

Stony Brook University



OFFICIAL COPY

The official electronic file of this thesis or dissertation is maintained by the University Libraries on behalf of The Graduate School at Stony Brook University.

© All Rights Reserved by Author.

**United In Righteousness: Slogans and Actions in the
Boxer Movement**

A Dissertation Presented

by

Aimin Guo

to

The Graduate School

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements

for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

History

Stony Brook University

May 2010

Stony Brook University

The Graduate School

Aimin Guo

We, the dissertation committee for the above candidate for the
Doctor of Philosophy degree, hereby recommend
acceptance of this dissertation

Iona Man-Cheong----Dissertation Advisor
Associate Professor History Department

Janis Mimura----Chairperson of Defense
Assistant Professor History Department

Michael Barnhart
Professor History Department

Gregory Ruf
Associate Professor Anthropology Department

This dissertation is accepted by the Graduate School

Lawrence Martin
Dean of the Graduate School

Abstract of the Dissertation

United in Righteousness: Slogans and Actions in the Boxer Movement

by

Aimin Guo

Doctor of Philosophy

in

History

Stony Brook University

2010

The Boxer movement in 1900 came into world history as an armed conflict between China and Western Powers. However, there was no unanimity in attitudes and actions of Chinese social groups in the conflict. Although all these major groups took saving China from foreign aggression as their “righteous mission” and used the traditional Chinese concept of patriotism—“righteousness” (*yi*) – to legitimize their action in the movement, they interpreted “righteousness” differently to fit their own interests. These different interpretations prominently embodied in the slogans of these social groups. An analysis of the underlying meanings of their political slogans contributes to the exploration of their cultural assumptions and moral frameworks of their political actions. Although previous studies have suggested that Boxer actions were grounded in a sense of moral rectitude, the same interpretation has not been applied to the other main social actors. My research examines the moral framework of these formerly excluded social groups. My dissertation will examine the slogans of each of the five main social groups, the Boxers, the Qing court, the provincial officials, the reformers, and the local gentry, in the Boxer movement and explore the influence of these cultural interpretations of “righteousness” on their political actions. I argue that the traditional concept of “righteousness” (*yi*) played an important role in the movement; however, its meaning and function were a construction of the power relations between these social groups.

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1: Preserve Confucianism to preserve the Country <i>(Bao Jiao Yi Bao Guo)</i>	17
Chapter 2: Obey the Qing, Destroy the Foreign (<i>Shun Qing Mie Yang</i>)	45
Chapter 3: Support the Qing, Destroy the Foreign (<i>Fu Qing Mie Yang</i>)	69
Chapter 4: Maintain the Orthodoxy, Dispel the Heterodoxy <i>(Fu Zheng Qu Xie)</i>	96
Chapter 5: Depend on People' Heart, Depend on Heaven's Will <i>(Yi Min Xin Shi Tian Yi)</i>	124
Chapter 6: United in Righteousness (<i>Yi He</i>).....	151
Conclusion	173
Bibliography	177
Appendix A: Table of Translation.....	190
Appendix B: Pictures.....	196

United in Righteousness: Slogans and Actions in the Boxer Movement

Introduction

The Boxer movement in 1900 came into world history as an armed conflict between China and major Western Powers. However, there was no unanimity in attitudes and actions of Chinese social groups in the conflict. Although all these major groups took saving China from foreign aggression as their “righteous mission” and used the traditional Chinese concept of patriotism---“righteousness” (*yi*) ---- to legitimize their action in the movement, they interpreted “righteousness” differently to fit their own interests. These different interpretations prominently embodied in the slogans of these social groups. An analysis of the underlying meanings of their political slogans contributes to the exploration of their cultural assumptions and moral framework of their political actions. Although previous studies have suggested that Boxer actions were grounded in a sense of moral rectitude, the same interpretation has not been applied to the other main social actors. My research examines the moral framework of these formerly excluded social groups. My dissertation will examine the slogans of each of the five main social groups, the Boxers, the Qing court, the provincial officials, the reformers, and the local gentry, in the Boxer

movement and explore the influence of these cultural interpretations on their political actions. I argue that the traditional concept of “righteousness” (*yi*) played an important role in the movement; however, its meaning and function were a construction of the power relations between these social groups.

The Boxers were a group of peasants in North China who practiced a particular set of boxing rituals. Through the ritual of “spirit possession” (*jiangshen futi*), the Boxers invited Chinese gods to possess them and endow them with the “invulnerability” to bullets. Because of these particular boxing rituals, they were called “Boxers” by the Westerners.¹ In June, 1900, thousands of Boxers streamed into Beijing, the capital of China, and confronted with the foreigners. The Boxers killed foreign Christian missionaries and Chinese Christians, attacked foreign legations and destroyed anything related to foreigners. The Boxers’ anti-foreign activities in Beijing led to allied military intervention of the Powers. On June 17, an allied army of eight nations occupied the Dagu Fort in

¹ Although scholars have different views on the nature of the conflict, which was called “Boxer Rebellion”, “Boxer Movement”, “Boxer Uprising” or “Boxer War”, they all take the cultural feature of Boxing skills as the hallmark of the conflict. George Nye Steiger, *China and the Occident: the Origin and Development of the Boxer Movement* (Russell & Russell, first published in 1927, reissued in 1966). Victor Purcell, *The Boxer Uprising: A Background Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963.) Joseph Esherick, *The Origins of Boxer Uprising* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987); Paul Cohen, *History in Three Keys: The Boxers as Event, Experience, and Myth* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997); Diana Preston, *The Boxer Rebellion: The Dramatic story of China’s War on Foreigners that Shook the World in the summer of 1900* (New York: Berkeley Publishing Group, 2000); Jane Elliott, *Some Did it for Civilization; Some Did it for their Country: A Revised View of the Boxer War* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2002.) Lanxin Xiang, *The Origins of the Boxer War: A Multinational Study* (New York: Routledge Curzon, 2003).

Tianjin and threatened to march on Beijing. On June 21, the Qing court declared war on all foreign Powers and ordered Qing forces to besiege all foreign legations in Beijing. The siege lasted 55 days until it was lifted by the arrival of the Allied army on August 14. As consequence of this conflict, the imperial court fled the capital which was occupied by the allied army for over a year. The Boxers were severely suppressed and several princes and high-ranking officials were executed and a huge indemnity (450 million taels of silver) was exacted.

The Boxer event, as an important conflict between China and Western Powers in modern Chinese history, has been studied by many scholars in the past century.² The relationship between the cultural practices of the Boxers, their Boxing rituals, and the armed conflict between China and Western Powers has always been a hot topic of the studies on the movement. What is the role of these cultural practices in the armed conflict between China and Western Powers? Before the 1960s, “conflict of civilization” explanations dominated studies of the Boxer movement. This model saw the movement as the result of a fundamental conflict between the supposed backward old Chinese civilization and the progressive new Western civilization. In the reports written by Western diplomats, missionaries, soldiers and journalists about the event, the Boxers were described

² In 2000, the 100th anniversary of the Boxer war, a comprehensive review of earlier scholarship was published, providing full bibliography and reviews of works on the Boxer movement over the last century. Weizhi Su and Tianlu Liu, ed., *Studies on the Boxers in the past 100 years* (Yihetuan yanjiu yibai nian)(Qi lu publishing house, 2000).

as “xenophobic”, “superstitious” and “backward” people, who hated all new things and refused to reform.³ In 1927, George Steiger stated in the preface of his book, *China and the Occident*, the first academic research on the Boxer movement in the English-language world, that “It was the culmination of the four centuries of relationship between the nations of the West and those of Asia, and had its origins on the essential differences between the civilization of the ‘old East’ and that newer civilization which was being brought to its doors by the merchants, the missionaries, and the men-of-war of Europe and America.”⁴ In 1978, William Duiker, an American historian, stated in his book *Cultures in Collision: the Boxer Rebellion*, that the Boxer event was “A story of two cultures on a collision course.”⁵ With this model, the cultural practices of the Boxers were regarded as symbols of backwardness of traditional Chinese culture. Although all these early studies focused on the cultural practices of the Boxers, no research into their meanings and functions was carried out.

In the Chinese scholarly literature on the Boxers, scholars before the 1960s saw the movement primarily as an anti-foreign mass movement. The logic

³ Roland Allen, *The Siege of the Peking Legations* (London: Smith, Elder, 1901); Nigel Oliphant, *A Diary of the Siege of the Legations in Peking: During the summer of 1900* (New York: Longmans, Green, 1901); Arthur H Smith, *China in Convulsion*, 2 vols. (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1901).

⁴ George Nye Steiger, *China and the Occident: the Origin and Development of the Boxer Movement* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1966), xii.

⁵ William J Duiker, *Cultures in Collision: the Boxer Rebellion* (California: Presidio Press, 1978), xvi.

of their arguments was that the foreign political and economic aggression at the end of the 19th century inevitably provoked the resistance of Chinese people. In 1930, the Chinese historian, Li Jiannong, influenced by Marxist-Leninist anti-imperialist ideology argued that it was imperialist invasion that gave rise to the movement.⁶ In 1945, historian Fan Wenlan stated in his influential book, *Modern Chinese History*, that the Boxer movement was an anti-imperialist mass movement. He took the movement as part of the long process of modern China's fight against imperialism and feudalism.⁷ The cultural practices of the Boxers were connected to the so-called feudalist tradition and to the folk culture of China which was deemed unscientific and superstitious. Some studies connected these cultural practices with the secret society traditions of the Big Sword Society, and the religious White Lotus Sect.

In the 1980s, the role of “cultural practices” in the movement was reevaluated under the influence of “cultural studies” theories. A major source of inspiration for this approach is Edward Said's critiques of “Orientalism”. Said argued that Western studies of the Orient were inextricably linked to the history of imperialism. The construction of the East as the backward Other anticipated

⁶Li Jiannong, *Zhongguo jin 30 nian zhengzhi shi* (China's political history of the last thirty years,1930).

⁷ Fang Wenlan, *Zhongguo jindaishi* (Modern Chinese history) (Beijing: Renmin Press, 1962).

and rationalized imperialist and colonial domination.⁸ Said's study pointed out the Euro-centered prejudice in the treatment of Asian culture and history. In the China field, some scholars began to study Chinese history on its own terms and from its own point of view.⁹ In the study of the Boxer movement, some scholars questioned the view that the Boxers were superstitious and backward and began to study the beliefs and mentality of the Boxers.¹⁰

A second inspiration for the studies on Boxers' cultural practice came from E.P Thompson and Natalie Davis' studies on the role of "popular culture" in the mass movements of the 16th and 18th centuries. Both of them emphasized that "The community's sense of identity and autonomy, as well as its shared sense of purpose and meaning, acts as a forceful element in validating and motivating crowd behavior."¹¹ E. P. Thompson pointed out, in his study on the food riots in the 18th century England that at moments of food scarcity and high prices, villagers in a disciplined and orderly fashion, took over the role of government officials and enforced the collection and sale of grain at "just" prices. The belief

⁸ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon, 1978).

⁹ Paul Cohen, *Discovering History in China: American Historical Writing on the Recent Chinese Past* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984).

¹⁰ Cheng Xiao and Chen Zhenjiang collected as many as 179 pieces of Boxers' placards, posters, and public announcements. They interpreted these documents from the angle of popular culture. Chen Zhenjiang and Cheng Xiao, *Yihetuan wenxian jizhu yu yanjiu* (Explications and studies of Boxer writings), (Tianjin: Tianjin Renmin Press, 1985).

¹¹ Lynn Hunt, ed. *The New Cultural History* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989), 56.

of justice in defending traditional rights and customs of the community, or “moral economy”, played an important role in the riots.¹²

Since early 1980s, some scholars have begun to explore the role of Boxers’ cultural practices in the movement from the perspective of popular culture. In his book, *The Origins of the Boxer Uprising* published in 1987, Joseph Esherick explored not only the socio-economic conditions of Shandong province where the uprising originated, but also the popular culture and sectarian tradition of this region. He argued that “foreign aggression” at the end of 19th century played an important role in the conflict; however, it could be made sense of by the Boxers only when it was interpreted in the cultural forms familiar to them. Esherick stated that “it was the popular culture of the West Shandong peasants which provided the link between (social) structure and (historical) event”.¹³ In his book, *History in Three Keys, the Boxers as Event, Experience and Myth*, Paul Cohen explored the role of cultural practices in the movement from the perspective of participants’ experience. He explored how the Boxers understood the drought, the mass spirit possession, the magic power, the death, and the rumor panic. He concluded that “The Boxers counted on these beliefs and practices for protection in an environment fraught with danger; they also used them as their main

¹² E.P.Thompson, “The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century”, *Past and Present* 50 (1971): 76-136.

¹³ Joseph Esherick, *The Origins of Boxer Uprising* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987), 321.

cognitive apparatus for understanding and explaining—to themselves and to others—what transpired in this environment.”¹⁴ Chinese historian Cheng Xiao analyzed the meaning and functions of Boxers’ rituals from the perspective of folk religion. He argued that the Boxers interpreted the severe drought of 1900 as the result of foreign aggression that had destroyed the harmony between Heaven and people. Through the ritual of “spirit possession”, the Boxers became the “spirit soldiers” (*shen bing*) of the gods. Therefore fighting foreigners became a righteous mission on behalf of the gods (*ti tian xing dao*). The sanction of the gods endowed the Boxers with “righteousness” and encouraged people to join the movement. The meaning of the Boxers’ cultural practices was expressed clearly in the Chinese name of the Boxers, “*yi he tuan*” (Boxers United in Righteousness).¹⁵ These studies explored how the Boxers interpreted economic hardship caused by foreign aggression in their cultural concepts and how they legitimized their violent anti-foreign actions with particular cultural practice. These studies improved our understanding of the role of Boxers’ cultural practices in the movement.

¹⁴ Paul Cohen, *History in Three Keys: The Boxers as Event, Experience, and Myth* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 98.

¹⁵ Cheng Xiao, “Minjian zongjiao yu quan min yishi” (Folk religion and Boxer mentality), *Lishi yanjiu* (History studies) (1990).

However, these criticisms of Euro-centrism led to the so called “Sino-centrism” and “cultural relativism”. This “China-center approach” emphasized the uniqueness of Chinese history that can not be reduced into Western-based theory; however, it overlooked the changes of Chinese culture in the intercourse with Western countries in modern times. In the 1990s, some scholars approached this theme from the perspective of New Cultural History. This approach emphasized that ideology and discourse are as important for our understanding as practice and material culture. The relationship between culture and practice should be studied as a dialectical process. Philip Huang points out in his article on theory and the study of modern Chinese history that “Pre-modern indigenous conceptualization makes up at best the first part of our problematic. We need to ask further about how official and popular constructions might have differed and how both related to practice...We must concern ourselves with how China has searched for a distinctively Chinese modernity. That search itself is now part and parcel of the local knowledge that we must seek to understand.”¹⁶ In the study of the sorcery scare of 1768, Philip Kuhn pointed out that “Chinese cultural was unified but not homogenous. That, I think, is why there could occur a society-wide experience such as the soul-stealing crisis, even while different groups represented that experience in different ways...But social distance did not mean mutual

¹⁶ Philip Huang. “Theory and the Study of Modern Chinese History”. *Modern China*, Vol.24 No.2, April 1998, 199.

incomprehension. Sometimes it means different configurations of commonly available symbols. Though the “evil arts” were feared and detested by all, the components of sorcery lore were arranged by each social group to fit its own view of the world.”¹⁷

In this dissertation, I will explore the role of Boxers’ cultural practice in the movement by examining it in the power relations with other social groups. Former studies explored the important role of cultural practices in the Boxer movement; however, these studies focused only on one group of the movement, the Boxers. The impact of other social groups on the meaning and function of this cultural practice has not been studied. In the evolution of the movement from a local anti-foreign uprising to an armed conflict between China and the major Western Powers, other social groups also played important roles.¹⁸ In particular the cultural assumptions of reform-minded provincial officials and the Qing court should be examined for understanding their political actions. Provincial officials and the Qing court reacted quite differently to the cultural practices of the Boxers. Shandong governor Yuan Shikai denounced the Boxers as heterodox sectarians

¹⁷ Philip Kuhn, *Soulstealers: The Chinese Sorcery Scare of 1768* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), 223.

¹⁸ Lin Huaguo, *Yihetuan shi shi kao* (A study of the true facts of the Boxers) (Beijing: Beijing University Press, 1993.) Lin argued that the war was the result of the struggle between the Boxers, the Qing court and the foreign Powers. Xiang Lanxin, *The Origins of the Boxer War: A Multinational Study* (New York: Routledge Curzon, 2003). Xiang argued that the war was due to the misunderstanding between the Qing court and foreign diplomats.

and suppressed them with the help of the orthodoxy Confucian ideology. As a result, there was no serious accident against the foreigners occurred in Shandong during the summer of 1900. In addition Yuan's policies to the Boxers were supported by some southeastern provincial officials who suppressed the Boxers as heterodox sectarians and kept neutral in the conflict. The Qing court took a different position and recognized the Boxers as "Righteous People" (*yi min*), praising their action as patriotic in the high tide of the movement. It was the Qing court's declaration of war on the Powers and the besieging of the foreign legations that accelerated the conflict. The influence of particularly these two groups had a direct impact on the conflict. I argue to understand the role of cultural practices of the Boxers in the armed conflict between China and Western Powers, the attitudes and actions of these other social groups to the Boxers also need to be taken into account.

In the movement, the Boxers, the Qing court, the provincial officials, the reformers, and the local gentry proposed slogans to claim the "righteousness" of their actions, although they defined "righteousness" differently. An analysis of the underlying meanings of their political slogans contributes to the exploration of the cultural assumptions and moral frameworks of their political actions. My dissertation will examine the slogans of each of the five main political actors in the Boxer movement and explore the influence of these cultural interpretations on

their political actions. In the final chapter, I will explore the interaction of these social groups and how it shaped the Boxer movement in the particular forms as we know them. I argue that the interpretations of traditional concept of “righteousness” played an important role in the movement, however, its meaning and function should be studied in terms of the power relations between the different social groups.

In Chapter One, I focus on the reformers and their slogan----preserving Confucianism to preserve the country (*bao jiao yi bao guo*). The reformers were a group of reform-minded lower scholar-gentry, part of the national elite. However, they had no political positions from which to participate in state affairs. China’s defeat in the Sino-Japanese war in 1895 and the “scramble for concessions” by the Powers in 1898 drew a radical response from the reformers, who interpreted the crisis as not only of the state, but also of Confucianism. Preserving the country from foreign aggression was no longer the exclusive responsibility of the officials, but became the duty of every Confucian-educated Chinese. “Preserving Confucianism” provided the reformers the “righteousness” to carry out their reforms after Western models. However, the Qing court saw the interpretation as a challenge to its rule. The court believed that advocating “Confucianism” as the national identity weakened the loyalty of the people to the Manchu-established Qing Dynasty. The slogan and actions of the reformers

increased people's awareness about the national crisis and directly impacted the Boxer movement.

In Chapter Two, I focus on the local gentry and their slogan in the uprisings in 1898----“Obey the Qing, Destroy the foreign” (*shun Qing mie yang*). Foreign aggression in rural areas was mainly embodied in the conflict between the Christians and the villagers. The Christians (foreign missionaries and Chinese converts) with the protection of the unequal treaties challenged the traditional order of rural society, especially the dominant position of local gentry. However, most anti-Christian activities focused on religious conflicts and were confined in local areas. They had never connected with state sovereignty. However, in 1898 the anti-Christian activities became closely connected with the state sovereignty. The slogan, “Obey the Qing, Destroy the foreign” became popular in the uprisings in 1898. The traditional Chinese concept of patriotism----righteousness (*yi*) ---- was used by the participants to justify their anti-Christian activities. The rioters called themselves “righteous people” (*yi min*). The slogan expressed the understanding of the rural people, under the leadership of local gentry, on the anti-foreign movement and directly influenced the Boxer movement.

In Chapter Three, I focus on the Boxers and their slogan----Support the Qing, Destroy the foreign (*fu Qing mie yang*). The Boxers were mainly peasants; their anti-foreign activities were initially suppressed by the Qing court as actions

of mobs and bandits. The Shandong governor Yuan Shikai later denounced them as heterodox sectarians. However, the Boxers called themselves “The Boxers United in Righteousness” (*yihetuan*) and supported their actions with the slogan, “Support the Qing, Destroy the Foreign” (*fu qing mie yang*). Through the ritual of “spirit possession”, the Boxer invited Chinese gods to possess them and claimed their righteousness from the sanction of Chinese gods. In this chapter, I will show how the Boxers interpreted “righteousness” to justify their actions.

In Chapter Four, I focus on provincial officials and their slogan, “Maintain the Orthodoxy, Dispel the Heterodoxy” (*fu zheng qu xie*). The provincial officials came through the civil examination system and saw themselves as the representatives of orthodox Confucianism. Although they tried to preserve the essence of Confucianism, they admitted to the necessity of adopting Western methods. They were the core of the Self-strengthening Movement from 1860s to 1890s and strongly opposed the Boxers’ interpretation of “righteousness” and disapproved their superstitious rituals. They denounced the Boxers as heterodox sectarians and with the cooperation of the local gentry set about suppressing the Boxers, as they had done in the Taiping rebellion (1851-1864).

In Chapter Five, I focus on the Qing court and its slogan---Depend on People’s Heart, Depend on Heaven’s Will (*yi min xin, shi tian yi*). The Qing court as the ruling group of China faced external and internal challenges. The Qing

court saw the foreigners as the destroyers of traditional order. Foreign aggression threatened the rule of the Qing court directly by wars and unequal treaties. It also caused internal unrest, like the influence on the Taiping Rebellion that was inspired by Christianity and the reforms of the provincial officials and the reformers that took the West as their model. The Qing court saw the anti-foreign activities of the Boxers as sincere expressions of “people’s heart”, and they regarded the claim of the Boxers that they had the sanction of Chinese gods for their activities as the expression of “Heaven’s Will”. Under the threat of foreign occupation, the Qing court recognized the righteousness of the Boxers and declared war on the Powers. In the war-declaration, the Qing court claimed that it would fight against the foreigners “depended people’s heart, and depend on Heaven’s will”. Therefore, the slogan expressed the Qing court’s position as the representative of traditional Chinese order. Thus their recognition of the righteousness of the Boxers and their declaring war on foreign Powers should be understood as their cultural interpretation of the situation.

In Chapter Six, I explore the relationship between the slogans and actions of these five groups in the high tide of the movement. In this chapter, I will examine the dynamic interactions between the Qing court, provincial officials and the reformers and the way their slogans represented their ideological positioning.

My research will contribute to the understanding of the role of Chinese culture in its modernization process. One important theme of modern China history is the relationship between traditional Chinese culture and its modernization. In the past one and a half centuries, China has sought most urgently to become modern. How to evaluate the role of Chinese culture in the modernization process? What does it mean to be modern and still Chinese? How to understand the concept of “modernization with Chinese characteristic”? Since China has played an important role in the globalization of today’s world, these questions have significant meanings. I hope that my study can contribute to the exploration of these questions.

Chapter One: Preserve Confucianism to Preserve the Country (*Bao Jiao Yi Bao Guo*)

The earliest social group that responded to the national crisis in 1898 with a cultural feature was the reformers. The slogan that they put forward to address the crisis had a direct influence on the Boxer movement. In 1895, China was defeated by Japan. The defeat of China by a small Asian country demonstrated its weakness and led to the national crisis in 1898, in which China was divided into several spheres of influence by Western powers. China was pushed to the edge of dismemberment. The national crisis stimulated the strong response of the reformers, a group of reform-minded lower scholar-gentry (*shi ren*). The reformers claimed that the national crisis in 1898 was not only about the life and death of the state, but also of Chinese culture. They argued that to save China from dismemberment, Confucianism, the essence of Chinese culture, must be preserved. “Preserve Confucianism to preserve the country” (*bao jiao yi bao guo*) became the slogan of the reformers to promote their reform movement. In April 1898, the reformers organized a protest against Germany about the damage of a Confucian temple in Germany’s occupied area; and in May, they organized “Preserve the Country Society” (*bao guo hui*), whose tenet was to “preserve the country, preserve the race, and preserve Confucianism” (*bao guo, bao zhong, bao jiao*). The meaning of the national crisis caused by foreign aggression could be

appreciated by the scholar-gentry only when it was connected with the life and death of Confucianism. The slogan and action of the reformers in 1898 directly influenced the Boxer movement. In this chapter, I will examine how the reformers interpreted and responded to the national crisis in 1898 with “preserving Confucianism”.

Reform and Confucianism

The reform movement from 1895 to 1898 was an attempt to modernize China following Western models; however, it had a close relation with Confucianism. The leaders of the reform movement were a group of reform-minded scholar-gentry (the reformers). The scholar-gentry were the elite class of traditional Chinese society. They achieved their elite status through the civil service examinations that based on Confucianism. The upper level of the scholar-gentry became government officials and the lower level of them became local elites. The repeated national humiliations that China had suffered from the West since the 1840s made some of them begin to study Western political and social ideas. In 1850, scholar Xu Jiyu (1795-1873) published a book, *Yin huan zhi lue* (A short account of the maritime circuit), to introduce geography, history and political and economic systems of Western countries. These scholars became pioneers of Chinese scholar-gentry to study Western knowledge systemically. During the Self-strengthening Movement (1860s -1890s), some scholar-gentry

became increasingly enthusiastic in Western knowledge due to their direct contact with Western civilization either in port cities or in Western countries. They advocated reforming China following Western models. In the 1890s, Kang Youwei became a representative of this group. Kang Youwei (1858-1927) came from a family of scholars in Guangzhou (Canton) and received formal Confucian education in his youth. However, when he read Western books translated by Western missionaries and Chinese scholars, especially when he visited Hong Kong and Shanghai, he became a radical reformer. In 1888, after the China's defeat in the Sino-French war (1884-1885), Kang wrote a memorial to the Emperor urging reforms. In 1891, Kang established a school in Guangzhou to teach Western knowledge. One of his students, Liang Qichao (1873-1929), became a radical reformer too. In 1895, when the news of the unequal treaty with Japan came to Beijing, Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao with 1,200 *juren* (imperial examination candidate) presented a "Ten Thousand Words" petition to the emperor, asking the government to reform immediately. In the petition, Kang stated that without reform, China would be perished soon.¹⁹

The defeat of China in the Sino-Japanese War made many reformers realize the deficiency of the Chinese government system. There was no clear demarcation of authority, no unity of command and no nationwide mobilization in

¹⁹ *Wu xu bian fa* (The Reform of 1898)(Shanghai: Renmin Publishing House, 1953),vol.2, 139-53.

China. Although Liang Qichao blamed Li Hongzhang, the main leader of Chinese forces in the Sino-Japanese War, for the failure of China and called him “traitor”, he admitted that there was much truth in Li’s defense that the victory was impossible when only his regional forces were used to fight against the entire might of the Japanese empire.²⁰ Japan had become a modern state after the Meiji Reform, in which a nationalistic consciousness bound the government and the people into a unified body. However, China was still a medieval polity, with the government and the people forming separate entities.

So to save China, the reformers believed an institutional reform must be carried out. Liang Qichao argued that if China was ever to be able to compete with the West, a state that could connect the people and the government into a unified entity must be established. The new state would not be founded on the rule of a monarch over his subject but would feature a shared participation of both rulers and ruled in a system of popular sovereignty.²¹ To encourage people to participate in state affairs, the reformers began to advocate the idea of “Peoples’ Right” (*min quan*) and “Grouping Together” (*he qun*). In mid-1895, Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao established “the Society for the Study of National Strengthening” (*qiang xue hui*) and a journal to promote their ideas. The terms of

²⁰ Zhang Hao, *Liang Ch’i-chao and Intellectual Transition in China, 1890-1907* (Cambridge: Harvard University press, 1971), 73-120.

²¹ Zhang Hao, *Liang Ch’i-chao and Intellectual Transition in China, 1890-1907* (Cambridge: Harvard University press, 1971), 73-120.

“people’s right” and “grouping” appeared with growing frequency in their publications.

However, these ideas of the reformers got very little support among the socio-political elite in part because the reformers were only a small part of the scholar-gentry class. To most scholar-gentry who insisted on the traditional social order, the ideas of “peoples’ rights” and “institutional reform” were too radical and if carried out would cause domestic disturbance. Many conservative officials and scholars presented memorials to the court criticizing the reformers for advocating Western ideas. A Hunan scholar, Su Yu, collected many memorials and articles against the reforms and edited them into a book, called *Yi jiao cong bian* (Essays in defense of Confucianism). The book condemned the reformers for their open criticism of Chinese political culture and tradition.²² A Hunan scholar, Ye Dehui, attacked the reformers’ advocacy of “people’s rights” and “individual equality” as having no respect for “either the sovereign or the fathers” (*wu jun wu fu*).²³ In 1896, the “Society for the Study of National Strengthening” (*qiang xue hui*) was proscribed and Kang Youwei was forced to leave Beijing.

Since Confucianism was the basis of the imperial system of China and the dominant ideology of the country, Kang Youwei tried to reconstruct

²² Su Yu, *Yi jiao cong bian* (Essays in defense of Confucianism) (First print in 1898; reprint Shanghai: Shanghai Shudian Press, 2002).

²³Ibid, 64.

Confucianism as a force to promote the reform movement. He wrote books to argue that Confucius and Confucian classics encouraged reform. His book, *A Study of Confucius on Institutional Reform (Kong zi gai zhi kao)*, was published in 1897. Kang sought the sanction of the most honored master to legitimize the reforms.

Kang Youwei also wanted to use the influence of Confucianism to attract more scholar-gentry into the reform movement. Since Confucianism was the common faith of Chinese scholar-gentry, it could unify them in a common cause. Kang Youwei argued that “To save China, it is necessary to lead the people by their historical customs. Because Chinese people lack public spirit and organization, they could not survive international competition. So it is impossible to unify their emotion and strengthen their spirit (of patriotism) without a faith that all Chinese respect and believe in. So reviving Confucian teachings is the first important thing to be done.”²⁴ As early as 1895, Kang Youwei advocated in his memorial to the Throne that the imperial government should encourage people to “study and disseminate Confucius’ teachings” and established Confucian shrines in every corner of the country to counteract the trend of “moral degeneration”.²⁵ In the memorial, Kang proposed that Confucianism should be established as the

²⁴ Jian Bozan et al. ed., *Wu xu bian fa* (The 1898 Reform), Vol.4 (Shanghai: Shanghai Renmin,1953), 15.

²⁵ Jian Bozan , *Wu xu bian fa* (The 1898 Reform), vol. 2, 150.

“state religion” (*guo jiao*), Confucius should be recognized as the “founder of the religion” (*jiao zhu*), 551 B.C., the birth-year of Confucius, should be taken as Year One of China’s national history, and a “Confucian Society” (*kong jiao hui*) should be organized as a nation-wide organization.²⁶ He reiterated these ideas in his memorial presented in July of 1898. It was obvious that Kang Youwei was trying to reconstruct Confucianism as a force to legitimize the reform to unify the people.

