

Research Institute of Cultural Heritage

**The Marsh and the Bush:
Outlaw Hero Traditions of China and the West**

Ye Zhang

This thesis is presented as
part of the requirements for
the award of the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
of
Curtin University of Technology

November 1998

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

During the three and half years of writing this thesis, I have received help from many people to whom I wish to express my thanks. I am grateful to my supervisor Dr Graham Seal for his suggestions, critical opinions and timely instructions. My associate supervisor Prof. Brian Dibble has given valuable guidance and help, especially during the six months when Graham was away. The comments of my other associate supervisor, Mrs Innes Tyson, on the first draft of my thesis proved very helpful. I am greatly indebted to Professor Ian Reid, Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Curtin University of Technology, for his introducing me into this wonderful university, encouraging me constantly to probe in this fascinating field, and helping me out of any difficulty that I have met in both my academic life and daily life. Professor David Dolan, Director of the Research Institute of Cultural Heritage, has given me enormous help in every possible way and manner. I wish to express my heartfelt thanks to Ms Linda Browning, who has been a kind friend and has given me very much help ever since the first day we met three years ago. Mrs Annette Ritchie has given me assistance whenever I needed it. Dr Patrick Bertola's help when I first arrived and his understanding of my changing the research topic have not only impressed me but also made me feel true kindness that exists in people's relationship.

I thank my friends in China for their tireless support in my research, including those working at universities, libraries and research institutes. Since they are too many to list here, I just want to mention Yan Shenghang, lecturer at Jilin university, in particular, who has sent me many of the materials I needed for my research.

ABSTRACT

This thesis makes a comparative study of cultural differences and similarities between Chinese and Western outlaw heroes. It examines this cultural phenomenon from eight angles: the outlaw hero as constructed by history, literature and folklore; outlaws constructed as archetypal heroes; social and cultural contexts; outlaw heroes and revolution; a comparative case study of outlaws in Northeast China and Australia; underground cultural products (the “lore” and “law”); ballads and proverbs reflecting values of outlaw heroism; and the fate of outlaws and the outlaw hero.

Historical and folkloric explanatory frameworks are applied to outlaw hero traditions. Archetypal outlaw heroes and their successors, praised or criticised, are all constructed through a long process which combines reality recreated and fiction made real. Characteristics of archetypal outlaw heroes are inherited by later outlaws in China and the West. Though there are common codes and values of outlaw heroes in China and the West, different attributes are manifested in their attitudes towards brotherhood, organisation and women, and also in bandit sources and bandit categories.

Western outlaw heroes are seldom involved in revolution, but their Chinese counterparts are connected with the Taiping revolutionary movement, the republican revolution and the Communist revolution. Some Communists are no more than outlaw heroes in the eyes of the poor and bandits in the eyes of the Kuomintang. However, the alliance between outlaw heroes and revolutionaries is a fragile one.

Northeast China and Australia have some parallels in their outlaw hero traditions. Convicts and immigrants play an important part in frontier banditry. The environment of both provides fertile soil for banditry and immigration. Among modern outlaws in Northeast China are chivalrous bandits and bandits who heroically fight against foreign Invaders. Bandit culture is valuable heritage in China. Bandits' ceremonies, argot, internal regulations, worship and superstition, and routine and recreational activities are all important facets of Chinese outlaw culture.

Outlaw heroes never bend their bodies under pressure; they rebel rather than wait for death; and they never rob the locals. This is all reflected in bandit ballads, proverbs and other lore discussed in the thesis. Death is what most outlaws have to face, and how to face it is a significant element in the construction of the outlaw hero. The arguments of this thesis are based on folkloric, historic and literary sources, many of which are here translated into English for the first time.

ABBREVIATIONS

- ACD: *Australian Chinese Daily*
- ACDNI: *A Chinese Dictionary of New Idioms*
- ADDEIMC: *A Dictionary of Difficult Expressions in Modern Chinese*
- ASBG: *A Summary of Bandit Gangs*
- BLRU: *Bai Lang's Righteous Uprising: Historical Materials on the Republic of China*
- CBC: Compiling Board of Cihai
- CDN: *Central Daily News*
- CFASS: China Folk Arts Study Society
- CGACTOA: The Compilation Group of "Ancient Chinese Thoughts on Administration"
- CGBHL: The Compilation Group of The Biography of He Long of the Headquarters of the General Staff
- CKACH: *Common Knowledge of Ancient Chinese History*
- CPC: The Communist Party of China
- EBHA: The Editorial Board of Historical Accounts of Past Events of Hebei Province
- HMANA: *Historical Materials about the Nian Army*
- KMT: Kuomintang
- LITIAAS: The Liangshan Investigation Team of the Institute of Archaeology of Academia Sinica
- LLMZT: *Long Live Mao Zedong Thought*
- MCD: *The Modern Chinese Dictionary*
- MHGHP: The Modern History Group of Hunan Provincial Philosophy and Social Sciences Research Institute
- MZF: *Mao Zedong's Footprints*
- PJU: *The Pingjiang Uprising*
- PLA: The People's Liberation Army
- PRC: People's Republic of China
- QQLABU: Qu Qiubai Literature Association of Beijing University
- RTAV: *Re-examination: Traditions and Values*
- SCB: *Selected Chinese Ballads*
- TAHU: *The Autumn Harvest Uprisings*

TMD: *The Macquarie Dictionary*

**TMEAE: *The Macquarie Encyclopedia of Australian Events: Events That Shaped
the History of Australia***

**TTMBS: *Taking Tiger Mountain by Strategy – A Modern Revolutionary Peking
Opera***

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments	i
Abstract	ii
Abbreviations	iv
Table of Contents	vi
Introduction	1
Chapter 1 - The Outlaw Hero as Constructed by History, Literature and Folklore	8
Historical Explanatory Frameworks	8
Folkloric Explanatory Frameworks	21
Heroism and Outlaw Heroism	25
The Outlaw Hero in Folklore	31
Chapter 2 - Outlaws Constructed As Archetypal Heroes	42
Archetypal Outlaw Heroes and Their Successors	42
Praise or Censure, and A Melodramatic Episode	49
The Process of Constructing Archetypal Outlaw Heroes	53
Folkloric Constructedness: Reality Recreated or Fiction Made Real	59
Characteristics and Ethics of Archetypal Outlaw Heroes	66
Chapter 3 - Social and Cultural Contexts	74
Continuities of Chinese Outlaw Tradition	74
Codes and Values	78
Brotherhood Vs Friendship	81
Organisations Vs Loners and Small Gangs	84
Attitudes Towards Women	89
Bandit Sources	91
Bandit Categories	96
Outlaw Heroes as Avengers and Haiduks	105
Chapter 4 - Outlaw Heroes and Revolution	112
The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom	113
The Republican Revolution	118
The Communist Revolution	125
Outlaw Heroes as Communists	133
A Fragile Alliance	139
Chapter 5 - A Comparative Case Study: Northeast China and Australia	145
Convicts and Immigrants: Frontier Banditry	145
Environment and Immigration	151
Modern Outlaws in the Northeast	156
Outlaw Heroes Against Foreign Invasion	162

Bandits and Chivalrous Bandits	170
Zhang Zuolin: Hero or Villain	172
Chapter 6 - Underground Cultural Products: The “Lore” and “Law”	179
Ceremonies	180
Bandit Argot	185
Internal Regulations	195
Objects of Worship and Superstition	199
Routine and Recreational Activities	211
Chapter 7 - A Rabbit Does Not Eat the Grass Outside Its Own Burrow:	
Ballads and Proverbs	215
Never Bend Their Bodies: Positive Bandit Ballads	215
Rebel Rather Than Wait for Death	225
Negative Bandit Ballads	229
A Good Man Protects Three Villages	232
The Trade Is Low, But the People in It Are Not Low	241
Chapter 8 - The Fate of Outlaws and the Outlaw Hero: Death and Life	245
Death and How to Face It	245
Surrender, Amnesty and Enlistment	252
Factors That Threaten the Life of A Bandit	258
Prey of the Government	269
Conclusion	272
Appendix I	282
Appendix II	285
Bibliography	290

The Marsh and the Bush:

The Chinese and Western Outlaw Hero Traditions

Introduction

This thesis is a comparative study of similarities and differences in value, principle, culture and behaviour that contribute to the “constructedness” of Chinese outlaw heroes and Western outlaw heroes. Particular attention is paid to the Chinese outlaw hero tradition manifested by the outlaws of the Marsh¹ and carried forward by their successors in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. When discussing Western traditions, this thesis places emphasis on the Australian tradition manifested by Ned Kelly, and on Robin Hood, as the traditional outlaw hero.

The outlaw hero tradition of Anglophone countries has been discussed repeatedly, but that of China has not yet been researched. The topic was taboo for long periods, and no historian, folklorist or critic in China felt inclined to explore it in depth. Even nowadays, the topic is still sensitive. Nevertheless, the book titled *True Records of Modern Chinese Bandits*,² with various kinds of material about bandits in China in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries, is a good reference book for the study of bandits. Cao Baoming’s findings of Northeast bandits provide us with some material for the study of bandits in that region. Billingsley’s research on bandits of Republican China gives some insight into banditry itself but not outlaw heroism. This thesis traces and explains the origin, development and formation of this tradition and analyses its important elements by using tools provided by socioeconomic, sociocultural and sociopsychological theories.

As well as providing a comparative study of the Chinese, Australian (and so, Anglophone) outlaw hero, this thesis outlines the extent to which the Chinese bandit

¹ “The outlaws of the Marsh” is used in this thesis as a generic term referring to the one hundred and eight outlaw heroes depicted in *Shui Hu Zhuan*, who are also known as *Liangshan Haohan* (Heroes in the Liangshan Mountain, which is located in Liangshan County, Shandong province).

² The Editorial Board of Historical Accounts of Past Events of Hebei Province (EBHA) (Ed.), *Jindai Zhongguo Tufei Shilu* (True Records of Bandits in Modern China) (*TRBIMC*), Volumes 1-3, Qunzhong Publishing House, Beijing, 1992. Hereafter the editors will be referred to as EBHA.

was very much a cultural construct. The gap between reality and fiction and that between folklore and history are large but revealing. Examination of this gap provides an insight into the cultural processes involved in the “invention” of the outlaw hero. This invention, or construction, the term preferred in this thesis, is a combination of political, economic, literary and folkloric influences that produce the strong and recognisable tradition of the outlaw hero, which can be traced to the earliest period of Chinese history.

The existence of outlaw heroes in almost all cultures in the world is a peculiar cultural phenomenon in human heritage that interests ordinary people as well as historians, literary practitioners, artists, folklorists, anthropologists, sociologists and even politicians. By “a peculiar cultural phenomenon”, we mean, first, that outlaw heroism implies a special concept of the heroic. Outlaw heroes are a group of heroic people denied by the authorities, the rich, the representatives of law and order, but recognised by their sympathisers and supporters, very often the poor and the oppressed. Consequently outlaw heroes, unlike national heroes, war heroes or moral heroes, always leave room for argument about the values that they embody. Second, each nation has brought forth its unique outlaw heroes who reflect cultural, social and economic differences. Third, outlaw heroes live in a narrow space between various forces and never become mainstream heroes, though they may feel free in this specific space, which Graham Seal defines as “the grey area between criminality and political or pre-political protest” (Seal 1996, 2). Seal argues that the construct of the outlaw hero consists of three aspects: first, the outlaw hero is a folk, but not an official, hero; second, the outlaw hero is an ambivalent combination of a criminal and hero; third, the outlaw hero exists in all times and all cultures in history.

In the Anglophone tradition, Robin Hood, the medieval English outlaw of Sherwood Forest, has been acclaimed by the folk as a hero for generations and the pattern of his behaviours recurs in that of his successors in English-speaking countries such as Britain, the United States and Australia. In mid-nineteenth century Australia, bushrangers robbed stations, squatters, homesteads, mail coaches, stores and hotels and challenged the authority represented by the police. Among them are those who

are regarded as heroes for the heroic deeds and quality they are thought to manifest. The number of Australian outlaw heroes is not as large as their Chinese counterparts, but we can still readily recall such names as Mathew Brady, Martin Cash, Mike Howe, Jack Donahoe, Ben Hall, Frank Gardiner, Daniel Morgan and Ned Kelly. In the United States, such names as Jesse James, Billy the Kid and Sam Bass arouse the same interest.

The Chinese outlaw hero tradition can be traced back to the late Qin dynasty (221BC-206BC) when Chen Sheng and Wu Guang organised a peasant rebellion³ and the early Han dynasty (206BC-220AD) when Liu Bang⁴ successfully captured the throne in history, and even earlier in legends. Some believe that the tradition first started in 880AD when Huang Chao led a peasant uprising in the late Tang dynasty (617-907) (Ross 1995, 47). However the real starting point of this tradition is in the Song dynasty (960-1279) when the outlaws of the Marsh demonstrated their heroic qualities in “enforcing justice on behalf of heaven” and “robbing the rich to help the poor”.

Among Chinese outlaw heroes were loners such as *xia* (sword-fighters)⁵ who defended people against injustice, revenged those wronged and helped the needy generously. However, most of them were organised bandits who banded together in the greenwood and opposed the rich and the government or authorities. This thesis does not purport to trace the history of actual outlaw hero activities, but aims to trace the development of the image of the outlaw hero in Chinese and Western cultures.

This thesis analyses explanatory frameworks on the constructedness of the outlaw hero, particularly those advanced by E. J. Hobsbawm, who studies the “social bandit” tradition from a historical point of view, and Graham Seal, who studies the “outlaw hero” tradition from a folkloric perspective. Applying their explanations to analysing the Chinese tradition, we find that some of them are useful while some

³ In 209BC, Chen Sheng and Wu Guang led a peasant uprising which gave a fatal blow to the Qin dynasty. Chen was killed by a traitor and Wu by one of his inferiors (CBC 1980, 429-730).

⁴ Liu Bang first rebelled in response to Chen Sheng (see above). He is the founder of the Han dynasty.

others are irrelevant. Beginning with the outlaws of the Marsh in the Song dynasty, the discussion proceeds to examine China's bandits in the late nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. When a comparison is made with Western manifestations of the tradition, the emphasis is placed on seeking out different as well as regular patterns in the construction of outlaw heroes. A more detailed analysis is given to the values represented by the outlaws of the Marsh, whose practice and cultural concepts are accepted by later outlaw heroes in China.

One of the aims of this thesis is to examine the relationship between history, folklore and mainstream ideology in constructing outlaw heroes. Different patterns of ideology and culture bring forth outlaw heroes different in value, practice, philosophy and institutionalisation. Overlooking them would make any comparative study of the outlaw hero tradition unconvincing. The outlaw hero, like all other types of hero, is a mixture of myth, legend and reality. Therefore, source material for this analysis is gleaned from historical, folkloric and literary writings.

As the first comparative study of its kind in this field, this thesis is faced with three obvious difficulties: the decision on the basis of comparison; the decision on the periods and outlaw heroes to compare; the decision on the outlaw hero as a historical figure or a semi-historical and semi-legendary figure as constructed by the "lore".

Of the three difficulties, the last is the most complex. To address this problem, this thesis starts by discussing some of the complexities and argues that the semi-historical and semi-legendary figure always eclipses the "true" historical figure. Western historians have to refer to legends and ballads to analyse the "social bandit", an earlier recognition of the outlaw hero in the Anglophone tradition. Chinese historians have to rely on romances and folk stories to help study the "*lulin haohan*" (Greenwood hero), an earlier recognition of the outlaw hero in the Chinese tradition. The reality is that all legends base themselves, to a certain extent, on historical facts, and historical accounts involve a large quantity of legendary associations.

⁵ *Xia*, also called *xiake*, *renxia*, *youxia*, *haoxia*, *Xiashi* and *wuxia*, is defined as people who support the weak and restrain the powerful and are ready to take up cudgels for justice (CBC 1980, 238).

The basis of comparison seemed obscure at the beginning. The cultural contexts, values, heritage and even the way of “constructing” looked so different that one might think it was impossible to make such a comparative study. However, through extensive reading of historical, folkloric and literary writings, it emerges that comparisons of outlaw hero traditions can be made in many different ways. Given all the differences in culture and tradition, Chinese and Western outlaw heroes share many qualities and values. Furthermore, books about outlaws of the Chinese traditions, though still very small in number, are found on the bookshelves of English-speaking families and vice versa. Phil Billingsley’s book *Bandits in Republican China*, Sydney Shapiro and Pearl Buck’s translations of *Shui Hu Zhuan*⁶, and even children’s books such as Stewart Ross’s *Fact or Fiction: Bandits & Outlaws*, have acquainted the English-speaking people with Chinese outlaws, while the Chinese translations of stories of Robin Hood and his merry men, TV plays, films and history books of Australia and America in Chinese have enabled the Chinese people to become familiar with such names as Robin Hood, Ned Kelly and Jesse James.

However, as Phil Billingsley observes, “systematic analysis of banditry and the conditions that produced and nourished it was almost non-existent until recently”(Billingsley 1988, xi). The serious study of the “social bandit” and the “outlaw heroes” did not start until Hobsbawm published his unprecedented work *Bandits* in 1969, though in his earlier work *Primitive Rebels* (1959) he had already touched on the topic. In Chapter II of the latter book, he gave several examples to indicate that “Naturally Robin Hood, the archetype of the social rebel ‘who took from the rich to give to the poor and never killed but in self-defence or just revenge’, is not the only man of his kind” (Hobsbawm 1974, 13).

In the period of the Republic of China, banditry became a serious social problem. The number of bandits reached a historical high, about 20 million all over the

⁶ *Shui Hu Zhuan*, as C. P. Fitzgerald points out, “is a very hard title to render but may be given as *The Story of the Marsh*” (FitzGerald 1976, 4). It has been translated in English as “*All Men Are Brothers*” by Pearl Buck, as “*Outlaws of the Marsh*” By Sidney Shapiro and as “*The Water Margin*” by Chung-Wen Shih. In this thesis, the book is referred to as *Shui Hu Zhuan* or *Outlaws of the Marsh*.

country (Cai Shaoqing 1993, 1). Some of them even had their own armies and bases. In some places, bandits could control political life, and there appeared a situation of “separate administration by officials and bandits” (Cai Shaoqing 1993, 1). While surveying the tradition of banditry, this thesis gives its main attention to the analysis of the tradition as reflected in those bandits who “rob the rich to help the poor” and “uphold justice”.

The thesis consists of eight chapters. Chapter 1 discusses how the outlaw hero is constructed by historians, people of letters and folklorists in different cultures. Hobsbawm and Seal’s explanatory frameworks are closely examined. Concepts of heroism and outlaw heroism are also analysed. The second chapter traces the Anglophone outlaw hero tradition to its origins in Robin Hood, giving much emphasis to the discussion of the Australian outlaw hero, and the outlaw heroes of the Marsh in China. Myths, legends and historical facts are mixed up in the depiction of these heroes. People accept the constructed heroes, though people with different ideology, social status and knowledge differ as to whether they recognise such people as heroes. Chapter 3 studies outlaws in different cultural contexts as reflected in China and Australia with an overview of the history of both Chinese and Australian outlaws. China’s secret societies, which, involving people with similar qualities as those of the outlaw hero, do not exhibit significant differences from outlaw heroes in their pursuit, are also discussed to some extent. Chapter 4 deals mainly with outlaw heroes and their relationship with revolution. Chinese outlaws have been involved in revolutions in different ways and to different degrees. However, revolution is not the ideal of the outlaw hero, though he may become a fellow traveller with the revolutionaries. Chapter 5 is a comparative case study of bandits in Northeast China and Australia, explaining cultural characteristics, history and physical environment related to the emergence of a unique group of bandits. Banditry in the Northeast bears significant similarities to that in Australia. Chapter 5 also discusses the role of the outlaw hero in fighting against foreign invaders. Since the Anti-Japanese War and the Anti-Russian struggle were mainly carried out in the Northeast, activities of bandits in the fight against foreign invasions are especially important in the study of the outlaw hero

tradition in this region. Chapter 6 is devoted to the study of Chinese outlaws as opposed to their Western counterparts in that they create a nearly complete cultural system, though it may be aberrant and bewildering in the eyes of other people, while Western outlaws have not left such an extensive cultural legacy. It proceeds from outlining the cultural products created by bandits in China to analysing the formation of this cultural phenomenon. The cultural products they created are organically related with the concept of “robbing the rich to help the poor” and other requirements for the outlaw hero. Chapter 7 provides analysis of the outlaw hero tradition as reflected in, and constructed by, various folkloric forms. The outlaw hero’s ideas as reflected in proverbs embody people’s feelings about the hero and his activities. Ballads in praise of outlaws and those criticising them, found in both China and the West, have become a part of both cultures. The last chapter ponders the fate of the outlaw hero and how it is related to the fate of all outlaws, the whole nation and the society. Factors that affect his fate – and it is almost always “he” – are many and complex, but the outlaw himself is the main factor. Escape, surrender and death are what a bandit has to face. How to face them marks the difference between an ordinary bandit and the outlaw hero.

In this thesis, the words “outlaw” and “bandit” are alternatively used to refer to those people who were robbers, highwaymen, bushrangers or greenwood heroes. When the Western tradition is discussed, the word “outlaw” is more frequently used; when the Chinese tradition is discussed, the word “bandit” is more frequently used. Actually, these two words mostly mean the same: “someone outlawed”, i.e., placed outside the law, as the word “bandit” is defined in its Italian origin, *banditto*. As Harry Nunn discovered that a bandit was early defined as “an outlaw, a lawless robber or a brigand (usually in organised gangs)” (Nunn 1991, 10).

Most sources about Chinese bandits are in Chinese, and have been translated into English by the present writer. For the convenience of the reader, titles of Chinese books are transliterated into Chinese phonetic alphabet with the English translations in the brackets following them.

Chapter 1

The Outlaw Hero as Constructed by History, Literature and Folklore

A country without a hero could hardly have any national identity, but there is no single type of heroic image. As Seal puts it, “Heroes come in all shapes, sizes, colours, creeds and nationalities and genders” (Seal 1996, 1). They are recorded, dealt with, portrayed and praised in all forms of writing, art, mass media and oral tradition. As pointed out earlier, outlaw heroism is a distinctive concept whose characteristics are different from usual kinds of heroism. Unlike popularly recognised national heroes, outlaw heroes often arouse ambivalent feelings among people of different social status.

In England, it was Hobsbawm who first advanced the conception of “social banditry”. In his seminal book *Bandits*, he makes clear his purpose from the very beginning: to deal only with “some kinds of robbers, namely those who are not regarded as simple criminals by public opinion” (Hobsbawm1972, 17). He focuses on historical events and figures, though he does use much legendary material and ballads. The characteristics of social banditry spelled out by Hobsbawm have aroused heated discussions among historians and folklorists. In Australia, scholars such as Seal, have placed emphasis on the opinion of ordinary people about the outlaw hero, expressed in folk tales, ballads, picture books and non-print genres. Using both Hobsbawm’s and Seal’s explanatory frameworks, this thesis attaches special importance to the analysis and comparison of cultural values of outlaw heroism in China and the West.

Historical Explanatory Frameworks

Hobsbawm argues that “social banditry is so remarkably uniform a phenomenon throughout the ages and continents” (Hobsbawm1972, 11). He explains what social banditry is, who are social bandits and their relationship with economics, politics and revolution. He describes social bandits as “peasant outlaws whom the lord and state regard as criminals, but who remain within peasant society, and are considered by their people as heroes, as champions, avengers, fighters for justice, perhaps leaders of liberation, and in any case as men to be admired, helped and supported” (Hobsbawm 1972, 17).

According to Hobsbawm, social banditry is found in one or other of its three main forms: the noble robber, the primitive resistance fighter or guerrilla unit that he calls the haiduks, and possibly the terror-bringing avenger. However, when he suggests that social bandits are “peasant outlaws”, he may be correct in some cases of medieval Western and ancient Chinese outlaw heroes, but incorrect in relation to British highwaymen, American badmen, Australian bushrangers and Chinese bandits in the last two centuries. Russel Ward remarks that “the distinctively Australian ethos which developed before 1851 sprang primarily from convict, working-class, Irish and native-born sources, and that it was associated particularly with up-country life” (Ward 1977, 178). He concluded that nearly all of the first Australian bushrangers were “convict ‘bolters’ of whom many were Irish, including Jack Donahoe, the most famous of them all in the early period” (Ward 1977, 178). Most Chinese outlaw heroes were not necessarily peasants either. As FitzGerald discovers, among the outlaws of the Marsh, “there are ex-soldiers, farmers, ex-Buddhist monks, and all sorts of men who had one thing in common – they had suffered injustice and oppression from the officers of the government” (FitzGerald 1976, 5). Peasants did not have much chance to become heroes, because their social and economic status and their way of looking at money made them short-sighted and miserly. In fact, it was those *lumpen*-proletarians who were more likely to become outlaw heroes. They were not tied up to the land or family. They spent money like water when they had it, so they were ready to give it to anyone they thought needed it. Their completely informal and unrestrained life before they became outlaws had already showed some bandit characteristics. Peasants’ fogginess, miserliness and attachment to the family and land limited their horizon and made them weak when they had to stand severe tests of outlawry.

Hobsbawm argues that in certain circumstances, epidemics of banditry may reflect the disruption of an entire society, the rise of new classes and social structures, and people’s resistance against the destruction of an entire society’s way of life (Hobsbawm 1972, 23). He suggests that in the history of China, banditry may reflect the exhaustion of the “mandate of heaven”, the social breakdown “which marks the approaching end of a relatively long cycle of history and heralds the fall of one dynasty

and the rise of another. Banditry at such times may be the precursor or companion of major social movements such as peasant revolutions” (Hobsbawm1972, 23). These remarks display a restricted knowledge of the complexity of Chinese banditry. What Hobsbawm asserts is incorrect in most cases for China, though it may be true when applied to peasant uprisings in some transitional periods from one dynasty to another in ancient times, such as the transition from the Qin dynasty (221BC-207BC) to the Han dynasty (206BC-8AD)¹ and the transition from the Sui dynasty (581-618) to the Tang dynasty (618-907).² Where there is injustice, there must be people to get it right. In old China, the viewpoint of “the mandate of heaven” was the rationale of replacing an old dynasty with a new one. As a result, different systems have developed to justify “the mandate of heaven”, including the “*Yin Yang*” theory³ and the theory of interaction between man and heaven.⁴ After the Tang dynasty, *Tui Bei Tu*⁵ was circulated among the masses and was used to predict important political, social and natural events, especially the change of dynasties. In the Qing dynasty, the difference between the orthodox theory of the “mandate of heaven” and secret societies’ theory of the “mandate of heaven” was that the former advocated maintaining and supporting the existing sovereignty while the latter aimed at “*fan qing fu ming*” (opposing the Qing [dynasty] and restoring the Ming [dynasty]) and “*ti tian xing dao*” (enforcing justice on behalf of heaven), because the Qing dynasty was against the will of Heaven. Outlaw heroes shared the theory with secret societies in that when corrupt officials and the oppressing forces committed injustices it meant they violated the ordinance, so they had to be punished. When the rich had too much while the poor had hardly enough to survive, outlaw heroes would also enforce justice by robbing the rich and helping the poor. In China, especially in the last two centuries, banditry was often a

¹ Chen Sheng and Wu Guang’s uprising in the late Qin dynasty.

² Wagang Zhai uprising lead by Zhai Rang in the late Sui dynasty.

³ A Chinese philosophical category. The original meaning of *Yin Yang* was the side facing the sun and the side in the shade. Later philosophers gave *Yin Yang* the meanings of positive and negative, unity of opposites, “interaction between man and heaven”, etc., (CBC 1980, 412).

⁴ A mysticist theory about the relationship between man and heaven, emphasising the unity between man and heaven and man and nature. Natural disasters are punishment given to man by heaven for their misbehaviours while good weather and natural resources are awards for their virtues. *Cihai*, p. 1229.

reflection of social morbidity, not necessarily heralding the fall and rise of dynasties. Corrupt officialdom and misery of the people were most times direct occasions of outlaw rebellions. In the early days of the Qing dynasty when the Manchus first entered the interior and became rulers of the whole country, “opposing the Qing and restoring the Ming” was the main cause of social banditry. In Northeast China, resistance against foreign aggressions, the fight for social status and the struggle for living accounted for bandit epidemics.

The history of banditry in China did not conclude until well after the founding of the PRC.⁶ Before that, banditry had been a common and continual phenomenon all over the country, particularly in rural and sparsely inhabited areas and during times of upheaval. At one time, China was known to foreign newspapers as a “bandit nation” (*feiguo*), and Japanese and American “China watchers” concluded that “China itself was no more than one huge bandit gang (‘400,000,000 outlaws’)” (Billingsley 1988, 1). After the Russian-Japanese War (1905), “the three Northeastern provinces became a world of bandits” (Xu Ke 1986, 5292). In the early days of the Republic, with the political situation worsening, banditry increased dramatically. As Chi Zihua observes, “No single province in China had no bandits; no single county in a province had no bandits; no single township in a county had no bandits” (Chi Zihua 1996, 160).

Hobsbawm argues that modern agrarian systems cease to produce social bandits and that “modernisation”, i.e., “the combination of economic development, efficient communications and public administration, deprives any kind of banditry, including the social, of the conditions under which it flourishes” (Hobsbawm 1972, 19). Innes holds the same position: “There are few outlaws left in the world today. Law and order and stable government have removed the conditions by which a man could become an outlaw – and only where men find themselves forced into violent opposition by a complete change of rule do we sometimes still get outlaws” (Innes 1968, 95-96).

Hobsbawm and Innes are incorrect here. If we say that Hobsbawm bases his argument on limited knowledge, Innes bases his on a false assumption. The existence

⁵ A book said to be compiled by Li Chunfeng and Yuan Tiangang in the Tang dynasty with sixty pictures representing the rise and fall of dynasties (CBC 1980, 701).

⁶ In the last decade, banditry has occurred in the country again.

of outlaws in the twentieth century has proven the erroneousness of their argument. "A complete change of rule" may or may not force people into "violent opposition". It is often the rule itself that drives people to outlawry. The rule, expressed by the legal and policing systems, "may have been operating to the satisfaction of the authorities and those economic groups within society closest to those authorities" (Seal 1989, 13). "But for those social groups that generated outlaw heroes, the same law and its systems of application had come to be seen as largely or seriously antagonistic to their own interests" (Seal 1989, 13).

Today, bandits lauded as heroes are still found in many parts of the world. For example, in India, a bandit gang headed by Phoolan Devi was operating just in the last decade. Devi turned outlaw when she was only 20 and became a legendary heroine in the inhospitable desert ravines of her native land. She was feared and revered as the "Bandit Queen," leader of a gang of bandits – dacoits, who often stole from the rich higher castes and shared the spoils with the poor lower castes.⁷ Mala Sen's book *India's Bandit Queen: The True Story of Phoolan Devi* gives a vivid account of Phoolan Devi. Hunted by police for a year, "despite a massive paramilitary operation involving hundreds of police from three different states", "she constantly eluded capture, defying authority"(Sen 1993, xix). A film based on the story of Phoolan Devi, titled "Bandit Queen", was produced in 1996 and has had considerable publicity throughout the world. Devi's deeds and experiences have won her fame as a folk hero in India in the low Mullah caste.

When social conditions are suitable for the existence of the outlaw hero, less frequently the heroine, he or she will certainly stand out. It follows from this that banditry is not something belonging only to agrarian societies or the past as asserted by Hobsbawm and Billingsley. Outlaw heroes were not necessarily born in the peasant community. Robin Hood was not, neither were most of the outlaws of the Marsh, nor Ned Kelly, Bai Lang and many others. Anton Blok criticised Hobsbawm and argued:

What seems wrong with Hobsbawm's perception of brigandage is that it pays too much attention to the peasants and the bandits themselves. Before looking at

⁷ From Netscape Internet : Story of THE BANDIT QUEEN'S METTLE: India's Famed Outlaw, Date: Mon, 26 Dec. 94 22:20:44 EST, From: Baj, bajwa@asd.enet.dec.com.

them, it is necessary to look at the larger society in which peasant communities are contained. Without taking into account these higher levels, which included the landed gentry and the formal authorities, brigandage cannot be fully understood as indeed many particular characteristics of peasant communities are dependent upon or a reflex of the impact of the outside world (Blok 1976, 498).

In those days when bushrangers were operating, Australia was a colonial and early industrial society, with convicts, miners and labourers as an important social force. It is true that, in an agrarian society, inconvenient transportation, simple living conditions and natural environment provided outlaw heroes with survival conditions, but the more convenient transportation has not stopped the outlaws from operating, if not more actively, in the more industrialised contemporary world. While the agrarian society is gradually disappearing, banditry is not disappearing as Hobsbawm expected. In China today, for example, "*chefeiluba*"⁸ have become a serious social problem. Newspapers give large coverage to kidnapping, robbery and murder: in just one month, there were twenty-eight cases of highway robbery on the freeway between Shenzhen and Guangzhou (ACD, 8 Jan. 1998). On the Mainland, businesspeople from Taiwan have been targets of robbery or kidnapping (ACD, 6 Jan. 1998). In Taiwan, secret societies and armed bandit gangs are running especially wild. The gang of three, who kidnapped and murdered Pai Hsiao-yen, held hostage the Military Attaché of South Africa in Taiwan, and committed several other murders and kidnappings, caused a sensation not only in Taiwan but over the world. For a time, the head of the trio became the focus, even a hero, of the mass media (CDN, 23 Jan. 1998).

To show that the end of banditry is "still a long way off" (Ross 1995, 44), Ross gives several examples, including Mexican bandits like Emiliano Zapata of the early twentieth century, car bandits in Western Europe, Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow in the 1930s who "live on in songs and films" (Ross 1995, 45), and recent drug bandits in the "Gold Triangle" (the border of Myanmar, Laos and Thailand) and in Colombia (Ross 1995, 45). In Australia banditry is far from being stamped out. Cases of armed robbery in Victoria have increased 35% in the 1997-1998 fiscal year (ACD, 6 Jan.

⁸ Vehicle bandits and highway robbers.

1998). Police news releases always report incidents of banks, delis and stores being held up.⁹

As for the part bandits play in the transformation of society, Hobsbawm sets forth a position that bandits are peasants “who refuse to submit”, but not “political or social rebels, let alone revolutionaries.” They are excluded from their usual career and forced into outlawry and “crime” and “they are little more than symptoms of crisis and tension in their society.” He concludes:

Banditry itself is therefore not a programme for peasant society but a form of self-help to escape it in particular circumstances. Bandits, except for their willingness or capacity to refuse individual submission, have no ideas other than those of peasantry (or the section of the peasantry) of which they form a part (Hobsbawm1972, 24).

This is too hasty a conclusion. It ignores modern outlaw heroes such as Ned Kelly, Bai Lang, Wang Tianzong and Zhao Zhigang, among others. They may not have a “programme”, but they do have “ideas other than those of the peasantry”. Kelly decided to rob banks which he described as “poorman crushers” and to fight against the police and the rich. It is true that early Chinese bandits were but an expression of dissatisfaction or discontent with certain social phenomena and hardly had any “programme”, but the outlaws of the Marsh flaunted the banner of “enforcing justice on behalf of Heaven and saving the people” (Wang Jue & Li Dianyuan 1994, 32-33). They did form a part, though usually small and remote, in the overthrowing of one dynasty by another. They sometimes played the role of a pressure group forcing the government to compromise. They did contribute, though in a small way, to social and political changes in China.

Hobsbawm suggests “Banditry is freedom, but in a peasant society few can be free. Most are shackled by the double chains of lordship and labour, the one reinforcing the other” (Hobsbawm1972, 30). The yearning for freedom is an important reason for Western outlaw heroes to rise against the government or the police. In Australia, in the early days, the convicts were confined to isolated islands and convict

⁹ When the author was working as editor for the newspaper *WA Chinese Times*, the newspaper received police news releases for every issue. In these releases, reports on robbery of banks, shops and delis were given every time (*WA Chinese Times*, issues 1-12, 1995).

settlements under close surveillance, with no freedom at all. The “convict bolters”, who could not stand the tyranny of the Governor and other rulers of the time, took to the bush to escape harsh living conditions or brutal punishment and became bushrangers. White states, “A desire for freedom no doubt excited the convicts in the first instance to break from control and take to the bush, and the pangs of hunger led them to plunder; but they soon assumed a boldness and lawlessness that fairly intimidated the Government” (White 1995, 3). These convicts included Irish rebels transported to Australia after the 1798 Irish rebellion. Being bitter enemies of the authority that exiled them, the rebels “were more troublesome than all the forgers, burglars and thieves with whom successive Governors had to deal” (Nunn1991, 52). The escapees from the settlement, to avoid capture and to survive, had to take to the bush for limited freedom.¹⁰

However, the concept of liberty was not well accepted by Chinese outlaw heroes. Traditional Chinese culture, based largely on Confucianism, attaches importance to social stratification and human relations. A person’s “self” is realised only in the context of relations with other people, so the reflection of the “self” or ego as mirrored in another’s eyes is very important to a person’s understanding of herself or himself. The five human relations are interpreted as:

Monarch—Subject
Father —Son
Husband—Wife
Elder Brother— Younger Brother
Friends—Friends.¹¹

In each pair of these relations, the latter should always show respect for, and obedience to, the former. Of all these relations, the most important are the first two. If the monarch ordered the subject to die, he had to die the way the monarch expected.

¹⁰ Mill maintains that the rulers, which include a governing One, or a governing tribe or caste, are conceived as in an antagonistic position to the people, whose power is “against their subjects, no less than against external enemies.” He points out, “The struggle between liberty and authority is the most conspicuous feature in the portions of history with which we are earliest familiar, particularly in that of Greece, Rome, and England. But in old times this contest was between subjects, or some classes of subjects, and the government” (Mill 1981, 59).

¹¹ Even in the “Friend - Friend” relation, social stratification plays an important part. Friends are differentiated by social positions and age.

Fairbank observes, "So absolute were the paternal authority and the virtue of filial obedience that a son who disobeyed parental instructions could be punished and even killed by his father with legal impunity unless the killing were held to be 'inhumane'. Alternatively, parents could ask the authorities to punish or even banish an unfilial son" (Fairbank 1978, Part I, 11). These values influenced the outlaws as well as ordinary people. The power of the ruler was derived through inheritance, conquest or usurpation, but the outlaws of the Marsh, chiefs like Song Jiang and Lin Chong in particular, never questioned the authority of the Emperor. They fought more for life, revenge and, maybe, justice than for liberty. Early bandits of Northeast China were willing to accept the tyranny of their Manchu rulers as long as they were allowed to settle down in the region.

Hobsbawm summarises the "image" of the noble robber, the most exemplary of his "social bandits", in nine points, which serve as standards for distinguishing noble robbers from criminals. He "begins his career of outlawry not by crime, but as the victim of injustice, or through being persecuted by the authorities"; he "rights wrongs"; he "takes from the rich to give to the poor"; he "never kills but in self-defence or just revenge"; "if he survives, he returns to his people as an honourable citizen and member of the community"; "he is admired, helped and supported by his people"; "he dies invariably and only through treason"; he is "invisible and invulnerable"; "he is not the enemy of the king or emperor" (Hobsbawm 1972, 43). He argues, "Social bandits do, in the great majority of recorded cases, begin their career with some non-criminal dispute, affair of honour or as victims of what they and their neighbours feel to be injustice" (Hobsbawm 1972, 43). Historical as well as folkloric accounts show that most outlaws of the Marsh started their career with disputes with the government, the rich or corrupt officials. Before taking to the greenwood,¹² many of them were law-abiding people.

Hobsbawm asserts, "Whatever the actual practice, there is no doubt that the bandit is considered an agent of justice, indeed a restorer of morality, and often considers himself as such" (Hobsbawm 1972, 44). To "right wrongs" is also a

characteristic attributed to the outlaws of the Marsh and their modern successors. In *Outlaws of the Marsh*, Old Jin and his daughter were blackmailed by a local villain. Lu Da, one of the outlaw heroes, not only gave them money and helped them to escape but pummelled the villain to death. Wu Song, another outlaw hero, punished the local bully and helped Shi En to get back his stolen establishment. Shi Xiu, yet another outlaw hero nicknamed Defying-Death, said, "Whenever I see injustice done I will come up to help the injured even if I have to risk my life" (Shi Nai'an & Luo Guanzhong 1975, 619).

"Taking from the rich to give to the poor" is a universal outlaw hero code in both history and folklore. Those who oppose this code are perceived and treated as villains. Seal elaborates:

The "rich" may be the forces of economic or social oppression, and injustice - the Sheriff of Nottingham's unjust taxes in the Robin Hood legend, the Union in the case of ex-Confederate raider, Jesse James, the "English" landlords in the case of Irish-Australian Ned Kelly. Similarly the "poor" are generally those members of the social group that sympathises with and supports the outlaw hero, and from which he has usually arisen or for whom his activities are appealing. These groups perceive themselves as suffering under various forms of injustice and oppression and see the activities of their outlaw hero as justified revenge against those forces and their representatives (Seal 1996, 3).

Chinese outlaw heroes robbed and even killed the rich. When they seized money or grain, they would gladly share such among the poor. Most Chinese outlaw heroes arise from the poor, while some others may not,¹³ but they are all supported and helped by the poor.

Hobsbawm argues, "Moderation in the use of violence is an equally important part of the Robin Hood image" (Hobsbawm 1972, 46). When explaining this, he quotes *Shui Hu Zhuan*: "Ch'ao Kai, one of the bandit leaders in the classic Chinese Water Margin novel, asks after a raid: 'Was no man killed?', and when told that nobody was hurt 'Ch'ao Kai, hearing this, was mightily pleased and said 'From this

¹² In China, outlaw heroes are most popularly called "*lulin haohan*", literally meaning "greenwood heroes".

¹³ Among the outlaws of the Marsh, several are from rich families. In Northeast China, there were a number of young people who escaped from their rich families to join bandit groups.

day on we are not to injure people’.”¹⁴ Even when robbing the rich, Chao Gai often commanded, “Just take gold, silver and valuables and don’t kill” (Hobsbawm 1972, 46). This does not really reflect attitudes of the outlaws of the Marsh towards killing. In China, justice often means punishment of, but not leniency towards, the wrong-doer. The death of the wrong-doer is justified and arouses no sympathy. Justice and violence work hand in hand. To avenge his brother, Wu Song killed two people. Lu Da killed more people than justified. Li Kui, one of the outlaw heroes, killed for minor reasons: he killed Li Gui and Wang Xiaoer, beat Yin Tianxi to death, and split Luo the sage, but people always speak favourably of him. Their cruelty is vividly revealed in Chapter 41 of *Shui Hu Zhuan* in which the outlaws are described as cannibal heroes and felt proud of eating people:

Li Kui took a sharp knife, looked at Huang and laughed. “In Prefect Cai’s rear hall you lied and slandered, framed people, invented stories out of whole cloth, and stirred him up and deceived him. Now you want a quick death? I am going to see it that you die slowly!” So saying, he started by carving Huang’s legs. He picked good flesh to bake for dishes while drinking. He sliced and baked piece by piece. It was not long before he sliced Huang to the chest. He cut open Huang’s chest, pulled out his heart and cooked soup for the assembled gallants to dispel the effects of alcohol (Shi Nai’an & Luo Guanzhong 1975, 568-569).

Such cruel activities are definitely formidable and disgusting, but because of Li Kui’s heroic deeds and generosity, Chinese readers tend to forgive him, or at least forget such activities. The famous writer Zhang Henshui commented that Li Kui was “simple and unaffected.” He was never hypocritical. “To those who were close with him, he would kowtow on knees; to those he hated, he would brandish his battleaxes.” He compares Song Jiang and Li Kui in these terms, “When attacking a town, Song Jiang always said not to inflict damage to common people, while Li Kui killed without discrimination. Therefore, Li Kui’s evil is the evil of a bandit, while Song Jiang, besides robbing, wanted to buy popularity” (Jin Shengtan et al 1993, 240). Hobsbawm himself emphasises, “They are heroes not in spite of the fear and horror their actions inspire, but in some ways because of them. They are not so much men who right wrongs, but avengers, and exponents of power; their appeal is not that of the agents of

¹⁴ The name Ch’ao Kai is now spelt as Chao Gai.

justice, but of men who prove that even the poor and weak can be terrible” (Hobsbawm 1972, 51).

However, most outlaw heroes, especially those modern ones, tried to be moderate in killing. A Chinese officer that Lindt met said, “A bandit keeps his word,” and “never completely ruins a man” (Lindt 1933, 34). When he was with some bandits, Lindt found that “the brigands for the most part simple and kind-hearted people, make no attempt on the lives of their clients, but in the face of a few revolvers find themselves obliged to defend their rights of pillage by force” (Lindt 1933, 89). These words echo those of Kelly, “If I see innocent life taken, I should certainly shoot if I were forced to do so, but I should first want to know whether this could not be prevented but I should have to do it if it could not be stopped in any other way” (Jones 1995, 209-310).

Hobsbawm observes that “In remote and inaccessible areas, where the agents of authority enter only on occasional forays, the bandit may actually live in the village,” where “the bandit may be not only tolerated and protected, but a leading member of the community” (Hobsbawm 1972, 48). History and folklore both show that Chinese outlaw heroes do return to, and some of them never leave, their communities as respected members when they cease to be an outlaw. After they accepted amnesty and surrendered, the outlaws of the Marsh were sent by the royal court to fight other rebels. When they returned in triumph, all those still alive were granted official posts by the emperor, but they were discriminated against and persecuted by other officials. Some were framed; some were killed by the government; and some had to return to the greenwood and became outlaws again. Dai Zong resigned, went to the Sacred Mountain Temple and became a Taoist priest. Ruan the Seventh was framed by evil covetous officials and was deposed by the emperor. “He returned with his old mother to Stone Tablet Village in Liangshan Marsh and became a fisherman again. Ruan supported the old lady for the rest of her days. He himself later died at the age of sixty” (Shi Nai’an & Luo Guangzhong 1975, 1382). Chai Jin resigned and returned to his farms, where he lived a life of ease. Li Ying, too, resigned and returned to his

village of Lone Dragon Mountain. Many others returned to the country and became good villagers.

The outlaw heroes of the Marsh, like Robin Hood, not only insist on morally positive actions such as robbing the rich and not killing too much but also on the standard attributes of the morally approved citizen. These standards include honesty, self-respect and strictness in morals. When he heard the rumour that Song Jiang had forcibly taken a girl into the mountain fastness, Li Kui nearly killed Song before he found that it was a misunderstanding. The outlaw heroes were not only protected by their communities but also by righteous officials in the government. The generalisation of bandits perishing by treason does not apply to the outlaws of the Marsh. Their failure lies in that, first, without a clear “programme”, they did not quite know what their aim was, and second, they surrendered and fell into the traps set by corrupt officials.

Social bandits are seen by Hobsbawm as not being “the enemy of the king or emperor” (Hobsbawm 1972, 43). The same is true with outlaw heroes in feudal China, who were seldom in real conflict with the emperor. Instead, they showed loyalty to the emperor in a different and unique way. Evil counsellors calumniated the outlaw heroes in front of the emperor, who, when finally realising the truth, would recognise their virtue and ask them to serve the country with their feats. “It is neither incredible nor unprecedented that famous bandits should be pardoned and given official posts by the king” (Hobsbawm 1972, 53). The outlaws of the Marsh revolted against corrupt officialdom instead of the emperor. They acted in the name of Heaven, which in another word is the emperor, the Son of Heaven. They renamed their meeting hall as the Hall of Loyalty and Righteousness. The rebels in the Wagang Army¹⁵ fought for the man they believed to be the Genuine Dragon, the Son of Heaven. Western outlaws did not have such loyalty to the king or queen. On the contrary, they, especially those of Irish background, were often representatives of dissatisfaction with the crown. The important reason why the outlaws of the Marsh finally surrendered is that they believed that a perfect hero should show both filial obedience to the parents and

loyalty to the emperor. They could not, and perhaps would not, go beyond the historical limitations. What they really wanted to do was to render meritorious service to the royal court and hold high official positions so that their wives and children could be rewarded by heritage and honour could be brought to their ancestors. Therefore, they could not, and again perhaps would not, rebel against the emperor. In the Song dynasty (960 - 1279), the penalty for outlawry was usually very severe, but sometimes, the outlaw was exiled to a distant, and very often a desolate, place for penal servitude. Amnesty and enlistment were often offered by the royal court to organised outlaws, who were ordered to atone for their crimes by doing good deeds, especially in battles. These outlaws were very likely to come back to the 'law' for different reasons such as loyalty to the emperor, consideration of their future or family involvement. The problem is that those bandits who got official posts were not accepted and tolerated by other officials and were often persecuted again.

Folkloric Explanatory Frameworks

Historians have undoubtedly contributed to the research in this field. However, as Seal has noted, although Hobsbawm made some reference to folklore, "he undertook no coherent and sustained investigation of such cultural expressions and practices. Ironically, perhaps, it is folklore rather than history that proves his case" (Seal 1996, 3). Hobsbawm's primary analytical framework is social and historical. Though he relies to some extent on poems and ballads for his study of social banditry, he is worried about these "quite unreliable" "records of public memory and myth" (Hobsbawm 1972, 12). His concern not only limited his study of the tradition in the West but also that in China. However, the Chinese historian Guo Moruo¹⁵ has no such concern. Instead, he encourages historians to use material of popular literature in their historical studies. "Popular literature," he says, "provides the most correct historical material for historians. Scholars in the past only read the *Twenty-four Histories*¹⁷ and

¹⁵ The Wagang Army was a peasant uprising army in the late Sui dynasty (589-618) led by Zhai Rang. Several of the leaders of the Wagang Army have become popular heroes.

¹⁶ Guo Moruo (1892-1978), a famous Chinese historian and playwright.

¹⁷ *Twenty-four Histories* include history books written in the period from the Western Han dynasty to the Ming dynasty, 3259 volumes altogether (CBC 1980, 6-7).

official or semi-official historical materials. But we know it is popular literature that is the most real and valuable first-hand material for historical research.”¹⁸ The first popular Chinese outlaw hero Dao Zhi, though recorded in the *Book of History*¹⁹ by Sima Qian, is believed to be legendary. Wu Meng emphasises that the description of Dao Zhi is really a fable. He states, “It is a historical phenomenon to use fables to express ideas. However, the characters and stories in the fables should not be lightly taken as historical” (Wu Meng 1997, 82). Chinese popular literature include all folkloric genres, chapbooks and *shuoshu*²⁰ stories such as *Pai An Jing Qi* (Surprising and Strange Stories),²¹ *Jiajia Lou* (Jiajia Lou Warriors),²² *Xiao Wu Yi* (Five Junior Swordsmen),²³ etc.

From a folkloric point of view, Seal observes that the outlaw hero tradition consists of ten motifs of discrete but interacting narrative elements that can be referred to in shorthand as: friend of the poor, oppressed, forced into outlawry, brave, generous, courteous, trickster, does not indulge in unjustified violence, betrayed, lives on after death. He further explains, “These attributes may be expressed directly as in synonyms for manliness, boldness, bravery, defiance, or implied in the content of the song or narrative concerning an outlaw hero” (Seal 1996, 11). These motifs are related more to the outlaw hero’s personal quality while the nine standards given by Hobsbawm more to the outlaw hero’s behaviours and social roles. However, Hobsbawm’s “noble robber” is similar to Seal’s “outlaw hero” in many respects. These standards can also be applied to judging Chinese outlaw heroes, although due to cultural differences, there are some other typical Chinese values, such as “enforcing justice on behalf of Heaven”, loyalty to the monarch, brotherhood, observation of filial duties, and so forth.

¹⁸ Guo Moruo, “Women Yanjiu Minjian Wenxue de Mudi” (“Our Objectives of Studying Popular Literature”) (Cao Baoming 1992, 16).

¹⁹ One of the Twenty-four Histories. The original book was written by Sima Qian in about 104BC to 91BC.

²⁰ *Shuoshu* is a form of story-telling in theatres, teahouses and other public places. *Shuoshu* is not accompanied by music like some other story-telling forms such as *dagu* and *tanci*.

²¹ *Chuke Pai An Jing Qi* (The First Wood-block Version of Surprising and Strange Stories), 1993.

²² Chen Yinrong, 1981.

²³ Shi Yukun, 1994.

Seal observes, "The outlaw hero of tradition, and often of fact, is particularly adept at outwitting his captors, pursuers and oppressors and is often a great escaper and disguiser" (Seal 1996, 11). The Chinese outlaw hero is invisible, invulnerable and invincible because, in part, he is protected by his sympathisers and supporters and so the police or authorities cannot find him. He is also good at disguise, often disguising himself as a government soldier without being found. Shi Qian and Yan Qing, two outlaws of the Marsh, are especially good at disguise.

The outlaw hero never dies in the mind of his supporters. "For the bandit's defeat and death is the defeat of his people, and what is worse, of hope. Men can live without justice, and generally must, but they cannot live without hope" (Hobsbawm 1972, 51). In legends, another reason for outlaw heroes' invulnerability is that some of them are described as having the magic to protect themselves so that no sword or spear can penetrate them. Gongsun Sheng, one of the chiefs of the outlaws of the Marsh, not only knows the magic to protect himself and his army, but also the magic to command wind and rain. However, preternatural phenomena are not part of the story of Ned Kelly or Robin Hood or any other Western outlaw hero.

Bravery is one of the most important attributes of the outlaw hero. All the outlaws of the Marsh are courageous: Lu Da killed a strong villain with just his fist; Wu Song killed a tiger with his fist; Li Kui once killed four tigers alone. However, as mentioned earlier, they often demonstrate their bravery to such an extent that they seem terrible and cruel, especially when they act as avengers.

The outlaw hero rises from the humble. He is not just a friend of the poor, but their representative and spokesman. Seal remarks of the Anglophone outlaw hero:

What the outlaw's supporters and sympathisers saw in their hero's activities was themselves and the release of their fears and frustrations in the form of an avenging force robbing the rich and powerful landowners, the oppressive police or military and the banks or the railway companies that were often seen as economic oppressors (Seal 1996, 8).

In China, the outlaw hero's activities tend to be regarded as justified, and his killing and robbing as immensely satisfactory to the populace, because he generally robs and kills those who oppress and bully the poor, who feel indignant but do not dare to speak out. The general folkloric theme of justice in depicting the outlaw hero's

righting wrongs elevates the status of such a figure above that of common bandits. When the government and law become a tool of injustice in the hand of evil officials, outlaw heroes become representatives of the cause of righteousness. The ferocity of these outlaws gained some justification from their roles as heroes of the wronged, champions of the victims of misfortune and oppression. They administered a very basic sort of justice, robbing the rich to help the poor, afflicting the wicked and easing the lot of the oppressed.

Besides, adeptness in using all kinds of weapons and outwitting his enemies are also qualities found in Chinese outlaw heroes. According to a report in the *Shi Bao* in 1911, when Xie Baosheng, the garrison commander, led his army to suppress the outlaw hero Wang Tianzong, Wang said to him, "Hold your whip upright, and I can hit a pointed part of it. If I hit it, don't fight with me but withdraw. Otherwise, I will just stand still to be bound and arrested." He fired and hit the very part. The garrison commander was so frightened that he stopped his troops (*Shi Bao*, 7 July 1911). Being good at disguise, outlaw heroes are adept at escaping. Narrow escapes are not uncommon. Nunn has the same argument: "to Australians, bushranging has more connotations of skill in bushcraft, knowledge of the bush, horsemanship and the heroic romanticism of 'roaming the bush, free and bold' in defiance of authority and less emphasis on banditry, organised robbing, plundering and murder" (Nunn 1991, 10). This quality is also attributed to Chinese outlaw heroes, as demonstrated later in this thesis.

Chinese outlaw heroes, as those elsewhere, are very often a combination of historical and legendary figures instead of purely historical ones, although nearly all legends have some basis in historical fact (Ward 1977, 15). For instance, Li Jianghua, alias Li San the Swallow, was such a combined figure. Also called "flying knight-errant" or "righteous bandit", Li was once well-known all over the country. Born into a poor family, he started learning martial arts with his uncle as a street performer when he was just a small child. In 1916, he went to perform with other street performers in Luoyang of Henan. Suspected to have stolen things from the performing group, he had to leave them and roam the streets. He then met with several similarly afflicted young

men and became sworn brothers with them. They started robbing, but they only robbed the rich. Li was said to have learned *qing gong*²⁴, and his body was as nimble as a swallow's, thus his nickname. He was said to be able to climb walls backwards. Always carrying with him a rope with a claw-shaped iron hook, he could easily and quickly climb houses and trees. One night, he robbed several rich families and finally the Garrison Commander's house. When leaving the house, he left a note on which he signed "Li San the Swallow". Being furious, the Commander ordered the capture of Li dead or alive, but Li had left Luoyang on the same night (Xiao Qin 1992, 52-53).

Seal observes the tradition of the outlaw hero as a continuous process in three Anglophone countries, i.e., Great Britain, the United States and Australia. He places more stress than Hobsbawm on folklore and the intersection between the folkloric and the historical. The ten motifs he has drawn from the comparison of folkloric expressions relate to those real and legendary outlaw heroes, such as the British highwaymen William Nevison, Dick Turpin and William Brennan, the Australian bushrangers Ben Hall, Frank Gardiner, Ned Kelly, "Thunderbolt" and Daniel Morgan, and the American badmen Sam Bass, William Bonney and Jesse James. As Seal argues, "Many of the folkloric expressions that constitute the outlaw hero tradition relate to historical figures and their real, imputed or imagined activities" (Seal 1996, 19). However, historical or official recognition of the outlaw hero has never been as powerful and influential as folklore, legends and myths. In China, everyone knows about the outlaws of the Marsh, but few, if any, know about Zhang Shuye, the official who subdued those outlaws. In Australia, "every schoolkid knows about Ned Kelly; none knows about Redmond Barry" (Reid 1980, 596-597).

Heroism and Outlaw Heroism

General concepts of the hero are summarised by scholars, such as Erich Neumann and Joseph Campbell, who, when analysing psychological traits of heroism, describe archetypal patterns of heroes, universal in human experience. However, specific concepts of national heroes are found in different cultures.

²⁴ A kind of *qi gong* (*Chi Kong*) said to be able to make the body light.

Croizier observes that “in any society that takes its past seriously (as China did and does) the ‘history’ that influences living men’s actions is always to some degree mythical. Similarly, the historical figures who become heroes to later ages do so as symbols of values and issues relevant to those later times” (Croizier 1977, 1).

Joseph Campbell approaches this from a different angle: “The hero, who in his life represented the dual perspective, after his death is still a synthesising image: like Charlemagne, he sleeps only and will arise in the hour of destiny, or he is among us under another form” (Campbell 1972, 358). He argues that the hero is epitomised by autonomy and rebellion against the *status quo* and the heroic journey represents stages of personal development. He deals mainly with those sublime mythological heroes of Ancient Greece, Rome, China and other nations, i.e., “the world’s great heroes” (Campbell 1972, 358).

Neumann states that the hero’s fate is the archetypal pattern in accordance with which the masses of humanity must live and have always lived; though they might have fallen short of the ideal man, the stages of the hero myth have become constituent elements in every individual’s personal development (Neumann 1970, 131). This is a universally exemplary hero for ordinary people to learn from. In every nation, there is no lack of such heroes whose glorified public images are set up either by the authorities or by the populace.²⁵

Sidney Hook describes at least three types of heroes. First, they are great leaders of a nation or an organisation who are indispensable in all social life, and in every major form of social organisation. “Leaders are always at hand – not merely as conspicuous symbols of state, but as centres of responsibility, decision, and action.” Second, they are great individuals with great exploits – mythical or real. “In some ancient cultures the hero was glorified as the father of a nation, like Abraham by the

²⁵ *The Macquarie Dictionary* defines “hero” as: 1. a man of distinguished courage or performance, admired for his noble qualities. 2. one invested with heroic qualities in the opinion of others. 3. the principal character in a story, play, etc. 4. (in early mythological antiquity) a being of godlike prowess and beneficence, esp. one who came to be honoured as a divinity. 5. (in the Homeric period) a warrior chieftain of special strength, courage, or ability. 6. (in later periods of antiquity) an immortal being, intermediate in nature between gods and men. These definitions may be used as certain criteria for outlaw heroes, but when comparing outlaw heroes under discussion, we find that they do not fall into any categories given (TMD 1985, 820).

Israelites, or as the founder of a state, like Romulus by the Romans.” Third, whoever saves us is a hero. “In the exigencies of political action men are always looking for someone to save them. A sharp crisis in social and political affairs – when something must be done and done quickly – naturally intensifies interest in the hero” (Hook 1969, 3-14). These three types of heroes are also found among outlaw heroes. Some outlaw heroes are great leaders in their own world, some great individuals with great exploits – mythical or real, and some saviours in the eyes of their supporters.

Chinese definitions of heroism reflect that culture’s way of thinking, but again, “the types of heroes vary”, as Croizier observes (Croizier 1977, 3). In Taiwan, Confucian figures are honoured, including the sage kings Yao, Shun, Yu, the Sage Confucius himself, and rulers who had unified China, such as Liu Bang, Li Shimin²⁶, while on the mainland, though the attitudes have been changing, Confucian-despised figures or leaders of peasant uprisings are honoured. However, great historical figures and national heroes who died resisting foreign invaders are praised and worshipped across the Straits.

In the preface of the novel on knights-errant by Wen Kang of the Qing dynasty, the compiler says that knights-errant as heroes punish the villain and help the needy with their consummate martial arts, and their staunchness is admired by the people. In the same novel, the author, through the mouth of a god, describes the Chinese hero in these terms: “The Chinese require heroes to first prove themselves to be true sons and daughters (people of integrity) and then to manage their families well, and only then can they become real heroes who can manage the country” (Wen Kang 1994, 4-5). This is a traditional Confucian concept of heroism. When commenting on Wu Song, Zhang Henshui held the same opinion:

For anything that justice requires to do, he would not hesitate to lay down his life if need be. For anything that justice requires not to do, he keeps at a distance from it as if it were defiling. Such a person in the world could be a dutiful son at home and a good citizen of the country. If he studied, he could become a true scholar. If he practised Buddhism, he could become an eminent monk. If he were an official, he would be an honest and upright official (Jin Shengtan et al 1993, 229).

²⁶ Emperor Taizong (626 - 649) of the Tang dynasty. During his rule, China saw prosperity and progress.

With the outlaws of the Marsh as their examples, outlaw heroes in later dynasties in China adopted the slogan: “enforcing justice on behalf of Heaven”. In legends, the one hundred and eight heroes of the Marsh were all stars in Heaven who ascended to the earth to “rob the rich and help the poor” and “enforce justice on behalf of Heaven” (Shi Nai’an & Luo Guanzhong 1975, Chapter 1). The justice they wanted to enforce was the observation of Confucian ethical values and equality between the rich and the poor. In chapter two of *Shui Hu Zhuan*, Gao Qiu is described as a scamp who “did not know a thing when it came to humanity, justice, propriety, wisdom, faith, conduct, loyalty and goodness,”²⁷ the eight virtues people should observe. One who does not have these virtues is called *wang-ba-dan* (a bad egg who forgets the eight virtues). The outlaw heroes want to put things right by “robbing the rich” and “enforcing justice” according to these eight virtues. They fight against those *wang-ba-dan*, such as Gao Qiu, Cai Jing and other corrupt officials. These ethical principles permeate the spirit of folkloric accounts of the outlaw hero in China, but this value is not found in the Western outlaw hero. “Loyalty to the sovereign”, “observation of the filial duty” and “brotherhood”, a set of Confucian values, are typical qualities attributed to heroes, not just outlaw heroes, in Chinese history. An outstanding example is Yue Fei of the Southern Song dynasty, who was framed and persecuted to death, but remained loyal to the Emperor, even though the Emperor really wronged him. He was never remiss in doing his filial duties, and always remembered his mother’s instruction, “*jing zhong bao guo*” (“repaying the country with supreme loyalty”), which has become a term known by everyone in China. All stories about the outlaws of the Marsh promote these values.

Nevertheless, outlaw heroes find it difficult to always conform with these values as people outside the legitimist system. Therefore, they have other values that distinguish themselves from orthodox heroes. “Outlaw hero” is a paradoxical term. As an outlaw, such a hero is of the kind described by Brian Innes: “He is a person *outside the law*, unable to claim any of the protection the law affords. Indeed, except for the

²⁷ These eight values are regarded as the eight cardinal virtues. One who do not have these virtues is a villain (Shi Nai’an & Luo Guanzhong 1975, p. 16).

fact that he is a 'wanted man', the outlaw cannot be said to exist in the eyes of the law, since no acts committed against his person or his property – murder, theft, arson, assault – are to be considered as crimes" (Innes 1968, 4). He further elaborates, "For many centuries, however, the existence of outlaws – men who had escaped capture by the officers of the king, men who therefore could be proclaimed outcasts, whom any loyal subject of the king could lawfully take – was recognised in most countries" (Innes 1968, 4). China's modern bandits, though they might have received support from their sympathisers or their community, clearly showed the other side as bandits. As McCormack argues:

Generally, however, bandits were bandits, in China as elsewhere; they lived by raiding, robbing, or murdering the wealthy, be they landlords, usurers, businessmen, or even successful bandit rivals; sometimes by trading in opium; sometimes by plundering whole villages and towns; and sometimes by kidnapping travellers or rich men and holding them for ransom (McCormack 1977, 17).

W. Jenner who wants to single out a group of people as "*haohan*" (literally "a good man", referring a brave person, a hero, etc.) turns to the outlaws of the Marsh for evidence of values. "*Haohan*" is a term difficult to define. Jenner has made a futile effort here. For "*haohan*" is not an identifiable group of people. A "*haohan*" can be a soldier, an ordinary man who will not yield to the enemy or difficulty, a bandit, a "*guanggunr*" or a vagabond who "lives outside the rules of polite society" (Jenner 1993, 4). The "*haohan*" complex is deep-rooted in the Chinese male tradition of admiring a brave man who has the sense of honour and regards "friendship" to such an extent that he will take a knife in the ribs for a friend.

How can outlaws be regarded as heroes, who, in the orthodox point of view, are criminals, robbers, villains and badmen, and as outlaws, are no longer members of the community, and whose heads, as in the case of China and Australia, are worth several gallons of rum, a small amount of money or even suits of working clothes? Writing of the Australian situation, Boxall discovers: "The point of view of the convict being entirely different from that of the law-abiding citizen, the terms 'good' and 'bad' changed places in their vocabulary. Thus the clergy, the magistrates, the freemen, were generally 'bad men', while those who resisted authority, who fought against law and

order, were ‘good men’” (Boxall 1976, 41). Could such people who reversed right and wrong be at the same time heroes? Boxall’s total repudiation of the convict leaves an impression on the reader that convicts – many of them turned into outlaws – could never become heroes. But Seal thinks differently: the outlaw hero is “a villain, a criminal living outside and against the law”, but he is “at once a representative of the dissatisfactions of the particular social groups who sympathise with him, and someone set apart from the other members of such groups by his outlawry” (Seal 1996, 2). Here the outlaw hero is seen as a combination of opposites. Innes has a similar position: “But an outlaw, of course, was not always a villain. When a land was invaded by a foreign power those who resisted the invasion, and who went into hiding or exile rather than submit to the invader, were heroes to their more timid countrymen, although outlaws to the new king” (Innes 1968, 5).

In the Chinese folkloric tradition, outlaw heroes are not necessarily villains. The bearers of the Chinese folklore tend to make the image of their hero lofty and perfect. Under the surface of the sentiment of upholding outlaw heroism, the sense of justice is implied. What the hero does is totally correct and praiseworthy. He never kills unless the victim deserves killing. He rebels only when he is forced to do so. Those who outlaw the hero are representatives of injustice.

Outlaw heroes are a group of people who, forced to stay outside the “law” by personal circumstances or by some other forces such as officialdom, the rich, the police and the government, fight heroically for themselves and others who, generally the poor or the lower class, are wronged, discriminated against or oppressed. Living and acting in their own “kingdoms”, the outlaws have nurtured a special type of hero, though he might be a robber and even a murderer. Outlaw heroes distinguish themselves from other outlaws by the fact that they represent, help and “save” a class or a group of people who believe they are not fairly treated by the rulers, authorities or law. Under certain social circumstances, the majority of the people suffer while a small number lead a life of pleasure or ride roughshod over others, whereas the state apparatuses still maintain such a social order. Injustice is brought about in law and in distribution of social wealth. Improper and harsh punishment drives people to

desperation. In the Song dynasty, some convicts were transported to remote and very often uninhabited places for penal servitude. An important convict was sent to the place under escort. The escorting guards would kill the convict on the road for money or just for convenience. In the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Australia, bad conditions in the penal settlements drove the convicts to become bolters and turn “banditti”. If, in most cases, they had not been treated so harshly, the outlaw heroes could have been law-abiding citizens and lived peaceful and useful lives.

The Outlaw Hero in Folklore

Outlaw heroism belongs in part to the world of fairy tale. Ross argues, “Robin Hood stories are popular because they tell people what they want to hear – how ordinary men and women can triumph over privileged and corrupt masters” (Ross 1995, 18). Ward notes, “No doubt Australian bushrangers came to occupy such a prominent place in Australian legend partly because, in the last century, Australia took part in no great wars, and thus there were no colourful military figures to serve, as they tend to do in other countries, as symbols of national sentiment” (Ward 1977, 178). Innes discovers that throughout history the legends which grow up around the true careers of these outlaws remain surprisingly similar, because “although the outlaw is an outcast from society and a declared enemy of all, the peasants and the workers and all the downtrodden people (from whom the legends spring and in whom they find perpetuation) see their own unattainable dreams given shape in the outlaw’s revolt against their rulers” (Innes 1968, 7). That is also the reason why stories about the outlaws of the Marsh are recounted, read and revered all the time. Folklore often romanticises, idealises and exaggerates the image of the outlaw hero, especially the stereotypical outlaw heroes such as Robin Hood and the outlaws of the Marsh. As Campbell points out, “If the deeds of an actual historical figure proclaim him to have been a hero, the builders of his legend will invent for him appropriate adventures in depth” (Campbell 1973, 321). The story of the outlaw hero always bears such a romantic aura. Where there is injustice, oppression or ill-treatment, there exists a desire for resistance, which will continue if the situation remains. Those who dare to

stand out against oppression and injustice and help “save” the wronged will become heroes no matter whether they are outlaws or law-abiding citizens. Some of them will probably have to go so far as to break the existing law and of course will be outlawed by the oppressing power.

People’s desire for and pursuit of justice are the bases for recognising and accepting outlaw heroes. They wish their heroes to live for ever and to operate freely, even though they know that outlaw heroes might first be robbers. In reality, stark contrasts are found between legend and history, glorified deeds and actual events, and heroized figures and real persons, but people want to find spiritual sustenance in outlaw heroes instead of the government. The expectation for the outlaw hero is fully expressed and realised in folklore. An episode of an outlaw hero can be a story passed from one person to another and recreated every time, a topic never exhausted, or a song, a ballad circulated among the populace. Even the novel *Outlaws of the Marsh* was not written by one specific author. It is believed that, of the one hundred and eight outlaws of the Marsh, only thirty-six really existed in history.²⁸ They were highly loved and praised by ordinary people, whom they never wantonly robbed and attacked. Stories about them were spread far and wide and passed on from generation to generation. Bravery, sympathy for the poor and oppressed and anger against unfeeling rich people and unjust officials always find expression in these stories and ballads, which gradually developed into the novel. A ballad long before the novel was written so describes Li Kui, alias Black Whirlwind:

If I do see upon my way one who treats ill any man,
Then I delight to dig for him a pit, deep as ever I can.
For when I shout the very waves in the sea begin to roar,
When I shake my fist the hills and the mountains stand no more.
If any man dares to rouse my wrath, then blackguard though I be,
I fight with him, I turn him over—a cake on a griddle is he!²⁹

²⁸ Whether the thirty-six people existed in history is quite disputable. Hu Shi says that they are “all historical figures”, while Wang Jue and Li Dianyuan argue that they never exist in history at all (Wang Jue and Li Dianyuan 1994, p. 87). This thesis does not aim at examining and proving the facts, so Hu Shi’s argument is accepted here.

²⁹ *All Men Are Brothers* [Shui Hu Zhuan], translated from the Chinese by Pearl S. Buck, The John Day Company, New York, 1968, Vol. 1, Introduction vii-viii.

However, history, literature and folklore differ in admitting those outlaws as heroes in China and the West. Historians attach importance to facts. Assumption, imagination, manipulation or fabrication may affect the authenticity and impartiality. Literary writers let their imagination soar whenever they get the inspiration. The Muse does not wait for archaeologists, historians and anthropologists to present their findings. In folklore, without the seriousness of historians and the dextrousness of literary writers, every figure can be manipulated to construct the appropriate or desired outlaw hero. A man, who might be a villain in history, a lover in literature, could be a hero in folklore.

Although the figures examined are mostly historically based, their exploits as related by ballads and folk tales might be largely fictional. Outlaw heroes may seem to be more fabulous, mythical and legendary than factual and historical. Real persons in history may be totally different to those heroized in folklore, but people accept the transformed images. Folklore depicts the outlaw hero as a person who might have nothing to do with the real activities of the historical figure. In *Legendary Stories of Wu Yue*, Li Zicheng is depicted as a man who can lift nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine *jin*³⁰ and Hong Xiuquan as a man supported by the Heaven, the Earth and the people (Zhong Weijin 1990, 42 & 45).

The law of course does not recognise any outlaw heroes: A bandit is a bandit, a robber a robber, clear and definite. In the eyes of the government, the outlaw hero may never be regarded as a hero. In 1980, finding that the date on which Kelly was hanged one hundred years earlier had become the most resonant of Australia's anniversaries, Ian Reid noticed that the bushranger was not being given heroic status by any official recognition:

The Victorian State Government turned a deaf ear. Instead it chose to honour the man who sentenced Ned to death (only to die suddenly himself within a fortnight); it sponsored a Redmond Barry Centenary Oration, delivered by the Governor-General. (This reaffirmation of established values and official justice enjoyed the support of the Royal Historical Society Victoria and the University of Melbourne.) Moreover, the Victorian Governor unveiled a new plaque on the statue of Barry outside the State Library, commemorating "the vision and enterprise of this great man." And a biographical pamphlet on Barry by M.U.P.

³⁰ One *jin* is half a kilogram.

chief Peter Ryan was reissued this year, while Ryan went on record as deeming Kelly “our most boring murderer” (Reid 1980, 595).

The establishment values and the official justice system need the villain to condemn while the populace need the hero to praise. As Ross says, Ned Kelly is not everyone’s hero. “He was a thief, and he did shoot policemen (although he argued self defence)” (Ross 1995, 43). However, history’s verdict is unproven, but the verdict of the Australian people is clear: “Ned Kelly is their Robin Hood” (Ross 1995, 43).

In China, there have been historians who have tried to be impartial when describing historical figures and events. However, it has too often been the case that historians compiled historical books according to imperial decrees or orders from their superiors. As a result, history often showed a distorted perspective by declaring the victors kings or marquises and branding the defeated thieves or bandits. About Chinese historical writing, Twitchett writes: “Historical writing in China differed in a very important way from western historiography. It was, from a very early stage, essentially a professional and even more an official occupation. History was a function of the state” (Twitchett 1966, 28). Actually, there had never been independent individual historians in ancient China. All historians were appointed as government officials by the Royal Court.³¹ What they wrote was meant to be read only by the rulers or officials. “History, then, was essentially a didactic record of political-ethical policy decisions, written by professional historians who were at the same time professional bureaucrats.” (Twitchett 1966, 29). They made their political judgement and interpretations “in the light of a rigorous philosophical, political and ethical conformity.” (Twitchett 1966, 30). They had to ingratiate themselves with the rulers, especially the emperor. Otherwise they would have most times had fatal disasters. So not only did legitimacy belong to the victor, but history as well. As a result, history books compiled in the Qing dynasty described leaders of peasant uprisings all as bandits or gangsters. Words such as “*diaomin*” (unscrupulous rogues), “*guanfei*” (hardened bandits) and “*xiongcan*” (ferocious) are repeatedly used in official records of such “bandits”.

Literature has contributed significantly to the portrayal of the outlaw hero, but its detailed psychological description and critical methodology make it difficult to be understood by illiterate and semi-illiterate people, who are generally sympathisers of the outlaw hero. In a collection titled *Tai Bai*, the Chinese writer Jia Pingwa collects three of his novelettes describing bandits in Shaanxi in the period of the early Republic. With intricate plots, mystic actions and characters, complex feelings of gratitude or resentment, these stories deserve to be called masterpieces of literature, but their influence among the broad masses of lower social strata or classes are much smaller than folklore when it comes to depict the outlaw hero.³² However, literature and folklore are very often intermingled. *Outlaws of the Marsh* is really a work of literature based on folklore, telling a story in vernacular rather than literary expressions, though many people study it as a classic of literature.

However, the contribution that literature has made to the “constructedness” of the outlaw hero cannot be lightly overlooked. Stories about the outlaws of the Marsh and modern outlaws have been recreated, retold and rewritten in literary forms all the time. The same stories are adapted to plays, local operas and other performing genres. In a short story titled *Bai Lang* written by Jia Pingwa, the title character, the most famous modern Chinese outlaw hero Bai Lang, is described as a dignified, upright and fearless hero who robs the rich only to help the poor, has no lust for women and attaches greatest importance to brotherhood. He was so admired and respected by his followers and the poor that when he was captured and imprisoned by the bandit chief of another gang, all his sworn brothers, his followers and people who knew him as a hero tried their best to save him. Before he was captured, he had three thousand people. After he was captured, only about one thousand people were still alive, with one third of them wounded. Some of them died at the government’s hands and some

³¹ The first government department called “Shi Guan” in charge of compiling history books was set up in the Northern Qi dynasty (550-577) (CBC 1980, 725).

³² In a more recent collection of short stories, two stories are about outlaw heroes. See The Editorial Department of the People’s Literature and Arts Publishing House, 1992 *Duanpian Xiaoshuo Xuan* (The 1992 Anthology of Short Stories), The People’s Literature and Arts Publishing House, 1993. One story titled “Bang Piao” (“Kidnap”) describes how outlaw heroes outwit government officials, and another titled “Guandong Fei Yu Min” (Bandits and the People in the Northeast) describes how bandits and the people sympathise with each other.

through other bandit gangs' attacks, but most of them died rescuing Bai Lang. Two of his sworn brothers willingly gave up their lives in the rescue. One of them committed suicide and asked the other to give his head to the bandit chief who had captured Bai Lang so as to find an opportunity to assassinate the bandit chief (Jia Pingwa 1993, 223-284).

However, it is also true that in the past in China there was no clear dividing line between historical and literary writings. Historical writings were often read as literary selections and vice versa. The folkloric creation has taken a different road and portrayed heroes who are not only outside the law but also outside history, if not literature. It is true that, in China, history, literature and folklore have often found the same outlaw to be a hero, but seldom sing of his exploits in chorus. Furthermore, literature and folklore are not clearly divided either. Novels and dramas are transformed versions of folk stories. As Xu Xu says, "I believe that plays have changed from story-telling. When telling stories, people use gestures, sing with the company of stringed instruments, and dance. Thus the formation of plays and dramas" (Xu Xu 1993, 237). That is why the outlaws of the Marsh are found in both literature, especially in Yuan dynasty plays and novels, and folklore.

In ancient China, *xia*³³ shared many characteristics with the outlaw hero. *Xia*, as *haohan*, is not easy to define. Bi Shuchun comments on *xia* in these terms, "they are very clear about what to love and hate. In the feudal society, people had nowhere to turn for help. The *xia*, with their martial arts, fought tyrants, helped the weak, removed the evil and risked his life to save the wronged, but he never claimed credit and bragged about it" (Bi Shuchun 1996, 1). As early as the Tang dynasty, *xia* short stories were already quite popular. In *Short Stories from the Tang dynasty* are collected six stories about popular *xia* heroes of the ancient times, including legendary swordsmen, *xia* beggars and *xia* robbers (Wang Pijiang 1955). These stories, rather recorded folk tales than literary writings, are regarded as legends (Huang Liping 1993, Preface). They all draw a word picture of the *xiake*. The more vivid the words are, the farther away they are from historical facts. The book *Panorama of Chinese Haoxia*

³³ See "Introduction".

Stories has a collection of one hundred and twenty *xia* stories of ancient and modern China. They are mostly folk tales re-created by literary practitioners about *xia* robbers, beggars, thieves and bandits. In the Preface of the book, the editor starts:

Someone says, "If we say that in the soul of the Chinese intellectual there hides in depth the trace of Confucianism, then in the heart of the rank and file person, there is the trace of the *xia* flickering." This argument is true, but we must add, "in the heart of the Chinese intellectual the trace of the *xia* flickers from time to time, while in the depth of the heart of the rank and file person, the trace of Confucianism does exist." Only in this way can we understand why Chinese intellectuals have written so many poems, stories, novels and plays in praise of the *xia* and why they love *Shui Hu Zhuan* and *wuxia* novels so much (Wang Yi & Sheng Ruiyu 1995, 1).

This explains how literary practitioners pick the best from the subject matter used in folklore to create stories, poems and dramas. The Chinese historian Xu Sinian regards *Shui Hu Zhuan*, stories about bandits such as those about Sun Meiyao³⁴ and stories about secret societies all as *wuxia* stories (Xu Sinian 1995, 92, 157 & 161).

Morally and organisationally, outlaw heroes learned much from Mozi,³⁵ though most probably, without knowing it. Li Zonggui maintains that the ideal Mohist personality is *yixia* (the righteous knight-errant), but it is essentially different from the *xia* (knight-errant) of later times or the one described in novels or legends, and from the outlaw hero discussed in this thesis. The Mohist *yixia* is one who has theory, clear political aims and intense collective consciousness, while the later *xia* is a person who "helps those in danger and relieves those in need" and has strong individual emotional factors (Li Zonggui 1991, 177). As the historian Feng Youlan points out, the Mohist *yixia* is different from ordinary *xia* in that the latter is an expert who helps others in fighting while the former is an expert who helps others in fighting for a doctrine. *Yixia* is not only an expert who helps others in fighting for a doctrine, but also one who has a way of managing the state. Within the group of *xia*, there is ethics, which was systematised, theoretically summarised and popularised by Mozi (Feng Youlan 1984,

³⁴ The most notorious bandit chief who created "the train wreck at Lincheng". On 5 May 1923, Sun Meiyao and his gang robbed an international train at Lincheng in Shandong and kidnapped all passengers including American, English, French, Italian, Mexican, Rumanian, and other foreign passengers. This incident shocked the whole world (Li Ling 1995, 202-216).

