

THE

Chinese Recorder

AND

MISSIONARY JOURNAL.

Vol. XIV.

MARCH-APRIL, 1883.

No. 2

THE PROVERBS AND COMMON SAYINGS OF THE CHINESE.

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(Continued from page 17.)

IV.—PROVERBS CONTAINING ALLUSIONS TO HISTORICAL SEMI-HISTORICAL, LEGENDARY, OR MYTHICAL PERSONS OR EVENTS.

THE tendency in Chinese Proverbs to cluster, by a kind of crystallization, about a particular character, admits of numerous illustrations. The Sung Dynasty (A.D. 960-1278), produced many famous men, and great scholars, like *Chu Shi* (朱熹), the annotator of the Classics and historian, whose name is almost as familiar to the Chinese in every succeeding age, as those of Confucius and Mencius, whose works he interpreted. It is not, however, the name of *Chu fu tzu*, among men of his general era, which is most often heard in popular speech (although some of his reputed household words have become proverbial), but that of another individual who has become a national by-word and laughing-stock. *Chu fu tzu* is known principally to those who can read, but there is scarcely any one, whether he can read or not, who has not heard of *Wu Ta Lang* (武大郎). This individual was a dwarf. His wife was named *P'an Chin Lien* (潘金蓮), and is remembered for her intrigues with one *Hsi Wen Ch'ing* (西門慶), intrigues to which her husband was unable to put a stop. It is said that this precious couple finally put an end to *Wu Ta Lang*, by compelling him to take a drug in which poison was infused, which he dared not refuse, although aware of their purpose. Hence the proverb—employed in reference to one who is driven to the wall—'Wu Ta Lang's dose of poison—sure to die if he takes it, and sure to die if he does not,' 武大郎服毒。吃也死。不吃也是死。 *Wu Ta Lang* had an elder brother known as *Wu Sung* (武松), who was a general

point in a separate paper. What he says of the use of aphrodisiac remedies in the East and the evils consequent upon them I can most fully endorse. He was charged with having a private purpose to serve by the argument he has taken in this controversy but this he fairly rebuts and therefore he deserves credit for his sincerity and desire to arrive at the truth. His public retraction of that part, at least, of his views depending upon his belief in the non-volatilizability of morphia, which is the foundation upon which he has based his novel opinion of the innocuousness of the habit, does him credit. He concludes his two letters where he began with an assertion of its strictly harmless indulgence, the pleasure not being in the opium itself, so much as in the smoking it. Anything else would gradually become just as popular, although it might not incidentally prove so beneficial. It was in this way he tells us "that the Red Indians took to smoking willow bark in place of tobacco which was too costly for them. He has no hope of opium ever being relinquished by any people who have once taken to it." To put it down in China it may be granted that forcible and energetic measures will require to be adopted.



THE POPULATION OF CHINA.

BY REV. A. P. HAPPER. D.D.

IN the number of the *Chinese Recorder* for September-October 1880 I published a short paper on the population of Chinese at this present time. In that paper I expressed the opinion that the population of this empire was not as great as it was commonly stated to be, nor so great as it was fifty years ago. I stated that in my opinion the present population could not be more than three hundred millions; and gave as the reasons for that opinion, that the destruction of life had been so great by the wars connected with the T'ai-p'ing rebellion in fifteen of the provinces; by the Mohammedan rebellions in the South West and North Western Provinces, and the famines in the large and populous provinces of Shantung, Shansi, Chihli, and Shensi and parts of the adjacent provinces that after a careful consideration of the subject this was the largest estimate that could be accepted for the present population. The extra copies of that paper, which were printed in separate sheets were soon exhausted, so that there were no copies to supply the applications for it. Several European authorities have recently corrected their estimates of the population of Chinese. Their present estimates will interest the readers of the *Recorder* who have

