

LESSONS FROM THE BOXER REBELLION

GMAU PRESS



BY MICHAEL L MCCLURE

COPYRIGHT©1999 - 2006 ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

**ANY PART OF THIS BOOKLET MAY BE QUOTED PROVIDED
PROPER CREDIT IS GIVEN TO THE AUTHOR(S)
& THE GMAU PRESS**

CONTACT GMAU AT:

**GMAU INTERNATIONAL
1001 E. PALMER ST.
INDIANAPOLIS, IN 46203**

OR ON THE WEB:

WWW.GMAU.ORG EMAIL: JRRUSSELL@IUPUI.EDU

It was a pleasant day in the early months of 1981. The atmosphere was clear, the temperature was moderate and I was standing in a newly constructed office building. I was there to visit the Dean of Student affairs of the college I was attending. I wanted to ask a question, but it had little, if anything, to do with his position as Dean. It did have to do with his other position at the college: History Professor. I was in my second semester as a student in the class: "History of Civilization." The class was interesting enough and although most of the lectures were on video tape rather than in person it was something of a challenge. I do recall one taped lecture, when we had reached the point of studying the twentieth century, in which the professor said something along the order of: "Some of your parents probably remember the Kennedy assassination." I thought: "My parents? I remember the Kennedy assassination!"

Those days in November of 1963 are burned into everyone's memory who was alive at that time. The shocking image of Lee Harvey Oswald being shot on live television, the riderless horse in the funeral procession, little John Kennedy saluting the flag on his father's casket and many other scenes from those days cannot be erased from my mind!" I was a transfer student. I had already had five years of college training and had spent three years teaching Bible in a Christian school. The professor's statement brought me to realize that most of my fellow classmates were eight to ten years younger than I.

The study of history can give one a serious perspective on the length and brevity of life. But here I am waiting patiently to see the Dean/Professor. There is no doubt that I was only there fifteen to thirty minutes but it seemed like hours. I was, finally, admitted to the office. The normal cordial expressions were exchanged and then I came to the point of my visit. With the most humble and polite manner that I could summon I told the Professor that while his class was enjoyable, it seemed to be missing something. I had noticed that, although the course title was History of Civilization, we had skipped the part of the textbook that dealt with the history of China. I told him I was interested in China and wanted to learn more about its history. He told me that there was insufficient time to cover the entire text book and that if I were really interested I could study that part of the text on my own. Admittedly, I was disappointed. I wanted to hear him say something like: "You are right! We will spend an entire week studying China!" Since, however, this did not occur, I decided to take the professor's advice and study the history of China on my own.

Almost immediately I made a discouraging discovery. That discouraging discovery was that China has a very long and extremely complex history; one that cannot be covered in a week of study. This is the point where I would like to say something like: "I now take pen in hand to set forth that history in its entirety." But that just will not work here. There is no pen in my hand. I am sitting before a screen rapidly typing characters onto that screen via a word processor. Just as I am not holding a pen, I am not going to attempt a complete history of China. What I am going to do is to relate one significant story, with supporting events, that holds practical applications for all men in all times.

The Chinese people, like all people, are descendants of the three sons of Noah: Shem, Ham and Japheth (See Genesis chapter 9). This is not merely opinion, nor is it only a

religious belief. It is historical fact. The majority of secular historians will concede, at the very least, that civilization as we know it began in the “Fertile Crescent” which is precisely where the Bible says it began. The Chinese are, more particularly, Shemites or descendants of Shem. Their first ancestors, like yours and mine, lived in the region we now call the Middle East. It was the division at the tower of Babel (Genesis chapter 11) that drove them to what we now call the Far East. “... Middle Eastern technology predates Chinese in several aspects. Painted pottery, the use of bronze, and the horse drawn chariot appear earlier in the Middle East than in China, as does the subsequent use of iron and this priority naturally suggests that these cultural elements were transmitted to China.”¹