The reform movement from 1895 to 1898 had a close relationship with Confucianism. Both the progressive reformers and the conservatives used Confucianism to legitimize their action. The relationship between reform and Confucianism was fully displayed in two events in early 1898.

Protest about Confucian Temple Incident

1898 was a metropolitan examination year and hundreds of *Juren* from various provinces gathered in Beijing to take the imperial examination. Foreign aggression made these *Juren* feel grieved and indignant. In March, 1898, Germany forced the Qing government to sign a convention, which gave a 99-year lease of Jiaozhou Bay and exclusive rights to it to build railroads and mines in Shandong. Germany’s success started the so-called foreign powers’ “scramble for

²⁶ Kang Youwei, *Kang nanhai xiansheng wen gao* (The writing of Mr. Kang), Vol. 5, 10-13.

concessions”. Within three days of the convention, Russia had secured a 25-year lease on Port Arthur and Dalian on the Liaodong Peninsula and the right to build a railroad across Manchuria. France had promptly demanded and received a 99-year lease on Guangzhou Bay and Britain had gained a lease on the port of Weihaiwei in Shandong. This foreign aggression exacerbated the already strong anti-foreign indignation among the reformers. They discussed the urgent situation of the country and required the Qing government to reform immediately. A Western observer described, “It may fairly be said that , in the spring of 1898, all the young members of the mandarin and the gentry were reformers—some of them, perhaps, with a confused idea of what reform meant, but all ready to support moderate reform, and some resolved on radical measures.”²⁷ In January, 1898, Kang Youwei, presented his fifth memorial to the emperor. He used harsh language to warn the emperor that without immediate reform China would disappear as a nation and the emperor and his ministers might not even be able “to live life like commoners”.²⁸ Although Kang’s memorial circulated widely among the *Juren*, it could not be presented to the emperor. There was no channel for the non-official scholar-gentry to participate in state affairs. In April, a news about

²⁷ Morse, *International Relations*, Vol. 3, 132.

²⁸ Tang Zhijun, ed. *Kang Youwei zhenglun ji* (Political articles of Kang Youwei) (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1981), 201-2.

the damage of a Confucian temple in German occupied area spread to Beijing, the *Juren* immediately carried out a dramatic protest.

On April 22, 1898, Kong Guangshang and Meng Zhaowu, descendants of Confucius and Mencius, and 103 *Juren* from Shandong province presented a petition to the Censorate department. It stated: "on the first day of the first lunar month (January 22) some German soldiers broke into the Confucian temple in Jimo county (in Jiaozhou Bay area). They damaged the limbs of the sacred Confucius' statue and dug out the eyes the statue of the virtuous Zengzi(Confucius disciple). Their rude behavior was barbarous and intolerable. People near and far heard about this event are all indignant. Therefore we ask the Zongli Yamen to reason with the Germans".²⁹ Shandong is the homeland of Confucius and Mencius and Confucian temple was highly respected by Chinese scholars. The Censorate department took this matter seriously. Led by a senior official, Yude, the department submitted the petition to Emperor Guangxu on April 27.

When the news of the incident spread around Beijing, a vehement protest broke out. Many *Juren* who were attending the metropolitan examination and many junior officials of various boards of the central government joined the protest. On May 2, Fujian *Juren* Lin Xu submitted a petition with the signatures

²⁹ *Qing dezong shilu* (True records of the Guangxu period)(Beijing: Zhonghu shuju, 1987),3801.

of 369 *Juren* from the province to the Censorate department. After describing the brutal behavior of German soldiers, it said:

"Although foreign invasion is impending day by day, our country and our people are not in a panic. It is so not because of abundant revenues and strong defense, but because of the bounded ethical relation between emperor and subjects, fathers and sons and the unsolvable righteousness of filial piety and loyalty. Loving country and revering the emperor, everybody can die for the country. This is what our country relies on. All these virtues come from the teachings of Confucius. Confucius' teachings are the foundation of our country. When one race tries to make profits from other people and land, it always tries to convert the other's belief to its own. If the Teachings are saved then the country is saved. Poland and India were enslaved by others because they lost their teachings. So preserving Confucianism is preserving the country."³⁰

This petition emphasized the relation between Confucianism and the country. It argued that Confucianism was the spirit of the nation and it was the force that connected the people with the state. If Confucianism was lost, China would be perished like Poland and India. Therefore, to preserve China, Confucianism must be preserved. "Preserve Confucianism to preserve the country" became the slogan of the reformers in the protest. On the same day, 165 *Juren* from Hubei Province and 43 *Juren* from Hunan province also submitted petitions to the Censorate department. Representing a significant proportion of China's educated elite, they asked *Zongli Yamen*, the diplomatic department of the Qing government to call the German minister and demanded that he punish the offenders and give compensation for the damage. The petition of Jiangsu *Juren*

³⁰ Lin Xu, Lin Qingxi and 369 *Juren* memorial, *Qing Dezong Shilu*, 3803.

Zhuang Renyong expressed the feelings of many young educated elites: "If your Majesty goes to war to protect the sacred teachings, who will not make his effort to fight our common enemy and rest his head on the spears to await your order."³¹

On the following days, several more petitions were presented to the Censorate department.³² Among these petitions, the most influential one came from two important disciples of Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao and Mai Menghua, and 830 *Juren* from various provinces signed in support of it. The petition stated that:

"The teachings of Confucius root in the way of Heaven and earth and have great virtues for the people. They have been esteemed as the national principle by every dynasty. They have been especially revered by the emperors of our dynasty. (Thanks to the Teachings of Confucius), everyone knows the ethic of ruler and subjects, fathers and sons; every family knows the righteousness of filial piety and loyalty and honesty. Confucius' teachings are worshiped in the temple. It is the basic principle of the country..... The cession of Jiaozhou Bay is just losing a piece of land, but tolerating the insult to our sacred statues will lose the hearts of our people. Losing the sage's teachings is the most significant thing of the day. "³³

The petition pointed out the significance of the protest. It argued that losing Jiaozhou Bay to Germany is only losing a piece of land; however, tolerating the damage to the Confucian temple would lose the spirit of the country. This petition

³¹ Zhuang Renyong and 31 *Juren*'s Petition on Guangxu 24/03/14 (04/05/1898), *Qing Dezong Shilu*, 3803.

³² *Qing Dezong Shilu*, 3803.

³³ Mai Menghua, Liang Qichao and 832 *Juren* memorials, Kong Xiangji, *Wan qing shi tan wei* (Some examination on Late Qing history) (Chengdu: Bashu Shushe, 2001), 69.

was widely circulated. It was published in the widely-circulated “National News” (*guo wen bao*) of May 6 and the “China Reformers” (*zhi xin bao*) (54th issue). To further spread the idea of the petition, Liang Qichao wrote an open letter to the people and published it on the “National News”. In the open letter, he stressed the important relationship between preserving Confucianism and preserving the country. He wrote: “Just now the *Juren* gather together to proclaim their indignation. Anyone who reads Confucius and receives the teachings of Confucius and chose to stand by to see the perishing of our great teachings, is tantamount to stepping aside from the race. Please sign your name and indicate your examination year and province for the collection and presenting purposes. Please circulate the letter. This is about our public indignation, not about the concerns of a few persons”.³⁴

The Confucian temple incident caused unrest in Beijing. Petitions were presented to the Qing court constantly. Some *Juren* discussed going to the German embassy to protest. Rumors arose that some people were planning to destroy foreign churches to revenge the insult. The unrest caught the attention of some conservative officials in the Qing court. They pointed out that the protest about the Confucian temple incident was merely a disguise of the reformers to

³⁴“Guo wen bao” (National New), May 8, 1898, see Kong Xiangji, *Wan qing shi tan wei* (Some examination on Late Qing history), 69.

increase their influence. They argued that all the petitions said they had heard about the damage of temple, but none of them offered any positive evidence. Moreover the incident happened in January, but it was not brought up until three months later. On April 29, Censor Zhang Zhongxin expressed the worries of the conservatives at court in his memorial. He pointed out: “Some of them who did not know the general interest (of the country) even discussed rushing to the German embassy to revenge the insult. If this action is taken, there will be hundreds of followers. They will burn and destroy indiscriminately and finally do harm to the country. Nowadays, western learning is becoming popular and all kinds of heretical idea are arising up. “people’s right” is on everyone’s lips. There are probably unlawful persons using this event to incite disturbance, causing trouble in the country. I privately feel indignant about our weakness and foreign aggression, but I worry more about the deterioration of social order and the rise of internal turmoil.”³⁵

On May 5, censor Wenti presented a memorial criticizing the protest movement. He said “Recently the morale of Chinese people has changed a lot. The ideas of advocating strength, claiming peoples’ rights and organizing parties have risen up day by day. To the prophet, it is the beginning of a disaster. If the court does not control the power and officials postpone and hide these troubles to

³⁵Zhang Zhongxin’s memorial, see Kong Xiangji, *Wan qing shi tan wei* (An examination on Late Qing history), 72.

keep temporary peace, I am really afraid that these people will use this event, under the name of preserving the Confucian teachings, to cause turmoil openly. Then the disaster is not far off." ³⁶ The memorial argued that he believed the protesters wanted to use the incident to stimulate public indignation and increase public pressure for their reform movement.

The petitions from these *Juren* and Junior officials and the memorials from the conservative censors and officials caught the attention of the Qing court. If the people attacked foreign churches or foreigners, it would cause more foreign intervention. The Qing court has not recovered from the failure in the Sino-Japanese war and had no ability to resist foreign intervention. The Qing court ordered Shandong governor, Zhang Rumei, to investigate the incident immediately. Meanwhile, the protest movement went on.

On May 8, two councilors of the Hanlin Academy(National Academy), Kun Gang and Xu Tong presented a memorial to the throne written by the Hanlin Editor Li Guilin, Zhu Zumou, and 24 officials. The Hanlin academy was the highest academic institution in the empire and therefore most influential. In the memorial, on the one hand they agreed with the protesters in preserving and promoting Confucianism, but on the other hand they worried that the unorganized

³⁶ Kong Xiangji, *Wan qing shi tan wei* (Some examination on Late Qing history), 72.

protest would cause social disturbance.³⁷ On May 13, a Hanlin editor Li Guilin submitted a petition to the Censorate department. One hundred fifty-four junior officials from various departments signed on it.

In order that the protest could be pacified, the Qing government ordered Shandong governor, Zhang Rumei to report his investigation result as soon as possible. On May 21, Zhang Rumei reported that “no damage was found”.³⁸ With that conclusion, the protest movement died down. The protest had provided no direct political results, but had spread the idea of national crisis and had increased the influence of the reformers.

The reformers could not organize any large-scale protest against Germany in response to the occupation of Jiaozhou Bay in 1897. However, they made a dramatic protest against Germany when the Confucian temple was damaged by German soldiers. Compared to the occupation of Jiaozhou bay, the damage to the Confucian temple was trivial. However, the damage to the Confucian temple caused the indignation of the scholar-gentry. In their petitions, they emphasized the important relation between “preserving Confucianism and preserving the country”. To the important role of Confucianism in the protest, Yan Fu, a famous

³⁷ Li Guilin and 154 Hanlin Academy editors, *Qing dezong shilu*, 3803.

³⁸ *Qing dezong shilu*, 3807 .

translator, compared this protest with the Indian mutiny against the British in 1857. He argued:

"The cessions of Lushun (Arthur), Weihai and Jiaozhou, the treaties about tariffs Lijin (local commercial tax), railroad and the minerals did not capture the attention of the whole country. Randomly mentioned, people talk about these matters like they were talking about affairs of others. However in this spring, the event of some German soldiers' violating Jimo Confucian temple caused public indignation. It seems reasonable for the Gentry-scholars to get angry, but the merchants and travelers are also angry. Some Europeans laughed at this issue. They looked at this the same as the Indian mutiny. The Indians submitted to the rule of the British but they did not take it as a humiliation. But when they heard that there was animal oil in the bullets, they felt that their religion was violated and they revolted. Although the westerners laughed at it, it also suggested the depth of the influence of religion among Chinese people. To the nation and to the race, it is not a bad thing?³⁹

Yan Fu's article pointed out the importance of Confucianism in the protest. Foreign aggression caused the indignation of the reformers; however, only when foreign aggression was put in a cultural context, could the significant meaning be fully appreciated by most scholar-gentry. The fact that so many scholar-gentry participated in the protest increased the influence of the reformers.

Preserving the Country Society

At the same time of the protest over the Confucian temple incident, some *Juren* and junior officials also organized the "Preserving the Country Society"

³⁹ *Yanfu wenji* (The Collection of Yan Fu's Articles) (Beijing: Chinese Academy of Social Science Press, 1995), 65.

(*bao guo hui*) in Beijing. The first meeting of the society was held on April 17 in Guangdong Province Clubhouse in Beijing. 120 *Juren* and Junior officials attended the meeting. The society was to have head offices in Beijing and Shanghai and branches in provinces and counties. The society aimed at drawing like-minded people together to form an organization to carry out their reform plans. The main tenet of the society was to: “preserve the country, preserve the race and preserve Confucianism (*bao guo, bao zhong, bao jiao*).” The tenet explicitly connected “preserving the country” with “preserving Confucianism” and was published in the “National News” and “China Reformers”, newspapers that circulated widely among the scholar-gentry.

The reformers legitimize the society by connecting “preserving the country” with the idea of “preserving Confucianism”. However, during the Qing dynasty, it was forbidden to organize societies outside the imperial government system. Before 1898, participation in the affairs of government by non-office-holding literati was limited to informal and largely illegitimate networks under the loose protection of high-ranking officials. Even the system of private secretaries and aides (*mu you*) of officials that flourished in the suppression of the Taiping Rebellion (1851-1864) was just that: private and non-official.

In September, 1895, after the defeat of China in the Sino-Japanese war, the society for “Studying for the National Strengthening” (*qiang xue hui*) was

established in Beijing. The society members included not only the major reformers, like Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao, but also some government officials, such as the imperial tutor Sun Jianai, and the imperial tutor and the president of the Board of Revenue (1886-98)Weng Tonghe, and viceroy of Hunan and Hubei Province Zhang Zhidong. Despite the support of these high-ranking officials, the society was forced to shut down in just several months. The traditional political framework had no institutional space for this kind of political society.

The manifesto of the society pointed out that the national crisis now facing China was not only about the life and death of the dynasty, but also about the life and death of the Chinese race and Chinese culture. It went on to argue that although preserving the state is the duty of government officials, preserving the moral principle of the state (*Confucianism*) was the responsibility of every Chinese."(*tian xia xing wang, pi fu you ze*). Kang Youwei addressed the legitimacy of the society's political concerns in his speech at the first meeting of the society. He stated that "I do not blame these people in office, but blame the people not in office, the scholars-gentry. Today actually everybody is responsible for losing the country; everybody has the responsibility to save the country."⁴⁰ In this speech, Kang made clear that everyone was responsible for losing the country

⁴⁰ Kang Youwei, "Speech on the Opening of the preserve the Country Society. Tang Zhijun, *Wuxu bianfa shi* (History of 1898 reform) (Beijing: Renmin Publishinh House, 1984), 317-8.

and everyone had the duty to preserve the country. “Preserving Confucianism” was address to legitimize the society.

The conservatives immediately attacked Kang Youwei and the society in response. They knew the society was trying to establish a new organization outside the old power structure. To them, the society meant a threat to the authority of central government. Some conservatives believed that Kang Youwei’s preservation of Confucianism was actually a disguise for his ideas of “peoples’ rights”. On May 2, 1898, a second class secretary of the Board of Revenue, Hong Jiayu , composed a pamphlet, denouncing Kang Youwei as "the pope of the cult of democracy"(*min zhu jiao huang*). On May 17, censor Huang Guijun impeached the society and went as far as to organize an “Anti-preservation Society” (*fei bao guo hui*) to oppose the reformers.

The strongest attack on the society came from provincial censor Wen Ti. In his memorial he stated:

“These *Juren* have no power, no position, no money and no status. Empty-handed, how could they preserve the country? So they are not enough to resist outsiders but enough to usurp power internally. If, as they say, Zhejiang People preserve Zhejiang, Yunnan People preserve Yunnan and Sichuan People preserve Sichuan, and by extension, every province preserves its own part of the country, is not the country divided? In name they want to preserve the country, but in fact they are to destroy the country. This trend must be stopped.”⁴¹

⁴¹ *Wuxu bianfa* (Reform in 1898) (Shanghai: Renmin Publishing House, 1953), vol.1, 339.

Censor Wenti even attacked the society as aiming “to preserve the 400 million Chinese, not the Qing dynasty.”⁴² The point of Wenti’s critique resonated with other conservative officials, particularly a group of high-ranking Manchus. They knew that advocating “Confucianism” as a focus of national identity would weaken the loyalty of the people to Qing Dynasty and allow the society to challenge the rule of the Qing court. In response, they attacked the reformers as men of little consequence who had the conceit to discuss weighty issues such as saving China and the impudence to belittle the illustrious Qing dynasty. Ronglu, Grand Councilor and viceroy of Zhili, said publicly: "Kang Youwei dares to organize a society to save the country when ministers are still alive. Even if the country perishes, there would be no position for him to preserve the county. He acted beyond his position; he must be punished! Anybody who joined the society needs to be careful with his head." ⁴³

When the Society was impeached, many people dropped off at once. One of initiator of the society, Li Shengduo, submitted a memorial impeaching it as an effort to absolve himself. Under this storm of criticism and slander, the society lasted no more than three meetings.

⁴² *Wuxu bianfa* (Reform in 1898), vol.1, 341.

⁴³ Su Jizu, “Political Events of 1898”, *Wuxu bianfa* (Reform in 1898), vol.1, 350.

Although under the pressure of the conservatives in the Qing government, the protest and the society brought to an ended soon, their actions strongly boosted the reform movement. Many scholar-gentry provided their support to the protest and the society and the slogan, “Preserve Confucianism to preserve the country” was disseminated widely. These movements raised the consciousness of the educated scholar-gentry about the national crisis and enhanced the influence of the reformers. However, “Preserving Confucianism” as a principle of the movement had its limitations. Although the principle as a slogan could attract many scholar-gentry into the movement within a short time, it had no explicit organizing principle to bring them together into a strong political organization. There were too many different understandings about “Confucianism” among the scholar-gentry and many scholar-gentry strongly criticized Kang Youwei’s ideas about Confucianism. Even with just a slight pressure from the center, the protest and the society submitted. However, the reformers continued to press for change—there was an irreversible tide.

“One Hundred Days” Reform and Confucianism

When the radical reform of the young Guangxu emperor with the help of some reformers was suppressed by Empress Dowager Cixi in September of 1898, Confucianism again became the focus of the struggle between the reformers and the conservatives. Both groups claimed that they were following the Confucian

teaching and blamed their opponent as traitor of Confucianism. On June 11, 1898, the Guangxu emperor declared his resolution of reform. In 103 days, 110 imperial edicts were issued, covering almost every aspect of China's political, economic, military, educational and cultural life. Opposition to the reform became intense when these policies were put into practice. The conservatives denounced the reform as too radical. On September 4, the Guangxu emperor dismissed all the top officials of the Board of Rites for their obstruction of the implementation of the reforms. On the very next day, he appointed four young reformers, Tang Sitong, Yang Rui, Lin Xu, and Liu Guangdi to be secretaries of the Grand Council to carry out the reforms. These acts made the conservatives and Manchu grandees even more opposed to the reform. On September 21, 1898, Empress Dowager Cixi launched a coup against the reformers with the support of conservatives. The emperor was placed under house-arrest and six chief reform leaders were executed. Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao fled abroad with the help of Britain and Japan. Empress Dowager Cixi took over the power as regent, and all reform edicts were rescinded. After the suppression of the reformers, Manchu power was restored. Ronglu, Yulu and Qixiu entered the Grand Council, and the grand secretary Gangyi gained more power in the central government.

The Qing court had to justify its suppression of the reformers whose declared purpose was to save China from foreign aggression. The conservatives in

the Qing court blamed the reformers as traitors of Chinese “traditional Way”, who tried to “change China with barbarian ways” (*yi yi bian xia*). Kang Youwei was denounced as a traitor of Confucianism. The Empress Dowager issued a decree to condemn the reformers:

“We are further informed that, greatly daring, these traitors have organized a secret society, the object of which are to overthrow the Manchu dynasty for the benefit of the Chinese. Following the precepts of the sage, We, the Emperor, are in duty bound to propagate filial piety as the foremost of all virtue, and have always done so, as our subjects must be fully aware. But the writings of Kang Youwei were, in their tendency, depraved and immoral; they contain nothing but abominable doctrines intended to flout and destroy the doctrines of the sage.”.....”Our dynasty rules in accordance with the teaching of Confucius. Such treason as that of Kang Youwei is abhorred by gods and men alike.”⁴⁴

The Qing court claimed that it would uphold the “traditional way” and Confucianism. Kang’s books were banned for their forgery of Confucianism. The suppression of the reformers got the consent of some conservative Scholar-gentry. The reform on the civil service examination caused huge opposition from thousands of literati who had studied the Confucian classics for years to take the examination.

The struggle between the conservatives and the reformers certainly jeopardized the reform movement at this stage. Some moderate reformers and those who sympathized with the reform tried to conciliate these two groups by attempting to form a broadly based reform coalition which would be acceptable to

⁴⁴ Bland and Backhouse, *China under the Empress Dowager*, 226.

a larger number of scholar-gentry. On September 9, 1898, the viceroy of Hunan and Hubei provinces, Zhang Zhidong, presented his book *An Exhortation to Learning* (quanxu pian) to the emperor”⁴⁵ In the book, Zhang Zhidong criticized the two extreme views about the relationship between Confucianism and reform. He argued that Confucianism must be insisted and Western knowledge must be learned. The two aspects were not contradictory, instead they were inseparably connected. He argued:

“We would here state that there are now three things necessary to be done in order to save China from revolution. The first is to maintain the reigning Dynasty; the second is to conserve the Holy Religion; and the third is to protect the Chinese Race. These are inseparably connected; in fact they together constitute one; for in order to protect the Chinese Race we must first conserve the Religion, and if the Religion is to be conserved, we are bound to maintain the Dynasty.”⁴⁶

Zhang Zhidong’s idea got the support of many scholar-gentry. Emperor Guanxu and Empress Dowager Cixi highly praised the book and ordered it to be distributed to all officials for studying. Zhang’s idea represented the idea of the reform-minded provincial official.

In later Qing period, provincial officials became an important force in the state affairs. In the early and middle Qing periods the government had been highly centralized, with the court deciding policies for the provinces. However, after the

⁴⁵ Zhidong Zhang, *Quanxuepian* (China’s Only Hope) (Fleming H. Revell, 1900).

⁴⁶ Zhidong Zhang, *Quanxuepian* (China’s Only Hope), 32-3.

Taiping Rebellion(1851-1864), the power of Han provincial officials increased. Philip Kuhn has had brilliantly analyzed this trend in his book: *Rebellion and Its Enemies in Late Imperial China*.⁴⁷ The regional army that was established during the suppression of the Taiping rebellion by Zeng Guofan, Zuozongtang and Li Hongzhang became the personal army of the provincial governors. After the rebellions were put down, the militia armies were demobilized or reduced in size and an attempt was made to absorb what remained into the central system; but personal ties and personal loyalties between the militia units and their Han generals could not be replaced with a higher loyalty to the Manchu rulers. The influence of the Han officials has been greatly enhanced in the self-strengthening movement from 1860s to 1890s. Many modernization projects were carried out under their leadership. The Northern Ocean Army (*beiyang jun*), established and controlled by Li Hongzhang, became the national army after the 1870s.

Han provincial governors were those who had succeeded in the civil service examinations. They were regard as the leaders of the scholar-gentry and saw themselves as the patrons of Confucianism. Zeng Guofan, the founder of the Hunan army that played a major role in suppressing the Taiping Rebellion was a former Hanlin Academy and was regarded as the model of the scholar-gentry.

⁴⁷ Philip Khun, *Rebellion and Its Enemies in Late Imperial China: Militarization and Social Structure, 1796-1864*(Harvard University Press, 1980).

Since these Han officials came from the local gentry, they had a natural close connection with them. The combination of cultural status and military powers made these Han provincial officials a big challenge to the power of the Manchu court.

Zhang Zhidong (1837-1909) began his career as a superb scholar. He was elevated to the Hanlin Academy in 1880 and became an important member of the “Qing Liu” (clean stream) faction, a group of scholars with a self-appointed mission to monitor government corruption and bad policy-making. In 1884 he became the viceroy of Guangdong and Guangxi provinces and became a main leader of the self-strengthening movement. He was transferred to Hunan and Hubei in 1889 and remained in that post for 18 years. During this period, Zhang had been tirelessly promoting projects of economic modernization. He pressed vigorously and successfully for the development of a railway line from Hankou to Beijing and built up China’s first great coal, iron, and steel complex at Han Ye Ping mines in east Hubei.

Zhang Zhidong advocated moderate reforms. When the society of study for national strengthening (*qiang xue hui*) was established, Zhang donated 5,000 taels. When the newspaper of “*Shi Wu*” (current affairs) was published in Shanghai, Zhang provided considerable financial support and helped it to boost

circulation in the Yangzi region.⁴⁸ But as an imperial official, Zhang believed that the reform should be under the lead of the existing bureaucrats. When the radical ideas of the *Shi Wu Bao* caused the strong opposition of the conservatives, Zhang withdrew his support. Zhang also used his position as the viceroy of Hunan and Hubei to confine the reform movement in this region.

Zhang argued that the viable measure to preserve the country was to make it wealthy and strong. Due to the facts that most economic modernization projects were run by the provincial viceroys and governors, the reforms should be undertaken under the leadership of provincial officials.

Foreign aggression at the end of 19th century caused the crisis of China. Preserving China from foreign aggression became the righteous cause of all Chinese. The need for an institutional reform was recognized by scholars, officials and even the Qing court. However, these groups had different ideas about the nature, scope and leadership of the reform. Each group justified its political action by claiming the sanction of the ideology of Confucianism.

The slogan and action of the reformers had directly influence on the Boxer movement. First, the reform movement improved the awareness of the people about the national crisis. The urgency of the national crisis was spread to more

⁴⁸ Jian Bozan, et al ed. *Wuxu bianfa* (Reform in 1898), vol.4, 547-8.

people through their newspapers, books and protest actions. Saving China from foreign aggression was no longer the exclusive responsibility of a few high officials, but the duty of all Chinese. Anti-foreign activities got a sense of “righteousness”. Second, the political struggle between the reformers and the conservatives influenced the attitude of the Qing court to the Boxers. The suppression of the reformers weakened the legitimacy of the Qing court and widened the cleavage between the Manchus and the Chinese. When Empress Dowager Cixi and some conservatives returned to power, they face the challenges of foreign powers and internal political groups. This critical circumstance impacted their attitude toward the Boxers.

Chapter Two: Obey the Qing, Destroy the Foreign

(Shun Qing Mie Yang)

The slogan, “Obey the Qing, Destroy the foreign” (*shun Qing mie yang*) became popular in 1898. In this year, three anti-foreign uprisings broke out from different regions of China. These uprisings broke out before 1898 due to the conflicts between the Christians and non-Christians; however, they had never connected their uprising against the Christians with the state sovereignty of China. But when these uprisings broke out again in 1898, they all claimed that they were fighting the Christians for the country. The slogan “Obey the Qing, Destroy the Foreign” became popular in these uprisings. The changing of these uprisings in 1898 offered a clue about the understanding of their participants about the national crisis in that year. Since these the processes of three uprisings in 1898 have been studied by some scholars,⁴⁹ in this chapter, I will focus on the change of these uprisings in 1898 and the cultural forms that the uprising participants used to justify their anti-foreign activities.

⁴⁹ Joseph Esherick, *The Origins of the Boxer Uprising*, Chapter 5 and 6.; Li Shiyue, *Jin dai zhong guo fan yang jiao yun dong* (Anti-Christian Movements in Modern China) (Beijing: Renmin Publishing House, 1858).

Anti-Christian Movement before 1898

Anti-Christian movements started as soon as the Christian missionaries came to the inland of China in the 1860s. The Treaties of Tianjin in 1858 granted missionaries the right to preach in the inland areas, and the Convention of Peking in 1860 allowed them to rent and buy land for the construction of churches. Different from the Western traders who lived in coastal cities and cared more about lifting restrictions on commerce, the missionaries went into inlands and took upon themselves the task of reaching the masses and changing their faith.

The Christians (foreign missionaries and Chinese converts) with the protection of the unequal treaties challenged the traditional order of rural society. Different from Chinese religions, such as Taoism and Buddhism which provide religious services on behalf of the secular world, Christianity emphasizes intense social interaction. Converts' daily activities, such as birth, marriage, death, and career etc., were all influenced by the church. The Chinese Christians were forbidden by their religion to perform any ceremonies that were regarded as idolatrous, or to participate in any of the community festivals or amusements. Therefore, the Chinese Christians converts alienated themselves from the fabric of rural Chinese society where all these activities were usually carried out within the

framework of village and kinship hierarchies. Refusing to contribute to the community activities, such as festivals, irritated the villagers.

Anti-Christian incidents and uprisings started in the 1860s and continued into the twentieth century. In the anti-Christian movement, some foreign churches were burned and some Christians were killed. However, most anti-Christian activities focused on conflicts with the Christians and were confined in local areas. However, in 1898 the anti-Christian activities were connected with the foreign aggressions and state sovereignty. Christians were seen as the representatives of foreign aggression. The slogan, "Obey the Qing, Destroy the foreign" became popular in the uprisings in 1898. To illustrate the change of the anti-Christian movement in 1898, I will examine three uprisings in 1898.

Righteous People Society Uprising in 1898

In November 1897, Germany occupied Jiaozhou Bay with the pretext of the murder of two German missionaries in Shandong. On March 6, 1898, a convention was signed between China and Germany, in which a 99-year lease of Jiaozhou Bay and exclusive rights to build railroads and mines in Shandong were given to Germany. Shandong governor, Li Bingheng, was dismissed and several county magistrates were punished because of the missionary case.

