

Theater of combat: A critical look at the Chinese martial arts

by Charles Holcombe

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Everywhere in China the martial arts either present themselves in the guise of simple exercises or are shrouded in arcane religious mysteries. Western enthusiasts often feel impelled to strip away these religious trappings and construct a version of the martial arts that is neither simple gymnastics nor religion, but emphasizes true hand-to-hand combat skills. The question remains, is this an authentic understanding of the martial arts?

A distinctly Chinese pugilistic style does exist, of course: kung-fu was originally a Chinese word. But the original Chinese definition simply means "ability," with no particular martial arts implications. When the word first appeared in tenuous association with the martial arts, in the context of late-imperial sectarian religion, it still denoted forms of concentration involving the circulation of ch'i, or breath, rather than combat skills. [1] The idea of kung-fu has a more convoluted pedigree than one might otherwise have expected.

Even in China itself the history of the martial arts is obscure. The literate Chinese elite traditionally took a jaundiced view of physical combat and were inclined to ignore the martial arts. It may be true that some scholars have exaggerated the well-known "fundamental Chinese prejudice against the military." As one twelfth-century Chinese author put it, in antiquity "literature and the military were not separated"; but the same writer then concluded by asking, "How could later generations ever see their like again?" [2] The warrior visage of the earliest Chinese upper class had been made over in the Confucian scholar's image well before the birth of Christ, and from then on literary pursuits prevailed over physical ones. [3]

An early seventeenth-century author wrote that "arms are not something that the sage can dispense with," but then he concluded that "the benefit of bows and arrows is to overawe the world." [4] The Chinese elite did not neglect the undeniable strategic importance of the military; it simply scorned the heroic value of individual physical prowess. During the third century, for example, one lofty gentleman, who was active in the politico-military issues of the day refused to speak with the renowned warrior Cleans Fei, saying, "Why should I talk to [mere] soldiers?" [5]

This same Chang Fei who had been scorned as a mere soldier in the third century became one of the "gods" of the nineteenth-century Boxer movement,

after a popular novel apotheosiscrim. The peasant origins of this movement are significant, however, because in the dominant Confucian formulation those who worked with their minds governed those who labored with their bodies, and the upper classes in imperial China did not regard physical prowess highly. [6]

Not only is the written record in China biased towards civil over military virtues, it also speaks with the voice of a government deeply suspicious of the secret societies often affiliated with the martial arts. In the past, whole dynasties had fallen as a result of such movements. Martial artists were, almost by definition, members of the illiterate lower classes and unable to leave written records of their own activities. And, in the eyes of the elite record keepers, martial artists were not merely social inferiors--because of their frequent association with the underworld and seditious activities, they were often regarded as criminals.?

Under the circumstances, the attitude of the government was quite predictable. In the third century a member of the imperial family explained why officials had summoned all men of occult skill to the capital:

The reason we have brought them all together in the Wei Kingdom is honestly because we fear the followers of such men would form underworld connections to take advantage of the multitude, and practice supernatural evils to delude the people.s

During the last dynasty the government prohibited boxing associations, and the attitude of Ch'ing officialdom is captured in the following late-seventeenth-century advice to county magistrates:

In recent days in the regions of Wu and Yueh [ancient names for south China] there is a class of vagrant youths who gather together with the bad children of the educated classes, burn incense and take blood oaths. They publicly invite teachers and study boxing and fencing, tattoo patterns on both arms, and wear short armor down to their waists. Like a pack of foxes and dogs they come and go from tea stores and wine shops, wander like bees and dance like butterflies [a sexual euphemism], and go wild with women in brothels. When they hear of someone with an injustice, indicating that they will seek revenge [for him] they lustily plunder [the accused] If you arrest the gang leader who commits these atrocities, you must, together with public opinion, reject him. Either kill him under the bamboo cane, or report him to your superiors for an execution according to the law. Do not forgive him one tenth of the law; then customs will return to honesty and good men will have peace.

The attitude of the government was hostile, and because martial artists were often members of the illiterate lower classes, they were seldom able to put their case in writing. Even if literate and inclined to brave government sanctions, martial artists were silenced by a strict code of secrecy like the one that bound the early twentieth-century Red Spears Society. [10]

There were practical reasons for silence about membership in a suspect organization, but this tradition of secrecy may also be a legacy of the religious Taoist heritage of the martial arts. Over the ages many peasant rebellions have been religious in inspiration--the nineteenth-century White Lotus, T'ai-p'ing and Boxer movements provide good examples. From early times the texts and formulas of the Taoist immortality cult had been shrouded in the strictest secrecy, and this cult was to have a profound influence on the later martial arts. [11]

This religious heritage, in fact, turns out to be crucial to the development of a conscious martial arts tradition. Before trying to analyze this religious heritage, however, one should survey the history of the technical side of combat skills in China, for the modern martial arts grew out of a distinctive approach to physical combat that has been characteristic of China since antiquity.

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Present-day schools of the martial arts enjoy a venerable ancestry. Illustrations on bronze vessels from as early as 1000 B.C. show figures engaging in what apparently are martial exercises. During the formative age of Chinese civilization, archery and chariot riding were part of the regular education of the upper class, although as early as the time of Confucius (c.551-c.479 B.c.) archery had begun to degenerate into a mere gentleman's pastime. The Confucian thinker Mencius (c.372-289 B.C.) speaks casually of the transmission of archery skills from master to student in a way that foreshadows modern martial arts instruction. [12]

In the first century A.D, a catalog of existing books lists a Methods of Archery of P'eng-men and, even more interesting, a six-section book on boxing (shou.po). [13] Unfortunately these books are lost to us now, but they bespeak a distinguished pedigree for today's martial arts.

An incident recorded in the Hou-Han shu suggests these early Chinese fighting techniques. In the tumultuous era attending the end of the Han dynasty, Lu Pu (d. 198) served as a bodyguard for the warlord Tung Cho.

Once he slightly displeased Cho, and Cho picked up a hand-spear and threw it at him. Pu's fists were nimble and he evaded it [by striking it down], after which he altered his expression and apologized, and Cho's ire dissipated.

Lu Pu bore a grudge, however, and later conspired against Tung Cho, stabbing him to death. [14] This story, presented as sober history, shows that one characteristic move of the Chinese martial arts--striking down a projectile in mid-flight--was in practice by the early fifth century when the Hou. Han shu was written, and so commonplace as to need no comment.

