

**Variable Icons and Images:
Mulan and Her Legend in Five Legend-telling Groups in Huangpi,
People's Republic of China**

by

© Zhang Jing

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**Department of Folklore
Memorial University of Newfoundland**

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Abstract

The legend of Mulan, the Chinese woman warrior who disguised as a man and took her father's place in the army, has a thousand year history in classical literature and modern media, and has become localized in five places in China. I focus this study on contemporary oral legends of Mulan that I have recorded through my fieldwork in one of the claimed birthplaces of Mulan: Huangpi. I apply Timothy Tangherlini's methodology for interpreting legend ("Who tells what to whom in the form of a legend and why?") as I identify distinct storytelling groups, examine the narrative repertoire of each, and examine their respective attitudes toward Mulan and her legends. I trace the sources of each group's repertoire by examining the older written forms of the legend and I consider the role of brokers in transmitting versions between the telling-groups.

The cultural and political context of the Mulan legend is also considered. The Mulan story has value to all levels of government in China, especially since the adoption of the concept of Intangible Cultural Heritage. For local governments Mulan is a driver of economic development through the attraction of tourists to sites identified with her. For the national government Mulan emblemizes ideal behavior as a filial daughter and a self-sacrificing patriot.

The two main legend telling groups are the local and the official. The "local" group includes four sub-groups: the local people who have grown up around Dacheng Tan, Mulan's birthplace; those who live close to her grave at General Temple; the

Buddhists and Taoists on Mulan Mount; and those who work in tourism-related roles on Mulan Mount who act as brokers of the legends. The other “official” group is composed of government functionaries, amateur folklorists, and cultural experts. The two groups have different attitudes toward Mulan and the versions told in the oral tradition among the local population are given little attention or respect by the official group. The image of Mulan varies in each group: to those at Dacheng Tan she was an extraordinary local maiden; around General Temple she is considered a tragic hero and a local deity; to the Taoists on Mulan Mount she was a goddess with magical power sent from heaven with a mission; and to the official group she is a perfect woman and a moral icon.

I present the range of variation within the Mulan legend cycle through the narrative repertoires of these distinct groups. I suggest reasons for and processes of legend variation by examining narrators, contexts, and motivations for telling the legends in their various forms, from oral to written and beyond in film and television. I hope that this study of a legend from diachronic and synchronic perspectives, in the context of a limited local area, will promote new methods for examining and interpreting legends in Chinese folklore studies.

Acknowledgements

It has really been a long march to finish this thesis if I trace this work back to the beginning of my interest in Mulan in Huangpi when I was in middle school. Mulan legends have played a significant role in my academic life as a folklorist in which I have spent ten years collecting materials, oral and written, and researching this topic. Firstly, I should salute Mulan who overcame many difficulties and made great achievements in her life, as well as the people in my hometown who are still telling Mulan legends and everyone who helped me during the fieldwork. Then I would like to thank my supervisor Dr. Martin Lovelace, for his thoughtful and patient guidance, as well as his encouragement. Thanks are also due to the members of my committee, Dr. Diane Tye and Dr. Paul Smith who read through my thesis and gave their comments to improve it. Similarly, I am grateful to my colleagues at Central China Normal University, Liu Shouhua, Chen Jianxian, and Sun Zhenguo who shared their ideas with me. The deepest gratitude is given to my family who love me and support me unconditionally. To all of you, I express my heartfelt gratitude.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Tsiek tsiek and again tsiek tsiek,
Mu-lan weaves, facing the door.

.....

"The he-hare's feet go hop and skip,
The she-hare's eyes are muddled and fuddled.
Two hares running side by side close to the ground,
How can they tell if I am he or she?" (Frankel 1976, 68-70)

The release of Disney's animation *Mulan* in 1998 aroused debate in China.

Chinese people had mixed feelings: we were proud that Disney and people around the world loved this woman and her story, yet we blamed ourselves for not having produced our own version, and regretted that Americans had changed our Mulan and her thousand year history. Almost all Chinese people know Mulan and at least an outline of her story: how a woman went to the army in the place of her father. She was one of the most famous legendary women in China. In ancient feudalistic China, her virtues of filial piety to her father and loyalty to the nation were highly appreciated. The image of Mulan was always selected to arouse patriotism during wartime. In Mulan legends since the 1920s, feminism has become an increasingly important theme, and Mulan is regarded as the icon of Chinese women who are independent, self-confident, strong-minded and capable in contemporary China. Those women who are extraordinary and make great achievements are always titled "Hua Mulan," particularly those who do as well as, or even better than, men in "male" spaces. From

her first appearance in literature, Chinese people from all strata have praised Mulan and her virtues. Official culture praises her sacrifice for family and nation, ordinary people like her legendary story, a woman disguising as a man. Men appreciate her chastity, and women are interested in her independence and capability. Many people have participated in the dissemination, writing and re-creation of her legend in the past one thousand years through various forms: poems, drama, novels, movies, TV series, and so forth. Her story, though distributed around the country, has been localized in several places and is still living in oral tradition. Although there are many studies about Mulan and her literature, regional and oral versions of her legend did not gain attention until the late 1990s. Despite the rise of the Intangible Culture Heritage movement, folk Mulan legends in oral tradition are ignored or placed in a lower position than those recorded in history and rewritten in literature. As a folklorist, I feel that it is my responsibility to collect Mulan legends in oral tradition, to study the legends, tellers and regions, as well as the relationships between them.

The story of Mulan was first recorded in an anonymous poem “木兰诗 (Mulan shi)” or “木兰辞 (Mulan ci, Ballad of Mulan)” in approximately 568 AD. The poem was also the beginning of my contact with Mulan and the first of many ways to know her legend. Men and women, old and young, the official and the folk, the intellectuals and the common people, almost all Chinese people know of her and her legend: how she disguised as a man and went to the army in the place of her father, through books, recreations in dramas and novels from the late Ming Dynasty (1368-1644 AD) onward, and other visual arts since the 1920s.

I am not sure when I first knew of Mulan and the legend that often appeared in orations and mass media, of how she went to the army in the place of her father. I did know 木兰山 (Mulan shan, Mulan Mount), 木兰湖 (Mulan hu, Mulan Lake) and Mulan Bus Station in my hometown Huangpi when I was a child, but did not realize the relationship between them and the legendary Mulan. My first intentional encounter with Mulan and her legend in Huangpi still deeply impressed me, and motivated me to carry on research. My family took a one-day trip to Mulan Mount when I was twelve or thirteen years old. I do remember it was a warm and sunny day after the spring festival. It was the first time that I learned that my hometown—黄陂 (Huangpi), a county in Hubei Province, in Central China—claims to be the hometown of Mulan. I thought it was a ridiculous proposition because the introduction from the tourist centre was very different from what I had learned from books in which Mulan, a young lady, was said to have been from a minor ethnic group in the North of China. This experience motivated me to carry on research on Mulan legends in Huangpi when I was studying for the degree of Master of Folk Literature in the Chinese Department at Central China Normal University, almost ten years later. I went to Mulan Mountain a few times in 2004 and 2005, and read many written materials. According to the local legends, Mulan, with the surname 朱 (Zhu), not 花 (Hua),¹ as is usual in popular literary and visual revisions, was born in 双龙镇 (Shuanglong zhen, Two-dragon Town) a few kilometers north of Mulan Mountain in the early Tang Dynasty (618-907 AD), and at the end, she committed suicide to prove her loyalty to

¹ In the ballad, Mulan had no accurate surname, and Hua was added by Xu Wei in the Ming Dynasty. In the various towns that claimed her hometown, her surname was Zhu, Wei, or Hua.

the emperor. The tragic death of Mulan is still impressed deeply on my mind today. In my Master's thesis I only examined texts in publications and some manuscript materials, and then described the life story of Mulan: her birth, her adolescence, her life in the army and her death. The motif of going to the army in disguise as a man was the focus of my analysis in this tale-type study. So many secrets about Mulan remained to be uncovered: what Mulan legends are in oral tradition? Are local people still telling her legends? Is there difference in her legends between the written materials and oral tradition? Why did she have such a tragic death in Huangpi? Why are Mulan legends now localized in Huangpi? What are the natives' attitudes toward this woman? I try to solve some of these problems in this study. Mulan legends have a history of over one thousand years, have been localized in several places in China, and have been rewritten many times. I will introduce them next.

Mulan and Her Legend in China

Mulan has been a well-known image in Chinese classical literature and modern visual arts through continuous rewritings, and she has also lived in oral tradition in several places in China. Although Feng Lan and Dong Lan have reviewed the development of Mulan and her legend in classical literature (Feng 2003; Dong 2006), I will introduce her history briefly to provide a background to this study.

Mulan and her legend have a long history of rewriting from the Southern and Northern Dynasties (220-589 AD) to the present. The legend of Mulan was first recorded in “木兰诗 (Ballad of Mulan)” in *古今乐录 (Gujin Yuelu, Musical Record Old and New)*, a manuscript that no longer exists, by 智匠 (Monk Zhijiang) in

approximately 568 AD. 乐府诗集 (*Yuefu Shiji, Collection of Music-Bureau Poems*)

(the 12th century), compiled by 郭茂倩 (Guo Maoqian, 1041-1099 AD) in the Song Dynasty (960-1279 AD), provides us with the whole text and categorizes it as a Northern poem (Guo 1979, 373-375). This means that he believed it to be a folk ballad, and assumed it originated in North China.

Tsiek tsiek and again tsiek tsiek,
 Mu-lan weaves, facing the door.
 You don't hear the shuttle's sound,
 You only hear Daughter's sighs.
 They ask Daughter who's in her heart,
 They ask Daughter who's on her mind.
 "No one is on Daughter's heart,
 No one is on Daughter's mind.
 Last night I saw the draft posters,
 The Khan is calling many troops,
 The army list is in twelve scrolls,
 On every scroll there's Father's name.
 Father has no grown-up son,
 Mu-lan has no elder brother.
 I want to buy a saddle and horse,
 And serve in the army in Father's place."

In the East Market she buys a spirited horse,
 In the West Market she buys a saddle,
 In the South Market she buys a bridle,
 In the North Market she buys a long whip.
 At dawn she takes leave of Father and Mother,
 In the evening camps on the Yellow River's bank.
 She doesn't hear the sound of Father and Mother calling,
 She only hears the Yellow River's flowing water cry *tsien tsien*.

At dawn she takes leave of the Yellow River,
 In the evening she arrives at Black Mountain.
 She doesn't hear the sound of Father and Mother calling,
 She only hears Mount Yen's nomad horses cry *tsiu tsiu*.
 She goes ten thousand miles on the business of war,
 She crosses passes and mountains like flying.

Northern gusts carry the rattle of army pots,
 Chilly light shines on iron armor.
 Generals die in a hundred battles,
 Stout soldiers return after ten years.

On her return she sees the Son of Heaven,
 The Son of Heaven sits in the Splendid Hall.
 He gives out promotions in twelve ranks
 And prizes of a hundred thousand and more.
 The Khan asks her what she desires.
 "Mu-lan has no use for a minister's post.
 I wish to ride a swift mount
 To take me back to my home."

When Father and Mother hear Daughter is coming
 They go outside the wall to meet her, leaning on each other.
 When Elder Sister hears Younger Sister is coming
 She fixes her rouge, facing the door.
 When Little Brother hears Elder Sister is coming
 He whets the knife, quick quick, for pig and sheep.
 "I open the door to my east chamber,
 I sit on my couch in the west room,
 I take off my wartime gown
 And put on my old-time clothes."
 Facing the window she fixes her cloudlike hair,
 Hanging up a mirror she dabs on yellow flower powder
 She goes out the door and sees her comrades.
 Her comrades are all amazed and perplexed.
 Traveling together for twelve years
 They didn't know Mu-lan was a girl.
 "The he-hare's feet go hop and skip,
 The she-hare's eyes are muddled and fuddled.
 Two hares running side by side close to the ground,
 How can they tell if I am he or she?" (Frankel 1976, 68-70)

This version is the first and the most influential and authoritative one. As a folk ballad, it offers only a skeleton of a story, leaving so many spaces to fill. The end of the ballad portrays a woman with confidence, wisdom, humor, who can be as competent, and capable as a man or even more, which is the most impressive characteristic of Mulan and the reason why she attracted attention and interest.

In the Tang Dynasty (618-907 AD), Mulan's name, image and fragmentary legends are scattered in anecdote collections, ballads and poems in which she is always glorified as a lovely lady with extraordinary experiences. 李冗's (Li Rong) *独异志* (*Duyizhi*) that is believed to be compiled in the early Tang Dynasty recorded a simple legend: "There was a Mulan in ancient times. She displaced her father to go to the army, wearing martial attire. Those soldiers living in the same barracks did not know her female gender" (Li 1983, 7). In his collection, 郭茂倩 (Guo Maoqian) added a variant of "Ballad of Mulan" that was believed to be written by 韦元甫 (Wei Yuanfu, ?-771 AD). Along with keeping the core of the legend, Wei made a "striking change" at the end of the text:

How laudable is Mulan's virtuous integrity,
Serving as the model of the monarch's subjects.
Her unswerving loyalty and filial devotion
Will be remembered even after thousands of years.

(Guo 1979, 375, translated by Feng Lan 2003, 234)

This is the first time that Mulan was regarded as an incarnation of loyalty and filial piety, with an explicit emphasis on feminism: "when the relatives [were] toasting the parents, they got to know, girls are the same with the sons" (Guo 1979, 375).

In the Song Dynasty (960-1279 AD), there were a few changes in the development of Mulan legends (Luo 2008, 36). Firstly, "Ballad of Mulan" with nuances appeared not only in Guo's, but also other anthologies (Luo 2008, 6). Secondly, examinations and arguments about Mulan and "Ballad of Mulan" began,

such as when the ballad was written, whether Mulan was real or not, and the life history of Mulan (Luo 2008, 55-59). Thirdly, Mulan was titled “孝义 (Xiaoyi, Filial and Righteous) ”(Luo 2008, 58). Fourthly, a new trend emerged, the stress on and praise of “chastity” or “virginity,” which Confucianism emphasized for the women. In this period, more moral virtues and the influence from Confucianism were added on Mulan and her legends.

The Ming (1368-1644 AD) and Qing Dynasties (1644-1911 AD) are the period during which long dramas and novels about Mulan emerged. The most significant and famous is 徐渭 (Xu Wei, 1521-1593 AD) ’s 雌木兰替父从军 (*Ci mulan tifu congjun; Female Mulan Took Her Father’s Place in the Army*),² which likely was completed around 1580. It is the first treatment that provides detailed personal information about Mulan, particularly her surname Hua. This drama is the base for further writing, for instance 北魏奇史闺孝列传 (*Beiwei Qishi Guixiao Liezhuan*;

² Xu Wei’s version told: In North Wei Dynasty, Hua Mulan, a descendant of an illustrious family of Liu Jun (six counties in north-west of China, in Gansu and Inner Mongolia at present), was living in Wei County of Hebei. Her father was 花弧 (Hua Hu), a 千夫长 (Qianfazhang, a leader of one hundred soldiers) before, and her mother was 贾氏 (lady Jia). She had a younger sister 木难 (Mu Nan) and a younger brother 咬儿(Yao’er). The emperor drafted soldiers to resist the invasion of 黑山贼首 豹子皮(Leopard Skin of Hei Mount) and his one hundred thousand soldiers. Mulan decided to go to the army in the place of her father and used his name Hua Hu because he was old and the siblings were too young. She studied and led martial arts with her father during childhood. She bought necessities on the streets, loosened her wrapped feet and masqueraded as a man. The Marshal 辛平 (Xin Ping) dispatched Mulan leading the troops to attack Hei Mount. Mulan won and seized Leopard Skin. The royal court entitled her 尚书郎 (Shangshu Lang) and permitted her to see her parents and have a three-month rest. During her twelve years in the army, Gentleman Wang in her hometown was engaged with Mulan because his father was moved by her filial piety. At the same time when Mulan arrived home, Gentleman Wang saw his parents too. They met and conducted their wedding.

*The Legendary Story of a Filial and Heroic Girl from the Northern Wei*³ written by 张绍贤 (Zhang Sahoxian), the first edition of which is dated 1850 in the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911 AD). The story of Mulan is very different in another novel *忠孝勇烈奇女传* (*Zhongxiaoyonglie qinu zhuan*; *The Legendary Story of a Girl Who is Loyal, Filial, Heroic, and Chaste*) that was written in the decades after 1732 in the same Dynasty. This is the only classical version to which I can find correspondence in the Mulan legends that I recorded from oral tradition in Huangpi of Hubei.

Examining the classical versions chronologically, we can draw a few conclusions. The core plot that a girl, disguised as a man, goes to the army in the place of her old and feeble father, is stable. Secondly, her story is continuously expanded, localized and detailed. The third point is that the influence of Confucian ideology becomes more and more obvious. Feng Lan claims that “initially a hybrid product of multicultural interactions, the image of Mulan became a Chinese icon of heroic patriotism only after a historical process of appropriation—fueled especially by the powerful tradition of orthodox Confucian ethics—turned the folk tale to the service of an imperial hierarchy” (2003, 230).

The rewritings of Mulan did not halt in modern and contemporary China. As early as in 1912, a great Peking opera artist 梅兰芳 (Mei Lanfang) wrote and performed the drama *木兰从军* (*Mulan Congjun*, *Mulan Going to the Army*) based

³ It expands the details of Xu’s drama, however, it modifies the marriage. The enemy princess 卢玩花 (Lu Wanhua) fell in love with Mulan, who disguised as a male general, caught her and forced her to marry her. Mulan confessed her true gender, persuaded Wanhua to follow with her, and promised that they could marry her fiancé together and they did so at the end.

on “Ballad of Mulan” and Xu Wei’s drama. Mei’s Peking opera was filmed in 1926, which initiated a new form of rewriting, the movie. In 上海 (Shanghai), three movies about Mulan were released and stimulated patriotism in the heart of the people who were isolated by Japanese invaders between 1937 and 1941. Four movies were released during the 1950s and 1960s in the Chinese Mainland and Hongkong. The last one was released in 2009 in several countries around the world. Besides movies, TV series became another main verbal art form to represent Mulan legends from the late 1990s in the Chinese mainland, Hongkong and Taiwan. There are two obvious similarities in the above cinematic versions of Mulan since the 1920s: Mulan’s surname is Hua and a love story becomes an important topic in most of them. (See Appendix 1)

木雕 (Mu Diao) points out three trends of the development of Mulan in popular culture in modern times in an article of 2009 on his website: firstly, the theme is heightened from “national to international level”; secondly, the image changes from “masculine to feminine”; thirdly, the creations are from “coarse to elaborated.” Actually, the first trend can be revised as “local to national, and to international.” At first, the dramas were performed on the real stage only for limited audiences, and then were filmed, just like other movies, which made them available for audiences around China and even around the world. The problem of gender has been the eternal theme in Mulan legends from the beginning. In early versions, gender did not bring many troubles. In later versions, gender resulted in many interesting and appealing plots: the transformations from dressing as a young lady to a handsome man, her small wrapped

feet, the danger of revealing her female gender among the males, the engagement to or marriage with another woman warrior and so forth. In the long tradition of rewriting, more and more forms entered into the story, more and more episodes and plots were added. The simple ballad grew to dramas, to long novels and to TV series.

The cultural and social values of her legend were identified from three perspectives: filial piety, loyalty or patriotism, heroism and feminism (Wu 2011, 21-26). Among the values, filial piety is the core which matches highly appreciated values in Chinese culture, which provide her and her legend with continuing vitality. She has been appreciated in mainstream and elite culture because of her loyalty or patriotism. Feminism endowed her with pioneering and modern meanings. She has been accepted, respected and appreciated by all classes and strata in society. Her values are multiple and can be drawn out on different backgrounds. During wartime, her patriotism was highly praised, and in contemporary China, feminism has become the new main topic, as well as her legendary experience. Mulan has become a Chinese “cultural icon” that underwent continuous “variation and renovation,” and “a comprehensive pedigree of legend” was formed and became “the elite contents of collective memory and traditional culture of the country and the nation” (Wu 2011, 20).

In the past 1500 years, her legend has been expanded, protracted, and localized. At present, at least five places claim to be the hometown of Mulan, where legends of Mulan have been localized: 河南虞城 (Yucheng in, Henan Province), 湖北黄陂 (Huangpi, Hubei Province), 陕西延安 (Yan'an, Shanxi Province), 安徽亳州

(Bozhou, Anhui Province), 河北完县 (Wan County, Hebei Province) (see appendix 3). Most towns claimed that they had evidence: written records in local chorographies, steles with inscriptions, tombs and gravestones, shrines and temples, forms of worship and beliefs, legends, all of which the others had as well. However, no one can win in these arguments. Among them, 黄陂 (Huangpi) and 虞城 (Yucheng) moved further, both being accepted on the list of National ICH in 2008, and 延安 (Yan'an) followed in 2010. Yucheng was conferred the title “the Hometown of Mulan in China” in May of 2007 by the 民间文艺家协会 (The Alliance for Folk Literature and Art).

In 营廓 (Yingkuo Town) of Yucheng in Henan Province, Mulan, surnamed 魏 (Wei), living in the Sui Dynasty (581-618 AD), had a tragic ending: she committed suicide rather than submit to the emperor's sexual advances. She had her own temple, 孝女庙 (Xiaonv Miao, Temple of a Filial Daughter) that was destroyed in the 1940s, two rock steles⁴ survived the wars and chaos. The inscription by 侯有造 (Hou Youzao) on the first stele erected in 1334AD provides us with the legend of Mulan:

The General lady Wei, was a maiden with the name Mulan was a native from 毫之譙 (County Qiao in Wei District). According to legends, the emperor recruited soldiers. Mulan was worry about that her father was wore of his age and her younger sister and brother were young. She decided to displace him, dressing his armors, bring the arrow bags, riding the horse, and handing the spear. She fought bravely and established unusual achievements repeatedly. Nobody recognized her female identity. During the twelve years of service, she won many battles, and was promoted twelve times. The emperor was satisfied with her valor and entitled

⁴ “孝烈将军祠像辩证记”碑 (the stele of the “Dialectic Inscription of the Statues in Filial and Heroic General Temple”) that was erected in the second year of Yuantong (元统) era (1334A.D.) of the Yuan Dynasty. The other is “孝烈将军祠辩误正名记”碑 (the stele of the “Dialectic Inscription and Rectification of Filial and Heroism General Temple”) that was erected in the eleventh year of Jiaqing (嘉庆) era (1806) of the Qing Dynasty.

her with 尚书 (Shangshu; Minister). She declined it and asked to see her parents. She returned her hometown Qiao with her troops, came into the house, took off her armor and changed back into her clothes as a lady. Everyone was astonished and praised: “We have never seen such things!” The troops returned and reported this outlandish thing to the emperor. The emperor ordered her back and wanted her to become his concubine. The general said: “it does not accord with the rules and convention.” She refused even at the cost of her life. The enforcement was added so she hung herself. So she was granted the title “Filial and Heroic”. (28-31, my translation)

The inscription on the second stele written by 蒙毓谦 (Meng Yuqian) in 1806 AD, has a similar legend. Nowadays, the legends and worship of Mulan are still popular among the people.

In 完县 (Wan xian; Wan County), Mulan, also surnamed 魏 (Wei), a woman from 亳 (Bo; Bo County), was living under the reign of Wen Emperor (202-157 BC) in the West Han Dynasty (206AD-24 BC). She was called 将军 (Jiangjun, General) or 孝烈将军 (Xiaolie jiangjun, Filial and Heroic General) respectfully by the locals, and had her own temple and shrine 孝烈将军祠 (Xiaolie jiangjun ci, Filial and Heroic General Temple). Wan County has the earliest historical relic records of Mulan’s whole life—the stele of “汉孝烈将军记” (Han xiaolie jiangjun ji, The Epigraph of Filial Heroic General) written by 达世安 (Da Shian), and erected in April of Zhishun year in the Yuan Dynasty (1332 AD). According to it, Mulan was a local goddess:

The goddess, with surname Hua and name Mulan, was from Bo County. The Wen Emperor called the people around the country to defend against the king of the Turks who was leading the troops to invade. The father of the goddess was on the list....She declined the rewards and asked to return home. Wen emperor permitted and admired her. (18-21, my translation)

In 亳州 (Bo County), Mulan still had the surname Wei, from 东魏村 (Dongwei cun, the East Wei Village), and is said to have lived in the Sui Dynasty (581-618 AD). Her legend is very similar to those in 虞城 (Yucheng).

In the records from the above three places, Mulan legends have an immutable skeleton and retain two important pieces of information: her surname Wei, and her title “孝烈将军 (Xiaolie jiangjun, Filial and Heroic General)” from the Tang Dynasty. The above areas are very close geographically and overlapped in territories in history. It could be that they were in a regional cycle of Mulan legends, or at least interrelated and influenced each other closely.

The materials from 延安 (Yan'an) are much fewer than in those places introduced above, and research has not begun as far as I know. According to the legends on the website of Shanxi Intangible Cultural Heritage, Mulan was living in the North Wei Dynasty (386-534 AD) and her father 花弧 (Hua Hu) was a general. At the end, she married 张羽 (Zhang Yu) who was a neighbor and went to the army with her; after the war they returned home and lived happily.

Huangpi is far away from the above four areas geographically, and the legends are different as well. As early as the Tang Dynasty, 杜牧 (Du Mu) mentioned Mulan Temple in his poem of 844 AD. In the middle Ming Dynasty (1368-1644 AD), 张涛 (Zhao Tao), a native man who was a high-ranking official told a very simple Mulan legend in his letter to the emperor to ask to rebuild the temples on Mulan Mount, which means that as early as in the early seventeenth century, the Mulan legend had been localized in Huangpi; her shrine and worship had lasted many years even by that

time. *同治黄陂县志* (*Tongzhi huangpi xianzhi*; the *Chorography of Huangpi in Tongzhi Years*) (1856-1875 AD)) has a special part about Mulan—“木兰志 (Mulan zhi, the Biography of Mulan)” which brings together all the materials about her, which means that Mulan was believed to be historical and real and Mulan had been identified as a cultural icon by the local government. Another important document is “木兰古传 (Mulan guzhuan, Ancient Biography of Mulan)” with the author’s information “失名 (Shiming, the missing name)” in which the life story of Mulan was available:

General Mulan, was a native of 黄郡西陵 (Huangjun Xiling, Xiling County of Huang District). Her surname was 朱 (Zhu). Her father 朱寿甫 (Zhu Shoufu) and her mother 赵氏夫人 (Lady Zhao) had no child, so they prayed on 建明山 (Jianming shan, Jianming Mount). Lady Zhao dreamed that the God of Jianming Mount came into her room with a little girl and said: “it was a general in its previous incarnation and its soul secluded itself since the separation of our empire. It will be female because of water areas in this region⁵ and will be predestined to be famous in twenty years.” Then Lady Zhao was pregnant, gave birth to a baby girl and named her Mulan. Shoufu’s eldest son was dead in the army and her younger son was very young. Mulan was beautiful and dignified, but did not like making up and dressing up. She was chaste, filial, kind and friendly. She was very bright, could recite verbatim after read once. She was always shamed with her female gender and then cried. She began to sigh when she was reading the stories about the great mothers, the chaste women and others about royalty and filial piety. The Turk invaded and the conscriptions were coming one by one. Shoufu was on the list. He was old and weak, could not go at all, so he worried day and night. Mulan stopped her weaving and asked herself: “what took place?” and “what could I do as a daughter?” So she bought horse and saddle, changed her dresses. She disguised as a man and went to the army in the place of her father. She called herself 贞烈壮士 (Zhenlie zhuangshi, Chaste and Heroic Warrior) and changed her name to 朱贞烈 (Zhu Zhenlie, Zhu Chaste and Heroic). (vol. 7, 148, my translation)

In this legend, Mulan’s story took place in the early Tang Dynasty, and she was in

⁵ Water represents women in Chinese culture.

the army led by 尉迟恭 (Yuchi Gong) and 李靖 (Li Jing) and won the wars in the second year of Zhenguan Years (628 AD). In the royal court, she asked to go back home to see her old parents. The end is:

She took off her armors and took on her old clothes. She passed away at the age of ninety at her home. Her graveyard was right at the back of Mulan Mount. One tomb was in a higher place and was 将军墓 (Jiangjun mu, the General Tomb), and the other was in a lower place, in which her dresses were buried. There was a tombstone with an inscription on it. (vol. 7, 148, my translation)

I cannot know how “old” this biography is, as there is a lack of necessary information about its author and its original source. Some key pieces of information did not change after transmission in oral tradition over several hundred years, such as her father’s name 朱异 (Zhu Yi)⁶, her historical period in the early Tang Dynasty, her title 木兰将军 (Mulan jiangjun, General Mulan), her temple and her worship on Mulan Mount.

Folk legends about Mulan are very abundant and vivid in Huangpi, including her birth, childhood, training and learning, service in the army, favors for the locals, death and other legendary narratives. In the legends, Mulan was born in 双龙镇 (Shuanglong zhen, Two-dragon Town), learned and meditated on Mulan Mount, and was buried in General Tomb under the north foot of the Mount, beside which General Temple was rebuilt to be in memory of her. An old village 大城潭 (Dacheng Tan), five kilometers northward of Mulan Mount, has been identified as the home village of General Mulan where the Zhu family are still living. Legends about Mulan are still active in oral tradition, supplemented with written versions, at the above three locations: her birthplace, her shrine, and her graveyard.

All the above five places have a long history and tradition as Mulan’s hometown, with supporting written and oral materials. In the past two or three decades, local

⁶ Mulan’s father’s name was recorded as 朱异 (Zhu Yi), 朱寿甫 (Zhu Shoufu) and 朱天禄 (Zhu Tianlu). The three names were three names of the same person according to the tradition of naming in ancient China.

governments have tried to rebuild the destroyed relics gradually for economic and cultural purposes. All of them have become tourist sites and have used “Mulan’s hometown” to attract tourists. Arguments and competition for the title of “Mulan’s hometown” arose among them, particularly between Huangpi of Hubei and Yucheng of Henan. Investigations, studies and arguments did not begin until the 1980s when tradition, folk culture and tourism gained the attention of government and ordinary people. Compared to the written materials in ancient times, folk legends are not given enough attention by researchers, but are only used as supplementary evidences to prove that Mulan was born here or there.

After more than one thousand years of development and transmission, Mulan has become a symbol or an icon of Chinese women who are as capable as or even more capable than men, particularly in the army. Retellings and recreations of the Mulan legend have continued over more than one thousand years in various forms: poetry, drama, novels in classical literature, and new forms such as movies, TV series, operas, dancing, and even acrobatics in contemporary China.

Mulan has crossed the Chinese border and the Pacific, and has become world famous because of rewritings in other languages. In North America, audiences are familiar with Mulan and her legends through three sources: Maxine Hong Kingston’s “White Tigers” in *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood among Ghosts* (1976), Disney’s two animations *Fa Mulan* in 1998 and 2005, and “picture books for children in the United States in the 1990s” (Dong 2006, 1). The great success of the Disney’s animations stimulated the sensitive nerve of Chinese people and drove us to a

dilemma: on the one hand we were proud of the borrowing and adaptation of a Chinese legend by Disney, on the other hand, we did not make such a work to popularize our traditional culture around the world. 1998, when the animation *Fa Mulan* was released, was a watershed, after which studies of Mulan developed rapidly and broadly in multiple disciplines in China, such as mass media, cultural studies, and folklore, and were no longer limited to Chinese classical literature.

Not only scholars, but also the local governments of Mulan's putative hometowns around China felt a strong responsibility to re-identify their local Mulan legends. The local governments and local people felt that their self-pride and localism were hurt and took action quickly to popularize and propagandize Mulan and her legends in mass media. The towns that claimed to be Mulan's hometown attracted attention first in mass media and then in the academic field. Yucheng of Henan and Huangpi of Hubei were the first two that appealed to scholars. The local governments promulgated their local Mulan culture through mass media and local cultural tourism, as well as in small seminars through which they established frequent contacts with intellectuals and gained acceptance of their claims. For instance, the local government of Huangpi held the first Seminar of Mulan Culture as a necessary part of the first Festival of Mulan Culture in 1999. Local folklorists and officials began to pay attention to Mulan and have published their studies in journals since then.

A new term “木兰文化” (Mulan wenhua, Mulan Culture) was created and appeared more and more frequently in mass media and academic publications. This term covers everything about Mulan including classical literature, popular culture,

folk culture and local culture, such as all kinds of literature, paintings, stamps, sculptures, folk legends, cultural tourism and so forth (Dong 2012; He, 2008; Su, 2011, 2012; Liu, 2012, Pan, 2011, He and Zhang, 2006; Lian, 2010; Lü, 2010). Local governments are believed to have first created this term through its use in their cultural festivals in the name of Mulan to attract tourists and investments. The local government of 黄陂 (Huangpi) held the first 木兰文化节 (Mulan wenhua jie, Cultural Festival of Mulan) in September of 1999 and 虞城 (Yucheng) held its first one in April of 2000, both festivals have continued and have added more and more activities. The public and scholars have accepted this term and use it more frequently. As far as I know 黄锂 (Huang Li), an official in the Propaganda Department of Huangpi, was the first one to define it in his “木兰文化初探 (Mulan wenhua chutan, A Preliminary Research on Mulan Culture)” (2000): “Mulan culture is a kind of moral, national, traditional culture,” and he states that the focus of Mulan culture is patriotism, as well as four virtues: loyalty, filial piety, heroism, and chastity (Huang 2000,18). Furthermore, he points out that “Mulan is not a specific person, but rather a spiritual icon whose behaviors have been refined, epitomized, sublimed, and developed” (18). 皮明麻 (Pi Mingxiu), a historian from the Academy of Social Science of Wuhan, defines it as “a regional culture,” including “the culture combined with nationalism and patriotism” and “Buddhism and Taoism culture” (Pi 2007, 3).

何丽莎 (He Lisha) explained:

She was a village maiden, also a heroine. She was loyal to the nation, love the family and the elderly with unremitting self-improvement spiritual integrity, as

well as noble characters of indifference to fame and wealth and selfless dedication. Her diligent, kind, wise, brave, steadfast and unsophisticated characters, as well as the spiritual images with all traditional virtues have developed. (He Lisha 2008, 332)

In their definitions, the virtues of Mulan as a filial daughter, a loyal warrior, and a strong-minded woman have been emphasized. She is portrayed as a moral icon and a perfect woman in these studies.

Studies on Mulan in China and in the United States

Scholars have studied Mulan in classical literature, popular culture and folk legends from multiple perspectives: historical, literary, feminist, comparative cultural or literary, as well as folkloristic. To review them all could be another doctoral thesis, so I will only introduce them very briefly to provide readers with the background of the study of Mulan in China.

