

human being has a personal liberty. A greater mistake was never made! All the empires and republics of the West have governments of some kind, and the duties of officials, soldiers, and workmen are clearly prescribed. They have also lawyers and judges. Both officials and people are bound by the laws. What the Court recommends can be debated by the Parliament, but what the Parliament decides can be vetoed by the Court. How then can we say that men have personal liberty? Every market town has its elder to keep the peace, every band of robbers its chief. So every Government has its rules. If each individual possessed this "liberty," every family and village would serve its personal ends. The scholar would always sit at meat and do nothing else, the farmer would pay no taxes, the merchant would grow rich beyond bounds, the workman would raise his own wages, the *sans culotte* would plunder and rob, the son would disobey the father, the student would not follow the teacher, the wife would not obey the husband, the low would not defer to the high, the strong would force the weak, and mankind would soon be annihilated. There is not such custom even among the heathen. The English word *liberty*, which means "just in everything and beneficial to all," is mistranslated. The "Liberty Club" that now exists in foreign countries should be called the "Debating Society." If we wish to make China powerful and capable of resisting foreign nations, we must cherish loyalty and righteousness and unite ourselves under the Imperial dignity and power. This is the unchangeable truth of the past and the present, both in China and abroad. If it be urged that we give up the idea of a republic, but establish the Parliament, we reply that our present system is, to all intents and purposes, a republic now. The ancient custom practically meets the case. If the Government encounters difficult questions the Great Ministers are called upon to help settle them; and the people can apprise the rulers of their needs and wants through the appointed channels. The present Dynasty is open and above-board in its dealings, and if our Chinese subjects are loving and loyal there need be no fear that the Emperor will not find out about them and supply all their real wants. The people have the right of discussing questions now, although the rulers retain the prerogative of settling them. This is done with references to the best interests of all. Why is a Parliament demanded then, when we already have this institution in effect? If it were established, pray where would the members come from? Let us wait until our educational institutions are in full swing, and the capabilities of our men are tested by daily experience, and then consider the matter. The present is not the time.

#### 10.5 AND 10.6 BOXER MEMOIRS: ORAL ACCOUNTS OF THE BOXER REBELLION

The Boxer Rebellion was sparked in part by the disruption of life in north China brought about by Western penetration. The coming of missionaries,

the building of railroads, seizures of Chinese territory in Shandong, and other aspects of imperialism outraged north Chinese peasants and caused them to organize to obliterate the foreign presence in Shandong and Hebei. Initially, Qing troops suppressed the Boxers, but in January 1900 the dynasty ordered that the Boxers should not be considered bandits. In the spring of the same year the court, now controlled by the reactionary followers of the empress dowager, suggested that it provisionally approved of the Boxers' activities.

These oral historical accounts of the Boxer Rebellion were compiled by the Modern Chinese History Section of the History Department of Shandong University, Jinan, 1980. Beginning in 1960, the department conducted extensive field investigations, interviewing surviving Boxers and others who experienced the rebellion, until the Cultural Revolution brought the project to a close.

#### 10.5 Several Accounts of "The Shining Red Lantern"

1. The Shining Red Lantern got started a little later than Spirit Boxing. Around here Spirit Boxing started in 1898. The Shining Red Lantern started either in 1899 or 1900. I just remember that it was about a year or so later. When Spirit Boxing was about finished, the Shining Red Lantern started.

The Shining Red Lantern also set up a practice field. Majiafang had one and all the people who went were unmarried girls in their teens and twenties. They also practiced spirit possession. Fenglou had two or three sent there to learn.

In 1900, or maybe 1899, the Shining Red Lanterns took their spears and knives and went to the county seat to register. That is to say, they wanted to report their names and villages to the county magistrate and get him to do something. But the county magistrate didn't pay any attention to them. [Reminiscence of Dong Yuyao, age 86, from Houzhang Village of the Chengguan Commune of Renping County, January, 1966.]

2. When I was ten, I went to Fenglou to watch people play with the Shining Red Lantern. Their practice ground was set up in a house and it was really exciting and crazy! Liu Laizhu's old lady was running things. She was all dressed in red and it was really dazzling. She was teaching a dozen or so seventeen or eighteen year old girls. All these big girls were dressed from head to toe in red. Their footbinding cloths were red, their socks were red, their shoes were red, their pants were red, their shirts were all red, and they wore a red hair wrapping. Why even the little string to tie on the head wrapping was red! They carried red lanterns and waved red fans. Sometimes they practiced during the day and sometimes at night. They were all girls from poor families. Some couldn't afford to buy red