In the fourth century the alchemist Ko Hung wrote in his autobiography that he had received instruction in archery and the use of sword, shield, lance and seven-foot staff, "all of which have abstruse instructions and significant tricks for use against adversaries." Ko, however, dismissed these skills as no more vital than "the unicorn's horn or the phoenix's spur." [15]

A performance suggestive of the contemporary martial arts was made by a late-fifth-century cavalry officer, whose "fists were nimble and who was good at brandishing sword and buckler. Once [Huang] Hui had more than ten men splash him with water, but they were unable to touch him [with the water because he was swinging his sword so quickly]." [16] Like many contemporary kung-fu tales, this story stretches the bounds of credibility somewhat, and has interesting theatrical overtones.

The martial arts have at times been a part of regular military training in China. Ch'i Chi-kuang, for example, instructed his sixteenth-century troops in the use of boxing techniques that strikingly resemble modern T'ai-chi ch'uan. [17] Mere boxing expertise, however, proved inadequate to defeat the Japanese pirates who were terrorizing the coast, and Ch'i concluded by relegating boxing to the role of preparatory physical training: "The art of boxing seemingly is not included among the great war-making skills, but lively hands and feet and a practiced body are a gateway for beginners to

enter the art. Therefore I have retained it." [18]

If the martial arts were not useful in actual warfare, and became less so with the elaboration of ever-more-effective firearms, they still came in handy in private disputes. Ch'ing dynasty law stipulated that anyone guilty of manslaughter in a brawl, "whether the blow was struck with the hand or the foot, with a metal weapon or any other kind of instrument," was subject to the death penalty. [19] The reference to feet, in particular, suggests that martial arts styles may have seen regular use in ordinary fisticuffs.

The evidence is not altogether satisfactory, but is enough to conclude that those combat skills thought of today as the martial arts were practiced widely in China since well before the time of Christ. Boxing skills also exist in the West, however, and it took the influence of religion to raise them to the level of an art or a cult in China.

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Students of the Chinese martial arts like to repeat the legend of Bodhidharma. [20] The story goes that in the early sixth century the Indian monk Bodhidharma founded the outer school--one of the two major divisions in the Chinese martial arts--at the Shao-lin monastery in Honan. The other major division, T'ai-chi ch'uan, is said to have spun off from this later. [21] If true, this would make Shao-lin the oldest such school in China, and Bodhidharma the father of the Chinese martial arts. The martial arts, however, existed long before this time, and it is now clear that this legend is spurious.

Some recent scholars have expressed doubt that Bodhidharma ever lived at all, and the infrequency with which legitimate early historical sources mention him is worthy of note. [22] What is really disputed, however, is not his existence, but his reputation as the first patriarch of Ch'an Buddhism (Japanese Zen). Scholars point out that the central Ch'an idea of meditation had been present since the time of Parthian missionary An Shih kao, at Lo-yang after 148 and "the first undoubtedly historical personality in Chinese Buddhism." [23] There is also no evidence connecting Bodhidharma with any of the eccentricities that later came to characterize the Ch'an sect in particular. [24] So it is unlikely that Bodhidharma really was the first Ch'an patriarch, and "no scholar today takes the tradition very seriously." [25]

One should regard the legend of Bodhidharma as "a literary piece belonging to the genre of hagiography," and posthumously embroidered upon "in order to give more legitimacy to the new school" by later followers." [26] This was a common practice in China, where the stature of a past master measured the prestige of a school. If the legend connecting Bodhidharma with the creation of Ch'an is not born out by the historical record, the one connecting him with Shao-lin boxing is even less substantial. [27]

The legend of Bodhidharma's association with the martial arts is no older than the last imperial dynasty (1644-1912). A book called the I-chin ching, bearing the date 628 and purporting to contain the words of Bodhidharma himself, does make the connection, but scholars cannot verify its existence any earlier than about 1800. It appears to have been a late Ch'ing forgery ascribed to Bodhidharma to enhance its value. [28] Bodhidharma's then-secure reputation as the first patriarch of Ch'an would have made him a natural magnet for such frauds.

Apart from the Bodhidharma legend there are some other stories associating Shao-lin temple with the martial arts. One account has the "monk-soldiers" of Shao-lin playing a part in the stabilization of the early T'ang dynasty in 621. [29] A contemporary stele inscription says these monks "led a crowd

to oppose the false army," and it appears more likely that they raised a private army than that they used any special boxing skills. [30] Vast estates and labor forces were available to many monasteries during this period and it is not at all improbable that Shao-lin temple could have mobilized a large conventional fighting force. [31]

By the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the monks of Shao-lin were reportedly studying boxing, and were renowned for their use of cudgels (kun). In 1561, because of this fame, a Ming general sought out the temple to observe the use of cudgels there, but he was disappointed that the arts he sought had been lost, and he ended up by instructing the monks himself. [32]

If it is necessary to debunk the Bodhidharma myth since it is historically false, we must also be wary of our modern materialist impulse to tear aside the veil of myth to uncover the real martial arts beneath. [33] The truth is that for most Chinese practitioners of the arts the myths were real enough, and spiritual goals, in any case, are more central to the historical martial arts than actual combat skills. [34] Rather than viewing myths and legends as effluvia from the "real martial arts," it is more accurate to see the martial arts as a relatively minor by-product of Buddho-Taoist popular religion and the medieval immortality cult. [35]

Joseph Needham writes, "Chinese boxing . . . probably originated as a department of Taoist physical exercises." [36] In this case, at least, Needham is correct. Techniques of breath control and other exercises designed to facilitate the absorption of ch'i are the bridge that links the Taoist cults of antiquity with twentieth-century martial arts associations. [37]

The earliest antecedents of the kung-fu tradition were probably the fang-shih, "medicine men," who had appeared on the northeast coast of China by the third century B.C. Fang-shih were involved with shamartistic spirit possession and faith healing, and began the long-standing Chinese fascination with the pursuit of immortality. A somewhat hostile account from the first century B.C. says they "made a practice of the Way of Immortality, dissolved their bodies in transformations, and adhered to the affairs of spirits. . . . From this [time] weird sycophantic cultists arose in numbers too great to count." [38] The purpose of the original breathing exercises was to prolong life and attain immortality. As the skeptic Wang Ch'ung (27-c. 100) wrote in the first century:

Taoists sometimes use guiding their ch'i and nourishing their spirits to pass out of this world and not die. They suppose that if you do not shake, bend, and stretch the arteries in your body they will block up and not circulate, and if they do not circulate the accumulation will cause illness and death. This too is false. [39]

The origin of these exercises is lost in the mists of time, but has been claimed to go back as far as the sixth century B.C. [40] The Chuang Tzu, a classical text, records in a somewhat condescending manner:

Huffing and puffing, exhaling the old and inhaling the new, the bear climb and the bird call, is for long life and only that. This is what gentlemen of Taoist exercises, men who nourish their bodies, and those who study the long life of P'eng Tsu like.