Not only modern Chinese people but also those in ancient times were attracted by this woman and were interested in Mulan's life story, her surname, her birthplace, her hometown and so forth from the Song Dynasty onward (960-1279 AD). The most widely studied genre within the Mulan corpus must be the "Ballad of Mulan" itself with a focus on the time and background of its composition, the authors, and themes from literary, linguistic and historical perspectives. 王文倩 (Wang Wenqian) and 聂永华 (Nie Yonghua) reviewed such studies in the twentieth century and summed up three main questions: when was the Mulan story created, who wrote it and where is her hometown (2007, 17-21). It is reasonable to assume that the ballad emerged and formed in the Northern Dynasty (386-581 AD) and was elaborated and altered in the

Sui (581-618 AD) and Tang Dynasties (618-907AD) (Wang and Nie 2007, 19). In the above studies, the materials scholars consulted were limited: various versions of the “Ballad of Mulan” in literary anthologies in different dynasties, as well as the notes and footnotes. Normally, they drew their conclusion by tracing the fragmentary information in the materials, connecting the social and cultural contexts mainly from literary and historical perspectives. Even at present, no one can provide readers with sufficient and credible evidence for Mulan’s historical existence. In my view, all such studies lack strong and valid evidence and cannot lead to any accurate or commonly accepted conclusion.

Mulan as an image and an archetype is another prominent theme of scholarship, and the story’s opportunity to discuss traditional moral virtues, anti-feudalism, and feminism has attracted attention (Wei 2006; Luo 2007, 3-4; Ju 2007, 81-84; Zhang Zewei 2008, 165-166; Zhang Xiaoqian 2010, 34-35; Mei Dongwei 2010, 143-146). In some studies she was a representative of women in ancient China and even of a very popular group of women in Chinese literature and popular culture: cross-dressing women. 卢振杰 (Lu Zhenjie) reviewed the “cross-dressing women motif” in Chinese classical literature, and studied the relations between the core theme of anti-feudalism in the stories and the changes of the times (2005, 16-18). Most such studies are from feminist perspectives. 李祥林 (Li Xianglin) studied those women who made great achievements on the battlefield and in examinations in the royal court, and who pursued love in dramas, despite the patriarchal society. She argued that they were the representation on stage, of women’s fight for rights (1997, 10-13). Most of

the studies focused on popular literature in the Ming (1368-1644 AD) and Qing Dynasties (1644-1912 AD), and were mainly from feminist, social and cultural perspectives. 盛志梅 (Sheng Zhimei) and 鲁薇 (Lu Wei) located the stories in more complex literary, social, and cultural environments to examine their flourishing in popular literature (Sheng 2004, 21-28; Lu Wei 2010). Both of them and 梁丽丹 (Liang Lidan) noticed the roles of women writers in the creation of these stories (Sheng 2004, 21-28; Lu 2010; Liang 2006). 文迎霞 (Wen Yingxia) and 陈东有 (Chen Dongyou) paid attention to the influence of the audience's psychology (Wen and Chen 2004, 64-70). Cross-dressing women were not only a literary but also a cultural phenomenon. Mulan, though her stories originated very early, came to the first climax of re-creation through popular literature in the Ming (1368-1644AD) and Qing (1644-1912AD) Dynasties.

Besides the versions of "Ballad of Mulan", novels and drama in classical literature have been involved in the study, among which 徐渭 (Xu Wei)'s "The Female Mulan Going to the Army in the Place of Her Father" is the main work. Many scholars confirmed Mulan's dual-identity—a brave general and a perfect woman. 罗艳秋 (Luo Yanqiu) identified three values of the drama: feminism, patriotism and respect for human nature (2007, 183-184). 阙真 (Que Zhen) and 罗桂真 (Luo Guizhen) praised Mulan for two points: one is her service to the nation and the other is her marriage as a true woman (Que 2003, 41-43; Luo Gguizhen 2007, 97-98). Some scholars argued that Mulan's story ended in tragedy. 陈志国 (Chen Zhiguo) and 施海淑 (Shi Haishu) found a conflict in the drama: Mulan made great achievements

disguised as a man in battlefield but finally she dressed back as a lady, got married, and became an ordinary woman (Chen 2001, 12-15; Shi 2012, 120-122).

Scholars have also paid attention to the continuous recreations of Mulan's legend in popular culture, mainly in dramas and movies from the early twentieth century to the middle 1970s. The connotations and extensions of the image of Mulan have changed, being no longer limited to traditional moral virtues but extended to patriotism, anti-feudalism and feminism. The scope of the study extended because more and more forms of re-creation of Mulan and her legends emerged in the middle 1990s, such as TV series, operas, stamps, sculptures and even acrobatic drama.

Chinese scholars have also noticed Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior: Memories of a Girlhood among Ghosts* (1976) and studied her work from multiple perspectives: comparative and cross-cultural literature, cultural studies, ethnic studies, and Chinese-American studies. Most Chinese scholars argued that Kingston created a new Hua Mulan and her story, and tried to found and construct her own and Chinese-American women's identity through Mulan's story in the context of racial and gender discrimination in the U.S. (Liu Zhuo 2003, 452-454; Song 2005, 132-134; Liu Chengping 2008, Tan 2008, 20-21; Zhang Yanjun 2008, 174-177; Wan 2010, 40-41; Chen Jing 2011). A few others preferred the perspective of cultural studies and argued that Mulan represented the clashes and the integration of cultural differences (Pu 2001, 99-105; Tian 2006).

Disney's two animations of *Fa Mulan* raised new topics in the study of Mulan: film studies, cultural studies, cross-cultural studies. 张岩冰 (Zhang Yanbin) thought

that the animation was not the success of Chinese culture, and noticed that Mulan made achievements not as other male soldiers but as a woman (1999, 74-77). Mulan and her legends have been recreated in accordance to American values in the context of globalization (Zhao 2012, 60-61; Liu Siyang 2011, 77-79), and are even regarded as a product of cultural colonization (Zhou Linyu 2006, 117-127; Wang Yahong 2007, 68-69). Although they noticed the obvious difference between Chinese Mulan and American Mulan, 封艳梅 (Feng Yanmei), 康宁 (Kang Ning) and 王新 (Wang Xin) thought that the differences resulted from cultural differences and American Mulan is the mixture of cultural cohesion (Feng 2007, 33-34; Kang 2010, 26-27; Wang Xin 2012, 70-71). 陈岚 (Chen Lan), 程瑜瑜 (Cheng Yuyu) and 马玲玲 (Ma Lingling) affirmed the role and function of animation in the dissemination of Chinese traditional cultural resources (Chen 2008, 40-42; Cheng 2011, 50-53; Ma 2012, 68-69).

All the above studies are based on materials from written resources and mass media, but seldom touch on Mulan and her legends among the folk that are variable, widely spread, and preserved and handed down orally; versions which have different lives from those in elite and popular culture. The folk legend of Mulan also attracted interest and attention from the academic field, the nation, the government and the common people in recent years. I finished my M.A. thesis in Chinese folk literature “The Study of Mulan Legends in Huangpi” in 2005, in which I first traced the history of Mulan in classical literature and modern popular literature, and introduced the dissemination of her legends in five areas along with the skeleton of the legends,⁷ and

⁷ I added many new materials in this thesis.

then provided readers with texts of Mulan's legends in Huangpi from local chorography, folk literature collections and new recreations in contemporary novels. Although I did so-called fieldwork, I did not collect legends from oral tradition, just visited Mulan Mount and experienced the religious atmosphere. All the materials were from local archives, a local library, and private collections, and most of them were published. One year later, 张娅 (Zhang Ya), in her M.A. in Folk Literature, undertook research on Mulan legends of Yucheng. Besides the literary development and geographic dissemination of the Mulan story, she introduced Mulan legends in Yucheng in the order of the heroine's life story. Zhang Ya used legends from publications and the few legends that she collected from oral tradition or heard from other collectors. Both her work and mine on the Mulan legend was text-centered, which is the standard approach in Chinese legend and folk literature studies.

With the journey across the Pacific to the U.S., new studies on Mulan emerged. According to Dong Lan, "Mulan Ballad" or "Ballad of Mulan" was translated into English no later than the late nineteenth-century. Adaptations of the Mulan legend began as early as 1922 by Chinese students at Columbia University in a benefit performance in English (Dong 2006, 159-160). Although translations and adaptations were available very early, Americans got to know Mulan and her legend through three main sources: Maxine Hong Kingston's novel *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood among Ghosts* in 1976, Disney's film animations *Mulan* in 1998 and 2005 and pictorial books for children published in the 1990s (Dong 2006, 1; 3). Studies on Mulan in the U.S. focus on the former two sources from the perspectives of feminism

and gender studies (Homsher, 1979; Hunt, 1985; Wong, 1988; Jenkins, 1994; Allen, 1996; Outka, 1997; Yuan, 2001; Key, 2015), of cross-cultural and comparative literature (Cook, 1997; Feng, 2003; Dong, 2006; Tang, 2008; Xu and Tian, 2013, and of ethnicity (Hunt, 1985; Lightfoot, 1986; Lim, 2006; Hsieh and Matoush, 2012) and so forth. Mulan in literature and in popular culture is another topic among studies of Mulan covering many academic fields so I will only briefly note them, and pay more attention to studies of a group of women like Mulan—the cross-dressing women warriors, particularly those in folk literature and Chinese women warriors.

Shiamin Kwa and Wilt L. Idema trace the rewriting of Mulan story and provide the full translation of five versions: two version of Ballad of Mulan, Xu Wei's drama, the script of a Peking opera 木兰从军 (*Mulan congjun*; *Mulan Joins the Army*) published in 1903, and film written by Ouyang Yuqian in 1939, also with summaries of six plays selected pre-1948⁸, as well as synopsis of three novels of the Qing Dynasty⁹.

Susan Mann has examined the myths of Asian womanhood. She discussed the rewriting of the Mulan legends in collections of narratives from the sixth century to Mao's new China (Mann 2000). In the original ballad, she was a brave and clever heroine (846), became a filial daughter and 烈女 (*lie nü*; a heroic woman) in Xu Wei's drama in the Ming Dynasty (847), was portrayed as a woman with a sense of

⁸ They are: Yong'en 's *A Couple of Hares*, Chen Xu's *Hua Mulan* (1897-1914), Mei Lanfang and Qi Rushan's *Mulan Joins the Army* (1917) and the revised version *Mulan Joins the Army* by Ma Shaobo, Pi Fu's *Joining the Army : On the Road* (1932); Ouyang Yuqian's *Mulan Joins the Army* (a Guiju) (1942).

⁹ They are: Chapter 56-61 in Chu Renhuo's *Historical Romance of the Sui and the Tang, The Story of the Loyal, Filial, and Heroic Mulan*, and Zhang Shaoxian's *An Extraordinary History of the Northern Wei: The Story of a Filial and Heroic Girl*.

duty to the country and with physical strength (854), and was shaped as a “newly enshrined heroine of Chinese working women” (857).

Chinese scholars in the U.S who were interested in Mulan in American literature and popular culture found it was necessary to review the legends about Mulan in Chinese literature and popular culture before the legends came to the U.S. Feng Lan and Dong Lan traced the historical evolution of the Mulan legend in classical literature in pre-modern China. Feng’s study argues that as “a hybrid product of multicultural interactions, the image of Mulan became a Chinese icon of heroic patriotism only after a historical process of appropriation—fueled especially by the powerful tradition of orthodox Confucian ethics which turned the folk tale to the service of an imperial hierarchy” (230). Feng viewed Mulan as a Confucian woman with the moral virtues of loyalty, filiality, chastity and “implied expectation of female martyrdom” that were added to the representations of Mulan in the Ming (1368-1644 AD) and Qing Dynasties (1644-1912 AD). Feng marked the great revisions and changes in the Mulan legend through examining a few significant re-creations. The changes to the image of Mulan through the themes of her legend were closely connected with the value systems and the development of Confucianism in Chinese history. Studies of her were based on the well-known materials of ballads, drama and novels in classical literature.

Dong Lan’s study involved more materials: additionally the poems in the Tang dynasty (618—907 AD), the essays from the Song Dynasty (960-1279 AD), as well as seldom used sources such as historical chronicles and gazetteers, inscriptions and

tablets from the five “Mulan’s hometowns.” Dong does not limit her study to Mulan, but examines “the global evolvement” of Mulan among a group of women warriors and as representative of a paradigm, grounded in pre-modern Chinese literature and representations in contemporary Asian American literature and visual arts, and “conceptualizes the transmission and transformation of Mulan’s story as a palimpsest (v).” In Dong’s view, Mulan is a representation of “female identity in the complex and frequent negotiation between womanhood and warrior values in pre-modern Chinese society”(v, vi).

Louise Edwards separates the long history of Mulan’s stories into three phrases and examines the transformation: from defender of the family resisting an unreasonable state before the Qing Dynasty, to servant of the state with cooperation of filial piety pre-twentieth century, and to “a defender of peace and a reluctant warrior”(212) in the twenty-first century.

Folklorist Nai-tung Ting who compiled *A Type Index of Chinese Folktales* also paid attention to folktale versions of Mulan’s story and placed them under AT 884B The Girl as Soldier (1978, 137). I examined the eight narratives he cited and found that at least three are about Mulan: Ch’en Ch’iu-fan’s *Hua Mu-lan* (253), Liu Wan-chang’s *Mu-lan ko chu* (Annotated Song of Mulan) (260), as well as Chou I-pai’s *Min-jen tsa-chu hsuan* (Selections from Ming Drama) in which he cited the whole text of Xu Wei’s drama. Other citations in Ting’s index, CKC (Chinese Regional Drama Series) and Hsi-k’ao (Peking Opera Guide Book), are collections of folk or regional drama and I conjectured that they could be Mulan stories because of

the popularity of the story in dramas. Ting differentiates tales (t'ung-hua) from legends (ch'uan-shuo) and other related genres (8-11), but the borderlines between them are still not clear. I think he identified the Mulan story as a tale because his versions were not localized and did not present Mulan as “real.”

Chang-Tai Hung examined spoken dramas and summarized two recurrent themes of spoken dramas during the Japanese invasion of China (1937-1945): “patriotic courtesans and female warriors” (1989, 156, 161). As a representative of such heroines, Mulan “was a symbol of resistance” and “played an important role in both political and the military struggles against the Japanese” (167). The “juxtaposition of female tenderness and great prowess makes a most fascinating character” and the “combination of femininity and masculinity” makes her most popular and entertaining (172-173).

Women Warriors in Western Tradition

Women warriors like Mulan are not a phenomenon unique to Chinese history and literature, but are also popular in Western culture. Mulan and Joan of Arc are always juxtaposed as women who share the similarities of cross-dressing, valorous fighting in the battlefield, and protecting the country from foreign invasion or occupation (Hung 1989, 172-173). Female warriors and cross-dressing heroines “were an imaginative preoccupation of the early modern era, appearing not only in popular street ballads but in a host of other genres as well: epic, romance, biography, comedy, tragedy, opera, and ballad opera” (Dugaw 1989, 1). Western folklorists have also been attracted to folk literature in which a woman masquerades as a man and ventures off to war on

land and on sea for love and for glory (Dugaw 1989, 1). G. Malcolm Law classified this kind of ballads as “Ballads of Lovers’ Disguise and Tricks” (1957, 17-19), most of which are closely related to Ballads of family opposition to lovers, in his *American Balladry from British Broad-sides* (1957) and listed the outline and the reference of 43 texts (1957, 201-225). Normally the ballads focusing on woman’s cross-dressing include five structural elements: “a woman’s departure from home; her disguise as a man; her work experiences in that role; discovery of her sex; and finally, a choice about Marriage” (Greenhill 1995, 159).

Dugaw examined warrior women in Anglo-American ballads in the context of literature and social history and showed that “the heroine of the ballads enacts a histrionic impulse” (1985, 16). Such ballads bring together aspects of the eighteenth century: “the acknowledgement of women’s resilience and physical capability; the accepted presence of women in the day-to-day affairs of the army and even the navy; and the ongoing fascination of people at all levels with disguising” (1985, 16). They integrate and take for granted two themes: “the celebration of female cross-dressing,” and “the celebration of physical strength in women,” and “salute a remarkable pre-modern ideal of womanhood” (1985, 16).

Dugaw also applied structural analysis to the study of the female warrior ballads and uncovered the underlying structural pattern from over a thousand variants of 115 songs: the triumphant union of the true lovers in the face of ‘war’s alarms’ and the machinations of disapproving parents (1986, 24-25), with four more detailed figures to illustrate more texts. Such a pattern provides a tool to study not only the individual

text but the whole tradition in which the makers created new ballads on the basis of the old ones (1986, 31). In her book *Warrior Women and Popular Balladry, 1650-1850*, Dianne Dugaw traced the development of the ballad motif composed of four distinct steps, interpreted the meaning, looked at the context, examined the gender construction, related them to “an imaginative genotype” (10-11) and tied them to the “European heroic ideal” (10-11). This kind of woman enacted the two sides of the traditional ideal of Western heroism: female Love and male Glory. The equivocation of gender is the most fascinating and “most perplexing feature” (2). In Dugaw’s view, the “female warrior and her story assumed the status of an archetype” (Dugaw 1985, 2; 1989, 5) in popular balladry” and has become “a standard motif” (1989, 5).

Pauline Greenhill used the term “cross-dressing ballad” to designate those ballads in which the female protagonists dress in male clothing, including the female sailor, female warrior, and female highwayman (1995, 159). Her article “traces an interpretation and understanding of these songs that reflects a variety of considerations of sexuality as well as of gender,” such as “a conventional heterosexual narrative of lovers divided, then reunited” and “the possibility of same-sex attraction and of nonheterosexual activity”(157).

As Hans-Jörg Uther’s *The Types of International Folktales* has shown, ATU 514 The Shift of Sex is a story about a young woman who goes to war dressed as a man, because her father has no son to send, she makes achievements, and a princess falls in love with her (2011, 301), which is very similar to some versions of Mulan legends.

But the tests concerning her gender, her actual transformation into a man, and her consequent heterosexual marriage with the princess and happy ending are all different. In this tale type, events happen as a result of magic, for instance, helpers allow the disguised woman to accomplish the impossible tasks, and transform into a man. In Mulan legends in Huangpi, there are also several magic motifs: Mulan's camel transformed from a snake, the Taoist and Buddhist helpers who have magic power, the flying sword, the fighting with fox goblins, the beating heart and the blood that flows backward after Mulan's death. Although there is no evidence, there could be mutual influence on Mulan stories between the East and the West. In Uther's index, ATU 514** A Young Woman Disguised as a Man is Wooed by the Queen is a story about a woman in man's clothing working as a doctor who was seduced or raped by a queen who falls in love with her. At the end, the queen was executed and the disguised woman marries the king (2011, 302). The cross-dressing woman in these tale types has a happy ending, but in legends in Huangpi Mulan is punished with death because she does not return to the female space.

Although the narrative of women warriors in China and the West may seem to be telling the same story of a woman disguising as a man and leaving home for war or adventures, they are very different from many perspectives: the contexts, the forms, the values or virtues, the underlying structure, and so forth. Moreover, studies on them have been focused on different topics and from different perspectives. Literary and historical perspectives are the main methods in Chinese studies, and folklore and gender are the interests of Western scholars.

Legend Scholarship in China and in the West

Legend is a necessary genre in folk literature and has gained attention from folklorists for more than one hundred years both in China and in the West where legend scholarship shares some similarities, and also has its own features. I will briefly review the two traditions of scholarship and make some comparisons in order to establish an academic basis for my study which is an attempt to change the historic-geographic text-centered method which has dominated Chinese legend study for almost one hundred years.

The Emergence and the Development of Legend Study in China

Chinese legend scholarship started in the first two decades of the 20th century and developed over the next hundred years. There is no overview of Chinese legend scholarship, except for 毕旭玲 (Bi Xuling)'s (2008) doctoral dissertation concerning those who wrote before 1949. Legend did not gain the same attention as myth and folktale in Chinese folkloristics until recent years. I separate Chinese legend scholarship into four phases: (1) emergence (1910-1923); (2) development in the field of literature studies, history, folkloristics, ethnology and anthropology (1923-1949); (3) halted period; (4) development from the early 1980s. In the early two decades of the 20th century, historians and literati identified legend as an independent genre. Historians, literati, folklorists, anthropologists and ethnologists developed legend study further mainly through numerous case studies: researches on ancient myths and legends that have been recorded in official history, collection of myths and legends

from minor ethnic groups, and examinations on well-known legendary figures, such as lady Mengjiang and Zhu Yingtai. Academic study on legend halted from 1949 to the early 1980s because of the stagnation of humanities and social science for political reasons¹⁰, but collection, as a branch of people's literature, was an important achievement. More folklorists have begun to pay attention to legend and to research it from various perspectives since the early 1980s. Legend has now gained an independent position in folklore studies and undergoes rapid development.

The emergence of 传说学 (Chuanshuo xue, legend study) started in the early 20th century on the basis of the advancement of history, and under foreign influence. Scholars from history and literature first participated, and those from anthropology, and sociology joined in the late 1920s. Suspicion of ancient Chinese history caused the historians to seek to separate myth and legend from history. Translations of Western and Japanese scholarly works, "learning from the west," including history, anthropology, literature and folklore, made great contributions to the emergence of Chinese legend study. The works translated, including myths and legends from Greece, Rome, Northern Europe, India and so forth, and related studies, influenced Chinese legend scholarship in two ways: firstly, their theories and methods were borrowed by Chinese scholars; secondly, their efforts motivated and stimulated Chinese scholars to pay attention to our own myths and legends (Bi 2008, 91).

In 1910s and 1920s, a few literati who had studied abroad such as 鲁迅 (Lu Xun), 周作人(Zhou Zuoren), and 矛盾(Mao Dun) began to differentiate legend as a

¹⁰ Many disciplines in humanities and social science had been defined as capitalistic in that period, which means no support from the government or even dissolution.

genre independent from myth and folktale (Bi 2008, 30; Hu 1999, 29, 39). The first definition of “legend” was made by literati. As a modern academic term, it was first used by 单世厘 (Shan Shili) when she introduced Greek myth in 1910 (Bi 2008, 27; Shan 1994, 37). 周作人 (Zhou Zuoren), in articles published in 1913, used “传说 (Chuanshuo)” and “世说 (Shishuo)” to refer to sagas and define them as a genre believed by the people in which the time, the location and the personages were considered accurate (Bi 2008, 30; Zhou 1994, 44-48, 71-74). According to 鲁迅 (Lu Xun), myths evolved into legends and the personages in legends changed to semi-gods/goddesses or heroes (Lu 1925, 16), as he argued in his *中国小说史略* (*Zhongguo xiaoshuoshi lue, The Brief History of Chinese Novels*), first published in 1923. In the above articles and books, the literati differentiated legend from myth and folktale, which clarified legend as a genre and tried to define it.

Legend study entered the second phase with the early development of Chinese folkloristics during which intellectuals paid attention to folklore and began to collect and study. Collections of folk legends and studies on them have flourished since the early 1920s. Generally, 顾颉刚 (Gu Jiegang)’s “*孟姜女故事的转变* (Mengjiangnv gushi de zhuanbian, The Development of the Stories of Lady Mengjiang)” in 1924 is regarded as the beginning of legend study (Zhong 1986, 3; Ye 1987, 113; Bi 2006, 107), which “came to serve as a model for other studies” (Huang 1985, 81; Hu 2003, 23). During this period, the studies on legends of 徐文长 (Xu Wenchang) and 祝英台 (ZhuYingtai) were also well-known. Gu Jiegang’s study on Lady Mengjiang is the first climax of Chinese legend scholarship.

Studies on minority peoples were launched from 1928 to the 1940s. A few scholars who had been trained in anthropology, sociology and ethnology abroad returned to China and carried on their fieldwork and studies in aboriginal areas, particularly the south-west, to which the capital and cultural center moved after the break-out of the Sino-Japanese war in 1937. They began to collect myths and legends from minority people and included them in their studies, which were ignored by Han-Chinese scholars before and are now regarded as a necessary part of Chinese folk literature study.

In the period 1949 to 1976, legend study did not advance in theory, but the collections in different areas and from minorities were noticeable (Liu 2006, 606, 613). Legend study revived and achieved its second climax in the 1980s. Articles, books, and conferences about 四大传说 (Sida chuanshuo, the Four Great Legends)¹¹ developed very much further. 罗永麟 (Luo Yonglin) (Luo, 1983) and 贺学君 (He Xuejun) (He, 1986) compiled or wrote books centering on them. Research on Lady Mengjiang was still a hotspot. Gu Jiegang's series of articles on this woman was compiled and published under the title 孟姜女故事研究集 (*Mengjiangnv gushi yanjiuji*, *The Collection of Study on Stories of Lady Mengjiang*) (1984). Case studies extended to other well known legendary personages, such as 董永 (Dong Yong), 王

¹¹ The four great legends are 孟姜女 (Lady Mengjiang), 白蛇传 (Baishezhuang, White Snake), 梁山伯与祝英台 (Liangshanbo he Zhuyingtai, Liang Shanbo and Zhu Yingtai), and 牛郎织女 (Niulang he Zhin, The Cowherd Boy and the Weaving Maiden). These four legends have a very long history, they emerged before hundreds or even two thousand years ago. They were transmitted through oral tradition, classical literature, mass and popular culture and have become well-known among Han-Chinese.

昭君 (Wang Zhaojun), 鲁班 (Lu Ban), 钟馗 (Zhong Kui). 程蔷 (Cheng Qiang)'s and 张紫辰 (Zhang Zichen) did some preliminary study on legend typology (Cheng 1986; Zhang 1986).

In the 1990s, the theory of legend moved further. Japanese folklorist 柳田国男 (Yanagita Kunio)'s *传说论* (*Chuanshuo lun; The Legends*) has made a great impact on Chinese legend study since its translation and publication in 1988. 程蔷 (Cheng Qiang) (1995), 谭达先 (Tan Daxian) (1993) and 黄景春 (Huang Jingchun) (2008) wrote books about the general theoretical problems of legend as an independent genre. From the late 1970s, Chinese professional folklorists introduced foreign theories and methods, applied them for research, developed and modified them. 乌丙安 (Wu Bing'an) was interested in Yanagita Kunio's "legend cycle" and applied it to local legends (1995, 15-30) 邹明华 (Zou Minghua) (2003, 89-93) introduced Linda Dégh's discussion about legend and belief (2003, 175-179). 李杨 (Li Yang), 张敦福 (Zhang Dunfu), 魏泉 (Wei Quan), 王杰文 (Wang Jiewen), and 刘文江 (Liu Wenjiang) introduced U.S. contemporary legend studies to China (Liu Wenjiang 2012), particularly Brunvand's study on "The Vanishing Hitchhiker" (Wang 2005; Zhang 2005), and carried on research on Chinese versions (Li and Wang: 2000; Wei 2011; Wei and Zhang 2006; Zhang 2006). 施爱东 (Shi Aidong) involved rumor in folkloristics, but he did not notice studies by the Western folklorists (Shi 2012, 2013, 2015). Except for a few, most Chinese folklorists did not identify rumor and contemporary legend as folk literature.

Normally, Chinese scholars devoted their energies to examining a legend varying

in synchronic and diachronical dimensions, to trace the process of development, the route of dissemination and the factors motivating the variations normally from social and cultural perspectives. Such methodologies are suitable for a broad and macro study or a survey of the life history of a legend around China, a country with a vast territory and an integrated culture.

Chinese legend scholarship is undergoing a paradigmatic shift from text-centered to contextual studies. Early studies were based on texts from various channels, such as history, classical literature, local history and biography, popular and mass culture, as well as oral tradition, sometimes with a few considerations of localization. Few scholars did fieldwork themselves, including those who studied legends from oral tradition that had been collected by amateur folklorists. In the past decade scholars became apart from “text” and closer to “field” where they collected, observed and thought. They extended legend study to the discussion and examination of the relations between community and legend (Shi 2006, 213; 2007, 231), religion or belief and legend, custom and legend (Liu 2002, 246; Liu and Li 2003, 214), cultural tourism and legend (Xiao and Wang, 2004, 216), the development of society and legend (Xiao and Wang, 2004, 216; Shi 2006, 218) and so forth. Fieldwork has become a necessary part in legend study that was previously almost solely text-centered, not only collecting materials in fieldwork, but also examining the relationships between tellers, legends and communities.

In her study of legend scholarship, Bi Xuling identified four main perspectives for early legend study before 1949: historical, literary, folkloric and

socio-anthropological. Historical studies try to separate legend and history, while literary studies focused on the development of a legend in classical literature, both of which are text-centered. Folklorists began to involve materials from fieldwork in their studies from the 1930s, which was a big change. The greatest contribution is Gu Jiegang's study on the legends of Lady Mengjiang, in which he investigated the two thousand years development history of this legend, the routes of diffusion around the country, and the cycles of distribution. Anthropologists and ethnologists collected legends and used them as historical material to study the history of the minority ethnic tribes.

At present, a strong trend toward a mixture of various methods has emerged. The above four methods are still applicable and are always applied together in legend study. Among them, the folkloristic perspective that tried to provide a systematic frame with historical development and geographical distribution, has been the main one. Fieldwork is now believed a necessary part of legend study. Folklorists have moved from comprehensive and nation-wide examinations of a legend to systematic, in-depth research in a community or a limited location; for example Naqin (2004) and Chen Yongchao (2010) studied the members, the religion and the legends in a community in their studies, though they focused on religion, rather than the legends.

Legend Scholarship in the West

Legend scholarship in the West could be traced back to the Brothers Grimm who, motivated by rising nationalism, began to collect, publish and study German folklore, particularly mythology, Märchen and Sage. They tried to define and characterize

legend as an independent genre in comparison with Märchen (Tangherlini 1990, 371; Lindahl 1996, xi; Dégh 2001, 35). Their successful work inspired folklorists to collect legends in Germany and other European countries, such as Nilolaos Politis in Greece, de Keyser and Peeters in Belgium, Ó Súilleabháin in Ireland, as well as scholars in Hungary, Bulgaria and America (Hand 1965, 440), where scholars attempted to define and theorize folk legend from the early 1890s, such as Wehrhan, von der Leyen, Höttges, Ranke, von Sydow, Peuckert (Hand 1965, 439). Preliminary studies had emerged with the rising amount of collections since the early 1890s: Wehrhan's first scholarly survey of legendry in 1908, the handbooks of von der Leyen 1920-1924, of von der Leyen and Höttges in 1933, the theoretical writings of Ranke in 1926 and 1934, of von Sydow in 1948, Christiansen's *The Migratory Legends* in 1958, as well as Peuckert's *Handwörterbuch der Sage* in 1961 (Hand 1965, 439). German and Nordic folklorists, Lüthi, Ranke, Panyer, Röhrich, also made efforts to define legend, mainly following the Brothers Grimm's literary perspective to distinguish between two genres, märchen and sage (Dégh 2001, 36-42).

Numerous collections and preliminary theoretical exploitations called for classification and indexing that were in discussion in the first meeting of the International Society for Folk-Narrative Research. A planning committee composed of Christiansen, Sinninghe, Allen Woods, Peuckert and Hand was appointed to work on national index of legends, as a prelude to an international one, like the Aarne index for folktales (Hand 1965, 339-440). Legend scholars extended their focus from legend motifs to legend types in later conferences and seminars in Valdres, Norway and

Berlin, DDR in 1961, and Antwerp in 1963 in which they proposed “plans to produce national legend indices, and ultimately a usable international index of legend types” (Hand 1965, 442). For the purpose of further work, legend scholars made a tentative classification: Aetiological and Eschatological Legends, Historical Legends and Legends of the History of Civilization (with six sub-categories), Supernatural Beings and Forces / Mythical Legends (with thirteen sub-categories), and Religious Legends / Mythos of Gods and Heroes (Hand 1965, 444). Besides texts of legends, European scholars extended their study to legend tellers, and to legend and belief.

Early scholars followed the Brothers Grimm’s literary approach and gained many achievements, collections, classifications and preliminary theoretical studies. Their efforts peaked when they attempted to make an international index of legends but this proved to be extremely difficult and impractical. Their methodology was constructed “with disregard for social context, performance and psychological motivations” (Tangherlini 1990, 372). Legend scholarship entered a turning period in the 1950s and 1960s. The unsuccessful international index proved that the definitions, characterizations, the extent of texts, and methods based on literary perspectives were not suitable for legend studies any longer, and “a synthetic view...[which] considered legend from literary, anthropological and psychological viewpoints” was needed.

American folklorists showed interest in a new field, mass media, and they began to search for new approaches to understand the process and formation of legend (Dégh 2001, 42). The Germany literary approach and the European ambition to create national classifications still had their followers in the 1960s (Dégh 2001, 42). The

publication of *American Folk Legend: A Symposium* in 1971 “revealed both the German dominance of legend study and the rising tide of American scholarship” (Lindahl 1996, xii). British legend scholar Gillian Bennett identified three influential contributions in this symposium: Dégh’s “The ‘Belief Legend’ in Modern Society” that “inspired and informed the contextual, interpretative and ‘sociological’ approach to the study of contemporary legend,” Dundes’s “The Psychology of Legend” that raised the question “why it is that legends continue to be used and transmitted?” (Dundes 1971, 21), and Georges’ “The General Concepts of Legend” that attacked each proposition of the usual formulation of legend definition, all of which “laid the ground for a period of revaluation in legend study, in particular an accelerating shift away from text-based to process- and context-based approaches” (Bennett and Smith 1996, xxx-xxx). Bennett, Smith and Dégh highly praised this symposium:

[It] opened a new perspective for both American and European legend study. It called attention to the ethnography of the legend, the legend that lives in our time....This landmark meeting opened the door to the discovery of new sources of legendry, leading to the new classifications, definitions, and terminologies....The meeting was the overture to contemporary legend study (Dégh 2001, 102).

Three waves have contributed to the shift: Dégh’s and her students’ collections and studies on belief legend, as well as legend-telling, legend tellers and “ostension,”; Brunvand’s successful collections and publications that popularized contemporary legend among common people and inspired European colleagues; and Smith’s and

Bennett's effort to initiate conferences on Contemporary Legend from 1982, to found the International Society for Contemporary Legend Research (ISCLR) in 1988, and to compile another significant anthology *Contemporary Legend: A Reader* in 1996. The shift in legend scholarship corresponds with the shift from item-based to process-based, from " 'the folk' as a class or regional group to communicating groups," and from text to field, in folkloristics in the west in the 1960s (Lindahl 1996, xxxiii).

Bennett and Smith's anthology "consolidates a gradual shift which has taken place over the last two decades, in which English-language scholarship has taken the lead in the study of...contemporary legend" (Bennett and Smith 1996, xii). Contemporary legend has attracted attention from sociologists, psychologists, anthropologist, folklorists and scholars of literature who brought new approaches to this field and showed interest in mass media and popular culture, which resulted in "a paradigmatic shift which has led to highly contentious social and political issues" (Bennett and Smith 1996, xxxvi). The paradigmatic shifts heightened the contrasts with conventional definitions and characterizations of legend and created more disputes, in particular whether text (narrative) or belief is the "appropriate qualifier" for legend (Bennett and Smith 1996, xxxvii-xxxviii).

