Rebels and Revolutionaries in North China, 1845-1945

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1. Introduction

Why do some peasants rebel?* Scholars have argued at length over issues of peasant personality, class identity, social organization, and political proclivities. Yet any search for universal answers must bow before the undeniable fact that only *some* peasants rebel. Furthermore, only in certain geographical areas does rebellion seem to recur frequently and persistently.

Students of China have long recognized the importance of regional differences in rebel behavior. Although China lays claim to an exceptionally ancient and colorful history of rural insurgency, the turmoil tended to cluster in particular geographical pockets. The bandits of the Shantung marshes, the pirates off the Fukien Coast, the brigands of the Shensi hinterland—all are local figures of long-standing fame. Yet despite widespread recognition of the existence of local traditions, very little scholarship has been directed at solving the mystery of why particular regions tended consistently to produce such patterns.

This book seeks to answer the question of why peasants rebelled for one key area of China: Huai-pei, site of the first recorded popular uprising in Chinese history and of countless subsequent rebellions down through the ages. By examining a century of rural violence in one notably rebellious region, the

*The term *peasant* here refers to a rural cultivator living within a state system, the fruits of whose labor go primarily for family consumption, rather than for marketing. Since the household is the basic accounting unit in a peasant society, members of a household whose basic livelihood is derived from agricultural work are referred to as peasants, even though many of these individuals engage regularly in nonfarming occupations to augment household incomes. (Numeral superscripts refer to the Notes, pp. 274–93, used primarily for source citations.)

study is designed to explore the long-term causes of recurring peasant insurrection.

To date, most theories of peasant revolt have addressed themselves primarily to one question: how has it happened that traditionally isolated and impotent peasants—the "sack of potatoes" as Marx so vividly characterized them—have in recent years managed to take center stage in the making of revolution? Starting from a view of the traditional peasant as weak and disorganized, the theories have naturally tended to emphasize the role of outside persons and forces in permitting revolutionary breakthrough. Although the argument may help considerably to explain the emergence of modern revolution, it does not shed much light on the causes of earlier rebellions, tending to dismiss traditional peasant protest as "spontaneous, anomic, irrational," and the like.* This book takes issue with such a view of rural rebellion and proposes an alternative interpretation of traditional peasant insurrection as a sustained, structured, and sensible form of collective action. The analysis focuses upon the rural inhabitants themselves, emphasizing the adaptive value of peasant violence for coping with the local environment they inhabit.

Anthropological conceptions of the peasantry, though varying in detail, virtually all agree that peasants must be defined relationally with respect to (1) the wider sociopolitical world and (2) the particular natural base on which they make their living. As Eric Wolf has pointed out, "The existence of a peasantry involves not merely a relation between peasant and non-peasant, but a type of adaptation, a combination of attitudes and activities designed to sustain the cultivator in his effort to maintain himself and his kind."[1] Most theories of peasant rebellion have centered their attention on the first relation—the links between peasant and overlord—relegating the ecological question to a

*The term *revolution* will be used here to refer to a violent process that both envisions and achieves rapid political, social, economic, and cultural transformation. *Rebellion*, by contrast, refers to the much more common phenomenon of organized protest against the government—without any stipulation as to ideology, class consciousness, or political success.

distant second place. When we recall, however, that rebellion tends to be concentrated in certain geographical areas, the importance of the natural setting is immediately apparent.

In certain environments, the most adaptive strategy for survival may well be collective violence. The functional significance of human aggression has been noted by several anthropologists and human ecologists who point out that, under conditions of scarcity, violence against fellow competitors is often a rational strategy.* Environments where resources are in short and unpredictable supply may breed conflict as a way of life. Denial of essentials to others is seen as contributing directly to one's own chances for survival.†

Huai-pei, as Chapter 2 will document, was an exceptionally harsh habitat. Repeated ravages of flood and drought created a difficult and insecure milieu in which aggressive survival strategies flourished. For the most part, these forms of collective violence can, I propose, be categorized into two modal types. The first method of survival, termed the *predatory strategy*, entailed illegally expanding the resources of some members of the community at the expense of others. It ranged from theft, smuggling, and banditry to organized feuds. The reaction against such assaults, the *protective strategy*, was an effort to preserve

*Durham, 1976; Harris, 1975, 1977; Rappaport, 1968; Vayda, 1976. For the purposes of this book, *survival* is defined as the maintenance of oneself and one's family at a minimum level of food and shelter. *Adaptive behaviors* are those which enhance one's ability to survive in a particular environment. *Resources* are material goods that further survival capacity (such as land, tools, crops, money, and guns). *Competition* is an attempt to seize or withhold resources in such a way as to reduce their availability to others.

†The unpredictable environment must usually be coupled with a certain level of population size and stability to induce violent competition. In hunting-gathering societies where game and vegetable foods are scattered, the scant population is mobile and often quite free from conflict. Only when the environment allows the build-up of a larger and more settled population is competition common.

Much of the ecological thinking on this question has unfortunately been heavily colored by a stress on system stability in which warfare is explained as a homeostatic device to maintain a favorable equilibrium between population and resources. Although collective violence may in fact have this end result, its origins are best explained at the level of individuals and groups, rather than the ecosystem as a whole.

one's belongings in the face of predatory threat. Under this rubric were included crop-watching, private vigilantes, village militia, and the construction of fortified communities.

As Chapter 3 will explain, both the predatory and protective strategies were adaptive solutions to the problem of attaining and retaining hold over precarious resources. These were rational means that villagers used to maximize gain and minimize risk in a situation where alternative opportunities were extremely limited. Since these were essentially strategies for enhancing and ensuring a livelihood, they were adopted differentially according to one's access to resources. The predatory strategy was typically undertaken by people with few material possessions, who had less to forfeit and more to gain by this high-risk behavior. Predators used their one asset—surplus labor—to seize a livelihood from more affluent neighbors. The protective response, by contrast, was generally led by those who had both something to lose and the wherewithal to defend it. Surplus resources were put to use by protectors to safeguard their possessions against the threat of predatory plunder.

A very rough notion of social class—or relation to the means of production—helps to account for reliance on one as opposed to the other of these two modal strategies. In the context of a peasant society, where land constitutes the most prized resource, we would expect predatory behavior to be more common among the landless and protective measures to be more typical of landowners. Historical reality is, however, a good deal more complex than such a hypothesis might suggest. In the first place, peasants do not adopt collective strategies as individuals, but rather as families, clans, villages, and so forth. Then, to complicate matters further, these larger units do not act as simple sums of the individuals involved. Their behavior is shaped by considerations of leadership, group cohesion, past experience, and outside intervention. Such factors have a decisive impact on the extent to which different social groups are actually willing and able to mount an effective predatory or protective strategy.

Thus, although the model begins with a picture of individual peasants competing for scarce resources, it admits the importance of kinship, patron-client ties, and other communal allegiances in determining the degree and manner in which the struggle was conducted. Social structure exerted a critical and complex impact on the pattern of collective violence. Not all poor tenants were predatory bandits, just as not all landlords were protective militiamen. Higher-order collectivities defined the membership, and often the ideological justification, of group survival strategies.

Although the predatory-protective dichotomy is intended to focus attention on the fundamental issue of resource competition, it is important to note that the struggle was pursued with varying degrees of ideological awareness and concern for justice. Some predatory outfits were "social bandits," robbing the rich to assist the poor; others plundered indiscriminately and demonstrated no social conscience in distributing their loot. Likewise, some protective activities were conducted in an egalitarian manner and justified by appeals to traditional community rights, whereas others were organized in an authoritarian fashion to serve the interests of a single powerful landlord. These differences were of course a major factor in deciding the fates of particular predatory and protective movements. Still, such variation should not obscure the underlying connection of all these movements to the ongoing struggle for survival in a formidable environment.

While, during the century under consideration, some level of organized violence was a constant feature of the Huai-pei scene, at certain critical times the fighting intensified dramatically. Natural catastrophe was a major stimulus to increased predation and protective response. Invasion by outside forces—whether rebels, warlords, or foreign armies—also gave rise to heightened local competition. Although government concern for Huai-pei was ordinarily minimal, when violence reached an unacceptable level it would elicit state repression. Government intervention, if matched by recalcitrant local leadership, was a

catalyst for rebellion, turning endemic forms of collective action into vehicles for antistate revolt.

Chapters 4 and 5 present case studies of two massive insurrections that developed in the confluence of ecological and political crisis in Huai-pei: the Nien Rebellion of the mid-nineteenth century and the Red Spears of the early Republican period. The movements are interpreted as outgrowths of the two modal strategies of peasant survival in the area. The Nien are shown to have emerged from the predatory behavior—smuggling, banditry, feuds—endemic to this unruly border region. By contrast, the Red Spears illustrate the protective reaction against just such activities. Led for the most part by rich peasants and landlords, and based on the concept of village defense, the Red Spears developed as the conservative antithesis to predatory aggression.

An ecological approach offers a new perspective on the study of Chinese peasant rebellion. Although informative monographs have been written on several specific Chinese uprisings, we lack a useful body of theory to integrate these various cases. Rich in empirical detail as the monographs are, the many idiosyncrasies of any particular rebellion have tended to inhibit efforts at formulating general hypotheses on the causes of peasant involvement. Conventional wisdom has held simply that it was the presence of secret societies—the White Lotus in the North, the Triads in the South—that contributed to any enduring patterns of insurgency. In keeping with this view, the two movements chosen here as examples of traditional revolt in Huai-pei, the Nien and Red Spears, are commonly interpreted as White Lotus–inspired insurgencies.[2] Chapters 4 and 5 will, however, raise questions about this interpretation, asking whether secret-society influence may not have been less significant than the fact that the two movements represented contrary solutions to fundamental dilemmas of peasant survival. By locating the origins of rebellion in ecological circumstances, one is encouraged to bridge the gap between "event studies" of unique uprisings and "local area studies" of enduring socioeconomic conditions.

The ecological approach should by no means be construed as

environmental determinism; the natural setting simply provides certain limits and parameters to human activity. Peasants are often characterized as an intermediate type of rural cultivator, distinct both from primitives living in a simple exchange economy, and from farmers fully integrated into the market system.[3] On the one hand, like primitives, they are extremely influenced by the exigencies of the particular ecosystem they inhabit. On the other hand, peasants are not pure primitives unencumbered by outside forces. By definition, the peasant is a member of a state society. Although peasants may not be business entrepreneurs in the same sense as farmers, they share with the farmer a stratified political world. For this reason, the explanation of their collective violence calls for attention to this larger context. Tied into a complex social, economic, and political network, peasants may rebel not only against immediate threats to livelihood, but against perceived injustices in the wider system. And, precisely because they are members of class societies, peasants may participate not only in rebellion, but in revolution as well. They may act, in other words, not merely to replace individual politicians, but to restructure an entire social system—to transfer state control from one social class to another.

To the extent that this book succeeds in explaining why peasants rebel, it may also suggest some insights into the related question of why some peasants engage in revolution. Although traditional rebellion is often treated as an anomic phenomenon, the notion of a positive connection between a long tradition of rebellion and the potential for modern revolution is a familiar theme in general theories of peasant revolt. The structural weaknesses that facilitated endemic insurrection in premodern times are said to have enabled revolutionary breakthrough as well.[4] Scholars in the China field have also suggested that the legacy of peasant rebellion was an important ingredient in the Communists' rural success, serving both as a source of inspiration to the early revolutionaries and as a familiar frame of reference for peasants who joined the movement.[5]

Huai-pei was the home not only of countless traditional rebel-

lions, but also of a Communist base area prior to the victory of the revolution in 1949. Chapter 6 looks at Communist mobilization in Huai-pei in an effort to assess whether the rebel tradition furthered the cause of modern revolution. The revolutionaries, we will see, elicited distinct receptions from predators and protectors—reactions which changed over time as the Communist movement itself underwent transformation.

In the case of Huai-pei, we will question whether tenacious survival strategies actually constituted the sort of rebel tradition that modern revolutionaries could easily adapt to new purposes. But the verdict on Huai-pei will by no means settle the issue. If it is recognized that peasant insurgency originated and persisted more as a response to local conditions than as a direct challenge to state authority, regional variations assume central importance. For the argument is that any lasting pattern of collective violence was quite likely an adaptation to the parochial setting—one which could be variously hostile or hospitable to revolution depending upon its particular content.

We would expect in peasant societies, with livelihood so immediately dependent upon soil and climate, that natural conditions would assume a greater importance than may be true in other contexts. As Chapter 7 will note, a stress on the environmental background invites comparison with other similar areas, both within the diverse Chinese empire and beyond. Nevertheless, the contention here is not that a given environment leads automatically to a certain form of rebellion or revolution. Subsequent chapters deal with the complex and contingent intermediate links involved in adaptive survival strategies. Although many of the particulars described may be unique to the Huai-pei area, it is hoped that the theory and method of analysis will be more generally applicable to peasant societies elsewhere.