The basic text of the Chuang Tzu dates from the third century B.C., but scholars suspect this passage to be a Hah dynasty interpolation. A third-century commentator explained the cryptic remark about bears and birds, pregnant with meaning for the later martial arts, as "drawing in

ch'i like a bear climbing a tree--like a bird's cry." [41]

In the pre-Christian era, seekers after immortality used a variety of approaches, including incantations and sacrifices to the spirits as well as drugs and breathing exercises, to prolong their lives, but from the Hah dynasty on, men cast off their dependence on the spirit world and relied more and more on their own efforts, resulting in an expansion of knowledge about medicinal drugs and therapeutic exercises. [42] Practitioners termed these techniques "nourishing ch'i" (yang ch'i), and the non-medicinal methods included both breath control and sexual and gymnastic exercises. [43]

A typical immortality cult story attributed to the third century tells of a man who fell into a chasm on Mount Sung, the site of the later Shao-lin temple and the central and highest of the five traditional sacred mountains of China. Inside, two men playing the game of go offered him a white liquid which increased the strength of his ch'i ten times. [44]

The medieval cult placed special emphasis on the ingestion of medicines to attain longevity, but over the last thousand years attention shifted away from drugs and towards "internal alchemy" or "breath yogas." [45] This change explains the relative absence of references to chemical formulae in the late-imperial sectarian cults that spawned the martial arts. It may be that a broadening base of peasant believers simply could not afford the expensive ingredients, such as gold, necessary for the old literati elixirs. [46]

More directly ancestral to the modern martial arts, the renowned second-century physician Hua T'o is said to have claimed: "I have an art called the game of five animals. The first is called the tiger, the second the stag, the third the bear, the fourth the ape, and the fifth the bird." [47] History has not preserved the details of this art, but it is descended from Chuang Tzu's "bear climb and bird call," and foreshadows the moves of the later martial arts that were also often patterned sympathetically after animals.

This Chinese Taoist tradition of life-prolonging exercises dovetailed with the Indian yoga introduced into China along with the early centuries of the Christian era. Initial Chinese interest in Buddhism concentrated upon Indian approaches to these same problems, and some of the first texts translated into Chinese from Sanskrit were devoted to meditation, breath control and the secrets for attaining immortality in the next world. [48]

The passage from Buddho-Taoist longevity exercises to the true martial arts is obscure, but is part of the popularization of the old literati immortality cult. This cult was replaced, in a sense, by sectarian religion which involved both a democratization of elite religious beliefs and the revival or continuation of earlier practices, such as the shamanism of the ancient fang-shih with its emphasis on spirit possession. The graceful slow-motion movements of T'ai-chi ch'uan, for example, illustrate the heritage of Taoist therapeutic exercises embedded in the modern martial arts. The basic idea of a "Great Ultimate" (t'ai-chi) itself derives from the pre-Taoist Book of Changes, and the philosophical foundations of T'ai-chi ch'uan are closely linked to Taoism. [49]

This transition to the modern martial arts was accomplished together with the growth of secret apocalyptic religious movements such as the White Lotus Society (Pai-lien she). According to legend, the monk Hui-yuan founded this society in the year 402. The mature religion, however, does not appear to have emerged until the mid-sixteenth century as a blend of popular Buddhism and Taoism--and possibly even Manicheanism--characterized

by belief in an unusual deity known as the "Eternal Mother." This outlaw religion segmented constantly, and by the 1760s some sects had begun to practice the martial arts as part of their spectrum of meditative techniques. [50]

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the repertoire of techniques taught to White Lotus converts included incantations, breath control, therapeutic massage and fighting exercises. White Lotus followers referred to these meditative techniques as kung-fu (skill), but mystical healing remained its principal appeal. [51] Even among the later Boxers--an offshoot from these White Lotus groups--the function of kung-fu was still the religious attainment of supernatural powers. [52]

The role of heterodox religions such as the White Lotus Society in propagating the martial arts is clear. When the Boxer rebellion broke out at the end of the nineteenth century, therefore, Buddhist monks and Taoist priests figured prominently in the movement. [53] The recollections of "Old Lady Ning" testify to the religious orientation of the Boxer exercises:

The Boxer madness came to P'englai. . . The people practiced the arts. They went through the exercises and fell in rigid spells. One would say, "I am Kuan Ping." And another, "I am Sun Ho." [54]

In contemporary Western-influenced China, the immortality cult and the religious side of the martial arts have gone into eclipse, leaving as a residue various practices that can be classified as either medicinal or combat skills. [55] In a sense, then, modern China has returned to the conditions that prevailed in classical times when the skills of gentlemen warriors and Taoist longevity practices may have been two distinct entities. During the two thousand years that have intervened since the classical age, however, contact with religion has altered both the medical and military visions of the martial arts, and the modern attempt to separate them once again is an artificial reflection of the Western point of view.

The effect of religion on the martial arts is evident in the actual behavior of historical martial arts associations, such as the Boxers. The record shows that the religious promise of an ability to transcend the ordinary laws of physics--to work miracles--has been a consistent and critical attraction of the martial arts to its Chinese audience. In the medieval immortality cult the suspension of disbelief had been routine. Remarkable illusions were, cynics suggest, performed to impress people, win converts or simply earn a living. [56] In a classic and well-intentioned example, the Buddhist monk Buddhacinga (Fo-t'u-ch'eng, fl. 310348) converted the barbarian ruler of North China in the early fourth century by making a lotus magically sprout out of a bowl filled with water. The association between popular religion and feats of magic became so strong that in the late seventeenth century it was natural for a Chinese author to suppose a rope-climbing performance by a street magician had some connection with White Lotus sectarianism. [57]

The strange powers supposedly unleashed by Buddho-Taoist religious practices and demonstrated with magic tricks may have led to the delusion of invulnerability that is characteristic of the modern martial arts. In antiquity the Lao Tzu had claimed that an accomplished Taoist "does not meet with rhinoceros or tiger when travelling on land nor is he touched by weapons when charging into an army." [58] By the end of the Han dynasty Taoists had come to believe that they could ward off injury just by carrying a rare sword. In more modern terms, this translated into the belief in being impervious to bullets, a trademark of the martial arts. [59]

In 1900 the senior American diplomat in Peking reported to the secretary of state about the Boxers:

A number of teachers go through the country, gather together the idle young men at the various villages and organize them into companies and pretend if they will, under their direction, go through certain gymnastic movements and repeat certain incantations, that they will become impervious to all weapons and nothing can harm them. [60]

In a somewhat later example, early twentieth-century Red Spear instructors went so far as to test their students by firing rifles at them. [61]

In practice, magical invulnerability has been at the core of the Chinese martial arts. Although "the actual way in which the Boxers fought" is one of the worst-documented aspects of their movement, historians such as Jerome Ch'en speculate that in combat the Boxers may have simply "fought as ordinary soldiers," and historians are aware of other movements which did not scorn the use of modern weaponry when available. [62]

Boxing skills were not nearly as critical to such historical martial arts societies as was their belief in their own invulnerability. It is difficult to accept the idea that the kung-fu practices of Boxers really protected them from gunfire; but in fiction anything is possible, and it was here, in the popular imagination, that the martial arts most fully sprang to life.