³⁵ Mozi (c., 468-276BC), founder of the Mohist school.

325). In the Preface to *A Collection of Chinese Haoxia Stories*, Wang Yi summarised the characteristics of *xia*:

1. Be ready to draw his sword to help at the sight of injustice on the road. Be willing to exclude difficulty and anxiety for people but to take nothing; be willing to risk but not to fear.
2. Be independent and unruly. Show contempt for authorities and despise cowards.
3. Clearly distinguish love and hate, with forthright and natural feelings; dislike affectation, but tend to seek revenge for the smallest grievance.
4. Be generous in aiding needy people; curb the violent and assist the weak; support the good to prevail over the evil. Show strong sympathy and sense of responsibility in society.
5. Many of them excel in courage and martial arts, and therefore are called *wuxia* (chivalrous men skilled at martial arts) (Wang Yi & Sheng Ruiyu 1995, 3).

These are similar to the medieval European code of knightly chivalry, but obviously the “outlaw hero” under discussion in this thesis is in some ways different from the *xia* defined above, though there are some close similarities. The outlaw hero is not a rich man nor a man supported by a rich man, and therefore he cannot distribute his own wealth to the needy as the *xia* did. The outlaw hero is an enemy of the rich, while the *xia* may not be. The outlaw hero generally has a band with him, while the *xia* acts independently without seeking company. The *xia* does not rob, while robbery is the profession of the outlaw hero. The outlaw hero is driven out of the law and has to stay outside it, while the *xia*, though violating the law from time to time, is within the law, or volunteers to break the law for righting wrongs. However, the outlaw hero bears some of the characteristics attributed to the *xia*, and the outlaw hero tradition has inherited a valuable legacy from the *xia* tradition. They both help the needy, right wrongs, act bravely, have a good command of martial arts and win popularity among the common people, not necessarily just the peasant community. In addition, both of them are constructed mainly by folkloric processes, though the *xia* is a more popular literary subject matter than the outlaw hero.

Historians have to use folkloric sources when studying social banditry as Hobsbawm does, if only to a limited extent, and folklorists have also to rely heavily on history as Seal does. However, historians find “it is very difficult to isolate an ideal type of ‘social bandit’,” because of mixed traits of “bad” violence and “good” violence

(Billingsley 1988, 274) adopted by bandits and lack of historical facts, but folklorists can construct their “outlaw heroes” on the basis of legends and myths, both ancient and modern. Billingsley argues:

Bandits were part of a structure of violence and power, and obeyed its rules. Within that structure there was “good” violence and “bad” violence, the former corresponding to that which represented or seemed to represent the interests of the common people, the latter corresponding to that which was clearly directed against the people. Whether or not those people reaped any benefit, “social banditry” could often amount to no more than violence that was perceived to inflict damage upon the oppressors (Billingsley 1988, 274).

As historians, Hobsbawm and Billingsley find it difficult to fit specific outlaws into their definitions of “social bandits”, whereas the ten motifs of folkloric exposition of the outlaw hero tradition work well to separate the outlaw hero from the ordinary bandit, though more aspects can be added when analysing the Chinese tradition.

In many respects “outlaw hero” is a more suitable term than “social bandit” for the person who stays outside the law but has attributes of a hero. First, the term “outlaw hero” literally is a clear combination: one is an outlaw, but at the same time, his deeds, quality and personality distinguish him as a hero. The term “social bandit” is not so easy to understand without carefully studying Hobsbawm’s profound book, *Bandits*. In addition, the term “social bandit” is ambiguous in meaning and connotation. The definitions of the word “social” given in dictionaries and elsewhere do not effectively support the connotation of the term and the definition Hobsbawm gave to it (Hobsbawm 1972, 17). Second, “outlaw hero” is a recognition of a group of people who are unprotected by the law, rejected by the society (in this sense they are not “social”) and unrecognised as heroes by the authorities and the rich. Actually, they are a group of people everyone has a right to punish, but they fight heroically against their foes, generally consisting of the rich, the police, the authorities, and the corrupt officialdom. Their activities are mainly anti-institutional and anti-social. Third, the term “outlaw hero” is more folkloric than historiographical. The term “outlaw hero” is also much broader in connotation than the Chinese term “*xia*”.³⁶ What they did was to revenge people for their wrongs, no matter whether they were rich or poor. They did

³⁶ Though the term *xia* is often used to refer to some outlaw heroes, the basic meaning is different.

so not because they wanted to “rob the rich to help the poor”, but because their sense of justice called on them to “be ready with drawn swords at the sight of injustice” (Zhang Ye 1993, 220), or because they owed gratitude to the person they were to revenge. They might violate the law every now and then, but they were not outlawed. The Chinese term “*lulin haohan*” (greenwood hero) is closest in meaning to the term “outlaw hero”. However, the Chinese term has a broader implication, including the so-called *xia* heroes³⁷ who help upright and honest officials such as those described in the novels *Xiao Wu Yi* (The Five Junior Swordsmen)³⁸, *Qi Jian Shi San Xia* (Seven Swordsmen and Thirteen Knights-errant)³⁹ and other similar *wuxia* (swordsmen) novels as well as the type of outlaw heroes discussed in this thesis.

In the book *The Invention of Tradition* co-edited by Hobsbawm and Ranger, scholars explained the invented nature of “traditions”, arguing convincingly that “‘Traditions’ which appear or claim to be old are often quite recent in origin and sometimes invented” (Hobsbawm & Ranger 1983, 1). As this chapter has indicated, the outlaw hero tradition is also invented in some ways. The outlaw hero as well as the tradition itself is constructed at different stages through a long process. At each stage, “Adaptation took place for old uses in new conditions and by using old models for new purposes” (Hobsbawm & Ranger 1983, 5). History, literature and folklore do similar things in constructing outlaw heroism, though folklore may be the initiator of the precedent. When arguing that modern concepts must include a constructed or “invented” component, Hobsbawm says that “the national phenomenon cannot be adequately investigated without careful attention to the ‘invention of tradition’.” (Hobsbawm & Ranger 1983, 5). The same is true with the outlaw hero tradition. An understanding of the “constructedness”, or the “inventedness”, of the outlaw hero

³⁷ A typical modern *xia* is Huo Yuanjia (1867-1909). According to legends and myths as well as history, a master of martial arts, Huo fought against local despots, saved lives of workers, repeatedly defeated Japanese *ronin*, triumphed over a Russian master of martial arts and had heroic and lofty qualities. The long historical novel, *Huo Yuanjia, The Great Xia at Jinmen*, vividly describes his life and deeds.

³⁸ *Xiao Wu Yi* (The Five Junior Swordsmen) is a novel written by Shi Yukun of the Qing dynasty describing how five young swordsmen help the royal court and upright officials to fight against corrupt officials and the rebellious prince (Guizhou People’s Publishing House, 1994).

tradition is necessary if one is to investigate this cultural phenomenon in precise comparative terms.

³⁹ Tang Yunzhou (Qing dynasty), *Qi Jian Shi San Xia* (Seven Swordsmen and Thirteen Knights-errant) (Jiangxi People's Publishing House, 1990), a novel with a similar theme as *The Five Junior Swordsmen*.

Chapter 2

Outlaws Constructed As Archetypal Heroes

In outlaw hero traditions examined, mythical and non-historical elements play an important part in “preserving and transmitting” (Seal 1996, 19) the ethos of the outlaw hero. Even the most serious historians such as Hobsbawm, Ian Jones and Stephen Knight refer to folkloric sources when they discuss social banditry, the Australian outlaw hero and the medieval English outlaw hero. On the other hand, folklorists attach great importance to the historicity of the outlaw hero. Believing that “the lore” is not simply a chance grouping of beliefs about outlawry but a coherent philosophy and a guide to appropriate action, Seal says, “This philosophy is generally articulated only in fragmentary form in any one expression, yet is clearly present when the corpus that makes up the outlaw hero tradition is examined as a whole” (Seal 1996, 20). He concludes, “Regardless of the historicity of Robin Hood, his image, both popular and folkloric, is that of the outlaw hero, and he is clearly viewed in such terms from a very early period” (Seal 1996, 24). However, Ross derives a different image from the early printed poems of the late fourteenth century: “Robin is more like a real medieval bandit. He kills cruelly and enjoys it. Slaying Guy of Gisborne, he sticks his head on the end of his bow! But with time, as characters and adventures were added by writers like Sir Walter Scott (as in the novel *Ivanhoe*), Robin was transformed into the romantic hero we know today” (Ross 1995, 18). The supposedly twelfth century English outlaw Robin Hood is the archetype of Western outlaw heroes. The Chinese outlaws of the Marsh are similar archetypal heroes. This chapter discusses archetypal outlaw heroes and their successors, praise or censure of the outlaw hero, the process of constructing archetypal outlaw heroes, folkloric constructedness, and the characteristics and values of these heroes.

Archetypal Outlaw Heroes and Their Successors

Not many national heroes of the twelfth century are remembered by ordinary people in Britain, but Robin Hood is. He always has a prominent position in folkloric,

literary and cultural history in the Anglophone tradition. Knight observes that “Sydney and Melbourne breathe their own versions of elusive independence, with living respect for Robin Hood’s bushranging descendants” (Knight 1994, viii). In Australia, not many people could readily name Australian heroes in the first and second World Wars, but many are familiar with Kelly stories.

Not many Chinese ancient national heroes are remembered today, but stories about the outlaws of the Marsh are frequently recounted and appreciated. These outlaws always find striking positions in folklore, fiction and even popular religion. They are remembered by the people and praised in all genres of literature and art. Folk stories, novels, prose, poems, television plays, films, children’s books, paintings, dramas and all kinds of local opera construct these heroes in stereotypical ways. Just as Robin Hood has been imitated, sometimes knowingly, sometimes subconsciously, by some later outlaws in the Anglophone tradition, so have the outlaws of the Marsh. In the late Qing dynasty, Yu Mengting and his gang operated in the Taihu Lake, “robbed the rich to help the poor” and were “welcomed by the poor villagers around” (Cai Shaoqing 1993, 299). In the early days, the bandit gang led by Ye Axiang and Luo Xuyi simply named their operating area as “Liangshan Marsh”. The villagers “were grateful for the bandits, saying that the bandits were more serious about solving problems than the police in the Suzhou city” (Cai Shaoqing 1993, 300).

There are many ballads in praise of the outlaws of the Marsh, including ballads in the form of *kuaiban*¹, *Shandong kuaishu*² and *dagu*³, as well as local plays and operas which record stories of outlaw heroes or *lulin haohan* (greenwood heroes) of different dynasties. The 1996 full-length TV series play *Shui Hu Zhuan* produced by the China Central Television has brought the outlaws of the Marsh even more popularity not only in China today but also around the world. The stories and details of the play are new creations by the playwright and the director, different from those in the original text of *Shui Hu Zhuan*, though the plot is broadly similar. It has enabled the

¹ *Kuaiban* is a ballad or story recited to the rhythm of bamboo clappers, popular in the north of China.

² Rhythmic storytelling accompanied by copper clappers popular in Shandong well-known for telling stories about Wu Song.

construction of the outlaws to reach a new level. The theme song of the play is a new ballad in praise of the outlaw heroes.⁴

It is often folkloric rather than historical outlaws who are remembered and imitated. These images enter and stay in the knowledge and subconscious of people, while the names of the constructors and the fashions in which they are constructed quickly fall into oblivion. Hundreds of people have written novels, plays, ballads and stories about the outlaws of the Marsh, played the roles of these heroes in films, plays, operas, local operas and *quyi*⁵, and depicted the images of them with sculptures, paintings, and paper clippings. Many works have been published about Robin Hood and the outlaws of the Marsh, but people can rarely recall which of these works depicts such complete and perfect outlaw heroes as “Robin of Sherwood” and the outlaws of the Marsh who exist in our memory. Knight’s most recent and comprehensive study examines five domains of the process of Robin Hood’s construction, from the early thirteenth century to the late twentieth century (Knight 1994, 7-9). Dobson & Taylor’s *Rymes of Robin Hood* is a valuable source document; Seal’s *The Outlaw Legend: A Cultural Tradition in Britain, America and Australia* uses the archetypal traits of Robin Hood to analyse the tradition of outlaw heroism. As Seal argues, the images of English highwaymen, such as Turpin and Nevison, represent an eighteenth-century resonance of the Robin Hood tradition; the American outlaws and desperadoes, such as the outlaw Jesse James and the short-lived and brutal but romanticised outlaw William Bonney alias Billy the Kid, were representatives of the outlaw hero tradition in folklore and in other forms of cultural representation in the United States. Seal also asserts that Ned Kelly, “whose image, agglomerating many of the essential elements of Australian cultural identity, has transcended the status of local hero and even that of folk hero to become a truly national hero” (Seal 1996, 16-17). In China, though there is no dissertation on the

³ Versified story sung to the accompaniment of a small drum and other instruments.

⁴ See Chapter 7.

⁵ Chinese folk art forms, including ballad singing, story telling, comic dialogues, clapper talks, cross talks, etc. As a matter of fact, Chinese outlaw heroes are more performed in *quyi* than other forms of arts.

outlaws of the Marsh, articles on and about them are immense in number,⁶ but no single one gives us the complete popular images of those heroes. Many people talk about them and weave stories around them. One may know some stories about them told by other people or from books, but may not be satisfied, so he adds things to them and makes a new version of the story.

Outlaw heroes are a distinct species. They are remembered not as literary figures in whom the reader can find the subtlety of emotion and the nuances of character. It is their unique qualities as heroes recognised and unrecognised and their focusing on the ideals of people who are not satisfied or downtrodden that make their images inspiring and ever-lasting. It is their exploits in fighting against authority and helping the oppressed that interest those social groups that show sympathy and support for them. It is their way of voicing the wish of the wronged that awakens the unhearing. The significance of the existence of such outlaw heroes lies not with literary effects but with their symbolising certain types of social protest that prevail in different times in most societies.

Outlaw heroes are creatures inhabited by both “villain” and “hero” at the same time, though their supporters and sympathisers are reluctant to admit that the “villain” is also found in these same heroes, while the authorities are not willing to acknowledge their heroic qualities. The more mythical “Robin of Sherwood” and “outlaws of the Marsh”, and the more historical “Kelly of the Bush”, are said to have all robbed and killed people who in real life could be considered good people or people not deserving of being punished that way. Robin Hood is said to have beheaded the evil Guy of Gisbourne and shot fourteen foresters dead (Pyle 1979, 205); Kelly robbed banks, held up citizens in hotels and killed at least three police officers and “hoped to maim a trainload more” (Jennings 1968, 76). The outlaws of the Marsh robbed and killed travellers. Billy the Kid was believed to have killed 21 men in all – one for each of the 21 years he lived. In the eyes of the law, they are thieves, robbers and murderers, and hence enemies of society. The Crown prosecutor at the trial of Kelly at the Central Criminal Court, Melbourne on 29 October 1880 gave the motive for Kelly’s murder of

⁶ In 1975, almost all magazines and newspapers had articles on *Shui Hu Zhuan*. See the next section.

Lonigan as “one of malignant hatred against the police because the prisoner had been leading a wild, lawless life, and was at war against society” (Jennings 1968, 76).

But these ferocious deeds are not important for people who want to construct the outlaw into a hero. Therefore the “real” outlaw heroes are not the “real” Robin Hood or outlaws of the Marsh but their rebuilt images. Even Ned Kelly’s image, though he did exist in history, has become more and more mythical and legendary with time. In the 1968 edition of *The Dictionary of National Biography*, the entry for Ned Kelly defines him as a “bushranger” and has this description of the Kelly gang: “Their reckless audacity, their good fortune, and the fact that their murders were principally confined to policemen, their robberies to banks or government property, obtained for them some popular sympathy, and they seem to have had no difficulty in obtaining provisions and intelligence in their hiding-places in the mountains” (Sir Stephen 1968, 1235). In the 1982 edition of *The Macquarie Dictionary*, a Ned Kelly is defined as “a thief; swindler: *he’s a real Ned Kelly*” (TMD 1985, 1143). In the 1989 edition of *The Australian Oxford Paperback Dictionary*, Ned Kelly is defined as “one of a family of Australian bushrangers, who was outlawed in Victoria in 1878 and sentenced to death in 1880 but nevertheless became a folk hero” (Turner, George & Beryl 1989, 441). In the 1990 edition of *Chambers Biographical Dictionary*, he becomes “a popular mythical figure” (Magnusson 1990, 817). In *The Oxford Companion to Australian Folklore* published in 1993 he is described as “a bushranger hero” with an “enigmatic image” (Davey & Seal 1993, 223). In *The Macquarie Encyclopedia of Australian Events*, Kelly is said to be “the most famous of the bushrangers and a symbolic figure in Australian History” (TMEAE 1997, 228) Jennings notices the difference between works of the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries on Ned Kelly:

The major twentieth century works on Kelly, of which Clune and Keneally are perhaps the most widely read, are far different in tone from those written between 1880-1900. These early works are a product of the outraged citizens at the Kelly deeds and daring. They no longer felt safe and their fear at their lack of protection prompted great hatred for the Kellys. Every attempt was made to belittle Kelly. Consequently, the first Kelly biographers described the “hateful, vicious” Kelly “sneaking” around the country as he committed his “outrages” (Jennings 1968, 80).

Works in the twentieth century, including works by Ian Jones, Nancy Keesing, Charles White, John McQuilton and M. J. Jennings, pay more attention to analysing the social, legal and political environment. More sympathy than hatred is expressed. McQuilton notes the process of constructing Kelly as a social bandit, who transcends “the limitations of simplistic rural criminal definition and a purely biographical approach” (McQuilton 1979, 2). Though “the Kelly Outbreak and the Gang itself match Hobsbawm’s portrait of social banditry”, before McQuilton published his book in 1979, studies of the outbreak had “treated it basically as criminal outburst and offer one of the two traditional explanations for it”, one being “the pro-Kelly stream” represented by Kenneally and the other being “the anti-Kelly literature” represented by Farwell (McQuilton 1979, 2). When Ian Jones, after 54 years of research, found that the history books about Ned Kelly were not “complete” or not “true”, he hoped his book would be “closer to being both” (Jones 1995, VII). He dedicated a chapter to the study of the legacy and legend of Kelly. He says, “Far from being ‘the last act of the Kelly tragedy’, Ned’s death was the prologue to a complex saga that reaches to the present day, interweaving the stories of the ongoing Kelly rebellion and its outcome, the fate of the Kelly family and their friends, the impact of the outbreak on the police force and the steady advance of Ned Kelly into legend” (Jones 1995, 325).

The world in which Robin Hood and his band operated was a strange, distant and lost world to which later constructors of these heroes have only a tentative relationship. People are only able to rebuild the world and reconstruct the figures according to their own belief, imagination and liking. Although the story they construct is a sphere where strange, extraordinary and unspeakable things may prevail, what each of them really wants to create is an image they favour. Li Yu⁷ in his article, “Comments Made at Leisure”, says:

Legends, depending on little facts, are mostly allegoric. If they are meant to persuade people to do their filial duties, an example of a filial son will be given. As long as he (the filial son) has one conduct that is praiseworthy, other of his conducts will not be given in detail. All good conducts that filial sons should have are attributed to him. The same is true with the villain. King Zhou⁸ might

⁷ Li Yu (1611-c.,1679) is a famous theatre critic and writer.

⁸ The last ruler of the Shang dynasty (c.16-11th century BC), reputedly a tyrant in legend.

not have been that bad, but once he got the bad reputation, everything bad in the world was attributed to him (Yu Qiuyu 1985, 45).

Legends depict outlaws in the same manner. In Robin Hood and outlaws of the Marsh are found good qualities of the category of people. As outlaws, they are constructed as “others” to those who are law-abiding in the eyes of the authority; as heroes, they are “others” to other outlaws. It is the “otherness” they found in themselves and others found in them that singles them out as a unique type of hero. As Seal states, “Our fascination with heroism is based on the dual status of the hero who is recognisably one of us yet at the same time apart from us by virtue of his (or far less frequently, her) actions or experiences” (Seal 1993, 27).

Creators of outlaw hero stories do not try to find and describe their real identities and their actual experiences, but to rediscover the other human being, and the different quality and things that represent values they believe to be justified. Through centuries of reconstruction, the image of the outlaw hero becomes what it is like today, and will be further developed by future constructors. As a result, today’s many-times-invented Robin Hood and outlaws of the Marsh are no longer the ones loved or hated centuries ago. Even the more recent Ned Kelly is much more mysterious today than the one people knew just a century ago.

The one hundred and eight outlaws of the Marsh have been so romanticised that they have become idols for not only outlaws in different generations, but for people who are not satisfied with the existing order. The modern source of such romanticisation is *Shui Hu Zhuan*, which has been adapted to stories, operas, plays and other popular art forms.⁹ Since most bandits, including those regarded as heroes, were illiterate or semi-illiterate, what they knew about the outlaws of the Marsh is derived from oral traditions spun together by people who travelled about to make a living by telling stories. Billingsley has also noticed such romanticisation:

As well as providing inspiration for generations of bandit chiefs, the story has continued to forge the dreams of young people right up to the present. Its depiction of a non-hierarchical community as an alternative to the Confucian model of human relations, however, made it anathema to the imperial

⁹ FitzGerald says the novel “relates the history of a band of fugitives and rebels and their struggle against an oppressive government, a Robin Hood saga” (FitzGerald 1976, 5).

authorities, and it was frequently banned, a fact that only heightened its appeal to those feeling dissatisfied with the existing order (Billingsley 1988, 4).

The traditions of both Anglophone and Chinese outlaw heroes are long and multiple-layered. What interests us here is how the materials about these outlaws are put together to construct them as heroes for both traditions by historians, biographers, writers, folklorists and above all their sympathisers and supporters. A notable phenomenon in the study of the outlaw tradition in China is that people of different social status and classes have opinions of vast difference. When discussing the first Chinese legendary outlaw hero Dao Zhi, Wu Meng says, "In the last two thousand years and more, Dao Zhi's activities have been as much praised as condemned. The dividing line is class. Most mouthpieces of the landlord class would revile in a certain way, while the peasants would praise and memorise him in various ways" (Wu Meng 1977, 82). The ballad "The Ned Kelly Song" tells us exactly the same story:

Some say he's a hero and gave to the poor,
While others, "A Killer" they say;
To me it just proves the old saying is true,
The saying that crime doesn't pay.

Yet when I look round at some people I know,
And the prices of things we buy,
I just think to myself, well perhaps, after all,
Old Ned wasn't such a bad guy (Osborne 1970, 200).

People of such combined qualities naturally cause disputation between different social groups and classes.

Praise or Censure, and A Melodramatic Episode

Shui Hu Zhuan was officially prohibited for several centuries. During and after the May 4 Movement in 1919, scholars discussed it, but the study remained in the stage of fact-finding and text-interpretation. The famous historian Hu Shi¹⁰ published several long articles of such a nature, including "Textual Research on *Shui Hu Zhuan*" (Hu Shi 1971, Vol. 1, 500) written in July 1920, "Second Textual Research on *Shui Hu Zhuan*" (Hu Shi 1971, Vol. 1, 548) in June 1921, "Preface to Two Sequels of *Shui*

Hu" (Hu Shi 1971, Vol. 3, 450) in December 1923, and "Preface to the One Hundred and Twenty Chapter" (Hu Shi 1971, Vol. 3, 404). His last article reviewed the history of different versions of *Shui Hu Zhuan* and textual studies in the previous decade before he published the article on the one-hundred-and-twenty-chapter *Shui Hu Zhuan*.

After the founding of the PRC, scholars were either busy praising the Party and the new China or were silenced by the revolutionaries, so they could not do any serious research on historical, social and cultural heritage. Under Mao Zedong's instruction of "making the past to serve the present" and "analysing and treating everything from the class and the class-struggle points-of-view", all historical studies were tailored to the taste of the so-called "proletarian revolutionary thought". Even famous historians such as Guo Moruo¹¹ and Wu Han¹² had to change their viewpoints to go along with such thoughts. When Wu Han sent his manuscript of *Biography of Zhu Yuanzhang* to Mao, Mao told him that Zhu was a leader of a peasant uprising and should not be described as a villain. Wu Han not only changed the text but said, through study (of Chairman Mao's instructions), "I understand something more clearly, especially problems regarding class, class analysis, class struggle and the evaluation of historical figures" (Zhang Yijiu 1991, 183-194). During the Cultural Revolution, the topic of criticising *Shui Hu Zhuan* was picked up by Mao, distorted by those scholars who tried to cater to Mao's taste and abused by the masses. The notorious campaign of reviewing *Shui Hu Zhuan* and criticising Song Jiang featured an unprecedented melodrama in the study of this tradition. All people, workers, peasants, soldiers, intellectuals and cadres, literate or illiterate, seemed to have become scholarly critics and accused the book and Song Jiang unanimously. In 1975, in the four issues from the ninth to the twelfth of the CPC's Central Committee's journal *Hong Qi* (The

¹⁰ Hu Shi (1891-1962), famous Chinese historian, philosopher and literary critic.

¹¹ Guo Morou (1892-1978), a famous Chinese historian. He published the book titled "*Jia Shen San Bai Nian Ji*" in 1944, describing the reason of failure of the peasant uprising led by Li Zicheng in the late Ming dynasty. The book was used as reference by the CPC in the Yanan Rectification Campaign.

¹² Wu Han (1909-1969), a famous historian. His historical works include "Biography of Zhu Yuanzhang".

Red Flag), twenty essays on *Shui Hu Zhuan* were published, branding the book as an “Ode to Traitors”¹³ and Song Jiang and some of the outlaw heroes as capitulators.¹⁴ In the tenth issue, the article written by Zhong Wen called Hu Shi’s opinions on *Shui Hu Zhuan* “a series of fallacious discussions”.¹⁵ In the eleventh issue, another article gave a thorough criticism to Hu Shi’s arguments:

People would ask, why does Hu Shi laud the “broken tail dragonfly”¹⁶ to the skies? Basically, it is decided by their common reactionary stand. As a lackey of the landlord and the *comprador* bourgeoisie classes, Hu Shi, like Jin Shengtian¹⁷, the reactionary feudal writer, has an inveterate hatred for the peasant revolution, wishing to wipe out the revolutionaries. He clamours, “Banditry should not be advocated, but ‘condemned both in speech and in writing’.” Like Jin Shengtian, he cherishes the same dream of “bringing peace to the whole world by extinguishing all bandits.” He vigorously defends Song Jiang, saying, “*Shui Hu Zhuan* does not reproach Song Jiang.” He called Song Jiang “a ‘kind-hearted and just’ hero”. Then, in his textual research of *Shui Hu Zhuan*, Hu Shi concludes that it is “a book opposing the government and that it “‘praises’ in every part the bandits and ‘belittle’ the government.” This point of view is not only fallacious but also ill-intentioned (Yu Fan 1975, 42).

In the journal *Archaeology* an article written by a group of people from the Institute of Archaeology of the *Academia Sinica* accounted their investigation into the historical sites in Liangshan County, where the Marsh is situated. It tries to prove that Mao was correct about Song Jiang and *Shui Hu Zhuan*. Their purpose was made clear at the beginning of the article: “Following Great Leader Chairman Mao’s instructions, the criticism on *Shui Hu Zhuan* has been carried out in the whole country. To support this great struggle in the political and ideological front, we went to the Liangshan area

¹³ An article of this title written by an educated youth named Zhao Anting of Shandong province was published in the ninth issue of the magazine *Hong Qi* (The Red Flag), 1975.

¹⁴ The Criticism Group of Beijing University and Qinghua University, “Yi Bu Xuanyang Touxian Zhuyi de Fanmian Jiaocai” (“Teaching Material by Negative Examples of Praising apitulationism”), *Hong Qi* (The Red Flag), Issue 9, 1975; Zhong Gu, “Ping Shui Hu de Touxian Zhuyi Luxian” (“On the Capitulationist Line Advocated by Shui Hu Zhuan”), *Hong Qi* (The Red Flag), Issue 9, 1975.

¹⁵ Zhong Wen, “Ping Jin Shengtian Yaozhan Shui Hu” (“On Jin Shengtian’s Cutting of Shui Hu Zhuan”), *Hong Qi* (The Red Flag), Issue 10, 1975.

¹⁶ Lu Xun called Jin Shengtian’s seventy-chapter “*Shui Hu Zhuan*” “broken tail dragonfly”, See *Hong Qi*, Issue 11, 1975, 42

¹⁷ Jin Shengtian (1608-1661), literary critic in the late Ming and early Song dynasties. He left out the last thirty chapters of the one-hundred chapter *Shui Hu Zhuan* where Song Jiang and his followers were amnestied and sent to attack Fang La and ended the story with an outlaw’s dream of all the outlaws being killed.

and made this investigation” (LITIAAS 1975, 326). For all its biased and extreme viewpoints, the article has certain academic value for understanding the constructedness of the outlaws. It tells why the Marsh was an ideal place for “bandits”, how fishermen and peasants in this area were forced to become “bandits”, what stories the local people know and create about the outlaws and where one can find legends about these outlaws. Another famous journal at that time called *Study and Criticism* carried thirty-five articles on *Shui Hu Zhuan* and the outlaws of the Marsh from the ninth issue to the twelfth issue, expressing exactly the same viewpoints. In an article, the author lists nine steps that Song Jiang took to destroy “the revolutionary cause in Liangshan”. The first step: He changed the Hall of Fraternity into the Hall of Loyalty and Righteousness. The second step: He placed capitulators to leading positions. The third step: He raised the capitulationist slogan of accepting amnesty. The fourth step: He went to the capital in person to seek amnesty. The fifth step: He begged Marshal Chen to put in good words before the emperor. The sixth step: He released the captured Gao Qiu. The seventh step: All the outlaws accepted amnesty. The eighth step: After Song Jiang surrendered, he went to attack Fang La. The ninth step: Song Jiang cheated Li Kui into drinking the poisonous wine given by the emperor (Zhai Qing 1975, 5).

Journals and newspapers at that time were full of such articles. The preface to the 1975 edition of *Shui Hu Zhuan* is a typical one, reflecting the ideological tendency in those days. It called *Shui Hu Zhuan* “teaching material by negative examples”, Song Jiang “a capitulationist”, and the famous critic Jin Shengtian a “reactionary man of letter” (Shi Nai’an & Luo Guanzhong 1975, 1-12). Mao Zedong’s words about the book and the outlaws were quoted as the only criterion of judgement. Some heroes were regarded as traitors, representatives of the landlord class or headsmen suppressing peasant uprisings. Mao himself was a rebel, who was once outlawed by the KMT government. For him, rebellion and challenge were means rather than ends. He had an abhorrence of Song Jiang because Song surrendered to the government. In 1975, Mao summarised the factors that caused Song Jiang’s surrender:

Shui Hu Zhuan opposes only corrupt officials, but not the emperor. It excludes Chao Gai from the 108 people. Song Jiang surrendered. He carried out revisionist activities, changing Chao Gai's Hall of Fraternity into the Hall of Loyalty and Righteousness. He was amnestied and enlisted. The struggle between Song Jiang and Gao Qiu is a factional strife within the landlord class. After his surrender, Song Jiang went to attack Fang La (*Renmin Ribao* 4 Sept. 1975).

Mao believed that, first, Song Jiang could not have a thorough victory, because he "opposed only corrupt officials but not the emperor"; second, the nature of Song Jiang as a member of the "landlord class" could only lead to that result; third, the ethical philosophy of "loyalty to the sovereign" could only end in tragedy (Chen Jin 1992, 239). Most comments on the outlaws of the Marsh in those days were no more than putting tags on *Shui Hu Zhuan* and the characters to meet political needs. Recently, some articles and books about the outlaw heroes of the Marsh have been published, but no systematic theoretical study exists. The book titled "*Trickery and Strategy in Shui Hu Zhuan—No. 5 Scholarly Book in the World*" published in 1993 is but a repetition of archaic criticisms of the novel made by critics of several hundred years ago. Wang Jue and Li Dianyuan's more recent book "*Unsettled Questions in Shui Hu Zhuan*" consists of research into texts written in the Song and Ming dynasties and provides some valuable reference for the study.

The Process of Constructing Archetypal Outlaw Heroes

The question of whether these traditional outlaw heroes really existed has been frequently asked by some people, mainly historians. Since the outlaw hero tradition is a more folkloric topic than a historical one, unreliable and even contradictory bits of fact used by some historians to prove the existence of such outlaws have proved inadequate and irrelevant. Their efforts bring forth two main results: 1. making these outlaw heroes more "real" and therefore more "unreal" to the folk; 2. confusing those readers who accept constructed outlaw heroes instead of "actual" ones. In fact, even the "actual" ones evidenced through archaeological or archival findings are not real enough.

In England, names of places are sometimes used to prove the existence of Robin Hood, Little John and others of the merry Robin gang. When Knight discusses this kind of suggestion, he points out:

For example, he was from Wakefield, but left because of the oppressive sheriff and marched overland with his men to Whitby - hence Robin Hood's Bay. Or he lived in the hills above Derby, crossing to Sherwood in good highway-robbing weather, hence all the caves and wells in the eastern Peak District that bear his name or that of Little John. Both of those quite unrecorded accounts have actually come up in recent public discussions, from people who were enthusiasts of the outlaw's tradition and related him to their own locale (Knight 1994, 11).

The same happens in China. Some people find that in Shandong, Hebei, Shanxi and Zhejiang, there are places named after and temples in memory of outlaws of the Marsh, so they believe these outlaws really existed. Cai Dongfan, author of series of historical romances, wrote, "I grew up in Guyue, less than 100 *li*¹⁸ from Hangzhou, so I often went to Hangzhou to visit the historic site. There is a temple named after Zhang Shun who was conferred the title of God of Land in the city. There is a Shi Qian¹⁹ Temple in the suburbs. On the shore of the West Lake is Wu Song's Tomb. It is sure there are good grounds for this" (Cai Dongfan 1993b, 428). Later in the early twentieth century, Du Yuesheng²⁰ and Yu Jiaqing²¹ built another Wu Song tomb on the basis of two legendary passages in two collections of prose written in the Qing dynasty. One passage reads, "Some people in Zhejiang dug up a tombstone on which the characters 'Wu Song's Tomb' were engraved." Another passage supports this by saying, "Now that the stone tablet has been found, it should be of no doubt that Wu Song was buried in this area. Therefore, people dug deep in the adjacent area and found a skeleton of a huge man without the left arm. It must be Wu Song" (Wang Jue & Li Dianyuan 1994, 179-180). Wang and Li questioned the validity of the assertion by saying that first, it was the case in China that on the tombstone there should be not only his official title but also his birth and death dates; second, if Wu Song was a monk

¹⁸ One *li* is half a kilometre.

¹⁹ Zhang Shun and Shi Qian are two of the most famous outlaws of the Marsh.

²⁰ Du Yuesheng (1888-1951), once Chief of Qing Bang in Shanghai.

²¹ Yu Qiaqing (1867-1945), a rich and influential merchant in Shanghai in the early twentieth century.

as it was believed, he would have been cremated instead of buried in a coffin (Wang Jue & Li Dianyuan 1994, 180).

However, the most pressing problem in our study of the Chinese and Anglophone outlaw hero tradition is the relationship between “reality” and constructedness. Even historians such as Dobson and Taylor have to construct their own Robin Hood through rhymes, “although they deal sensibly with a wide range of literary matters” (Knight 1994, 12). The word “legend” is often adopted when giving substance to those famous outlaw heroes, which means, perhaps, that all the stories of these outlaw heroes may not be true, but at least there have existed such figures in history. Knight observes:

With a similarly concrete, or perhaps fetishized, concept of history, the historicist scholars have cherished fragments of what appears to be reality. Wakefield property records, York assize documents, Sussex personal names, even London street names: all these bear early traces of a figure called Robin or sometimes Robert Hood and each lode of empirical ore has sustained excavation and speculation about a specific biography at the core of the widely disseminated legend (Knight 1994, 12).

It must be the way all great villains and great heroes are constructed. Such transformed “real existence” could hardly be identified. Even if their names had really appeared in history, most of their activities had been made up. Knight gives a comprehensive list of “References to Robin Hood up to 1600” collected by Lucy Sussex. In the list we can see that Robin Hood has never been identified as a specific person, but a combination of different legends about a person who might have the name “Robin”, “Robynhod”, “Robyn Hode”, “Robert Hobbe”, “Robert Robyn hod” or “Robyn Hood”, which is closer to Robin Hood. It is clear that people in the same time or immediately after the time when Robin was supposed to be operating could not find one specific person as Robin Hood. Therefore, it is pointless, and impossible for people today, after seven hundred years, to identify him by stitching together fragments of fabricated data. When this question is asked of the Chinese outlaws, the answer is the same. Dobson and Taylor admit that “the discovery of the name Robert or Robin Hood in a medieval English document is not in itself of particular significance.” Hanawalt simply refuses to look for a historical Robin Hood because

“the evidence is insufficient” (Knight 1994, 15). In the long tradition of construction, Robin Hood has been regarded as “a mythical forest-elf, who filled a large space in English, and apparently in Scottish, folk-lore”(Sir Stephen 1981, 258-291), “a medieval English outlaw” (Watson 1976, 960), “the bold outlaw of Sherwood Forest” and the best archer in the world (Pyle 1979, 6 & 9), a “popular hero” (Graves 1948, 350), “the devil”, “the god of the Old Religion” (Murray 1931, 35-36), “the archetype of the social rebel” (Hobsbawm 1974, 13), and so on. In short, Robin Hood has been constructed by historians, folklorists, writers and balladists into a more and more mythical figure. As Knight observes:

When, in the early eighties television series “Robin of Sherwood”, Robin was initiated in his heroic role by a stag-headed Herne the Hunter, Richard Carpenter, the script writer, was not merely drawing on the late-seventies interest in magic of many kinds; he articulated the mythic undertow of the tradition, which the 1938 Hollywood “Adventures of Robin Hood”, for example, had realized in the famous and much-imitated scene where the great oak tree comes to life with green-clad outlaws (Knight 1994, 14).

When introducing the reader to Pyle and his book *The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood*, Vogel makes it clear that Pyle liked to create, with his brush and pen, special worlds – “lands of fantasy and imagination”. He says, “Pyle invites us into one of his fantasy lands. The many tales of Robin Hood come from medieval songs and ballads. They were originally sung to tunes played on a harp, but over the years they became stories. The storytellers of old carried all these tales in their heads” (Pyle 1979, 5).

Even the more recent outlaw Ned Kelly is constructed and reconstructed in different forms through a hundred years. Kelly has been constructed as a hero, the successor of Robin Hood in Australia in stories, ballads, non-fictional writings, films, TV plays and so on. Today, although many Australians still believe that Kelly is but a “pure” thief or robber, more and more people accept the reconstructed Kelly instead of the “real” figure. In the late nineteenth century, Tom Roberts, one of the greatest impressionists, depicted bushrangers such as Thunderbolt and Frank Gardiner. In the twentieth century, Sydney Nolan’s paintings of Ned Kelly depict a defiant hero for Australia. As Jennings puts it, “Nolan’s paintings of Kelly have spread the Kelly story

to many who might otherwise have remained unaware of the Australian outlaw. Douglas Stewart's play dramatises the Kelly exploits from the time of the Jerilderie bank robbery to Ned's capture at Glenrowan" (Jennings 1968, 80). Recently, a set of stamps with Kelly's pictures was issued, which enhanced his status to the level of great historical figures that have also appeared on the stamps. More recently, Kelly appeared in a computer game titled "Wanted, Ned Kelly", as a wanted man.²² The producers make the program in such a way that it "could be integrated into any classroom, based around the themes of either Bushrangers or history as players are taken back in time to learn about lifestyles of the time of bushrangers."²³ Players can find general information on all characters. "Overall, the program could certainly enhance learning in regards to Bushrangers or Australian history in primary school, and be of interest to lower secondary students."²⁴ The game, of course, does not give the "real fact" or the truth, while different players get different results from the game. However, this effort is important. Students, when playing the game, can construct their own villain or hero through their knowledge of the Kelly gang. Osborne's words help us understand the constructedness of Kelly: "Ned Kelly is still, of course, remembered in Australia. But it is not the man who is remembered, it is a myth-figure who is referred to with ironic affection and, at least in what is still called the Kelly Country of Victoria, jealously cherished and guarded from the prying foreign eyes of Melbourne and the outside world." (Osborne 1970, 5).

Not only folklore and literature construct heroes or villains, history has to construct its heroes or villain on limited information as well. A historic figure is too insipid when he appears in books, stories, ballads, biographies, or autobiographies. The writer, producer or the autobiographer always build him into something larger than life. Therefore, it is no wonder that we find different images of the same person in different works by different writers, story-tellers, or biographers.

²² O'Brien, Michael & O'Brien, John, *Wanted, Ned Kelly*, Publishing Source: Newbyte Educational Software. Year: 1992. Collation: computer software, 1.--<http://netspot.com.au/ier/db/The-Arts/88.html>

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

Stories about outlaws of the Marsh had spread across the country long before *Shui Hu Zhuan* was first written in the early Ming dynasty. According to Sidney Shapiro:

Historians confirm that the story is derived from fact. Some of the events actually happened, some of the persons actually existed. Their rebellious deeds struck a responsive chord in the oppressed masses and gradually evolved into folk legends. Professional story-tellers further dramatized and embellished them in performances at market fairs and amusement centres (Shapiro 1988, 1).

The construction is a long and continuous process. In the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368), *zaju* (Medley Dramas), based on stories made up by story-tellers, played a very important part in this construction. With partly historical but largely fictional figures as characters, *zaju* manifested "realistic details" in the portrayal of *Liangshan Haohan*. There were at least thirty popular dramas, forming a complete series, depicting outlaw heroes, such as Lu Zhishen, Yan Qing, Li Kui, Wu Song, Lin Chong and Song Jiang.²⁵ In these dramas, these outlaws established themselves as heroes. These dramas, called *lulin zaju* (greenwood plays), reflected the general ethics of outlaw justice. It is these ethics that elevate the stature of the outlaws of the Marsh above that of common bandits. The dramatists manufactured the outlaws to meet their own need of expressing their discontentment and indignation in a way of "using the past to condemn the present." In the Yuan dynasty, a deep feeling of oppression prevailed across the whole nation. The supreme and most honoured imperial government and feudal ideas were smashed by the nomadic Mongols from their slave society. The law had become a tool of injustice and oppression in the hands of the newly-arrived rulers. With strict control from the royal court, scholars could not directly express their complaints and indignation, so they resorted to traditional outlaw stories. They established the outlaws as heroes to represent the cause of justice. Even the ferocity of the outlaws gained some justification from their role as heroes of the people and

²⁵ Yuan Dramas on the outlaws of the Marsh number more than 30, including such famous ones as *Liangshan Po Li Kui Fu Jing* (Li Kui Carries Thorns to Show His Apology), *Lu Zhishen Da Nao Huang Hua Yu* (Lu Zhishen Raises Havoc in the Yellow-flower Valley), *Tong Le Yuan Yan Qing Bo Yu* (Yan Qing Bets on Fish in Tongle Yuan), "*Hei Xuanfeng*" *Shuang Xian Gong* (The Black Whirlwind's Double Feat), *Zheng Bao En San Hu Xia Shan* (Three Tigers Went Down the Mountain for Repaying Favours), *Bao Jian Ji* (The Sword).

champions of the victims of misfortune and oppression. "In the Yuan plays, we see them administering a very basic sort of justice, robbing the rich to feed the poor, confounding the wicked, and easing the lot of the oppressed common man" (Shih 1976, 107).

Staying outside the law, the outlaws of the Marsh were the most free and merry souls on earth. They ate and drank to their hearts' content and spent gold and silver as they wished. In the ancient agrarian society in China, most people were bound to land. The royal court, officials and landlords oppressed and exploited the poor because they thought they owned the country, the people and the land. The political and economic systems decided that the *shijia*²⁶ were always *shijia*, the rich always rich, and the poor always poor. Most of the oppressed and exploited meekly accepted the humiliations, but the outlaws of the Marsh would not. They formed their own society, made their own laws and talked on equal terms with anybody else. They displayed an awe-inspiring righteousness by fighting at the risk of their lives against fiendish adversaries.

In the long process of constructing and reconstructing, the outlaws of the Marsh have been established as "indirect agents of justice" (Shih 1976, 107), heroes who "act for God and save people" (Yu Qiuyu 1985, 228), and *lulin haohan* who "kill the rich and help the poor". However, at the same time, some people see them as villains. Such terms as "Timely Rain"²⁷, "Demons", "capitulators", "lackeys" used in describing outlaws of the Marsh reflect this perception.

Folkloric Constructedness: Reality Recreated or Fiction Made Real

This section deals with the problem of fact and fiction in the construction of outlaw heroes. A good example is the evolution of the image of Wu Song. According to a scholar of the Qing dynasty, Wu Song's original name was not the same. His surname was Li. Born in a landlord's family, he was a young ruffian in the village, who liked quarrelling and fighting, so the villagers called him "Li Ba" (Despot Li). Once, he was defeated by a juggler. He formally acknowledged the juggler as his master to

²⁶ *Shijia* was a family holding high official positions for generations.

²⁷ Nickname given to Song Jiang.

teach him martial arts. The juggler required that only when Li promised never to bully other people with his martial arts could he teach him. Li promised. After he finished his study, Li removed two evils for the region: a tiger and a local bully who raped women and committed every kind of evil doing. Li had to flee. He went to the Shaolin Temple where he became a monk and got his name Wu Song. Later he wandered about in the country, defending the weak and the poor against injustice (Wang Jue & Li Dianyuan 1994, 177). In the Song and Yuan dynasties, there were two kinds of popular talking and singing entertainment: *pinghua* (story-telling with daily words) and *shihua* (rhymed ballads), which very often took the stories of the outlaws of the Marsh as their subject matter. In those days and later times, *Shandong Kuaishu*²⁸ was not so called, but known as *Wu Laoer* (Wu the Second), a nickname of Wu Song, because he was the second son in the family. It got this name for the fact that the main content of *Shandong Kuaishu* was about the hero Wu Song. Wang Jue and Li Dianyuan concluded from this:

First, the story of *Shui Hu Zhuan* was derived from multiple sources; second, the images and exploits of the characters in *Shui Hu Zhuan* have been continuously reformed and “re-constructed”. Material about Wu Song differs in one hundred ways if it comes from one hundred places. It is a folk legend, an oral folk creation (Wang Jue and Li Dianyuan 1994, 179).

Shui Hu Zhuan, though regarded by many as written by Shi Nai'an and Luo Guanzhong, really evolved from stories, mainly “*shuohua*”²⁹ stories. Long before the book was completed, stories about outlaws of the Marsh had already been spread far and wide. Wang and Li believe that the book was based on such stories as “The Tattooed Monk”, “Pilgrim Wu” and “The Blue-Faced Beast” (Wang Jue and Li Dianyuan 1994, 4). Some believe that the records of Song Jiang in history were the origin of the story, but Wang and Li believe that, on the contrary, the stories about Song Jiang are the origins of the historical records (Wang Jue and Li Dianyuan 1994, 8-9). As Seal finds, “‘Robin Hood’, long looked for as a real person, has not yet been convincingly located in the shadows of medieval England” (Seal 1996, 20). The same is true with the outlaws of the Marsh.

²⁸ See above.

The heroes transformed by different means of construction have expressed ordinary people's wish to resist their own oppression by a handful of rulers from both at home and abroad. However, most people dare not express their resistance openly at the risk of their lives, so they find satisfaction in these constructed heroes. Nevertheless, resistance itself does not make one a hero. Robin Hood's merry band, the Kelly gang and the outlaws of the Marsh elevated their resistance to a different height by their clever fights and enlightening strategies against the evil force. Robin always outwitted the Sheriff of Nottingham. The latter tried to take Robin by law, tricks and might, but failed every time. Commenting on Ned's two bank robberies, Jennings says, "Both robberies, involving a considerable number of people, were carried out with all the skill of a small scale military campaign. Indeed, Ned won the acclaim of many of his contemporaries for such strategy and unruffled nerve" (Jennings 1968, 79). A contemporary newspaper called the bank hold-up at Euroa "one of the most daring and skilfully planned bank robberies that has occurred since the Egerton gold robbery" (Jennings 1968, 36) or "a masterly piece of strategy and remarkably leisurely affair" (McQuilton 1979, 110). The resistance waged by the outlaws of the Marsh was great in scale and skilful in strategy. One hundred and eight heroes led thousands of outlaws to confront the imperial government, to fight the official armies and to struggle with corrupt officialdom. They occupied the Marsh and the mountains, set up an ideal society of their own and made their own laws. The three attacks on the Zhu Family Manor, the robbery of the birthday gifts by a ruse and many other manoeuvres have been regarded as brilliant battle examples.

Up to now, we can see that the popular images of Robin Hood, Ned Kelly and outlaws of the Marsh share some characteristics, with "robbing the rich to help the poor and righting wrongs" as the most relevant. It is this code that gains sympathy from the poor who accounted for the majority of the population in medieval England, the Song dynasty in China and nineteenth-century Australia. In Australia, the English tradition, especially the Irish tradition of opposing the police, also resulted in sympathy and support for those who dared to challenge the authorities, though the possibly

²⁹ A form of story-telling combining talking and singing popular in the Song dynasty.

premature execution of Kelly could be one of the stimuli to such feelings. When telling the reader that his book “will reveal the truth” and the reader “will discover how the noble bandit is the creation of generations of storytellers and ballad writers”, Stewart Ross says:

The word “bandit” conjures up such romantic images – colourful thieves, smugglers and highwaymen; daring and heroic figures robbing the rich to feed the poor; champions of the oppressed; outcasts dedicated to taking their rough but honest revenge on an unjust society.

Think again!

You have in mind the bandits of fiction – Robin Hoods, all smiles and bravado. Forget such figures! They exist only in novels and films.

History’s real bandits were never so jolly. They were usually vicious criminals. True, they robbed the rich, but very rarely did they give to the poor. True, they shunned the law, but in its place they set up their own brutal laws, based on violence, theft and murder (Ross 1995, 5).

It is precisely this shared characteristic that provides a key for the distinction of outlaw heroes from ordinary thieves. For in their opposition to the rich and the authorities, they return to the ordinary people who also protected them. When the Sheriff of Nottingham issued a warrant for his arrest on Robin, no one in Nottingham offered to serve it (Pyle 1979, 33). Many people of the north-eastern district, sympathisers of Kelly, were convinced that Kelly had been thoroughly wronged and protected him whenever they could. They not only supplied provisions, but most importantly “the bush telegraph”. “Information was conveyed to the outlaws by a system of signals, fast horses and verbal messages” (McQuilton 1979, 148).

Rather than concentrating upon a phenomenological portrait of the existent figures or a contextual history of them, folkloric portrayal of the outlaw heroes focuses on their positive qualities in their association with the oppressed and the poor. As a result, the folkloric conception of “outlaw heroism” is more a myth than actuality. Folklore structures the image of the outlaw hero as a legendary one shifting away from historical facts. However, folklore also assigns importance to facts, but the difference is that facts about the hero in history are diversely used in the folkloric construction of the hero as powerful supporting evidence of their characteristics as heroes, while history may use them as evidence of their relations with the society. As argued,

“robbing the rich to help the poor and righting wrongs” is the structuring principle of outlaw heroism, which originates from the archetypal outlaw heroes under examination. Relying on this structuring principle, folklorists have firmly established the status of Robin Hood, Ned Kelly and the outlaws of the Marsh as heroes for people yesterday, today and tomorrow.

The relationship between the constructed outlaw heroes and the ordinary people is seen as primarily emotional and social. In these heroes, people want to find themselves on a different platform, performing the same function as these heroes in fighting against their oppressors. As a result of this relationship, the construction accrues its importance for both the outlaw hero and the folk. This is why argument is made for folkloric constructedness instead of historical records. To elevate their heroes, the various constructors for Robin Hood even gave the outlaw the predominantly aristocratic nature: He had a noble title and helped the king. The outlaws of the Marsh were glorified by having Lin Chong, the Instructor of the Mighty Imperial Guards, and Chai Jin, descendant of the later Zhou dynasty royal family, among them.

The purpose of examining the constructedness of these archetypal outlaw heroes is to distinguish folkloric construction and historical reality. Through a comparison of these two competing claims on the real, it is found that the folklorically constructed heroes are more “real” in the popular imagination than those recorded in history. In folkloric construction, however, facts take a back seat. It is scarcely surprising that in folklore the constructed images have edged out the real ones. The withering of the historicity of these outlaw heroes can perhaps be compared with the fate of villains such as the Sheriff of Nottingham and Tong Guan and Gao Qiu, whose real existence, which is generally unknown, untold or purposely overlooked, has been replaced by wicked images. It has become almost natural among the folk that when they are singing the praises of the outlaw heroes they condemn these wicked people. The essentials of the constructedness are exemplified especially in Chinese construction of “*lulin Haohan*”. They exaggerated their exploits, courage, generosity and even their social functions.

As is often emphasised, what most people accept is the constructed images but not the “real” ones. Actually, the more people try to find the “real” ones in history, the farther away they are from the “reality”. The conflict between concepts about actual and ideal heroes, or between the historicity and the symbolic meaning of the constructed “reality”, reflects such a fact that the constructors show little interest in the former. An example of constructedness is the play “Li Kui Carries Thorns to Show His Apology” written by Kang Jinzhi.³⁰ Folkloric construction may be connected with “historic reality”, but “historic reality” is by no means the only basis of folkloric construction. Historic reality may have shown that the outlaw heroes we have found in our cultural heritage did not exist, or those who did exist were nothing but notorious robbers. Moreover, this is a contrast illuminated also by their different starting points and perspectives. Folkloric construction produces a cast of outlaw heroes loved by the masses, while historic reality, using fragmentary facts and data, attempts to tell people of the existence or non-existence of the outlaw heroes who have already been accepted by the ordinary people. The mythic and legendary nature of the stories of outlaw heroes, especially the early ones, creates difficulties for historians while folklorists find rich resources in it.

To compare folkloric construction with historic reality, we should see both as attempting a different form of “reality”. Stories of the outlaws of the Marsh, ballads about Robin Hood and Ned Kelly excavate the divine within the rebellious and the illegal. This is what is termed “folkloric constructedness”. As Seal puts it, these outlaw heroes live “outside the law” but “inside the ‘lore’” (Seal 1996, xii). The most important characteristic of folkloric constructedness is to use stories as an unconscious means of masking these outlaws’ less romantic acts in the face of historic reality into more romantic activities, and to use imagination to turn otherwise irrelevant reality into vivid events. Folklore generated diverse ways of integrating and accommodating piecemeal real events, and allowing room for people’s imagination as well. Seal’s description of the evolution of Robin Hood’s image and that of Ned Kelly, and the legend about his gang, gives a clue to how folkloric constructedness operates through

³⁰ Kang Jinzhi, dramatist of the Yuan dynasty, from Shandong province.

time. Robin Hood evolves from an unjustly treated man taking to the woods into a political rebel, then into a romanticised outlaw hero and finally into an international archetype of outlaw heroes. In the case of Kelly, at first, ballads and songs defending the Kellys were composed. Then stories about the escape of Daniel Kelly and Steve Hart from the Glenrowan fire were told. Later, pamphlets, books, paintings, films, TV programs, plays, musicals, broadcasting and computer internet, all depict Ned Kelly in a positive way and make him transcend his image as a local, or even national hero, to finally become an internationally recognised noble robber (Seal 1996, 148-149). As Robin Hood has survived all other heroes in England, Kelly has survived all other heroes in Australia.

Studying the outlaw hero tradition inevitably involves the problem of mixing folklore with history. As Seal notes, "The problematic relationship of history and folklore has been a long and fiery one" (Seal 1996, 181). It is true that "it is not the purpose of folklore to provide 'historical truth'" (Seal 1996, 181), but it is the "truth" that the bearer of the tradition believes he or she holds. It is also true that it is not the purpose of history to provide subjects for folklore to exploit, but history does. Folkloric constructedness does not depend on historic truths, instead it interposes romanticised or idealised "truths" to history which, in turn, may record them as "truths", as in the case of Song Jiang. Folkloric construction has "a power that is easily able to override the claims of history" (Seal 1996, 181). Folklorists find more in the mixture of history, folklore and popular culture that constitutes the outlaw tradition than historians. Seal maintains that "the nature of that mixture, the effects it has on historical groups and individuals and the effects that their activities have on the folklore or legends of their lives (and other outlaw heroes) should be the focus of scholarly concern, rather than the arid debate about whether folklore is 'true' or 'historically accurate'" (Seal 1996, 181).

Characteristics and Ethics of Archetypal Outlaw Heroes

Besides the universal code of “robbing the rich to help the poor”, there are a number of other archetypal characteristics and ethics, which are discussed here in relation to Chinese and Anglophone outlaws.

“*Bi shang Liangshan*” (being driven to take to the Liangshan Mountain³¹) is the most important reason for becoming an outlaw. Robin Hood became an outlaw when he killed one of the King’s foresters who tried to kill him first and “the Sheriff of Nottingham swore that he would bring Robin Hood to justice” (Pyle 1979, 16). Ned and Dan Kelly had to seek refuge in the hills because Mr Justice Barry, believing the story made up by Constable Fitzpatrick whom Ned had called “the meanest article that ever the sun shone on”, would “give Ned a sentence of fifteen years” if he were caught and Ned knew that “he would get very little justice” (Jennings 1968, 28). His remarks about how he was driven to outlawry evidence a similar situation (Jennings 1968, 66).³² When Gilbert was asked why not to try some other way of earning a living, he said that “they would not let him work for an honest living; he had tried it lately, and even gone to New Zealand to be out of the way, but there he was hunted like a native dog, and had to fly from that country and come back to where he was known” (White 1995, Vol. 2, 33).

Almost all the outlaws of the Marsh were “*bi shang Liangshan*”, the most typical ones being Lin Chong, the Instructor of the Mighty Imperial Guards framed by Gao Qiu the Martial, Xie Zhen and Xie Bao, the hunter brothers framed by Squire Mao, and Shi En, bullied by Jiang Zhong in collusion with Zhang the stockade garrison commandant. “*Bi shang Liangshan*” has entered the Chinese language as an idiom to mean “to be driven to drastic alternatives or revolt”. It originates from the story about Lin Chong, who was persecuted by Gao Qiu just because Lin would not allow Gao’s

³¹ The term “Liangshan Mountain” has become a synonym for “revolt” in Chinese folklore.

³² Jennings quotes what Ned Kelly told the magazine *Age*: “If my life teaches the public that men are made mad by bad treatment, and if the police are taught that they may not exasperate to madness men they persecute and ill-treat, my life will not be entirely thrown away. People who live in large towns have no idea of the tyrannical conduct of the police in country places far removed from court” (Jennings 1968, 66).

adopted son to take liberties with his wife.³³ Besides the episodes in *Shui Hu Zhuan*, dramas, plays, films and all other forms of art have adapted this famous story. The drama “The Sword” written by Li Kaixian³⁴ is regarded as one of the “three great verse dramas”³⁵ of the Ming dynasty. In this drama, the dramatist instilled his “new understanding” of the story. Lin Chong is depicted as a general with meritorious feats and contributions to the country. Trapped by wicked officials, he is arrested and imprisoned, his family ruined. What is worse is that the cruel court officials will not be satisfied till they see his death. Lin in nature is loyal to the emperor, but the wicked officials drive him to desperation. His words reveal his complicated feeling about his going to Liangshan for shelter:

But to take to the Marsh I have no way out,
Turning back, I look at the heavenly court.
In a hurry I have to flee,
Loyal and filial I cannot be (Yu Qiuyu 1985, 349).

The whole drama conveys this theme. When the emperor is fooled by wicked officials, upright and loyal officials should use blunt words to remonstrate. If the emperor refuses to listen, they can choose to take to the greenwood to fight against the wicked officials and wait for the emperor to learn the truth and change his mind. Therefore, when he was cornered by corrupt officials and the emperor himself, Lin could only ask, “I haven’t done anything to disappoint His Majesty. How can he treat me like this?” (Yu Qiuyu 1985, 352). Lin Chong’s being driven to Liangshan is a tragedy which reveals the painful process of an upright and honest person’s being persecuted and choosing to pledge allegiance to the “heavenly way” taken by the outlaws.

“*Fen ting lang li*” (acting independently and confronting defiantly) is the ensuing and inevitable step taken by outlaw heroes against evil officials, police or the oppressing force in general. Robin Hood himself did not want to kill, but when the Sheriff of Nottingham, the Bishop of Hereford and King John tried to wipe him and his

³³ For stories about Lin Chong, see Chapters 7, 27, 29 and 49 of *Shui Hu Zhuan*.

³⁴ Li Kaixian (1502-1568), dramatist and writer of the Ming dynasty.

³⁵ The “three great verse dramas” refer to *Baojian Ji* (The Sword), *Mingfeng Ji* (The Singing Phoenix) and *Huan Sha Ji* (Washing Silk) (Yu Qiuyu 1985, 346).

merry men out, he had to take up his sword and bow. The fight against the foresters, the daring rescue of Will Stutely, the struggle against the Sheriff of Nottingham and the Bishop of Hereford, the killing of the Guy of Gisbourne, battle after battle, Robin and his merry band dealt bravely with the evil force. The battle of Stringybark Creek (26 October 1878) and the official proclamation that Ned, Dan, Steve and Joe were outlaws (mid-November 1878) “made it impossible for either the police or the Kellys to give any quarter to each other in the future. War was declared” (Jennings 1968, 34). If Lin Chong is a passive fighter against the court, Li Kui is a conscious one, a typical example of “*fen ting kang li*” against corrupt officials and even the emperor himself.

All men must die, but “*bao han er zhong*” (dying with regret) is almost the inevitable end of all outlaw heroes. Robin Hood was betrayed by his cousin, the Prioress of the nunnery in Kirklees. Upon his death, Robin regretted that he and his friends could “never walk in the forest again” (Pyle 1979, 236). Kelly regretted that he had not examined the witnesses himself (Jones 1995, 310). Instead of getting rid of corrupt officials, many of the outlaws of the Marsh were framed and killed by corrupt officials. Many of them died with regret at having surrendered.

If we say that “*jie fu ji pin, shen zhang zhengyi*” (robbing the rich to help the poor and righting wrongs) is their operative norm, “*bi shang Liangshan*” their only way out, “*fen ting kang li*” their strategy and “*bao han er zhong*” their inevitable end, then nobility, bravery, generosity, sympathy and uprightness are their personal qualities established in the long history of their construction.

Nobility of one’s personality does not necessarily come from noble position or family background, even though some people have tried in some way to prove that Robin Hood had a noble family background and he himself was “Earl of Huntington” (Knight 1994, 16-22), and the Scottish chronicler John Major “set the hero on the path to gentrification”, with his immediate model as an existing story of “a misunderstood nobleman”, and “later writers would complete Major’s redirection of the myth towards a displaced earl” (Knight 1994, 35). However, the nobility of Robin Hood lies with the greatness of his mind and vision, his lofty ideas and respectable behaviours. In

contrast, the Sheriff of Nottingham, though with a noble position, appears to be mean, greedy and lowly. In this sense, the outlaw hero is a noble robber.

If Robin Hood is more like Jesus Christ, more a saviour than a scourge, then the outlaws of the Marsh are more scourges than they are saviours. As Pyle describes it, "All the band were outlaws, yet the country people loved them. No one who came to jolly Robin for help ever went back with an empty hand" (Pyle 1979, 9). Whereas the outlaws of the Marsh are believed to be demons, i.e., "thirty-six stars of Heavenly Spirits and seventy-two stars of Earthly Fiends" accidentally released from the pit in which they were imprisoned. In Chapter one of *Shui Hu Zhuan*, the abbot of the Temple of Supreme Purity told Marshal Hong that in the Suppression of Demons Hall the demons were locked and the hall should not be opened because it would bring disaster, but the Marshal got very angry, threatened him with imprisonment and outlawry if he would not open the hall (Shi Nai'an & Luo Guanzhong 1975, 12-13). The abbot, afraid of the Marshal's influence, had no choice but ordered blacksmith priests to remove the seals and break the lock. When the demons were released, the description was ghastly and bloodcurdling. "A great ripping sound was heard, and a black cloud shot out of the pit. It tore through half a corner of the roof and zoomed into the sky" (Shi Nai'an & Luo Guanzhong 1975, 14). Whether these demons had "brought disasters to the human beings" or "enforced justice on behalf of Heaven and saved the people" is a very disputable question. According to the description at the beginning of *Shui Hu Zhuan*, before the demons were set free, the Song dynasty was all at peace and the people lived a prosperous and contented life. "Grain harvests were large; the people were happy at their work; no one kept articles lost by others on the road; doors were left unlocked at night." (Shi Nai'an & Luo Guanzhong 1975, 3). It was Marshal Hong, a representative of officialdom, who really brought disasters by using his power to force the abbot to open the hall. The heroes of the Marsh were demons, hence outlaws in the society, but they are stars³⁶ at the same time. According to religion, or rather superstition, only emperors, kings, generals and ministers were stars but never ordinary people. *Shui Hu Zhuan* destroys the superstition. The outlaw

heroes, who were fishermen, woodmen, servants, bricklayers, prison guards, gardeners and shop-keepers, were all stars. However, in essence, they were demons. Even when they righted wrongs, the way they did it was fiendish and frightful.

The outlaw hero's challenge to the authorities (the Sheriff and the Bishop as in the case of Robin Hood, the persecutors and corrupt officials in the case of the outlaws of the Marsh, and the police in the case of Ned Kelly) exists in the demonstration that they were fighting not only for their own fate but also that of the wronged, the persecuted and the tyrannised. But their political aim is ambiguous. No one of them has any established political philosophy, manifesto, or aims. Even the thought of "*ti tian xing dao*" was not really raised by Song Jiang. According to the few passages about Song Jiang and his followers in history, they were but some sneaking bandits who never had any political programme. The slogan of "*ti tian xing dao*" was first found in "*zaju*" of the Yuan dynasty. The ideological content of stories about Song Jiang was given in later times. Even if there was such a slogan, its content is open to discussion. The "*tian*" and "*dao*" in Chinese could be interpreted in different ways. However, in stories about the outlaws of the Marsh, the "*tian*" (Heaven) and "*dao*" (Doctrine of Justice) obviously refer to those advocated by Confucianism. Nevertheless, without clear political programme, the political vision of the outlaws of the Marsh could not go beyond the low level programme of "robbing the rich to help the poor". They were just rebels against and destroyers of the existing political system, but not builders of a new one. It was at this political level that they demonstrated their love, hate, strength and courage.

The outlaw hero tradition has given a great deal of enlightenment to people in different fields. However, the function of the outlaw hero in history should not be amplified. It is necessary to note that in history we could get a glimpse of what was really going on. In this way we could understand better whether these people are outlaws heroized or heroes outlawed.

Outlaw heroes live on in history and folklore after death. In spite of different opinions among historians or folklorists, some of the outlaws of the Marsh are

³⁶ In Chinese folklore, only special and highly-distinguished people are described as stars.

believed to have really existed in history. The book *History of the Song dynasty* has several accounts of Song Jiang and his gang.³⁷ In some other history books, there are also short accounts of Song Jiang, but all historical records are very simple and sketchy, though we can tell from these records that the gang had threatened the Song dynasty to a certain extent. However, for seven hundred years folk stories about these outlaws have been handed down. In the early twelfth century, the northern nomadic tribes invaded central China. The Song government was full of corrupt officials who were addicted to the pleasures of song and women, hunting and riding horses. As a result, a dissatisfaction for the government and hate for the corrupt officials brewed among the ordinary people, low-level officials and intellectuals. They pinned their hopes on outlaw heroes to eliminate all the evils in society. The deeds of outlaw heroes were recorded, made up, told and passed on by these people. In the next dynasty, i.e., the Yuan dynasty, Shi Nai'an turned the yarns into one of the greatest novels in Chinese history, *Shui Hu Zhuan*. Many events described in the book are based on folk legends. In history books we can only find that in Huainan, thirty-six outlaws headed by Song Jiang rose in rebellion, but in legend, besides these thirty-six people, seventy-two others joined them. Cai Dongfan describes:

At that time, in Huainan there arose a formidable bandit named Song Jiang, who got together 36 men, ran wild in Hesu and plundered ten Prefectures. The court had to enforce martial law in Jingdong. All the ministers talked about armed suppression or invitation to surrender, but no one had any good idea. Have you, the readers, ever read the novel *Shui Hu Zhuan* written by Shi Nai'an of the Yuan dynasty? With seventy chapters, the book describes all about Song Jiang. Most of the anecdotes are fabricated, but not real, but the way of narration is very good, and in addition, Jin Shengtan has made excellent commentary and annotation, so it has been handed down up to now and is

³⁷ In the book, the following accounts are found (Wang Jue & Li Dianyuan 1875, 71-78): 1. "In the third year of Xuan He (1121), Huainan bandits led by Song Jiang attacked the army in Huai Yang. Troops were dispatched to suppress them, but they invaded Jingdong and Jiangbei and entered Chuzhou and Haizhou." (*Chronicles of Hui Zong*) 2. "Song Jiang attacked the East Capital. Hou Meng reported to the Royal Court, 'A gang of thirty-six members headed by Song Jiang was on a rampage in the Qi and Wei areas. Several tens of thousands of troops could not resist them. Song Jiang must excel in wisdom. Now bandits run wild in Qingxi, the Royal Court had better pardon Song Jiang and send him to suppress Fang La and his gang, so that he can atone for his crime.'" (*Biography of Hou Meng*) 3. "Song Jiang organised a rebellion in Hesu and invaded ten prefectures. No official army dared to challenge them. They declared that they would enter Haizhou. Zhang Shuye ambushed them and caught the deputy chieftain. Song Jiang therefore surrendered" (*Biography of Zhang Shuye*).

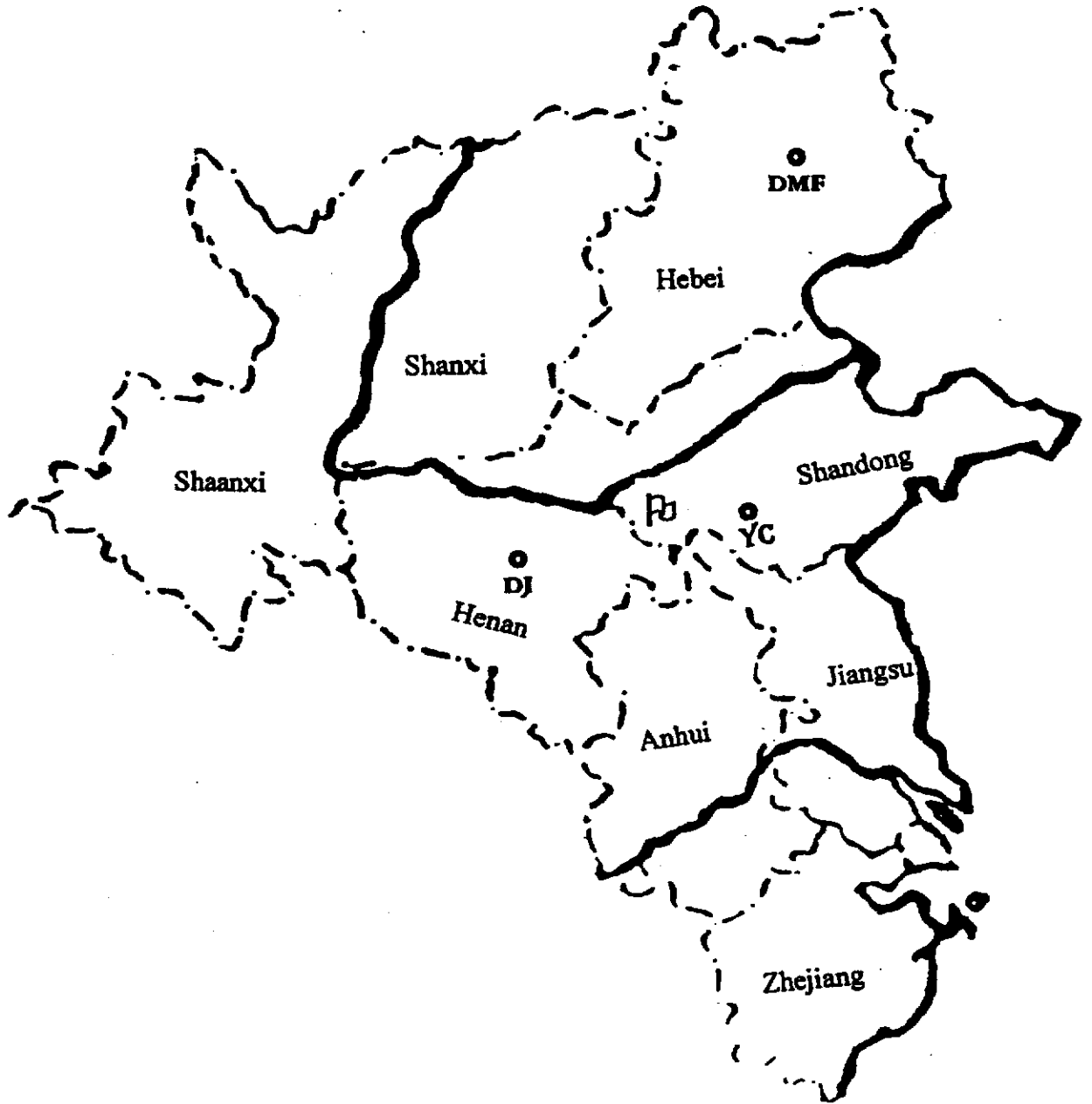
appealing to all people. But in official history books, there was only a short passage about Song Jiang and his thirty-six followers who ran wild in Hesu and surrendered when Zhang Shuye attacked them. No biography about Song Jiang is found (Cai Dongfan 1993b, 427-428).






The Marsh was formed by floods from the Yellow River. People around the Marsh made a living by fishing, prawning and digging up lotus roots. During the reign of Hui Zong, the government took the possession of the Marsh and levied taxes on fishing and all productive activities. Peasants around the Marsh could not afford to pay the taxes, so they organised to fight for their interest. Stories about peasant uprisings had spread in this area before Song Jiang rebelled. In later literary writings, Song Jiang's rebellion was regarded the same as Liangshan peasant uprisings, because, perhaps, Song Jiang once operated in this area (CKACH 1979, 263-264). Lu Xun quotes Gong Shengyu, an adherent of the Song dynasty, as saying, "Stories about Song Jiang are but street gossips, not worth collecting" (Lu Xun 1973, Vol. 9, 282). But in folklore, stories about Song Jiang and other outlaw heroes of the Marsh are very popular. Ordinary people wish that these heroes live for ever, though the authorities may think differently. In folklore, these heroes are all deified. Thirty-six of them are stars of Heavenly Spirits and seventy-two of them stars of Earthly Fiends sent down by God to punish the evil-doers on earth. They do not just live on after death but become immortal. Temples were built up for some of the outlaws of the Marsh, a kind of apotheosis. The word for "Heavenly Spirits" in the Chinese language is "*tian gang*". The character "*gang*" is formed with the character for "four" and the character for "right" meaning "upright in all four directions", i.e., the stars spread evenly in all direction to keep the Heaven balanced. They descend to the earth to maintain the heavenly way of "taking from those who have more than sufficient to help those who do not have enough" (Wang Jue & Li Dianyuan 1994, 31). In Australia, similar phenomena are found by some in the stories of Ned Kelly and Jesus Christ (Osborne 1970, 5). However, the comparisons have never gone so far as to regard Kelly as God himself, but "a man from humble origins, with no pretensions to greatness, facing unsurpassable odds and death with glory" (Reid 1980, 597).

What is important in folklore is that it has invented, constructed and established an outlaw hero tradition, which has summarised in a subconscious way the values, codes and concepts of that tradition, which have influenced people, especially bandits. When they act, they may try to act within these norms which history or law does not provide. As Seal states, “Outlawry is an uncontrolled and dangerous *distress* in which any number of serious consequences may occur. The cultural need for a set of rules and boundaries to contain and control the deep discontents, frustrations and aggressions unleashed by the outlaw is therefore imperative” (Seal 1996, 183). It is the outlaw hero tradition, or rather folklore, but not history, that provides this need. Only with these values, codes and concepts could outlaws get shelter, information, silence, or support and sympathy at the best, so that they would not perish easily. These values, codes and concepts, together with the need for survival restrained them from robbing his neighbours, i.e., the Chinese code of “rabbits not eating the grass by their furrows” (Zhang Ye 1993, 382), his kind, i.e., the Chinese code of “one hawk not pulling another hawk’s eyes out” (Zhang Ye 1993, 377)³⁸ and, of course, the poor.

³⁸ See detailed discussion of the proverbs in Chapter 7.

Areas the Outlaws of the Marsh Are Believed to Have Inhabited



-  The Liangshan County (Base of the Outlaws of the Marsh)
-  Yun Cheng (Song Jiang's Home Town)
-  Dong Jing (The Capital)
-  Daming Fu
-  DMF

Chapter 3

Social and Cultural Contexts

The socio-historical circumstances of the outlaw hero in Western and Chinese traditions bear some similarities. Chinese and Western outlaw heroes have many values and concepts in common. This chapter deals with what is typical of Chinese outlaw heroes in values and behaviours and in social, economic and cultural contexts as compared with Western outlaw heroes. It examines the continuities of Chinese outlaw tradition, codes and values, brotherhood and friendship, organisations and loners and small gangs, attitudes towards women, bandit sources, bandit categories, and outlaw heroes as avengers and Haiduks.

Continuities of Chinese Outlaw Tradition

Chinese outlaw tradition can be traced back to the earliest recorded history. In the first Chinese history book *Shi Ji* (The Book of History), Sima Qian¹ wrote, “Chi You² would not listen to the Yellow Emperor and rose in revolt. So the Yellow Emperor gathered troops from all princes, fought a decisive battle in the field of Zhuolu³ and captured Chi You” (Sima Qian 1993, 1). This is a myth, though the book that contains this is generally regarded as a history book. The historian Bai Yang regards the period as a legendary era, describing the war between Chi You and the Yellow Emperor as one between semi-gods instead of human beings. “Chi You, like Ji Xuanyuan⁴, was a figure with supernatural characters. The thick fog he emitted from his big mouth would not disperse for three days and nights, so the soldiers of the You Xiong tribe⁵ would lose their directions. Ji Xuanyuan then invented the *zhinanche*⁶, so

¹ Sima Qian (145BC?-?), famous historian and writer of the West Han dynasty. Sima Qian’s *Shi Ji* (The Book of History) is the earliest history book in China. Besides historical records, the book contains a large amount of myths and legends.

² A legendary chief of a tribe, who fought against Huang Di (the Yellow Emperor) for supremacy. He was said to be able to produce fog from his mouth to make the enemies lose their way.

³ A legendary place.

⁴ Ji Xuanyuan is said to be the name of the Yellow Emperor (Huang Di).

⁵ The tribe led by the Yellow Emperor.

⁶ A cart, like a compass, always pointing to the south.

that his troops could tell directions even in the thick fog” (Bai Yang 1987, 64). They used the God of Wind, the God of Rain, the Fairy of Drought and all kinds of animals in their fight.

The Book of History also describes anecdotally such legendary knights-errant and outlaw heroes as Ji Ci, Yuan Xian, Zhu Jia, Guo Jie⁷, Dao Zhi⁸ and Zhuang Jiao (Zhao Ming 1987, 5). When he discusses the deeds of these people, Sima Qian writes, “Today’s knights-errant, though their activities may be not in line with justice, are as good as their words. They keep their promises. When helping people out of difficulties or danger, they are not afraid of giving their lives” (Sima Qian 1993, 577). When describing Dao Zhi and Zhuang Jiao, he writes, “Zhi and Jiao are both cruel and fierce, but their followers all praise them for their code of brotherhood” (Sima Qian 1993, 577). However, the earliest detailed legend about bandits was that of Dao Zhi recorded in *Zhuang Zi*⁹, “Dao Zhi, with nine thousand followers, ran wild in the country. They broke into houses, stole oxen and horses, and captured women” (Wang Xianqian 1979, 194-195). In the same book, the following is recorded:

Dao Zhi’s followers asked him, “Do bandits also have justified principles?” Dao Zhi said, “What can they follow if they don’t? They do not hide what they have from others, so they are sages; they charge forward in a battle before others, so they are brave; they take after others have taken, so they are virtuous; they know what they can do and what not, so they are wise; they distribute benefits equally, so they are benevolent. It is impossible for those who are lack of these five principles to become great bandits in the world (Wang Xianqian 1979, 59).

Ever since then, the expression “*dao yi you dao*” (even bandits have a code of conduct) has been used to describe those bandits who abide by the code. During the Warring States period, the princes of different states were attacking each other for the power as chief. “When they fought for land, they killed people everywhere; when they fought for a city, they killed all people in the city” (Huang Pumin et al 1990, 331). The difference between the rich and the poor was so vast that the former lived

⁷ Deeds of these four knights-errant are not found except in Sima Qian’s *Shi Ji* (The Book of History) (Sima Qian 1993, 577).

⁸ A legendary figure named Zhi. Dao (bandit) is used before his name, so he is known as Dao Zhi.

⁹ Zhuang Zi (c., 369BC-286BC), a famous philosopher of the Warring States period. His articles are collected in a classic book named after him, *Zhuang Zi* (CBC 1980, 847).

luxuriously while the latter starved to death. Those who did not want to die of starvation often made reckless moves and became bandits. In the State of Lu, “Bandits ran wild”; in the State of Zheng, “Bandits were seen everywhere”; in the State of Jin, “Bandits acted openly”. In the late Warring States period (475BC-221BC), Zhuang Jiao ‘ran rampant in Ying’ and attacked the capital, but “the government could not stop him” (Zhao Ming 1987, 5).