They settled in a land as diverse and beautiful as fruitful and adventurous as any on earth. They carried with them the knowledge of God and the worship of God. Over the centuries that knowledge and worship was corrupted in China just as it has been in many other parts of the world. “... it appears that the primitive religion of China was monotheistic with worship of a heavenly Creator and living God whose benevolent blessing was sought by the emperor as high priest and by the mediatorial invocation of worthy deceased ancestors. However, with the introduction of Taoist and Buddhist concepts, all original meaning of their rituals was lost and religious appellations were falsely applied to expanding mystical ideas of spirit deities. Many ancient records had been burned, and religious worship was altered, revised, and blurred with the passage of time.”² The religion of an individual or of a nation will determine the philosophy of that individual or nation. The philosophy of an individual, a nation or a society will determine the action and direction that individual, nation or society will take. In short, what we are is determined by what we believe. This truth will help us greatly in understanding the events of the “Boxer Rebellion” and the application of those events.

Often when we Americans go to a concert or a sporting event, particularly a boxing match we will enjoy several “acts” or preliminary bouts before we see the “main event”. This is what we bought our tickets for. This is what we set our calendars for. This is why we planned and anticipated until the day when we would see the “main event”. When we sit down to a fine meal, we will have the appetizer and then the main course. In order to understand our subject we will need to give some of the events which lead up to the Boxer rebellion. These preliminaries will help us to understand the “main event”. We need to understand who the “Boxers” were, why they rebelled and what their actions have to do with us.

Most of the authors of the books on the history China that I researched for this project seemed to have little to no understanding of who these people were. These authors were, of course, concerned with the major events of China’s history. It appears, however, that they “failed to do their homework” in identifying the “Boxers”. The closest description I found was in W. Scott Morton's “China Its History And Culture” On page 172 he states: “Rebellion was again stirring under the banner of the Righteous and Harmonious Fists (I Ho Chuan), usually known as the Boxers. The strange title enshrined a very ancient belief, that by callisthenic exercises the ascendancy of mind over matter could be established. By undergoing training in a traditional form of shadowboxing, and athletic

ballet with swift, complex movements and an elaborate pattern of held pauses, accompanied by the use of magic charms and trances, the devotees were taught they could be victorious and that even foreign rifle bullets would bounce harmlessly off them.” On page 230 of his work: “China: A New History” John King Fairbank writes: “Joseph Esherick’s (1987) masterly study of the Boxers’ origins pinpoints the combining in northwest Shandong of two peasant traditions - the technique of the martial arts of “boxing” (featured in operas and storytelling and visible today in movies of gongfu combat) and the practice of spirit possession or shamanism.” This statement is not entirely accurate. While the Boxers throughout Chinese history were, what we would call today, martial artists, they were not all “spirit possessed”. Fairbank continues: “The Spirit Boxers, who later took the name Boxers United in Righteousness, put together these two elements. After appropriate rituals, Boxers went in to a trance, foamed at the mouth, and arose prepared for combat because they were now invulnerable to swords or bullets.” He adds later: “The aim was the simple slogan, ‘Support the Qing [Ching] destroy the foreign.’” What both Morton and Fairbank failed to mention, either because they were not aware or because they chose to ignore it, is the fact that the rituals they mentioned were actually drug parties. Tzu-hsi’s people had persuaded the Boxers that if they would use drugs in their preparation they would gain magic power over the non-Chinese. The reason these Boxers went into a trance, foamed at the mouth, and thought they were invincible, is that they were “high” on hallucinogenic drugs. This is similar (although not identical) to the drug ceremonies practiced by Japanese Kamikaze pilots during World War II. While a case may certainly be made that there is a connection between drug abuse and demonic possession it is not to be assumed that all Chinese Boxers practiced shamanism or drug abuse. Neither should it be assumed that to practice Chinese Boxing or any martial art (American Boxing, Greco-Roman wrestling, etc.) necessitates or is directly connected with drug abuse and demonic possession. When the actual rebellion came to its apex, the Boxers made the fatal discovery that drugs did not make them impervious to western fire power.