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Some martial arts enthusiasts themselves admit that "the relationship between the martial arts and entertainment has a long history in China." [63] Martial entertainments are known from the beginning of the written record. One of China's oldest books, the Book of Songs, documents an early division of theatrical performances into civil and military; the Rites of Chou describes a "dance with bows and arrows"; and texts and stone reliefs from the Hah dynasty attest to martial acrobatic performances. [64] These intertwined traditions of theater and the martial arts came together in their most peculiar form in the "butting game" (chiao-ti hsi) of the Ch'in and Han dynasties.

The eighteenth century T'u-shu chi-ch'eng, an encyclopedia in 10,000 sections (chuan) that is one of the largest and most complete ever compiled anywhere, lists this butting game as its first entry under the subject of boxing. In the original form of this game, people donned cow's horns and butted one another, in commemoration of a mythological event from the time of the Yellow Emperor. [65] Eventually, however, it became a generic name referring to games of combat such as wrestling, acrobatics and other assorted forms of entertainment. This transformation was in progress in 209 B.C., when the second emperor of Ch'in "made merry with games of butting and comedic actors." In this, one of their earliest manifestations, the martial arts appear to have taken the form of faintly ridiculous entertainment. [66]

When true drama evolved in China during the Sung (960-1279) and Yuan (1279-1368) dynasties, military entertainments composed a popular part of the new theatrical tradition. Stage-fighting was a principal attraction in the famous Peking Opera of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and fantastic acrobatic feats were a regular and expected part of performances. [67]

Robert Fortune, an Englishman, witnessed one such performance in rural China sometime between 1853 and 1856, and left the following account:

An actor rushed upon the stage amid the clashing of timbrels, beating of gongs, and squeaking of other instruments. He was brandishing a short sword in each hand, now and then wheeling round apparently to protect himself in the rear, and all the time performing the most extraordinary actions with his feet, which seemed as if they had to do as much of the fighting as the hands. People who have seen much of the maneuvering of Chinese troops will not call this unnatural acting. [68]

As Fortune noted, such stage fighting was an accurate, if exaggerated, portrayal of actual Chinese fighting techniques. It would be a mistake, however, to dismiss this theatrical tradition as a mere imitation of the real martial arts. Image and reality have reflected each other for millennia, and real martial artists have often found the most practical use for their skills in earning a living as entertainers.

In late imperial times Boxers toured the countryside, fighting in competitions at market fairs as a way of life. An eighteenth-century satirical novel, *The Scholars*, provides an excellent description of a typical knight-errant (ywhsia) hero who is "seen at his best in a sword dance," and who turns out to be something of a fraud. Today, in Beijing, martial arts experts can still be found performing breathing exercises and splitting bricks with their heads in sideshows at amusement parks. [69] If the actual moves of the martial arts are enmeshed in the theatrical tradition, the image of the martial arts hero comes from another source altogether. This is the knight-errant, champion of the down-trodden, who roams the land righting injustice with his practiced sword arm. [70]

This heroic figure has an actual historical foundation in the classical philosophical school of Mo Tzu (fifth century B.C.), who opposed offensive warfare and trained his band of followers to go to the aid of states that were being attacked. For centuries after the time of Mo Tzu such men must have existed, since the historian Ssu-ma Ch'ien (c. 145-90 B.C.) included biographies of knights-errant in his monumental work. [71]

Before the T'ang dynasty (617-907) the Chinese literary tradition made no clear distinction between the modern categories of fiction and non-fiction, although elements of what we would call fiction were present. Some of China's earliest attempts at fiction are simply fantastic stories presented in the guise of fact, and the traditional Chinese novel never really shed its historical coloration. The famous *Water Margin* (*Shui-hu chuan*), for example, which so profoundly influenced the young Mao Tse-tung, has been described by an eminent Chinese scholar as "a conscious fabrication of pseudo history." [72]

In accounts of Chinese combat, therefore, exaggeration "in the direction of fantasy" should alert one to the presence of a fictional narrative mode. [73] An excellent early example is the following episode from a first-century text, the *Wa-Yueh ch'un-ch'iu*. In this story, the king of Yueh is instructed in the arts of swords and halberds by a virgin of the "Southern Groves" (Chekiang). She tells him of an encounter with an old man who turned into a white ape when defeated in combat, and, with a heavy dose of Taoist concepts, says: "The Way of hand combat is to realize your spirit within, yet appear calm externally. Look at her and she seems to be a pleasing lady, but snatch at her and she is like a fearsome tiger." The instruction impressed the king, and he subsequently had his troops learn her arts. [74]

Tales of fabulous swordsmen became popular in China around the ninth century. A thousand years later, at the end of the nineteenth century, stories of knights-errant became the chief format for Chinese adventure

fiction, and they remain popular today in television and movies. [75] According to one explanation, the popularity of this genre of fiction in modern times may "reflect the wishful thinking of a weakened nation in the face of foreign powers with superior military strength." [76]

In the last imperial dynasty many of these novels emphasized not just knights-errant but the martial arts in particular, and the tales often became filled with technical descriptions of fights, dwelling on the marvelous skills of the martial arts heroes. [77] At about the same time, warrior monks from Shao-lin temple became stock characters in novels of this genre, and anti-Manchu secret societies capitalized on this reputation by claiming Shao-lin affiliations. The swordsman heroes of these popular entertainments were not only skilled in boxing, fencing and the use of other weapons, but were also invested with fantastic acrobatic abilities that stretch the bounds of credibility. [78]

Fiction and reality bounced back and forth off each other like reflections in a hall of mirrors. The author of a seventeenth century sequel to the renowned Water Margin, for example, based some of his characters on the real-life exploits of folk-hero bandits during the Ming-Ch'ing transition, who in turn had patterned themselves in part after the heroes of the original Water Margin--itself loosely based on history. Fictional characters mirrored actual human beings, and real people then looked to them for role models. [79]