However, the tradition of Chinese greenwood heroes (*lulin haohan*) first emerged in the late Western Han dynasty (10BC-25AD). After Wang Mang¹⁰ usurped the throne, corvee and taxation were so heavy that people could no longer endure. In the fourth year of the Tian Feng period (17AD), Wang Kuang and Wang Feng¹¹ organised famine victims in a rebellion (Bai Yang 1987, 302). They occupied the Lulin Mountain (the Greenwood Mountain). In history, this insurrectionary army is called the Lulin Army (the Greenwood Army). Ever since then, the word *lulin* (Greenwood) has been used as the synonym of “bandits” including secret societies and knights-errant. In the fourth year of the Di Huang (23AD) period, the army occupied Kunyang and made Liu Xuan¹² Emperor (Bai Yang 1987, 304-305). When Wang Mang was defeated, Liu Xuan moved his capital from Kunyang to Changan. Before long, he betrayed the Greenwood army and killed the two Wangs. In the first year of Jianwu (25AD), Greenwood troops recaptured Changan. Liu Xuan, who had been on the throne for not yet three years, surrendered, and was killed (Bai Yang 1987, 305). In the late Eastern Han dynasty, just before the Three Kingdoms period (220-265), Liu Bei, Guan Yu and Zhang Fei became sworn brothers, who swore to die, though they could not choose to have been born, on the same day. They are followed as an example of brotherhood by later secret societies and bandits. As discussed, in the Song dynasty, the outlaws of the Marsh, worshipping Heaven and Earth and smearing their mouths with blood, swore to be brothers. The formalities and rites are copied by later bandits (Liu Bingrong 1993, 2). The Yuan dynasty (1271-1368) started when

¹⁰ Wang Mang (45BC-23AD), founder of the short-lived Xin dynasty (9 - 13AD).

¹¹ They are leaders of an uprising in the late Xin dynasty.

¹² Liu Xuan (?-25), a short-lived emperor of the late West Han dynasty.

Kublai¹³ became Emperor. During the reign of Shundi Emperor (1333-1368), people in the Yellow River Valley were overburdened with taxation. A man called Han Shantong¹⁴ took the advantage and set up the White Lotus Society,¹⁵ claiming that the Maitreya, the “future” Buddha, had been born to this world. Han Shantong and his followers killed a white horse and a black cow and swore an oath that they would rebel with red scarves as signals. Unexpectedly, the secret leaked out and Han was captured and killed. Later, one of the chiefs called Liu Futong gathered one hundred thousand people to rebel again. He supported Han Lin, son of Han Shantong, to be Xiaoming Emperor, and changed the title of the dynasty into Song with Bozhou as their capital. In history, this army is called the “Red Army” or the “Fragrant Army”.¹⁶ At the same time, Chen Youliang¹⁷, Zhang Shicheng and Guo Zixing organised uprisings and claimed to be Emperor or King one after another. Zhu Yuanzhang¹⁸ had the winning game and set up the Ming dynasty in the turbulence. In its late years, eunuchs and favoured ministers monopolised power, drought struck the country and famine prevailed. In the fifth year of Tianqi, the White Lotus Society rose up again. Wang Sen in Jizhou founded the White Lotus Religion and claimed to be “Fragrant-smelling Bishop”. His disciples scattered all over the country, who, in alliance with greenwood bandits, set themselves against the government. Later, Wang was arrested and died in prison (Liu Bingrong 1993, 2). The rebellion of Li Zhicheng¹⁹ overthrew the Ming dynasty. In the late Qing dynasty, the rulers became extremely corrupt. After

¹³ Kublai (1215-1294), called Yuan Shizu or Xuechan Emperor, who defeated the Song dynasty and unified the whole China in 1279.

¹⁴ Han Shantong (?-1351), a leader of a peasant uprising in the late Yuan dynasty

¹⁵ A religious secret society originated in the Song dynasty and had been used as a way of organising people in mass uprisings and rebellions.

¹⁶ The name “Fragrant Army” was derived from the fact that they often burnt incense to worship Maitreya (CBC 1980, 2032).

¹⁷ Chen Youliang (1320-1363), one of the chiefs of a peasant uprising called the Red-scarf Army in the late Yuan dynasty, who claimed to be emperor in 1360; Zhang Shicheng (1321-1367), a leader of a peasant uprising in the late Yuan dynasty, who claimed to be King of Wu in 1363; Guo Zixing (?-1355), a chief of the Red-scarf Army.

¹⁸ Zhu Yuanzhang (1328-1398), i.e., Taizu of the Ming dynasty, one of the chiefs of the Red-scarf Army at the early stage, but later he had his own army, overthrew the Yuan dynasty and founded the Ming dynasty in 1368.

¹⁹ Li Zicheng (1606-1645), leader of a peasant uprising. He occupied Beijing in 1640 and established his own government called Dashun (CBC 1980, 1266).

the Jiawu War²⁰ and Gengzi War,²¹ people who could hardly survive took to the greenwood. The book *Greenwood Bandits in the Late Qing dynasty* reveals inside stories, rules, established practices and argots of bandits. While describing some evil-doings by bandits, such as looting, raping and calumniating the good, it also depicts outlaw heroes who “support the just and rid the people of evils” (Liu Bingrong 1993, 1). After the Qing dynasty was overthrown, bandits were found everywhere.

Codes and Values

Chinese outlaw heroes share some of the ten motifs listed by Seal, as discussed in Chapter 2. However, they also have their own characteristics. In Australia, outlaw heroes grow out of convict bolters and bushrangers. Chinese outlaw heroes, growing out of the poor, rebels, swordsmen, thieves, beggars, soldiers, and other marginal or dispossessed social groups, are called many things.²²

As Australian outlaw heroes are influenced by anti-authoritarianism, their Chinese counterparts are influenced by traditional Chinese ethical philosophy. However, outlaw heroes generally do not live by accepted values, instead, they are forced, or they take the initiative, to break away from them. When the outlaws of the Marsh were operating, the traditionally accepted values were those advocated by Confucian scholars, with Cheng Hao, Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi as their representatives. Naming their ethical philosophy as *Lixue*, they allegedly stated that *Li* (principle of ethics) exists eternally, and *Li* had existed before the heaven and earth came into being (Liu Zongxian & Xie Xianghao 1993, 574). After that, *Lixue* became orthodox ideas, which have ruled Chinese ideology in all dynasties ever since. Zhu Xi argued that in

²⁰ The Sino-Japan War in 1894 waged by the Japanese invaders against China, known as the Jiawu War.

²¹ The Eight-Power Allied Forces sent by Britain, the United States, Germany, France, Russia, Japan, Italy and Austria to China in to suppress the anti-imperialist Yihetuan Movement (Boxer Movement) in 1900. They forced the Qing government to pay 982,238,150 *liang* (a Chinese unit of weight = 50 grams) of silver as compensation to these countries (CBC 1980, 853).

²² Chinese outlaw heroes are called in many ways, such as *caomang yingxiong* (heroes of grass and swamp), *cao tou wang* (king of the bushes), *lulin* (greenwood outlaws), *lulin yingxiong*, *lulin haohan*, *lulin haojie* (Greenwood heroes), *jianghu yingxiong* (heroes of rivers and lakes), *tufei* (bandits), *hufei* (bearded bandits), *xiangma* (mounted bandits), and so on. As demonstrated in this thesis, these do not exhaust the list.

the universe, there was but one *Li*. In a broad sense, *Li* is the three cardinal guides (*san gang*); in the ethical sense, it is the five constant virtues (*wu chang*).²³ The core of this *Li* is *zhong xiao jie yi* (loyalty, filial piety, chastity and righteousness). Those who violate these heavenly laws are regarded as traitors and heretics. Therefore, the outlaws of the Marsh were regarded by the authorities as having committed a “monstrous crime” for which “all close relatives would be sentenced to death” (Shi Nai’an & Luo Guanzhong 1975, 1). Anyhow, the influence of *Li* on outlaws is clearly manifested in their behaviours.²⁴

China has a unique outlaw hero tradition which has nothing to do with the deep continuities of the Western tradition. Nevertheless, the Chinese outlaw hero does reveal attributes similar to those of the Anglophone one. Like the Western outlaw hero, the Chinese outlaw hero opposes the authorities, but unlike him, the Chinese outlaw hero generally does not oppose the Emperor. In ancient China, since the majority of wealth was in the hands of officialdom, the outlaw hero was more directly involved with corrupt officials than just the ‘rich’, though the latter was always the target of the outlaw hero’s raids.

The Chinese outlaw hero also represents two other unique values. First, it is the sense of honour, or *yi*,²⁵ which expresses *lulin haohan*’s supreme ideal. Second, it is the sense of brotherhood, which is discussed in detail in the next section.

Yi is hard to define, but the closest meanings could be the sense of honour, the sense of justice, the sense of faithfulness, the sense of righteousness and the sense of duty. For *yi*, he would sacrifice everything, his property (*zhang yi shu cai*, i.e., to give generously and show the sense of honour), his position (*zhang yi zhi yan*, i.e., to speak out of a sense of justice at the risk of losing one’s position), his interest (*yi wu fan gu*, no turning back for honour) and even his life (*she sheng qu yi*, to give up one’s life for righteousness). In contrast, if one *jian li wang yi* (forget the sense of

²³ *San gang*: the three cardinal guides, i.e., emperor guides subject, father guides son and husband guides wife – principle of feudal moral conduct advocated by Confucian scholars in the Song dynasty. *wu chang*: the five constant virtues, i.e., benevolence, righteousness, propriety, knowledge and sincerity (Li Zonggui 1993, 100).

²⁴ See Chapter 1 for this influence on the outlaws of the Marsh.

²⁵ *Yi* has many connotations, such as righteousness, justice, honour, friendship, brotherhood, etc.

honour when seeing gains) or *bei xin qi yi* (to break one's faith and go against the sense of honour) he will be regarded as a mean man without sense of honour (*wu yi xiaoren*) and cast aside by his friends and other people. *Yi* is an ethical code guiding people's conduct. In *Li Ji*²⁶, *yi* is defined as "proper conduct." Han Yu²⁷ in his article "Yuan Dao" says, "*Yi* means to conduct properly" (CBC 1980, 324). Of course, the overall national interest (*minzu da yi*) is above everything else. That's why after the "9.18 Incident"²⁸, most bandit gangs in the Northeast fought in different ways against the Japanese. Most troops of the Northeast Anti-Japanese Allied Army consisted of bandits. On 7 February 1936, more than 1,000 bandits from bandit gangs joined Yang Jingyu's²⁹ troops and were reorganised into *Yi Yong Jun* (Army of Volunteers, literally Righteous and Courageous Army). The National Anthem of the PRC was originally "March of the Army of Volunteers" composed for and sung by the famous Northeast Army of Volunteers. Many leaders at different ranks in the army were former bandits or bandit chieftains.³⁰

However, *yi* of the outlaws originated from the three heroes in the Three Kingdoms period, i.e., Liu Bei, Guan Yu and Zhang Fei, who became sworn brothers for *yi* – the cause of justice of wiping out traitors and restoring the Han dynasty. Their loyalty to each other set an example for later outlaws to abide by "the code of honour in the rivers and lakes" (*jianghu yiqi*), with the code of brotherhood at the core. The perfect combination of "loyalty" and "brotherhood" was reflected in the relationship of Liu, Guan and Zhang. They were sworn brothers but at the same time the Emperor and subjects. So "loyalty" and "brotherhood" had been the aim of sworn brothers among the outlaws of the Marsh, later bandits and members of secret societies. As Zhou Yumin and Shao Yong observe, in the ballads popular among members of the Heaven and Earth Society, there were such sayings: "One who has loyalty and brotherhood will survive swords, and one who has not will die under swords", "One

²⁶ One of the most important Confucian classics.

²⁷ Han Yu (768-824) is a famous philosopher and writer of the Tang dynasty.

²⁸ On 18 September 1931, Japanese army invaded the Northeast of China.

²⁹ Yang Jingyu (1905-1940), chief leader of the Northeast Anti-Japanese Allied Army and the CPC organisation in the Northeast from 1929 to 1940, killed by the Japanese army when he was only 35.

³⁰ See Chapter 5 for details.

who has loyalty can enter the Hall, and one who lacks brotherhood does not need to burnt incense”, “With blood in the wine cup, we drink to show our loyalty and brotherhood” (Zhou Yumin & Shao Wei 1995, 93). Bandit gangs attached importance to the traditional moral principles of kinship. The sworn brother relationship was an invented family relationship, even more important than that of relatives.

Brotherhood Vs Friendship

Though the Western outlaw hero is “a friend of the poor” (Seal 1996, 11), making friends everywhere is typical of the Chinese outlaw hero. “All within the four seas are brothers” (Zhang Ye 1993, 358). The Chinese concept of friendship is embodied in the code of brotherhood as well as such beliefs: “One more friend gives you one more way out”, “At home one relies on his parents, outside on his friends”, and is one “not afraid of being stabbed on both sides of the body for the sake of a friend”(Zhang Ye 1993, 84, 498 & 392). When one of his sworn brothers was captured, Zhu Wu, one of the outlaws of the Marsh went to the captor and said:

We three small men were harried so by the officials that we were forced to go into the hills and become outlaws. We swore that “although not born on the same day we would on the same day die.” Perhaps ours cannot be compared to the brotherhood between Guan Gong, Zhang Fei and Liu Bei of antiquity, but our hearts are equally sincere. ...Since we have no way to save him, we’ve come to die with him. Please turn the three of us over to the officials and collect the reward. We won’t even frown. We gladly ask you so send us to our deaths. (Shi Nai’an & Luo Guanzhong 1975, 33)

Brotherhood is believed to have originated from Mozi’s thought. Mozi (468-375BC) took as his and his followers’ creed: “self-correction with rules and regulations and preparation for use when needed by society” (Zheng Shao 1986, 58). Later Mozi and his students, known as the Mohist School (*Mo Jia*), became an academic body with unique political views. They advocated “*feigong*” (no attacking each other), loving each other and benefiting mutually. When told that his student Sheng Chao invaded other countries three times, Mozi had him removed from the office, because that was against Mozi’s “*feigong*” thought. When Fu Tun became the leader of the Mohist School, Fu’s son murdered a person. The King of Qin exempted

his son from execution, but Fu ordered him to be executed, following Mozi's law: "One who murders must die." Their discipline was strict and organisation compact. The head of a Mohist organisation was called "*juzi*" (the great person), a post held by a person of virtue among the disciples. *Juzi* was entitled to choose his successor who had to command public respect and support. All members must absolutely obey what the *juzi* said. When he issued an order, collective actions would be carried out immediately. "They would go through fire and knives and die, but not run away" (Zheng Shao 1986, 58).

The Chinese outlaw hero "eradicates the evil for other people" (EBHAPEH 1992, Vol. 1, 91) and "is ready to die for one who understands his heart" (Zhang Ye 1993, 340). Australian outlaws' "bush telegraph" consisted mainly of family members and relatives, while in China, those who provide greenwood bandits with information are mostly friends. One way of making very close friends is for people from different families to become sworn brothers. The ballad "We Were Thirty-Six in Number When We Came" in praise of the outlaws of the Marsh is found in a book compiled in the Song dynasty:

We were thirty-six in number when we came, so
There should be eighteen pairs when we return.
If one is missing,
We are sure not home to return (Shang Liqun 1974, 73).³¹

This indicates that in the Song dynasty the practice was already popular among bandit gangs. In the Ming and Qing dynasties the practice enjoyed a widespread currency among secret societies, bandit gangs and even ordinary people. In 1625, a pirate gang led by Zheng Zhilong was organised by sworn brothers (Zhou Yumin & Shao Wei 1995, 14). In the Qing dynasty, *Tian Di Hui* (the Heaven and Earth Society)³² was based on organisations of sworn brothers.

However, among pure bandits in the Northeast of China, brotherhood was less obvious than among outlaw heroes. Billingsley quotes He Xiya as saying:

³¹ Originally this ballad is in the historical novel *Xuanhe Yishi* (*Stories from the Period of Xuanhe*) written in the Song dynasty.

³² *Tian Di Hu* (The Heaven and Earth Society), also called *San Dian Hui* or *San He Hui*, is a famous secret society founded in 1674, which organised many peasant uprisings (CBC 1980, 1227).

The bandit's life is one of killing and burning; of rape and plunder; of shock and fright with no guarantee of another night; of quick joy and sudden misery, shadowed by death from gluttony or starvation; of running east and fleeing west with never a chance to settle; of rejecting human society and being rejected by it; of unadulterated self-interest with no concern for others; of existence in the world but no attempt at living with it; in short, a life which has quite turned its back upon the principles of human coexistence (He Xiya 1925, 41-42; Billingsley 1988, 123).

Loot distribution in a bandit gang was regulated according to “*renfen*” (a person's share) and “*qiangfen*” (a gun's share). The person's share was decided upon one's position and role in the gang. Generally, “*Dadangjia*” (the First Chief) and “*Erdangjia*” (the Second Chief) could each have five to six persons' share, the four “beams” and eight “pillars” three to four persons' share, ordinary members one person's share, and a newly joined rank and file bandit just fifty to eighty per cent of the person's share. Besides, the gun's share was decided upon how many guns one had brought into the gang. Those who did not have guns could not have the gun share. One who borrowed a gun from another member had to pay the latter forty per cent of the gun share. The money and valuables robbed each time had to be handed in to the *Liangtai* (Treasurer). If one kept his loot concealed and unreported, he would receive a very severe punishment when discovered. Autumn every year was the time for distributing loot after deducting the reserves for the next year (Fan Chunsan & Yuan Dongxu 1997, 235). From this we can see that in such bandit gangs, there was no such equalitarianism characterised by spending money and eating together without discrimination. The reality is that in a bandit gang, the chiefs had more power and privilege than those ordinary members. To change one's situation in the gang, one had to try to get a gun, and most times had to risk one's life. Even among the outlaws of the Marsh, such equalitarianism is questionable. In Chapter Twenty of *Shui Hu Zhuan*, when they distributed the large haul, “They directed the junior officer in charge of the warehouse to store away half of each pile for future use. The remainder was divided into two parts. One part was equally split among the eleven chieftains. The rank and file shared equally in the second part” (Shi Nai'an & Luo Guanzhong 1975, Vol. I, 258). We do not know whether the two parts were the same, but the

difference was clear. Equality might be found among chieftains or rank and file bandits, but not between the two groups.

Organisations Vs Loners and Small Gangs

Taking organisation as an important means is another typical Chinese value of outlaw heroism. Organisations are more important to Chinese outlaws than to their Western counterparts. Outlaw heroes in modern China were generally leaders of long-established, fairly large-scaled and comparatively stable bandit organisations.

From the ancient to the very recent times, there is a long list of outlaw organisations (including secret societies), which form a unique Chinese outlaw perspective. The earliest outlaw hero, Dao Zhi, had “nine thousand followers” (Wang Xianqian 1979, 194). Peasant revolts in the Western Han dynasty had such organisations as “the Greenwood Troops”, “the Red-brow Troops”, “the Pinglin Troops”, “the Bronze Horse Bandits”, and so forth (Bai Yang 1987, 302-303). Zhang Jiao³³, the leader of the Yellow Turbans Uprising in the Eastern Han dynasty, had millions of followers. He divided the country into thirty-six “squares”, with each “square” having eleven thousands of his followers. He used the slogan “The Blue Heaven is dead; the Yellow Heaven should rule; in the year of Jiazi (184), auspiciousness will befall everything on earth” (Bai Yang 1987, 342). Religious organisations were often adopted by the greenwood heroes. The White Lotus Society founded by Han Shantong in the Song dynasty was used by the masses in the Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties as a tool for their struggle against the government. Three uprisings in the Yuan dynasty,³⁴ at least six uprisings in the Ming dynasty³⁵ and many

³³ Zhang Jiao (?-184) founded the “*Taiping Dao* Religion” to unite his followers (CBC 1980, 1084).

³⁴ The uprising organised by Zhao Chousi in Henan in 1325, the uprising organised by Bang Hu in Henan in 1337 and the Red-scarf Army uprising.

³⁵ The uprising organised by Tian Jiucheng in Shaanxi in 1397, the uprising organised by Shi Jinzhou in Wuluo in 1417, the uprising organised by Liu Hua in Hebei and Shanxi in 1418, the uprising organised by Zhao Jinglong in Henan in 1505, the uprising organised by Cai Boguan in Sichuan in 1566 and the uprising organised by Xu Hongru in 1566.

large-scale uprisings in the Qing dynasty used this religious organisation to call on people.³⁶

In the late Ming dynasty, Li Zicheng, who claimed to be Chuang Wang (the Daring King), operated in a very organised way. At his time, there was a common saying among the poor: "When Chuang Wang comes, no grain (for taxation) will be paid." *Cheng wang cheng ba* (declaring oneself king or emperor) was not uncommon among leaders of outlaw rebellions. As Nathan says, "Factions enjoy less power capacity than formal organisations because of the limitations on their extent, coordination, and control of followers implied by their basis in the clientelist tie, their one-to-one communications structure, and their tendency toward breakdown." (Nathan 1976, 37)

Bandit organisations bear similar characteristics to other Chinese organisations. The organisational structure of the state being the same as that of a family is a striking characteristic of feudal China. The state was a large family whereas the family a small state. In a family the patriarch, and in the state the monarch, held the most honourable position and greatest power. In other words, the patriarch was father of the family while the monarch father of the whole nation. This patriarchal relationship infiltrated the whole society and shadowed the class relationship. The outlaws of the Marsh finally find their respective places and take seats in order of rank with Song Jiang as head. In most cases Chinese outlaws acted as a group instead of individuals. In Australia, Britain and America, some bandits did band together, but their organisations were never so large in scale and so compact as their Chinese counterparts'.³⁷ Australian outlaws, similar to American outlaws, operated mainly as loners or in small bands, though "the majority were in organised gangs ranging from three to fifteen members. One exception was the largest and earliest of them all in Van

³⁶ Such uprisings include the great White Lotus Society uprising from 1796 to 1805 in Sichuan, Hubei and Shaanxi, the uprising organised by Lin Qing and Li Wencheng from 1813 to 1814 and the uprising organised by Cao Shun in Shanxi in 1835.

³⁷ Innes observes, "The outlaw was banished from society, he might find some distant castle on a rocky crag, or a hideout deep in the forest; he might gather round him a band of friends.... but still he was a fugitive surviving only by his own cleverness, and his only hope of final safety lay in suing for pardon" (Innes 1968, 5).

Diemen's Land led by escaped convict John Whitehead which reached over one hundred members" (Nunn 1991, 9). Most gangs had only three or four people (Nunn 1991, 13-15). Even the Kelly gang consisted of only four, possibly five, people (McQuilton 1979, 143).

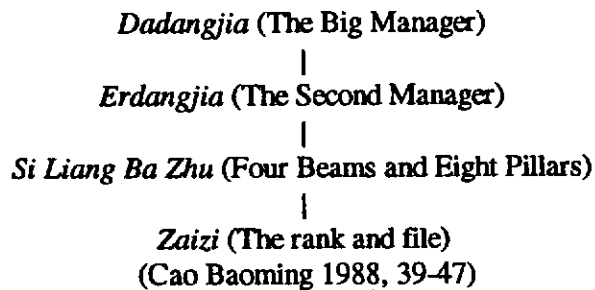
In Chinese bandit organisations, though they may claim to exercise equality, hierarchy is as rigid as in other organisations and a rank differentiation is created. The internal structure of secret societies is even more compact. As Franz notes, "They were formed as brotherhoods of the persecuted and of those who had no voice or power in the existing political and social structure. They formed underground political organizations, rival and potentially hostile to the existing state organization" (Franz 1966, 12). He also observes that "Loyalty to society brothers was the first obligation, but above the brotherhood of equal members was a hierarchy of officials of the society who could enforce absolute authority and discipline" (Franz 1966, 13). In the form of a pyramid, a secret society always has a head at the pinnacle with a group of close aides and advisers immediately beneath him, and then a group of senior members, and finally ordinary clientele. *Tian Di Hui* is a good example of secret societies' influence on bandit organisational structure. The main chief is called "*Dage*" (Eldest Brother) as the chieftain of a bandit gang; then there are "*Erge*" (Second Eldest Brother) and "*Sange*" (Third Eldest Brother), etc. "*Xiansheng*" (Master) in a secret society, as *Fanduo* in a bandit gang, acts as counsellor. "*Xianfeng*" (vanguard) has the same role as "*Paotou*" in a bandit gang. However, the organisation of a secret society is more complex than that of a bandit gang for the fact that its members may be scattered all over the country and act for a long time while the bandits of a gang may always stay together and act for a comparatively short time.

Analysis of the bandit gangs in the Northeast of China aids understanding of the organisational system. Lattimore elaborates:

The Manchurian bandit tends very strongly to adhere to a group; and to a group which is identified with a particular region. There are no more solitary bandits than there are solitary settlers; there are bands of robbers and occasional footpads, who hardly count as bandits. Single desperadoes, or very small bands of two or three wandering outlaws, of the kind that, in the history of the

American frontier, are far more typical than the group, are almost non-existent (Lattimore 1935, 225).

Large bandit gangs generally had a complete organisational system as illustrated below:



Dadangjia, also called *Dage* or *Dazhanggui*, is generally a prestigious, brave and able person chosen through shooting competition or according to his actual ability. *Erdangjia* is not necessarily such a person, but he must be able to cooperate with, and give assistance to, *Dadangjia*. The four inner beams are *Paotou* (Gun Head), *Liangtai* (Treasurer), *Shuixiang* (Water Incense) and *Fanduo* or *Jiaojiangyuan* (Adviser); the four outer beams include *Yangzifang* (Manager in charge of the kidnapped), *Huashenzi* (Flowery Tongue), *Chaqian* (Spy) and *Zijiang* (Secretary).³⁸

Paotou takes the lead in fighting, so he must be the best shooter with unusual courage and resourcefulness recognised by other members. There is a Chinese saying, "Grain and fodder go before troops and horse", which indicates the importance of provisions for the troops. *Liangtai* is in charge of the preparation and distribution of provisions, so he must be fair-minded, good at calculation with an abacus and quick-witted. *Shuixiang*, in charge of organising members to stand sentinel and do guard duties, must be a man good at organisation, diligent and alert. The last but not least of the four Inner Beams is *Fanduo*, who is the adviser and helps *Dadangjia* making plans for battles. He must be literate, have a command of meteorological and geographical

³⁸ They use secret language to call those bandits, so it is almost impossible to render them into English.

knowledge and know how to use the Eight Diagrams in divination.³⁹ Among the four Outer Beams, *Yangzifang*, in charge of affairs regarding kidnapped hostages, is generally a cold and unfeeling person. *Yangzifang* originally indicates the place where hostages are detained and later is used to call the person in charge. He takes his cue from a hostage's words and facial expressions as for what kind of person the hostage is and how much money can be taken from his family as ransom. *Huashenzi* ranks second among the four Outer Beams, who plays the role like that of a liaison officer. *Huashenzi* is often a villager in the open and a bandit in secret. He brings messages to the hostage's home. He has a silver tongue so that he can get good ransom from the hostage's home. *Chaqian* is in charge of scouting the place the gang is to attack. He is good at disguise, often disguising himself as a peddler or a purchaser of scrap or a barber, so that he can enter the courtyard of a rich family. The last of the four Outer Beams is *Zijiang*, in charge of writing letters, who not only knows how to write but also has a good command of calligraphy. He is good at writing different fonts, imitating other people's handwriting and making seals.

Family is an essential stronghold of a Chinese man, so when one is outlawed, it means that he is going to lose the family. Therefore Chinese outlaws go to find a substitute for the family, a reflection of the esteem for hierarchy. The outlaws of the Marsh choose a man as head, a person like the head of a large family, the patriarch. Showing loyalty to their superior is another quality unique to the Chinese outlaw hero. Chinese culture teaches people to respect the order of seniority and precedence. Inside bandit gangs, the obsession with hierarchy is deep-rooted. Absolute obedience to the "*Dadangjia*" must be strictly observed. Through control at different levels, the *Dadangjia* maintains the internal unity and loyalty, commands in battles and distributes spoils. Inside a bandit gang, it was the outlaw hero who made such efforts to change his organisation into one with which he could realise his ideal of robbing the rich to help the poor. The outlaw hero as a leader or organiser regards himself as a different kind of authority, though it was authority that he fought against. He saw the

³⁹ Eight combinations of three whole or broken lines arranged in different ways used in fortune-telling or divination.

bad ruler, so he wanted to become a good ruler; he saw the bad ruler could exercise his power in doing evils, so he wanted that power with which he could do good things.

The reason why Chinese outlaws tended to band together to form large gangs while Australian outlaws tended to operate alone or in small groups is related to different cultural values. The five person-to-person relations in China, spread through textbooks, classic Confucian expositions and the seniors' daily instructions and behaviours, had long bound the people and the society. Neither the KMT nor the Communists changed this radically. Sun Yat-sen himself was always addressed as *Guofu* (father of the country), while Chiang Kai-shek expected no less obedience from his generals and civil servants. Mao Zedong destroyed "an old world", but he did not destroy the engrained values. Mao called for people to rebel, saying "Rebellion is justified" (Mi Hedu 1993, 100), but within the CPC, he strictly required that the individual must be subordinated to the organisation, the lower level to the higher level, and the whole Party to the Central Committee. When organising the Allied Anti-Japanese Army in the Northeast of China, the communists tried to reform the bandits they recruited into obedient revolutionary soldiers.

Attitudes Towards Women

Marriage and love are important, but not as important as brotherhood, not necessarily brothers of the same parents, to Chinese outlaw heroes. But the wife must be loyal to her husband and follow him, be he a fool or a crook, as in the case of Pan Jinlian in *Shui Hu Zhuan*. The outlaw heroes never fight for a beauty, for they believe that 'brothers are like hands and feet, while wives are like clothes' (Zhang Ye 1993, 427). So *Shui Hu Zhuan* was first translated as *All Men Are Brothers* by Buck, who says in the "Introduction" to the translation: "I have chosen arbitrarily, therefore, a famous saying of Confucius to be the title in English, a title which in amplitude and in implication expresses the spirit of this band of righteous robbers" (Buck 1968, Preface).

Western outlaw heroes very often prove to be polite to women. When Hall's gang was robbing a house, "The leaders treated the ladies with utmost courtesy, and when Burke proceeded to light his pipe after the meal, Gilbert called out 'For shame! In the presence of ladies!' and ordered him out of the room" (White 1995, 33). Seal recounts the widespread tale of the outlaw robbing back a poor widow's rent from a greedy landlord, which is attached to the folklore of outlaw heroes in England, Ireland and America. He maintains that this tale "reflects the essentials of respect for women, sympathy for the downtrodden, and robbing the rich, all presented in a narrative that show the protagonist displaying the necessary panache of the outlaw hero" (Seal 1996, 7-8).

Another good example in Australia is the 'gentleman' bushranger, Mathew Brady, who was always polite to women and thanked settlers for their hospitality as he robbed them (TMEAE 1997, 226). The story of Lu Zhishen's helping the poor old man and his daughter coincides exactly with this (Shi Nai'an & Luo Guanzhong, 43-35). Nevertheless, in feudal China, women were at the bottom of society. They were not only oppressed by the rich and officials but also by men. This tradition is traced back to the time of Confucius, who says, "Women and mean men are most difficult to raise" (Huang Pumin et al 1990, 192). He equates women with mean men. Later, the so-called *san cong si de* deprived women of every bit of freedom. A woman was to "obey her father before marriage, and her husband during married life and her sons in widowhood" and to "have fidelity, physical charm, propriety in speech and efficiency in needlework" (CBC 1980, 20). In the Song dynasty, women's social position was the lowest. With *Lixue* as theoretical support, the feudal ethics discriminated against women. The outlaws of the Marsh, influenced by these ethics, looked down upon women and regarded them as nothing but vassals to men. They seldom showed any respect for women and even killed those who are supposed to have extramarital affairs. Pan Jinlian, Pan Qiaoyun and Yan Poxi were all victims killed by the outlaws of the Marsh. Li Kui, the "Black Whirlwind", even killed Squire Di's daughter who just had secret meetings with her lover in her own chamber. Though respecting women is not a major quality attributed to the Chinese outlaw hero, the persistent

outlaw hero narrative that encapsulates a number of the fundamental characteristics of the outlaw tradition in Anglophone nations is also found in the Chinese tradition. Ding Tongsheng is a good example in this aspect.⁴⁰

Bandit Sources

Hobsbawm believes that the first and most important source of bandits is the rural surplus population and the second is marginal groups who are not integrated into rural society. Among such marginals, soldiers, deserters and ex-servicemen played a significant part. He also lists several source categories of banditry. These sources also play a significant part in supplying bandits in China.

Hobsbawm asserts, "Banditry tended to become epidemic in times of pauperisation and economic crises." "All rural societies of the past were accustomed to periodic dearth – harvest-failure and other natural crises – and to occasional catastrophes, unpredictable in themselves by the villagers, but likely to occur sooner or later" (Hobsbawm 1972, 22). China's economy in the past featured land trade, tax in kind and small-scale farming by individual owners. As a result, most land was in the hands of landlords or officials, and most peasants became farm hands or landless labourers. In good years, peasants could earn marginally enough to support themselves, while in years with natural disasters, they had to starve. In 1627, in Shaanxi, due to natural disasters, villagers scrambled for grass in the mountains to eat. When grass was eaten out, they had to eat tree bark. When bark was finished, they had to dig white stone⁴¹ to eat, and many died of indigestion and constipation. Those who were unwilling to die that way became bandits. They knew clearly that banditry was illegal and that they would be killed by the government, but they would rather be killed as bandits, so when they became ghosts they were, at least, fed ghosts (Bai Yang 1980, 794). At the same time, the royal family and high-ranking officials, paying no heed to people's life or death, were still leading lives of debauchery. To satisfy

⁴⁰ See Chapter 7. Since some other values which are typical to Chinese outlaws, such as loyalty to the emperor, have been discussed earlier, they are not dealt with in depth in this chapter.

⁴¹ It is a kind of white stone discovered along the Yellow River, which, when boiled in water, becomes pasty. The stone tastes fishy. One feels full after eating a bit.

their need, they tried to wring every ounce of sweat and blood out of the people through all kinds of taxes such as those on shops, salt, trade, tea, timber, boat, fish, and reed, among others. To survive, peasants gathered to rob the officials and the rich.

In the Song dynasty, the expansion and annexation of land by landlords and officials intensified the conflict between them and the peasants. Under such an economic and social system, there appeared a large class of parasite-like consumers, including the emperor, imperial clansmen, the royal force, officials, landlords and their families. Peasants were not only the source of taxation and corvee, but also suppliers for all these people's consumption. Desperate peasants rebelled in all corners of the country. The government regarded these people as "roving bandits" and the chiefs as brutal and sinister scoundrels and outlawed them.

The rural surplus population, or "floating people", was the main source of bandits in China. Natural calamities, such as droughts, floods, grasshoppers and ice storms, that frequently befell farming areas made hundreds of thousands of people destitute. While getting away from the famine-stricken areas, they had to either beg or rob for a living. Wandering aimlessly, able-bodied young people were very likely to become bandits. Records of bandits related to natural disasters can be found in almost all local chronicles. A report in the late 1920's and early 1930's states: In Suiyuan⁴², floods and droughts brought disasters; land lay waste; bandits were seen everywhere. In Shaanxi and Gansu from 1929 to 1931, because of serious droughts, many peasants died or left. Floods, droughts, wars and banditry frequented Henan and Shandong provinces. In addition, exorbitant taxes were levied. Unable to sustain, people deserted their land (Chi Zihua 1996, 155). Such man-made and natural catastrophes multiplied the number of "floating people" and bandits. From 1914 to 1925, among 1,186 bandits executed in Shandong, Anhui, Henan, Hebei, Guizhou and the Northeast, 894 were "floating people", more than seventy-five per cent of the total (Chi Zihua 1996, 163-164).

⁴² A province from the year 1928 to 1954, now part of Inner Mongolia.

As Huang Juezi noted, when people had the right jobs, their strength and mental ability could be used for work and making a living; without the right jobs, they could not use their strength and mental ability to make a living, so they become local bullies, bandits or members of heretical religions (Zhou Yumin & Shao Wei 1995, 69). In 1741, the population in China was 143.41 million. In 1790, it reached more than 300 million, while in 1851, it was already 432.16 million (Zhou Yumin & Shao Wei 1995, 67). Such a large population lived very concentratedly in the inner provinces such as Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Shandong, Hubei, Henan, Jiangxi and Fujian. The pressure for life forced people to migrate from overpopulated areas to sparsely-populated areas. This large-scale migration meant that those people were separated from their original ties. When they arrived at a totally strange place, they had to struggle for living resources such as land, water, forests, etc., with the local people and with each other. Many of them had to give up farming for other trades. To protect their interest, some people came together to form a gang or a society. Floating people made use of any cultural element that could be used in forming such organisations. Sworn brothers, masters and apprentices, fellow-villagers, people of the same trade, became sources of bandit gangs and secret societies. As for the causes of increased banditry and secret societies, Huang Juezi⁴³ had an explanation:

If there is one more unemployed person in the country, there is one more trouble-maker; and one more trouble-maker means one more element of chaos. So far as I know, religious bandits in Zhili⁴⁴, Shandong and Shanxi, the Nian⁴⁵ bandits in Henan, the Guo bandits in Sichuan, the salt bandits in Jiangxi, the pole and knife bandits in Jiangxi and Fujian, have all worried the local governments who know clearly the trouble they create but cannot improve the situation because there are no right jobs available to which those people can apply their strength and mental abilities (Zhou Yumin & Shao Wei 1995, 69).

Mao Zedong believed that China's colonial and semi-colonial status before 1945 produced large groups of unemployed people, who, being unable to find a proper means of living, had to find some indecent ways to survive. They were the source of "robbers, gangsters, beggars and prostitutes and the numerous people who live on

⁴³ Huang Juezi (1793-1853), Minister of Justice in the Daoguang Period (1821-1850) of the Qing dynasty (CBC 1980, 2057).

⁴⁴ Today's Hebei province.

superstitious practice” (Mao Zedong 1975, Vol. 2, 325-326). The historian Xu Ke said, “There are more bandits in our country than in any other country. This has been an object of foreigners’ denunciation, who even call our country a country of bandits” (Xu Ke 1986, 5392). After the Russo-Japanese War, “The three provinces in the Northeast became a world of bandits” (Xu Ke 1986, 5331). In Henan, “People vied to become bandits” (Chen Zhengmou 1935, 69). West Henan was simply called a haunt of bandits. In the early days of the Republic, there rose such famous bandits as Bai Lang, Lao Yangren and Fan Zhongxiu. Jiangsu was harassed by secret society bandits. In Hunan, bandits are seen everywhere, in the mountains and on the plains. Zhejiang and Fujian were full of pirates and bandits (Chi Zihua 1996, 160). In Shandong, “Bandits were too many to count” (*Chen Bao*, 20 Jan. 1921). In Hebei, “Bandits reached five million in number” (Zhu Xinfan 1930, 299). In Shaanxi, “To survive, the bankrupt peasants joined bandit gangs in large numbers.” In Yunnan and Guizhou provinces, “There were endless disasters caused by wars, and bandits were as many as the hairs on an ox” (Chi Zihua 1996, 161). In Guangdong, in just Leizhou district, more than thirty thousand people joined bandit gangs. Bandits in Anhui, Qinghai, Gansu and the Inner Mongolia, pirates in Fujian and Zhejiang, “lake bandits” on the Taihu Lake in Jiangsu and Zhejiang, and horse thieves in the Northeast “ran extremely wild”. Chi Zihua summarises, “In a word, in the four corners of the country, there were countless bandits. No one can give an exact figure of bandits in modern China, but it is known to all that banditry was extremely rampant.” (Chi Zihua 1996, 162).

To be a bandit was often a painful choice for a man. He was virtually driven to this because he could not make a living in any other way. Xu Ke’s analysis of bandits in Guangdong province explains how “floating people” were forced to banditry:

The poor, with no means of living, are to die of starvation and cold, or to die in the hands of the government when being captured, or wait to die gradually. However, living in hunger and cold, they are sure to die, while being bandits, though violating the law, not everyone is captured. Even if one is captured as a bandit, what awaits him is but death. If one does not become a bandit, he is to die now and he has no escape; but if he becomes a bandit, he is not to die now

⁴⁵ Namely the Nian Army, one of the mass uprising during the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom period.

and may luckily survive. So what is the reason of not becoming a bandit? (Xu Ke 1986, 5337).

This mentality was shared by people all over the country. In 1876, when Shaanxi suffered from drought, famine victims committed highway robbery. They held high a banner with eight Chinese characters on it meaning "It is painful for us to violate the law, but it is also painful for us to endure hunger" (*Shen Bao*, 27 Aug. 1877). In 1883, when Hubei was struck by floods, "the wild and intractable people became bandits and robbed everywhere" (*Shen Bao*, 17 Jan. 1884).

China has seen, perhaps, more wars than any other nation, especially in the last two hundred years. The two opium wars, the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, the Nian Rebellion, the aggression by the Eight-Power Allied Forces, the Russo-Japanese War, the 1911 revolution, the wars among warlords, the civil wars between the Communists and the KMT and the Anti-Japanese War do not exhaust the list. Battle after battle was fought in all the provinces. After each battle, armies would recruit new soldiers. Between wars, a large number of soldiers would be disbanded. Soldiers who survived wars returned to their native places to become peasants again. Landless and unskilled, the demobilised soldiers tended to be either dependent on others or take to banditry. Johnson discovered in 1933 that "The bandits of Manchoukuo were recruited mainly from ex-soldiers and farmers" (Johnson 1934, 20). In the late 1920s and early 1930s, the sociologist Yan Jingyao investigated criminality in twelve provincial prisons. Of the five bandits he recorded, two were peasants who could not pay their rent, two were peasants whose properties were taken away by soldiers, and one was a soldier whose army was defeated (Yan Jingyao 1986, 89-93).

Marginals contributed to banditry. Besides those Hobsbawm has discussed, China had other kinds of marginals: Buddhist monks, Taoist priests, itinerant street-performers (especially *kungfu* performers), etc. They were collectively called *jianghu zhong ren* (people of the Rivers and Lakes), thus such people, "*jianghu langzhong*" (doctors of the Rivers and Lake, often a charlatan doctor), "*jianghu shushi*" (necromancers of the Rivers and Lakes), "*jianghu yiren*" (wandering performers of the Rivers and Lakes), "*jianghu yishi*" (believers in brotherhood of the Rivers and

Lakes), “*jianghu pianzi*” (swindlers in the Rivers and Lakes), to mention only some. Secret society members, bandits and all people mentioned above are “people of the Rivers and Lakes”, who “*zou jianghu*” (wander about the Rivers and Lakes) and believe in “*jianghu yiqi*” (the code of brotherhood in the Rivers and Lakes). One who led such a life is said to “*liulang jianghu*” (live a vagabond life in the Rivers and Lakes) or “*liuluo jianghu*” (be an outlaw in the Rivers and Lakes).

Corvee or conscript labourers were another source of bandits in China. The government forcibly recruited labourers for huge construction projects, such as the Great Wall, the Grand Canal, the Imperial Palaces and water conservancy projects. Hard labour and harsh treatment drove them to flee. Not daring to go back home for fear of being caught, escaped labourers took to the greenwood. In the 1860s, bandits were very active in the Northeast, especially in the state-controlled gold-mining industry. Working conditions in the mines were abominable. Labourers forcibly recruited from other parts of China kept deserting. To try to get as many labourers as needed, the state turned to deported criminals and “anti-social” elements, but they also deserted the mines whenever they could. The deserters were outlawed for either mining gold on their own or for becoming bandits.

These do not exhaust the possible sources of Chinese bandits. A scholar has noted that one group of “*honghuzi*” (red-bearded bandits) included the following members: a ruined merchant, who had been arrested for debts but escaped by bribing a guard, a young man whose father was persecuted by the authorities, a peasant who was ruined by a swindler, a man who had killed another in a robbery, a carpenter who had fled from local oppression, a Chinese Eastern Railway worker who sought independence and a patriot from South China who had fled, with a reward of 5,000 ounces of silver on his head for his opposition to the Manchus (Chesneaux 1971, 126-127).

Bandit Categories

Banditry evolved into a trade in those well-known “bandit areas”, such as Shandong, Henan, Hunan, Huaibei and the Northeast. In China, a trade was called

hang, thus the saying “There are three hundred and sixty trades (*hang*) and every trade (*hang*) has its rules and regulations” (Zhang Ye 1993, 312).⁴⁶ Cao Baoming believes that banditry was also a trade, for, like people in all other trades, people in this trade wanted to “eat and wear” (Cao Baoming 1994, 2). Judged by their social natures, China’s modern bandits consisted of four categories: *lulin haohan* bandits, pure bandits, secret society bandits and soldier bandits.⁴⁷

Some bandits were regarded as heroes by the ordinary people but were hated by the government. For example, the Nian troops were regarded by the government as bandits, but “people were willing but not forced to join the Nian” (HMANA 1957, 311). “*Lulin haohan*” bandits are the closest Chinese equivalents of the “social bandits” and “outlaw heroes” defined by Hobsbawm and Seal respectively. They are different from pure bandits in that they robbed only the rich and the influential. Cai Shaoqing mechanically applies the standards set forth by Hobsbawm to the Chinese situation by calling *lulin haohan* bandits “social bandits”, and summarises their characteristics as:

1. They took to banditry because some of their activities were regarded by rulers as “crimes”, which the local people thought of as no crimes.
2. They robbed the rich to help the poor, and upheld justice for the people.
3. They generally would not rob the peasants. They would not indiscriminately slaughter the innocent people except for self-defence or revenge.
4. They lived among the masses, and were respected, help and shielded by the people. They were alert and quick, and very often the rulers could not see them or catch them.
5. They opposed corrupt officials, landlords and local despots, but not the old system. They could not set up a new system (Cai Shaoqing 1993, 7).

Cao Baoming does not give any definition to any of the four categories that he sums up. When explaining the “*sha fu ji pin*” bandits, he just says, “Their main activity

⁴⁶ The number “three hundred and sixty” is a general reference and does not mean exactly that many.

⁴⁷ Cao Baoming holds that there are four categories of bandits in the Northeast of China, i.e., pure bandits, “*sha fu ji pin*” (killing the rich to help the poor) bandits, “*jiu guo jiu min*” (saving the country and the people) bandits and soldier bandits (Cao Baoming 1988, 21-26). Gu Zhengren and Shen Mingxun believe the four categories to be, 1. pure bandits, 2. armed bandits, 3. bandit armies and 4. cudgel Hands (*bangzi shou*) who are often loners, robbing with a cudgel in hand (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 1, 94-97). Cai Shaoqing divides them into more categories: “social bandits”, hardened bandits, soldier bandits, secret society bandits, religious bandits, salt smuggling bandits, opium bandits, etc., (Cai Shaoqing 1993, 7).

was ‘attacking homesteads’ and ‘kidnapping’. They kidnapped only rich people and attacked only those homesteads that hung ‘flags’” (Cao Baoming 1988, 22).⁴⁸

In this thesis, the *lulin haohan* category refers to those who had the quality of heroes and followed the code of “righting wrongs” if they were *xia*, and the code “robbing the rich to help the poor” if they were bandits. When invaders came, with national conscience, they turned their guns to the invaders, and therefore, were supported and respected by the people. When explaining the reason why the Kelly gang had remained at large, McQuilton gives four factors, but the most important one “lay in the general support the Kellys received from the region’s selectors” (McQuilton 1979, 151).

But, as McCormack points out, “Generally, however, bandits were bandits, in China as elsewhere; they lived by raiding, robbing, or murdering the wealthy, be they landlords, usurers, businessmen, or even successful bandit rivals; sometimes by trading in opium; sometimes by plundering whole villages or towns; and sometimes by kidnapping travelers or rich men and holding them for ransom” (McCormack 1977, 17). Such bandits belong to the category of pure bandits, who robbed all people as long as they could get money or valuables. As a result, they were hated by both the rich and the poor, and seldom found any support. Some bandits just operated temporarily or seasonally, generally being people who could not earn enough to support themselves or their families. Among such bandits, few were outlaw heroes.

“*Huifei*” or “*bangfei*” (secret society bandits) refer to those members or organisations of superstitious sects and secret societies that were involved in banditry. Huang Juezi, terms secret societies “heretical religions”, and writes:

Secret society bandits are unemployed people at first. Being unemployed, they wander about; when they wander they become hooligans; when they become hooligans, they bully people around. Being unemployed, they suffer from hunger and cold; when suffering from hunger and cold, they become bandits or thieves; being bandits or thieves, they are evildoers. Members of secret societies are but those villains and evildoers getting together (Zhou Yumin & Shao Wei 1995, 69).

⁴⁸ Here ‘homesteads that hung ‘flags’” means rich families with fortified walls and armed persons to guard the homesteads. They often hung flags over the house.

But Mao Zedong holds a different opinion. In 1926, he analysed this group as “a fairly large population of *lumpen*-proletarians, made up of peasants who have lost their land and handicraftsmen who cannot get work” (Mao Zedong 1975, Vol. I, 19). Secret societies were everywhere, for instance, “*San Dian Hui*” (the Triad Society) in Fujian and Guangdong, “*Ge Lao Hui*” (the Society of Brothers) in Hunan, Hebei, Guizhou and Sichuan, “*Da Dao Hui*” (the Big Sword Society) in Anhui, Henan and Shandong and other provinces, “*Zai Li Hui*” (the Rational Life Society) in Zhili and the Northeast, “*Qing Bang*” (the Green Band) in Shanghai and other places (Mao Zedong 1975, Vol. I, 19). Chinese secret societies have no equivalent in the West in number, popularity or influence. The relationship between bandits and secret societies is too tangled to unravel fully. “Secret societies” are often another name for “bandits” and vice versa. A member of a secret society could be a bandit; and a secret society could be a bandit gang.

The years between late nineteenth century and the founding of the PRC were a time when bandits ran wild in the whole nation. According to an official sent by the government to suppress bandits, “There were five kinds of bandits, namely official bandits, gentry bandits, soldier bandits, mass bandits and local bandits” (Zhou Yumin & Shao Wei 1995, 318). These bandits were at once rebels against the Qing dynasty and also robbers of ordinary people. Secret societies provided organisations for these rebels and robbers. In Nanning, “Vagrants, bandits and secret societies ganged up” (Zhou Yumin & Shao Wei 1995, 312). With thick forests, the mountains in the border areas of Guangdong and Guangxi became a den of bandits and secret societies. People who became vagrants because of poverty or being robbed joined bandit gangs or secret societies; people who wanted to protect their families and their own lives had to give money to bandit gangs and secret societies; people who scrambled for local political power or spheres of influence turned to bandit gangs and secret societies for support (Zhou Yumin & Shao Wei 1995, 312). Billingsley tries to clarify the confusion between the bandit gang and the secret society:

The bandit gang, however, was only one of the many varieties of militant rural combination deemed illegal by the authorities. Another was the so-called “secret society”, and the two have often been confused. The old saying that “the

officials draw their power from the law, the people from the secret societies” should really be extended to include bandit gangs. (Billingsley 1988, 8).

His clarification is not very convincing. Secret societies were treated as bandits by the Qing dynasty, which was reflected in the criminal laws. As early as the Shunzhi period (1644-1661), there were already regulations regarding sworn brothers: “Those who are from different families and become sworn brothers shall be flogged one hundred strokes.” “Those who smear blood and burn incense to become sworn brothers shall be executed immediately” (Zhou Yumin & Shao Wei 1995, 16). In 1671, smearing blood to become brothers was officially defined as treason. In 1774, further stipulations were issued. To those who became sworn brothers through smearing blood and burning incense, the regulation on “attempted treason” applied: the head would be jailed prior to execution by hanging and the followers would be punished for one degree less. If there were more than twenty people who became sworn brothers in that way, the head would be hanged and executed immediately and the followers would be sent to the remotest back country to serve in the army. If, without smearing blood and burning incense, forty and more than forty people became sworn brothers in the order of age, the head would be jailed prior to execution by hanging and the followers would be punished for one degree less. If the head was younger and the sworn brothers were not in the order of age, he was sure the chieftain of a bandit gang and would be hanged and executed immediately and the followers would be sent to the remotest back country to be enlisted in the army. If the sworn brothers were in the order of age and numbered more than twenty but less than forty, the head would be flogged one hundred lashes and exiled three thousand *li* away; if the number was less than twenty, the head would be flogged one hundred lashes and locked in the cangue for two months and the followers would be punished one degree less (Zhou Yumin & Shao Wei 1995, 17). A younger man being the head or “the eldest brother” (*Dage*) was a sign of “a bandit gang”, because in ordinary people’s practice of sworn brotherhood, the order was decided by age, that is, the oldest should be the eldest brother, while in a secret society or a bandit gang, “the eldest

brother” could be anybody whose personal ability, financial capacity or personality suited the position.

During the Republic, the relationship between bandits and secret societies became even closer. Warlords, corrupt officials, landlords and local despots oppressed and exploited the peasants to an unprecedented extent. Such oppression and exploitation, successive years of wars and severe natural disasters, forced more and more people to join secret societies in the hope of seeking some protection. Many of them were engaged in armed robbery, feudal or tribal fights, smuggling, abduction and trafficking human beings. Among secret society bandits, there was no lack of “just kings” who “robbed the rich to help the poor.”

Tian Di Hui called itself *Hong Men* for the fact that its original aim was to “oppose the Qing and restore the Ming” and the reign title of the first Ming Emperor was Hong Wu. Billingsley called *Hong Men* “the Red Gang” (Billingsley 1988, 114), which is not correct, because members of *Hong Men* never call themselves “the Red Gang”. According to Fan Songpu, once a branch chief of *Hong Men*, *Hong Men* was an anti-Qing organisation, which the Qing government regarded as treasonous and heretical. “The Qing government branded the members as Red-scarf bandits and called them ‘the Red Gang’ bandits. People outside the *Hong Men* did not know the truth and all called Hong Men ‘*Hong Bang*’ (Red Gang). In fact, there had never been a Red Gang in China” (Fan Songpu et al 1987, 4). Anyhow, to avoid suppression and arrests, different names were used for subordinate secret societies such as the White Lotus Society, “*Hong Deng Zhao*” (Red Lantern), “*Da Dao Hui*” (Broadsword Society), “*Xiao Dao Hui*” (Small Sword Society), etc.

The so-called *bingfei* (soldier bandits) were those people who used to be bandits and were later recruited to the army and, at times of upheaval, became bandits again, or simply those soldiers who disguised themselves and robbed people. There was a saying in those days, “Soldiers and bandits are of the same family.” Some people were soldiers in the open and bandits in secret. Soldier bandits also include those defeated or disbanded troops, or escapees from the army. Without reliable

income, they took to banditry. More often than not they were soldiers in name, but bandits in reality, or soldiers in the daylight, but bandits at night.

Whether bandits became soldiers depended on the situation and need of the government or warlords; whether soldiers became bandits depended on how they were treated in the army. Chi Zihua maintains, "After the founding of the Republic, soldiers and bandits became one" (Chi Zihua 1996, 51). The economist Zhu Xueshi asserts that the warlords blackmailed for their own good or at most shared what they gained with the senior officers. Most soldiers were exploited by them through "pocketing a portion of the soldiers' pay". When life was made difficult, soldiers were forced to become bandits (Zhu Xueshi, Vol. II, 67). But Chi Zihua argues that the definition of *bingfei* was much broader than that: "Those disbanded soldiers who were similar to bandits and those enlisted bandits should all be included in '*bingfei*'" (Chi Zihua 1996, 169). That was what Li Yuanhong⁴⁹ described, "When disbanded, soldiers became bandits; when recruited, bandits became soldiers" (Chi Zihua 1996, 169). Warlordism, born soon after the Republic was established, was one of the main causes of "*bingfei*". Warlords continuously disbanded and recruited soldiers. "Reports of brigandage, looting, kidnappings, murders, came from many parts of the country in 1912 – and every year thereafter" (Sheridan 1975, 54). The disbanded soldiers, before they were recruited again, joined bandit gangs instead of going home. The reserve force for soldiers and bandits increased continuously. As a result, there formed a vicious circle: peasants – floating people – soldiers (bandits) – bandits (soldiers) – *bingfei* (soldier bandits).

Billingsley devotes much accommodation to discussing "*bingfei*": bandits as soldiers and soldiers as bandits. Government needed bandits to defend itself, and warlords needed bandits to fight for their interest. Bandits formed large semi-regular armies, especially when invaders came. As a result, "Alongside the institutionalization of the military, therefore, the warlord period also saw the institutionalization of the bandit as soldier." (Billingsley 1988, p 195). He continues, "Substantially, the term referred to a joint process by which, on the one hand, former soldiers deprived of their

military status sought to retrieve it by the use of predatory bandit techniques, and on the other, regular bandit gangs strove to utilize their customary activities to acquire regular military status otherwise unattainable” (Billingsley 1988, 205-206). He calls that “a dialectical process” by which the military became “banditized” and the bandits became “militarized”. Soldier-bandits, however, are different from traditional bandits.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, as Billingsley himself has noted, “In practice, then, soldier-banditry was a fairly complex phenomenon with its own rules of operation” (Billingsley 1988, 206).

Geographically, Chinese outlaws, as outlaws in any other country mentioned, flourish in “remote and inaccessible areas such as mountains, trackless plains, fenland, forest or estuaries with their labyrinth of creeks and waterways” (Hobsbawm 1972, 18). Marshes, river valleys, sparsely inhabited areas and places of harsh weather are also good and frequent haunts of outlaw heroes in China. Cai Shaoqing divides bandits into four geographic categories: Mountain bandits, border bandits, sea pirates and lake bandits. His division reflects the diversity of Chinese bandits, but does not reflect the complete picture. For example, *mazei* (horse thieves) in the Northeast do not fit into these categories. Though most of them operated along rivers or in the plains, we do not call them river bandits or plain bandits. In Qinghai, bandits were mainly found in the pastoral areas on the prairie, but we do not call them prairie bandits.

Much has been discussed about different categories of bandits. Since we are primarily interested in outlaw heroes, it is necessary to explain the relationship between outlaw heroes and bandits of these categories. As Hobsbawm argues, social bandits differ from “robber barons” and criminals. Social bandits are forced to take to

⁴⁹ Li Yuanhong (1864-1928), President (1914 and 1922) of the Northern Warlord government.

⁵⁰ Billingsley argues that the soldier-bandits differed from traditional bandits in seven principal respects: 1. Their activities were aimed at the achievement of legitimacy through instigation or reinstatement in the military. 2. Their operations were harsh and wide-ranging. 3. The abandonment of local ties resulted in the brutalization of banditry. 4. Large towns and cities become the principal objects of attack. 5. Large numbers and good organization were required for their strategy. 6. Speed of movement was essential. 7. The capture of foreigners ensured not only publicity for the gang’s chief but also pressure on the Chinese authorities to accede to the bandits’ demands. (Billingsley 1988, 206).

the greenwood, while criminals regard robbery, violence and even murder as their profession. Social bandits get sympathy, help and support from their people, while criminals cannot. "Nevertheless," Hobsbawm writes, "criminal robbers cannot be simply excluded from the study of social banditry." He gave three explanations for this: first, "where social banditry did not flourish or had died out, suitable criminal robbers might well be idealised and given the attributes of Robin Hood"; second, involuntary outcasts from the peasantry "provided a link between social and anti-social banditry"; third, "old-established and permanent pre-industrial empires had long developed a double underworld: not only that of the outcast, but also that of unofficial mutual defence and opposition" (Hobsbawm 1972, 39-40).

Secret societies had a number of members lauded by the common people as heroes. Many beliefs, values and regulations of secret societies were shared by bandit gangs. In *The Romance of Qing Bang & Hong Bang*, Wu Yugong describes the members in these terms: "There is a prevalent characteristic among the members of Qing Bang and Hong Bang, namely, being not afraid of death. Properly treated, these people can become chivalrous heroes; neglected, they become bandits. Those who value promises, love friends, respect the seniors and meet death with brave composure are heroes; those who do not obey regulations, indiscriminately slaughter and blackmail villagers are villains" (Wu Yugong 1992, 1). The heroes of secret societies had the same code of conduct as their bandit comrades.

When discussing mass uprisings in the short-lived Xin dynasty (9AD-23AD), Bai Yang puts mass uprisings into five categories: 1. people who rose against official oppression; 2. hungry people; 3. people who rose for self-defence against outside threats; 4. people with vested interests in the past dynasty; 5. careerists (Bai Yang 1987, 304). Based on socio-economic and political analysis, this clarification is also true for later mass rebellions. Bandits as a whole also fall into these categories though we may find a large number of sub-categories. People of the first three categories produce more outlaw heroes than the last two. From a cultural point of view, outlaw heroes are people who generally do not live by accepted values. They belong to five categories again: 1. people who are not willing slaves; 2. people who find themselves

unable to fit into the existing society; 3. people who have a different understanding of life; 4. people who believe that only they can put wrongs right; 5. people who want to achieve self-fulfilment through a different channel.

Outlaw Heroes as Avengers and Haiduks

The outlaw hero may be a Robin Hood style noble robber, an avenger, a haiduk or a combination of them all. Since Robin Hood style heroes have been dealt with previously, the focus here is placed on outlaw heroes as avengers and haiduks.

An avenger is not so much a man who rights wrongs, but appeals to power or arms to avenge himself, his relatives or his friends. After doing something extreme, very likely murdering, he is outlawed and, with his sense of injustice, he is likely to become an outlaw hero. "Nevertheless, though a hero, he is not a *good* hero" (Hobsbawm 1972, 61). Being wild for revenge, they often went so far as to kill without discrimination. Zhang Shun, to avenge himself, killed not only the ferry boat owner, who robbed his silver and wanted to drown him, but four others who had nothing to do with the robbery. Terror is more the characteristic of the avenger than of the "noble robber". However, "it is mixed with some characteristics of the 'noble robber'. Very often in the character of the outlaw hero, terror and cruelty are combined with 'nobility'" (Hobsbawm 1972, 62). To avenge, he takes up actions that awe the wrong-doers, who are very often in power and the position to outlaw the avenger. At the time of social turmoil, incomplete legal system and corrupt administration, it was impossible to settle public or private grudges by the government. Many therefore turned to banditry for revenge. General Ma Zhanshan⁵¹ became a bandit in this way. Of the nine best-known bandit chiefs in Luoning of Henan in the period of the Republic, four first took to banditry for revenge.⁵²

⁵¹ Ma Zhanshan (1884-1950) later became a Garrison Commander in Heilongjiang province. In 1931, he was acting Governor of Heilongjiang, and leading his troops to fight against Japanese invaders, became a famous anti-Japanese general.

⁵² "Bai Lang Qiyi Diaocha Baogao" ("Investigation Report on Bai Lang's Uprising"), *Kaifeng Shifan Xueyuan Xuebao* (The Journal of Kaifeng Normal College), No. 5, 1960, 80. Dong Shiwu was to revenge his father, Qin Jiaohong and Han Yukun their brothers, and Zhang the Widow her husband and sons (Cai Shaoqing 1993, 31).

Hobsbawm tries to find reasons for the avenger's excessive violence. The first is that "even the best of bandits must demonstrate that he can be terrible"; and "the second is that cruelty is inseparable from vengeance, and vengeance is an entirely legitimate activity for the noblest of bandits" (Hobsbawm 1972, 63). The reason for the outlaw hero's becoming such an avenger is often the fact that the oppressors had the advantage of using the power of the government, the army and the law, which the outlaw hero could not use, or rather was fighting against. He had only his own strength to rely on.

As avengers, outlaw heroes are more destroyers than builders. "But even when such rebels triumph, victory brings its own temptation to destroy." "To kill, to slash, to burn away everything that is not necessary and useful to the man at the plough or with the herdsman's crook, is to abolish corruption and leave only what is good, pure and natural" (Hobsbawm 1972, 65). Burning and killing often go side-by-side with robbing. In China, in the transition period from one regime or dynasty to another, values changed radically. The lawful to the previous regime or dynasty might be unlawful to the new one; the outlawed now could come back inside the law. Since the beginning of its civilisation, China has witnessed more than eighty dynasties and more than five hundred regimes. The change from one regime to another was very often the result of blood and fire. A typical phenomenon is that many rebels and bandits, after capturing land, claimed to be kings or emperors themselves. In the Qin dynasty, almost all chiefs of rebels represented by Chen Sheng and Wu Guang and the more than fifty leaders of peasant uprisings in the Sui dynasty all proclaimed themselves kings, emperors or khans. These separatist regimes again had those who rose against them outlawed, when they were then within the 'law'. By the end of the Ming dynasty (1620s), Li Zicheng and his followers captured Xian and founded a new regime called the Shun Empire, and Li himself became the emperor. Liu Bang, founder of the Western Han dynasty, and Zhu Yuangzhang, founder of the Ming dynasty, were both outlawed by the former royal courts. After they took the throne, the first thing they did was to announce that they had done everything in Heaven's name and they were sons of Heaven. All these emperors, kings, Khans or princes had a habit in common:

when they first had power in hand, to show that they did not forget their poor friends and hated corruption, they burnt down the palaces of the previous regime. So China, though with a history of civilisation of more than 4,000 years, can only boast of the palaces of the late Ming and Qing dynasties. To know anything about earlier days, archaeologists have to excavate the cultural relics in ancient tombs.

Social tension brings forth more bandits as avengers. In the last days of the Ming dynasty, the Emperor, eunuchs and officials were so corrupt that they did nothing but amassed wealth and tyrannised the country. Li Zicheng, a law-abiding peasant, had never dreamed of becoming a hero. He borrowed some money from a usurer called Ai and could not pay it back when it was due, because of a serious drought. The latter bribed the *yamen* and had Li arrested. In fetters and yokes, Li was put in the scorching sun in the market, exposed to the public. No one was allowed to give food to him. The usurer meant to torture him to death this way so that other poor debtors would be frightened. Even the guards could not stand the sight and tried to move Li to the shade under a tree, but they were rudely stopped by Ai and his roaring footmen. The onlookers got so angry that they smashed the yokes and fetters and fled with Li to the bush outside the town. Even then they did not think of rebellion, but the government had already sent troops to chase them. Knowing clearly what would happen if they were arrested, sticks in hand, they came out and attacked the troops. The official of the troops was so scared that he fell from the horseback and died. His troops scattered, leaving all their weapons such as swords, knives, bows and arrows behind. With lethal weapons in hand, the peasants simply captured the county seat the same night. Starving poor peasants in the neighbouring places responded very quickly, and a thousand people joined them. They then took towns, seized land and robbed the rich. They were so angry that they took their extreme revenge on the rich and even killed them. "Where men become bandits, cruelty breeds cruelty, blood calls for blood" (Hobsbawm 1972, 69). Vengeance did not stop until Li Xin and Niu Jinxin joined the uprising and helped Li Zicheng seize Xian and establish the new empire in 1644.

Haiduk-type outlaw heroes are different from avengers and the noble robber. Hobsbawm says, "The definition of the haiduk-hero is fundamentally political." "Unlike the 'noble robber', the haiduk does not depend on personal moral approval; unlike the 'avenger' his cruelty is not his essential characteristic, but tolerated because of his services to the people" (Hobsbawm 1972, 73 - 74). Throughout the Yuan dynasty, in the Qing dynasty and during the Japanese invasion, such bandits were commonly seen.

In the Yuan dynasty, Mongolians occupied China, who had but two aims: first, to plunder wealth, and second, to satisfy their desire of conquering. In the early days, they regulated: "one who kills a Mongolian must pay with his life; one who kills a person from the middle Asia must pay eighty taels of silver; one who kills a Han person pays only the amount of money as the price of a donkey" (Bai Yang 1987, 686). The Mongolians tyrannised over the Han people, exerting a strict control from the very root level. They set up a *Jia* (a unit of civil administration) for every twenty households. The head was of course a Mongolian, who treated the people of the twenty households as slaves and took whatever he liked from them. The Yuan government also stipulated that Han people were not allowed to hunt, to learn martial arts, to have weapons, to hold meetings, to do business in the markets or to go out at night. All heads of government organisations were Mongolians, who were extremely corrupt. To maintain their luxurious life they blackmailed the Han Chinese. The Khan deprived Han farmers of their land and awarded it to members and relatives of the royal family. To fight against Mongolians, just in the 1340s, the Han Chinese organised over three hundred uprisings (Bai Yang 1987, 689).

There is a wide-spread folk story in China about the Red-scarf uprising led by Liu Futong. At the time, the Han people were not allowed to have get-togethers, so Liu could not pass the information of the uprising onto other people. However, Liu talked the Mongolian Heads of the Neighbourhoods into believing that Han people in the town would pray for happiness for the Mongolians by eating a kind of round sweet cake called moon cakes on the fifteenth day of the eighth lunar month. The Mongolian Heads were happy and allowed him to distribute moon cakes to the Han

families without knowing that inside each cake there was a slip of paper with the words "On the fifteenth day of the eighth month, all the Mongolians should be killed." As a result, on that day all the Mongolian Heads and their families were killed (Bai Yang 1987, 686). Nowadays people still eat moon-cakes on that day but more in celebrating the Mid-Autumn Festival (an occasion for celebrating harvest) than in commemoration of the event.

In the early days of the Qing dynasty, the Manchus met with strong resistance from the Han Chinese. The resistance was very often a common effort made by peasants associated with secret societies, who harboured feelings of hatred towards the Manchus as foreign invaders. During the time when the Great Powers attempted to carve up the territory of China and during the Japanese occupation of China, "Time and time again the secret societies were to be found among the national resistance forces" (Chesneaux 1973, 10). As Chesneaux noted, "It (The Qing dynasty) had had periods of glory in the eighteenth century, but as the nineteenth century advanced, faced with the incompetence and corruption of the civil servants, the peasants began to protest, the secret societies became active, and many Chinese came to question the validity of the Mandate of which the emperor was trustee" (Chesneaux 1973, 6). In the late Qing dynasty, almost all officials of the country, from those in the royal court to those in each county, were offering or receiving bribes, for they found that if they refused to bribe their superiors, they would be pushed out or be thrown into prison. A national corruption network therefore came into being. This man-made disaster and natural calamities made millions of peasants lose their homes and become refugees. Chesneaux also observed, "In traditional China, where the political power of the ruling class (the civil servants) and its economic power (feudal exploitation of the peasants) were intermingled, the discontent with the established order was directed against both the rich and the state" (Chesneaux 1973, 8). From the 1760s to the 1790s, there were at least eleven large-scale peasant insurrections (Bai Yang 1987, 374). During the whole of the nineteenth century, mass rebellions were like raging fires burning in every part of the country. In 1850, in Guangxi alone, there were nine armed peasant forces (Bai Yang 1987, 906). The Taiping Movement started in the

same year. From 1855 to 1862, people of the Hui nationality organised three large armed rebellions. As Hobsbawm observes, "Haiduk banditry was therefore in every respect a more serious, a more ambitious, permanent and institutionalised challenge to official authority than the scattering of Robin Hoods or other robber rebels which emerged from any normal peasant society" (Hobsbawm 1972, 76).

If fighting against corrupt officialdom could be regarded as political struggle, the outlaws of the Marsh could also be regarded as manifesting political characteristics. However, they were more avengers and noble robbers than people who came together for fighting against foreign oppressors or the founding of a new dynasty. In his discussion, Hobsbawm compares the outlaws of the Marsh with Haiduks:

Of course in times of trouble for the people and crisis for authority, the number of Haiduks and haiduk bands would grow, their actions multiply and become more daring. At such times the government orders to stamp out banditry could grow more peremptory, the excuses of local administrators more shrill and heartfelt, and the mood of the people tense. For, unlike the epidemics of ordinary banditry which we retrospectively discover to be forerunners of revolution only because in fact they have preceded it, Haiduks were not merely symptoms of unrest but nuclei of potential liberators, recognised by the people as such. If the times were ripe, the 'liberated area' of the Chinese bandits on some mountain of Liang Shan P'o (locus of their 'lair' in the well-known Water Margin novel) would expand to become a region, a province, the nucleus of a force to topple the throne of heaven (Hobsbawm 1972, 81).

This is not true for the outlaws of the Marsh. They occupied the Marsh as a temporary lodging rather than a base to expand. They were not "nuclei of potential liberators." The emperor said, "I have heard that Song Jiang and his men neither attack prefectures and counties around nor harm the people. They seek only an amnesty so that they can serve the country" (Shi Nai'an & Luo Guanzhong 1975, 1119).

From the discussions above, we find that Chinese and Western outlaw heroes share values in many ways. They are forced to take to the bush or the greenwood; they "rob the rich to help the poor"; they are avengers; they fight against the authorities; they represent the oppressed in righting wrongs. However, they also differ greatly not only in values but in their behaviours, everyday lives, religions, practices

and attitudes towards life because of cultural differences. The Chinese outlaw tends to be more violent, less sympathetic to women, better organised and more bounded in brotherhood.

Chapter 4

Outlaw Heroes and Revolution

The relationship between outlaw heroes and revolution is a fundamental aspect of banditry. This chapter discusses the involvement of Chinese bandits with a number of such events, including the Taiping revolutionary campaign, the republican revolution and the Communist revolution. It also discusses more general aspects of this topic, such as outlaw heroes as Communists and their position in revolution.

Unlike their Western counterparts, Chinese outlaw heroes are often involved with revolution. There are two reasons for this: first, there have not been so many large-scale revolutions in the West in modern history; second, Chinese revolutions, especially the Heavenly Kingdom Revolution and the revolution led by the CPC, mostly aimed at depriving the rich of their wealth to give to the poor. Bandits were mainly from the poorer social classes, so they saw benefits in such revolutions. When Hobsbawm says “social banditry has an affinity for revolution” (Hobsbawm 1972, 98), the examples he quotes are those from Ukraine, Russia, India, Turkey, Columbia, Java, Algeria, Mexico and even China, but not from any country of the Anglophone tradition.

There are many ways in which Chinese bandits and revolution are connected. They sometimes take part in the revolution, sometimes break away from it, and at other times sabotage it. When the revolution is in the high tide, outlaws can easily become “fellow travellers”, but then the revolutionaries may reject them. When the revolution is in the low tide, the revolutionaries will seek support from all kinds of anti-government forces with bandit gangs as one of the most important allies, but then the bandits may turn their backs to the revolutionaries. When there is a struggle for leadership, the conflict between the outlaw and the revolutionary becomes all the more severe. When fighting against their enemies, revolutionaries make use of outlaws, but when they win and become rulers, revolutionaries usually want to get rid of them.

The historian Hu Sheng says that there are three revolutionary “high tides” in the late Qing dynasty: the first being the period of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom from 1851 to 1864; the second being the period after the 1894 Sino-Japanese War, which saw the

1898 Reform Movement¹ and the 1900 Boxer Movement²; the third being the period from 1905 to 1912, that is, the period from the founding of *Tung Meng Hui* (the Alliance Society) to the fall of the Qing dynasty (Hu Sheng 1980, 3). The three revolutions that have changed modern China are the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, the Republican revolution and the Communist revolution. Outlaw heroes have been involved in all three.

The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom

Hobsbawm argues that two things may turn the modest social objective of bandits into genuine revolutionary movements. “The first is, when it becomes the symbol, even spearhead, of resistance by the whole of traditional order against the forces which disrupt and destroy it.” And “the second reason why bandits become revolutionaries is inherent in peasant society. Even those who accept exploitation, oppression and subjection as the norm of human life dream of a world without them: a world of equality, brotherhood and freedom, a totally *new* world without evil” (Hu Sheng 1980, 27). The second reason could be the reason for any revolution, while the first one does not reflect the objective of the Heavenly Kingdom, which was to “disrupt and destroy” the traditional order. In 1850, Hong Xiuquan³ organised a peasant uprising. The Qing government sent an army to suppress them but was defeated. Hong proclaimed the founding of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom,⁴ whose forces reached eighteen provinces. Franz gives a comprehensive explanation of the setting of the movement:

If the Taiping Rebellion was a new beginning in Chinese history, it arose in a setting that still contained the familiar elements characteristic of periods of dynastic decline and rebellious uprisings in the past. Grave corruption in government, heavy overtaxation of the farmers, high rent, desertion of the land by the peasants, the

¹ After China's defeat by Japan in 1895, Kang Youwei and some reformers organised more than one thousand three hundred candidates for the imperial examination to write to Emperor Guangxu, opposing the “Treaty of Shimonoseki” signed on 17 April 1895 and advocating reform (CBC 1980, 1652).

² The Boxer Movement is not discussed in detail in this thesis. Some ballads in praise of the Boxer rebels are discussed in Chapter 7.

³ Hong Xiuquan (1814 - 1864) was the leader of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. He called himself the Heavenly King.

⁴ The Chinese name for this movement is Taiping Tian Guo, usually translated as “The Heavenly Kingdom of Great Peace” (Franz 1966, Vol. I, 3). In this thesis “The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom” is used.

increase of a roaming population, banditry and general insecurity—these had been the conditions for dynastic changes by rebellion or foreign conquest throughout imperial history (Franz 1966, 4).

The Kingdom lasted for fourteen years (1850-1864) and shook the Qing dynasty. The three main aims of the Kingdom were, 1. to drive the Manchurians out of China; 2. to eliminate unreasonable living styles; and 3. to set up a Christian society.

The Taiping movement saw the first climax of outlaw heroes' and secret societies' involvement in a revolutionary movement. The social turmoil in Guangxi provided a favourable condition for the uprising. Before the uprising, there were already twenty to thirty armed peasant forces in Guangxi. The official description about these forces was that they "rose and disappeared quickly", "banded and disbanded quickly" and "rushed around" (Hu Sheng 1980, 96). They named their organisations *Tang* (literally Hall), such as *Desheng Tang* (Victory Hall), *Juyi Tang* (Fraternity Hall), and so forth. Therefore, they were also called "Tang Bandits" by the government. A memorial to the throne in 1850 said, "The bandits bound their heads with red cloth. On their banner was written 'enforcing justice on behalf of Heaven and opposing the Qing to restore the Ming'" (Hu Sheng 1980, 96). In the mid-nineteenth century, the Qing officials' corruption and incompetence in dealing with natural disasters and social problems aroused strong discontent among the people. After the Opium War, economic crises, Western encroachment and anti-Manchu sentiments led to unrest throughout the country. South China was the last area the Manchus conquered but the first to come under Western influence. Guangzhou was the centre of social unrest. Hong Xiuquan and Feng Yunshan, both born near Guangzhou, became the first organisers of the uprising and the founders of the Kingdom.

Hobsbawm states, "The bandit chief who is regarded as a royal pretender or seeks to legitimize revolution by adopting the formal status of a ruler, is familiar enough" (Hobsbawm 1972, 101). The most formidable examples in China were perhaps the chiefs of the rebellious troops of the Taipings. The Taiping rebellion was a revolutionary movement with not only usual characteristics of previous peasant insurrections but also influences from the Occident. Hong Xiuquan claimed to be the second son of God while

Jesus was the eldest. He “formulated a revolutionary ideology that was a Chinese version of Protestant Christianity” (Clubb 1972, 13). Besides the effort of overthrowing the Qing, they attempted to improve “the status of women”, oppose “opium traffic”, introduce “communal economic organization” and embark upon “a reform of land tenure” (Clubb 1972, 13).

Hong Xiuquan (1814-1864), a village teacher, founded *Bai Shang Di Hui* (the Society of God Worshippers) and formulated a new religious belief. With the assistance of Feng Yunshan, his close friend and comrade-in-arms, Hong soon had thousands of followers. They recruited troops not only from among believers but also other armed groups, including bandits and secret societies. As Sun Yat-sen points out, “When Hong Xiuquan rose in revolt, most members of the *Hong Men* Secret Society came to his support” (Sun Yat-sen 1991, 50). In 1851, they rose in rebellion in Jintian Village of Guiping County in Guangxi. They wanted to “wipe out all evil spirits and realize great peace in the world” and believed that “all men within the four seas are brothers”. At first, their aim was not clear until they formulated the document *Land System of the Heavenly dynasty*,⁵ which stipulated not only equalisation of land but also military organisations, resources distribution and social and government structures. They aimed much more and higher than ordinary outlaws. Hong proclaimed the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom with himself as Tianwang (Heavenly King). The new order was to reconstitute a legendary ancient state in which peasants owned and tilled the land together; slavery, concubinage, arranged marriage, opium smoking, footbinding, judicial torture, and the worship of idols were all to be eliminated.

Taking part in the Taiping rebellion were mainly peasants, roving people and “colliers” in the mountains (Hu Sheng 1980, 104-105). When they first rebelled, there were only about twenty thousand troops, but when they seized Wuhan, they claimed to

⁵ *Land System of the Heavenly dynasty* is a document issued in 1853 when the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom made Tianjing (today's Nanjing) as capital, announcing that all land and riches in the world belong to God. The principle of distributing land was “dividing land into nine classes”, “distributing land according to the number of people of a family”, and “distributing to a person good and poor land fifty-fifty”. It also stipulated that the annual incomes, after enough rations were kept for the family, were sent to the “sacred treasury” of the central government. Expenses for marriage, burial ceremony and other necessities were borne by the “sacred treasury” (CBC 1980, 1231).

have fifty thousand troops. As Hu Sheng records, “Wherever they went, poor peasants and homeless labourers who had no ‘land and property’ to worry about swarmed into the revolutionary army.” “Those poor people,” Hu continues, “who had already taken to the mountains and become bandits, joined the Taiping Army in packs and bands” (Hu Sheng 1980, 109). When the Taipings entered Hunan, “the local bandits secretly developed. With several hundreds of people, assuming the strength of the Yue bandits (the Taipings), they suddenly came to attack the county seat” (Zhou Yumin & Shao Wei 1995, 213). Zeng Guofan⁶ regarded the Taipings as “people who should have been beheaded in the last thirty or forty years, who have now brought the disaster of roving bandits” (Hu Sheng 1980, 119).