Timothy R. Tangherlini provided a historical survey of earlier legend scholarship and developed a characterization of the legend genre based on a synthesis of previous scholarship in a manner that explains the basic characteristics of the folk legend in his article "A Survey of Legend Theory and Characterization" (1990, 371). He reviewed

both the literary approaches and considerations of context and performance (372). The characteristics of this genre were summarized through comparison with other related genres such as folktale and rumor. He investigated the essential aspects of legend scholarship—legend and folktale, history, and psychology, legend style, form, and structure, legend, folk belief and rumor, as well as subgenres, classification of legend and contemporary legend (1990, 372-384; 1994, 3-22). This article was modified and located in the first chapter of his book, “Legends and legend scholarship” (Tangherlini 1994).

Comparison of Legend Scholarship between China and the West

It seems that Chinese legend scholarship took a similar road to the Western approach before the 1960s, and the two share some similarities. Both sought to

1. Define and characterize legend as a genre of folk narrative in comparison with other genres, particularly folktale, with other disciplines, for instance history, and religion.
2. Collect and publish legends recorded by both amateur and professional.
3. Show interest in literary, artistic, historical and religious features of legend, as well as functions and values.

The differences are multiple and obvious, from the preliminary problems to the methodologies for interpreting legends.

1. Chinese legend scholars mainly followed the Brothers Grimm’s definition and characterization, and regard history and truth as the core of a legend. The Western scholars highlight belief.

2. The extent of legend is much smaller in Chinese legend scholarship. Chinese legend scholars limit their materials to complete and well-elaborated versions.

3. Chinese scholars pay much attention to the content of legend, but ignore form and structure.

4. Chinese scholars prefer to discuss religion, including institutional religion, and folk religion, rather than belief. They examine the relations between them and how they influence each other, but they ignore simple and fragmentary folk belief and ideas.

5. Western scholars have categorized legend into more sub-genres, and have involved memorate, fabulate, and contemporary legend in their field.

6. Literary and historical approaches are still dominant in Chinese legend scholarship. Tracing the life story of a specific legend, with consideration of geographic distribution is always a necessary part of study. Western legend scholars have switched to ethnographic, context-oriented and performance-oriented methodologies, and pay attention to narrators.

The communication between Chinese and European legend scholarship, particularly the Brothers Grimm, began in the earliest period through a mediator, Japanese folkloristics and anthropology, but was suspended for many decades until the new century. Chinese legend scholarship is now in the same shifting period that Western legend scholarship experienced in the 1950s and 1960s. This shift takes place against the academic background of the shift of Chinese folkloristics away from text-based studies. Legend scholars have begun to pay more and more attention to the

field where they identify, collect, observe and analyze their materials, including texts from oral and written sources, contexts, tellers, audiences, localities, religions, local and official histories. As well they apply approaches from sociology, ethnology, anthropology, and communication.

Review and comparison of legend scholarship between China and the West has enlightened my studies in the following ways:

1. How to define “legend” became more significant because it implies the choice of objects, classification, extent of, and methods for study. I need contrast with the old-fashioned definition of legend based on text that still dominates Chinese legend scholarship at present, and I prefer Tangherlini’s approach that surprised me as being a totally different definition from what I had read before. He echoed Robert Georges’ suggestion to define legend based on the “nature and structure of the sets of relationships that underlie [legend]” (1971, 18), and synthesized “the underlying relationships—textural, psychological and sociological—which affect the form and function of legends” (1990, 385). In Tangherlini’s perspective, “Legend, typically, is a traditional, (mono) episodic, highly ecotypified, localized and historicized narrative of past events told as believable in a conversational mode”(1994, 22). Tangherlini pointed out three perspectives or levels of analysis: textual, social, and psychological, as well as a few key points of characterization of legend. I will discuss his ideas further in the next section of my methodology.

2. The extent of text is necessary because it determines the materials for study. Dégh’s suggestion is practical. After reviewing definitions of legend from the

Brothers Grimm in Europe and America, Dégh uses legend as “an overarching term to include all stories, short or long,” and “lump together all of the materials that contain a possible legend core” (Dégh 2001, 97). I involve simple, fragmentary, incomplete legends in my study.

3. Tracing the life story of a legend only touches the surface, analysis and interpretation can probe into a deeper level. Tangherlini defined legend psychologically as “a symbolic representation of folk belief and reflects the collective experiences and values of the group to whose tradition it belongs” (1994, 22).

Dégh’s discussion about “legend core” also attracted my attention:

[T]he legend can be characterized as the conveyor of information that concerns subjective human experience and answers an implicit or openly uttered question....Each legend informs, explains, instructs, warns, or exemplifies through the telling of an extraordinary, unexplainable experience that a known person has encountered....In fact, sooner or later, most people (99) are touched by a never-to-be-forgotten extranormal experience, and in it they find a message that makes them ponder or act. This message is the core, kernel, or nucleus of the legend, and because to communicate it to its audience is the main goal, the shape it takes is subordinated to the message it transmits (2001, 99).

Interpretation of legend should probe into the psychological level, considering why informants tell legends, what they want to represent and communicate consciously or unconsciously. In this study, I ask why Mulan legends have survived more than one thousand years and spread around China, why Mulan became a deity or goddess in some regions? Revealing the underlying structure and meaning of legends is necessary to answer these questions.

4. Legend tellers should be brought into the discussion. Interest in narrators,

singers or performers and their creativity has a long history in Western folkloristics, for instance, the work of Azadovski, von Sydow, Parry and Lord, Dégh. Tangherlini based his methodology on Bengt Holbek's, who reviewed and rejected the superorganic viewpoint, the national viewpoint, the text historical viewpoint, the morphological viewpoint and the literary viewpoint, and chose the craftsmanship viewpoint that privileges the narrators (Holbek 1998, 23-44). Tangherlini found "legend, like folktale, is well-suited to the application of a methodology which emphasizes the role of the individual in shaping and creating tradition as a performer, as an audience and as part of a larger cultural system" (Tangherlini 1994, 34). Dégh differentiated legend tellers from other tellers and performers, asserting "there is no stage for them and no social recognition for their recital skill," and legend "is a specific area of knowledge on which the narrator can offer information" (Dégh 1995, 79). She highlighted the importance of tellers in the telling process:

The narrator, as the author/teller, produces the legend in a given unique circumstance in which tradition, audience, and a chosen method of communication interact. In this balanced collaborative act, the narrators are the obvious primary agents because their personalities, their psyches, prevail. It is the narrator's voice that sounds, his or her style that shapes words and sentences into sense, and his or her conception that forges epic units into coherent meanings. (Dégh 2001, 206)

Generally, the text of legend plays an authoritative role in Chinese legend scholarship, not only in the definitions, but also in the studies. The materials and the methodologies are based on text, particularly the content, almost regardless of form, structure and morphology. In Chinese scholars' eyes, only those narratives that have

complete well organized structure with traditional motifs and plots can be regarded as “legend,” so many subgenres of legend in Western folkloristics are excluded from their study. Chinese scholars always notice variants of a legend and explain textual differences from historical, geographical and cultural perspectives, but they ignore the tellers and the community. My study is an attempt to integrate methodologies in China and in the West, and also a contribution to the ongoing paradigmatic shift of Chinese legend study.

The Methodology of My Study

If I had applied the Chinese mainstream methodology for legend study, I should have collected Mulan legends around China, as many as possible, particularly in the five claimed hometowns of Mulan. I would have introduced the texts, and then tried to trace their origin in history, in literature or in folklore, to identify the prototype, to discuss why it underwent such a long history of development and such a broad dissemination. Instead I preferred to complete a deep study of Mulan legend in only one place in order to examine the dynamics of a legend in a Chinese context.

I prefer Tangherlini’s definition (1990, 385; 1991, 22) and extracted a few key points: “ecotypified,” “localized,” and the reflection of “collective experiences and values.” His methodology is based on Holbek’s study on folktale, particularly the “craftsmanship viewpoint” that privileges the tradition participants.

Tangherlini called for a synthetic methodology and attention to legend tellers:

Because of the multifarious nature of meaning, legend tradition should be

analyzed on several levels...Rather than rely on a single, exclusive methodology—structural, functional, text-historical, psychological, etc.—the methodology should incorporate as many of these approaches as possible to develop an understanding....The role of tradition participants in shaping tradition should be considered along with aspects of performance, story function, structure and content. (1991, 31)

He summarized his study as “**who** tells **what** to **whom** in the form of a legend, and **why**?” including three main sections: “a broad evaluation of the tradition group” focusing “on the socio-economic context of the tradition area and the overall make-up of the active tradition participant pool,” focusing on “the most active tradition participants” by “relating aspects of these informants’ class and social affiliations to the elements of content present in their legend repertoires,” focusing “on particular tradition participants and [evaluating] their legends within particular performative situations” (Tangherlini 1991, 33). He divided his analysis into three parts: “a broad overview of the general aspects of the tradition” including “a discussion of the social and economic organization of the tradition area;” “the identification of the exceptional legend informants;” and “in-depth research” about three informants to “determine the motivation of the informant for performance and the culturally specific meanings produced by the account” (Tangherlini, 1991, 35).

I will follow his model with some modifications and additions to apply it to a legend cycle: the Mulan legend in a specific area. Firstly, I have reviewed the Mulan legends in China from multiple perspectives in this introduction to provide an overall cultural background for the thesis: the development and evolution in classical literature and modern visual arts, the localization and distribution in specific areas, the

identification, usages and commercialization of the legend as local culture, the competition between the claimed hometowns, as well as its safeguarding in the ICH movement. I will also provide an overview of Huangpi, the area where Mulan legends are localized, including its location, geographic and natural features, history, culture, economy, social strata, population and education. The history and geographic features of the relics associated with Mulan and villages around them, are also necessary.

I identified telling-groups from the different places where Mulan legends are popular—Dacheng Tan, Mulan Mount, General Temple, as well as the official group, and introduced each group in a separate chapter to answer “**who**,” and then provide the repertoires of each group to answer “**what**.” I attempt to examine the relationships between legends and the tellers, as well as to study legends in the particular groups and communities in order to uncover “the collective experiences and values.”

Additionally, I will go further with consideration of the characteristics of and the contexts of Chinese legends. I add a further dimension which is to trace the source of the repertoire by examining the old tradition both orally and written, to examine the interchange and influence of oral and written tradition on the Mulan legends in China. Furthermore, I will examine the brokers between the groups, and sometimes a specific group which is acting as a broker.

In this thesis, I have narrowed the study to the Mulan legend and the tellers in Huangpi of Hubei province, one of Mulan’s hometowns. The “Mulan legend” in my study refers to every form of telling consisting of at least one episode, regardless if it is short or long, if it is completed or fragmentary, including the folk legends from oral

tradition and collections, the records, the retelling and recreations in ancient and contemporary written materials, those in other forms such as folk drama, operas, covering materials and forms as many as possible because they interrelate closely and strongly influence each other. It is impossible to limit my study to legends in oral tradition, to those recorded from uneducated villagers, or to a single community. This thesis also studies the legends with their tellers in specific communities, which is an effort to switch Chinese legend studies from literature to folklore, from literary and historical perspectives to folkloristic ones. I attempt to apply the methodology for legend study developed in North America to Chinese legend, and try to combine and synthesize legend studies from two academic traditions.

I have set out the following goals for my study:

1. To provide scholars and others who are interested in Mulan with the local legends about her in China that are very difficult to gain access to, and which are seldom involved in academic studies ;
2. To portray Mulan as she is told about among the Chinese folk, in versions which are quite different from those in the well-known Disney animations;
3. To present the multiple Mulan legends and their variations;
4. To study the features of Chinese legends through this case study, such as the relations between oral tradition and written tradition, as well as the folk, religious, and other official factors in the development of Mulan legends.

Unlike Tangherlini's research, I am interested in legend-telling groups rather than individual tellers. Dégh followed Matthias Zender in showing interest in the

differences between legend tellers and tradition bearers of other genres:

Proponents of legendary subjects and beliefs tend to establish their own institutions. Groups are formed, bringing together tellers and audiences. In other words, practitioners and disciples together form a bond to communicate, circulate, and perpetuate the main message of their legend. Members of the group establish the appropriate social context and networks, and stabilize the text while they also multiply it by continued retellings. Together they help it to spectacular proliferation and variations. (Dégh 1995, 81)

Dégh identified legend-telling groups as oral communicators by the criteria of age: children, adolescents and young adults, and adults (Dégh 2001, 230-297).

After the examination of available materials and fieldwork through which I contacted the tellers face to face, and listened to or read their legends about Mulan, I identified two main groups: local, and official, who have very different backgrounds, repertoires, attitudes to Mulan and her legends, and ways of telling. Among the local group, I divided them further into four sub-groups by the criteria of religion and the place of residence: the natives living at her birthplace Dacheng Tan, around her graveyard General Temple, the Buddhists and Taoists on Mulan Mount, and the natives working on Mulan Mount. The three native sub-groups were born, grew up and are still living there, where they listened to or read Mulan legends, and observed and experienced the worship of General Mulan. After answering “who” are telling through the introduction of each group, I examine the group’s repertoire, along with textual study of their legends, in order to answer “what” they are telling.

I will outline the repertoire of each subgroup in the form of a list of motifs that I abstracted from each informant’s repertoire, normally according to their telling sequence. Chinese folklorists do not use a correspondent terminology for “repertoire,” nor do they research on it. Robert A. Georges reviewed the usage of

“repertoire” in folklore books and essays in the West. Examination of repertoire could be “enumerative and qualitative” (1994, 315) and “characterized in general or overview” (1994, 315). Folklorists changed their opinion of “repertoire finiteness and closedness” (1994, 317) to “conceptualize repertoires as dynamic as well as emergent” (1994, 318). Repertoire could be general, as “folklore repertoire” and a genre repertoire (1994, 316), and could be also specific, as individual and community’s repertoire (1994, 319). I examine the repertoire of a group/sub-group in order to involve as many versions or variants of Mulan legends as possible.

For a great number of legends and variants in my study, a structural study is an applicable approach to differentiate motifs and themes: those necessary, those optional, those fixed and those changed. Chinese folklorists applied a structural study to myth and folktale, but not legend. A few western folklorists made their efforts in this field. Tangherlini surveyed the study of “legend style and internal aspects of composition and structure” through reviewing Johann Folger’s, Oldrich Sirovatka’s, Ina-Maria Grevarus’s, Vilmos Voigt’s and W.F.H. Nicolaisen’s attempts to do morphological or structural studies of legend (1990, 375). He commented that “despite the promise of these structural approaches to legend study, none has been able to establish any set rules of legend morphology. Part of the failure lies in the extreme elasticity and its high degree of ecotypification” (1990, 377). Tangherlini also found that Axel Olrik, Oldrich Sirovatka, and Juha Pentikainen were unable to successfully establish morphological or structural models for analysis or interpretation of legend (1994, 9-10). However, he appreciated Nicolaisen’s model composed of six structural elements, and von Sydow’s ecotypification theory in which “cultural environment influences folk expressions and their development” (1994, 11).

Nicolaisen examined Labov's model in which a fully-formed narrative includes six structural elements: Abstract (what was this about?), Orientation (who, when, what, where), Complicating Action (then what happened?), Evaluation (so what?), Result or Resolution, and Coda (what finally happened?) through examination of twenty-eight variants of "The Surpriser Surprised" legend, and found that "Labov's structural elements...are indeed a helpful device in determining the major linguistic structure of the modern legend" (1987, 72). He identified the tripartite structure, Orientation, Complicating Action and Result (Resolution), as the core of legend's narrative; the other three, Abstract, Coda and Evaluation, as periphery elements (1987, 92). Nicolaisen attested the practical value of Labov's model in the study of modern (urban) legend, a sub-genre of legend. Gillian Bennett also studied another well-known urban legend "The Phantom Hitchhiker" using this model and concluded that "this has the advantage of simplicity, generality, and applicability to a wide range of oral narrative" (1984, 52).

I attempt to apply Labov's model to study numerous versions and variants of Mulan legends. Unlike Bennett's and Nicolaisen's studies in which they examined the variants of a particular legend, the subjects of my study are various legends about a woman in a limited area. The people at a specific locality have a similar repertoire which is different from the repertoire of people at other localities. Even among the specific group, no informant has the same repertoire as any other. Legends collected in my fieldwork are more fragmentary and very variable, for instance a version could be a few sentences long or thousands of words. In my study, I list the motifs and themes making-up the repertoire of a specific legend-telling group, fit the motifs to the six structural elements, make a statistical study of the numbers of elements told by the informants and each one's structure. I study the repertoires of four groups: the

natives at Dacheng Tan; the natives around the General Temple; the Taoists; and the natives on Mulan Mount and make a table to represent the essential and optional motifs of the four groups in my conclusion.

I was impressed with the extent to which written tradition has influenced the oral tradition of Mulan legends. The influence of written materials is evident in Chinese folk literature, particularly the prose narratives—myth, legend and folktale. There are communications and interchanges between folk, popular and elite levels of culture, as well as with religious culture.

I try to answer “why” through examining attitudes towards Mulan and her legends in the section “Their attitudes towards Mulan and her Legends” in Chapters Two, Three, Four, Five and Six, including three aspects: attitudes towards telling, attitudes towards reality, attitudes towards the values and virtues of Mulan.

Although I differentiate the tellers and identify distinct groups, there are still communications and interchanges among them. I found a few individuals and even a group who acted as brokers between two groups. “Broker” is a term from network analysis that has been applied to folklore study. According to Goffman, “A broker, linking two network clusters, takes a share of the resources passing through that position. Brokers, by their very structural position, cannot be full members of any network cluster. Often their marginal nature means they are not fully trusted because no single cluster can exercise total social control over them” (Wellman 1983, 177). Marsen defines “broker” as “an actor who facilitates transactions or resource flows as a broker whether or not the actor attempts to extract a direct reward” (Gould and

Fernandez 1989, 91). Dorothy Noyes includes “broker” in her discussion about “group” and referred to them as “those accustomed to dealing with outsiders and representing the inside to them” (2003, 13). Augusto suggested that network theory can facilitate the study on “the text or item in relation to its context,” “the process and patterns of transmission,” “an individual tradition bearer and his repertoire,” “the construction of a network for a particular item,” and “the various forces that control, modify, and direct a specific folklore genre or item” (1970, 81-82). In my study, the brokers between groups and subgroups do exist: the local folklorists, the businessmen and helpers on Mulan Mount and a few villagers who grew up in Taoist temples and then moved to villages around the Mount.

Huangpi and the People

One of Mulan’s hometowns, Huang Pi, also my hometown, is to the north of Wuhan, the capital of Hubei Province and the center of Central China. It is a conjunction of part of the north-east hilly region and 江汉平原 (Jianghan Plain) in which a few rivers and many lakes are scattered. Huangpi, 2261 km² in area, covers 19 towns and districts (Wuhanshi huangpiqu difanzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui 2008; 35)¹², among which 前川 (Qianchuan Town) is the downtown where Administration, cultural organizations (the archive and library), banks, post office, malls and cinema are located. The north part (Caidian Town, Yaoji Town, Changling Town and The

¹² They are 前川 (Qianchuan), 六指 (Liuzhi), 横店 (Hengdian), 滠口 (Shekou), 罗汉寺 (Luohansi), 祁家湾 (Qijiawan), 天河 (Tianhe), 武湖 (Wuhu), 长轩岭 (Changxuanling) or 长岭 (Changling), 王家河 (Wangjiahe), 李家集 (Lijiaji), 蔡店 (Caidian), 木兰乡 (Mulan Town), 姚家集 (Yaojiaji) 姚集 (Yaoji), 蔡家榨 (Caijiazha), 三里桥 (Sanliqiao), 大潭 (Datan), 木兰山风景区 (The Scenic Area of Mulan Mount), 盘龙城经济开发区 (Panlongcheng Economic Zone).

Scenic Area of Mulan Mount), is a mountainously and hilly area where the farmers plant tea and fruit trees. The south part (Wuhu Town, Shekou Town, Hengdian Town, Tianhe Town) is watery area where fishing is a traditional industry. The central parts are plains, with scattered lakes, where agriculture is still the pillar industry. Since the 1980s, modernization and urbanization have developed in the southern area adjacent to Wuhan, where commerce and logistics industry have become the main industry. The Northern part, where the Mulan Culture Scenic Area is located, developed cultural tourism, with improvement of the traffic system and modern agriculture. Other parts are still traditional agricultural areas. 长岭 (Changling Town), 姚集 (Yaoji Town) and 木兰山风景区 (The Scenic Area of Mulan Mount) where Mulan legends proliferate are in the Northern area.

Huangpi has a long history at least from the building of 盘龙城 (Panlong City) in the fifteenth century B.C. (Chen and Li 2009, 25-40). As a county, Huangpi was first settled in the first year of Daxiang of the Northern Zhou Dynasty (579 AD) (Wuhanshi huangpiku difanzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui 2008, 98) and remained so over the past one thousand five hundred years. The area of Huangpi County was variable before the Song Dynasty (960-1279 AD) and became fixed since then. Huangpi flourished because its water system connected with Yangtse River, the second longest river in China. Huangpi flourished as long as 汉口 (Hankou), a town of Wuhan adjacent to the southern part of Huangpi, which grew into an important harbor, was an economic and transportation center in Central China. Huangpi became a transportation channel for population, food stuff, merchandise, as well as culture

between Northern and Southern China because of its geographical position. Besides traditional agriculture, modern industry, particularly the textile industry, commerce, education and culture developed rapidly from the early 20th century also because of the flourishing of Wuhan that became the centre of revolution in China. Huangpi County changed to Huangpi District, as a part of Wuhan in 1998 (Wuhanshi huangpiku difanzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui 2008; 663).

Culture and education in Huangpi have been prosperous and highly developed at least since the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127AD) when the Brothers Cheng, 程颐 (Cheng Yi, 1033-1107 AD) and 程颢 (Cheng Hao, 1032-1085 AD), well known pioneers and intellectuals of the Confucian school of idealist philosophy of the Song (960-1279 AD) and Ming (1368-1644 AD) Dynasties, were born and grew up in Huangpi. Their memorial hall was built in 1450 AD and was changed to a local school in 1580 AD, which served as a local education centre until the 1930s when it was destroyed by the Japanese (Chen and Li 2009, 130-131). The school developed education and culture in Huangpi and its influence has lasted until today. In the modern period, many local people participated actively in the revolution that ended the long feudal society of China, among whom 黎元洪 (Li Yuanhong) became the second president of the Republic of China (1912-) and was the vice-president three times. The natives who devoted themselves to revolution, the liberation of the people and the development of China joined the army and many became high officers both in the Nationalist Party and Communist Party, and some became well known intellectuals.

An emphasis on education is a tradition of most Huangpi families. 私塾 (Sishu, traditional private school) that ended in 1949 offered education for common people. The traditional private school sponsored by the rich members of a specific clan, was always located in villages to serve the male children in the clan, regardless if they were rich or poor. The tuition fees were very cheap and simple, they could even be paid in food. That could be a very important reason why many of my male informants could read and write. Modern education began in the early 20th century and developed rapidly in the 1980s. Figure 1 provides the numbers of students learning in schools from 1980 according to the statics of 黄陂区志 (*Huangpi quzhi; the Biography of Huangpi*) (617-619).

Figure 1. Students in high, middle and primary schools

	High	Middle	Primary
1980	11,958	62,339	143,884
1990	5,666	31,993	132,498
2000	10,497	50,820	125,431
2004	17,361	61,303	82,886
2012	40,700		41,200

The obvious decline in the number of students in primary, middle and high schools from 2004 demonstrates the population loss in Huangpi in recent years.

The urbanization of Huangpi began in the middle 1980s after it came under the direct administration of Wuhan. At present, Huangpi develops its business in the south

part in conjunction with Wuhan, and its tourism in the north part, as well as its traditional industries, agriculture and the fishery. With the development of contemporary industries and urbanization, more and more natives have left their farms to move into cities and then settle down. Migration from Huangpi to cities, from rural areas to urban or urban-rural regions, results in population loss, particularly of those working on their farms. The population who finished primary education has been stable since the 1980s, those who finished middle education (middle and high school) rise and are almost 30% of the whole population. The number who finished high education (undergraduate and graduate) is small but has risen ten times during twenty years. I give a simple figure according to the statistics in *黄陂区志* (1980-2004) (*Huangpi quzhi, the Biography of Huangpi*) (59-63), the last *Yearbook of Huangpi*, volume 2012 (37).

Figure 2. Population

	Total	Agricultural	Non-agricultural	High education	Middle education	Primary education
1949	661,208	610,807	40,401			
1980	904,463	814,409	62,621	1,331	242,487	313,003
1982	916,532	813,056	62,679			
1990	974,454	892,509	123,948	4,545	304,716	358,040
2000	1,098,910	905,204	181,598	14,090	384,032	329,897
2012	1,112,700	904,500	208,200			

During my research, the desolation of the farms in the northern areas and the decrease

in population astonished me. At the official level, economy, culture, and education are developing; however, at the folk level there is obvious depression, poverty and disappearance of folklore in rural areas.

The non-agricultural people normally live in the downtowns of each town and district, including two classes: those working for the government and common residents in towns. The people in the first class are government officials, employees in state-owned enterprises (power and water supply, telecommunication), organizations and institutions of the government (schools, library, archive, post office, bank, art organizations, TV and radio stations). They gain payments from the government, have a fixed working schedule, a stable income, compensation and welfare, all of which means their lives are guaranteed and differentiate them from other social strata. Their families should also be categorized in this class. This group has a higher social rank, some privileges for education and medical treatment. They are always highly educated, spend leisure time in enjoying food with friends or families in restaurants, reading and watching TV indoors, some like painting, calligraphy, chess, music, drama and mahjong. Common residents in towns always have their small business, for instance, restaurants, barbershop, hair salon, grocery and shops.

The agricultural people are living in villages in rural areas, normally surrounded by farms, ponds, brooks and forests that have been separated into small pieces belonging to each family. They have no or very small compensation and welfare from the government, and use their own earnings to raise their family. After their work on farms and housework indoors, they have little leisure time, which they spend

watching TV or playing mahjong. Many members of this group attempt to change their social class, to get an education or earn more money in big cities, then settle down and change their agricultural identity to a city identity which means higher social rank and incomes, better compensation and welfare, more chances and opportunities. The winners always help their families in rural areas to settle down in cities or downtown, or help improve their lives.

Fieldwork

Mulan legends that have gained attention since the early 1980s are experiencing preservation and alteration. On the one side, we can still find traditional and folk parts of Mulan legends, on the other side we can observe changes and variations through mass media under the circumstance of the development of cultural tourism and safeguarding of folk culture and intangible culture. In my research, it is lucky that the traditional and folk legends about Mulan are still living in oral tradition in rural areas, though they are declining. What the official groups, including local government, officials, scholars and local folklorists, have done and are doing for Mulan and her legends creates a dilemma—their interest and intervention both preserves and destroys. I will provide legends from both groups, examining them with consideration of the tellers and the contexts, in order to offer a comprehensive overview of Mulan legends in Huangpi at the present.

Mulan legends are mainly popular in the northern district of Huangpi where she was born, lived and died, and relics associated with her still remain. Normally, legends are preserved very well and legend-telling is popular and active around the

relics. My study examines Mulan legends in oral tradition, the relationships between legends and their tellers in the present. So I selected three locations special to Mulan: her birthplace, 大城潭 (Dacheng Tan); her graveyard, 将军坟 (Jiangujun fen; General Tomb), where she was buried, and the affiliated 将军庙 (Jiangjun miao; General Temple), and Mulan Mount where she was educated and where her memorial relics are located.

During the research for my M.A. thesis, I visited the local amateur folklorists 黄铨 (Huangli), 明德运 (Ming Deyun) and 黎世炎 (Li Shiyan) and got their articles and books about Mulan, I also visited the Cultural Department and Cultural Station of Huangpi, Mulan Mount and got precious written materials, including two collections of Mulan legends, *木兰山的传说* (*Mulanshan de chuanshuo, The Legends on Mulan Mount*) (1983), *神奇的木兰山* (*Shenqi d Mulanshan, The Mysterious Mulan Mount*) (1985); two novels: *花木兰传奇* (*Huamulan Chuanqi, The Romance of Hua Mulan*) by 周大望 (Zhou Dawang) (1999), and *花木兰* (*Hua Mulan*) by 明德运 (Ming Deyun) and 李竞业 (Li Jingye) (2002); two old hand-written books *木兰宝传* (*Mulan bgaozhuan; Mulan Baozhuan*) and the Taoist version of *木兰从军* (*Mulan congjun; Mulan Going to the Army*); as well as a few tourism pamphlets. Most of these written materials still influence the repertoire of Mulan legends in Huangpi at present and I will discuss them in the following chapters.

For this doctoral thesis, I began my research with library work in Wuhan, reading collections of articles and books. I went to Huangpi to begin my fieldwork in January 2010, and visited the Propaganda Department, the Cultural Station, the Local

Chorography Office, the Research Society of Mulan Culture, and local folklorists who have devoted themselves to the study of Mulan for many years. The officials, working staff and a few individuals helped me a lot, provided me valuable information, and donated some precious written and oral materials. However, I found it was interesting that they strongly suggested that I collect materials from written sources and the commonly identified experts, but did not understand why I was going to the rural areas to interview ordinary people because they thought that the peasants knew little and could not tell many legends. The discrimination was so evident that I did not want to ask them to arrange or help me with fieldwork in rural areas. I did know that I needed a broker between the officials and the natives in rural areas. With the help of 黄英 (Huangying), the General Secretary of the Research Society of Mulan Culture, I contacted 杜有源 (Du Youyuan), the director of the Cultural Station of Changling Town, and arranged a visit. He was very kind and was pleased to lead me to General Temple to begin my fieldwork on March 16th, 2010. In March and April, I carried on my fieldwork around General Temple, particularly in a few villages right around General Temple, 肖家田 (XujiaTian Village), 杨家田 (Yangjiatian Village), 尹家冲 (Yinjiachong Village) and 铁石墩 (Tieshi Dun Village), as well as 仙河店 (Xianhe dian; Celestial-river Village) where Mulan cut open her breast or belly. I was living in downtown Huangpi and took a bus to General Temple right on the side of 长塔公路 (Changta gonglu; Changta Avenue). Normally, I knocked on each door and asked everyone whom I met if he/she knew Mulan and her legend, and asked everyone to introduce me to other informants. I had conversations about Mulan with twenty seven

people and had formal interviews with seventeen of them.

I moved to Mulan Mount in June and stayed there in the Manchun Inn and Restaurant on the west side of 胜景广场 (Shengjing guangchang, Splendid View Square) for two months. 彭彩建 (Peng Caijian), the director of the Propaganda Office, accompanied me to visit the Tourist Center and to go around 古庙区 (Gumiao qu, the Ancient Temples Area) where the Taoists and some Buddhists are living, which was very useful for me as an outsider and for the insiders to get to know me. Additionally he gave me a copy of 木兰山志 (*Mulanshan zhi, The Chorography of Mulan Mount*) through which I became familiar with everything about Mulan Mount. In the following days, at daytime I went up and down the rock stairs of the Ancient Temples Area, said “hi” and introduced my research to everyone. At evening, I walked around Splendid View Square and tried to talk with everyone I met. I visited the Tourist Center, Existence Office to contact the working staff on the Mount, and each Buddhist and Taoist temple. It is difficult to carry on interviews among the working staff and the Buddhists. Normally the working staff suggested that I talk with the Taoists and read books, and gave me excuses, such as “I know little” and “I have no time.” I talked with only two of them, who did not tell me much about Mulan, so I exclude them from my thesis, which will not be a great loss. I do not think this negatively affected my study because they are not representative tellers of the Mulan legend. Mulan has been involved in the system of Taoists on the Mount and the Buddhists told me that Mulan was a Taoist goddess. The working staff could be brokers between the official and the Taoist groups, but their influence is very much

less than 杜有源 (Du Youyuan), Director of the Cultural Station of Changling Town, and 王汉青 (Wang Hanqing) who compiled *神奇的木兰山* (*Shenqi d Mulanshan, The Mysterious Mulan Mount*). I was not surprised that the Buddhists told me little about Mulan. They are not interested in Mulan and her legend because she is a Taoist deity, and their religion, Buddhism, makes them isolate themselves from the outside world, including Mulan and her culture. I met seven Buddhists, tried to conduct interviews with them, but only three wanted to talk with me and only one, 圣明 (Shengming) in 法藏寺 (Fazang Temple), told me something about Mulan. I met twenty Taoists, each of them was willing to talk with me, among which fourteen were interviewed formally. However another group of natives attracted my attention, the local people working on Mulan Mount, such as businessmen, owners of restaurants and inns, the helpers, the fortune-tellers and the door-keepers. I had one group discussion and interviewed thirteen.

It was amazing that I was permitted to read or take pictures of some treasured materials: a printed copy of *木兰传* (*Mulan zhuan, Romance of Mulan*), handwritten copies of *木兰忠烈将军救世真经* (*Mulan zhonglie jiangjun jiushi zhenjing; Scriptures about Loyal and Heroic General Mulan Saving the World*) and *清微木兰将军醮科*¹³ (*Qingwei mulan jiangjun jiaoke; Qingwei Scriptures about General Mulan*) bound together, as well as the original manuscript of *木兰宝传* (*Mulan baozhuan, Mulan Baojuan*), all of which have been kept secretly as treasures, and seldom shown to others. This written tradition of Mulan preserves early Mulan legends very

13 醮科 (Jiaoke), abbreviation of 斋醮科仪, designates all kinds of Taoist rituals.

completely. Some information is different from those versions popular in Huangpi at present, which helps trace the history of the Mulan legend in Huangpi, as well as the worship of Mulan in the Taoist system that influences the Taoist repertoire of Mulan legends.

It was really difficult to begin the fieldwork at Dacheng Tan. According to convention, I should have asked a local official from the Cultural Department or Local Cultural Station to go with me at the beginning of the fieldwork, but no one was willing. Their excuses were the lack of time, bad transportation, and prejudice against the peasants: “what do they know” or “they can tell few.” After waiting a long time, I decided to begin my fieldwork there by myself but an introduction by an official was necessary. I asked for the phone number of 谌文正 (Shen Wenzheng), a well-known informant, from Du Youyuan and called him before my trip. Shen’s nephew told me the route and arranged a meeting with me over the phone. Actually, the condition of transportation has been improved since 2004 and a bus has been running the three-hour route from the downtown of Huangpi directly to Dacheng Tan since 2010. Although I was really a stranger on the first trip, I was treated very warmly by the villagers. I imagined many difficulties before the trip, however, beyond my expectation, everything went smoothly. With the help of Shen Wenzheng, my accommodation and meals were organized by the village head, 谌建国 (Shen Jianguo), who arranged for me to live with a couple 谌文焱 (Shen Wenyan) and his wife 朱延芝 (Zhu Yanzhi), considering the condition of the accommodation and meals of a stranger from the big city, the security of a single young woman, and a

clean and quiet single bedroom for a researcher.