Water Margin became the archetype of peasant rebellions from the late Ming dynasty on. The effect of such entertainments was considerable on the lower classes, who received from them what might be called a "fictional education." [80] For these illiterate and semi-literate Chinese the visions of the past presented by oral storytelling and the theater were their principal source of history. Unable to gain access to the critical historical tradition of the literate high culture--written in a special literary language known as wen-yen--popular Chinese culture recast history in terms of images drawn from more familiar legends and dramas. [81]

Popular movements of the sort that might employ the martial arts exploited these legends to appeal to their lower-class audiences. White Lotus sectarianism, for example, submerged its sermons in the language and atmosphere of folk plays and storytelling. The Boxers cast themselves on theatrical models and "spoke and acted like opera actors." [82] Bandit leaders identified themselves with characters drawn from popular fiction, and even assumed their names. One sectarian leader explained their motivation in 1823 when he said: "In propagating our faith we often meet with the ignorance of common people and so we assumed the identities of characters from the novel Fengshen-yanyi." [83]

This was the environment in which the legend of the martial arts was born, amid an atmosphere heavy with ignorance, religion and the occasional deliberate manipulation of both. The martial arts reflect the escapist fantasies--and lack of critical faculties--of the illiterate common man, but for many ordinary Chinese these legends also provided a paradigm that gave meaning to their lives and invested them with purpose, courage and nobility.

In China the martial arts are far more than just techniques of hand-to-hand combat, although actual fighting skills are indeed traceable far back into antiquity. In China the martial arts are an aspect of religion, with all of the attendant mystery and miracles. At the same time, the public face of the martial arts has often been that of the entertainer, and the self-image of the martial artist has been thoroughly imbued with motifs drawn from fiction and the theater. The martial arts of today must be understood as a

confluence of China's unique approach to physical combat, Buddho-Taoist religion, and theater.

1 See Susan Naquin, *Millenarian Rebellion in China: The Eight Trigrams Uprising of 1813* (New Haven, 1976), 29 and 296, note 87, and "The Transmission of White Lotus Sectarianism in Late Imperial China," *Popular Culture in Late Imperial China*, ed. David Johnson, Andrew J. Nathan and Evelyn S. Rawski (Berkeley, 1985), 275; and Daniel L. Overmyer, *Folk Buddhist Religion: Dissenting Sects in Late Traditional China* (Cambridge, 1976), 119-20.

2 Hung Mai, *Jung-chai sui-pi* (Taipei, 1981), 798. Matsuda Takatomo discusses the difficulties involved in reconstructing the history of the Chinese martial arts in *Chung-kuo wushu shih-lueh* (Taipei, 1986), 1-3. For the prejudice against the military, see David George Johnson, "The Medieval Chinese Oligarchy: A Study of the Great Families in Their Social, Political, and Institutional Setting" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, 1971), [93]. A revisionist reassertion of the importance of the military in Chinese society is in Johanne Menzel Meskil, *A Chinese Pioneer Family: The Lins of Wu-Feng, Taiwan, 1729-1895* (Princeton, 1979), 262-63.

3 See Yu Ying-shih, *Chung-kuo chih-shih chieh-ts 'eng shih Inn (ku-tai p 'ien)* (Taipei, 1980), 8-9; Chou Shao-hsien, *Han-tai che. hsaeh* (Taipei, 1983), 5.

4 Sung Ying-hsing, *T'ien-kung k'ai-wu* (Hong Kong, 1983), 378.

5 Ch'en Shou, *San-kuo chih* (Taipei, 1979), 253.

6 See Jerome Ch'en, "The Nature and Characteristics of the Boxer Movement--A Morphological Study," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 23, pt. 2 (1960): 287-308, esp. 298-99; Vicar Purcell, *The Boxer Uprising: A Background Study* (Hamden, 1974), 228; Ch'u T'ung-tsu, "Chinese Class Structure and its Ideology," in *Chinese Thought and Institutions*, ed. John K. Fairbank (Chicago, 1957), 235-36.

7 J. Ch'eu, "Nature and Characteristics," 287; John W. Dardess, "The Transformations of Messianic Revolt and the Founding of the Ming Dynasty," *Journal of Asian Studies* 29 (May 1970): 540-42.

8 Ch'en Shou, *San-kuo chih*, 209.

9 Huang Liu-hung, *Fu.hui ch'uan-shu* (Tokyo, 1973), 128. See also Huang Liu-hung, *A Complete Book Concerning Happiness and Benevolence: Fu-hui ch'uan-shu, A Manual for Local Magistrates in Seventeenth. Century China*, trans. Djang Chu (Tucson, 1984), 265. For the attitude of the Ch'ing government towards the martial arts, see Jin Chongji, "The Relationship Between the Boxers and the White Lotus Sect," *Chinese Studies in History* 20 (Spring-Summer 1987): 87-97, esp. 96; Lu Yao, "The Origins of the Boxers," *Chinese Studies in History* 20 (Spring-Summer 1987): 42-86, esp. 56. According to Purcell, at the time of the first official mention of the Boxers in 1727 they were accused of "stirring up the 'stupid people,' "and strictly prohibited; see his *Boxer Uprising*, 160-61.

10 J. Ch'en, "Nature and Characteristics," 287. The Red Spear code of silence is described in Elizabeth J. Perry, *Rebels and Revolutionaries in North China, 1845-1945* (Stanford, 1980), 193. Robert Van Gulik avers that the secrecy of transmission of the boxing art accounts for the scarcity of texts, in his *Celebrated Cases of Judge Dee (Dee Goong An): An Authentic Eighteenth-Century Chinese Detective Novel* (New York, 1976), 104-105 and

note.

11 For Taoist secrecy, see James R. Ware, *Alchemy, Medicine and Religion in the China of Av 320: The Nei P'ien of Ko Hung* (New York, 1966), 51, 70 and 175; Michel Strickmann, "The Mao Shah Revelations: Taoism and the Aristocracy," *T'oung Pao* 63 (1977): 26; Nathan Sivin, *Chinese Alchemy: Preliminary Studies* (Cambridge, 1968), 12; Chang Po-tuan, *Understanding Reality: A Taoist Alchemical Classic*, trans. Thomas Cleary (Honolulu, 1987), 86, 117-18.

12 The bronze illustrations are described in Ian Hou-sheng and Lo P'ei-yu, *Ch 'i-kung san-pai wen* (Canton, 1983), 2, 14. See also *The Analects of Confucius*, trans. Arthur Waley (New York, 1938), 95, 98; *Mencius, The Four Books*, trans. James Legge (Taipei, 1979), 749-52.

13 For the P'eng-men she.fa, see Wang Hsin-wu, *T'ai-chi ch 'aan-fa chir~g.i* (Hong Kong, 1962), 1. For the book on boxing, see Matsuda Takatomo, *Chung-ching-i wu-shu shih-lueh*, 4-5.