Webster’s New World Dictionary (Third College Edition) defines a boxer as: “One who boxes; pugilist; prizefighter; often, one skilled in the offensive and defensive tactics of boxing, as distinguished from a slugger.” This is not a bad description of the people who are at the center of our subject. Pugilism is as old as the story of Cain and Able. Pugilism was developed, like so many other things in the history of mankind, out of necessity. The necessity was to defend one’s self against attackers. Fighting became an art early in man’s story. Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphics have been found to depict systematized fighting. The Bible records battle strategies and extremely skilled fighters such as: Joshua, the brilliant soldier and strategist of the Canaanite conquest; Shamgar who “slew a thousand men with an ox goad” (a sharp, pointed stick, about 3’ to 4’ in length); Samson who was not only known for his great strength but also for his fighting skill and strategy; Gideon whose battle plan amazes warriors even today; the men of Benjamin who could “sling a stone at an hair’s breadth” and David who not only knew how to use the sling and the sword but was also accomplished in empty hand fighting.

Greek fighting seems to have gone both to the East and the West. Greco-Roman Wrestling is, simply, Greek pankration with a few Roman modifications. The Greek

fighting arts came to be identified with two letters of the Greek alphabet: Mu and Tau. We find that the people of the Asian nation of Siam (Thailand) adapted both the Greek arts and the Greek name for the art into their own culture. Thus we have Muay Thai (from Mu Tau) or as those in the West choose to call it: Kick boxing.

This, of course, brings us to China. The precise moment in history wherein systematized fighting was first brought into China is impossible to identify. This is largely due to two major factors: 1. early masters of Chinese Boxing chose not to write down their techniques. They would transmit their knowledge from one generation to the next through systematized exercises which have come, in more modern times, to be known as kuen or forms. 2. The Chinese people have always been and still are, on the whole, very private people. They are not, generally, interested in what “foreigners” know nor are they interested in sharing their own knowledge with “outsiders”. I am, of course, speaking in broad generalities here. One may well find some examples of Chinese people being quite open to others. Yet, the fighting arts of China were for many generations closely guarded secrets. It is still a general policy among Chinese martial arts instructors not to share all of their knowledge. So it is that for many generations father would teach son and virtually no one else. One of the positive aspects of this practice is that families became the developers and the holders of intricate and effective fighting theories and systems. The obvious negative is that no one outside the family would ever know those theories and systems. One would sometimes learn a technique or theory from another who had defeated him. The loser then became a student. If he was fortunate enough to survive the lesson he might incorporate his painfully gained knowledge into his own system. Professional fighters were certainly around in early China, but they could not, in any way, be considered sportsmen. Generally an accomplished Boxer would be employed as a soldier, a body guard or a security escort for caravans. Roaming gangs of bandits would often prey upon those who were traveling. It was customary, therefore, to hire a well known Boxer to accompany one on his journey. In some cases a banner or flag would be displayed above the caravan with Boxer's name or crest on it. Those who knew of this great warrior would then be discouraged from attacking the party he was escorting.

It seems prudent, at this point, to remind the reader that in America something that happened 200 years ago is ancient history. Therefore most Americans do not hold a grudge against the British although 200 years ago there was bitter fighting between the two nations. The rest of the world does not, generally speaking, choose to exercise such a short memory. Ethnic wars in the 21st century may be fought over issues that arose centuries, if not millenniums ago. China is not an exception in this case. During the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) Boxers enjoyed relative peace. We must use the word “relative” because, like other nations, there have rarely been times when the whole of China was at peace and living in prosperity. The strife may have been external or it may just as likely have been internal. In either case the Boxer might be employed to help settle the strife.

Much of this changed as a result of major political shifts in the ruling class of China. Interestingly, the same dictionary we referred to earlier has this definition under “Boxer”:
“[[transl. of Chin phrase ‘righteous-uniting band,’ misunderstood as righteous uniting fists]] a member of a Chinese society that led an unsuccessful uprising (the Boxer

Rebellion, 1900) against foreign powers and foreigners in China, as a result of which the Chinese were forced to economic and territorial concessions.” There is accuracy in this definition. However, it does not give us an understanding of how “Boxers” came to be the “society that led an unsuccessful uprising” at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Manchuria is situated to the North east of Peking (Beijing), to the Northwest of Korea and to the West of Japan. The Western thinker may have some difficulty understanding that the Manchus were considered by the Chinese to be “foreigners”. They would have been considered much the same as the Koreans or Japanese. “The Chinese were past masters of the art of divide and rule. But when a Jurchen tribal leader of genius arose in Manchuria, the policy boomeranged and they lost their empire, only to gain it back again by making the tribesmen more Chinese than themselves. This extraordinary drama of the Qing dynasty moved to its tragic climax when the empire, more generally cultured and apparently more powerful than it had ever been suddenly crumbled in the face of internal rebellion and the external pressure of foreign powers.” [3]