At the same time, the Nian⁷ Secret Society was on the rampage in the North. A basic unit of the secret society was called a *Nian*, with a small *Nian* having several people or several tens of people and a large two or three hundred people (CBC 1980, 701). “When in a good year they were a bit peaceful, while in a lean year, they ran wild” (HMANA 1975, Vol. 1, 408). In 1855, the Yellow River was breached and many places in Shandong, Anhui and Jiangsu were flooded. Unable to survive, numerous poor peasants joined the Nian Society. For a time, “the disaster caused by the Nian bandits was worse than that caused by the Long-haired bandits (the Taipings)” (HMANA 1975, Vol. 1, 408). The Nian troops were more roving bandits than the Taipings. In 1857, the Nians began cooperating with the Taipings. Zeng Guofan said in 1859, “In Henan, the Taipings and the Nians mixed together. From Qinghui in the East to Queshan in the West, in a span of two thousand *li*, there is not even a small peaceful lot of land” (Hu Sheng 1980, 193).

The Taipings often recruited bandits into their army within which there was inevitably a mixture of all kinds of people. “Robbers, prisoners, salt smugglers, poor and fierce beggars, rascal gamblers, who desired to see the world plunged into chaos” (Zhou Yumin & Shao Wei 1995, 215), attached themselves to the Taipings. The Taipings also

⁶ Zeng Guofan (1811-1872), leader of the Hunan Army in the late Qing dynasty, whose main task was to suppress the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom.

⁷ Known also as the Torch Bearers, a peasant uprising army in the mid-nineteenth century.

greatly influenced roving people in other places that they did not reach. Rebels everywhere used the name of "Taiping Heavenly Kingdom", some of them being connected with it, while some others having nothing to do with it. Such rebellions included secret societies such as *Xiao Dao Hui* (the Small Sword Society) in Shanghai, *Tian Di Hui* in Guangxi, Guangdong and Hunan, *Shuang Dao Hui* (the Double Sword Society), *Hong Qian Hui* (the Red Money Society) in Fujian and the White Lotus Society in Shandong, and bandit troops such as those led by Zhang Xiumei in Guizhou in 1855, by Li Wenxue in Yunnan in 1856 and by Lan Dashun in Sichuan (Hu Sheng 1980, 213). The hopes that inspired the Taipings and Nians and the ever-worsening atmosphere of misery and despair favoured the growth of secret society activities. Chesneaux observes, "Thousands of these subversive groups were active in the last three decades of the nineteenth century; they were swelled by increasing numbers of *éléments déclassés* and discontented people of all kinds." He comments, "Whether large or small, they had the same ancient slogans as before: 'Kill the rich and help the poor!', 'Restore justice in the name of Heaven!', 'Overthrow the Ch'ing and restore the Ming!'" (Chesneaux 1973, 44).

The Taiping tolerance of the esoteric rituals and quasi-religious societies of south China (themselves a threat to Qing stability), their relentless attacks on Confucianism (widely accepted as the moral foundation of Chinese behaviour) and the involvement of foreign powers resulted in the ultimate defeat of the rebellion. Its advocacy of radical social reforms alienated the Han Chinese scholar-gentry class. The Taiping army, although it had captured Nanjing and driven as far north as Tianjin, failed to establish stable base areas. The leaders found themselves in a net of internal feuds, defections, and corruption. Additionally, British and French forces, being more willing to deal with the weak Qing administration than contend with the uncertainties of a Taiping regime, came to the assistance of the imperial army, "suppressing bandits on behalf (of the Royal Qing Court)" (Hu Sheng 1980, 215). The government showed no mercy in suppressing the revolt. In 1861 Zeng Guofan was appointed imperial commissioner in charge of military affairs of the four provinces of Zhejiang, Jiangsu, Anhui and Jiangxi. He proposed to "borrow foreign troops to help suppress (the Taipings)" (CBC 1980, 301). Zeng's Hunan army, well-known as *Xiangjun*, organised and trained by Zeng himself, became a new

fighting force. Zeng, with the help of British and French troops, finally seized Tianjing, capital of the Kingdom.

The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom as a whole was a revolutionary movement led by outlaw heroes, which in turn served as promoter of banditry and secret societies and accelerated the downfall of the Qing dynasty.

The Republican Revolution

Twentieth century China has seen two revolutions: the 1911 revolution which overthrew China's last dynasty and the Communist revolution which led to the founding of the PRC. Outlaw heroes were actively involved in both revolutions.

The late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century was an important turning point in modern Chinese history. After the Sino-Japanese War in 1895, China was in a crucial moment of national crisis. World powers vied with each other in carving up China. However, the Manchu rulers were the direct reason for the downfall of the Qing dynasty, who, with inherited privileges, became parasites on the society. Each Manchu was allotted land and given a "salary" by the government ever since he or she was born. Parasitic life deprived the originally strong and brave Manchus of their courage and fighting spirit. In front of the foreign powers, the Manchu rulers could do nothing but cede territory and pay indemnities in order to negotiate peace. Shortly before the 1911 Revolution, China lost "Weihaiwei, Lushun, Dalian, Qingdao, Kowloon and the Guangzhou Bay" (Sun Yat-sen 1991, 27). As Sun Yat-sen pointed out, "The Powers' attitude was formerly something like this: since China would never awaken and could not govern herself, they would occupy the points along the coast like Dairen, Weihaiwei, and Kowloon as bases for 'slicing up' China." "Further back in history, our territorial losses were Korea, Taiwan and the Penghu Islands (Pescadores)." "Still further back in the century, we lost Burma and Annam." (Sun Yat-sen 1991, 27). Here the concessions in Shanghai, Tianjin, Hankou, etc., are not included.⁸

⁸ A Taiwan author affectionately describes this period: "China was forced to sign the Treaty of Nanjing in 1842, ceding Hong Kong Island to Britain. In 1860, it signed the Treaty of Peking, ceding part of Kowloon. After the Sino-Japanese War of 1894, the situation worsened: Taiwan was ceded to Japan.

Seeing the country torn apart and the people suffering and distressed, people of every social status expressed their concerns for the future of China. Reformers such as Liang Qichao and Kang Youwei⁹ advocated constitutional reform and modernisation; democratic revolutionaries such as Sun Yat-sen advocated revolution to overthrow the Qing dynasty and to establish a republic; peasants, mainly in the North, set off the Boxer Movement. Influenced by this tide of saving the country from subjugation and ensuring its survival, bandits and secret societies were, willingly or unwillingly, drawn into the revolution.

Sun Yat-sen, born into a peasant family in Guangdong but educated mostly in the West, was the leader of the first revolution and founder of the KMT (the National Party). According to Clubb, "In July 1914, after the KMT was outlawed, he (Sun Yat-sen) had organised his party in Japan as the secret and conspiratorial KMT (Revolutionary Party), with its membership committed to strict allegiance to himself as leader" (Clubb 1972, 56). Sun organised *Xing Zhong Hui* (the Society for Reviving China) in Honolulu in November 1894 with the aim of "driving the Manchu enemy away and restoring and reviving *Huaxia*." (Xiao Xiaoqin 1989, 11-12).¹⁰ In 1895, he set up the Head Office of *Xing Zhong Hui* in Hong Kong. After that, branches were established in many places both at home and abroad. Making use of *Xing Zhong Hui*, the revolutionaries organised armed rebellions. In October 1895, they bought 600 new-style pistols, contacted and organised garrison troops and navy soldiers in Guangdong as well as members of secret societies, *lulin* bandits, stranglers and disbanded soldiers." They decided to use the slogan "eliminating the evil and giving peace to the good people" (Xiao Xiaoqin 1989, 20-21). *Hua Xing Hui* founded by Huang Xing (1874-1916) used the same slogan and kept in

Owing to the intercession of Germany, France and Russia, Japan was prevented from annexing the Liaodong Peninsula. But then China was forced to express its gratitude to the powers, and as a result it was divided among the colonialists. Russia came to control Manchuria, and Germany gained as a concession the Jiaozhou Gulf in the Yellow Sea. England leased Weihaiwei in Shandong, gained the Kowloon Peninsula for 99 years, and also carved out the Yangtze River Valley as its sphere of influence. France gained Guangzhou Bay as its concession, and carved out Guangdong, Guangxi and Yunnan as its realm of control. Japan followed suit, carving out Fujian as its sphere of influence. Therefore, all the best harbors of China were occupied by foreign powers. In actuality, almost all the provinces were divided among them." (Wang Ying 1996, 3).

⁹ Liang Qichao (1873-1929) and Kang Youwei (1858-1927), two leader of reformers in modern China.

¹⁰ *Huaxia* is an ancient name for China.

touch with secret societies and bandits as well. Sun Yat-sen himself had a very positive view about secret societies. In his lectures on “The Three Principles of the People”, he praised their members as being “far-sighted”, “clear-minded” and “acute in observation” (Sun Yat-sen 1991, 49). The members themselves also emphasised their roles in the revolution. Liu Lien-k’o, a member of *Hong Men*, said, “Brothers of the *Hong Men* had the mission of ‘wiping out the Qing and restoring the Ming’, a mission with obligations but without rights. They have shed blood and sacrificed many lives for the revolution” (Liu Lien-k’o 1990, 135).

Bandits had always been a force the revolutionaries wanted to win over. Two famous outlaw heroes¹¹ joined the 1911 revolution, one being Wang Tianzong, the “Robber King of Henan” and the other Bai Lang,¹² “one of the most formidable and implacable of all the south Henan chiefs as well as a committed foe of gentry control” (Billingsley 1988, 243). Wang Tianzong and his followers “cut off several heads when they met corrupt officials. He was called *xiashi*¹³ by people in the neighborhood but regarded as a bandit by the Qing government” (Cai Dongfan 1993a, 185). The revolutionaries promised Wang to make him “governor of Henan” if the revolution was successful. The two revolutionaries sent to contact Wang and his gang drank “the wine mixed with cock’s blood” and became sworn brothers with him (Billingsley 1988, 235-237). When the Wuhan Uprising in October 1911 broke out, Wang led two thousand troops and fought at Tongguan Pass against the Qing government troops, which “were utterly routed” (Cai Shaoqing 1993, 345).

Bai Lang was born in a peasant family in Baofeng County of Henan. He was “forthright, good at commanding people and generous in aiding needy people” (BLRU

¹¹ Another famous bandit chief Fan Zhongxiu in Henan also joined Sun’s revolutionary army. From 1918 to 1919, Fan occupied a mountain in west Henan with several hundred troops. “In a few years, he had a large number of people and great influence. He led his band to Mr Sun Yat-sen’s army and changed it into the ‘Henan Jianguo Army.’” (EBHA 1992a, 5).

¹² Bai Lang (1873-1914), a famous outlaw hero. In 1912, he rose in rebellion in Henan. His slogan was “fight against the rich and help the poor”. His troops grew from a few hundred people to several tens of thousands. During the revolution, he changed his army into “*Gongmin Taozei Jun*” (the Citizens’ Fighting Traitor Army). In April 1914, he died in a battle (CBC 1980, 1760). “Old Foreigner” (Lao Yangren) Zhang Qing joined Bai Lang’s uprising in 1911 (Fan Shengyu et al 1989, 4).

¹³ See “Introduction”.

1980, 1). Bai, who opposed gentry power, was considered a hero by the peasants in the areas where he was operating. The movement led by Bai through five provinces exemplified the best of traditional banditry, “which often verged on full-scale peasant rebellion” (Billingsley 1988, 12). In 1913, when the Second Revolution launched by the Republicans started, the KMT sent a punitive expedition and attempted to wrest the power back from the “usurper” Yuan Shikai. Before they started the expedition, the Republicans appointed Bai Lang as “Vanguard Commander, Hunan-Hubei-Henan Allied Army” (Billingsley 1988, 242). Huang Xing sent a letter to Bai to persuade him to assist in fighting, saying, “Since you rose in Hubei and Henan, your army has always been victorious. Gallant and noble-minded men have warmly responded to your call and followed you. In future, when China is cleared of Yuan’s troops and the crime culprit is wiped out, your heroic deeds will be immortal among future generations” (Cai Shaoqing 1993, 346). Bai actively engaged himself and his army in many campaigns. When the Second Revolution failed, young revolutionaries, avoiding arrest and murder by the government, joined Bai Lang’s army (BLRU 1980, 410). However, the alliance between the revolutionaries and Bai was not very successful. Qiao Xuwu, who once joined Bai’s army, maintained that one of the causes for Bai Lang’s failure was that the Republicans did not give substantial assistance to him (BLRU 1980, 418).

In 1916 when Yuan Shikai claimed to be Emperor, Sun Yat-sen sent a high-ranking official to Shandong to organise an army to fight against Yuan. Since the soldiers he recruited were insufficient and he did not have as much fighting capacity as required, “he recruited three thousand people from a bandit gang whom the citizens called *Honghuzi* (Red Beards). These troops, ferocious and tough, were good at fighting” (EBHA 1992a, Vol. II, 520). In the Northeast, the well-known outlaw hero Zhao Zhigang “joined *Tung Meng Hui* to fight against the Qing until he sacrificed his life bravely and gloriously” (Fan Chunsan & Yuan Dongxu 1997, 208). Song Jiaoren¹⁴ suggested first to include *honghuzi* in the revolution, when he was planning to mobilize local *honghuzi* to occupy the city of Fengtian. In his letter to bandit chiefs in Liaoning, Song called their gangs “*Majun*”

¹⁴ Song Jiaoren (1882-1913), a democratic revolutionary. He joined the *Tung Meng Hui* in 1905 and was a senior member of the KMT. In 1913, he was assassinated by an agent sent by Yuan Shikai.

(Mounted Armies), who “cherished the ideals of helping the weak, restraining the powerful, protecting the people against the government” (Pan Xiting et al 1985, 151). Billingsley observes, “Song took a positive view of the heroic outlawry represented by the *Shuihu Zhuan* and other knight-errant novels, and saw the *honghuzi* as being in the direct line of descent from the tradition” (Billingsley 1988, 239). Song even wanted to have an “alliance between bandits and revolutionaries” (Billingsley 1988, 239).

However, secret society bandits were more important in the Republican revolution. Franz points out that “Secret societies led many of the uprisings that occurred all through imperial history” (Franz 1966, 12). *Tung Meng Hui* was in many ways like a secret society and later had many secret society members. In 1906, at a meeting to celebrate the anniversary of the official newspaper of *Tung Meng Hui*, Zhang Taiyan¹⁵ said, “Previous revolutions are popularly called rebellions by the ‘fraternity of bandits’; this present revolution is popularly called a rebellion by ‘genteel scholars’” (Hu Sheng 1980, 3). Hu Sheng maintains that in the period of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, it was a rebellion by the “fraternity of bandits” but not a rebellion by “genteel scholars”; in the period of the 1898 Reform Movement and the 1900 Boxer Movement, it was still the “fraternity of bandits”, however, the “genteel scholars” were about to rebel even though they were still reluctant to involve themselves with the “fraternity of bandits”. In the period after *Tung Meng Hui* was founded, it was mainly “rebellion by genteel scholars” and “the genteel scholars” wanted to use the strength of “bandits” (Hu Sheng 1980, 5). The Secret Society that *Hua Xing Hui* had connection with was mainly *Hong Jiang Hui*, a branch of *Ge Lao Hui*.¹⁶ Ma Fuyi, the head of *Hong Jiang Hui*, was “a hero who rights wrongs for the masses” (Zhou Yumin & Shao Wei 1995, 325).

After the Taiping rebellion, there were mainly three types of struggle against the Qing dynasty: armed uprisings organised directly by secret societies, activities against foreign religions, and the movement of constitutional reform and modernisation (Zhou

¹⁵ Zhang Taiyan (1869-1936) joined *Tung Meng Hui* in 1906, serving as editor-in-chief of *Min Bao*, the official newspaper of the *Tung Meng Hui*.

¹⁶ *Ge Lao Hui*, also called *Pao Ge Hui*, was one of the secret societies in the late Qing dynasty. The Chief was called the Eldest Brother and the members called each other Pao Ge (Pao Brothers). (Fan Chunsan & Yuan Dongxu 1997, 316-318).

Yumin & Shao Wei 1995, 289). The abortive Guangzhou Uprising on 26 October 1895 was the first attempt of armed struggle by Sun Yat-sen, whose force consisted mainly of, and relied mainly on, “secret society members, greenwood bandits and disbanded soldiers” (Xiao Xiaoqin 1989, 21). After the 1894-1895 Sino-Japanese War, Sun Yat-sen pointed out, “about three fourths of Guangzhou troops were dismissed by the government. Most of the disbanded soldiers became floating people or bandits” (Zhou Yumin & Shao Wei 1995, 291). The revolutionaries could make use of this ready force. Zheng Shiliang, a secret society member, made friends with Sun Yat-sen and became a revolutionary. In his *Autobiography*, Sun praised Zheng as being gallant and generous, who “makes friends with people who believe in brotherhood”. Sun said, “As soon as I saw him, I found him to be an unusual person. Soon after we became acquainted, I discussed revolution with him” (Sun Yat-sen 1990, 2). The revolutionaries and secret societies shared some ideology. *Tian Di Hui*’s initial aim was “opposing the Qing and getting rid of Manchus”, while the revolutionaries wanted to “drive out the Tartars (Manchus), restore China and found a republican government” (Xiao Xiaoqin 1989, 4).

However, most bandits or secret society members who joined the revolution did not have a clear aim. They first served the revolution as mercenaries. A notice to the public by the governments of two counties in Guangdong said: “A bandit chief named Sun Wen,¹⁷ colluding with another bandit chief Yang Quyun, attempt to rebel and harass the provincial capital. They send their gangsters to agitate people and recruit members by offering ten silver dollars per person monthly. Those foolish people in the village, coveting money, come to enlist” (Zhou Yumin & Shao Wei 1995, 291). Bandits in Beijiang, Xiangshan and Shunde areas were also bought over. Sun “distributed money he got to the *lulin* people” (Zhou Yumin & Shao Wei 1995, 291).

In the late Qing dynasty roving people became a main source of mercenary soldiers for the government or armed forces of the local gentry or landlords. However, these forces could not absorb them all. Those homeless people, mainly interested in economic gains, easily turned into bandits. When the government offered them money or official positions, they could easily accept amnesty and surrender; when the local gentry offered

them money, they could be easily bought over; when there was a revolution, they could become activists. However, since most of them were originally poor peasants, they could easily find a common language with peasant revolutionaries. As compared with those peasants who would rather stay at home starving, roving people tended to be more courageous, resourceful and knowledgeable. They could play an important part in revolution, and some of them could even become leaders. When discussing how much revolutionaries could be attracted by bandit gangs and secret societies, Billingsley maintains:

By contrast with the passivity and suspicion characteristic of peasant society as a whole, the heroism of such groups must have seemed well suited to the putschist revolutionary orthodoxy of the early twentieth century. The appeal was probably heightened by the congruence of the elite-oriented *wuxia* ("knights-errant") and the more earthy *haohan* ("stout fellow") traditions (Billingsley 1988, 228).

Some of those who joined the 1911 revolution were simply called *xia* by their supporters and sympathisers. Qiu Jin¹⁸ was called "*nu xia*" (a female *xia*) and Wang Tianzong "*Zhongzhou da xia*" (The great *xia* of Zhongzhou prefecture) (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 3, 228).

Bandits' or secret society members' hired-hand mentality resulted from the fact that most of them did not have a secure means of livelihood. If the revolutionaries could not solve the problem for them, they could not be mobilised to join the revolutionary force. This mentality could be used by anyone who had the resources, including the government. In 1851, secret society members in Guangdong and Sichuan were recruited by the government to suppress the Taipings. When there were wars against foreign invasions, bandits or secret society members could be drawn into the wars, and some of them could be bought over by the invaders (Zhou Yumin & Shao Wei 1995, 292). Billingsley argues, "When the revolutionaries held out better prospects than those offered elsewhere, it was not unusual for bandits to make at least temporary alliance with them" (Billingsley 1988, 227). To win over bandits and secret society members, the revolutionaries sometimes had

¹⁷ Sun Wen is Sun Yat-sen's alias.

¹⁸ Qiu Jin (1879-1907), who joined the 1911 revolution and was involved in the organisation of the uprisings in Anhui and Zhejiang. When the uprisings failed, she was sold out by a traitor and was arrested and executed. (Wang Yi & Sheng Ruiyu, 1995, 328).

to join bandit gangs, secret societies or other underground organisations. When Sun Yat-sen asked Chen Shaobai to canvass secret societies, Chen joined *San He Hui* (the Triad). Making use of his high position in *San He Hui*, he contributed much to the development of the revolutionary force in Guangdong (Zhou Yumin & Shao Wei 1995, 292).

The Communist Revolution

Mao Zedong had always regarded bandits as a force that could be reformed into a revolutionary force. In his class analysis, Mao put these people into the category of “*éléments déclassés*” which consisted of “peasants who have lost their land, handicraftsmen who have lost all opportunity of employment as a result of oppression and exploitation by the imperialists, the militarists, and the landlords, or as a result of floods and droughts” (Howard 1977, 64). Mao said, “They can be divided into soldiers, bandits, robbers, beggars, and prostitutes. These five categories of people have different names, and they enjoyed a somewhat different status in society.” He praised them, “These people are capable of fighting very bravely, and, if properly led, can become a revolutionary force” (Howard 1977, 64). Mao warned his comrades never to “force them to go over to the side of the enemy and become a force in the service of the counter-revolutionaries” (Howard 1977, 65). Mao’s view on bandits was in many ways similar to that of the Russian anarchist, Michael Bakunin, who said, “The brigand is always the hero, the defender, the avenger of the people, the irreconcilable enemy of the entire State regime, both in its civil and its social aspects, the life and death fighters against our statist-aristocratic, official-clerical civilization” (Billingsley 1988, 226). To Bakunin the bandit was “the genuine and sole revolutionary – a revolutionary without fine phrases, without learned rhetoric, irreconcilable, indefatigable and indomitable, a popular and social revolutionary, non-political and independent of any estate” (Billingsley 1988, 228). However, unlike Bakunin, Mao adopted a tactic of “unity and struggle” to reform bandits into revolutionaries. In 1926, the topic “Secret Societies and Bandits” was introduced into the courses of the Guangzhou Peasant Movement Training Institute (Zhou Yumin & Shao Wei 1995, 506). One way to reform them was to organise them into peasant associations. By 1927, the Hunan peasant association, led by Mao, had two million

members. It confiscated land, checked accounts, tried corrupt officials and conducted economic struggles against the entire gentry and attacked individual rich tyrants (Mao Zedong 1975, Vol. 1, 35-37). Because of the coexistence of brigands, peasants and all other kinds of people, peasant associations were regarded by many as bandit gangs. When people inside and outside the Party criticised the peasant movement in Hunan for their extreme activities, Mao defended it by saying:

First the local tyrants, evil gentry and lawless landlords have themselves driven the peasants to this. For ages they have used their power to tyrannise the peasants and trample them underfoot; that is why the peasants have reacted so strongly. ...The peasants are clear-sighted. Who is bad and who is not, who is the worst and who is not quite so vicious, who deserves severe punishment and who deserves to be let off lightly - the peasants keep clear accounts, and very seldom has the punishment exceeded the crime (Mao Zedong 1975, Vol. 1, 27-28).

How to deal with bandits had been a long-term question with the CPC before and several years after the founding of the PRC. Mao maintained that bandits belong to the vagrant social stratum:

This social stratum is unstable; while some are apt to be bought over by the reactionary forces, others may join the revolution. These people lack constructive qualities and are given to destruction rather than construction. After they join the revolution, they become a source of roving-rebel and anarchist ideology in the revolutionary ranks. Therefore, we should know how to remould them and guard against their destructiveness (Mao Zedong 1975, Vol. 2, 326).

When the KMT government led by Chiang Kai-shek outlawed the Communists, the latter started a series of failed uprisings in cities. Their forces, though only a small number survived, started to grow. The Communists incorporated a large number of bandits into their forces. In a document issued by the Central Committee of the Party on 3 August 1927 about organising Autumn Harvest Uprisings in Hunan, Hubei, Guangdong and Guangxi, the strategy was “with the Peasant Associations as the core, to call upon all social forces, such as bandits and secret societies which are close to the peasants, to take part in the uprisings” (TAHU 1982, Vol. 2, 106). Leaders of peasant uprisings in history were almost all regarded as bandits by the government, but Mao and his comrades regarded them as heroes. Mao maintained that peasant uprisings and peasant wars were “real driving forces for social advance” (Chen Jin 1992, 231).

As Clubb states, before Mao and other Communists led their defeated troops into the mountains, “the Chinese peasantry was more restless than at any time since the Taiping Rebellion. Banditry, always a warning sign of trouble in Chinese politics, was growing” (Clubb 1972, 123). Hobsbawm is right when he says, “In 1929 the bulk of Mao’s Red Army seems to have been composed of such ‘declassed elements’” (Hobsbawm 1972, 106). When in the Jinggang Mountains in 1927, Mao even followed the ancient custom and swore brotherhood with two bandit chiefs, Yuan Wencai and Wang Zuo. Mao understood the military value of the mountains and the importance of winning over the bandits who had occupied the mountains in establishing a base for his forces. Yuan and Wang and their bandit soldiers mainly robbed the rich, but they had “a dim class viewpoint, a roving bandit ideology and bad habits of vagrants”, and “burning incense and swearing to become brothers are their open activities” (He Changgong 1987, 102 & 124). Some people in Mao’s army insisted that Wang and Yuan bandits be wiped out, but Mao criticised “this erroneous opinion”. He emphasised that class analysis should be made about Yuan and Wang’s troops. Most of them were exploited and oppressed peasants. Although they had shortcomings such as “Greenwood” habit and localism, under the leadership of the Communist Party, they could be transformed (MHGHP 1977, 58). Mao told his comrades that he had learned from the bandits how to get around the enemy. He summarised this in the axiom, “If you can win, fight; if you cannot win, move away” (Ladany 1988, 32-33). When Mao and his army first arrived at the Jinggang Mountains, Yuan and Wang were suspicious and hostile, but Mao soon won their trust by giving them weapons and helping them wipe out their enemies (Ladany 1988, 32). In his letter to Yuan, Mao said, “I will pay a formal visit to you on a good day and make friends with you” (Qiu Hengming & Wu Zhenlu 1992, 39). They became sworn brothers and the bandits all joined the Workers and Peasants Revolutionary Army (Zhang Cheng 1994, 87-90). Later, Yuan joined the Communist Party and Wang became Vice Chairman of the Revolutionary Committee of a county in the Jinggang Mountain base (Zhou Yumin & Shao Wei 1995, 507). However, their status as outlaw heroes remained unchanged. When Wang heard that Mao was expelled from the Central Committee and the Party, he said, “Why is the Central Committee unreasonable like an emperor? What do they base

this on? If they drive you further, you just rebel. You can still take to the mountains with me” (Qiu Hengming & Wu Zhenlu 1992, 407). This was reminiscent of the reckless outlaw hero Li Kui of the Marsh. In effect, Mao not only learned from these bandits but also from the outlaws of the Marsh, who inspired him and his guerrilla fighters. Mao loved, and had lifelong interest in, *Shui Hu Zhuan*. During the years of battles, in his bag were two books: *Shui Hu Zhuan* and *Lun Yu* (The Analects of Confucius) (Chin Jin 1992, 2).¹⁹ Mao, “powerfully influenced by the native tradition of popular resistance”, was said to have wanted to “imitate the heroes of Liang Shan P’o” (Hobsbawm 1972, 106). He often quoted the exemplary battles involving those outlaws. The code of “robbing the rich to help the poor” was rooted in Mao’s mind. In a poster he wrote this doggerel:

The Army of the Communist Party
Rob the rich to help the poor.
To get soldiers’ pay and provisions,
We turn only to the despotic gentry.
We give them a deadline of three days
To get the silver dollars ready.
One thousand silver dollars
Must be sent to this army.
If they give less,
All their houses would be burnt to ashes (Qiu Hengming & Wu Zhenlu 1992, 114).

In the process of setting up his revolutionary bases, Mao always drew lessons from the experience of outlaws in history. He called the administrations he established in the bases “armed independent regimes of workers and peasants” (Lü Xingdou 1992, 181). Lü Xingdou maintains that the process of formation and development of this idea had the following stages: 1. Before 12 April 1927 when Chiang Kai-shek openly broke with the Communist Party, Mao advocated “taking to the mountains” and forming the base of the revolutionary force. 2. After the first Civil War Mao put forward the proposition of “establishing a separate rule in South Hunan province”. 3. After the Autumn Harvest Uprising (1927), Mao had in mind the idea of becoming a “revolutionary *Shan Da*

¹⁹ According to Xu Zhongyuan, in the 1970s, Mao had at least twelve versions of *Shui Hu Zhuan* (Xu Zhongyuan 1997, 79-80).

*Wang*²⁰ (king of the mountains)”. In this period, Mao Zedong and his comrades were more like outlaw heroes than revolutionaries. They built up those bases in remote border areas; they robbed the rich and helped the poor. Mao tried to persuade his comrades, “*Shan Da Wang* has never been wiped out in history. We should go to the mountains to be *Shan Da Wang* of the Red Regime, ‘revolutionary *Shan Da Wang*’” (Lü Xingdou 1992, 183). 4. Mao believed that the middle part of the mountain range, where the famous Jinggang Mountains were located, was the best place for the armed independent regime.²¹ 5. The “armed independent regime” was “that of Zhu De and Mao Zedong style” and “that of Fang Zhimin Style”, i.e., the combination of armed struggle, agrarian revolution and the construction of the revolutionary bases (Yu Boliu 1992, 183-184).

However, Mao had his own creation. The difference between Mao and the outlaw hero was that he always remembered his revolutionary aim. The fact that he used the word “revolutionary” to modify “*Shan Da Wang*” indicated the essential difference between the outlaw hero and the revolutionary that he had in mind. To take to the mountains was an ancient proposition in Chinese history, but Mao gave it a new connotation. At that time, to take to the mountains was perhaps the only choice for the Communists, because they became illegal, actually outlawed by the National government, and had to go underground. On 4 July 1927, at the enlarged politburo meeting, Mao was elected alternate member of the provisional Politburo of the CPC. He was asked to stay in Shanghai where the Central Committee was stationed, but Mao refused. He said, “I want to make friends with the greenwood heroes and to carry out the agrarian revolution” (MZF 1993, 66). When some suggested organising a division of armed troops to jointly attack Guangdong with the troops in Nanchang, Mao once again insisted on establishing a base in Hunan, “even if we fail, we can take to the mountains instead of going to Guangdong” (MZF 1993, 68). If what Wang Duonian said was true, “the CPC spent forty thousand silver dollars to buy over the Zhang Qiufeng bandit gang as the main

²⁰ In China, a bandit chieftain is called *Shan Da Wang* (king of the mountains).

²¹ As Ladany has noticed, “Communist insurgents often worked at the meeting-places of several joining provinces, as bandits had always done in Chinese history, to avoid pursuit by the authorities of any one government.” (Ladany 1988, 29).

force” in the Autumn Harvest Uprising in 1927. Buying over bandits became one of the ways the Communists expanded their troops (Wang Duonian 1972, 59 & 62).

In the Jinggang Mountains was a broad, circular valley surrounded by wooded slopes. “In the past ages, ‘bandit peasants’ whose descendants now numbered fifteen hundred souls had founded five villages” (Smedley 1956, 227). Mao and Zhu trained the peasants to be soldiers with “the consent and help of the bandit leaders”. When these peasants did not have enough for existence, “to make ends meet they had gone marauding in distant towns” (Howard 1977, 77). The Red Army adopted the slogan of “attacking despotic landlords and distribute the land among the poor”, which was far from a revolutionary programme aiming at seizing the whole country or realising socialism. In the minds of ordinary soldiers and low-level officials, and in the eyes of the poor, the Red Army was no more than an outlaws-of-the-Marsh style gang. The poor were happy not because the Communists would establish socialism but because they could help them get land and food:

The Red Army came to attack despotic landlords,
In August, when the Autumn wind was howling.
They distribute land among the poor,
Who were happy and laughing (QQLABU 1959, 29).

Many ballads have similar themes and sentiments. The Army confiscated land of the rich and redistributed it to the poor. They impressed the poor peasants by strictly abiding to the code. One incident described by Roger Howard showed this clearly:

During one assay from their Chingkang (Jinggang) Mountain base, Red Army soldiers looted some villagers’ homes, led by their company commanders, in clear contradiction of Red Army rules. Mao ordered the looters to explain their actions to a mass meeting of peasants. One looter defended himself by saying, “What shall a man do if his own commander leads in the looting? I would have stopped if they had ordered me to.” Another said, “Shoot us for what we have done wrong! Our commanders led us, but we followed like sheep.” At the vote of the massed assembly, the soldiers went free but the commanders were executed (Howard 1977, 82).

Mao and Zhu’s troops were regarded by the peasants as “the poor man’s army”. To win support from the poor, the Red Army announced the famous “Three Disciplines and

Six Points for Attention”, which were revised into “Three Disciplines and Eight Points for Attention”:

The Three Disciplines:

1. Be submissive to command.
2. Do not take anything from the masses.
3. Give anything captured to the collective.

The Eight Points for Attention:

1. Replace all doors when you leave a house;²²
2. Return and roll up the straw matting on which you sleep;
3. Be courteous and polite to the people and help them when you can;
4. Return all borrowed articles;
5. Replace all damaged articles;
6. Be honest in all transactions with the peasants;
7. Pay for all articles purchased;
8. Be sanitary and, above all, establish latrines a safe distance from people’s houses (Chesneaux 1973, 107).²³

Some of these disciplinary regulations are found in the ten motifs of the narrative of the outlaw hero defined by Seal and the nine standards set forth by Hobsbawm. These soldiers aspired to be friends of the poor, were generous and courteous, and treated women properly.

When Zhu De, Chen Yi and He Long, leaders of the 1 August Uprising in Nanchang, were defeated in the cities, they were driven to the mountainous areas between Guangdong and Hunan. Zhu later joined Mao with about two thousand troops. In the Jianggang Mountains, “they had little food, few weapons, no training and no proper leadership” (Ladany 1988, 23). They attacked landlords to get food, money and rifles. As a soldier recalled, “We beat down the gentry, divided the land and carried out land reform.” “The government offices and houses were set on fire” (Ladany 1988, 21). Such soldiers were really more bandit-like than conscious Communist fighters.

Not only Mao, other early leaders of the Red Army, such as Zhu De and He Long, found similar positive qualities in bandits. When talking about the bandit chief Lu

²² The wooden doors were used as beds by the soldiers.

²³ “The Eight Points for Attention” were revised later but the essence and spirit remained unchanged, which are still observed by the PLA. The song title “*Three Disciplines and Eight Points for Attention*” was sung not only by every soldier in the Army, but also every student from the primary school to the university, if not by every person in the whole country in the 1960s and 1970s.

Guofan,²⁴ who once caught him in Sichuan, Zhu De said, Lu “was a bandit alright. ...Compared with the warlords, he was a righteous and honorable citizen” (Billingsley 1988, 229). Lu was a chief of *Ge Lao Hui*. He was illiterate, but was influenced by stories of the outlaws of the Marsh. When the 1911 Revolution broke out, he and his followers drove the local landlords away, confiscated their land and redistributed it among the poor. When the Revolution failed, many people went to him for refuge. When the harvest was poor, he “attacked cities and robbed the rich to help the poor” (Cai Shaoqing 1993, 29). He Long “spoke of bandits with the voice of personal experience”:

Though they were barbarous all right, they also had their merits: they were sincere, spirited, and hard-nosed. If they don't want to talk and fraternize, they'll never talk and fraternize. Once they trust you, then neither death nor earthquake can change [them]. No matter what you bring, an official [rank] or money, you cannot buy them off. And they were so brave--many people sacrificed themselves by following me alone (Smedley 1956, 300).

The Communists did as much as the Nationalists, if not more, to attract secret society members. In May 1935, when the troops led by Su Yu²⁵ entered the border area of Zhejiang, “most members of *Qing Bang* joined the Guerrilla forces of the Red Army and took part in the construction of the bases. Some advanced elements even joined the Communist Party and became the first group of local Party members and cadres after the Division entered Southwest Zhejiang” (Su Yu 1988, 140). To those armed forces of secret societies and bandit gangs controlled and used by the KMT, the Communists adopted a policy of “winning over the masses, opposing their chieftains and sabotaging their organisations” (Zhou Yumin & Shao Wei 1995, 610).²⁶

²⁴ Billingsley mistakes the name Lei Yongfei for Lu Guofan.

²⁵ Su Yu is a senior general of the PLA.

²⁶ In their propaganda posters, the Red Army wrote: “1. Welcome Lulin and the Hung Men Society brothers to arm themselves and fight local despots and divide their land! 2. Welcome Lulin and the Hung Men Society brothers to rise and organise revolutionary guerrilla forces! 3. Lulin and the Hung Men Society brothers are all from workers or peasants' families, so you should not fight against the workers and peasants' own army--the Workers and Peasants Red Army! 4. Lulin and the Hung Men Society brothers, don't believe your chieftains' lies that guns cannot kill you and shield them from gunfire with your bodies. 5. Welcome awakened Lulin and the Hung Men Society brothers to join the Red Army! Fight against the local despots and divide the land! 6. Welcome Lulin and the Hung Men Society brothers to struggle for dividing land and establishing your own Soviet Governments!” (PJU 1984, 119).

Outlaw Heroes as Communists

At the embryonic stage, Chinese Communists, especially those peasant leaders, bore more characteristics of outlaw heroes than revolutionaries. Ladany comments, "Communist insurgents often worked at the meeting-places of several adjoining provinces, as bandits had always done in Chinese history, to avoid pursuit by the authorities of any one province" (Ladany 1988, 32). The Autumn Harvest Revolt in 1927 saw the rebels more as bandit heroes who killed and robbed landlords, divided land and distributed their loot to the poor than revolutionaries. "Land, housing and all other goods were to be distributed evenly among hired labourers, poor peasants and middle-peasants" (Ladany 1988, 39).

Mao once said, "I was in the Greenwood University, where I did learn something" (LLMZT 1969, 549). Some famous Communist figures were at first no more than outlaw heroes. The Long March itself was an organised flight of those "bandits" (as called by the KMT government), and Mao and other leaders of the Red Army were but bandit chieftains (Chen Jin 1992, 231). Being continually encircled and attacked by the well-equipped KMT troops, and always on the run, the Red Army soldiers were "lean and hungry men", "to whom life had been nothing but a round of toil and privation, insecurity and oppression" (Howard 1977, 86).

Billingsley observes that Red Armies in northern Shaanxi, Hubei, Henan and Anhui, "behaved like social bandits, robbing the rich to support their activities and so on. When attacking a district they would take only what they needed, and leave after killing certain 'enemies of the people' such as county magistrates, government officials, police chiefs, and tax officials" (Billingsley 1988, 257). Some important generals of the Red Army were but Robin-Hood-style outlaws when they first rebelled. Liu Zhidan (1903-1936)²⁷ and He Long (1896-1969)²⁸ are two good examples.

²⁷ Liu Zhidan (1903-1936) launched revolution in Shaanxi with Xie Zichang (1896-1935) in 1928 and established the Northern Shaanxi revolutionary base area. When Mao reached Northern Shaanxi, he took his footing in this area.

²⁸ He Long was born in Hunan. His story of rebelling with two kitchen knives is known to all in China.

Liu Zhidan and Xie Zichang,²⁹ two romantic and legendary figures, organised a few hundred peasants, and sometimes led only a small handful of men when they first rebelled. “It was a disorderly, haphazard revolution, hardly distinguishable from organised banditry or Robin Hood-like outlawry” (Ladany 1988, 45). Liu was a native of Shaanxi and had a very high reputation among local revolutionaries. Xie Zichang was his close friend and “the leader of the Shaanxi revolutionaries” (Ladany 1988, 44). Liu launched the revolution at the age of twenty-five. Edgar Snow, a historian on Chinese Communist revolution, writes, “Liu was a modern Robin Hood, with the mountaineer’s hatred of rich men; among the poor he was becoming a name of promise, and among landlords and money lenders the scourge of the gods” (Snow 1968, 209). As for Liu’s career:

Liu Chih-tan’s career from 1929 to 1932 was a kaleidoscope of defeats, failures, discouragements, escapades, adventure, and remarkable escapes from death, interspersed with periods of respectability as a reinstated officer. Several small armies under him were completely destroyed. Once he was made head of the *min-t’uan* at Pao An, and he used his office to arrest and execute several landlords and moneylenders--strange behavior for a *min-t’uan* leader (Snow 1968, 210).

Mao Zedong, Zhu De, He Long, Fang Zhimin, and many other leaders of the Red Army during the first (1924-1927) and the second (1927-1937) civil wars were really Robin Hood-style heroes in the eyes of the poor peasants, but bandits in the eyes of the KMT, who called them “Gong Fei” (the Communist bandits), “Hong Fei” (the red bandits) or “Mao Fei” (Mao bandits) alternatively. The government offered several thousand silver dollars for the heads of the most important Communist leaders as all governments did for wanted bandits. Particularly in the Second Civil War, KMT troops waged five large-scale encirclements and suppressions of the troops led by Mao and Zhu. General Wang Duonian of the KMT army makes a detailed description of the events. He refers to Mao’s “Soviet Government of China” as “illegal”, and called the Workers and Peasants Red Army “bandit troops” and leaders of the Red Army “bandit chieftains” (Wang Duonian 1972, illustrations). In the preface to Wang’s book, Hao Baicun, the General Chief-of-staff of the national army, says:

²⁹ Xie Zichang (1896-1935) was also a native Shaanxi man. He was one of the founders of the bas in Northern Shaanxi before Mao Zedong arrived there in 1935 (CBC 1980, 398).

In the spring of the seventeenth year of the Republic of China (1928) the bandits of the CPC had failed in its armed rebellions one after another. Bandit Chief Mao Zedong and Bandit Chief Zhu De, leading the remnants of two bandit gangs took to the Jinggang Mountain in the border area between Hunan and Jiangxi provinces. They gathered bandits, coerced the masses and organised the so-called “Soviet Government of the Hunan-Jiangxi Border Area” and “Peasant-worker Red Army of China”. They plundered and killed everywhere, and openly rebelled (Wang Duonian 1972, 6).

Wang asserts that “the Communist bandits” “had brought more disaster to the country and people than the roving bandits led by Huang Chao in the Tang dynasty and Li Zicheng and Zhang Xianzhong in the Ming dynasty” (Wang Duonian 1972, 54). Nevertheless, Mao’s troops were supported and praised by the poor. In a collection titled *Data of Chinese Ballads* are contained many ballads in praise of outlaw heroes as Communists. The following two stanzas are from such a ballad titled “Take Up Arms”:

The nightingales sang in the evening,
Fang, the eldest brother led his soldiers out of the mountains.
The red-tasselled spears shone,
Landlords and despots shook.

The moon shone on the Xinhe River,
Numerous peasants took up arms.
To defeat the feudal landlords,
The victory relied on Fang, our eldest brother (QQLABU 1959, 7).

In this ballad, the local peasant rebels call Fang Zhimin *Dage* (Eldest Brother), as in a bandit gang where the chief is called *Dage*. In another ballad about Fang titled “The Peasants Rose and Captured Xin Jiang”, the association of Fang with the outlaw hero is even more obvious:

Liu, Guan and Zhang became sworn brothers in the Peach Garden,³⁰
The peasants rebelled in this place.
The sworn brothers set up the Shu Han dynasty,
The peasants captured Xinjiang River.

Liu, Guan and Zhang became sworn brothers in the Peach Garden,
The poor people rose for liberation.
Their aims were different basically,
Fang Zhimin exceeds Liu, Guan and Zhang (QQLABU 1959, 9).

³⁰ Referring to Liu Bei, Guan Yu and Zhang Fei’s becoming sworn brothers.

As discussed earlier, the way Liu, Guan and Zhang became sworn brothers was admired and copied by all outlaw heroes in later generations. In another ballad titled “Singing At Night”, Fang was described as a hero who “defeated the rich and helped the poor and made the poor no longer poor” (QQLABU 1959, 12). The poor even regarded Fang as a saviour:

We do not worship gods or chant Scriptures,
Because we have a saviour,³¹
Who fought with just two and a half guns,
For the poor to win the whole world (QQLABU 1959, 10).

He Long may be the most famous among the revolutionaries who are regarded as Robin Hood-type heroes by the poor. Billingsley writes, “Forced to the hills, He quickly gained a kind of Robin Hood reputation for aiding the poor and never taking for himself” (Billingsley 1988, 88). Among his comrades, he was known as “He Huzi” (He the Bearded) for two reasons: first, he always wore a beard; second, he was once a bandit (called *Huzi* by the masses), so it was believed. He Long once said, “In my home place, people can still call me ‘He *Huzi*’. ‘*Huzi*’ is another name for ‘bandit’! I am not afraid that people mention my past when I raided homesteads and plundered houses. What was wrong when I raided landlords’ homesteads and KMT officials’ houses? What should I have used if not kitchen knives? Could we get planes and cannons as we have today? Isn’t that absurd?” (Zeng Fanhua & Hou Jianfei 1995, 148). An outlaw hero and a revolutionary did not display much difference in their activities at that stage. After he joined the Red Army, He’s habit of “roving banditry” was disliked by his comrades:

He Long’s first months with the Red Army provide a good illustration of the gulf between banditry and revolutionary ideals. According to Zhang Guotao³², his “cooperation with the (Chinese Communist Party) was beyond question, but he was not like a Communist in his way of living.” ...Not surprisingly, he and his officers got on badly with the Communist officials; even on the eve of He’s admission into the Party, he and his men were being referred to as “bandits” by top Communist generals (Billingsley 1988, 234).

However, the masses, or rather the poor, had always regarded He as a hero. In the Honghu Lake area in Hubei province, stories about He were widely known. He rebelled

³¹ Referring to Fang Zhimin.

³² Zhang was one of the founders of the Chinese Communist Party and major leaders of the Red Army.

with just two kitchen knives, attacked the county government and led the Honghu Red Guards to fight against the KMT troops. He was regarded as a representative of the poor and their leader in rebellion. The ballad "Take to the Mountains and Wait for He Long" describes this relationship:

This world is too far from justice,
The rich are too rich and the poor too poor.
The poor are too poor and rich too rich,
I have nothing to eat but north wind.

With my hands I produce tens of thousands of kilos of grain,
But I have to sleep in a straw-thatched hut at night.
I throw the hoe away, but the land is still there,
I take to the mountains and wait for He Long (QQLABU 1959, 16).

He Long was born in a poor peasant family in west Hunan. When he was a child, he never had decent clothes and meals. At 17, he joined *Ge Lao Hui*. When Tang Boyi³³ told He and his father about *Ge Lao Hui*'s stand of "opposing the Qing and restoring the Ming", "killing the rich to help the poor" and "overthrowing corrupt officials", He felt it true and was very much attracted to the ideal. They became good friends. Later He and his father joined *Ge Lao Hui* with Tang's introduction. "The seventeen year old became the youngest member of the "Tenth-Row Youngest Brothers" (CGBHL 1993, 9-10).

People in west Hunan (called Xiangxi by local people) had a strong tradition of rebellion and banditry. The unruly characteristic was also reflected in He Long. When he was nine, He often beat children of the rich. When he was twelve, he became the head of the poor boys in his village. At the age of seventeen, he saw the tax-collecting police take most of the goods he and his friends had bought, "He took up a hay cutter and wanted to put up a desperate fight with the police" (CGBHL, 1993, 5-11). In January 1916, He attacked the official Security Guards in a town, seized more than twenty rifles. He quickly organised more than three hundred people and attacked the County Seat of Shimen. Lack of training and strong leadership, equipped with just a few rifles, these rebels "rushed forward when attacking the city, and broke up quickly when they could not capture it". He's forces were "immediately disintegrated" (CGBHL 1993, 16-17). On 16 March

³³Tang Boyi, a head of a branch of the *Ge Lao Hui* in Hubei province.

1916, He Long, together with twenty-one young men, with one firelock, three sabres and three kitchen knives, “broke into the Taxation Station of the Salt Bureau, killed the head, seized twelve rifles and opened the storehouse and distributed money and things to the local people”. Then he and his band attacked Security Guards in another town and “seized four rifles” (CGBHL 1993, 16-17). In August 1917, “He went back to his home town and soon organised an army of over two hundred people” (CGBHL 1993, 16-17). He was put into prison five times, but he never yielded. Shortly after he was released from prison in December 1917, He and a follower called Wu robbed the newly-appointed Magistrate of Cili County with just two kitchen knives. With the two rifles they captured, He organised a band of eighteen. In two months time, his band expanded to more than one hundred people with seventy rifles” (CGBHL 1993, 16-17).

The KMT government showed no mercy in dealing with the “Communist bandits”. The first peasant association was organised in Guangdong by Peng Pai³⁴ in 1923. When the “First *Guo-Gong* Cooperation”³⁵ came to an end in 1927, the KMT and the Communists became enemies. Peng and the local Soviet Government he had established had to retreat to the hills. Not long after, Peng was arrested. After being tortured for many days, he was put to death. His two brothers and his wife were all killed by KMT agents (Howard 1977, 62-63). On 12 April 1927, “Chiang’s troops launched a general attack on the Shanghai labor unions and workers’ organizations that had so substantially helped the Nationalists take the city. About three hundred Communists, labor leaders, and ‘radicals’ were massacred, among them a number of important Communist leaders” (Clubb 1972, 137).³⁶

Since Communists were regarded as “*Gong Fei*” (Communist bandits), when a Communist was arrested he or she would most probably be executed. But Communists regarded themselves as fighters for justice and the liberation of the poor and oppressed. The following is a song sung by an anonymous Communist martyr before his execution:

³⁴ Peng Pai (1896-1929), one of the leaders of the early Communist peasant movement. On 31 August 1929 he was killed in Shanghai by the KMT government (CBC 1980, 816).

³⁵ The First KMT-Communist Cooperation (1923-1927).

Who is a bandit after all?
Who is a bandit after all?
Who is right? Who is wrong?
Please, everybody, give your judgement!
Please, everybody, give your judgement! (QQLABU 1959, 168)

A Fragile Alliance

Outlaws contributed to the success of revolution, but it was very hard for them to win the trust of the revolutionaries. When they needed their help, the revolutionaries turned to the outlaws; when they felt, or even just suspected, a threat from the outlaws, the revolutionaries never showed mercy in getting rid of them. The document "The Resolution on Organisational Problems of the Soviet Governments" passed by the National Congress of the CPC in 1928 stated:

The alliance with bandits and similar bodies is applicable only before armed uprisings. After armed uprisings, they should be disarmed and suppressed without mercy to ensure the local social order and prevent reactionary bandit chieftains from rising again. The chieftains of bandit gangs should be regarded as reactionaries, even though they helped the armed uprisings. Chieftains such as these should be resolutely wiped out. It is exceptionally dangerous to let bandits involve themselves too far with the revolutionary army and government. They must be expelled from the revolutionary army and government (Zhou Yumin & Shao Wei 1995, 614).

In a letter to the Hunan Provincial Committee of the Party, the Central Committee said, "different small bandit gangs have different ambitions and cannot be easily submitted to control in the final analysis. They may be used temporarily by us, but in times of difficulties they will separate themselves from us and be used by the enemies" (Zhou Yumin & Shao Wei 1995, 614). With such an understanding, they wrongly killed Wang Zuo and Yuan Wencai in 1930 (Billingsley, 258).³⁷ Ladany's irresponsible assumption that "Mao finished them off, first one, then the other" (Ladany 1988, 33), is not believable at all. Being a revolutionary "*shan da wang*", Mao's attitudes towards those in the Red Army, who were once bandits, was different from the Central Committee and some other leaders of the Red Army. According to historical records, Yuan and Wang were killed by

³⁶ At the same time, the Communists regarded the KMT as "bandits" and called them "Chiang bandits" (*Jiang Fei*), "white bandits" (*bai fei*) or reactionaries (*Fan Dong Pai*). They also waged campaigns of "*Jiao Fei*" (suppressing bandits).

the Special Party Committee of Hunan and Jiangxi on the charge of being “old bandits” and “traitors” long after Mao left Jinggangshan (Li Jukui 1986, p.66). Mao later said, “Yuan Wencai was originally a Communist Party member. He should not be killed. Wang Zuo was not a Party member originally, but he opposed the despotic gentry. Through reform, he joined the Party. So the nature of the problem has been changed. He should not be killed either. There is no justification to kill him” (Zhou Yumin & Shao Wei 1995, 616).

The KMT adopted a policy not much different from that of the Communists. They made use of bandits and secret societies when they had the need. Once they were in power, they tried to get rid of these “unhealthy elements” (Zhou Yumin & Shao Wei 1995, 676). In 1940, the Organisational Department of the Central Committee of the KMT sent a telegram to the officials in Chongqing, saying, “Secret societies and their members should be dealt with according to law without leniency” (Zhou Yumin & Shao Wei 1995, 671).

In Guizhou, Sichuan and Yunnan, the activities of suppression were carried out from 1939 to 1940. However, the KMT had never eliminated bandits and secret societies. In July 1944, when the Magistrate of Songpan County of Sichuan went to the villages to root out opium poppies, he was captured and killed and his troops were disarmed by the “opium bandits”. In the same year, the Magistrate of Chuanbei County sent more than two hundred soldiers and policemen to root out opium poppies, but they met with a repulse. After four days, the Magistrate had to sign an agreement with the “opium bandits” and the opium poppies remained intact (Zhou Yumin & Shao Wei 1995, 679).

At the final stage of the Civil War, the KMT remembered bandits again. When the Fourth Field Army of the PLA was approaching Hunan, General Song Xilian, Commander in Chief of the KMT army in the border area of Hunan and Hubei, and Bai Congxi³⁸ had to buy over local bandits to serve them (Zeng Fanhua & Hou Jianfei 1995, 8-20). Anti-Communist armed forces organised in this way accounted for more than

³⁷ Billingsley wrongly assumes that “Wang and Yuan defected within two years.”

twenty gangs with more than one thousand members each. Bai redesignated more than one hundred thousand bandits and roving forces into more than ten divisions. When Song was captured by the PLA, he mentioned these forces, "They are but bandits who cannot climb out of the mountains" (Zeng Fanhua & Hou Jianfei 1995, 28). This may be the attitude of all revolutionaries towards bandits. When they needed the bandits they called them "*haohan*", "heroes", "folk armies"; when they saw bandits as a threat to their power or when they did not need them any more, they called them "bandits", "robbers", "*honghuzi*". As Billingsley observes, after the 1911 revolution, Republicans chose this time to ignore bandits, and "their journals reverted once again to labelling those popular heroes who had not surrendered to the new authorities as 'bandits'" (Billingsley 1988, 241).

If revolutionaries' suspicion of outlaw heroes who were involved in revolution disappointed the latter, their suppression of outlaws after the revolution turned outlaw heroes into their enemies. A bandit gang was actively involved in the Republican revolution, but when the revolution succeeded and the Republicans were about to set up the Republic, not one of the bandits was offered amnesty and enlistment (*Shenzhou Ribao*, 5 May 1912). Wang Zuo and Yuan Wencai joined the Communist revolution, but were finally killed by the Communists. The possibility of the outlaw hero becoming a revolutionary is very small. Those leaders of the Red Army such as Liu Zhidan and Xie Zichang, who manifested the tradition of outlaw heroism, were always suspected in the Party. He Long seemed to be an exception, but "He the bandit" was persecuted and sentenced to death during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution after the founding of the PRC. When revolutionaries become corrupt officials and oppress people, the outlaw hero will also become their direct foe. Nevertheless, bandits were not used to well-organised and disciplined life. With habits of roving bandits, they tended to destroy both the social order and the order within the revolution.

³⁸ Bai Congxi (1893-1966) was deputy chief-of-staff of the National Revolutionary Army during the Northern Expedition (1926-1927). During the Civil War (1945-1949), he was the Defence Minister of the KMT Government and Senior Military and Civil Officer of Central China (CBC 1980, 1764).

As discussed, the outlaw hero has a natural tie with revolution, but the tie is easy to break. In China, outlaw heroes and revolutionaries are linked by many factors, but the most important one is that they generally cherish the similar hatred for the rich (with the landlord class as their representative).

To sum up, the common characteristic of traditional outlaw heroes' rebellions and the Taiping and the Communist revolutions is that they all wanted to "equally distribute land" among the people. Li Zicheng in the Ming dynasty proposed to "equally distribute land" and make it "exempt from taxation" (CBC 1980, 1266); the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom regulated its principle of equal land distribution. The 1911 nationalist revolution aimed at "letting all tillers have their own land". In the early stage of the Communist revolution, and even in the land reform movement right after the founding of the PRC, the principle of land distribution was not different from that of the Heavenly Kingdom. The fallacy of this principle is that they all robbed the rich or landlords without discrimination. No matter how they got the wealth or land, the rich and landlords were bad. They had to be deprived of their right to their land, robbed of their riches, suppressed and even beheaded. What the revolutionaries did was no more than announced public robbery, even though they did help the poor. For example, when the Taiping troops reached a place, they would put up posters "ordering the rich to donate money and grain and the poor to serve in the army" (Hu Sheng 1980, 126). When they entered Wuchang in 1853, "They set up an office to collect donations. After just one day, when they saw that they had got but little, they began searching every house." But "they would not rob the villagers, instead, they distributed the clothes and things that they had seized to the poor on their way." When the Taipings got to a village, they would "ask evil servants and agents in the rich families about where the rich had buried their money and promise if they (evil servants and agents) dug out the money they would get their share" (Hu Sheng 1980, 126).

Land has always been the bone of contention in China. Clubb made a clear observation of the significance of Chinese agriculture, which was "the dominant economic activity and main source of revenue" (Clubb 1972, 5). But the problem was

that land was concentrated in the hands of a handful of people. Cultivators, working for the few who had land, could not support themselves and their families. Clubb states:

When their want and misery became sufficiently painful, they often took to banditry, and sometimes under strong leaders they formed revolutionary armies in order to overthrow a dynasty and despoil the landowners through a redistribution of the land. In this way two peasants even became founders of new dynasties, the Han and the Ming (Clubb 1972, 6).

Since China had been mainly an agricultural country, land had always been the central problem for all the revolutions. Equal redistribution of land had always appealed to the poor peasants. With this principle, the Taiping Heavenly campaign won support from the peasants. The Communists' land reform movement and redistribution of land among the peasants apparently helped mobilise the poor peasants into the Red Army. In 1935, in Ruijin, a base of Mao's troops, a regulation on land reform was issued by the Soviet Government, which ordered "confiscation of the land of landlords, kulaks ('rich peasants') and all counter-revolutionaries". "Land, housing and all other goods were to be distributed evenly among hired labourers, poor peasants and middle peasants" (Ladany 1988, 39). Outlaw heroes see the same code of "robbing the rich to help the poor" in all these revolutions.

The outlaw hero does not have the ideal of destroying an old system and building a new one. The late nineteenth century saw the Qing dynasty's loss of the "mandate of Heaven" and revolutionaries saw the opportunity of overthrowing the rotten system and establishing a new one, but the outlaw hero's supreme ideal never went beyond that of "robbing the rich to help the poor". His enemies were mainly corrupt officials and the rich, who directly oppressed, wronged or hurt him or his loved ones. Neither Sun Yat-sen's "three people's principles" nor Mao Zedong's "socialism of the people's democratic dictatorship" appealed much to the outlaw hero. Wang Tianzong joined the revolution, but he was restricted to the position he was given by the Republicans. He would rather go back to the green wood again. Bai Lang in essence was never a revolutionary. He joined the campaign of overthrowing Yuan Shikai in the hope of having a "perfect government", but his "perfect government" was but "an ideal of an egalitarian society which can ensure the poor brothers to have enough food and clothing" (Ladany 1988, 158).

Therefore, the linkage between outlaw heroes and revolutionaries is fragile. Conflicts always exist, which inevitably arouse suspicion and resentment among the revolutionaries who, though willing to temporarily use outlaw heroes, will sooner or later drive them out of revolution, especially when they win the final victory.

Chapter 5

A Comparative Case Study: Northeast China and Australia

As discussed in Chapter 3, different social and cultural environments bring forth outlaw heroes with different characteristics. Although the Australian outlaw tradition is a continuation and an integral part of the Anglophone tradition, it also displays unique features. Likewise, Northeast China's outlaw tradition reveals characteristics different from that of other parts of China, while being part of the whole tradition. There are many similarities between the outlaw hero tradition in Australia and that in Northeast China in terms of social, natural, anthropological and cultural environment. This chapter compares the Australian and Chinese experience in the Northeast region. It examines convicts' and immigrants' contribution to frontier banditry, environment and immigration, modern outlaws in the Northeast, outlaw heroes against foreign invasion, bandits and chivalrous bandits and Zhang Zuolin as hero or villain.

The Northeast is known as *Dong San Sheng* (three eastern provinces), *Guan Dong* (East of the Pass), *Guan Wai* (Beyond the Pass), *Dong Bei* (Northeast), or Manchuria by foreigners. Historians point out: "The term Manchuria or *Man-chou* is a modern creation used mainly by Westerners and Japanese" (Lee, R. 1970, 60). "'Manchuria' is a European rather than a Chinese or a Manchu term" (Fairbank 1978, Part I, 42). This thesis does not use the word "Manchuria" to refer to the Northeast, because first its connotation is ambiguous, and second it has "positively imperialistic overtones" and the use of the term is "misleading, question-begging and incorrect" (McCormack 1977, 4). Instead the term "Northeast China" or simply "the Northeast" is used, unless the word "Manchuria" is unavoidable when quoting original sources.

Convicts and Immigrants: Frontier Banditry

Australia's traditional regard for Robin Hood-style bandits and highway robbery was brought in by the first settlers with influence from English and Irish heritage. In its short history, Australia has had such outlaw heroes as "Bold" Jack Donahoe, Matthew Brady, Martin Cash, William Westwood, Edward Davis, Morgan, Captain Moonlite,

Frank Gardiner, Frederick Ward, "wild colonial boys", and above all Ned Kelly, who bears close similarities to Robin Hood in his code of conduct. Characteristics of Australian outlaw heroes are determined by the uniqueness of Australian culture and people with influence from Anglophone tradition as a whole. Ward lists characteristics of the mythical Australian:

He ('the typical Australian') believes that Jack is not only as good as his master but, at least in principle, probably a good deal better, and so he is a great 'knocker' of eminent people unless, as in the case of his sporting heroes, they are distinguished by physical prowess. He is a fiercely independent person who hates officiousness and authority, especially when these qualities are embodied in military officers and policemen (Ward 1977, 17).

In many cases, Australian outlaw heroes "met the police boldly and fought with some degree of fairness" (Boxall 1976, 125). The characteristics of challenging authority and being "fiercely independent" are reflected in Australian outlaw heroes' resistance to the harsh treatment and injustice imposed upon them and their mates by the "constituted authority" (McQuilton 1979, 4) represented by the police. Ward also notes that outback conditions have an impact on the formation of qualities of the Australian: "The qualities favouring successful assimilation were adaptability, toughness, endurance, activity and loyalty to one's fellows, just those traits already noticed as being typical of the convict and currency elements of the population" (Ward 1977, 105-105). As a result, in addition to the ten motifs summarised by Seal, such idealised characteristics of the Australian at that time as courage, determination, mateship, physical strength, endurance and resourcefulness, are also qualities of the Australian outlaw hero.

When describing the Western Australian bushranger Moondyne Joe, Ian Elliot remarks, "These men (first bushrangers) made large hauls from gold-laden coaches and made a laughing stock of the police and governments of their time. Thieves and murderers they may have been, but their daring exploits made them heroes amongst the impoverished, outlying free-selectors or 'cockies'." He finds that "A colonial observer of the period noted the reluctance of schoolboys to take the part of a policeman when the game of bushrangers was to be played, and, it is the bushrangers, not the police who hunted them, who have become our folk heroes" (Elliot 1978, XI).

Billingsley has made a fairly detailed study of bandit activities in Henan of central China, but has not paid enough attention to the Northeast, which is three times larger and where banditry is probably more rampant.¹ The tradition of banditry in the Northeast is closely linked with that in central China, but is unique in many ways determined by its cultural, socio-economical and geographical environment. An investigation of banditry in Northeast China highlights some important differences and similarities between Australian and Chinese outlaw heroes.

As Australian bandits are called bushrangers, bandits in the Northeast are mainly called “*huzi* (beards)” or “*honghuzi* (red beards)”, with such other names as, “*tufei* (local bandits)”, “*xiangma* (bandits on belled-horses)”, “*mazei*” (horse thieves), *mahuzi* (mounted beards)”, “*hufei*” (bearded bandits), or “*shua hun qian de*” (Dirty Money Gamblers) (Li Ling 1995, 67). A bandit gang was called “*liuzi*” (skein) or “*bang*” (gang). Answers vary as to why most of these terms have the word “*hu*” or “*huzi*” (beard) in them. Some say that they were so called because they wore thick beards; some believe that the word first referred to the Russian invaders, who robbed, killed and raped and whose beard was thick and red in colour. Zhang Xueliang states, “The Han people called the barbarians in the Northeast ‘*huer*’. In the Ming dynasty, ‘*huer*’ often crossed the border to rob Han people, who called the robbers they saw ‘*huzi*’. Later, ‘*Huzi*’ was adopted to refer to bandits” (Cao Baoming 1994, 5). In official documents, words like “*jinfei*” (Gold Bandits), “*yanfei*” (Opium Bandits) and “*mafei*” (horse bandit) were also used to indicate bandits (Cao Baoming 1994, 6). “*Mazei*” (horse thief) is a Japanese word brought into China. A historian explains, in the Northeast, “At the beginning² some of them (bandits) used cudgels, so they were called ‘Cudgel Hands’ (*bangzi shou*); later they rode on horsebacks and appeared and disappeared unexpectedly, so they were called ‘horse thieves’ (*mazei*)” (Yang Yulian et al 1991, 203). Cao Baoming is not completely correct when he says, “In the Central Plains, bandits are called ‘*mazei*’, in Shandong ‘*xiangma*’, in the central area of the Southwest ‘*zeikou*’, and in Hunan and Hubei

¹ In the three volume, one thousand nine hundred and nineteen page book *Jindai Zhongguo Tufei Shilu* (EBHA 1992A), five hundred pages are devoted to recording bandits in the Northeast, while three hundred and five pages are given to recording bandits in Henan.

² Around the 1850s-1860s.

'*banghui*' (secret societies)" (Yang Yulian et al 1991, Preface). Actually, in each place bandits are called by different names. In the central area of the Southwest, bandits are also called "*guofei*", in the Central Plains "*dadaoke*" or "*daoke*", in Hunan and Hubei "*huifei*" (secret society bandits), and in Henan, "*tangjiang*". However, it is clear that "*huzi*" and "*honghuzi*" are used only for bandits in the Northeast.

If as Ward points out, "The convict system manufactured bushrangers" (Ward 1977, 179) in Australia, the Chinese government system of exiling criminals to the Northeast played an important role in manufacturing *honghuzi* in the early period of settlement. Fairbank's analysis of the social structure of the time describes the situation:

At the bottom of society were the unskilled workmen, domestic servants, prostitutes and exiled convicts, including slaves. One of the capacities in which Manchuria, especially Kirin and Heilungkiang, had served the Ch'ing empire was as a place of exile, not only for disgraced officials but also for convicted criminals. The worse the crimes and the more hardened the offenders, the farther North the Ch'ing judicial system generally sent them. Many of these criminals took up crafts or small businesses, eventually becoming dependable members of society, but their presence in increasing numbers added to the lawless, rough-and-ready character of Manchurian frontier society (Fairbank 1978, Part I, 46).

The "lawless" and "rough-and-ready character" of the Northerner is very similar to that of the Australian. In the late Qing dynasty, a revolutionary called Tao Chengzhang published the article "A Study of Origins of Secret Societies". He analysed differences between people of the South and the North:

The most obvious is the difference between people in the Yangtze River Valley and the Yellow River Valley. The area to the South of the Yangtze River is called the South, while the area to the North of the Yellow River is called the North. People in the South are wise and witty, so they are not so superstitious and have political ideas. People in the North are straightforward and slow-witted, so they are superstitious and set great store by martial qualities (ASBG 1975, Vol. 3, Appendix 4).

Although Tao might be biased, his analysis is justified. The Chinese writer Lin Yutang also held the same opinion: "On the one hand, we have Northern people, who are used to simple thinking and hard life. They are tall, strong and energetic, with honest personality and happy and impatient disposition." He concluded, "They are therefore producers of Henan boxers, Shandong bandits, and warriors who struggled for the monarch" (Lin Yutang 1995, 19-20). When talking about southerners, he said:

From areas along the Yangtze River to the Southeast coastal areas, the situation is different. People's living style is very different. They are used to an easy and comfortable life. They are refined in manner, clever and cunning. They are intellectually developed but bodily degenerated. They like a retired and quiet life and literary or artistic pursuits. Men are short with smooth skin, and women are slim and fragile (Lin Yutang 1995, 20).

Shandong and Hebei are two typical Northern provinces. According to a book published in the early twentieth century, people in Shuntian of Hebei are "simple and crude". When describing people of Gaoyan county of Shandong, the book says, "People are poor, outspoken and caring about brotherhood." In Dengzhou Prefecture, "Heroes and gallant men number most to the east of the Capital" (Hu Pu'an 1986, 1). The Shandong outlaw tradition of not bowing before tyrants and being ready to take any risk for brotherhood has taken root in the Shandong man's mentality.

When relating the Irish tradition of outlawry, Butterss says, "Irish convicts transported to Australia were familiar with tales of outlaws who refused to bow to the crown and when 'Bold Jack Donahoe' was composed, its hero was constructed in terms of such a tradition" (Butterss 1988, 6). The Shandong tradition has contributed to the construction of the outlaw hero in Northeast China. Lattimore asserts that "there are more men of the naturally wild and adventurous type in Manchuria than in any non-frontier province of China" (Lattimore 1935, 228-229). The vast plains, primitive forests and rough mountains have endowed the Northeastern men with a combatant and courageous character.

There was a saying in China in the past: "Shandong produced '*xiangma*', and the Northeast '*huzi*'." The Northeast, because of the fact that most of the early Han immigrants were from Shandong, was strongly influenced by the Shandong outlaw tradition which boasted the earliest outlaw heroes like Wang Xianzhi and Huang Chao, the outlaws of the Marsh, and famous outlaws in the transition period from the Sui dynasty to the Tang dynasty such as Cheng Yaojin, Shan Xiongxin and Qin Qiong,³ as well as rebels in all dynasties.

³ The book, based on the traditional *pingshu* (storytelling at tea houses, on stages or in more recent time on TV), tells stories about outlaw heroes such as Cheng Yaojin, Qin Qiong and Shan Xiongxin of the late Sui dynasty (589-618), who robbed tributes to the emperor, broke into prisons and rescued

In modern China, though some of the convicted criminals became “dependable members of society”, many of them actually became bandits. “In Kirin and Heilungkiang, most of whose territories were not easily accessible, there lived a considerable Han Chinese outlaw population” (Fairbank 1978, Part I, 47). These outlaws included hunters, trappers, ginseng gatherers, goldminers and robbers.⁴ To survive or resist the government’s suppression, they established organisations called *hangbang*⁵. As Australian bushrangers were connected with Irish convicts transported to Australia (Reece 1990, 135), bandits in the Northeast were related in a similar manner to convicts exiled by the Ming and Qing governments in the early years, but later more with people who fled from famine, mostly illegal immigrants.

Two centuries before Britain started sending convicts to Australia, China had started exiling convicts from the central area to the Northeast.⁶ The convicts in Australia were put into prisons built and maintained by the gaolers and gaoled under strict guard by the military force. Whoever tried to escape had to risk their lives. However, “it was only a short time before the first convicts escaped into the bush in doomed hope of reaching China or some other impossible haven” (Seal 1996, 119). By contrast, in Northeast China the exiled were generally set loose in a certain area and ordered not to go beyond a certain limit. Those convicts settled themselves in places they built into villages instead of prisons or convict settlements where their Australian counterparts stayed. Some “unhealthy elements” (Cao Baoming 1988, 2) became bandits. Lattimore states, “The bandits of Heilungchiang have a special reputation for savagery, and I should not be at all surprised if this were the result of influences imparted in earlier days when Heilungchiang was a place of exile for criminals and political offenders, many of whom subsequently escaped and took up banditry” (Lattimore 1935, 223). Charles White found it difficult to research the early history of bushranging in Australia, “for the facts have

prisoners. The book also reveals influence of traditional morality on these heroes who were sworn brothers (Chen Yinrong 1981).

⁴ These people were called “blackmen”, a similar term to “outlaws”, because they were not allowed to do what they were doing in the “imperial preserves”.

⁵ A typical Chinese term referring to guilds, trade associations or gangs.

⁶ The earliest historical records show that the exile of criminals to the Northeast started in the Yong Le period (1403-1425) of the Ming dynasty.

never been recorded” (White 1995, 1). The same is true with research on banditry in the Northeast.

Environment and Immigration

The dominant feature of the “Kelly Country” or “North Eastern Victoria” where Kelly operated “is the Eastern Highlands, an ancient and complex series of foothills and ridges rising steadily in height to the south and east and culminating in a scattered belt of Alpine peaks” (McCormack 1977, 5). Like the Eastern states of Australia, Northeast China features vast land, high mountains and sparse inhabitation. Of the three provinces, Liaoning has an area of about seventy thousand square miles, Jilin one hundred thousand and Heilongjiang two hundred and ten thousand. Thus the area of the Northeast is “roughly equal to that of France and Germany combined” (McCormack 1977, 2). This has been an area inhabited by different nationalities, including the Han, Manchu, Korean and Mongolian. Two of the three minority nationalities, namely, the Mongolians and the Manchus ruled the whole of China respectively for a long time.⁷ The mountains and the Great Wall had been barriers to the relationship between the Northeast and central China. However, the land connection through the Shanhaiguan pass, the connection by the Bohai Sea and political and social links have made the relationship very close. The Northeast has a huge fertile plain, open to the sea on the Southwest, surrounded by mountains on all other sides. As Lattimore observes:

Each part of the ringing mountains has its own racial, historical, cultural, and economic associations, and the influence of each mountain section reaches out into the central plain. On the south the association is with the Chinese; on the west, with the Mongols; on the North, with the Tungus tribes from which, at a comparatively late period, the Manchus emerged, and on the east with the Koreans (Lattimore 1935, 14-15).

Most people in the Northeast first migrated from Shandong, Hebei and Henan.⁸ Some of them were Manchus, some with mixed blood of Han, Manchu or Mongolian,

⁷ The Mongolians established the Yuan dynasty and ruled for more than one hundred years, and the Manchus, the Qing dynasty, and ruled for nearly three hundred years.

⁸ In their study of villagers of a small village near Shenyang in Liaoning province, Lee and Campbell find, “Many claim to have come from Shandong; others say they come from Hebei, and a few from as far away as Shanxi.” This is a typical example of villages in the Northeast (Lee & Campbell 1997, 6).

but most of them were Han people. By the fourteenth century when Nurhachi⁹ founded the Qing dynasty, Han people had reached every part. "Han Chinese heavily outnumbered the tribal followers of Nurhachi" (McCormack 1977, 3). The French traveller Abbé Huc who visited the Northeast from 1844 to 1846 writes, "You may now traverse Mantchouria to the river Amour¹⁰ without being at all aware that you are not travelling in a province of China" (McCormack 1977, 3). Conflicts among these peoples had always existed, but the tension between "the region as a whole" and "the rest of China" (McCormack 1977, 2) never ceased. The Han people accounted for the overwhelming majority in the Northeast, probably 80 per cent of the estimated population of fourteen million (McCormack 1977, 4), or as Sir Hosie estimated, by the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century:

Of the 17,000,000 inhabitants of the three provinces of Manchuria probably not more than ten per cent are Manchus, and by Manchus I mean not merely the descendants of the various tribes which were welded into one kingdom by Nurhachi, but also the descendants of the inhabitants of the Northern province of Hei-lung-chiang, which was not brought completely under the sway of the present dynasty until 1671, as well as the descendants, called Han-Chün of the Northern Chinese, who assisted the Manchus in the conquest of China. All these - Manchus, Han-Chün, as well as descendants of Mongols, who also lent their aid - are known by the generic name of Ch'i Jên, or Bannermen (Hosie 1980, 155).¹¹

In the early Qing dynasty, the government regarded the Northeast as "the Origin of the Real Dragons" or "the place where the dragon rose".¹² Many restrictions were imposed on migration, forbidding Han people to go into regions outside the Great Wall and "especially forbidding women to pass beyond this traditional frontier" (Lattimore 1935, 47). An emperor of the Qing dynasty said that *Guan Wai*¹³ was "essentially

⁹ Nurhachi (1559-1626), the founder of the Qing dynasty.

¹⁰ Today's Heilongjiang River.

¹¹ This chapter mainly deals with Han outlaws though Mongolian outlaws and those of other minority nationalities accounted for a large number, and to the period of the first half of the twentieth century though earlier days are mentioned when we discuss historical evolution of banditry. Cao Baoming states, "Most horse thieves were Han people. The 'Bannermen', with enough good food and clothes, did not need run about in the wilderness for life, so they did not want to join the horse thieves" (Cao Baoming 1994, 12). Cao makes a mistake here, because Bannermen comprised of both Manchus and Hans. At first in the Qing dynasty, Banner was a military unit; later it was used as an administrative unit.

¹² In feudal China, the Emperor was called the Real Dragon. (Tian Zhihe & Gao Lecai 1992, 64).

¹³ Chinese also call Northeast "*Guan Wai*" (Outside the Shanhaiguan Pass) and Central China "*Guan Nei*" (Inside the Shanhaiguan Pass).

important as the base of Manchus” (Xu Liting 1994, 3). To safeguard the place of origin, the Manchu rulers ordered a border line built with willows along the Liaohe River. Known as the “Willow Palisade”, this formed the boundary between the Han and Manchu and other Nationalities. “The Willow Palisade ran Northeastward from the Great Wall near Shanhaikuan to a point a little beyond the Liao river at T’ungchiangk’ou, some seventy miles North of Mukden” (Lattimore 1935, 15). They set up laws against intermarriage between the Han and the Manchu. As a result, the population in the Northeast decreased sharply. In 1661, the Governor of the Fengtian Prefecture said, “There is fertile land of a thousand *li*, but no people. Just a few deserted towns, castles and broken walls are scatteringly seen in the vast prairie” (Xu Liting 1994, 3). However, as the American historian Fletcher notes, “The Manchurian frontier (Kirin and Heilungkiang) was officially closed to Han immigration, but throughout the eighteenth century the Ch’ing government acted with increasing ambivalence, sometimes blocking immigration, sometimes looking the other way while Han Chinese settlers filtered the Willow Palisades” (Fairbank 1978, Part I, 39). The filtration was obvious in Liaoning. “In Kirin and Heilungkiang, however, the irreversibility of the demographic and cultural trend was less obvious, and the Ch’ing government, at least at the top levels, was still making a serious effort to block immigration and to minimize China’s cultural contacts with the Manchurian frontier” (Fairbank 1978, Part I, 39). Lattimore argues that banditry in the Northeast was originally a by-product of these restrictions on Chinese penetration into the Northeast (Lattimore 1935, 227). As Etherton and Tiltman argue, “The drastic laws against this infiltration into the land of the three provinces did much to check but did not entirely prevent it” (Etherton & Tiltman 1932, 64). However, “by the beginning of the nineteenth century, the impossibility of keeping Han Chinese settlers, poachers and runaways out of the Manchurian frontier must have been apparent to all” (Fairbank 1978, Part I, 40). The Northeast was an ideal place of living for those drifting people from Shandong, Hebei and Henan, especially in the early years of this century, which saw “anarchy and chaos prevailing elsewhere, the incessant civil war, and the numberless factions fighting for power and loot in the twenty-two provinces of China” (Fairbank 1978, Part I, 44). Every year, millions of people from famine-stricken areas, mainly

Shandong and Hebei, fled their homes and begged their way to the Northeast. Those who “encroached on the forest preserves, the Imperial Hunting Grounds or the fringes of the sacred Ch’ang-pai-shan” (Lattimore 1935, 227) would be traced, and most probably, evicted. Instead of going home, they were likely to become bandits.

Nevertheless, the Manchus did not always deter the Han immigration. Sometimes the Manchus even encouraged it. “In the mid-nineteenth century, initially for financial reasons, they began again to open large tracts of land for sale to Chinese” (McCormack 1977, 3). The fact is, through intermarriage between Manchus and Chinese Bannermen, with the Han culture accepted completely by the Manchus and Chinese immigrants’ fast moving to the North, “there were no grave distinctions between the races” (Lattimore 1935, 46-47).

The Northeast has vast land with dense forests, lofty mountains, high ranges, and boundless stretches of grasslands with high grass and crops in which people can hide themselves easily. Etherton says, “Even in the midst of existing anarchy Manchuria is a land of plenty, for it is not only a granary of the East, but has immense coal deposits, and is rich in gold and silver. There are, too, forests of pine, oak, elm, and walnut, and resources in timber that rival the American West.” “Its varied crops give valuable yields; tobacco, fruit, vegetables, and above all wheat and other grains.” (Etherton & Tiltman 1932, 41). Loosened immigration restrictions, natural disasters and ambitions to get rich sent millions of people into the Northeast farming, hunting, gold-prospecting and medicinal herb collecting communities. As Lindt discovered, “From the famine-stricken provinces of Chili and Shantung they poured in thousands into this rich and unexploited country. The thousands became millions – traders, coolies, peasants, outlaws” (Lindt 1933, 17). In 1741, there were only three hundred and fifty thousand people, while by 1842 the population increased to more than three million (Xu Liting 1994, 3). In 1860, the Qing government decided to lift the ban of immigration in Jilin and Heilongjiang (Yang Yulian et al 1991, 202). However, at the beginning of the twentieth century, the population of the Northeast was still sparsely scattered throughout the vast area, “farming communities in the river valleys and more accessible areas; bandits, lumbermen, gold prospectors, seekers of ginseng root, and dealers in elkhorn and furs scattered

throughout the mountainous or inhospitable hinterland” (McCormack 1977, 5). From the 1920s onwards, immigrants from other provinces came in large numbers and the population consisted of heterogeneous people of different classes and trades. Like Australia, Northeast China is a region of immigration, colonisation and settlement. Like Australian bandits, Northeastern bandits were first or second generation, or at most third generation, settlers.