14 Fan Yeh, *Hou. Han shu* (Beijing, 1965), 2445.

15 Ware, *Alchemy, Medicine and Religion* 19. See also Ko Hung, *Pao-p'u tzu* (Taipei, 1984), wai p'ien, 50.7a '.

16 Wang Chin-jo et al., eds., *Ts'e-fu yuan-kuei*, 20 vols. (Taipei, 1981), 10,034.

17 Stanley E. Henning, "The Chinese Martial Arts in Historical Perspective," *Military Affairs* 45 (1981): 175. Ch'i's techniques are also discussed in Ray Huang, *1587, A Year of No Significance: The Ming Dynasty in Decline* (New Haven, 1981), 168. See also Herbert A. Giles, *Adversaria Sinica* (Shanghai, 1914), 133.

18 Ch'i Chi-kuang, extracted in *Ku-chin t'u-shu chi-ch'eng*, 800 vols. (n.p., 1934), chuan 810, 487:62a. See also Giles, *Adversaria Sinica*, 137. For the inadequacy of boxing against the Japanese pirates, see Huang, *1587, A Year of No Significance*, 165.

19 Huang Liu-hung, *Complete Book Concerning Happiness*, 328, 334.

20 For a good example, see Howard Reid and Michael Croucher, *The Fighting Arts: Great Masters of the Martial Arts* (New York, 1983), 20 and 26-27.

21 See, for example, Wang Hsin-wu, *T'ai-chi ch'uan-fa ching-i*, 2.

22 For doubts as to Bodhidharma's existence, see Matsuda Takatomo, *Chung-kuo wu-shu shih-lueh*, 47. The only reference to Bodhidharma that I have been able to find in a legitimate early text is the brief one in the *Lo-yang ch'ieh-lan chi* of c. 547. His name is also mentioned in an inscription at Shao-lin temple dated 728, transcribed in Tonami Mamoru, "Su gaku shorinji hi ko," *Chugoku kizokusei shakai no kenkyu*, ed. Kawakatsu Yoshio and Tonami Mamoru (Kyoto, 1987), 744.

23 Erik Zurcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China: The Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China* (Leiden, 1959), 32-33; Tsukamoto Zenryu, "The Early Stages in the Introduction of Buddhism Into China (Up to the Fifth Century A.D.)," *Cahiers d'histoire mondiale* 5 (1960): 557.

24 See Pa-chou, "Ch'an-tsung yu P'u-t'i-ta-mo," *Ch'an-tsung shih-shih k'ao-pien*, ed. Chang Man-t'ao (Taipei, 1977), 121.

25 Fung Yu-lan, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy*, ed. Derk Bodde (New York, 1948), 255-56.

26 Bernard Faure, "Bodhidharma as Textual and Religious Paradigm," *History of Religions* 25 (1986): 191, 197. See also Heinrich Dumoulin, *A History of Zen Buddhism*, trans. Paul Peachoy (New York, 1963), 67-69; Pa-chou, "Ch'an-tsung yu P'u-t'i-ta-mo," 115.

27 The martial arts legend of Bodhidharma is thoroughly debunked in Henning, "Chinese Martial Arts," 176.

28 Matsuda Takatomo, *Chung-kuo wu-shu shih-lueh*, 46-47 The I-chin ching is not, for example, listed in the index to an exhaustive imperial bibliography completed in 1782, Wang Yun-wu, comp., *Hsu-hsiu ssu-k'u ch'uan-shu t'i-yao*, 13 vols. (Taipei, 1972), 13:118, although this may simply reflect the book's heterodox status.

29 Ku Yen-wa, *Jih-crih-lu chi-shih* (Shanghai, 1985), 2167-68. An imperial message of commendation for the temple's cooperation was inscribed on a stele at Shao-lin temple, and is described in Tonami Mamoru, "Su gaku shorinji hi ko," 720. Evidently, in the fourth month of 621 the monks overthrew the city of Huan-chou, southeast of Lo-yang, and returned it to the state. See pages 735-38.

30 Tonami Mamoru, "Su gaku shorinji hi ko," 743.

31 For the land and labor available to many monasteries during this period, see T'ao Hsi-sheng and Wu Hsien-ch'ing, *Nan-pei-ch'ao thing-cri shih* (1937; reprint, Taipei, 1979), 144, 164-65. At the beginning of the T'ang, Shao-lin monastery itself claimed a grant of some 1500 acres from the defunct Sui state. See Tonami Mamoru, "Su gaku shorinji hi ko," 724.

32 Matsuda Takatomo, *Chung-kuo wu-shu shih-lueh*, 52-55; Henning, "Chinese Martial Arts," 175.

33 A good example of this mistaken approach, which seems to come naturally to Americans, is Henning's otherwise outstanding essay, "Chinese Martial Arts," esp. 173.

34 In a parallel fashion, recent scholarship has demonstrated that Taoist meditation was more religious in purpose than physiological. See Sivin, "Science and Medicine in Imperial China--The State of the Field," *Journal of Asian Studies* 47 (February 1988): 41-90, esp. 57.

35 Cleary, in his edition of Chang Po-tuan's *Understanding Reality*, 10, 19.45, 53-54, 63, 154-55, notes that mental and physical exercises were dismissed as mere secondary techniques--sidelines rather than central concerns--by many Taoists. For a summary of the growth of the immortality cult, see Sivin, *Chinese Alchemy*, 25-26; Herrlee G. Creel, *What is Taoism? And Other Studies in Chinese Cultural History* (Chicago, 1970), 7ff.; and Holmes Welch, *The Parting of the Way: Lao Tzu and the Taoist Movement* (Boston, 1957), 88-163.

36 Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilization in China*, 6 vols. (Cambridge, 1954-1986), 2: 145-46.

37 Taoist exercises were the beginning of the Chinese martial arts, according to Wang Hsin-wu, *T'ai-chi ch'uan-fa ching-i*, 1. Donald Harper, "The Sexual Arts of Ancient China as Described in a Manuscript of the Second Century B.C.," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 47 (December 1987): 539-93, esp. 563-64, observes that all of these ancient methods of

physical cultivation revolved around the absorption of ch'i. In the early twentieth century breath control was still an important part of the martial arts training of the Red Spears Society, according to Perry, *Rebels and Revolutionaries*, 195.

38 Ssu-ma Ch'ien, *Shih-chi* (Beijing, 1959), 1368-69. For the fang-shih, see also Ku Ming-chien (Ku Chieh-kang), *Ch'in-Han te fang-shih yu ju-sheng* (1933; reprint, Taipei, 1985), 11; Colin A. Ronan, *The Shorter Science and Civilization in China: An Abridgement of Joseph Needham's Original Text*, 3 vols. (Cambridge, 1978), 1: 107; *Doctors, Diviners, and Magicians of Ancient China: Biographies of Fang-shih*, trans. and comp. Kenneth J. DeWoskin (New York, 1983), 1ff., 33.