As an investigator and researcher, living in a local house with local people was a helpful way to build rapport with the villagers, to arouse their interest in Mulan, and to motivate their participation. During the fieldwork, though I was not yet acquainted with them, most of the informants knew of me and my research, which saved time to introduce it, and dispelled their misgivings and hesitation as well. The village and the population are small so I finished my fieldwork in two weeks. I asked everyone I met in the village, had two group discussions and interviewed twenty. Besides Dacheng Tan, I visited another village, 一里河 (Yili he; One-li River) that was often mentioned in the repertoire of tellers around General Temple, on Mulan Mount, and in Dacheng Tan, where I had a group discussion.

Outline of the Thesis

In the first chapter, I have given an overview of the chronological development of Mulan legends in classical literature and modern popular culture, as well as their geographic dissemination in five claimed hometowns of Mulan—Yucheng of Henani, Bo County of Anhui, Wan County of Hebei, Yan'an of Shanxi, and Huangpi of Hubei, as well as the emergence of Mulan culture from the late 1990s. I also reviewed studies on Mulan and cross-dressing women warriors, a group to which she belongs, in China and in the West. My review of the legend scholarship in China may help provide a base for readers to become familiar with the different academic traditions. I also briefly compared Chinese with North American approaches to legend study. I prefer the North American methodology in legend study, but I also paid attention to the

study from literary and historical perspectives that is the mainstream in Chinese legend scholarship.

In Chapter Two, Three, Four and Five, I focus on Mulan legends told within four groups: the natives at Da Chengtan, the natives around General Temple, the Buddhists and Taoists on Mulan Mount, as well as the natives working on Mulan Mount. The places, the relics, the people of the group, their lives, their legends, the sources of their legends, and their attitudes towards Mulan are the main contents of these chapters.

The structure of each of these four chapters is the same. After an introduction I described the repertoire of the group with an examination of legend structures, the sources of the repertoire, the brokers, as well the range of attitudes towards Mulan. In the introduction, I describe the community from geographical and historical perspectives, the relics related to Mulan, and then move to the members of the community, including their labor, their religions, their education and their everyday lives.

When discussing the repertoire of each group I give individual legends with full or partial texts as well as variants in order to provide an overview of the Mulan legends in each group. A few tellers attracted more of my attention, and from them I have normally recorded a brief life history. In most cases, there is a commonly identified talented teller in each community who is believed to know much about Mulan and her legends. Such talented tellers are always known by other members and even by others out of the group. To examine the repertoire of each group and

subgroup is to not only represent Mulan legends in Huangpi as widely as possible, particularly those that are not available in early publications, but also or more important to express their differences and nuances and then explain why such variations took place.

“The source of the repertoire” concentrates on written and oral Mulan legends and their mutual influence. Mulan legends in Huangpi were told in the official records in local chorography, and in novels, as well as in Taoist scripts. The local chorography is for the well-educated not only in old times but at present. The novels were very popular among the people living around Mulan Mount and among the Taoists on the Mount before the Cultural Revolution. They were held secretly at that time and some even protect them in the present. The Taoists hold the manuscripts of the narratives that were told and sung to the common people as a way to preach in particular rituals. The sources of the legend of each teller influenced the texts, the telling and the attitudes towards Mulan and her legend, so their tracing is necessary for this study.

In terms of the question “Why they are telling?” I study the attitudes towards Mulan and her legends in the part “Their attitudes towards Mulan and her Legends,” including three aspects: attitudes towards telling, attitudes towards reality, and attitudes towards the values and virtues of Mulan. The attitude towards reality is not a simple question of believing or not believing. I found the matter of belief was very complicated among members of the local and official groups. In my opinion, the attitude is a spectrum between two poles—believing and unbelieving. Many of the tellers were located in the middle, some were closer to one pole or to the other. The

attitudes of the teller can be felt in their telling and in their text of the legend. Their attitudes towards telling and the values and virtues of Mulan could be seen as “a symbolic representation of folk belief” and “the collective experience and values of the group” (Tangherlini 1994, 22).

I identified several brokers among the natives at Dacheng Tan, around General Temple, among the official group, and give them an independent part in Chapters Two, Three and Six. I do not find brokers among the Taoists, but there is a group acting as brokers between the natives and the Taoists on the Mount, whom I examine in Chapter Five. I point out who the brokers are, introduce their life stories and their repertoires, as well as discuss why they became brokers and why their repertoires are mixed.

The official group, composed of the officials in the local government, the amateur folklorists, the scholars who participated in the collection, study, protection and rewriting of Mulan legends, is the topic of Chapter Six. I introduce this group and their society, their books and articles, the repertoire of this group through introduction of three complete versions of Mulan legends as well as several other versions in publications. I examine their attitudes towards Mulan and her legends, and the role of brokers who mediate between the official and other groups.

In my study, I separate the local and the official groups who tell different Mulan legends in different ways, whose attitudes towards her are various. I present the variable image of Mulan in different groups, as an extraordinary local maiden among the natives, as a deity in religious groups, and as a national icon in the official group. I

try to identify and examine the factors that influence the development and variations of Mulan legends, such as the different groups, their religions, their place, and the sources of their legends. The interchange and interweaving of oral tradition and written tradition, the communication between the natives, the religious and the official group, all attract my attention because they are features of Chinese legends.

Chapter 2

The Native Group and the Repertoire at Dacheng Tan

大城潭 (Dacheng Tan) is the home village of Mulan in local legends and has been recognized as such by the Huangpi government. The native group of this village is still telling the Mulan legend in which she is described as an extraordinary local maiden. 大城潭 (Dacheng Tan) is a village on the east side of 潌水 (She shui; She River) in 姚集 (Yaoji; Yaoji Town) of Huangpi at present. Dacheng Tan means a big city in a pond, actually a city surrounded by water, which normally is abridged as Dacheng. It was called 双龙镇 (Shuanglong zhen; Two-dragon Town) in novels and sometimes in oral tradition. According to archeological and historical studies, the history of Two-dragon Town can be traced back at least to the Southern Qi Dynasty (479-502 A.D.) (Ruan 2002,48).

Both in the written materials found in Huangpi and in the oral tradition among the natives, Mulan was born into the Zhu family at Dacheng Tan; her grandfather was 朱若虚 (Zhu Ruoxu) and her father was 朱寿甫 (Zhu Shoufu) or 朱天禄 (Zhu Tianlu). The Zhu family are still living right on the side of 潌水 (She shui; She River) and the tiny village purely composed of this family was named as 河边湾 (Hebian wan, Beside-river Village) and is normally abridged as 河边 (Hebian; Beside-river). The members of the village of 大城潭 (Dacheng Tan) realized and emphasized the difference and separation of the two villages, but the local government and others

composed them together as one village—Dacheng Tan. Almost all my informants around 将军庙 (General Temple), on Mulan Mount and at 大城潭 (Dacheng Tan) have the same legend in which Mulan was born in the Zhu family. Moreover, Dacheng Tan has been identified as the home village of Mulan by the local government since the late 1980s, and this is now the official version, which has been promoted in mass media.

Dacheng Tan and the Informants

The villagers are proud of the long and splendid history of their village, along with its perfect feng-shui—the two dragons playing with a pearl which is the origin of the name of 双龙镇 (Shuanglong zhen; Two-Dragon Town). The village is located in the middle of the two “dragons.” The two “dragons” are hills on which 大寨 (Dazhai, the Big Stockade) and 小寨 (Xiaozhai; the Small Stockade) were once located. Only some walls remain but the sites were identified as Cultural and Historical Site by the Wuhan Government on December 25th in 1988, and the “Pearl” is the huge rock on the west side of the She River.

Besides the geomantic quality, the villagers still talk about the city’s high ramparts, solid walls and wide moat, which were destroyed by their own hands. The whole village was encircled by ramparts as high as almost five meters, which were protected by a moat as wide as seven to ten meters. There were three gates, 东门 (Dongmen; East Gate), 西门 (Ximen; West Gate) and 南门 (Nanmen; South Gate), as well as three bridges as entrance/exits—东门桥 (Dongmen qiao; East Gate Bridge), 西门桥 (Ximen qiao; West Gate Bridge) and 南门桥 (Nanmen qiao; South

Gate Bridge). On the north, 大寨 (Dazhai, the Big Stockade) was on the top of a hill, strategically located and difficult to access, where cannons were fixed, so there was no need of a north gate and bridge. Among the three gates and bridges, East Gate and Bridge were the main entrance, exactly the same as nowadays. It seems that 双龙镇 (Shuanglong zhen; Two Dragons Town) was a place with military importance.

Dacheng Tan was a commercial and trading centre, a transportation centre and a place with military importance because of its geographical position—located in the middle of 淝水 (Sheshui; She River) from 河口 (Hekou) to 淝口 (Shekou), flowing into 长江 (Yangtze River)—the biggest and busiest water system in China. The origin of 淝水 (Sheshui; She River) is the south part of 大别山 (Dabie shan, Dabie Mount) where Hubei and Henan province are joined. Dacheng Tan's prosperity continued to the 1960s, so villagers over fifty still remember the busy market and ferry, the crowds of customers, and all kinds of goods.

观音寺 (Guanyin si; Guanyin Temple), that often appears in the Mulan legends, was located on the middle of a hill only half a kilometer away from the village. It was not only a local religious centre but also served as a school. Unfortunately it was demolished during the Cultural Revolution, and replaced by an orange garden.

The Cultural Revolution in 1969 was the watershed for the village and its residents. During the Movement, Dacheng Tan was completely destroyed and replaced by a cotton farm. After 1969 Dacheng Tan lost its status as a local centre of politics and economy, commerce and transportation, culture and religion. Now it is just a common agricultural village without any apparent difference from others in this

rural region.

In 1969 all the walls and buildings were demolished and the remains were moved to the top of 跑马岭 (Paoma ling, Running-horse Hill) on the south of the village to construct a new one—新建村(Xianjian cun, Newly Constructed Village), and all villagers moved there. Since the early 1980s most of the residents have returned to their former addresses to build new houses. So Dacheng Tan now has two parts: the lower and the higher. At present, there are about thirty houses in the lower part, half of which are locked by the householders who have moved out to big cities and are only used during the Spring Festival holiday. It is much worse in the higher part, 新建村 (Xianjian cun, Newly-constructed Village) in which almost fifty old houses remained; only ten are in use, eight have been abandoned, and the rest are locked.

Although the village has been rebuilt, only a few relics have survived, including 朱家台子 (Zhujia taizi; The Foundation of the Zhu Family) that is the foundation of the old Zhu family's house, ten-meter long rock walls on the west side of The Foundation, a thirty-meter long wall on the northern top of 大寨 (Dazhai, the Big Stockade), and the piers of the East Gate Bridge. All three gates were pulled down and demolished, and East Gate Bridge and West Gate Bridge were rebuilt on the former address and the South Gate Bridge disappeared without any trace. I could not discovered the moat circling the village because grasses and shrubs are growing in it, the cattle and chickens are strolling and looking for food inside, and half has been reclaimed as a vegetable garden.

Not only the splendid walls and gates but also its prosperity as a transportation

and trading center has gone since the 1960s. With the continuous development of highways and roads, the status of 潞水 (Sheshui; She River) as a main transportation and commercial artery in Huangpi has disappeared. So Dacheng Tan does not act as a dock or ferry any longer.

The tranquility of this common village was disturbed when it was identified as Mulan's home village. The first investigators were two officials from 文管局 (Wenguan ju; Cultural Relic Protection Department) in 1986 who interviewed 谌文正 (Shen Wenzheng). 杜有源 (Du Youyuan), the director of the Cultural Station of Changling Town, noticed the village in the hot days of 1986 or 1987. This accidental finding led to more archeological and historical investigations through fieldwork and historical literature, such as 阮润学 (Ruan Runxue)'s and 黄锂 (Huang Li)'s studies.

Since the turn of the twenty-first century, Dacheng Tan has gained continuous attention from the propaganda, culture and tourism departments of the Huangpi government, the Wuhan and Hubei governments, scholars and the mass media. However, this phenomenon decreased from 2006 and almost stopped in 2009. On the one hand, the villagers are proud of the identification as Mulan's home village and the following attention from the outside world. On the other hand, they complain that it did not bring them any profit—no investment, no cultural tourism exploitation, no opportunity to make money, and no hope to rebuild the gates and the walls. This process of change from focus to oblivion has influenced their attitudes toward telling Mulan legends and toward any interview and investigation. Most of the villagers are reluctant to tell Mulan legends to any visitors and they expressed these attitudes

clearly in the interviews.

Although the earlier prosperity has gone, the community is still a local market for the natives in adjacent villages. There are four meat shops, two barber shops, one vegetable store, a wholesale station of bag foods (such as potato chips, dried fruits and berries) and commodities, two cloth stores, and three groceries, a mah-jong room and one cell phone service station along the two sides of the main street of the village. All the owners stated that they had no good profits and had just enough for everyday life. The owners of such small businesses always provide their services and merchandise in or in front of the hall of their own houses. Normally, they open their doors very early and begin business from nine clock a.m. and finish at four or five p.m. They go out to take care of their vegetables on the farms, or chat with other villagers to kill time when no patrons visit.

The villagers without businesses continue their quiet and simple lives, working on the farms when the weather permits, playing mah-jong and talking, watching TV, and walking outside to enjoy the sun, the breeze and the clear air. Most of the villagers spend their time planting wheat, rice, peanuts and all kinds of vegetables to fulfill the need of their families, rather than to make money. Such food is believed to be safer, healthier, and cheaper. Moreover, the villagers believe that working on the farm is a good and acceptable way to keep healthy and to spend leisure time.

The decrease in population is serious. There are almost two hundred and thirty members of the village but less than fifty are still living in the village and most of them are over fifty. There are only two young children living at home and going to the

school by bus. No adolescents stay in the village. Some of them are studying in the schools in the downtown of Yaoji and of Huangpi and come back on weekends or on holidays. Some of them are working in more developed cities, particularly in Wuhan and cities in south-east China. They are working hard not only for themselves but also for their parents and families, to build new houses in their hometown, to try their best to settle down in cities for better lives, education and brighter futures. It is very common that more than half the houses are locked for almost the whole year, and some are abandoned and collapsed.

At Dacheng Tan I did not meet any serious religious adherents. Nevertheless, the villagers have their own system of faith and belief—a complex of ancestor worship, folk belief, Buddhism, Taoism, and politics, which leave traces on their hall altars in the living room. Normally there are a pair of candle, a incense burner, pictures of deceased parents, as well as a sculpture of Avalokitesvara, the most popular Buddha among Han-Chinese people on the altars. The householders fix a one meter wide, one and a half meter high picture on the wall of the hall, right above the altar, facing the main door. Generally, I saw pictures with a dragon dancing with a phoenix, or with one 百寿图 (Baishou tu; a painting with hundred artistic characters of “寿”)¹, which are conventional in Huangpi. At Dacheng Tan, paintings of the first generation of leaders of new China are popular—Chairman Mao, Mao and 周恩来总理 (Premier Zhou Enlai), or Mao, Zhou and Commander-in-chief 朱德 (Zhu De). Chairman Mao must be on the picture, taller and amiable. The old leaders of our new China have

¹ 寿 (Shou) means high age in China.

been mythicized and are acting as protectors displacing the traditional gods and goddess. Pictures of departed parents, decorated with artificial flowers, are always fixed below the big paintings or are placed on the altar. The natives hold rituals on the anniversaries of their death and important festivals—the Spring festival, the Tomb-sweeping Day, the Dragon-boat festival, and mid-Autumn festival. The ritual is the same: set the table with wares containing rice, meat and fish, with three cups of alcohol, sometimes with fresh fruits, set the burner with a pair of candles and three perfume sticks and light them, fire the paper money and then kneel down. They do not regard this ancestor worship as a kind of religion, but as a significant responsibility.

Buddhism and Taoism have their position in the system, though they are less important than ancestor worship. The natives only believe in some gods or goddesses, and in some very simple doctrines, but most of them do not make pilgrimages, and are not closely adherent to the religion. It is only 朱卫华 (Zhu Weihua), owner of a large wholesale store, who went to Mulan Mount every year during the pilgrim season. For other villagers, some do not believe in Buddhism and Taoism and are not interested in pilgrimage; on the other side, most of them have not enough money to pay for the tickets, to donate money, to buy yellow paper money, perfume sticks and candles, and gifts for the family, or to pay the transportation fees, all of which could amount to two hundred yuan in total. The villagers have an idea popular in Huangpi: 木兰山的菩萨应远不应近 (the Buddhas fulfill the wishes of the adherents from a long way, not from the neighbor), which they could not explain the origin. Moreover, because transportation is not convenient for them without private vehicles, they have to

transfer twice and endure the long waiting and crowded buses. The male villagers sometimes went to Mulan Mount to have fun or went to General Temple to have a look by motorcycle, which suggests that they were still interested in and paid attention to Mulan.

The Repertoire of the Native Group at Dacheng Tan

The repertoire of legend tellers at Dacheng Tan can be divided into two sets of topics that I will call “motifs.” The first set focuses on their village, Dacheng Tan, the place where Mulan was born and grew up, and the second set are about Mulan’s whole life, from birth to death. In their telling processes, the motifs of the two legend sets were often interwoven.

The legend topics about Dacheng Tan include:

1. Dacheng Tan was a flourishing town—双龙镇 (Shuanglong zhen; Two-dragon Town), which in the past had three doors. It was a trade centre, a local market and an important dock on the Sheshui River. Some informants also mentioned Guanyin Temple that was ruined in the 1960s.

2. Dacheng Tan has a good feng-shui² of two dragons playing with the pearl, which meant that a new emperor would appear at Dacheng Tan.

3. One day a visitor found that a black dog was barking on the roof and asked the villagers to kill it.³ (In some versions, around Guanyin Temple, the bamboos in which

² Feng-shui, 风水 (wind and water) in Chinese. It is a complicated discipline related to philology, ecology, geography, and folk religion. Its goal is to harmonize the world, between human being and environment and nature. For common people, Feng-shui means locations of buildings particularly the village and the tomb, that are supposed to influence the fortune of a family, a village or even a region. Normally, a good feng-shui means that an extraordinary person will appear there. The extraordinary person will be an emperor if there is something like a dragon, the symbol of emperor in Chinese culture.

³ No informant explained why the black dog should be killed, it may be because a black dog means that a bad

soldiers and horses were hiding split ahead of time.⁴)

4. Fog over the town cleared when the black dog was killed. The Emperor 朱元璋 (Zhu Yuanzhang)⁵ found the feng-shui here and ruined it by cutting a dragon in order to protect her throne.

5. The East Gate Bridge which still remains, is mysterious and strange events happen there.

The second set of legend topics, focusing on Zhu Mulan include:

6. Birth and families: Mulan's surname is Zhu. She was born in 朱家台子 (Zhuja taizi; The Foundation of the Zhu Family) in 河边湾 (Hebian wan, Beside-river Village) in the late Sui (581-618 AD) and early Tang Dynasties (618-907 AD). Her father 朱天禄 (Zhu Tianlu) was a general or a minister in the royal court.

7. Learning: She had two masters, 铁冠道人 (Tieguan daoren; Taoist Tieguan) from Mulan Mount and 丧吾和尚 (Sangwu heshang; Monk Sangwu). (In a few versions, she was practicing martial arts and was walking her horse on the south side of the village.)

8. Disguising as a man and going to the army: She went to the army in the place of her father who was old or ill. (Informants at Dacheng Tan seldom mentioned the motif of disguising as a man.)

9. Surname "Hua": She got the surname 花 (Hua) because Hua (meaning

thing would happen, or only that it made noise.

⁴ This is a very popular motif in Chinese folk tale and legend. The motif is: a strong and smart hero was going to overthrow the cruel emperor. The bamboos nearby the village split ahead of time for some reason. The villagers found that there were soldiers and horses inside the bamboos but all of them were dead. The hero lost his soldiers and horses so he could not succeed in the fight and finally was killed. The soldiers and horses would go out to help the hero if the bamboos split at the right time.

⁵ 朱元璋 (Zhu Yuanzhang) (1328-1398 AD), the first Emperor of Ming Dynasty (1368-1644 AD).

‘flowers’) represents the female or because her attendant’s (or another woman’s) surname was Hua and the two women were confused by others.

10. Accusing or slandering: She returned with triumph and asked to come back home. (In a few versions, the emperor offered to marry the princess to her but she declined after her military triumph.) She was accused of cheating the emperor and the royal court (or she was slandered that she had lost her chastity in the army and was pregnant).

11. Suicide: She cut open her belly to prove her loyalty or chastity. The blood flew one li (0.5k.m.) and this is how 一里河 (Yili he; One-li River) got its name.

12. Burial and memorial: She was buried in General Tomb on the northern foot of Mulan Mount. General Temple is in memory of her.

In most cases, those legends that are about the town are more impressed on the villagers’ minds and more important in their repertoire than those about Mulan, both of which can be categorized as local legend. Only four among twenty-one informants did not know any motif about the town, among whom three were from other villages. Two women about fifty years old, 姚引弟 (Yao Yindi) and 朱延芝 (Zhu Yanzhi), only knew something about the town and did not tell anything about Mulan. What do those legends about the town mean and what do the informants want to convey through them? The informants portray a flourishing town in the past and described how it was ruined by themselves so heavily that only a few relics remained. They also showed strong interest in the perfect feng-shui of two dragons playing with a pearl and how this was destroyed because they killed the black dog whose barking brings

fog to cover the town. Jacqueline Simpson studied two English local legends and revealed “religious beliefs or social and moral norms” that could be “conveyed directly or in a coded form” (Simpson 1983, 223) through “binary oppositions, with a mediating figure as hero and problem-solver” (Simpson 1983, 228). Legends about the old town and the loss of perfect feng-shui also have a binary structure: possession/loss, and their own mistakes caused the losses. The binary opposition implies a glorious past that remains only in memory and the frustrated present that they have to face, and reflects local people’s fears that their village is in decline, and that powerful outsiders want to steal their right to claim Mulan as their distinctive cultural heritage. Although those about the town seem unfamiliar with the following parts about Mulan, they established a real internal world for the Mulan story. The geographic space and features created “the center” of “this world” “at which the narrator and his audience are located” (Jason 1971, 141), as well as an internal landscape to reinforce and develop the believability of the legend (Tangerhlini 1990, 375-376).

I examined the linguistic structure of the Mulan legends in the repertoire at Dacheng Tan, which is based on Labov’s model that Bennett (1984) and Nicolaisen (1987) applied to legend study.

Table 1. Structural elements in the repertoire at Dacheng Tan

Element	Motif
Abstract (1)	Introduction
Orientation (1)	Birth and families
Complication (4)	Learning Disguising as a man and going to the army Surname “Hua” Accusing or slandering
Resolution (1)	Suicide

Coda (1)	Burial and memorial
Evaluation (1)	Attitudes towards the reality of Mulan

The informants emphasized that Mulan was from Dacheng Tan in Abstracts that bring the listener to the life of Mulan, then move to an Orientation about Mulan's birth and a Complication about her learning, going to the army, the surname "Hua," and the accusation or slander that causes her to commit suicide to prove her loyalty or chastity in the Resolution, and to a Coda in which she is buried in General Tomb and how the villagers build General Temple in memory of her. The informants mentioned existing relics about Mulan in the Coda to transition to the present and then to express their attitudes towards the reality of Mulan in their Evaluation.

Table 2. Narrative emphases of individual informants at Dacheng Tan

Informant	Abstract	Orientation	Complication	Resolution	Coda	Evaluation
A man at his meat store	×	×	×			×
A woman on her farm	×	×	×			
Chen Jiatai		×	×		×	×
Chen Fuguo	×	×	×	×	×	×
Dan Shirong	×	×	×	×	×	×
Hu Shengfu	×	×	×	×	×	×
Huang Shunzhou		×				
Li Chunsheng	×	×	×	×	×	
Li Runzhi			×	×	×	×
Li Xianyao	×	×	×	×	×	×
Liu Shunzhen	×	×	×			
Shen Wenfen		×		×		
Shen Wenzheng	×	×	×	×	×	×
Shen Wenyan	×	×	×	×		×
Shen Zhangqiang	×	×	×	×	×	×
Shen Zonghua			×		×	×
Zhang Xiaomei	×	×				×
Zheng Xianwen		×	×	×	×	×

Zhu Weihua		×	×		×	×
	12	17	16	11	11	14

The most repeated elements are Orientation in seventeen and Complication in sixteen informants' repertoires. All other elements are repeated more than ten times, Abstract appears in twelve tellings, Complication in ten, Resolution in eleven, Coda in twelve, and Evaluation in fourteen.

Table 3. Overview of structural patterns used by individual informants at Dacheng Tan

Number of Units	Informant	Structure
6	Chen Fuoguo, Hu Shengfu, Li Xian Yao, Shen Wenzheng, Shen Zhangqiang	All
5	Dan Shirong	Abstract+Orientation+Complication+Coda+Evaluation
	Li Chunsheng	Abstract+Orientation+Complication+Resolution+Coda
	Shen Wenyan	Abstract+Orientation+Complication+Resolution+Evaluation
	Zheng Xianwen	Orientation+Complication+Resolution+Coda+Evaluation
4	Chen Jiatai	Orientation+Complication+Coda+Evaluation
	Li Runzhi	Complication+Resolution+Coda+Evaluation
	Zhang Xiaomei	Abstract+Orientation+Complication+Evaluation
	Zheng Xianwen	Orientation+Resolution+Coda+Evaluation
3	An man at his meat store	Abstract+Orientation+Evaluation
	A woman on her farm, Liu Shunzhen	Abstract+Orientation+Complication
	Shen Zonghua	Complication+Coda+Evaluation
	Zhu Weihua	Orientation+ Coda+Evaluation
2	Shen Wenfen	Orientation+Resolution
1	Huang Shunzhou	Orientation

As the table shows, nine informants told five or even more elements, including the

core of the structure. Four have a reduced structure “Orientation – Complication,” one has a structure “Complication – Resolution,” and two have an “Orientation -- Resolution” structure. Two others have Orientation, and one has Complication, along with one or two elements, Coda and Evaluation, on the periphery. “Orientation – Complication” appears in thirteen repertoires, which indicated that Mulan’s birth and life before her suicide are considered core elements in the legend.

Analysis and Observation

The feng-shui of two dragons playing with the pearl of Dacheng Tan is the most repeated subject in the repertoire, and it appears in eleven of twenty-three informants’ tellings and always as the first or the second legend in their telling. 谌文正, a seventy-five year old man, is a respected expert on Mulan in the village, and an enthusiastic and knowledgeable informant. His version is the most detailed one:

It was told like that before, you know? A family feed a god, was the one right on the side of the river, and supposed to be Zhu Mulan’s family. It took place in late Song dynasty and in the early Ming dynasty. Zhu Hongwu was on their throne in Nanjing. He found that it was foggy here. A dog was barking on the roof of the house every day. It went there every early morning, and did not bark at night. A relative came here and said: “Why does the dog go up to the roof and bark like that? There something wrong could take place in your family. It will bring trouble to your family!” That was a purely black dog. No matter which dog is not 100% black. It was 100% black. Then the dog was beaten to death. Immediately the bamboos in Guanyin Temple split. The human beings and horses in the bamboos came to death. This is the case. The old talked about this before, you know?

It was said that an emperor would appear here. The emperor cut the two dragons of Dacheng Tan. Zhu Hongwu came here and said that an emperor would appear, so he cut that place, just the gap of the Small Stockade near the river. It is he who cut it like that.

Nowadays, there is a road passing through the gap. (October 11th, 2011, interview in his house)

谌文正 (Shen Wenzheng) told this version among a group of six men who were talking about their work on the farm, their memories about their village, and the legends about Mulan, in the evening of October 11th, 2012 in front of the door of 谌文焱's (Shen Wenyan's) house. Wenyan, middle-aged man, runs his tiny meat shop in his house where the villagers like to get together to talk or enjoy sunshine. It was at the end of the discussion when they moved to the topic of the black dog. Wenzheng tried to correct the temporal vagueness: "It took place after the period of General Mulan, in the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644 A.D.) when 朱洪武 (Zhu Hongwu, 1328-1398 A.D.)⁶ was on the throne." The younger brother of 谌文焱 (Shen Wenyan) interrupted with a scientific explanation: "It was foggy at the day break, and at this moment, a dog came. It was a natural phenomenon, a natural phenomenon, not such a story." Wenzheng followed him and told the complete and detailed legend given above.

When he ended his telling, 文焱 (Wenyan) added a popular saying "Thousands of people removed the earth, and ten thousand people removed the earth, slower than a steel nail fixed on it." It means that in order to cut the dragon to break the feng-shui, thousands of people were ordered to remove the earth from 小寨 (Xiao Zhai; the Small Stockade). However, they failed because the earth was growing more and more. The earth stopped growing when a steel nail was fixed there. And they believed that

⁶ 朱洪武 (Zhu Hongwu) was 朱元璋 (Zhu Yuanzhang) (1328-1398 A.D.), the first Emperor of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644 A.D.).

red water which was actually the blood of the dragon had been found there.

Not only the feng-shui of this place, but also the flourishing of the town in early days was frequently repeated. It was mentioned several times in one informant's telling process. Normally the prescription was like this: Dacheng Tan was once a flourishing place. It was a big town with three gates—the east gate, the west gate and the south gate (Shen Wenzheng, October 5th, 2011, interview in his house). In interviews, or chats and casual talk, the villagers always talked about it. Both their pride and regret were obvious. It is easy to see this legend as a contemporary reflection on the present-day decline of the village.

The East-Bridge Gate is a relic which has at least nine mysterious legends in the local repertoire. These legends involve propositions that: those who did harm to the old bridge fell ill and died, but that good villagers were not hurt at all when they fell from the bridge. 朱卫华 (Zhu Weihua), a sixty year old man, narrated a legend that told how some local people tried to dismantle the statues in it and then something happened to them. He said:

We have General Temple here. The tomb has never been opened. We made pilgrimages to Mulan Mount when I was young. On the way home, we went to General Temple to fire perfume sticks. There is a pair of ginkgo trees in the front, and 阎王殿 (Yanwang dian; The Hall of Yanwang (the king of the hell) is on the southern side. The statuary of General Mulan was in the main hall. During the Cultural Revolution, some people tried to tear down it to break the superstitions. Later something happened to them. The same thing happened to a few people who dismantled Guanyin Temple. One person sold a bronze mirror from the temple. At first, he had acne on the nose. He did not recover even after he spent all his money. At last, he was dead. Although they are superstitions, they are reasonable, and a little mysterious.

When we were rebuilding the East-Bridge Gate, a labourer removed an old

rock. Later, he lost his life. However, the villagers were fine when they fell down. Then hands were hands, and the feet were feet.⁷ (October 5th, 2011, interview in his house)

Weihua's youngest sister 朱延芝 (Zhu Yanzhi), provided me with four legends on this topic while we talked late at night in the hall. She told that:

This bridge! Whoever fell down, they were fine. Once a married couple and their bicycle fell down, both of them and the bicycle were all right.

A naughty boy was walking, with a handkerchief on his face, he fell down. Wow, he was standing and his legs were fine.

One time, a bus was full with passengers. The driver was not good at driving and could not control it on such a narrow bridge. It was very dangerous. It stopped on the bridge and nothing wrong happened.

There was a stonemason. He was very strong. He found the bridge was old and was afraid that it would crumble and was dangerous. There were a few huge stone piers of the bridge. He tried to fix them. But he covered the dragon on the pier carelessly. Finally, he lost one eye. It was a mysterious bridge! (October 13th, 2011, interview in her house)

They believe these legends and told them as true. The East-gate is only two or three meters high and there is grass on the dry river bed, so it is very likely that people who fell down from the bridge would be fine. That a person got ill after he/she did something wrong could be a coincidence. These events related to the belief that the bridge, the relic of the old town, is mysterious, grew to legends. The villagers reflect their resentment of outsiders who try to tell them their beliefs are “superstitions,” and try to emphasize that their village is still extraordinary during our conversation.

Compared with those about Mulan, the legends about Dacheng Tan are more detailed, exact and vivid. For the villagers, their community was real and tangible, and the relics were there before 1969. Some tellers did not know stories about Mulan,

⁷ This traditional phrase means they had no injuries.

but everyone could tell something about their village, Dacheng Tan, such as 谌文焱 (Shen Wenyan) and 谌宗华 (Shen Zonghua), two men born in the 1950s.

Within the local repertoire, a particular formula is often used to begin a narrative: “Mulan had the surname Zhu. She was born in the village on the side of the river. The Foundation of the house is still there” (Shen Wenzheng, October 5th, 2011, interview in his house). Most of the informants do not know other more detailed personal information about Mulan. Only a few narrators mentioned her family. 谌文正 (Shen Wenzheng) and 谌章强 (Shen Zhangqiang) knew that her father was 朱天禄 (Zhu Tianlu) or 朱寿甫 (Zhu Shoufu) who was a general in the royal court. Wen Zhen added: “Zhu Mulan was born on the side of 潞水 (She shui; She River) in the late Sui Dynasty (581-618 AD) and early Tang Dynasty (618-907 AD)” (October 5th, 2011, interview at his house).

The above version of the legend about Mulan’s biography was always told to me as history and truth by the tellers of Dacheng Tan. The tellers differentiate truth and fiction clearly in the telling process. A visitor in Wenzheng’s house told:

The history is too long, with thousands of years. It is too long to recall. It is mostly said that Zhu Mulan was born in Zhujia Taizi (the Foundation of the Zhu Family) on the side of the river. Her father was Zhu Shoufu and her mother passed away very early.

In legends, according to legends, she learned martial arts from Taoist Tieguan from Mulan Mount. Later, she went to the army in the place of her father. Her father was a general of the royal court in the late Sui Dynasty (581-618 AD). It came to Tang Dynasty when she was born. She went to the army because her father was ill. She was eighteen or twenty-four at that time. There is a poem about her, “Tsiek tsiek and again tsiek tsiek, Mu Lan weaves, facing the door.” This could be an interlude.

She was from here. She was studying at Guanyin Temple before, right close.

It had been destroyed. Later she followed Taoist Tieguan to Mulan Mount. Her master was Taoist Tieguan. But it could not be proved. (October 5th, 2011, interview in Wenzheng's house)

For him, that Mulan was born in the Zhu family of Dacheng Tan is history, but that Mulan learned from 铁冠道人 (Taoist Tieguan) on Mulan Mount is legend, which means it was not history, not truth; it cannot be proved but could be real.

