

Not used

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TORTURED CHINA by Hallett Abend
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Chapter 7 - Dissolution

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"When Heaven has decided to destroy a people, there is no use trying to save them," says the official report of a Shanghai Chinese relief organization which also investigated conditions in Honan province. This report tells of the raids made by Wang Tien-kwoh, a notorious bandit leader, and of what befell the town of Kwanyin.

"Kwanyin consisted of 400 homes and a population of about 2000 people. After the last raid something over 10 houses were left standing, and the population was reduced to about 500.

"The people saw that life was impossible, and decided to cross the Yellow River northward, and seek shelter in the province of Shansi until times should be better. They marched to the bank of the river and secured a boat in which 200 got across.

"The boat returned, and 300 crowded into it for the second crossing. But when the craft was in midstream it was seen that the northern bank was lined with soldiers, and these prohibited the starving crowd from landing. The authorities in Shansi had plenty of beggars of their own, and were in no mood to welcome hungry ghosts from Honan.

"The boatmen turned back, but this time bandits had collected on the southern bank, prepared to rob the poor folk of their clothes and of whatever possessions they might have salvaged from the ruin of their homes.

"The refugees would not permit the boatmen to approach the southern bank, and the soldiers would not permit them to land on the northern bank, and thus the boat dallied in midstream until dusk.

"The wind arose as the sun went down, and the tired helmsman made a wrong move and swung the boat broadside to the swift current. In a moment it went over, and every soul was drowned."

"Bandit suppression" moves are frequently announced by the military, but the Chinese investigators declare that the unpaid soldiers have an agreement with the bandits, and always keep one day's march behind. At stated intervals the bandits leave piles of loot by the paths and roads, and these pay the soldiers for their cooperation.

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