On April 27, some anti-foreign placards were posted on the walls of the examination hall of the Daming prefect in Zhili while the provincial civil service examination was being held there. The placard read like this:

“Notice:--The patriots of all the provinces, seeing that the men of the West transgress all limits (literally: over-reach Heaven) in their behavior, have decided to assemble on the 15th day of the fourth moon and to kill the Westerners and burn their houses. Those whose hearts are not in accord with us are scoundrels and women of bad character. Those who read this placard and fail to spread the news deserve the same characterization. Enough. No more words are needed.”⁵⁰

The placard also appeared in several other places in Zhili and Shandong provinces. The placard called on people to attack foreigners on the 15th day of the fourth moon (May 3rd). The placards caused the unrest of Christian missionaries in this region. They feared that a large-scale anti-Christian storm would come soon. The missionaries strengthened the defense of their churches and asked protection from their ministers in Beijing. A missionary, Pere Gouveneur, at Xien xien in Zhili, described the situation in his letter:

“On the seventh day of the third moon (April 27, 1898) during the baccalaureate examination which bring together in the prefectural city thousands of candidates, always very turbulent, a placard was posted at the four corners of Tai-ming-fu. Our people told us about it and we sent our catechists to take down the placard and bring it to the notice of the proper authorities. Behold the tenor of

⁵⁰ These placards are noted in Zhang Rumei, (6/17/1898). *Jiao wu jiaoran dang*, vol.6, 237-8. George N. Steiger, *China and the Occident: the Origin and Development of the Boxer Movement*, (New Heaven: Yale University Press, 1927), 139.

this bit of Chinese literature, which as at least the virtue of being quite clear (which is a rare quality in Chinese).⁵¹

The placard was collected by the missionaries and sent to their ministers in Beijing. German minister demanded the Qing government to investigate the event immediately and take measures to protect the missionaries. The French minister also protested to the Zongli Yamen about this placard. The event attracted the attention of the Qing government. Germany's occupation of Jiaozhou with the pretext of the missionary incident alarmed the Qing court. In the situation of 1898, any small anti-Christian case in local areas could cause trouble to the state. On May 21, the Qing court ordered Shandong governor, Zhang Rumei, to investigate this issue instantly. On May 22, an imperial edict was sent to the governors of Shandong, Zihli and Henan provinces, ordering them to dispatch proper officials to investigate the issue and plan ahead to control the situation.⁵²

Under the pressure of the Qing court, Shandong governor, Zhang Ruwei, immediately commanded prefecture and county officials to investigate the event in their jurisdiction. On June 17, Zhang Rumei reported to the Qing court by citing the investigation reports of the prefecture and county officials. In this report, Zhang pointed out explicitly that there was no such a new society that was called

⁵¹ George Steiger, *China and the Occident*, 139.

⁵² Telegram to Wang Wenshao (05/24/ 1898), *Yihetuan dang an shiliao xubian* (Additional Boxer Archives), vol. 1, (Beijing: 1990), 112.

“Righteous People Society” (*yi min hui*). It was the hearsay by the people about some martial arts groups that conflicted with Christians.

“In the junction area between Zhihli and Shandong, many people practice martial arts. These people organized the militia group called *Yihe* (United in Righteousness). Later they changed its name to Plum Flower Fist and recently they changed it back to *Yihe*. There is hearsay far and near about it and it is mistaken for the Yiminhui (Righteous People Society). They took it as a new established society, but actually it has existed before the Christians came to China. Originally it was to protect themselves from the bandits and have no trouble with Western religions. Now the common people and the Christians go back to peace in Guan County and the Chinese Christians of Liyuan village has already gone back home and settled down. There is no such thing as distributing leaflets to make trouble with the Christians. The so-called leaflets was started from the Cang prefecture in Zhihli province and later also appeared in the Daming prefecture in March and April. They are made by stupid persons who had fuel with the Christians to express their anger. There is no evidence to prove that these leaflets and rumors came from the *Yihe* group.”⁵³

In this report, Zhang pointed out clearly that there was no such a group called “the Righteous People Society” (*yi min hui*). There was a group called “Yihe quan” in the border area between Shandong and Zhili province, but no evidence to prove that these placards came from it. As for the placards posted in many place in Zhili and Shandong provinces, Zhang argued that they were not made by any society. They were just made by some people who hated the Christians.

⁵³ Zhang Rumei memorial on 06/30/1898). *Yihetuan dang an shiliao* (Archive materials on the Boxers), Vol.1, 14-5.

Although the placard could not be traced to any particular group, it reflected the anti-foreign sentiment of the people in this region. The placard in 1898 was quite different from former anti-Christian placards. It did not focus on the Christians. They called people the “patriots of all provinces” and called upon them to attack all “Westerners”, whose behavior “transgressed all limits”. The reason against the foreigners was no longer confined in the aspect of anti-Christian. Fighting against the foreigners was regarded as for the country. This feature is clearer if we consider the time that the placard spread.

The placard appeared soon after Germany’s occupation of Jiaozhou Bay and expressed clearly the condemnation of foreign aggression. For the anti-foreign sentiment of people after Germany’s occupation of Jiaozhou Bay, Southeast Zhili pastoral areas president of Jesus Ma Zexuan said: “Herein sectarians even set the date to kill all the missionaries and their followers. This is because they were regarded as the reason that German occupied Jiaozhou Bay.”⁵⁴ Missionaries in Shandong and Zhili left some records. German missionary Stanze was arrested by the people of the Jietou village of Rizhao county. On this event, Stanze wrote: “Residents in the eastern Shandong started a riot since the end of 1898. The Big sword society transplanted their branches to there. This Softwood

⁵⁴Joseph Esherick, *The Origins of the Boxer Uprising*, 78.

bloomed there under the name of 'black societies'. Since the Qin prefecture was visited by Germany engineers, businessman and tourists because of its rich mineral and coal recourse, more people believed that the threat comes from Qingdao and tried to prevent the invasion of Europeans to the inland by this 'black society'. Stanze recorded that when he was paraded on the streets, the people shorted: "this person here is the person invade our country"⁵⁵ The letter recorded that in the uprising, the slogan has been used. Regarding to the name of this anti-foreign uprising, the British minister reported that "the idea underlying the name is that the members of the society will unite to uphold the cause of righteousness, in necessary, by force."⁵⁶

Boxer movement rose up later in Zhilii, missionary Pei Shengsan reported the local situation in a letter: "We Chihli province will be impacted in a one or two weeks. They came from Shandong, and they spread rapidly like powder keg exploded. Why? This is because the Germans occupied Jiaozhou Bay. They will not treat us friendly. You know, how intensive of the fire burning in the hearts of the Chinese people. They attack our churches is the advance team of foreigners,

⁵⁵ *Shandong Yihetuan anjuan* (The archives of Boxer cases in Shandong) (Jinan: Qilu Shushe, 1981), 349.

⁵⁶ Joseph Esherick, *The Origins of the Boxer Uprising*, 154.

and foreigners are called in by the churches. People here are saying: ‘foreigners are going to carve up China, they have hidden in various parts of China.’”⁵⁷

Although the placard spread widely in Shandong and Zhili, there was no anti-foreign uprising happened on the set date. The event did not cause serious conflict. However, the placard expressed the sentiments of the people towards foreign aggression. Anti-foreign activities were regarded as the “righteous acts”. The name of “Righteous People Society” (*yi min hui*) became popular. It is the first time that the *yi he quan* (the Boxers united in Righteous) was mentioned in government document, which was identical with the name of the uprising in 1900.

Yu Dongchen Uprising in 1898

On July 3, 1898, an uprising under the leadership of Yu Dongchen broke out in Sichuan province, in southwest China. The rioters kidnapped a French missionary, Fleury, and proclaimed the uprising. They raised many flags with the slogan “Obey the Qing, Destroy the Foreigners” (*shun qing mie yang*) and “Righteous People” (*yi min*). In several days, the people joining the uprising had reached ten thousand. Yu Dongchen divided the troops into two branches and began to attack churches and Christians in this region.

⁵⁷ Ibid, 156.

The conflicts between the Christians and non-Christian villagers in Dazu county had lasted more than a decade. The first conflict happened in 1886. In this year, on July 20, when a traditional festival for the local folk god, Lingguan, was held in Longshui town of Dazu, many people from surrounding villages came to celebrate the festival. In the center of the town, a new Catholic church had just been established. During the festival, conflicts happened between the villagers and the Christians. The villagers flushed into the church and destroyed its walls and side buildings. At the same time, a Catholic hospital in Sanquchang, 30 mile from Longshui town, and a church and hospital in Wanguchang, about 50 miles away were also destroyed. The Dazu county magistrate, Han Chenzhou, came to suppress the uprising immediately, but he could not find anyone responsible for the incident. Later this case was concluded with other anti-Christian cases in this area together, compensating 7,000 taels of silver for the damage to the churches and hospital and 8,000 taels for houses of the Christians. This was the first anti-Christian conflict in Dazu county.

In 1888, the Longsui Church was rebuilt using the compensation. On the Lingguan festival, the Christians tried to keep the villagers away from the church. Again, conflict occurred and the church was damaged. Failing to capture the offenders, the Dazu county magistrate, Wu Ruqian, was dismissed.

In 1890, when the Lingguan festival approached, the Dazu county magistrate, Qian Baotong, went to inspect in person and ordered the town militia to protect the church. Because of the presence of the county officials, only minor conflict happened. Some people threw stones at the church. Christians pointed out that Jiang Zanchen was the leader and asked to have him arrested. Jiang Zanchen fled out of the town and hid himself at the place of his cousin, Yu Dongchen. Yu had made his living by carrying coal in a coal mine since a young age. Because of his extraordinary strength, people called him Muscular Yu (*Yu Manzi*). On August 12, Yu Dongchen called on about 200 villagers and rushed into the church. Father Joseph escaped by running over the wall, but 9 Chinese Christians were beaten to death and 77 houses were burned. On November 23, the French acting minister protested to Zongli Yamen, demanding severe punishment for the criminals and compensation for the Christians. Under pressure of the French minister, the central government ordered the Sichuan viceroy, Chang Huakui, to dispatch troops to arrest the rioters. Several people were captured and executed. Yu Dongchen escaped with injuries and hid in the mountains for several years.

In early 1898, the conflicts between the Christians and non-Christians in this region became intense again. The missionaries and Christians believed that Yu Dongchen was the man who caused the unrest. They claimed that without the

execution of Yu, the anti-Christian attacks would not stop. In July, Yu Dongchen was ambushed by Dazu magistrate and was put into the county jail. When the news of Yu's arrest spread, some anti-Christian groups were agitated. Jiang Zanchen and Zhang Guishan raided the county jail with over one hundred people and rescued Yu. When Yu came back to Longshui town, thousands of people greeted him on the road. On August 3, Yu Dongchen issued a proclamation and declared the uprising. The proclamation stated:

“Bully villagers, insult religious temples, protect the converts, shake up our frontiers, destroy the Confucian orthodoxy, and degrade the five moral principles... (Our uprising) is prompted by anger and dignity; we devote ourselves to helping the Emperor. Now that Shandong is being destroyed, who does not have heart-ache? Now we rise up with righteousness and proclaim our purpose.”⁵⁸

The proclamation stated that the uprising was to protect the country from foreign aggression. The slogan, “Obey the Qing, Destroy the foreign”, became very popular in this region. To the popularity of this uprising, the French missionary, Fleury, offered some record. He was taken hostage in the Yu Dongcheng uprising. When Yu surrendered, he was released. He published his experience in the uprising on the newspaper, *Hui Bao*, a missionary newspaper in Shanghai. He recorded that Yu's troops were welcomed by many local people. Yu

⁵⁸ “Zhongwai ribao” (China and Foreign News), (September 19, 1898), in *Jindai shi ziliao* (Materials of modern history), vol.1, 131.

said to the populace: “There are two troubles of today’s China: one is the flourishing of Christianity, one is the rampancy of the foreigners. In the past burning the Christian churches was done by myself. But now all the people are waking up and know that the churches have to be destroyed. So now people unite their strength and fight for the country.”⁵⁹

The uprising caused the strong protest of the French minister. He threatened to send troops to protect their people. The Qing government ordered the local officials to suppress the uprising severely. The Sichuan viceroy, Wenguan, was dismissed. Kuijun, the former Jiangsu governor, was assigned to take his place. Kuijun reached the post in December and dispatched provincial troops to suppress the rioters. Several hundred rioters were killed. On January 19, 1899, Yu released the French missionary and surrendered. Yu was imprisoned for life in Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan. The uprising lasted 242 days.

Zhao Sanduo Uprising in Shandong

On October 25, an uprising broke out in Guan county in Shandong province. In the uprising, the name of “Boxers United in Righteousness” (*yi he quan*) and the slogan “Obey the Qing, Destroy the foreign” were used. This was

⁵⁹ Qi Qizhang, *Wan Qing Jiao’an jishi* (Missionary cases in Late Qing), 289 .

the first time the title and the slogan that identical to the Boxer uprising were recorded. Isore was a French missionary, who arrived at Caojia Zhuang in Zhili in 1882. In his diary on October 25, 1898, he wrote: “at six o’clock in the morning, I was informed of the uprising of the *Yi He Quan*. These rebels have as their insignia a sort of turban and boots; their weapons are muskets or lances; their ensign, a yellow flag with a black border, carrying the motto, ‘Obedience to the Tsing, Death to the Europeans’. Their object, to provoke a general revolution at the beginning of the year, in the meantime, to recruit, to drill, and to conciliate the officials by attacking only the Christians.”⁶⁰

The Liyantun case has a long and twisted history which spanned decades. Liyantun was a town of 300 households in Guan county on the western border of Shandong province. In the middle of Liyantun, there stood a temple to the Jade Emperor (*Yuhuang Dadi*), the supreme god of Heaven to the Chinese. The temple was ruined in the war in the 1860s. In 1869, the villagers decided to divide the temple property and the 38 mu of farmland whose rents supported the temple. According to the agreement, the Christians of the village got the temple ground and the non-Christian villagers got the 38 mu of farmland. But when the Christians tried to dismantle the temple and build a church on the ground, they were stopped by the villagers. In 1887, when the Christians prepared materials

⁶⁰ George Steiger, *China and the Occident*, 132.

and tried to build the church again, they were drove off by the villagers and their materials was used by the villagers to rebuild the temple. The dispute caught the attention of local officials. The county magistrate, He Shizhen, ordered the villagers to tear down the temple and return the materials to the Christians. In the following several years, whenever one side attempted to build its place of worship, the other side intervened to tear it down. The dispute lasted several years.

The group of young men in Liyuantun began to seek help from outside forces in their struggle with the Christians. They invited an influential boxing master, Zhao Sanduo, as their teacher. Zhao was the leader of a well-known boxing group, Plum Flower boxers (*meihua quan*), in this region. In April 1897, when the Christians resumed their construction of the church, 500 to 2,000 people under the lead of Zhao attacked the Christians and occupied the temple ground. All the Christian families fled the area. In the fall of 1897, a new settlement was made. The site was confiscated and would be used for a charitable school for all villagers. The officials were to buy the Christians a new site and supply building materials for the church.

However, the settlement was soon reversed again. In November 1897, two German missionaries were killed in Juye county and German troops occupied Jiaozhou Bay. The Shandong governor, Li Bingheng, was removed and several county magistrates were punished. Under the pressure of foreign forces, the site

was given to the Christians and the Shandong government intensified its suppression of anti-Christian activities. In October, two members of the “Eighteenth Chiefs” were arrested. On October 25, an uprising under the lead of Zhao Sanduo and Yan Shuqin broke out. On October 26, they attacked the Christians in Liyantun. In the following days, they attacked Christians in the surrounding areas. They raised the banners with the slogans “Obey the Qing, Destroy the Foreigners”. The name of “Boxers United in Righteousness” (*yi he quan*) was used. Government troops were sent to suppress the uprising. Under the military pressure, Zhao dispersed the group and fled to the north. On November 2, a small group under the lead of Yao Wenqi attacked the Christians in Hongtao village on their way home. They were attacked by Qing troops on the next day. Yao was captured and beheaded. This marked the end of the Liyantun case.⁶¹

Uprisings and the National Crisis in 1898

Through previous descriptions of the three uprisings, the change of these uprisings in 1898 was obvious. The anti-Christian uprisings before 1898 mainly justified their action by treating the Christians as a heterodox group. In the Yu’s case is because the Longshui church, and in the Zhao Sanduo’s case, it was because of the temple for the Jade emperor. Both the conflict in the Yu dongchen

⁶¹ Joseph Esherick, *The Origins of the Boxer Uprising*, 163.

and the Zhao Sanduo uprising focused on the conflicts between the Christians and non-Christian villagers. However, in 1898, all of them connected their activities with the state sovereignty. Anti-foreign invasion and protect the country became the claimed purpose of these uprisings. And these uprisings got the support of many people. How did this change happen?

Anti-Christian movement before 1898 denounced the Christianity as a heterodox religion. In the anti-Christian movement, a large number of anti-Christian pamphlets were produced. These pamphlets denounced the Christianity was as a heterodox religion (*xie jiao*), which was antithetical to Confucianism, the orthodoxy (*zheng*, means “right”). They condemned the Christians for dishonoring ancestors and local gods, instigating immoral and perverted behavior. The anti-Christian pamphlet, *A record of facts to ward off heterodoxy (pi xie shi shi)*, was circulated widely in early 1860s.⁶² In the 1880s and 1890s, many pamphlets were produced by Zhou Han (1843-1911) or under his name. In 1891, he published a pamphlet, *the Devil Doctriners Ought to Be Killed (gui jiao gai si)*. To broadcast these ideas to the illiterate peasants, he drew 22 pictures to illustrate the contents. These pamphlets circulated widely and played an important role in anti-Christian uprisings. In 1891, a series of riots broke out in the Yangzi valley.

⁶²Chen Zhenjiang and Cheng Xiao, *Yihetuan wenxian jizhu yu yanjiu* (Explications and studies of Boxer writings)(Tianjin: Tianjin Renmin Press, 1985), 63.

The foreign ministers believed that Zhou Han's pamphlets played an important role in these riots. Under their pressure, Zhou Han was arrested and his publications were banned.

However, all these anti-foreign uprisings were suppressed by the Qing government as bandits. Denouncing the Christianity as the heterodoxy could not justify their burning and killing. People who participated in burning churches and killing Christians were punished as criminals. In the cases of Yu Dongchen and Zhao Sanduo, both uprising were suppressed by the Qing government as banditry. To many villages, these uprisings were about the conflicts between the Christians and some groups. These anti-Christian activities had never been connected with preserving the state sovereignty before 1898.

In 1898, foreign aggress already threatened the existence of China as a sovereign state. Germany occupation of Jiaozhou Bay with the pretext of the death of two German missionaries directly connected local anti-Christian incident with the state sovereignty. Although many missionary-incidents happened in the past decades, there was no country sending troop directly into China because of a missionary incident. The action of Germany suggested that China was losing her sovereignty. The viceroy of Jiangsu and Jiangxi provinces, Liu Kunyi, pointed out in his memorial to the Throne that the local officials always did their best to

protect churches and missionaries according to the treaties. But robbery of the mobs occurred in a sudden, how could the officials prevent it from happening in advance? If this kind of incident could be used as excuse by foreign Powers to take military action, then there would find any kind of excuse. He argued that, "If Jiaozhou Bay could not be recovered, other Powers would follow suit and try to grab more areas by force. So, the issue of Jiaozhou Bay was not just about a small piece of land, but about the integrity of the country's territory."⁶³

The Qing court realized the threat of this incident to its sovereignty; however, it had no ability to resist Germany. The only way to avoid conflict with foreign Powers was to prevent anti-Christian case in the local areas. On January 15, 1898, Qing court issued an edict, ordering local officials to prevent anti-Christian incidence by all means.⁶⁴ On the same day, the Qing court announced the punishment of Shandong officials related to the Juye incident. Shandong Governor, Li Pingheng, was dismissed and several county magistrates were degraded."⁶⁵

⁶³ *Deguo qinzhan Jiaozhou wan shiliao xuanbian* (Selected Documents about Germany's occupation of Jiaozhou Bay 1897-1898) (Qingdao: Qingdao Museum, 1987), 174.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*,191.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*,191

Under the pressure of foreign Powers and central government, the local officials increased their suppression of anti-foreign movements. In the case of Zhao Sanduo in Shandong, the agreement was overturned to the favor of the Christians. In the case of Yu Dongchen, the magistrate made more efforts to have Yu captures. A missionary in Wei county of Zhili observed: “The most marked effect we see is the prestige (the Jiaozhou Seizure) give to the foreigners, a prestige that is pitiful to see. The officials seem for the time being to stand in abject fear of any complications with foreigners.”⁶⁶ Any anti-Christian incidence could cause the conflict between China and foreign powers.

Under the critical situation in 1898, local anti-Christian incidents were directly connected with the state sovereignty. Foreign missionaries and the Christians in the local areas became the representatives of foreign aggression. Anti-Christian activities were endowed with the meaning of “anti-foreign aggression and preserving the country”. The rioters believed that since the government officials dared not to challenge the foreigners, they would fight the foreigners for the country. In the uprising of Yu Dongchen, his troops were welcomed by many people. The slogan, “Obey the Qing, Destroy the Foreign” got popular.

⁶⁶ Joseph Esherick, *The Origins of the Boxer Uprising*, 134.

“Obey the Qing” and the Role of Local Gentry

In the uprisings in 1898, local gentry played an important role. In the case of the “Righteous People Society”, the placards appeared in the examination hall of the Daming prefecture when the civil examination was holding there and might be written by the “literati”.⁶⁷ In the uprising of Yudongchen, the famous proclamation was written by local gentry, Zou Ziting, an influential scholar in Sichuan province.⁶⁸ In the case of Zhao Sanduo, the local gentry played a leading role in the early struggle against the Christians and later mediated between the Qing troops and the rioters.

The local gentry were the degree-holders of the civil examination and local landlords. They were the leaders, advisers, and opinion-formers of local affairs. They taught Confucian moral teachings, helped to maintain local law and order and ran local public works. Although they were not governmental officials and received no governmental salary, they played an important role in local affairs. However, the increasing influence of Christian missionaries in rural areas threatened their dominant position. The missionaries took the role of teachers and

⁶⁷ Georger Steiger, *China and the Occident*, 140.

⁶⁸ Wang Minglun, *Fany yangjjiao yundond dang an* (Documents of the Anti-Christian movements) ((Sichuan: Renmin Publishing House, 1974).

protectors of the underprivileged people. Since the majority of Christian converts came from the least privileged levels of the society, the interference of the missionaries on the behalf of them challenged the dominant power the gentry in local affairs. They strongly opposed the Christians.

Foreign aggression in 1898 caused the indignation of local gentry. Since majority of them lived in local villages or towns, their understanding of the national crisis was quite different from that of the reformers. They blamed all their suffering on the foreigners. They believed that the way to preserve China from foreign aggression was not to learn from the foreigners but to get rid of them at all. In 1898 when the news of foreign scramble of concessions was spread to Hunan, Zhou Han stood out again and published pamphlets to call up people to resist foreign aggression. Because of the protest of the British councilor in Wuhan, On March 20, Zhou Han was arrested and put into jail. Several influential scholars and over one thousand county students in his hometown protested the county magistrate, asking to release him. Hunan governor, Chen Baozhen, afraid of the breakout of anti-Christian incident because of the public indignation, weaved his severe punishment with the excuse of his mental illness. Zhou Han's affidavit spread out from the jail and spread wildly.

Although the local gentry opposed the Christians, they did not want to confront with the government. Their status depended on the government. When anti-Christian action caused the suppression of the government, they retreated from the struggle and avoided confrontation with the government. However, they did their best to mediate between the government troops and the rioters because if the rioters were severely suppressed, the force of the Christians would be increased and further challenged their position. So “Obey the Qing, Destroy the Foreign” embodied their response to the national crisis in 1898.

No Rituals in the Uprisings of 1898

The obvious difference between the uprisings in 1898 and the Boxers were that they had no superstitious rituals. The hallmark rituals of the Boxers, “spirit possession” and “invulnerability” did not show up in these uprisings. Without the faith and rituals, they had no ability to persist their movement. When the government denounced their attacks on foreigners and churches as banditry and sent troops to suppress them, many participants soon dispersed. Even their leaders could not stick to the movement either. In the case of Yu, when the magistrate, Ding Changyan, went to Longshui town persuaded him to give up the uprising and release the missionary to commute his punishment, Yu Dongchen wavered. In December, when the new governor persuaded him to give up and

promised pardon his death, Yu Dongchen released the foreign missionary and surrendered. He was imprisoned for life in Chengdu.

The uprisings in 1898 had a close relation with the Boxer uprising in 1900. The name of “Boxers United in Righteousness” (*yi he tuan*) was identical with the Boxers in 1900. Anti-Christian actions were connected with the righteous cause of saving China from foreign aggression. And the slogan “Obey the Qing, Destroy the foreign” (*shun Qing mie yang*) was similar with that of the Boxers. Local anti-foreign activities were connected with state sovereignty. However, there are also essential differences. In these three uprisings, there were no the rituals of “spirit possession” and “invulnerability”, the most distinguished feature of the Boxers. So to understand the Boxer movement, we need to analyze its cultural features.

Chapter Three: Support the Qing; Destroy the Foreign

(Fu Qing Mie Yang)

“Support the Qing, Destroy the Foreign” became the most popular slogan of the Boxers. In May, 1900, the Boxers began to confront with Qing troops in Zhili. The Boxers killed Colonel Yan Futong in Laishui county and occupied Zhongzhou. In early June, the Boxers streamed into Beijing in large numbers and confronted with foreign diplomats. Hundreds of Christians were killed and several foreign churches and one legation were burned down. The action of the Boxers caused chaos in Beijing and led to the armed intervention of foreign Powers. Several high officials in the Qing court and some viceroys of southeastern provinces urged the Qing court to suppress the Boxers immediately. They called the Boxers “rebels” and “Bandits”. Facing domestic and foreign condemnation, the Boxers justified their actions by the slogan, “Support the Qing, Destroy the Foreign” (*fu qing mie yang*).⁶⁹ In addition to the slogan that claimed “fighting the foreigners for the country”, the Boxers sought the sanction of Chinese gods to legitimize their violence against the foreigners. Through the rituals of “spirit possession”, the Boxers claimed that they were possessed by Chinese gods and were carrying out the righteous mission of driving out “foreign devils” (*Yang guizi*). They called themselves “The Boxers United in Righteousness” (*Yihetuan*).

⁶⁹ The slogan was recorded by many documents. Putnam Weale, *Indiscreet Letters from Peking* (London: Dodd, Meade and Co. 1907), 17.

In this chapter, I will explore how the Boxers, mostly poor peasants, justify their anti-foreign actions with the slogan and their own cultural patterns.

The Boxers Confront the Qing Troops

In the spring of 1900, the activities of the Boxers in Zhili province intensified. In May, they confronted with Qing troops that were sent to suppress them. On May 12, some Boxers killed dozens of Chinese Christians in Gaolu village in Laishui County. A troop led by colonel Yang Futong was dispatched to suppress the Boxers. On May 17, Yang's troop attacked the Boxers and killed about 60 of them. However, on May 22, when Yang' troop went back to check the situation of Gaolu village, they were ambushed. Yang Futong and two soldiers were killed. After the battle, the Boxers occupied the country seat of Laishui, Zhuozhou. To block the transportation of the Qing army, the Boxers began to destroy railroads and telegraph lines. On May 28, they burned down the Fengtai station on the Beijing-Tianjin railway line, which was 10 miles from Beijing.

The death of Yang Futong, the first provincial level military commander killed by the Boxers, shocked the Qing government. On May 23, Zhili viceroy Yulu ordered the military commandant of Zhili, Nie Shicheng, to suppress the Boxers in Laishui immediately. On May 28, Nie's troop opened fire at the Boxers and killed dozens of them. On May 30, the Qing court issued a decree, condemning the Boxers as rebels, which stated: "(The Boxers) killed the

government official and destroyed the railroad. Openly violating the law like this, they had no difference from rebels. The military commanders and local officials should capture the leaders and disperse the followers immediately. Anyone who dares to resist the officials must be exterminated accordingly.”⁷⁰ It was the first time of the Qing government to use the word “exterminate” (*jiao*) in its policy towards the Boxers. Grand Councilor Ronglu went to inspect the Fengtai and Majiapu stations in person and dispatched troops to protect the railroad. On May 31, the viceroy of Hunan and Hubei provinces, Zhang Zhidong, presented a memorial to the Qing court, suggesting strict suppression on the Boxers.⁷¹

The Qing court denounced the Boxers as rebels and took measures to constrain them. On June 2, Zhili viceroy Yu Lu dispatched troops to surround the Boxers from three directions. He stated in his memorial to the Throne: “These bandits are gathering strength day by day and can not be dismissed by empty words. If military force were not assembled and used to punish them, the disturbance would have no end. ” On June 4, his troops fired at the Boxers who were destroying the railroad near Huangcun station and killed dozens of them. On June 5, the Qing court dispatched Grand Councilor, Zhao Shuqiao, to investigate the case and disperse the crowds. On the next day, the Qing court added Grand

⁷⁰ Imperial edict on Guangxu 26/5/3(5/30/1900), *Yihetuan Dang'an Shiliao* (Archival materials on the Boxers) (Beijing:Zhonghua,1959), 106.

⁷¹ Zhang Zhidong telegram on Guangxu 26/5/4 (5/31/1900), *Yihetuan Dang'an Shiliao* (Archival materials on the Boxers), 112.

Councilor, Gang Yi, to the investigation. On June 6, the Qing court issued a decree, denouncing the Boxers as rebel and threatening to exterminate them severely if they did not disband after this declaration.”⁷² On June 7, Nie Shicheng’s troop killed over one hundred Boxers near Langfang.

Nevertheless, the Boxers did not fall apart under the pressure of the Qing army. Thousand of them gathered in Zhuozhou town and took full control of it. They raised flags with the slogan, “Support the Qing, Destroy the Foreign”. Many people from the region came to join them. When the Qing court was taking measures to pacify the Boxers in Zhuozhou, from early June on, the Boxers flooded into Beijing from all directions. In a few days, the Boxers in the city increased to more than 20, 000.

Boxers in Beijing

The Boxers in Beijing began burning churches and killing foreign missionaries and Chinese Christians. On the evening of June 10, Boxers destroyed the British summer legation in the Western Hills outside Beijing. On June 13, the Southern Cathedral (*nan tang*) was burned to the ground and hundreds of Chinese Christians were killed. To the chaos in Beijing, some officials urged the Qing court to suppress them immediately and recover the order of the city.

⁷² Imperial edict on Guangxu 26/5/10 (6/6/1900), *Yihetuan Dang an Shiliao* (Archival Materials on the Boxers), 118-19.

However, the Boxers saw themselves as righteous people who were carrying out the mission of driving out the foreigners. They raised flags with the slogan of “Support the Qing, Destroy the Foreign” and called themselves “Boxers United in righteousness” (*yi he tuan*). They came into the city with bright-color clothes and played drums and gongs. Hu Sijing, a junior official in Beijing, described the Boxers coming into Beijing like this: “In May and June, the bandits in Beijing got rampant. The people coming from the east of Beijing called themselves the Wuqing Boxers or Xianghe Boxers, and those from the south called themselves Gu’an Boxers or Yongqing Boxers. These Boxers came with flags with the name of their village or town on it. Playing drums and gongs like the performances in local festival celebrations, people coming into the city were uncountable.”⁷³

The Boxers claimed that their actions were sanctioned by Chinese gods and they were carrying out the righteous mission of Chinese gods to drive out foreign devils. These ideas embodied in their placards and rituals. In Beijing, the Boxers posted many placards to proclaim their purpose. These placards expressed their understanding of their action. Among the large number Boxer placards, the following piece was the most popular one:

“Divinely aided Boxers,

United in Righteousness Corps,

⁷³*Yihetuan* (The Boxers), vol.2, 504.