In sum, the main contribution of an ecological approach lies in its ability to account for enduring *traditions* in certain geographical areas. The perspective is a long-term one that stresses the continuity over time of broad patterns of peasant violence. As such, the approach does have inherent limitations which

should be identified at the outset. On the question of the timing of a particular revolt, an ecological perspective is of little predictive value. Still less can it account for the idiosyncrasies of individual rebellions, the very stuff of which colorful history is written.* Thus the approach is no substitute either for additional efforts at generalization or for detailed histories. It is admittedly a supplement, but one that promises to bring new understanding to the problems of peasant rebellion and revolution.

*One of these idiosyncrasies was the propensity of uprisings, once they developed into large-scale movements, to overstep the neat geographical boundaries drawn by the local area specialist. The lack of perfect congruence between geographical region and actual rebel movements has required that, in this study, reference sometimes be made to events outside the Huai-pei area when these were of critical importance to the evolution of a particular rebellion.

3. Strategies of Peasant Survival in Huai-pei

Huai-pei peasants, we have seen, lived in a highly unstable natural environment. The resultant insecurity cast a dark shadow upon economic, social, and political life in the area. With productive opportunities severely constrained, peasants turned to alternative means of promoting and safeguarding their survival. Many households pursued the familiar strategies of controlling family size, borrowing from others, or moving elsewhere in an effort to obtain or conserve scarce resources. Such solutions, common to peasants the world over, assumed a particular form in Huai-pei that was conducive to the emergence of a diverse array of more aggressive strategies. These violent adaptations to a hostile environment can, for the most part, be subsumed within two broad categories. The first category includes offensive attempts to seize the resources of others: the predatory strategy. The second is composed of efforts to guard against such attacks: the protective strategy.

Although the motivation for these strategies was personal survival, their effect was to provide peasants with valuable experience in cooperation, mobility, and high-risk behavior. It is often assumed that sideline pursuits work primarily to sap rebellious potential.* Missing from this view is the point that adaptive strategies are more than simply income boosters. Far from

*For example, James Scott has commented, "To the degree that the marginal opportunities open to the peasant do in fact alleviate short-run subsistence needs, to that degree they tend to reduce the likelihood of more direct and violent solutions" (1976, p. 204).

an inevitable fetter upon revolt, involvement in short-term migration, banditry, militia, and the like can actually organize peasants for more dramatic steps.

It is important to remember that these adaptations to the local environment evolved and persisted over generations. Although conditioned by the physical and social backdrop, these were by no means automatic, "knee-jerk" responses to set stimuli. Peasants learned to cope with their predicament in a cumulative history of trial-and-error experience, passing on these traditions to their progeny through oral history, folklore, and direct instruction.

Like all human beings, peasants are not entirely autonomous individuals. Their range of activity is dependent upon and limited by social circumstances and traditions. Conflict over scarce resources is not comprehensible on an individual basis alone. Both the pattern of resource distribution and the struggle for a readjustment of this pattern necessarily involve wider social units. Much of the following discussion of peasant survival strategies will therefore be concerned with identifying the levels of social organization at which particular strategies were employed. Collective action implies organization, but this may be variously based upon kinship, settlement, class, friendship, occupation, or a number of other ties. Only after having clarified the underlying structures of action can we proceed to the central issue: the relationship of these strategies to peasant rebellion.

Recent theories of group conflict stress the importance of "mobilization"—the process whereby the discontented muster resources for the pursuit of common goals.[1] Collective survival strategies constitute important means of peasant mobilization, thereby facilitating the possibility of rural rebellion. Case studies of the Nien and Red Spears in Chapters 4 and 5 will show how, at two specific times in history, ongoing predation and protection were transformed into outright rebellion. Under the pressures of severe natural disaster and political crisis, regular survival strategies could generate antistate activity. Such dramatic,

rebellious expressions should not, however, blind us to the pragmatic and continuous character of these local patterns of survival.

An ecological perspective on peasant revolt does not deny its political nature. In the first place, national policies played a role in creating many of the problems with which Huai-pei peasants had to cope. Lack of proper dike maintenance by the central government was largely responsible for the devastating flooding of the region. Administrative irrationalities made possible the practice of smuggling. Lax security contributed to the growth of banditry and the need for private forms of defense. Periodic tax increases and marauding government soldiers furthered the protective response. In the second place, rebellion by definition involves opposition to government authority and is therefore a political act. Nevertheless, such opposition is often peripheral to an explanation of how and why traditions of rural violence evolve and persist. For the peasants themselves, armed revolt is often an extension of familiar strategies for making a living, turning into an antistate position only reluctantly and under outside pressure.

STANDARD HOUSEHOLD STRATEGIES

Peasant households sought to cope with the problem of scarcity by controlling family size and composition, borrowing from others, and the like. Periodically family members or entire households would also move outside the Huai-pei area in search of additional resources. These "sedentary" and "mobile" solutions were standard patterns that may at first appear quite unrelated to more aggressive survival strategies. In fact, they did have an important bearing on the likelihood and style of collective violence. Typically adopted at the level of the household—the primary production-consumption unit of any peasant economy—these mundane responses are common to many peasant societies. The form and consequences of these solutions to resource scarcity differ, however, and it is these differences

that help to define the nature of peasant action in specific local areas.

Sedentary Solutions

One of the most prevalent and tragic solutions to peasant poverty is the killing of infants. In China, where males were the favored offspring for both cultural and economic reasons, infanticide was primarily directed against girl babies. Whereas boys might be expected eventually to contribute to family income, girls were seen simply as liabilities who had to be reared and then married off at considerable expense. Widespread female infanticide resulted in a glaring imbalance in the sex ratio, males outnumbering females by a sizable margin.[2]

For the mid-nineteenth century, figures from Hsüchou Prefecture in Kiangsu suggest an average of 129 men for every 100 women.[3] The disparity continued into the twentieth century. Table 7 gives figures from a field investigation conducted in sixteen north Anhwei villages in 1932. These statistics show males outnumbering females in the early years, with the ratio reversing itself among the elderly. Although in peasant societies female life expectancy is often lower than that of males because of higher mortality during the childbearing years, here we see no indication of that trend. Rather, the proportion of women increases steadily over the life cycle. It thus seems likely that the imbalance in sex ratio was due to female infanticide. Figures from eighteen northern Anhwei counties in 1934 range from a low of 108 to a high of 150 males per 100 females. The mean for the area as a whole was 123 men for every 100 women.[4]

This sex ratio imbalance was not extraordinarily high by traditional Chinese standards, yet the figures suggest that as many as 20 percent of Huai-pei males may have gone unmarried. Although individual peasant families were pursuing a rational policy in rearing sons who were expected to augment household income, the social impact of this policy was a serious surplus of single young males. The dryland wheat farming practiced in Huai-pei, we have seen, was an extensive form of agriculture

Table 7. Percentage of Males and Females in Northern Anhwei Villages, 1932

Age group	Pct. male	Pct. female
Under 7 years	55%	45%
7–14 years	54	46
15–54 years	53	47
55+ years	49	51
AVERAGE	53%	47%

Source: Yang Chi-hua, 1933.

unresponsive to increased increments of human labor. Few family plots were large enough to absorb the labor of many sons. Although some of these unmarried men were able to sell their services to more affluent families as hired workers or servants, unemployment was a chronic problem. The existence of this huge contingent of single men had major consequences for the pattern of intergroup conflict. "Bare sticks," as unmarried males were popularly termed, provided a principal source of recruits for both predatory and protective movements in Huai-pei. Smugglers, bandits, crop watchers, and militiamen alike were drawn in large part from their ranks. Thus the practice of female infanticide, though motivated by a family's need to restrict resource consumption, also helped contribute to particular forms of resource competition.

Despite efforts to control family size, many households continued to suffer economic difficulties. A flood, famine, wedding, or funeral could push peasants below the margin of survival, forcing them to borrow grain or money to weather the crisis. If an investigation conducted in four northern Kiangsu villages in 1943 is representative, nearly one-half of all households were in debt. About 80 percent of these debts had been incurred to provide food for immediate subsistence needs. Most of the other borrowing was a response to weddings, funerals, or illness. Less than 5 percent of the debts were for productive purposes such as irrigation improvement or the purchase of seeds, tools, or draft

animals. Borrowing from relatives was common, since such loans might carry a more favorable rate of interest.[5]

Besides borrowing from creditors to tide themselves over in immediate crises, peasants organized loan associations as a means of insurance against hard times in the future. Although often based on kinship, such groups involved a level of cooperation higher than the nuclear family, bringing together friends and relatives in a collective strategy for coping with economic insecurity. "Old people societies" were formed to help with the burden of funeral expenses. Dues were pooled and then used to defray the cost of mourning clothes, coffins, and funeral arrangements as the need arose. "Fur garment societies" were organized to provide participating peasants with warm winter coats which were beyond their individual means. Members paid annual dues which were used to purchase one or more coats each year. The group disbanded when all participants had been duly provided for. In addition to these specialized societies, groups created to provide more general types of loans were also common. These associations, or *yao-hui,* typically met once a year, at which time members drank wine and threw dice to determine the precedence for borrowing.[6] Only a thin line separated the *yao-hui* from the *hua-hui,* or illegal gambling societies, which were also prevalent in the area. Gambling had long been a favorite pastime for Huai-pei peasants during the slack season. As the gazetteer of Po County commented, "Gambling constitutes the most serious and harmful vice of the local people."[7] Those who engaged in this practice usually did so with very little capital, so that losers often had no means of making good their debts. As we will see in the case of the Nien, losses at the gambling table were a potent motivation for the move to open banditry.

Incurring debts was obviously only a temporary palliative, one which could readily lead to greater poverty as interest on the loan accumulated. Many peasants thus sought relief beyond the creditor or loan association, in the outside world.

Mobile Solutions

Throughout human history, one common method of alleviating the problem of too large a population for too little food has been migration. Not a few Huai-pei residents adopted this "exit" solution to rural poverty. Mobility was a way of life for Huai-pei villagers, a clear consequence of the difficult environment in which they lived. Chronic unemployment drove many to seek seasonal support elsewhere during periods of agricultural slack. Sudden natural disasters forced whole communities to evacuate their homes on a moment's notice. Gazetteers state that in time of calamity poor peasants "rushed to abandon the land," leading women and children down across the Yangtze in search of food.[8] Shouldering a few belongings, they would trudge off to a temporary refuge where they might wait out the trouble back home. This meant that the Huai-pei population was in a continuous state of transiency and flux. Although not every member of every family was on the move every year, many people did in fact migrate both seasonally and in response to unforeseen ecological crises.

Whether individual or group, seasonal or in response to sudden disaster, mobility was a normal feature of Huai-pei peasant life. The fact that mobility was both continuous and temporary (in the sense that peasants returned home whenever possible) gave it a special importance with respect to the development of collective action. Migration, because of its disruptive and unsettling consequences, frequently militates against group action. In Huai-pei, however, migration did not involve a sharp break with familiar patterns of organization. An integral part of household economic activity, migratory experiences could enhance rather than inhibit the emergence of collective action and group conflict.

In the mid-nineteenth century, southern Kiangsu—particularly the city of Shanghai—was the destination for many Huai-pei migrants who sought seasonal work as coolie laborers, porters, rickshaw pullers, and the like. Few jobs were available, however, and most of the new arrivals were forced into the

ranks of the beggar army of Shanghai. Numbers swelled with the onset of natural disaster. A description of the phenomenon appeared in the October 4, 1865, *North-China Herald:*

> They have come from the northern part of this province, where the country has been devastated by locusts, and are traveling with a passport, given to them by the chief magistrate of the place from which they have come—specifying the reasons for their traveling, and testifying to their good character, declaring that they are good, but *distressed* people.
>
> In times of scarcity of provisions—occasioned by inundation, drought, locusts, and the like, when the government is unable to supply the means of sustenance—such licensed bands of beggars are by no means uncommon to China. As the food cannot be brought to them—there being neither the money to purchase it, nor the ways and means of transporting it if bought—necessity requires that the distressed people should go to the food.
>
> In this land begging is moreover no very dishonorable profession, and when, as in this case, a passport is given to the beggars, they go in high spirits and are very bold; yet they rob nobody, take no denials, grow stout, and when the calamity is passed they usually return quietly to their native places—having traveled perhaps over half the length of the empire.[9]

As this description makes clear, begging in ecologically more stable areas constituted a recognized route for pursuing one's living in a society with few productive options outside agriculture. Begging was often a seasonal phenomenon—an alternative adopted during periods of agricultural slack as a regular method for supplementing family income.*

Seasonally mobile peasants created a fluid population not eas-

*In Feng-yang, Anhwei, the practice of begging evolved in an interesting fashion. This county, birthplace of the first Ming emperor, was devastated by turmoil that preceded the founding of the dynasty. To repopulate his home county, the new sovereign forced more than fourteen thousand affluent people from south of the Yangtze to settle permanently in Feng-yang. Any who returned to their homes were to be severely punished. Since the displaced persons had a strong desire to visit their family graves, they masqueraded as seasonal beggars to make the risky journey home. In time, it became a regular custom to depart in winter and return for spring planting. The practice had originated because people in Feng-yang had enough money to travel, but over the centuries it became in fact what it once had pretended to be, a winter occupation of the poor for supplementing annual income (Inoue Kobai, 1923, pp. 273–74).

ily subject to government control. Throughout the Ch'ing dynasty, memorials and edicts proliferated with regard to the problem. In 1815, a report on conditions in Anhwei by Manchu official Na Yen-ch'eng stressed the importance of conducting an annual census of all mobile peasants—the so-called shed people or *p'eng-min*—during the periods when they returned to their native villages. In 1822 and again in 1824, imperial edicts were issued to the effect that "shed people" must be investigated one by one, with a responsible supervisor chosen for every ten households and accurate family registers posted on all doors.[10]

Local gentry bemoaned the difficulties of instituting the *pao-chia* security system in Huai-pei. As one gazetteer stated the problem, "The people are not attached to their land and there are many wanderers without regular occupations. They may leave for months at a time without returning home. Thus 30 to 40 percent of the dwellings are occupied by outsiders. These intruders may stay for months and are neither easily expelled nor easily incorporated into a security system."[11]

Periodic movements of large numbers of people opened the way for a good deal of dislocation in Huai-pei, inhibiting government efforts at tight supervision. The result was not chaos, however, for regularized mobility induced a kind of structure of its own. Although usually conducted as a household strategy, migration often generated higher levels of social cooperation and conflict. A revealing illustration of this process is provided by the *hu-t'uan*, or lake associations, which developed as a result of serious inundations in the area.[12] Massive flooding of the Yellow River in 1851 caused two lakes on the Kiangsu-Shantung border to overflow, submerging all the surrounding land on the western shores of these two lakes. The inhabitants of the area (P'ei and T'ung-shan counties in northwest Kiangsu) fled en masse to escape the calamity.