39 Wang Ch'ung, *Lun Heng* (Taipei, 1981), 7.10b.

40 Needham, *Science and Civilization* 5:142. See also Lin Hou-sheng and Lo P'ei-yu, *Ch'i-kung san-pai wen*, 4.

41 Ch'ien Mu, ed., *Chuang tzu tsuan-chien*, rev. ed. (Hong Kong, 1960), 122. See also Chou Shao-hsien, *Han-tai che-hsueh*, 89; Li Feng-mao, "Hsi k'ang yang-sheng ssu-hsiang chih yen-chiu," *Ching-i wen-li hsueh-yuan hsueh-pao* 2 (1979): 374-66, esp. 54.

42 For the increasing reliance on personal effort, see Mugitani Kunio, "Shoki dokyo ni okeru kyusai shiso," *Toyo bunka* 57 (1977): 27-28, 35. The growth in medical knowledge is discussed in Li Feng-mao, "Hsi K'ang yang-sheng ssu-hsiang chih yen-chiu," 42. A manuscript interred in 168 B.C., however, already contained a chart of color illustrations of tao-yin physical exercises. See Harper, "Sexual Arts," 555-56; and Lin Hou-sheng and Lo P'ei-yu, *Ch'i-kung san-pai wen*, 5.

43 Needham, *Science and Civilization* 2: 143. A good description of Taoist exercises can be found in Henri Maspero, *Le taoisme et les religions chinoises* (Paris, 1971), 380, 578-86. Harper, "Sexual Arts," *passim*, provides details of early sexual techniques.

44 Ying Shao, *Feng-eu t'ung-i* (Taipei, 1976), 10.1b; Li Fang et al., eds., *T'ai. p'ing yu-lain*, 7 vols. (Taipei, 1980), 314.

45 Sivin, *Chinese Alchemy*, 30-31, 55n; Sivin, "Science and Medicine," 55; and Welch, *Parting of the Way*, 130-32.

46 In the fourth century the alchemist Ko Hung himself could not afford these ingredients. See Ware, *Alchemy, Medicine and Religion*, 70.

47 Wei Chu-t'ing, ed., *I-shih chi-shih* (Taipei, 1981), lei 15, p. 5. See also DeWoskin, *Doctors, Divines and Magicians*, 149.

48 Chang Chung-yuan, "An Introduction to Taoist Yoga," *The Review of Religion* 20 (1956): 133-35, 145; Needham, *Science and Civilization* 5:283. See also Paul Demieville, "La penetration du bouddhisme dans la tradition philosophique chinoise," *Cahiers d'histoire mondiale* 3 (1956-1957): 22.

49 Overmyer, *Folk Buddhist Religion*, 163-64. For spirit possession in modern China, see Edwin D. Harvey, "Shamanism in China," in *Studies in the Science of Society*, ed. George Peter Murdock (New Haven, 1937), 256-58. For t'ai-chi, see "Fang t'ai-chi ta-shih Wang P'ei-sheng," *Jen-min jih-pao* (overseas ed.), 3 August 1987, 2. Chang Po-tush, *Understanding Reality*, 14-15, lists T'ai-chi ch'uan as a Taoist practice. The technique is discussed at length in Linda Chih-ling Koo, "Nourishment of Life: The Culture of Health in Traditional Chinese Society" (Ph.D. diss., University

of California, 1976), 110-16. However, Sivin, "Science and Medicine," 68, observes that early Taoist exercises resemble yoga more closely than they do T'ai-chi ch'uan. For the source of the idea of t'ai-chi in the Book of Changes, see Zurcher, *Buddhist Conquest*, 88.

50 The formation of the White Lotus Society in 402 A.D. is discussed in Zurcher, *Buddhist Conquest*, 219. An excellent description of this religion can be found in Naquin, "Transmission of White Lotus Sectarianism," 255ff. See also Naquin, *Millenarian Rebellion*, 8; David K. Jordan and Overmyer, *The Flying Phoenix: Aspects of Chinese Sectarianism in Taiwan* (Princeton, 1986), 16; Lloyd E. Eastman, *Family, Fields, and Ancestors: Constancy and Change in China's Social and Economic History, 1550-1949* (New York, 1988), 217-21. The Manichean component of White Lotus sectarianism is discussed in T'ang Ch'ang-ju, *Wei chin nan-pei-ch'ao shih-lun shih-i* (Beijing, 1983), 206; Dardess, "Transformations of Messianic Revolt," 540.

51 Naquin, *Millenarian Rebellion*, 24-25, 27, 80-31; Naquin, "Transmission of White Lotus Sectarianism," 275; Eastman, *Family, Fields, and Ancestors*, 220.

52 For the White Lotus origins of the Boxers, see Immanuel C. Y. Hsu, "Late Ch'ing Foreign Relations, 1866-1905," in *Late Ch'ing, 1800-1911, Part Two*, ed. Lui Kwang-ching and Fairbank, vol. 11 of *Cambridge History of China*, ed. Fairbank and Denis Twitchett (Cambridge, 1980), 117-18; Purcell, *Boxer Uprising*, 161-62

53 Lu Yao, "Origins of the Boxers," 66-67.

54 Ida Pruitt, *A Daughter of Hah: The Autobiography of a Chinese Working, Woman* (1945; reprint, Stanford, 1967), 151.

55 The erosion of belief in immortality, and residual concern for health, is described in Koo, "Nourishment of Life," 71-72. A strong affirmation of the medical purpose of the martial arts can be found in Lin Hou-sheng and Lo P'ei-yu, *Ch'i-kung san-pai wen*, 1.

56 Van Gulik, "The Mango 'Trick' in China: An Essay on Taoist Magic," *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan*, 3rd ser., 3 (1954): 118; Ware, *Alchemy. Medicine and Religion*, 54; Kominami Ichiro, *Chugoku no shinwa to monogatari--ko shosetsu shi no tenkai* (Tokyo, 1984), 168-69.

57 Fang et al., eds., *T'ai-p'ing kuang-chi* (Beijing, 1981), 573. Jonathan D. Spence, *The Death of Woman Wang* (New York, 1978), 26-30.

58 Lao Tzu: *Tao Te Ching*, trans. D.C. Lau (Harmondsworth, 1963), 111. Compare Chang Po-tuan, *Understanding Reality*, 146, and see also Arthur Waley, *The Way and Its Power: A Study of the Tao Te Ching and Its Place in Chinese Thought* (Guildford, 1934), 118.