As a native, Mulan practiced martial arts there. According to 谌文正 (Shen Wenzheng) and 谌宗华 (Shen Zonghua), she was doing it on the north side of the village, in a quiet and isolated location on the north side of the Big Stockade. Wenzheng named it 饮马湾 (Yinma wan, the Horse-drinking-water Bay), and only he said that Mulan was walking her horse on the top of the hill—跑马岭 (Paoma ling; the Horse-running Hill) where Xinjian village is located at present. Others did not mention this.

Normally, the natives at and around Dacheng Tan call Mulan “Zhu Mulan,” and only two explained why she became “花木兰 (Hua Mulan).” Wenzheng's nephew explained that females are flowers, and 花 (Hua, flowers) represented the female, so she became 花木兰 (Hua Mulan). Wenyan had another legend, “the surname Hua could be from her attendant whose surname was Hua, and they were confused by the others” (October 13, 2011, interview in his house).

The local legends about Mulan's death were familiar: she cut open her belly to prove her loyalty or chastity. In the repertoire of the tellers at Dacheng Tan, this part was not as important as those details about her birth. Fifteen tellers did not know it or only recalled it after I asked them specially. Their telling is very simple, which could

be summarized to two episodes: cutting open her belly, and the blood flowing one li.

Shen Wenyan recalled “it is there where she cut open her belly” when we talked about why 一里河 (Yili he, One-li River) got its name. In most narrations, the teller did not tell why she committed suicide, and just told the above two simple episodes. Only a few men added the reason in the legend for Mulan’s death: 谌章强 (Shen Zhangqiang), 陈甫国 (Chen Fuguo), 胡生富 (Hu Shengfu) and 郑先文 (Zheng Xianwen). Zhangqiang heard the story from his mother and other old women, and he had a version with more details and emotions than other villagers:

What’s her death? In terms of her death, it could be, could be a little of history. I have heard of this. In ancient times, women were not permitted to go out, were they? Their feet were wrapped. The old talked about this. The girls with wrapped feet, could not go out of the door. She went to the army and then came back. It was very feudal at that time. Some people could talk about that this girl, as a soldier, must have some bad things. They were always talking about this, talking about that. There was a legend. I heard it from my grandma. She (his grandma) was talking about this with a few old women in our house before. She (Mulan) was very grief. I could not talk about this with you, a young girl. They said that she was pregnant. She had no way and cut open her belly. She (Mulan) cut open her belly herself. This is the legend. What’s the evidence? The blood flew away one li, one li in the river. Why is there a village named 一里河 (Yili he, One-li River)? This is the reason. This is what I have heard from them. It proved that she had no baby. It was a slander. This is a legend. The blood flew one li, flew one li in the river. There is a village named 一里河 (Yili he, One-li River) in lower reaches. This is the legend of 一里河 (Yili he, One-li River) handed down from the old. They talked liked this, but I don’t know if it was true. Whatever, the legend likes this. It is not to say that this woman died like this. The aim is to prove her chastity. Definitely, she had no such a thing (baby). (October 12th, 2011, interview in his house)

In the above version, there was slander about Mulan that she lost her chastity and was pregnant which could be popular here because two women, 李闰之 (Li Runzhi)

and his wife 张小梅 (Zhang Xiaomei) who were sitting beside agreed with him.

郑先文 (Zheng Xianwen)'s version is different, in which Mulan was accused of cheating the Emperor. In his version, she still disguised as a man, did not reveal her real gender and declined the marriage with the princess before she returned home. Xianwen is an old man who likes reading and sharing his knowledge. His telling was very close to the old book he read before, but added a new detail that the emperor wanted to marry the princess to her.

At Dacheng Tan, most of the natives confirmed that Mulan cut open her belly there and the blood flew to 一里河 (Yili he, One-li River), which is different from the legends on Mulan Mount and around General Temple that Mulan did it at 仙河店 (Xianhedian; Celestial-river Village) and the blood flew backwards to One-li River. Among the tellers only two old men, 陈甫国 (Chen Fuguo) and 胡生富 (Hu Shengfu) told versions in which the above two details were the same as those on Mulan Mount and around General Temple. There are still different details in their versions. In Chen Fuguo's version, Mulan was accused of being against the royal court, and in Shengfu's, Mulan got along well with 丧吾和尚 (Monk Sangwu)'s son and then the slander that she was pregnant spread.

The tellers at Dacheng Tan know that she was buried in General Tomb and that General Temple was in memory of her and many are interested in the two relics far away from their village because they are closely related to Mulan; for instance, 谌文焱 (Shen Wenyan) often drove his motor-bicycle there to have a look. However, they could not answer why Mulan cut open her belly at Dacheng Tan but was buried in

General Tomb.

Comparing the two parts of the repertoire, those legends about Dacheng Tan itself are more detailed, more important, more active than those about Mulan. 朱卫华(Zhu Weihua), 姚引弟 (Yao Yindi) could not tell any complete or detailed legend about Mulan. What they could recall is just General Mulan. The thirteen tellers living at Dacheng Tan were more pleased and more ready to tell legends about the town in the distant past, among whom 谌文正(Shen Wenzheng) and 谌文焱 (Shen Wenyan) told many. Those narratives about Mulan were short and simple, incomplete and fragmentary.

The story 朱家台子 (Zhujia taizi; the Foundation of the Zhu Family) only appears in the repertoire of the tellers in Dacheng Tan, where it functions as a relic of a local woman, and tangible historical evidence. Its existence strengthens the local beliefs about Mulan and her legends.

The Women and their Repertoire at Dacheng Tan

During my fieldwork at Dacheng Tan I talked with six women in one-to-one interviews and identified four tellers in group discussions. There were also a few women who gave the excuse that they knew nothing and declined an interview. In comparison with the women in villages around General Temple, the women at Dacheng Tan paid more attention to Mulan, and were more willing to take part in interviews as well as the group discussions during the fieldwork. I met and identified more female tellers here, though not only the men but the women themselves did not think that Mulan culture was their business. For instance, 谌文正(Shen Wenzheng),

an older man, explained: “the women are focusing on the family, not interested in these, and they could not talk about such serious topics,” moreover “it has nothing to do with them, without any profit” (October 13th, 2011, interview in Wenyan’s house). However, why were the women here more interested in Mulan? The only thing that connects them with Mulan culture directly are the continuous visits and investigations in their home village, which have influenced their lives and may continue to do so in the future. The telling of 姚引弟 (Yao Yindi), a woman over fifty, includes two main subjects: those about the investigation of the German couple hired by the Wuhan government to identify possible tourism sites, which did not bring any further action; and those about the two dragons playing with the pearl. Undoubtedly, the visible relics contribute to the preservation and transmission of Mulan legends.

At the beginning of my contact with them, the women here did not show a strong confidence in telling stories about Mulan. They said that they did not have the opportunities to become acquainted with Mulan and her culture. On the other hand, the old men are popularly identified as the legend tellers. These could be the reasons why women had no confidence. Although they were not confident tellers, they did know and could tell something. Each woman whom I asked told me something more or less. At least, each of them knew Mulan was called Zhu Mulan and was born here, actually in the village right on the side of the river. Some, such as 淡 shirong⁸ (Dan Shirong), a woman over eighty, who suffered from a stroke of apoplexy a few years ago, knew more details. At the beginning, I chatted with her: what her supper was, if

⁸ Lady Dan cannot read or write, so she did not tell me how to write the two words.

the surname of her family was 湛 (Shen), where she was from and what her maiden name was, and so forth. She was very friendly and answered such questions. Later, with a slight hope I asked her if she knew something about Mulan. She knew General Mulan but then suggested that I ask others because she couldn't remember much. Naturally she moved her topic to what she knew about Mulan. I selected and ordered her legend details together logically from her scattered telling and repetition of "I don't know clearly," "I can't tell completely," and "I forgot." General Mulan, "this woman was from the Zhu family on the side of the river and her surname was Zhu." "Zhu Mulan, I heard that she was from the side of the river," "there was no son or something else (in the family)," so "her father and mother (had no choice) and (let) her go there (to join the army)." "Hua Mulan, this Hua Mulan was the only child in the family, no son. Later, she went to the army. "That's what I had heard" "from others" "when I was walking and crossing the river." (October 12th, 2011, interview in the front of her house)

In comparison with those stories about Mulan that were regarded as history, supernatural legends about the place where they were living gained more of the villagers' attention and interest, and better represented their ability in telling legends. 黄顺洲 (Huang Shunzhou), a woman at the age of seventy-four began her short telling with "Mulan was from the lower part"⁹ and immediately and naturally moved to the magical things—the huge round stone on the west side of the river. "That stone is supernatural and magical! The stone was not submerged in the flood at all even

⁹ The villagers living in 新建村 (Xinjian cun, New-built Village) called the part on the former address "底下 (Dixia, The Lower Part)."

when the water rushed into the street of the village. Wasn't it Mulan who blessed us?"

(October 12, 2011) For her, Mulan was a protector of the village. 朱延芝 (Zhu Yanzhi), 谌文焱 (Shen Wenyan)'s wife and 朱卫华 (Zhu Weihua)'s younger sister, knew many anecdotes about the East-gate Bridge and was excited to share them with me in a chat after supper. Besides legends about the East-gate Bridge that constituted half of her telling, she told something about the foundation stones of the Zhu Family's house that she had heard from her mother, as well as the legend about the black dog and breaking feng-shui of the village.

The women of Dacheng Tan were more pleased and eager to participate in group-discussion—sitting in a circle to listen, and sometimes interrupting, which indicated that they had strong interest in the topic of Mulan. This rarely happened among the women around General Temple. 张小梅 (Zhang Xiaomei), 李闰之 (Li Runzhi), 柳顺真 (Liu Shunzhen), 谌文芬 (Shen Wenfen) and two unknown women had been identified in two group discussions. The first one happened in 谌章强 (Shen Zhangqiang)'s hall. He and his wife, Zhang Xiaomei, stayed at home and were interviewed on a rainy day when they could not work on their farm. Xiaomei knew Zhu Mulan only as a local woman from the low part of the village. During the whole discussion, she was sitting there, listening, asking, and sometimes arguing with her husband and whispering with 李闰之 (Li Runzhi), an old lady who came in later. She was curious why Henan stole the title of "hometown of Mulan," the details of the legend of breaking the geomantic omen, and the origin of the 一里河 (Yili He; One-li River) and so forth. The discussion was a process of not only listening but

also studying and debating. Li Runzhi, an old lady at the age of eighty-two, came in and sat down in the hall and then participated in the group. She knew more than Xiaomei about the destroyed city, about the two dragons, and about Mulan: “I just heard from the old. What did the old speak? At that times, (the parents) had only one girl. The father was ill when he was called-up. The daughter displaced the father. That is the case” (October 12th, 2011).

Three female tellers were identified in the biggest discussion group in 李先耀 (Li Xian Yao)’s house in One-li River on October 14th, 2010—湛文芬 (Chen Wenfen), 柳顺真 (Liu Shunzhen), and 李春生 (Li Chunsheng)’s younger sister.¹⁰ Wenyan drove me to visit Li Xian Yao and his wife 湛文芬 (Shen Wenfen) and, by coincidence, we met a few members of their families who had come back from Wuhan to see them and returned after the discussion. Xian Yao, an enthusiastic old farmer, was very pleased to narrate, and the relatives were also interested in this topic, so we sat in a circle to talk. Xian Yao was the focus of the circle, whose story was similar to those I heard at Dacheng Tan, but the women’s performance attracted my attention.

柳顺真 (Liu Shunzhen), a middle-aged woman, sitting to the right of me, was listening absorbedly and interrupted sometimes. I asked her to tell and she said:

What I heard was Zhu Mulan and Hua Mulan. My mother-in-law was always talking about them. She was the only child, having no sister-in-law at all. I heard from my mother-in-law before. Hua Mulan was from Zhu family of Dacheng Tan. Her father was ill or old, so she displaced her father to go to the army. Afterwards,

¹⁰ She left before I asked her name. The others answered “you don’t need to know her name” when I asked her husband and older brother later, which indicates that they did not believe her capability in telling the Mulan legends.

the emperor wanted to marry the princess with her. (October 14th, 2011, interview in Li Xian Yao's house)

The source of her legends was her now deceased mother-in-law from Dacheng Tan, who was very respected, a competent and knowledgeable woman without any formal education. She had listened but without much attention, so that now she could remember and tell only a few details. As a woman without high education, she also lacked confidence to speak in front of others, particularly men. I encouraged her to continue, and as others looked at her, she smiled shyly and repeated what she told earlier.

谌文芬 (Chen Wenfen), the hostess of the house, sat in the chair on the left of Shunzhen. She was from Dacheng Tan, and Wenzheng called her “elder sister,” which means they were cousins. Like most women in rural areas of China, she kept silent during the discussion. I asked her to narrate when others had nothing new to tell. Her versions of each legend were always short, summed up in a phrase or a sentence; they were simple and without many details. She knew Mulan's surname was Zhu, from the Zhu family of Dacheng Tan, and she knew about the black dog, as well as the soldiers and horses in the bamboo.

A woman came in while we were talking about General Temple and asked if the ginkgo trees were still living. The trees had been impressive in her memory because they were very magical and mysterious; they began to bleed when the local people were chopping them down during the Cultural Revolution. Like other women, she was interested in supernatural phenomena and related legends. Unfortunately, she left a few minutes later before I could ask her to tell more of what she knew.

Those women taking part in the group discussion consistently acted as listeners; sometimes they agreed with the male members in the group through simple “yes, that is the case”; and by simple repetitions. Normally, their interruptions and desire to continue discussion were stopped by the men. Always they felt too nervous to tell more when I encouraged them to continue.

In rural areas of China, the women still follow traditional gender roles: taking their responsibilities indoors—doing housework and taking care of all the family; their activities and visions have been limited to the family. Mulan and her legends, interviews and investigations, are subjects for outdoors, rather than their business. It is very common and considered polite that the women keep silent when men are talking with visitors. I tried to talk with 张小梅 (Zhang Xiaomei) and 李闰之 (Li Runzhi) when I met them later, but they did not want to say anything and said that others had already told. I sensed that the female tellers who were identified in group discussion could tell more about Mulan than I had heard in one-to-one interviews. I think that the group discussion motivated them to recall those stories about Mulan which lay deep in their memories, or motivated them to compare others' telling with their own memories and then verbally agree or to tell what they knew that was different from others. Moreover, the other women in the group discussion made them more relaxed and gave them an excuse to stay and then to speak out. I could not imagine that only one woman could say something in a group discussion.

The repertoire of the women seems very small; it appears to be smaller than that of the men. Both the men and the women gave the same familiar explanation for this.

谌文正(Shen Wenzheng) said, “The women are focusing on housework, [they] do not talk about them [Mulan stories] and they cannot talk.” Moreover, “They often do not pay attention or forget immediately” because “those [stories] are not related with them, no any profit” (October 5, 2011, interview in his house). Yao Yindi said, “The women knew little about the out-world, and they were weaving indoors, paid no attention to the out-world” and suggested that I “ask the old male” (Oct 11, 2011, interview on her farm).

From their narration and their chats with me, I found a few clues about women’s storytelling. 张小梅 (Zhang Xiaomei), 黄顺洲 (Huang Shunzhou) mentioned the chatting between the women who were talking about Mulan in the past. 谌章强 (Shen Zhangqiang) recalled a women’s group talking in the hall. His stress on Mulan’s small wrapped feet attracted my notice and finally I found that this detail came from women’s telling. The difficulties that she overcame as a woman in feudal China, particularly the wrapped feet, could be an important topic in women’s telling. Except for the wrapped feet, I did not find many different legends about Mulan among the women at Dacheng Tan.

The Sources of the Repertoire

According to my investigation, except for three informants, 郑先文 (Zheng Xianwen), 谌文正(Shen Wenzheng), and 谌章强 (Shen Zhangqiang), no one had read written sources about Mulan. 郑先文 (Zheng Xianwen), a seventy year-old man from 郑家湾 (Zhengjia wan; Zhengjiawan Village), a close village, is the only one who had read the old book about Mulan at Dacheng Tan. I asked each informant if

he/she read or heard of old books and new publications about Mulan. No one mentioned any of the old books that were often identified as the source of the Mulan legend on Mulan Mount and around General Temple. 谌文正(Shen Wenzheng) kept this in mind and began to ask others, and then introduced Xianwen. Xianwen came directly to the hall of 谌文焱 (Shen Wenyan)'s house where I was waiting for him on the morning of October 15th. At the beginning, he described the old book:

It was an old book. The pages were very thin. The words were written from top to bottom. A few decades ago, a friend liked reading such old books. I saw it and later borrowed it to read. It was lost during the borrowing and lending among people. We tried to search for it a few times, but failed. One person came here to do research and found that what I knew was familiar with what he read from a book. The book was three to four cm thick and twenty or thirty cm long. (October 15th, 2011, interview in Wenyan's house)

Unlike the legends told by the informants from Dacheng Tan, he separated Zhu Mulan and Hua Mulan clearly: Hua Mulan was from Henan and Zhu Mulan was from here. The ending of Mulan in his version is also different:

ZJ: Why did she kill herself?

Xianwen: Cheating the emperor! She made great contributions, so someone envied and wanted to do harm to her. Someone accused that she was cheating the emperor. She did not recover her gender until she came back home. She did not recover when the emperor wanted to marry the princess to her. Cheating the emperor was a very serious crime, and all the families and relatives would be killed! (October 15th, 2011, interview in Wenyan's house)

Later he told a legend of Hua Mulan from another old book—*隋唐演义* (*Suitang yanyi; The Romance of the Sui and Tang Dynasties*). At the end of the interview he recalled the title of the old book, *朱木兰传* (*Zhu mulan zhuan; The Romance of Zhu Mulan*) or *木兰传* (*Mulan zhuan; The Romance of Mulan*). Unlike Wenzheng, he

liked reading but not listening to the old people, so he admitted that all that he told was from written tradition, not from oral tradition. He borrowed the book from a friend in another neighboring village in 1961 or 1962 and looked it through. Later it was lent to another friend. This book was lost during its circulation among the villagers and perhaps was burned during the Cultural Revolution¹¹.

In comparison with the versions of the other informants from Dacheng Tan, 郑先文 (Zheng Xianwen)'s legends about Zhu Mulan and Hua Mulan are more complete and fluent. Besides 谌文正(Shen Wenzheng)'s interruptions, his telling is coherent, without many hesitations, rethinking, or inconsistencies.

There must have been a book that was popular before the Cultural Revolution, since two tellers, 谌文正(Shen Wenzheng) and 朱卫华(Zhu Weihua), mentioned it. Shen Wenzheng recalled the title as 木兰将军 (*Mulan jiangjun; General Mulan*) or 木兰传 (*Mulan zhuan; The Romance of Mulan*). Zhu Weihua could not remember the title at all. It seemed that the old book *Mulan Zhuan*, did not influence the repertoire directly or obviously. Except for 郑先文 (Zheng Xianwen), no other teller here read any old books.

谌文正(Shen Wenzheng) had read a few publications about Mulan but he could not recall their titles. Wenzheng's enjoyment of reading makes him unique among the villagers who do not have much formal education. He spent some money to buy books and magazines every month in downtown Yaoji Town. Every day he reads for almost one hour before sleeping, which has been his habit in the last few decades. He

¹¹ The Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), brought chaos in politics, society, and culture all around the country. Traditional culture, including religion, suffered devastating damage.

has collected hundreds of books and magazines and has placed them in two cabinets in his bedroom as his important treasures. After supper on October 13th, he came to see me with a book in his hand—*木兰烽火* (*Mulan Fenghuo; The Wars on Mulan Mount*)—a book about the history of soldiers of the Red Army fighting on Mulan Mount and in the peripheral area during the 1930s. This book is the only one about Mulan that he could find among his collection. Nevertheless, he admitted that he had read a few books about Mulan before, which were brought or distributed by the officials from Yaoji Town who knew he was interested in the topic. His answer was very simple and affirmative, “There is no difference from what we are talking about,” and “all of them identified Dacheng Tan [as the hometown of Mulan],” which “could not be changed.” His answer represented his focus on Dacheng Tan as the hometown of Mulan that has been officially recognized and he believes what he knows to be historical and real. Although he did not provide the titles of the books, I think that they were recent publications. Although it is not obvious, the influence of such books could be identified during our contacts. He pointed out the name “Hua Azhen,” which no other informants here knew, and he had learned it from a book.

There were two natives who had access to new publications. 谌章强 (Shen Zhangqiang) mentioned a book about the history of Huangpi when he was talking about the competition between Henan and Huangpi, “in order to win the competition to claim Mulan [as a native], many people investigated here. After the investigations, a book of Huangpi history had been written. Later I got one. However, my children lost it”(October 12th, 2011, interview in his house).

He could not remember the title of the book, and did not point out which parts of his telling had come from this book. Nevertheless, he admitted that what he told was from the old people who handed the stories down through generations. According to clues in his telling, I conjectured that the book could be *木兰文化新论* (*Mulan wenhua xinlun*; New Perspectives to Mulan Culture) 或 *黄陂通史* (*Huangpi tongshi*; *The General History of Huangpi*). He was the only informant who had read recently published books about Mulan during my fieldwork in rural areas in Huangpi.

Generally the traces of the influence of recent publications were not obvious, or many. I tend to believe that the legend repertoires of Wenzheng and Zhangqiang were mostly based on the oral tradition of this region. Wenzheng recalled how he knew them: “When I was pretty young, the old people liked talking about them, particularly on a summer night. They got together and were talking. I stood by and listened. There was a 如爹 (Rudie, Grandpa Ru) before. He liked talking, traveled many places, even Henan. Before, the old people were talking more, but no one paid attention” (October 5, 2011, interview in his house). Zhangqiang and 李闰之 (Li Runzhi) affirmed that Grandpa Ru was a very active teller.

At Dacheng Tan, the old books *木兰传* (*Mulan zhuan*; *The Romance of Mulan*) and *隋唐演义* (*Suitang yanyi*; *The Romance of Sui and Tang Dynasties*) must have been popular in the past, but do not appear to influence legend telling at present. The newer publications entered into a few tellers’ repertoires but are not significant influences either. Mulan legends at Dacheng Tan are mainly from oral tradition.

The natives' attitudes towards Mulan and Her Legends

Beyond my expectation, the villagers of Dacheng Tan were unwilling to talk about Mulan and her legends. Normally, their responses to my questions were similar, “Is there anything that deserves telling?” and “It has been stolen by Henan.” My first informant at Dacheng Tan—谌文正(Shen Wenzheng)—spoke to me like that at the beginning of our conversation on October 5, 2011. He asked me to sit down and gave me a cup of tea, and then he returned to silence in his chair with his walking stick in his right hand. He looked very serious, cool, without any smile on his face, without any warm welcoming words. His nephew made similar response: “It’s boring to tell and nothing is worth telling.” I began to introduce my research and emphasized that my goal of fieldwork at Dacheng Tan was to record and represent what they were talking about to the outside world. It seemed that my explanation moved him to begin to explain why they were not happy to be interviewed. They have been bothered by the frequent and continuous visits and investigations from national, provincial, and local government, academic institutes, as well as mass media in the past decade. Additionally, their hope of exploring and developing the local economy and tourism as a result of the interest in Mulan was not fulfilled at all and they had lost patience and hope. Wenzheng changed his attitude when he found that I was different from other investigators in that I was going to carry on serious and strict fieldwork, not superficial investigation. During the fieldwork at Dacheng Tan he helped me enthusiastically. This kind of change was very common at Dacheng Tan. The solution was simple—moving people by patience and pure-heartedness.

Every villager whom I met and asked did know of Mulan and that she was born here. This was true for even some of those who did not accept my invitation to be interviewed giving the excuse that they didn't know anything. Their participation and contributions in group discussion during the interviews with others, or in casual conversations, attested their knowledge. Women, as a sub-group, who were not recognized as Mulan legend tellers among the narrators in the villages around the General Temple, were recognized at Dacheng Tan, though their repertoires were smaller and their legends were more fragmentary and simple.

Except for a few informants, most tellers affirmed that Mulan was born in the Zhu family in 河边湾 (Hebian wan, Beside-river Village). Normally, they used a visible relic as evidence—朱家台子 (Zhuja taizi; The Foundation of the Zhu Family) which is still there and has been protected as the private emblem of posterity by the Zhu family. This element in the legend has always been the beginning of the telling. For instance, Shen Wenzheng said: "Mulan's surname was Zhu. There is a tiny pavilion on the side of the river. 河边湾 (Hebian wan, Beside-river Village)! There is still a house."

The evidence is convincing. Firstly, the Foundation is still standing here. Secondly, the Zhu family has members living here. Thirdly, they have their own arguments, "I'm thinking that she was real. We were talking like this very long ago, before these things.¹² I had heard about her when I was pretty young" (Hu Shengfu, October 13th, 2011, interview in his house). Even those informants who know few

¹² "These things" mean all the actions related to Mulan from governments at different levels and mass media, such as the competition for recognition as her birthplace, the visits and investigations, as well as the popularization and exploration.

legends about Mulan could retell this detail clearly and affirmatively. Dan Shirong confirmed that “that, that was from the Zhu family on the side of the river, her surname was Zhu, right on the side of the river, that woman” (October 12th, 2011, interview in front of her house).

Besides this simple introduction, they knew little about her family except for her father, the era when she was living, her experience and comrades in the army, and other information about her life story. Going to the army in the place of her father and masquerading as a man are just mentioned briefly. Another significant topic, Mulan’s death, was not important in the repertoire of this group. 谌文正 (Shen Wenzheng) did not tell this legend in the first interview and answered “I don’t know” when I asked further. However, I found amazingly that he did know the legend of 一里河 (Yili he; one-li river) in which Mulan cut open her belly. The tellers did not declare their judgment of the reality of this legend, but regardless whether they believe it or not, no one can deny the existence of the village—One-li River Village.

Among the villagers of Dacheng Tan and a few from neighboring villages, only two claimed that they did not believe in the reality of Mulan and her legends. Both of them were not willing to be interviewed formally, but were pleased to take part in group discussions and gave me help. I don’t know their names because they did not want to tell me at all. The first one was 谌文焱 (Shen Wenyan)’s younger brother. The first time when I noticed him was when a few neighbors were discussing my fieldwork and what they knew in front of Wenyan’s house. Wenyan’s younger brother squatted in the front of Wenyan’s neighbor’s house, three meters away from the circle.

He kept silent while he was listening. When the topic moved to the legend of the dark dog and the heavy fog, his explanation from a scientific perspective caught my interest: “It was foggy at the day break, and at this moment, a dog came. It was a natural phenomenon, a natural phenomenon, not such a story.” I met him twice later and tried to talk with him. He was very dismissive and answered “Who knows” and “I can’t talk about this because I didn’t see.” Wenyan told me that his younger brother was working in Wuhan and spent the hot summer in the village.

The other one was an old man holding a store in the hall of his house in which ready-made clothes and meat were available. He did not want to tell anything about Mulan and said: “No, there is no man older than me. This could take place not one generation, not two generations before, you know? My grandpa could be over two hundred years old if he was still alive. He didn’t know. Who can be asked? He passed away. He didn’t know even if he was alive. Actually, no one see.” (October 13th, 2011, interview in front of his store). His answer “legends are nonsense,” and his impassive reactions represented his attitude towards Mulan and her legends, disbelieving them all though he had heard of her in childhood and must have known something. This old man had worked in Huangpi and returned home after retirement two decades ago.

If we imagine a continuum between belief and disbelief, the above two natives are on the pole of unbelieving, while two others are on the middle of the spectrum, 谌文焱 (Shen Wenyan) and 谌宗华 (Shen Zonghua). Both knew about Mulan and some of her legends but did not reveal their attitudes explicitly.

Shen Zonghua’s explanation is about economics:

We don't investigate it. Regardless she was real or not, we did not think about. What we are thinking day and night is food. I'm not interested in it...It is meaningless. However, if developing here, our villagers will have some advantages. A lot of money is needed. I should be better if our city was not dismantled. (October 14th, 2011, interview on the side of She River)

Both Zonghua and Wenyan were born in the 1950s, younger than other old informants. They were not farmers during their lifetime. Zonghua left the village to go to the army in 1974 and then began to work in Wuhan from the 1980s. Although he stays in the village, Wenyan has many more contacts with the outside world. He is a full-time butcher, a well-known cook, and a motor-driver giving the villagers rides back and forth between the downtown of Yaoji and Dacheng Tan. Reading the newspaper and watching TV news are necessary parts of his everyday life which connect him in an isolated village with the outside world. I was astonished when a professional term “非物质文化遗产 (Feiwuzhi wenhua yichan; intangible cultural heritage)” came out of his mouth. He was the only one who knew this word and who mentioned the American cartoon *Hua Mulan*. He led me to 大寨 (Da Zhai, the Big Stockade) and drove me to 一里河 (Yili He, One-li River Village). He did this on his own initiative even though I did not ask him for help at all. His strong localism and sense of self-pride were represented in the interview. Wenyan differentiated history that was real and believable from legend that could be real. He hoped that Mulan and her legends were real but still defined them as legend that he was not sure was reality. Neither Zonghua or Wenyan confirmed or denied the reality of Mulan as a native, nevertheless, they had a desire to believe for reasons of localism and the development

of tourism which would benefit the local economy.

The above four natives have certain similarities: firstly, they are male, secondly, they have some formal education, and thirdly, they have had many chances to contact the outside world through their work and access to mass media. Except for Wenyan, all the others had worked in cities for a long time. Except for the old man, they are middle-aged, from forty to fifty. Normally, men of this age, with some education, have their own opinions, do not believe the old legends very much, and like to raise questions. Furthermore, they have more chances for contact with the outside world and possibilities to get new information. The distance from oral tradition and the degree of contact with the outside world are the two main factors in locating individuals on the spectrum “believe-disbelieve.”

Most of the natives listened to and told some legends as history: firstly, Mulan was Zhu Mulan, from the Zhu family from 河边湾 (Hebian Wan, A village on the side of the river) and her father was 朱寿甫 (Zhu Shoufu) or 朱天禄 (Zhu Tianlu); she went to the army in the place of her father; thirdly, she was buried in General Tomb. Why do they believe? They explained clearly that it is because 朱家台子 (Zhujia taizi; The Foundation of the Zhu Family), General Tomb and General Temple are still there; the old generations told them like this. The existence of the relics and the oral tradition prove the reality of the legends.

Some tellers differentiated history and legend in their telling, such as 谌文正 (Shen Wenzheng) and 谌章强 (Shen Zhangqiang). Zhangqiang expressed his opinion about Mulan's death:

What's her death? In terms of her death, it could be, could be a little historical. I have heard of this.... This is a legend. The blood flew one li (0.5 km), flew one li in the river. There is a village named Yi Lihe in lower reaches. This is the legend of Yi Lihe handed down from the old. They talked like this, but I don't know if it was true. Whatever, the legend likes this. It is not to say that this woman died like this. The aim is to prove her chastity. Definitely, she had no such a thing [baby]. (October 12th, 2011, interview in his house)

It seems that his explanation was confused. I know he tried to express three points in our conversation: firstly, the tradition that Mulan cut open her belly could be historical; secondly, that the blood flew one li (0.5km) is only a legend, which means that it is supposed to be unreal; thirdly, this action was to prove her chastity.

In the group of tellers at Dacheng Tan, Mulan has been regarded as a local maiden, as a common woman and as a countrywoman with glorious deeds. In their telling, they were calling her “Zhu Mulan” or “Mulan” and only a few mentioned “Hua Mulan,” sometimes along with the former two. The respectful appellation General Mulan, which is popular on Mulan Mount and around General Temple rarely appeared. Dan Shirong, and 李闰之 (Li Runzhi) used this appellation in the interview, however, mostly they were calling her “Zhu Mulan.”

In the eyes of the villagers of Dacheng Tan, though Mulan was a common local woman, she has been worthy of remembering and praising.

谌章强 (Shen Zhangqiang) represented his opinions clearly:

Why are we talking about Mulan? From ancient times to today, there is no other woman going to the army like her. In ancient times, women were prohibited from going out of the door. Who dared? All had wrapped feet. The women of the generation of my grandma had wrapped feet. It was very feudal before. Why are

we still talking about Mulan? She, as a female, had such an insight, for instance, learning martial arts, going to the army in the place of her father. It was not easy. Additionally, she, a woman, had been in the army a few years, but had not been found out by others. It proved that she, she was not, un-... She was very chaste. It is very different between the old society and the contemporary society, so she was not common, was not easy (October 12th. 2011, interview in his house).

In his mind, Mulan was an extraordinary woman who overcame great difficulties and did something other women could not do at all in feudal China, moreover she was extremely chaste, particularly in comparison with contemporary women.

谌文正(Shen Wenzheng)'s representation was logical and methodical:

Firstly, going to the army in the place of her father, and other ordinary woman could not do; secondly, she had kept virginity and chastity, as well as showing loyalty and heroism during her twelve-years service; thirdly, being loyal to the nation, and being filial to the parents (October 5th, 2011, interview in his house).

Wenzheng praised Mulan as an extraordinary woman at first, and then spoke of her virginity and chastity. He located them higher than loyalty, heroism, and filial piety. In his eyes, Mulan was a woman with some great deeds, but not a moral icon.

Among the group at Dacheng Tan, Mulan, as a woman in ancient times, was “common” which means they believe she was just a common native maiden, not a deity with a mysterious birth and mission to protect the nation and save the common people. She had no magic, no extraordinary power; however she was also special: firstly, she had the courage to go out of the door, which other women could not do, or never even thought of; secondly, she displaced her father to go to the army; thirdly, she was promoted from a common soldier to a respected general; she kept her

virginity in the army for twelve years. Particularly, that Mulan as a woman of that period had wrapped feet has been emphasized by the tellers, for instance, 李先耀 (Li Xianyao) and her relatives.

In sum, Mulan, a common woman, performed deeds that other females, even other males could not do. No villagers used the phrase “忠孝勇节 (loyal, filial, brave and chaste)” that is popular on Mulan Mount, around General Temple, and in new publications from official sources to summarize the merits and virtues of Mulan, instead they used their own plain words. Mulan was respected as an extraordinary woman by the villagers, but not as a human being with supernatural power, and not as a local deity.

The Brokers

Among the natives, there was a teller who did not read “new” books at all but listened to a neighbor who read them and borrowed many details, episodes and legends from them. 胡生富 (Hu Shengfu) based his telling both on oral tradition and recently written resources. According to our interview, he had heard something about Mulan from one of his neighbors 谌文进 (Shen Wenjin) who returned home to the village from the downtown of Huangpi after his retirement more than two decades ago. According to 胡生富 (Hu Shengfu), the old man, 谌文进 (Shen Wenjin), was born and grew up in Dacheng Tan where he returned when he retired from a brickfield close to the downtown of Huangpi in 1980s. Wenjin’s house was located side by side with Hu Shengfu’s. He had read a book when he was working in which there were historical records about Mulan. They talked about these subjects when he dropped by.