not yet seen them. Drs. Behm and Wagner in the recent edition of their well known collection of statistics, "Die Bevolkerung der Erde" give the population of China including Corea as 379,500,000, which number is 55,000,000 less than they formerly gave as the population. Petersen's *Meittheolungen*, which is published biennially, has reduced the estimate of the population of China proper from 425 millions to 350 millions, a lessening of 75 millions. It gives the reasons for this reduction in some five pages. It estimates the population of the outlying territories at 21 millions which makes the population of the empire to be 371 millions. These numbers I think can very safely be reduced some 50 millions more and get give the whole number of present population. As helping to confirm my own estimate I have pleasure in republishing a statement of Mr. H. A. Hippisley, Acting Commissioner of Customs. To his Report of the port of Wenchow in Cheh-kiang Province Mr. Hippisley appends some remarks on the population of China. It will be noticed by those who will compare these statements with those made by me in the paper published in September 1880—that Mr. Hippisley gives the very same reasons for the diminution of the population that I have given. But he estimates the destruction of life by the rebellions and famines to have been greater than I estimated it. The report of the results of a census of the Cheh-kiang Province in 1879 appears to bear out the estimate of Mr. Hippisley. But it appears to me that this reported census gives just grounds for regarding its results as unreliable. It was taken in 1879, fifteen years after peace and quiet had been restored in the province. Of course during this time all the inhabitants that had been scattered into the adjoining provinces by the incursion of the insurgents had returned to their former homes, some settlers had come in from adjoining provinces to occupy the vacant lands, and with the return of quiet and order the natural increase of population would be noticed in that time. If then at the end of fifteen years there was still a decrease of the population from what it was previously, to the extent of 60 per cent, as stated in this census, what must it have been when the insurgents withdrew from that Province?

From the sources which I have indicated there must have been a large accession to the population in fifteen years of peace and prosperity. It is quite incredible that the population should have diminished so much that after such an increase there was still only 40 per cent of the former population. Besides in 1879 it was reported from the same Provincial authorities that taxes were paid

on 7/10 of the former quantity of titled lands. The two statements do not appear congruous. For it is not probable that 4/10 of the same population would pay taxes on 7/10 of the same quantity of land. The quantity of land paying taxes would be easier to get at than the population. I consider Mr. Hippisley's estimate of the population of Cheh-kiang province a more probable estimate than the number given by the reported census. It will be noticed that as Mr. Hippisley estimates the whole population of China at 250 million while the two German authorities both place it above 359 millions, there is a difference of more than 100 millions in their estimates. It shows at once that the data which we have for arriving at a knowledge of the population of China are very unreliable, when such a wide discrepancy exists in the results arrived at. It also appears that the estimate of 300 millions, which I have given as the most probable is about half way between the others. I am sure that the data which I presented in my former paper on this subject, would justify placing the number of the population of China rather below than above 300 millions. I am therefore more inclined to agree with Mr. Hippisley rather than with the German statisticians. I think that perhaps the number 280 millions would more nearly express the number of the population than any number which has hitherto been published. For in forming the estimate of the number of people which had perished in the various rebellions and famines, I accepted the *lowest* estimate that could be accepted in consistency with the facts then presented. The number which perished in these several calamitous visitations might very easily be counted as 20 millions more than I estimated it to be, and that would have made the population to be 280 millions. But I must present my readers with the statements of Mr. Hippisley. He writes thus; Mr. Rhys Davids, in his work on "Buddhism," states on the authority of Schopenhauer ("Parerga et Paralipomena") that, "according to the *Moniteur de la Flotte*, May, 1857, the allied armies found, on taking Nanking, 1842, returns which gave the population of China at 396,000,000, and that the *Post Zeitung* of 1858 contains a report from the Russian Mission at Peking giving the numbers, on authority of state papers, at 414,687,000." I have not seen Schopenhauer's work and know not, therefore, whether detailed statistics for each province are given in these returns. The latest census of which I am aware containing this information is that of 1812, which gives the population as 362,447,183 souls. The areas of the several provinces are given by Dr. Williams in his "Middle Kingdom," but there is reason to think his estimate is, in some cases at least, an excessive