The nature of the frontier society decided that Northeast China produced bandits with characteristics different from those of bandits in other parts. As Lattimore puts it:

Banditry is one of the great plagues of modern China, and is commonly said to be chiefly due to civil wars, famine and desperation. Yet in Manchuria also banditry is endemic. If, then, banditry has not been eliminated in Manchuria, where food and work are plentiful and where the population is practically free from the effect of civil war, how is it ever to be eliminated? The answer is that the banditry of Manchuria is essentially a “frontier” banditry, organically different from the banditry of social disintegration and despair which characterizes so much of China proper (Lattimore 1935, 224-225).

He further pointed out, “The history of spontaneous colonisation in Manchuria and Mongolia is closely interwoven with the history of banditry. Indeed the pioneers were often squatters, wanderers and outlaws by turn.” He believed that more villages were founded in Manchuria by bandit groups than anywhere else in the world, which were the “effective advance guard of normal settlement and exploitation” (Lattimore 1935, 67).

When migrants first arrived, they were faced with three difficulties: struggle with the environment, fight against the government and coping with strangers. Like first convicts in Australia, first migrants in Northeast China had to conquer the bush, mountains, grass and rivers for survival. Ward reiterates what Harris has observed of the environmental pressures on the new migrants. One of his mates had to walk “full forty miles” in twenty-four hours, carrying a fifty pound pack across the mountains. Ward emphasised:

The hazards and hardships, but above all the loneliness of up-country life were such that, to make life tolerable, often merely to preserve it, every man had habitually to treat every other man as a brother. In cases of accident or illness the individual depended completely on whoever was nearest. Even apart from these contingencies, the mateless man was likely to become a “hatter” (Ward 1977, 113).

The same is true of the people of Northeast China. In the Changbai Mountains, there were no inhabitants a hundred years ago. Dense forests, dangerous cliffs and valleys were on the one hand full of treasures, but on the other, formed natural barriers against people entering and living in these mountains. Even worse was that the Qing government regarded the mountains as sacred land and prohibited people from trespassing, hunting, cutting wood, collecting or cultivating. Those who did go stealthily into the mountains were poor people, escapees or desperadoes who were ready to give up their lives at any moment in the hope of a narrow escape (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 1, 89). Through a long fight against nature and society, the Northeasterners evolved a complex temperament: rough, unsophisticated, brave, wilful, resolute, steadfast, and even cruel. Banding together, they not only made the practice of a collectivist “mateship” essential but made powerful bandit gangs. Even today, Chinese people believe that the Northeasterners are unique: big in size, tough, warm-hearted, bold and straightforward.

Modern Outlaws in the Northeast

As McCormack states, bandits in the Northeast “often enjoyed quite wide popular support and somewhat of a ‘Robin Hood’ reputation for killing the rich and helping the poor (*sha-fu chi-p'in*). Their reputation among the people was at least probably no worse than that of regular army detachments” (McCormack 1977, 16).

China in the last two centuries has suffered from civil wars, foreign aggressions, rebellions, bad governments and natural disasters of a kind that Australia has never experienced. The Northeast has been inevitably affected. Corrupt Qing officials made the people’s already hard life even worse; foreign powers’ military invasion and economic infiltration caused xenophobia among the people; the fall of the Qing dynasty destroyed the established values and disturbed the life of the original “*shunmin*” (abjectly obedient subjects) of the crown; the confused fighting between the warlords made millions of people homeless; the Japanese occupation saw millions of people killed and millions made slaves, while the fight between the Communists and KMT not only disrupted the nation but also families. To become a bandit was not only a desperate and frenzied way of living for people caught in such grim situations but also a rational product of the

prevailing socio-political environment. In this milieu, banditry became a means of living for those who were not willing to be killed or to die of starvation.

There were different reasons why people became bandits: a villain who was pursued by the government or other people for his misdoing and could not find a place to hide; a poor man who could not afford to repay his debts; a gambler who was bankrupt; a convict avoiding pursuit and capture; a rich man or a militarist taking the advantage of social turmoil to organise his own armed forces and waiting for the opportunity to become a government official, or an adventurer taking the chance to become rich by robbing. Many bandit chiefs, not necessarily from the poor, became army officers in this period. Some rich people would buy weapons and recruit people into their gangs during turbulent times. When the government needed hands for combating bandits or appeasing their feelings, the chiefs of such gangs would be recruited into the army or employed in the government as officials. Northeast bandit chieftains such as Zhang Zuolin, Ma Zhanshan, Li Haiqing and Xie Wendong all became officials in the regular army or the government. (EBHA 1992a, Vol 1, 135 & 161) One who dreamed of becoming rich by robbing probably never realised his dreams. Most bandits were forced to take to the greenwood, but some were willing to do so. There was a ballad titled “To Be A *huzi*” describing their feelings:

To become a *huzi*, you stop worrying,
You come to the concessions and stay in a high building;
You eat delicious dishes and visit brothels,
And spend money like river water flowing.
You are freer than gods,
With a pistol at your hips dangling (Cao Baoming 1988, 6).

Among bandits in the Northeast, as elsewhere, were traditional outlaw heroes, haiduk-like anti-invasion bandits, pure robbers and soldier bandits. However, as Seal notes of Australian bushrangers, only a select few become heroes (Davey & Seal 1993, 58). Traditional banditry in the region, “with its occasional flashes of the Robin Hood instinct” (Lattimore 1935, 234), did not produce many outlaw heroes.

In the same period, when the Russians and Japanese were fighting for the control of the Northeast, the Qing Government became extremely weak and corrupt. On the one hand, life was tragic for the poor, but on the other, the officials were incredibly corrupt.

Incompetent and fawning persons were promoted to important positions, where their common practice was spending extravagantly and competing in ostentation. "One piece of clothing could cost several hundred taels of gold, and one meal could cost several ten taels of gold" (Xu Liting 1994, 2). To survive, many poor people became bandits. As Etherton and Tiltman found, "Smash-and-grab raids are as frequent in Manchurian towns as they are in London" (Etherton & Tiltman 1932, 51). Banditry simply became a special profession. "In some families, all the members were bandits. Many common people were involved in banditry for a living or safety. A number of peasants, who worked in the fields in busy farming seasons, took up banditry in slack seasons to subsidise family expenses" (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 1, 87). According to records, in 1924, there were 23,000 bandits in the Northeast, while in 1931 there were 89,000 (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 1, 87).

As previously discussed, warlordism was an important cause for banditry in the Northeast. To expand their influence, local warlords, such as Zhang Zuolin¹⁴ and Wu Junsheng, continuously enlarged their military forces. Many able-bodied young men left their farms. From these soldiers weapons were spread to the masses. Most families had guns for both self-protection or the convenience of taking up banditry themselves. "All in all, there were probably more than two million guns in private hands" (Billingsley 1988, 28).

After the Republic was founded in 1912, the government simply became an instrument for the warlords. Officials changed very frequently, so each of them seized every opportunity to squeeze money out of the people. The administration of the country fell apart and the people barely managed to survive. Zhang Zuolin took advantage of the chaos and became "king" of the Northeast. With the ambition of controlling the central government, he sent his army to *Guan Nei* several times. People in the Northeast had to bear the enormous military expenditure. Officials at different levels in Zhang's government appropriated social property and embezzled public money. The people in the Northeast not only suffered from wars but also from exploitation by the officials, who forcibly seized land from the farmers and became landlords. At one time, Zhang Zuolin

¹⁴ Zhang Zuolin was once a bandit who manifested characteristics of the outlaw hero, but when he became an warlord, he amassed riches.

forcibly took possession of 180,000 *shang*¹⁵ of the Banner land. Wu Junsheng “seized land almost in every corner of the province” (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 1, 19). Many people who had lost their land or opportunity to work chose to become bandits.

To study outlaw heroism in Northeast China, it is important to understand the relationship between bandits and the rich, and between bandits and peasants. The following ballad spread among the bandits in those days illustrated such relationship:

The upper class, you owe me money,
The middle class, don't meddle in my business,
The lower class, come with me
To celebrate the New Year in the mountains (Fan Chunsan & Yuan Dongxu 1997, 205)

Lindt demonstrates this with an example:

As we passed the villages, the peasants crowded round the captain. When we travelled with generals, we ourselves were invariably the centre of attraction. Now for the first time we passed unnoticed. The men ran in from the fields, the women, their babies at their pointed breasts, from the houses, to see the great bandit chief. The captain became suddenly debonair and jovial. He made the children chuckle, pinching their cheeks and tickling their little round tummies. He gave advice to the mothers who brought him their sick babies. He complimented the fathers on their sons. “This,” pointing to a jolly little two-year-old, “looks a sharp little chap. He'll be a great bandit like me one of these days.” He made the girls smile. “You've grown pretty, child. You are worthy of becoming the concubine of the governor of the province.” The peasants, surrounding him as disciples might a beloved master, even accompanied him for some miles, listening to his stories, and asking his advice on the year's harvest, on the Japanese advance, on the price of horses (Lindt 1933, 189-190).

Cutlack, a special correspondent of the Australian Press Association in the Far East in 1934, noticed, “Many a Manchurian village, it is said, preferred the rule of the local bandits to that of Chang's generals, in exercise of Chang's or of their own local authority” (Cutlack 1934, 39).¹⁶

Winter in the Northeast is harsh and long, and also a leisure time for farmers, gold prospectors and medicinal herbs collectors. Some of them were engaged in transportation with horse-drawn carts, but most would just gamble, travel or take to the greenwood. Even in a vast area where there was no problem for people to settle down,

¹⁵ A land measure equal to fifteen *mu* (one *mu* = 0.0667 hectares) in the Northeast.

¹⁶ For detailed discussions on the relationship between bandits and the local people, see Chapter 7.

some settlers still took up banditry in winter as an avocation. They robbed one another's base villages as well as travellers on the road. Between Heilongjiang and Jilin is the Songhua River, which can be easily crossed on the ice in winter, bandits could easily find room for dodging and hiding.

However, many bandits would find places to "*maodong*" (go into hide for the winter). Before they left, *Dadangjia* would distribute money to the gang members, and reiterate the discipline. The bandits would hide their rifles, but take pistols with them. Those who had families would go home, but they would say that they had come back from business. Some of them would go into mountains to stay with lumbermen, because the government army seldom went into the mountains. Winter for the Northeast bandits was a time of enjoyment. After several months of fighting battles and running around here and there, they wanted to live a normal life for a short period. They went out to find their women, to gamble, and for other recreational activities. The carters' hostel was the most frequented place and has many links with bandits. In the hostel, the owner treated bandits well. Sometimes, a bandit would marry a daughter of the hostel owner. They called this kind of marriage "seasonal marriage". In winter a bandit married, but when the spring came, he would leave. The next winter, maybe another bandit came, who might marry the same daughter. After several years, the woman belonged to several men. When these men left, such women would live like widows. Some of them would become secret prostitutes (Cao Baoming 1994, 197-198).

Bandits on the plain tended to "*maodong*", while bandits in the mountains would still operate. On the plain, when tall crops were cut down, bandits had to stop temporarily and wait till they grew up again next year. But in the mountains, bandits were active in all seasons, because they could always find places to hide. Bandit gangs were generally mobile, but sometimes they occupied mountains, lakes, marshes or forests, fighting against official troops, robbing the rich, and harassing the society. They colluded, and at the same time contended, with each other.

As bandits elsewhere, Northeastern bandits were generally people from lower social strata, people who were bullied by officials or the rich, people who wanted to avenge themselves or their relatives for the wrongs they received, or people who tried to

find a special way of a living when the normal way of living was blocked. People were driven to outlawry for different reasons.

Lattimore said, "Opium has played in Manchuria the part played by gold in California, Australia and elsewhere" (Lattimore 1935, 188). McCormack, too, believed that opium played a role in the colonisation of the Northeast, "drawing to unsettled, frontier regions 'men of adventure and enterprise'" (McCormack 1977, 16), and therefore bandits had a close association with it. This may be true for the early settlers in the mid-eighteenth century but not true for later bandits. Law was most times against the production of opium, so those who grew and sold opium poppies were outside the law. Governments from time to time sent officials to the rural areas to uproot opium poppies. A frontier opium-producing region in the Northeast was "lawless and bandit infested" (Lattimore 1935, 195). Such bandits were not threats to the local people:

Banditry is ruled by strict convention. Many of the bandits are themselves poppy growers in season. A great number of them are recruited from outside adventurers, but others are drawn from among the unmarried men of the poppy-cultivating villages. The men with families live in villages, and often the bandits are chiefly financed by subsidies from opium villages which they protect from the law (Lattimore 1935, 195).

However, for the major part of the outlaw tradition, opium neither played very important roles in the colonisation of the Northeast nor in banditry there.¹⁷ Bandits in the Northeast consisted mainly of vagabonds, bankrupt peasants and very often gamblers. Banditry and gambling often went side by side. "The new arrivals, after working a season in the lumber camps in the mountains of Jilin and Liaoning, often gambled away their first season's pay" (Billingsley 1988, 74). Without money, they could not return home; being in the off-season, they could not find a job; without local roots, they could not find a shelter in the founded towns and villages.

Like opium growers, a large number of gold prospectors, lumbermen, hunters and ginseng gatherers were also outside the law because they could not get licences from the government. Since gold, ginseng, sable and lumber were highly profitable, men, especially the newly arrived floating people, ventured into the forests without official

¹⁷ A contrast to the role of gold in the Australian and American experiences.

permission. Always on the move to avoid pursuit by the *yamen*¹⁸, they gained good knowledge of topography, routes and hiding-places in the forests and mountains, which they found convenient when they were forced to take to banditry (Cao Baoming 1992, 3).

The suffering of the Northeasterners was three-fold during the civil war: caused by the contention between the KMT and Communists, by bandits, and by fights either between the KMT army and bandits or between the Communist army and bandits. After Japan surrendered in 1945, the Communists entered into rivalry with the KMT. Although Chiang Kai-shek told the Communists to remain where they were, the Communist troops marched to the Northeast on foot and by sea, never slower than the KMT troops. To win support from local people, both fought bandits wherever and whenever they could (Cao Baoming 1994, 19-20; Tian Zhihe & Gao Lecai 1992, 65-66).

Outlaw Heroes Against Foreign Invasion

Foreign invasion was an opportunity for bandits to turn into heroes. The Northeast, with fertile land and rich resources, had long been coveted by the Russian and Japanese. From 1894 to 1904, the Sino-Japanese Jiawu War (1894)¹⁹, the Gengzi Boxer Indemnity (1900)²⁰, and the Russo-Japanese War (1904)²¹ ransacked this area, set the society in turmoil and made life almost impossible for the people. All places "suffered from fire, havoc and turmoil caused by war. The masses fled their homes and land lay waste" (Xu Liting 1994, 20). Reckless in desperation, thousands of people took to banditry, with most apt to turn into anti-invasion forces. Without fear of death, many became heroes.

The border areas between China and Russia, and China and Korea, though mountainous, are easy to cross. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Japanese and Russians had both made easy invasions into the Northeast. Russia had great

¹⁸ Government office in feudal China.

¹⁹ The war launched by Japan to annex Korea and invade China.

²⁰ In 1900, the eight foreign powers occupied Beijing and forced the Qing Government to enter into the Xinchou (1901) Treaty. China would pay 982,238,150 taels of silver to the foreign powers in 39 years (Cihai, 1983).

²¹ The war between Japan and Russia, but the major battlefield was in the Northeast of China. The aim of the war was to re-divide the Northeast between the two powers.

economic interests there through the construction of the 2,500-kilometer Chinese Eastern Railway network. When the Russian troops entered the Northeast in 1900, they were corrupt, undisciplined, and waged incessant harassment. Russian soldiers in the strongpoints along the Liaohe River often went to villages and raped women. However, Russia's infiltration was not without resistance. As Chesneaux observes, "The *Hung-hu-tzu* (Red Beards), mounted bandits of Manchuria, had also effectively opposed Russian penetration into that region during the construction of the Transmanchurian Railway, and armies had to be brought up before they could be suppressed" (Chesneaux 1973, 50).

After China was defeated by the Japanese in the Jiawu War, the Liaodong Peninsula was largely under the control of Japan. Japan's strength alarmed other foreign powers, including Russia, so Japan had to hand the peninsula back to China. To 'reward' Russia for its intervention, China agreed that the Russians build a railway across the Northeast to their treaty port of Lushun. The Russians moved troops in with the railway and controlled the area.

The 1904-05 Russo-Japanese War greatly reduced Russia's influence in this area, but Japan took the position instead. As McCormack states, "*De facto* and increasingly from 1905, Manchuria was a piece of colonial property, probably even more effectively so than India or Java" (McCormack 1977, 6). In 1932, Japan, setting up the puppet regime *Manchukuo*, realised its dream of occupying the whole of the Northeast (McCormack 1977, 6).

After the "9.18 Incident" in 1931, neither the KMT nor the CPC really earnestly resisted the Japanese invaders. Chiang Kai-shek instructed Zhang Xueliang, "In order to avoid any enlargement of the incident, it is necessary resolutely to maintain the principle of nonresistance" (Clubb 1972, 166-167). To implement his policy of "first pacification then resistance", Chiang sent troops to suppress the "Communist bandits" rather than to fight against the Japanese invaders. Zhang withdrew his army out of the Northeast at the order of Chiang Kai-shek to fight the Communists in central China. Before the Xi'an Incident, Zhang had believed Chiang's promises to cede no more territory to Japan and to recover the Northeast when the "Communist bandits" were wiped out. On 12 December 1936 Zhang Xueliang and Yang Hucheng detained Chiang when he flew to

Xi'an to organise yet another suppression campaign against the "Communist bandits" and forced him to agree to fight against the Japanese in alliance with the Communists. It was already more than five years after the Japanese had invaded China. The Communists were not strong enough to deal with both the KMT and the Japanese invaders at the same time, and above all, they were also trying to preserve their strength in the hope of realising their ambition of controlling China. However, the Communists define the Anti-Japanese War as "a great national revolutionary war (1937-1945) waged by the Chinese people under the leadership of the CPC against the Japanese Imperialist aggression" (CBC 1980, 675).

From 1931 to 1937, that resistance against the Japanese invasion was organised spontaneously by the people. Dissatisfied with the government's non-resistance policy, officials and soldiers of the official army took to the mountains and organised different kinds of "Anti-Japanese Volunteer Armies", many of which were but bandit gangs. Holding high the banner of justice and being resolute in fighting against the Japanese invaders, "Greenwood heroes" became an important force in the Rehe²² and Liaoning Anti-Japanese Volunteers Army. Large in number, brave in fighting and operating in large areas, they had high combat effectiveness (EBHA 1992, Vol. 2, 3). According to the book *A History of the Anti-Japanese Army of Volunteers*, after the "9.18 Incident", there were more than sixty thousand greenwood troops in Liaoning, more than forty thousand in Jilin and more than thirty thousand in Heilongjiang who fought against the Japanese invaders (Pan Xiting et al 1985, 163, 185 & 193).

One of the strategies bandits adopted was to kidnap foreigners, mainly English people. Johnson evidenced the "political significance" of bandits' kidnapping foreigners: "Many of the kidnapping outrages are intended as a gesture to other nations that Japan's occupation of Manchuria, instead of ridding the country of bandits, has rather intensified their menace." They even hoped that Britain would take "active steps to drive the Japanese out of Manchoukuo" (Johnson 1934, 20). However, this never worked.

²² Rehe, sometimes known as Jobol, was a province in the Northeast in those days. In 1955, Rehe province was merged into Liaoning, Hebei and Inner Mongolia.

The first greenwood hero who stood up against the Japanese invaders was Gao Zhenpeng, alias "Lao Tizi" (Old Ladder), who was then the leader of the bandit alliance in East Rehe and West Liaoning. Not long after the "9.18 Incident", he presided over a meeting of bandit chiefs and declared he would fight against Japanese. With the consent of all the chiefs, the Northeast National Anti-Japanese Army was organised with Gao as the commander-in-chief. And then Lan Tianlin, alias "Ping Dong", Liu Chunqi, alias "Liang Zhi", Liu Zhendong, alias "Zhen Dong", Li Tiande, alias "Da Yitian", Deng Wenshang, alias "Ping Kangde", and others, all rose against the Japanese one after another (EBHA 1992, Vol. 2, 3). When the official army "fled in a mob without fighting" (Cutlack 1934, 45), it was outlaw heroes who confronted the Japanese invaders. One thing they did, which they excelled in, was to sabotage and make trouble. When he arrived at a village, Lindt found that "the volunteers had so ingeniously destroyed the bridges" (Lindt 1933, 69).

Many outlaw heroes, such as Gao Zhenpeng, Lan Tianlin, Deng Wenfeng, Liu Zhendong, Jin Haishan, gave their lives in the battlefields during the anti-Japanese campaign (Pan Xiting et al 1985, 195-203). To the Japanese, of course, "the Chinese rebels were mere bandits" (Lindt 1933, 84-85). Lindt gave a detailed account of the Volunteer Corps led by General Li Hai-Ching, which was "famed for bravery, due to its composition – its members were almost exclusively bandits and peasants." In the Corps was a captain named Lin, who used to be a doctor, but had "joined a band of brigands for some unknown reason" (Lindt 1933, 184-185). When the Japanese came, "he placed himself at the disposal of the General. He organized the People's Army, enrolling the members of his former bands – and the unit is famed throughout the country." Lin, even though in the army, still kept up his relations with the bandits, who were his personal friends. "By the same token, he also knows most of the officers of the Volunteer Corps, ex-bandits themselves." Bandit he was, but he had "the grace of a nobleman" (Lindt 1933, 185-186).

With guns and the existing organisations, bandits turned easily into anti-Japanese volunteers. However, due to their roving nature, they mounted surprise attacks against the Japanese army and the puppet troops instead of establishing and expanding a base so

as to finally drive the Japanese invaders out. Many of the chiefs became heroic martyrs remembered by the people. However, not all bandits became anti-Japanese heroes. Instead, some became traitors and collaborators. Because of a lack of a clear programme, they could be used by any one who offered the better conditions. Some bandit gangs were quick to switch sides, fighting for the government or the Communists today, but becoming turncoats and fighting for the Japanese tomorrow. As a ballad of the time put it, such bandits were hated by the people:

The Red Beards are furious,
Their actions are capricious.
They, though Chinese, serve the Japanese
And turn their guns against Chinese soldiers (QQLABU 1959, 72).

Billingsley observes, “How a gang reacted to the incursion of Japanese forces depended first upon the inclinations of its chief. In Manchuria, where banditry and local armed defense were permanently intertwined in a long resistance tradition, socially conscious local chiefs were the first to resist” (Billingsley 1988, 260-261). During the Japanese occupation, when the national contradictions between the Northeastern people and the Japanese invaders intensified, more and more people joined the resistance. In 1932, there were more than three hundred thousand people in the army of volunteers, with fifty per cent from ordinary masses, twenty-five per cent from the original Northeast Army, fifteen per cent from the greenwood bandits and five per cent being intellectuals. Those on the leadership of these volunteer forces included army officers, police officers, government officials, intellectuals, enlightened gentry and landlords, bandit chiefs and peasants (Quan Yong 1995, 2). In Liaoning, Gao Zhenpeng led the Northeast National Salvation Army organised by bandits (Quan Yong 1995, 2). In Jilin there was an anti-Japanese volunteers army, transformed from a bandit gang, led by Zhang Haitian, alias “Lao Beifeng” (Old North Wind), operating along the Liaohe River. In Heilongjiang, Xie Wendong organised bandits in several battles and Li Jingpu led his band fighting bravely (EBHA 1992a., Vol. 1, 161 & 198; Quan Yong 1995, 115). Besides, many bandit gangs were reorganised into anti-Japanese forces led by the CPC or the Northeast Army. The so-called “*Dongbei Kangri Lianjun*” (the Northeast Anti-Japanese Allied Army) consisted of tens of thousands of outlaws (Quan Yong 1995, 2).

An exemplary anti-Japanese bandit was Wang Yachen in Wuchang County of Heilongjiang. He became a bandit known as “Shuang Long” (Double Dragon) when he was only 17. When the Japanese came, he and his gang joined the band led by Song Delin, a famous bandit chief in Wuchang, whose band robbed only the rich but never disturbed the poor. Not long after their bands merged, they attacked a puppet “Self-defence Corps” stationed in the Shahezi Town, killing about fifty enemy and the two chieftains named Shen Qingshan and Jing Tian. There was a ballad in praise of them:

Song Delin and “Double Dragon”
Attacked the Shahezi Town,
Killed Lao Shen
And shot Lao Jing,
Wiped out the Japanese running dogs
And made the people laugh (Quan Yong 1995, 234).

Bandit heroes fought many hard battles during the anti-Japanese War and achieved notable merits. Such heroes, both real and legendary, had inspired the people in the Northeast in their struggle against the Japanese.²³ In Ningan County of Heilongjiang, Li Jingpu became a bandit right after the “9.18 Incident”. Li and his followers, to arm themselves, attacked several rich families’ homesteads and seized several rifles. He often said, “A hero does not fear death; he who fears death is not a hero” (Quan Yong 1995, 116). He admired a folk hero called “*Ping Yang*” (Conquer the Ocean)²⁴ who killed six Japanese soldiers all by himself and robbed only the rich and helped the poor. So Li called himself “*Ping Nan Yang*”.²⁵ He won several victories and a great reputation among the people, but was later killed by traitors in his gang (Quan Yong 1995, 117).

²³ In China, most people know that the “National Anthem of the PRC” was originally called “March of the Volunteers”, but not many people are clear about the troops of the Volunteers. The volunteers refer to the forces organised by the masses in Northeast China during the Anti-Japanese War (1931-1945) (Quan Yong 1995, 1).

²⁴ Literally, “*Yang*” in Chinese means “ocean”, but the real connotation is “foreign country” or “foreigners”. Here it refers to Japan.

²⁵ It is said that Li first wanted to name himself “*Ping Dong Yang*” (Conquer the East Foreign Country), because people in the Northeast then called Japan “*Dong Yang*”. The character “Dong” (East) has eight strokes. According to the superstitious belief, “one means life, two death, three flight, four hide, five wealth, six poverty, seven promotion, eight surrender”, so “Dong” was not a lucky character for a name. He therefore changed it into “*Ping Nan Yang*” (Conquer the South Foreign Country), because Japan is to the South of his home place. (Quan Yong 1995, 117).

Xie Wendong, one of the most famous bandit chiefs in the Northeast was forced to outlawry by the Japanese invaders. In 1931 after they invaded the Northeast, the Japanese made a migration plan that in twenty years' time five million Japanese would migrate to Northeast China. From March to July in 1933, more than one thousand Japanese migrated to the Yongfeng Town of Yilan County in Sanjiang (part of today's Heilongjiang). To satisfy these migrants' need of land, the Japanese Army forcibly occupied all the land in the county and alongside the Qihuli River, and at the same time, under the excuse of "public security", ordered peasants to hand in their title deeds for land and firearms. In early 1934 the Japanese Kwantung Army ordered the police in Taiping Town to notify all the peasants to hand in all guns and ammunition. They threatened that if the peasants could not make it before the last day of the lunar year, they had to make it the first day the next year at the latest. Those who could not make it would be regarded as guilty of unlawful possession of weapons. The Kwantung Army sent soldiers to villages to search every house for hidden weapons. They rummaged through chests and cupboards and destroyed walls. They forced the villagers to send young women to the Japanese barracks. With indignation, some people with rifles came to Xie Wendong, who believed that they had to rebel in order to survive. Soon he organized an anti-Japanese force of more than three hundred people (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 1, 163-164). Later, Xie led the Taiping Town Peasant Revolt joined by more than ten thousand peasants. He was elected Commander-in-chief of the "People's Army of Resisting the Japanese and Saving the Nation", which had over two thousand seven hundred people. The Army had three disciplinary rules: "1. One who runs away when going into battle shall be executed. 2. It is not allowed to ask villagers to walk the horses. 3. It is not allowed to take common people's property and things or to ask for good food from them" (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 1, 168). He had several battles with Japanese troops and heavily damaged the Japanese invaders. In 1938, his army became part of the Northeast Anti-Japanese Allied Army, the largest anti-Japanese force in the area of the lower reach of the Songhua River. Five members of Xie Wendong's family were killed by the Japanese (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 1, 176). However, due to his conflicting experiences,²⁶

²⁶ He was once a bandit, commander of the Northeast Anti-Japanese Allied Army led by the

Xie was a man of controversy. The Communist government still regards him as a bandit. However, his brave deeds in fighting for the nation are remembered among the people.

The well-known “Lao Beifeng” Anti-Japanese Volunteers Army led by Zhang Haitian was a typical example of bandits turning into anti-Japanese forces. Born in a poor peasant family in Haicheng of Liaoning in 1890, Zhang Haitian was the eldest son. His parents could not afford to send him to school. When he was twelve, he had to work as a farm labourer for a landlord. In 1911, he became a gunner to protect the homestead of a landlord. In the following year, when his home village was flooded, the family moved to the suburb of Zhengjiatun, a famous ancient town in Jilin. When he was twenty-three, he went to a police station to do sundry duties, where he was always beaten or scolded. With indignation, he decided to become a greenwood hero who killed the rich and helped the poor. He first divorced his wife, and asked her to marry another man so that she would not be treated with humiliation as a dependant of a bandit. With the rifles he had stolen from the police station, he joined a bandit gang called “*Lao Tou Piao*”²⁷ and started his life as an outlaw. The gang not only robbed the rich and helped the poor, but also robbed the Japanese invaders. When they robbed Japanese they wanted only the currency issued by the Bank of Japan in the Northeast (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 1, 198-199).

Zhang was a tall and strong man, brave and wise, respected by other fellow members. He was bravely involved in robbing and kidnapping Japanese businessmen, in destroying Japanese opium shops and firearms shops before he was chosen as “*Paotou*” (Gun Head) and became a bandit chief. Later he joined another gang called “*Xi Sheng*” (West Victory) and took the position as “*Paotou*”. In 1931, when the Japanese occupied the Northeast, Zhang, with indignation, said to his fellows, “When I first joined the bandit gang, I thought I could get an official position and become rich. Now the Japs have come in. The country is to perish. Our homes are to perish. How can you be an official? How can you be rich? If we don’t fight against the Japs, we are utterly inhuman, and we are not good men” (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 1, 199-200).

Communists, a foreman in a coal mine run by the Japanese, and senior general and commander of the KMT’s central army (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 1, 161 – 197).

All members of the gang gave a unanimous response. They called their gang "Lao Beifeng" (Old North Wind), implying that they would defeat the Japanese invaders.²⁸ Soon more than two thousand bandits joined him. In just approximately one year, they wiped out several thousand Japanese and puppet troops. Later, the Northeast Anti-Japanese Salvation Association appointed Zhang Haitian as commander-in-chief of the Third Route Army of the Second Military Area, with ten brigades and twenty regiments under his command. His army became a strong threat to the Japanese. The Japanese organised more than ten thousand troops to attack him. He was wounded and had to go to a hospital in Beiping. When the Japanese later occupied Beiping, his economic support was cut and his wounds worsened. He died in poverty, anger and despair at the age of fifty (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 1, 199-200).

Bandits and Chivalrous Bandits

In just thirteen years from 1919 to 1932, cases of banditry reported to government numbered several thousands. Bandits raged everywhere, in the mountains and forests, in isolated villages and towns and even in bustling big cities (Fan Chunsan & Yuan Dongxu 1997, 205). Generally speaking, bandit categories in the Northeast were similar to those of China as a whole. However, the Northeastern bandits mainly consisted of four categories: pure bandits, "*shafu jipin*" (killing the rich and helping the poor) bandits, bandits against foreign invaders and soldier bandits.²⁹ Since considerable detail has been given about such bandits, this part mainly deals with bandits who demonstrate qualities of outlaw heroes. In 1933, three English officers of the British-owned coasting steamer *Nanchang* were kidnapped, and endured subsequently five-and-a-half months' captivity.

²⁷ The notes issued by the Bank of Japan in the Northeast of China at that time were called by the ordinary people as "*Lao Tou Piao*" (Old Man Notes), so the gang named themselves as "*Lao Tou Piao*".

²⁸ "*Beifeng*" is a term used for playing *mah-jong*. "*Beifeng*" is the person on the right of "Ben Zhuang" (the Banker). Whether or not the Banker can take a card depends on how the person at the "*Beifeng*" place plays. In other words, "*Beifeng*" can control "Ben Zhuang". The family name of the Commander-in-chief of the Japanese Kwantung Army in the Northeast was "Ben Zhuang" in Chinese characters.

²⁹ For detailed discussions about bandit categories, see Chapter 3.

They found that the bandits “never ill-treated their captives to any great extent” (Johnson 1934, 20).

A bandit who Lindt met, named Lin, said gave an indication, though perhaps a biased one, of what bandits in the Northeast did and thought of:

I am a bandit, the chief of an army of bandits. I am a bandit, as are all the great men of Manchuria. Old Chang Tso-Lin³⁰, master of the Three Eastern provinces, was a former bandit; General Ma³¹ was a bandit. Where would Manchuria be without the bandits? The bandits defend the plain against the warrior tribes of the Mongols, the horse-thieves. The bandits protect the peasants from the injustice of the mandarins. The bandits are the friends of the poor, the enemies of the rich. They are the distributors of wealth. The flower of our youth, the strongest, the most intelligent, the bravest of our young people-what do they become? They become bandits. They dictate their conditions to the governors. Nobody could govern without them. And to-day, who is it that defends Manchuria against the Japanese? Is it the great merchants of the city, is it the cowardly soldiers? Once more it is the bandit who, together with his friend the peasant, will save Manchuria (Lindt 1933, 190-191).

After the Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895), in Niuzhuang of Liaoning province, there was a young blacksmith named Zhao Zhigang, who was regarded by his sympathisers as such a bandit. He often robbed the officials and the rich to help the poor. He was courageous and often defended poor and powerless people against injustice. “He enjoyed love and esteem among the poor” (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 1, 78). Once, a girl was forced to become a maidservant at a despotic landlord. When learning that the girl was cruelly treated, Zhao went to the landlord’s home, killed the landlord and saved the girl. He then organized a gang of several tens of people, “killing the rich and helping the poor” and “revenging the wronged poor”. He later became a brave member of *Tung Meng Hui*, fighting bravely against the Qing army. In the 1911 revolution he was betrayed, arrested and executed (EBHA 1992A, Vol. 1, 78).

At about the same time, in the Changbai Mountains, there was a large bandit gang of more than one thousand members headed by Lin Qi (alias “Curly Beast Tiezi”). “The members of the gang were mainly lumbermen, hunters and poor peasants in the mountains” (Fan Chunsan & Yuan Dongxu 1997, 229). In Autumn 1905, they seized Andong city and ordered the officials to give them 150,000 silver dollars as soldiers’ pay

³⁰ Zhang Zuolin.

and provisions. The officials, high and low, who did not dare to delay, gave the money the very next day. Lin Qi put up notices throughout the city, asking the poor people to gather at the *yamen* the following morning to receive silver dollars as relief. Early next day, poor people came from all directions. Lin Qi distributed half of the silver dollars to the poor people, who, upon receiving the money, all shed tears (Fan Chunsan & Yuan Dongxu 1997, 230).

Gao Zhenpeng was a bandit in Sishan County of Liaoning. Before he took up banditry, he was a law abiding man. One day he hunted a fox, but a battalion commander tried to take it from him. When Gao refused to give it to him, the officer tied him up, beat him savagely and robbed the fox fur. In a fit of anger, he went to the army camp with a gun and wounded the officer and his concubine. He then organized a gang, and, with the nickname "*Lao Tizi*", started his career as an outlaw. He operated for more than ten years as a bandit chief. His gang robbed only "*dahu*" (big families), but never disturbed common people and "never burnt a house or raped a woman" (Fan Chunsan & Yuan Dongxu 1997, 214). Fan Chunsan and Yuan Dongxu commented:

Persons like Zhao Zhigang and Gao Zhenpeng followed the example of ancient knight-errands, regarded righting wrongs as their duty and declared to get rid of all injustice in the world with their guns. The gangs they led robbed "*dahu*" but never common people, and therefore were called "*yifei*" (chivalrous bandits) by common people (Fan Chunsan & Yuan Dongxu 1997, 204).

Such Bandit gangs were generally large in number. They often saved poor people kidnapped by pure bandits. A man nicknamed "*Da Lai Hao*" in Jilin was such a bandit chief too. Once a small bandit group kidnapped a poor old man's grandson and took the only donkey the old man had. *Da Lai Hao* found the bandits and forced them to return the child and the donkey (Cao Baoming 1992, 81).

Zhang Zuolin: Hero or Villain

Zhang Zuolin, who controlled the government in Beijing for sometime, was once a bandit. What is of interest here is not his career as a warlord but his life as a bandit, perhaps a chivalrous one.

³¹ Ma Zhanshan.

T'ien Pu-i observes that Zhang Zuolin was "a good man with a gun, gifted with exceptional leadership ability, possessed both of bold originality and of diplomatic finesse. He knew how to choose the right moment to fight and the right moment to negotiate" (T'ien, Pu-i et al 1967, 62). Cutlack so described Zhang Zuolin:

Those who knew him describe him as small-built but of finely-chiselled appearance, wise beyond all men of his environment, an opium-smoker, yet efficient, ambitious, wily, an undoubted patriot in his own peculiar way, a convinced royalist, unquestioned monarch in his own domain (Cutlack 1934, 23).

Unlike Ned Kelly, who had constant conflicts with the law when he was young, Zhang did not have much trouble with the law, because China at that time was not a country ruled by law, but he had conflicts with gamblers, rich people and officials. Zhang's early life was hard. Like most outlaws in the world, he was born into a poor family on 19 March 1875. After Zhang was born, his father became "a sometime gambler, bandit, and vagabond" (McCormack 1977, 15), who was killed by a fellow gambler when Zhang was only fourteen.³² Zhang was involved in several petty crimes related to his gambling habit and unbending character. Once when he put out a landlord's horses to pasture, one horse was missing. Having been beaten by the landlord savagely, he became very ill and "could not eat and drink for several days" (Xu Liting 1994, 10). The landlord, believing that he could no longer live, threw him into a deep ditch.³³ He was saved by an old man. Later he learnt to be a vet and got a smattering of veterinary medicine. While treating animals he became acquainted with all kinds of people, "bandit chieftains, petty officials in the Qing army as well as peasants" (Xu Liting 1994, 11). In 1893, unable to pay his debts, he and his brother, Zhang Zuofu, became "*Bangzi Shou*" (cudgel hands), "blocking roads and robbing money" (Xu Liting 1994, 13).

Before Zhang Zuolin took to the mountains for the second time, he had served in the Army led by General Song Qing. He performed very well, and was later appointed as Squad leader. In March 1895, the Army, defeated by the Japanese army, withdrew from the Northeast. Zhang returned to his home place again, where he picked up his trade as a

³² McCormack says that Zhang's father died when Zhang was around 10, but most historians believe that his father died when he was 14.

³³ Later Zhang instigated a bandit gang to rob the landlord and set his house on fire (McCormack 1977, 15; Xu Liting 1994, 48).

vet. It was a time of epidemic banditry, including Russian bandits, who often crossed the Ussuri River to pillage villages, and Mongolian bandits. Most bandits rode on horses. Zhang often treated their horses free of charge. In this way he “made friends with many ‘greenwood bandits’” (Xu Liting 1994, 20).

The Sino-Japanese War brought unprecedented disaster to the people in the Northeast. When on the edge of starvation and in a turbulent society, some young people and the demobilised soldiers became bandits. Zhang at first just treated horses for bandits, but he could not support his family with the little money he made. He had to close his business. As he was not used to farm work, he did nothing but gambled. He often, wearing his official uniform, “swaggered through the streets”, and “most local rascals and gallant outlaws liked to make friends with him” (Xu Liting 1994, 22). Once Zhang Zuolin and his brother Zhang Zuofu fought with other people and offended some villagers, who sued them by saying that the Zhang brothers “harboured bandits.” Zhang Zuolin was arrested, but was released for lack of evidence (Xu Liting 1994, 22).

Finding it difficult to keep a foothold in his village, Zhang was forced to take to the greenwood. He first joined a bandit gang in Guangning County, the sphere of influence of a bandit chief called Hong Fuchen. When he first met Hong, Zhang had a revolver which he treasured very much. When Hong showed that he liked the revolver, Zhang Zuolin gave Hong the revolver immediately. It was said that before he went to see Hong, Zhang had twenty-nine members in his own gang. One day when they reached a town called Jiangjiatun, “They robbed a horse dealer of more than fifty horses. They took up residence in the town and used it as their base” (Xu Liting 1994, 24). Later Zhang joined another gang and became the chief in charge of the “*yangzifang*” (a place where the kidnapped were kept). Once his gang kidnapped two cart-loads of women from two officials’ families who had to pay five hundred taels of silver before the kidnapped were released. “Zhang was strict with the members of his gang who did not dare to violate the regulations. To the two cart-loads of women no one dared even to make a joke” (Xu Liting 1994, 25). When he felt that such kidnapping was not “a permanent solution” of his living, and he hated kidnapping women, he left the gang.

In 1900, the Boxer Movement in Shandong and Hebei soon reached the Northeast. On 20 May 1900, foreign powers decided to send troops to Beijing to suppress the Boxers. The Russian government announced combat readiness in the Northeast and dispatched more than one hundred thousand Russian troops into the Northeast. The Russians met with resistance by the masses and “bandits”. According to a Russian soldier of the then Russian railway guards, “In early 1900, on the southern part of the Chinese Eastern Railway, besides our conflicts with the local people, we found being attacked by *Honghuzi* in the south.” (Xu Liting 1994, 27). Facing the chaos, the Qing government called upon people to organise “*Tuanlian*” (local armed corps). Zhang Zuolin organized his own “Protection Team” in the same year. Zhang’s “Protection Team” belonged to “*Tuanlian*” in name, “a legal organisation to blackmail the people” in effect (Xu Liting 1994, 30). In actuality many bandits usurped the name of “*Tuanlian*” to rob people openly and “Zuolin was one of them” (Xu Liting 1994, 31). But some other people say that Zhang’s “Protection Team” had a reputation of “good discipline” and “not blackmailing the people” (Xu Liting 1994, 31). When he was “*Dadangjia*” of the Protection Team in Bajiaotai, Zhang Zuolin, with the help of Tang Yulin, another bandit chief, wiped out several bandit gangs one after another. “He became well-known far and wide, and organized more than two hundred bandit troops with Zhang Zuolin as the chief, Zhang Jinghui, Zhang Zuoxiang and Tang Yulin as leading members” (EBHA 1992a, 141-142). The three Zhangs, like traditional outlaw heroes, were bound by an oath of blood brotherhood, with Jinghui as Zuolin’s “elder brother” and Zuoxiang his “younger brother”. When Zhang Zuolin’s band was once outnumbered in a clash with a rival band, Tang Yulin came to Zhang’s aid, “after which an offensive-defensive alliance was set up linking the two” (McCormack 1977, 17). When later he had about two thousand five hundred people in his band, Zhang wanted to surrender to the Qing government. He gathered the leading members together and said, “There is no future for us if we make our living as bandits all the time. Now we have some strength which we can use to bargain with the government. If we forsake the darkness for light, we will have a better way out than doing this” (Xu Liting 1994, 39). He kidnapped the wife of Fengtian General Zeng Qi, and treated her and her servants with respect and courtesy.

He asked Zeng's wife to convey his intention of surrender. Zeng was persuaded, and ordered to "enlist Zhang Zuolin's band into the Provincial Patrol Guards" (EBHA 1992a, Vol, I, 142). Zhang turned into a government appointed official and ended his career as a bandit.

Zhang Zuolin's character was multi-dimensional: cruel, courageous, resolute and ambitious. He was a combination of a hero and a villain, a patriot and a traitor, a great historical figure and a criminal. Spread among the people are many anecdotes and interesting stories about 'Great Marshal Zhang'. He remains a folk hero among his supporters and sympathisers especially in the Northeast. Xu Liting says, "Zhang Zuolin has the mettle of an outlaw of the marshes. He kept his promise, abided by the code of brotherhood, was discriminating in his rewards and punishments, returned any good that he had received and even requited injury with kindness" (Xu Liting 1994, 378).

The 1904-05 Russo-Japanese War put an end to Russia's domination of the Northeast. The land battles were fought on China's soil, and when the Russians surrendered Japan gained control of the trans-Manchurian railway and Port Lushun. Meanwhile, the overall control of Northeast China moved into Zhang Zuolin's hands, the bandit Commander-in-chief of the Northeast Army. Lured by promises of reward, he threw his lot in with the Japanese and emerged from the war with the strongest Chinese army in the Northeast. By the time the Qing dynasty fell, he held the power of life and death in the Northeast. Between 1926 and 1928 he ran a government in Beijing recognised by foreign powers.

But by the 1920s, the militarist Japanese government was ready to take a hard line on China. To them, the advantages of seizing the Northeast were enormous. Here was an area of land three times as large as Japan but with a third of her population, an area of undeveloped mines and timber, and vast agricultural possibilities. Zhang's policy in the Northeast had been to limit Japan's economic and political expansion, and eventually to break Japan's influence entirely.

When Zhang Zuolin was the supreme leader of the Northeast, some people believed that “Manchuria under Chang-Tso-Lin³⁴ had better government than any other of the twenty-two provinces of China” (Etherton & Tiltman 1932, 63). All the key members of his bandit gang became high-ranking officials. Zhang Zuolin was assassinated by the Japanese in 1928.

Zhang Zuolin turned from a poor boy to an outlaw hero, from an outlaw hero to an army officer, and finally from an officer to the “King of the Northeast”. His life was full of legendary features. As most outlaw heroes in China, he was the leader not a rank and file bandit. Besides the qualities attributed to the Western outlaw hero, he had such unique qualities as circumspection, far-sightedness, resoluteness and gratitude.

In summary, the outlaw hero tradition in the Northeast is part of that of the whole of China, but a unique part. Bandits in the Northeast are as fascinating in the study of modern outlaw heroes as bushrangers in Australia. Similarities these two places have in history, convict transportation, criminal exile and large-scale immigration account for some shared characteristics of respective outlaw heroes. Like Australia, exiled convicts in Northeast China constituted a large part of banditry in the early days. Like their Australian counterparts, Northeast bandits depended heavily on the use of horses, and were involved in robbing, stealing and trading horses. The frontier spirit, harsh climate and environment foster an agile and brave people in the Northeast as well as in Australia. The outlaw-heroic ethos is enriched by the frontier spirit, endurance, courage, mateship (brotherhood in the Chinese case), and horsemanship, present a similar picture of the outlaw hero in the two places. Adventures of gold-diggings, hunting and lumbering in the high mountains and thick forests and galloping on the vast plain give the outlaw hero a bold, generous and uninhibited character. Australian bushrangers expanded the apogee of outlaw heroism symbolised by Robin Hood to the new English-speaking world, while bandits in the Northeast expanded the spirit of the outlaws of the Marsh to the frontier.

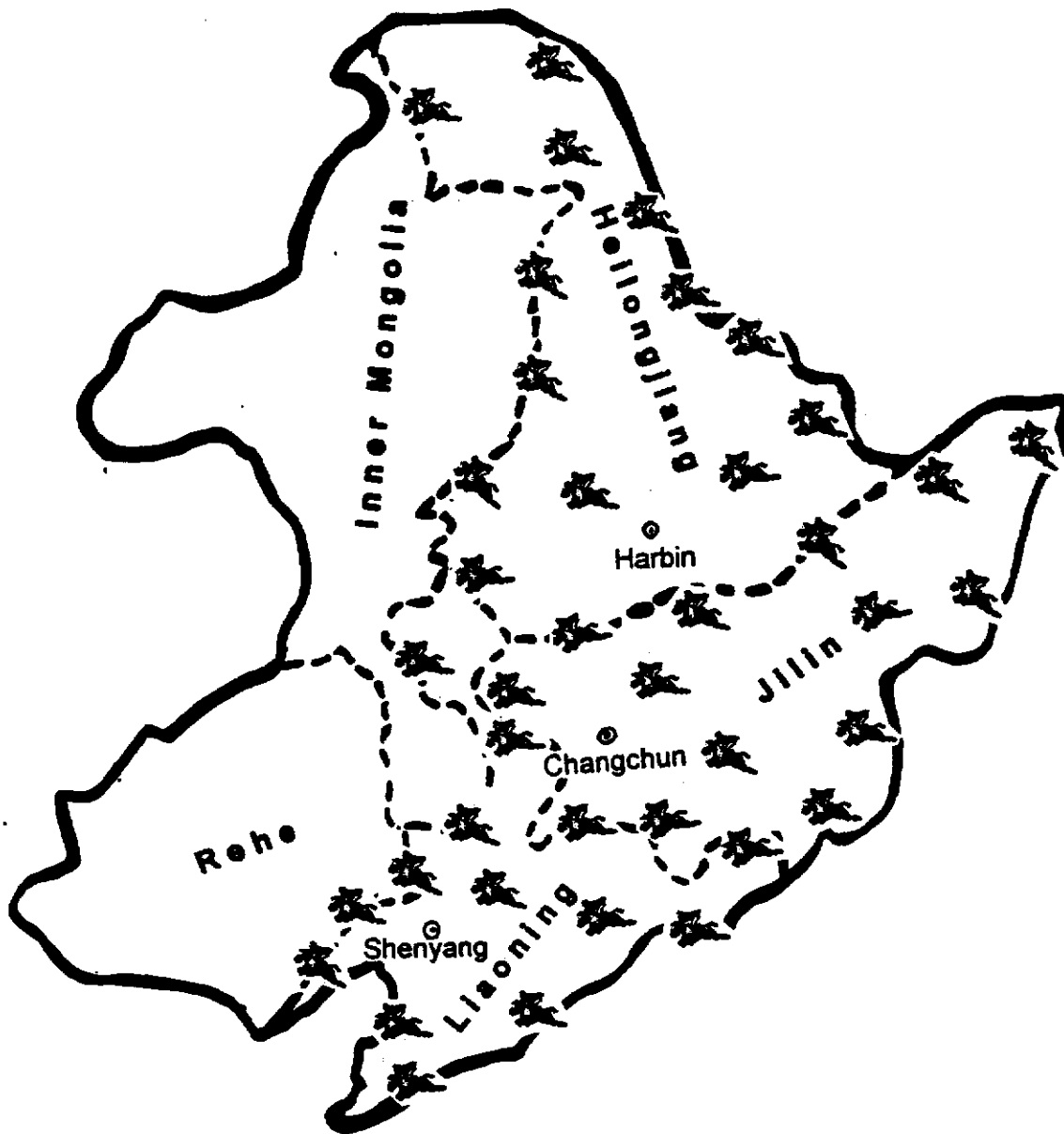
However, the ideology and behaviour of Northeastern outlaws had their different aspects. They demonstrated unique characteristics because of different demographic,

³⁴ The name is spelt in three ways: Zhang Zuolin, Chang Tso-lin and Chang-Tso-Lin.

cultural, economic, geographical and political backgrounds. As different cultures reflect different facets of the outlaw hero tradition, the regional culture of the Northeast shaped the tradition into something special as evidenced in the career and legend of the outlaw heroes discussed including the bandit general Zhang Zuolin. They robbed only the rich by “attacking rich homesteads” (*za yingyao*). In the Northeast, the relationship between bandits and the peasants was generally very close. They treated women politely. Since the Northeast was more frequently invaded and occupied by foreign forces, mainly Japan and Russia, than other parts of China, outlaw heroes assumed obligations of resistance against invaders and many give their lives in the cause. Northeast outlaw heroes created a unique regional bandit culture.

The Map of the Northeast of China Before 1949

(Including Part of Inner Mongolia and Rehe)



--- Provincial Border Lines

Bandits' Operating Areas

Chapter 6

Underground Cultural Products: The “Lore” and “Law”

In this Chapter discussion is focused on some underground cultural products created by Chinese bandits, including their formalities for setting up, joining or quitting a gang, the gods they worshipped, their superstitious beliefs, their language and their regular and recreational activities.

The ideological and moral concepts of bandits, through several thousand years of change, have developed into a fairly complete system. As mentioned in Chapter 3, unlike in Australia, where most bandits were loners or in small groups, in China, bandits tended to operate in large groups, especially those claiming to be fighters against the government. They advocated “righteousness and justice” to justify their behaviours. Although starting in rebellion against the ethical concept of Confucianism, most bandit gangs finally turned to it to find a theoretical foundation for their organisation. This ideological factor is reflected in the way in which some modern bandit gangs treated their captives.¹

Bandit gangs were called *bang* or *liuzi* in Chinese. *Bang* originally meant “a group of people”, for example, “*yi bang ren*” (a group of people); “people of the same trade”, for example, “*cha bang*” (people who sell tea) and “*si bang*” (people who sell silk); or “secret societies”, for example the “*Qing Bang*” and “*Hong Bang*”. Like the word *nian*² for the Nian Rebellion, the word *liu* or *liuzi* originally also means “skein”. The use of these two words reflects the pattern of formation of bandit gangs. Of course, bandits did not call themselves bandits. Instead, they often claimed to be “*xia*” and called what they did “*ti tian xing dao*”; they joined the gangs to learn “loyalty and righteousness” (Cao Baoming 1994, 13).

¹ According to *Huadian County Gazette*, one day during the Tongzhi Period (1862-1874), a bandit gang approached a well-to-do family with an intention of robbery. When they came to know that the son was observing mourning for his mother, instead of robbing him, they gave him all the things they had robbed from other places. This embodied the traditional Confucian concept of “showing leniency towards others” and showing respect for the son who did his filial duties (Cao Baoming 1994, 13).

² *Nian* is used to mean strands of a rope. The Nians used it to mean that they were united as a rope.

To understand the internal structure and dynamics of Chinese bandit gangs, it is necessary to investigate their language, ceremonies, beliefs and other practices. Previous studies of Chinese bandits have had little to say on these matters, partly because historians would not, or could not, record bandit activities, and partly because records of such gangs are, where they exist at all, fragmentary. However, some significant details can be discovered from the records of secret societies, many of which were closely related to bandit gangs.³

Ceremonies

Bandit culture is closely related to the tradition of secret societies. Like any traditional cultural category, bandit culture has its continuity and permeability. The ceremonies for starting a new gang or recruiting new members to the gang or a bandit's leaving the gang are similar between bandit gangs and secret societies.

"*Qiju*" (start the game) is for several men to initiate to organise a band. What they generally do is to first worship the eighteen Luohan (arhats), mainly Bodhi-dharma⁴, and then "*sha xue wei meng*".⁵ The one who first initiates "*qiju*" or the chief-to-be takes the oath first. To show his seriousness, one may say, "If I do not abide by the rules of the gang, or if I go back on my words, or if I rape, I will die in my boots, be shot or drowned." But after that the word "die" or "death" is no longer heard among bandits, avoided as a taboo. They use such euphemisms as "sleep" (*shui*) or "fall down" (*dao*), or "enter the earth" (*jiutu*) instead (EBHA 1992a, Vol 1, 6).

The ceremony of becoming sworn brothers is also institutionalised in bandit gangs as well as secret societies. It generally consists of three steps: burning joss sticks, drinking wine with blood (blood of chicken, oxen, horses, or from fingers of the bandits), and taking oaths. By drinking wine with blood they mean that the blood and souls of the sworn brothers are then blended, so there will be no room to return or

³ The book titled *Jiang Hu Hai Di* (Secrets of the Rivers and Lakes) and Xiao Yishan's *Xiandai Mimi Shehui Shiliao* (Historical Materials about Modern Secret Societies) record some of the language, ballads and ceremonies.

⁴ Bodhi-dharma (?-528 or 536), often referred to as Dharma, is believed to be the founder of the Chan (Zen) Sect of Buddhism in China.

regret. If they go back on their words they will die under knives like the animals. They swear oaths before gods or Heaven to make a covenant with them. One who breaks his promise will be punished by gods or Heaven, struck by lightening or hit by plague or other ways of violent death. This ceremony has been passed down from ancient times, especially when Liu Bei, Guan Yu and Zhang Fei became sworn brothers in the late Han dynasty, and has evolved into a complete rite. In ancient times, people kept faith, believing that "A promise cannot be taken back once it is made." One who went back on his words would die even without a sickness. In those days, a vow could be taken with the breaking of an arrow, a stick, a chopstick or a sword, meaning if one broke his promise he, like the things, would be dismembered (Chen Sheng 1994, 166-168). However, this covenant with Heaven is not one hundred percent reliable. That is why so many outlaw heroes are sold out by traitors.

In the past, religious, ideological and cultural concepts all bore the brand of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism. Secret societies and bandit gangs were inevitably influenced. As people from the bottom of the society, members of secret societies and bandit gangs could not obtain classical knowledge of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism in a systematic way from orthodox institutions. Instead, they got fragmentary ideas from temples, oral legends and fortune-tellers. Secret societies' worship of Heaven and Earth originated from primitive people's worship of the same content. However, in traditional Chinese culture, Heaven, Earth, Monarch, Parents and Teacher were respected most. Secret societies and bandit gangs also regarded them as the most respectable to worship. In the Heaven and Earth Society, the most important ceremony was "to worship Heaven as father and Earth as mother" (Zhou Yumin & Shao Yong 1995, 89), also a major program when members of bandit gangs swore to become brothers. This had at least two meanings: 1. the rationale of "*ti tian xing dao*"; 2. a binding force. It reflected the belief that one who broke the oaths he made would be punished by Heaven. So the oaths, once made, became a binding force. The following ballad reflects such a belief:

What you say will reach Heaven,

⁵ Each one cut his middle finger and dipped the blood into a bowl of wine, burnt some incense, drank a mouthful of the wine with mixed blood and took oaths.

So never cheat when you make oaths.
Don't think there is no judgement,
Three *chi*⁶ above your head are gods (Zhou Yumin & Shao Yong 1195, 91).

At the end of each oath of the "Thirty-six Oaths of the Heaven and Earth Society", there is an imprecation for those who break their oaths, including such malicious languages as "die under ten thousand swords", "be struck dead by lightning", "die in waters", "die by spewing out blood", and "be bitten to death by wolves or tigers" (Cao Baoming 1992, 116-120). The fear of divine retribution was invisibly binding. The ceremony of taking oaths and worshipping when one first joins a secret society is stricter and more complicated than that in a bandit gang. The place where the ceremony is held is called "*Zhongyi Tang*" (Hall of Loyalty and Righteousness). The person who wants to join has to pass through three arch doors, smear blood and burn incense and take oaths. On each side of each door stands a person with a knife or iron ruler in hand. Under each arch door, there is a bowl of water and three burning joss sticks. The person is ordered to kneel down, put the burning joss sticks into the bowl and swear. They call this "passing through three holes". In the hall, there are three desks on which are large square grain containers called *dou*. In the *dou* are some golden flowers and a five-colour flag. A man sits at the desk, with a man wearing a red scarf standing beside him with a writing brush in hand. Another man ushers the new-comer in and asks him to kneel down. The new-comer is questioned why he wants to join. Then he has to register his name on a red piece of paper on which joining fees are listed. After that, the new-comer pierces his middle finger with a needle and drops blood into wine which is distributed to the people present to drink. Then another master gives him a pair of straw sandals and a fan. Then the ceremony finishes (Zhou Yumin & Shao Yong 1995, 81-82).

The ceremony of taking oaths and worshipping in a bandit gang, though similar in significance, is much simpler. When they start a new gang, they come together to worship the eighteen arhats⁷ and take an oath. They cut their middle fingers, drop the

⁶ *Chi* is a Chinese unit of length, equal to one third of a metre.

⁷ *Luohan* in Chinese is Arhat in the Sanskrit language. In Buddhist temples there are often eighteen or five hundred Arhats, who are immortals and are believed to help the poor and punish greedy people. (Cao Baoming 1994, Preface; *Cihai* 1679-1680).

blood into wine, burn joss sticks, drink a mouthful of the wine with blood, and then taking oaths with the chief. The process of joining an established bandit gang is called “*guazhu*” in bandit argot. To join the gang, one needs to find a guarantor who is acquainted with the “four beams and eight columns”. A written pledge is signed by both the person who wants to join and the guarantor. Those who come to the gang themselves and apply to join are strictly and thoroughly examined. The process of testing the newcomer involves “*guotang*” (passing the hall), “*dashi*” (robbing) and “*baixiang*” (worshipping Heaven with burning incense). The first two processes are to test his courage and the last to test his loyalty. During “*guotang*”, he is asked to place a bowl or wine pot on his head and walk about a hundred yards when the chief shoots the bowl. If he is not afraid, he passes the first test. When he is asked to do the first robbery (*dashi*) with others, he is not given any weapon. What he does is to explore the way and spy out the situations of the place they are going to rob. If he does a good job, he will be regarded as having passed the test. Then there comes the ceremony itself. He burns nineteen joss sticks, eighteen for the eighteen arhats and one for *Da Ge*. Then he kneels down and says:

I am joining today,
I will be of one mind with you my brothers.
If I am not of one mind,
I will be struck by thunderbolts
Or the eldest brother can kill me (Cao Baoming 1988, 30-31).

He thus makes a covenant with Heaven. His name is then registered in a booklet. After that he has to meet with, and show respect to, the “four beams” and the “eight columns”. Sometimes the ceremony can be more complicated, as is often held in a big bandit gang or when the gang is stationed in one place for a long time.

The ceremony varies from place to place. In Hubei, they write on a piece of red paper “The Spirit Tablet of Guan Yu the Sacred Emperor”, and place it on the altar. The one who is to join, holding three joss sticks, swears to be loyal to the gang. After he finishes the oaths, he breaks the joss sticks in halves to mean that if he breaks his words he will be punished by being cut into two like the joss sticks. Then people present will drink wine with chicken blood to mean that they will share weal and woe (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 3, 41).

It is more difficult to quit a bandit gang than to join. The bandit expression for withdrawing from a gang is "*baxiang*" (pulling the joss sticks out) or "*jinpen xishou*" (washing one's hands in the gold bowl). In a large well-organised gang, a member generally does not dare to quit unless his family is faced with imminent disaster and needs him to come back, but that has to be verified by the spy of the gang. The ceremony is the reverse of "*baixiang*". On a night with a full moon, the quitting person burns nineteen joss sticks in the yard, kneels down and swears that he will never reveal anything about the gang. The oath in the form of ballad:

The eighteen arhats sit in all directions,
Dadangjia in the centre.
I have lingered in the mountain for over one hundred days,
And have been looked after by you brothers.
I, your younger brother, am going to leave,
I beg your pardon and tolerance.
I am going home to support my Mum,
But my fate is linked with you brothers.
When there are riches I will let you know,
When the police or solders come I will report to you.
The Heaven is above and the earth under,
I am connected with you my brothers.
I will not open my mouth even when being tortured,
I will not change my mind even when being stabbed.
If I reveal a word to others,
I will be struck to pieces by thunderbolts.
The eldest brother will have the luck forever,
And money will pour in from all sides.
I wish you all, my brothers, safety! (Cao Baoming 1988, 31-32).

When he finishes each line of the oath, he pulls one joss stick out. When he finishes all the nineteen lines, the joss sticks are all pulled out. In the process, all the senior chiefs surround him and watch with guns or swords in hand. If they think he is lying or suspect him, it is very likely that they will kill him there and then. Only when he can justify himself will the chief say, "Now you go! You go! Whenever you miss this home, just come back" (Cao Baoming 1994, 78).

Nevertheless, the ceremony for joining or quitting a gang is not as complex as that for joining or quitting a secret society. In his book, Cao Baoming mixes up the two and gives the reader a misleading impression that no difference exists. The oaths

listed by Cao are quoted from those of secret societies, mainly Hong Men and Qing Bang.⁸

Bandit Argot

When discussing differences between criminals and bandits, Hobsbawm says:

They (criminals) normally speak their own special language (argot, cant, calo, Rotwelsch). Their associations are with other outcast occupations or communities, like the gypsies, who supplied so much of the argot of the French and Spanish underworld, the Jews who provided even more vocabulary to the German. (The bulk of peasant bandits speak no kind of argot, but simply a version of the local peasant dialect.) (Hobsbawm 1972, 37-38).

This is not true of Chinese bandits, who develop a relatively complete system of argot. Argot is secret language (*yinyu*) used by different organisations that do not want outsiders to know their inside secrets. Bandit “*heihua*” (black language) is a variant of the language, which has not only the function of keeping secrets but also of transmitting information in a clever way and identifying insiders and outsiders. In secret societies, *yinyu* is called “*qiekou*” or “*koubai*”, a very complicated *yinyu* system.

In the book *Outlaws of the Marsh* secret language is used, but it is not systematic. For example, in Chapter 21, Tang the Ox says, “I am looking for my *gulao*, but I can’t find him” (Shi Nai’an & Luo Guanzhong 1975, 271). *Gulao* means “official” in the secret language of the Rivers and Lakes, and “whoremaster” in the secret language of prostitution (Qu Yanbin 1990, 160). Here it is borrowed to mean “patron”. In Chapter 67: “With one blow of his fist the fellow knocked Li Kui down to the ground on his bottom (*da ge tadun*).” “*Tadun*” means “falling down on one’s bottom” as *yinyu* (Qu Yanbin 1990, 164). In Chapter 5, “Zhou Tong clutched his

⁸ Comparing Cao’s *Dongbei Mazei Shi* (A History of Horse Thieves in the Northeast), Li Yin’s *Da Hong Shan Jin Bu Huan* (The Priceless Book of Da Hong Shan), Liu Shiliang’s *Han liu Quan Shi* (A Complete History of Han Liu), the hand-written copy of *Jiang Hu Hai Di* compiled by Qunying Press and Xiao Yishan’s *Xiandai Mimi Shehui Shiliao* (Historical Materials about Modern Secret Societies), the reader can find that the so-called thirty-six oaths listed by Cao (Cao Baoming 1994, 86-91) as bandit oaths are actually oaths taken by secret societies which are carried in Xiao Yishan’s authentic book (Xiao Yishan 1985, 226 to 230) and the ceremony doggerels in Cao’s same book (Cao Baoming 1994, 50-58) can be found on pages 299 and 308 of Xiao’s book. In his article titled “A Brief Summary of Hong Bang” (EBHA 1992b, Vol. 1, 39), Xu Guisheng points out that Hong Bang had “36 oaths, 21 regulations, 10 penalties, 10 terms and 10 articles.” Cao is wrong to have taken the 36 oaths and 21 regulations for those of bandits.

head. 'Aiya!' he cried. He stepped forward and kowtowed (*jianfu*)" (Shi Nai'an & Luo Guanzhong 1975, 80). In here the author used "*jianfu*" for "kowtow" or "*xiabai*". "*Jianfu*" is *yinyu* meaning "kowtow on knees".

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a bandit argot system came into being. The "black language" is passed on orally. It is true that bandits in different areas have different argots, but they do use many expressions in common. There are words previously existing among a certain group of people as well as invented words which do not have any origin to trace or any rules to follow. However, some of the words have some connections with their everyday usage and reflect local characteristics. For example, in Hubei, in the bandit argot, "people" are called "*shui*" (water), which followed the old comparison of people to water: "People are like water. The water that bears the boat is the same that swallows" (Zhang Ye 1993, 353). The implication is that the people can overthrow the ruler as well as support him.

Qu Yanbin defines the "black language" (*heihua*) as "secret language used by criminal syndicates such as bandit gangs" (Qu, Yanbin 1990, 11). In the old days, many trades have their own jargons, which are not "secret language", because they were used only for convenience but not for the purpose of hiding anything from people outside the trade. Bandits and secret societies used "secret language" to avoid anything that might cause ill association and keep their actions secret.

Meanings of words vary in bandit argots in different places. For example, in the bandit "black language", in Shandong, especially in the Baodugu Mountain area, an official soldier is called "*zaizi*", while in the Northeast, "*zaizi*" is the name given to call a rank and file bandit. In the Northeast, the word for "setting up a gang" is "*qiju*", while in the Bohai Bay area, it is "*cuo ganzhi*" and in Hebei "*la gan*". The following is a comparison of some different words used in bandit argots in different regions for the same things:

Henan	Shandong	Northeast	Meaning
zongjiagan	dadangjia	dazhanggui ⁹	the bandit chief
roupiao	yezi	yangzi	hostage
kuaipiao	huapiao	hongpiao	female captive
guofang	jiutu	shuijiao	die
fengzi	fengzi	lianzi	horse
piaozi	yaohuo	lianhua	bowl
latiaozi	shangxian	hua	walk
jiao rangzi	shang quanzi	ken fu	eat ¹⁰

Bandit argot, covering a wide range from daily to military life, is very complex. As the saying goes, “You can become a successful scholar in ten years’ study, but you cannot become a successful man of the Rivers and Lakes” (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 3, 50). This reflects the difficulty of learning the “black language”. The above list is just a small proportion of bandit argot. Many different ways of expressing the same thing are found, but not listed for the sake of space. Of course not all bandits use all expressions, but it is good for a bandit to know most of them. Some expressions reflect bandits’ attitude towards life. They call a prison “study”, implying that a “study” and a prison are the same: no freedom in either place and you learn in both.

Superstition is one of the reasons for inventing the bandit black language. In Hubei, bandits abstain from using the word “*wei*” (surround). When they want to say “*weizuo*” (sit in a circle), they use “*yuanzuo*” (round sit). When crossing a river or a bridge, they would say “*guokan*” (cross a ridge), for “*guohe*” (cross a river) in the local dialect means “fail” and “*guoqiao*” (cross a bridge) means “die” (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 3, 50). A typical case given by Zhu Guonan in his article titled “Bandits as I Know in the Jiangnan Plain” shows how bandits can go to the extreme in superstition. Once a bandit chief called Nie Dahui was riding at night and his groom was following. When they came to the low clearance of a bridge, the groom said to Nie, “Please mind your head.” Hearing that, Nie hated his groom because “mind your head” was a taboo. When they were crossing the bridge, the groom said to Nie, “Please cross the bridge.” Nie, in a rage, said, “See who will cross the bridge first.” So saying, he shot his groom

⁹ In the Northeast, “*dazhanggui*” was also called “*dadangjia*” as in Shandong and commonly as *Da Ge*.

dead (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 3, 51). Though Billingsley is too arbitrary when he says, "Most bandit argot grew out of the need to cope with various specific superstitions", he gives some good examples of how bandit argot is related to superstition. Because of superstition against direct mention of enemies, bandits make up some substitutes with or without association with the originals. Billingsley also gives some good examples in this respect, such as "guzi" (ancient) for "magistrate", "weiwuyao" (brothels of power) for "police station", "tuzi" (rabbits) for "soldiers", etc., (Billingsley 1988, 146-147).

Besides words, there are also sentences, rhymes and ballads in bandit argot. Such sentences conform with the grammatical rules of the language in common use, but the internal semantic implication was specific. Formalised dialogues called "pandao" (questioning) are used among bandits. The following example in the Northeast is found in the novel *The Immense Forest and Snowfield*:

Mushroom, which way to slip away? What is the price? (What are you? Where are you going?)

Whatever you think of comes. When you want to have milk, the mother is here. When you think of family members of your mother's side, your children's uncle is here. (I am here to find my fellows.)

The pheasant scurries silently. How can it get to the Mountain of the Heavenly King? (But you are not of the right brand.)

There is plenty of rice on the ground, and I have a solid foundation. (I am of the right brand. I am of the old brand.)

Have you called to show respects to A Yao? (Who was your master [teacher]?)

He does not have tiles on his roof. Not is not. Not is not. (I can't say that until I get to the right hall. A pupil should not say his teacher's name.)

How did you come? How did you come? (Who showed you to here?)

A *linglong* pagoda, facing the green belt with its back to sands. (A Taoist priest.)

Yaoha? Yaoha? (Were you a loner before?)

Talking at noon, nobody has a home. (I was in the mountain where Xu Damabang controlled) (Qu Bo 1964, 205-209).

This exchange is used by Northeast bandits when meeting a stranger. Some words had special implications. For example, "pheasant" means "miscellaneous brands"; "yao" means single; "tiles on one's roof" means "the principal room" referring to "the room where the chief is"; "talking at noon" is how the family name

¹⁰ Refer to EBHA 1992a, Vol. 1, 101-102 & 132-134; Vol. 2, 107-108; Vol. 2, 341-357.

“Xu” (許) is formed: “talking” (言) is the radical, and “noon” is “午” (Qu Yanbin 1990, 18-19).

In Scene Six of the “modern revolutionary Peking opera” *Taking Tiger Mountain by Strategy* staged during the Cultural Revolution, there is a dialogue using bandit black language between Yang, a soldier of the PLA sent to suppress bandits in the mountains, who disguised himself as a bandit, and Vulture, the bandit chief in the Tiger Mountain:

Vulture (*suddenly*): The god of the heavens shields the earthly tiger.

Yang: Precious pagoda represses the river sprite.

Terribles: Moha? Moha?

Yang: Speak exactly at the stroke of noon. No one has a home.

Vulture: Why is your face so red?

Yang: My spirits are flourishing.

Vulture: Why so yellow again?

(*The bandits press closer, sword and gun in hand.*)

Yang (*calmly*): Ha, ha, ha! I smeared it with wax to ward off the cold (TTMBS, 1971, 24).

If one goes to visit or join a gang, when he sees the “*liaoshui*” (watching water), that is the guard or sentry, he salutes him first and says:

There is a chicken in the Northwest sky,
People in the greenwood do not bully their like.
The feelings of the greenwood will be hurt,
If they bully their like (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 1, 130-131).

Then he tells the guard that he is going to see the chief. When he sees the chief, there is another ceremony. If one is sent by another gang to do some business, after the ceremony comes the “*pandao*”.¹¹

Besides superstition, the formation of bandit argot is attributed to different other factors. First, in order to avoid being traced by government troops, they talk with argot so that ordinary people cannot understand them nor know their whereabouts. When in a dangerous situation, they will say, “*fengjin*” (The wind is blowing hard). When an army is going to attack them, they will say, “*feng lai le*” (The wind is coming). If a member of the gang is killed, they will say, “*hua le*” (He slipped). They

¹¹ In bandit gangs and secret societies, “*pandao*” was an important process of receiving a new-comer or a guest. Besides special language used, gestures were important ways of “*pandao*” (called “*zhifa*”

call an outsider “*gouzi*” (seducer), one-*li* distance “*chi xian zi*” (*one-chi line*). Second, they use argot to identify bandits of different gangs. When a bandit enters the hideout of a gang, he will be questioned with argot (*pandao*) so that they can find which gang he belongs to, where he comes from, why he comes to the hideout. If he can answer with argot and prove to be harmless to the gang, he will be well received, otherwise, his life will be in danger. Third, there are a lot of taboos in bandit gangs. Some homonyms are purposely avoided. For example, the word for “tea” (*cha*) is pronounced the same as that for “ferret out” (*cha*). The word for “rice” (*fan*) is pronounced the same as that for “criminal” (*fan*).

As discussed earlier, bandit language, though playing a part in maintaining secrecy, is not just used for that purpose. It is part of the folkloric culture. The language of bandits, especially secret society bandits, is so institutionalised, standardised and complex that only the insiders know it, while outsiders could never decipher it without a painstaking study. When Lindt asked Mr Han, who accompanied him travelling what two bandits were talking about, Han answered, “I do not know. They speak the language of the bandits, which only the member of the bands can learn” (Lindt 1933, 195).

In 1932, the Chinese scholar Xiao Yishan hand-copied the materials collected in the British Museum. Through research, he published a book titled *Historical Materials about Modern Secret Societies* in 1935, which has since become a rare source for the study of the secret language of secret societies. As for the black language used by bandit gangs, materials are even rarer, seen scattered in books or articles, which have never been systematically studied. As Billingsley observes:

Bandit argot was less standardized than that of the secret societies. Whereas the latter's was designed to allow members to move from one lodge to another and be recognized as 'brothers' or 'sisters', a bandit gang's operations were usually based on a relatively restricted locality, and the argot was similarly limited (Billingsley 1988, 119).

Though limited, the bandit argot used in a certain region is understood by most of the bandits operating in that area. That is to say, the main elements of the argot are

pandao” [*“pandao”* with fingers]). Sometimes, they used tea pots and tea cups placed in different formations as a means of *“pandao”* (Cao Baoming 1994 & Xiao Yishan 1985).

intelligible to the bandits, even though there are variations. In this way bandit argot helps strengthen solidarity and cohesion in the bandit gangs and made “an individual feel distinct from ‘the rest’ outside the group.” Again, Billingsley argues, “Bandits were reaffirming their personal identity as outlaws. In plain terms, it brought them a sense of togetherness” (Billingsley 1988, 120).

Qu Yanbin states, “The emergence, development and heritage of folk secret languages have their subjective origin and rule and objective historical conditions and cultural soil” (Qu Yanbin 1990, 2). The large population of secret societies and bandit gangs in China resulted in a large black language system. There are three major sources from which the bandit language originates: special expressions used by secret societies, local slang and superstitious beliefs. However, in the Northeast, words in the argot are often found imaginative. Billingsley quotes a Chinese scholar as saying that most bandit argot originated in the special vocabulary of *Hong Men* and 134 terms of the secret societies’ argot are used by bandits. Local slang has its influence on the bandit language: “One Henan bandit dialect was based on that spoken in the Xuchang region of central Henan, a traditional center for bandit operations and the disposal of illicit income” (Billingsley 1988, 119).

Unlike secret societies which have their hand-written or printed pamphlets, bandits learn their black language by memorising the words taught them orally by their comrades. From available materials there is no evidence that “every bandit chief possessed a booklet containing the gang’s secret words, which every member had to learn” and that “the task took from six to eight months” (Billingsley 1988, 119).

Since banditry is such a common phenomenon in the Northeast, words of the bandit language have entered, and have been maintained in, the daily vocabulary. Even today, people secretly call a policeman “*gouzi*” (dog), of course to his back; one who refuses to obey or creates trouble to his superior is “*qipizi*”. As a variant of the common language, the black language has contributed words and expressions to the enrichment of the common language. Examples of this can be found in the expressions used by bandits in the Northeast. In the bandit black language, the word “*dashi*” means “to find and rob a person or a family”, while nowadays, people use the same

word to mean “(an animal) to find something to eat”. “*Cai panzi*” means “to investigate or spy before robbing a homestead or a place” in argot, while in the Northeast dialect it means “to inspect a place in advance in order to make some preparations for doing something later”. If the new-comer in a bandit gang does not panic and urinate in his trousers when he is going through the joining ceremony, he is said to be “*dingying*” (stand up to something undauntedly). In the Northeast dialect, “*dingying*” is used to mean the same in everyday use. “*Si liang ba zhu*” (the four beams and eight pillars) in the bandit black language means top chieftains of a gang, now people use it to mean the principle leaders of an organisation, especially those who are closely connected. Some words of the Northeast bandit language have been collected in Chinese dictionaries as standard expressions. “*Bangpiao*” (tie up a ticket – kidnapping) is a bandit practice in China. In the Northeast, after they kidnap a captive, they will send a person – “*Huasheshi*” (flowery tongue) to the family to tell them the deadline, method and venue for sending the ransom. If the family refuses to give the money (*chuxie* – “shed blood” literally) and send it to the place designated before the deadline, the bandit would “*shangpiao*” (wound the ticket) or “*sipiao*” (tear off the ticket – kill the captive) (Fan Chunsan & Yuan Dongxu 1997, 219). Now “*huasheshi*” (flowery tongue), “*bangpiao*” (kidnap), “*chuxie*” (shed blood) have all become frequently used words in modern Chinese and collected in dictionaries:

bangpiao: “Bandits kidnap a person, and force the person’s family to pay ransom” (MCD 1978). “Bandits hold a person for ransom. The bandits are called ‘*bangfei*’ (kidnapping bandits), and the kidnapped is called “*roupiao*” (meat ticket)” (CBC 1983).

chuxie: “Give money” (ADDEIMC 1985).

huasheshi: “a person of fine rhetoric” (ADDEIMC 1985). “In the Northeastern dialect referring to a person who has a glib tongue and deceive people with flowery words and cunning statements” (ACDNI 1986)

Baohao (nickname or alias) could be regarded as a kind of black language. The tradition of *baohao* can be traced back to the time when the outlaws of Marsh were operating, perhaps even earlier. *Baohao* reflects the customs, tendency and ethos of the time as well as ethical concepts, aspirations, beliefs and characteristics of bandits. The practice is very popular among Chinese bandits, while Australian bushrangers are not so keen about it. Some Australian bushrangers do have nicknames such as

“Cannibal” (Alexander “Cannibal” Pierce), “Boy Bandit” (“Boy Bandit” Rares), “Jewboy” (Edward “Jewboy” Davis), “Moondyne Joe” (Joseph Bolitho Johns), Michael Howe, self-styled “Governor of the Woods”, Frank McCallum alias “Captain Melville” and John Ellis alias “Yankie Jack”. But they do not pay much attention to their aliases in the bush. A bandit gang in Australia is in most cases named after the chief, for example, the Kelly gang, the Underwood gang, the Frank Gardiner Gang”. However, Australian bushrangers’ nicknames are not so popular, nor related to the ideology of banditry. They are no match to the Chinese *baohao* in meaning and colour. *Baohao* is not fixed, but always has a meaning related to marksmanship, controlled territory, prosperity, events, courage and animals. *Baohao* is often fancy, strange and even mysterious. Most bandits have one *baohao*, but some may have two or three. There are some principles of getting *baohao*: 1. It prognosticates good luck. 2. It sounds awe-inspiring. 3. It is related to the name of the place the bandit is operating. 4. It expresses the ambition of the bandit. 5. It is used in memory of a certain person or event. 6. It sounds appealing to the common people. 7. It displays one’s marksmanship (Cao Baoming 1988, 129). *Baohao* is either given by others or chosen by a bandit himself. Generally speaking, individual bandits have *baohao* to hide their identification and to avoid bringing trouble to the family. As Billingsley puts it, “The practice of adopting pseudonyms or borrowing the names of past heroes also had as much to do with secrecy as with romance” (Billingsley 1988, 119). *Baohao* of an individual often shows characteristics of the temperament or behaviour of the person. The outlaws of the Marsh all have *baohao*, which make their names so vivid and impressive that people can always remember. “Lu the Tattooed Monk”, “Li Kui the Black Whirlwind”, “Song Jiang the Timely Rain”, “Yang Zhi the Blue-faced Beast”, “Liu Tang the Red-Haired Demon”, and so on, are known to everyone in China. In modern times, bandit gangs have *baohao* to show areas of their operation, their behaviour or their hope, with the word “hao” (good) most commonly used in a *baohao*, for example, “Jinshan Hao” (Good in Jinshan), “Lulin Hao” (Good in the Greenwood), “Xinlai Hao” (Good Newcomer), among others. Since many bandit gangs use “hao” in their *baohao*, repetition is inevitable. Therefore, when several

gangs have the same *baohao*, people often fasten one gang's story upon another. Words about marksmanship are chosen for *baohao*, such as "Shuang Biao" (Double Dartchery), "Kuai Qiang" (Quick Gun), and "Shen Qiang" (Crack Shot). Some bandits live up to the reputation of their nicknames. For example, the bandit alias "Shuang Biao" in Jilin was confronted with two bandits on his first robbing expedition, but he was the quicker and better: he killed the two bandits with two shots. (Cao Baoming 1988, 130)

Outlaw heroes attach much importance to their *baohao*. A famous bandit in Jilin called Luo Mingxing used "San Jiang Hao" (Three Rivers Good) as his *baohao*. When he set up his gang, he said, "Brothers, do you know why I called myself 'San Jiang Hao'? It means people on the Songhua River, Tumen River and Yalu River¹² unite to fight against the Japanese invaders" (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 1, 6-7). Another famous bandit called himself Lao San Sheng (Old Three Provinces"). He explained, "I, Old Three Provinces, want to take care of people of the three east provinces. Now we are becoming slaves without a country. What a damned Old Three Provinces am I?" He continued, "My family name is Yang, but a *yang*¹³ is bullied in the mountains. I would rather use Lang.¹⁴ That's why I do not use my name. Everyone knows that I am 'Lao San Sheng'" (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 1, 7).