Four years later the Yellow River again burst its dikes, this time inflicting its greatest damage a few miles north of the previous flood. Inhabitants of the southern Shantung area were hardest hit, and disaster victims rushed down across the border

by the hundreds of thousands to seek refuge in neighboring Kiangsu. There they found the abandoned lands which had been inundated in 1851, but which by now had partially dried into fertile silted terrain. The newcomers from Shantung erected shacks and industriously set about cultivating the unoccupied lands. Their hard work paid off and soon the immigrants were enjoying bountiful harvests. This prosperity was reflected in the organization of twelve defense leagues, called lake associations, to protect their newfound wealth. With official approval, the settlers constructed forts and stockpiled weapons to safeguard their livelihood against outside intrusion. The immigrants successfully fought off waves of rebel incursions and remained happily settled in their new homes for nearly a decade.

At this point, however, former inhabitants of the region who had fled the 1851 floods began to reappear on the scene. Seeing that their now fertile lands had been claimed by others, the returned natives filed indignant complaints with the local authorities. When no official help was forthcoming, fighting erupted between the original occupants and the immigrant lake associations. The conflict escalated in late 1865 with an incursion of Nien rebels from Anhwei, who found supporters among unruly elements in the *hu-t'uan*. The area was on the verge of revolt, and order was restored only when government troops marched in to arrest and execute more than one thousand lake association members. Two *hu-t'uan* found guilty of having harbored rebels were disbanded and their lands confiscated by the government and redistributed to the original owners.

As the example suggests, life in Huai-pei was extremely fluid. An unstable natural environment resulted in massive population movement both out of and into the area. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the urbanization of South China also drew large numbers of Huai-pei residents out of their villages to seek temporary employment. In 1935 the Ministry of Industries reported that more than 50 percent of rural families in northern Anhwei had lost some of their members by migration to cities—the national average being only 13.5

percent. Young unmarried males formed the bulk of the emigrants.[13]

Armies were another outlet for the surplus population. Huai-pei had historically served as a major recruiting ground for government soldiers in times of national crisis. Although military service paid poorly in terms of salary or provisions, the life of the soldier promised travel and adventure as well as the opportunity to prey upon distant populations. A military career was usually brief, however. After completing a campaign, the troops would be summarily released and ordered to return to their native villages. Accustomed to a life of violence, and seldom able to find regular employment at home, demobilized soldiers were likely candidates for banditry.[14]

AGGRESSIVE SURVIVAL STRATEGIES

Peasants in Huai-pei, we have seen, employed a variety of conventional methods for dealing with the problem of scarcity. These standard and, for the most part, officially sanctioned activities in turn generated a number of more aggressive approaches. It is important to emphasize that no hard and fast line can be drawn between the conventional methods and the more dramatic strategies of predation and protection. As a foreign observer in bandit-infested Honan noted in 1927:

> Personally, after having talked this over with numbers of foreigners as well as Chinese, I am inclined to believe that there really is no distinction as between "bandits" and "people" further than that by bandits are meant those who are at the time under arms and "on the war path" and by people the women and children and the aged who carry on small businesses in the poorly stocked markets or till the land. But that the people are really the fathers and mothers and sisters and brothers of the bandits, and profit by their activity insofar as those who are active in the profession divide their gains with the folks back home.
>
> On the other hand, there is ample evidence that some of the inhabitants, at least on occasions, rebel against being interfered with by anyone. For one comes upon towns which are "sealed"; and have been so for weeks or months. By this is meant that all the gates are closed and

banked up behind with earth, so that the wall is, to all intents and purposes, a continuous structure, and no one who does not belong to the community is allowed in under any circumstances. Communities which adopt this measure may be reinforced by soldiers or Red Spears or both. I have heard of places that had held out in this manner for months, refusing admittance even to the military on official business.[15]

Ordinarily the relative absence of state interference in Huai-pei meant that peasants were fairly free to devise their own methods for ensuring subsistence. When agriculture failed, competition for scarce resources intensified. The hungry staged attacks on those with goods; the latter responded defensively. And thus was set in motion a kind of parochial dialectic between predator and protector. Periodically, however, if violence escalated to an unacceptable level, if the central treasury were seriously depleted, or in times of foreign invasion, outside actors might enter the picture: government soldiers, state officials, or Japanese or warlord troops. Their tactics of harsh repression or heavy taxation could drive predator and protector together into a united front against this common enemy from the outside. Although such a synthesis was always fraught with tension, it furthered the potential for massive rebellion in Huai-pei.

PREDATORY STRATEGIES

It is frequently noted that peasants are normally inhibited from rebellious activity by the tyranny of work and the pressures of custom. The young surplus population of Huai-pei—unemployed and often well traveled—were less subject to these restrictions. Having engaged perhaps in periodic excursions out of their native villages as beggars, soldiers, or hired laborers, they had acquired valuable exposure to new ways. Denied regular work at home, these bare sticks were on the face of it classic "marginal men"—impoverished and with no stake or position in conventional society. In reality, however, the very fact that Huai-pei regularly reproduced this "marginal" class gave its members a certain recognized social place. These young men,

we remember, had been reared as part of a household strategy for survival. Although unmarried, they remained a part of their natal families, to whom they might return periodically with remittances of resources secured in their outside activities. For this reason, the predatory strategy—staffed predominantly by such bare sticks—was organized largely along familial lines. Smuggling activities were frequently conducted by lineage, bandit gangs generally encompassed kinship networks, and feuds were often between competing clans. Thus predation need not be seen as the domain of solitary individuals, forced into asocial behavior by their lack of communal bonds. Precisely because these figures were not only "marginal," but also an integral part of the structure of peasant society, their predatory ventures were a form of collective action with strong rebel potential.

Smuggling

Smuggling was an illegal form of seasonal mobility which took peasants to other areas in an effort to supplement their inadequate agricultural income. It differed from begging, migrating, or soldiering in that it was a seizure of resources officially deemed off-limits to the people involved. Smuggling is by definition illegal, and it is this criminal aspect of the behavior that differentiates it from officially sanctioned mobility. In attempting to seize control over resources to which they had no legal access, smugglers were engaging in a type of predatory activity that blended easily into theft, banditry, and open revolt. As early as Huang Ch'ao's uprising in 874–85, salt smuggling was a prelude to rebellion on the North China Plain.

The peculiarities of the government salt monopoly during the Ch'ing made the illegal transport and sale of salt an extremely lucrative occupation for peasants in the Huai-pei area. Official regulations divided the country into eleven salt zones. Only certain types of salt could legally be sold and consumed in particular zones at fixed prices. The way the boundaries were drawn, central and eastern Honan and the one county of Su in northern Anhwei were "Ch'ang-lu salt" districts, whereas the rest of

northern Anhwei was restricted to the inferior "Huai salt." To make matters worse, the foul-tasting Huai salt was the most expensive variety of all.[16] In the early nineteenth century, each *chin* of Huai salt cost 40 to 50 *wen*, whereas the more palatable Ch'ang-lu variety sold for only half the price.[17] Enterprising peasants in the Huai districts thus used the winter slack period to travel to the Ch'ang-lu zones, load up on salt, and return home to sell the illicit variety at a sizable profit.

Because of the danger inherent in this illegal enterprise, salt smugglers enlisted the services of armed guards to accompany them on their perilous journeys. In 1815, imperial censor T'ao Chu[18] memorialized that salt smuggling along the Honan-Anhwei border was being conducted behind a shield provided by people popularly known as "Red Beards." These strongmen were said to be remnants of the White Lotus Rebellion who now engaged in armed robbery for a living. Their nickname derived from the fact that, in traditional Chinese opera, red beards were part of the stock make-up for the role of the fierce, lawless character. These people often supplied protection for more than a hundred salt carts a day, receiving a fee of 200 *wen* per cart. If the revenue from smuggling proved insufficient to support the extravagant feasting and gambling parties to which they were accustomed, the Red Beards undertook plundering expeditions to secure additional goods. On these forays they gathered into groups, each of which was known as a *nien*, organizational units that T'ao described as ranging in size from a dozen to several hundred people. The Red Beards-cum-*nien* were said to have stolen goods, seized women, and committed a host of sadistic atrocities on innocent victims. They were described as well armed and as posing a major challenge to local peacekeeping efforts.[19]

As we will see in Chapter 4, the Nien Rebellion was in many ways intimately linked to Huai-pei salt smuggling. Subsequent rebellions in the area were also connected to conflict over the prized resource of salt. In 1898, for example, an uprising involving some thirty thousand peasants in Kuo-yang County began

with an attack on the market town's largest salt shop. Centered in the same county that had produced the Nien half a century before, these latter-day rebels also set up a five-colored-banner system and chose an alliance commander in obvious imitation of the Nien pattern.[20] Problems with salt continued into the Republican period. In 1928, Hsü-i County in Anhwei was plagued with more than a thousand "salt bandits" who took advantage of the poorly maintained Huai River system to plunder stranded salt boats as they ran aground on the accumulated silt.[21]

The Huai-pei salt traffic provided a tempting opportunity for poor peasants to augment a meager income. During the Republican era, opium smuggling was also a lucrative profession in this area.[22] As a regular seasonal activity, smuggling was well organized, often according to lineage.[23] The high-risk nature of the enterprise made it imperative for participating peasants to cooperate closely; such cooperation was most easily effected along kinship lines. The fact that the activity was in direct defiance of government authority meant that it was but a short step from smuggler to full-fledged rebel. Thus smuggling was a form of organized predatory behavior especially conducive to antistate movements.

Banditry

Even nearer than smuggling to rebellion was organized banditry. Huai-pei was for centuries known as a hotbed of Chinese banditry. Here, where natural disaster and warfare swept the countryside repeatedly, large numbers of peasants took to the "green forests" (*lü-lin*) with equal regularity. Throughout the late Ch'ing and Republican periods, scarcely a day would pass without newspaper and government reports of organized brigandage in the area. Within Huai-pei itself, certain locations were particularly prone to bandit occupation. Frequent flooding turned the marshy shores of Lake Hung-tse into an especially fertile breeding ground for brigands. Provincial and county borders were another favorite refuge.

Ineffective government control made the choice of banditry viable. Huai-pei, like Taiwan or northern Shensi, was one of those backwaters of the Chinese empire traditionally regarded by the government as incorrigibly recalcitrant. Officials dreaded assignment to this unruly area and, if they had the misfortune to receive such a post, usually tried to endure the tenure with as little local involvement as possible. Along county and provincial borders the problem of banditry was especially acute. Since officials in each district preferred to pass the buck to their neighbors rather than cooperate for effective control, bandits moved back and forth across jurisdictional boundaries with impunity. In 1823, Anhwei governor T'ao Chu characterized the zones of bandit activity as the "three no-governs" (*san pu-kuan*), where county, prefecture, and province all denied responsibility for law enforcement.[24] T'ao repeatedly memorialized, to no apparent avail, on the need for official cooperation along the provincial borders of Anhwei-Kiangsu-Honan-Shantung, where banditry was rampant. This region continued to serve as home for many of China's bandits on into the Republican period.[25]

Government ineptitude was itself partially a product of the natural setting. Take as an example an incident that occurred along the Kiangsu-Honan border in 1872. The magistrates of neighboring counties in the two provinces met to adjudicate a case in which a dry-goods store had been plundered by bandits. The problem was that the village in which the incident took place had no tax registers or property deeds, these having all perished in massive inundations some years back. After the flood waters subsided, people in adjacent counties had bought and sold property in ignorance of the earlier provincial boundary line, and it was now unclear to which jurisdiction the village belonged. Only after a lengthy investigation were gravestones unearthed that identified the village as part of Yung-ch'eng County in Honan.[26]

Natural and political factors worked in concert to make Huai-pei an unstable ecosystem especially hospitable to banditry. In addition to contextual causes, an ongoing popular tradi-

tion among the peasants themselves played a vital role in perpetuating an awareness of and propensity for banditry. 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.[27] The profession of banditry thus apparently did enjoy a certain popular prestige.