Arose because the Devils,

Messed up the Empire of yore.

They proselytize their sect,

And believe in only one god,

The Spirits and their won ancestors,

Are not even given a nod.

Their men are all immoral;

Their women truly vile.

For the Devils it is Mother-san sex,

That serve as the breeding style.

And if you don't believe me,

Then have a careful view:

You' ll see the Devils' eyes,

Are all a shining blue.

No rain comes from heaven.

The earth is parched and dry.

And all because the churches,

Have bottled up the sky.

The gods are very angry.

The spirits seek revenge.

En Masse they come from heaven,

To teach the way to men.

The Way is not a heresy;

It is not the White Lotus Sect.

The Chants and spells we utter,

Follow mantra, true and correct.

Raise up the yellow charm.

Bow to the incense glow.

Invite the gods and spirits,

Down from the mountain grotto.

Spirits emerge from the grottos;
Possessing the Bodies of men,

Gods come down from the hills,
Transmitting their boxing skill.

When their martial and magic techniques,
you,
Suppressing the foreign devils,

Are all learned by each one of

Will not be a tough thing to do.

Rip up the railroad tracks!
Quickly! Hurry up! Smash them—
combines.

Pull down the telegraph lines!
The boats and the steamship

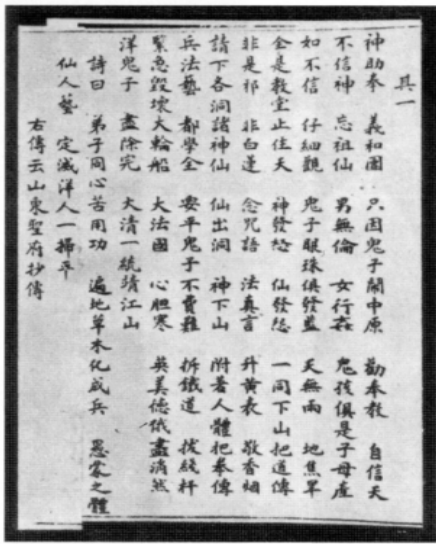
The mighty nation of France,
While from England, American, Russia,

Quivers in abject fear,
And from Germany nought do we hear.

When at last all the foreign Devils,
The Great Qing, united, together,
land.”⁷⁴

Are expelled to the very last man,
Will bring peace to this our

⁷⁴ *Yi He Tuan Shi Liao*, Edited by Zhongguo Shehui Kexueyuan Jindaishi Yanjusu, (Beijing: Zhongguo Shehui Kexue, 1982), vol. 1, 18. Translated by Joseph Esherick, *The Origins of the Boxer Uprising*, 299-300.



Boxer Placard. From *Yihetuan*, vol. 1

This placard spread widely and was recorded by many witnesses.⁷⁵ This placard illustrates a number of important points of the uprising. At the beginning, it pointed out explicitly that the uprising was due to the evil deeds of foreigners in China. Then it blamed the Christian heresy that angered Chinese gods and caused the continuing drought. It stated that the Boxers got the skills from the gods and acted on the behalf of gods to drive off foreign devils. It denied the connection with the heterodox White Lotus sect, and affirmed their loyalty to the Qing dynasty.

⁷⁵ Yutian Zhang, "Study of the poster of 'God Support the Boxers'", *Lishi yanjiu* (History Studies), 1983.

If we compare this placard with the placards in the anti-Christian uprisings before 1895 and the posters in the uprising in 1898, we can see the connections and differences between them. This placard included the main ideas of former uprisings, anti-Christianity and anti-foreign invasion; however, it added the idea of “Gods Support the Boxers” (*shen zhu quan*). The drought in early 1900 were interpreted as the anger of Chinese gods at the foreigners and attack on the foreigners were interpreted as driving off the devils on the behalf of the gods. The idea of “Gods Support the Boxers” appeared repeatedly in Boxer documents.

The “Public Notice of Malan Village” was one important document of the Boxers which was recorded by several books. Malan village was a small village in Wanping County, in the west of Beijing. When the Boxer uprising spread to Beijing in May, a Boxer group was set up by Du Hailong in Malan village. In July, the Boxers under the lead of Du Hailong killed 11 Chinese Christians in the village and joined the Boxers from nearby villages to attack a Catholic church in the town of Hou Sangyu.⁷⁶ The notice was posted in the village, but later spread widely in north China. It stated:

“Since the Xianfeng reign (1851-1861), Catholics have been conspiring with foreigners; causing chaos in China; squandering the state’s revenue; tearing down temples and monasteries; destroying Buddhist statues; and taking over people’s graveyards. Such evil acts have aroused swarms of locusts and droughts

⁷⁶ *Yihetuan* (The Boxers), vol.4, 153-54.

which harm the trees and plants. Our country is no longer harmonious and the Chinese people are no longer secure. This has angered Heaven.

Blessed by the great god in Heaven, all the spirits have descended to set up an altar. They will teach our young men how to support the Qing, eliminate the foreigners, and implement virtuous principles on behalf of Heaven. We want to contribute to the country so that it will be at peace; and to help the peasants so that the villages and neighborhoods are safe. In the end, misfortune will come to an end while prosperity returns. Yet, we worry that ignorant people and hooligans will use the support of the gods to mistreat the weak. All such behavior should be reported to the local leaders to be dealt with publicly and in accordance with the laws and regulations. It is forbidden to resolve the matter in purely selfish manner. The eyes of the gods are as sharp as lightning and will see those who are pursuing the cases purely with selfish motives and will punish them accordingly.

The false methods perpetrated by the deluded foreign missionaries have angered Heaven who has ordered the spirits to descend to the divine altar in order to teach the youth. The meaning of *Yihetuan* is as follows: *Yi* means benevolent and *He* means unified. Benevolent and unity keep villages and neighborhoods peaceful and harmonious. Virtue is the foundation of living. Agriculture is the means we make a living. Buddhism is the religion that we should follow. Public matters should not be handled with selfish aims of revenge. It is not allowed to mistreat the poor and the weak. No one should mistake wrong for right.⁷⁷

The point of the first paragraph was quite similar with that of the proclamation in the uprisings in 1898 that addressed the hatred to the Christians and foreign aggression. However, different with the proclamations in 1898, the notice addressed the support of Chinese gods. It stated that the movement was to “implement virtuous principles on behalf of Heaven.”

Both documents expressed the idea of “Gods Support the Boxers”. They are the longest ones in the 179 pieces of documents made by the Boxers that were preserved or recorded. Most of the else were short and some of them were in

⁷⁷ *Yihetuan* (The Boxers), vol.4, 148.

mysterious style, however most of them expressed the idea of “God support the Boxers”. In February, 1900, the Tianjin agent of the American Bible Society reported that the following text had been posted everywhere in north China: “On account of the Protestant and Catholic religions, the Buddhist gods are no longer respected, and the Five Relationships are disregarded. The anger of Heaven and Earth has been aroused and the timely rain has consequently been withheld from us. But Heaven is now sending down eight millions of spiritual soldiers to extirpate these foreign religions, and when this has been done there will be a timely rain.”⁷⁸ Another poster stated: “The arrival of calamities is because of the foreign devils. They have come to China to propagate their teachings, to build telegraph lines and to construct railways. They do not believe in spirits and they desecrate the gods. It is the desire of the gods to cut up the telegraph line, to rip up the railroads, and to cut off the heads of the foreign devils.”⁷⁹ The essence of this idea was distilled in jingles that even a small child can recite from memory. “No rain comes from heaven, the earth is parched and dry, and all because the churches, have bottled up the sky”⁸⁰; “When the foreign devils have been killed, a heavy rain will fall” (*shale yanggui tou, menyu wangxia liu*), and “When the

⁷⁸ *The Boxer Rising, A History of the Boxer trouble in China* (Shanghai: Shanghai Mercury, 1901), 9.

⁷⁹ William Duiker, *cultures in Collision*, 37.

⁸⁰ *Yihetuan shiliao*, vol.1, 18. Translated by Joseph Esherick, *The Origins of the Boxer Uprising*, 299-300.

foreigners have all been killed off, rain will come when we call for rain, and it will be clear when we want it to be clear” (*yangren shajin, yu yu huan yu, yu qing jiu qing*)⁸¹. Through these placards, public notices and jingles, the idea spread widely.

The Ritual of “Spirit Possession”

The most distinguishing feature of the Boxers was their rituals of “spirit possession” (*jiang shen fu ti*) and “invulnerability” (*dao qiang bu ru*). These rituals directly embodied the idea of “Gods Support the Boxers”. Through the rituals, the Boxers were possessed by Chinese gods and were endowed with the magic power of “invulnerability”. Many witnesses made detailed descriptions of these rituals. Most of the records showed that the rituals had the same procedure. A Boxer first kowtowed to the southeast, burnt incense, or recited charms; then he invited gods by name to descend and entered his body. Once possessed, he entered an altered state of consciousness and often greatly enhanced physical prowess. They believed that the possession by god made them “invulnerable” to swords and spears.

Yuan Chang was a minister of the Zongli Yamen. He presented several memorials to the Qing court against the Boxers. He described the rituals of the

⁸¹ Chen Zhenjiang and Cheng Xiao, *Yihetuan wenxian jizhu yu yanjiu* (Explications and studies of Boxer writings) (Tianjin: Renmin, 1985), 32.

Boxers like this, “When a disciple came to an altar, he burned incense and swore to his belief in the god. A big brother handed him a charm, which he bound on his body with a towel or belt. The big brother then chanted an incantation to invite the possession of a holy spirit. This was called the ‘beginning of the enchantment’. The man would fall to the ground as if asleep. He would rise a while later, kowtow toward the southeast, and then stand with staring eyes, breathing heavily. The man’s strength seemed to flow to the upper part of his body. Taking up a weapon, he would swing it wildly; no one could match his strength. This would be repeated three times a day while the enchantment lasted. When the power was gone—a state called the ‘dismissal of the enchantment’—the man would be completely exhausted”⁸²

When the Boxers were possessed by the gods, they became the “spirit soldiers” of the gods. They were no longer themselves but the representatives of the gods on earth. Their attacking on the foreigners was on the behalf of gods (*tian xing dao*). These beliefs and rituals legitimated their violent action against foreigners and encouraged them to fight with bare hands against the well-armed foreigners.

⁸² Yuan Chang, *The Incomplete Diary of Yuan Chang in the Turmoil of 1900*, in *Yihetuan* (The Boxers), 347.

Justify the Rituals: the Guangong Worship

However, the rituals of the Boxers were regarded as superstitious and incredible by some people. Some officials, like Lao Naixuan and Yuan Shikai denounced these rituals as heterodox that came from the heterodox White Lotus sect. To justify their rituals, the Boxers took Guangong (Lord Guan), the symbol of loyalty and righteousness, as the most important god to possess them.

In the Boxer movement, the gods that the Boxers invited to possess them came from various sources, including religious deities, folk spirits, and legendary heroes from popular operas and novels, such as Guangong, Zhangfei and Zhaoyun from the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms (sanguo yanyi)*; Monkey, Sandy and Pigsy from *Journey to the West (xi you ji)*; and Jiang Ziya, Yangjian, and Huang Feihu from *The Enfeoffment of the Gods (feng shen bang)*. Among all the gods that the Boxers invited to possess them, Guangong was the most popular and authoritative god in the movement. When Guangong appeared, all other gods became minor.

Guangong (Lord Guan) was an apotheosized hero of the Three Kingdoms period. Three Kingdoms period is a historical period from 168 A.D., when the massacre of the eunuchs heralded the downfall of the Han dynasty, to 265 A.D., when the empire was reunited by the founder of the Jin dynasty. He was originally known as Guan Yu. He formed a partnership with Liu Bei and Zhang

Fei, swearing everlasting friendship, and fought against the Yellow Turban insurgents and other warlords. He was captured by the Prime Minister of Han dynasty, Cao Cao, and was given high-ranking position and good treatment. But he kept his loyalty to his sworn brother and refused to change side. He rejoined his sworn brothers after a series of dangers and difficulties. Later when Liu Bei proclaimed himself Emperor of the Shu Han kingdom, Guan Yu became a general of it. He died in a war with Kingdom Wu, one of the Three Kingdoms. In 260 A.D., Liu Bei's son bestowed on him the posthumous title of "Brave and Faithful Marquis".

Guangong became a symbol of bravery and loyalty in the following thousand years. His myth became increasingly popular through a variety of media—literature, drama, official and popular cults, and the lore of secret societies. He was adopted as a patron-saint by various trades and professions and gradually developed into a god of wealth as well as war. He became one of the most popular gods in China and temples dedicated to him could be found in many villages. American historian Prasenjitt Duara argued that Guangong had become a symbol of nationalism in China. He argued that the two deities found most commonly in North China were Guan Di (Lord Guan) and Tu Di (the earth god). The coupling of the two deities is particularly apposite because villagers spoke of them as paired but distinctly contrasting symbols. Thus, Tu Di was seen as a subordinate god uniquely in charge of the affairs of a particular village, whereas

Guangong was seen as a great being, symbolic of the nation, and worthy of being worshiped by everybody.⁸³

Contrary to the popularity of Guangong in the Boxer movement, heroes from another popular novel, *Water Margin (Shui Hu)* were rarely mentioned by the Boxers. *Water Margin* is a collection of stories about the adventures of 108 men who joined a band on the mountain passes of Liang Shan Po in Shandong. One by one, the bandit heroes in the novel were driven to outlawry by the gross injustices of the corrupted officials. But once they are outlaws, they engage in causes to challenge all varieties of corruption and oppression, making these tales a favorite of market town audiences. Their characters and scenarios circulated widely among villagers. *Water Margin* more than any other classical Chinese novel embodied reflections of popular rural culture.

The different treatment of the Boxers to the heroes of these two popular novels reflected their understanding of the movement. To this phenomenon, historian Dai Xuanzhi argued that the main reason of this phenomenon lay in the idea of the Boxers about the movement: Guangong was the representative of the loyalty and righteousness, while the heroes in the *Water Margin* are rebels. They were supporters of the Qing dynasty against the foreigners, not rebels against the

⁸³ Duara Prasenjit, *Culture, Power, and the State: Rural North China, 1900-1942* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), 139-47.

government.⁸⁴ I agreed with his idea that the gods that the Boxers invited to possess them embodied their understanding of “righteousness” and I argue that the Boxers tried to justify their rituals with the Guangong worship.

Against the White Lotus Sect

The mysterious rituals of the Boxers were regarded by many people as coming from the heterodox White Lotus Sect. When the Boxers rose up in Shandong and Zhili province, the magistrate of Wuqiao county, Lao Naixuan, wrote a pamphlet, *The examination of the Origins of the Boxer Sect*, denouncing the Boxers as the offspring of the White Lotus sect. Although his evidence was very thin, his idea was accepted by many officials and Confucian scholars.⁸⁵ Shandong governor Yuan Shikai used Lao’s idea in his suppressing of the Boxers. Many copies of Lao’s pamphlets were printed and distributed.

The White Lotus Sect (*bai lian jiao*) was largely a Buddhist sect that incorporated some elements of Daoism and other native religions of China. It arose very early, perhaps going back to the twelfth century. The White Lotus Sect initially engaged only in chanting or reciting Buddhist sutras or some things akin

⁸⁴ Dai Xuanzhi , *Yihetuan yanjiu* (A study of the Boxers) (Taibei: Zhongguo Xueshu Zhuzuo Jiangzhu Weiyuanhui, 1963), 34-40.

⁸⁵ *Ibid*,1-4.

to sutras which were supposed to clear the adherents' souls and prepare them for entry into the Pure Land (Nirvana). Imperial authorities were very distrustful of such religious groups. After centuries of persecution the White Lotus sect shifted from being meditative to being messianic. In 1796, a rebellion by the White Lotus Sect against the Qing government broke out and continued for eight years. The Qing government put down the rebellion but it was not able to exterminate the sect. The White Lotus religion continued well into the nineteenth century. When the Boxer rose up in Shandong and Zhili, they were denounced by Lao Naixuan and Yuan Shikai as the offspring of the White Lotus Sect.

To justify the righteousness of their rituals, the Boxers openly declared their difference with the White Lotus Sect. In the most popular placard that I cited above, they explicitly stated that “We are not White Lotus heretics”⁸⁶. They looked down the White Lotus as heresy. The Boxers instructed the people to write the names of the deities that the Boxers worshiped on a piece of red cloth and tack it above the front door, declaring that this could counter the “black magic” of the White Lotus sect. The Boxers even accused the White Lotus sect of having collaborated with the Christians in plotting a rebellion.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ *Yihetuan shiliao* (Historical materials on the Boxers), 18.

⁸⁷ Yang Diangao, *Gengzi dashi ji* (A record of the main events of 1900), In *Gengzi jishi*, 79-98.

The Boxers not only declared their difference from the White Lotus Sect, but also arrest White Lotus members and sent them to the Qing Penalty department for trial. These White Lotus members were executed in public and were witnessed by many residences of Beijing. A Hanlin Academy official, Yun Yuding recorded: “Some Boxers could not reach their goal and had no excuse to end, so they went out (of Beijing) from the *Yongding* Gate. When they met some villagers who had some opera costume and some toy stuffs, they arrested over 70 of them and denounced them as the White Lotus. These people were detained in the prison of the Punishment Department for one night and were executed in the West market the next day without trail.”⁸⁸ A junior official in Beijing, Hu Sijing, recorded: “One day, the Boxers arrested over one hundred men and women, denouncing them as the members of the White Lotus sect. ... All the officials in the department knew the injustice of the accusation but no one dare to claim. All these people were driven to the West Market and executed.”⁸⁹ The attitude and activities of the Boxers to the White Lotus reflected their view on their relation to the state in the movement.

The belief of “Gods support the Boxers” and the rituals played an important role in the Boxer movement. The sanction of the gods encouraged them to participate in the movement. These ideas and rituals were familiar to the

⁸⁸ Yun Yuding, *Chongling chuanxin lu*, in *Yihetuan*, vol.1, 45-55.

⁸⁹Ye Changzhi, *Yuandulu riji* (Selections from the diary of the Yuandu Studio), *Yihetuan*, vol.2, 439-80.

peasants and could be understood by them. The interpretation of the flood and drought as the anger of Chinese gods at the foreigners explained their suffering. To them, the foreigners were “foreign devils” (*yang gui zi*), who destroy the harmony of traditional life. So fighting against the foreigners was understood as a war between the Chinese gods and foreign devils. They were on the side of the righteousness. So the Boxers called themselves “the Boxers United in Righteousness” (*yihetuan*).

The Righteousness of the Boxers

Anti-foreign activities had been existed among the populace even since the 1860s; however, these killings and burnings were regarded as banditry by the government. The claiming of the rioters of their righteousness of maintaining Confucianism and anti-foreign invasion could not justify their actions. These riots could not get the support of many people and soon disbanded under the pressure of the government. In the many anti-Christian incidents since the 1860s, it was common for the peasants to blame the Christians for their suffering.⁹⁰ The natural disasters were believed as the anger of the Gods at the injustice of human world. In the anti-Christian movement, many anti-Christian pamphlets blamed

⁹⁰ Richard Bohr, *Famine in China and the Missionary: Timothy Richard as Relief Administrator and Advocate of Nation Reform, 1876-1884* (Cambridge: East Asian Research Center, Harvard University, 1972), 33-4.

foreign missionaries for natural disasters. The preaching of Christianity and prohibiting the worship of Chinese gods and ancestors was regarded as offending the Chinese gods, and the construction of churches and railroads were regarded as disturbing the graveyard of ancestors and damaged the “dragon’s vein” (*long mai*) in the land. However, these accusations were regarded by the government officials and literati as ridiculous.

The peasants felt the pressure of foreign aggression; however they could not find a way express their suffering. In 1891, an extraordinary anti-missionary violence broke out in the Yangzi Valley. Within three months, nine riots occurred in the cities and ports along Yangzi River. Many rioters came from the boatmen on the river. After 1860, along the Yangzi River, Shanghai, Zhengjiang, Nanjing, Jiujiang, Hankou, Wuhu, Yichang, Chongqing were opened as trade ports. Because of the competition of foreign steam boats, many boatmen lost their way of living. According to the consul of England in Chongqing, Sibance, there were over 200, 000 boatmen and boat-tractors lost their job. Accounted their families, over one million lost their way of living. However, the targets of these riots were the Christians. The rioters accused the Christians for kidnapping and abusing children and poisoning the water. These accusations on the Christians were regarded as ignorant and ridiculous and these riots were suppressed by the Qing government.

In Shandong, when the tribute rice from the south to Beijing was shipped on the sea, the Grand Canal became obsolete, affecting the decline of the cities and the livelihood of the people along its banks. The decline of the Grand Canal as the major land route, throw thousand of bargemen, carters, innkeepers, and businessmen out of work. Foreign economic aggression was felt by the peasants in the inland areas. However, they could not blame their suffering on the abstract “foreign aggression”. They expressed their anti-foreign emotion on the Christians. In the 1890s, many anti-Christian uprisings occurred in Shandong. Among them, the “Big Sword Society” used their skills of “Golden Bell” (*jin zhong zhao*), which claimed the ability of defending the practitioner from the wound of swords and spires; and the “Spirit Society” used the rituals of “spirit possession”. However, all these skills and rituals were regarded as incredible and heterodox. They were never connected with the “Righteousness”.

However, the scramble for concessions by the powers in 1898 enkindled the anti-foreign sentiment all over the country. Foreigners became the targets of the uprisings in 1898. In the uprisings, anti-Christian movement was connected with state sovereignty. Anti-foreign activities were regarded as the righteous mission against foreign aggression. In the uprisings of 1898, the rioters were regarded as the “righteous people”. In this context, the belief and rituals of the Boxers gained new meanings.

Natural disaster was nothing new to the peasants of northern China. During much of the 1890s, severe flooding and water logging had resulted. The flood of Yellow River in 1898 wreaked devastation on large portions of western Shandong. Thirty-four counties were affected; thousands of villages inundated and millions of people struggled on the edge of starvation.⁹¹ The hardship due to the flood and drought caused the unrest of the peasants. Several small-scale rebellions happened during this period.⁹² After the winter of 1899-1900, however, this pattern abruptly reversed, too little or no rain falling in North China. A wide range of sources, including gazetteers, official memorials, diaries, oral history accounts, and the reports of foreigners, indicated a direct link between the natural disasters and the spread and intensification of the Boxer movement. Luella Miner, a missionary in Shandong province, identified drought as one cause of growing Boxer-related unrest in northwestern Shandong: “The present conditions in this province are most favorable to such a movement (as the Boxers). The people are very poor; until yesterday (May 7) practically no rain had fallen for nearly a year, plowing had not been and can not be done, crops have not been planted, the ground is too dry and hard to work in any way, and consequently the whole

⁹¹Li Wenhai ed., *Jindai Zhongguo zaihuang jinian* (A Chronological record of modern Chinese famines) (Changsha: Hunan Jiaoyu Chubanshe, 1990), 650-75.

⁹² Joseph Esherick, *The Origins of the Boxer Uprising*, 174-80.

country is swarming with hungry, discontented, hopeless idlers, and they... are ready to join any organization offered.”⁹³

In late 1898, victims of the flood and drought in Shandong and Zhili began to blame their misfortune on the foreigners. They insisted that the flood and drought were caused by foreigners, whose evil behavior had offended Chinese gods. So the rain won't come until the foreign devils were driven off. This idea spread rapidly across North China. With the deterioration of the drought in north China in early 1900, this idea was accepted by many peasants.

The interpretation was accepted by many peasants in north China. The interpretation explained their suffering. Their suffering was not a short-term crisis caused by the natural disaster; it was the deep structure crisis of the traditional agrarian economy. In 1800, after 150 years of peace and prosperity under the Qing dynasty, the Chinese population rose from 143 million in 1741 and to 430 million in 1850. The discrepancy between population and land growth resulted in a sharp decrease in per capita cultivation. 50 percent to 60 percent of the population had no lands. Many displaced and unemployed peasants drifted to the cities as porters, dockhands, and sailors. There were no big industries, and the surplus persons became a source of unrest in the society. Peasant rebellions broke out throughout the country in mid nineteenth century. The Taiping Rebellion lasted 14 years and

⁹³ Ibid.

impacted 11 provinces. Over 20 million people died in the war. But the basic economic problem was not resolved. Many people were unemployed and penniless. However, for a long time the poor peasants had no way to express their suffering. In 1898, in the context of anti-foreign aggression, the interpretation got new meanings. The peasants were not fighting the foreigners for themselves; they were fighting for the country with the sanction of the gods. The idea of “gods support the Boxers” (*shen zhu quan*) became popular.

The Boxers’ actions were praised by many people in Beijing. The killing and burning was carried out with a lot of people watching on site. Zhongfang Shi, recorded: “Tens of thousands of Boxers (*tuan min*) have come from all parts in the past few days. Most seem to be simple country folk who make their living by farming. They have neither leaders directing them nor potent weapons. They provide their own travelling expenses and eat only millet and corn. Seeking neither fame nor fortune, they fight without regard for their own lives and are prepared to sacrifice themselves on the field of battle. They come together without prior agreement, a great host all of one mind. They wish only to kill foreigner and Christians and do not harm the common people. From this perspective, it seems that they are fighting for righteousness.”⁹⁴

⁹⁴ Zhongfang Shi, *Gengzi jishi* (A record of the events of 1900), In *Gengzi Jishi*(Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1978), 9-77.

The Boxers got the support of many people in Beijing, including not only the poor residents, but also some princes, officials, and literati. Chai E, a minor official in Beijing, recorded: “Boxer altars were established everywhere in sight. Before, there was only one altar in one district or even two or three districts. But now, there were three to four or even five to six altars in one district. At the beginning, altars were established by only the Boxers, but now some were established by the well-to-do people. From the royal princes and high-ranking officials to the lower-class populace, people were all Boxers.”⁹⁵

The Boxer movement was a response of the peasants to the foreign aggression at the end of nineteenth century. In the forming process, the uprisings in 1898 played an important role. In the uprisings in 1898, the slogan, “Obey the Qing, Destroy the foreign” connected anti-Christians movement with the state sovereignty. Anti-Christian actions were no longer focus on the conflict with the Christians. It was taken as a way against foreign aggression. Without this stage, the idea of “gods support the Boxers” and the mysterious rituals of the Boxers could not be connected with state sovereignty. They would still be regarded as superstitious. After the uprisings in 1898, anti-foreign activities became the righteous action against foreign aggression. The superstitious ideas and rituals became much easier for people to accept.

⁹⁵ *Yihetuan* (The Boxers), vol.1, 306.

Different from the uprisings in 1898 under the slogan of “Obey the Qing, Destroy the Foreign”, the Boxers began to challenge the authority of the Qing government. Different from the uprisings in 1898 in which the rioters saw themselves as the patriotic subjects of the Qing dynasty, the Boxers saw themselves as the representatives of Chinese gods. When the Qing troop was sent to suppress their anti-foreign actions, they openly resisted the Qing troops.

In 1898, anti-foreign activities had been regarded as the righteous action against foreign invasion. Now the Boxers, most of them were poor peasants, expressed their view of the “righteousness” in their own forms. Through the rituals of “spirit possession”, they became the spirit soldiers of Chinese gods. The righteousness of fighting the foreigners came from the sanction of Chinese gods. It was not the Boxers support the Qing government as the loyal subjects, but as the representatives of Chinese gods.

Chapter Four: Maintain the Orthodoxy, Dispel the Heterodoxy (*Fu Zheng Qu Xie*)

The anti-foreign activities of the Boxers in Shandong after 1898 caught the attention of the Qing court. In December, 1899, under the pressure of foreign diplomats, the Qing court removed Yuxian from the governor post and appointed Yuan Shikai as the acting governor of Shandong. The Boxer turmoil in Shandong and the change of governor caused a heated debate among Qing officials. Most of them noticed the culture feature of the Boxers; however, they had quite different opinions on the nature of this feature. Some officials saw the feature of the Boxers as the expression of righteous indignation of people to foreign aggression but some officials saw the feature as the sign of heterodox sectarians. Yuan Shikai, adopting the idea of a local magistrate, Lao Naixuan, denounced the Boxers as heterodox sectarians and suppressed them with the cooperation of local gentry. The slogan, “Maintain the Orthodoxy, Dispel the Heterodoxy (*fu zheng qu xie*)” became of spirit of Yuan’s policy toward the Boxers. Yuan Shikai put down the Boxers in Shandong within two months. However, the Boxer movement developed in Zhili. Although the viceroy of Zhili, Yulu, suppressed the Boxers strictly by force, without the help of orthodox ideology and local gentry, his suppression failed. In this chapter, I will explore the role of the slogan in suppressing the Boxers in Shandong.

Yuan Shikai Replacing Yuxian as the Governor

When uprising of Zhu Hongdeng broke out in Pingyuan County, Shandong governor Yuxian sent troops to suppress it immediately. On November 21 and 24, 1899, he had Zhu Hongdeng and another leader, Monk Xincheng, captured. Although he settled this case quickly, the Empress Dowager, Cixi, still reproached him and the local officials for their inefficiency. She ordered Yuxian to investigate these various societies thoroughly and ban them strictly.⁹⁶

The execution of Zhu Hongdong did not stop the anti-Christian movement in this area. Within a month, attacks on the Christians appeared in Qihe, Liaocheng, Tangyi, Pingyin, Feicheng, Xiajin, and Deng'e counties. To the constant eruptions of anti-Christian incidents, foreign ministers in Beijing attributed them to the inefficiency of Yu Xian's suppression. And they believed that, to some extent, his inefficiency was deliberate. In November, 1899, American minister, Conger, took the lead in pressing the Qing court to dismiss Yuxian from his post. On December 5, Conger sent a diplomatic note to Zongli Yamen, warning: "Unless the imperial Chinese government take some immediate effective measures to suppress these brigands, the outside world will be justified in the belief that China is purposely trifling with a momentous question, which

⁹⁶ Imperial Decree, Guangxu25/10/26 (11/28/1900). Guojia Dang An Ju (National Archive Bureau), *Yi He Tuan Dang An Shi Liao* (The Boxer Archives) (Beijing: Zhuhua Shuju, 1959), vol. 1, 38.

may lead to the needless murder of foreigners whom she has agreed to protect and to the most serious trouble for herself.”⁹⁷ Conger explained his requirement of the removal of Yuxian in his representation to the State Department of the United States of America on December 7, “It is generally understood that the governor, Yuxian, is strongly anti-foreign, and believed that he is by no means doing what he could and should do.”⁹⁸

Conger’s criticism of Yuxian did not quite accord with his performance in Shandong. Yuxian had been working in Shandong for more than 20 years before he was appointed as the governor in April, 1899. He suppressed the Big Sword Society in 1896 when he was the judicial commissioner of the province. As the governor, he suppressed an anti-Christian group in Jiaxiang and Juye counties in June ; captured the Big Sword Society leader of Kaizhou, Liu Zanyu in August; and put down the Spirit Boxing uprising and executed Zhu Hongdeng and Monk Xinchun in December. Yuxian suppressed these uprisings with an iron hand; however, he could not prevent the eruption of new ones. The French and American ministers jointly pressed the Qing government to dismiss Yuxian. On December 1, Zongli Yamen telegraphed Yuxian on the latest visit of the American minister: “The American minister is not a habitual meddler. It seems

⁹⁷ Mr. Conger Report to the State Department, *Foreign Relations of the United State* (1900), 120.