Another common way of getting *baohao* is using the name of a place or territory. Like Moondyne, which is the name of the area in which Joe set up his camp and horse cage. The name of the place where a bandit is operating, or where his home place is, is often given to a person as part of his *baohao*, e.g., "Shandong Timely Rain" Song Jiang, "Hebei Jade Kylin".¹⁵ The area around the hideout of a bandit gang is usually under their control. The chief often chooses the name of the place as his *baohao* to show his sphere of influence, such as, "Changshan Hu" (Tiger of Changshan), "Tugang Long" (Dragon in Tugang), "Zhan Donggang" (Occupant in Donggang), etc., (Cao Baoming 1994, 137).

¹² Three great rivers in Jilin.

¹³ The family name Yang and the word for "sheep" (*yang*) is the same in pronunciation.

¹⁴ The family name Lang and the word for "wolf" (*lang*) is the same in pronunciation.

¹⁵ Kylin is Chinese legendary animal like unicorn.

Internal Regulations

An important, if not decisive, force that keeps members of bandit gangs or secret societies together is that of their internal regulations, which in a way reflect some ideals of the outlaw hero. The regulations of secret societies are similar in many ways to those of bandit gangs. *Qing Bang* has ten rules of different versions. However the following are those commonly accepted:

1. Never cheat the master and the ancestors.
2. Never violate the regulations.
3. Never despise the seniors.
4. Never violate the Greenwood rules.
5. Never commit incest.
6. Never leak the society's secret.
7. Never commit adultery.
8. Share sufferings.
9. Share happiness.
10. Abide by the ethic standard of five virtues: humanity, justice, propriety, wisdom and faith (Fan Chunsan & Yuan Dongxu 1997, 2).¹⁶

One who commits a slight breach will be warned or beaten or driven out of the gang. One who commits a serious breach will be crippled or beheaded. In *Qing Bang*, one who violates the regulations will be either "stabbed with a sword three times leaving six holes in the body" or "stabbed with a sword nine times leaving eighteen scars in the body" or "killed by tying a stone plate to the body and throwing into water" (Wen Shi 1995a, 63). *Hong Men* never drives a member out, because, as a secret organisation, it is afraid that the expelled may leak internal secrets. When secret societies were first set up, these regulations were strictly observed, but later, disciplines became loose and members who committed unsanctioned acts were not punished at all, and might be encouraged. The punishment in the *Pao Ge* Society is similar to that in *Hong Men*. The lightest punishment is to "strike the person who violates regulations with a red-colour stick". If the breach is serious, the punishment is to "blow out the lamps" (dig out the eyes) or "cut off the branches" (cut off the hands

¹⁶ See also Zhou Yumin & Shao Yong 1995, 37; Wen Shi 1995a, 63.

or feet) or “stab oneself three times with a sword and leave six holes”. The capital punishment is also to ask the offender to kill himself (Wen Shi 1995a, 314).¹⁷

Such regulations are not uncommon among bandit gangs in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In the Northeast, the bandit chief alias “White Horse Zhang” has thirteen rules for the conduct of the band. To join the band, one has to be presented by at least twenty other members. To gain full membership, he has to declare his willingness to accept the leadership of the chief, to pass through an initiation ceremony, and to prove his courage by participating in an expedition. Members are enjoined to help their comrades whenever necessary, to maintain secrets, to undertake any duties assigned them, and to behave justly. Any member who engages in antisocial action (as defined by the band) is to be punished. Clearly, they do not consider themselves bandits.¹⁸

Bandit regulations are not as clearly stated as those of secret societies, but in principle they are similar. However, although bandit gangs and secret societies are very often but two names for one thing, bandits can claim some disciplinary regulations as their own. Billingsley writes:

According to He Xiya, most gangs followed the “Four Covenants, Eight Regulations on Rewards, and Eight Regulations on Beheading” originally set out by the Red Gang secret society (this is consequently another area in which the distinction between bandit gangs and secret societies becomes hazy). The

¹⁷ Shi Yukun listed the 17 prohibitions set up by the gang in Junshan: 1. Those who do not charge forward when hearing drums or do not stop when hearing gongs and therefore defy orders shall be beheaded. 2. Those who do not respond when called or delay action shall be beheaded. 3. Those who do not beat the watches when patrolling or do not give clear signals shall be beheaded. 4. Those who always blame their superiors and refuse to listen to them shall be beheaded. 5. Those who make a lot of noise or violate discipline and ride in front of the headquarters shall be beheaded. 6. Those whose weapons are not looked after or whose banners were not in the proper condition shall be beheaded. 7. Those who spread rumours or befog soldiers' minds with superstitious remarks or activities shall be beheaded. 8. Those who cause alienation among soldiers or stir up some soldiers against others shall be beheaded. 9. Those who bully the masses or rape women shall be beheaded. 10. Those who steal others belongings or falsely claim military exploits shall be beheaded. 11. Those who stealthily enter the headquarters and spy out military secrets shall be beheaded. 12. Those who leak out orders or military secrets to the enemies or betray shall be beheaded. 13. Those who recoil from fear when dispatched shall be beheaded. 14. Those who do not observe the bans and talk loudly or run about while marching shall be beheaded. 15. Those who pretend to be ill so as to avoid battles shall be beheaded. 16. Those treasurers who show prejudice when allotting money and grain so that soldiers complain shall be beheaded. 17. Those who make a false report about the military situation shall be beheaded (Shi Yukun 1994, 105).

¹⁸ In Australia, gangs of bushrangers did not have such strict disciplinary regulations. In this sense, Australian outlaws were more democratic, perhaps equal, than their Chinese counterparts.

death penalty was prescribed for the following offences: (1) revealing secrets; (2) failing to obey orders; (3) running away from a battle; (4) secretly communicating with the enemy; (5) leading troops to the gang's camp; (6) personally using the gang's property or finances; (7) insulting one's comrades; and (8) flirting with women (Billingsley 1988, 114).

Other regulations of bandit gangs include "do not kill those who beg for mercy", "do not rape" and "show respect to the Eldest Brother" (Cao Baoming 1992, 111-113). As the main practice of bandits is "robbing", there are regulations regarding do's and don'ts when robbing:

1. Don't rob wedding and funeral ceremonies;
2. Don't rob a postman;
3. Don't rob a ferry boatman;
4. Don't rob a doctor on duty;
5. Don't rob a gambler;
6. Don't rob small peddlers carrying their goods on a shoulder pole;
7. Don't rob inns or carters hotels;
8. Don't rob monks, Taoist priests or nuns;
9. Don't rob widowers, widows, bachelors or orphans;
10. Don't rob a single person walking at night (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 1, 39).

Besides, there are some other things they will not do: they will not rob a coffin shop, a prostitute, a fortune-teller, a beggar or a sorcerer (Fan Chunsan & Yuan Dongxu 1997, 213). In addition, four other things are forbidden: 1. robbing the poor; 2. entering a delivery room; 3. passing by or through pigs or donkeys standing in the way; 4. eating and drinking at a wedding ceremony (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 1, 130). There are also regulations of not robbing weddings, funerals, postmen, ferrymen, gamblers, medical doctors, porters, monks and nuns and single travellers (Liu Bingrong 1993, 4). These regulations are derived from either bandits' codes of conduct or their superstitious beliefs and taboos. Since wedding and funeral are regarded as the two most important events in life, robbing them will bring bad luck to the bandits. Robbing a postman is not allowed because a postman's job is hard and unprofitable. They will not rob boatmen or doctors because they often have to turn to them for help. Inns for carters are places where bandits in the Northeast often stay in winter (Cao Baoming

1988, 73). If they robbed such inns, they cut off their own retreat. Bandits regard gamblers as their own kind.¹⁹

As secret societies, some bandit gangs inflict severe punishment on offenders. In Jilin in 1915, once when the bandit gang led by “Da Lai Hao” was stationed in a village, a bandit soldier raped a girl. When “Da Lai Hao” found out who did it he asked two soldiers to put the offender to death. When he realised that the two soldiers purposely shot to the sky, he shot the offender himself and punished the two soldiers” (Cao Baoming 1988, 74-75). The punishment by Heaven for going back on one’s oaths and the punishment by man for violating the regulations have a binding force in two senses. First, a member will behave himself with or without another’s presence for fear that God is always watching. Second, the Eldest Brother is provided with tools to bind the gang together. Such a force is not seen in bandit gangs in Australia or other Anglophone countries.

Bandit gangs are almost always on the run, so when they punish a person they usually do not have time to hold a ceremony as a secret society may do. One way of capital punishment is to shoot the offender dead. Before the execution, the offender is told what offences he has committed. Then he is asked to kneel down, facing the gun, before he is shot. They will not shoot from behind. Other ways include “burying alive”, “hanging” and “beheading” (Li Ling 1995, 42-43). As the saying goes, “In the Rivers and Lakes there is justice, and in the royal court there was the law” (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 3, 48). Besides the regulations and the penalties discussed above, bandits in the Northeast had a special way of dealing with traitors. They call the event “*dianbian*”, that is, getting chiefs of different gangs together to act as witnesses when punishing the traitors. When a chief arrived at the place for *dianbian*, he must say his *baohao* loudly and fire a pistol three times. There was such a saying: “At the Spring Festival people use firecrackers to expel ghosts, but the bandits use *dianbian* to invite ghosts.” Once the bandit chief Vulture was deceived by his adopted son, who nearly tied him up and sent him to the Japanese army. The Vulture punished him in the way of

¹⁹ There is a ballad: “There is one flower in numerous waters and mountains,/ Of one family are bandits and gamblers./ When each becomes rich the other benefits,/ I drink the soup when you eat meats” (Cao Baoming 1988, 73).

dianbian. When all the chiefs he had invited arrived, he said, “Bandits have to kill, but bandits should not kill good people. I, the Vulture, kill just three kinds of people, first, corrupt officials, second, foreigners, third, scum of the gang.” He killed his adopted son with other chieftains as witnesses (Cao Baoming 1994, 208).

There are conscious outlaw heroes who have very strict disciplinary regulations for their gangs. One outstanding example in modern China is that of Fan Zhongxiu²⁰ in Henan, who is said to have protected the local people and fought against the government troops. With the expansion of his forces, some members of his group were found to have done something harmful to the people, so he pronounces the following regulations: 1. No rape; 2. No robbing properties of good people; 3. Equality to all people from both the local place or elsewhere (Wen Shi 1995b, 86).

Bandits are outlawed, but are lawful within their own sphere. They set up a law, unwritten but common, that is, to take from those who should not possess so much and help those who need some to survive. Such a “law” has more power and influence among the poor and the oppressed than any law that governs them. Its significance prevails at all times. The disciplinary regulations support such a “law”.

Objects of Worship and Superstition

As discussed in Chapter 3, in traditional Chinese culture, *yi* originally means a principle or truth. Later, it means “justice” or “righteousness”, including certain ethical concepts and criteria in dealing with relationships between people. However, its connotation as understood by people of low social status is different. It can be the *yi* in *xiayi* (chivalry or the sense of justice), or the *yi* in *yiqi* (code of brotherhood or personal loyalty). The morality and custom of “having a strong sense of justice and being ready to help the weak” have been handed down among the people. Guan Yu, in this sense, is an exemplary figure, who killed a local despot and had to take to the Rivers and Lakes. He said, “I killed a local despot because he bullied people on the strength of his powerful connections. I have been on a flight for five or six years in the Rivers and Lakes” (Mei Zhengzheng 1994, 47). Guan Yu’s action of killing the local

despot has been regarded as a righteous activity. His relationship with Liu Bei as sworn brothers, as well as subject and monarch has been regarded as the supreme example of *zhong* (loyalty) and *yi* (brotherhood). So Guan became an idol of worship among bandits. When bandits swear to become brothers, they swear to the enshrined statue of Guan. When they burn joss sticks and kowtowed to Guan, they recite:

Lord Guan is above and your disciple so and so is below here. Tonight the nine of us swear to become brothers. From today on we will support each other. We brothers will treat each other with one heart and one mind. If I have two minds, I will be shot in the heart in battle, or be torn into pieces by five dogs, or die with my brains out on the ground (EBHA 1992A, Vol. 3, 117).

Bandits also believe in the 18 *Luohan* (Arhats), with Bodhi-dharma as their idol of worship, who is believed to be able to protect them. The bandit life is a life on the horseback, so they trust life to Gods. In the late Qing dynasty and early period of the Republic, armed escorts and bodyguards were commonly used by rich people or officials. When they encountered bandits while escorting important people or valuable goods, they would shout, "*Dharma Laozu weiwu.*" (The Mighty Progenitor Dharma) (Fan Chunsan & Yuan Dongxu 1997, 231). Then they greeted the bandits in a special way. An escort or bodyguard who did not know such bandit practice would be in trouble. Dharma is believed to have come to China from India during the reign of Wudi Emperor of the Liang State²¹ in the South dynasty (420-589) and established the Zen sect of Buddhism in North China. Zen is a combination of Buddhist theory and the *Xuanxue*,²² "with Buddhism as appearance and Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi's theory as essence" (Fan Chunsan & Yuan Dongxu 1997, 232). *Xuanxue* promotes a free, natural and even licentious life. According to folk tales, it is Dharma who first created the famous Shaolin Temple *wushu* (martial arts) (Cao Baoming 1988, 89). In the Shaolin Temple there is a hut in which Dharma cultivated himself by motionlessly facing the wall for nine years. With the martial arts, Shaolin Temple monks help the poor and

²⁰ In 1912, Fan started his career as a bandit chief. The local people supported him and joined him (Wen Shi 1995b, 85)

²¹ Wudi Emperor (464-549), founder of the Liang State of the South dynasty, who believed in Buddhism.

²² *Xuanxue* is a philosophical sect of the Wei & Jin dynasties, advocating metaphysics with Laozi and Zhuangzi's philosophy as the main content.

weak and kill the wicked. It can be understood why bandits chose Dharma as their progenitor. There is such a legend about the eighteen *Luohan* in Northeast China:

A long time ago, there were eighteen brothers in a poor family. One day, their mother said, "Go and make a living yourselves. Come back to see me after a year. I will see what ability and skill you learn." Wherever they went, they found that the poor numbered much more than the rich. The rich were indulged in eating, drinking and pleasure-seeking while the poor were suffering from hunger and cold. When they returned to their mother, they told her, "The world is not fair. The rich are too rich and the poor too poor."

The mother asked, "What will you do then?"

"There are all trades but a trade of killing the rich and helping the poor."

The mother said, "But if you kill people, they would know you are my sons."

The sons answered, "We will wear masks with hair on them, so that people cannot recognise us."

So they went out to start the trade of "killing the rich and helping the poor." Because they wore masks with hair, they were called "*Hu Zi*" (Beard) (Cao Baoming 1988, 82-83).

Theoretically there are two reasons for this worship. First, all trades, especially the "*xia jiu liu*" (the nine lower trades),²³ have an idol to worship; second, they use these idols to unite and bind the gang members. Some bandits also worship Dao Zhi and Song Jiang. Perry indicates, "As one indication of this tradition, we have the testimony of the famous Ch'ing general Yüan Chia-san, who was horrified to discover on an inspection tour of Huai-pei the existence of extremely ornate temples dedicated to none other than Tao Chih, the notorious bandit chief of Chinese legend" (Perry 1980, 64). Cao Baoming quotes a book of the Qing dynasty as saying, "In Jining, there is a Song Jiang temple in which bandits often come and pray secretly" (Cao Baoming 1994, 138).²⁴

Religious beliefs in China have always featured polytheism, which is reflected in beliefs of secret societies and bandit gangs. In a document called "Prayers for Inviting Gods" of the Heaven and Earth Society are included all kinds of gods, spirits, stars

²³ For detailed explanations of this, see Chapter 7.

²⁴ Dao Zhi is worshipped by bandits, who believe that his concept of virtues compare favourably with those advocated by the Saint Confucius. There was a legend in Northeast China in which Dao Zhi said, "I am Dao Zhi who pays greatest attention to humanity, justice, propriety, wisdom and faith." He emphasised, "There may be ten thousand things in the world, but there is only one truth, that is, one who cares about humanity and justice will live long, while one who does not will certainly fail."

and people who are believed to have become immortals, such as the Jade Emperor, the Sun, the Moon, Tathagata, Amitabha, Guanyin, the God of Wealth, the Village God, the thirty-six Heavenly Spirits and the seventy-two Earthly Fiends, the Thunder God, the Rain God, the Wind God, the Dragon Kings of the Four Seas and all the founding fathers and saints of the society (Zhou Yumin & Shao Yong 1995, 92). Bandits also believe in all kinds of gods, but they mainly believe in the eighteen Arhats.

Superstition is a means frequently used by Chinese outlaw heroes to attract people to join them. Almost all of them claim to be acting in Heaven's name or simply claim to be representatives of Heaven. For example, Xu Hongru, one of the leaders of the White Lotus Society in the Yuan dynasty hung a mirror in the hall and asked people to look in the mirror. Those who looked in the mirror were surprised to find that they wore different kinds of official uniform. When Xu himself looked into the mirror, he was reflected as in a king's uniform. People were so awed that they were willing to serve him. No one knew what kind of magic he used, but it was certain that his magic was good enough to deceive others. In just a few months, more than ten thousand people joined him (Pu Songling 1979 324). Hong Xiuquan simply claimed to be the "Heavenly King" who received orders directly from the God (Levenson 1968, Vol. 2, 101). Bandit superstition originates from animism. Bandits pray to natural forces that have souls to protect them. This kind of folkloric belief embodies their knowledge, feelings, motivation and desire. "All kinds of natural and social forces are refracted into two kinds of souls: good (gods and Buddha) and evil (ghosts and goblins)" (Cheng Su 1991, No. 3, p.167). The adviser of a bandit gang often resorts to a certain kind of mumbo jumbo to arouse awe among fellow bandits.

"*Chenyao*"²⁵ is a ballad in form, which is frequently used to call on people to join the gang, to support the chief or to rebel. "*Chenyao*" is composed beforehand and is spread among the people, but the one who delivers it will say it is revealed by God so that it has a mysterious tincture. The first recorded "*chenyao*" was made and

Therefore, it won't do without humanity, justice, propriety, wisdom and faith" (Cao Baoming 1994, 188).

²⁵ "*Chenyao*" was a prophecy in the form of ballad, which was believed to have been revealed by God and to be realised in the near future.

spread by Chen Sheng and Wu Guang. To mobilise people, they adopted two means. One involved writing “King Chen Sheng” on pieces of cloth and hiding them in fish bellies; and the other involved imitating the voice of foxes to recite the “*chenyao*”: “The Great Chu will rise and Chen Shen will be the King.”²⁶ When soldiers in the army found the writing in fish bellies and heard the foxes’ words, they believed that it was ordinance and followed Chen and Wu in rebellion (Sima Qian 1994, 579). In the late Tang dynasty, there spread such a “*chenyao*” ballad, “A gold frog opened its angry eyes, and there will be a rebellion all over the country started in Caozhou.” Soon after people heard this Wang Xianzhi and Huang Chao²⁷ rebelled in Caozhou. Obviously the “*chenyao*” was made by the rebels (Wang Yude et al 1993, 392).

In the late Yuan dynasty, Han Shantong and Liu Futong also used “*Chenyao*” to call on people. They buried a stone-carved man in the place where people were building a dam and made up the “*chenyao*”: “A stone man has only one eye, who stirs up the Yellow River and a national rebellion” (Wang Yude et al 1993, 392). According to Wu Han, on the 22 April 1351, about 150,000 labourers were ordered to build the Yellow River dam in Henan. The labourers, having not enough to eat because the officials embezzled money, often complained. Han and Liu took the advantage and spread the rumour that the world would see a great turbulence and the Maitraya had been born into this world to save it. When they really dug out the stone man with only one eye, “thousands of labourers were astounded” (Wu Han 1993, 27). They believed that the “*chenyao*” was God’s will, so they joined the rebellion. Besides the ballad mentioned above, the following ballad expressed the same ideas:

The Heaven has sent this army to kill the persecutors,
The wronged kill those who give the injustice.
The wronged kill all those who give the injustice,
Only then can the world be at peace (Wang Yude et al 1993, 222).

This ballad was said to be sciomantic writing, revelation given by gods or spirits. When Zhu Yuanzhang got the upper hand among the rebels, he made up a “*chenyao*” in Hebei, saying, “The pagoda is black, so the northerners will be host and the

²⁶ Chen Sheng used the “Great Chu” (*da chu*) as the reign title.

²⁷ Wang Xianzhi and Huang Chao were leaders of peasant uprisings in the late Tang dynasty. Wang was killed and Huang committed suicide when they were defeated.

southerners guests; the pagoda is red, so the man in red will be the master.” His family name “Zhu” means “red”. It is believed that it was Zhu himself who juggled things. Sometimes the rebels made use of the ballads already spread in their own favour. When he seized Yingtian, Zhu claimed to be King Wu, because there was a ballad which said, “Don’t build mansions, the rich people; don’t build houses, the poor people. In the year of ram, this will be the country of the Wu.” Zhu finally overthrew the Yuan dynasty and became “the master”, first emperor of the Ming dynasty (Wang Yude et al 1993, 392).

In the Jiaqing period (1796-1820) of the Qing dynasty, there spread such “*chenyao*” ballads: “When the North water returns to the Han Emperor, the heaven and earth will change”, and “If you want the red flowers to bloom, you must wait till Yanshuang (literally ‘killing frost’) comes”. They were made up by two peasant rebels Liu Qing and Li Wencheng. “The Han Emperor” refers to Liu Qing, whose family name was the same as that of Liu Bang, the first emperor of the Han dynasty, while Li Wencheng’s alias was “Yanshuang” (Wang Yude et al 1993, 392). “*Chenyao*” was used in ancient times and mostly spread in the form of ballads through children.

Religions and superstitious beliefs are not related with the outlaw hero in the West, but in China they not only play an important role in his everyday life, but sometimes also provide a theoretical foundation for his rebellion. Dominant religions in China include Buddhism and Taoism, but popular religions comprise of all kinds of beliefs and sects, which are products of the lower class people including peasants, floating people, petty craftsmen and especially the underworld people. Popular religions, called “heretical religions” by the rulers, spread secretly, hardly distinguished from superstitious beliefs. However, even Taoism and Buddhism, Taoism in particular, are used by outlaw heroes to call upon people. In 1754 the government noted “the likely link of Taoism (and Buddhism) with low fellows, lawless *fei* or vagabonds” (Levenson 1968, Vol., 2, 78). To control such religions, the government set up an office for records of Taoist priests. Taoism took shape in the Han dynasty, which featured small-scale peasant economy and living style. Taoism reflects the peasant consciousness and resistant spirit against exploitation and oppression.

Other religions, such as Christianity and Manichaeism (called *Moni* in Chinese)²⁸ have also been used by leaders of peasant uprisings. As Hu Daojiang says, “In the history of the feudal society of our country, many peasant uprisings flaunted the banner of religion. For example, in the Song dynasty, Fang La’s peasant uprising army called on people with Manichaeism, and in the late Qing dynasty, the peasant uprising army of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom used Christianity as a call (Hu Daojiang 1991, 182). Another purpose of bandits’ using religions is to unite themselves and solve problems for which they cannot find a rational solution. Fairbank highlights this:

The admixtures of Manichaeist and Maitreyan beliefs provided an apocalyptic strain that could play its part in history when social and political conditions were at their nadir. The advent of the saviour, whether the Manichaeist prince of light (*ming-wang*) or the ‘future’ Buddha (Maitreya - Mi-le-fo) could signal the coming transformation of all worldly institutions and ignite armed uprisings among the scattered congregations of believers” (Fairbank 1978, Parts I, 139).

In history, famous popular religions have all been created or used by outlaws. In the late Eastern Jin dynasty, Sun En and Lu Xun made use of the *Wu Dou Mi* (Five Bushels of Grain) Sect to organise peasants in the coastal areas to rebel. In the late Five dynasties (907-960), Mu Yi and Dong Yi used Manichaeism. At the close of the Eastern Han dynasty (15-220), Zhang Jiao used popular religion in organising the Yellow Turbans Uprising. He founded the Tai Ping (Peace) Sect, worshipping a god called “*Zhang Huang Taiyi*”. He created the slogan “The blue sky is dead, and the yellow sky is rising; in the year of Jiazi,²⁹ peace will prevail under heaven.” Poor peasants expected the year of Jiazi, and on city walls, gates and other public places, the word “Jiazi” was found (Bai Yang 1987, 342). The previously-mentioned White Lotus Sect (or Society) was used by Han Shantong and Liu Futong in the North and Peng Yingyu and Xu Shouhui in the South to organise peasant uprisings in the Yuan dynasty (Bai Yang 1987, 690-691). Zhu Yuanzhang himself was a believer of the White Lotus Sect, but he turned against it when he became Emperor. In the Ming dynasty, Tang Saier in 1420 and Xu Hongru in 1622 respectively organised revolts in

²⁸ A religion originated in Persia in the third century and entered China in the seventh century, also known as *Ming Jiao* (the religion of light).

Shandong in the name of the White Lotus Sect (Bai Yang 1987, 736). In the Qing dynasty, the White Lotus Sect was strictly banned, but many people led revolts in its name, including Wang Cong'er, Liu Song, Nie Renjie and Wang Sanhuai. In the modern time in the South, especially Sichuan province, the *Guolu* bandit gangs were closely related to the White Lotus Sect. Besides the White Lotus Sect, the *Bagua* (Eight Diagrams) Sect, the *Tianli* (Heavenly Way) Sect and the *Hong Yang* (Red Sun) Sect were all used by outlaws (Wang Yude et al 1993, 217-221).

In feudal China, people tend to be loyal to the throne, good or bad, and will not rebel unless forced, but they believe in God's will, which can make them proceed without hesitation. There are two reasons for this: first, poor peasants, oppressed and exploited, want to get out of poverty; second, God is almighty and the poor are happy to accept the promised good future, equality, retribution, and of course, the millennium. In the last two thousand years and more, China saw hundreds of peasant uprisings. Religion and superstition had always been used as a banner to call upon people to take part in the uprisings and as an organisational form in the process. This historical phenomenon lasted well into the twentieth century.

Bandit life is unstable and unsafe, so bandits tend to believe in anything that they think of as being able to protect them. Bandit culture is inevitably suffused with supernatural and mythical beliefs. Bandits believe not only in gods but also certain animals that they think of as having become immortals or having the power of ensnaring, controlling and even killing. They believe that foxes and weasels have more such power than other animals. Superstition often gives bandits spiritual comfort and peace. Bandits enshrine and worship *Hu Xian* (the Fox Spirit), *Huang Xian* (the Weasel Spirit) and *She Xian* (the Snake Spirit), which they believe can either protect them or enchant them and lead them astray in the mountains or forests. These animals are immortals (*Xian*), like other immortals changed from human beings such as the

²⁹ In the lunar calendar, the years are designated by the combination of the ten Heavenly Stems and the twelve Earthly Branches. Every sixtieth year is the year of Jiazi. Here the year of Jiazi refers to 184AD.

Eight Immortals (Cao Baoming 1994, illustrations).³⁰ These animal immortals are naughty ones. If they are not very well treated, they will make trouble.³¹

Bandits' superstition is related to the local people's superstitious beliefs which are narrow in perception and utilitarian in practice. All the superstitious beliefs are closely linked to the interest of individuals or a group of people intimately related. Fortune-telling, consulting oracle, worshipping gods and spirits, are all used to predict the good or bad luck of an individual or a family, or preparing them for pursuing good fortune and avoiding disaster. Praying to "the weasel spirit" not to eat one's chickens, praying to the rain god to rain when there is a drought, and praying to the kitchen god to "report everything good to Heaven" are popular activities in Northeast China.

In the old days, the most fearful thing about walking in the forests and mountains was to lose the way, because one who lost his way would, in eight or nine cases of ten, die. So chiefs of a gang had to possess the ability of telling directions in thickly forested mountains under any circumstance. They could tell time and direction by the sun, the moon, the stars, flowers, grass leaves and rivers. Bandits often travel in dense forests or mountainous areas and at night. They would also pray to those animal immortals mentioned above for help when they get lost. Besides, they believed in the efficacy of incantations. In the Northeast people believed that when one walked at night, he might come across "*gui da qiang*" (the wall built by ghosts), i.e., it became so black that one could not see the road and anything else. At such moments, some bandits would recite the incantation:

I am not afraid of walking at night,
I have brass hands and iron nails,
I have seven clubs and eight guardian warriors,
I have a fire dragon that shines in all directions (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 1, 47).

There were five other ways to find the correct direction. First, the "*Fanduo*" (Advisor) placed playing cards in eight directions indicated by the names of the Eight Diagrams, i.e., *qian* [Northwest], *kan* [north], *gen* [Northeast], *zhen* [east], *xun*

³⁰ Legendary figures, i.e., Lu Dongbin, Zhang Guolao, Han Xiangzi, Han Zhongli, Tieguai Li (Li the Cripple with an iron crutch), He Xiang (a woman immortal alias "He the Fairy") and Cao Guojiu (Cao the prince's maternal uncle).

[Southeast], *li* [south], *kun* [Southwest], *dui* [west]]. There was one card representing “*shengmen*” (the gate of life). The gang would go to the direction in which the card was found. When doing “*bai ba men*”, the “*Fanduo*” would mutter incarnations:

The eighteen arhats, my Lords,
Please point the way to us.
When our gang get out of here,
We'll give you sacrifice (Cao Baoming 1994, 140).

Second, the “*Fanduo*” designated a part of his hat as “the gate of life” and threw the hat to the air. When the hat fell to the ground, he would find the direction of “the gate of life” and lead the gang out. Third, the “*Fanduo*” inserted four joss sticks on four piles of earth in four directions and burnt them. The direction in which the fastest burning joss stick indicated would be “*shengmen*”. Fourth, the “*Fanduo*” folded the four corners of a handkerchief and threw it to the air. When it fell down to the ground, the direction in which the corner was unfolded would be “*shengmen*”. Fifth, the “*Fanduo*” studied the constellation image to tell the time and direction, but very often at night in dense forests or mountains, or when it was cloudy, star image study was made impossible (Cao Baoming 1994, 140-141).

Superstition was also reflected in bandit actions and behaviours. When two bandits from different places met, they saluted to each other by holding the right fist with the left hand and putting them to the right hip (EBHA 1992a, 116). In the old days, men saluted each other by holding the right fist with the left hand, raising them to the height of their noses and shaking up and down, but bandits did not do it that way, because it was believed to be the gesture of being handcuffed.³² Whistling was thought to bring bad luck; kowtow was forbidden because that was the gesture of waiting for the executioner's sword to fall; clasping the hands behind one's back was taboo because it resembled a trussed prisoner's posture (Billingsley 1988, 147). In the Northeast, bandits never put chopsticks across a dish or a bowl, because the word describing such a position sounds similar to that of “a violent death” (Billingsley 1988, 118-119). Such taboos are based on the hylozoistic belief that all matter is endowed

³¹ In and before the 1950s in villages in the Northeast, small temples enshrining the tablets of *Hu Xian* and *Huang Xian* were seen everywhere.

³² What Billingsley says about the “bandit salute” is not correct (See Billingsley 1988, 120).

with life, a belief held by people who associate phenomena they cannot explain and control with things which happen to them.

Superstition about numbers, dates and hours of the day also affect the actions of a bandit gang. Billingsley says:

Among other actions designed to improve or protect the gang's fortune was the practice of sprinkling five drops of wine on the floor with the middle finger before a meal to signify respect for Heaven, earth, the emperor, and both parents. Whereas Manchurian gangs allegedly carried out attacks only on days with odd numbers – 3, 5, 7, or 9 (Billingsley 1988, 148).

Bandits often use such numbers such as “three”, “six” and those that are their multiples such as “nine” and “eighteen”, which they believe are lucky numbers. Eighteen is the number of the arhats; Hong Bang has Thirty-six Rules; in *Tian Di Hui*, one who violates rules will be flogged thirty-six, seventy-two, one hundred and eight, or three hundred and sixty lashes. However, Cao Baoming states the fact that bandits often use the numbers “three” and “six” comes from Mozi's way of arranging the structure of his articles, which all contains three chapters (Cao Baoming 1994, 165-166). Whether it is coincidence is not clear, but the fact is that Mozi liked using the numbers “three” and “six”. For example, he could cut a piece of three *cun* wood into a bearing that can carry six hundred *jin*. A family should use only “a three *cun* thick wood coffin” and “hold the funeral for three days” (CGACTOA 1986, 58-59). The “three” great disasters Mozi listed included, “no rest for the labouring”, “no food for the hungry” and “no clothes for the cold” (CGACTOA 1986, 63). *Shui Hu Zhuan* uses these numbers most frequently: three thousand six hundred Taoist prayer services, thirty-six stars of Heavenly Spirits and seventy-two stars of Earthly Fiends, “Of all the thirty-six ways to get out of trouble, the best way is – to leave”, eighteen weapons, three heavenly books and the Magic Queen of the Ninth Heaven, three attacks on the Zhu Family Manor, three mountain bands attacking Qingzhou, a total of one hundred and eight chieftains, “Song Jiang set troops in nine segments within an octagon”, etc (Shi Nai'an & Luo Guanzhong, 1975).

Even on the same day, the timing of bandit activities was carefully regulated.

Bandits had a rhyme indicating “*shichen*”³³ for action on a day:

At *chou*, do not go far, and at you not to the east,
The effort of getting riches and happiness will be all in vain.
At *yin*, it is very dangerous to go to the west,
The sick will encounter ghosts and be hurt by evil spirits.
At *hai* and *zi*, the North means separation,
Roosters and dogs make your effort come to naught.
At *si* and *wei*, the Northeast is blocked,
With three mountains in the way there will be disasters.
Do not go to the Southwest at *wu* and *shen*,
You should just get off your horse and gain nothing.
At *xu*, do not go to the Southeast,
There will be quarrels and bane.
At *mao*, the road to the Northwest will be blocked,
By waters and mountain unsurpassable (Li Ling 1995, 45).

Dreams are a significant factor that influences bandit activities. Interpretation of dreams in China is mainly based on mysticism rather than psychoanalysis as used by Freud. Some omens indicated by different dreams are believed to have definite meanings. Old men or women appearing in the dream are regarded as God of Wealth, girls or young women as honourable people who will help, a girl in yellow as Miss Yellow – gold, fire as good luck, water as wealth, a coffin as wealth, a donkey as gains,³⁴ a funeral ceremony with children crying as bad luck, wind as losing wealth, a tiger as a strong enemy, a dog chasing people as bad luck for attacking, a man jumping down from a tree as bad luck because “jumping” (*tiao*) in the bandit language means “soldiers” or “policemen” (Cao Baoming 1994, 139-140).

A book titled *A Complete Book of Zhou Gong's Interpretation of Dreams* is used by all kinds of people including bandits. There are also other methods such as “interpreting dreams by splitting Chinese characters”. Bandits’ belief that dreams have meanings is again based on animism. Bandits’ superstition of natural phenomena, animals, gods and spirits, sorcery, etc., reflects such bandit beliefs that as long as they

³³ *Shichen* is a traditional Chinese time measurement, i.e., one of the twelve two-hour periods into which the day is divided, each being given the name of one of the twelve Earthly Branches: *zi*, *chou*, *yin*, *mao*, *chen*, *si*, *wu*, *wei*, *shen*, *you*, *xu*, *hai*. *Zi* is the period from 11pm to 1am; *chou* is the period from 1am to 3am; the rest is on the analogy of this.

³⁴ A donkey in a dream symbolises gains, which means that the Immortal Zhang Guolao has arrived on his donkeyback – good luck and gains.

combine their own strength with that of gods or spirits, they can win a battle, get good luck, predict the future and get out of trouble. Dreams, like other unfathomable phenomena to people in the past such as meteors, comets, solar eclipses, lunar eclipses, earthquakes and even eyelid shakes, were regarded as revelation by gods or spirits. When Song Jiang led his troops to attack Daming prefecture, Cao Gai, who was dead, appeared in his dreams and stopped him from taking a planned revenge. Song then sent for Wu Yong, the Military Advisor and told Wu about his dream. Wu said that Cao's words could not be ignored, so they stopped the attack (Shi Nai'an & Luo Guanzhong 1975, 902-903).

Routine and Recreational Activities

As bandits all over the world, Chinese bandits mainly rob, burn and kill. How and why they do these things are instructive. As other people have routines at work, bandits had their regular activities including “*zayao*” (attacking a village or homesteads), “*bangpiao*” (kidnapping), “*baofu*” (revenging), and “*yule*” (entertaining) (Cao Baoming 1988, 48).

“*Zayao*” in bandit argot means armed attack of fortified towns, villages or homesteads. In the early twentieth century, homesteads of rich people were protected with tall and solid walls and by armed guards. Such homesteads were called “*xiangyao*” (sounding brothels). Small bandit gangs did not have the courage to attack such homesteads. Some owners of homesteads, with fortified walls and connections in the government, were so self-assured that they hung red flags over the roof to show their contempt for bandits. Such homesteads, called “*hongyao*” (red brothels), were dangerous and difficult to attack. “*Zayao*” was generally done by large gangs with several hundred people and sufficient weapons. Before the attack the “*chaqian*” (spy) was sent into the village to investigate the force, weapons, hidden guns and roads. The attack was generally waged at night and organised carefully, because such homesteads were always well prepared and would go all out to protect themselves. Failure in attacking a homestead would bring shame on the bandit gang, which would become a laughing stock among bandits. So it was common that a bandit gang repeatedly

attacked a homestead until they seized it. To ensure success, the “*chaqian*” sometimes tried to buy over people in the homestead, such as concubines, maids or farm hands (Cao Baoming 1988, 50). Those who attacked only rich homesteads were regarded as “*haohan*” (heroes) by people from poorer social strata.

Besides robbing wealth as Western outlaws did, Chinese bandits kidnapped people (*bangpiao*) from rich families as hostages who they called “*piao*” (notes) or “*yangzi*” (seedlings), implying that they were money or a growth (like the growth of seedlings) of money. They asked the families to ransom the kidnapped within a certain period of time, otherwise they would torture them.

Bandits would not rob street-performers, because first they were also “people of the Rivers and Lakes”,³⁵ and second they needed these people to perform for them. Of course most of the performers were forced to do so. Sometimes they had to stay with a bandit gang for several days. During the day, bandits went out to do “business”, at night they would ask the entertainers to perform. Sometimes, bandits also performed themselves. Reciting ballads was one of the most frequently performed acts. Most ballads were made up by themselves. The following ballad is said to be the most heard among bandits:

A bare-stick³⁶ has no companion,
Who cooks soup for you when you are ill?
A bare-stick leads a hard life,
Who patches up your clothes when they are worn out?
A bare-stick lives a happy life,
When you are fed no one in your family will starve (Cao Baoming 1994, 217).

Bandits have their special recreational activities such as playing cards, “*zouwudao*”³⁷, shooting competitions, sword competitions, opera performance, etc. The most popular ones are “shooting coins”, “guessing riddles” and the “finger-guessing game”. They hung an old coin which had a square hole in the middle from a tree branch and shot from a distance of about one hundred yards. The winner would be paid by the loser with bullets, money or other things. Sometimes they shot at a burning

³⁵ See Chapter 2.

³⁶ In Chinese a bare-stick (*guanggunr*) is a bachelor.

joss stick at night, a bowl placed on one's head, a chopstick or a flying bird. Among other recreational activities were wrestling competitions, fencing, drinking and singing vulgar songs (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 1, 109). Guessing riddles was a popular and simple game. One gave the riddles for others to guess. Since bandits lived a vagrant life, complex games were almost impossible, so guessing riddles became one of the main recreational activities. They often drank, especially in the cold winter and after they captured a homestead. While drinking, they would have the drinking game called "*huaquan*" (finger-guessing). Before they started, each should recite a ballad about drinking. The one who could not recite had to drink a cup of wine first. While doing the finger-guessing, the loser had to drink each time (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 1, 73).

Bandits had their dreams, hopes, needs and moods as ordinary people. When they watched the performances, "They showed longings and happiness on their faces." (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 1, 215). Life for bandits is unavoidably hard. They wanted to relieve the hardships by trying to live as happily as possible. To achieve this end, they try to win the favour of their countrymen by acting bravely and generously, to create a culture for themselves to remedy the separation from the normal culture, to entertain themselves in different ways, and to avoid possible disasters.

The cultural products created by bandits in China are in essence related to the outlaw hero's thought of "robbing the rich to help the poor" and defying the authorities. They call policemen *gouzi* (dogs), one of the worst terms used in China to curse. If one is called a dog, he is a most contemptible person. Such expression as "worse than a dog or a pig", "running dog", "like a dog threatening people on the strength of its masters power", are the worst things that one can say about another person. Bandits compare rich homesteads, police stations, *yamen* and prisons to brothels, not only expressing their contempt for such places but also reflecting their view of such places as dirty and disgusting. These cultural products provide people with a physical view of the outlaw hero tradition in China and enable scholars to examine the tradition from within and without. They reflect that outlaw heroes,

³⁷ A game played by two people: drawing a square of five horizontal and five vertical lines, each person place five small stones on the bottom line and move them. One who capture all of the other's stones wins.

generally as heads of bandit gangs in China, stressed unity in fighting against the rich and authorities. The internal regulations of bandit gangs, restricting gang members from perpetrating whatever evils they pleased, enable the outlaw heroes to put into practice his ideas of “robbing the rich to help the poor”. These cultural products have become folkloric source material, a part of Chinese culture. The gods they worship are gods who punish the wicked and help the wronged. Cao Baoming argues, “According to popular legends, originally they³⁸ are also ‘*youxia*’ or rebels against the bad society.”³⁹ The secret language, ceremonies and activities formed a unique cultural and ideological pattern, spread far and wide among bandits and inherited or imitated by the later underworld and even ordinary people in organising activities that may be prohibited by the authorities. These cultural products realistically reflect the social, cultural, economic and political situations of the time and are valuable historical materials. It is necessary to do comprehensive research on such bandit cultural products when examining the outlaw hero tradition in China.

³⁸ The eighteen arhats and the eight immortals.

³⁹ Cao Baoming, *Dongbei Mazei Shi* (A History of Horse Thieves in the Northeast), Preface.

Chapter 7

A Rabbit Does Not Eat the Grass Outside Its Own Burrow: Ballads and Proverbs

Throughout the world, outlaw heroes are celebrated in folklore. In China some of the most important and widespread folk expressions about bandits are found in ballads and proverbs. This chapter discusses such forms and analyses their significance in the perpetuation of the Chinese outlaw hero.

Never Bend Their Bodies: Positive Bandit Ballads

Seal calls those ballads in praise of unnamed highwaymen who followed the code of the outlaw hero tradition “positive highwayman ballads” (Seal, Graham 1989, 31). These are called “positive bandit ballads” in this thesis. In the *Selected Chinese Ballads* are forty-seven such ballads in praise of outlaw heroes including Li Zicheng, the Nian Army, the Yi He Tuan Movement,¹ and other rebellions. In Shang Liqun’s *One Hundred Ballads from the Past*, there are fifteen ballads about outlaw heroes or rebels. The following short ballads are selected examples of a large body of such ballads. First, a ballad in praise of Li Zicheng:

Damn it food,
Damn it clothing.
When you don’t have enough,
Just come to the Daring King.
Then you needn’t serve in the army,
Nor need you taxation to pay.
Everyone will live happily (Li Huifang 1996, 162).

The Taipings are most lauded in ballads. In one ballad, the image of the “long hairs”² and that of red flowers are very impressive:

Pomegranate blossoms in April are red as fire,
From Xuzhou in the South come troops called “Long Hairs”.
They are soldiers of the Heavenly Kingdom, Aiheyao,
They kill the rich, help the poor and save the masses (CFASS 1959, Vol. 1, 133).

The masses like the “Long Hair”, but the official soldiers hate and fear them:

¹ Namely the Boxer Uprising in 1900.

When back looks the Long Hair,
The official soldiers are filled with scare(CFASS 1959, Vol. 1, 228).

As previously discussed, the Boxers are a group of people who touch off most contradictory feelings among Chinese as well as foreigners, but many Chinese regard them as heroes. The movement first started in Shandong, where the tradition of outlaw heroism is most cherished. This ballad shows how persistently the Boxers struggled:

Women join *Hong Deng Zhao*³,
And men join Yihetuan.
You can't drive them apart,
Nor catch them all (CFASS 1959, Vol. 1, 148).

Historical bandits, such as the Nians, also have their positions and unforgettable images in ballads. "Nian⁴ Brothers with Red Faces" is one of such ballads:

Nian brothers with red faces
Poor as they are,
Never bend their bodies.
They kill the official soldiers and the landlords
And save us poor brothers (SCB 1978, 50).

In modern China, "The Ballad of Horse Thieves" which circulates in the Northeast contains the message of robbing the rich and that of bandits' enjoying the life:

In the green curtain of tall crops,
Carrying guns and riding on horseback,
They join the *Da Pai*⁵,
Robbing only those ostentatious moneybags,
But not those who have no land and no house.
They eat dumplings, mung bean noodles and chicken;
They use opium and play cards.
They hold up homesteads,
And take away their horses.
When they need to make money,
They kidnap "red tickets"⁶.
Those who are prescient would
Surrender and be enlisted.
"With pay in the pocket,
I visit brothels.

² Referring to the Taipings.

³ *Hong Deng Zhao* (Red Lantern) was the organisation of females in the Boxer Movement.

⁴ Namely the Nian Army, or the Torch Bearers.

⁵ *Da Pai* is a kind of bandit organisation.

⁶ Important captives kidnapped from rich families.

It is worthwhile my doing it,
As heroes rise from the greenwood.
If one day the world changes,
I am a hero, no matter I lie down or stand” (Cao Baoming 1994, 232).

In Ludian of Henan, the following ballad spread during the period of the Republic gives evidence of the practice of robbing the rich:

Zhang Sanni, Ma Zicai,
In Ludian was also a Ren Shuanglai.
With a gun and a pistol,
They forced the Masters to give silver.
The silver that was white,
They spent buying guns and candles (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 3, 22).

Ballads describing bandit life often give a romantic and happy picture. If “The Jolly Highwayman” (Seal 1996, 31) depicts a contented British outlaw, the ballad “To Be A Huzi”⁷ and the “Changbai Mountain Ballad” describe the similar feelings of his Chinese counterpart:

In the Changbai Mountain,
There is a man called Wang Bo.⁸
His spear is long, and his sword shining,
In the Mountain, he eats roe deer;
Down the mountain, oxen and sheep are for his eating.
Upon learning that the government troops have arrived,
He charges forward with his sword in hand.
“It does not matter if I fight to death in battle
Or am by the government beheaded (Shang Liqun 1974, pp67-68).

Another ballad entitled “To Be Xiangma” circulating among Northeast bandits in China expresses the same optimistic view on bandit life:

To be *xiangma*,
You have much pleasure:
Riding on a high horse,
Drinking to your heart’s content,
Sleeping with women
And kissing their breasts (Cao Baoming 1994, 218).

Comparison of this ballad with one of Seal’s positive highwayman ballads shows that while the “Jolly Highwayman” found pleasure in robbing the rich, his Chinese

⁷ See Chapter 5.

⁸ In 611, Wang Bo revolted and operated in the Changbai Mountain of Shandong province.

counterpart enjoyed the pleasure of worldly comforts. When he was robbing “a lord of honour”, the Jolly Highwayman said:

I put a pistol to his breast, which made him for to shiver,
Ten thousand guineas all in bright gold to me he did deliver,
Besides a gold repeater watch to me he did surrender,
I thought I had noble prize to me he did deliver.

When he was captured he faced death in the same manner as his Chinese counterpart. “Glad was I, resolved to die, so fare you well, companions”, while the latter said, “It does not matter if I fight to death in battle / Or am by the government beheaded.”

As the legendary Robin Hood and his merry men are lauded as heroic figures in numerous British ballads, so the legendary outlaws of the Marsh have persisted in folksongs the same way.⁹ In the Xilishan area of Liangshan County and Chao Village of Yuncheng County of Shandong province, ballads about Chao Gai and the outlaws of the Marsh are heard everywhere. The local people feel proud of having such a tradition. The following ballad sings in praise of Chao Gai. The code of robbing the rich to help the poor and the code of fighting against tyranny are clearly manifested:

In the Hall of Fraternity were all heroes,
With Chao Gai as Number One.
They rebelled against corrupt officials and the Emperor,
And gave grain and clothes to save the poor.

Chao Baozheng claimed to be the Heavenly King,
And attacked the government by leading an uprising.
They robbed the Birthday Gift and took to the Liangshan Mountain,
And got soldiers and generals ready against the government tracing.
They wanted to see who the master was,
The Emperor or the heroes in the Mountain.

The Son of Heaven sent troops,
To suppress Chao Baozheng¹⁰,
But once they fought, the royal court lost.
The Heavenly King swore:
We'll seize the capital Bianliang,
And capture the Emperor Huizong.

⁹ The ballad “Bold Robin Hood” was originally collected in A. Williams’ *Folk Songs of the Upper Thames* published in London in 1923. For the ballad itself, see Seal 1996, 26.

¹⁰ Baozheng is Chao Gai’s alias name.

The outlaw hero proudly announced,
I, your Lord, having grown up on Reed Catkins Beach
Fear neither officials nor the Emperor (LITIAAS 1975, 326).

Not only in the Liangshan areas where the outlaws of the Marsh are believed to have operated, but also in other parts of China, ballads about these outlaws are very popular. In Huzhou of Zhejiang a popular ballad titled “Twelve *Taizi*¹¹ of the Outlaws of the Marsh” (Zhong Weijin et al 1991b, 339-341) gives a positive description of important episodes about these outlaws. In each stanza, three outlaw heroes of the Marsh are mentioned, so that the thirty-six Heavenly Stars are all praised. In the ballad “Ancient Figures of the Twelve Months”, these heroes are lauded side by side with famous ancient figures, such as Liu Bei, Guan Yu, Zhang Fei, Liu Bang, and Xiang Yu:

In the tenth month, the days are fine,
Song Gongming¹² on behalf of Heaven enforces justice.
Still remembered today for their brotherhood and loyalty
Are the one hundred and eight heroes of the Marsh (Zhong Weijin et al 1991b, 338).

Another ballad titled “The Twelve Horoscope Animals Representing the Years” praises the outlaws of the Marsh the same way:

The Tiger lives in the mountains,
But the real hero who kills the tiger is Wu Song.
Of the one hundred and eight heroes of Liangshan,
Song Jiang is Number One (Zhong Weijin et al 1991b, 342).

Most outlaw heroes are young in age. Billingsley asserts that thirty is the crucial age for banditry:

Chiefs for whom details are available all turn out to have been extremely young: Sun Meiyao (the man responsible for the Lincheng Incident) was 25, Laoyangren was 28 or 29 at the peak of his career, two Bai Lang subchiefs were 29 and 20, and Bai’s contemporary Gao Yongcheng was only 17 when he began his career. Han Yukun and Zhang Zhigong, with some years of banditry behind them, were still but 20 and 24, respectively, in 1911; in Manchuria, 25-26 was evidently the average age for chiefs (Billingsley 1988).

These young bandits were merry as the men in the Robin Hood’s gang, who were energetic and fearless:

¹¹ In Huzhou of Zhejiang a popular form of ballad is called “*taizi*” (stages).

¹² Song Jiang’s alias.

Looking majestic at the age of seventeen to eighteen,
When sleeping on the ground, I look like a dragon.
To die for the folks,
I take death as my hat being blown away by wind (SCB 1978 74).¹³

Compared with this young Chinese outlaw, the “flying” highwayman has the same quality, “youthful and bold”, robbing “only the rich”, helping the poor or “the folks”:

Young MORGAN was a flashy blade
No youth had better courage (Seal 1996, 35).

Like the young Chinese outlaw hero, he announced:

I scorn poor people for to rob,
I thought it so my duty;
But when I met the rich and gay,
On them I made my Booty (Seal 1996, 36).

He met his execution with the same required bravado,

I stood as bold as John of Gaunt,
All in my rich attire;
I ne'er seem'd daunted in the least,
Which made the court admire (Seal 1996, 36).

“The Wild Colonial Boy” in Australia was no less a young outlaw hero than the above-mentioned British and Chinese outlaws:

He was scarcely sixteen years of age when he left his father's home,
And through Australia's sunny clime a bushranger did roam.
He robbed those wealthy squatters, their stock he did destroy,
And a terror to Australia was the Wild Colonial Boy.

When he was surrounded, he faced death bravely and humorously:

He drew a pistol from his belt, and shook the little toy,
“I'll fight, but not surrender”, said the Wild Colonial Boy.

He fired at Trooper Kelly and brought him to the ground,
And in return from Davis received a mortal wound.
All shattered through the jaws he lay still firing at Fitzroy,
And that's the way they captured him – the Wild Colonial Boy (Seal 1996, 39).¹⁴

¹³Deng Laowu, a rebel against the Qing dynasty in 1911, was killed by the government at the age of 17.

¹⁴There are different versions of the ballad titled “The Wild Colonial Boy”. William Joy and Tom Prior give a different version, which they believe to be the most popular (Joy & Prior 1977, 129).

Unlike the rest of the oppressed or wronged who swallowed insults, outlaw heroes, living outside the law, unbound to the soil or the whim of any master, made their own laws, lived in their own society, and talked on equal terms with anyone they might encounter. In Liaoning, on the flag of a bandit gang appeared the following ballad:

We are the first corps in the world,
To us everybody owes money.
They won't pay back, if ask politely:
They pay us back only when asked forcibly (Cao Baoming 1994, 227).

They regarded themselves as the most courageous people in the world. They could only appeal to force to fight against such an unjust society.

Some ballads and proverbs reflected the qualities of the outlaw hero. As noted by Billingsley, "A rhyme that circulated in southwestern Henan around the time of the 1911 Revolution thus encapsulated the qualities of the ideal bandit chief by listing the respective attributes of seven prominent local 'heroes'" (Billingsley 1988, 103):

Righteousness itself in word and deed:
Guan Laojiu and Lao Zhang Ping;
Diligent pupil and respected teacher:
Zhang Zhigong and Zhai Yunsheng;
Alert to every trick and wile: Wang Tiancong;
Leaping into every breach: Han Yukun;
A demon who can kill at will: Tao Furong (Billingsley 1988, 103).

Wang Tianzong, Chai Yunsheng¹⁵, Zhang Zhigong, Guan Laojiu and Han Yukun were all regarded as outlaw heroes in Henan during and after the 1911 Revolution. When he was young, Wang Tianzong revered the spirit of knights-errant. He excelled in martial arts and marksmanship. He "hit the target every time without a miss, and was called a 'crack shot'" (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 2, 223).

In contrast, some ballads satirise the incapacity of the authorities, the police in the case of Australia. In Republican China, local governments were supposed to keep peace and settle disturbances in the area under their administration. However, peace

However the content and theme are the same in both versions. See also Seal's article titled "The Wild Colonial Boy Rides Again: An Australian Legend Abroad" (Craven 1994).

¹⁵ Not Zhai Yunsheng as spelt by Billingsley.

had never been realised, whereas disturbances had dominated. The reason was, on the one hand, the governments, especially at the county level, were weak. The best equipped county might have “a few hundred barely trained and poorly armed men”, while the worst equipped might have only several tens of constables. On the other hand, government employees and constables “would exploit the situation to their own ends, making false arrests so as to extort money from the victims, inciting vagrants to cause trouble and prolong the crisis, and so on. Someone in the magistrate’s office itself might even be in collusion with the bandits, selling them information about suppression plans.” For the magistrate of the county, or the local official, “the slightest hint of trouble could mark the end of his career” (Billingsley 1988, 152). As a result, “to report only what is good while concealing what is unpleasant” became a common practice among local officials. More often than not, they just turned a blind eye to bandit unrest in their respective areas:

The county magistrate turns a blind eye,
Playing mah-jong and carousing in the brothels.
No cares for the people, no plans against bandits –
Who’d imagine he’s on an official salary? (Billingsley 1988, 152)

Another ballad satirises the ineptitude of the police of the Republic:

The Republic is weak.
It sets up police stations,
And recruits those good-for-nothings.
They smoke foreign cigarettes,
And breath official airs.
There emerged bandits in South Mountains,
They sent such a policeman to suppress.
When he heard the shot of a gun,
He fell to the ground and ate a lot of mud.
When he got up and dusted his clothes,
He said “good luck, My Dad and Mum.”
He deserted the gun,
And ran and ran.
He dared not take the main roads,
But ran through sorghum fields.
When he encountered a peasant,
He stripped him of his shoes.
He bragged to people,
“I took them from the bandits” (CFASS 1959, Vol. 2, 115).

The situation in Australia for the local governments, though perhaps better equipped, was not much better. However the difference is that the Australian police did try, while their Chinese counterparts made no attempt at all. The following two lines from a Chinese ballad tells what the police or soldiers were doing when bandits came:

Rushing everywhere, the River Garrison,
Catches no bandits but chicken (CFASS 1959, Vol. 2, 121).

The outlaw hero tradition in China was basically a product of economic egalitarianism in its traditional culture to which peasants were the backbone supporters, and sometimes advocators themselves. Outlaw heroes wanted to distribute social wealth equally among the people, taking from those who had surplus to give to those who had not enough. This carried within itself the seeds of the peasant cultural psychology of rebelling against the authorities and the rich and demanding sameness of all people. This belief, with absolute egalitarianism at its core, could never be realised. However, the outlaw hero had always used it as a weapon and regarded it as an aim. Many bandits abided by the rule of “sharing food, sharing money, robbing the rich but not the poor, and robbing elsewhere but not the neighbourhood” (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 1, 447). As Billingsley put it, traditional slogans such as “carry out the way on Heaven’s behalf” and “rob the rich to aid the poor” were still appealing to outlaws in south Manchuria and the provincial border zones in the twentieth century (Billingsley 1988, 133). A song praising Bai Lang reflected such an appeal:

Bai Lang, Bai Lang –
He robs the rich to aid the poor,
And carries out the Way on Heaven’s behalf.
Everyone agrees that Bai Lang’s fine:
In two years rich and poor will all be levelled (Billingsley 1988, 133).

Billingsley discovered a study of the “people’s revolutionary movement in the Northeast”, which approvingly quoted the popular proverb: “When the bandits come, people send out presents of food and drink; when the soldiers come, they point them the wrong way at the crossroads.” Billingsley also found that “similar stories were recalled of Bai Lang’s popularity among the villagers of south and west Henan, where

legends of the exploits of Bai and other past heroes continued to circulate as late as the 1950's" (Billingsley 1988, 134).

Economic equality was by no means the same as social equality. Outlaws did not have the so-called class feeling, not to speak of class consciousness. Even hatred for the rich did not result from the class consciousness, as defined by Mao Zedong and his comrades, but from jealousy and anger at "their having amassed huge fortunes in the midst of the poverty and suffering of the peasants" (Billingsley 1988, 135). Billingsley quotes the following ballads to support his argument that "class feeling then, if not strictly class consciousness, was evidently not unknown":

Upper-class people, you owe us money;
Middle-class people, don't meddle in our affairs;
Lower-class people, come without delay,
And pass the years on the mountain with us (Billingsley 1988, 135).

Billingsley's understanding of the original ballad is not correct, especially the last line of the ballad: "*gen wo shang shan qu guonian*" in Chinese, which literally means "follow me to the mountains and celebrate the New Year." The ballad quoted by Billingsley is a word-for-word translation, which loses the emotional colouring and tone of the original. The term "*guonian*" (literally pass the years if translated word for word) actually means to "celebrate the Spring Festival (the Chinese New Year)", implying "leading a happy life" like having the Festival everyday. In Chinese when describing happy days, people often say, "It is like celebrating the New Year." Therefore, the bandits were in effect saying that they were having a happy life in the mountains. In old bandit stories, bandits were often described as "being kings of the mountains, dividing loot on the spot, drinking wine and eating meat with big bowls, allotting gold and silver with large steelyards, being like celebrating the New Year every day, and being like getting married every night" (Cai Shaoqing 1993, 63).

When quoting the same ballad, Perry quotes a large bandit gang's proclamation from Nagano Akira, a Japanese journalist who stayed in China during the 1930s to support the argument in favour of "a social bandit characterization" (Perry 1980, 73) of some Chinese bandits. The proclamation read:

We signal the masses of the green forest to assemble for one end – liquidation of the corrupt elements in our society. The common folk are our concern and

communal property our goal. First we must beat to death all greedy officials and evil rich, destroying the root of China's trouble and transforming this into a pure new world (Perry 1980, 73-74).

Rebel Rather Than Wait for Death

Government oppression and social injustice put people in hardships and destitution. As the saying puts it, "When a man is cornered he will become a bandit, as a dog will bite people when pushed to the wall" (Li Ling 1995, 3). Many people took to the greenwood as a result of being forced either by the tyrannical government or poverty. They were first outlawed and outcast by the society before they were forced into crime. The reasons why people became bandits are also explained in ballads and proverbs:

The Government Drives People to Revolt¹⁶

The sun is burning like fire
Withered are crops in the fields;
The government troops
Rob all the money and grain;
Young and handsome men
Are all beheaded by the government troops;
Young and beautiful girls
Are all taken away by the government troops.
As weeds in the fields cannot be extirpated
In the world there are countless villains.
Can we endure any longer?
Can we live on like this?
Come on!
Draw you sword out,
Put your rifle on your shoulder,
Follow Zhang Xiumei¹⁷
To teach the government troops a lesson.
Let them see the true colour of the Miao people,
Who are not to be pushed around (SCB 1978, 59-60).

Poverty was always a reason for people to become bandits: "Rich places turn out scholars and poor places bandits" (Zeng Fanhua & Hou Jianfei 1995, 17). Huning of Henan was a poor place, where, in the rocky mountains and dense forests, people led a hard life. In the early days of the Republic, there was a saying in this area, "Huning has

¹⁶ This is a ballad of the Miao Nationality.

two specialities: bamboo and bandits” (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 3, 194). An earlier ballad called on people to “Rebel Rather Than Wait for Death” in hunger:

During the year of Xianfeng,¹⁸
When famine attacking,
Eaten up is the grass
On both sides of the Wohe River.
With landlords for payment of debts pressing,
Rebel rather than for death waiting (SCB 1992, 35).

In China there is an old saying, “People consider food the first necessity.” Food has always been the first concern of the Chinese people. Land that produces food for the people, therefore, is considered most important in life. Before the Communists took power, in ten counties of west Hunan, more than one hundred million people did not have an inch of land (Zeng Fanhua & Hou Jianfei 1995, 152). Without land, people could not have food. Without food, people would choose to become bandits. As another proverb puts it, “When people are starving, the weak among them become beggars, the strong, bandits” (Billingsley 1988, 42). So famine-struck areas are generally well-known for banditry. In Fengyang of Anhui province, the beggars’ song titled *Fengyang Huagu* (Flower-drum Song) has become a popular folk song:

I tell of Fengyang, I speak of Fengyang:
Fengyang was once a good place.
Since Zhu, the Emperor, came out of here,
Nine out of ten years there has been famine (Lu Zhiwei 1982, 76).

Zhu, the Emperor, here refers to Zhu Yuanzhang, who was once a beggar in Fengyang. Huaibei (North of the Huaihe River, including the northern part of Anhui) had been known for centuries as “a hotbed of Chinese banditry” (Perry 1980, 62). Poverty caused by frequent natural disasters was one of the most significant catalysts for banditry. A poem of the late Qing dynasty wrote:

Pitiful Huai people – victims of flood.
Our temples have been inundated and our ancestral tombs deluged.
Our houses are like fish swimming in a stewpot.
The old peasant planning a dike shoulders his bamboo baskets of dirt.
His feet torn, his hands blistered, he ceases not his labor.
Muddy water reaches his waist; grass covers his stomach.

¹⁷ Zhang Xiumei, a leader of a Miao peasant rebellion from 1855-1872. He was arrested and executed.

¹⁸ The first year of Xianfeng, i.e., year 1851.

He draws water, yet the water refuses to subside,
Rising, in a single night, four to five feet.
Good fortune brings abundant green seedlings.
Alas, why is the river god so unkind?
Raise high your head and cry to heaven.
But heaven answers not.
We cannot wait for the rivers to clear;
We pray only that the dikes will hold, and
The merit of those who control the rivers
Will be engraved upon tablets of jade (Perry 1980, 62).

In the period of the Republic, natural calamities became even worse. According to Perry, "In 1911 the American Red Cross estimated that Huai-pei was subject to some form of natural catastrophe at least once every three or four years" (Perry 1980, 15). In Longshan county of Hunan there is a mountain called Bamianshan, which was a lair of bandits in the period of the Republic. Qu Boping started his bandit career from here. There was a ballad describing the poverty of the place:

Bamianshan is high, and people's misfortunes are many.
Unable to find food, birds fly away.
Grass roots were eaten by people as food.
Nine out of ten sheds are dilapidated (Tian Xinghua 1993, 45).

In the 1930s', in the Bohai Bay area, there was a well-known pirate alias "Hei Laowu" (Black Old Five). He was very poor before he became a bandit. He had a rich aunt, but she refused to help him. To survive, he forcibly took a mule away from his aunt. Later he became a pirate lording it over that district:

"Hei Laowu" was a short man,
He made for himself a fake gun.
He robbed his aunt of a mule with the fake gun,
And he sold the mule and got a real gun.
He occupied an island with the gun,
And strangled the necks of fishermen (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 2, 60).

In the early days of the Republic, there was a saying: "One who is not a bandit cannot become an official; one who is not a prostitute cannot become an official's concubine" (Li, Ling 1995, 4). A ballad circulated in Fujian province indicated the same situation:

The Republic is a strange world:
The gun barrel is the commander;
Hooligans become officials,

And prostitutes become madams (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 2, 472).

This reflects the characteristics of the time when everyone who had the resources, ability or ambition to become somebody would venture to first become a bandit and, when the time came, to become an official by changing camp overnight. As a result, many people became bandits in a chaotic period. “Heroes rise from all directions in troubled times, and one who has guns becomes a ‘king of the grass’” (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 2, 2). This shows the fact that people became bandits not just because of being forced by hard life. There were many reasons, one being that some careerists wanted to take the advantage of a time of turmoil for their own good. In the Bashang region of Hebei, where people tended to become bandits because, on the one hand, life was too hard:

Barren hills, flat lands and back flowing waters
Bring forth not generals or ministers but bandits.

On the other hand, in the same grassland area, banditry was simply encouraged:

To get rich,
You should organise a bandit gang.
If you organise a small gang,
You become a petty officer;
If you organise a large gang,
You become a high ranking officer (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 2, 81).

As discussed in previous chapters, in the period of the Republic, to be a bandit chief was one of the easiest ways to become an official and get rich. Just in Luoning county of Henan, fifteen bandit chiefs later became officers in the official army, including such famous ones as Ding Laoba (regiment commander), Mei Fakui (army commander) and Li Laoyao (division commander). There were such sayings in Henan, “To be an official, you have to ‘carry a stick’ (set up a bandit gang).” and “The greater trouble you make, the higher your rank will be” (Cai Shaoqing 1993, 33-34). Ballads satirised the phenomenon of “the rise of banditry as an avenue to power and privilege”:

Just pull back the trigger of your rifle
And you’ve two or three thousand silver dollars;
One who was “carrying a stick” in the morning
Will be an official by nightfall (Billingsley 1988, 200).

Negative Bandit Ballads

Most bandits were but robbers and thieves. Seal calls ballads consisting of texts “in which highway men are portrayed acting against or outside the code of the outlaw hero tradition and suffer appropriate consequences” “negative highwayman ballads” (Seal 1996, 39). The examples he gives include “The Yorkshire Farmer”, “The Yorkshire Bite”, “The Highwaymen Outwitted” and “The Two Jolly Butchers”. Chinese ballads of such a nature condemn bandits more directly than with a humorous or witty story as told in these four ballads. This is clear from a comparison of “The Two Jolly Butchers” and a Chinese ballad. In “The Two jolly Butchers”, a valiant man, who wanted to help a woman who was apparently the conspirator of three robbers, was trapped, robbed and killed by the “wicked woman” and the bandits. In this ballad, the cruelty and ingratitude of the bandits are exposed through the description of the murder of the kind-hearted and courageous Butcher by the bandits. Chinese ballads generally attack such crimes directly. In West Hunan, there was a black-hearted and cruel bandit called Zhang Ping. People used a ballad to condemn him:

When the Heaven sees Zhang Ping,
The sun and the moon will become dim;
When the earth sees Zhang Ping,
Grass and trees will not grow;
When people see Zhang Ping,
Nine out of ten will be dying (Zeng Fanhua & Hou Jianfei 1995, 331).

The following ballad is a typical Chinese one condemning bandits who acted against the code of the outlaw hero tradition:

On the thirtieth of July,
Just at noon time,
There came the bandit Zhang Guansan.
He killed people and set houses on fire,
And asked for money and food,
With crimes mounting up to the sky.
He attacked Nianzi Gou village,
Killing without an eyelid batting,
With machine guns and hand grenades roaring (Cao Baoming 1994, 228).

Another ballad simply expresses people’s hatred for bandits:

The yellow wind blows and blows,
The poor people’s tears flow and flow.
The snow falls and falls,

When the bandit kills and kidnaps.
People are so scared
That they dare not sleep (Cao Baoming 1994, 231-232).

To get ransom, such bandits often tortured the captives horribly. The bandits called this “*jiao yangzi*” (to teach the seedling [captive] a lesson). They invented many ways to torture the captives. One of the most cruel was “*aoying*” (make the eagle stay up all night). They asked the captives to ring a bell in succession around a fire at night. One who stopped in the process would be terribly beaten. Some of them were burnt to death and some badly wounded (Li Ling 1995, 44). Then the “Flowery Tongue” would go to the captives’ families and tell them how their beloved ones were suffering and they had better pay the ransom. There was a common saying among the bandits in the Northeast, “A seedling is like a *yaoqianshu*,¹⁹ if you do not knock it, gold will not drop off” (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 1, 223). If a captive’s family did not come with money on time, the bandits sometimes would possibly cut an ear off the captive and sent it to his home (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 1, 76-77). When such bandits entered a village, they would force the villagers to prepare good food for them. There spread among the bandits such sayings, “If you beat them, they give you rice and flour; if you don’t, they give you millet” (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 1, 83) and “You must be merciless when you beat the rich” (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 1, 433).

Billingsley notices that folk songs eloquently express the general air of apprehension affecting towns regularly visited by bandits. The following lyric that circulated in Xin’an and Mianchi tells how much fear people held in those days:

In daylight don’t dare leave the town,
At nighttime don’t dare hear a dog bark;
At the sound of single shot
All folk fear the worst (Billingsley 1988, 49).

People had good reasons to fear, because bandits were everywhere. In west Henan, banditry was a part of everyday life: “Fathers encouraged their sons, brothers urged their younger brothers, and women incited their husbands (to become bandits). Those who were unwilling were despised by their wives for their weakness. Those who happily complied were commended by father and brother for their spirit”

(Billingsley, 50). According to Billingsley, "These communities had a morality of their own, for there was no clear distinction between 'bandits' and others, and robbery in itself was not considered a crime" (Billingsley 1988, 50). In the bush in Xinghe County of Suiyuan, a family named Lu had been bandits generation after generation. They often said, "If you are born to be a bandit, you don't feel it a piece of bad luck even when you become a ghost." "I would rather bully than be bullied." "If you do not bully other people while young, you will regret when old." "Bad or not, a man with money is a hero." "A man is not afraid of death, because the earlier you die the earlier you will be reborn." "If you don't rob, you'll suffer from poverty all your life." "We would rather die as a bandit who will leave a heroic name for a thousand years than die of disease without any reputation." From 1909 to 1949, male members of the family all became bandits, and more than thirty of them were beheaded by the government (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 2, 53). Their aphoristic sayings were remembered by the local people.

Bandits occupied mountains, forests and waters and regarded the areas as their own. The following ballad is found in most stories about outlaws:

It is I who opened up this mountain;
It is I who planted these trees.
If you want to pass by,
You must for your passage pay fees (Cai Shaoqing 1993, 64).

In the early twentieth century, "Soldiers and bandits are of one family" (Li Ling 1995, 5). This was also a typical Chinese phenomenon. People commented sardonically through folk songs:

Comes a certain army and calls up the bandits,
Selling them bullets, selling them guns,
Telling them they are the emperor's legions –
Who'd believe they were all a bunch of weasels? (Billingsley 1988, 65).

As yet another proverb put it, "bandits and soldiers breath from the same nostrils" (Billingsley 1988, 154). In the summer of 1927, in Shuangyang of Jilin, an official battalion commander called several squad leaders together and said to them, "Change your uniform and wear plain clothes. You are going out tomorrow." When

¹⁹ A legendary tree that sheds coins when shaken.

asked why, he said, "You can join a bandit gang or simply set up your own bands and operate for two months. Each of you must bring back five-thousand silver dollars." When asked what if superiors sent people to investigate, he said, "I will tell them that you went out to carry out a task." So the soldiers happily took off their uniform and became bandits (Li Ling 1995, 5). Sometimes bandit spies went to the soldiers' camp and seduced them with solicitations like the following:

How poor you are! If you come over, how you will benefit!
If you wish to drink wine, you will have a large cup;
If you wish to eat, there is a big piece of meat;
If you want a girl, there are numbers, here (Billingsley 1988, 82).

A Good Man Protects Three Villages

Seal argues that the outlaw hero tradition "provides a kind of 'cultural script' by which all the actors involved can plan and judge their attitudes and actions":

Because those actions involve defiance of dominant power structures of one kind or another, it is necessary for outlaws and their supporters to follow an alternative, traditionally defined, moral code that acts to legitimise their defiance and violence in certain circumstances (Seal 1996, 17).

However, the Chinese outlaw hero had some unique moral principles that his Australian, British and American counterparts did not consciously pursue. These codes are also recorded by ballads and proverbs. The proverb, "a rabbit does not eat the grass outside its own burrow" was often used by outlaws to admonish their fellow members not to harm the local people. Some put related proverbs together and composed a ballad:

A good man protects three villages,
A good dog protects three families in the neighbourhood.
A rabbit does not eat the grass outside its own burrow,
A bandit does not rob his countrymen for his own good (Cao Baoming 1994, 227).²⁰

Billingsley argues that there are two reasons that bandits abided by this code:

Usually, Chinese outlaws would not rob their home areas, mainly because to do so they would alienate themselves from the local people, who generally would rather keep silence when the government came to investigate than sell the outlaws out, but also because such areas were probably too poor to be worth

²⁰ In Guangning of Sichuan, they also say "A rock eagle will not eat the food under its nest" (EBHA 1992A, Vol. 1, 566).

the trouble. They therefore looked elsewhere for targets, so that a place listed as having no resident gangs was often worse off than one with a high bandit population (Billingsley 1988, 47).

What Billingsley says here may be true, but in fact, not robbing the local people was a way for bandits to protect themselves. The local people were well-informed of the local bandits' whereabouts and what they were doing. If they offended the local people and piled-up rancour, they would actually cut off their own way of sustenance. In a village in Fuyu county of Jilin, a bandit robbed in his own village. The villagers hated him. One night on his way home, he was shot dead by the villagers (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 1, 119).

In Luoyang of Henan, this code was commonly observed by bandits. In the 1920s, Bai Zhongtian was a good example. Bai was born in a well-to-do family, whose father died when he was only a baby. With the money they had, he and his mother could have lived happily, but being bullied and blackmailed by the villains in the village, all their property was gone. To survive and to get revenge, he set up a gang, which expanded very fast. Soon he became a famous bandit in Luoyang. Bai was "honest and tolerant, but not talkative." He was never cruel, instead, he kept to the code of robbing the rich to help the poor. "He kidnapped but never killed any captive; he robbed but never hurt the robbed." Bai "never committed robbery in the Jiahe area where their homes were" (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 3, 28-29). Perry has also noted that Chinese bandits "did display a certain consideration toward the people who lived near their base of operations." They obviously depended on the good will and protection of the local people to whom they were often related by blood. These bandits often shared booty with poor friends, relatives and protectors. Perry quotes a ballad from a gazetteer to explain this phenomenon:

Bandits make a stir,
Impoverishing the wealthy, enriching the poor;
They kidnap for ransom and eat all they can hold;
Then the leftover silver they give to the old (Perry 1980, 73).

This code of not robbing the local people and the code of robbing only the rich often won sympathy, help and support. With this the outlaw hero felt more confident

in challenging the authorities.²¹ In Luoning of Henan, Ding Tongsheng alias “Ding Laoba”²² observed this code strictly. He claimed “to attack the rich to help the poor, to enforce justice on behalf of Heaven and to rob money but not hurt the owner” (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 3, 196). Ding never robbed near his home place. In a short time, he had a gang of more than one thousand people. He was sympathetic with the poor and often gave grain to them.

Hunan, especially the western part, was a large bandit lair. As the saying puts it, “No place in West Hunan has not mountains; no mountain has not caves; no cave has not bandits” (Zeng Fanhua & Hou Jianfei 1995, 7). In West Hunan, the notorious bandit chief Yao Dabang, operating in the first half of this century, did not allow his gang members to make trouble in the area around Fangjiatun, the haunt of his gang. If anyone violated this regulation, he would find out who did it and punish the person. Once a bandit killed a travelling businessman in this area. When Yao found out who did it, he put the bandit to death. He also protected the area from being robbed by bandits from outside. Once, when a family was robbed by three bandits from Guizhou, Yao captured and killed them. When there were disputes among villagers, they often asked Yao to “arbitrate” (Li Ling 1995, 134-135). He even set up a school for the local people and appointed himself as principal (Zeng Fanhua & Hou Jianfei 1995, 445).

Cao Baoming also gives an example of bandits’ observation of this code. In Yongji County of Jilin, there was a bandit chief alias “Tian Hu”, who had very good

²¹ Ned Kelly’s distribution of his stolen wealth among friends and relatives turned him into a respected person and friend to the local people. As for the “Kelly Song”, which reflects the same spirit. Joy and Tom Prior wrote, “Holding 20 men for their alleged sympathy for the Kellys, the authorities found to their dismay that the number could have been, as justly, twenty-thousand. In country towns and city slums there were as many as that and more to jeer their way through the latest, and most popular of all, “Kelly” songs whenever they saw a uniform” (Joy & Prior 1977, 101-102).

²² Ding was a very famous outlaw hero in Henan. He was born in 1885. He could not afford to go to school when he was a child. In the late Qing and the early Republic, Ding set up a gang himself. He often told his fellows, “Now that we have entered the greenwood and taken the greenwood for home, we should go to distant places so that our countrymen will not be hurt.” So he often operated in the border area between Shaanxi and Henan. He was killed by Yuan Shikai’s army when he was only 30 years old. In the period of the Republic of China, a play titled “Ding Laoba Attacks the Tongguan Pass” had been performed for many years, and a *tanci* (storytelling to the accompaniment

relationship with the villagers. He often attended wedding ceremonies and funerals and gave lavish gifts. Once when he was attending a wedding ceremony, police came to arrest him, but he was helped out of the place safely by sympathetic locals (Cao Baoming 1994, 84-85).

In Hebei in the 1930's, there was a bandit chief called Xu Erhei, who never committed any offence in Shenxian where his gang was stationed. In normal times, Xu often did favours for his countrymen. On festivals and special occasions, when people came to him, he never allowed them to return home with empty hands.²³ Therefore, the local people regarded Xu as a hero who killed the rich and helped the poor. Even nowadays, when talking about Xu Erhei, some senior villagers still say, "Xu Erhei was a bandit alright, but he had never done any harm to us poor people, and he was good to his countrymen. No family, big or small, had not benefited from Lao Er" (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 2, 198). Xu was not only a bandit chief but also the chief of a branch of the Qing Bang secret society. Local despots and government officials were all afraid of him.