Folk songs and folk tales recently collected by historians working in this area offer further evidence of a living tradition of social banditry.[28] The stories are rich in matters of strategy and tactics, suggesting that oral literature was an important means of transmitting practical knowledge from one generation to the next. That Huai-pei bandits considered themselves a part of such a tradition is suggested by their widespread adoption of similar titles and practices. It was common for bandit chiefs to assume names borrowed from the heroes of popular literature, to organize their forces under a system of five banners, and to distribute turbans and tasseled spears to their followers. In addition, bandits in this area developed a distinctive set of expressions to describe their activities, a vernacular which showed surprising stability over time.[29] Thus there existed background conditions and a conscious tradition conducive to the growth of banditry in Huai-pei. Yet the question remains as to what this banditry was like and how individual brigands coalesced into organized groups to pursue their common interests.

Bandits often began their journey into crime at the level of petty thievery—robbing graves or individual households by night, seizing crops from unwatched fields, and so forth. Once the group obtained sufficient arms and personnel to pose a credible threat, however, they would escalate to more audacious activities. Frequently bandits set up operations in local markets, requisitioning lavish food and drink from the surrounding populace and extorting protection money from shopkeepers and merchants. Another favorite activity was to lie in wait along trade routes and swoop down upon unsuspecting travelers,

robbing them or demanding some set fee for safe passage. Sometimes bandit groups even managed to take control of government customs passes, assuming the authority to levy taxes at will.

One of the most common ways in which Huai-pei bandits acquired money and goods was by kidnaping hostages for ransom. This practice was directed primarily against the well-to-do, since these families could best afford handsome compensation. Huai-pei bandits often demanded their ransom in opium, which served as a prime medium of exchange in the late Ch'ing and Republican periods. Those who insisted upon this form of payment were known as *hsiang-chu*, or "trunk masters," and government reports are replete with references to their bold runs across the Huai-pei plain.[30] Even more colorful terms were used to differentiate kidnaping according to the victim involved. In the case of female victims, the act was termed "seizing a goddess of mercy"; in the case of wealthy males, it was "grabbing a fat pig." The ransom price would vary according to the chief's appraisal of the financial means of the household involved. The time limit imposed on payment was also variable. In the case of virgin girls, a special "quick ticket" (*k'uai-p'iao*) might be required if the young woman were to be reclaimed before nightfall. In addition to opium, payment could be demanded in cash, grain, arms, or horses.[31]

During the Republican period, foreigners also became prized targets for kidnap. Perhaps the boldest such instance was an international incident in May 1923, when thousands of armed bandits converged upon the Tientsin-Pukow Railroad as it approached Lin-ch'eng station in southern Shantung. Three hundred passengers, including thirty foreigners, were taken hostage in a bid to end the military siege to which the bandits' mountain lair was being subjected by government forces at the time.[32] A decade earlier, bandit chief Pai Lang ("White Wolf") had adopted similar tactics, seizing thirteen foreign missionaries on a foray into northern Hupeh. The practice was repeated by his band on a smaller scale in Anhwei, Honan, and Kansu.[33]

Whether such activities represented an incipient anti-imperialism is uncertain; that they were an effort to garner lucrative ransom seems indisputable.

In addition to relying on robbery, extortion, and kidnap, some large and well-organized groups of bandits were sufficiently bold and powerful actually to occupy cities. The famous Honan bandit Lao Yang-jen was an example. Popularly known as the "old foreigner" because of his height and curly hair, this bandit led a force of over ten thousand to occupy a whole string of cities in Honan and Anhwei during the 1920s.[34]

Bandit gangs numbering in the hundreds and thousands were not uncommon in Huai-pei. For the Republican period, the picture has been reasonably well documented. In 1925, Shantung was reported to have had forty-seven major bandit chiefs with a total of more than seventeen thousand regular followers. In Honan Province, some fifty-two bandit gangs were said to include fifty-one thousand regulars. Hsüchou district in Kiangsu harbored close to five thousand bandits; in one Anhwei county alone there were ten gangs with several hundred followers in the early 1930s.[35]

Who were these bandits and how did they organize themselves? In answering these questions, we must keep in mind that there were at least three types of bandit outfits, differing in size, composition, geographical scope, and durability: the ad hoc gang, the semipermanent gang, and the bandit army.

The simplest bandit group—the ad hoc gang—was a regular institution in the Huai-pei countryside. This was the small, seasonal gathering of local *yu-min* who drifted into occasional brigandage for economic reasons. The *yu-min* were chronically unemployed persons, usually young males, who milled about their local market towns gambling, committing petty theft, and the like. These were the surplus sons of poor peasant families, unable to secure a steady occupation within the confines of their unproductive home economy. For them, the world of banditry constituted an appealing alternative to a life of aimless hunger.

In fact, their participation in brigandage was often a regular family strategy whereby younger sons would serve as seasonal bandits to augment household income. Bandit gangs composed entirely of *yu-min* were temporary, small-scale operations of a dozen or so people that seldom ventured far from home. At harvest time, the members would disband to lend a hand with the farm work.

In bad years, when flood or drought depressed the harvest, ad hoc gangs could evolve into a second type of bandit outfit: the semipermanent gang. Unable to pursue even a seasonal occupation on the land, the bandits began to operate year-round. They selected some safe base from which to conduct their plundering forays, activities that began to spread farther from home to areas less struck by natural disaster.

As banditry took on a more permanent form, it attracted a new type of member. On the leadership level, the *yu-min* were superseded by another group that may, for lack of a better term, be called the "village aspirants." Rural Huai-pei generated a certain number of ambitious young men, and less frequently women,* of relatively affluent families who found their plans for advancement thwarted by the powers that be. These were usually not the offspring of landed gentry, for whom educational and bureaucratic advancement was within reach, but the children of moderately well-off owner-cultivators to whom such channels of mobility seemed far less promising. Unschooled but enterprising, these individuals faced a bleak future in the vil-

*Women bandit leaders were less common, but certainly did exist, in both the Ch'ing and Republican periods. For examples from Huai-pei during the late nineteenth century, see NC, vol. 2, pp. 202–88; vol. 4, pp. 210–49. In the Republican period, Huai-pei's best-known female bandit was "Mama Chao," who led a force of six or seven hundred bandits, all of them women, in southern Shantung (Ho Hsi-ya, 1925, p. 19; Nagano Akira, 1931, p. 68). Interviews with former residents of the area suggest that there were in fact many more women outlaws than the written record would have us believe. In Anhwei's Shou County, for example, a woman bandit known as "Two-gun Chang" was famous for wielding a pistol in each hand. She is said to have come from a respectable middle peasant family and to have stolen from the rich in neighboring areas to assist the poor of Shou County.

lages of Huai-pei. Since legitimate entrepreneurial opportunities were extremely scarce, some of the aspirants chose instead to seek their fortune in the world of crime.

Often the aspirants were actively coaxed into brigandage by some unfortunate brush with the law. Like Hobsbawm's "noble robber," they might begin their bandit careers as victims of injustice.[36] Occasionally their subsequent activities also reflected an ethic of social banditry: righting wrongs, robbing the rich to assist the poor, and performing other acts of peasant justice associated with a Robin Hood—or *Liang-shan-po*—image. Chang Lo-hsing, commander of the Nien alliance, was apparently an outlaw of this sort. Pai Lang, perhaps the best-known bandit of the Republican period, demonstrated similar tendencies. Both Chang and Pai came from families with sizable landholdings, Chang's father owning some 140 to 150 *mou* and Pai's about 200 *mou*. Both were illiterate peasants who engaged in a variety of nonagricultural pursuits before turning to open banditry. In each case, their fateful brush with the law stemmed from involvement in gambling and interclan feuds. Both carried out individual acts of chivalry and tried to impress upon their followers the importance of discipline and social justice.[37]

The semipermanent gang was based upon a patron-client relationship between village aspirant leaders and *yu-min* followers. The bandit chief used his own influence and resources to offer security and material welfare to the otherwise destitute drifter. The *yu-min*, for his part, reciprocated by carrying out plunder and performing symbolic acts of deference to the leader.* Chieftains brought to the group crucial assets with which to get the enterprise underway. In the case of the Lin-

*Scott and Kerkvliet (1977, p. 443) deny the applicability of a patron-client link to the bandit context, noting that the bandit chief is newly arrived with little claim to higher status, and not culturally sanctioned. The typical Huai-pei case would seem at variance with this. In Huai-pei the chief usually did come from a relatively secure family and thus brought to banditry a set of resources quite different from those of his followers. Furthermore, there does seem to have been a strong subculture of legitimacy to sustain the bandit leader. Interviews with former residents confirm the fact that in Huai-pei the role of "noble bandit" was considered a quasi-respectable one for frustrated youths.

ch'eng railroad brigands, for example, the two brothers who founded the gang did so by using the proceeds from selling their family lands to purchase horses and arms.[38] Once the group was in operation, the plunder of the followers supplied the wherewithal to continue. The chief did not lose importance, however, for it was his responsibility to negotiate the necessary protective alliances to keep the gang afloat. The followers provided the economic basis of survival, and the chieftain contributed political resources to the arrangement. It was his duty to serve as a kind of power broker for the group, effecting advantageous coalitions with prestigious individuals, competing gangs, or other potential allies.

Sometimes the hard-core followers of a bandit gang were related to the chief by blood. The impoverished nephew was an especially common source of committed clients. Members of the gang who were not actually related often underwent sworn brotherhood ceremonies and addressed one another with fictive kinship titles. Bandit chief Wu Ju-wen, an important brigand operating along the Anhwei-Kiangsu border in the early Republican period, claimed more than one hundred "adopted sons" among his entourage.[39] Newcomers to bandit gangs were often assigned new names, one character of which was uniform for all members of their same age or seniority, the same pattern as was used for siblings and cousins in a regular extended family. Thus the gang did provide a kind of surrogate family for the *yu-min* who attached themselves to it. The structure of the group was highly authoritarian, however, since the chief had final responsibility for all major decisions and held the power of life or death over his subordinates.[40]

In his role as power broker, the bandit chief made short-term alliances with other gangs. According to these arrangements, each chief retained autonomy with respect to his own subordinates but was expected to coordinate tactical plans with other cooperating chieftains. These alliances were the backbone of the third major type of bandit group, the massive bandit armies that staged periodic raids on market towns and administrative cen-

ters. Bandit armies were especially likely to emerge in times of chronic famine, attracting to their ranks large numbers of starving peasants from the surrounding countryside.

If particular coalitions proved especially successful, the chieftains might agree to cooperate on a longer-term basis. In this case, they would make a formal alliance, usually selecting as their commander the chief with the largest following. Often the resulting coalition took on a quasi-military organizational structure, assuming divisions such as brigades, battalions, and the like. Some armies adopted formal disciplinary codes and a kind of martial law.[41] Even in these cases, however, the alliances remained in reality cellular and segmented, with primary loyalties continuing to operate at the level of the gang, rather than the army. Military codes were honored mostly in the breach, and discipline was seldom strictly enforced. Since tactical cooperation really pertained only among chiefs, alliances did not involve a basic restructuring of gang commitments. The coalition was always uneasy, with great potential for disharmony and fissure.

Understanding the composition of bandit gangs and armies is crucial in assessing the adaptability of this survival strategy to peasant rebellion. Without such inspection, banditry might appear a natural candidate for incorporation into wider antistate movements. It was, after all, an enterprise that organized huge numbers of peasants into an aggressive and mobile mode of action. It was led by individuals with concerns that transcended personal or parochial boundaries. What could have been simpler than to convert this ongoing tradition into outright rebellion?

From the perspective of the state, of course, the very existence of banditry augured rebellion, inasmuch as it was an open defiance of official authority. Particularly in China, where the Mandate of Heaven sanctioned the possibility of a commoner rising to assume the throne, the political potential of brigandry must have seemed especially strong. Looked at from the bandit side, however, another picture emerges. Large-scale banditry, we have seen, was an uneasy composite of three distinct layers of rural Huai-pei society. Each of these elements entered the ac-

tivity for its own reasons, and each implied a different degree of commitment to brigandage as a way of life. The poor peasant who joined up with a marauding bandit army was the least tied to this survival strategy. His allegiance was short-lived and purely pragmatic. Plunder was for him a means of supplementing, but not supplanting, an inadequate income. By contrast, the *yu-min* participants demonstrated a stronger allegiance to banditry as an occupation. These individuals might owe their entire livelihood to the bandit gang and were thus unlikely to abandon it unless offered a secure alternative means of survival. Finally, the bandit chieftain had joined the movement for yet a third set of reasons. His motivation stemmed less from temporary or chronic poverty than from a desire to enhance his own position. The aspirant's commitment to banditry was dependent upon its being able to facilitate honor and impact in a wider world than his own village could offer.