⁹⁸ “Papers relating to the foreign relations of the United States 1900, *Affairs in China*, 77.

that his words are not without cause. ”⁹⁹ On December 7, the Qing court summoned Yuxian to Beijing and appointed Yuan Shikai as the acting governor of Shandong.

Yuan Shikai (1859-1916) was a young reform-minded military commander. He grew up in a locally prominent family in Henan province. His father and uncles were active in suppressing the *Nian* rebellion in North China in the 1850s and 1860s. In 1880, he went to serve in the military after failing the civil service examination. In 1882, he was dispatched with the Qing troops to pacify an uprising in Korea, a tributary country of China. Yuan made a success of himself with his military talents and in 1884 he was placed in command of the three Chinese divisions in Korea. Over the next 9 years, Yuan effectively re-established Chinese ascendancy in Korea and minimized the influence of other countries. He left Korea shortly before the outbreak of the war between China and Japan over Korea in 1894 in which China was defeated. Yuan was chosen to command and train a new established army, the Newly Created Army, near Tianjin. His success in training this army, which became the most modernized army in China, won him a high reputation.

⁹⁹ Zongli Yamen to Yuxian, Guangxu25/10/29, *Yihetuan dang'an shiliao* (Archival materials on the Boxers), vol.1, 42.

The turmoil in Shandong and the change of governors (four times from 1898 to 1900) caught the attention of many officials. They presented memorials to the court to offer advices. Most of them noticed the different features of the Boxer movement from former anti-Christian uprisings. On January 9, Censor Xi Ling presented a memorial to the court. He pointed out that the Boxers had no obvious organization and leaders, but when an anti-Christian conflict occurred in one place, hundreds, even thousands of people assembled there in a short time. When the troops came to the spot, they disappeared; but once the troops left, they gathered again. What made these people gathered together in a short time? He argued that the root of the Boxers lay in the “public indignation” (*gong fen*) of the people to foreign aggression. Anti-foreign activities were regard as the “righteous thing” by the people. He stated that:

“The Boxers’ fighting against the Christians seems on the righteous side. Although it can’t be suppressed without using force, force alone can not solve the problem. The churches are located everywhere and so are the Boxers. There is one church, but the Boxers are thousands. The government troops have not moved and the people have been agitated. Once the troops moved, the life of the missionary has been in the hands of the Boxers. One man takes the lead and thousands follow. Like a prairie fire, the disaster is not far.”¹⁰⁰

The point of Xi Liang was supported by other officials. An official of the Hanlin Academy, Zhu Zumou, pointed out that the anti-foreign indignation among the people was the deep reason of the turmoil. He argued that Germany’s

¹⁰⁰ Censor Xi Ling memorial, Guangxu25/12/9(1/9/1900), *Yihetuan dang’an shiliao* (Archival materials on the Boxers), vol.1,55.

occupation of Jiaozhao Bay with the pretext of the missionary case and the punishment of Shandong Governor, Li Bingheng, and several county magistrates caused the indignation of the people. People believed that the officials could not keep justice in treating the disputes between the Christians and the common people. So they organized societies to protect themselves.¹⁰¹

All these memorials pointed out that the feature of the Boxer movement expressed the righteous dignity of the people to foreign aggression. They should be encouraged rather than suppressed. Censor Huanf Guijun pointed out that suppressing the Boxers would weaken the morale of the people and increase the force of the Christians. At a critical moment when China faced the menace of foreign powers, it would be extremely dangerous to suppress the people and support the Christians.”¹⁰²

On December 27, Censor Huang Guijun presented a memorial to the throne. He pointed out that Yuan Shikai as a military commander had no experience in civil administration. If he handled the conflicts between the Christians and the commoners depending excessively on military force, not only the conflicts would not be solved, large uprising might arise. He asked, “The state

¹⁰¹ *Yihetuan dang an shiliao* (Archival materials on the Boxers), 42-3.

¹⁰² Huang Guijun memorial, Guangxu 25/12/9 (1/9/1900), *Yihetuan dang'an shiliao*, 44.

spent millions each year on the armies; not fighting foreign aggressors, but killing the innocent people, is it the intention of the state to maintain the army?”¹⁰³

These memorials touched the Qing court. The Qing court also worried that Yuan’s handling of the conflicts by force would cause larger unrest in Shandong. On December 26, the very day that Yuan took office in Jinan, the court sent him an edict. It stated:

“Yuan Shikai should commend his subordinates to handle the conflicts between the people and the Christians with even hand, must not rely on force and cause unrest of the people. In essence, the key lies in handling the day to day affairs evenly. If the local officials win the trust of the people, it is not hard to deduce the serious case into trifles, and dissolve trifling case into nothing.”¹⁰⁴

On December 29, the court sent Yuan Shikai another edict, ordering him to treat the conflict with extreme caution. The edict commanded him to discipline his troops, warning him “If handled inappropriately and thus caused disturbance in the heart province, he would be held responsible.”¹⁰⁵

Just at this time, on December 30, 1899, a British businessman, S. M. Brooks, was killed in a small village in Feicheng county in Shandong. Since the Juye incident in November 1898, in which two German missionaries were killed, Brooks was the first foreigner who was killed in Shandong, and Brooks was

¹⁰³ Huang Guijun’s memorial, Guangxu 25/11/25 (12/27/1899), *Yihetuan dang’an shiliao*, 44-45.

¹⁰⁴ Imperial edict, Guangxu 25/11/24 (12/26/1899), *Yihetuan dang’an shiliao*, 44.

¹⁰⁵ Telegraph to Yuan Shikai by the Grand Council, Guangxu25/11/27(12/29/1900), *Yihetuan dang’an shiliao*, 46.

neither a Christian missionary nor a German. The death of Brooks caused an intensive protest of the foreign ministers in Beijing. They asked the Chinese government to suppress the Boxers strictly. The incident offered a good excuse for the people against Yuan Shikai. Many of them argued that this incident was the result of Yuan's harsh policy of military suppression. Some people even argued that Yuan made this incident happen deliberately in order to carry out his military suppression. The opinions of these officials influenced the policy of the Qing court to the Boxers.

Debates on the January 11 Edict

Based on the debates in the passed month, on January 11, the Qing court issued an edict about the Boxers. Since the edict explicitly express the policy of the Qing court to the Boxers and played an important role in the development of the Boxer movement, it is needed to be cited in whole:

Of late in all the provinces brigandage had become daily more prevalent and missionary cases have recurred with frequency. Most critics point to seditious Societies as the cause, and ask for rigorous suppression and punishment of these. But reflection shows that Societies are of different kinds. When worthless vagabonds form themselves into bands and sworn confederacies, and relying on their numbers create disturbances, the law can show absolutely no leniency to them. On the other hand, when peaceful and law-abiding people practice their skill in mechanical arts for the self-preservation of themselves and their families, or when they combine in village communities for the mutual protection of the rural population, this is in accordance with the public-spirited principle (enjoyed by Mencius) of "Keeping mutual watch and giving mutual help".

Some local authorities when a case arises, do not regard this distinction, but listening to false and idle rumors, regard all alike as seditious Societies, and involve all in one indiscriminate slaughter. The result is that, no distinction being made between the good and the evil, men's minds are thrown into fear and doubt. This is, indeed, "adding fuel to stop a fire," "driving fish into the deep part of the pool to catch them." It means, not that the people are disorderly, but that the administration is bad.

The profound compassion and unbounded favor of our dynasty have blessed the country for over 200 years, the people eat our produce and treat our soil; they have natural goodness implanted in them; how can they, of their own free will, come to adopt bandit ways, and bring down punishment upon themselves?

The essential this is that the Viceroys and Governors of the provinces should select officers worthy of confidence, who should rule their districts well and give rest to their people. When litigation arises between converts and people, it should be dealt with according to justice, without the slight partiality for either side. Such conduct serves as a matter of course to fulfill the people's trustful hopes, and to quiet popular feeling in time of trouble, changing serious affairs to trifles and causing trifling ones to disappear. The stability of the country's institutions and the consolidation of international relations alike depend on this.

The Viceroys and Governors of the provinces have received the fullest and weightiest marks of our favor. If they offer their united services in these critical times, they must be able to carry into effect the determination of the Throne to treat the masses with paternal kindness and to regard all men with equal benevolence. Let them give strict orders to the local authorities, that in dealing with cases of this kind they should only inquire whether so-and-so is, or not, guilty of rebellion, whether he has or has not stirred up strife, and should not consider whether he belongs to a Society or not, whether his is or not an adherence of a religion.

As for our common people, let them give thought to the protection and security for their native places, their persons, and their homes. Let them not give ear to those who would unsettle their minds and so bring upon themselves calamities and military operations. Nor let them on the other hand presume upon influence and authority to oppress their fellow-villagers.

In this way it is our earnest hope that the hamlets will be at peace, and that thus we may be relieved of our anxious care by day and night.

Let this Decree be published abroad.¹⁰⁶

The edict stated that people drilling themselves for self-defense or organizing themselves for the protection of their villages should not be regarded as bandits. Any indiscriminate execution would make more people join the societies (adding fuel to the fire). It instructed local officials to distinguish the criminals from law-abiding people. The decree forbade the local officials to take action against the “societies”, unless they had been guilty of some overt act of offending the law.

The edict caused intense opposition from the foreign diplomatic group. They thought that it acknowledged the legal status of the Boxers. The ministers in Beijing noticed the anti-foreign sentiments in these societies. They believed that the way to eliminate this sentiment was to denounce all societies as illegal and ban them strictly. However, they believed that the edict of January 11 went on the opposite direction. On January 27, the British, French, German and American ministers sent a joint diplomatic note to Zongli Yamen. It stated: “The wording of this edict (January 11) has unfortunately given rise to a widespread impression that such societies as the Fist of Righteous Harmony (*yi he quan*) and the Big Sword Society are regarded with favor by the Chinese government, and their

¹⁰⁶ Imperial decree, Guangxu 25/12/11(1/11/1900), *Yihetuan dang'an shiliao* (Archival materials on the Boxers), 56. English translation see, George Nye Steiger, *China and the Occident: The Origin and Development of the Boxer Movement* (New Heaven: Yale University Press, 1927), 178-80.

members have openly expressed their gratification and have been encouraged by the decree to carry on their outrages against the Christian converts.” The note, requested “That an Imperial decree be published and promulgated, ordering by name the complete suppression and abolition of the ‘Fist of Righteous Harmony’ (*yi he quan*) and the ‘Big Sword Society,’ and we request that it may be distinctly stated in the edict that to belong to either of these societies or to harbor any of its members is a criminal offence against the laws of China.”¹⁰⁷ They believed that the existence of the societies would give rise to the anti-Christian incidents at any time. They demanded the Qing government denounce the Boxers as illegal explicitly and ban them strictly.

However, the Qing court had different opinion on how to dispel the Boxers. Connected with the debate among the officials, it was obvious that the Qing court tried to dispel the Boxers by separating them from the anti-foreign indignation. The edict claimed that to judge a case, the officials should ask only if they had broken the law or not but should not ask if they are society members or Christians. No matter whether they are society members or Christians, whoever broke the law should be punished as criminals. In this way, the movement could be separated from the anti-Christian and anti-foreign indignation. And it would be

¹⁰⁷ *Papers Related to the Foreign Relations of the United States*, (1900), 96. Cited from Lan Xinxiang, 144.

much easier to handle a few criminals by separating them from the law-abiding populace.

Under the pressure, the Qing court issued a decree on February 19, which clearly announced that all societies of the people were illegal and all society members would be punished. The decree was posted throughout the affected areas of Shandong and Zhili provinces.¹⁰⁸ The foreign diplomatic groups were satisfied with the contents of the decree, but they had a problem with the form in which the decree was published. They insisted that in order to let all people know this forbidden decree, it should be published on the *Peking Gazette*, a widely circulated pamphlets that included copies of government documents. On March 2, foreign ministers presented a diplomatic note to the Zongli Yamen, demanding the Qing government publish the banning decree in the official *Peking Gazette*. They believed that the public denouncing of the Boxers and other societies as illegal would undermine the popularity of these societies.

The Qing court did not want to make the decree a public topic. If it was published on the *Peiking Gazette*, many discussions would arise and the discussion would stimulate more anti-foreign sentiment. Then the decree would be seen as the sign of the surrender of the Qing court to foreign powers. Therefore, the Qing court turned down the demand of the ministers. Prince Qing and Zongli

¹⁰⁸ Yulu's memorial, Guangxu 26/3/10(4/9/1900), *Yihetuan dang'an shiliao* (Archival materials on the Boxers),72.

Yanmen insisted that it was unsuitable to publish the decree on the *Peiking Gazette*. On March 6, the Zongli Yamen sent a diplomatic note to the ministers, which explained that the *Peking Gazette* had only limited circulation and it would not serve the purpose of informing the common people of the banning order as the minister demanded. Minister Xu Jingcheng called on Sir Robert Hart, a respectful British diplomat, to explain to the ministers that publicly denouncing the societies would increase the excitement against the foreigners.

The refusal of the Qing court confirmed the suspicion of the ministers on the intention of the Qing court in the edict on January 11. They held a conference to discuss the issue On March 7. On the Conference, American minister, Conger, explicitly expressed his suspicion, “the Chinese government has, and either purposely or through fear of a general uprising, flagrantly trifled with this matter from the beginning and has grossly violated their treaty obligations.”¹⁰⁹ On March 10, the ministers sent a final diplomatic note to the Zongli Yamen, it stated: “Nothing less than this will, I am convinced, put an end to the outrages against the Christians which have lately been so prevalent in Zhili and Shandong. Should the Chinese Government refuse this reasonable request, I shall call only an ordinary precaution against a most pernicious and anti-foreign organization. The consequence of further disorder in the districts concerned cannot fail to be

¹⁰⁹ Papers Relating to Foreign Relations of the United States, *China Affair*, (1900), 102.

extremely serious to the Chinese government.¹¹⁰ In April, a naval demonstration was carried out in northern China Sea.

The debates in early 1900 focused on how to eliminate the anti-foreign sentiment among the people that gave rise to the anti-foreign Boxers. The Qing court tried to suppress the Boxers as criminals. And the foreign minister tried to eliminate it by denouncing it illegal. However, all these measures failed. Yuan Shikai put down the Boxer movement in Shandong within two months. In March, Yuan reported to the Qing court that the situation of Shandong had come back to peace. How did Yuan achieve this? What was the difference between Yuan's methods and the Qing court and other officials?

Boxers as Heterodox Sect

Yuan Shikai was appointed as the acting governor of Shandong on December 26. On his way to the governor post, Yuan Shikai deliberately went to Wujiao county in Zhili to meet its magistrate, Lao Naixuan (1843-1921). In 1899, Lao Naixuan presented several memorials to Zhili viceroy and the central government on the Boxer movement. Lao agreed with the analysis of these officials that the root of the Boxer movement lay in the "public indignation" at foreign aggression, but he thought that all their policies would not work. And he believed that the way of denouncing the Boxers as illegal organization, as the

¹¹⁰ *China*, No.3, 21.

foreign ministers demanded, wouldn't work either. Lao argued that these methods could not really separate the anti-foreign sentiments of the people from the Boxer movement. He suggested that the best way to eliminate the root of the movement was to treat the Boxers as a rebellious heterodox sect. Lao Naixuan argued that people were fooled by its propaganda of anti-Christianity and anti-foreignism. They did not know that the nature of the Boxers as a rebellious heterodox sect. So if the government declared its heterodox nature of the Boxers, no people would join it to violate the law? ¹¹¹ Lao pointed out that the Boxer group was a branch of the White Louts Sect; its nature was a rebellious heterodox sect. Lao stated in his report to the Zhili viceroy:

“The Boxers originated from a heterodox sect. Conspiring to rebel is its nature. Attacking the Christians is just the way that they used to agitate the public indignation and cover their evil purpose. They had distributed their members into huge areas, instigating and deluding people. Its influence has been spread over one thousand miles and their members have been over ten thousands. One man calls, thousands respond. Their purpose is not shallow.”¹¹²

In October, 1899, Lao Naixuan composed an essay, *A Examination on the Origins and Evolution of the Boxer Sect* (Yihetuan Jiaomen Yuanliu Kao), to

¹¹¹ Lao Naixuan , “Quan’an za cun” (The Collection of Boxer Documents), *Yihetuan* (The Boxers), vol.4, 431-39.

¹¹² Naixuan Lao, “Quan’an za cun” (The Collection of Boxer Documents), *Yihetuan* (The Boxers), vol.4, 468.

spread his idea.¹¹³ Lao offered six means to counterattack the Boxers. The first one was to “clarify its nature to dispel the delusion”. He stated:

“The way with which they delude the people easily is also the way with which they can be dismissed easily. Many country populaces were deluded by them because did not know its nature as a heterodox sect and were cheated by its words about invulnerability and defending themselves and their families. If having known its nature as a sect, who would join it? So once its nature is clarified, this group will be dismissed at once.”¹¹⁴

Yuan Shikai saw clearly the intension of Lao’s method. It offered a plausible reason to suppress the Boxers without any involvement of the anti-foreign sentiment. As a heterodox sect, the Boxers could be separated from the anti-foreign cause and would lose their popularity among the people. When Yuan Shikai reached his post, he immediately had Lao Naixuan’s booklet on the origins of the Boxers printed and distributed them to every village. To spread the idea, Yuan published a proclamation against the Boxers and posted it in every village. In the proclamation, Yuan denounced the Boxers as heterodox sect and warned people not to join this heterodox group. Yuan also used the six methods of Lao as his principles in handling the Boxers.

To spread the points of the proclamation to the vast illiterate populace, he had the main points of the proclamation composed into an ode. Copies of the ode

¹¹³ *Yihetuan* (The Boxers), 438.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid*, 469.

were sent to every school and the students were directed to chant the ode from time to time.

“In point of fact they are a treacherous and guileful class of persons.
These societies are formed for the purpose of gathering in money.
Outlaws from abroad seize the opportunity to join them;
They have, for a long time, unexpectedly broken out in open rebellion.
.....

In obedience to the Imperial Decree the Governor makes it clearly known to all,
So as to enable everyone to hear.
You all have mothers and fathers,
You also have brothers.
Labor and trade are possible for you,
You can till the fields and the gardens,
You all have your own duty in life,
Your village clans are prosperous and happy;
What is the use of your believing in false or heretical words?
You have, in consequence, been in trouble up to the present time.
Proclamations have been repeatedly issued;
You should have been aroused to the error of your ways a long time ago.
If you still wander in the error of your ways,
You will rush into the net of the law.
It is to be feared that your necks will not be saved,
And that your family and property will be utterly ruined.

Your aged father and mother will weep until the tears are dry;
Your brothers will weep until they are unable to utter a sound.
The evil you will have brought upon yourselves,
And your entire families will have suffered hardship.
Lay your hand on your heart, and in the night time, when all is quiet, ponder and reflect;
When you dream of the departed spirits, are you frightened or not?¹¹⁵

To enforce the policy in every village, Yuan realized that he needed the cooperation of the local gentry. Since the Boxers had a large number of followers and spread in a large region, it was impossible to control them only by military force. The force of local gentry who controlled the village must be stressed. In the ode, the role of local gentry was also emphasized. It stated:

“Shangtung is a state known for its civilization;
The Ancient customs of the town of Tsao, in the state of Lu, are still in existence.
The highest education should be taught in the schools;
The manners and customs of the people will then be pure-minded and honest.
The Gentry and retired officials should assist in leading and directing the people as to the proper course to follow.
Who would have thought it?

¹¹⁵ George Steiger, *China and the Occident: the Origin and Development of the Boxer Movement* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1966), Appendices. The Author noted that “The translation, labeled ‘proclamation, in verse of five characters, issued by Yun Shikai’, was communicated to the State Department by Mr. Conger in his dispatch no. 356, of April 12, 1900. It is to be found in the manuscript documents of the Department of State, Dispatches from China, Vol. 108.”

That corrupt and evil teaching should have been started and circulated about.”¹¹⁶

In January, 1900, a report from the Gaotang prefect caught the attention of Yuan. The prefect reported that he asked the village headmen to sign an agreement to forbid Boxer grounds in their village. Yuan highly praised his method. In his comments, Yuan wrote: “charge the village headmen to persuade the villagers not to gather together to practice boxing. It is a good way to clean the river by cleaning its origin. This handling is proper.” He ordered all local officials to follow this model. Every county magistrate was required to go to the villages in his jurisdiction to have the village headmen sign the agreement, putting the responsibilities of banning the Boxers on the shoulders of local gentry. In his proclamation, Yuan announced that, “The village headmen and constables are liable to one to three years of imprisonment if they do not report any Boxer establishment set up in their village. If the constables or any Yamen employees connive with the Boxers, they will be promptly executed.”¹¹⁷ Under the pressure, many village headmen withdrew from the movement and forbade the practicing of boxing in their villages.

Yuan also ordered the local officials to use the local militia in suppressing the Boxers. He Said: “Checking and banning the Boxers, local officials must

¹¹⁶ Ibid, Appendices.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

cooperate with local gentry, local militia, and discharged soldiers and braves and combine them together to control the Boxers. Then the Boxer leaders would be arrested one after another and their followers would be disbanded soon.”¹¹⁸ On February 28, 1900, the militia of Dong Village of Xiajin County helped Yuan’s troop to attack the Boxers. Yuan Shikai ordered an award of one hundred taels and sixth grade to any village militiaman who wounded two Boxers. In January, 1900, the militia of Guan County participated in the suppression of the Boxers and killed seven Boxers and captured one. Yuan order a reward for them.

Yuan combined the force of the government, the military, the gentry and the militia together to check the movement. In two months, the Boxer movement quieted down in Shandong. This method reduced the popularity of the Boxers among the people. In March 1900, Yuan reported to the Qing court that the situation in Shandong had come back to peace. Yuan described this method in his report to Zongli Yanmen:

“After my arrival at my post, I had already issued a Proclamation vigorously denouncing Boxer Societies, and published it throughout my jurisdiction. In obedience to the Imperial commands now received, I have, as in duty bound, again issued a trenchant proclamation, and have expressly composed an ode, in verse of five characters, to be posted from village to village. I have also commanded the local authorities to lead the way in this matter with the gentry,

¹¹⁸ Modern Chinese history section of History department of Shandong University, ed., *Shandong Yihrtuan Diaocha Ziliao Xuanbian* (Selections from survey materials on the Shandong Boxers)(Jinan: Qilu, 1980).

elders, and headmen of the towns and villages, and on all market days to expound the ode carefully and truly.”

In suppressing the Boxers, Yuan Shikai addressed the important role of the orthodoxy ideology and the cooperation of local gentry. To better understand the role of these two elements, I want to compare his methods with Zeng Guofan’s methods in the suppression of the Taiping rebellion

The Taiping rebellion broke out in 1851 from Guangxi province. The rebellion drew its inspiration from Christianity. Its leader, Hong Xiuquan (1814–64), was influenced by Christian teachings and had a series of visions. He believed that he was the son of God, and had been given a heavenly mandate to build a peaceful kingdom on earth. On January 1, 1851, Hong proclaimed his new dynasty, the *Taiping Tianguo* (Heavenly Kingdom of Great Peace). The Taiping rebellion also set up a goal against the Manchus. In order to show their anti-Manchu resolution, the Taipings wore their hair long, in contrast to the prevailing Manchu style that shaved the front part of the head while keeping a long queue in the back. The anti-Manchu stand of the Taiping rebellion won it the support of many secret societies. With fanatical religious beliefs and anti-Manchu sentiment, the Taipings soon occupied six of the richest provinces of China along Yangtze River. In 1853, they established their capital at Nanjing, which they changed to *Tianjing* (heaven capital).

The Qing imperial army, the Banner troops and the Green Standard army, went to pieces when they met the zealous revolutionaries. To counter such a crusading force, the Qing court had to depend on the Han officials and local militias. Zeng Guofan was appointed as militia commissioner to organize a volunteer force. Zeng Guofan (1811-1872) was a devoted Confucian scholar. He successfully passed the metropolitan examinations and was appointed to the Hanlin Academy. Zeng Guofan declared that the mission of the suppression campaign was to defend the Chinese cultural heritage. Zeng issued a proclamation in which he skipped altogether the issue of nationalistic and racial revolution that the Taipings made much of, but stressed their heterodox worship of Christianity. He condemned the Taipings' disruption of the Chinese way of life and Chinese cultural tradition. His proclamation against the Taiping in 1854 reads in part: "Scholars may not read the Confucian classics, for they have their so-called teachings of Jesus and the New Testament. In a single day several thousand years of Chinese ethical principles and proper human relationships, classic books, social institutions and statutes have all been completely swept away. This is not just a crisis of our Qing dynasty, but the most extraordinary crisis of all time for the Confucian teachings, which is why our Confucius and Mencius are weeping bitterly in the nether world. How can any educated person sit idly by without thinking of doing something?"¹¹⁹

¹¹⁹ Jonathan Spence, *The Search for Modern China, Documents* (New York: Norton, 1999), 145.

Zeng Guofan's proclamation of 1854 was a powerful evocation of the scholar-literati's view of the rebel, which drew a clear line between the forces of orthodox "light" and heterodox "darkness". The proclamation strongly undermined the popularity of the rebellion among the people, especially the literati.

Zeng's mission of protecting Confucianism won the support of local gentry. The Taiping concept of all men being brothers and all women sisters contradicted the Confucian idea of propriety and social hierarchy. The destruction of the temples and idols alienated the literati. When Zeng organized the provincial (Hunan) army, many of its officers were recruited by him through the network of gentry connections and they got many donations from local gentry. The orthodox Confucianism ideology and local gentry played the key role in suppressing the Taiping Rebellion. The success of Zeng Guofan offered an example to understand the method of Yuan Shikain in suppressing the Boxers.

The Boxers in Zhili Province in 1900

When the Boxer movement was put down in Shandong, it rose up in Zhili. Yu Lu was assigned as the Zhili viceroy on September 28, 1898. Yu Lu's policy to the Boxers was different from Yuan Shikai. He insisted that all boxing societies were illegal and should be banned completely. He treated the Boxers as bandits and depended on military force to enforce the banning. He made little effort to

enroll the help of Confucian ideology and the cooperation of local gentry. Less than one month after he took the post, a riot under the lead of Zhao Sanduo broke out in Guan county, the border area between Zhili and Shandong province. Yu Lu ordered the troops to suppress it immediately. After the riot was put down, he ordered the troop to stay there to patrol this region. In August, 1899, when the anti-Christian incidents broke out in Kaizhou and Puzhou, Yu Lu immediately sent troops to suppress. In November, 1899, he dispatched troops to Jingzhou to suppress the Boxers there. To the end of 1899, the troops used to suppress the Boxers consisted of over ten battalions.

In December 1899, five magistrates of Zhili presented the six points recommended by Lao Naixuan to viceroy Yulu for his approval. Although Yulu agreed to have Lao naixuan's pamphlet on the origins of the Boxers be printed and distributed to the districts where the Boxer societies were active, he did not make efforts to broadcast it and establish institutions to enforce it. When Yuan Shikai asked him if he had approved Lao's recommendations and suggested the Throne to issue a decree to suppress the Boxers, Yulu replied that the policy of suppressing the Boxers should not be published and the six points recommended

by Lao could not be used in their entirety. Therefore it would not be wise to submit them to the throne.¹²⁰

Without the help of local gentry, even a minor conflict had to be handled by the provincial army. The Boxing group in some areas was small and focused mainly on practicing boxing skills. But when it was dispersed by military force, its members usually jointed other groups in this region for protection. To May 1900, the troops of Zhili had not been enough to control the Boxers. In May, 1900, when 4 members of a Boxer group in the village of Zuo in Anping County was captured by the county magistrate, other members fled their village and asked aid from neighboring villages. In several days, the boxers gathered in Zuo village numbered over one thousand. The county magistrate hurriedly asked the provincial officials to send troops to suppress them. However, the governor had no more troops to send there because the uprising in Laishui county in which a Qing commander was killed. According to the situation, he released the arrested Boxers and withdrew the troop. On May 12, 1900, thousand of Boxers assembled in Gaolu village in Laishui County. Viceroy Yulu dispatched Zhang Lianfen and Yang Futong to suppress them. On May 22, they arrested 20 Boxers. The next day when Yang Futong and 70 soldiers went back to check the situation, they were ambushed by the Boxers and Yang Futong and several soldiers were killed. This

¹²⁰ Yulu to Yuan Shikai, *Zhidong Jiaofei Diancun* (Telegrams concerning the suppression of the Boxers in Zhili and Shandong), 50.

was the first time that a provincial level commander was killed by the Boxers. In the following days, Yu Lu sent five battalions to suppress the Boxers. To stop the troops, they began to destroy the railways and train stations. On May 29, over ten thousand Boxers occupied Zhuzhou town. The confrontation between the Boxers and governmental troops became intensified. Soon after that, the uprising in Zhili developed into the areas around Beijing. Gao Yijun stated in their memorials that: “the excessive using of force was the main reason for the eruption of the Boxers in Zhili.”¹²¹

The different policy of Yuan Shikai and Yu Lu to the Boxers directly influenced the Boxer movement in their province. Yuan denounced the Boxers as heterodox sectarians and enlisted the force of local gentry to confine the Boxers. While Yu Lu depended more on military force and got little support from the local gentry. The difference of their policy clearly embodied in their response to the throne in May. When the Boxer movement rose up in Zhili province in May, 1900, censor Zheng Binglin presented a memorial to the court. He brought up the policy of enlisting the Boxers into the militia again. The Empress Dowager ordered Zhili viceroy Yulu, and the Shandong governor Yuan Shilkai to evaluate the availability of this suggestion. Both of them opposed this method explicitly, but from different perspectives. On May 17, Yulu replied that all the Boxers were

¹²¹ *Yihetuan Dang'an Shiliao*, 88.

bandits and their skill were not authentic. If they were organized into militia, they could hardly be law-abiding, while the upright gentry would certainly refuse to take a lead in these organizations.¹²² On May 19, Yuan Shikai reported to the throne and stated explicitly that “it is completely unviable”. He pointed out that the Boxers were a heretic sect; it came from the White Lotus Sect. He used a long paragraph to describe the rituals and organizations of the Boxers. Then he concluded that “Since the ancient to today, never can heretical sectarians be used to resist enemies, nor can bandits be regard as righteous people. No matter the Boxers are society or militia, involved with the heretical skills, they would certainly cause catastrophe.”¹²³ The different policy of Yuan Shikai and Yulu led to different result.