In Shiping of Yunnan, there was a bandit called Xu San who operated for two years from 1916 to 1918, who never robbed any person from Shiping and neighbouring counties. Whenever he heard someone had difficulties, he would deliver help. So the local people called him "Xu San the Chief" and did not regard him as a bandit (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 3, 438). In west Hunan, the most notorious bandit chief Qu Bojie had even a better understanding of this code. To buy popularity, he promulgated three regulations: 1. Do not offend people who have no money; 2. Do not rape; 3. Do not take away farm cattle. Besides, he also protected the environment and the natural resources. He restricted people from felling trees and burning the grass on wasteland in the mountains, so as to create a fairly good living environment. When he died of disease, many ordinary people from the local place took part in the funeral procession (Zeng Fanhua & Hou Jianfei 1995, 326-327).

of stringed instrument) titled "Ding Laoba Attacks Sichuan" had been circulated among the people (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 3, 216-217).

²³ This compares with what Robin Hood did. See Chapter 2.

This code forced some bandits into contradictions between their actions and nature. In their home places, they were “social bandits” while in other places they were robbers who tended to be very cruel. In Shandong, there was a most notorious bandit called Liu Guitang alias Liu Heiqi, who operated for 29 years from 1915 to 1943. “Liu Heiqi was crafty and cruel, who committed innumerable murders and every evil, but he really used his brain and had a way in winning over his inferiors’ support and ordinary people’s hearts” (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 2, 377). Once when his gang was stationed in his home village, Liu told his men in advance not to bully the villagers, and that one who violated the order would be punished. In spite of this, in a habit of robbery, some of his men still robbed the villagers. Once, an old woman came to Liu and complained, “Guitang, your men have taken two chickens and several tens of *jin*²⁴ of grain from my home. How can I, an old woman, live without them?” Liu comforted the old lady and asked his adjutant to pay in full what the old woman had lost. When he found out the person who robbed the old lady, he put him to death. Before the execution, Liu said, “I often tell you not to do this, but some people won’t listen. You are worse than an animal. A rabbit does not eat the grass outside its own burrow. It understands that the grass can protect it from being seen by the enemy. Why don’t you understand such a simple truth. People in our trade should also have several ‘burrows’ and should not touch the grass around the burrows.” When using people, Liu also adopted the double standard: “Liu confided most in people from his home places. In the most important positions he placed his countrymen from Feixian county and Tengxian county. He often did some favours for these people so that they became his enthusiastic followers” (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 2, 377-378).

Because of the relationship between the local people and local bandits, the latter were often regarded as harmless, and even heroic by the former. Robbing was generally carried out by bandits from other places (even neighbouring villages), who were always regarded as enemies. As Lattimore writes, along the Sungari River in the northern, “the common people consider that the bandits of their own side are a nuisance, but part of the natural social order and usually amenable to diplomacy and

²⁴ One *jin* is half a kilogram.

reasonable arrangement; while the bandits from the other side of the river they loathe and dread” (Lattimore 1935, 233).

However, in the eyes of local people, bandits, bad as they were, were better than soldiers. There was a popular rhyme in those days, “When bandits come, they steal and burn; when soldiers come, they devour us wholesale” (Billingsley 1988, 186). Another ballad tells the same story, “When bandits come, they borrow matches from me; when soldiers come, they order me to prepare food” (CFASS 1959, Vol. 1, 195). Soldiers, without care about the crops and living of the local people, tended to take everything useful and destroying crops, while bandits, very often being local peasants or members of local families, would not do the same.

As Billingsley says, when Bai Lang was operating, even officials had to reluctantly admit that “the local people saw the soldiers as ‘enemies’ and the bandits as ‘family’” (Billingsley 1988, 187), because Bai Lang’s gang was more disciplined than official troops:

When bandits come,
They rob like a comb;
But when official soldiers come,
They rob like a double-edged fine-toothed comb (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 1, 2).

Other codes of conduct recognised by the Chinese outlaw hero, including “no raping”, “no robbing single travellers”, are also recorded in ballads and proverbs. For example, Ding Laoba, who has been mentioned earlier, regulated: “No picking flowers (raping); no robbing travellers.” Once a Christian priest was robbed of his luggage in the area where his gang was stationed. When Ding came to know who did it, he killed the robbers and returned the luggage to the priest. The priest gratefully said, “Lord Ding punished the devil at the God’s will.” Ever since then, in the area Ding controlled, no more robberies occurred (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 3, 196). The punishment for raping was especially severe. Most rapists were executed secretly. Once in a garden, a body was found with the penis cut off. The corpse was a notorious bandit in that area. He was killed by Ding for “picking flowers”. A contemporary ballad echoes this theme:

If you pick flowers,
Your head will surely be removed;

If you pick flowers,
You cannot conceal it from Ding Laoba (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 3, 196).

Another typical example of observing this code is Liu the Impersonal of Fusong county of Jilin. His uncle had been with him in the same gang for many years. Once when they stayed in a village, his uncle raped a girl, who came to Liu and complained to him. His uncle thought that his nephew would not be so cruel as to kill his uncle, but he was wrong. Liu ordered his uncle to be executed. His uncle swore, "You son of bitch! How dare you? I am your uncle." But Liu said, "I don't care whether you are my uncle. You were born several years earlier. That is true. I don't have such an uncle like you. What is more, I said earlier that even if I myself violate the rules, I would not pardon myself either. If I spare your life, how can I lead this group of people in future?" Being convinced, his uncle said, "That's good, my child. I have violated your regulations, so brothers, shoot me to death." So they did. Liu held an elaborate funeral for his uncle (Cao Baoming 1994, 192).

When a gang was stationed in a village, the chief would tell its men not to see women in any house. If they had clothes or socks to be mended, they had to hand them in and a person in the gang would be appointed to contact the head of the family and gave them to him. When they were mended, they would be sent back to the gang. If one went to look for a woman, he would be punished. A bandit chief called "Da Lai Hao" demanded his gang never touch girls. He said, "Who does not have daughters? If you 'pick flowers', I can pardon you, but our founder would not pardon you." He often wore a flower on his head and recited the rhyme,

I wear flowers but do not pick flowers,
Because reputation is most important in life.
There is no stinking smell in my body,
So that I can with one mind fight (Cao Baoming 1994, 96).

Similar attitudes were taken by the famous Australian bushranger William Westwood, better known as "Jacky-Jacky", who "never molested a women, nor would

he see one insulted” (Wannan 1974, 25). Other highwaymen and bushrangers had similar reputations.²⁵

In China, though there were many examples of forbidding rape, as Billingsley puts it, they “often did so not from humane considerations for women’s dignity, nor merely from tactical considerations (though these were probably present to some extent), but from a sheer instinct for survival.” Influenced by the Taoist belief that one’s life energy was limited, and one would die when the energy was exhausted, they believed that sexual intercourse would reduce the quantity of energy, and chastity could “be construed as the difference between life and death” (Billingsley 1988, 142). In the Northeast in the 1940’s, when the Vulture punished a traitor of the gang, he said, “The second greatest taboo in our greenwood is ‘picking flowers’. He sees only women’s bottoms, but not us brothers” (Cao Baoming 1994, 209). Obviously, bandits were afraid that one who was close to women would remember only women but not their fellows. In a word, for such bandits, “Rape was banned not for women’s sake but to preserve the life-force and the very lives of the heroes from the threat posed by women” (Billingsley 1988, 143).

The code of brotherhood in most cases came before the code of robbing the rich to help the poor and other codes of conduct among Chinese outlaws. The saying, “People from all directions share the space and people of different surnames are of one family” and the saying “Within all gangs, brotherhood is the most important” (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 1, 26) reflected such a practice among outlaws. The code of brotherhood, a typical Chinese outlaw hero spirit, was reflected in the outlaw’s everyday activities. Mutual assistance between bandits or gangs embodied this code. When a fellow bandit or gang was in trouble, other bandits or gangs must come to assist. One who refused to help was called “*du miaozi*” (a poisonous seedling). Others would keep a distance from him. In 1935, a gang led by Luo Mingxing ran out of ammunition when being attacked by official troops. Luo went to “Da Lai Hao”, the chief of another gang, and asked him to escort his gang out of the danger. The latter agreed without hesitation, though it was only their first meeting (Li Ling 1995, 26).

²⁵ Wannan gives some other examples of abiding by the code of gentlemanly treatment of women,

As the saying goes, "Like a jongleur entering a troupe or a nun entering a nunnery, when a gangster meets a gangster they are of one family" (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 1, 34). This code of brotherhood was extended to other people of the Rivers and Lakes. Bandits in the Northeast would not rob gamblers because "all people playing with money are of one family." As a ballad puts it, "There is one flower in numerous rivers and mountains, / Players with clean money and players with dirty money are of one family" (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 1, 39). In Northeast China in those days, people called gamblers "players with clean money" and bandits "players of dirty money". This code of brotherhood often embodied such behaviours as stated in the sayings: "A hero has the courage to accept the consequences of his own actions" (Li Ling 1995, 201) and "One is willing to shoulder the full responsibility for whatever one has done; if the cap fits, wear it" (Cun 1981, 456). He always tried not to involve others in trouble.

However, Billingsley changes the proverb "all within the four seas are brothers" into "Some men are brothers" when discussing bandit lives and perspectives (Billingsley 1988, 123). "Calling each other brothers", or "becoming sworn brothers" and "the code of the brotherhood" were on one hand a means of solidarity within the bandit gang, and on the other hand, were a binding force for the members to follow the eldest brother. Liu Heiqi treated his men in such a way that he called them "Dage" (Eldest Brother), "Erge" (Second Eldest Brother) or "Mazi Ge" (Brother with a pockmarked face), etc., (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 2, 378). However, the internal relationship of a bandit gang in modern China was by no means that of the Robin Hood's "merry men". Younger brothers (not necessarily younger in age) must unconditionally obey the eldest brother. As Cao Baoming says, "(They must) show respect for the Eldest Brother as for their parents. Those who harboured disloyal sentiments would be punished" (Cao Baoming 1988, 76). Rank and file bandits must obey the four "outer beams" and the four "inner beams" as well as the Eldest Brother, who often had the power of life and death over his gang members. Of course, he put a member to death only when absolutely necessary, otherwise he would employ both kindness and severity, avoiding contracting enmity. In some bandit gangs, members

such as Ben Hall, Gardiner, Johnny Piesley and Matthew Brady (Wannan 1974, 25-26).

were naturally divided into grades and were treated differently, as the following ballad indicates:

Top-grade people become bandit chiefs, spending money like water;
Second-grade people take up a gun and stick close by their side;
Third-grade people shoulder a rifle, fighting and killing at every turn;
Fourth-grade people negotiate terms for the captives,
both sides using elegant phrases;
Fifth-grade people become the bandits' bringing ruin to ordinary people;
Sixth-grade people take care of the loot, filled with anxiety and fear;
Seventh-grade people look after the captives,
their eyes gone blind from worry and exhaustion (Billingsley 1988, 40).

The Trade Is Low, But the People in It Are Not Low

The outlaw hero “eradicates the evil for other people”, “is ready to die for one who understands his heart”, and “is not afraid of being stabbed on both sides of the body for the sake of a friend” (Zhang Ye 1993, 392), These proverbs have been, and are, frequently used to describe a person who is regarded as a “*haohan*” (hero). Nevertheless, banditry, in spite of all its romantic associations, was not a good trade in the eyes of most people. Even bandits themselves would speak of banditry in such terms: “The trade is low, but the people in it are not low” (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 1, 7). In China people often use the term “*san jiao jiu liu*” (the three religions and the nine schools) to mean people of various trades. The ancient records of the three religions can be traced back to the Jiande period (572-578) of the North Dynasty. In the book “*A History of the North Dynasty: Gao Zu Emperor of Zhou*”, the records read “All the ministers and Taoist priests from Shamen assembled and the Emperor ascended his high throne and asked them to decided the order of the three religions. They placed Confucianism first, Taoism second and Buddhism third” (CBC 1980, 22). The nine schools originally referred to the Confucians, the Taoists, the *Yin-yang*, the Legalists, the Logicians, the Mohists, the Political Strategists, the Eclectics and the Agriculturists (CBC 1980, 22). This definition is given according to historical records, but the masses have a different version. They divide the nine schools into the upper nine schools and the lower nine schools. The upper nine schools (*shangjiuliu*) are in this order: Buddha, immortals, Emperor, officials, merchants, farmers, thieves, bandits, and beggars. The lower nine schools (*xiajiuliu*) include: peddlers using steelyards,

small traders of grain using *dou*²⁶, butchers, street cleaners, pedicurists, barbers, prostitutes, actors and actresses, and trumpeters for wedding and funeral ceremonies (Xiao Qian 1992, 99). The division of people into the eighteen categories shows people's judgement of different trades in the society distinguished by precedence. The fact that bandits rank among the upper nine schools indicates people's attitude towards bandits and also the outlaw hero tradition in China.

However, most bandits robbed for money or for a living. Some believed that "Without robbery, a man cannot get rich, as a horse cannot put on flesh without feed at night" (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 1, 600). Therefore, most people would regard banditry as bad. There were ballads urging bandits to give up banditry. The following is one frequently heard in Northeast China, and is believed to have been sung by those kidnapped by bandits:

With Autumn around the corner,
The poor are worried
Why do we grow crops and have no grain?
Because the Japs collect taxes.
They treat us as beasts of burden,
And recruit soldiers from door to door.
As soon as you do something slower,
They beat you till you are bleeding all over.
I advise, you, my bandit brothers,
Do not make the worst come to the worst.
The Japanese invaders are our arch-enemies,
Why don't you come up to fight these foreign dogs?
You bandit brothers,
You should think what kind of persons you are.
Born in China, grown up in China,
Why should you bully your own brothers? (Cao Baoming 1988, 97-98).

This was related to a story about the bandit alias "Gun Di Lei" (Thunder on Earth), who operated in Panshi county of Jilin in 1934. One day in winter, the gang kidnapped more than thirty people. At night, several people sang this ballad, which so moved "Gun Di Lei" that he ordered the release of all of them.

There was a ballad titled "Advice to the Husband", telling how a wife advised her husband not to join bandit gangs:

I advise you, my hubby, to repent,

²⁶ A measure for grain.

And don't join bandit gangs.
You have your wife and children at home,
Don't stay outside.
If you kill, you have to pay with your life;
If you hurt people, they will revenge.
Who doesn't have sisters and brothers?
Who doesn't have oxen and horses?
Now you compare your feelings with others',
Don't bring other people worries (Cao Baoming 1988, 98-99).

These ballads realistically reflected people's feelings and kindness. However, to be a bandit is a road of no return. Few of them could really repent. Even if they did, the life awaiting them was never a happy one. As the saying went, "It is easier for one to join (*guazhu*) than to quit (*ba xiang tou zi*) a bandit gang" (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 1, 12). If one wanted to join a bandit gang, he had to sign a simple form on which were such words: "Ride a horse to go everywhere; do not care about life or death" (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 1, 12). If one did not have good reasons to quit, or if he cheated, he would probably be killed, because in that case other bandits would suspect that he was to escape or to report to the government.

As this discussion demonstrates, most ballads and proverbs, especially those of the anglophone tradition, picture bandits romantically, often overlooking their brutality, although there are some condemning them. If Dick Turpin was a murderer and robber in life, he was nevertheless an outlaw hero, "gentleman of the road" in ballads. Ross states, "Many Australian ballads have likewise transformed the crimes of the bushrangers into acts of bravery, loyalty and generosity" (Ross 1995, 43). However, ballads and proverbs have left a valuable legacy for the study of the outlaw hero tradition in both the West and China.

In China now, corrupt officials bully, exploit and oppress the people, and have created new cases of injustice. People hope that heroes like those of the Marsh will emerge again to right wrongs. The theme song of the forty episode TV series *Shui Hu Zhuan* produced in 1997 is a new ballad reflecting people's call for such heroes:

Great rivers flow east,
Stars in the sky pay respects to the Big Dipper.
Friendship of life and death comes from a bowl of wine.

You have, I have and all people have.
I go when I say "I go",
And never regret even in water and fire.
I roar whenever I see injustice on my way,
And fight whenever it is necessary.
I travel the country like wind blowing and fire spreading.

The second stanza repeats most lines of the first one but the third line is changed to "There is no discrimination of high and low in the bowl of wine", and the sixth line to "And look up into the sky and never regret." The attitude of defiance towards injustice shown here is a reflection of people's wish today.

Ballads encapsulate "legends, myths and history in memorable language" (Jenkin 1978, 34-35), so do proverbs. They provide a new form of "expression of national history, character, and folklore with which everyone, young and old, city or country, could identify" (Jenkin 1978, 35). They, therefore, make myths and legends of the outlaw hero memorable and provide a code of conduct for outlaw heroes to follow them and how. As Elizabeth Peever states, "Proverbs, generally speaking, are enigmatical sayings in which profound truths are cloaked. Their teachings are meant to govern our lives and conduct, often giving the contrast between good and evil. Many times they are concentrated parables passed down through the generations to teach morals or to express some familiar experience" (Zhang Ye 1993, 1). Proverbs regarding banditry give a condensed summary of values, beliefs and principles that govern the lives and conduct of the outlaw heroes, providing contrast between the "good" and the "evil" doings of bandits.

Chapter 8

The Fate of Outlaws and the Outlaw Hero: Life and Death

This chapter considers the fate of the outlaw hero. Through a comparative study of Chinese bandits and selected outlaw heroes from other cultures it argues that the outlaw's fate was an important element in the construction of his image. It examines death and how to face it, surrender, amnesty and enlistment, factors that threaten the life of a bandit and the bandit as prey of the government. Outlaws had but three ways to end their career: death, escape, or surrender.¹

Death and How to Face It

In his study of hero myth, Joseph Campbell argues, "The last act in the biography of the hero is that of the death or departure. Here the whole sense of the life is epitomised. Needless to say, the hero would be no hero if death held for him terror; the first condition is reconciliation with the grave" (Campbell 1973, 356). The Chinese scholar He Xianming says, "If one accepts death as a natural and reasonable development of life without resentment in his subjective psychology, he has then in his life style the making of taking death as 'going home'" (He Xianming 1993, 79). The philosopher Zhang Zai² of the Song dynasty had a saying about death representing an attitude held by the Chinese. He said, "Alive, I conform to the way things are going; dead, I enjoy peace" (He Xianming 1993, 79). Zhuang Zi is the ancient philosopher who wanted to get rid of the fear for death:

How can I know that one who cravenly clings to life is not being confused?
How can I know that who fears death is not like a wanderer who does not know how to get home? There was once a girl, the daughter of a frontiersman, who wept until her clothes became soaked with her tears when the King of the State of Jin came to take her to the palace and marry her. When she got to the palace, she regretted that she had cried like that. How can I know that a person will not regret after death for his unwillingness to part with life? (RTAV 1991, 127).

With such an attitude towards life, Zhuang Zi, instead of being sorrowful, beat time on a brass bowl and sang when his wife died.

¹ In the Chinese case "*zhaoan*" – accept amnesty and enlist in the official army.

The historian Philippe Ariès studied the changing western attitudes towards death from the middle ages to the modern era. He noticed that “the attitude towards death may appear almost static over very long periods of time” (Ariès 1974, 1). He first studied how the knights in the oldest romances faced death. He found that first they were forewarned. “They did not die without having had time to realize that they were going to die” (Ariès 1974, 2). Gawain, Roland, and Tristram³ all understood that they were dying. They were prepared for death. In a world as steeped in the supernatural as that of the Round Table, death was a very simple thing (Ariès 1974, 7-8).

However, no historian in China and the West has ever studied the attitudes of the outlaw hero towards death. Bandits often had to face violent death: shot dead, executed or tortured to death. Such a death is far more terrifying than a natural one. Bandits were doomed, no matter whether they were heroes or villains. They saw little chance of surviving continuous suppressions, hunt-downs, isolation from the society or harsh natural environment.

The way people face death reflects their outlook of life, beliefs and personality. “To confront death with dignity” is regarded as the highest virtue held by the outlaw hero, and a final challenge to the authority. This virtue was very often interpreted as “to die like a man” in Britain and America (as reflected in the ballad “My Bonnie Black Bess” and other outlaw ballads and legends), as “to die game” in Australia and as “to die a glorious death” in China.

Like everybody else, the outlaw hero tries to guard against death. Ned Kelly tried to make himself invulnerable by wearing armour and helmet, while some Chinese outlaws believed in certain spells. During the Anti-Japanese War, “The Volunteer Corps had an almost legendary reputation among the peasants. The Japanese could not kill its members; they were invulnerable” (Lindt 1933, 192).⁴ Neither worked.

² Zhang Zai (1020-1077), philosopher of the Northern Song dynasty.

³ Also known as Tristan, the hero of a medieval legend.

⁴ Lindt says, “The Red Lancers, Invulnerables all, in their blue coolie’s trousers, in their shirt-sleeves, charged the Japanese gunners, armed only with their lances. Their comrades saw them fall, mowed down by the machine-guns.” “They kept their faith in the efficacy of their magic.” “At last they

When death was inevitable, the outlaw hero would face it bravely. In Australia, “dying game” became a traditional attitude held by the outlaw hero handed down from “Bold Jack” Donahoe in the convict days. Before his execution, Ned Kelly had dictated three letters to the Governor. At the end of his third letter, he confronted the inevitability of death with dignity (Jones 1995, 319).⁵ In his two years’ outlaw life, Ned Kelly was seen to be resolute and determined in the face of all disasters, whether it be family misfortune or life-threatening battles with the police. Even when the judge, Mr Barry, announced his death sentence, Kelly took it calmly. He told the judge that his mind was “as easy and clear as it possibly can be” (Jones 1995, 309). His mother asked him to “die like a Kelly.” And Ned Kelly did die game. When the verdict of guilty was brought in, Ned Kelly said, “It is not that I fear death; I fear it as little as to drink a cup of tea” (Jones 1995, 308). Before the execution, the hangman tried to pinion Ned’s arms, but Ned said, “There’s no need for tying me!” His last few words were almost inaudible, but some believe they were: “Such is life!” or “Ah well, I suppose it had to come to this!” (Wannan 1974, 15). The execution of Ned Kelly brought destruction to his physical life, but made him immortal spiritually. As Wannan puts it, “Ned Kelly’s hanging brought to his short, rebellious career the aura of martyrdom, and ultimately of myth. By his execution he became a sacrificial victim of State power” (Wannan 1974, 6). The powerful image of Ned Kelly’s standing and shooting with his self-made armour on has become a symbol of heroism in Australia.⁶ Gilbert’s image of defying death and helping his fellow at the risk of his own life has been made immortal by A. B. (“Banjo”) Paterson in the ballad “How Gilbert Died” (Grant, Newman & Seal 1994, 63). The ballad depicts the classic death of the outlaw hero – sold out by a traitor.

retreated. Their losses were enormous. Rumour went that ten thousand had been killed” (Lindt 1933, 183-194).

⁵ An early Australian bushranger named Hall said before he was hanged, “I’ll go to the gallows and die as comfortable as a biddy, and be glad of the chance.” (Boxall 1974, 59.) Jenkins, another bushranger, advised the audience before his execution, “If any of you take the bush, *shoot every tyrant* you come across.” (Ward 1977, 182.)

⁶ One day in 1997 the author saw a boy wearing such a helmet. When asked, the boy’s father said that the boy liked wearing it and imitating Ned Kelly. Just recently, the armour of the four members of the Kelly Gang were displayed at an exhibition in Australia.

In China, the tradition of dying a glorious death was handed down from the ancient knight-errant, who would die for justice, for one who understood him and for gratitude. To die for brotherhood and for gratitude was regarded honourable in ancient times. In history, high-minded and chivalrous persons, such as knights-errant, believing in the principle of “dying for one who understands his heart”, were examples for later outlaw heroes. Their courage in confronting death has been greatly valued by the later generations. In the *Book of History*, there are many such stories about such martyrs. In the State of Jin in the Warring States period, the minister Zhao Dun often remonstrated with Ling Gong, Head of the State, who was very cruel and led a wasteful life. Ling Gong was offended by Zhao’s repeated remonstrations and ordered Chu Ni to kill Zhao. When Chu went to Zhao’s house and found Zhao led a frugal life and was loyal to the State, he withdrew and sighed, “To kill a loyal minister and to go against the King’s order are both crimes of the same nature” (Sima Qian 1994, 499). He bumped himself against a tree and killed himself. The story about Yu Rang who died for Zhi Bo of the State of Zhao, his benefactor, is a good example of dying for gratitude. When Yu Rang heard that Zhi Bo was killed by Zhao Xiangzi, he said, “A man is ready to die for one who understands his heart; a woman dolls herself up for the man who loves her. Zhi Bo understood me. Now he is dead. I must revenge him and die for him.” He painted his body black, changed his voice by swallowing rough and coarse things, begged in the street, and tried every way to kill Zhao. When he could not see any chance, he begged Zhao to take off his clothes and let him cut the clothes with his sword. He said, “I pray you to give your clothes for me to cut. In this way, I will think that I have revenged and I will die without any regret.” Zhao, moved by his virtue, gave his clothes to him. Yu Rang cut the clothes three times and killed himself. “On the day when he died, righteous people in the State of Zhao all wept for him” (Sima Qian 1994, 754).

This code of conduct was especially valued by the outlaws of the Marsh. As discussed earlier, Zhu Wu wished to die for brotherhood.⁷ The last chapter of *Shui Hu Zhuan* describes how Wu Yong and Hua Rong abided by this code. When they heard

⁷ See Chapter 3.

that Song Jiang and Li Kui were poisoned to death, they went to Liao Er Flats where Song Jiang and Li Kui were buried. Wu Yong said, "First I followed Chao Gai, then I met you, brother, and you saved my life. We shared honours together for several decades, all thanks to your virtue. Now you have died for our country and appeared to me in a dream. I still haven't repaid your kindness, brother. I shall be glad to take the dream as an omen and join you in the Nether World" (Shi Nai'an 1975, 1386). Wu Yong and Hua Rong, who held the same opinion, hung themselves from a tree.

Since outlaws were direct enemies of the authorities, in the eyes of the government, they were never heroes. No mercy was given to them. Usually, especially in modern times, outlaws would be executed when captured. The following table presents selected examples of professional bandits executed in different provinces and areas in the early years of the Republic:⁸

province	Region	Period	Number
Shandong	Caozhou	1914, 1918, 1922	231
	Yanzhou	1914, 1915	179
	Jinan	1918	68
	Yizhou	1914	58
	Wuding	1918	51
Anhui		1914, 1915	202
Henan		1914, 1911	34
Hebei		1914, 1915, 1925	81
Northeast		1919, 1921, 1925	89
Guizhou		April-August 1915	150

These figures are very incomplete. Such figures, like the number of bandits shot dead during suppression campaigns, have never been accurate. For example, in early 1916, in one clearing up campaign in two counties in Sichuan led by Zhu De, then a regimental commander, "two to three hundred bandits were executed" without any legal trial, and most of them were beheaded, for Zhu ordered not to waste bullets

⁸ The figures are quoted from Chi Zihua's book titled *Floating People in Modern China*, 1996 163-164. The figures do not include those wiped out during bandit suppressions. For example in 1921, Wu Junsheng killed more than eight hundred bandits after they surrendered (Xiao Xianzhi 1996, 407-415); in 1928, he killed more than one thousand five hundred Da Dao Hui members (Xiao Xianzhi 1996, 434-435). Official figures of this kind are never complete. The actual figures are very often much larger than official statistics.

because bullets were earned with “people’s blood and sweat” (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 1, 636).

To face death in a different way from ordinary bandits or people, the outlaw hero died a moving death. The last words he said often reflected his extraordinary personality. In 1915 when Yuan Shikai claimed to be the Emperor, Ding Laoba⁹ joined the expedition against him. At the Tongguan Pass, he was captured and executed. Before he died, he said to one of Yuan Shikai’s henchmen, “A real man does not fear even if he has to die. I only regret that I have captured the Tongguan Pass but I cannot defend it. When I die, you should hang my head from the gate of the Tongguan Pass so that I can see the flag with the blue sky and the bright sun¹⁰ floating on the Pass. In twenty years, I will be another *haohan* (hero). What can you mean men do to me?” (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 3, 217).

Influenced by Buddhism, Chinese people believed in rebirth after death. It was not uncommon for outlaw heroes to say, “In twenty years, I will be a hero again.” Jenner quotes Xiao Jun:

The tougher criminals would stand on the cart. When they passed a draper’s they demanded a length of red cloth to drape over themselves, which they called “wearing the crimson cross”. On passing a pub they’d ask for a drink. Some even sang folk songs or *bangzi* opera. Others foamed at the mouth, yelling and cursing... Some even asked the crowds following them to watch the fun, “I have got what it takes to be a real *haohan*, haven’t I?” (Jenner 1993, 2).

Two Chinese women outlaws’ attitudes toward death are enlightening in this respect. One was a woman bandit alias “Tuolong” in the Northeast. Before she was executed, “Tuolong” shouted loudly, “Come on! I am not afraid of death! I am not afraid of death” (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 3, 127). The other was Zhang the Widow of Henan. She was executed in the Autumn of 1933. Witnesses said:

A truck carrying Zhang the Widow and escorts drove slowly out of the Garrison Headquarters in Zhougongmiao. When it reached the West Street, people saw her calm wrinkled face with her grey hair flying in the wind. On her back there was a flag with the words “Executing Capital Prisoner Zhang the Widow by Shooting”. Those onlookers standing high could see Zhang’s small feet. When the truck reached the Well Lane, who defying death bravely, suddenly shouted with her resounding voice, “My countrypeople, please listen. I

⁹ See Chapter 7.

¹⁰ The national flag of the Republic has the pattern of the blue sky and the bright sun.

am Zhang the Widow. I was forced to become a *daoke*. I have killed and set fire, but I still have not revenge myself! I am fifty-three. In another fifty-three years, I will be as big." She shouted and shouted continuously as the truck was driving to the execution ground. She finally shouted at the execution ground, "I will revenge after my death..." (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 3, 253)

Both Tuolong and Zhang the Widow were forced to become bandits. Tuolong¹¹ was first deceived into becoming a prostitute and then became a bandit chief's wife before she became the chief herself. Zhang the Widow's original name was He Zhen. When she was only twenty-six, her husband died, thus the nickname "Zhang the Widow". She and her three children led a very hard life, but she did her best to overcome all difficulties and raised the children all by herself. They had a rich relative, but he never helped them. When Zhang the Widow was about to sell one of her children because of poverty, the relative even insulted them. When her eldest son asked the relative to rent a plot of land to them, the relative not only refused but let it to somebody else and ordered people to beat him. Her son was thus forced to take to the greenwood, but was killed by a fellow bandit. To revenge her son, she and her second son joined a bandit gang. Before long she became the chief. She told the members of the gang to rob only the rich, but not to kill, not to harass women "tickets" (captives). Soon she became very famous in West Henan. She was loved by the poor, but hated by the rich. The rich relative and other rich people in her village killed her third son. In 1931, her second son, who was already enlisted into the Zhensong Army of the Hunan government, was killed by the local gentry. With indignation, Zhang the Widow was determined to revenge her sons by killing the rich and corrupt officials. She first revenged her second son by killing and burning in one village and then her third son by doing the same in another village. Two years later she was caught (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 3, 245-253).

Some outlaws died without saying a word when being tortured, another way of defying the authorities. In Henan, at the same time when Wang Tianzong was operating, a man called Meng Qi was busy running in Shandong, Tianjin and Shanghai, making friends with Chinese and foreigners (businessmen and church missionaries) to

¹¹ Her real name is Zhang Shuzheng. She is better known as Tuolong (Camel Dragon).

purchase rifles and bullets for Tianzong. A man who was dispatched by Meng to arrange transportation of weapons was arrested in Henan. Being severely tortured, the man told the government Meng's whereabouts. Meng was arrested. The Prefect tried the case in person. Meng Qi was calm and kept silence. No matter how the Prefect threatened or induced, Meng Qi did not utter a single word. The Prefect was so angry that he killed Meng with his walking stick. The onlookers were deeply impressed by Meng Qi's unyielding personality. "His story had a great influence among outlaws, who regarded Meng Qi as having the true quality of a hero, because he did not involve others in trouble, nor asked for mercy, nor begged for his life. In the greenwood Meng Qi was regarded as a genuine hero" (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 3, 226).

Surrender, Amnesty and Enlistment

In Australia and Great Britain, although their "only hope of final safety lay in suing for pardon" (Innes 1968, 5), outlaws saw little chance of being pardoned, unless they betrayed their gangs, killed other outlaws and surrendered to the government. When captured, they faced either death or severe punishment. In medieval England an outlaw could be arrested by any man and even be killed if he resisted.

To consider the fates of these outlaw heroes, attention should be paid to cultural differences. When examining medieval outlawry in England, Seal concludes,

The outlaw, then, was literally cast out of human society and explicitly identified with the natural world, the domain of the animal. He was no longer human and could be slain by any (male) human with complete immunity from prosecution by the law. Although the severity of outlawry declined from the fifteenth century, outlawry legislation remained within the British legal code and was invoked against Ned Kelly in the colony of Victoria in 1879 (Seal 1996, 20).

In China, it was very often different. In the Song dynasty, about the same time as the medieval period in Europe, an important criminal, if not executed immediately, was often tattooed on the face as a criminal and sent to exile. Many of the outlaws of the Marsh were such "imperial" criminals, including Song Jiang, Wu Song, Lin Chong, etc. When an outlaw was caught, it was not the case that any (male) human could kill him, instead he had to be brought to the authorities who decided how to dispose of him.

To accept amnesty offered by the authorities and join the official army or to hold office in the government was a decent way out for many outlaw heroes. This enabled them to become a different kind of hero with both loyalty to the emperor and honour for themselves. This practice started in the Song dynasty with the outlaws of the Marsh. Song Jiang, Lin Chong, Wu Song and most other outlaw heroes were forced to rebel, demanding to have their grievances redressed. The best way of redressing their grievances was for the royal court to offer amnesty and enlistment to them and to forgive their past misdeeds of killing and robbing. Achieving that end meant victory to the outlaws in their rebellion and revenge. That was why the moment they came to Liangshan they started thinking of surrender (Wang Jue & Li Dianyuan 1994, 141).

In times when foreign forces invaded or when there was an honest and upright official, the outlaw hero would like to serve the government as the outlaws of the Marsh did. In the early twentieth century, in the Changbai Mountain area of Jilin, there was a large bandit gang led by Wang Lin, who became a bandit when the Russians invaded the Northeast. His gang had never robbed the masses but only “foreign devils”. They attacked trains and ships of Russian officials and businessmen and went into Russia to kidnap “foreigners” and rob “foreign money”. In 1918, the Governor of Jilin, admiring his deeds, invited him to the provincial government and persuaded him to join the army with his gang. Later, Wang became Commander in Chief of the Salvation Army of several tens of thousands of soldiers fighting against the Japanese invaders (Fan Chunsan & Yuan Dongxu 1997, 234).

In modern China, holding an office even became the aim of many outlaws. In the Northeast in the early days of the Republic, one of the main objectives of bandits was to become officials. In times of social and political turbulence, many careerists exploited the situation and organised gangs to occupy certain areas in the aim of becoming officials. When their power expanded to a certain extent, they had something to use to their own advantage in bargaining with the government, which could do little but to adopt the so-called appeasement policy by offering them office in the army or the government. The chiefs became officers and *zai*zi soldiers. When a bandit gang was really big and combative, they often could get favourable conditions

for them. For example, in 1930, in Rehe, when the government army could not suppress the bandit gangs led by Zhao Kuangyin alias “Da Denglouzi”, Wang Qing alias “Da Qingshan” and others, the government sent an eloquent person to persuade the bandits to surrender. The conditions for the bandits to surrender were as follows:

1. No action should be taken against those who had some misdeeds in the past.
2. Bandit chiefs who are willing to surrender should be appointed officers in the army.
3. All bandits will be redesignated, and those who want to go home should not be harmed in any way (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 2, 31).

The famous bandit chieftain and ambitious warlord Zhang Zuolin¹² took the same road to ascend the “throne” of “King of the Northeast”. When Deng Xiaoping’s father was working in the police force of a county, he once led some policemen to try to suppress a bandit gang led by a person named Zheng. Zheng later accepted the government amnesty and became a high-ranking officer. Afraid of being persecuted, Deng Xiaoping’s father had to flee to take refuge (Mao 1993, 40). In Henan, many officers in the army were originally bandits. Wang Tianzong became the Chief Inspector in Yuan Shikai’s government; Liu Zhenhua became the governor of Shaanxi province; the “Old Foreigner” was appointed as regimental commander. Numerous other bandits became commanders in the armies of warlords (Cai Shaoqing 1993, 16).¹³

Acceptance of amnesty and enlistment was a way out for an outlaw, which meant the end of a past life full of danger and hardships. Now he could show his face to the public in style without fear. However, sometimes the authorities used amnesty and enlistment as bait to trap the bandits. As Lattimore states, “Bandits are most commonly disposed of by enlisting them in the troops or police, or, not uncommonly, by betrayal and massacre; but even betrayal and massacre are essentially the results of negotiation, not of outright warfare” (Lattimore 1935, 226). It was true that enlisting bandits in the troops or police, the government often betrayed and killed them. It was also true that officials seldom felt comfortable with bandits unless they were once bandits themselves. Amnesty and enlistment could become a way out, but could also

¹² For detailed discussions about him see Chapter 5.

¹³ For detailed discussions see Chapter 7.

bring about fatal disasters to the bandits. As Lattimore noticed, “The negotiations for ‘reclaiming’ bandits are often marred by subsequent treacherous massacre” (Lattimore 1935, 229). In the early 1920s shortly after Wu Junsheng was appointed *Dujun*¹⁴ and governor of Heilongjiang province, he accepted the proposal of “getting rid of the bandits by offering amnesty and enlistment”:

1. Wipe out the bandits by using both the method of suppression and the method of appeasement; suppress small bandit gangs with armed forces but offering amnesty to large ones and appoint their chiefs as officials of different ranks according to the number of bandits in the gang.
2. Ask the dependants of the bandits to expostulate with the bandits about their coming back home; forgive those who return home, their past misdeeds.
3. Reduce and exempt taxes so as to relax the tension between the government and the people (Xiao Xianzhi 1996, 409).

More than 800 bandits of gangs such as “Nao Dong Yang” (Afflicting the East Ocean), “Qing Shan Hao” (Good Green Mountain), “Tai Yang Hong” (Red Sun) and “Lao Niu Tou” (Old Oxhead) were amnestied and enlisted in the army, but Wu Junsheng treated them with prejudice: no training, no salary. When the surrendered bandits complained, with just enough excuse, Wu killed them all, leaving more than eight hundred wronged ghosts wandering about in the vast plain (Xiao Xianzhi 1996, 409-415).

Even when they were actually amnestied and enlisted, bandits seldom enjoyed any trust. The authorities took precautions against these unruly former bandits in every respect. The outlaws of the Marsh, who surrendered to the Song Empire, were always suspected. Most of them were finally framed and put to death. The fortunate ones were driven out of officialdom, some becoming ordinary people and some living in seclusion. In modern times, governments played the same trick.¹⁵ In the 1860s, in Northern Shaanxi, there was a peasant uprising organised by the Hui nationality (Muslims). People who joined the uprising, called “*Hui ni*” (Hui Rebels) or “*Hui fei*” (Hui Bandits) by the government, tried to get amnesty and enlistment. Tao Maolin,

¹⁴ The official of a province in charge of the military affairs in the early years of the Republic of China.

¹⁵ Surrender could not always save the bandits' lives. In November 1990, in front of Number 1 High School of Chishui county of Guizhou was unearthed a tablet in memory of an executioner who

Commander-in-chief of the provincial army, led his army to suppress the uprising. He “accepted gold and beautiful women given as gifts by the Hui Rebels, and allowed them to surrender.” But people believed “Amnesty and enlistment were not true. Commander Tao was deploying forces from different places to suppress them in secret” (Ouyang Yuefeng 1989, 85). In 1873, Zuo Zongtang, Governor-General of Shaanxi and Gansu, offered amnesty to the last group of the Hui uprising troops, but he still called them “*Hui ni*” and “*Hui fei*” (Ouyang Yuefeng 1989, 85).

Sometimes, government officials tried various devices to reduce the power and influence of these former bandits, or trap them and get rid of them. Therefore, many people took to the greenwood again. In the early 1920s, there was a bandit gang of more than seven hundred people led by Gong Changhai (alias Foolish Man) operating in Jilin. They accepted amnesty and enlistment offered to them by the Governor of Jilin, but the governor always wanted to disarm them. When Gong realised the trick, he led his troops out of the county and took to the mountains again (He Nian 1998, 591).

During the Anti-Japanese War, most bandits fought against the Japanese invaders, but some of them surrendered to the invaders. “Most bandit chiefs who surrendered to the Japanese or the puppet government were killed by the Japanese invaders. Those bandit soldiers who surrendered to the Japanese and became lackeys could not escape the fate of ‘the donkey that is killed the moment it has done its job at the mill’” (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 1, 128). Fu Dianchen, a bandit chief in the Northeast during the Japanese occupation was enlisted into the puppet army, but disappeared not long after. Some said it was Japanese who killed him; some said that he was killed by one of his followers (Li Ling 1995, 58). However, the Japanese also made use of those bandits who surrendered, for they had the best knowledge about the terrain and its features in the mountains and forests. They served as guides in the suppression of the Anti-Japanese Allied Armies. Since the Japanese suffered a great loss for not knowing

executed four hundred and eighty-seven bandits who were deceived into surrender (Xiao Qian 1992, 15).

the way in the mountains and forests,¹⁶ they tried to buy over bandits at all cost. A bandit chief called Shao Benliang, after surrendering to the Japanese, was appointed major general and “Commander-in-chief of the Bandit Suppression Army”. Modern weapons were allotted to him and planes were sent to cooperate with him. In Shenyang, they built a mansion for him. Shao was later killed by the Anti-Japanese Allied Army (Li Ling 1995, 59).

However, for some outlaw heroes, becoming officials in the army or government was not the destination of their life voyage. Wang Tianzong, one of the most famous outlaw heroes in modern China, was forced to take to the mountains, from where he robbed the rich and helped the poor. In two to three years after he became outlawed, he became the leader of all gangs in the Funiu mountains. The Qing government sent troops time and again to suppress him, but all failed (Cai Shaoqing 1993, 26). When Yuan Shikai became the interim president in Beijing, he wanted to make use of Wang. He ordered Wang to come to Beijing and appointed him lieutenant general and Chief Inspector. Tianzong did not like the official life at all. He often complained to his friend, “It is very boring to be an official. To be a king of the mountain is more pleasurable.” When he could not leave, he said, “I was tired after more than ten years in the mountains and forests, but it is beyond my expectation that the quiet life in Beijing has made me more tired” (EBHA 1992a, 234).

Some outlaw heroes simply refused to surrender. The Australian outlaw hero Bold Jack Donahue’s shout of defiance when called upon to surrender represents Western outlaw heroes’ attitudes:

“Resign to you, you cowardly dogs, a thing I never would do.
I’ll fight this night with all my might,” cried bold Jack Donahue.
“I’d rather roam these hills and dales like wolf or kangaroo
than work one day for the Government,” cried bold Jack Donahue (Scott 1978,
14).

¹⁶ In the winter of 1933, three hundred Japanese soldiers were searching and chasing the Anti-Japanese Allied Army soldiers in the forest in Northern Manchuria. The latter lured the former into a steep mountain area with a varied topography. The Japanese soldiers lost their and were all frozen to death that night (Li Ling 1995, 58).

When the Manchus first became master of the whole China, Zheng Zhilong,¹⁷ father of Zheng Chenggong,¹⁸ surrendered to the Manchus. When the Qing Emperor asked Zhilong to persuade his son Chenggong to surrender and Chenggong refused, “the Qing Emperor was so angry that he killed Zhilong and all his family members” (Liu Shiliang 1975, 1). Zheng Chenggong organised the secret society Han Liu,¹⁹ predecessor of the Hong Men secret society and was determined to fight against the Qing dynasty to the end and finally restore the Ming dynasty.

Factors That Threaten the Life of A Bandit

The life of a bandit was principally threatened by three factors: government suppression, betrayal and adverse environment. Betrayal is seen by western scholars as one of the main causes, and a classic one, that brought the Western outlaw hero to death or capture, which is also a cause in the Chinese case. Governments encouraged or tempted outlaws to sell their fellows by offering gains or positions in both the West and China. According to Charles White, in Australia, “frequent proclamations were issued offering gratuities to convicts who should assist in apprehending bushrangers. The authorities had good and sufficient reason to know that rogues would, without scruple, ‘sell’ their fellows for the sake of personal gain” (White 1995, 145). Outlaws had to face threats from both quarters. Internal fighting and plotting had been a permanent phenomenon in bandit gangs. When the official army could not capture Gao Chongdao, a bandit chief in North Hubei, they bought over several rank and file bandits with a large amount of money. With those bandits serving as plants, the

¹⁷ Zheng Zhilong, (?-1661), a pirate chief during the period of Tianqi (1621-1627) of the Ming dynasty, who surrendered to the royal court of the Ming and was appointed General. When the Manchus captured the whole China, he surrendered again but was killed by the Emperor (CBC 1980, 448 & Liu Shiliang 1975, 1).

¹⁸ Zheng Chenggong, (1624-1662), alias Koxinga, a famous general of the late Ming dynasty, who recovered Taiwan from the hands of the Dutch and fought against the Qing dynasty (CBC 1980, 448).

¹⁹ Han Liu has three different ways of spelling in Chinese, 漢人, 漢民 and 漢黨. The first one means literally “the remainder of the Han people”, which implies that people who joined Han Liu were seeds left by the Ming to fight against the Qing. The second means literally “the school of the Han thought” as against the school of Manchu thought. The third means literally “Liu of the Han dynasty” implying that people in the Han Liu became sworn brothers in the same way as Liu Bei, Guan Yu and Zhang Fei did in the Han dynasty (Liu Shiliang 1975, 2).

government army captured Gao and five other chiefs, whose heads were cut off and exposed to public view as a warning (*Shi Bao*, 3 October 1925). Chen Hanzhang was also killed by his subordinates (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 3, 365). As Hobsbawm argues, "Thus his standard end – for if he makes too much of a nuisance of himself almost every individual bandit will be defeated, though banditry may remain endemic – is by betrayal" (Hobsbawm 1974, 14). He gives several examples including Robin Hood, Jesse James, Oleksa Dovbuš, the Carpathian bandit of the eighteenth century, Salvatore Giuliano, Angiolillo and Diego Corrientes (Hobsbawm 1972, 50-51). Seal also argues that betrayal was one of the causes of the outlaw hero's death. Billingsley supports the same argument by citing an example of an ex-bandit in Anhui selling out his comrades (Billingsley 1988, 196). Billingsley discovers that some betrayals were really the result of intimidation:

These soldiers would be under orders to make the lives of the villagers so miserable that they would question the sense of protecting the bandits further when doing so threatened their own and their children's lives. Sooner or later, someone, either a gang member seeking to save his own skin, or a peasant driven beyond the limits of endurance, would decide to sell out the gang and bring the troubles to an end. Consequently, social bandits everywhere have almost always met their ends as the result of a betrayer's perfidy (Billingsley 1988, 189).

Zhang Qing, alias "*Lao Yangren*" (Old Foreigner), was killed by one of his followers (Xiao Qian 1992, 15-16). Several times he wanted to have his gang incorporated into the official army, but only to find that he had almost fallen a prey to the government's plot. He was determined not to talk about "*zhaoan*" any more, but his "chief of staff" Ding Baocheng, seeing that the situation was getting worse and worse, asked another bandit chief, Li Erhei to talk secretly with the official army about "*zhaoan*". "*Lao Yangren*" discovered Li's activities. Believing that it was only Li's own idea and behaviour, he decided to execute him as a warning to all. When "*Lao Yangren*" pulled out his pistol and was about to shoot, another bandit chief present shot him dead first (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 3, 265). As Billingsley puts it:

Lao Yangren's movements created the basic pattern for soldier-banditry. As "the first man to introduce the sport of kidnapping foreigners," he showed clearly his ultimate aim to be his and his followers' enrolment in the army. Many were indeed formally instated after his death – some, like Ren Yingqi,

leading relatively successful careers. The remainder resumed banditry in their old haunts (Billingsley 1998, 208).

However, government suppression was the principal factor that threatened the outlaw hero's life. In the West the suppression was generally carried out by the police, while in China, it was constantly carried out by either the local or the central government armies. In most cases, the severity of outlawry punishment saw the extremes. The Qing government ordered its troops to "kill bandits, whenever they come across, without hesitation" (Liao Yizhong et al 1981, 138).²⁰ When the KMT and the Communists outlawed each other, Chiang Kai-shek's policy of "wiping out all communists" and the CPC's policy of "suppressing all counter-revolutionaries" claimed countless lives. Besides frequent large-scale suppression campaigns, captors were always on the way. As Billingsley observes, "Government suppression troops were stationed in the villages so as to deny food and shelter to the bandits, who were thus forced to take to the mountains permanently" (Billingsley 1988, 189).

Outlaws tried to avoid capture and death, "Yet", as Billingsley observes, "caught they always were, though rarely by direct means" (Billingsley 1988, 188-189). Efforts to escape from death or capture mostly proved unsuccessful, and the end result would be the same. Moondyne Joe was an expert escaper among Australian bushrangers, but, captured again and again, he died in the Fremantle Lunatic Asylum, his final prison. Qin Guoqing, the last bandit in China, was an expert escaper among Chinese bandits. Qin and his wife started their flight and became fugitives in 1951 and were on the run for fifteen years. The Communist government mobilised three hundred thousand people and sacrificed forty-four people's lives in hunting down Qin Guoqing and his wife²¹. "The people's government would dig three feet into the earth to suppress him and make sure that he come to the worst end" (Wu Haifeng 1996, 1). At last, he and his wife were shot dead on 23 March 1965 while ten thousand people sent by the

²⁰ In 1900, in a campaign of suppressing Boxers, the official troops tended to kill all villagers. One officer defended this by saying: "Outsiders think that we are killing ordinary people, but I believe that we are killing bandits. Even if one is not a bandit, when mixed with bandits who are burning the railway, he is a bandit."

²¹ Qin Guoqing, who may not be considered as an outlaw hero for his murdering without discrimination, but his courage of fighting against the government and its powerful army, his skill at escaping and his endurance in an extremely harsh environment are noteworthy.

government were searching for them in the mountains. Their death is believed to have marked the end of banditry in China, though the fact is that banditry has risen again in some areas in the last decade (Wu Haifeng 1996, 117).

The fate of the outlaw hero in China was worse than those in other places. The campaign of suppressing bandits by the Communists from 1945 to 1951 claimed millions of lives. The data on the number of bandits killed or executed by the Communists are quite inadequate. Even so, some figures give an indication of how many people were killed as bandits in just a few years in just a few areas. In the Northeast from 1945 to 1951, they wiped out more than 30,000 bandits; in Hunan they claimed to have got rid of 180,000 bandits from 1949 to 1951; in Guangxi from 1949 to 1952, the number, though exaggerated greatly by the Communist propaganda, was 460,000.²²

From these figures, it can be seen that the Communist government eliminated more bandits than any other governments in Chinese history and any foreign government in the world. In all the dynasties, the emperor and officials at all levels had the power of granting life or death and giving or seizing properties of the people. Even Yue Fei,²³ a national hero of the Song dynasty, was executed on a fabricated charge (*Cihai* 789). In the period of warlordism, the warlords had the people completely in their power. When the KMT and Communists were fighting for power, they could give any person a name such as “bandit” or “reactionary” and kill him or her.

The Communists propagated that they were lenient towards captives and would not kill those who surrendered, but not long after they seized power, the Communists started the Campaign of Suppressing Counter-revolutionaries, which claimed millions

²² The sources of these figures are the book *Bandits in the Period of the Republic* by Cai Shaoqing, the book *Jindai Zhongguo Tufei Shilu* (True Records of Bandits in Modern China) and the book *Dang Fei Da Xiangxi: Xiangxi Jiaofei Jishi* (Mopping Up Bandits in West Hunan: True Events of Suppressing Bandits in West Hunan), by Zeng Fanhua & Hou Jianfei. These figures are scattered throughout the books. Some of the figures are obtained by adding several related figures together. These figures do not include those bandits killed in the Campaign of Suppressing Counter-revolutionaries from 1951 to 1952.

²³ Yue Fei (1103-1142), a famous general in the South Song dynasty in the resistance against the invasion by the Jin. He was framed by Qin Hui, the Prime Minister, with a “*mo xu you*” (“not necessarily existing”) crime. “*Mo xu you*” since has become frequently used term meaning “fabricated charge”.

of lives,²⁴ an even worse disaster for bandits. The campaign, also directly aimed at bandits, is officially defined as:

A political campaign in which, under the leadership of the CPC, the Chinese people ferreted out and suppressed counter-reactionaries. When the PRC was first founded, the special agents, despots and other counter-revolutionaries left behind by the KMT reactionaries would not take their defeat lying down and continued to make trouble and sabotage. In December 1950, the CPC led the people to carry out the Campaign of Suppressing Counter-revolutionaries. The broad masses of people actively denounced and reported against counter-revolutionaries. ... This campaign, concentrating on suppression of five kinds of counter-revolutionaries, i.e., bandits, despots, special agents, core members of reactionary parties and organisations and chiefs of reactionary secret societies, punishing with severity a number of principal culprits who had committed grave crimes against the people and the motherland, wiped out the main forces of counter-revolutionaries (CBC 1980, 1724).

Such campaigns indiscriminately claimed innocent lives including those of outlaw heroes, who, being a worry to the new regime, were not recognised as heroes. Thousands of people were killed. According to the official figure of the CPC, from the beginning of the campaign in March 1950 to May 1952, one million five hundred thousand counter-revolutionaries had been arrested and five hundred thousand of them were killed. By 1953, seven hundred and thirty thousand counter-revolutionaries had been executed and a large number imprisoned (Li Jianwei 1990, 77-79). In 1950 in Hunan, the bandit chiefs who surrendered were gathered together in a training class. The following description is self-explanatory:

Outside the door were a platoon of soldiers. When a prisoner came out, they would tie his hands behind his back and order him to stand in a line. When the next one came out, they would tie them with one rope. At dusk, about one hundred prisoners were tied up together. After the head of the county's public bureau made a short speech, the first group of prisoners were sent to the suburbs under escort. In a narrow lane, one could not see the ends of the line. In about three days, more than two hundred bandits, special agents and other counter-revolutionaries at the county level or regimental level were executed (Zeng Fanhua & Hou Jianfei 1995, 527).

Among them were people who contributed to the victory of the Anti-Japanese War and the victory of Communism. However, when they needed soldiers, the

²⁴ There has never been a publicised figure for how many people were murdered during the Campaign. The campaign, the most cruel of its kind after World War II, claimed innumerable lives unjustly.

Communists remembered the surrendered bandits. When the Korean War started, they recruited more than ten thousand ex-bandits. Many of them sacrificed their lives. According to Yuan Fusheng, Divisional Political Commissar of the forty-seventh army, those "bandits" from west Hunan were especially able to fight. When the forces were fairly depleted, he sent people to West Hunan to recruit a large number of "bandits" (Zeng Fanhua & Hou Jianfei 1995, 527).

Threatened by factors mentioned above, dying at a young age is one of the common characteristics of Chinese and western outlaws. Many of them ended their lives violently. Wannan lists some notorious Australian bushrangers with their ages at the time of their deaths, the youngest being nineteen years old and the oldest thirty-five (Wannan 1974, 11). Some well-known bandits were shot dead or executed at young ages.²⁵ Ordinary bandits tended to die even younger. According to incomplete figures, in four years in the early period of the Republic, one thousand four hundred and twenty five bandits were executed in five provinces, one district and the Northeast region.²⁶

Age Groups of Bandits Executed²⁷

Area Age	Shandong	Northeast	Nanyang (Henan)	Hebei	Anhui	Hubei	Guizhou	Sub- total
15 - 20	43	3	2	4	4	8	3	67
21 - 25	141	11	7	17	23	29	10	238
26 - 30	202	46	12	25	59	49	16	409
31 - 35	168	37	14	19	58	39	14	349
36 - 40	107	15	7	10	23	22	7	191
41 - 50	75	7	4	4	31	16	9	146
51 - 60	17	1	0	1	4	0	0	23
61 - 70	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Not Clear	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	754	120	46	81	202	163	59	1,425

²⁵ This is a list I have made in accordance with materials examined: Lao Shicai, 24 (Shot dead); Chen Zhifang (Chen Erhu), 26 (Shot dead); Xu San, in his twenties (Shot dead); Li "Lao Luan", 27 (Beheaded); Ding Tongsheng (Ding Laoba), 30 (Beheaded); Zhang Qing (Old Foreigner), 30 (Shot dead by a bandit in his gang); Wang Haishan, 32 (Shot dead); Qiao Richeng, 36 (Shot dead); Chen Deshan, 36 (Executed); Yu Fu, 36 (Executed); Li Yuanzhou, 38 (Shot dead); Zhou Shouwa ("Zhou the Wolf"), 39 (Executed); Bai Lang ("White wolf"), 41 (Shot dead); Li Kuiwu ("Lao Er Ge"), 41 (Executed); Gao Zhenpeng, ("Lao Tizi"), in his forties (Shot dead by a traitor).

²⁶ The five provinces were Shandong, Hebei, Anhui, Hubei and Gui Zhou. The district was Nanyang prefecture of Henan.

²⁷ For the figures see Cai Shaoqing 1993, 52.

People aged from 15 to 40 accounted for almost eighty-eight percent of the total, while young people aged from 15 to 30 for more than half the total. Physically speaking, young people were full of energy and ambition. Those who had land were unwilling to be bound by the land, while those who did not have land were more than willing to leave their homes to make their own living. Banditry was most attractive to them. Banding together to support each other in the environment unfit for living, they became sworn brothers, joined secret societies, or simply organised bandit gangs. Socially and politically speaking, young people were looked down upon by the seniors at home and upper classes in society. Successive famines, wars and other disasters drove young people from the original social structure. They therefore admired the romantic life of bandits which they might have seen with their own eyes or have heard through stories, songs or books. The reason why there were so many people aged 30 to 40 among bandits was attributed to the fact that they were “mostly single with no wives nor children” (Cai Shaoqing 1993, 53). According to Chinese tradition, 30 is the age of “marrying and settling down”. Poverty made a large number of men unable to marry and settle down. Being single and frustrated, most of them would choose banditry as a way out. As a saying put it: “If you haven’t made a success of your life by the time you are thirty, you had better fall into the grass²⁸ and be a bandit” (Billingsley 1988, 76). In a time of great social turmoil, young people were apt to break away from traditional moral norms. The double mentality of “becoming rich and enjoying while one can” (Cai Shaoqing 1993, 53) impelled them to rob.

Robin Hood and his men lived a merry life in the forest by singing, dancing, drinking and robbing the rich; the outlaws of the marsh lived a merry life by eating and drinking at pleasure. However, reality was far different. Wannan maintains, “A *short life and a merry one!* It is a fine, devil-may-care phrase, and conjures up a picture of outlawry dear to the romantically-minded” (Wannan 1974, 8). He further writes:

Few of the many hundreds of Australian bushrangers who operated during the nineteenth century would have accepted these words as a true summary of their careers. Rather, they would have used Thomas Hobbes’s famous phrase, had they known it, to describe the condition to which banditry soon reduced them.

²⁸ “Fall into the grass” is an euphemistic expression meaning “begin a life as bandit”.

Theirs was, indeed, a way of life “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short” (Wannan 1974, 8).

In China, bandits’ living environment was perhaps even harsher. They had to endlessly find food, clothing and shelter for themselves, to scramble desperately for living space with each other, to guard against suppression by the government and attacks by police and army, to fight between gangs, and to fight against the severe weather that often killed people mercilessly. In the 1920s He Xiya described the bandits’ life:

Bandits’ life is a life of murdering and burning, a life of raping and robbing, a life of fear and immediate danger, a life of starving or being too full, of unexpected hardship and happiness, a life of rushing east and west (here and there) and vagrancy, a life of being discarded by the society and being held in contempt by other people, a life of benefiting themselves at the expense of others, a life of not cooperating with the present society though being in it (He Xiya 1925, 41-42).

As the saying said, “Being a ‘*huzi*’ (bandit) for just one day, one is afraid of soldiers all his life.” Bandits lived a life full of anxiety, fear and distress. Most bandits lived a life no better than that of ordinary peasants. They ate food of rather poor quality except after robbery or getting their shares of the loot. The most striking characteristic of the bandit life was vagrancy and instability. They often had enemies intercepting in front and troops chasing behind. They risked their lives more often than not. They had to cross mountains and rivers and be exposed to cold and wet, making hurried journeys without stop. They were often exhausted, so their greatest happiness at these moments was to have a full stomach and a good sleep. When being encircled by strong enemies, they had to fight hard continuously and face the threat of death. According to *Shi Bao* newspaper, in October 1923, the army was chasing a bandit gang day and night without rest for more than fifty days altogether. When they reached the top of a mountain, “bandits who fell from the cliffs and those killed amounted to four to five hundred in number, and the rest fled across mountains with their lives, leaving their weapons behind” (*Shi Bao*, 6 Nov. 1923). Bandits needed to have strong physique and the willpower of fearing neither hardships nor death to adapt

themselves to the hard and vagrant life. Young people were more suitable for such a life in this regard than people of other age groups.

As already noted, records of bandits in China are very often incomplete. The ages and family backgrounds of most bandits were unknown. Xu Erhei, the most notorious bandit of Hebei, was operating from 1935 to 1944 when he was shot dead. It could only be estimated that he was around his early thirties when he died. Xu San became a bandit in 1916 and operated between 1916 and 1918. He never robbed in the neighbouring villages. When he knew anybody in need in his home place, he always came to help. He was shot dead in 1918. It could only be estimated that he was then in his late twenties. Bai Tianzhong, whose name was known far and wide, was perhaps very young when he was shot dead. His head was cut off and hung from the city wall for display (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 3, 187).

Execution ended the career of many outlaws. Before he was executed, Tian Boqing, a famous bandit chief in Xiangxi (West Hunan), was asked to drink and eat.²⁹ After eating and drinking, Tian overturned the table and swore, "Qin Zhibin, you have taken bribery. I will wait for you and Peng Tianwei at the gate of hell."³⁰ He would not kneel as others when he was executed.

Hanging was a popular method of execution in Australia, America and other western countries, but beheading was favoured by governments in China for executing bandits and criminals in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. On the following page is a picture showing the scene of the beheading of a dozen of Chinese bandits at Mukden from a 1901 newsreel produced by Charles Urban.³¹ An American called William C. Hunter, who lived in China for eighteen years from 1826 to 1844, saw the execution of fifty-four bandits. He gave a very vivid description of the scene when the bandits were beheaded. The executioner chopped the bandits' heads off as fast as lightening, and the whole execution of the fifty-four bandits took just a couple of minutes (William 1992, 8). In ancient times the Chinese invented many devices and

²⁹ It was a practice in China in the old times that before one was executed, he was given food and wine.

³⁰ Qin and Peng framed the case against Tian and arrested him (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 3, 361).

³¹ Internet: <http://www.frii.com/~gnat/movies/censorship/1.html>.



The beheading of Chinese bandits at Mukden from a 1901 newsreel produced by Charles Urban.



An Execution



Captured Bandit

methods to make people die miserably, including putting a person into an oil-wok, a scorpion pool or a snake pool, putting a person on a nailed board, dismembering the body, tearing a body limb from limb by five horses, tearing a person asunder using five carts, burning, cutting a person in two at the waist, peeling off the skin, boiling and burying alive. All these were used to punish the enemies with bandits as one of the main targets. Even in the period of the Republic, though advanced means of killing were available, the Chinese were still reluctant to part from those barbarous killing devices. Shooting did not seem as interesting as beheading. After one was executed, his bloody head would be hung on the city gate, city walls or the railway station to “warn others against following the bad example and terrify bandits” (He Xianming 1993, 183). In his book, Billingsley used a picture selected from William White’s photographic works, which shows five cages hanging from a city wall containing the heads of Bai Lang and several of his followers. Bai was shot dead, “his severed head was identified and sent to Kaifeng, where it was displayed in a cage on the great south gate a warning to all who dreamed of following the foot steps of the ‘White Wolf’” (Billingsley 1988, 61). Zhang Ping was also shot dead, his head cut off and hung on the city gate for public view (Zeng Fanhua & Hou Jianfei 1995, 341). This is a clear indication that in those days it was still very popular to cut the head off the body of the executed to expose it publicly.

Government officials had both hatred and fear for the bandits. In the late Qing dynasty, there was a strange practice in the *yamen* of Xiangfu County of Henan province: On each New Year’s Eve, the officials in the *yamen* would prepare several hundred taels of silver and a table of expensive food, which they sent to a designated place. The silver was wrapped with red silk with a red card attached to it. On the card were two characters meaning “money for the road”. It was placed in front of the table as a gift to bandits. After the New Year, they went to have a look. If the food had been consumed and the silver taken, the officials would congratulate each other, because that meant there would be peace all the year round. If everything remained untouched, they had to do it again on the Lantern Festival (the fifteenth day of the first lunar month). If the table was toppled over, the wine and food were thrown about, and

the silver bag was torn off, it was an indication that the bandits thought the money was not enough and the gift too slight. They had to increase the amount and make it up again on the Lantern Festival. If the bandits did the same on the Lantern Festival, there would never be peace in the county the whole year (Xiao Qian 1992, 51).

It was rare that a bandit could live in seclusion for a long time after he had operated for many years. However, some of them did succeed. Tian Weifang alias "Laizi Fang" (Fang the Rascal) was a bandit in Xiushan County of Sichuan from 1930 to 1945. He and his gang robbed rich families and merchants, fought against local public security corps, robbed ammunition, and attacked prisons. His name was known to everyone in the county. When he killed his last personal enemy, he disbanded his gang and went to Guizhou, where he lived as a farmer for the rest of his life with his family (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 1, 624-630).

A politically and economically advanced society makes it difficult for the outlaw hero to survive for two main reasons. The first was the construction of a complete transportation and communication network, which makes the environment unsuitable for the existence of outlaws. To resist the official troops or police, outlaw heroes, such as Wang Tianzong, Bai Lang, Wang Zuo and Yuan Wencai among others, relied very much on high mountains; some, such as bandits in the Taihu Lake, Chaohu Lake and Dongtinghu Lake areas, relied on mazy water courses; and some others, such as the horse thieves of the Northeast, relied on border areas and remote places. Modern transportation and communication means, although convenient for the outlaw hero to run away, enable the government to act quickly. Unable to find shelters as easily as their predecessors, contemporary bandits' operating time is much shorter than in the past. The most notorious trio in Taiwan operated for just half a year (CDN, 23 Jan. 1998).³²

Another factor that makes it difficult for the outlaw hero to exist is the completion of laws that help ensure social justice, especially in well-advanced societies of the West. People in these democratic societies do not need the outlaw hero to right wrongs for them as much as they did in the past. The outlaw hero is a product of a

³² For detailed discussions see Chapter 1.

society where the law and government do not provide protection, or enough protection, for the people. There are still such societies in the world.

Prey of the Government

All governments want to get rid of bandits, because they pose a potential, and actual, threat to their power. Chiang Kai-shek and Mao Zedong both wanted to suppress bandits. The difference is that Chiang wanted to suppress the “Communist bandits” first and other bandits later, while Mao wanted to suppress the “white bandits” and bandits who served the reactionary forces. In reality, they both used bandits whenever they could to achieve their aims, so they both adopted the policy of “using the carrot and the stick simultaneously”. Before KMT withdrew to Taiwan, they tried to make use of bandits to stop the Communists from advancing to the South. Bai Congxi, Military and Administrative Chief Executive of Central China, a first rank general, had to condescend to swear brothers with bandit chiefs, and appointed them as “commanders” on behalf of the KMT government (Zeng Fanhua & Hou Jianfei 1995, 10-11).

The Communists once made use of bandits when they were weak. A few lucky bandits who cooperated with the Communists became their honoured guests, including Qu Boping who had been a bandit for twelve years. When he surrendered, he was “warmly welcomed by the PLA”. Later he was chosen as a consultant of the Wuhan municipal government (Tian Xinghua 1993, 53). However, most bandits were not so lucky. As early as 1928, Yuan Wencai and Wang Zuo were killed and Ren Weizhang, a division commander of the Red Army, who was once a bandit chief, was executed by the CPC (Zhou Yumin & Shao Wei 1995, 616).³³

The most critical moment for the “greenwood heroes” in China was after the Japanese surrendered when the Communists and KMT were struggling against each other for power. Those who chose to follow the Communists had their way for a time, but the later Communists’ campaign of suppressing bandits and campaign of suppressing counter-reactionaries brought many of their lives to an end. In West

³³ See Chapter 4.

Hunan, Jiang Yuanhua, who surrendered to the Communists with a whole bandit army, was mercilessly killed by the Communists just one year after he surrendered. Before the founding of the PRC, two most notorious bandit chiefs, Jiang Yuanhua and Shi Xingzhou were both killed not long after they surrendered. Xie Wendong was executed by the Communists, who once belonged to the same alliance (EBHA 1992a, Vol. 1, 197). Those who chose to follow the KMT were nominally appointed as “commanders” by Chiang Kai-shek, but were mercilessly suppressed as “bandits” by the winning Communists.

It was the people who supported and sympathised with bandits who suffered during all these suppression campaigns. In west Hunan again, Long Yunfei, called by his countrypeople “King of the Miao Nationality”, forced by the Communists, chose to follow the KMT. He was regarded as a hero by the Miao people, but a bandit by both the Communists and the KMT. Like He Long, Long Yunfei was also called by the local people “Long the Beard”. At first, to expand their influences respectively, the CPC and the KMT both wanted to win over Long Yunfei, because Long was really influential among the Miao people. On 3 October 1939, in his telegram to the Chairman of Hunan province, Chiang Kai-shek said, “Division Commander Long Yunfei of the New Sixth Army should be entrusted with important tasks” (Zeng Fanhua & Hou Jianfei 1995, 174). In 1950, when other bandit chiefs surrendered to the Communists, Long Yunfei organised an army to fight against the Communists who had just come to power. “Like many lower-ranking KMT army officials, he was regarded, in many newspapers, magazines and historical materials, as a bandit, and the most notorious, just because he did not come to serve the CPC and the people’s government” (Zeng Fanhua & Hou Jianfei 1995, 476). He and his son were said to have been shot dead in a suppression campaign by the PLA, while the local people believed that he had killed himself. While he is still regarded as a bandit by the government, the local people regard him as a hero. The following dialogue between a journalist and a local woman in Fenghuang county of Hunan, Long Yunfei’s native place, is worth quoting:

“We are PLA men. Do you know PLA men?”
“PLA men have never come to this place.”

“Do you welcome to your home as guests?”
 “You are very welcome.”
 “But we want to know something about suppression of bandits forty years ago?”
 “...”
 “Do you know Long Yunfei, the arch-bandit?”
 “I have heard of him, but he was not a bandit.”
 “Then what was he?”
 “King of the Miao people.”
 “Do you know how he died?”
 “He killed himself.”
 “Where?”
 “In Tuqiaoao.”
 “Can you show us to the place.”
 “No. I have to get in the grain.”
 “Can you tell us something about how Long Yunfei murdered people?”
 “I don’t know anything about that, but I hear that when the ‘King of the Miao People’ was alive, there had always been timely wind and rain, and people from other places did not dare to rob grain from here” (Zeng Fanhua & Hou Jianfei 1995, 160).

If Jiang Yuanhua’s death was a tragedy, Long Yunfei’s death was a heroic sacrifice. To commit suicide rather than surrender, one needs extraordinary courage. Outlaw heroes might die in different ways, but they died heroically.

Banditry is a tragedy of the individual as well as the country. The fate of the outlaw hero is related of the fate of a country and that of all outlaws. It is determined by many factors such as time, governments, environment and regional culture. However, the fate of outlaw heroes is decided not wholly by the authorities but by the outlaw heroes themselves. They choose the way to live and the way to die. Otherwise they could have lived like underdogs, which they refuse to do. In China and the West, though the attitudes are different, the way people look at the death of the outlaw hero bears many similarities. Outlaws may have different fates, but death, surrender and escape are the inevitable ends an outlaw could expect, with death as the most probable. The outlaw hero is expected to face death heroically, defy it and die fearlessly.

Conclusion

This thesis has compared differences between the Western outlaw hero and his Chinese counterpart in their behaviours, philosophy, attitudes towards people and their outlooks on life and death. With respect to the differences of individual character, personality, habits and behaviours, this thesis has sought to explain individual traits of outlaw heroes through comparison. Some are generous, some brave, some expert at escaping, some unyielding to oppression, some revengeful. Since the tradition of outlaw heroism is apparently a universal phenomenon, it demonstrates common features shared by outlaw heroes in all cultures and nations. The ten motifs of the outlaw hero tradition elaborated by Seal and the nine points of the image of the social bandit who has the role of “the champion, the righter of wrongs, the bringer of justice and social equity” (Hobsbawm 1972, 42) as summarised by Hobsbawm are also found in the Chinese tradition of outlaw heroism, though in a slightly attenuated form, as demonstrated in this thesis. If outlaw heroes are regarded as a specific group of people, we can accept He Long’s definition of banditry as “acts of bravery by fearless people who were simple, loved prominence, had real fiber, and valued friendship” (Billingsley 1988, 273).

Chinese outlaws have characteristics similar to, as well as different from, those of their Western counterparts. In Australia it was the mid- to late nineteenth century that saw the rampage of outlawed bushrangers, while in China, it was the early twentieth century that experienced unprecedented banditry, approximately twenty million bandits (Cai Shaoqing 1993, 1). Australian bushrangers mainly operated in the eastern states and Van Diemen’s Land, while Chinese bandits were found all over the country. Among bushrangers were a few outlaw heroes, while most of them were robbers or murderers; among Chinese bandits, “*lulin haohan*” were not rare, but most of them brought misfortune to the people. Most Chinese bandits, especially outlaw heroes, would occupy a place and claim to be kings in the areas that they occupied as bases, while Australian outlaws were almost always on the run. Both Australian and Chinese outlaws might provide protection for the local people and help the poor, but the help was more like patronage for the Chinese outlaw, while more like sharing than helping for the Australian

one. Both the Australian and the Chinese outlaw heroes confronted the representatives or wielders of state power, such as the police, the army and the law. But the Australian outlaw hero fought more directly with the police and the law, while his Chinese counterpart fought more directly with corrupt officials and the army, having little chance to enter into any legal trial process. The Australian outlaw hero was a product of the convict system and injustice forced upon him by the authorities represented by the police, while the Chinese outlaw hero was a product of corrupt officialdom, warlordism, evil gentry, landlord exploitation and oppression, civil wars, poverty and natural disasters. The exceptions were the early bandits in the Northeast who, like their Australian counterparts, were the products of a convict system. Australian outlaw heroes acted more to revenge a sense of injustice, though they sometimes shared their loot with relatives, friends or neighbours, while Chinese outlaws robbed more for wealth, probably also distributing their loot to the poor, though they could also assume the role of avenger. Activities of both the Australian and Chinese outlaw heroes were against the law, but the Australian outlaw hero was tried and killed, while the Chinese one was killed but not tried.

The Australian outlaw had a close tie with his local people, so did his Chinese counterpart. The local people provided a kind of protection by keeping silent when the police or government army came to investigate his whereabouts or by giving wrong information to them. However, the Australian outlaw hero did not provide much protection for his local people. It is more correct to say that the poorer Australians provided more protection for the outlaw hero by giving him information of police movements through the "bush telegraph". However, his Chinese counterpart more often than not protected his local people from being raided by all kinds of troops and other bandit gangs. The Chinese outlaw's unique code of "a rabbit not eating the grass outside its own burrow" was a kind of passive protection for local people. Furthermore, the Chinese outlaw hero could even set up certain administrative schemes in the area where he operated to compensate for the weak or bad local government, something the Australian outlaw hero never did.

The Western outlaw hero is seldom involved in revolution, while the Chinese equivalent has natural ties with revolution. However, the ties are fragile. When revolutionaries need the courage and fighting capacity possessed by the outlaw hero, they turn to him for help, but when the revolutionaries have established their new order, they cannot wait to get rid of the outlaw hero for fear of his symbolic strength becoming a destructive factor in the new order. The Republicans, the Communists and even the Heavenly Kingdom leaders all did the same. When the Republican revolution was at its height, participation in the revolution became a trend among outlaw heroes. Objectively, revolutionaries and outlaw heroes aimed at the same target: the revolutionaries wanted to overthrow the Qing dynasty and realise social reform, while the outlaw heroes, rejected by the Qing dynasty, wanted to fight against, if not to overthrow, the Qing government. Bai Lang, Wang Tiantong, Ding Laoba and a number of other outlaw heroes all eagerly responded to the call of the revolutionaries. However, the revolutionaries used them from a purely pragmatic point of view. They did not intend, and did not try, to transform these outlaw heroes and their followers into revolutionary forces. Subjectively, outlaw heroes saw that their involvement in the revolution gave them an opportunity to organise more people in their gangs and an opportunity to achieve their immediate aims of revenge, robbing the rich or righting wrongs for their people.

Though influenced by revolution, the outlaw hero could only enter into a limited alliance with the revolutionaries. He was mostly made use of, but seldom given any help organisationally, materially and ideologically by the Republican revolutionaries. Right after the founding of the Republic in 1912, the armies formed by greenwood gangs and secret societies were either disbanded or suppressed. Outlaw heroes joined the revolution for different reasons. Besides their common target, as discussed above, the temptation of material supports, such as money, ammunition and equipment, and official positions, was another important reason. Once they felt disappointed, or when they saw more powerful material and political temptation, they would be dragged away from the revolutionary forces, for in the last analysis their aims were not the same.

The Communists adopted the “carrot and stick” policy towards bandits. When they were weak, the Communists tried various strategies to win support from bandits. Unlike

high-ranking officials of the KMT, who very often came from rich families or officials' families and were well-educated, the Communists, being mostly from the lower and middle peasants' families, had a natural affiliation with bandits. They could use bandit language to talk with bandits and would swear to become brothers with bandit chiefs. The Communists were more successful in transforming bandit chiefs into revolutionaries. He Long, Wang Zuo, Yuan Wencai, all became members of the CPC.

The outlaw hero's participation in revolution was but to find a large battlefield to realise his ideal of "robbing the rich to help the poor." Therefore, revolution had appeal to the outlaw hero only at the beginning or when the outlaw hero saw the possibility of realising that ideal. He did not care much about the success or failure of the revolution, for the success of the revolution might lead to new inequality in the society and the failure of the revolution might bring back the inequality that had existed and which he had fought against in the past. What was worse was that after the success of the revolution, the revolutionaries tended to turn their weapons against the outlaw hero ally to show that they were different to previous regimes. When the revolution failed, it was the outlaw hero who had to face suppression by the government. Generally speaking, unlike revolution, outlaw heroism could not punctuate history. Since outlaw heroes usually did not have clear revolutionary political programmes, their roles in revolution were very restricted.

The outlaw hero tradition is one of resistance against oppression, inequality and injustice by a number of brave, ambitious and law-defying people. In China, especially in rural areas, farmers, with the family as the working unit, were firmly and willingly attached to small pieces of land generation after generation. Feeling it hard to leave their home and land, they lived and died in the same place. Once a man was married, he had to work hard in the field to support his parents, wife or wives, and children. If his economic condition was reasonably bearable, it was very difficult for him to take to banditry. So those who did take to banditry had great courage or were hopelessly cornered. Bandits in China were mainly those people who were poor, landless or uninterested in farming. That is to say, surplus population in rural areas was the main source of bandits. Deprived of

land and source of income by wars, natural disasters or man-made disasters, the weak begged for a living and the strong became bandits.

The second important source of bandits was demobilised, defeated or dispersed soldiers of all kinds of armies. Especially during the years when warlords fought against each other for influence, people were soldiers for one day and bandits for another. In the aftermath of war, the defeated troops, with no reliable source of income, turned to robbery for a living. Another important source of bandits were those people who, unnecessarily poor, were wronged, frustrated or deprived of legal opportunities to realise their ambition. These people were apt to become “outlaw heroes” in the eyes of their supporters and sympathisers, as discussed at a number of points throughout this thesis.

The outlaw tradition exists in all nations and cultures. Due to historical, social, political, economical, cultural, philosophical, ethical and even environmental differences, the tradition varies in regard to its length, impact and development between nations and cultures. The Australian outlaw tradition, though it could be linked with the English tradition, has a history of, at most, two hundred years. The Chinese outlaw tradition, starting from the legendary period of the Five Emperors¹, has a history of more than four thousand years. If Huang Chao² is regarded as the first outlaw hero in history, the outlaw hero tradition in China has lasted for more than one thousand years.

In such a long history, Chinese outlaws have created organisational concepts, disciplinary rules, language and ceremonies. The bandit argot has enriched the Chinese vocabulary. The names of some outlaw heroes have become eponyms of a quality, spirit or action. These cultural products reflected the outlaws’ challenge to and contempt for the existing institutions, authorities, orthodoxies and mainstream culture. When they are driven out of the legal system and everyday routines, outlaw heroes are no longer bound by the law and social values of the existing society, but by a different set of values, principles and guidelines. Some of these codes have written or oral forms, while some, without proclamation in writing or speech, are simply understood and accepted by all outlaw heroes without question. From social and cultural points of view, outlaw heroes

¹ Allegedly 2700 BC.

² The leader of a peasant uprising in the late Tang dynasty (875-883), who killed himself when his troops were defeated by the government army.

themselves are symbolically significant. As with Robin Hood in the English language and Ned Kelly in the Australian English language, *Liangshan haohan* (heroes in Liangshan Mountain)³ in the Chinese language signifies those who dare to challenge the authorities and uphold justice. As the bush is a representative icon of the outlaw heroes in Australia, the marsh is a symbol of the outlaw hero tradition in China.

Different social environments also nurture people with different characters, temperaments and outlooks. The characteristic of defying the police was formed among the convicts in the early days of Australia's colonial settlement and inherited by later outlaw heroes especially in Victoria, New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land. Banditry was popular all over China in the late nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century, but it was particularly endemic to three regions: the Northeast, Shandong and Henan provinces.