Manchurian rule, the Ching or Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), became the final phase of the Chinese empire. Abahai, the tribal leader of the Jurchen (for political reasons) chose to call his people the Manchus. He had already invaded, successfully, Korea and Mongolia. He now had his sights on Peking and the Dragon throne (the emperor's throne). Before he could complete as successful campaign against China, Abahai died of natural causes. His ninth son, Fu-lin, the heir-apparent to his leadership, was only six years old. Therefore, an adult relative named Dorgon became the military leader of the Manchurians. A Rebellion led by Li Tzu-ch'eng had arisen within the Ming Empire. This combined with the potential of attacking forces from the North placed Peking (Beijing) and the Forbidden City (the Royal Palace) in dire circumstances. The Emperor appointed his most trusted general, Wu San-kuei, to defend Peking. This general, however, did not feel that he had adequate forces to defend the city and the emperor. Wu San-kuei chose to invite Dorgon and his army to help him fight the rebel forces.

Li Tzu-ch'eng's forces entered Peking on April 25, and the Ming emperor hanged himself on Prospect Hill, overlooking the Forbidden City. Dorgon arrived to find the Emperor dead, the Royal army weakened and so he seized the opportunity to take the Forbidden City and install Fu-lin as the first Emperor of the Ching dynasty.

The Chinese people, in general, wanted to restore the Ming Empire. They viewed the Manchurians as foreign dictators. In order to over throw this foreign control various resistance groups were formed. It was only natural for the Chinese people to look to the Boxers, their greatest fighters, to drive out the invaders. One group of Ming loyalist Boxers chose to hide in the famous Shao-lin (Quiet Forrest) monastery. Their plan was to disguise themselves as Buddhist monks and thereby to be able to train in secret. It was here that the famous Shao-li or Five Animal system of Chinese boxing was developed. Graduate students of the Shao-lin system were sent to Northern China to educate and prepare others for the planned over throw of the Manchurians.

The original Shao-lin monastery was burned down when it was finally invaded by the Manchurian army who had learned of the hiding Ming loyalists. All but a few perished in the attack. Some of the survivors traveled to the Fukien Province in Southern China. There they built a second Shao-lin monastery and sought to recruit boxing students for the overthrow of the “foreigners”. This second monastery was also discovered and attacked by the Manchurians. The surviving Shao-lin monks then scattered throughout China and over to Okinawa. It must be understood that there were other groups of Boxers in China at this time. The Shao-lin monks became the most famous however there were tongs, societies, families or styles apart from the monks.

I would now like to “fast-forward” about 200 years in the story to the time of Manchurian or Ching (Qing) Emperor Hsien-feng. “Only nineteen when he ascended to the Throne, he was weak and easily led ... The Grand Council did the Emperor's thinking for him and made all decisions, merely asking for a Vermilion Pencil [the official ink of the Emperor] endorsement when this was necessary.”⁴ Hsien-feng's favorite concubine was Yhonalá, a Manchu, who later became known as the Empress Dowager, Tsu-hsi. Dowager – “1 a widow with a title or property derived from her dead husband: often used in combination with the title (queen dowager, dowager duchess), 2 an elderly woman of wealth and dignity” Webster's New World Dictionary.