The Boxer’s anti-foreign activities caused disturbance in Shandong and Zhili. Although the Boxers had no obvious organization and leaders, they could assemble many people in a riot in a short time. Many officials noticed that the public indignation of the people at foreign aggression boosted the movement. Yuan Shikai used the idea of Lao Naixuan and denounced the Boxers as heterodox sectarians. The slogan, “Maintain the Orthodoxy, Dispel the heterodoxy”, weakened the legitimacy of the Boxers and undermined its

¹²² Yulu’s memorial, Guangxu26/4/19 (5/17/1900), *Yihetuan dang’an shiliao*, 90-2.

¹²³ Yuan Shikai’s memorial, Guangxu 26/4/21 (5/19/1900), *Yihetuan dang’an shiliao*, 92-5.

popularity among the people. The slogan got the support of local gentry and played an important role in the suppressing of the Boxers in Shandong.

Chapter Five: Depend on “People’s Heart” (*Yi Min Xin*), Depend on “Heaven’s Will” (*Shi Tian Yi*),

The slogan, “Depend on People’s Heart, Depend on Heaven’s Will”, was stressed repeatedly by the Qing court in the imperial conferences and edicts. From June 16 to 19, 1900, when the Boxers streamed into Beijing and confronted with foreign diplomats, the Qing court held four imperial conferences continuously to discuss the crisis. Over 100 high-ranking officials, princes and dukes participated. On the conferences, “People’s Heart” (*min xin*) was stressed by some officials who supported the Boxers. On June 21, when the news reached Beijing that an allied troop of the major Powers had occupied Dagu Fort in Tianjin, the Qing court declared war on the foreign Powers. The war-declaration claimed that China would fight the Powers “depending on people’s heart and Heaven’s will”. In the following days, the Qing court issued several decrees praising the “righteousness” of the Boxers and awarding them money and rice. The slogan appeared repeatedly in these imperial decrees. In this chapter, I will explore the meaning of this slogan to the Qing court and its influence on the action of the Qing court.

Confrontation in Beijing

The anti-foreign activities of the Boxers in Shandong and Zhili alarmed foreign diplomats. Since January of 1900, foreign ministers in Beijing had already

put diplomatic and military pressure on the Qing government. They demanded the Qing government denounce the Boxers explicitly and ban them thoroughly. In April, the Powers posed a military menace to the Qing government by assembling warships outside the Dagu Fort near Tianjin. When the Boxers began to destroy railroads and telegraph lines near Beijing, the foreign ministers held an urgent meeting to discuss the situation. On the meeting, the ministers expressed their distrust of the Qing government and decided to bring more troops to secure their legations. On May 28, the ministers notified the Qing government about their decision. When their requirement was turned down by the Qing government, on May 30, the ministers send another note, stating arbitrarily that, “In view of the serious situation and the unreliability of Chinese army armed guards must be added immediatelyIf (the Qing government) refuses the requirement, the number of the guards will surely increase and serious consequences might happen to the Chinese government”.¹²⁴ From May 31 to June 2, four hundred armed soldiers entered Beijing. However, the situation in Beijing became more dangerous in the following days. Attack on foreigners increased. On June 8, the minister of Britain, Sir McDonald, sent an urgent telegram to the admirals outside the Dagu Fort, asking them to send more troops to Beijing immediately. On June 10, a troop of over 1,000 soldiers from several countries, led by British admiral Edward Seymour, set out toward Beijing. The troop increased to 2,000 in the

¹²⁴ Xiang Langxin, *The Origins of the Boxer War*, 156.

following days. On June 11, a chancellor of the Japanese embassy, Akira Sugiyama, was killed on his way to meet Seymour's troop at the *Yongding* train station by several soldiers of General Dong Fuxiang's Gansu army. The death of Sugiyama confirmed the decision of the foreign ministers to bring more troops to Beijing.

Debates on the Imperial Conferences

The Qing court held four imperial conferences continuously from June 16 to 19 to discuss the turmoil in Beijing. Over one hundred high-ranking officials, princes and dukes participated.¹²⁵ According to Yun Yuding, an official of the *Hanlin Academy* who participated in these four conferences, on the conference, Xu Jingcheng, Yuan Chang, Lishan and Lianyuan argued vehemently that the Boxers were rebellious bandits. They supported their point with the facts that the Boxers killed one government official and burned railroads and stations. They also pointed out that the magic skills of the Boxers was unauthentic and could not be relied upon to resist foreign invasion. On how to stop the expedition troops, they argued that if the Qing government could suppress the Boxers itself, the expedition troop would have no excuse to come. So they argued that the critical way to solve the crisis was to suppress the Boxers instantly. They even offered

¹²⁵ On the edict issued on June 16, it listed the names of 71 officials. *Yihetuan dang'an shiliao* (Archival materials on the Boxers), 145.

some detailed plans to carry out the suppression. They suggested the court closing Beijing and granting chief-commander Ronglu the full authority to suppress the Boxers by force.¹²⁶ However, these ideas were strongly opposed by some Manchu officials. Prince Duan argued that although these Boxers were not well trained, they were ready to fight for the country. It was indeed a gratifying surprise to see the people displaying courage and enthusiasm against the foreigners. He insisted that the Boxers were “righteous people” (*yi min*) and should not be suppressed. When a Hanlin Academy official, Liu Yongheng, suggested driving the Boxers out of Beijing, Prince Duan yelled loudly, “This is the best way to lose people’s heart.”¹²⁷ The two groups debated heatedly, but no definite resolution was achieved. On the conference, Empress Dowager Cixi stated that: “Magic power (of the Boxers) might not be relied upon, how can’t people’s heart be relied upon? Today’s China is weak to the extreme; the only thing we can depend on is people’s heart.”¹²⁸

On June 16, Duke Zailan presented a memorial to the Throne, which offered a more detailed opinion of the officials who supported the Boxers. Duke

¹²⁶ Yun Yuding, *Chongling chuanxin lu* (A True Account of the Guangxu Emperor), in *Yihetuan*, vol. 1, 45-55. Kong Xingji questioned the authenticity of his records. See kong Xiangji, *Wan Qing Shi Tan Wei* (Examinations on some topics of Late Qing history) (Chengdu: Bashu Shushe, 2001), 232-46.

¹²⁷ Yun Yuding, *Chongling chuanxin lu* (A True Account if the Guanxu emperor), in *Yihetuan*, vol.1, 45-55.

¹²⁸ *Ibid*, 48.

Zailian was a brother of Prince Duan. He was appointed by Empress Dowager Cixi on June 15 to control the order of Beijing with Yikuang, Zaiyi and Ronglu.

In the memorial, he stated:

“Although there is no evidence that the Boxers can avoid fire power, their courage and spirit of defying death can truly deter their enemies. And it is common recognized that they had never harassed common people. The only problem with them is the lack of regulation, letting some mobs involved. Therefore, if some loyal generals like Dong Fuxiang are appointed to recruit and command them, they could be valuable aid of the imperial army. Generally speaking, the Boxers should be pacified, not exterminated, and the foreigners should be strictly resisted and not be tolerated. Suppressing the Boxers will lose people’s heart but resisting the foreigners will strengthen people’s morale. The people’s heart is the Heaven’s will. The critical point lies in this.”¹²⁹

Zailan pointed out that how to deal with the Boxers would decide the fate of the dynasty. He argued that although the magic skills of the Boxers might be unreliable, their courage and enthusiasm against foreigners was true. The Boxers represented the morale of the people against foreigners. Therefore, suppressing the Boxers would lose the support of the people to the government. Now China was facing the threat of the Powers, and it would be a disaster for the Qing dynasty to lose the support of the people. Like the arguments of Empress Dowager Cixi and Prince Duan on the conference, Duke Zailan emphasized the importance the “people’s heart” to the Qing dynasty.

¹²⁹ *Yihetuan dang’an shiliao* (Archival Materials on the Boxers), 146.

As to the attitude of the Manchu officials to the Boxers on the imperial conferences, Grand Councilor Ronglu left some descriptions. Ronglu (1834-1903) was a Grand Councilor, the Northern Commissioner, and the commander of the *Wuwei Army* (Martial Guards Army), a modernized army with over 80,000 soldiers.¹³⁰ As the most powerful official in the Qing government, he was blamed by many provincial officials for the turmoil in Beijing. For example, when the news of the disturbance in Beijing came to the South, the Governor of Anhui province, Wang Zhichun, sent a telegram to Li Hongzhang, asking for his opinion. Li replied: “I knew the court would not use force in the suppression, so it is no use for more suggestions. ... Ronglu controls tens of thousand of troops and should not let the situation get out of hand. The conservatives dominate the court and the Empress supports them, so the disaster is unavoidable. What can we do?”¹³¹

Ronglu wrote letters to southern viceroys and governors to explain the situation in Beijing. In a letter to Shandong governor Yuan Shikai, Ronglu wrote: “All the princes, dukes and ministers were holding the same opinion in the imperial conference. As you may have heard of this, so I need not dwell on it. Moreover, half of the entourage of Their Majesties and the princes belong to the

¹³⁰ This army was established after the Sino-Japanese war of 1895. With the support of Empress Dowager Cixi, Ronglu reorganized the former *Beiyang Army* into this new army. Ronglu regularized its training, equipment and payment. He also invited Germans to direct the training. The *Wuwei Army* was a modernized army with about 80,000 soldiers.

¹³¹ *Li Hongzhang Quanji, Dianbao*(The whole collection of Li Hongzhang, telegraph), vol. 1, 933.

Boxer societies, as do the majority of the Manchu and Chinese troops. They swarm in the streets of the capital like locusts, several tens of thousands of them, and it is extremely difficult to reestablish order. Even though there is the wisdom of Their Majesties, it is hard to turn the majority. If Heaven decrees it, what can we do?”¹³² He described the views of the princes in a letter to his uncle, Sichuan viceroy Kuijun, that the princes shouted: “We are the closest members of the royal family..... we can not hand over the empire to the foreigners without a fight!” They called Ronglu a coward.¹³³

Yuan Chang, a vice-minister of the Zongli Yanmen, participated in the conferences. He strongly opposed the Boxers and kept a close relationship with southern viceroys. He described the situations of the imperial conferences in his letter to Zhang Zhidong on June 28: “The matter went wrong with the hesitation and poor preparation of the Zhili viceroy, the garrison commanders, local officials of *Shuntian* prefecture and the metropolitan police commanders. From June 13 on, the Boxers erupted and made trouble in the city. The royal family members and the imperial tutors insisted on using the Boxers to destroy the foreigners. They silenced Ronglu and Prince Qing and spread rumors that when the Boxers came into the city, the first four people they would kill were Ronglu, Price Qing,

¹³² *Yihetuan* (The Boxers), 405-6.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

Chongli and Zhuyun. So all of them dared not open their mouths and the war declaration edict was announced.”¹³⁴

Declaring War on Foreign Powers

The Empress Dowager Cixi tried to restore the order of Beijing; however, She soon realized that it was impossible to achieve depending on the troops in Beijing. On June 13, she issued a decree that stated: “Recently the Boxer bandits caused unrest in the capital region and disturbed the capital. Several decrees have been issued, but the burning and killing continued. From ancient times to today, is there ever a country to defend itself depending on bandits? These bandits must be exterminated immediately with no more tolerance. Now order General Song Qing to command Ma Yukun to run to Beijing with his troop immediately and exterminate the Boxers along the roads.”¹³⁵ On June 14 and 15, the Qing court ordered the security officials of Beijing to restore order of the city.¹³⁶ However, all these efforts were failed.

Empress Dowager Cixi decided to use armies from outside Beijing to carry out this task. On June 13, she ordered general Song Qing to bring his troop

¹³⁴ Kong Xiangji, *Wan Qing Shi Tan Wei* (Some examination on Late Qing history) (Chengdu: Bashu Shushe, 2001), 250-51.

¹³⁵ *Yihetuan dang'an shiliao* (Archival materials on the Boxers), 132-33.

¹³⁶ *Ibid*, 137-40.

to Beijing from the Shanhai Pass; and on June 15, she ordered Yuan Shikai to Beijing with his troops from Shangdong. At the same time, she tried to solve the crisis by diplomatic means. On June 15, she ordered Li Hongzhang, the most experienced and respected diplomat of China, to Beijing. On June 16, ministers of the Zongli Yamen, Xu Jingcheng and Natong, were dispatched to persuade the foreign troops to return to Tianjin.¹³⁷ On June 17, Qing court sent Lianyuan, Lishan and Xu Yongyi to the American legation for an interview with Mr. Conger, giving him assurance that every means would be devised to give full and adequate protection to the legations and to all foreigners.¹³⁸ Grand Councilor Ronglu was ordered to protect foreign legations. However, no agreement was achieved.

While the Qing court was managing to control the situation, Seymour's troop had already reached *Langfang*, 60 miles from Beijing. Fearing that the foreign force would control Beijing, the Qing court ordered Zhili Viceroy Yulu to stop Seymour's troop by all means. On June 13, Qing troop had a fight with the expedition troop and cut off its communication with the navy outside Tianjin. To rescue Seymour's troop, the navy commanders planned to seize the Dagu Fort. On June 16, an ultimatum was sent to the commander of the Dagu Fort and viceroy Yulu, demanding the surrender of the fort in 24 hours. On June 17, the allied

¹³⁷Yun Yuding, *Chongling chuanxin lu* (A true account of the Guangxu Emperor). In *Yihetuan*, vol.1, 45-55.

¹³⁸ Foreign Relations of the United States, 1900, 152-53.

troop occupied the Dagu Fort. When the Qing court received the report of Yulu on the ultimatum, the Qing court sent a note to the ministers, demanding them to leave Beijing within 24 hours.¹³⁹ On June 21, the Qing court received the report of Yulu and learned that the foreign troops had occupied the Dagu Fort and attacked Tianjin. The Qing court realized that war was unavoidable and on the same day, the Qing court issued an edict, declaring war on the Powers.

This edict is an important document for us to learn the policy of the Qing court to the foreign Powers and the Boxers. It publicly expressed its stand in the war. The declaration first blamed the foreigners for initiating the hostilities: “For the past thirty years they have taken advantage of China’s forbearance to encroach on China’s territory, trample on the Chinese people and demand China’s wealth. Every concession made by China only heightened their reliance on violence. They oppressed peaceful citizens and insulted our gods and religious leaders. Their action provoked a burning fury with the people, hence the burning of chapels and slaughter of converts by patriotic warriors.” Then the declaration pointed out the direct reason of the war: “A dispatch was yesterday sent by George Du Chaylard, calling us to turn over the Dagu Fort to them, otherwise they would be taken by force. These threats only serve to reveal their aggressive intentions. In all matters relating to international intercourse, we have never been wanting in civility. But

¹³⁹ Diplomatic notice on GX26/5/23 (6/19/1900), *Yihetuan dang an shiliao* (Archival Materials on the Boxers), 152.

while styling themselves as ‘civilized states’ they continue to act with complete disregard to what is right, depending solely on their military force.”

The declaration praised the resistance of the “righteous soldiers” to this aggression and expressed the resolution to take the challenge of the Powers.

“I have now reigned for nearly 30 years and have treated the people as children, and the people in return have treated me as their divinity. In the midst of our reign we have been the recipients of the gracious favor of the Dowager Empress. Furthermore, our ancestors have come to our aid, the gods have answered our call, and never has there been so universal manifestation of loyalty and patriotism. With tears have I announced war in the ancestral shrines. Better to enter the struggle and do our utmost than seek some measures of self-preservation involving eternal disgrace. All our officials, high and low, are of one mind, and there have assembled without official summons several hundred thousand patriotic soldiers (“Boxers”). Even children are carrying spears in the service of the state. Those others [foreigner] rely on devious schemes, our trust is in Heaven’s will (*tian li*). They depend on violence, we on people’s hearts (*min xin*). Not to speak of the righteousness of our course, our provinces number more than twenty, our people over 400, 000,000. It will not be difficult to vindicate the dignity of our country.

We conclude this decree by promising heavy rewards to those who distinguish themselves in battle or subscribe fund, and threatening punishment to those who show cowardice or act treacherously.”¹⁴⁰

Like the arguments on the imperial conference, the edict addressed more on the morale of the people than strategies of fighting against the foreign powers.

The edict stated: “All our officials, high and low, are of one mind, and there have

¹⁴⁰ *Yihetuan dang’an shiliao* (Archival materials on the Boxers), 162. English Translation from *Sources in Chinese History*. Edited by David, G. Atwill and Yurong Y. Atwill (London: Prentice Hall, 2009), 106.

assembled without official summons several hundred thousand patriotic soldiers (“Boxers”). Even children are carrying spears in the service of the state..... Not to speak of the righteousness of our course, our provinces number more than twenty, our people over 400, 000,000. It will not be difficult to vindicate the dignity of our country.” The real audiences of the edict were the Chinese people rather than the foreigners. Actually, the edict was not delivered to the governments of the Powers. It was only one of the edicts to the provincial officials.

On the same day, the Empress Dowager issued an imperial decree to praise the Boxers: “The Boxers who helped the troops so much in these actions are men of the people; with them, the state need not use a soldier nor spend a dollar. Even the little children wielded arms in defense of their altars and fields. It is the benevolence our ancestors and the protection of our gods and sages that the myriads of the people are actuated by one ideal and righteousness.”¹⁴¹ On July 6, Empress Dowager Cixi issued an edict to award the Boxers 100,000 tael of silver and rice. The edict stated: “This time, the Boxers in northern provinces take the duty of protecting the country and driving off the foreigners in one mind. It is out

¹⁴¹ *Yihetuan dang'an shiliao* (Archival materials on the Boxers), 162. This edict, in substantially the same form, is reported from several sources; the above translation is taken from the *British Blue Book, China No.1 (1901)*, enclosure in document no.289.

of my expectation. I am very happy to see this.”¹⁴² These two edicts express the same idea as the war-declaration. They declared the righteousness of the war against foreign aggression and praised the patriotic spirit of the Boxers.

Depend on “People’s Heart”, Depend on “Heaven’s Will

“People’s Heart” and “Heaven’s Will” were addressed repeatedly in the imperial conferences, the war-declaration edict and the following edicts. In the war-declaration, the Qing court explicitly announced that it depend on “people’s heart”, depend on “heaven’s will” to fight against the foreign Powers. The edict on the same day of war-declaration stated that “It is the benevolence our ancestors and the protection of our gods and sages that the myriads of the people are actuated by one ideal and righteousness.”¹⁴³ Why was the slogan repeatedly emphasized by the Qing court at this time? What was its influence on the action of the Qing court?

“Heaven’s Will” and “People’s Heart” were traditional Chinese ideologies about the legitimacy of rulers.¹⁴⁴ “Heaven” (*tian*) was worshiped by the Chinese as the supreme power which predetermined all events in the universe, from great

¹⁴² *Yihetuan* (The Boxers), vol.4, 132

¹⁴³ *Yihetuan dang’an shiliao* (Archival materials on the Boxers), 162

¹⁴⁴ C.K. Yang, *Religion in Chinese Society: A Study of Contemporary Social Functions of Religion and Some of Their Historical Factors* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961), chapter IV.

affairs of state to humble occurrences in individual's life. The concept of "Mandate of Heaven" (*tian ming*) stemmed from the worship of Heaven and became the most important political theory concerning the legitimacy of rulers. According to this theory, an emperor receives his authority to rule from Heaven. The Chinese emperor was called "Son of Heaven" (*tian zi*). The emperor claimed that he ruled the empire according to the mandate of Heaven. This idea of "Mandate of Heaven" addressed the divinity of the emperor's power. However, unlike Western "Divine Right of Kings", the "Mandate of Heaven" is not permanent. Heaven will withdraw its mandate from an emperor for his misconducts and gives it to those who could rule better. The emperor ruled only as long as he was virtuous and worked for the welfare of his people. People's interest and public opinion were interpreted as the indications of "Heaven's will". In summary, "Heaven's will" and "People's heart" represented the legitimacy of an emperor.

The Qing dynasty (1644-1911) was established in 1644 by the Manchus, an ethnic group from the northeast of China. As an alien ethnic group to rule China, the Qing court took many measures to legitimize its rule of China. One of the measures that the Qing dynasty took was claiming the Mandate of Heaven. From the founding of the Qing dynasty in 1644, the coronation of each successive emperor until 1909 was accompanied by the most sumptuous sacrifices

to Heaven. Such sacrifices served as a symbol of receiving the “Mandate of Heaven” to rule the empire.

To the mid-nineteenth century, after over two hundred years of Manchu’s rule over China, the intension between the Manchus and Han Chinese had been mitigated.¹⁴⁵ However, the distinction between Han Chinese and the Manchus was still obvious and played an important role in the political life of the dynasty.¹⁴⁶ The Manchus were segregated from Han Chinese administratively, occupationally, residentially and socially. All Manchus were organized in the Banner system. They were registered as “banner people” (*qi ren*), whereas the Han Chinese were registered as “civilians”. These classifications were hereditary and essentially permanent.

After the mid-nineteenth century, foreign aggression and internal rebellions challenged the rule of the Manchu Qing dynasty. The Opium War (1840--42) and the Second Opium Wars (1857--60) undermined the sovereignty of the Qing dynasty. In 1851, the Taiping rebellion rose up as a nationalistic-racial revolution against the alien Manchu rule. In order to show their anti-Manchu resolution, the Taipings wore their hair long, in contrast to the prevailing

¹⁴⁵ Mary Wright, *The Last Stand of Chinese Conservatism: The T’ung-Chih Restoration, 1862-1874* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962), 53.

¹⁴⁶ Edward Rhords, *Manchu & Han: Ethnic Relations and Political Power in Late Qing and Early Republican China, 1861-1928* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000), 10.

Manchu style that shaved the front part of the head while keeping a long queue in the back. Hence they were known as the “long-hair banditti” or simply “long hair”. The anti-Manchu stand of the Taiping rebellion won it the support of many people. Secret societies extended them considerable help. The Taiping rebellion, lasted 15 years and covered half China, highlighted the conflicts between the Manchus and the Han Chinese and seriously damaged the rule of the Qing dynasty.

To counterattack the Taiping rebellion, the Qing imperial court repeatedly claimed its Mandate of Heaven. At the height of the rebellion, edict after edict was issued by the emperor to enlist the help of the gods to suppress the rebels. From 1851-1854, as the Taiping rebellion ran rampant over half the empire, Emperor Xianfeng offered sacrifices to Heaven nine times, pleading for Heaven’s help in suppressing the rebellion. And in many times, he blamed the rebellion for all the floods, droughts, and unseasonable weather that caused agricultural damage in different parts of the country. When at last the rebel capital of Nanjing was recaptured in 1864, there was a burst of religious activities, including the impressive imperial sacrifice to Heaven and Earth, the supplication to the spirits of the imperial ancestors, and the numerous sacrifices to local deities, all offering thanks for divine assistance in the great achievement. An edict from Emperor Tongzhi stated that the imperial government had launched its campaign in the name of Heaven, and that the success in recapturing the city of Nanjing was “due solely to favored protection from Heaven and affection from the spirits of the sage

ancestors.” The emphasis on the divine help reflected the inability of the Qing dynasty to suppress the rebellion by its military force.

The defeat of China in the Sino-Japanese war further weakened the authority of the Qing dynasty. The defeat of China by a small Asian country demonstrated the inability of the Qing government to cope with the challenge of the times. In 1898, a political and institutional reform was carried out by Emperor Guangxu with the help of some progressive scholar-gentry (reformers). However, the radical reform was strongly opposed by some conservative officials as a challenge to the rule of the Qing dynasty and was put down by Empress Dowager Cixi. Facing exacerbating foreign aggression, the Qing government had to find a way to justify its rule. Unless the Manchu rulers could evolve some means by which to put an end of the continued aggressions of the Western powers, the dynasty’s “Mandate from Heaven” would be regarded as having become exhausted.

Facing the challenges from both exterior and interior, the action of the Boxers got the sympathy of some Manchu officials. The most popular slogan of the Boxers was “Support the Qing, Destroy the foreign”. Anti-foreignism was the main characters of the Boxers. Anti-foreign sentiment existed among the people since the 1840s. However, anti-foreign activities of the populace were regarded by the Qing government as banditry. The constant anti-Christian incidents since

the 1860s were the main conflict between the Qing government and Western Powers. The Qing court denounced the anti-foreign activities as causing trouble to the state. However, facing the challenges after 1898, anti-foreign sentiments caused the sympathy of some Manchu officials. They praised the Boxers as “Righteous people” and called their anti-foreign activities as the expression of “people’s heart”.

The attitude of the Manchu officials to the Boxers was well embodied in their role in the entering of the Boxers into Beijing. The entering of the Boxers into Beijing was a critical step in the development of the Boxer event. The attacks on the Christians in Zhili were still conflicts between the Boxers and the Christians. However, when the Boxers entered Beijing in a large number and confronted the foreign diplomats, the event evolved into a conflict with all foreign Powers. So the Boxers’ entering into Beijing became the turning point of the Boxer movement. From descriptions of witnesses, the Boxers entered the city under the acquiescence of the guards. There were no records of battles between the city guards and the Boxers. Beijing, as the capital of the Qing dynasty, was well guarded. The city was surrounded by tall and solid walls and all gates were guarded by soldiers. The garrison soldiers and metropolitan policemen in Beijing were about 130,000.¹⁴⁷ So it was almost impossible for the Boxers with simple

¹⁴⁷ Edward Rhords, *Manchu and Han: Ethnic Relations and Political Power in Late Qing and Early Republican China, 1861-1928* (University of Washington Press, 2000), 27.

weapons to force their way into the city.



According to the eyewitness records, the Boxers' entering into Beijing had got the acquiescence of some Manchu officials. A junior official in Beijing, Zhongfang, recorded: "On June 12, the Boxer groups coming into the city were more than ten a day. Some of them consisted of twenty to thirty people, some of forty to fifty. Many of them were young teenagers and looked like laborers in the field. All of them wore red turbans on their heads with the plate of the God of Ganggong hiding in it, and with red jackets on top of their shirts and red leg wrappings. Their weapons were diverse, including spears, knives, swords and daggers. Although their weapons were various, their clothes looked alike. Some people reached the city at night after the closing of the gates and called the guards

to let them in. The guards did not stop them, opening the gates and letting them in. All these things were seen with my own eyes. The talk that the Boxers used magic skills to go through the walls of the city was a baseless rumor. No such thing happened.”¹⁴⁸ Chai E recorded: “Thousands of Boxers came into Beijing. When some gate guards refused to let them enter and quarreled with them, one man arrived with the order of Duke Zailan and ordered the guards to open the gate. The guards had to give in. Once the news spread, people coming into the city were more than one thousand every day.”¹⁴⁹ Hu Sijing described the entering of the Boxers into Beijing like this: “In May and June, the bandits in Beijing got rampant. The people coming from the east of Beijing called themselves the Wuqing Boxers and Xianghe Boxers and those from the south call themselves Gu’an Boxers and Yongqing Boxers. Some Boxers came with flags with the name of their village or town on it. Playing drums and gongs like the performances in local festival celebrations, people coming into the city are uncountable.”¹⁵⁰ For the fact that all military force in Beijing was controlled by Manchu officials, it was reasonable to argue that the entering of the Boxer into Beijing had got their acquiescence.

¹⁴⁸ Zhongfang, *Gengzi jishi* (A record of the events of 1900). In *Gengzi Jishi* (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1978), 12.

¹⁴⁹ *Yihetuan* (The Boxers), vol.1, 306.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 168

In Beijing, the anti-foreign actions of the Boxers got the support of many Manchu officials. The princes and nobles set up Boxer units and invited the Boxers to their residences and burned incense to the Boxers' gods. Prince Duan, a Grand Councilor, established a Boxer altar in the vacant land of his palace ground. Prince Zailan permitted Captain Wenshun and a hundred Boxers to live in his garden and the elder Princess Yizhun allowed two hundred Boxers to camp at her palace. The son of Jingshan, a retired Manchu official, made himself a chief of a group of Boxers. Ronglu described the situation in his letter to Yuan Shikai, "Everyone from princes, ministers down to the common people joined the Boxers".¹⁵¹

The war-declaring edict highly praised the patriotic spirit of the Boxers. It stated that "There have assembled without official summons several hundred thousand patriotic soldiers. Even children are carrying spears in the service of the state. Those others [foreigner] rely on devious schemes, our trust is in Heaven's will (*tian li*). They depend on violence, we on people's hearts (*min xin*).” On the same day, the Empress Dowager issued an imperial decree to praise the Boxers: "The Boxers who helped the troops so much in these actions are men of the people; with them, the State need not use a soldier nor spend a dollar. Even the little children wielded arms in defense of their altars and fields. It is the

¹⁵¹ *Rong Wenzhonggong ji* (Collected Works of Rong Lu), in *Yihetuan*, vol.4.

benevolence our ancestors and the protection of our gods and sages that the myriads of the people are actuated by one ideal and righteousness.”¹⁵²



Child Boxer. From *Yihetuan*, vol.1

The zealous anti-foreign sentiment of the Boxers made some Manchu officials believe that the Boxers could be used to resist the foreign troops. On

¹⁵² *Yihetuan dang'an shiliao* (Archival materials on the Boxers), 162. This edict, in substantially the same form, is reported from several sources; the above translation is taken from the *British Blue Book, China No.1 (1901)*, enclosure in document no.289.

June 23, the Qing court appointed Gangyi and Prince Zhuang to take charge of the Boxer force. They established a registration system to enlist the Boxers at the Prince's Household Office. The registered Boxers were called "Approved Boxer Militia" (*feng zhi yi he tuan*). The Qing court published "regulations for Boxer militia," requiring the Boxers and the army to cooperate as if they were one family. Members of the Metropolitan Banners joined forces with the Boxers to attack the Catholic cathedral and besiege the legation quarters. The regulation included 10 items. The first item stated that "the Boxers are following the mission of Heaven and the teaching of Buddha to kill the foreigners and exterminate the Christians, in order to protect the country and safeguard the good people. (The Boxers) should unite in righteousness and work in one mind to achieve this supreme end."¹⁵³

¹⁵³ *Yihetuan shiliao* (Historical Materials on the Boxers), 3.



Boxers' Placard. Courtesy of the Chinese Historical Museum, Beijing¹⁵⁴



Regulations for Boxer Militia¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁴ *Yihetuan shiliao* (Historical materials on the Boxers), ii.

