In the late Eastern Han Dynasty, the common people lived in great misery because the society was ruthless and the government officials were corrupt. In response to these evil times, a man named Zhang Jiao from Julu (today's Pingxiang of Hebei Province) created a sect named "Taiping Dao" (The Way of Supreme Peace), and by curing diseases with his witchcraft, he secretly made allies with people from various areas. At that time people joining the sect came from as many as eight states, covering places such as today's Hebei, Shandong, Anhui, Hubei etc.

In 184 during the reign of Emperor Ling of the Eastern Han Dynasty, the followers of the Taiping Dao from all corners revolted simultaneously. They were tired of the empire’s high taxes and corruption, and they believed the floods and famine were signs that the Han Dynasty had lost the Mandate of Heaven. They wore a yellow turban, and called themselves "Yellow Turban Army". Their slogan attracted more people to join with them: "The dark green heaven (referring to the Eastern Han Dynasty, as its army uniform was dark green in color) has died and the yellow heaven (referring to the uprising army, as they wore a yellow turban) should emerge; right in the year of Jiazi\* (184 A. D.), the whole country will be blessed." They gathered several hundred thousand people and inflicted heavy losses on the imperial army which came up to squash them.

Later, Zhang Jiao, the leader of the Yellow Turban Army, died from illness, and his younger brothers Zhang Liang and Zhang Bao were killed. The main force of the army was conquered after nine months' fighting, while the rest kept fighting in local areas for over 20 years.

To squash the revolt, the Han Kingdom had to rely on the local forces. So, the local warlords took their chance and strengthened their own forces, which caused the country to fall apart. The government of the Eastern Han had become powerless, existing only in name!

*\*Jiazi* – refers to the ancient 60-yr lunar calendar; “a full lifespan”

*Source:*

<http://www.cultural-china.com/chinaWH/html/en/34History1967.html> - with some editing