

# Textual Research on *the Uprising of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom*: The Change of the Name of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom

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## Abstract

The study of the Taiping Kingdom itself has a great influence on the study of the history of the Taiping Kingdom in modern China. It involves the research of politics, economy, culture, military, figures, laws and regulations, religion and so on. However, the academic research on the national title of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom is less involved. Investigating this history will not only help us understand the historical details of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom period, but also correct some wrong understandings about the name of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom.

**Keywords:** the uprising of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, country name

## 1. The Change of the Name of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom

There have been differences in academic circles on the title of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. Some scholars believe that the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom has used four national names, namely "Taiping rejuvenating the country", "Taiping Heavenly Kingdom", "God Heavenly Kingdom", "father heavenly brother Heavenly King Taiping Heavenly Kingdom"; Other scholars believe that the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom did not use the national name of "Taiping rejuvenating the country". Through the reading and textual research of documents, the author prefers the latter view. The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom has not used the national name of "Taiping rejuvenating the country".

*The uprising of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom* is an important historical material to study the history of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. The emergence of this book has an important relationship with Hong Rengan, the dry king of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. Hong Rengan traveled to Hong Kong in 1852, where he met with Swedish missionary Theodore Hamberg. Theodore Hamberg once wrote the book "the uprising of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom" in English through Hong Rengan's oral statement and various documents and materials given to him. The book was translated into Chinese and published in 1935. It is now included in the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, a series of materials on Modern Chinese history, according to the printed edition of Yanjing University Library in 1935. "The uprising of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom" once recorded that "Hong Xiuquan was the emperor in Yong'an and changed the country's name to the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom" (Han, S.-W., 1935). There is no doubt about the former part of the sentence "Taiping", but it is worth examining. The word "change" in the second half of the sentence means that the Taiping army had a national name before this, and this national name is not "Taiping Heavenly Kingdom". The name of "Taiping Heavenly Kingdom" was only changed when the Taiping army occupied Yong'an and Hong Xiuquan was the emperor. It is such a record that many scholars believe that before the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom changed its name to "Taiping Heavenly Kingdom", it used "Taiping rejuvenating the country". However, the book was written by Theodore Hamberg through the oral statement of Hong Rengan, which makes it difficult to ensure that there will be no errors in the process of recording, resulting in contradictions with historical facts. In addition, Hong Rengan left the handwritten *confession of Hong Rengan*, the king of Gan, before he died, that is, *Hong Rengan's autobiography*. In his autobiography, he once wrote: "at this time, the heavenly king was stationed at Hu Yuguang's house in Huazhou, and all the teams of the General Assembly came to Huazhou to meet the holy driving. When they came to Jintian, they congratulated the Wanshou uprising, which was officially called the first year of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom and established the child Lord" (Taiping Heavenly Kingdom History Museum., 1979). It can be seen that the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom had a positive sign at the time of the Jintian uprising. How could the incident of "changing the country's name to the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom" occur after the capture of Yong'an?

Compared with the records in *the uprising of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom* written by Theodore Hamberg through Hong Rengan's oral narration, the records in *Hong Rengan's autobiography* written by Hong Rengan are more convincing. Luo Ergang also described this in his research work "*a textual research on the historical events of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom*" "The date on which the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom revolutionary movement issued the order to mobilize the members of all localities to worship God was June of the 30th year of Daoguang, but there was no uprising in Jintian at this time. The mobilization order was sent to the members' homes along the door. The members of all localities received the mobilization order, and the dates of the group were in order. After arriving at the Jintian regiment camp to welcome Hong Xiuquan back to Jintian, it was on the 10th day of December of that year (i.e. January 11, 1851), Hong Xiuquan's birthday was celebrated on this day. The uprising in Jintian was called the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom and announced the "crusade against the Manchu and Qing Dynasties" (Luo, E.-G., 1979). Through the in-depth study of the history of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, Luo Ergang came to the conclusion that the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom had a positive sign when the Jintian uprising. This further shows that the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom did not change its country name in Yong'an. This part of the records in the records of *the uprising of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom* remains to be studied, which is not enough to explain that the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom still used "Taiping rejuvenating the country" before using the country name of "Taiping Heavenly Kingdom". Although the change of the country's name in *the uprising of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom* has yet to be verified, the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom did change the country's name from "the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom" to "the Heavenly Kingdom of God" and "the heavenly Father's heavenly brother, the heavenly king, the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom". One of the *imperial edicts of the king of heaven* was issued on the 26th day of the first month of the 11th year of Xinyou, which said: "my brother, I and my child sit in heaven, the kingdom of heaven is peaceful, the sky is flying, and all kinds of gods in the kingdom of heaven are the head. The peaceful and unified Tianshan river is now changed into the kingdom of God, and the whole heaven is the father and Emperor. Since now, the seal has been printed and engraved, the kingdom of God is more glorious, the jade seal has changed the kingdom of God, and each seal is imitated and engraved with the top master's Outline" (Taiping Heavenly Kingdom History Museum., 1979). "I hereby decree that the heavenly Father and God will be the only one on the earth tomorrow, which is the biggest norm in the history of development. I think carefully about God and Christ coming down to earth to take me and my children as masters. The Heavenly Kingdom is called the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. Although I am the father of the Taiping Heavenly Emperor and my brother is the brother of the Taiping God, it is more in line with the truth that I am the only one, respect God and change the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom into the Heavenly Kingdom of God." (Taiping Heavenly Kingdom History Museum., 1979) From the imperial edict, it is not difficult to see that the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom once changed its name to "the kingdom of God". In addition, in the *imperial edict of the heavenly king*, the imperial edict on February 17, the eleventh year of Xinyou was inscribed as "the imperial edict on February 17, the eleventh year of Xinyou, the heavenly Father and brother, the heavenly king of Taiping Heavenly Kingdom". The imperial edict after the 17th day was also signed with "heavenly Father, heavenly brother, heavenly king, Taiping Heavenly Kingdom". From these historical records, we can know that some time before February 17, the eleventh year of Xinyou, the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom changed its name to "the heavenly Father and brother, the heavenly king Taiping Heavenly Kingdom". Through the mutual confirmation of historical materials, we can know that the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom did not use the country name of "Taiping rejuvenating the country", and the "Taiping Heavenly Kingdom" was not changed by it. In the history of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, only the three national names of "Taiping Heavenly Kingdom", "God Heavenly Kingdom" and "heavenly Father and heavenly brother and heavenly king Taiping Heavenly Kingdom" have been used.

