

Since ancient times, rulers and people believed in God-on-High,
 Valiant individuals swiftly overpowered the demon's gate.
 Follow Heaven and achieve happiness, defy Heaven and you will
 perish.
 Why do mortal people discuss the arguments for and against
 [God]?
 Looking at you, none of you appear to be Buddha's children,
 Why do you not want to turn towards the Heaven?

3.4 TAIPIING PLAN FOR REORGANIZING CHINESE SOCIETY (1853)

The Taiping plan for reorganization sought to regulate, systematize, and classify Chinese society in fundamentally new ways. The plan contained both incentives (especially for the lower classes) for adhering to the new Taiping principles as well as disincentives for those who did not. Deliberately shunning the easier path of retaining or only minimally altering the Qing administrative structure, the Taiping plan reveals sweeping changes and an attempt to establish an intricate bureaucracy to oversee their reforms. The plan demonstrates a desire to completely displace the traditional regime of landed wealth with an uncompromising devotion to Taiping-style Christian faith. The Taiping plan, however, should not be mistaken for a portrait of Taiping society. The Taiping kingdom experienced few periods of outright peace, leaving little time for the plan to be fully implemented.

Questions

1. Based on your reading of the earlier documents, what aspects of the plan do you think would have been implemented first?
2. In the Taiping Plan, why do you think there is such an emphasis on the precise detail of the hierarchy and the chains of command?

All the people under heaven are one big family with the Heavenly Father [*tianfu*], the Supreme Ruler [*shangzhu*] and God-on-High [*huang shangdi*]. Within the empire, no one should have private possessions. Everything should be submitted to the Supreme Ruler. He can make use of it and distribute it equally to all places across the empire. In this way, everyone is properly fed and dressed. This is the specific order from the Heavenly Father, the Supreme Ruler, and God-on-High to the true Taiping Ruler to save the world. The Squad Leader must keep a record of all money and grain collected and then accurately report [the totals] to the Director of Revenue and the Director of Remittance and Disbursement.

For every twenty-five families, one treasury and one church should be organized and overseen by a Squad Leader. All events for the twenty-five families, such as weddings and birthday celebrations, are funded by the treasury. Limits are fixed and no excess spending will be allowed. So, if each family is paid 1,000 cash and 100 *jin* of grain for a wedding or a birthday, everyone within the empire should be given the same amount. Expenses must be monitored carefully, in order to be prepared for possible military shortfalls. In this way, all marriage matches should not be based on wealth.

For every twenty-five family unit, the pottery-making, blacksmithry, carpentry, masonry and other such tasks will be conducted by Team Leaders and soldiers, when free from farming duties. When the Squad Leader performs wedding and birth celebrations for the twenty-five family unit, they must always offer prayers and sacrifices to the Heavenly Father, the

Supreme Ruler and God-on-High. All other old impure customs must be abolished. Every boy in the twenty-five family unit must attend church every day where the Squad Leader will teach them to read the Old and New Testaments, and Sacred Decrees. Every Sunday, the Team Leader is charged with leading all men and women to church, dividing men and women to sit separately, to listen to preaching, praising and paying tribute to the Heavenly Father, the Supreme Ruler and God-on-High. . . .

Every three years, all officials in the empire will be re-assessed for promotion, or demotion, to demonstrate the equanimity of the Heavenly Kingdom. Those who irresponsibly promote, or demote, others, will be relegated to the status of farmer [*nong*]. At the triennial period of promotion and demotion, every leader is responsible for promoting or demoting those under them. The Regiment Commander should carefully evaluate their Squad and Team Leaders. Note the achievements of those who truly excelled and list the shortcomings of those who performed poorly. Record the name of each individual, include your own name with the recommendations for promotion or demotion to your Brigade Commander. Those who are not promoted or demoted, will continue in their current positions. . . .

For every 13,156 families there is one army, headed by a General. Each General supervises five Division Commanders. Each Division Commander supervises five Brigade Commanders, totaling twenty-five Brigade Commanders. Each of the twenty-five Brigade Commanders supervises five Regiment Commanders, totaling 125 Regiment Commanders. Each of the 125 Regiment Commanders supervises four Squad Leaders, with a total of 500 Squad Leaders. Each of the 500 Squad Leaders supervises five Team Leaders, for a total of 2,500 Team Leaders. Each of the 2,500 Team Leaders leads four soldiers, totaling 10,000 soldiers. Each Army totals to 13,156 men. . . .

Every Sunday, all officials and people must attend a service, faithfully listen to the prayers and praises of the Heavenly Father, the Supreme Ruler, and God-on-High. Every seventh Sunday, every forty-nine days, the Division, Brigade and Regiment Commanders should attend the church of a Squad Leader under their command on a rotating basis, teaching the sacred texts to educate people, quizzing them to see if the regulations are being obeyed or neglected. For example, on one Sunday of the seventh week, the forty-ninth day, the Division Commander could visit the church of one Squad Leader, the next Sunday of the seventh week, forty-nine days later, the Division Commander will visit the church of another Squad Leader. Such a rotation is to be followed and repeated. The same is true for the Brigade and Regiment Commanders.

For each man who has a wife, with three or four children—or five, six, seven, eight, or nine—one should be drafted to become a soldier. All widows, widowers, single, or disabled people are exempted from conscription, and will be supported by the treasury.

Each Sunday, every official across the empire must contribute sacrificed goods, according to their ranks, to praise the Heavenly Father, the Supreme Ruler and God-on-High, and to study the Sacred Texts. Anyone who neglects this will be relegated to the status of farmer [as a punishment].

3.5 LAND SYSTEM OF THE HEAVENLY DYNASTY (1853)

The Taiping's Land System sought to fundamentally change society through the redistribution of land, an idea that would be replicated by both Sun Yat-sen (6.3)