In 1895 Japan drew China into a war over the control of Korea which had become a prosperous and powerful nation on its own. This prosperity and power disturbed both the leaders of Russian and Japan. Each of these wanted to control the entire region. China entered the picture as General Yuan Shih-k'ai was asked to train the Korean army. Much to Japan's dislike, a strong political bond formed between the Koreans and the Chinese. This prompted Japan to launch an all-out war against China, a war for which the Chinese were ill prepared. The Japanese army clearly dominated and China was forced to sue for peace. One of the results of this war was that Chinese ports were opened to Japan for trade. In a relatively short time other nations began to take advantage of this new openness and “foreigners” of every sort flooded the country. Businessmen from France, the U.S., German, Britain, and Russia joined Japan in setting up enterprises throughout China. Much to the dislike of the Chinese people, their resources were being used to prosper these and other nations. It should be noted that the openness forced by the Sino-Japanese war also allowed the entrance of missionaries. While Roman Catholic missionaries had been in the country prior to this time others came in with the hope of reaching the souls of the Chinese with the truth that they, themselves, had once had.

With regard to the “invasion” of international businesses, U.S. Secretary of State John Hay wrote a letter in 1899 asking other “foreigners” to exercise restraint in their endeavors. It was bad enough that China had been humiliated by losing the war to Japan. But, in addition, the Japanese had demanded heavy financial payments as a term of peace. Since Japan, itself had been considered a sort of “little brother” by the Chinese for centuries this was all very troubling for the people. “... Japanese culture does derive mainly from China. The kimono, Japan's traditional dress, is that of the Ming Dynasty ...”⁴

Tzu-hsi, the Dowager Empress, was considered by many Chinese to be self-indulgent, extravagant and apathetic toward the welfare of the common people. Tzu-hsi had charge of the boy Emperor Kuang-hsu, her nephew. “He had been four years old when she [Tzu-hsi] snatched him from his mother and had him crowned at midnight in the palace, old enough for the memory of the alarming experience to stay with him.”⁵

In 1886 Kuang-hsu came of age and rightfully took the throne of China. Although Kuang-hsu was now in charge, Tzu-hsi made certain that she maintained a powerful position in the court. In spite of Tzu-hsi's domineering personality and great political strength Kuang-hsu was an independent thinker. He had learned to speak English. He read many Western books and became an able negotiator with the “foreign” businessmen and ambassadors that were now so numerous in his country. On June 11, 1898 Kuang-hsu launched a program of modernization and westernization called “the Hundred Days Reform”. This project was ambitious and effective, to a degree, but it did not survive the time of its name.

Tzu-hsi had planned to have a General (Jung-Iu), who was loyal to her, take back the throne by military force. Kuang-hsu got wind of this and attempted a counter strike. His plan failed due to treason within his own ranks and he was imprisoned in an island palace called the Ocean Terrace. Tzu-hsi assumed the throne in order to restore China and to rid the country of the “foreigners”. The events of the Sino-Japanese war and the resulting influx of westerners had left China divided. The army was divided and the people were divided. Tzu-hsi saw herself as the uniting force of China. She turned to the Boxers for help. The paradox of this is that she was a Manchurian. The Boxers whose predecessors had hid out and developed the famous Shao-lin style of Kung Fu in order to overthrow the Manchurian Ching (Qing) dynasty were now employed as the elite fighting force of that dynasty.

On pages 172-175 of “China: Its History and Culture”, W. Scott Morton gives us a summation of the bloody rebellion:

“As in former rebellions, flood and famine conditions rendered many peasants desperate. But there were new factors. The sale of imported cloth and kerosene oil and the increased use of steamers and railways instead of boatmen and porters had led to unemployment. Fear that railway and telegraph construction was offending local gods and spirits was an element of discontent (ironically it was the Chinese, to a large extent, who built the trans-continental railroads in the United states during the later nineteenth century.), and resentment against Chinese Christians became a dominant feature of the rebellion.

Conservative Manzhou [Manchu] and Chinese at court sympathized with these latter aims of the Boxers; their support; and ultimately that of the empress dowager herself, turned the movement from being anti-dynastic to being purely anti-foreign. Beginning in 1898, the Boxers spread over north China, attacking railways, factories, and shops which sold foreign goods. They killed missionaries and Chinese converts, the latter in large numbers.”

“In June of 1900 the struggle became more bitter. In Peking itself Christians were massacred and buildings burned, the foreign settlements in Tientsin were besieged ...”

“On June 20 the German minister in Peking, Baron Klemens Von Ketteler, was shot and killed, and the next day the court declared war on the foreign powers. At this point the Boxers, backed by imperial troops, besieged the Legation Quarter. There was considerable hardship, owing to lack of food, and a number of casualties, among them Chinese Christians who had been brought to the quarter for protection.”