He passed away four or five years ago at the age of eighty-one or eighty-two. Hu Shengfu could not remember the title of the book nor any other information about it. As a common worker in a brickfield, few books would have been easily accessible to him in the 1980s. I deduced that the book could have been one of *神奇的木兰山* (*Shenqi de mulanshan; The Mysterious Mulan Mount*) or *木兰山的传说* (*Mulan shan de chuanshuo; Legends on Mulan Mount*), as both were the only two books about Mulan accessible to common people.

The version Hu Shengfu offered presented a mixture of two sources and conduits—oral tradition from Dacheng Tan and newly written tradition. The most obvious influence of written tradition is the relationship between the son of 丧吾和尚 (Sangwu heshang; Monk Sangwu) and Mulan. Although Hu Shengfu did not confirm it clearly, it must indicate the relationship, friendship and love, between a young man and a young woman, which always arouses slander. However, the main skeleton is still from the oral tradition of Dacheng Tan. Although he admitted that Shen Wenjin told him something, Hu Shengfu still emphasized that he grew up with the oral tradition about Mulan. He believed that Mulan was real because “we are talking about these not only at present, but long, long ago,” and “I heard of these when I was very young” (October 13th, 2011, interview in his house).

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have introduced the village where Mulan was born, the tellers, and their legends about this place and Mulan. Dacheng Tan, an isolated village, is still a traditional peasant community. Villagers are working hard on their farms and in

their houses. Like other villages in rural areas in China, the loss of population and the vanishing of folklore are inevitable. What most frustrated the villagers was the depression of the town, and the failure of tourism exploration. The villagers are traditional peasants who got some primary education, if any, have a complex religious system composed of ancestor worship, folk belief, Buddhism, Taoism, and politics, and follow an old-fashioned living style. They discovered the value of Mulan and her legends when outsiders, officials, scholars, and reporters from mass media, visited their village and claimed it to be the home village of Mulan. That is the reason why both men and women know of Mulan and have some interest in her. The male informants' repertoire is bigger than the female, and normally their versions are more complete and longer. The villagers hoped that the development of tourism could benefit the village, but their expectations were dashed because they destroyed the old town themselves and few relics remain. Proud of the glorious past, regretful of their own mistakes, frustration about the status quo drove them unconsciously to begin their telling with memories about the old town, as well as the destroyed perfect feng-shui of two dragons playing with a pearl. The texts of Mulan legends in their repertoire are very simple, short, fragmentary and incoherent, and only a few are well-formed. There are very few supernatural or supernormal elements in Mulan legends, which make their versions more historical and imply that they believe Mulan is real and her stories are true. Written sources, whether old or new, have not entered their repertoire at present, though old books may have been popular in the past. The repertoire at Dacheng Tan is mostly from oral tradition. Informants at Dacheng Tan

had no access to the legend repertoire at other places, or to new publications, because of the isolation of the village. In their eyes, Mulan is a real historical personage, a maiden born in their village, an extraordinary woman as capable as a man.

In the next chapter, I will move to General Tomb where Mulan was buried and where the local people worshipped her as a local deity. The local people in the villages around General Temple have many legends about the tomb and the temple, as well as about Mulan. Although there are only five kilometers between the two places, their legend repertoires about Mulan are very different.

Chapter 3

The Native Group and the Repertoire around General Temple

“将军庙 (Jianguan miao; General Temple)” is a place name: as an administrative district, it is in 木兰乡 (Mulan xiang; Mulan Town)¹ including eleven villages. But more importantly, it is a temple, the shrine of General Mulan of Huangpi. The place name was still kept after the temple itself was destroyed in 1966. In legend, General Mulan and her troops were camped here, and after her death, her grave was located here. This place is well-known for the temple and the tomb, as well as the celebratory Lantern Festival that once attracted thirty or forty thousand people. But in recent years, fewer and fewer villagers participate because of lack of financial support and depopulation. I learned that only 肖家田 (Xiojiatian Village) took part in the celebration in 2010 and they stopped it in 2011.

General Temple is located at the north foot of Mulan Mountain, at the junction of 尹家冲 (Yinjia chong; Yinjiachong Village), 肖家田 (Xiaojia tian; Xiaojiatian Village) and 杨家田 (Yangjia tian; Yangjiatian Village). General Tomb and Temple occupy a location with good feng-shui, a place that looks like a phoenix, so it was called “凤凰地 (Fenghuang di; Phoenix Place)” (Du 2006, 324-326). In Chinese culture, phoenix represents the female, and furthermore, any place like a dragon or a

¹ The former name was 塔耳乡 (Ta'er xiang; Taer Town) before. The local government changed it to 木兰乡 (Mulan xiang; Mulan Town) in June of 2001. The new name Mulan Lake was given to 夏家寺水库 (Xiajiasi shuiku; Xiajiasi Reservoir) in January of 1990 in order to develop cultural tourism.

phoenix means a perfect feng-shui where an extraordinary personage would appear or the family living there would be prosperous.

Although there are no written records about the time when the temple and the tomb were built, they were part of a local religious shrine with a long history, from at least early in the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644 AD). In *Biography of Mulan* in *同治黄陂县志* (Tongzhi huangpi xianzhi; the Chorography of Huangpi in Tongzhi Years), General Tomb, General Temple and Mulan Temple are mentioned in two travellers' notes—王霁 (Wang Ji) and 屠达 (Tu Da). Wang, a countryman living in 嘉靖 (Jiajing Years, 1522-1566 AD), not only mentioned the relics and shrines of Mulan, but recorded that “wind and thunder came abruptly to protect the tomb when robbers tried to dig the tomb” and “a temple is located side by side where countrymen hold rituals in memory of Mulan annually”(150).

General Temple was an important religious shrine in Huangpi for pilgrims to Mulan Mount and for the natives living around. For pilgrims from the north, the General Temple was the first station of pilgrimage. For the natives, it has been a shrine of mixed religions—Buddhism and folk religion. Additionally, it contributed to the education of the local people, as an old-style private school belonging to the Lei family was located inside.

The old General Temple, facing west, included: a pair of ginkgo trees, nine or twelve stone steps, a pair of stone lions, the first door, the first hall without statuary, which was used as a dining room and a reception room for the pilgrims, a patio with a pair of stone white horses on the side of the path, each of which was pulled by an

officer, the main hall in which the statue of General Mulan and other statues were located, a patio, the third hall if going ahead. None of my interviewees could provide exact and detailed information about the statues of gods and deities inside the two halls. A few statues were known to most of the interviewees: in the main hall, a huge statue of General Mulan, facing the door, the statue of Bodhisattva 韦陀 (Weituo) back with Mulan, a statue of Avalokitesvara (Guanyin in Chinese) and a statue of the God of Mammon in the third hall. Beside these, there were lots of unknown or unrecalled statues in the main and the third hall. In their words, “there are too many statues, and no one can remember everyone!”

There were two Buddhist nuns living in the temple and they were forced to leave in 1960. They managed and ran the temple and the tomb, with the help of adherents and neighbors in this region. Besides the tributes of pilgrims and adherents, they were living on the produce of their own farms and vegetable gardens (Luo Dengfeng, April 16th, 2010, interview in the front of her house).

Almost every informant mentioned 十曹 (Shicao; Ten Hells), recalling something horrible with vivid words. In Chinese folk religion and Buddhism, those who broke the moral rules had to be punished in 十曹 (Shicao; Ten Hells), such as deep frying in hot oil, being ground in a stone mill, or being cut slowly with a saw.

Another impressive mysterious thing was the borrowing of tableware. If the poor countrymen around the temple needed tableware to serve visitors, they knelt down to pray,² lighting paper money, perfume sticks, and candles. On the next day, tableware,

² No one can remember which god or goddess they prayed to.

such as chopsticks, dishes, and bowls, would appear underneath the altar.

General Temple is mysterious and sacred, and is safeguarded by some unknown power. A legend is that a pair of huge hoptoads with glistening red eyes, which lived under the steps, were safeguarding the temple when Japanese soldiers tore down the building to collect construction materials³. Another more popular legend must be based on real incidents: during the 1960s and 1970s when superstition and religion were forbidden and atheism was popular, a young woman got a serious illness—paralysis or convulsions of the body—after she rode the stone lion or white horse regardless of others' attempts to prevent her. She could not be helped by any treatment except praying for forgiveness on her knees in the temple, burning paper money, lighting perfume sticks and candles (Lei Daoping and Liu Jinhua, April 21, 2010, Interview in Liu's house).

Other things in the temple are sacred as well, particularly the statuary of white horses and the pair of stone lions. The stone white horses were said to be able to come to life. One legend is that the white horses ate the wheat on the farm and were hurt by local people. In legend, General Mulan liked the stone lions and chose them, so they could not be carried forward in the front of the temple.

1966 was the watershed in the history of General Temple. The militia dismantled the buildings, pushed down and shattered the statuary. The remains were delivered to the downtown to build a new fertilizer factory and removed by the countrymen to use as construction materials. Before the disaster, the two Buddhist nuns were

³ See the full text told by Liu Yunlin on P.146.

expelled by force because all religion and superstition were forbidden during the Cultural Revolution. Nevertheless, some parts of buildings remained until 1999 when the reconstruction of the temple began.

During the three decades between 1966 and 1999, although General Temple was ruined, the space in front of it was a busy market serving the natives. On the west side of the muddy trail was a line of simple booths, about ten to fifteen, providing meals, particularly breakfast, fresh meat, vegetables and groceries. The houses of 供销社 (Gongxiao hezuoshe; Supply and Marketing Cooperative Station)⁴ are on the east side, which are still there but locked.

The reconstruction began in 1999 and was suspended from 2002, which was often mentioned by the natives who were very disappointed. The new temple was constructed almost on the former site. Besides the old tombstones, two relics survived the disaster of 1966, a pair of ginkgo trees and a pair of stone lions that were left on the farm and were stolen a few years ago.

The building that we can see at present was constructed in 2000 on the former site. The whole building includes: a pair of stone lions, stone steps, a quadrate courtyard with a main door, a north door and a south door, and a pavilion containing an altar and three unfinished statues of General Mulan. 将军坟 (Jiangjun fen; General Tomb)—an earth hummock with trees and grasses on it—is still there if we pass through the north door of the temple.

There are two tombstones, one of which is old, and the other of which is new. The

⁴ Something like groceries and shops.

memorial monument is a new marmoreal tombstone, conspicuous and high, standing on a platform with a marble enclosure. The five words—“木兰将军墓 (Mulan jiangjun mu; Graveyard of General Mulan)” are engraved on the front side. It was erected by the 木兰湖管委会 (Mulan hu guanweihui; The Administrative Office of Mulan Lake) in September of 1999. The gravestone is new and well protected, however, the marmoreal enclosure has been destroyed to some extent, and the fragments scattered around. The old rock tombstone on which the words could not be read has been moved from the north side, facing the hometown of Mulan, Da Chengtan, to the south side, facing General Temple and Mulan Mount.

General Tomb was not changed or damaged obviously. The local militias obeyed the order to excavate the tomb, and there is still a four square meter hole on the north of the tomb at present. Besides obeying this political order, they wanted to confirm if there was treasure inside. All the interviewees told me that they got nothing and condemned such stupid actions. In oral history, this tomb grew into a hummock by itself⁵ (Lei Daopin, April 21th, 2010, interview in his house; Xu Jianxin, May 27th, 2010, interview in Leijiadang Village). According to two old men, 陈克念 (Chen Kenian) and 雷用寿 (Lei Yongshou), this tomb is not real and the real one is in the pond to the south, two hundred meters away. Both of them regarded it as a secret that is not accessible to many countrymen, in order to protect the real tomb and the good feng-shui.

The importance of the tomb was recognized on January 15th of the Lunar

⁵ The villagers believe that the tomb grew itself supernaturally.

Calendar when the celebration of the Lantern Festival begins, with the sacrifice, setting fire to crackers and paper money, lighting perfume sticks and candles there. The performers climb the tomb on stilts! Normally, the natives believed that the tomb is of a higher rank because Mulan was buried there first and it has a longer history than the temple.

General Temple and General Tomb are not protected or managed well. There are no management personnel, no doorkeeper, no religious adherents, nor pilgrims or visitors. During my three months of fieldwork around General Temple, I encountered visitors only twice. Although the buildings have been constructed, the religion, and the culture have not revived, which resulted in vandalism, for instance, the arms of the unfinished statues of Mulan on the ground of the temple.

General Temple and the Informants

General Temple is a representative region in the rural area of Central China. The decrease in the local population is obvious. The doors of a third to half of the houses are locked all day, with no one living inside. Most of the permanent residents are those over sixty who are not willing to live in cities with their children, have not become accustomed to life in the city, or do not have the ability to settle down in cities. The labor force and the youth have rushed into cities for more profitable occupations or higher education. During my research, I seldom saw anyone between twenty and fifty. The young kids always go to cities with their parents. Those working and living with their families in Wuhan come back for important festivals—the Spring festival in winter, Tomb-sweeping Festival in spring, Middle-Autumn Festival in

autumn and in seven-day holidays of the National Day (October 1st). The decline in the number of young children in the population is extraordinary. According to the village head—徐治芳 (Xu Zhifang), a man over sixty, there are only two children in Yangjiatian Village. The primary school beside General Temple that served the natives for decades was closed in 2009 because of the lack of pupils.

Agriculture is the only industry—planting rice, rape, tea, peanuts, and vegetables. Local people seldom sell their products for money because it is toilsome and not profitable at all. More than half of the farms of rice are deserted, with high green weeds growing on them. Some residents do not plant rice and buy it in the market in 长岭 (Changling Town). It is popular to plant vegetables to save money, to kill time, and to keep healthy. Picking wild green tea is popular in March and April around Mulan Mount. Families enjoy gathering and drinking home-made wild green tea and sell any surplus. The busy working-season begins when the celebration of the Spring Festival is finished and ends in August when the harvest of rice is done. Some people choose to take a part-time job during the slack season, working on building sites in cities or their hometown. There are two kinds of fixed occupations, Mamu⁶ drivers and businessmen. With commercial economic infiltration, some local people are hired to work in tea gardens and other agricultural industries. Local people do not expect to earn lots of money through planting, it is only to meet the needs of simple basic necessities. Working in the cities is the main way to earn money to build a new house,

⁶ Mamu is a kind of motor tricycle with a tiny carriage. It is a popular public transportation vehicle in rural areas but forbidden in downtown Huangpi. They wait for patrons in some crowded place, such as the front door of the market, the doors of middle and primary schools and the bus station. They are running on the muddy roads connecting villages where the bus cannot access. It is really convenient but does not save money at all.

to support children's education, to buy cars or trucks, and to hold luxury weddings and funerals that bring prestige among the natives.

The old people are living in their home village very happily. Some old people get their exercise and spend their leisure time through working in their vegetable gardens. Besides people who are busy on their farms, there are many old people not working at all. They are taking care of the house, playing mahjong almost every day, watching TV, and chatting with the neighbors. Some of them are old or weak and cannot work, while others do not want or need to work because their children support their lives. Playing mahjong is the most popular leisure time activity. Although few of them have retirement pensions, their savings, support from children and the one or two hundred yuan pension from the government are enough for everyday life. However, serious diseases always mean they are into big trouble, particularly financial problem.

I found that many of my male informants are well-educated because they went to the traditional private school in General Temple before 1949. They can read and write, and show strong interest in history and local culture. Several villagers have had strong contact with Mulan Mount where they stayed for a few decades when their families ran businesses, or they worked. It is an avenue to communicate with Taoism and Buddhism, with the modern world, and with other sources about Mulan legends, for instance printed books.

The religions and beliefs of the local people are diverse, but not formal, which is similar to Dacheng Tan. Ancestor worship is still the main element in the religious system, except for Christians. It is the same with those at Dacheng Tan: the natives

who live at the foot of Mulan Mount do not make pilgrimage to Mulan Mount zealously, and most of my interviewees, particularly the men, have not been there for many decades. They often collected firewood, cut grass, or helped their parents running a business, and just had fun when they were young. Their excuses are as follows: “木兰山的菩萨应远不应近” (“the Buddhas fulfill the wishes of the adherents from a long way, not from the neighbor”), being too old, nothing interesting in it, an unreasonable expensive ticket fee for local people.⁷

Some natives made the pilgrimage with their parents or relatives during their childhood. Similar to most Chinese people, they are not devoted to one religion, but to Buddhism, Taoism, folk belief and religion, including magical practices, any of which can help them, bless them, and save them. Normally they pray for health and safety of their family, high scores in exams and admission to a university for a child, to earn more money, and other practical benefits. In some special instances, such as family accidents, being seriously ill, having no baby or actually no son, they will ask for help and blessings from such powers. If their wishes are fulfilled, they must express their appreciation, by making a pilgrimage, giving donations, dressing the god or goddess⁸, and holding rituals.

However, there are a few obvious differences in the religious system between the natives around General Temple and those at Dacheng Tan. Firstly, Mulan worship does exist. Secondly, some villagers practice formal orthodox religion. Thirdly, Christianity has entered into the religion system. Fourthly, the paintings of the first

⁷ They claim that Mount Mulan is in their territory, so it is ridiculous for them to have to buy a ticket, and mentioned conflicts with the ticket-seller or door-guarder several times.

⁸ Dresses are silk robes with traditional embroidery symbols: flowers, cloud and phoenix.

generation of the family have disappeared.

Mulan worship was very strong but decreased after 1966, though it is still living. General Temple is still the religious centre for the natives and functions as a sacred site. Although there is no financial support or management from the government, the natives take care of the temple and the tomb. Sometimes they clean the temple, brush away the ink marks of the naughty children, and lead tourists around. The performances and rituals of the Lantern Festival began in General Temple and General Tomb. Burning perfume sticks, candles and money paper, praying in front of the statue of General Mulan, and even sacrifices (normally apples and oranges) for Mulan are still popular and a necessary part of the celebration. In the oral tradition, General Mulan has been a sacred deity since her death.

Only a few countrymen believe in one religion strictly and devoutly. The Christians are a unique group with a clear boundary separating them from others. They do not hold traditional rituals, do not decorate their living rooms with images of dragon and phoenix, but only hang a cloth with a red cross, for instance 雷绍云 (Lei Shaoyun) who learned English in university in the 1940s, and they are open to other cultures, very different from other countrymen. They get together to study the Bible, preach, sing hymns and pray in a private house.⁹ Most of the members are women over fifty, others are around forty. Some natives living alone, who were poor, weak, old, and ill, converted to Christianity when they could not find support or encouragement from family, neighbors or the government. Among the group they are

⁹ The only church is located in downtown Huangpi, far away from them.

like a family, they help and support each other. Out of the group, they are considered strange and unfavorable. A nice old lady got angry when she found that I went to a Bible study with a Christian and did not want to be interviewed. However, some countrymen noticed the advantage of adherence to a foreign religion—some women with extremely bad tempers became nice and friendly. This group showed little interest in Mulan and focused their attention on religion, except for 雷绍云 (Lei Shaoyun) who told Mulan legends as history.

Besides the group of Christians, one couple, 陈克念 (Chen Kenian) and 陈银春 (Chen Yinchun), are the only two residents who clearly identified Buddhism as their religion. Both have been pious Buddhists, obeying commandments mostly being purely vegetarian and not killing any living things for twenty years. To a great extent, their devotions to Buddhism are very private. Firstly, beside observing the simplest and the most popular rules of Buddhism for common people, their practices are watching DVDs, listening to CDs about Buddhism, burning and offering perfume sticks and candles for a tiny statue of Avalokitesvara (Guanyin in Chinese) in the living room twice everyday. Secondly, more offerings, such as fruits, flowers and food are prepared in Buddhist festivals, particularly the birthday of Avalokitesvara and the Buddha. Thirdly, they have not made pilgrimage to any shrine of Buddhism for twenty years, even to Mulan Mount. The husband, Chen Kenian, who was born in a family good at making statues in temples in 1935, summed up “the Buddha is living in our hearts.” What is the goal of their simple but pious practice? I believe that they want to be immortal like his uncle grandfather. Kenian told a legend:

My grand-grandfather, a few earlier generations were making statues of god [in temple], you know . . . My uncle grandfather [grandfather's younger brother] was making josses around here [Mulan Mount]. He had gone when I was about ten years old. He has been dead [in our world], and is living in the celestial sky [another world]!¹⁰ He has become an immortal.¹¹ (He lowers his voice) He was also practicing vegetarianism, doing charitable deeds, curing the sickness without any payment [before his death]. He came down [from the celestial sky] to see me [in my dreams] in recent years. (April 17th, 2010, interview in his house)

It seems that anti-theism is held by some local people, maybe they just do not believe in any supernatural things. Although some local people claim that they believe nothing, they still go to Mulan Mount with villagers or light perfume sticks and candles and burn paper money in a tiny temple in the village.

I could not identify women tellers who could tell much about Mulan here. Some said that they did not know and some knew of Mulan and her temple, but no one could tell a complete and detailed legend about Mulan. Most of the women whom I contacted were not willing to be interviewed. On April 17th 2010, I met four old women in Xiaojiatian Village and Yangjiatian Village. I asked each of them if they knew of General Mulan and they said they knew about her. Later I asked if they knew her legends. The first one said that she did not know the detailed story and suggested I ask an old man 张保华 (Zhang Baohua). The second one explained that she came here late, only forty years ago and had paid no attention to it at all. The third one, Chen Yinchun, told me that she forgot and could not recall at all, but she talked about

¹⁰ The celestial sky is a sacred world in Chinese culture where gods/goddesses, deities, and celestial beings are living, just like Olympus in Greek mythology.

¹¹ Becoming an immortal means that a human being becomes a sacred one with eternal life through some kind of religious meditation or a dead person has entered a sacred world where he/she got eternal life.

the stolen stone lions, the white stone horses, and the ginkgo trees. Interestingly, she gave me the same advice to interview—张保华 (Zhang Baohua). The fourth one could not remember and suggested I ask the old men. Their responses were similar: firstly, they knew of General Mulan but could not tell her legends; secondly, it seems that they had listened before but could not recall or remember; thirdly, they suggested that I ask the old men, three of whom nominated Zhang Baohua.

I talked with two old women during the fieldwork around General Temple, and they did not tell me legends about Mulan, but about the temple. One is Zhang Baohua's wife, who focused her telling on her husband's life story. The second one was talkative 罗登凤 (Luo Dengfeng) and began her telling with General Temple and the stone lions. She gave me much information about the nuns' life in General Temple, and shared her personal experience about folk healing. She knew General Mulan but could not remember her story. It seemed that they did not know, or pay any attention to the legend about Mulan.

The Repertoire of the Native Group around General Temple

The legends about Mulan around General Temple include two main types: those about Mulan's life, particularly her tragic death and local legends about the tomb, the temple, the stone lions, the stone white hoses and the ginkgo trees.

Those about Mulan include:

1. Mulan Mount and Mulan: Mulan Mount was named after Mulan.
2. Birth and families: Mulan, with surname Zhu, from Dacheng Tan ten to twelve li away, was living in the Tang Dynasty (618—907 AD). Her father was Zhu Shoufu

and her grandfather was 朱若虛 (Zhu Ruoxu).

3. Praying for a child: her parents had no child and were praying for one on Mulan Mount. Her father had a dream and then Mulan was born.

4. Learning: she had two masters--Monk Sangwu and Taoist Tieguan.

5. Disguising as a man: Mulan decided to displace her old or weak father, disguised as a man, practiced her martial arts and persuaded her parents.

6. Going to the army: she went to the army in the place of her father and made achievements during her twelve-year service.

7. Marriage: Mulan got married with a woman, Hua Azhen.

8. Surname "Hua": Zhu Mulan got the surname "Hua" for some reason (Many tellers knew the surname "Hua" but did not know why or gave unclear explanations).

9. Accusing or slandering: Mulan came back home after returning with triumph, her sister-in-law slandered her, saying that she had lost her chastity and was pregnant.

10. A bet: She and her sister-in-law had a bet to prove whether she was pregnant, and her sister-in-law lost.

11. Suicide: She cut open her belly to prove her loyalty or chastity in 仙合店 (Xianhe dian; Celestial River Village), which is the origin of 一里河 (Yili he; One-li River).

12. Selection of her graveyard: Mulan selected the location of her graveyard by herself.

13. Burial and Memorial: She was buried in the General Tomb and the General Temple was built in memory of her. (In a few versions, Mulan Mount is named after

her.)

14. Entitlement: She was entitled “忠孝勇节 (loyal, filial, brave and chaste).”

Legends about the General Tomb and the General Temple

15. The real and the faked tombs: Actually there are two or three tombs, and the one we saw can grow itself.

16. Magic service: The natives could borrow plates, bowls and chopsticks for the guests in the temple.

17. The stone lions: General Mulan liked 张涛 (Zhang Tao)'s stone lions and kept them in the front of her temple through magical power.

18. The white stone horse: The white stone horse came to life and ate the wheat at night.

19. Those who rode on the white horse or stone lions, and those dug the tomb were punished and would not recover until they prayed in General Temple.

20. A pair of huge hoptoads were safeguarding the temple during the Sino-Japanese wars (1937-1945).

21. The ginkgo trees are very old, and one was dead.

22. Why did 铁屎墩 (Tieshi dun; Iron Remains Mound) get its name?

Tellers around the General Temple showed more interest in Mulan than those at Dacheng Tan, added more details in the motifs known by the two groups and inserted a few new motifs: praying for a child, a bet with her sister-in-law, and selection of her graveyard. They also tell many local legends about the relics of Mulan: the tombs, the stone lions and horses, the ginkgo trees, the magic service for the villagers of the

temple, a few place name legends, as well as contemporary legends about punishment of those who violate the holy temple. Tellers around General Temple know and told legends about Mulan, as well as those legends about the temple and the tomb. Unlike legends at Dacheng Tan, Mulan underwent a transition from a human being to an immortal and local goddess through extraordinary deeds and her tragic death in the legends around General Temple. All the legends about General Tomb and General Temple normally following those focusing on Mulan emphasize the reality, the long history and most important, the holiness of Mulan, her tomb and temple. The focus of the whole repertoire is her death—a slander, the bet and the suicide—which connected the life history of Mulan and the local legends about the relics. The legends began in the secular world and then entered a sacred one after Mulan’s death.

I offer a linguistic structure examination of Mulan legends in the repertoire around General Temple, based on Nicolaisen’s (1987) model.

Table 4. Structural elements in the repertoire around General Temple

Element	Motif
Abstract (1)	Introduction
Orientation (2)	Mulan and Mulan Mount Birth and families Praying for a child
Complication (7)	Learning Disguising as a man Going to the army Marriage Surname “Hua” Accusing or slandering A bet
Resolution (2)	Suicide Selection of her graveyard
Coda (1)	Burial and memorial
Evaluation (2)	Entitlement

	Attitudes toward the reality of Mulan
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The informants always began their telling about Mulan in Abstract with some information about Mulan Mount and the relation with Mulan, or the formula “I knew little about her”, as well as the source of their information sometimes. They gave more information about Mulan’s family and the dynasty when she was living, and added the motif of her parents praying for a baby before her birth in Orientation. Complication is composed of seven motifs, more than the four that appear in Complication of Dacheng Tan’s repertoire, moreover the Complication here involves more details, for instance, her disguising, her marriage, and add an additional motif--a bet with her sister-in-law. A more mysterious motif appeared, that the river flew back, and Mulan’s selection of her graveyard by herself is unique in the repertoire around General Temple. The informants always ended their telling with the expression of Entitlement “忠孝勇节 (zhong xiao yong jie; loyal, filial, brave and chaste)” or their attitudes toward the reality of Mulan, belief, unbelief or undecided.

Table 5. Narrative emphases of individual informants around General Temple

Informant	Abstract	Orientation	Complication	Resolution	Coda	Evaluation
Chen Kenian	×	×	×	×	×	
Lei Daoping	×	×	×	×	×	×
Lei Jianguo	×	×	×		×	×
Lei Jianhuai	×	×	×		×	×
Lei Shaoren	×	×	×	×	×	×
Lei Shaoyun	×	×	×	×	×	×
Lei Yongshou	×	×	×	×	×	×
Liu Jinhua	×	×	×	×		
Liu Yunlin	×	×	×	×	×	
Luo Dengfeng			×			
Xu Jianxin	×				×	

Xu Zhankui	×	×	×	×	×	×
Xu Zhifang	×	×	×	×	×	
Xu Zhikui	×	×	×	×	×	×
Yin Weizheng	×	×	×	×	×	
Zhang Baohua	×		×	×		×
Zhang Huikui	×	×	×	×	×	×
	16	15	16	13	14	10

The highly repeated structure elements are Abstract, Orientation, and Complication, more than fifteen times, and Coda and Resolution follows.

Table 6. Overview of structural patterns used by individual informants around General Temple

Number of Units	Informant	Structure
6	Lei Daoping Lei Shaoren, Lei haoyun, Lie Yongshou, Xu Zhankui, Xu Zhikui, Zhang Huikui	All
5	Lie Jianguo, Lei Jianhuai	Abstract+Orientation+Complication+Coda+Evaluation
	Chen Kenian Liu Yunlin Xu Zhifang Yin Weizheng	Abstract+Orientation+Complication+Resolution+Coda
	Zhang Baohua	Abstract+Orientation+Complication+Resolution+Evaluation
4	Liu Jinhua	Abstract+Orientation+Complication+Resolution
2	Xu Jianxin	Abstract+ Coda
1	Luo Dengfeng	Complication

Seven informants' versions comprise all the six structure elements, seven told five, and one told four, all of whose versions include the core, Orientation, Complication and Resolution, which indicates that the repertoire of the informants around the General Temple is very complete and fixed.

Analysis and Observation

In most cases, the tellers began their narration with something about how Mulan Mount came to be physically formed. 雷绍仁 (Lei Shaoren), an old man born in 1936 who went to the traditional private school during his adolescence, told a legend in the hall of his house :

Why is Mulan Mount here, why? Originally, in ancient times, the peasants were very poor, very poor. It was originally sea before. Emperor was whipping the mountain. At first, the queen of the heaven ordered the people to remove earth there, later, 秦始皇 [Qing Shihuang, The First Emperor of the Qing Dynasty, 259-210 B.C.] thought about a solution to make a lash to whip the mountains. Mulan Mount was whipped from the north. (Lei Shaoren, April 2nd, 2010, interview in his house)

Normally, the educated old men talked about 夫子山 (Fuzi Shan; Confucius Mount) during their telling, on the west side of the villages around General Temple. Fuzi Mount was named after Confucius who went there before in the folk legends. 雷绍仁 (Lei Shaoren) told a legend about why Mulan Mount is a little higher than 夫子山 (Fuzi Shan; Confucius Mount):

Confucius and Mulan were betting—playing chess. Playing Chess. Confucius won and Mulan lost. She stamped Fuzi Mount heavily so it would not grow further any longer, would not grow. Originally, this one was higher.

The mysterious Mulan Mount is connected with sea underneath, accurately in the 风洞 (Fengdong; Windy Cave). (Lei Shaoren, April 2, 2010, interview in his house)

Mulan Mount had formerly been named 青狮岭 (Qingshi ling; Green Lion Mount), 牛头山 (Niutou shan; Ox-head Mount), and 建明山 (Jianming shan,

Jianming Mount). In the villagers' views, its name was changed to Mulan Mount since the Tang Dynasty. 徐治魁 (Xu Zhikui), a retired rich businessman whose family have a construction team, said it was 尉迟恭¹² (Yuchi Gong) who changed the name to Mulan Mount when he was ordered to construct Mulan Temple (June 2nd, 2010, interview in his house). The relationship between Mulan and Mulan Mount was not clear, or not explained, in the repertoire of Mulan legends around General Temple, except in Lei Shaoyun's telling in which the mount was named after Mulan.

All the male informants knew that Mulan, with the surname Zhu, from Dacheng Tan, ten to twelve li (five or six km) away, was living in the Tang Dynasty (618-907 AD). But the women seldom mentioned these details, and could not answer if I asked. Only two men 雷绍云 (Lei Shaoyun) and 张保华 (Zhang Baohua) could tell her father's name. Both of them had read old books about Mulan, and Shaoyun even knew Wang Hanqing's book. Shaoyun is the only informant who had the opportunity to go to modern university to finish his undergraduate program in the 1940s. Baohua learned reading and writing when he was a Taoist on Mulan Mount before 1966. Both of the two educated old men are willing to share their knowledge about Mulan.

In terms of Mulan's life story, the tellers around General Temple did not tell much about her birth, her decision to go to the army, her service, and return, and they focused their narrations on Mulan's tragic death. Her sister-in-law slandered Mulan saying she was pregnant. Mulan bet with her and cut open her belly to prove her chastity. She cut open her belly in 仙合店 (Xianhe Dian; Celestial River Village) and

¹² 尉迟恭 (585-658 A.D.) was an very important general of Li Shimin, Taizong of the Tang Dynasty. He was also a very well-known protector in folk religion.

her blood flew backwards one li so the part of the river was named after this: 一里河 (Yili he; One-li River). A series of place names arising from the legend of Mulan's death at 仙合店 (Celestial-river Village) and One-li River are commonly known and told, including 血里湾 (Xueli Wan; Blood Lane) and 搭命塘 (Daming Tang; Losing-life Pond) that were only heard in 雷道平 (Lei Daoping)'s and 刘金华's (Liu Jinhua's) telling, but other villagers also knew the two place names.

After Mulan proved her chastity in such a tragic way, her sister-in-law was killed and her head was removed. There was a statue of a warrior with a woman's head hanging from his hand in the old General Temple, which only the tellers around General Temple know and tell about. The sister-in-law was Mulan's elder cousin's wife because Mulan had no elder brother.

Mulan was alive but could not be moved further on the way back home. So she was buried there and the countrymen built General Temple in memory of her. There are two versions with details of her death. 雷道平 (Lei Daoping), an old man around seventy who still works on his farm, provided a very vivid legend when we talked about Mulan with the couple Liu Daoping and his wife in the living room of Daoping's house on a rainy day:

Afterward, [she] stayed in the army, ten years. She was fighting with the invaders and won lots of battles. Finally, the emperor entitled her and gave her a holiday, a holiday to rest at home. She had eaten, stayed outside for ten years, and grew up, and got some weight. She was welcomed warmly by the countrymen. And, the family, her Zhu family, and someone, said that as a [unmarried] girl, she did not keep the virginity and something happened, something like this. Her father, and her mother got angry. She could not clear this scandal. She explained to her mother, and her mother did not believe her. Right? Finally, she had no way.