These three layers of participation thus implied quite different sorts of motivation and commitment. For our purposes, the crucial point is that none of the three was inherently rebellious. Temporary gain, permanent livelihood, and individual prestige were all a far cry from an attack upon either the personnel or the structure of state authority. Add to this the intrinsic weaknesses of bandit organization—the patron-client basis of the gang, the loose, cellular quality of intergang cooperation, the fleeting attachment of ordinary peasants—and one appreciates the difficulties involved in any effort to convert banditry to the cause of rebellion.

What complicates the picture somewhat is the pivotal role of the bandit chief. This individual, we must recall, was largely interested in expanding his own power. The scope of the chieftain's control depended upon the kinds of outside coalitions he was able to forge. Such coalitions were seen not only as a necessary source of protection for plundering activities, but as steppingstones to a wider world of power and fame. Although ambitious chiefs effected alliances according to strictly pragmatic criteria, the character of the allies had potentially important im-

plications for the subsequent direction of the bandit movement. If the leader's most promising friends were rebels, then it was quite possible that he would change the rhetoric, and sometimes the substance, of his activity to an antistate position.

Nien leader Chang Lo-hsing, as Chapter 4 will show, offers a prime example of this process. In his search for broader sources of support, Chang effected a crucial alliance with the Taiping rebels which was intended to transform his bandit army into an anti-Ch'ing movement. Similarly, in the Republican period it was assistance from Sun Yat-sen's camp that pushed bandit chief Pai Lang toward open revolt. When much-needed arms and military advisors were forthcoming from the revolutionaries, Pai's pronouncements took on an increasingly political tone.[42]

These examples suggest that it was indeed possible for bandit leaders to assume a rebellious position. If wider political circumstances were such that rebels constituted the most available allies, then banditry could change from pure plunder to anti-government revolt. Historically speaking, however, these situations were relatively rare. Since the state usually constituted the most promising power domain, it was far more common for ambitious bandits to turn in this direction. Government cooptation of bandit chiefs was frequent in traditional China. "Pacification," complete with official position, was such a common government tactic that more than a few bandit leaders probably saw their outlaw career as a quick means of attaining bureaucratic rank.[43] The popular novel *Shui-hu chuan* provided a well-known model of this very pattern. In fact, the phenomenon of pacification was so frequent that a folk saying arose: "If you want to become an official, 'carry a big stick'; i.e., be a bandit."[44] Talking softly, however, was evidently not required. Exactly when to surrender was nevertheless a delicate calculation, since the larger one's following, the higher official title one might expect to be offered. Thus there was always a countercurrent at work drawing bandit chieftains away from government control. Because his behavior was not firmly rooted in either economic

need or political commitment, the chieftain often assumed a chameleonic quality, vacillating between the worlds of officialdom and crime in a continuing search for personal gain.

Bandits did display a certain consideration toward the people who lived near their base of operations. As the Chinese proverb puts it, "A rabbit never eats the grass around its own hole." Outlaws were obviously dependent upon the good will and protection of local inhabitants and were usually related to them by blood. It was thus common to share booty with poor friends, relatives, and protectors back home.* For most peasant participants, however, banditry was a survival strategy born of desperation. Whether or not it also exhibited a sense of social justice depended in large part upon the level of affluence and security a particular group managed to attain. Outlaws who did enjoy some degree of safety tended to be both more selective in their targets and more generous in sharing the booty. When starvation no longer loomed, it is plausible that brigands would consciously try to fashion their behavior on a social bandit model. A popular song recorded in one gazetteer reflects this process:

> 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.[45]

Nagano Akira, a Japanese journalist stationed in China during the 1930s, has left us with some of the most informed firsthand accounts of Chinese banditry for that period. Nagano argues strongly in favor of a social bandit characterization of the groups he investigated. As evidence, he quotes from the proclamation of a large bandit gang in Yen-ch'eng, Kiangsu: "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

*Edward Friedman (1974a, p. 164) has noted that the government was finally able to suppress the bandit army of Pai Lang ("White Wolf") only by terrorizing the brigands' families. Their relatives were killed, farms confiscated, and homes burned to prevent the bandits from blending back into the peasantry.

beat to death all greedy officials and evil rich, destroying the root of China's trouble and transforming this into a pure new world."[46] As further indication of a rudimentary class consciousness, Nagano cites a song popular among the notorious railway brigands of Lin-ch'eng, Shantung:

> Upper classes, you owe us money;
> Middle classes, stay out of our affairs.
> Lower classes, hurry to our mountain lair,
> Here to pass the years with us.[47]

Apparently some bandit groups thus did evidence a redistributive ethos. Nevertheless, the dominant motivation for involvement in banditry remained the promise of immediate gain. Even the Lin-ch'eng bandits, for all their radical rhetoric, ended up negotiating a deal with the government whereby their chieftain would be made a brigade commander and allowed to reorganize his followers into the army in exchange for the release of their foreign captives.[48]

In conclusion, banditry was a complex variety of predatory behavior that incorporated a number of contradictory strains. For most of its participants, the enterprise represented an effort to secure resources in response to sudden or endemic scarcity. In this sense, banditry was only a more organized form of other aggressive strategies for survival that had evolved on the Huai-pei plain. Precisely because of this higher level of organization, however, banditry was sometimes liable to take a more politicized direction. Depending upon the types of coalitions that their chieftains forged, bandit gangs could move toward either open rebellion or calculated capitulation. The outside context was crucial in presenting opportunities and obstacles for wider involvement.

Feuds

An equally complex type of predatory violence in Huai-pei was the feud, an enduring form of contention between families and villages. Local gentry being few and far between in this area,

conflict resolution was correspondingly deficient. Competition among inhabitants fostered bitter, deadly disputes conducted along clan and community lines. Like salt smuggling and banditry, feuds were usually organized by kinship, as part of a household or clan strategy to improve its livelihood at the expense of competitors. More than these other forms of predatory activity, however, feuding also involved aspects of the protective response. Because parties to the feud were roughly coequals, with each engaging in aggressive assaults on the other, both sides found it necessary to build up their defenses. As protective measures proceeded, feuds often incorporated whole villages. Settlement in Huai-pei was often by clan, and defense was most effectively conducted at the community level. The fact that certain of the disputes revolved about issues that affected entire villages (for example, water rights or territorial boundaries) also helped to organize the violence on a communal basis.

More clearly than in other forms of predation, we can see in the feud an attempt not only to seize scarce resources, but also to eliminate fellow competitors. In this respect, the feud closely resembled primitive warfare. However, its occurrence in peasant, rather than primitive, society lent the phenomenon rebellious potential. Despite its essentially private character, feuding had wider implications. For one thing, this form of predatory behavior encouraged the militarization of peasant families, thereby enhancing the possibility of armed action on a larger scale as well. Furthermore, when rebellions did get underway in the area, they were shaped in important ways by these homely roots. Revenge could escalate to draw in increasing numbers of combatants, but the resulting conflict never entirely outgrew the pattern of underlying feuds.

The making of armaments for private use flourished. In 1815 in Ying Prefecture, along the Honan-Anhwei border, a village ironsmith was running a lucrative business producing guns for the local populace. The county magistrate reported that repeated efforts to confiscate the weapons had failed miserably, both because of the high economic value of the guns and be-

cause peasants feared official investigation if they turned in the weapons as requested.[49] As one gazetteer noted, "The riffraff take along knives and swords whenever they venture outdoors. These persons gather into groups of desperadoes who are quick to pick a fight. As a result, ordinary peasant families must also stockpile weapons."[50]

Ethnic feuds were one motivation for the private arsenals. In 1852, the governor of Anhwei memorialized that Muslims and Han Chinese in this area were making their own spears and swords for use in combat against each other.[51] Often, however, the disputes involved no such ethnic overtones.

During the late Ch'ing, reports on feuds were a frequent theme in memorials to the throne submitted by the provincial governors of Anhwei, Honan, and Kiangsu. As described in these documents, the conflicts typically originated as disputes over scarce resources between individuals. The controversies then quickly escalated into armed confrontations fought, for the most part, along kinship lines.

A few examples from the Huai-pei region of Anhwei illustrate the flavor of these feuds. In June 1845, for instance, the governor of Anhwei presented a memorial describing a case in a village in Huai-yüan County. The trouble began when livestock belonging to an escaped criminal trampled and devoured beans growing on his neighbor's land. Seeing the damage to his crops, the neighbor initiated a heated argument. When the ex-criminal consulted his paternal uncle for advice, the uncle decided that the dispute provided an excellent pretext for a feud. A number of relatives were notified, and the following day thirteen of them—some armed with guns, some without weapons—marched on the home of the victim. The neighbor, assisted by several of his relatives, rushed out to meet the intruders. A fight ensued in which many on both sides were wounded or killed. Bystanders who tried to mediate were also injured in the fray.[52]

In October 1848 an armed feud between two families in Shou County was reported as having developed out of a quarrel over the price of a cow. The owner demanded 13,000 *wen*, whereas a

prospective buyer would offer only 12,700. In March 1849, a feud in Huai-yüan stemmed from an argument over repayment of a debt. Wang Yüan-k'o owed Shao K'uei-shen 160 *wen* in cash from a loan for the purchase of firecrackers. One day Shao ran into his debtor on the street and asked for the money. Wang responded with loud curses. The next day Shao called together four of his relatives. Armed with spears, they set out to start a fight. Wang and his neighbor were both killed in the melee.[53]

These examples, brief as they are, give some indication of the origins of Huai-pei feuds. The conflicts developed out of controversies between individuals over scarce resources: crops, animals, money. From these modest beginnings, interclan wars were generated to buttress the individual disputants' claims.

Eventually communal feuds took on a life of their own. An illustration is provided by a dispute that had endured for generations between the Wang and Kuo family villages in Shang-ch'iu, Honan. In 1844, Kuo villagers amassed armed groups of raiders to plunder and kidnap residents of two neighboring villages inhabited by members of the Wang clan, extracting ransoms from more than a hundred families. In 1847, Kuo villagers again went on the offensive, this time stealing wheat from the same Wang community. The theft was reported to the county authorities, whereupon two of the raiders were apprehended. As a result, the Kuo clan harbored an even deeper grudge against the Wangs. In 1850 one of the imprisoned Kuo raiders escaped from jail and stole some millet from the Wang village. Again the government was notified, at which point the Kuo clan amassed more than a hundred members, armed with spears and swords, to stage a retaliatory offensive against the Wangs. One member of the Wang clan was seriously wounded and one Kuo killed in the melee. Not content to let the matter rest, several of the Kuo masqueraded as officials to launch a surprise attack upon Wang households, forcing open doors, breaking windows, and looting at will.[54]

Disputes over water use were a common source of lingering intercommunity feuds. In the summer of 1932, for example, such

a conflict flared up along the border between the counties of Hsiao in Kiangsu and Su in Anhwei. When inhabitants of Hsiao County drained two riverbeds, thousands of armed Su villagers responded by filling in the trenches dug by Hsiao in order to keep their own land from flooding. A similar struggle occurred in the same area in the fall of 1933, in part because enduring animosities had yet to be settled.[55]

Although feuds were usually conducted on a clan basis, often pitting whole lineage settlements against each other, disputes within the kinship network also occurred on occasion. In 1850, for example, we have an account of such a case in Su County concerning an unemployed peasant, Wang Chia-pao, who tried to borrow money from his kinsman Wang Chia-hsiu. Chia-hsiu, who was in mourning at the time, reprimanded Chia-pao for the impropriety, ridiculed his lack of a steady job, and summarily refused the loan. Infuriated by these insults, Chia-pao gathered eleven followers to attack his relative's home. They robbed the house of money and carted Chia-hsiu off to an empty lot north of the village where they proceeded to gouge out both his eyes. When the eldest son arrived to rescue his unfortunate father, his eyesight was extinguished as well. A year later Chia-hsiu's second son ran into Chia-pao at market and cursed him vociferously, whereupon Chia-pao seized the youth with the intention of gouging out his eyes also. In response to the impassioned pleading of a crowd who gathered in the marketplace, Chia-pao released the son but avenged the insult by another attack on the family home in which he stole horses and donkeys that were later sold for cash. Four months later yet another assault was staged. This time Chia-pao made off with dishes, pots, and clothing.[56]

An interesting sidelight on these cases is that all were reports of lawsuits filed by the self-declared victims. The initiators were individuals whose persons or property had been harmed or stolen and who used the lawsuit as a means of regaining, or preferably improving upon, their loss. It is important to point out, however, that such people were not only the wealthy or

landed gentry. In 1849, for example, a case was filed by a young tenant farmer in response to a bandit attack. Local officials, bribed by the bandit's relatives, took advantage of the litigant's illiteracy to avoid filing a complete report on the incident. Eventually, however, the full facts of the case were brought to light and the victim was compensated for his losses.[57]

Local gazetteers confirm the fact that lawsuits were filed by all sectors of rural Huai-pei society—although with differing frequency and success, one would certainly suspect.[58] That lawsuits were often a strategy for aggressively gaining at the expense of others, rather than a simple effort to redress loss, is borne out by the gazetteer accounts: "The people are frugal, wear rough clothing, and eat coarse food. However, they often gamble and file court cases. Households may easily be bankrupted in this way. Those who are able to take their complaints to the higher courts are regarded as local heroes. Relatives and friends think it normal to give money to support these ventures, which are pursued in hopes of profit."[59] If the cases reported by the provincial governors are any indication, many Huai-pei lawsuits were filed in connection with armed feuds. After loss on the battlefield, a trip to the county magistrate might be a next step in the conflict. Since legal recourse was, however, a less predictable and a potentially disastrous move, most disputes were settled out of court.