“A larger international force, half of whom were Japanese, was quickly prepared under the command of a German field marshal, Count Alfred von Waldersee, and was able to defeat the Boxers and the imperial regiments.”

“... the Manzhou dynasty - and with it the imperial system, which had lasted for over 2,000 years- was coming to an inevitable end. The personality holding the dynasty together, 'the old Buddha,' Cizi [Tzu-hsi, the Empress Dowager], died in 1908. One day before her death the emperor Guang Xu [Kuang-hsu] had passed away, and she had arranged once more for a boy emperor, the three year old Pu Yi. But his occupation of the throne was to be short, for the revolution broke out and the Republic was founded on the 'Double-tenth,' October 10, 1911, the tenth day of the tenth month.”

That, dear reader, is a brief accounting of an historical event that can only be described as a bloody tragedy. Yet, in all of this there are lessons for each of us. I think that we could well spend years learning all that these events could teach us, but I will only try to set forth a few.

Lesson 1: It is abundantly evident that the Chinese people were, in the beginning days of their nation, monotheistic. It is also abundantly evident that the one God Whom they worshipped, their Heavenly Emperor, was the God of the book of Genesis. While some may not like to acknowledge this truth and some may even be outraged at this statement, it is, none the less, truth. “Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?” Paul, Epistle to the Galatians 4:16. The problems that the Chinese people had (and are still having) are a direct result of their turning away from the One True God; the God of the Bible. This is not only true for China, it is true for Israel, Europe, the United States and any and every nation, people or person who turns away from God.

“Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance.” Psalm 33:12 "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all nations that forget God." Psalm 9:17 “I, even I am the Lord: and beside me there is no savior.” Isaiah 43:11

Lesson 2: The fact that people are estranged from God by their own rejection of Him and His truth leads us to hope that there is some way to be restored to a right relationship with God. This is not a vain hope. Jesus Christ said: “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.

In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him and have seen him. Philip saith unto him, Lord shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?"

The writer of Hebrews tells us: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;" Hebrews 1 :1-3

The Apostle John adds: "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not." John 1: 1-5

John continues: "That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:" John 14:9-12

Jesus, Himself, explained: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." John 3:16-18

Lesson 3: Someone has wisely said: "Politics makes strange bedfellows." The Boxer Rebellion is a classic example of that truth. Chinese Boxing predates the Ming dynasty. However, its strongest stage of development seems to have been during the first and second Shao-lin temple periods. The motivation for this development was to overthrow the Manchu's and restore the Ming Empire. Yet, in time, Chinese Boxers fight on behalf of the Manchurian dynasty. Political expediency often leads us to compromise our deepest convictions and violate our strongest loyalties. Having said that let me also point out that the convictions and loyalties of one generation are not by any means those of successive generations. We humans have the mistaken idea that we are, somehow,

smarter than all those who have lived before us. We believe that our ancestors just weren't quite as advanced in thinking as we are. So we decide that the things they believed, held true, and in many cases died for were not really as important as they thought. In the case of the Boxers they chose to fight for the Manchurians against the foreigners. Indeed, some of them probably felt that they were siding with the lesser of two evils. However the point we need in our day is that right is right and wrong is wrong. Political changes, political expediency should not govern our decisions.

Lesson 4: It must be noted that primary among the “foreigners” who were targeted for death were the Christians. One example is that of Chang Shen who was also known as “Blind Chang”: "He became the most famous evangelist in Manchuria. Before his conversion he was known as 'Wu so pu wei te' which means 'one without a particle of good'. He received Christ in mid-life at a missionary hospital to which he had gone to seek restoration of his sight. The missionary at the hospital put off his baptism till he went to his home village and told them of his change. After five months the missionary visited and found hundreds of new believers resulting from Chang's testimony. Chang traveled from village to village with the Gospel which saw hundreds more converted. During this time he managed to memorize the whole New Testament and large portions of the Old Testament. When the Boxer Rebellion broke out Chang was targeted. In a nearby city the Boxers rounded up 50 believers and were going to execute them, when they were persuaded that only by getting rid of Chang, could they eradicate the foreign religion. When Chang heard this he immediately went to the city and offered himself in place of the fifty. Chang repeatedly refused to deny Christ. Three days after his surrender, he was lead to the cemetery outside the city as he sang ‘Jesus loves me ...’ and there executed. After his execution the Boxers became fearful of revenge from Chang due to a prediction that he would rise from the dead, so they had his body cremated, and spared the local Christians.”⁶