## 2. The Source of "Taiping Heavenly Kingdom"

The national name of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom "Taiping Heavenly Kingdom" contains the lofty ideal of farmers' leaders to create a better society. This country name is also the crystallization of the combination of Chinese and Western cultures. The main source of Hong Xiuquan's thought of "peace" is Chinese traditional culture. The word "Taiping" has been running through Chinese culture. Mr. Su Zhongli once wrote in the article: "the origin of the word 'Taiping' is far from China's economic history. According to the theory of troubled times, Shengping times and Taiping times, the word 'three generations' in *Biography of RAM* in the spring and Autumn period is the first word of Taiping, which can be seen in the classics" (Wang, C.-R., 1994). It can be seen that "peace" has long existed in Chinese culture and has become the "peace in the world" and "peace and prosperity" in the public's mouth. Since its establishment, tiandihui has always regarded the establishment of a "peaceful society" as its goal. Hong Xiuquan had many contacts with the society of heaven and earth, and his thought of "peace" was also influenced by the society of heaven and earth. Here, Hong Xiuquan wanted to lead the oppressed poor working people to establish a life ideal of "a world of peace". After Hong Xiuquan founded the

religion of worshipping God, in order to spread the doctrine and carry out his activities of transforming society, he created "*The original way awakens the world*" in 1843. In this book, he described as follows: "the world is one family, sharing peace, geometric obedience, leaving a thin world, which will not once become a fair and upright world" (Hong, X.-Q.). The "Kingdom of heaven" in the name of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom mainly comes from Christianity. Hong Xiu's whole heart was devoted to fame. However, he failed repeatedly and inadvertently read the book "*Good advice to the world*". This book is a missionary book of the Protestant Church of Christianity. It contains a lot of contents of *the Bible* and uses Confucian remarks to explain Protestant teachings. After reading this book, Hong Xiuquan first knew that "the kingdom of heaven came" and respected his thought, resulting in the concept of believing in God and pursuing equality. "*The uprising of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom*" also has relevant records: "the word" Heavenly Kingdom "seems to refer to China from the literal meaning, but from its status, it may be the title of emperor. This name is named after Hong's book, which was selected by the Bible". In the New Testament revised by Hong Xiuquan, it is described that "the kingdom of heaven is the kingdom of heaven in terms of heaven and earth. There is a kingdom of heaven in heaven and there is a kingdom of heaven on earth. Both heaven and earth are priests' Kingdom of heaven, so don't mistakenly refer to the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, the elder brother (referring to Jesus) gave an edict saying:" the kingdom of heaven is coming soon, and the kingdom of heaven is coming from the earth. Today, it is also the father and brother Tian who came to earth to create the kingdom of heaven ".

### 3. Historical Value

Although the historical materials of the uprising of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom were written by foreigners, there are some defects in structure and writing, and there are few records because of insufficient materials, and there are many places to be verified. But after all, it was made by people in that era, and it was also based on the oral statement of the leaders of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. The content is highly authentic. It can supplement the shortcomings of other historical materials and confirm each other with other historical materials. It is an important history for studying the history of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom.

### 4. Summary

Through the analysis of the records of the country name of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom in the records of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom uprising and the use of other historical materials, we find that the change of the country name to the "Taiping Heavenly Kingdom" is not a historical fact, and the Taiping army did not use the country name of "Taiping rejuvenating the country" before using the "Taiping Heavenly Kingdom". It is also proved by historical materials that the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom changed its national name to "God's Heavenly Kingdom" and "heavenly Father's heavenly brother's Heavenly King's Taiping Heavenly Kingdom" after using the national name of "Taiping Heavenly Kingdom". It also analyzes the origin of the country name "Taiping Heavenly Kingdom" (Jian, Y.-W., 1958).

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