Not only the anti-foreign stand of the Boxers got the sympathy of some Manchu official, but also their anti-reform stand did. The Boxers expressed their hatred to all people associated with the foreigners. In the eyes of the Boxers, the reform governors and the reformers were “disloyal subjects” and “Chinese traitors”(han jian), who followed the foreigners and destroyed the peace of traditional life. Li Hongzhang, the most important leader of the Self-strengthening movement, was called a traitor after he signed the humiliating treaty with Japan. In the Boxer movement, there was a widespread rumor that Li’s nephew was the son-in-law of Japanese emperor and Li Hongzhang and his nephew were conspiring to sale the country to Japan.¹⁵⁶ The Boxers called these reformers the “Second Hair” (*Er Maozi*), because they were the followers of the foreigners who had different hair styles from the Chinese. Since the hair-style was an important political sign of obeying the rule of the Manchu dynasty, the name of “Second hair” meant disloyal to the Qing dynasty. In the Boxer movement, rumors spread that Kang Youwei was guiding foreign troops to Beijing to rescue the Guangxu emperor. In the movement, the Boxers vowed to kill “one dragon, two tigers and three hundred lambs”(yi long, er hu, san bai yang).¹⁵⁷ The dragon signified

¹⁵⁵ This Document preserved in the Institute of Modern Chinese History of Chinese Academy of Socials Science. The document was printed. It was issued in July,1900. The regulation was mentioned in the memorial of Zaixun on July 28, 1900.

¹⁵⁶ *Yihetuan shiliao* (Historical Materials on the Boxers), 4.

¹⁵⁷ Lu Yao ed., *Yihetuan yundong* (The Boxer movement)(Chengdu, 1985), 348.

Emperor Guanxu and the two tigers referred to Li Hongzhang and Yuan Shikai, and the three hundred lambs (yang- the same pronunciation with “the foreign”) referred to the reformers. A poster, *God has seven angers*, expressed the hatred of the Boxers to the provincial officials and the reformers.

First anger at the Prince Qing, who converted to Christianity;

Second anger at the wicked Yuan (Shikai);

Third anger at Li Hongzhan, who betrayed the country,

Fourth anger at Yu (lu), who was disloyal;

Fifth anger at commander Nie (Shi cheng), who had a bad reputation after death

Sixth anger at the Preserve-country Society, who would be beheaded and go to hell soon.

Seven anger at the people who should die, the double-moon fall would be a catastrophe.¹⁵⁸

The hatred of the Boxers to reform provincial officials and the reformers got the sympathy of some conservatives in the Qing court. They saw the reform governors and the reformers as the people who wanted to overthrow the rule of the Qing dynasty. Now the Boxers’ opposition to the Han officials and reformers proved that the Qing court still got the support of the people. Even Empress Dowager Cixi admitted in her edict that it was out of her expectation. The

¹⁵⁸ *Yihetuan shiliao* (Historical Materials on the Boxers), 11.

Manchu official attributed the support of the people to the blessing of the gods and ancestors. The edict on June 21 stated that “It is the benevolence our ancestors and the protection of our gods and sages that the myriads of the people are actuated by one ideal and righteousness.”

Facing the external and internal challenges, the Qing court had to take measures to justify its rule. “People’s heart” and “Heaven’s will” represented the most important principle of the traditional order. Therefore emphasizing them was addressing the legitimacy of the Qing dynasty. Since the People’s heart is the Heaven’s Will, recognizing the righteousness of the Boxers is not only fit the public opinion of the people but also fit the will of the gods. Therefore, recognizing the righteousness of the Boxers and declaring war on the Powers should be considered as the means of the Qing court to emphasize its legitimacy.

Chapter Six: United in Righteousness (*Yi He*)

In July and August, 1900, the Qing court recognized the righteousness of the Boxers and resisted the Allied troops. However, the viceroys and governors of Southeastern provinces ignored the war-declaration of the Qing court and made a peace agreement with foreign Powers. They criticized the Qing court for believing in the magic power of the Boxers and causing the conflict with the Powers. They required the Qing court to protect foreign ministers and exterminate the Boxers. At the same time, the reformers denounced the Qing court as a reactionary government and carried out a revolt against the Qing court in South China. They tried to take advantage of the war in the North to overthrow the Qing authority in the South. The action of provincial officials and reformers impacted the policy of the Qing court to the Boxers. So to understand how the Boxer uprising with their supernatural rituals evolved into a conflict between China and all Western Powers, the relationship between the major social groups should be examined.

Southeastern Provincial Official and the Qing Court

Since May, 1900, the political turmoil in Beijing had caught the attention of the viceroys and governors of southeastern provinces. They tried to persuade the Qing court to suppress the Boxers strictly. On May 31, when the

Boxers killed colonel Yang Futang and started to attack the railroad near Beijing, Zhang Zhidong, the viceroy of Hunan and Hubei provinces, telegraphed the Qing court, suggesting strict suppression to the Boxers. He stated:

“These bandits confronted the governmental army, killed a governmental official, disturbed the capital and destroyed the railroads... Their activity is actually a rebellion in disguise of anti-Christianity and their intention is to cause trouble to the state. The railroads have nothing to do with the Christians, so it is clear that the Boxers are bandits, not law-abiding people. If they are not suppressed immediately, the Boxers in Henan and Shandong provinces will follow up. Then it will be harder to control.”¹⁵⁹

In this telegram, Zhang stated clearly that the Boxers were rebels. He pointed out that the Boxers killed government officials, destroyed railroads and disturbed the capital. All these actions proved that the Boxers were rebels. On June 8, the viceroy of Jiangsu and Jiangxi, Liu Kunyi, telegraphed the Qing court, expressing the same opinion. He pointed out that the Boxers were rebels and should be suppressed immediately. He further pointed out that the foreign gunboats had already gathered near the coast; once they intervened with force, the situation would be more dangerous.¹⁶⁰

In early June, the viceroys continually urged the Qing court to suppress the Boxers. They believed that the court was confused by the Boxers' pro-Qing

¹⁵⁹ Zhang Zhidong telegram on Guangxu 26/5/4 (5/31/1900), *Yihetuan dang'an shiliao* (Archival materials on the Boxers), 112.

¹⁶⁰ Liu Kunyi telegram on Guangxu 26/5/12 (6/8/1900), *Yihetuan dang'an shiliao* (Archival materials on the Boxers), 121.

slogan and their magic skills. So in the following telegrams they emphasized that the Boxers were rebellious heterodox sectarians and their magic skills were undependable. On June 15, Liu Kunyi and Zhang Zhidong sent a joint memorial to the Qing court. They stated that: “Never can heterodox skills resist enemies, nor can mobs protect the country. If the foreign troops penetrate into the inland and act violently, if bandits of the secret societies rise in the various provinces, the situation would become hopeless.”¹⁶¹ On June 20, a joint memorial of 8 viceroys and governors was presented to Beijing. It stated that “No government since the beginning of history can rule a country depending on the rebels who violate laws and kill people, nor can a country preserve itself when it fights six to seven Powers at a time and for no good reason.”¹⁶² They urged the Qing court to suppress the Boxers immediately.

Besides persuading the Qing court to suppress the Boxers and stop the hostility with the Powers, the southern provincial officials tried to arrange an agreement with the Powers to avoid conflicts in their jurisdiction. In June, when the news of the Boxer movement in Beijing came to the South, the situation in the Southern provinces became intense too. Some secret societies were stimulated by the news and began to act. And the foreigners in this region (much more than that

¹⁶¹ *Yihetuan* (The Boxers), vol.3, 327.

¹⁶² *Yihetuan* (The Boxers), vol.3, 330.

in the north) were alarmed and took actions to secure their lives and property. On June 15, the British government, through its embassy at Shanghai, notified Zhang Zhidong and Liu Kunyi that British gunboats would sail along the Yangzi River to help them to suppress the bandits.¹⁶³ The viceroys of the southeastern provinces intensified their efforts to prevent disturbance in this region. Troops were dispatched to ensure the security of trade ports and Christian Churches along the Yangzi River.

To the middle of June, the war in the North seemed unavoidable. Liu Kunyi and Zhang Zhidong hoped to arrange a peace agreement with the Powers. They sent representatives to Shanghai to negotiate with foreign diplomats there. When the news of the battle at Dagu Fort came to the south on June 19, they quickened their step. On June 25, Zhang Zhidong and Liu Kunyi appointed Yu Lianyuan, the Shanghai prefect, and Sheng Xuanhai, director of Railways and Telegraphs, as the representatives to negotiate with the foreign diplomats in Shanghai.

When the negotiation was going on, the edict of war declaration reached Shanghai on June 28. The edict ordered the viceroys to prepare for the war immediately and send troops and supplies to Beijing. What should the viceroys do with the edict? They did not want to have a war with the Powers, and they dared

¹⁶³ *Parliamentary papers. China, No.3* (1900).

not to disobey the edict openly. Li Hongzhang first broke the deadlock. He called the edict a “mock order” (*luan ming*), an illegitimate order issued without proper authorization of the throne. His idea was soon accepted by other southeastern viceroys and governors. They collectively refused to recognize the validity of the edict and suppressed it from the public. Zhang Zhidong twisted the meaning of the edict on June 20 that “All governors should be united to protect their territories” to that “They should cooperate to suppress the Boxers and protect the foreigners”.

To avoid conflict with foreign force in this region, Zhang and Liu quickened their negotiation and reached an informal agreement with foreign diplomats in Shanghai on June 30. In the agreement, they as the highest authorities of their provinces would protect foreign lives and property and suppress the Boxers within their jurisdictions, while the foreign Powers would refrain from sending troops into this region. With this agreement, Chinese officials would collaborate with foreign Powers to maintain law and order in this region. Li Hongzhang, viceroy of Guangdong and Guangxi, Yuan Shikai, governor of Shandong, and the governors of Fujian and Zhejiang subscribed to this agreement. Hence all the southeastern provinces were exempt from the Boxers’ disturbance and foreign invasion. The viceroys and governors’ refusal to the war-declaring edict and signing agreement with the Powers were a *de facto* independence of these provinces from the Qing court.

To reply the accusation of the southeastern viceroys, the Qing court tried to explain its policy. On June 26, five days after the declaration of war, the Qing court sent an edict to all southern provincial officials. The edict admitted that the opinion of the viceroys about avoiding conflicts with the Powers was “right thought for the country”; however, it rebutted the accusation of the southeastern viceroys and governors that the Qing court supported the Boxers and caused conflict with the Powers. The edict explained the urgent situation in Beijing, “In several days, the Boxers had run allover the capital, its member were no less than 100,000. The Boxers are found everywhere, from the abodes of soldiers and common people to the mansions of princes and dukes. They all claimed the hatred of the Christians and would fight them to the end. So to suppress them by force would lead to calamities right near us and the people are plunged into an abyss of misery. So measures have to be taken according to the situation and try to rescue the crisis gradually.” Then the edict concluded that

“The statement in your memorials that the court believed in the magic power of the Boxers to protect the country did not consider the extremely difficult situation of the court. If your viceroys considered the urgency of the internal change, you must be too worried to eat and sleep and must work harder to help. How could you make this kind of prejudicial statement? It is the coincidence of the heavenly occasion and the human affairs that make the war inevitable. Your viceroys should has no more hesitation and prepare armies and supplies immediately to protect the territory. If there is any careless mistake, you will hold responsible.”¹⁶⁴

¹⁶⁴ Imperial edict on Guangxu 26/5/30 (6/26/1900), *Yihetuan dang an shiliao* (Archival materials on the Boxers), 178.

The edict expressed the view of the Qing court to the southern provincial officials. It blamed the provincial officials for without considering the difficulties of the Qing court. It pointed out that the anti-foreign activities of the Boxers were supported by many people in Beijing, so it was hard to suppress them in a short time. And the edict emphasized that the Powers started the war. At the end of edict, the Qing court ordered the provincial officials to prepare for the war.

Southeastern viceroys and governors tried to keep neutral in the war. They refused or delayed the implementation of the edicts from the Qing court. During the war, there was no material and troops being sent from the South to Beijing. On July 3 and 6, the Qing court twice ordered Li Hongzhang to come to Beijing to negotiate with the Powers. On July 8, the court appointed Li as viceroy of Zhili and ordered him to Beijing immediately. However, Li delayed his trip to the North with excuses. He wanted to wait for the best time. On July 14, foreign troops took Tianjin and prepared to advance toward Beijing. On the same day, thirteen southeastern viceroys and governors collectively presented a memorial to the Qing court, urging the court to suppress the Boxers and protect the foreigners.

On August 14, the allied army entered Beijing and released the siege of the legations. On the morning of August 15, the Empress Dowager and the Emperor fled out of Beijing in the clothes of common people. Emperor Guangxu had actually wanted to remain in Beijing to negotiate a peace with the Powers and

restore his authority, but Empress Dowager Cixi would not let him stay. She ordered, at the last minute of her departure, to throw the emperor's favorite consort, who suggested him to stay, into a well.

On August 20, 1900, Emperor Guangxu issued a decree blaming himself for the Boxer catastrophe. But actually, the whole decree blamed the provincial governors for this disaster. The decree pointed out that the disaster was caused by the weakness of China and the weakness of China was due to the selfishness of the officials. The local officials cared more about their own benefits than the interest of the whole country. The decree expressed the view of the Qing court to the action of the southeastern viceroys and governors during the war.

The Reformers and Qing Court

At the beginning of 1900, the reformers paid attention to the Boxers because of the anti-Christian incidents.¹⁶⁵ They believed that the anti-foreign activities of the Boxers could not help the country but only caused trouble to the state. They advocated improving the relationship between the Christians and the non-Christian to avoid disputes. In April and May, when the Boxer uprising developed into the areas near Beijing, the reformers began to pay more attention to the movement. They worried that the action of the Boxers would lead to the

¹⁶⁵ "On improving the relation between the Christians and the Commoners to avoid disputes" *Shanghai News* (Shen Bao), January 6, 1900.

intervention of the Powers. They call the Boxers “stupid people” (*yu min*).

However, they mainly blamed the Qing court for the chaos. They argued that the conservatives of the Qing court were the main reason of this anti-foreign turmoil.¹⁶⁶

In July, when the Boxer uprising caused the war with the Powers, the reformer blamed the Qing court for the disaster. On the "Sino-Foreign Daily" of July 15, Liang Qichao, a main leader of the reform movement, stated in the article "On the Boxer Movement and the Old and New parties" that “The old party won, but they felt unsecured and tried to destroy the new party completely. They thought the new party was under the goad of foreigners and tried to destroy the foreigners together. Based on these thoughts, they brought up the Boxer event. The Boxer event was not a sudden eruption. It was the combination of four old parties...So in essences, the Boxer event was not a war of state affairs; it was a war of factional struggle.”¹⁶⁷ Liang blamed the conservatives for the disaster.

While the Boxer war was going on in North China, the reformers carried out an armed revolt against the Qing court in south China. The revolt was planned by Tang Caichang and was directly supported by Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao

¹⁶⁶ “On the Uprising of the Boxers”, *The News* (Xin Wen Bao), May, 20, 1900.

¹⁶⁷ *Yihetuan* (The Boxers), vol. 4, 179-181, 227.

from abroad. The revolt was designed to take advantage of the confusion of the Boxer war in the North to overthrow the authority of the Qing court in south China. They hoped to establish a new government in south China, and eventually take over the full state authority.

To prepare the revolt, Tang Caichang and some other young men returned to Shanghai from Japan at the end of 1899. Tang Caichang was a fellow of Hunan province and a close friend of Tan Sitong, a leader of the One Hundred Days reform. Returned to Shanghai, Tang Caichang established *Tongwen School* as a cover for his activities and founded *Tongwen News* to advocate political reforms in China. With Lin Gui, Di Baoxian and Shen Jin, he established the “Independence Society” (*zili hui*), which served as a center for liaison with other revolutionary parties and secret societies. The society began to recruit members from the secret societies of central China, especially the “Elder Brother Society” (*gelao hui*). Soon, the Independence Army was established and claimed to have over ten thousand members. The army was divided into five commands and its units scattered in Hubei, Hunan, Jiangxi and Anhui provinces. The reformer leaders, Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao, were listed as leaders of the society. They raised money in Canada and America to support the revolt.

An important part of the preparation of the revolt was to create an organization that could provide a framework of a new government. A preliminary

“national assembly” (guo hui) was held in Shanghai from July 26 to July 30. The national assembly elected Rong Hong as the president and Yan Fu as the vice-president; the assembly also elected Tang Caichang as the secretary general. This national assembly would serve as the highest authority in the revolt. Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao highly praised the founding of the “national assembly”. Kang declared in a circular letter to Chinese communities all over the world that “The false government has collapsed and the reform faction has met in Shanghai to organize a preliminary national assembly, to prepare the establishment of a new government in south China, and to lay the groundwork for the building of a new nation. The emperor will then be invited to move south and to proclaim to the countries of the world his policy of protecting the foreign residents and safeguarding the religious missions. Once our righteous army is on the move, we will sign treaties of commerce with foreign countries and resume our program of reform.”¹⁶⁸ The establishment of “national assembly” offered an alternative to the bankrupt Qing government.

The reformers also tried to get the support of the foreign Powers and southern viceroys. In July, while the Boxer war was going on in Beijing, Kang Youwei sent letters to the governments of the Powers, declaring that the Empress Dowager Cixi should be blamed for the outrages committed by the Boxers. He asked the Powers not to recognize the authority of the Empress Dowager. At the

¹⁶⁸ Feng Ziyou, *Geming yishi* (Additional revolution history)(Beijing: Zhonghua,1981), vol.6, 30.

same time, the reformers also tried to win over southern provincial governors. Kang Youwei wrote to Li Hongzhang, viceroy of Guangdong and Guangxi, urging Li to take the initiative to restore the emperor to his rightful position. Wang Kangnian wrote an editorial in his newspaper, calling on those governors engaged in the Yangzi peace agreement to declare their provincial independence and come together in a new form of national authority.¹⁶⁹ Considering the confusion and uncertainties in early August, 1900, it was not entirely unrealistic of the leaders of the revolt to hope for some sort of positive, or at least neutral, reaction from some southern governors. If the entrance of allied troops into Beijing had resulted in the death of the Empress Dowager and the Emperor, leaving a political vacuum, the provincial viceroys and governors would showed some interest to the cause of the Independent Society.

The strategy of the revolt was hotly debated. Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao preferred to launch the revolt in Guangdong province first and seized it as a base to move northward. Tang Caichang preferred to capture Changsha, the capital of Hunan province, as the base and sail down to the cities along the Yangzi River, where he hoped that other insurgent forces would rise in response for a

¹⁶⁹ Sang Bing, *Gengzi qingwang yu wan Qing zhengju* (Protect-Emperor movement in 1900 and the Late-Qing Political Situation)(Beijing: Beijing University Press, 2004), 96-7.

general revolt against the Qing government. Tang also hoped that he could win the support of Zhang Zhidong, the viceroy of Hunan and Hubei province. In the end, it was Tang Caichang who settled the issue, because he succeeded in winning the support of the secret societies in the Yangzi River region.

The revolt was scheduled to start on August 9 in four provinces simultaneously. But after Tang Caichang met Lin Gui in Hankou, the capital of Hubei province, he decided to postpone the date of revolt till all preparations were completed. But at Datong, Qin Lishan, either because he did not receive the order of postponing the revolt or because he purposely disobeyed the order relying on his military strength, staged his revolt according to the original plans. The revolters posted many proclamations in Datong, announcing the purpose of the revolt.

“China independent Society proclaimed about protecting the emperor to exterminate the mobs. Since the coup of 1898, the vice officials seized the power and the regicidal empress controlled the country. Their evil deeds led to horrible disaster. The edict of January 24 discarded the traditional rule of the dynasty and displayed their conspiracy. When the Boxers rose up with the slogan of “support the Qing, Destroy the Foreign”, the vice officials, Gang Yi and Rong Lu, secretly supported them with weapons to reach their goal of murdering the emperor. Now we gather the comrades in the Yangzi valley to eliminate the vice officials and restore the peace with other countries.”¹⁷⁰

The proclamation blamed some Manchu officials for the Boxer turmoil and called people to overthrow the rule of the regicidal empress. The

¹⁷⁰ Feng Ziyou, *Geming yishi* (Additional revolution history)(Beijing: Zhonghua,1981), vol.6, 22.

proclamation justified the revolt as a righteous cause of recovering the authority of the Emperor. Qin Lishan's revolt failed after three days. The revolt exposed the whole scheme to the Qing authorities. On August 14, Zhang Zhidong raided the headquarters of the Independence Army in Hankou. On August 23, thirty leaders of the Independence Army, including Tang Caichang, Lin Gui, Fu Cixiang and Tian Bangchun, were executed in Wuchang. The revolt failed. The Qing Court denounced the reformers as betrayers of the country.

United in Righteousness: the Qing Court and the Boxers

The Boxers and the Qing court joined together in the war against the allied troops. The Boxers called themselves "The Boxers United in Righteousness" (*yihetuan*). They claimed that they were the "righteous People" and they were fighting the foreigners for the country ----support the Qing, Destroy the foreign. The Qing court recognized their righteousness. It enrolled the Boxers into a force to fight against the foreigners and awarded them rice and money. The support of the Qing court made the uprising from a local area evolved into a war between China and all Western Powers. What was the "righteousness" that they claimed? Why did these two groups unite together in the war?

To understand the "righteousness" claimed by the Boxers and the Qing court, we need to put the movement into the historical context after the Sino-

Japanese war. In 1895, China was defeated by Japan in the Sino-Japanese war. China's defeat in the war led to the national crisis in which China was divided into several "influence areas" by the imperialist Powers. China faced the crisis of dismemberment. Under this circumstance, saving the country from foreign aggression became the "righteous cause" of all Chinese. Although different social groups had different ideas about how to save China from foreign aggression, they all regarded saving the country as the righteous cause.

The progressive reformers were the first group responding to the crisis. The reformers advocated political and institutional reforms to deal with the national crisis. From June to September, 1898, a radical reform was carried out under the lead of Emperor Guangxu and some young reformers. In this year, the anti-Christian uprisings connected their anti-Christian activities with the cause of resisting foreign aggression. The slogan "Obey the Qing, Destroy the Foreign" became popular. It was this radical anti-foreign context that endowed the Boxers with the "righteousness". Their claims and rituals were part of the responses of Chinese people to foreign aggression at the end of nineteenth century.

However, the righteousness of the cause did not unite all these social groups. The Boxers were denounced by some provincial officials and reformers as rebels and bandits. They believed that the anti-foreign action of the Boxers not only could not save China, but caused more trouble to the country. However, the

Qing court changed its usual attitude towards peasant uprisings and support the Boxers. They recognized the legitimacy of the Boxers and praised the Boxers as “righteous People”. The Qing court declared war to the foreign Powers and organized the Boxers into force to resist the allied troops. How could we explain the different attitude toward the Boxers?

The national crisis intensified the relation between the Manchu Qing court and the Han officials and reformers. In June, 1898, Emperor Guangxu launched the radical reform with the help of some reformers. The purpose of the reform was the remedy the weakness of China. However, this reform was put down by the Empress Dowager with the help of some conservative officials. Emperor Guangxu was house-arrested and six reform leaders were executed. Two leaders of the reform, Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao, fled to Japan. The Qing court blamed the reformer for the failure of the reform. In an edict, the Qing court announced that it never refused to reform. However, the reform of Kang Youwei was mutinous law (*luan fa*), not true reform (*bian fa*) and Kang’s reform was only superficial words and phrases, not the fundamentals of the wealth and strength. It was the wrongdoing of Kang and Liang that led to the failure of the reform.

After the failure of the reform in 1898, the reformers carried out a campaign to recover the power of Guangxu emperor and resume the reform. Although Emperor Guangxu was under house arrest and lost his power, he was

still the emperor of the country. His existence itself was the hope of the reformers to resume their cause. In July, 1899, Kang and Liang organized a “reform association” in America, which was known as the “Preserve the Emperor Society” (*bao huang hui*). On August 14, 1899, the thirtieth birthday of Emperor Guangxu, many overseas Chinese in America and Southeast Asia telegraphed the central government, asking them to restore the power of the emperor.

The activities of the reformers made the Manchu conservatives very worried. Emperor Guangxu was 28 years old while the Empress was already 63. Once the empress died, the Emperor would recover his power, and it would be a disaster for the Manchu conservatives. So they wanted to root out the cause of the trouble before the death of Empress Cixi. However, there was no historical precedent in the Manchu Dynasty’s history to publicly dethrone an emperor.

On January 24, 1900, the court issued a decree, announcing the establishment of Pujun, and Prince Duan’s son, as the heir apparent to Emperor Tongzhi. To many people, this action was the first step to deposing Emperor Guangxu. Large numbers of junior officials, urban gentry groups, merchants, students, and overseas Chinese protested this action. Many overseas Chinese telegraphed not only Zongli Yamen, but also British, American, and Japanese ministers in Beijing, expressing their opposition to this action of the government. The most striking protest was a mass telegram sent from Shanghai to Beijing on

January 26, signed by 1, 231 individuals, including officials, private merchants, gentry, and students. Ranking local officials also supported this protest. Liu Kunyi, the much-revered viceroy of the Yangzi region, made it perfectly clear in his telegraph to the central government that “ the relationship between the Emperor and his subjects is already established, how could one protect oneself from (being attacked by) negative opinions both at home and abroad (by removing the Emperor).”¹⁷¹ These struggles aggravated the relation between the reformers and the Qing court.

The struggle between the reformer and the conservatives in the Qing court directly impacted the policy of the Qing court to the Boxers. There was a wide-spread rumor during the Boxer war that the foreign Powers sent an ultimatum to the Qing court, requiring Empress Dowager Cixi to return the power to Emperor Guangxu. The rumor spread widely during the war. Many books about the war before 1920 took this requirement as a main reason of the declaration of war of the Qing court.¹⁷² Although many scholar argued that this ultimatum was only a rumor, the wide spread of it suggested the intension between the Qing court and the reformers. If the foreign troops occupied Beijing, it would directly impact the rule of the Qing court. So the power struggle between the reformers and the conservatives directly influenced the policy of the Qing court to the Boxers.

¹⁷¹ *Wuxu bianfa* (Reforms in 1898), vol.4, 360

¹⁷² *Yihetuan* (The Boxers). vol. 4, .227.

The relation between the Qing court and the Han provincial officials also intensified in the crisis. The Han provincial governors came from the civil examination systems. They represented the orthodox tradition of Confucianism and had close connection with local gentry. In the suppression of the anti-Manchu Taiping Rebellion, their political power increased dramatically. They control regional armies and local administrative power. In the self-strengthening movement, a modernization movement that lasted 30 years, they controlled almost all important projects.

The contradiction between the Qing court and the provincial officials become prominent in the Sino-Japanese war (1894-1895). The provincial officials blamed the Qing court for lacking strong leadership. However, the Qing court attributed the defeat to the selfishness of the provincial governors. They argued that the entire modernization program was carried out by the provincial governors. But they cared more about their own gains than the interests of the whole country. In the Sino-French war of 1884-85, when the Southern navy was attacked by the French, the Northern navy refused to help. In the Sino-Japanese war, there was very little help from other provincial forces.

During the scramble for concession in 1898, many provincial officials cared only about their provincial power base. They had no intention to resist foreign aggression wholeheartedly. To reverse the regional trend of these

provincial officials, the On 11 November, 1899, the Qing court send an edict to all provincial governors which stated:

“Our empire is now laboring under great difficulties which are becoming daily more and more serious. The various powers cast upon us looks of tiger-like voracity, hustling each other in their endeavors to be the first to seize upon our innermost territories. They think that China, having neither money nor troops, would never venture to go to war with them. They fail to understand, however, that there are certain things that this empire can never consent to…… there is an evil habit which has become almost a custom among our governor-generals and governors which, however, must be eradicated at all costs. For instance, whenever high officials have had on their hands cases of international dispute, all their actions seem to be guided by the belief in their breasts that such cases would eventually be “amicably arranged”. These words seem never out of their thoughts: hence, when matters do come to a crisis, they, of course, find themselves utterly unprepared to resist hostile aggression on the part of foreigners. We, indeed, consider this the most serious failure in the duty which the highest provincial authorities owe to the throne, and we now find it incumbent upon ourselves to censure such conduct in the most severe terms.……never should the word “peace” fall from the mouths of our high officials…With such a country as ours, with her vast areas, stretching out several tens of thousands of li, her immense natural resources, and her hundreds of millions of inhabitants, of all would prove their loyalty to their emperor and love of their country, what indeed is there to fear from any strong invaders? Let us not think of making peace, nor rely solely upon diplomatic maneuvers.”¹⁷³

This decree was quoted by many scholars to prove that the Qing court tried to take hare-line police toward foreign power.¹⁷⁴ I will argue that the decree actually expressed the view of the Qing court on the failure of China in 1898. The Qing court attributed the failure to the non- resistance of the provincial official. Whenever there was a conflict with the foreign powers, the provincial officials

¹⁷³ Chester C. Tan, *The Boxer Catastrophe* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955), 32.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

firstly thought about their own interest. They did not want to sacrifice their force to resist the foreign powers.

To strengthen the military force of the central government, on December 7, the Qing court assigned Rong Lu to reorganize the national army. And to support this program, provincial money contribution were increased. China Merchants' steam Navigation Company and the Telegraph Service was required return a certain percentage of their surplus profits to the national exchequer.¹⁷⁵ Gang Yi was appointed Imperial High Commissioner to investigate the southern provinces. He was called "Lord High Extortioner". But his work was highly commended by the Empress Dowager as "stooping extortions and turning to the Imperial exchequer funds which would otherwise have gone to fill the pockets of provincial officials."¹⁷⁶ The struggle between the Qing court and the provincial officials intensified.

The struggle between the Qing court, the provincial officials and the reformers manifested during the Boxer war. The provincial made the de facto independence and the reformer organized the "Independent Army Revolt". These struggles directly impact the policy of the Qing court to the Boxers. The Qing court recognized the Boxer as the "righteous people" and organized them into

¹⁷⁵ *Qing dezong Shilu*(True Records of the Guangxu Period)(Beijing: Zhonghu shuju, 1987),445.

¹⁷⁶ *ibid*, 447.

troops to assist the Qing armies. “People’s heart” and “Heaven’s Will” were addressed repeatedly. The traditional ideology of “Mandate of Heaven” became the force that the Manchu government had to depend on to legitimate its rule.

Conclusion

The Boxer movement in 1900 was a dramatic conflict between China and Western Powers. In the movement, although the five major Chinese social groups discussed here took saving China from foreign aggression as their “righteous mission” and used the traditional Chinese concept of patriotism----“righteousness” (*yi*) ----to legitimize their actions, they each interpreted “righteousness” differently to fit their own interests. I have argued that the traditional concept of “righteousness” played an important role in the movement; however, its meaning and function were a construction of the power relations between these social groups.