Natural environments accounted for the degrees and extents of banditry. The bush and hills in Australia and the marsh, mountains, the maze of complex water courses and forests in China provided arenas and protection for outlaw heroes. The vast grasslands with tall grass and crops in the Northeast of China were an ideal area in which "mazer" (horse thieves) galloped freely on horseback, while horses were also widely used by Australian bushrangers.⁴ Border areas in between provinces and counties which were called "san bu guan" (administered-by-none) areas in China, being out-of-the-way and loose in political control, were especially advantageous to banditry. To adapt themselves to such environments and to avoid government suppression, outlaw heroes developed techniques of moving and hiding quickly.

The tradition of outlaw heroism will stay as a significant part of the traditions of the cultures compared and contrasted in this thesis. Outlaw heroism is a voice, which cannot be silenced by the law, but is amplified by the lore. There will be bandits and a popular love of bandit heroes as long as poverty, oppression and injustice exist in the world and the outlaw hero tradition will be cherished and learnt from as long as banditry exists. The

³ Referring to the outlaws of the marsh.

⁴ In other parts in China, such as the plains in the central part, North and Inner Mongolia of China, horses were also widely used by bandits.

outlaw hero is the scourge of heaven for those who, with power or money in hand, oppress, or do injustice to, other people, especially the poor.

Outlaw heroes of both China and the West verify such arguments. The law that outlaw heroes instituted embodied their ideas and ideals of justice by “robbing the rich to help the poor”, using moderate violence (in the Chinese and Western cases, this rule was not always observed), and revenging those wronged. It is part of the cultural heritage passed on through the folkloric revelation of the outlaw hero tradition. Seal notes “alternative forms of law”, such as “the rule of the mob in eighteenth-century England”, “the role of vigilantism in America”, and “the outbreaks of outlawry” in Australia, Britain and America (Seal 1988, 200). In China, these “alternative forms of law” include the rules of the marsh, i.e., “killing the rich and corrupt officials”, secret societies’ penalty regulations, and Ding Laoba’s punishment for “picking flowers” and Northeast horse thieves’ trade regulations. Outlaw heroism is so powerful a cultural tradition all over the world that it is remembered and learned from whenever there is such need. It is also an entertaining tradition for folk who feel indignant at oppression by the government, the law and the rich but do not dare to speak out. The outlaw hero’s deeds of fighting against the oppressing force and injustice as reflected in folklore give the downtrodden a glimmer of hope. That is why stories of the outlaw hero are popular everywhere and why the outlaw hero is often constructed as a lovable, and sometimes mischievous, man, such as Li Kui among the outlaw heroes of the Marsh.

The fate of the Australian outlaw hero was similar to that of his Chinese counterpart. The attempt to escape from final destruction proved unsuccessful for both. The fate of the outlaw hero was related to the fate of other outlaws. In Western traditions, outlaws saw little chance of escaping from their destiny. In China, though final extinction was inevitable, bandits had other hopes, such as surrender and enlistment into the official armies or appointment as government officials in times of turmoil.

When the outlaw hero had to die, he would die a heroic death. The Western and the Chinese outlaw heroes both “died game”, but the attitudes reflected their cultural differences. Life is precious, but when one is forced to die, the way that he dies shows his quality and character. The outlaw hero knew that violent death was always the possible

end of his life. He wanted to guard against such a death, but it seemed that it was inevitable. Indignation, doubt, anxiety and fear filled his life and made him into a man of adventurous spirit which often led him to an even narrower life and a more hopeless situation.

This comparative study of the outlaw hero has analysed that tradition as a universal phenomenon as well as one particular to different countries. As a universal tradition, it bears common characteristics: outlaw heroes in China and Australia abided by similar codes in their operations, had similar qualities and shared similar views on life and death, society and the world. But in each country, the tradition has its unique national characteristics, the Chinese outlaw hero would use more violent means in robbing and revenging, while the Australian outlaw hero tended to be moderate; the Chinese outlaw hero was bound by brotherhood and traditional ethical principles, while the Australian outlaw hero was unrestrained. The Chinese outlaw hero created cultural products for the trade of banditry, while the Australian outlaw hero did not care for such things.

However, the outlaw hero tradition has a self-contradictory nature. Fighting against violence by using violence, righting wrongs but creating new wrongs, defending a specific group of people against justice but doing other groups of people injustices, robbing the rich but creating new poor people are all contradictory activities. In history, outlaw heroes are by no means as perfect as the romanticised Robin Hoods in all cultures. Outlaw heroism cannot get rid of injustices, inequality and poverty. Outlaw heroism lauded by folklore is a result of social problems but not a solution to them. Those who resort to outlaw heroism to right wrongs may succeed, but only temporarily. The way in which the outlaw hero fought against and defied the authorities, on the one hand, gave a blow to the corrupt official or the unreasonable and unfair authority, but on the other hand, aggravated the cruelty and autocracy of the state apparatus. The cycle of oppression, rebellion, more cruel oppression, stronger rebellion, even more cruel oppression will finally lead to revolution which tends to change the system most radically. The outlaw hero, no matter how glorious his legend, can play only a trivial role in such large political movements.

However, the image of the outlaw hero established by folklore is ideal. The outlaw hero's resistance is a hopeless one. The existence of the outlaw hero is a tragedy. He was hated by the authorities, so his deeds, being purposely neglected, could not be known too widely when he was alive. When he died, the spread of his stories relied on oral communication. In China there are still many outlaw heroes whose deeds, lives and names remain anonymous, because of lack of records. Therefore, stories about those who are known tend to be a mixture of legends, myths and facts filled with fabrication, imagination, distortion and manipulation. The deeds of one outlaw hero could be found in the stories of another as this and other studies have found. But once the image of the outlaw hero is established, it persists as "folkloric reality", a contrast to historic reality. Indeed, folklore, assisted by literature and popular culture, has successfully constructed Robin Hood, Ned Kelly and the outlaws of the Marsh. Folklore is concerned with the heroic image of the outlaw hero and its implications to the folk. This is thus not a question of a direct connection between the image and the reality, but a concern with the exemplary unity of the image.

The outlaw hero wanted to clear away the injustice and oppression that he saw or experienced. The famous peasant uprising leader Han Shantong said "only when injustice is eliminated completely can peace be gained" (Yang Ne 1978, 62). The outlaw hero hoped to achieve economic and political equality through robbing the rich to give to the poor or fighting against corrupt officialdom. Such an ideal could not be realised in any society, East or West. The equality the outlaw hero wanted to achieve was based on robbery of richer places or people. As a result, new poor places and people were created and the social problem remained unsolved. The outlaw hero pursued primitive absolute equality which, being antithetical to any existing social order, could not last long. Though the outlaw hero himself created "laws" inside his own organisation or for himself and his followers, those "laws" could not be applied to the whole society, and if they had been, they would have created even more problems.

We are, and will continuously be, interested in outlaw heroes or *lulin haohan*. The legacy they have left us, together with that of the exemplary Robin Hood and the outlaws of the Marsh, is valuable for those who study the phenomenon, for those who need to

draw lessons from it and for those who still suffer from injustice. Outlaw heroes will always be an inspiration for people who are unwilling to bow before those they consider to be oppressors and humiliators. The existence of Chinese outlaw heroes or *lulin haohan* in all dynasties and across the whole country is by no means a fortuitous phenomenon. The emergence of the outlaw hero reflects the people's wish to have someone right wrongs and enforce justice when the government or the law provide none, or too little, protection. However, the protection of the outlaw hero is very limited. People cannot expect much from him, for what he can do is only to right wrongs. He cannot make a world of equality, not even within his own sphere of influence. When the outlaw hero aims to realise equality by "robbing the rich to give to the poor", the poor may benefit for a while, but not for long.

Appendix I

<i>aoying</i>	熬鹰
<i>ba xiang tou zi</i>	拔香头子
<i>Bagua</i>	八卦
<i>Bai Lang</i>	白狼
<i>Bai Lian Jiao</i>	白莲教
<i>Bai Shang Di Hui</i>	拜上帝会
<i>baixiang</i>	拜香
<i>baibamen</i>	摆八门
<i>baifei</i>	白匪
<i>bang</i>	帮
<i>bang fei</i>	帮匪
<i>banghui</i>	帮会
<i>bangpiao</i>	绑票
<i>bangzishou</i>	棒子手
<i>bangzi</i>	梆子
<i>bao han er zhong</i>	抱憾而终
<i>baohao</i>	报号
<i>baxiang</i>	拔香
<i>Bei Feng</i>	北风
<i>bei xin qi yi</i>	背信弃义
<i>Ben Zhuang</i>	本庄
<i>bi shang Liangshan</i>	逼上梁山
<i>bingfei</i>	兵匪
<i>bu fa zhi tu</i>	不法之徒
<i>cao mang yingxiong</i>	草莽英雄
<i>cao tou wang</i>	草头王
<i>cha bang</i>	茶帮
<i>Chaqian</i>	插千
<i>cha wan zhen</i>	茶碗阵
<i>chang hu zi dui</i>	唱胡子堆
<i>chefeiluba</i>	车匪路霸
<i>chenyao</i>	谰谣
<i>Cheng wang cheng ba</i>	称王称霸
<i>chi da hu</i>	吃大户
<i>Dadangjia</i>	大当家
<i>Da Dao Hui</i>	大刀会
<i>dadaoke</i>	大刀客
<i>Dage</i>	大哥
<i>Da Mo</i>	达摩
<i>da pai</i>	大排
<i>dashi</i>	打食
<i>Dazhanggui</i>	大掌柜
<i>dagu</i>	大鼓
<i>dao</i>	道
<i>dao yi you dao</i>	盗亦有道
<i>Dao Zhi</i>	盗跖

Glossary

<i>daxia</i>	大侠
<i>Dharma Laozu wei wu</i>	达摩老祖威武
<i>diaomin</i>	刁民
<i>Dong Bei</i>	东北
<i>Dong San Sheng</i>	东三省
<i>Dong Yang</i>	东洋
<i>Dongbei Kangri Lianjun</i>	东北抗日联军
<i>dou</i>	斗
<i>Dujun</i>	督军
<i>Erdangjia</i>	二当家
<i>Erge</i>	二哥
<i>fan dong pai</i>	反动派
<i>Fanduo</i>	翻垛
<i>fan qing fu ming</i>	反清复明
<i>feigong</i>	非攻
<i>feiguo</i>	匪国
<i>fen ting kang li</i>	分庭抗礼
<i>Fengyang Hua Gu</i>	凤阳花鼓
<i>fu-tang</i>	幅堂
<i>Ge Lao Hui</i>	哥老会
<i>Gengzi War</i>	庚子战争
<i>gua zhu</i>	挂柱
<i>Guan Dong</i>	关东
<i>Guan Dong san bao</i>	关东三宝
<i>guan fei</i>	惯匪
<i>Guan Nei</i>	关内
<i>Guan Wai</i>	关外
<i>Guangguir</i>	光棍儿
<i>Guanyin</i>	观音
<i>gui da qiang</i>	鬼打墙
<i>guo fei</i>	国匪
<i>Guofu</i>	国父
<i>guotang</i>	过堂
<i>Han Liu</i>	汉留
<i>hang</i>	行
<i>haohan</i>	好汉
<i>haoxia</i>	豪侠
<i>heihua</i>	黑话
<i>heiren</i>	黑人
<i>Hei Xuanfeng</i>	黑旋风
<i>Hong Bang</i>	洪帮
<i>Hong Deng Zhao</i>	红灯照
<i>honghuzi</i>	红胡子
<i>Hong Men</i>	洪门(红门)
<i>Hong Qian Hui</i>	红钱会
<i>Hong Qiang Hui</i>	红枪会

<i>Hong Yang</i>	红阳教	<i>Liangshan Haohan</i>	梁山好汉
<i>hong yao</i>	红窑	<i>Liangshan Marsh</i>	梁山泊
<i>hu fei</i>	胡匪	<i>liumin</i>	流民
<i>Hu Xian</i>	狐仙	<i>liuzi</i>	络子
<i>huzi</i>	胡子	<i>liulang jianghu</i>	流浪江湖
<i>huaquan</i>	划拳	<i>liuluo jianghu</i>	流落江湖
<i>Huashezi</i>	花舌子	<i>lulin</i>	绿林
<i>Hua Xing Hui</i>	华兴会	<i>lulin haohan</i>	绿林好汉
<i>Huai Nan</i>	淮南	<i>lulin yingxiong</i>	绿林英雄
<i>Huang Xian</i>	黄仙	<i>lulin zaju</i>	绿林杂剧
<i>hufei</i>	胡匪	<i>Lun Yu</i>	论语
<i>Hui fei</i>	回匪	<i>luocao</i>	落草
<i>Hui ni</i>	回逆	<i>Luohan</i>	罗汉
<i>huifei</i>	会匪	<i>mafei</i>	马匪
<i>Hung Jiang Hui</i>	红江会	<i>mazei</i>	马贼
<i>Jiajia Lou</i>	贾家楼	<i>mahuzi</i>	马胡子
<i>jian li wang yi</i>	见利忘义	<i>Majun</i>	马军
<i>jianer</i>	健儿	<i>maodong</i>	猫冬
<i>jianghu langzhong</i>	江湖郎中	<i>miao</i>	庙
<i>jianghu pianzi</i>	江湖骗子	<i>minzu dayi</i>	民族大义
<i>jianghu shushi</i>	江湖术士	<i>Mo Jia</i>	墨家
<i>jianghu yingxiong</i>	江湖英雄	<i>Mo Ni</i>	摩尼
<i>jianghu yiqi</i>	江湖义气	<i>mo xu you</i>	莫须有
<i>jianghu yiren</i>	江湖艺人	<i>Nian</i>	捻
<i>jianghu yishi</i>	江湖义士	<i>nuxia</i>	女侠
<i>jianghu zhong ren</i>	江湖中人	<i>Pai An Jing Qi</i>	拍案惊奇
<i>Jiaojiangyuan</i>	叫将员	<i>pandao</i>	盘道
<i>jiao yangzi</i>	叫秧子	<i>Pao Ge Hui</i>	袍哥会
<i>jie fu ji pin</i>	劫富济贫	<i>Paotou</i>	炮头
<i>Jinfei</i>	金匪	<i>pinghua</i>	平话
<i>jinpen xishou</i>	金盆洗手	<i>Qi Jian Shi San Xia</i>	七剑十三侠
<i>jing zhong bao guo</i>	精忠报国	<i>qiju</i>	起局
<i>jiu guo jiu min</i>	救国救民	<i>qiangfen</i>	枪份
<i>jiu kun fu wei</i>	救困扶危	<i>qiekou</i>	切口
<i>jiu liu</i>	九流	<i>Qing Bang</i>	青帮
<i>jiu sheng min</i>	救生民	<i>qinggong</i>	轻功
<i>juzi</i>	巨子	<i>Qiushou Baodong</i>	秋收暴动
<i>Juyi Tang</i>	聚义堂	<i>quyi</i>	曲艺
<i>ka ju</i>	开局	<i>renfen</i>	人份
<i>koubai</i>	口白	<i>renxia</i>	任侠
<i>Koxinga</i>	国姓爷	<i>san cong si de</i>	三从四德
<i>kuaibanr</i>	快板儿	<i>San Dian Hui</i>	三点会
<i>kungfu</i>	功夫	<i>san gang wu chang</i>	三纲五常
<i>la pianzi</i>	拉片子	<i>Sange</i>	三哥
<i>Li</i>	理	<i>San He Hui</i>	三合会
<i>Li Ji</i>	礼记	<i>san jiao jiu liu</i>	三教九流
<i>Li San the Swallow</i>	燕子李三	<i>sha fu ji pin</i>	杀富济贫
<i>Lixue</i>	理学	<i>sha xue wei meng</i>	歃血为盟
<i>Liangtai</i>	粮台	<i>Shan Da Wang</i>	山大王

Shandong Kuaishu 山东快书
shang jiu liu 上九流
Shaolin Temple wushu 少林寺武术
she sheng qu yi 舍身取义
She Xian 蛇仙
Shen Nong Shi 神农氏
shen zhang zheng yi 伸张正义
sheng men 生门
Shi Ji 史记
shichen 时辰
shihua 诗话
shijia 世家
Shua Hun Qian De 耍混 钱的
Shuang Biao 双镖
Shuang Dao Hui 双刀会
Shui Hu Zhuan 水浒传
Shuixiang 水香
shunmin 顺民
shuohua 说话
shuoshu 说书
si bang 丝帮
Si liang ba zhu 四梁八柱
taizi 台子
Taiping Dao 太平道
Taiping Tianguo 太平天国
tanci 弹词
Tangjiang 趟将
ti tian xing dao 替天行道
Tian Di Hui 天地会
Tian Gang 天罡
Tian Li 天理
Tian Zhu 天主
Tuanlian 团练
tufei 土匪
Tui Bei Tu 推背图
Tung Meng Hui 同盟会
Wa Gang Zhai 瓦岗寨
wang-ba-dan 忘八蛋
Wu Laoer 武老二
wu yi xiaoren 无义小人
wuxia 武侠
xia 侠
xia jiu liu 下九流
xiashi 侠士
xiake 侠客
Xianfeng 先锋

xiangma 响马
xiangyao 响窑
Xiansheng 先生
Xiao Dao Hui 小刀会
Xiao Wu Yi 小五义
xie jiao 邪教
Xing Zhong Hui 兴中会
xiongcan 凶残
Xuanxue 玄学
yamen 衙门
Yan Fei 烟匪
Yangzifang 秧子房
yangzi 秧子
yaoqianshu 摇钱树
yi 义
yi bang ren 一帮人
yi fei 义匪
Yi He Tuan 义和团
yi wu fan gu 义无反顾
yixia 义侠
Yi Yong Jun 义勇军
Yin Yang 阴阳
yinyu 隐语
youxia 游侠
zaju 杂剧
zayao 砸窑
Zai Li Hui 在理会
Zaizi 崽子
zeikou 贼寇
Zhang Huang Taiyi 张黄太乙
zhang yi shu cai 仗义疏财
zhang yi zhi yan 仗义直言
zhaoan 招安
zhifa pandao 指法盘道
zhinanche 指南车
zhong xiao jie yi 忠孝节义
Zhong Yi Tang 忠义堂
Zhonghua Minguo Fu Han Tao Yuan Jun 中华民国抚汉讨袁军
Zhongzhou da xia 中州大侠
Zhuang Zi 庄子
zhuo na gui an 捉拿归案
Zijiang 字将
zou jianghu 走江湖
zou wu dao 走五道

Appendix II
Selected Bandit Argots

Argot	Phonetic Symbols (Pinyin)	Meaning in Chinese	Phonetic Symbols (Pinyin)	Literal Meaning in English	Meaning in English
靶子	bazi	头	tou	target	head
拔香头子	ba xiang tou zi	退伙	tuihuo	pull out the joss sticks	quit a gang
搬姜子	ban jiangzi	喝酒	hejiu	move the ginger	drink wine
板台子	ban taizi	床	chuang	board platform	bed
宝盖子	bao gaizi	马鞍子	maanzi	treasure cover	saddle
宝莲子	bao lianzi	灯笼	denglong	treasure lotus	lantern
扁嘴子	bian zuizi	鸭子	yazi	flat beak	duck
别梁子	bie liangzi	劫路	jielu	bolting the ridge	highway robbery
草卷	caojuan	烟	yan	grass roll	cigarette
槽子	caozi	银子	yinzi	manger	silver
插了他	cha le ta	杀了他	sha le ta	stab him	kill him
柴火	chaihuo	子弹	zidan	firewood	bullet
齿轮	chilun	月饼	yuebing	gear wheel	moon cake
臭筒	chou tong	袜子	wazi	reeking tubes	stocks
大老黑	da lao hei	锅	guo	big old black	wok
打小项	da xiaoxiang	给大匪伙进贡	gei dafiehuo jingong	hand in small sums of money	pay tribute to a bigger bandit gang
大扇	da shan	门	men	big fan	door
登天	deng tian	上房	shang fang	ascend the sky	climb to the roof
顶	ding	没交情	mei jiaqing	goring; lock horns like bulls	have no established friendship
顶天	dingtian	帽子	maozi	propping up the sky	hat
点儿背	dianr bei	晦气	huiqi	bad number in gambling	bad luck
定盘子	ding panzi	星星	xingxing	marks on the arm of a steelyard	stars
翻张子	fan zhangzi	烙饼	laobing	turning over the piece	pan cake
放台子	fang taizi	开局放赌	kaiju fangdu	set the table	provide room for gambling
飞窑子	fei yaozi	搬家	banjia	flying kiln	moving house
富海	fuhai	喝水	heshui	rich sea	drink
疙瘩	gada	锁头	suotou	knot	lock
狗子	gouzi	警察	jingcha	dog	policeman
古楼子	gu louzi	庙宇	miaoyu	old building	temple
挂柱	gua zhu	入伙	ruhuo	hang on to the pillar	join a gang

滚子	gunzi	鸡蛋	jidan	roller	egg
管儿直	guanr zhi	枪法准	qiangfa zhun	straight pipe	crack shot
(海)叶子	(hai) yezi	信	xin	(sea) leaf	letter
海瞧	hai qiao	看朋友	ken pengyou	look at the sea	visit friends
黑货	heihuo	大烟土	dayantu	black goods	opium
恨脏	hen zang	肥皂	feizao	hate dirt	soap
哼哼	hengheng	猪	zhu	groaning	pig
红光子	hong guangzi	太阳	taiyang	red light	the sun
滑	hua	走、撤	zou, che	slip	go; withdraw
花盘子	hua panzi	麻子	mazi	flowery plate	a pockmarked face
花票	hua piao	绑来的女人	bang lai de nuren	flowery notes	kidnapped women
花子房	huazi fang	乞丐住处	qigai zhuchu	flower house	beggars living place
黄货	huang huo	金子	jinzi	yellow goods	gold
晃门子	huang menzi	说假话	shuo jiahua	flash doors	lie
尖角子	jian jiaozhi	牛	niu	sharp horns	ox
接财神	jie caishen	去绑票	qu bangpiao	to receive God of Wealth	to go to kidnap
金盘子	jin panzi	脸盆	lianpen	gold plate	basin
进书房	jin shufang	坐牢	zuolao	enter the study room	be imprisoned
局红	ju hong	兴旺	xingwang	The game is red.	thriving
开克	kaike	打仗	dazhang	start conquering	fight
开局	kaiju	成立缙子	chengli liuzi	start opening	set up a gang
看书	kan shu	吃官司	chi guansi	read a book	be sued (in a court of law)
靠背子	kao beizi	椅子	yizi	seat back	chair
靠窑	kao yao	投靠	toukao	lean to a house	go and join (another gang)
啃富	ken fu	吃饭	chifan	bite the rich	eat
啃草卷	ken caojuan	抽烟	chouyan	bite grass rolls	smoke
空子	kongzi	外来的	wai lai de	gap	outsider
空心子	kong xinzi	桥	qiao	hollow heart	bridge
苦水窑子	kushui yaozi	药店	yaodian	bitter water brothel	drug store
宽帐子	kuan zhangzi	被褥	beiru	wide tent	quilt
苦窑	ku yao	监狱	jianyu	bitter brothel	prison
快嘴子	kuai zuizi	电话	dianhua	quick mouth	telephone
捆龙	kun long	绳子	shengzi	tying up dragon	rope
拉线	la xian	侦察	zhencha	pull the line	spy; scout
兰花马	lanhua ma	猫	mao	orchid horse	cat
浪飞	lang fei	到处走	dao chu zou	waves flying	wander about
老头	laotou	银元	yinyuan	old man	silver dollar
里码人	li ma ren	同行、	tonghang,	insider	of the same trade,

		自己人	zijiren		one's own people
帘子	lianzi	马	ma	curtain	horse
莲花	lianhua	碗	wan	lotus flower	bowl
莲叶	lianye	碟子	diezi	lotus leaf	saucers
亮子	liangzi	灯	deng	bright	lamp
流水窑	liushui yao	旅店	lǚdian	flowing water brothel	hotel
漏水	loushui	被人察觉	bei ren chajue	water leaking	be found out
炉子	luzi	月亮	yueliang	oven	the moon
乱点子	luan dianzi	坟墓	fenmu	disorderly spots	tomb
轮子	lunzi	车	che	wheel	cart
落马	luoma	犯案	fan'an	fall from the horse	be found out and sent to the law court
码走	ma zou	被绑票	bei bangpiao	be piled away	be kidnapped
码人	ma ren	集合	jihe	pile up people	assembly
买卖顺不 顺?	Maimai shun bu shun?	事干没干 成?	Shi gan mei gan chang?	Was the transaction smooth?	Was that successful?
毛页子	mao yezi	皮大衣	pi dayi	fur leaves	fur coat
苗	miao	头发	toufa	shoots	hair
明了	ming le	被人知道 了	bei ren zhidao le	become clear	be known by others
爬山	pashan	羊	yang	climbing the mountain	sheep
盘儿	panr	脸	lian	plate	face
碰	peng	有交情	you jiaoqing	touch	have established friendship
喷子	penzi	枪	qiang	sprayer	gun
碰码	peng ma	见面	jianmian	touch counter	meet
漂洋子	piao yang zi	饺子	jiaozi	floating on the ocean	dumpling
皮子	pizi	狗	gou	fur	dog
皮子喘了	pizi chuan le	狗叫	gou jiao	The fur is breathing.	The dog is barking.
片子	pianzi	钱	qian	card	money
漂子	piaozi	船	chuan	floating	boat
平托子	ping tuozi	桌子	zhuozi	flat support	table
起皮子	qi pizi	起事	qishi	making leather	rise in rebellion
掐灯花	qia denghua	晚上砸窑	wanshang zayao	to stub out the snuff of a candlewick	to attack a homestead at night
青子	qingzi	刀	dao	the green	knife
圈子	quanzi	县城	xiancheng	circle	county seat
软富	ruan fu	喝茶	hecha	soft rich	drink tea
山神爷	shanshenye	老虎	laohu	God of Mountains	tiger

山头	shantou	匪号	feihao	mountain head	bandit alias
上道	shang dao	出发	chufa	take to the road	start out
上天	shang tian	上房	shangfang	climb up to the sky	climb up to the roof
上项	shang xiang	交钱	jiao qian	hand in a sum of money	pay money in
上窑	shang yao	进屋	jin wu	go into the homestead	go into the house
抻腰子	chen yaozi	大米饭	dami fan	stretching the waist	rice
手筒子	shou tongzi	枪	qiang	hand pipe	gun
水	shui	官兵	guanbing	water	official army soldiers
书房	shufang	牢	lao	study room	prison
耍混钱	shua hunqian	土匪	tufei	play with muddy money	bandit
耍清钱	shua qingqian	赌钱的	duqian de	play with clear money	gambler
双铜	shuang jian	筷子	kuaizi	double maces	chop-sticks
双脸子	shuang lianzi	镜子	jingzi	double face	mirror
双影子	shuang yingzi	相片	xiangpian	double shadows	photo
睡觉	shuijiao	死	si	sleep	dead
四块子	si kuai zi	棺材	guancai	four blocks	coffin
四脚子	si jiao zi	长凳	changdeng	four feet	bench
烫了	tang le	受伤	shoushang	burnt	wounded
提手子	ti shou zi	马勒绳	ma leisheng	handle	rein
跳子	tiao zi	兵	bing	jumper	soldier
挑龙	tiao long	面条	miantiao	picking up dragons	noodle
踢土	ti tu	鞋	xie	kicking the earth	shoes
天窑子	tian yaozi	山寨	shanzhai	heaven brothel	mountain fastness
挑号	tiao hao	名气大	mingqi da	raised alias	of great reputation
通天	tong tian	大衣	dayi	reaching the sky	overcoat
土台子	tu taizi	炕	kang	earth platform	kang ¹
脱条	tuotiao	睡觉	shuijiao	take clothes off the body	sleep
威武窑子	weiwu yaozi	衙门	yamen	mighty brothel	yamen (government office in the old times)
星星闪	xingxing shan	小米饭	xiaomi fan	twinkling star	millet
线	xian	路	lu	line	road
响没响	xiang mei xiang	开没开始	kai mei kaishi	Has it sounded?	Has it started?
小学堂	xiao xuetang	拘留所	juliusuo	primary school	detention home

¹ Brick bed used in Northern China.

熏斗子	xun douzi	香	xiang	fumigating the dipper	incense
压脚子	ya jiao zi	马	ma	foot-rester	horse
哑巴	yaba	剪子	jianzi	dumb	scissors
压水	ya shui	设卡	sheqia	press water	set up checkpoint
秧子	yangzi	绑来的男人	bang lai de nanren	seedlings	kidnapped men
洋票	yang piao	外国人质	waiguo renzhi	foreign note	foreign captive
窑变	yao bian	出事了	chushi le	change in the homestead	something goes wrong
窑子	yaozi	房子	fangzi	brothel	house or homestead
压下来	ya xialai	住下来	zhu xialai	press down	stay
页子	yezi	衣服	yifu	leaves	clothes
夜衣	yeyi	被子	beizi	night clothes	quilt
艺窑	yi yao	戏院	xiyuan	artistic brothel	theatre
邮了	you le	跑掉了	pao diao le	be mailed	escaped
园子	yuan zi	城	cheng	garden	town or city
崽子	zaizi	小土匪	xiao tufei	whelp	rank-and-file bandits
昭子	zhaozi	眼睛	yanjing	the bright	eyes
枕龙	zhen long	枕头	zhentou	resting on a dragon's head	pillow
锥子	zhui zi	塔	ta	awl	pagoda
追秧子	zhui yangzi	绑票	bangpiao	trace the seedling	kidnap

Bibliography

- A Chinese Dictionary of New Idioms* (ACDNI), Shaanxi Publishing House, 1986.
- A Dictionary of Difficult Expressions in Modern Chinese* (ADDEIMC), Yanbian Education Publishing House, 1985.
- All Men Are Brothers [Shui Hu Zhuan]*, Translated from the Chinese by Pearl S. Buck, The John Day Company, New York, 1968.
- Ariès, Philippe, *Western Attitudes towards Death: From the Middle Ages to the Present*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, Maryland, 1974.
- Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, Translated with an Introduction by David Ross, Oxford University Press, Oxford, New York, Toronto, Melbourne, 1980.
- Australian Chinese Daily* (ACD), 6 January 1998, "Wei Sheng Xiejie An Sheng 35%" ("Cases of Armed Robbery Has Increased 35% in Victoria").
- Bai Lang Qi Yi: Zhonghua Minguo Shi Ziliao Conggao* (Bai Lang's Righteous Uprising: Historical Materials on the Republic of China [BLRU]), China Social Sciences Publishing House, 1980.
- Bai Lang Qiyi Diaocha Baogao* (Investigation Report on Bai Lang's Uprising), *Kaifeng Shifan Xueyuan Xuebao* (The Journal of Kaifeng Normal College), No. 5, 1960.
- Bai Yang, *Zhongguoren Shigang* (General Outlines of Chinese People's History), Shidai Literature and Arts Publishing House, Changchun, 1987.
- Bartra, Roger, *Wild Men in the Looking Glass: Mythic Origins of European Otherness*, Translated by Carl T. Berrisford, The University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 1994.
- Bi Shuchun, *Chu Bao An Liang Ji Pin Ruo: Gudai Xiake Wenxue Xinshang* (Killing Tyrants and Helping the Good, Needy and Weak: Appreciation of Ancient Xiake Literature), Sichuan People's Publishing House, Chengdu, 1996.
- Billingsley, Phil, *Bandits in Republican China*, Stanford University Press, California, 1988.
- Blok, Anton, "The Peasant and the Brigand: Social Banditry Reconsidered", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, September 1976.
- Boxall, George E., *The Story of the Australian Bushrangers*, Penguin Books, Ringwood, Victoria, 1974.
- Boxall, George, *Australian Bushrangers: An Illustrated History*, Rigby Ltd, Adelaide, 1975.
- Boxall, George, *An Illustrated History of Australian Bushrangers*, Penguin Books, Ringwood, 1981.
- Butterss, Philip, "Bold Jack Donahue and the Irish Outlaw Tradition", *Australian Folklore*, No. 2, 1988, Curtin University of Technology, Western Australia.
- Butterss, Philip & Webby, Elizabeth, *The Penguin Book of Australian Ballads*, Penguin Books Australia Ltd, Ringwood, 1993.
- Cai Dongfan, *Minguo Shi Yanyi* (Historical Romance of the Republic), Hainan Publishing House, Haikou, 1993a.
- Cai Dongfan, *Song Shi Yanyi* (Historical Romance of the Song Dynasty), Hainan Publishing House, Haikou, 1993b.
- Cai Shaoqing, *Minguo Shiqi de Tufei* (Bandits in the Period of the Republic), Chinese People's University Press, Beijing, 1993.
- Campbell, Joseph, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, 1949, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1973.
- Cao Baoming, *Tufei* (Bandits), Chunfeng Wenyi Publishing House, Shenyang, 1988.
- Cao Baoming, *Zhongguo Dongbei Hangbang* (Trade Associations and Gangs in the Northeast of China), Shidai Wenyi Publishing House, Changchun, 1992.

- Cao Baoming, *Dongbei Mazei Shi* (A History of Horse Thieves in the Northeast), Qiling Publishing House, Taiwan, 1994.
- Carnegie, Margaret, *Morgan: The Bold Bushranger*, The Hawthorn Press, Melbourne, 1974
- Chen Bao (the Morning Post), 20 January 1921.
- Chen Jin, *Mao Zedong de Wenhua Xingge* (Mao Zedong's Cultural Character), China Youth Publishing House, Beijing, 1992.
- Chen Sheng, *Zhongguo Jinji* (Taboos in China), Guangxi Minzu Publishing House, Nanning, 1994.
- Chen Xulu (ed.), *Jindai Zhongguo Ba Shi Nian* (Eighty Years of Modern China), Shanghai People's Publishing House, Shanghai, 1983.
- Chen Yinrong, *Jiajia Lou* (Jiajia Lou Warriors), China Quyi Publishing House, Beijing, 1981.
- Chen Zhengmou, *Ge Sheng Nonggong Guyong Xiguan ji Xu Gong Zhuangkuang* (Employment Practice of Farmhands in Various Provinces and Supply and Demands), Nanjing Central Culture and Education Centre, Nanjing, 1935.
- Cheng Qiang, *Zhongguo Minjian Chuanshuo* (Chinese Folk Legends), Zhejiang Education Publishing House, Hangzhou, 1995.
- Cheng Su, *The Ideology of the Boxers and Popular Belief* published in the magazine *Zhongguo Shehui Kexue* ("Social Science in China") 1991, Issue 3.
- Chesneaux, Jean, *Peasant Revolts in China 1840-1949*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1973.
- Chi Zihua, *Zhongguo Jindai Liumin* (Floating People in Modern China), Zhejiang People's Publishing House, Hangzhou, 1996.
- Child, F. J., *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, Dover Publications, INC., New York, 1965.
- China Folk Arts Study Society (CFASS), *Zhongguo Minyao Lishi Ziliao* (Historical Materials of Chinese Ballads), Vol. I, Zuoqia Publishing House, Beijing, 1959.
- Chuke Pai An Jing Qi (The First Wood-block Version of Surprising and Strange Stories), Zhiyang Publishing House, Taiwan, 1993.
- Clarke, Henry, Mrs, *The Bushranger's Secret*, Blackie, London, 1893.
- Clubb, O. Edmund, *20th Century China*, second edition, Columbia University Press, New York and London, 1972.
- Clune, Frank, *Ben Hall: The Bushranger*, Pacific Books, Melbourne, 1969.
- Clune, Frank, *Wild Colonial Boys*, Angus & Robertson Ltd, Sydney, 1963.
- Craven, Ian (ed.), *Australian Popular Culture*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, 1994.
- Croizier, Ralph C., *Koxinga and Chinese Nationalism: History, Myth, and the Hero*, East Asian Research Center, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1977.
- Cun, C. C., *As the Saying Goes*, University of Queensland Press, 1981.
- Cutlack, F. M., *The Manchurian Arena: An Australian View of the Far Eastern Conflict*, Angus & Robertson Limited, Australia, 1934.
- Davey, G & Seal, G., *The Oxford Companion to Australian Folklore*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1993.
- David, Gail, *Female Heroism in the Pastoral*, Garland Publishing, Inc., New York & London 1991.
- Dibble, Brian and Evans, Jim, "Keep Your Smile in Working Order": *Australian Bush Humour*, Manuscript, 1993a.
- Dibble, Brian and Evans, Jim, *The Brand of the World Bites Deep: Australian Bush Wisdom*, Manuscript, 1993b.
- Ding Wangdao, *Chinese Myths and Fantasies*, China Translation Publishing Company, Beijing, 1991.
- Dobson, R. B. & Taylor, J., *Rymes of Robin Hood*, William Heinemann Ltd, London, 1976.

- Dong Conglin, *Long yu Shangdi* (Dragon and God), Sanlian Press, Beijing, 1992.
- Dong Kechang, *Bai Lang Qiyi Xingzhi yu Zuoyong de Yanjiu* (A Study of the Nature and Function of Bai Lang's Righteous Uprising), *Xueshu Luntan*, 1958.
- Dongfang Fengsu Wenhua Cidian* (A Dictionary of Orient Customs and Culture), Huangshan Press, Huangshan, 1991.
- Dunstan, Keith, *Saint Ned: The Story of the Near Sanctification of An Australian Outlaw*, Methuen of Australia, Sydney, 1980.
- Dutton, Geoffrey, *In Search of Edward John Eyre*, The MacMillan Company of Australia Pty Ltd, South Melbourne, 1982.
- Elliot, Ian, *Moondyne Joe: The Man and the Myth*, University of Western Australia Press, Perth, 1978.
- Etherton, P. T. & Tiltman, H. H., *Manchuria: The Cockpit of Asia*, Jarrolds Publishers London Limited, London, 1932.
- Evans, G.W., *A Geographical, Historical and Topographical Description of Van Dieman's Land, 1822*, Fascimile Reprint, William Heinemann, Melbourne, 1967.
- Fairbank, K. John (ed.), *The Cambridge History of China, Volume 10, Late Ch'ing, 1800-1911*, Parts I & II, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1978.
- Fan Chunsan & Yuan Dongxu, *Jiu Zhongguo Sanjiaojiliu Jiemi* (Secrets of Various Gangs and Secret Societies in Old China), China Shehui Publishing House, Beijing, 1997.
- Fan Shengyu et al, *Geming Qiyi Lu* (Records of Revolutionary Uprisings), Qiushi Publishing House, Beijing, 1989.
- Fan Songpu et al, *Banghui Shili Zhenwen* (Anecdotes of Secret Societies), Zhongyuan Publishing House, Hong Kong, 1987.
- Fansi: Chuantong yu Jiazhi [Zhongguo Wenhua Shi'er Jiang]* (Re-examination: Traditions and Values [Twelve Lectures on Chinese Culture]) (RTAV), Shanghai Wenyi Publishing House, Shanghai, 1991.
- Feng Youlan, "Yuan Ru Mo" ("The Original Confucianism and Mohism"), *San Song Tang Xueshu Wenji* (Sansongtang Collection of Academic Writings), Beijing University Press, Beijing, 1984.
- Feng Yunan, *Jinmen Daxia Huo Yuanjia* (Huo Yuanjia: The Great Xia at Jinmen), Baihua Wenyi Publishing House, Tianjin, 1984.
- Feng, He, & Zhou, *Zhongguo Wenhua Jianshi* (A Concise History of Chinese Culture), Shandong People's Publishing House, Jinan, 1993.
- FitzGerald, C. P., *Mao Tsetung and China*, Holmes & Meier Publishers, Inc. New York, 1976.
- Franz, Michael, *The Taiping Rebellion: History and Documents*, Vols. I & II, University of Washington Press, Seattle & London, 1966.
- Fraser, Bryce, *The Macquarie Encyclopedia of Australian Events: Events That Shaped the History of Australia* (TMEAE), Revised Edition, The Macquarie Library Pty Ltd, North Ryde, 1997.
- Gordon, Adam Lindsay, *Bush Ballads & Galloping Rhymes*, Seal Books, Sydney, 1995.
- Grant, D. & Seal, G (eds.), *Australia in the World: Perceptions and Possibilities*, Black Swan Press, Curtin University of Technology, Perth, 1992.
- Grant, D., Newman, J. & Seal, G. (eds.), *An Anthology of Australian Verse & Song*, Black Swan Press, Perth, 1994.
- Graves, Robert, *The White Goddess: A Historical Grammar of Poetic Myth*, Faber, London, 1948.
- Grinnell, G. Bird, *Pawnee Hero Stories and Folk-Tales*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1961.

- "Guangdong Daji Chefeiluba Hengxing" ("Guangdong Cracking down *Chefeiluba*"), *Australian Chinese Daily*, 8 January 1998.
- Gu Fei Zonglu (A Summary of Bandit Gangs [ASBG]), *Mimi Shehui Congkan* (A Series of Secret Societies), Vol. 3, compiled by Ku Ting Study, published by Hsiang Sheng Publishing House, Taipei, 1975.
- Gu Zhaocang, *Yuanren Zaju Xuan* (Selected Medley Dramas of the Yuan Dynasty), People's Literature Publishing House, Beijing, 1956.
- Guan Chengxue & Ma Zhao (eds.), *Ming Dai Lishi Gushi* (Historical Stories of the Ming Dynasty), Jilin Wenshi Publishing house, Changchun, 1987.
- Guo Moruo, *Jia Shen San Bai Nian Ji* (The 300 Anniversary of the Year of Jiashen), *Xinhua Daily*, 19 March 1944.
- Harpur, Charles, *Stalwart the Bushranger with the Tragedy of Donohoe*, Currency Press Pty Ltd, Paddington, 1987.
- He Changgong, *He Changgong's Reminiscences*, The PLA Publishing House, Beijing, 1987
- He Nian (ed.), *Jiu Zhongguo Tufei Jiemi* (Secrets of Bandits in Old China), China Xiju Publishing House, Beijing, 1998.
- He Xianming, *Zhongguoren de Siwang Xintai* (Chinese People's Death Psychology), Shanghai Culture Press, Shanghai, 1993.
- He Xin, *Zhongguo Wenhua Shi Xinlun - Guanyu Wenhua Chuantong yu Zhongguo Xiandaihua* (A New View on Chinese Cultural History: About Cultural Tradition and China's Modernisation), Heilongjiang People's Publishing House, Harbin, 1987.
- He Xiya, *Zhongguo Daofei Wenti zhi Yanjiu* (A Study of China's Bandit Problem), Taidong Press, Shanghai, 1925.
- He Zuoren, *Zhongguoren de Dexing* (The Character of the Chinese), Northeast Polytechnic Press, Shenyang, 1989.
- Heishan Xian Zhi* (Heishan County Annals), Vol. 12.
- "Henan Xiadao Bieji" ("Report On the Xia Bandit of Henan"), *Shi Bao*, 7 July 1911.
- Hobsbawm, E. & Ranger, T. (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1983.
- Hobsbawm, E. J., *Bandits*, Penguin Books Ltd, Harmondsworth, 1972.
- Hobsbawm, E. J., *Primitive Rebels: Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movement in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1974.
- Hobsbawm, E. J., "Social Bandits: Reply", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, September 1976.
- Hook, Sidney, *The Hero in History: A Study in Limitation and Possibility*, Beacon Press, Boston, 1969.
- Hookey, Mabel (ed.), *Bobby Knopwood and His Times*, Hobart, 1929.
- Hosie, Alexander, Sir, *Manchuria: Its People, Resources and Recent History*, published in 1904, reprinted in 1980 by Garland Publishing, Inc., New York & London.
- Howard, Roger, *Mao Tse-tung and the Chinese People*, George Allen & Unwin Ltd, London, 1977.
- Hu Daojiang, "Nature and Life: A Survey of Taoism" collected in *Fansi: Chuantong yu Jiazhi [Zhongguo Wenhua Shi'er Jiang]* (Re-examination: Traditions and Values [Twelve Lectures on Chinese Culture]), Shanghai Wenyi Publishing House, Shanghai, 1991.
- Hu Pu'an (ed.), *Zhonghua Quanguo Fengsu Zhi* (Notes and Data of China's National Customs), Shanghai Photocopy Publication, 1986.
- Hu Sheng, *Cong Yapien Zhanzheng Dao Wu Si Yundong* (From the Opium War to the May 4 Movement), People's Publishing House, Beijing, 1980.

- Hu Shi, *Hu Shi Wen Cun* (Selections from Hu Shi), Vols. 1 - 4, Far East Books Company, Taipei, 1971.
- Huang Liping (ed.), *Zhongguo Gudai Wenhua Jinhua Congshu: Zhongguo Gudai Xiake Chuanqi Baili* (A Series of the Cream of Chinese Classic Culture: One Hundred Legends of Xiake of Ancient China), China Huaqiao Publishing House, Beijing, 1993.
- Huang Pumin et al (comps), *Baihua Sishu* (The Four Books in the Vernacular), Sanqin Publishing House, Xi'an, 1990.
- Hui Xicheng&Shizi, *Zhongguo Minsu Daguan* (An Introduction to Chinese Folklore), Guangdong Tourism Publishing House, Guangzhou, 1988.
- "Huiyang Zhenpo Bangjia Taishang An" ("Huiyang Has Cracked A Criminal Case of Kidnapping A Taiwan Businessman"), *Australian Chinese Daily*, 6 January 1998.
- Hunter, William C., *Bits of Old China* (Chinese Version), Guangdong People's Publishing House, Guangzhou, 1992.
- Igger, G. G. & Parker, H. T. (eds.), *International Handbook of Historical Studies: Contemporary Research and Theory*, Methuen & Co. Ltd, Greenwood Press, Westport, Conn. 1980.
- Inglis, F., *Cultural Studies*, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford UK & Cambridge USA, 1993.
- Innes, Brian, *The Book of Outlaws*, Bancroft & Co. (Publishers) Ltd, London, 1968.
- Institute of Historical Research of Jilin Provincial Branch of Chinese Science Academy & the History Department of Jilin Normal University, *A History of the Northeastern People's Revolutionary Movement in Modern Times*, Changchun, 1960.
- Jenkin, Graham, *Songs of the Great Australian Balladists*, Rigby Ltd, Adelaide, 1978.
- Jenner, W. J. F., *A Knife in My Ribs for A Mate: Reflections on Another Chinese Tradition*, The Australian National University, Canberra, 1993.
- Jennings, Eugene E., *An Anatomy of Leadership: Princes, Heroes, and Supermen*, McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York, 1972.
- Jennings, M. J., *Ned Kelly: The Legend and the Man*, Hill of Content Publishing Co. Pty Ltd, Melbourne, 1968.
- Jia Pingwa, *Tai Bai*, International Village Book Store, Taiwan, 1993.
- Jiang Hu Hai Di* (Secrets of the Rivers and Lakes), *Mimi Shehui Congkan* (A Series of Secret Societies), Vol. 3, compiled by Ku Ting Study, published by Hsiang Sheng Publishing House, Taipei, 1975.
- Jin Shengtian (Late Ming and early Qing Dynasties) et al, *Shui Hu Zhuan Zhong de Quanshu yu Moulue* (Trickery and Strategy in the Book "Outlaws of the Marsh"), Hainan Publishing House, Haikou, 1993.
- Jin Ze, *Zhongguo Minjian Xinyang* (Chinese Folk Worship), Zhejiang Education Publishing House, Hangzhou, 1995.
- Jin Ziqian, *Zhongguo Wenhua de Jingshen - Yanjiu Zhongguoren* (The Spirit of Chinese Culture -- Study of the Chinese People), Inner Mongolia People's Publishing House, Huhehaote, 1992.
- Jing An, *The Bandit and Soldier Calamities as Seen in Henanese Folk Songs*, the journal of "Folklore" (Minsu), 30 April 1930.
- Johnson, Clifford, *Pirate Junk: Five Months Captivity with Manchurian Bandits*, Jonathan Cape, London, 1934.
- Jones, F. C., *Manchuria Since 1931*, Royal Institute of International Affairs, London, 1949.
- Jones, Ian, *Ned Kelly: A Short Life*, Thomas C. Lothian Pty Ltd, Port Melbourne, 1995.
- Joy, William & Prior, Tom, *The Bushrangers*, Seal Books, Rigby Limited, Adelaide, 1977.
- "Kaizhan Dui Shui Hu Zhuan de Pipan" ("Carry Out Criticism on Shui Hu Zhuan"), Editorial, *Renmin Ribao* (People's Daily), 4 September 1975.
- Keesing, Nancy, *The Kelly Gang*, Ure Smith, Sydney, 1975.

- King, J. A., *"Mad Dan" Morgan Bushranger*, Phillip Mathews Publishers, Milson's Point, 1976.
- Knight, Stephen, *Robin Hood: A Complete Study of the English Outlaw*, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, UK, 1994.
- Ladany, Laszlo, *The Communist Party of China and Marxism, 1921 - 1985: A Self-Portrait*, Hurst, London, 1988.
- Lai Xinxia, "Tan Minguo Chunian Bai Lang Lingdao de Qiyi" ("On the Peasant Uprising Led by Bai Lang in the Early Years of the Republic"), *History Monthly*, June 1957.
- Lattimore, Owen, *Manchuria: Cradle of Conflict*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1935.
- Lee, James, & Campbell, Cameron, *Fate and Fortune in Rural China: Social Organisation and Population Behavior in Liaoning 1774-1873*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1997.
- Lee, Robert, H. G., *The Manchurian Frontier in Ch'ing History*, Cambridge, Mass., 1970.
- Les Carlyon, *The Last Outlaw*, A Pegasus production in association with the Seven Network, published by HSV7, Melbourne, 1980.
- Levenson, Joseph R., *Confucian China and Its Modern Fate, A Trilogy*, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1968.
- Li Chun, *Taiping Tianguo Zhidu Chu Tan* (Preliminary Study of Taiping Institutions), Zhonghua Press, Beijing, 1963.
- Li Dun J. (ed.), *China in Transition: 1517-1911*, Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, New York, 1969.
- Li Huifang, *Zhongguo Minjian Wenxue* (Chinese Folk Literature), Wuhan University Press, Wuhan, 1996.
- Li Jianwei (ed.), *Zhongguo Gongchandang Shi* (A History of the Communist Party of China), Volumes 1-3, The People's Publishing House, Beijing, 1990.
- Li Jukui, *Li Jukui Huiyilu* (Li Jukui's Reminiscences), The PLA Publishing House, Beijing, 1986.
- Li Ling, *Xian'e Rensheng: Minguo Tufei Da Xiezheng* (Dangerous Lives: True Records of Bandits in the Republic of China), Tuanjie Publishing House, Beijing, 1995.
- Li Shutian & Yi Baozhong, *Lun Chang Bai Shang Wenhua* ("On the Regional Culture of the Changbai Mountains"), *Shehui Kexue Zhanxian* (Social Science Front) (Bimonthly), issue 6, 1994.
- Li Tianchen, *Lun Yu* (The Analects of Confucius), Shandong University Press, Jinan, 1991.
- Li Zonggui, *Zhongguo Wenhua Gailun* (An Introduction to Chinese Culture), New Knowledge Publishing Centre, Taipei, 1991.
- Liao Yizhong et al (eds.), *Yi He Tuan Yundong Shi* (History of the Boxer Movement), People's Publishing House, Beijing, 1981.
- Lin Xianzhi (ed.), *Juewang de Fankang: Luxun Rensheng Wenben* (Resistance In Despair: A Collection of Lu Xun's Writings on Life), Zhejiang Wenyi Publishing House, Hangzhou, 1993.
- Lin Xinnai, *Zhonghua Fengsu Daguan* (A Complete Book of Chinese Folk Customs), Shanghai Wenyi Publishing House, Shanghai, 1993.
- Lin Yutang (ed.), *Renshi Jian* (In This World), China Friendship Publishing Company, Beijing, 1993.
- Lin Yutang, *Wu Guo Wu Min* (Our Country and Our People), Hualing Press, Beijing, 1995
- Lindt, A. R., *Special Correspondent: With Bandit and General In Manchuria*, Cobden-Sanderson, London, 1933.
- Liu Bingrong, *Qing Mo Lulin Jishi* (True Stories of Greenwood Heroes of the Late Qing Dynasty), China People's Public Security University Press, Beijing, 1993.

- Liu Lien-k'o, *Pang-Hui San-pai Nien Ko-ming Shih* (A Revolutionary History of Three Hundred Years of Secret Societies), Hebei People's Publishing House, Tianjin, 1990.
- Liu Shiliang, *Han Liu Quan Shi* (A Complete History of *Han Liu*), Compiled by Ku Ting Study, Hsiang Sheng Press, Taipei, 1975.
- Liu Zongxian & Xie Xianghao, *Zhongguo Ruxue* (Chinese Confucianism), Sichuan People's Publishing House, Chengdu, 1993.
- Lü Xingdou (ed.), *Mao Zedong he Ta de Shiye* (Mao Zedong and His Cause), CPC History Publishing House, Beijing, 1992.
- Lu Xun, *Lu Xun Quanji* (Complete Works of Lu Xun), People's Literature Publishing House, Beijing, 1973.
- Lu Zhiwei, *Zhongguo Shi Wujiang* (Five Lectures on Chinese Poetry), The Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, Beijing, 1982.
- Luo Ergang, *Taiping Tian Guo Shi Gang* (An Outline History of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom), Commercial Press, Shanghai, 1937.
- Ma, Y. W. & Lau, S. M., *Traditional Chinese Stories: Themes and Variations*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1978.
- Magnusson, Magnus (ed.), *Chambers Biographical Dictionary: 20,000 Profiles of Famous Men and Women from Earliest Times to the Present Day*, W & R Chambers Ltd, Edinburgh, New York, 1990.
- Mao Jiaqi, Fang Zhiguang & Tong Guanghua, *Taiping Tian Guo Xing Wang Shi* (The History of the Rise and Fall of the Heavenly Kingdom), Shanghai People's Publishing House, 1980.
- Mao Zedong de Zuji* (Mao Zedong's Footprints [MZF]), compiled by the Office of Research on the Party History of the Central Committee of the CPC, the CPC Party History Publishing House, Beijing, 1993.
- Mao Zedong Sixiang Wansui* (Long Live Mao Zedong Thought [LLMZT]), Beijing, 1969.
- Mao Zedong, *Mao Zedong Xuanji* (Selected Works of Mao Zedong), Vols, I-IV, The People's Publishing House, Beijing, 1966.
- Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, Volumes 1-4, Foreign Language Press, Beijing, 1975.
- McCormack, G., *Chang Tso-lin in Northeast China, 1911-1928*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, California, 1977.
- McQuilton, John, *The Kelly Outbreak 1878-1880: The Geographical Dimension of Social Banditry*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1979.
- Mei Zhengzheng, *Zhongyi Chunqiu: Guan Gong Congbai yu Minzu Wenhua Xinli* (History of Loyalty and Brotherhood: Worship of Guan Gong and the National Cultural Mentality), Sichuan People's Publishing House, 1994.
- Meng Yao, *Zhongguo Xiqu Shi* (A History of Chinese Drama), Biography Publishing House, Taiwan, 1979.
- Meredith, *The Wild Colonial Boy: Bushranger Jack Donahoe, 1806-1830*, Red Rooster Press, Melbourne, 1982.
- Mi Heduo, *The Generation of the Red Guards*, Joint Publishing (H.K.) Co., LTD, Hong Kong, 1993.
- Mill, J. S., *On Liberty*, Penguin Books, Suffolk, 1981.
- Milner, A., *Contemporary Cultural Theory: An Introduction*, Allen & Unwin, North Sydney, 1991.
- Moore, Cindy Tittle, *Robin Hood Booklist*, Copyright 1994, Internet:
<http://www.io.com/user/tittle/homepage.html>.
- Mou Zongshan, *Daode Lixiang Zhuayi de Chongjian* (The Reconstruction of Ethical Idealism), China Broadcasting & Television Publishing House, Beijing, 1992.

- Murray, Margaret, *The God of the Witches*, Faber, London, 1931.
- Nakamura, Hajime, *Ways of Thinking of Eastern Peoples: India-China-Tibet-Japan*, University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1964.
- Nathan, A. J., *Peking Politics, 1919-1923: Factionalism and the Failure of Constitutionalism*, Berkeley, Calif., 1976.
- Neumann, Erich, *The Origins and History of Consciousness*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1970.
- Nianjun Lishi Ziliao* (Historical Materials about the Nian Army [HMANA]), compiled and published by Shanghai People's Publishing House, Shanghai, 1957.
- Nixon, Allan M., *100 Australian Bushrangers 1789 - 1901*, Rigby Publishers, Adelaide, 1982.
- Nunn, Harry, *Bushrangers: A Pictorial History*, Ure Smith Press, Sydney, Hong Kong, Chicago, London, 1991.
- O'Brien, Michael & O'Brien, John, *Wanted, Ned Kelly*, Publishing Source: Newbyte Educational Software. Year: 1992. Collation: computer software, 1.--<http://netspot.com.au/ier/db/The-Arts/88.html>.
- Osborne, Charles, *Ned Kelly*, Anthony Blond Ltd, London, 1970.
- Ouyang Yuefeng, "Lun Qingchao Tongzhi Nian Jian Shaanxi Huimin Qiyi Zhong de 'Qiu Fu' Wenti" ("On the Issue of 'Asking for Amnesty' by the Hui Uprising Troops in the Tongzhi Period of the Qing Dynasty"), *Lishi Yanjiu* (Research on History), Issue 1, 1989.
- Pan Qingyun, *A Complete Book of Enigmatic Languages in China*, Xuelin Publishing House, Beijing, 1995
- Pan Xiting et al, *Dongbei Kangri Yiyongjun Shi* (A History of the Anti-Japanese Army of Volunteers), Liaoning People's Publishing House, 1985.
- Pawley, Tinko, *My Bandit Hosts, as told to Joy Packer*, Treasure Library, Stanley Paul & Co. Ltd, London, no publishing date, collected in Murdoch University Library.
- Penzig, Edgar, *Bushrangers, Bandits and Bastards: An Illustrated History of Colonial Crime (1850-1900)*, Tranter Enterprises, Katoomba, NSW, 1994.
- Perry, Elizabeth J., *Rebels and Revolutionaries in North China*, Stanford University Press, California, 1980.
- Pingjiang Qiyi* (The Pingjiang Uprising [PJU]), The Party School of the Central Committee of the CPC Publishing House, Beijing, 1984.
- Plaks, A.H., *Chinese Narrative: Critical and Theoretical Essays*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1977.
- Polster, Miriam F., *Eve's Daughters: The Forbidden Heroism of Women*, Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco, 1992.
- Propp, V., *Morphology of the Folktale*, University of Texas Press, Austin and London, 1968.
- Pu Songling, *Liaozhai Zhiyi*, Shanghai Guji Publishing House, Shanghai, 1979.
- Pyle, Howard, *The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood*, Playmore, Inc., Publishers, New York, 1979.
- Qian Chaoying, *Wenhua Xianxiang* (Cultural Phenomena), Youth Literary Company Ltd, Hong Kong, 1991.
- Qiu Hengming & Wu Zhenlu, *Shan Shuai* (The Commander of the Mountain), The PLA Literature and Art Publishing House, Beijing, 1992.
- Qiushou Qiyi* (The Autumn Harvest Uprisings [TAHU]), Vol. 2, The Party School of the Central Committee of the CPC Publishing House, Beijing, 1982.
- Qu Bo, *Lin Hai Xue Yuan* (The Immense Forest and Snowfields), The People's Literature Publishing House, Beijing, 1964.
- Qu Qiubai Literature Association of Beijing University (QQLABU), *Zhongguo Geyao Ziliao* (Data of Chinese Ballads), The Writers Publishing House, Beijing, 1959.

- Qu Yanbin, *Zhongguo Minjian Mimi Yu* (Folk Secret Languages in China), Shanghai Sanlian Press, Shanghai, 1990.
- Quan Yong, *Shanhe Huxiao: Dongbei Kanglian Zhengzhan Shilu* (The Roar of Mountains and Waters: Records of Activities of the Northeast Anti-Japanese Allied Forces), Hunan Publishing House, Changsha, 1995.
- Reece, Bob, "Irish Convicts: The Origins of Convicts Transported to Australia", *Australian Folklore*, No. 5, 1990.
- Reid, Ian, "Aspects of Modern Social Mythology", *Makings of Myth: Myth in Literature and Society*, Deakin University, Victoria, 1987.
- Reid, Ian, "In Memoriam, Ned Kelly", *Meanjin*, vol. 39, No. 4, 1980.
- Ren Jian & Lei Fang, *Zhongguo Gaibang* (The Gang of Beggars in China), Jiangsu Guji Publishing House, Nanjing, 1993.
- Rolls, Eric, *Sojourners: Flowers and the Wide Sea*, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 1992.
- Ross, Stewart, *Fact or Fiction: Bandits & Outlaws*, Aladdin Books Ltd, London, 1995.
- Sale, Roger, *Modern Heroism*, University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1973.
- Saxby, Maurice (ed.), *Through Folklore to Literature*, IBBY Australian Publications, Sydney, 1979.
- Sciolino, Elaine, *The Outlaw State: Saddam Hussein's Quest for Power and the Gulf Crisis*, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1991.
- Scott, Bill (Compiled), *Complete Book of Australian Folk Lore*, Paul Hamlyn Pty Limited, Dee Why West, 1978.
- Seal, Graham, "Deep Continuities and Discontinuities in the Outlaw Hero Tradition of Britain, Australia and America", *Lore & Language*, 10/1, 1993.
- Seal, Graham, "The Wild Colonial Boy Rides Again: An Australian Legend Abroad", In Craven, I. (ed.), *Australian Popular Culture*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1994.
- Seal, Graham, *Ned Kelly in Popular Tradition*, Hyland House, Melbourne, 1980.
- Seal, Graham, *The Hidden Culture: Folklore in Australian Society*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1989.
- Seal, Graham, *The Outlaw Legend: A Cultural Tradition in Britain, America and Australia*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, Melbourne, 1996.
- Sen, Mala, *India's Bandit Queen: The True Story of Phoolan Devi*, HarperCollins Publishers India, New Delhi, 1993.
- Shang Liqun, *Li Dai Minge Yi Bai Shou* (One Hundred Ballads from the Past), Zhonghua Publishing House, Hong Kong, 1974.
- Sharpe, Alan, *The Giant Book of Crimes That Shocked Australia*, The Book Company, Australia, 1994.
- Shen Bao* (Shanghai News), 27 August 1877, 17 January 1884.
- Shenzhen University, *Dong Xi Fang Wenhua Pinglun* (Reviews on Eastern and Western Cultures) Vol. 1, Shenzhen University Journal, Shenzhen, 1988.
- Shenzhou Ribao* (Shenzhou Daily), 5 May 1912, "Lulin Haohan Shang Sun Zhongshan Shu" ("A Letter From Greenwood Heroes to Sun Yan-sen").
- Sheridan, James, E., *China in Disintegration: The Republican Era in Chinese History*, The Free Press, Collier Macmillan Publishers, London, 1975.
- Shi Nai'an & Luo Guanzhong (late Yuan and early Ming Dynasties), *Outlaws of the Marsh*, Translated by Sidney Shapiro, Foreign Languages Press, Beijing, 1988.
- Shi Nai'an & Luo Guanzhong (late Yuan and early Ming Dynasties), *Shui Hu Zhuan* (Outlaws of the Marsh), People's Literature Publishing House, Beijing, 1975.

- Shi Yukun (Qing Dynasty), *Xiao Wu Yi* (Five Junior Swordsmen), Guizhou People's Publishing House, Guiyang, 1994.
- Shih, Chung-wen, *The Golden Age of Chinese Drama: Yuan Tsa-chu*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1976.
- Sima Qian (Han Dynasty), *Shi Ji* (The Book of History), Zhongzhou Guji Publishing House, Beijing, 1994.
- Sir Lee, Sidney & Sir Stephen, Leslie, (ed.), *Dictionary of National Biography*, 1885-1900, Smith, Elder, London, 1891.
- Sir Lee, Sidney & Sir Stephen, Leslie (ed.), *The Dictionary of National Biography: From the Earliest Time to 1900*, Volume X, Oxford University Press, London, 1968.
- Smedley, Agnes, *The Great Road: The Life and Times of Chu Teh*, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1956.
- Snow, Edgar, *Red Star Over China*, Grove Press, Inc., New York, 1968.
- Steiner, Rudolf, *Between Death and Rebirth : Ten Lectures Given in Berlin between 5th November, 1912 and 1st April, 1913*, translated by E. H. Goddard and D. S. Osmond, Rudolf Steiner Press, London, 1975.
- Su Yu, *Su Yu Zhanzheng Huiyilu* (Su Yu's Reminiscences of Wars), the PLA Publishing House, 1988.
- Sun Bang et al (eds.), *Weiman Shiliao Congshu: Kangri Jiuwang* (A Series of Historical Materials about the Puppet Manchuria: Fight against Japan and Save the Nation from Distinction), Jilin People's Publishing House, Changchun, 1993a.
- Sun Bang et al (eds.), *Weiman Shiliao Congshu: Weiman Renwu* (A Series of Historical Materials about the Puppet Manchuria: Important Figures of the Puppet Manchuria), Jilin People's Publishing House, Changchun, 1993b.
- Sun Bang et al (eds.), *Weiman Shiliao Congshu: Weiman Shehui* (A Series of Historical Materials about the Puppet Manchuria: Society of the Puppet Manchuria), Jilin People's Publishing House, Changchun, 1993c.
- Sun Yat-sen, *San Min Zhu Yi* (The Three Principles of the People), China Cultural Service, Taiwan, 1991.
- Sun, C. C., *As the Saying Goes*, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 1981.
- Tang Ren Xiaoshuo* (Short Stories from the Tang Dynasty), edited and annotated by Wang Pijiang, Classic Literature Publishing House, Shanghai, 1955.
- Tang Yunzhou (Qing Dynasty), *Qi Jian Shi San Xia* (Seven Swordsmen and Thirteen Knights-errant), Jiangxi People's Publishing House, Nanchang, 1990.
- The Committee of Historical Accounts of Passed Events of The Chinese People's Political Conference and Shandong Provincial Branch, *Tufei Junfa Zhang Zongchang* (Zhang Zongchang, the Bandit Warlord), China Wenshi Publishing House, 1991.
- The Compilation Group of "Ancient Chinese Thoughts on Administration (CGACTOA)" (ed.), *Zhongguo Gudai Guanli Sixiang* (Ancient Chinese Thoughts on Administration), Enterprise Administration Publishing House, Beijing, 1986.
- The Compilation Group of *The Biography of He Long* of the Headquarters of the General Staff (CGBHL), *He Long Zhuan* (The Biography of He Long), Dangdai Publishing House, Beijing, 1993.
- The Compiling Board of *Cihai* (CBC), *Cihai*, Shanghai Dictionary Publishing House, 1980.
- The Criticism Group of Beijing University and Qinghua University, "Yi Bu Xuanyang Touxiang Zhuyi de Fanmian Jiaocai" ("Teaching Material by Negative Examples of Praising Capitulationism"), *Hong Qi* (The Red Flag), Issue 9, 1975.

- The Editorial Board of Historical Accounts of Past Events of Hebei Province (EBHA) (Ed.), *Jindai Zhongguo Tufei Shilu* (True Records of Bandits in Modern China [TRBIMC]), Volumes 1-3, Qunzhong Publishing House, Beijing, 1992a.
- The Editorial Board of Historical Accounts of Past Events of Hebei Province (EBHA), *Jindai Zhongguo Banghui Neimu* (The Inside Story of Secret Societies in Modern China), Qunzhong Publishing House, Beijing, 1992b.
- The Editorial Department of the People's Literature and Arts Publishing House, *1992 Duanpian Xiaoshuo Xuan* (The 1992 Anthology of Short Stories), The People's Literature and Arts Publishing House, 1993.
- The History Department of the Chinese People's University and China's First Archive Establishment (Comps), *Qing Dai Nongmin Zhanzheng Shi Ziliao Xuanbian* (Selected Material of the History of Peasant Wars in the Qing Dynasty), Volume 6, The Chinese People's University Press, Beijing, 1990.
- The Liangshan Investigation Team, Institute of Archaeology, Academia Sinica, "Liangshan Diqu de Yiji He Minjian Chuanshuo de Diaocha" ("Investigation of Liangshan Region's Historical Sites and Folk Legends"), *Kao Gu* (Archaeology), Issue 6, 1975.
- The Macquarie Dictionary* (TMD), Revised Edition, Macquarie Library Pty Ltd, 1985.
- The Modern Chinese Dictionary* (MCD), The Commerce Press, 1978.
- The Modern History Group of Hunan Provincial Philosophy and Social Sciences Research Institute (MHGHP), "Qiushou Qiyi he Xiang Jinggangshan Jinjun" (The Autumn Harvest Uprising and March to the Jinggang Mountains"), *Lishi Yanjiu* (Research on History), Issue 4, 1977.
- Tian Xinghua, *Zou Xiang Guangming: Xiangxi Feishou Sishi Nian Gaizao Jishi* (Towards A Bright Future: Records of Forty years' Transformation of Bandit Chiefs), Haichao Publishing House, Beijing, 1993.
- Tian Yuan, *Hong Xiuquan Zhuan* (Biography of Hong Xiuquan), Hubei People's Publishing House, Wuhan, 1982.
- Tian Zhihe & Gao Lecai, *Guan Dong Ma Zei* (Horse Thieves in Guandong), Jilin Wenshi Publishing House, Changchun, 1992.
- Tien Pu-I et al, *Xianhua Junfa* (Chat About Warlords), Taipei, 1967.
- Tuchman, Barbara W., *Stilwell and the American Experience in China 1911-45*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1972.
- Turner, George & Beryl, *The Australian Oxford Paperback Dictionary*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1989.
- Twitchett, Denis, "Chinese Social History From the Seventh to the Tenth Centuries", *Past and Present*, Journal of Historical Studies, No. 35, December 1966.
- WA Chinese Times*, issues 1-12, 1995, "Police News Releases".
- Wang Duonian, *Guomin Geming Zhan Shi* (A History of National Revolutionary Wars), Series 4, Vol. 1, Liming Culture Enterprise Ltd, Taipei, 1972.
- Wang Jue & Li Dianyuan, *Shui Hu Zhuan Zhong de Xuan'an* (Unsettled Questions in Shui Hu Zhuan), Sichuan People's Publishing House, Chengdu, 1994.
- Wang Ken et al, *Dongbei Su Wenhua Shi* (A History of Folk Culture in the Northeast), Chunfeng Wenyi Publishing House, Shenyang, 1992.
- Wang Pijiang (ed.), *Tang Ren Xiaoshuo* (Short Stories from the Tang dynasty), Classic Literature Publishing House, Shanghai, 1955.
- Wang Xianqian (Qing Dynasty), *Zhuangzi Jizhu* (Collected Annotation of Zhuangzi), Shi Jie Publishing House, Taiwan, 1979.
- Wang Yi & Sheng Ruiyu (eds.), *Zhongguo Haoxia Gushi Daguan* (Panorama of Chinese Haoxia Stories), Central China University of Technology Press, Wuhan, 1995.

- Wang Ying, *Historical Reflections on 1997*, an article published in the *Sinorama (Guanghua)* magazine, Vol. 21, No. 8, August 1996.
- Wang Yude et al, *Zhonghua Shenmi Wenhua* (Chinese Mystery Culture), Hunan Publishing House, Changsha, 1993.
- Wannan, Bill, *Tell 'em I Died Game: The Stark Story of Australian Bushranging*, Rigby Limited, Seal Books, Adelaide, 1974.
- Ward, Russel, *The Penguin Book of Australian Ballads*, Melbourne: Penguin, 1964.
- Ward, Russel, *The Australian Legend*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1977.
- Watson, Owen (ed.), *Longman Modern English Dictionary*, Longman Group Limited, Harlow and London, 1976.
- Wei Dong, *Hunan Xupu Xian Nongcun Jingji Diaocha* (The Survey of Rural Economy in Xupu County of Hunan), *Zhongguo Nongcun* (The Rural Area of China), Issue I, Vol. I.
- Wen Kang (Qing Dynasty), *Ernu Yingxiong Zhuan* (The Story of True Sons and Daughters and Heroes), Guizhou People's Publishing House, Guiyang, 1994.
- Wen Shi, *Banghui Shili Zhenwen* (Anecdotes of Secret Societies), China Wenshi Publishing House, Beijing, 1995a.
- Wen Shi, *Haoqiang Shilu* (True Records of Despots), China Wenshi Publishing House, Beijing, 1995b.
- White, Charles, *History of Australian Bushranging*, Seal Books, Sydney, 1995 (first published in 1970).
- William C. H., *Bits of Old China* (Chinese Version), Guangdong People's Publishing House, 1992.
- Wong Hongbin, Zhang Zuolin he Fengxi Junfa (Zhang Zuolin and Warlords of the Fengtian Clique), Henan People's Publishing House, Zhengzhou, 1989.
- Wu Bingan, *Chinese Folklore*, Liaoning University Press, Shenyang, 1987.
- Wu Haifeng, "Zhongguo Zuihou Yige Tufei" ("China's Last Bandit"), *Feixia Magazine*, February Issue, 1996.
- Wu Han, *Zhu Yuanzhang Zhuan* (Biography of Zhu Yuanzhang), Hainan Publishing House, Haikou, 1993.
- Wu Huiying, *Zhongguo Shu Wenhua* (Chinese Culture of Numbers), Yuelu Press, Changsha, 1995.
- Wu Qiangjia, "Qing Dai Jilin Weichang Yu Yimin Tuntian" (The Weichang and the Immigration Tuntian System in Jilin in the Qing Dynasty), *Social Science Front* (Bimonthly), issue 6, 1994.
- Wu Yugong, *Qing Hong Bang Yanyi* (The Romance of Qing Bang and Hong Bang), Beijing Normal University Publishing House, Beijing, 1992.
- Xiandai Hanyu Cidian* (The Modern Chinese Dictionary [MCD]), The Commerce Press, Shanghai, 1978.
- Xiao Qian (Ed.), *Shehui Bai Xiang* (The Social Kaleidoscope), The Commercial Press, Hong Kong, 1992.
- Xiao Xianzhi, *Dongbei Jiaofu: Dashuai Wu Junsheng* (The Godfather of the Northeast: Wu Junsheng, the Great Marshal), Heilongjiang People's Publishing House, Harbin, 1996.
- Xiao Xiaoqin, *Zhongguo Guomindang Shi* (A History of the Kuomintang of China), Anhui People's Publishing House, Hefei, 1989.
- Xiao Yishan, *Xiandai Mimi Shehui Shiliao* (Historical Materials about Modern Secret Societies), Yuelu Press, Changsha, 1985.
- Xie Chengren, *Li Zicheng Xin Zhuan* (A New Biography of Li Zicheng), Shanghai People's Publishing House, Shanghai, 1986.

- Xie X. & Liu, Z., *Zhongguo Rujiao* (Confucianism in China), Sichuan People's Publishing House, Chengdu, 1993.
- Xu Ke, *Qing Bailei Chao: Daozei Lei* (Unofficial Records of the Qing Dynasty Arranged by Categories: Bandits), Zhonghua Shuju, Beijing, 1986.
- Xu Liting, *Zhang Zuolin Da Zhuan* (Biography of Zhang Zuolin), Harbin Publishing House, Harbin, 1994.
- Xu Sinian, *Xia de Zongji: Zhongguo Wuxia Xiaoshuo Shi* (Footprints of Xia: On the History of Chinese Wuxia Stories), The People's Literature Publishing House, Beijing, 1995.
- Xu Zhongyuan, *Mao Zedong Du Ping Wu Bu Gudian Xiaoshuo* (Mao Zedong's Comments on Five Classic Novels), Huawen Press, Beijing, 1997.
- "Xueli Naoshi Zuozhi Jie Xiyuan Qu Qingnian Feidang Xingjie" ("Young Gangsters Rob In the Theatre Area on George Street in Sydney"), *Australian Chinese Daily*, 8 January 1998.
- Yamaguchi, M. & Kojima, S., *A Cultural Dictionary of Japan*, The Japan Times, Tokyo, 1989.
- Yan Jingyao, *Zhongguo de Fanzui Wenti yu Shehui Bianqian de Guanxi* (China's Criminal Problems and Their Relations with Social Changes), Beijing University Press, Beijing, 1986.
- Yang Yulian et al., *Qing Dai Dongbei Shi* (The History of the Northeast of the Qing Dynasty), Liaoning Education Publishing House, Shenyang, 1991.
- Yarwood, A.T., *Problems in Australian History: Attitudes to Non-European Immigration*, Cassell Australia Limited, Stanmore, NSW, 1968.
- Yu Boliu, "A Historical Investigation of the Formation of Mao Zedong's Idea of 'An Armed Independent Regime of Workers and Peasants'" collected in *Mao Zedong he Ta de Shiye* (Mao Zedong and His Cause) edited by Lü Xingdou, CPC History Publishing House, Beijing, 1992.
- Yu Fan, "Ping Hu Shi de Shui Hu Kaozheng" ("On Hu Shi's Textual Research of Shui Hu Zhuan"), *Hong Qi* (The Red Flag), Issue 11, 1975.
- Yu Jiayi, *Song Jiang San Shi Liu Ren Kao* (Study on the Truths of the Thirty-six People Including Song Jiang), *Mimi Shehui Congkan* (A Series of Secret Societies), Vol. 3, compiled by Ku Ting Study, published by Hsiang Sheng Publishing House, Taipei, 1975.
- Yu Qiuyu, *Zhongguo Xiju Wenhua Shi* (History of Chinese Theatrical Culture), Hunan People's Publishing House, Changsha, 1985.
- Zeng Fanhua & Hou Jianfei, *Dang Fei Da Xiangxi: Xiangxi Jiaofei Jishi* (Mopping Up Bandits in West Hunan: True Events of Suppressing Bandits in West Hunan), Hunan Literature and Arts Publishing House, Changsha, 1995.
- Zhai Qing, "Ping Shui Hu de Touxiang Zhuyi" (On Capitulation Advocated by Shui Hu Zhuan), *"Study and Criticism"*, Issue 9, 1975.
- Zhang Cheng, *Xin Bian Mao Zedong Gushi Ji* (Newly Collected Stories of Mao Zedong), Liaoning University Press, Shenyang, 1994.
- Zhang Ye, *Hanyu Suyu Yingyi Daquan* (A Complete English Translation of Chinese Common Sayings), Haitian Publishing House, Shenzhen, 1993.
- Zhang Yijiu, *Mao Zedong Du Shi* (How Mao Zedong Reads History), China Friendship Publishing Company, Beijing, 1991.
- Zhao Ming, *Daojia Sixiang yu Zhongguo Wenhua* (Taoism and Chinese Culture), Jilin University Press, Changchun, 1987.
- Zheng Shao, "Mozi's Thought on Administration", carried in *Zhongguo Gudai Guanli Sixiang* (Ancient Chinese Thoughts on Administration) edited by the Compilation Group of "Ancient Chinese Thoughts on Administration", Enterprise Administration Publishing House, Beijing, 1986.

- Zhi Qu Weihushan - Geming Xiandai Jingju* (Taking Tiger Mountain by Strategy – A Modern Revolutionary Peking Opera [TTMBS]), June 1970 Script, Foreign Languages Press, Peking 1971.
- Zhong Fulan, *Xiandai Minsu Liubian* (Changes in Modern Folk Customs), Sanlian Press, Shanghai, 1990.
- Zhong Gu, “Ping Shui Hu de Touxiang Zhuyi Luxian” (“On the Capitulationist Line Advocated by Shui Hu Zhuan”), *Hong Qi* (The Red Flag), Issue 9, 1975.
- Zhong Weijin (ed.), *Wu Yue Shan Hai Jing* (Legendary Stories of Wu Yue), Shanghai People’s Publishing House, 1990.
- Zhong Weijin et al (edit), *Zhejiang Sheng Minjian Wenxue Jicheng: Huzhou Shi Gushi Juan* (A Collection of Folkloric Writings of Zhejiang Province: Stories in Huzhou City), Zhejiang Literature and Arts Publishing House, Hangzhou, 1991a.
- Zhong Weijin et al (eds.), *Zhejiang Sheng Minjian Wenxue Jicheng: Huzhou Shi Geyao Yanyu Juan* (A Collection of Folkloric Writings of Zhejiang Province: Ballads and Proverbs in Huzhou City), Zhejiang Literature and Arts Publishing House, Hangzhou, 1991b.
- Zhong Wen, “Ping Jin Shengtan Yaozhan Shui Hu” (“On Jin Shengtan’s Cutting of Shui Hu Zhuan”), *Hong Qi* (The Red Flag), Issue 10, 1975.
- Zhongguo Gudai Shi Changshi* (Common Knowledge of Ancient Chinese History [CKACH]), compiled and published by China Youth Publishing House, Beijing, 1979.
- Zhongguo Lishi Da Cidian: Song Shi* (The Great Dictionary of Chinese History: History of the Song Dynasty), Shanghai Dictionary Publishing House, Shanghai, 1984.
- Zhongguo Minyao Xuan* (Selected Chinese Ballads [SCB]), Shanghai Wenyi Publishing House, Shanghai, 1978.
- Zhongyang Ribao* (Central Daily News [CDN]), Taiwan, 23 January 1998.
- Zhou Yumin & Shao Wei, *Zhongguo Banghui Shi* (A History of Chinese Secret Societies), Shanghai People’s Publishing House, Shanghai, 1995.
- Zhu Mengliang, *Haidao Yanyi* (The Romance of Pirates), Shenyang Publishing House, Shenyang, 1995.
- Zhu Xinfan, *Rural Economic Relations in China and Their Characteristics*, Shanghai New Life Press, Shanghai, 1930.
- Zhu Xueshi, “Cong Wanjiu Nongcun Jingji Shuodao Nongcun Hezuo de Gongneng” (“On Saving Rural Economy and the Function of Rural Cooperation”), *Nongcun Jingji* (Rural Economy), Issue 8, Vol. II.
- Zuo Zongtang, *Zuo Zongtang Quanji: Zajuan* (Selected Works of Zuo Zongtang: Letters), Yuelu Press, Changsha, 1986.