59 Li Feng-mao, "Liu-ch'ao ching chien ch'uan-shuo yu tao-chiao fa-shu ssu-hsiang," in *Chung. kuo ku-tien hsiao-shuo yen-chin chuan-chi 2* (Taipei, 1980), 1-28, esp. 24; Purcell, *Boxer Uprising*, 236-39, ascribes the Boxer belief in invulnerability to Taoist religion. An eighteenth-century example is presented in Naquin, "Transmission of White Lotus Sectarianism," 278; a nineteenth-century example is discussed in Perry, *Rebels and Revolutionaries*, 110; and the delusions of the Boxers are described in Jin Chongji, "Relationship Between the Boxers," 87-88, and Hsu, "Late Ch'ing Foreign Relations," 117-18.

60 See document no. 15 in Jules Davids, ed., *Boxer Uprising*, vol. 5 of *American Diplomatic and Public Papers: The United States and China*, Series

III--The Sino-Japanese War to the Russo-Japanese War, 1894-1905, ed. Davids (Wilmington, Del., 1981), 40.

61 This practice is described in Perry, *Rebels and Revolutionaries*, 186-97.

62 J. Ch'en, "Nature and Characteristics," 290. The Peking Gazette described Boxers fighting side by side with regular Imperial troops, being issued firearms, and apparently even using artillery. See extracts in document no. 58, Davids, *Boxer Uprising*, 118-21. The weaponry of the Red Spears ranged from spears to Mausers, according to Perry, *Rebels and Revolutionaries*, 199.

63 Reid and Croucher, *Fighting Arts*, 62, 73-75.

64 The division into civil and military entertainments is described in DeWoskin, "On Narrative Revolutions," *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews* 5 (1983): 29-45, esp. 39-41. The dance can be found in Yu Shih-nan, *Pei-t'ang shu-ch'ao* (Taipei, 1974), 476. For the Han acrobatics, see W. Eberhard, "Thoughts About Chinese Folk Theatre Performances," *Oriens Extremus*, no. 1 (1981): 5-7.

65 Ku-chin t'u-shu chi-ch'eng, vol. 487, chuan, 810, 61b. The encyclopedia is described in Ssu-yu Teng and Knight Biggerstaff, eds., *An Annotated Bibliography of Selected Chinese Reference Works*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge, 1950), 95. See also Giles, *Adversaria Sinica*, 133; Li Fang, et al., *T'ai-p'ing ya-lan*, 3483.

66 Ku-chin t'u-shu chi-ch'eng, vol. 487, chuan 810, 61b. See also William Dolby, *A History of Chinese Drama* (New York, 1976), 3; and Matsuda Takatomo, *Chung-kuo wu-shu shih-lueh*, 265, table.

67 James I. Crump, "The Elements of Yuan Opera," *Journal of Asian Studies* 17 (May 1958): 417-34, esp. 421, 433; James J. Y. Liu, *The Chinese Knight-Errant* (Chicago, 1967), 191.

68 Robert Fortune, *A Residence Among the Chinese: Inland, On the Coast, and at Sea* (1857; reprint, Taipei, 1971), 258.

69 Wu Ching-tzu, *The Scholars*, trans. Yang Hsien-yi and Gladys Yang (Beijing, 1973), 139-40 and 142-45. See also Naquin, *Millenarian Rebellion*, 32; Purcell, *Boxer Uprising*, 162; and Fred C. Shapiro, "Letter From Beijing," *The New Yorker*, 28 December 1987, 96.

70 Liu, *Chinese Knight-Errant*, xii; Robert Ruhlmann, "Traditional Heroes in Chinese Popular Fiction," in *Confucianism and Chinese Civilization*, ed. Arthur F. Wright (Stanford, 1959), 152.

71 See Milton M. Chiu, *The Tao of Chinese Religion* (Lanham, Md., 1984), 330-32; and Liu, *Chinese Knight-Errant*, 13-17.

72 C. T. Hsia, *The Classic Chinese Novel: A Critical Introduction* (New York, 1968), 75. For Shui-hu chuan's influence on the young Mao, see Edgar Snow, *Red Star Over China*, rev. ed. (New York, 1968), 133.

73 Hsia, "The Military Romance: A Genre of Chinese Fiction," in *Studies in Chinese Literary Genres*, ed. Cyril Birch (Berkeley, 1974), 345 and note 10.

74 Chao Yeh, ed., *Wu-Yueh ch'un-ch'iu* (Taipei, 1980), 9.6a-6b. For an analysis of this text, see David Johnson, "The Wu Tzu-hsu Pien-wen and Its Sources: Part I," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 40 (June 1980): 83-156, esp. 151.

75 Liu, *Chinese Knight-Errant*, 81; Hsia, *Classic Chinese Novel*, 331 notes 48 and 49; Hsia, "Military Romance," 384.

76 Liu, *Chinese Knight-Errant*, 135. See also J. Ch'en, "Nature and Characteristics," 291.

77 Liu, *Chinese Knight-Errant*, 117, 134-35; Ruhlmann, "Traditional Heroes," 148. For an example in an eighteenth-century detective novel, see Van Gulik, *Celebrated Cases*, 104-105.

78 Matsuda Takatomo, *Chung-kuo wu-shu shih-lueh*, 60, 63. The secret brotherhood of the Triads, for example, claimed to have been founded by Shao-lin monks of Fukien in 1674, according to Eastman, *Family, Fields, and Ancestors*, 222. See also Ruhlmann, "Traditional Heroes," 147. An extreme example of fantastic powers in the martial arts can be found in Wu Ch'eng-en's sixteenth-century novel, *Hsi-yu chi*, translated by Arthur Waley as *Monkey* (New York, 1943), *passim*, but esp. 29-30.

79 Ellen Widmer, *The Margins of Utopia: Shut-ha hou-chuan and the Literature of Ming Loyalism* (Cambridge, 1987), 60-61.

80 Wang Li-Ch'i, "Shui-hu yu nung-min ke-ming," *Shui-hu yen-chiu lun-wen chi* (Beijing, 1957), 64ff, esp. 71.

81 This idea is developed in Ruhlmann, "Traditional Heroes," 123-25, and presented forcefully in J. Ch'en, "Nature and Characteristics," 291-92 and note 4, and in Purcell, *Boxer Uprising*, 223.

82 J. Ch'en, "Nature and Characteristics," 291-92, note 4, and 299. See also Naquin, *Millenarian Rebellion*, 19.

83 Lu Yao, "Origins of the Boxers," 64. See also Perry, *Rebels and Revolutionaries*, 64.