The Boxer movement was a response of Chinese people to foreign aggression at the end of the 19th century; however, the response had a particular cultural character. Foreign aggression after China’s defeat in the Sino-Japanese war in 1895 became prominent. The division of China into several influence spheres by the Powers in 1898 pushed China to the edge of partition. In this urgent situation, saving China from foreign aggression became the common mission of all Chinese social groups, which was expressed in the traditional Chinese concept of patriotism----righteousness (*yi*). In this dissertation, I have suggested that the progressive scholar-gentry led by the reformers promoted reforms following

Western models with the slogan, “Preserve Confucianism to Preserve the Country”. They took preserving the orthodox ideology of Confucianism as their righteous mission. From June to September, 1898, a radical One Hundred Days Reform was carried out under the sponsorship of Emperor Guangxu and the leadership of Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao. Local gentry and peasants connected their anti-Christian feelings with activities of resisting foreign aggression, raising the slogan, “Obey the Qing, Destroy the Foreign”. They claimed that they were fighting the Christians for the country and called themselves “Righteous People” (*yi min*). The Boxers called themselves “the Boxers United in Righteousness” (*yi he tuan*) and raised the slogan, “Support the Qing, Destroy the Foreign”. Through the ritual of “spirit possession”, the Boxers invited Chinese gods to possess them and endow them with the power of “invulnerability” to bullets. The Boxers legitimized their violence against foreigners as righteous actions on behalf of Chinese gods. The Qing court recognized the righteousness of the Boxers and claimed that their actions fitted “people’s heart’ and “Heaven’s will”. All these groups used the traditional concept of “righteousness” (*yi*) to legitimize their action against foreign aggression.

Although all these social groups took “righteousness” (*yi*) to justify their actions against foreign aggression, they interpreted “righteousness” differently to fit their own interests in the movement. The reformers and provincial officials

insisted that the reforms should follow their leadership. They proclaimed that their reforms represented the “righteous” way based on the orthodox Confucianism. They denounced the Boxers’ methods as “heterodox” way and used the influence of orthodox ideology of Confucianism and the power of local gentry to suppress the Boxers. Although the Qing court recognized the righteousness of the Boxers and praised their patriotic spirit, it used them both to deal with foreign aggression and domestic elite discontent. When the allied army came into Beijing, the Qing court denounced the Boxers as rebellions and suppressed them ruthlessly. My conclusion is that the traditional concept of “righteousness” played an important role in the movement; however, its meaning and function were a construction in the power relations of different social groups.

My study contributes to the understanding of the role of Chinese culture in its modernization process. One important theme of modern Chinese history is the relationship between traditional Chinese culture and its modernization. In the past one and a half centuries, China has sought most urgently to become modern. In the process, traditional Chinese culture played important roles, either positively or negatively. Studying on the role of traditional Chinese culture in the modernization process has significant meaning to understand today’s China. My dissertation offered a case of how to considering the relationship in a dialectical method. I argued that the traditional concept of “righteousness” (*yi*)

was used as a sign of patriotism and played an important role in the Boxer movement. At the same time, I argued that meaning and function of this traditional concept changed in the process of interacting with the Western countries. The Boxers, the Qing court, the provincial officials, the reformers and the local gentry had different interests in their relations with Western Powers. They interpreted “righteousness” differently to fit their own interests in this conflict. I emphasized that the relationship between traditional Chinese culture and China’s modernization should be studied in a dialectical process.

Bibliographical Note

In 1950, the “Chinese Historical Association” organized a large number of well-known historians to compile a “Series of Source Materials of Modern Chinese History.” In order to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the Boxer movement, *Yihetuan* (the Boxers), number nine of the twelve projected collections, were completed in 1950 and published in 1951. *Yihetuan*, four volumes and 2,243 pages, includes 56 items. The collection included 14 government documents, 31 records of contemporary people, and 3 collections of editors, newspapers and other materials. The collection included seven works compiled by the editors. Three of them are composed of documents: 1, a collection of edicts copied from the *Qing Shilu*, over four hundred edicts; 2, a collection of contemporary editorials and comments from Chinese and foreign newspapers; 3, a collection of documents relating to the agreement among the southern provincial government officials to keep out the war against the foreigners. The book also includes an annotated bibliography, containing 298 titles in Chinese, 1 in Japanese, 65 in Western languages. 60 to 70 per cent of the source materials came from Peking University Library. The Book became the basic resources of the study of the Boxer movement.

In 1982, the Modern History Institute of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences published *Yihetuan shiliao* (Historical materials on the Boxers).

Yihetuan shiliao, 2 volumes and 1085 pages, included a collection of documents from the Boxers; 67 records of contemporary people; 199 local gazetteers of 12 provinces. With the *Yihetuan*, these two books offer the basic source materials of the Boxer movement.

For the government archives, the Chinese First Historical Archives (Ming-Qing archives) published, *Yihetuan Dang An Shiliao* (Archival materials on the Boxers) in 1959. It includes decrees and telegraphs of the Grand Counsel archives. In 1990, they published *Yihetuan Dang An Shilai Xubian* (Additional archival materials on the Boxers). The book includes 1, 600 government archives related to the Boxer movement. These archives became the basis to study the policy of the Qing government.

One difficulty of the study on the Boxers is the lack of records and scarcity of documents written by the Boxers themselves. This is because very few of them were literate and most of their placards, public notice, incantations, and so on were destroyed during the war. Under such circumstance, the study on the Boxers has to rely on the records written by the opponents of the movement. However, through the efforts of some historians about 200 documents from the Boxers has been discovered. 52 of them were included in the collection in *Yihetuan* (4 vol. Shanghai, 1951). In 1985, Chen Zhengjiang and Cheng Xiao published *Yihetuan wenxian jizhu yu yanjiu* (Explications and studies of Boxer

writings). This book included 179 documents written by the Boxers. In 1960 and 1965-66, oral history surveys were done by students and faculty of the Shandong university History department in the areas of the Boxer movement in Shandong. A volume of these surveys, *Shandong Yihetuan diaocha ziliao xuanbian* (Selections from survey materials on the Shandong Boxers), was published in 1980.

Bibliography

- Allen, Roland. *The Siege of the Peking Legations*. London: Smith, Elder, 1901.
- Arnold, David. *Famine: Social Crisis and Historical Change*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988.
- Bays, Daniel H., ed. *Christianity in China: The Eighteenth Century to the Present*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996.
- Bland, John Otway Percy, and Edmund Trelawny Backhouse. *China under the Empress Dowager: Being the History of the Life and Times of Tzu His*. Compiled from State papers and the Private Diary of the Comptroller of Her Household. London: William Heinemann, 1900. Reprinted Taipei, 1970.
- Bickers, Robert and Tidemann, R.G.. *The Boxers, China, and the World*. London: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2007.
- Bohr, Paul Richard. *Famine in China and the Missionary: Timothy Richard as Relief Administrator and Advocate of Nation Reform, 1876-1884*. Cambridge: East Asian Research Center, Harvard University, 1972.
- Boxer Rising: A History of the Boxer Trouble in China* (Reprint from Shanghai Mercury), 2d ed. Shanghai: Shanghai Mercury, 1901.
- Buck, David D. "The 1990 International Symposium on the Boxer Movement and Modern Chinese Society." *Republican China* 16.2 (April 1991): 113-20.
- ed. *Recent Chinese Studies of the Boxer Movement*. New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1987.
- Chen, Jerome. "The Nature and Characteristics of the Boxer Movement: A Morphological Study." *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 23.2 (1960): 287-308.
- "The Origin of the Boxers." Chen and Nicholas Tarling, eds., *Studies in the Social history of China and South-East Asia: Essays in Memory of Victor Purcell*, 57-84. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970.
- Chen Zhenjiang. "Huabei youmin shehui yu Yihetuan yundong" (The mobile unemployed society of North China and the Boxer movement). In *Yihetuan*

yundong yu jindai Zhongguo shehui guoji xueshu taolunhui lunwen ji, 230-45.

Chen Zhenjiang and Cheng Xiao. *Yihetuan wenxian jizhu yu yanjiu* (Explications and studies of Boxer writings). Tianjin: Tianjin Renmin Press, 1985.

Cheng Xiao. "Minjian zongjiao yu Yihetuan jietie" (Popular religion and the Boxer posters). *Lishi yanjiu* 2 (1983): 147-63.

Cheng Xiao. "Minsu xinyang yu Quanmin yishi" (Folk beliefs and Boxer consciousness). *Yihetuan yundong yu jindai Zhongguo shehui guoji xueshu taolunhui lunwen ji*, 284-311.

Choubi oucun (Retained working notes). Edited by Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan jindaishi yanjiusu he Zhongguo diyi lishi dang'anguan (Modern History Institute of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and the First Historical Archive of China). Beijing: Zhongguo Shehui Kexue, 1983.

Cohen, Paul A. *China and Christianity: The Missionary Movement and the Growth of Chinese Anti-foreignism, 1860-1870*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963.

----- *Discovering History in China: American Historical Writing on the Recent Chinese Past*. New York: Cambridge University press, 1984.

-----*History in Three Keys: The Boxers as Event, Experience, and Myth*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1997.

Dai Xuanzhi. *Yihetuan yanjiu* (A study of the Boxers). Taibei: Zhongguo Xueshu Zhuzuo Jiangzhu Weiyuanhui, 1963.

Ding Mingnan. "Guanyu Zhongguo jinsaishishang jiaoran de kaocha"(An examination of the church cases in modern Chinese history). *Jidaishi Yanji* 1(1990): 27-64.

Duara, Prasenjit. *Culture, Power, and the State: Rural North China, 1900-1942*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988.

Duiker, William J. *Cultures in Collision: The Boxer Rebellion*. San Rafael, California: Presidio, 1978.

Elliott, Jane. *Some Did it for Civilization; Some Did it for their Country: A Revised View of the Boxer War*. Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2002.

Eno, Robert. *The Confucian Creation of Heaven: Philosophy and the Defense of Ritual Mastery*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990.

Esherick, Joseph W. *The Origins of the Boxer Uprising*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987.

Fairbank, John K., ed. *The Cambridge History of China, vol.10: Late Ch'ing, 1800-1911*, Part 1. Cambridge University Press, 1978.

Fairbank, John K. and Liu, Kwang-Ching, eds. *The Cambridge History of China, vol.11: Later Ch'ing, 1800-1911*, part 2. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980.

Fleming, Peter. *The Siege at Peking* (1959). Rpt., Hongkong: Oxford University Press, 1986.

Fleury, Francois, "My Captivity with Chinese Rebels", *Catholic Missions* (1900), in several issues. Fleury was held captive by Yu Dongchen in Sichuan in 1898. His account first appeared in *Annales M.E.P.3* (1900).

Gao Nan. *Gao nan riji* (The diary of Gao Nan). *Gangzi Jishi*, 143-246.

Geertz, Clifford. "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture." In Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 2-20. New York: basic Book, 1973.

Gengzi Jishi (A Record of the events of 1900). Compiled by Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan jidaishi yanjiusu jinsaishi zilao bianjishi (Section for editing of materials on modern history of the Modern History Institute, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1978.

Guan He. *Quanfei wenjian lu* (A record of things seen and heard concerning the Boxer bandits). In *Yihetuan* 1: 465-92.

Hart, Robert. "These from the land of Sinim": Essays on the Chinese Question. London: Chapman and Hall, 1901.

Hershatter, Gail. "The subaltern Talks Back: Reflections on Subaltern Theory and Chinese History." *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* 1.1 (Spring 1993): 103-30.

Hevia, James. "Leaving a Brand on China: Missionary Discourse in the Wake of the Boxer Movement." *Modern China* 18.3 (July 1992): 304-32.

Hong Shoushan. *Shishi zhilue* (A summary record of contemporary events). In *Yihetuan* 1: 85-103.

Hiao, Kung-Chuan. *A Modern China and a New World: K'ang Youwei, Reformer and Utopian, 1858-1927*. Seattle: University of Washington press, 1975.

Hu Sheng. *Imperialism and Chinese Politics*. Beijing: foreign languages press, 1955.

Hu Sijing. *Lu bei ji* (Writings from the back of a donkey). *Yihetuan* (The Boxers). Vol. 2, 481-533.

Hua Xuelan. *Gengzi riji* (A Diary of 1900). In *Gengzi jishi*, 99-141.

Jiaowu jiaoran dang (Archives of church affairs and disputes involving missionaries and converts). Compiled by Zhongyang yanjiuyuan jidaishi yanjiusui (Modern History Institute, Academic sinica). 21 vols. In 7 series, covering period 1860-1912. Taipei: Zhongguo Yanjiuyuan jidaishi Yanjiusuo, 1974-1981.

Jin Jiarui. *Yihetuan shihua* (A historical narrative of the Boxers). Beijing: Beijing Chubanshe, 1980.

Jingjin quanfei jilue (A brief chronicle of the Boxer bandits in Beijing and Tianjin). Hong Kong: Xiangang shuju, 1901.

Johnson, David, Andrew J. Nathan, and Evelyn S. Rawski, eds. *Popular Culture in Late Imperial China*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985.

Keown-boyd, Henry. *The Fists of Righteous Harmony: A History of the Boxer Uprising in China in the Years 1900*. London: Leo Cooper, 1991.

Ku, Hung-ming [Gu Hongming]. *Papers from a Viceroy's Yamen: A Chinese Plea for the Cause of Good Government and True Civilization in China*. Shanghai: Shanghai Mercury, 1901.

Huhn, Philip. *Rebellion and Its Enemies in Late Imperial China: Militarization and Social Structure, 1796-1864*. Harvard University Press, 1980.

-----*Soul Stealers: The Chinese Sorcery Scare of 1768*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990.

Hunt, Lynn, ed. *The New Cultural History*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989.

Hunt, Lynn and Bonnell, Victoria, ed. *Beyond the Cultural Turn*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999.

Lao Naixuan. *Yihetuan jiaomen yuanliu kao* (An examination of the origins and evolution of the Boxer sect). In *Yihetuan* vol.4, 431-39.

Latourette, Kenneth Scott. *A History of Christian Missions in China*. London: society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1929.

Levenson, Joseph. *Confucian China and Its Modern Fate*, vol.1, The Problem of Intellectual community. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1958.

Lewis, I.M. *Ecstatic Religion: A Study of Shamanism and Spirit Possession*. 2d.ed. London: Routledge, 1989.

Li Dezheng, Su Weizhi, and Liu Tianlu. *Baguo lianjun qinhua shi* (A history of the Eight-power Allied Force's aggression against China). Jinan: Shandong Daxue chubanshe, 1990.

Li Di. *Qaun huo ji* (A record of the Boxer calamity), 2 vols. Preface dated 1905.

Li Shiyue, *Jindai Zhongguo fanyang jiao yundong* (Anti-Christian Movements in Modern China), Beijing: Renmin publishing house, 1958.

Li Wenhai et al., eds. *Jindai Zhongguo zaihuang jinian* (A chronological record of Li, Xisheng. *Gengzi guobian ji* (A chronicle of the national troubles of 1900). In modern Chinese famines). Changsha: Huana Jiaoyu Chubanshe, 1990.

Liao YiZhong, Li Desheng, and Zhang Xuanru. *Yihetuan yundong shi* (A history of the Boxer movement). Beijing: Renmin, 1981.

Lin Huaguo. *Yihetuan shishi kao* (A study of the true facts of the Boxers). Beijing: Beijing University Press, 1993.

Liu Mengyang. *Tianjin quanfei bianluan jishi* (An account of the Boxer bandit disorders in Tianjin). In *Yihetuan* vol.2, 1-71.

Lynch, George. *The War of the Civilizations, Being the Record of a "Foreign Devil's" Experience with the Allies in China*. London and New York: Longmans, Green, 1901.

Liu Yitong. *Minjiao xiangchou dumen wenjian lu* (A record of things seen and heard concerning the mutual hatred of the people and the Christians in the capital). In *Yihetuan* vol.2, 181-96.

Lu Wantian. *Gengzi Beijing shibian jilue* (A brief account of events in Beijing in 1900). In *Yihetuan* vol.2, 395-438.

Lu Yao et al., comps. *Shandong Yihetuan diaocha zilao xuanbian* (Selection from survey materials on the Shandong Boxers). Jiana: Qilu, 1980.

Lu Yao and Cheng Xiao. *Yihetuan yundong shi yanjiu* (Studies on the history of the Boxer movement). Jinan: Qilu, 1988.

MacGillivray, D., ed. *A century of Protestant Missions in China (1807-1907), Being the Centenary Conference Historical Volume*. Shanhai: American Presbyterian Mission Press, 1907.

Madsen, Richard. *Morality and Power in a Chinese Village*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984.

Martin, Christopher. *The Boxer Rebellion*. London: Abelard-Schuman, 1968.

Martin, William Alexander Parsons, *The Siege in Peking: China against the World. By an Eye Witness*. London and Edinburg: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier; New York: F. H. Revell, 1900. Reprinted Wilmington: Scholarly Resources; Shannon: Irish University Press, 1972.

Naquin, Susan. *Millenarian Rebellion in China: The Eight Trigrams Uprising of 1813*. New Heaven: Yale University Press, 1976.

----- *Shantung Rebellion: The Wang Lun Uprising of 1774*. New Heaven: Yale Univeristy Press, 1981.

Oliphant, Nigel. *A Diary of the Siege of the Legations in Peking: During the Summer of 1900*. New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1901.

Perry, Elizabeth J. *Rebels and Revolutionaries in North China, 1845-1945*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1980.

Preston, Diana. *The Boxer Rebellion: The Dramatic story of China's War on Foreigners that Shook the World in the summer of 1900*. New York: Berkeley Publishing Group, 2000.

Purcell, Victor. *The Boxer Uprising: A Background Study*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963.

Qing dezong shilu(True records of the Guangxu period), Beijing: Zhonghu shuju, 1987.

Rankin, Mary Backus. *Elite Activism and Political Transformation in China: Zhejiang Province, 1865-1911*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986.

Rhoads, Edward. *Manchu & Han: Ethnic Relations and Political Power in Late Qing and Early Republican China, 1861-1928*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000.

Rong Wenzhonggong ji (Collected Works of Ronglu), in *Yihetuan*, 4.

Sang Bing. *Gengzi qingwang yu wan Qing zhengju* (Protect-Emperor movement in 1900 and the late-imperial political situation). Beijing: Beijing University Press, 2004.

Sato Kimihikoo[Zuoteng Gongyan]. “Yihetuan Minzhong de quanliguan” (The Boxer masses’ conception of state authority). *Yihetuan yundong yu jindai Zhongguo shehui guoji xueshu lunwen ji*, 884-903.

Shrecker, Hohn E. *Imperialism and Chinese nationalism: Germany in Shantung*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971.

Schwartz, Benjamin I. *In Search of Wealth and Power: Yan Fu and the West*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964.

Deguo qinzhan Jiaozhouwan shiliao xuanbian 1897-1898 (Selected Documents about Germany's occupation of Jiaozhou Bay 1897-1898). Qingdao: Qingdao Museum, 1987.

Shandong Yihetuan anjuan (Archival records concerning the Shandong Boxers). Compiled by Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan jindaishi yanjiusuo jindaishi ziliao bianjishi (section for editing of materials on modern history of the Modern History Institute, Chinese Academy of Social Science). 2 vols. Jinan: Qilu, 1981.

Shandong Yihetuan diaocha ziliao xuanbian (Selections from survey materials on the Shandong Boxers). Edited by Modern Chinese history section of History department of Shandong University, Jinan: Qilu, 1980.

Smith, Arthur H. *China in Convulsion*. 2 vols. New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1901.

-----*Village Life in China: A Study in Sociology*. New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1899.

Steiger, George Nye. *China and the Occident: The Origin and Development of the Boxer Movement*. New Heaven: Yale University Press, 1927.

Tan, Chester C. *The Boxer Catastrophe*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1955.

Wang, Minglun, ed. *Fan Yangjiao shuwen jietie xuan* (Selected writings and notices opposing the Western religion), Jinan: Qilu, 1984.

Wehrle, Edmund S. *Britain, China, and the Anti-missionary Riots, 1891-1900*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1966.

Wright, Mary. *The Last Stand of Chinese Conservatism: The T'ung-Chih Restoration. 1862-1874*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962.

-----,ed. *China in Revolution: the First Phase, 1900-1913*. New Heaven: Yale University Press, 1968.

Wu xu bian fa (The Reform of 1898). Shanghai: Renmin Publishing House, 1953, 4 Vols.

Wu Yung, *The Flight of an Empress*. Trans. By Ida Pruitt. New Heaven: Yale University Press, 1936.

Yang, C.K. *Religion in Chinese Society: A Study of Contemporary Social Functions of Religion and Some of Their Historical Factors*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961.

Yang Diangao. *Gengzi dashi ji* (A record of the main events of 1900). *Gengzi jishi*, 79-98.

Yihetuan (The Boxers). Edited by Jian Bozan, et al. 4 vols. Shanghai: Shenzhou Guoguang She, 1951.

Yihetuan dang'an shiliao (Archival materials on the Boxers). Edited by Guojia dang'an ju Mingqing dang'an guan (The Ming-Qing archives division of the national archives bureau). 2 vols. Beijing: Zhonghua, 1982.

Yihetuan shiliao (Historical materials on the Boxers). 2 vols. Edited by Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan jindaishi yanjiusuo jindaishi bianjizu (Modern history materials editorial group of the Modern History Institute of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences). Beijing: Zhuonguo Shehui Kexue, 1982.

Yihetuan yundong yu jindai Zhongguo shehui (The Boxer movement and modern Chinese society). Chengdu: Sichuansheng Shehui Kexueyuan, 1987.

Yihetuan yundong yu jindai Zhongguo shehui guoji xueshu taolunhui lunwen ji (Collected papers presented at the international conference on the Boxer movement and modern Chinese society). Compiled by Zhongguo Yihetuan yanjiuhui (Chinese association for Boxer research). Jinan: Qilu, 1992.

Yuan Chang. *Luanzhong riji can gao* (Draft Fragments of a diary kept during the disorder). In *Yihetuan* vol.1, 335-49.

Yun Yuding. *Chongling chuanxin lu* (A true account of the Guanxu Emperor). In *Yihetuan*, vol.1, 45-55.

Zhang Hao. *Liang Ch'i-chao and Intellectual Transition in China, 1890-1907*. Cambridge: Harvard University press, 1971.

Zhongfang. *Gengzi jish* (A record of the events of 1900). In *Gengzi Jishi*, Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1978: 9-77.

Zemon Natalia, Davies. *Society and Culture in Early Modern France*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975.

Appendix A: Table of Translation

bailian jiao 白莲教	Bao GuoYi Bao Jiao 保国以保教
Baoguo hui 保国会	Baoguo baozhong baojiao 保国 保种保教
Baohuang hui 保皇会	Beiyangjun 北洋军
bianfa 变法	Caocao 曹操
caojia zhuang 曹家庄	Chai E 柴萼
Chen Baozhen 陈宝箴	ChengXiao 程歙
Chongli 崇礼	Cixi 慈禧
Dagu 大沽	Damingfu 大明府
Dazu 大足	Dai Xuanzhi 戴玄之
dao qiang bu ru 刀枪不入	Dong Fuxiang 董福祥
Du Hailong 杜海龙	er maozi 二毛子
Fan Wenlan 范文澜	Fei baoguohui 非保国会
Feicheng 肥城	fengtai 丰台
fengzhi yihetuan 奉旨义和团	Fu Qing MieYang 扶清灭洋
Fu Zheng Qu Xie 扶正驱邪	Gangyi 刚毅
gaoluo 高洛	gaotang 高塘
gelao hui 哥老会	guangzhou 广州
Guangxu 光绪	gu'an 固安
Guangong 关公	gui jiao gai si 鬼教该死

guohui 国会	guojiao 国教
hanjian 汉奸	hanlin 翰林
hankou 汉口	Hong Chenzhou 洪程洲
hequn 和群	He Shizhen 何士箴
Hua Fangji 华芳济	Hong Xiuquan 洪秀权
Housangyu 侯桑峪	Hu Sijing 胡思敬
huangcun 黄村	Huang Guijun 黄桂鋆
Huibao 汇报	jimo 即墨
Jiangshen Futi 降神附体	jiao 剿
Jiang Zanchen 蒋赞臣	Jiaozhou 胶州
jiaozhu 教主	jinzhong zhao 金钟罩
Jingshan 景善	juren 举人
juye 巨野	Kang Youwei 康有为
Kongjiao hui 孔教会	Kong Guangjian 孔广蹇
Kongzi Gaizhi Kao 孔子改制考	Kuijun 奎俊
laishui 涑水	langfang 廊坊
Lao Naixuan 劳乃宣	Li Bingheng 李秉衡
Li Hongzhang 李鸿章	Li Guilin 李桂林
Li Jiannong 李剑农	Li Shengduo 李盛铎
Lishan 立山	liyuantun 梨园屯
Lianyun 联元	Liang Qichao 梁启超

Lin Gui 林圭	Lin Xu 林旭
lingguan 灵官	Liu Bei 刘备
Liu Guangdi 刘光第	Liu Kunyi 刘坤一
longmai 龙脉	longshui 龙水
luan fa 乱法	luan ming 乱命
majiapu 马家铺	Ma Yukun 马玉坤
Mai Mmenghua 麦孟华	meihua quan 梅花拳
Meng Zhaowu 孟昭武	min quan 民权
min xin 民心	minzhu jiaohuang 民主教皇
mu you 幕友	nantang 南堂
Nian 捻	Nie Shicheng 聂士诚
pingyuan 平原	Pujun 溥隼
qi ren 旗人	pixie shishi 辟邪实事
Qixiu 启秀	Qiangxue hui 强学会
Qin Lishan 秦力山	Ronglu 荣禄
Rizhao 日照	sanqu chang 三屈场
Shale yanggui tou mengyu wangxia liu 杀了洋鬼头，猛雨往下流	
Shandong 山东	shenbing 神兵
Shen zhu quan 神助拳	Sheng Xuanhuai 盛宣怀
Shiren 士人	shiwu 时务
Shu han 蜀汉	shui hu 水浒

Shun Qing Mie Yang 顺清灭洋	Shuntian 顺天
Song Qing 宋庆	Su Yu 苏舆
Sun Jianai 孙家鼐	Tan Sitong 谭嗣同
Taiping 太平	Taiping Tianguo 太平天国
Tang Caichang 唐才常	Ti Tian Xing Dao 替天行道
tian 天	tianming 天命
tianzi 天子	
Tianxia xingwang pifu youze 天下兴亡，匹夫有责	
Tongzhi 同治	tongwen 同文
tuan min 团民	wanping 宛平
Wang Kangnian 汪康年	Wenti 文悌
Weng Tonghe 翁同龢	wu jun wu fu 无君无父
wuqiao 吴桥	wuqing 武清
Wu Ruqian 吴汝谦	wuwei 武威
xian xian 献县	Xianfeng 咸丰
xianghe 香河	xiejiao 邪教
Xincheng 心诚	Xu Jiyu 徐继畲
Xu Jingcheng 许景澄	Xu Yongyi 徐用仪
Yamen 衙门	Yan Fu 严复
Yan Shuqing 严书勤	Yan Futong 杨福同
yang guizi 洋鬼子	

Yangren shajin yuyu huanyu yuqing jiuqing 洋人杀尽，欲雨还雨，欲晴就晴

Yang Rui 杨锐

Yao Wenqi 姚文奇

Ye Dehui 叶德辉

Yi 义

Yihequan 义和拳

Yihetuan 义和团

Yilong erhu sanbai yang 一龙，二虎，三百羊

yimin 义民

yimin hui 义民会

Yi MinXin Shi TianYi 依民心 恃天意

yi yi bian xia 以夷变夏

Yongqing 永清

Yude 裕德

Yu Dongchen 余栋臣

yuhuang dadi 玉皇大帝

Yu Lianyuan 余联元

Yumin 愚民

Yulu 裕禄

Yuxian 毓贤

Yuan Chang 袁昶

Yuan Shikai 袁世凯

Yun Yuding 恽毓鼎

Zailan 载澜

Zaiyi 载漪

Zeng Guofan 曾国藩

Zengzi 曾子

ZhangFei 张飞

Zhang Guishan 张桂山

Zhang Rumei 张汝梅

Zhang Zhidong 张之洞

Zhao Sanduo 赵三多

Zhao Shuqiao 赵书翘

Zhao Yun 赵云

Zheng 正

Zhili 直隶

Zhu Hongdeng 朱红灯

Zhu Zumou 朱祖谋

Zhuang Renyong 庄仁勇

Zilihui 自立会

Zongli yamen 总理衙门

Zhuozhu 涿州

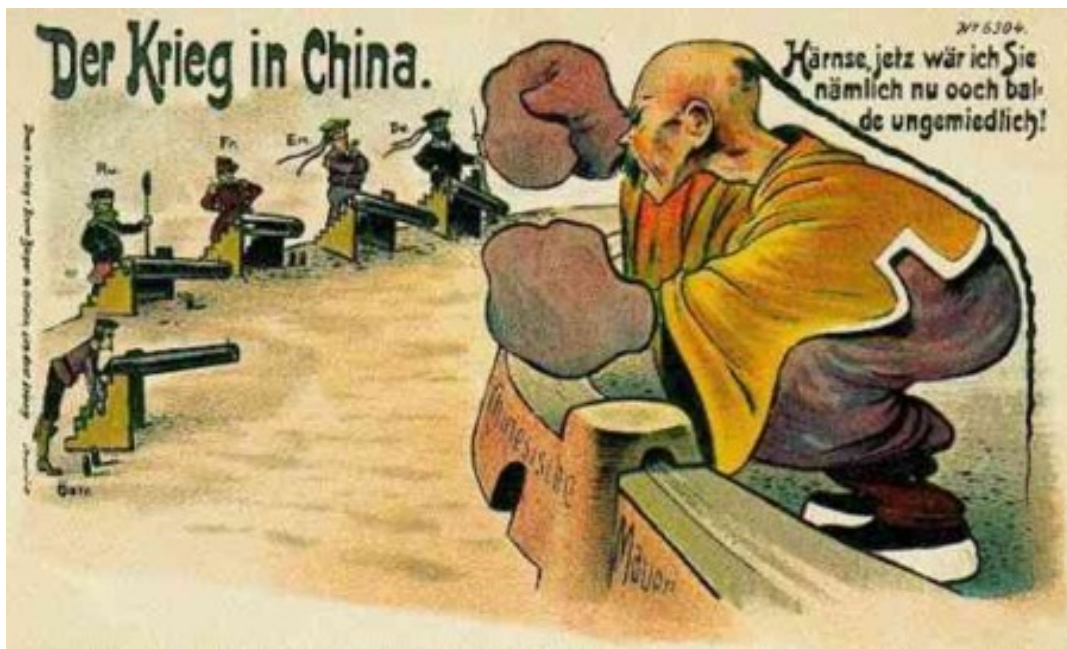
Zilijun 自立军

Zuozongtang 左宗棠

Appendix B: Pictures



The signing of the Boxer Protocol: representatives of China seated on the right side and representatives of 11 countries seated on the left side.
(Courtesy of the Chinese Historical Museum, Beijing)



China with Boxing gloves challenged the armed Western Powers. (This cartoon was published in 1900 in a German journal)



Flag of *yihetuan* (The Boxers United in Righteousness) (courtesy of the Tianjin Historical Museum)



The Boxers in Tianjin. (Picture from *Cambridge Modern Chinese History*)