one, for Baron von Richthofen computes the area of the Cheh-kiang province at 36,000 square miles, while Dr. Williams gives it as 39,150 square miles. Accepting, however, Dr. Williams's statement, the population returned in the census of 1812 for the provinces of Kiang-su, Gan-hwuy, and Cheh-kiang would give an average to the square mile in them of 850,705 and 671 respectively. In Belgium, the most densely-populated country in Europe, the present average is 469; and in Oudh, the most densely-populated portion of India, the average is, according to the census of 1881, but 476. It seems almost incredible that any portion of CHINA could at any time have possessed a population 50 to 75 per cent denser than these countries. But, however that may be, I have long been of opinion that the present population of CHINA falls far short of the number given by the census of 1812. In the Taip'ing rebellion, which was characterised by ruthless destruction and slaughter, sixteen provinces were desolated. It was followed by the Nienfei and Mussulman rebellions, and by the terrible famine of 1876-78. In these successive calamities vast tracts of country were depopulated, and as is evidenced by the memorials regarding the grain tribute published in the *Peking Gazette*, no small portion of them remains to this day unreclaimed. For these reasons I have considered that the population of China at the present day does not exceed 250,000,000. This estimate has, I am aware, been generally considered too small. It was, therefore with no slight interest that I read in the *Peking Gazette* of the 17th March, 1880, a postscript memorial from the Governor of this province reporting the result of a general census held in the autumn of the fifth year of the present reign (1879). The population of Cheh-kiang, which I had estimated as slightly over 15,000,000, is given according to this census as 11,541,054. This census of 1812 having stated the then population as 26,256,784, the present returns show a reduction of 14,700,000 souls, or nearly 60 per cent, and an average to the square mile of 295, instead of 671.

Through the courtesy of the Taotai, I am able to give particulars of the population of this prefecture. The returns forwarded from Ping-yang Hsien are less detailed than those from some of the other districts, and those from Tai-shun Hsien give only the number of habitations, omitting the number of inhabitants. But to have obtained further particulars might have delayed the despatch of this report beyond the date fixed by you, and I have calculated the population of the last-named district by estimating five persons to each habitation, a number slightly below the average of the other

districts. The area of this prefecture is about 3,380 geographical square miles, or 4,500 statute square miles. The average population would therefore seem to be about 409 to the square mile in this prefecture, and thus largely in excess of the general average of the province. The adjoining prefecture of Ch'u-chau, to the west, is, however, nearly twice as large as this prefecture, with a population of probably scarcely more than half the above number. The average of the two prefectures would thus be considerably below that of the whole province.—*The Shanghai Courier*.

As the extra copies of my former paper on this subject were long ago exhausted and none are on hand to meet the application for copies, in order to give completeness to this paper I reprint a few pages of that article in this connection for the facts referred to therein.

“We are glad to put this opinion of Dr. Williams’ on record on our pages, for we agree in opinion of the reliability of the census of 1812; and consider the statement that the population of China in 1812 was 363,000,000 quite credible. But we think that Dr. Williams has *underestimated* the destruction which has happened to the population, during the last forty years, from wars, famines and pestilences, when he expresses the opinion that the population is still 340,000,000.

We will proceed to examine those sad items in the history of this country in order to arrive at some opinion as to the diminution of the population. Dr. Williams estimates the loss of life during the Taiping rebellion at *twenty millions*. This is a very great number of human lives to be lost in a rebellion. But great as the number is in itself, we think the number is too few by one half; and that the loss of life during these eighteen years of war was at least *forty millions*. Dr. Williams notices the fact that *fifteen* out of the eighteen provinces had been reached by the insurgents and were more or less ravaged by them. All who know the history of that rebellion, at the time, will remember the terrible slaughter inflicted on the cities and populous towns of Wuchang, Hanyang, Hankow, Kiukiang, Wuhu and Nganking, on their way down the Yangtsze river till they took Nanking; also the destructive and bloody raids, which they made frequently into the provinces of Honan, Shantung, Chihli, Shansi, Shensi and Szechuen. But their most terrible visitations were in Kwangsi, where it originated and where for four years it gathered and organized its forces at the expense of the lives and property of many of the inhabitants of that province; and in the four provinces of Kiangsu, Chehkiang, Kiangsi and Nganhwui. These four provinces are all in