- clothes so they tore off strips of cloth from their bedding and dyed it to make their red costume. [Interview with Liu Shaocheng, age 73, from Wangzhuang Village, the Zhuwang Brigade of Chengguan Commune, Renping County, December 1965.]
3. Fenglou had the Shining Red Lantern. All the Shining Red Lanterns were women who dressed up completely in red. They waved red fans and carried red lanterns and they could get wind or rain or ride the clouds and call in the mist. Two women facing each other would wave their fans and while waving them they could ascend into the sky. That was the kind of thing they did. The elder sister of Wang San of Wangguang village was a Shining Red Lantern. This sister later got married to someone from Nanguan in the city. Before this woman was married, at the age of eighteen, she was a Shining Red Lantern. I used to go to watch the hustle and bustle. [Interview with Zhang Yuqi, age 82, Ma Village, Sanlitun Commune, Renping County, January 1966.]
  4. The Shining Red Lanterns were all women. All of them were unmarried girls about eighteen or nineteen years old. They dressed all in red and when they waved fans or bowls they could go up to heaven. They could ride clouds in the sky and become magic fairies! [Interview with Feng Jinyu, age 84, Feng Village, Wulizhuang Commune, Renping County, January, 1966.]
  5. Girls who joined the Boxers were called "Shining Red Lanterns." They dressed all in red. In one hand they had a little red lantern and in the other a little red fan. They carried a basket in the crook of their arm. When bullets were shot at them they waved their fans and the bullets were caught in the basket. You couldn't hit them! Some were also possessed by spirits and would say that they were Ma Guiying or Hu Jinchan.<sup>5</sup> [Interview with Zhu Yunze, age 82, Zhu village, Yeguantun Commune, Renping County, December 1965.]
  6. In every village there were girls who studied the Shining Red Lantern. In my village there were eight or ten of them. They all carried a red lantern in their right hand and a red fan in the left hand. They'd wave the fans and go up into the sky. They didn't want people to watch and so they'd practice at night when it was dark. There was a song then that went:

"Learn to be a Boxer, study the Red Lantern.  
Kill all the foreign devils and make the churches burn."

[Interview with Li Mingde, age 74, Liuli Temple, Liuli Temple Commune, Gaotang County, January 1966.]

5. Ma Guiying and Hu Jinchan were famous women warriors who were often portrayed in popular dramas in north China.

### 10.6 *Four Accounts of the Fate of Miss Han (Han Guniang)*

1. Miss Han was from Hebei. On the 27th day of the Fifth Moon [in 1900], at the time of the big hemp marketing day, she rode a horse into the town Longgu with about a dozen followers. They stayed in the town and she gave out food. There was a big drought then and so within two or three days, over a thousand people joined her Big Knife Society [Dadaohui]. She took food from wealthy households and passed it out to the masses of the Big Knife Society.

After two or three days, there was a big rainstorm. The next day you couldn't find any Big Knife Society members; they'd all gone. To start with they'd all joined to get something to eat. When it rained, they all went home to plant their fields. [Interview with Yu Keyi, age 78, Juye County, February 1960.]

2. Miss Han was from Long'gu in Zhili [Hebei]. Her family had several hundred *mou* of land. She was invited to come from Hebei by Xu Chuanzhong who was from Big Xu village, located southeast of Shatuji which is east of the Hezhe county seat. Miss Han came to Long'gu on the big hemp marketing day, the 27th day of the Fifth Moon, in 1900. She was riding a big horse and a dozen or so followers came with her. They entered Long'gu blowing bugles and many people ran to watch her. Her followers came from all over Long'gu; there were several thousand of them. She was short and had a long face. Her face was a yellowish ivory color. She was about twenty-five or twenty-six. It was said that she was a Shining Red Lantern. She was very skillful; she could fight with spears or a sword. When she rode on a bench, it would turn into a horse; if she rode a rope, it would change into a dragon; if she sat on a mat it would become a cloud and she could ride the cloud and fly away.

Miss Han was invited by Xu Chuanzhong of Xu Village. She came from the west side. She stayed in Long'gu a half month or a month. After she came she set up a "Righteous Gruel Station." Since there was a big drought that year many people came into the town. But later there wasn't enough rice and so Miss Han asked some families to provide wheat to make steamed buns. Within a few days, four or five thousand people came into town. All of them were Big Knife Society members. In Long'gu, Miss Han sent people to confiscate everything from the Huang Village church and the Ma Village church. Miss Han was the leader. She stayed in town. She didn't go herself. Then there was a big rainstorm and the next day they were all gone. Some said that when she went to Maliang in Henan, they all dispersed. Some said that after the rainstorm, the whole Big Knife Society in Long'gu dispersed because all of them were farmers and they all went home to plant crops. Others said that the very night of the rain-