This, of course, goes back to lesson one. That Christians were the targets of persecution should come as no surprise since it is a fulfillment of prophecy. Jesus taught, repeatedly, that His followers would be persecuted by those who do not believe in Him: Matthew 5: 10-12 “Blessed are they which are which are persecuted for righteousness sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.”

Luke 21:17 “And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake.”

John 15: 18-23 “If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.

If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

Remember the word that I said unto you, the servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will

keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me. If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin. He that hateth me hateth my Father also.”

The Boxer Rebellion was, in a very real sense, a spiritual warfare.

Lesson 5: Because of the training the Boxers had had they should have know that drugs cloud the thinking and lead one to unrealistic ideas. The Greek word: pharmacia (and the derivatives there of), from which we get our English word: pharmacy is often translated in the New Testament book of the Revelation as: sorcerer, sorcery or sorceries (Revelation 9:21; 18:23; 21:8 & 22: 15). Drugs dement the mind and may, indeed, be an avenue to spirit possession.

Lesson 6: Neither martial arts nor any other kind of skill, training or invention of mankind can make him invincible. While we may learn to be “skilled men” the literal translation of “Kung Fu” we are still mortal. The Boxers charged fire arms with inferior weapons and they died as a result. Just as the builders of the Titanic thought they had built a ship that “God Himself could not sink”, the Boxers overestimated their ability. The student of the martial arts must realize that the skill he is developing, while it may be great, is temporary. While he may win many victories, he will eventually taste defeat. The Dowager Empress had her way for many years, but she has been in eternity for almost a century now and she has come to realize that there is only one King of Heaven. The reader will, doubtless, be able to form his own applications from this story. The search that I began in 1981 to learn from the history of China has not concluded. This material contained here is only one stop on the journey.

End notes:

[1] Page 41, "China A New History" by John King Fairbank, The Belknap Press of Harvard University, copyright 1992)

[2] Page 19, "The Discovery of Genesis" (How the Truths of Genesis Were Found Hidden in the Chinese Language) by C.H. Kang and Ellen R. Nelson, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Missouri. Copyright 1979.

[3] Page 137 "China, Its History and Culture" by W. Scott Morton, Lippincott & Crowell, Publishers, New York copyright 1980

[4] Page 64, "China Only Yesterday" by Emily Hahn, edited by John Gunther, 1 st Edition, Doubleday & company, Garden City, NY, copyright 1963

[5] Hahn, page 243.

[6] Hahn, page 245

[7] Supplied by Dwight Keafer and Stephen J. Jones, taken from "The Voice of the Martyrs Magazine", March 2000, Primary source "By Their Blood" by James and Marti Hefley, Baker Books, Grand Rapids, MI, 1966

All Scripture quotations are from the King James Version of the Holy Bible.

No part of this work is to be reproduced without the express written permission of the author.

About the Author:

Michael L. McClure became a Christian in 1969 and began formal study for the Gospel ministry in 1970. He received a Graduate of Theology diploma from Pensacola Christian College in 1981. He was ordained as a Baptist minister in 1984. He received a Bachelor of Divinity and Master of Religious Education from Great Plains Baptist College and Divinity School in 1993 and was awarded an honorary Doctor of Humanities in 1998 for "making significant contributions in the field of Christian Martial Arts". Michael McClure founded the missionary evangelistic association: Men of Valour Ministries, Inc. in 1982. He has served as the Pastor of the West Park Baptist Church in Delray Beach, Florida since 1984. Michael McClure began his study of the Chinese Martial Arts in 1973 and has continued such study since. He holds several advanced rankings in various styles of Chinese Martial Arts and is a member of the Gospel Martial Arts Union.