the vicinity of Nanking which the insurgents made their head-quarters for *some eleven years*; and these rich and populous provinces were the forage ground from which nearly all their supplies of men, and means, and food were gathered. These provinces have all been visited and travelled over in various directions by missionaries and others since quiet was restored. And though we have not any reliable census to show with certainty the full loss of population during the eleven years of merciless execution and murder, yet, we have various facts which will enable us to form some approximate-estimate thereof. Some of those who travelled over Chehkiang province, soon after it was recovered by the Imperial government, estimated the loss of population at one-half. After these sixteen years of quiet and the resumption of peaceful pursuits, in the beginning of this year one of the provincial officers of the province stated that $3/10$ of the *arable land* still paid no taxes. Every one who has passed along the canal from Hangchow to Soochow and thence either to Chinkiang, or Nanking, has noticed the large districts of very good land that is still uncultivated. It is noticeable in the large cities and towns and villages within this same region, how much of these places remain unbuilt. Those who have frequently travelled through Nganhwui, both north and south of the river, have written of the extensive desolation that prevails—whole cities yet in ruins—and towns and villages depopulated, and whole districts uncultivated. Some have estimated that one half the population in Nganhwui had perished. This opinion was further supported by the fact that many of the present inhabitants have come in from the adjacent provinces since quiet was restored. Less has been written of the condition of Kiangsi since the restoration of order than of the other provinces adjoining Nanking. But as it was equally open to the marauding excursions of the insurgents, we may suppose that it suffered nearly to the same degree. Those who have, within the last few years, passed through Kwangsi state that large tracts of the country are still desolate, and that cities and towns are still in ruins. During a part of the time the insurgent chief was in Kwangsi it was a war of extermination. If the chief had been taken he and his followers would have been massacred, hence the war was very destructive of life. The aggregate population of these five provinces, before the outbreak of the insurrection, according to the census of 1812, as given by Dr. Williams in "The Middle Kingdom," was 128,629,276. If we estimate the loss of life in these five provinces, during this long continuous butchery of the peaceful inhabitants by the insurgents, at $4/10$ of the population it will make the number thus perishing to

have been 51,451,080. If we fix on 3/10 as the probable proportion that perished, (and no one who will consider all the facts in the case will consider 3/10 as a high estimate of those who perished) it will make the numbers to have been 38,588,771. If to this last number, we add the lowest possible estimate for the numbers that perished in the other fifteen provinces, that suffered from the incursions of the insurgent forces, it will make the numbers that were destroyed by the Tai-p'ing rebellion to have been over 40,000,000.

But besides this rebellion which caused the destruction of population, there have been other causes, within the last thirty years, that Dr. Williams does not refer to. The most destructive have been the Mohammedan rebellions in the South-west and North-west and the recent famine in the North-east. Those travellers who have passed through the provinces of Yunnan and Kwei-chow within the last few years all write of the depopulated state of the country. A gentleman, who is in the employ of the Chinese Government and who has *resided* in Kwei-chow province for several years, said to the writer, in answer to inquiries on this point, that in some places 4/10 of the population had disappeared, in some places 6/10 were gone. The statements made by other writers as to the exterminating character of the war to subdue of this Mohammedan rebellion would lead us to expect to hear of such destruction of the population. The French Consul-General M. Theirsant, in his book in "Le Mahometisme en Chine" as quoted in the *Edinburgh Review*, for April 1880, says "The most deplorable conflict between the Muslims and their neighbors in Yunnan was that which begun in a quarrel between some miners in 1855, and only ended in 1874, in well-nigh the extermination of the Muslim population of the province." The same article at p. 374, quotes another writer, describing the terrible nature of the war as stating, "that Seventy-seven towns were taken by assault, and forty of them absolutely destroyed, whilst the villages and hamlets burnt and pillaged defy calculation." We have no detailed statements as to the extent of the depopulation of the country in Kansuh province, by European travellers. But the population of these three provinces, before the rebellions in them, according to the census of 1812, aggregated 25,932,644. The war in Yunnan continued nineteen years, in Kansuh for a shorter period. It will be a low estimate to suppose that 8,000,000 of the population perished during these destructive war, in those three provinces of the empire.