Feuds thus usually remained a private form of competition. Nevertheless, they did organize people, typically along kinship lines, to pursue their interests by violent means. To be sure, the feuds of Huai-pei were not so elaborate as the massive armed battles (*hsieh-tou*) of southeastern China. There a more commercialized economy and powerful lineage structure had made possible the development of a sophisticated and expensive type of vendetta that involved hiring mercenaries, performing religious ceremonies, and so forth.[60] Despite its comparatively modest proportions, however, feuding in Huai-pei did provide peasants with experience in collective violence. Emergent rebellions, we will see, took advantage of such rivalries to gain supporters from

among the competitors. By the same token, the form the rebellions assumed—their geographical spread, definition of enemies, level of political consciousness—was shaped in many respects by those roots in local feuds.

Like banditry, feuding bore a two-sided relationship to rebellion. On the one hand, it schooled peasants in the practice of group violence, a skill that might under certain historical conditions be channeled into more rebellious directions. On the other hand, feuds were inherently divisive, establishing deep animosities that could surface during the course of a rebellion.* In the case of both the Nien and the Red Spears, continuing feuds sapped the vitality of the rebel movements and undermined effective cooperation for wider political goals.

PROTECTIVE STRATEGIES

Predatory activities, we have seen, were methods for aggressively increasing the assets of some individuals and groups at the expense of others. The origins of these activities may be linked to local problems of resource scarcity, but the subsequent directions of particular predatory movements were highly dependent upon the wider political context. The protective strategy can also be traced back to endemic competition among Huai-pei inhabitants. Those who found themselves under attack rose to the challenge with a variety of countermeasures. Surplus resources were used to sponsor village guards, crop-watching associations, community defense leagues, and fortification projects.

Compared to the predatory strategy, protection was typically organized by community, rather than by kinship. In single-

*Lamley notes that feuds helped give rise to all four of China's major mid-nineteenth-century rebellions: Taiping, Nien, and Northwest and Southwest Muslim. However, he also finds that in the areas of southeast China where *hsieh-tou* were most highly developed, large-scale rebellion was uncommon. Apparently, in those areas the conflicts were too intense to permit cooperative struggle against the state. ("Hsieh-tou: The Pathology of Violence in Southeastern China, *Ch'ing-shih wen-t'i*, 3, no. 7 [1977]: 31–32.)

lineage settlements the distinction was of course irrelevant, but in multisurname villages the community can usually be identified as the dominant unit of organization. Since predation often threatened all members of a victimized community, the residents devised cooperative measures of defense.

As with the predatory strategy, the form, strength, and political coloration of such activities were intimately connected to the larger society. Just as outside forces played a critical role in attracting or alienating bandits, so they also had a decisive impact upon the allegiances of protective groups. Official support was crucial in encouraging the evolution of local defense. However, when governments tried to extract more resources in the form of higher taxes, these same protective units could rapidly turn their energies toward open revolt.

Crop-watching

The threat of crop theft was the cause of a good deal of defensive activity in rural Huai-pei. Since stealing from a wheat field was an almost irresistible temptation to the hungry, cultivators found it necessary to provide protection for their ripening crops. The likelihood of theft was exacerbated by the fact that peasant dwellings were clustered together into compact villages a good distance from many of the fields. Although a central location evened out the travel time to the scattered holdings where peasants worked, this settlement pattern had the side-effect of leaving fields unprotected by the security of a nearby dwelling. As a result, when harvest time drew near, peasants would send family members out into the fields at night to take turns guarding the household plots. Some affluent families hired regular crop watchers to do the unpleasant task for them. The practice was known as *k'an-ch'ing*, or "watching the green." Often several families with contiguous holdings cooperated in hiring a guard to protect all their crops until ready for harvest.

When harvest time finally arrived, unemployed laborers would converge upon the local market town in search of temporary work. Large landholders contracted with these laborers

by the day, leading them to the fields to help cut the wheat. Additional crop watchers were often hired to make certain that no stealing occurred in the midst of the harvest activity. This variety of crop-watching was known as *k'an-pien,* or "watching the borders."[61]

As the harvesting proceeded, in many places it was customary to permit poor peasants from the surrounding countryside to go through the fields gleaning leftovers. The practice, intended as a concession to the impoverished, was the root of many a dispute between gleaners and landowners. In some areas, the difficulties associated with this custom led to the emergence of more formal institutions. In Lu-i County, for example, the evolution of crop-watching associations was directly traceable to gleaning:

> At harvest time, women from impoverished families descended upon the fields to seize any leftovers. The more cunning sometimes used gleaning as an opportunity for theft. Time and again quarrels and lawsuits occurred over this problem. As a result, the community determined that gleaning was to be prohibited. Anyone who pilfered grain or let loose animals [to graze on the property of others] would be punished severely. These decisions resulted in the *lan-ch'ing-hui,* or crop-protection association.[62]

By the early twentieth century, crop-watching had in many places changed from a family to a village responsibility. Sometimes the job was performed on a rotating cooperative basis, but more commonly guards were hired by the crop-watching association to carry out the task. Expenses were borne by the villagers, payable in direct proportion to the amount of their holdings.[63] The individuals hired to serve as watchmen were usually the landless poor who had no regular source of support. By hiring some "idle, worthless fellow in the village (not infrequently a thief he is)"[64] the crop-watching association provided an alternative livelihood, thereby channeling potentially lawless behavior into a socially beneficial mode.

Several village studies conducted in North China during the later Ch'ing and Republican periods point to the formation of crop-watching associations as indicating a heightened degree of

solidarity and cooperation in the villages of this area.[65] However, Japanese scholar Hatada Takashi presents a quite different explanation for the phenomenon. In Hatada's opinion, crop-watching associations were evidence not of village growth and development, but rather of village decline. His interpretation is based primarily upon investigations sponsored by the South Manchurian Railway that Hatada helped to conduct in six North China villages from 1940 to 1944. According to informants, the organization of crop-watching activities escalated in direct response to the threat of theft. Thus the switch from family- to village-based systems was primarily a defensive reaction against increased robbery, rather than a positive reflection of village dynamism. In Hatada's analysis, the emergence of crop-watching associations was linked to a deterioration in peasant livelihood during the late Ch'ing and Republican eras: growing concentration of landholdings, dissolution of the single-lineage settlement, decline in village finance, and so forth. As rural poverty increased, so did the incidence of theft, and hence the need for protection. Although the peasants originally tried to conduct crop-watching on a household basis, family plots were usually scattered in small parcels here and there, so it was extremely difficult for one household to guard them all. Crop-watching associations were formed as a more effective means of carrying out the onerous chore. Furthermore, since the most persistent thieves were not outsiders, but impoverished members of the village itself, the practice of providing gainful employment for these individuals was a boon to the other inhabitants as well. In short, in Hatada's view the evolution of crop-watching was a gradual and multifunctional strategy for dealing with the effects of rural poverty.[66]

Significantly, the process was soon coopted by local governments. By the turn of the century, it was common for counties in North China to instruct their villages to form crop-watching associations. The idea was that, by cutting down on the percentage of the harvest lost to theft, more would be made available for taxation. Furthermore, since villagers were quite willing to pay

to protect their fields, the county government saw the crop-watching association as an effective vehicle for general tax collection. In many areas, "crop-watching fees" became the center of village finance, only a fraction of which actually went toward the expense of crop-watching operations.[67]

The government thus found it expedient to systematize and convert to its own purposes a practice by which peasants tried to protect their insecure livelihoods. In this respect, the development of crop-watching associations resembled that of local militia—another process that evidenced the overlay of official policy upon preexisting ecological strategies.

Militia

Whereas crop-watching was designed to protect the outlying fields, other measures were required to defend property within the village. Since the local government was of little assistance in this matter, responsibility for village defense devolved upon the rural inhabitants themselves. Wealthy households hired personal vigilantes—usually the local riffraff—to provide protection. In addition, whole villages cooperated in organizing for common defense. One traditional village defense institution was the night watch. Watchmen patrolled the streets at night and, at two-hour intervals, sounded a gong, the noise of which was intended to scare off prowlers.

Private vigilantes or night watchmen by themselves were, however, inadequate for the defense needs of most Huai-pei villages. The prevalence of large-scale banditry meant that villagers found it necessary to organize from among themselves groups of armed guards, or militia, to provide the requisite protection. Leadership and funding for these defense forces came from the wealthier inhabitants—gentry, landlords, or rich peasants.

An example of a particularly successful defense league was one directed by Niu Fei-jan of Ts'ao-shih-chi, Anhwei. Niu, a degree holder, in 1853 organized the local militia in opposition to growing Nien activity in his area. For a decade, he, his son, and

a cousin actively fought against the Nien. Their work was so esteemed by the government that they were officially dubbed the "Niu Family Army." In 1863, Niu Fei-jan played a leading role in pacifying a Nien chieftain in the area who then proceeded to betray Nien commander Chang Lo-hsing to the authorities. For this deed Niu was rewarded with a high bureaucratic position.*

The militia was one of those key institutions in China which to some extent represented a convergence of the interests of state and society.[68] For rural inhabitants, a viable defense structure meant protection of their livelihood against the threat of banditry. To the government, the militia was a means of maintaining its mandate in the face of rebellion.

Official encouragement of local defense was forthcoming when the regime found itself unable to cope with serious peasant unrest. Thus in 1853, with the northward advance of the Taiping rebels, the Ch'ing government ordered the formation of militia throughout the Huai-pei area. It is important to keep in mind, however, that official support during times of crisis was being superimposed upon a preexisting pattern of rural protection. Although state and society shared certain concerns in the matter, tensions reflecting the two strains were inherent in the institution of the militia. To the villagers, self-defense was a weapon against predatory threats to property. In cases where the threat was posed by plundering bandits, those under attack shared with the state a common interest in combating the problem. Often, however, it was the government itself that played the role of predator by demanding resources from the countryside. At such times the militia constituted an effective vehicle for furthering peasant livelihood at government expense.

An illustration of the rebel potential of the defense corps was found in Hsü-ch'ang, Honan. In 1854, a militia had been estab-

*_Kuo-yang-hsien chih_, 1924, 12/51. Niu's militia was probably related to the Old Cows, a secret society–defense league (described in more detail in Chapter 4), which carried out bitter opposition to the Nien. One Nien folk tale (_Nien-chün ku-shih chi_, 1962, p. 225) suggests such a connection. The Niu militia was located in approximately the area described by Liu T'ang (NC, vol. 1, p. 349) as Old Cow territory.

lished there in reaction to the intrusion of the Taipings. The following year the militia decided to turn its attention to government intrusion as well. For years, government troops had passed through Hsü-ch'ang on their way to military engagements elsewhere. In the past, the troops had hired carts from the local peasants at the rate of one liang of silver per one hundred *li*. Now, under the auspices of the new defense corps, the community demanded one liang per day per cart, regardless of the distance traveled. The government stepped in to thwart the proposal, but not without provoking a major riot in which several officials were killed.[69]

In the mid-nineteenth century, the proliferation of militia was associated with a dramatic rise in the frequency and scale of tax resistance in Huai-pei.[70] The relationship was twofold. In the first place, the surcharges levied to support the organization of militia were a cause of considerable resentment. In the second place, these same militia in turn offered an organizational base for opposition to government policy.

Massive tax riots were occasioned in part by a steady fall in the price of grain during the first half of the nineteenth century.[71] It has been estimated that prices dropped by about one-half between the years 1815 and 1850, creating an almost 100 percent appreciation in the value of silver.[72] Since taxes were paid in cash, peasants were now forced to sell nearly double the amount of crops in order to be able to pay the same taxes as previously. When one adds on the new surcharges that were being demanded in this period, the magnitude of the burden is readily apparent.

