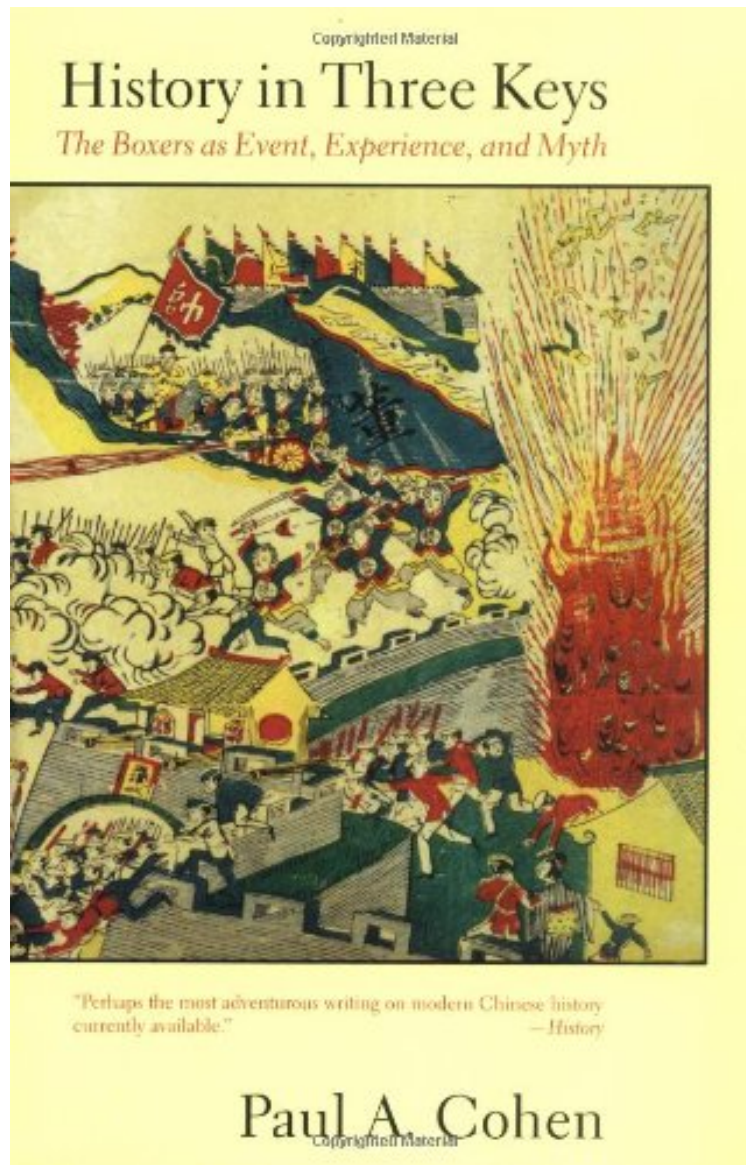


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History in Three Keys: The Boxers as Event, Experience, and Myth

Paul A. Cohen

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Paul A. Cohen : History in Three Keys: The Boxers as Event, Experience, and Myth before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised History in Three Keys: The Boxers as Event, Experience, and Myth:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. A fascinating view of the Boxers little seen by Western eyesBy J. F.

Benedetto Cohen's book is one of the few reference works I have found that explains not only the Boxers (the Yihequan) but also goes into significant detail regarding the Red Lanterns (the Hongdengzhao, -- the female Boxers). It even includes a handful of contemporary representations of the Red Lanterns I have yet to see anywhere else, along with an in-depth analysis of how these Chinese females fit into the Boxer Rebellion. Given how little contemporary Chinese males thought of women, the very existence of the Red Lanterns as a powerful supportive force in the uprising against the foreigners and the Christians is all the more remarkable, yet their role is all but ignored in most historical treatments of the Boxer Rebellion, so this book is a welcome addition to the history of the Boxers. The book covers the original events of the Boxers as well as their cultural aftermath in China up until the modern day, has many interesting photographs and period Chinese illustrations, as well as over 70 pages of notes explaining points in the text. For people used to reading about the Boxer Rebellion as seen through Western eyes, Cohen's work -- of the Boxers as Event, Experience and Myth -- is an interesting counterpoint, and one worth studying.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Different By Terry Tucker This is a very interesting book. Well done, as it looks at the Boxer rebellion through myth, as an event and as an experience. The author looks at this event in a holistic way, for example, this passage from page 9 of the book: " The Boxer episode, too, formed part of a plurality of larger event structures (but not confined to) the pattern of recurrent domestic violence in the late imperial era, the growing problem of rural breakdown, the history of conflicts between Christians and non-Christians from the mid-nineteenth century on, and Sino-foreign diplomatic relations. "

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. A refreshing work of history By J. Lee I bought this book for its China centered content, and I was not let down, but what I liked best about this work is that Professor Cohen weaves in a fourth component; a discourse on what historians actually do. Just as he divides the Boxer Movement into the above noted three parts he does so as well with the historical craft itself, in the process explaining his development as a historian and seriously examining in what ways history itself can have value greater than myth and commonly held beliefs. Cohen approaches history in a modest, human, and clear thinking way which makes this highly academic work also highly enjoyable to read. I enthusiastically recommend this wonderful book to anybody that is interested in Chinese society, Chinese history, or the art of making history.

A comprehensive look at the Boxer Rebellion of 1898-1900, a bloody uprising in north China against native Christians and foreign missionaries.

From Library Journal Harvard historian Cohen presents a comprehensive and enlightening look at the Boxer Rebellion of 1898-1900, a bloody uprising in north China against native Christians and foreign missionaries. The rebellion resulted in a rescue by eight nations and then the conclusion of a peace treaty. Cohen offers excellent insight into the idiosyncracics of the Boxer movement, including its ideas, origins, rituals, and development. He successfully examines and discusses the uprising in terms of its historical narrative, the participants' experiences, and the literary myths to which it gave rise. Cohen also distinguishes between historians and mythologizers. A specialized, thorough, and well-researched book with good references, this is an excellent complement to Joseph Eshevick's *The Origins of the Boxer Uprising* (Univ. of California, 1987). Highly recommended for large public libraries and the East Asia collection of academic libraries.

Steven Lin, Dallas P.L., Tex. Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc. The most adventurous writing on modern Chinese history currently available. (History) An extraordinary book. It is breathtaking, bold in concept, innovative in methodology, provocative at times, and eminently readable. (Edmund S. K. Fung Asian Studies) Cohen offers excellent insight into the idiosyncracics of the Boxer movement, including its ideas, origins, rituals, and development.... Highly recommended. (Library Journal) From the Back Cover Historical reconstruction is in constant tension with two other more pervasive and influential ways of "knowing" the past - experience and myth. In this long-awaited book, Paul Cohen uses the Boxer uprising of 1898-1900 - a major antiforeign explosion and watershed event in Chinese history - as a vehicle for the skillful illumination of these tensions. *History in Three Keys* juxtaposes the accounts of historians with those of participants and witnesses and sets these perspectives against the range of popular myths that were fashioned about the Boxers. The first part of the book tells the story of the Boxer uprising as reconstructed by historians. Part Two explores the thought, feelings, and behavior of the direct participants in the Boxer experience, individuals who, without a preconceived idea of the entire event, understood what was happening to them in a manner fundamentally different from historians. Finally, in Part Three, Cohen examines the myths surrounding the uprising in twentieth-century China - and, to a lesser extent, the West - as symbolic representations designed less to elucidate the Boxer past than to draw energy from it in the present.