The other terrible calamity, which has in recent years come upon China, attended with great destruction of life, is the recent famine in the five adjacent provinces of Chihli, Shantung, Shansi, Shensi and Honan. The aggregate population of these five provinces according to the census of 1812 was 104,803,416. The famine did not extend over all the provinces, but from the statements of those who engaged in the relief work the calamity must have involved nearly *one-half* of the whole population. The Committee at Shanghai gave as an estimate, that the loss of life from famine and the attending diseases was 13,000,000. This is probably an *under-estimate*. It has been stated that the Chinese officers reported the loss of population as 20,000,000. But taking the estimates, as given above, of the loss of population by those appalling calamities; viz: the Taiping rebellion at 40,000,000; in the three provinces of the S.W. and N.W. at 8,000,000; and by the famine in the five N.E. provinces at 13,000,000 and it makes an aggregate number of 61,000,000.

Besides these great calamities resulting in such a fearful loss of life, there have been other causes which lessen, the general tendency to the recuperation of the population. Some of these are as follow:— The continued stream of emigration of young and able-bodied men to all the countries of the Eastern archipelago, to Siam, to Australia and to the United States of America. There have been some limited regions of China that have suffered from floods and the dear prices for food. The first war with England from 1839-42 was attended with very considerable loss of life, at some points; and the local rebellions which occurred in the Canton and Fukien provinces, in 1854-5, soon after the fall of Nanking, were only suppressed after a considerable loss of life. All will recall the number of executions at Canton city by the then Governor-General Yeh. But the most wide spread cause, which has prevented recuperation of the number of the population, is the use of opium by such a large number of the adult males. The habitual use of opium, as is known to all, has spread rapidly among the middle classes during the last forty years.

After considering these causes which affect the population of China, we think that most of our readers will agree with us in the opinion, that taking the census of 1812 as a ground of estimate, 300,000,000 is a probable estimate for the *present population* of the empire of China. If we accept the number which is given by Dr. Peterson's Mitthellunger as the probable population of the globe,

viz: 1,429,145,000 to be correct, then China contains a little more than *one fifth* of the population of the globe."

It will be evident to all my readers when they examine the details of the sad calamities affecting the population of China that if we increase the estimated number of those who perished during the T'ai-p'ing rebellion by 10 millions, making the estimated number to be 50 millions instead of 40 millions it will be fully justified by the facts presented. So if we add 6 millions to the number as formerly given of those who perished in the Mohammedan rebellions in the South West and North West provinces, and again add 4 millions to the number formerly given as the number perishing through the famines in the populous provinces of Chihli, Shantung, Shansi, Shensi and Honan the estimates as thus increased will be sustained by the facts above presented. These several items make an aggregate of 20 millions. In my former paper as will be seen from the quotation above given I presented 61 millions as the lowest estimate of the numbers of lives that were destroyed and that this number subtracted from the number given in the census of 1812 made the present population to be in round numbers 300 millions. If now we estimate the loss of life by these various calamities to have been 20 millions more than the estimate then given, it will make the number to have been 81 millions. This number taken from the number as given in the census of 1812 will leave the population at 280,000,000. If any are inclined to accept Mr. Hippisley's estimate of 250 millions I consider it to be much better supported than the higher estimate of 350 millions. I present the facts and leave my readers to form their own opinion. It is worth noticing in this connection that the recent census in India gives the population of that populous country to be 250 millions. The population of India is therefore very nearly equal to that of China—according to these latter estimates—But if the rapid increase of the growth and consumption of opium in China cannot be arrested, there is reason to believe that the population of India, under the beneficent rule of the British government will soon exceed that of China and China will then cease to be, what it has so long been, the most populous country on the globe.