It was in areas where tenancy was low and freeholding peasants numerous that tax riots tended to be most frequent.[73] Higher taxes were of concern to all landholders—large landlords and small owner-cultivators alike. The newly created self-defense forces, led by local landlords and gentry and staffed by ordinary peasants, thus constituted an effective vehicle for tax resistance. In contrast to the secret society, the militia was free to recruit its numbers openly. Under the pretext of local defense,

peasants were encouraged to stockpile weapons and participate in military training. The result was a powerful force that could be mobilized to promote local interests when these conflicted with government demands. In 1859, the Manchu prince Seng-ko-lin-ch'in reported that all of Shantung was ablaze with tax revolts instigated by the local militia. Hundreds of cases have been recorded of militia leading assaults on county offices, burning tax registers, and killing magistrates and other officials.[74]

In addition to carrying out what were essentially defensive acts against tax collection, the militia sometimes engaged in outright predatory activities themselves. Ironically, the state's promotion of the militia had brought into being a weapon that could be used for plunder as well as protection. The very existence of this institution in the Huai-pei countryside opened new organizational opportunities for both types of survival strategy. As if to spite a social scientist's search for order, bandits now began to assume the guise of regular militia, secreting their predatory designs behind the cover of protective legitimacy. Government-sponsored militarization during the late Ch'ing gave birth to powerful institutions that could turn from their officially prescribed functions to tax resistance, banditry, and open revolt.

The importance of defense forces to collective violence did not end with the demise of imperial China. During the Republican era as well, self-defense leagues were a crucial basis for local resistance. In the chaos of the 1920s, locally sponsored village militia mushroomed to combat bandits and warlords in the Huai-pei countryside, often moving to tax revolt in their effort to maintain control over precarious resources. In the late 1930s, when the Japanese occupied much of Huai-pei, the central government once again instructed local communities to organize self-defense groups in response. Newspapers of the time are replete with accounts of these forces turning to predatory activities. In 1939, all of Anhwei Province was ordered to establish militia units to resist Japanese intrusion.[75] The vice-commander of the northern Anhwei self-defense league, a young man by the

name of Chou T'iao-fan, used his position as a front for organized banditry. Chou forced peasants in his jurisdiction to grow opium, which he then sold at considerable profit to himself. For several years, the vice-commander instructed his subordinates to kill, plunder, and kidnap for ransom.[76]

The militia stood as a kind of bridge between the government and the peasantry. As power brokers in the countryside, village defense leagues were intended to mediate the interests of state and society. When those interests proved irreconcilable, however, militia could serve to channel mass action in opposition to government demands.

Fortification

Intimately connected to the emergence of militia was the establishment of fortified communities. To facilitate local defense, villagers erected walls and constructed stockades around their threatened settlements. Throughout Chinese history, the wall has been an architectural response to conflict. Simple town walls of pounded earth date back to Lung-shan settlements of 2000 B.C. Subsequently the structures became more massive and enclosed greater expanses of territory. Walls were built to fend off bandits, to define the borders of warring states, and to insulate the so-called civilized world from the barbarous outside.

The particular type of fortification associated with the rise of the militia during the late nineteenth century had precedents in practices developed during the White Lotus Rebellion. Local notables instructed the peasants to construct earth fortresses in which to store grain and take refuge. The idea was that when rebels approached there would be nothing in the fields for them to steal, no place to rest, and no people to threaten. Moats were dug around the fortresses and gun turrets built at the corners to make them virtually impervious to rebel incursion.[77]

In Huai-pei, construction of these fortified communities may have begun with the White Lotus insurgency, but it mushroomed in response to the Nien and Taipings in the mid-nineteenth century. The fortresses were known in the Huai-pei

area as *yü-chai*. The term has an interesting etymology. Although the word *chai*, or stockade, was common throughout North China, the character *yü* had a more parochial meaning. Originally the word referred to land that was effectively protected by dikes against the Huai River. During the late Ch'ing, the meaning was extended to describe the heavy fortifications constructed against banditry and rebellion under gentry supervision.[78] As maladministration of the river system increased, so grew the need for defense against predatory attack. A term that at one time had been reserved for protection from the physical environment was now applied to protection from human competitors.

A cyclical theory of village fortification has been proposed by G. William Skinner, who suggests that each dynastic decline triggered a process of community closure at the local level. According to the theory, during the height of a dynasty's vigor, rural villages were relatively open. In response to the many opportunities for upward mobility, individuals moved out of and back into their rural communities with considerable frequency. Conversely, the onset of dynastic decay caused villages to close their doors in defense against an increasingly threatening and insecure environment. "Coercive closure," as Skinner terms the process, involved a sequence of steps: formation of crop-watching societies, expulsion of outsiders, militarization of local systems, and fortification of key areas.*

In Huai-pei in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the process of community closure was well underway—a direct response to the ecological and political instability of the period. Although construction of fortifications was periodically endorsed by the state, it was fundamentally an expression of parochial interests. Local residents rushed to erect walls and

*Skinner, 1971. Skinner's point about decreased movement in and out of the community during the period of closure is less applicable to Huai-pei, where seasonal migration as beggars, salt smugglers, and bandits seems to have increased in response to ecological insecurity. Although mobility for educational or commercial purposes may have declined, periodic forays to obtain scarce resources intensified.

stockades when their property was threatened by attack. Construction of *yü-chai* thus neatly mirrored the level of predatory activity in the area. The general pattern is illustrated by data culled from the gazetteers of six Huai-pei counties which have recorded the dates when fortresses were built in their areas (see Table 8). As the table shows, the greatest period of construction occurred during the late Hsien-feng and T'ung-chih reigns (1856–66), when the Nien and Taipings were most active in the area. The early Republican period then witnessed another rise in construction, as Pai Lang, Lao Yang-jen, and other bandits marched across Huai-pei. Unfortunately, most of the gazetteers that included these data were published too early to present an accurate indication of the trends after the turn of the century. However, we know from other accounts that forts continued to be built in opposition to warlords and marauding troops on into the Republican period. It is probably safe to assume that the construction of new forts and repair of dilapidated ones escalated during this period far faster than the table would suggest.

The building of these massive forts had important implications for the configuration of spatial boundaries in Huai-pei. As peasants arranged to store a part of their crop in its granary, the stockade began to assume a host of economic functions. In time, the *yü-chai* effectively displaced local markets in some areas. Once-prosperous markets turned into ghost towns as commerce shifted to the safety of the walled fortress.[79]

This accretion of economic importance was soon translated into political status as well. In the 1860s, the *yü-chai* replaced the rural town as a quasi-administrative unit in most parts of Huai-pei. By the Kuomintang period, the *yü-chai* was formally recognized as a level of rural administration, with 3,721 of these units in the Huai-pei portion of Anhwei Province alone.[80] Encompassing an average of 400 to 500 households, the *yü-chai* occupied a slot one step above the village in the hierarchy of rural administration. In Kuo-yang County, for example, the 221 *yü-chai* in operation in 1925 had jurisdictions ranging from 3 to 79 villages, the average being about 25 villages.[81]

Table 8. Construction of Fortified Communities in Huai-pei

Year	County						Total
	T'ung-shan	P'ei	Sui-ning	Feng	Che-ch'eng	Hsiang-ch'eng	
1807	1						1
1846	1						1
1850	5					5	10
1853					1	1	2
1854						5	5
1855					1		1
1856	4				2	2	8
1857	6				1	5	12
1858	9		31	5	3	17	65
1859	17		11		12	5	45
1860	27	1	25	16	9	10	88
1861	9	2	7	20	9	24	71
1862	28	1	12	1	16	36	94
1863	7		3		1	8	19
1864	2	1	1	1		3	8
1865	2	1	3			1	7
1866	4	1	2		3	3	13
1867	1	1	1			1	4
1870						1	1
1871	5						5
1875			1			1	2
1880	2						2
1890	1						1
1891	1						1
1894	1						1
1909	2						2
1910						3	3
1911	8					12	20
1920		46					46
No date	23		6	1		36	66
TOTAL	166	54	103	44	58	179	604

Sources: T'ung-shan-hsien chih, 1926, 10/1–30; *P'ei-hsien chih*, 1920, 16/9–10; *Sui-ning-hsien chih*, 1887, 6/35–51; *Feng-hsien chih*, 1894, 2/7–11; *Che-ch'eng-hsien chih*, 1896, 2/15–19; *Hsiang-ch'eng-hsien chih*, 1911.

The method of operation of these forts and the extent to which they constituted permanent living quarters as opposed to emergency shelters varied from place to place. The differences seem due in large measure to the magnitude and distribution of resources in particular locales. In areas of poor, freeholding villages—which were most typical of Huai-pei—*yü-chai* were usually temporary refuges managed cooperatively by all members of the community. However, in places where there was severe landholding concentration, such that one or two families controlled great tracts of property, the construction of forts was likely to be considerably more lavish. Since these affluent households had much to protect and sufficient means to do so, they would build massive fortifications within which they and their subordinates lived permanently.

To illustrate the freeholding pattern, we have the case of Lao-wo, a large village in eastern Honan which included some 400 households. In 1938 the village learned of a bandit gang numbering over 1,000 which had plundered ruthlessly in the area. The villagers congregated in their earthen fort at night in self-defense. Some two miles in circumference, the fort was divided into 35 sections, each of which was guarded by 10 members of the community on a rotating basis. In addition to the 350 peasants on stationary duty, there were 8 mobile units which took turns patrolling around the fort. Within the stockade, peasants slept in dwellings they themselves had constructed. A few of the more affluent used bricks, but most dwellings were made of wheat stalks, and some peasants simply laid out straw mats on which to spend their nights, clutching their rifles as they slept. At one point, Lao-wo joined with neighboring villages to try to combat the bandits directly. Although they managed to mobilize nearly 1,800 peasants in this engagement, the villagers were unable to suppress the menace. As a result, the peasants of Lao-wo were forced to continue their nightly routine of taking refuge in the fort.[82]

In cases where the *yü-chai* were essentially owned and operated by wealthy landlords, the system was somewhat different.

This second pattern has been vividly described for certain sections of northern Kiangsu where land concentration was especially pronounced. The walls of these forts were often constructed of brick or stone, rather than earth. Cannon towers were erected at the four corners of the stockade. In the center of the encirclement was a tiled mansion with its own cannon tower, the home of the large landowner. All around the fortress chief lived the several hundred tenant households who cultivated his lands. Outside the fort were a number of tiny satellite villages, some of whose inhabitants also tilled the fortress chief's lands.[83]

According to observers who conducted field work in the area in 1930, these were extremely self-contained communities, permeated with a thoroughly medieval atmosphere. The fortress chiefs, who were also the commanders of the local self-defense corps, assumed titles such as "King of the Underworld Kuo," "Hegemon Li," and the like. Their militia comprised primarily tenant farmers, sometimes supplemented by disbanded soldiers or other peasants in need of employment.[84]

The *yü-chai* under these circumstances operated as autonomous kingdoms, the fortress chief in command of both economic and judicial matters. Militarily such forts constituted a serious challenge to the local government. In Kiangsu's P'ei County, for example, in 1930 the county administration itself controlled only eighteen rifles—eight under the militia and ten under the public security office. By contrast, one single fortress chief in the county possessed thirty-four rifles and, when he cooperated with two adjacent forts led by kinsmen, could control fifty-three rifles, nearly three times the government stock. Often several fortresses did join forces to resist the authority of the county administration. They would then refuse to pay taxes and would assume full independence from government control.[85]

Regardless of whether they were initiated and managed by small owner-cultivators or by rich landlords, the forts were essentially a means of promoting security and survival in a

threatening environment. Once these structures were built, however, they themselves constituted an important part of the setting to which peasants had to adjust. The *yü-chai,* we have seen, came to assume both marketing and administrative functions in rural Huai-pei. Furthermore, the very physical presence of these walled communities had an important effect upon collective survival strategies in the area. Although they were products of human activity, the forts became, in a real sense, a feature of the Huai-pei ecosystem.* As such, *yü-chai* were an important weapon for predators as well as protectors. Operating on such flat terrain, Huai-pei bandits found the walled fortress a useful substitute for the swamp marsh or mountain lair that their brethren in other geographical regions chose as home base. Just as the construction of fortified communities was an essential method of protection against bandit attack, so the occupation of these same fortifications became a key tactic for successful banditry in Huai-pei.

CONCLUSION

There was a kind of dialectic at work in the relation between the predatory and protective strategies of survival. On the one hand, the two strategies were polar opposites. Predation was an aggressive attack upon the resources of others; protection was its direct countermeasure. On the other hand, these approaches implied a mutual dependency in which they simultaneously presupposed and limited each other. Although the strategies were fundamentally antagonistic, they provided opportunities for cooperation as well as competition. At times, one mode would pass into the other—militias turned to plunder or bandits

*Clifford Geertz explains this same process with reference to the example of the Eskimo's igloo, which, he explains, "can be seen as a most important cultural weapon in his [the Eskimo's] resourceful struggle against the arctic climate, or it can be seen as a, to him, highly relevant feature of the physical landscape within which he is set and in terms of which he must adapt" (1971, p. 9). As a Chinese scholar described the Huai-pei landscape in 1930, it was "nothing but windswept, dry, dusty fields on which were planted a veritable forest of earthen forts" (Wu Shou-p'eng, 1930, p. 70).

settled within walled fortresses. At still other times, the two would even join hands, with bandits and defense leagues making common cause in opposition to yet a third enemy: the state. Widespread and long-lasting rebellion in Huai-pei was born of this peculiar synthesis. The alliance was always fragile, however, inasmuch as it represented two contrary sets of interests and approaches. Particular rebellions had roots in either the predatory or the protective strategy. Large-scale movements necessarily drew to their ranks adherents of the opposite mode, but they could not entirely overcome their origins in the process. The synthesis was never complete, and was often rife with conflict.