She went to 仙合店 (Xianhe Dian; Celestial-river Village), and there is a 剖腹台 (Poufu Tai; Opening-breast Flat), just the river near to 长岭 (ChangLing; Changling Town). She, just on the bank of Celestial-river Village, there, opens her breast. So it was named “剖腹台 (Poufu tai: Opening-breast Flat).” She opened her breast there. Her attendants saw this and were astonished. She removed, her heart, removed. She asked [one of her attendants]: “You, you go, go to the royal court, to tell [the emperor] that I have committed suicide.” [Her attendant) rode a horse. [I do not know] where the capital was. [I] cannot remember. I was very young when the old told me. The heart was beating when it arrived, was still beating. The emperor was flustered and said: “What a chaste girl!” Right? So, [he] entitled her, what? [He] conferred on her a title of general. Oh, no, [he] did not confer on her, just conferred on her four words “loyal, filial, brave, and chaste.” Right? [He] did confer on her the four words.

Afterward, she was back, back, was taken back, and passed here, from the Opening-breast Flat. The blood, on the Opening-breast Flat, flew backward! Because she, was born in DaCheng Tan. Because the Opening-Breast Flat. [She] opened her breast on the Opening-Breast Flat, right? [The blood] flew, flew backward, flew backward one Li. Flowing backward one Li, one Li! [Liu’s wife: oh, that is why it is called 仙河 (Xianhe; Celestial River), and 仙合店 (Xianhe dian; Celestial-river Village)]. In the older society, the Yi-Li River was never submerged when the flood came. Because the blood became an immortal there, the Yi-Li River was never submerged. That is the story.

Afterward, she was carried back home and arrived at our village. From there [pointing to the west, Changling Town], it was a pilgrimage route to Mulan Mountain before. They stopped somewhere 血里湾 (Xueli Wan, Blood Lane)—in our village, and the name is Blood Lane, just there. [Liu: All of us know this. What the old lady said is not clear.] [She] was carried from there, stopped at Xueli Wan, the name is Xueli Wan. The blood remained there, so it was named “Xueli Wan.” [Liu: “The bleeding keeps one Li.”]. They stopped there and had a rest. [General Mulan] was still living! They stop in the front of General Temple, just here [pointing at the temple]. That was, the ancestral temple of Lei family before. They were resting there, near to the pond. She wanted some water. According to the science now, those after operation could not have water, could they? She was asking for water. [The attendants] had no way, didn’t they? She was in that situation. Could she live after the heart was removed? [She] passed away here after she had some water. She passed right here! That pond, the pond. [Its name] is “Daming Tang” [Losing-life Pond]! [It is] named 搭命塘 (Daming tang; Losing-life Pond). Why? Mulan drank water from there, so it was called 搭命塘 (Daming tang; Losing-life Pond). (April 21st, 2010, interview in Liu Jinhua’s house)

In terms of the details of her death, an old bachelor, 雷用寿 (Lei Yongshou), had

another version that he learned from a neighbor when he was a child:

[Mulan] cut open the chest and breast. Guanyin Buddha. In terms of idealism, someone saved her. In the past, it was normally said that Guanyin Buddha saved [her]. This was a loyal court official. At that time, a treacherous court official was going to harm her. He was selling 无心菜 (Wuxin cai; Vegetable without Heart). Look at this? Was there vegetable without heart, isn't it? She cut open her belly at Xianhedian, a place named Xianhedian. She would live if she did not turn her head or did not answer any call in one hundred steps. This treacherous court official was selling while calling “无心菜 (Wuxin cai; Vegetable without Heart)”. (Mulan) was tolerant to answer when she walks over ninety steps. She asked, “How a vegetable without heart can grow?” She asked like this. The treacherous court official answered: “it has root.” She asked: “If human beings have no heart?” He answered: “Must die without heart.” So, General Mulan fell on the ground and died. (April 17th, 2010, interview in his house)

The motif of someone selling a vegetable without a heart can only be heard in the repertoire of the tellers around General Temple.

An interesting legend about the test of chastity was told by 雷用寿 (Lei Yongshou) who has a good memory and a strong willingness to tell legends that he learned in the village and on Mulan Mount where his parents ran their small business:

Mulan's mother, had two children—her brother and her. Her sister-in-law... The mother asks the daughter, and she says: “No, there is no such thing.” Her sister-in-law asks the mother and she answers: “Your sister-in-law has no such things, and she gets some fat.” She does not believe, so she leaves two cloth pads under stones on the both side of the backdoor in the backyard. I do not know how long. One cloth pad has been worn-out. That is, that is. Her sister-in-law, is watering [Mulan's] cloth pad secretly everyday. So it is worn out. Her (the sister-in-law's) [cloth] is not watered, so it is not worn out. That is the reason. [Mulan] has no way. Finally, she cuts open the chest and breast. This is why Xianhedian got such a name. (April 17th, 2010, interview in the front of Luo Dengfeng's house)

A woman I met when 陈克念 (Chen Kenian) led me around General Temple

told a variant of this legend: “I heard that a piece of red cloth was placed down the pig’s food trough” (April 17th, 2010). The motif to test a woman’s chastity by placing a cloth under somewhere is very popular in Chinese legends in which two women (normally a virgin and her sister-in-law) make a bet and then place a piece of red cloth somewhere to test their chastity. One woman (always the sister-in-law) tried to do harm to the virgin’s cloth. There has been little study about this motif, but testing women’s chastity by cloth was very popular in Chinese culture. On the wedding night in ancient China, a piece of white cloth was placed on the bed to test the bride’s virginity. Red cloth is always believed to have some magical power, particularly protecting something.

The confusion over Mulan’s surname is a theme in the repertoire. Most of the tellers called her Zhu Mulan, and a few mentioned the two names and even gave legends to interpret. 张辉魁 (Zhang Huikui), an old man living in 仙合店 (Xianhe Dian; Celestial River Village), told me a legend in the living room of his house:

General Mulan, um, some said she was from here, and some said she was not. According to our original legends, General Mulan was from our Dacheng Tan. At present, the nation said General Mulan’s surname was Hua. General Mulan, we said her surname was Zhu. I don’t know why her surname was Hua later. Originally, she was from Dacheng Tan, and her surname was Zhu. A marshal had a daughter and she wanted to marry with her. The marshal went to Mulan’s house and planned to arrange a marriage between Mulan and his daughter and called her 花将军 (Hua Jiangjun; General Hua). He saw Mulan’s brother. The brother did not look like General Mulan. Afterwards, the marshal left. It had gone. Afterwards, it was said that General Mulan had the surname Hua, and was called Hua General. It was clear. We could not clear it out. (May 25th, 2010, interview in his house)

雷绍仁 (Lei Shaoren) told another version:

After returning, she heard “Help, help.” A bad man was flirting and wanted to violate a woman. She helped and saved the girl. They could be the same age. That girl wanted to marry General. She said that I could only 成亲 [chengqin; have a wedding] with you, but not 成婚 [chenghun; have sex]. That girl was likely to be Hua Mulan. She did not make sense of the nuance and asked why. Mulan said that Chengqin is just a ritual for the relatives and friends. The woman did not understand that General Mulan was a woman. That’s the case. They did not get married. (April 7th, 2010, interview in his house)

雷用寿 (Lei Yongshou)’s version was, “Zhu Mulan’s father passed away. His eldest apprentice was from Henan. Mulan was still in her mother’s belly. She [Mulan’s mother] moved to Henan with her husband’s eldest apprentice. [Mulan’s mother] Changed [Mulan’s surname] to Hua, you know? Actually, Mulan was from the Zhu family. That is the case” (April 16, 2010, interview in the front of Luo Dengfeng’s house). The surname of Mulan confused some men, including 张发魁 (Zhang Fakui), brothers 雷建怀 (Lei Jianhuai) and 雷建国 (Lei Jianguo), 雷绍芳 (Lei Shaofang), and 徐治魁 (Xu Zhikui) who made the same point that Hua was not a surname, but a nickname.

Besides those legends about Mulan herself, the tomb, the temple, the mythical stone lions, the white stone horses and the ginkgo trees occupied more than half of the repertoire of the tellers around General Temple.

It was Mulan herself who selected the location as her graveyard. She cut open her belly and was moved back home. She was still alive and asked to have a rest beside the pond in the front of the temple. 雷用寿 (Lei Yongshou) told:

She was interested in this location, she did not want to go anywhere else. There

should be some reasonSo the village head knelt down there, burned the perfume sticks and yellow papers, and then asked, “Would you show your power if you like this place, and we will bury you here.” Then she could be moved with little work. So she was buried there. (April 17th, 2010, interview in his house)

Around General Temple, the tellers commonly said that there are three or two of Mulan’s tombs there. The hill-like one believed by others to be General Tomb is actually a fake one, a 气包 (Qibao, air-bag) which can grow itself in order to confuse and then protect the real one that is in a pond one hundred meters away southwards.

The legends about General Temple are very mysterious and engaging. There is no information about the exact period when the temple was built. 雷用寿 (Lei Yongshou) told a legend about the construction of the temple:

The villagers selected a place like an armchair to build the temple and they made bricks themselves. However, they had no stone to make the ground. An old man with white beard appeared when they were digging and asked the villagers who were worried about the lack of stone. The old man suggested that they dig and dig, and then they saw the stones with all sizes and forms. The numbers of stones were enough to finish the construction. (April 17th, 2010, interview in his house)

In the temple there are three very special features—the pair of stone lions, the white stone horse and the pair of ginkgo trees, with many legends about them. The pair of stone lions were replaced by new ones and discarded on the edge of the village at the turn of the 21st century. Unfortunately they were stolen by strangers a few years ago. According to the legend, the pair of stone lions belonged to 张涛, a native man who was a high-ranking official in the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644 AD) and are well-known among the countrymen, but they could not be moved in the front of General Temple. The countrymen believed that General Mulan liked them and fixed

them there. 雷道平 (Lei Daoping), an old farmer who emphasized the reality of Mulan and her legends, told a complete version:

Oh, the lions, the history of the lions. Our nation, do not talk about this, nobody is concerned about this. The history of the lion is related to 张涛 (Zhang Tao). He had a pair of [stone] lions to move somewhere, could be westward. It was a busy road before. Those who wanted to go east, west and north must have passed here, stopped here and went to the temple to drink some tea. They, more than ten, returned to carry the lion after they drank the tea. Could not move! Two people could not. Four people could not. Eight people tried, and could not. They went to the temple to ask the abbot, "The abbot, the abbot, what happened, why?" The director burnt paper money and perfume sticks and then knelt down. She said: "You, if you like here and want stay here, go ahead; if you do not like here, or do not give you travelling expenses, go ahead." She says: "If you want to stay here, the road is too narrow, and let two people try to carry you here. If you want to go to the place you want to go, let four people try to carry you." Two people tried and succeeded. The two people carried them here. They stood here. Less than one year, two ginkgoes were planted here. So the lions came earlier, and the ginkgo trees were planted later. (April 21st, 2010, interview in Liu Jinhua's house)

Moreover, the natives believed that those who rode on either the stone lions or the white horse would get seriously ill or would be paralyzed in bed. A respected well-educated old man, 柳云林 (Liu Yunlin) told an anecdote in which a girl rode on it and something bad took place, and emphasized that the lions were mysterious (March 19, 2010, Interview in his house). An old woman and 杜有源 (Du Youyuan) who were sitting beside nodded and admitted that they had also heard it before. 柳云林 (Liu Yunlin) did not tell what happened and then switched to the ending "Finally, she was recovered after praying to the Buddha. We should not be superstitious, however, it was supernatural and we had to be superstitious a little." The old woman also knew but did not want to talk more than a little when I asked further. 柳云林

(Liu Yunlin) and 杜有源 (Du Youyuan) also paused and changed the topic if I asked about this. It is obvious that this topic is taboo and cannot be talked about with young ladies or outsiders. This reticence was very common during my research.

The stone white horse was also magical, and had a familiar legend. Two old ladies mentioned a young man who was ill for a long time and died after he rode on the horse during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976 AD). It could come alive and it ate the wheat on the countrymen's farm at night. The ginkgo trees in the front of the temple now are the only visible relics of the old General Temple. The villagers believed that they were planted there right after Mulan was buried and the temple was built. The male one on the right side is alive, and the female one on the left side died in the 1970s when no one took care of the temple. In my research the natives in other places also asked if the ginkgo trees were still alive.

The natives believed that there was magical power protecting the temple. During the Sino-Japanese wars (1937-1945 AD), a pair of huge hoptoads were safeguarding General Temple when Japanese soldiers were removing the stone steps. 柳云林 (Liu Yunlin) told:

Japanese, you don't see Japanese, Japanese. I was only eight years old when Japanese came to China. They built a road, a road bypass General Temple. Japanese came to build a road and stopped in the front of the General Temple. Japanese were going to cut the two ginkgo trees down. The local people beg them. Japanese believed a little superstition. [The local people] said that they could not be cut down because it was magical here. So they did not. They were going to dismantle the stone steps. They just removed a few steps and saw a pair of huge hoptoads. A pair of huge hoptoads, sitting on either side, is guarding the doors, sitting on either side. How huge! [He use his hands and arms to show that the hoptoad was as big as a dustpan] Their [eyes] were glistening, on either side,

guarding, just like the stone lions. Heihei, don't you think if it is? A pair of huge hoptoads appeared, how huge, with glistening eyes when Japanese were removing the steps. (March 19th, 2010, interview in his house)

The sources of the Repertoire

Normally, the tellers around General Temple began their telling with “I heard of it from the old” or “the story is handed down from the old times,” and such familiar formulas. In general, most of the tellers around General Temple have pointed to earlier times as their legend sources. Besides the oral tradition, “old books” are another important legend source. 张保华 (Zhang Baohua) and 雷用寿 (Lei Yongshou) definitely told me that they had read old books. 张保华 (Zhang Baohua) grew up on Mulan Mount as a Taoist before 1966 and the book was probably *木兰传* (*Mulan zhuan; The Romance of Mulan*) which has been popular among Taoists on the mount. He is a broker between the two groups—the Taoists on Mulan Mount and the tellers around General Temple and I will discuss him and his telling below.

雷用寿 (Lei Yongshou) read an old book with illustrations belonging to his close relative in the village. The skeleton of his version is similar to others, but two episodes need more attention: one is that the sister-in-law watered Mulan's cloth in order to cast doubt on her chastity and the other is that a treacherous officer was selling a 无心菜 (Wuxin cai; Vegetable without Heart). At first, I thought that the second episode was borrowed from a fiction *封神演义* (*Fengshen yanyi, Creation of the Gods*)¹³ in which the minister 比干 (Bi Gan) was ordered to cut his belly and

¹³ *封神演义* (*Fengshen yanyi, Creation of the Gods*) is a fiction based on traditional oral story-telling, and was finished in the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644 AD). The fiction focuses the history that emperor Wen (1152--1106 BC) beat the emperor Zhou (?—1046 BC) and established Empire Zhou (1046-256 BC). The story has been very popular in China in the form of printed books, professional story-telling and folk dramas since the 16th century.

removed his heart to cover the emperor Zhou's concubine's illness. He was still alive and could ride his horse because his friend gave him magical water to protect him when he knew the order. An old woman was selling 无心菜 (Wuxin cai; Vegetable without Heart) on his way home. 比干 (Bi Gan) stopped and asked what she was selling. The old lady answered. 比干 (Bi Gan) asked how human beings would live if they had no heart. The old lady answered that they must die immediately if they had no heart. 比干 (Bi Gan) shouted out loudly and fell down from his horse. His blood sprayed on the ground. It is obvious that 比干 (Bi Gan) death is almost the same as Mulan's. I suspected that this version about Mulan's death could have been popular around General Temple after I heard a simpler version from a villager in Celestial River Village and from 徐治魁 (Xu Zhikui). Both 雷用寿 (Lei Yongshou) and 徐治魁 (Xu Zhikui) admitted that an old book was one of the sources of their telling. 雷绍云 (Lei Shaoyun) also read an old book that should be *Mulan Zhuan* because the names of the characters and even those unimportant details and plots were the same. He was the only one among the folk group who could remember so many names and details, even including a poem to glorify General Mulan at the end of the book: “我爱将军勇过男” (“wo ai jiangjun yong guo nan,” I praised the General because she was braver than the men). However, the death of Mulan was the same as in the legend popular around General Temple, different from the one in *Mulan Zhuan*. His repertoire is a mixture of written tradition and oral tradition. I could not draw the conclusion that 雷用寿 (Lei Yongshou), 徐占魁 (Xu Zhankui), 徐治魁 (Xu Zhikui) and 雷绍云 (Lei Shaoyun) read the same book without further information.

Regardless of how many old books were popular earlier, they were destroyed a few decades ago and their stories were absorbed into oral tradition.

New publications are known by a few villagers. Three mentioned Wang Hanqing's book: 雷绍云 (Lei Shaoyun), 徐占魁 (Xu Zhankui), and 徐建新 (Xu Jianxin). Compared with the old books and those stories told by the elders, Wang's book had much less importance. 徐占魁 (Xu Zhankui), though he had read Wang's book, emphasized that his telling was from an old Taoist and an old book. 徐建新 (Xu Jianxin), a middle-aged man, was the only one among the tellers around General Temple who recognized Wang's book as the source of the telling. However, he only mentioned two place names, 洗身河 (Xinshen he; Washing-body River) and 夫子台 (Fuzi Tai; Confucius Flat) when he talked about Wang's book. What he told was the legend about the origin of the name of his village, 铁屎墩 (Tieshi dun; Iron Remains Mound), which appeared both in the book and in the oral legend repertoire. The influence of new publications could not be identified, and maybe they have not influenced the repertoire.

Around General Temple, oral tradition is the most significant source and medium for transmission of Mulan legends. Old books, of which I could not confirm the numbers, were another source, which is a new clue in tracing the written tradition of Mulan legends in Huangpi. The influence of new publications could not be determined, but was likely very small.

The natives' attitudes towards Mulan and her legends

General Temple was the initial site of my fieldwork to collect folk legends of

Mulan in oral tradition in Huangpi. Beyond my expectation, the work went very well. The villagers were very kind and friendly to me. The first informant, 柳云林 (Liu Yunlin), had no hesitation in telling what he knew to me, and neither did most of the villagers. Only a few declined my request because of lack of time or knowledge of Mulan. Sometimes, an ongoing interview in the living room or in the front of the house attracted an audience, or even motivated another person to narrate. 雷用寿 (Lei Yongshou) came close and joined in the interview with 罗登凤 (Luo Dengfeng), admitting that he knew something about Mulan. I was surprised that he sought me out and told me he had forgotten something when I was walking in the village on the second day after my interview with him. He had recalled something that night and decided to tell me. 陈银春 (Chen Yinchun), though she did not tell much, went home to ask her husband 陈克念 (Chen Kenian) if he knew and then led me to their house. Chen Kenian, an old man of seventy-five walking with a cane, insisted on leading me to the tomb, interpreting its feng-shui, and telling details about the tomb. I was worrying about him and tried to stop him climbing the tomb, but he persisted. Other tellers welcomed me to their house, asked me to sit down, gave me a cup of tea, and were pleased to tell what they knew. A few hesitated to tell something to me because they thought it was impolite or improper to tell things to an unmarried woman, such as how Mulan was slandered for allegedly losing her chastity.

Their attitudes towards the reality of Mulan ranged from believing to unbelieving. 雷道平 (Lei Daoping), 刘金华 (Liu Jinhua), and 雷用寿 (Lei Yongshou) were on the pole of belief, insisting on Mulan's reality. 雷绍云 (Lei Shaoyun) believed that

General Mulan was real and that was proved by the poem from 武则天 (Wu Zetian) (624-705 AD), the only empress in Chinese history, as well as the recognition by the national government regardless of the competition among the various towns which claimed Mulan.

Lei Shaoyun: General Mulan was from Dacheng Tan—her hometown, and had the surname Zhu. It is six km from here. Dacheng Tan, right on the north.

Jing: Which Dynasty?

Lei Shaoyun: Tang! According to *Ballad of Mulan*, she was living in the Northern and Southern Dynasties, earlier than Tang Dynasty. Did you read *Ballad of Mulan*?

Actually, she was in Tang Dynasty, in the years of Emperor Taizong—Li Shimin.

Wu Zetian, the first emperor of China, wrote a poem for Mulan. It had been proved. Some places did not recognize Mulan from here, didn't they? Some said she was from 安徽 (Anhui). After the liberation, the local old men contributed materials to the competition. Competition for General Mulan[‘s hometown]. It was real that Mulan was identified and proved by the nation. That Hua Mulan was from Bo County of Anhui. Their General Mulan had the surname Hua, not Zhu. Our Huangpi argued with Anhui. It was real after proof. It meant that General Mulan here was real, and all others are not.

Jing: How did you know that?

Lei Shaoyun: I read the documents. General Mulan here is real, and had the surname Zhu. (April 2nd, 2010, interview in his house)

The two pieces of evidence were not reasonable at all, but he believed them without any doubt. The poem by 武则天 (Wu Zetian) is available in *Mulan Zhuan*, which could be the source of his telling. He could not point out the document, he simply emphasized the “proof” presented by the national government, so I speculated that he learned the arguments and the propaganda of Huangpi as one hometown of Mulan from the mass media or publications. He was proud of his knowledge about the old tradition and information from the mass media.

雷道平 (Lei Daoping) and 刘金华 (Liu Jinhua) emphasized that Mulan was

real and historical, despite the supernatural motifs in the legends, such as the blood flowing backwards and the fight with the goblin fox. However, they did not identify those aspects as unbelievable. Lei emphasized that “the reality of General Mulan should be examined and identified by the nation....They were real person and real story. General Mulan was from Zhu family of Dacheng Tan. I’m sure” (April 21st, 2010, interview in Liu Jinhua’s house).

Besides those from the older generations, many tellers identified the existence of General Temple, the tomb and everything in and around the temple, as well as the series of place names as evidence. 刘金华 (Liu Jinhua) interrupted when 雷道平 (Lei Daoping) did not tell where the real tomb was, “The real tomb, and all the history were here. 搭命塘 (Daming tang, Losing-life Pond), and General Temple do stand here. What he told is real. I heard them from the old. A few generations told like that. Furthermore, everything about Mulan was recorded in the temple, and the statue was there before. All of them were dismantled.” He also took the visible relics as evidence and explained, “I believed those I could see by myself; and suspected those I couldn’t” (April 16th, 2010).

Three tellers expressed explicitly their suspicion of the reality of Mulan and her legends. 徐占魁 (Xu Zhankui), an old man spent his whole life in his home village and on Mulan Mount, said, “those stories about Mulan were hearsays, not real history.” In his view, the history of Mulan, written by a official in the Qing Dynasty (1616-1912 AD), could not be proved, and “was hearsay, disseminated among the folks, and was not recorded in books” because “it happened a thousand years ago.” He

differentiated clearly between history and legend, arguing that one is real but the other is not. He even identified the death of Mulan as a myth, which meant “fabricated stories” (May 19th, 2010, interview in his house). I spent a few hours with him and his wife talking, picking vegetables in their garden, washing them, preparing and enjoying lunch. He was very pleased and proud to recall his adolescent and working years on Mulan Mount, his master 万昭虚 (Wan Zhaoxu), and his knowledge about Mulan Mount. However, he did not talk much about Mulan and her legend.

Two brothers, 雷建怀 (Lei Jianhuai) and 建国 (Jianguo) emphasized that Mulan legends were “legends” and explained how the legends emerged:

What I only remember is the temple. In terms of General Mulan, I couldn't [agree] one. They were legends, and did not take place in modern times. No one knew them. So I couldn't tell. Some told like this, and some told like that. Many people did not know many legends about General Mulan. She didn't contribute much to this place. The people around here didn't know her contributions. They only heard of General Mulan, but did not see her. Her going to the army in the place of her father was recorded in books....In this place, even the old heard of them from others, told like others. The old heard from those elder than them. For instance, we were talking here, and the youth heard, talk about them and then handed them down. That's the case. General Mulan had legends and stories. However, no one saw, no one saw her. (April 18th, 2010, interview in Yinjiachong Village)

The three unbelievers had the same reason: legends about Mulan were disseminated among the folk through oration, and could not be proved, from any written record.

A few tellers did not deny the existence and the reality of Mulan, and emphasized that some legends about Mulan were history, though some were fabricated. 徐治魁 (Xu Zhikui) believed that General Mulan was a lady from the Zhu family of Dacheng Tan in the Tang Dynasty (618-907 AD), and had been buried at General Temple.

However the accounts of her death, the origin of One-li River, and the story of selling 无心菜 (Wuxin cai; Vegetable without Heart) were “folk legends,” and “fabricated stories,” which means he thought them unbelievable.

Some tellers could be located in the middle of the spectrum. They did not express their attitudes explicitly, just told me that they were handed down from old generations, everyone was talking like that, and it could not be clarified. 张辉魁 (Zhang Huikui) explained, “How to make them clear? Lady, the folks are talking about those things unseriously. Spread like that. How to clarify those things that happened in the Tang dynasty” (Zhang Huikui, May 25th, interview in his living room in Xianhedian Village)?

徐占魁 (Xu Zhankui) said: “it is difficult to tell whether General Mulan was real or not, because there was too long a history” (May 19th, 2010, interview in his house) . On the one side they respected the legends from old generations, and held by the community; on the other side, they could not believe all of them. Some tellers differentiated the believable from the unbelievable, but some did not. They just told the narratives as the old generation did before.

Around General Temple, the natives called Mulan “General Mulan” with great respect. In the local repertoire of legends about her, the death of Mulan is the most often repeated one, with many details; it is the most vivid part and the focus of the repertoire. Except in 张保华 (Zhang Baohua)’s and 徐占魁 (Xu Zhankui)’s repertoires, Mulan made a bet with her sister-in-law. She cut open her belly to prove that she had no baby. Sometimes two motifs were added: placing a red cloth under a

stone to be an indicator of chastity, and how the sister-in-law played a trick to make Mulan's cloth fade. They are popular motifs in Chinese legends. That Mulan's sister-in-law was beheaded is supposed to be believable among the people around the General Temple because 柳云林 (Liu Yunlin) and 雷绍仁 (Lei Shaoren) mentioned that they saw a statue of a warrior with a woman's head in his hand beside the statue of Mulan in the temple (Liu Yunlin, March 19th, 2010; Lei Shaoren, April 2nd, 2010). During my fieldwork I only heard this idea around General Temple. Mulan's chastity and heroism are the focus of this legend in which a maiden proves her virginity at the cost of her life. In ancient China, the chastity of unmarried and married women was considered a serious concern for them and for their families. If a woman lost her chastity, her family, the village, and even the clan would lose their reputations, and the woman would be punished, or even killed. Mulan had to deal with slander about her chastity through a tragic and cruel way—cutting open her belly to see if she had a baby because she had gained some weight after her twelve-year service in the army. She had no other choice when her red cloth appeared worn out or faded because of her sister-in-law's trickery. Her blood dyed the river red and flew backwards, motifs which were told with vivid details though they were part of unbelievable “myths” and “legends.” Such supernatural plots and episodes represented Mulan's chastity. Her sister-in-law lost the bet, was killed, and her head was removed. Such an end expressed sympathy with Mulan and the hatred of slander.

These most frequently repeated legends identified 节烈 (chastity and heroism) as the focus of the repertoire of the tellers around General Temple, even though most

of them did not speak out. Only Lei Daoping could recall the popular four virtues of Mulan—忠孝勇节 (loyal, filial, brave and chaste) and explained them briefly one by one. Lei Shaoren remembered them with a difference—忠孝节烈 (loyal, filial, chaste and heroic), but he could not explain their exact meanings.

Loyalty and filial piety were not emphasized in the repertoire, but contributions to the nation were highly praised. 雷用寿 (Lei Yongshou) declared:

[She] made achievements for the nation. [Her legends were] handed down from one generation to another. The old people fired money paper to her on the Brightness Festival in memory of her. So many years, [her legends were] handed down from generation to generation, not to forget her....[She] contributed to the nation. [She] made efforts to guard the nation, contributed her blood and sweat, and even sacrificed her own life. (April 16th, 2010, interview in his house)

The Brokers

A few tellers, 张保华 (Zhang Baohua), 徐占魁 (Xu Zhankui) and 徐治魁 (Xu Zhikui), could be viewed as the brokers between the native group around the General Temple and Mulan Mount. All of them were men who were born in villages around Mulan Mount, had stayed on the Mount for a very long time, had learned legends from the Taoists there and then resided in the villages around the General Temple.

Unlike the common tellers in the villages around the General Temple, 张保华 (Zhang Baohua) and 徐占魁 (Xu Zhankui) could describe Mulan's family members with particular details. 张保华 (Zhang Baohua) admitted that "the history" of Mulan was recorded clearly in an old book:

Mulan Mount was named as Qingshi Mount before and there were no people living on it. Zhu Tianlu had no son so he went to Qisi Peak to pray for one. Finally he got a daughter. Zhu Tianlu was a general in the royal court before and returned home when he was very old. He was recruited when a war broke out. He was anxious about it. Mulan saw it and decided to go the army. Taoist Tieguan gave her three embroidery bags. One goblin on Mulan Mount—Hu Bing-chi went to the battlefield, too. He hanged Mulan's parents on the wall to force Mulan to surrender. Mulan won with the help of one embroidery bag and found that her parents were transformed by goblins. Later, Hu wanted to flirt with Mulan in an inn. Mulan used one embroidery bag to beat him and removed his one leg. Goblin Dushou!¹⁴ A female general in the enemy—Hua Azhen—fell in love with Mulan and joined Mulan's army. Mulan told her the truth in the wedding room and they swore to be sisters. Zhu Mulan changed her name to Hua Mulan. They returned home.

Mulan went to Mulan Mount to see her master and met Hu Bingchi. She burned the third embroidery bag and the master came. Hu was crushed under Qipan Stone.

The emperor asked “Who will take my throne” and a minister told him that a man with surname 武 (Wu) would. He killed all people with the surname Wu. He (the emperor) asked it again and the minister answered the same. The emperor thought about Mulan who was titled as Marquis Wu. Mulan had no way to escape, and cut open her breast in Yili River beside Xianhe Dian. Her heart was carried to the royal court in a box and was still red. Finally, it was Wu Zetian who wanted to take over the throne. However, the royal court recorded Hua Mulan, not Zhu Mulan. (April 16th, 2010, interview in his house)

His repertoire was very similar to that of the Taoists on Mulan Mount, who heightened the connection between Mulan and Taoism. It is likely that the source of his repertoire was the book which was supposed to be 木兰传 (*Mulan Zhuan, the Romance of Mulan*). Although he has lived in the village more than forty years, it seemed that his repertoire had not been learned from those around the General Temple. The differences between some legend patterns in the two locations are very obvious, particularly in their accounts of the death of Mulan. His telling of the Mulan legend

¹⁴ In other versions, this episode took place when she was learning martial arts on Mulan Mount before she went to the army.

was very complete and fluent, without any hesitancy, which is a characteristic of those telling directly from written tradition. He emphasized that what he told was from an old book which had about forty chapters but he could only remember twenty-four. I tried to find out why he had read such an old book and which one it was. He did not want to continue and declined another interview and then left. His wife took over the interview and talked much more about him.

张保华 (Zhang Baohua), born in Zhangjiachong village under the west foot of Mulan Mount in 1942, was brought to Taoist Wan's 玉皇阁 (Yuhuang ge; the Jade Emperor Pavilion) to become an apprentice because of his extreme poverty when he was young. He grew up, read books and helped to take care of the temple until 1966 when all religious affairs were stopped and all the Taoists and monks were forced to leave. Zhang resumed a secular life and chose to join a family in Xiaojiatian Village that had only two girls, and he married the older one. His wife, who did not want to tell me her name, was very proud of her husband's life with Taoist Wan, his comprehensive reading, as well as his abundant knowledge about Mulan and Mulan Mount.

The respect for old books and his adherence to tradition made him clearly differentiate those stories that were traditional and those that were new, and Baohua kept those new stories out of his repertoire. He did know the legend in which others blamed Mulan for lost chastity, and had seen a TV show in which Mulan got married and even had a son, but he strongly expressed his dissatisfaction with these frivolous rewritings about Mulan's love stories and marriage that he did not hear before, not

only in a TV series about Mulan but also in other TV series based on folk legends and tales.

Before the telling of the legend, he emphasized that his telling was from an old Taoist who had lived before New China, though he had read three other new publications in recent years, including Wang Hanqing's book. Besides the Taoist, he said that a book *木兰传* (*Mulan Zhuan*), abbreviated as "Zhuan," was written by an official in Huangpi in the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644 AD), and was lost during the Cultural Revolution. He told a version that he could remember clearly:

General Mulan's father was 朱天禄 (Zhu Tianlu) and her grandfather was 朱若虚 (Zhu Ruoxu). 朱天禄 (Zhu Tianlu) was a 千户 (Qianhu, an officer in local government) and 朱若虚 (Zhu Ruoxu) was a great general before. They were landlords in Shuanglong Town where was a busy market with convenient traffic. Mulan had two masters—Taoist Teiguan and Monk Sangwu who was Wu Yunzhao, a general before. She declined the emperor's rewards and asked to return home after twelve-year service. The emperor entitled her as "Princess of 武昭" (Wuzhao). The emperor was worried about who would take over his country and a minister reminded him of a personage with the surname of Wu (武). Almost all with the surname Wu were killed, but the minister told the emperor that that person was still alive. Later, he began to suspect Princess Wuzhao—Mulan. He issued twelve edicts to recall Mulan back to the royal court. Mulan went to Poufu Plat on the riverside to cut open her breast. Her blood flew backwards to her home village. A village was named after it as Yilihe. That is her death. Her heart was washed in the river and brought to the emperor. Finally, it was Wu Zetian who took over the throne. (April 16th, 2010, interview in his house)

Except for the motif that the blood flew backwards in the river, other details in his story are similar to the repertoire of the Taoists. He was very pleased to be asked to talk about Mulan, and Mulan Mount. He also told the origin of 铁屎墩 (Tieshi dun; Iron Remains Mound) that was an interesting legend in the repertoire of the local people.

徐占魁 (Xu Zhankui) also stayed in Taoist Wan's Jade Emperor Pavilion as an apprentice from 1956 to 1962, with four other young men including 张保华 (Zhang Baohua). He returned home in 1962 after his marriage and was working as an accountant in the village. He and his wife went to Mulan Mount again in 1982 to run their small business of selling toys, souvenirs, drinks and snacks until 2008 when his wife had a stroke. He is familiar with the Taoists and monks on the mount, as well as their anecdotes that outsiders seldom get to know, for instance the conflicts among them. Unlike Baohua, Zhankui was very pleased to tell what he knew and could not stop narrating, from one topic to another, from Mulan to Mulan Mount and then to himself, even to telling about the conflicts in his family.

