *ch'ang-lung* vessels Tsêng need never hope to get into these concealed places to drive them out. It was on the basis of this suggestion that Tsêng added these to his flotilla. *Ta Shih Chi*, I, 5a.

<sup>42</sup> *Dispatches*, II, 31-32a.

employed to give them the necessary training. When Tsêng was ready to set off down the river he had five thousand marines in ten *ying*, of which the half who were placed on the *k'wai-hai* boats were regarded as the active force and those on the *ch'ang-lung* the reserve. They were distinguished by their flags: the active force having a single color on theirs, while the reserves had variegated banners.<sup>43</sup> Chu Yu-hang was in general command of this flotilla.

The land army also consisted of five thousand men under the general command of T'a Chi-pu.<sup>44</sup> Here the *ying* were not uniformly made up of five hundred men; some totalled more and some less.

Including soldiers, artisans, servants, and laborers, the whole expedition numbered about seventeen thousand men, and it was accompanied by stores of ammunition and weapons as well as quantities of provisions which were carried on supply vessels. The expedition set off down the river with 12,000 piculs of rice, 18,000 piculs of charcoal, 40,000 catties of salt, and 30,000 catties of oil.<sup>45</sup>

The financial burden for the support of this expeditionary force was estimated at 80,000 *taels* per month, but a revised estimate reduced the total by 10,000 *taels*. The ordinary revenues were insufficient for such a sum. Tsêng therefore begged the emperor to designate special officials and gentry to raise the necessary sums by collections in Hunan, Kiangsi, and Ssuch'uan. He furthermore requested that four thousand blank patents to official rank, actual and honorary, be supplied, through the sale of which large sums might be realised in these three provinces. These extraordinary measures were

<sup>43</sup> *Ta Shih Chi*, I, 5a.

<sup>44</sup> *Nienp'u*, III, 2a.

<sup>45</sup> *Dispatches*, II, 32b. A picul was about 133½ lbs., and a catty about 1½ lbs.

justified and, indeed, necessitated by the failure of the governor of Hunan to discover any means of securing the needed amounts, thus placing the whole enterprise in jeopardy for lack of funds.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 35 f., under date March 13.