The notion of a dualistic tension is implicit in much of the scholarship on traditional Chinese society. The terms of the dialectic are usually defined from the perspective of the ruling elite, however. Thus the dichotomy is typically posed as one of "order versus chaos," "orthodoxy versus heterodoxy," or "state versus society." In this view, the tension in the system arises out of conflict between the government's demand for conformity and the propensity of peasants and local gentry toward an unruly independence. In adopting this perspective, scholars mirror the outlook of the documents they study. It is the *yin* and *yang* as seen from the top that is being applied to society at large.

Although data on the peasant perspective are obviously less accessible and often altogether nonexistent, we do have information about peasant behavior. Building our theory of rebellion from the bottom up, we begin with the notion of peasants adapting to a particular environment, developing individual and group strategies on the basis of the paucity or surplus of their resources. By looking at rural collective action, we can identify a dialectic operating by its own rules at the lowest levels of society.

Chapters 4 and 5 will present case studies of rebellions born of the predatory and protective strategies of Huai-pei peasants. A central theme will be the interplay, at once generative and self-destructive, of each strategy with its opposite over the course of the movements.

84. *Nung-ts'un shih-k'uang pao-kao*, 1935; "Shiyō no nōson," 1942, p. 119.
85. Redfield, 1965.
86. Erasmus, 1968.
87. Foster, 1969.
88. Solomon, 1971, pp. 105–34.
89. Fanon, 1963.
90. Huizer, 1972.
91. *Lu-i-hsien chih*, 1896, 9/1–5.
92. *T'ung-shan-hsien chih*, 1926, 9/32–33.
93. *Feng-t'ai-hsien chih*, 1882, 4/3–7.
94. Rawski, 1972.
95. Jameson, 1912, p. 74.
96. *Chi-ning-chou chih*, 1840, 3/22–24; *Feng-t'ai-hsien chih*, 1882, 4/6–7; *Po-chou chih*, 1894, 2/28–29.
97. Wei Yüan, *Wei Yüan chi* [Collected work of Wei Yüan], vol. 1, p. 358. Quoted in Namiki Yorinaga, 1978, p. 56.
98. Vayda, 1968, pp. 88–89.

Chapter 3

1. Anthony Oberschall, *Social Conflict and Social Movements* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1973); Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution* (Reading, Mass., 1978).
2. Ho Ping-ti, 1959, pp. 58–59.
3. *Hsü-chou-fu chih*, 1874, 12/53–54, gives the figures shown in the table below. See Aird, 1968, pp. 266–67, for some of the methodological problems with sex ratio statistics for Ch'ing China.
4. *An-hui-sheng t'ung-chi nien-chien*, 1934, p. 68.
5. Chang Wei-ch'eng, 1943a, pp. 47–54; Wu Shou-p'eng, 1930, p. 61.
6. "T'ung-shan nung-ts'un," 1931, p. 387.
7. *Po-chou chih*, 1894, 2/29.

Table for Note 3. Sex Ratio Among the Population of Hsüchou Prefecture, 1874

County	Males	Females	Males per 100 females
T'ung-shan	450,903	337,211	134
Hsiao	177,087	148,986	119
Tang-shan	170,560	170,277	100
Feng	337,536	246,992	137
P'ei	272,198	216,536	126
P'ei-chou	266,750	266,748	100
Su-ch'ien	659,330	439,554	150
Sui-ning	260,682	159,991	163

8. *Huai-an-fu chih*, 1884, 2/4.
9. NCH, October 4, 1856, p. 38.
10. KCT-TK 0008605–1, HF 001658.
11. *Feng-t'ai-hsien chih*, 1882, 4/6.
12. The following discussion is based on NC, vol. 1, pp. 13–30; *P'ei-hsien chih*, 1920, p. 16.
13. "Internal Chinese Migration," in *Agrarian China*, 1938, p. 256.
14. See Nagano Akira, 1931, 1938, for a discussion of Huai-pei's role in generating soldiers; Wu Shou-p'eng, 1930, p. 65.
15. NCH, March 5, 1927, p. 388.
16. Hsü Hung, 1972.
17. NCPC, p. 8.
18. For information on the career and policies of T'ao Chu, see Metzger, 1962.
19. NCPC, p. 6.
20. *Feng-yang-fu chih*, 1908, p. 4; *Meng-ch'eng-hsien chih*, 1915, p. 6; Mu Lien-fu, 1959, pp. 77–83.
21. *Chung-yang jih-pao*, August 30, 1928, p. 1.
22. Billingsley, 1974, pp. 118–20.
23. Ma Ch'ang-hua, 1959, pp. 22–23.
24. NCPC, p. 7.
25. Nagano Akira, 1931, p. 66; 1938, p. 199.
26. *Hsiao-hsien chih*, 1874, 4/5–6.
27. Yüan Chia-san, 1911, 5/31.
28. Examples appear in numerous articles in *Min-chien wen-hsüeh* [Folk literature] during the late 1950s and early 1960s. A general collection is contained in *Chung-kuo nung-min ch'i-i ti ku-shih* [Stories of Chinese peasant uprisings], 1952, Shanghai. Interviews with former Huai-pei residents in Taiwan reinforce the impression of a strong bandit tradition, perpetuated through oral story-telling.
29. Ho Hsi-ya, 1925, pp. 39–41, 65–76; NC, vol. 1, pp. 192–288; vol. 4, pp. 210–49; NCPC, pp. 6, 29.
30. NCPC, p. 29; WCT-TK 5/9/26.
31. Ho Hsi-ya, 1925, pp. 49–56; Tai Hsüan-chih, 1973, pp. 61–62.
32. Nagano Akira, 1931, p. 27.
33. Wang Tsung-yü, 1964, pp. 23–24.
34. *Shan-hsien chih*, 1936, p. 1.
35. Ho Hsi-ya, 1925, pp. 83–94; Nagano Akira, 1938, pp. 226–27; *Shina no dōran*, 1930, pp. 27–56.
36. Hobsbawm, 1965, pp. 13–29; 1969, pp. 34–49.
37. Jo Mu, 1959, p. 52; *Kuo-yang-hsien chih*, 1924, 15/6; *Shih-hsüeh yüeh-k'an*, no. 2 (1960): 20; Wang Fan-t'ing, 1975, p. 15.
38. Nagano Akira, 1933, p. 269.
39. *Chung-yang jih-pao*, March 7, 1928, p. 3.
40. Ho Hsi-ya, 1925, pp. 34–35; Tai Hsüan-chih, 1973, pp. 61–62.
41. Ho Hsi-ya, 1925, pp. 34–38.

42. Friedman, 1974a, pp. 151–56; Wang Tsung-yü, 1964, pp. 20–21.
43. Ho Hsi-ya, 1925, p. 9.
44. Tai Hsüan-chih, 1973, p. 61.
45. *Tung-p'ing-hsien chih*, 1935, p. 5.
46. Nagano Akira, 1933, p. 270.
47. Ibid.
48. Nagano Akira, 1938, pp. 149–54.
49. NCPC, p. 28.
50. *Feng-t'ai-hsien chih*, 1882, 4/5.
51. KCT-HF 001949.
52. KCT-TK 009663.
53. KCT-TK 010929, 00838.
54. FL 1/1–3.
55. Bianco, 1976, p. 320.
56. KCT-HF 002504.
57. WCT-TK 29/8/24.
58. *Hsiang-ch'eng-hsien chih*, 1911, 5/47; *Lu-i-hsien chih*, 1896, 9/1; *Sui-ning-hsien chih*, 1887, 3/6.
59. *Feng-t'ai-hsien chih*, 1882, 4/5.
60. Harry J. Lamley, "Hsieh-tou: The Pathology of Violence in Southeastern China," *Ch'ing-shih wen-t'i*, 3, no. 7 (1977): 1–39. Although feuds in Huai-pei were less elaborate, there was a certain amount of ritualistic behavior. For a description, see NC, vol. 1, p. 387.
61. *Feng-t'ai-hsien chih*, 1882, 4/6.
62. *Lu-i-hsien chih*, 1896, 9/3.
63. Gamble, 1963, pp. 69–70; Smith, 1970, pp. 121–22.
64. Mills, 1873.
65. Gamble, 1954, pp. 156–57; Smith, 1970, pp. 119–24; M. C. Yang, 1945, pp. 148–49.
66. Hatada Takashi, 1973, pp. 67, 68, 174–224, 225.
67. Ibid., pp. 64, 74–76; Myers, 1970, pp. 60, 100.
68. See Kuhn, 1970, pp. 10–36, for a discussion of this point.
69. KCT-HF 007580.
70. Yokoyama Suguru, 1964, pp. 44–45.
71. NC, vol. 2, p. 177.
72. Wang Yeh-chien, 1973, p. 114.
73. Kanbe Teruo, 1972, p. 91.
74. NC, vol. 2, pp. 174–91; vol. 4, pp. 415–44.
75. For details on the evolution and organization of Anhwei local defense during this period, see Ch'iu Kuo-chen, 1940. Ch'iu distinguishes three types of defense forces: the "protect-peace corps" (*pao-an t'uan-tui*), the guerrilla forces (*yu-chi pu-tui*), and the county self-defense corps (*hsien tzu-wei-tui*). Each had a distinct origin and purpose. The "protect-peace corps" was apparently the most effective in combating banditry. See Tsou Jen-meng, 1940, for an account of their success in bandit extermination during the Republican period.

76. *Wan-pao*, February 22, 1939, p. 3.
77. Hibino Takeo, 1953, pp. 141–55.
78. Kuo Han-ming, 1938–39, p. 156.
79. *Chung-mou-hsien chih*, 1935, 2/2–4.
80. *An-hui-sheng t'ung-chi nien-chien*, 1934, pp. 153–55; *T'ung-shan-hsien chih*, 1926, 10/1–20.
81. *Kuo-yang-hsien chih*, 1924, 2/19–24.
82. Ch'en Hung-chin, 1939, pp. 86–88. Another description of a freeholding type of *yü-chai* is found in Hsia Fei-jui, "I chung-yüan Hua-ch'eng-chai" [Memories of Hua-ch'eng Fort], *Chung-yüan wen-hsien*, 6, no. 9 (1974): 32–33. This western Honan fort included one thousand households with six hundred guns. Slightly affluent households all possessed their own guns, wealthy families had several guns, and poor families cooperated in buying weapons to share.
83. Wu Shou-p'eng, 1930, p. 71.
84. Ibid., p. 72.
85. Ibid., p. 73.

Chapter 4

1. Chang Wen-ch'ing, 1953; Chiang Siang-tseh, 1954; Chiang Ti, 1956a, 1956b; Teng Ssu-yü, 1961.
2. The point that the Nien are most fruitfully approached in relation to their local setting has been made in several fine Japanese studies: Namiki Yorinaga, 1978; Ono Shinji, 1961; Ōta Hideo, 1978; Sano Manabu, 1958, vol. 4; Shimizu Minoru, 1977. The research of an investigation team at the Anhwei Institute of Modern History also emphasizes the importance of the Huai-pei environment in giving rise to the Nien Rebellion (Hsiao Liu, 1959; Ma Ch'ang-hua, 1959). The aim here is to expand upon this ecological theme, suggesting that the connection to the environment can be analyzed in terms of adaptive behavior.
3. Chesneaux, 1971, p. 94; Chiang Siang-tseh, 1954, pp. 8–15; Chiang Ti, 1959, pp. 7–13; Kuhn, 1970, p. 179; Teng Ssu-yü, 1961, p. 37. Recently Western scholarship has been moving away from this interpretation. See Kuhn, 1978, pp. 310–16; K. C. Liu, 1978, pp. 456–75.
4. *Kuo-yang-hsien chih*, 1924, 15/6; NC, vol. 1, p. 1; WCT-TK 29/8/24, TK 25/11/27. Interviews with former residents of Huai-pei also confirmed this interpretation.
5. NC, vol. 3, pp. 470, 478, 481, 498.
6. NC, vol. 1, p. 309; vol. 2, p. 289; vol. 3, p. 114; vol. 4, p. 28. For the debate among Chinese historians over the correct title for the movement, see Lo Erh-kang, 1960; Ts'ao Mu-ch'ing, 1956; and Wu Han, 1961.
7. *Chin-hsiang-hsien chih*, 1862, 10/21. Both the Annals of Shantung Military Operations (NC, vol. 4) and the Annals of the Honan Army (NC, vol. 2, pp. 157–446) also refer to the Nien from Anhwei in this fashion. That the term *nien* was not a consistent reference to one tightly knit movement is borne out by an 1851 memorial that characterized