徐治魁 (Xu Zhikui), 占魁 (Zhankui)'s elder brother, was fishing beside the pond near 上屋咀 (Shangwu zui; Shangwuzui Village) when I saw him. I said "Hi" and began to talk with him. Later, the topic moved to Mulan. His view that "those [stories] about Mulan were hearsay, not real history, weren't they" sparked my interest. He told me that a local man, Zhang Hanlin in the Qing Dynasty (1616-1912 AD), wrote the history of Mulan and that her family had lived in 朱家寨 (Zhujiia zhai; Zhu Stockade, Dacheng Tan at present) and then were moved to Henan province. Mulan had the surname Zhu and was alive in the Tang Dynasty (618-907 AD). But he did not think it was real history.

徐治魁 (Xu Zhikui), born in 1936 in 上屋咀 (Shangwu zui; Shangwuzui Village), was educated in a traditional private school for a few years. He asked some countrymen to go with him to construct the buildings and temples on Mulan Mount in

1984¹⁵, as a part of the revival of religion and the development of cultural tourism on Mulan Mount, and continued for almost ten years. His acquaintances included the Taoists and monks. His sister-in-law and his neighbor showed their respect to him for his traveling around the country, comprehensive knowledge, and contributions to the construction of Mulan Mount. He knew much about Mulan Mount, particularly about the history of its construction from the early 1980s and the folklore of pilgrimage. Comparatively, he expressed less interest in Mulan and her legends. He talked about the difference between history and legend when I asked something about Mulan. At last, I asked about the origins of place names such as 铁屎墩 (Tieshi dun; Iron Remains Mound) and 仙河店 (Xianhe dian; Celestial River Village). He told a mixed version:

A treacherous minister framed a case that Mulan wanted to rebel. In order to prove her loyalty, Mulan cut open her breast to show her red heart on Poufu Flat beside Xian River. Her blood flew backwards one li. She was still alive and met a man selling Wuxin Vegetables. She asked what he was selling and fell down to death when the man answered “无心 (without a heart) 菜 (Wuxin cai, Wuxin Vegetable).” She died around the General Temple. (May 19th, 2010, interview beside a pond in Shangwuzui Village)

At the end, he emphasized “That is. I am not clear. That is...a fabricated story.”

All of the last three narrators were born in villages around Mulan Mount, had stayed on Mulan Mount for at least ten years with frequent contact with the Taoists and monks, had access to their repertoire through both books and the oral tradition, and had also lived in the villages for a long time. The three repertoires can be located

¹⁵ The construction began in the early 1980s, with financial support from the local government and donations from the countrymen and pilgrims.

on a spectrum with two poles, at one end the repertoire of the Taoists and at the other that of the tellers around the General Temple. 张保华 (Zhang Baohua)'s repertoire is almost the same as that of the Taoists; 徐占魁 (Xu Zhankui)'s, involving a legend popular around the General Temple, is very close to that of the Taoists; and 徐治魁 (Xu Zhikui)'s is at the middle of the spectrum, very similar to the repertoire of General Temple. It seems that the mixture of the repertoires of the two groups took place naturally.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I introduced General Temple, General Tomb, the villages and villagers around them, as well as their legends about the temple, the tomb and Mulan. General Temple is Mulan's graveyard and her shrine with a long history, and its reputation has decreased since 1966 when the temple was destroyed. General Temple is very close to the downtown of 长岭 (Changling Town), on the foot of Mulan Mount, on the side of a main avenue, all of which give the villagers access to the modern world. Agriculture is not their main job, but is a source of fresh vegetables, leisure, and a kind of outdoor exercise. Many families hold or held small businesses on Mulan Mount, which encouraged the communication of legends. Similar to those at Dacheng Tan, most of the villagers have a mixed religious system of ancestor worship, Buddhism, Taoism, and folk belief. But Mulan worship also exists around her shrine, as well as serious Buddhism and even Christianity. Mulan worship is the background for the supernatural and magical motifs which appear in the repertoire. The local people shared the idea that Mulan was from Dacheng Tan and ended her life

tragically. The villagers highly respected Mulan as a deity, as well as her shrine—General Tomb and General Temple where many supernatural and magical things took place. They were proud of the high position of General Temple in the past, and worried that its status has gradually decreased and been displaced by Mulan Mount. In their eyes, Mulan was born as a common woman, and became a local deity who had her own shrine after her death. Half of the repertoire is about Mulan, and half is about General Temple and General Tomb. The former parts took place in a secular world and the latter parts established a sacred world in which many supernatural motifs appeared, particularly those about the stone lions and horse, and Mulan's blood flowing backwards. The part about General Temple represents the villagers' self-pride in the past, their worry about the current situation and their underlying expectation of re-identification and development of the area. Although Mulan was more capable than men, she had to deal with slander about her chastity and then to prove it at the cost of her life. The local people showed strong sympathy with this woman in the legends.

The repertoire of General Temple is based on oral tradition, with strong influence of written materials, including old books and new publications. The legends on Mulan Mount can be identified as a distinct group within the Mulan legend cycle. The people here have lived close together for many generations. The villagers around General Temple believed Mulan was born as a normal maiden, but finally became a local deity through her extraordinary deeds and after her tragic death.

I will move to the Taoist group on Mulan Mount and their legends about Mulan in the next chapter. In their repertoire, Mulan was a goddess with magical power, who

was predestined to experience her secular life as a part of her religious practice. In the repertoire there are more supernatural and Taoist motifs, more characters appear, and there are more legends about Mulan's life.

Chapter 4

The Religious Group and the Repertoire on Mulan Mount

木兰山(Mulan shan; Mulan Mount) is the most well-known religious shrine and tourist destination in Huangpi. Many visitors do not associate the heroine Mulan with this mountain, and are surprised by Mulan Place on the Mount, because the stories told here are very different from those they had learned from books and visual arts. However, in oral and written tradition Mulan learned, meditated, and fought with fox goblins here.

Mulan Mount and the Religious Informants

木兰山(Mulan shan; Mulan Mount) is located on the east bank of 仙河 (Xianhe; the Celestial River), 30 km from the downtown of Huangpi District, 70 km northeast of Wuhan, the capital of Hubei Province. It has had various names in the past: 牛头山 (Niutou shan; Ox Head Mountain), 青狮岭 (Qingshi ling; Green-lion Mountain) or 建明山 (Jianming shan; Jianming Mountain) (Wang 1985, 1). The “木兰山风景区 (Mulan shan fengjingqu; Mulan Mountain Scenic Area)” was founded officially in 1982. In the past three decades the local government has acted as the regulator and administrative agency of the mountain. Six features of Mulan Mountain are introduced to the tourists: the beautiful scenery, the connection to General Mulan, the Buddhism and Taoism Site, the Revolution Site (a branch of the Red Army was there in the 1930s), the rocks, as well as forests. Consequently, the whole area is separated into four parts: 古庙区 (Gumiaoqu; The Ancient Temple Area), 奇石公园 (Qishi

gongyuan; The Stones Park), and 木兰花苑 (Mulan huayuan; the Lily Magnolia (Mulan in Chinese) Garden) and 度假休闲区 (Dujia xiuxianqu; the Resort Area) where hotels and inns are located. The Ancient Temple Area is a provincial historical site, 582 meters above sea level. The Stones Park is full of stones with different shapes, 棋盘石 (Qipan shi; Chess-board Stone), 龙尾石 (Longwei shi; Dragon Tail Stone), 剑劈石 (Jianpi shi; Sword Stone) and so forth, many of which are associated with legends about General Mulan. The Ancient Temple Area and the Stone Park are surrounded by walls as a limited area, and the tourists and the pilgrims need pay fifty yuan (8 or 9 U.S. \$) for entrance. The administrative office constructed the ticket office and the entrance gate on the north of the Splendid View Square, with a few offices besides them, including a tourist centre.

The scenery, the Taoism and Buddhism, and the folk religion, made Mulan Mount a site which has attracted pilgrims, literati, and tourists over the past one thousand years. 杜牧 (Du Mu) (803-852 AD), a great poet in the Tang Dynasty (618-907 AD), made a trip to Mulan Mount and wrote a poem to eulogize Mulan after he visited Mulan Temple on the mountain in 843. In the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644 AD), the writer 屠达 (Tu Da), visited Mulan Mountain and wrote an account in which he described it as the most splendid landscape in 西陵 (Xiling).¹ According to Yan and Mei's investigation, Mulan Mount was not recorded in the national gazetteer until the Song Dynasty (960-1279 AD), and became recognized as a well-known and splendid landscape in the Ming (1368-1644 AD) and Qing Dynasties (1644-1911 AD) (Jiang

¹ 西陵 (Xiling) was the old name of Huangpi District.

2007, 88).

Mulan Mountain has also been a religious site since the sixth century, the Tang Dynasty (618-907 AD). It has been an important Taoist and Buddhist site through different dynasties. The construction of the temples started in the Sui Dynasty (581-618 AD), developed further in the Tang Dynasty (618-907 AD), and there were more than fifty buildings in the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644 AD), “occupying thirty thousand square meters....There were more than one thousand statues...at that time...the pilgrimages came from different regions, shoulder by shoulder, heel by heel” (Wang 1985, preface). Mulan Mount is the shrine of 真武 (Zhenwu),² Taoism and Buddhism co-existed on Mulan Mount, the Taoists occupied the top, and the Buddhists built their temples from the foot to halfway up the slopes.

Mulan Mount is also a site of folk religion. For common people, it is a place to pray for the birth of a child, particularly a son. My mother gave an anecdote, “Your uncle and your aunty [her eldest brother and his wife] went there because your cousin’s wife had several miscarriages a few years after they got married” (Yang Ximei, October 31st, 2008, conversation via telephone). This must be a popular, deep-rooted and very ancient cult. In each version of Mulan’s birth, her parents’ childlessness and prayer for a son on Mulan Mount are mentioned. The temple named “娘娘殿 (Niangniang dian; Goddess Palace)” is well known because three goddesses in it bless those who pray for a child. The belief is expressed in the phrase “groping

² 真武 (Zhenwu), is called also 玄帝 (Xuandi; Emperor Xuan) or 真武大帝 (Zhenwu Dadi; Emperor Perfected Martial or Truly Martial Great Emperor), also called Xuantian Shangdi (Supreme Emperor of Dark Heaven or Protecting Holy True Lord of the North Pole (star)). He has been a national Taoist deity since early the Ming Dynasty (Pas 1998, 165).

for shoes,” that is the woman can have a child if she can get shoes that the Taoists have placed under the altar in front of the statues of the goddesses.³ However, the woman should donate some money into the donation box beforehand. If she does not, it is certain that she will not conceive a son (Wang 1985, 19).

Pilgrimage to Mulan Mountain is very popular among the local people and those from neighboring towns and counties, such as 新洲 (Xinzhou), 孝感 (Xiaogan), 大悟 (Dawu), and even some areas in Henan Province and Jiangxi Province. The pilgrimage season is from February to August of the lunar calendar. According to written records, the pilgrimage groups, composed of a few dozens or hundreds of people, processed to Mulan Mount on two fixed routes, the east route and west route, sometimes with a statue carried on four men’s shoulders, accompanied with folk music and a series of rituals (Pi 2007, 10-12). Religious rites were held in each temple. The number of pilgrims reached ten thousand during the 1930s and 1940s (Pi 2007, 12).

Mulan Mount, particularly the buildings, was damaged by the wars of the Twentieth century. During the Cultural Revolution,⁴ most of the temples were torn down, except for two buildings, the Archway in memory of Mulan, and 玉皇阁 (Yuhuang ge; Jade Emperor Pavilion). The damage was not only at the physical level. Religion itself was forced to stop. The Taoist and Buddhist monks and nuns were expelled, and at the same time all religious activities were prohibited. During my fieldwork, the local people and the old monks and nuns mentioned that Mulan Mount

³ “Xiezi (Shoes)” is a homonym of “kid” in the local dialect.

⁴ The Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), brought chaos in politics, society, and culture all around the country. Traditional culture, including religion, suffered devastating damage.

was in ruins from the 1960s to early 1980s.

The government of Huangpi has been making efforts to develop Mulan Mount as a modern tourism site. 1982 is the significant year when Mulan Mount was given the title “Mulan Mountain Scenic Tourism Area.” The government’s involvement started immediately and began to influence perception of the area’s scenery and cultures. This followed in a series of actions: the reconstruction of the buildings, the development of tourism facilities, and the reconstruction of the religion system. More than twenty buildings were restored, and facilities such as the roads, parking area, and hotels, were completed by 1985, and have been improved since. Meanwhile, the government has invited Taoists, monks and nuns who were expelled a few decades ago to return and resume their religious practices, for instance, the religious fairs. Besides these actions, more efforts were taken to discover, identify, collect, advertise, and market the culture. Among them, two were regarded as representative fruits: one is the first performance 木兰山组歌 (*Mulan shan zuge; A Suite of Songs of Mulan*) that was held at Splendid-view Square on the Mount in September 21st, 2006, which advertised it at national level, and the second is 木兰山志 (*Mulan shan zhi; The Chorography of Mulan Mount*) that was finished and published in 2009 after more than thirty years of work.

Buddhists and their repertoire

The history of Buddhism on Mulan Mount dates back to the construction of 上古禅寺 (Shanggu chansi; Shanggu Buddhist Temple) in the early Tang Dynasty (618-907 AD) by 醉月和尚 (Monk Zuiyue) (Wan 2009, 135). At present, there are six Buddhist temples on Mulan Mount (see below), all of which are under 南天门

(Nantian men; the South Celestial Gate) which has acted as the boundary between Buddhism and Taoism on the mount. Among them, 妙法寺 (Miaofa si; Miaofa Temple) and 法藏寺 (Fazang si; Fazang Temple) are in the improved tourist site but others are outside, which means they could be more accessible to tourists and pilgrims. 华严阁 (Huayuan ge; Huayan Pavilion) and 上古禅寺 (Shanggu chansi; Shanggu Buddhist Temple), though they are right on the side of the road to the parking area, are always ignored by the tourists and pilgrims. 川心灵官殿 (Chuanxin linguan dian; Chuanxin Lingguan Hall) and 准提阁 (Zhunti ge; Zhunti Pavilion) are on the discarded road connecting 张家冲 (Zhangjia chong; Zhangjia Village) and Parking Lot at 小庙 (Xiaomiao; Small Temple) which only the natives use, which are not even on the tourist map. Among the five temples, 妙法寺 (Miaofa si; Miaofa Temple), 法藏寺 (Fazang si; Fazang Temple), 华严阁 (Huayan ge; Huayan Pavilion) are in use, 上古禅寺 (Shanggu chansi; Shanggu Buddhist Temple) is under construction and no monk or nun is there, 川心灵官殿 (Chuanxin lingguan dian; Chuanxin Lingguan Hall) and 准提阁 (Zhunti ge; Zhunti Pavilion) are almost abandoned.

There are thirteen registered monks and nuns in the six temples. Normally they have daily morning and evening lessons, in which they chant certain scriptures. The monks or nuns encircle the shrine clockwise in the hall, praying while shaking a bronze ring. This ritual begins at 4 p.m and lasts one hour every day. Eleven out of thirteen of them came to Mulan Mount after 1984 when the reconstruction began and the religion resumed. This indicates that they could have had no close relationship

with the old and earlier Buddhists on Mount Mulan. This was the case during my fieldwork. The Buddhist interviewees knew little about Mulan.

The income of Buddhist temples is from donations by the pilgrims, some of whom put money into donation boxes, while others give to the monks and nuns directly. The donations are not only money, but also oil, fruits, books and decorations for the statues and for the temple. Buddhists also beg alms among local people and pilgrims, particularly for the rebuilding and extension of the temple and for erecting new statues. The names of those benefactors must be engraved on walls of the temple or steles exhibited in the temples.

The Buddhists are not willing to have close connection with the outside world, and prefer to separate themselves from worldly lives, even from their families. None of them is living with parents or siblings, which is popular among Taoists. They do not pay any attention to anything unrelated to their religion and meditation, so most of them are not interested in General Mulan who is a Taoist goddess, her legends, and the history of the Mount.

圣明 (Monk Shengming), the youngest one among the Buddhists, is very nice, always smiling. Compared to other religious adherents on Mulan Mount, Shengming, who finished his technical secondary school, majoring in computer engineering in 1996, is highly educated. He met his master, 仁慈 (Monk Renci) in 孝感 (Xiaogan) in 1997 or 1998 and then followed him to come to Mulan Mount in 1999 and stayed there. Unlike other Buddhists who do not care about the outside world, he was very curious about it. He asked me many questions about my study and life in Canada in a

office beside the entrance to the Ancient Temple Area⁵. He was like any curious young man if I ignored his bare head and Buddhist cassock. He told his version:

The General Mulan is adherent to Taoism. However, she has a Taoist master, as well as a Buddhist master. I knew about her when I was very young. The legend about her is that: Guanyin Buddha flips a pillar in the court of heaven when she is competing in magic with other deities. She flips vigorously, so, her finger is bleeding. A drop of blood falls to the human world. Her [Mulan's] mom, at that time, is praying for a baby. She opens her mouth and the drop of blood falls in it. After that, she is pregnant, and it is the General Mulan. After she was born, the General Mulan is very bright, is a soul girl. She can play language games very well when she is listening to Buddhist preaching in a temple. You know this. I cannot remember the content of the language games, but you can find it in references. Others think that she is a soul girl. Afterwards, what is about her afterwards. She takes her father's place to the army when war breaks out. Is it right? She disguises as a man, disguises as a man, goes to the army out of country. After she comes back to the country after wars, after she comes back home, she removes her armor and dresses [as a general]. At that time, others found that she is a woman. That is the story.

Afterwards, the emperor is going give her the position of a minister in the royal court. She is not willing. Afterwards, a treacherous minister makes a false charge against her. That treacherous minister charges with her that she is going to rebel or something else. And, she says that she does not do such things. Afterwards, there is a 洗心河(Xixin he; Washing Heart River), there is a Xixin River nearby. That is, for the presentation of her loyalty, she takes out her heart and washes it in the water. The whole river changes red! The water, the heart, is as white and bright as a jade, very white. It is called "Xixin River"! That is, and next, she comes back to her hometown.

There are lots of legends about her, right? She uses magic to fight with goblins, with a fox goblin, fight, and with a snake goblin. [Jing: with a snake demon?] Yes, she subdues a few goblins, fights a few goblins for the people, eliminates goblins for the region. What is next, she is single, that is she is living by herself. And then, she passed away without any illness, passed away in her sleep. [Jing: Oh, how old when she passed away?] How old? Maybe seventy or eighty years old. (June 29th, 2010, interview in Fazang Temple)

In his telling, Mulan has an extraordinary birth, from the blood of 观音菩萨

(Guanyin pusa; Avalokitesvara), a goddess in the heaven, she was very bright, she is

⁵ There are two sites need entrance fees, the Ancient Temple Area and the Stone Park.

heroic and sacrifices her life to prove her loyalty, and she killed goblins for the local people. Generally, she is portrayed as a deity, not a human being. The beginning of his telling cannot be found in any of the books that I have read, and could be from his imagination or appropriation from other books. Although 圣明 (Shengming) admitted that Mulan was a Taoist adherent, he mentioned the influence from Buddhism, her Buddhist master and the language game in a temple.

He told me that his source of the Mulan legend is the published books exhibited in the Tourist Centre, but he could not remember which books that he had read. I think that it could be 王汉清 (Wang Hanqing)'s *神奇的木兰山* (*Shenqi de mulanshan*; *Mysterious Mulan Mountain*). The main part of his telling is an assembled text of abstracts of two legends in Wang's book: “观音寺中一神童 (Guanyinsi zhong yi shentong; a Whiz Kid in Guan-yin Monastery)” and “木兰抽剑剖腹 (Mulan choujian poufu; Mulan Cutting Open Her Belly with a Sword).” He added a few fragments of other versions—fighting with monsters and goblins, being alone for the rest of her life and passing away in her sleep without any illness and pain. Although he had stayed on Mulan Mount for more than ten years, he did not hear his master and grand master tell a Mulan legend. His explanation is that “all of us are born in Hubei, so we knew it when we were young” (June 29th, 2010, interview at Fazang Temple).

Taoists and Their Repertoire

The history of Taoism can be traced back to the Sui Dynasty (581-618 AD). During the last few hundred years, Taoist temples suffered from wars, fires and

damages and were rebuilt at the request of 张涛 (ZhangTao)⁶ who asked the emperor and royal court to rebuild the temple to commemorate General Mulan in the thirty-sixth year of Wanli period (1608 AD). Taoism flourished in the Ming (1368-1644 AD) and Qing (1644-1912 AD) Dynasties. Taoism and all the temples were totally destroyed during the Cultural Revolution and were rebuilt from the early 1980s. All Taoist temples are located above 南天门 (Nan tianmen; the South Celestial Gate) on the two north peaks of Mulan Mount after the Cultural Revolution. In total there are sixteen temples: 磨针涧 (Mozhen jian; Mozhen Pavilion), 药王宫 (Yaowang gong; Yaowang Palace), 文昌宫 (Wenchang gong; Wenchang Palace), 回光殿 (Huiguang dian; Huiguang Palace), 木兰殿 (Mulan dian; Mulan Palace), 迎恩宫 (Ying'en gong; Bless Palace), 斗姥宫 (Doumu gong; Doumu Palace), 朝天宫 (Chaotian gong; Chaotian Palace), 报恩殿 (Bao'en dian; Thanksgiving Palace), 古金顶 (Gu jingding; Ancient Golden Peak), 帝主宫 (Dizhu gong; Dizhu Palace), 三清殿 (Sanqing dian; Palace of the Three Taoist Seniors), 三元宫 (Suanyuan gong; Sanyuan Palace), 古娘娘殿 (Gu niangniang dian; Goddess Palace), 金顶 (Jinding; Golden Peak), and 玉皇阁 (Yuhuang ge; Jade Emperor Pavilion).

Each temple has an abbot or an abbess who needs to be approved by the Taoism Society of Mulan Mount. The abbot or the abbess of each temple always has pupils who begin their meditation as attendants, a cook in the kitchen, a farmer in the vegetable garden, the simplest and basic training as a Taoist—setting perfume sticks twice a day, at morning and at evening, kneeling and kowtowing professionally,

⁶ 张涛, a native of Huangpi, became a high rank official in the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644 AD).

reading scriptures and so forth. There were twenty-two registered Taoists living in the temples in August, 2010.

The age of the Taoists ranges from forty to eighty. Some Taoists worry about the future of Taoism on Mulan Mount but have no alternative. 许信慧 (Xu Xinhui), the Abbess of 斗姥宫 (Doumu gong; Doumu Palace) who is about fifty years old and stayed on the mount for more than twenty years, thinks that it is natural because the life of common people is getting better and better so the youth need not leave home to convert to Taoism at all (July 7th, 2010, interview at Doumu Palace). The temples and the abbots/abbesses have their particular adherents. Some adherents believe in the virtues of a certain temple. Some adherents trust a particular abbot/ abbess and will follow him/her if he/she moves to another temple.

Among the Taoists, except two males, 董礼孝 (Dong Lixiao) and 展宗一 (Zhan Zongyi) who are from other provinces, nine are from Huangpi and twelve are from neighboring counties. There are four old Taoists over eighty years old who came to the Mount before 1949 and they are 付明义 (Fu Mingyi), 展宗一 (Zhan Zongyi), 刘明纯 (Liu Mingchun) and 陈法仙 (Chen Faxian). Their existence ensures the preservation, spread and transmission of Mulan legends in oral tradition.

The meditation of Taoists is more various and comprehensive than Buddhists. Beside their ideas about their belief and religion, they are interested in music, calligraphy, traditional Chinese medicine, literature and even popular culture. One vision is deeply impressed in my mind: 展宗一 (Zhan Zongyi), the Abbot of 迎恩宫 (Ying'en gong; Bless Palace), was playing Chinese flute in the front of the temple at

evening, with his long white beard and his robe waving with the breeze under the sunset and glow. The Taoists are always interested in and good at massage and traditional medicine.

The Taoists live basically on donations and payments from pilgrims. Normally, the pilgrims put some money into the donation boxes in the temple that they visit. The second important source of earnings is the pilgrims' payments for holding rituals. The rituals can be divided into two categories: one kind is held on a Taoist festival, in which the Taoists will read the names that pilgrims left on the yellow paper, each of which marks a donation of at least fifty yuan (8.5 U.S. \$). The second is held for the pilgrims who ask for a ritual to be held for some reason—to solve difficulties in the family, to pray for someone's health, to bless someone in illness and so forth. The pilgrims should donate a few thousand yuan. If the wishes are fulfilled, they must visit again with money and presents: fruits, oil, decorations for the altars, and silk banners.

The life of the Taoists is simple, quiet, and regular. Normally, they get up at four a.m. and begin their morning lesson—reading scriptures on their knees in front of the altar. In the early morning, they make and have breakfast, clean the temple and attend to other trivial things. During the daytime serving the pilgrims and taking care of the Xianghuo⁷ in the hall are their main works. If the pilgrims or visitors request, they provide the service of fortune telling by drawing lots, reading fortunes by face or palm, leaving names on yellow paper for rituals on Taoism festivals, all of which need payments. The evening lesson, the same as the morning, is repeated at 4 p.m., after

⁷ Xianghuo, (香火 perfume and fire) means everything burnable or giving light in the temple. Taking care of Xianghuo includes: keeping all perfume sticks, candles and oil lamp burning, replacing those that die out or adding oil in time, being careful and avoiding fire or conflagration.

which is their private time—cooking, washing, chatting, visiting friends, walking around, watching the sunset and so forth.

Very different from the Buddhists, Taoists have more contact with the outside world. Some of them even run businesses. For instance, 董孝礼 (Dong Xiaoli), a middle-aged abbot runs a clinic in 药王宫 (Yaowang gong; Yaowang Palace), and 马至立 (Ma Zhili), a fifty year old abbess, has a Taoist restaurant in the backroom of Ancient Golden Peak. Both of them believe that medicine or Taoist food are necessary parts of the culture of Taoism and they have the strong responsibility to take them over, popularize them and hand them down. Most of the Taoists have a TV set, some of them own DVD players and read newspapers. They are also willing to keep up the connection with their families. Some ask their families and relatives to live with them, and help them as well, some even hire some people to be in charge of household tasks.

The legends told by the Taoists focused on Mulan herself. Their themes are:

1. Birth and families: General Mulan, surnamed Zhu, was a native of 双龙镇 (Shuanglong Town; Two-dragon Town) on the north of Mulan Mount. Her father 朱天禄 (Zhu Tianlu) or 朱寿甫 (Zhu Shoufu) was a local official, 千户 (Qianhu), her uncle was 朱天锡 (Zhu Tianxi), and her grandfather was 朱若虚 (Zhu Ruoxu), a court official in the Sui Dynasty.

2. Praying for a child: Mulan's father Zhu Tianlu and his wife were still childless at the age of forty or fifty and they prayed for a baby on 祁嗣顶 (Qisi ding; Praying-for-a-Child Peak) of Mulan Mount. They got a baby girl and named her "Mulan." This

was the origin of Praying- for-a-Child Peak.

3. Incarnation: Mulan was not a common person, but rather a dog or an immortal from the celestial world who was arranged to go down to the underworld.

4. A child prodigy: Mulan could answer questions quickly and wisely when 丧吾 (lose myself) 和尚 (Sangwu heshang; Monk Sangwu) was sermonizing in the temple. She was so smart and curious.

5. Learning: Her grandfather 朱若虚 (Zhu Ruoxu) was a close friend of 丧吾和尚 (Monk Sangwu) and 铁冠道人 (Tieguan daoren; Taoist Teiguan). Both of them became her teachers and trainers. Monk Sangwu taught her martial arts, shooting, horsemanship and military strategies.

6. Chess-board Rock: Mulan played chess with 祖师爷 (Zushi ye; the Master Zhenwu) on a rock. The loser used snot to stick the separated rock together. This is the origin of 棋盘石 (Qipan shi; Chess-board Rock).

7. Cutting a fox goblin's leg: She used a magical sword to cut off one leg of a fox goblin and then the two became enemies. Then the fox goblin had a nickname 独手大仙 (Dushou daxian, Fox Goblin with One-hand).

8. Disguising as a man and going to the army: Mulan decided to go to the army in the place of her father, masquerading as a man. Her parents did not permit this. She tried to persuade them. They permitted her to go.

9. The three embroidery bags: Taoist Tiegan gave her three embroidery bags with magical symbols in them.

10. The magical saddle camel: 靖松道人(Taoist Jingsong) subdued a snake and

begged for a dying camel. He transferred the soul of the snake to the camel and it became Mulan's magical saddle camel.

11. The character “斗”: The character “斗” appeared, which meant Mulan must stay in the army twelve years.

12. Danger of revealing her female gender: Mulan's female gender was revealed by Hua Azhen or Li Jing who did not harm her.

13. Fighting with the fox goblins: On the battlefield, Mulan exercised magical power against Fox Goblin with One-hand.

14. Marriage: A native 花子麻 (Hua Zima), forced his widowed younger sister, 花阿珍 (Hua Azhen), to marry again. Hua Azhen married General Mulan. Mulan confessed to her that she was female, and the two women swore to be sisters. Zhu Mulan was from Huangpi and Hua Mulan was Hua Azhen, from Henan.

15. Surname “Hua”: She was confused with Hua Azhen and got the surname “Hua”.

16. Returning: The wars ended and Mulan returned to the royal court. She declined the rewards (and marriage with the princess in a few versions) and asked to go back home to be with her old parents.

17. Imprisoning the Goblin fox: Taoist Tieguan imprisoned Goblin fox under the Chess-board Rock.

18. Accusing or slandering: A treacherous court official framed a rebellion against Mulan. The emperor 李世民 (Li Shimin) promulgated an imperial edict to order Mulan back.

19. Suicide: Mulan cut open her breast, removed her heart and washed it to prove her loyalty. One-li River that got its name because Mulan's blood flew back one li (0.5 k.m.).

20. Becoming an immortal: Mulan became immortal after her death.

21. Burial: She was buried in the General Tomb.

22. Memorial: The emperor built a memorial archway for her.

23. Entitlement: She was entitled “忠孝勇烈 (Zhong xiao yong lie; loyal, filial, brave and heroic)” by the royal court.

24. Appearance after death: She made her appearances on the Mount to help the people after her death.

The legends told by Taoists on Mulan Mount focus on Mulan's whole life story, from her birth to death and then afterlife.

Very different from tellers at Dacheng Tan and those around General Temple, Taoists show much less interest in local legends about the mount, the temples and the landscape, all of which are closely connected to Mulan. In my view, landscape narratives played the same role as the local legends in the repertoire at Dacheng Tan and around the General Temple. 余艳红 (Yu Yanhong) explains “landscape narrative” about legends as:

Landscape narrative is telling legends through landscape. Specifically, landscape narrative is a narrative system centering on landscape and buildings, composed of pictures, statues, sculptures, written words, oral introduction and so forth. In this system, the narrating function of landscape is ignited by memory of legends, and legends exist in all narrative forms. (Yu 2015, 57)

Landscape narratives about Mulan on Mulan Mount include: the reputation of Mulan

Mount that is related with General Mulan, the existence of Mulan's relics (the Archway and Mulan Temple), as well as the written or oral introductions to Mulan Mount in which the relationship with Mulan and Mulan's story are told. Tourists and pilgrims could learn the outline of Mulan legends and knew the relationship between the mount and Mulan before they came and on their journey on the mount.

Furthermore, religion on Mulan Mount has created a historical and sacred surrounding in which Mulan is a goddess worshipped by Taoists, has her own religious shrine (Mulan Temple), as well as a memorial relic (the Archway). So the landscape narratives have the same function as local legends at Dacheng Tan and around General Temple, which could be the reason why Taoists seldom told local legends.

Several place names -- 祁嗣顶 (Qisi ding; Praying for a child Peak), 棋盘石 (Qipan shi; Chess-board Rock) and the archway—as well as their origins appear in legends, so there is no need to tell special local legends about them. The internal world created in the legend is the same as the outside world that any visitors could see.

I carry on a linguistic structure examination of Mulan legends in the repertoire at Dacheng Tan, which is based on Labov's model that Bennett (1984) and Nicolaisen (1987) applied to legend study.

Table 7. Structural elements in the repertoire of the Taoists on Mulan Mount

Element	Motif
Abstract	Introduction
Orientation (3)	Brith and families Praying for a child Incarnation
Complication (15)	A child prodigy Learning Chess-board Rock

	Cutting a fox goblin's leg Disguising as a man and going to the army The three embroidery bags The magical saddle came The character “斗” Danger of revealing her female gender Fighting with fox goblins Marriage Surname “Hua” Returning Imprisoning Goblin fox Accusing or slandering
Resolution (2)	Suicide Becoming an immortal
Coda (2)	Burial and Memorial Appearance after death
Evaluation (2)	Entitlement Attitudes toward the reality of Mulan

Taoists on Mulan Mount showed more confidence when they were telling legends of Mulan and started with designating the source of their repertoire. They always gave more information about Mulan's family in their Abstract, her father's name and his simple life story, her grandfather's and her uncle's names, sometimes even her mother's and younger brother's name, as well as her extraordinary birth.

Complication is composed of fifteen motifs, involving her learning in her childhood, her conflicts with fox goblins, her helpers and helps, many details about her disguising and fighting in the army, and her life after returning. Accusation resulted in Mulan's suicide, but she became an immortal after death in Resolution. Besides burial in the General tomb, the informants added memorials for Mulan, the General Temple, the Archway, and Mulan Temple, as well as a unique motif, her appearance after death in the Coda to finish their knowledge about Mulan and then switched to Evaluation in

which they expressed their pride in and praise of Mulan, and then ended their legend with their attitudes toward the reality of Mulan.

Table 8. Narrative emphases of individual Taoists on Mulan Mount

Name	Abstract	Orientation	Complication	Resolution	Coda	Evaluation
Dong in Mozhen Pavilion	×	×	×	×		×
Feng Zongli	×		×	×		×
Gong in Bless Palace			×			
Gong Xinxiang	×	×	×		×	×
Liu Mingchun	×		×			
Wang Lixing	×	×	×	×	×	×
Xu Xinhui	×	×	×	×	×	×
Zeng Zhigang			×	×		
Zhan Zhixin	×	×	×		×	
Zhan Zongyi	×	×	×	×	×	×
	8	6	10	6	5	6

Table 9. Overview of structural patterns used by individual Taoists on Mulan Mount

Number of Units	Informant	Structure
6	Wang Lixing, Xu Xinhui, Zhan Zongyi	All
5	Dong in Mozhen Pavilion	Abstract+Orientation+Complication+Resolution+Evaluation
	Gong Xinxiang	Abstract+Orientation+Complication+Coda+Evaluation
4	Zhan Zhixin	Abstract+Orientation+Complication+Coda
	Feng Zongli	Abstract+ Complication+Resolution+Evaluation
2	Liu Mingchun	Complication+Resolution
	Zeng Zhigang	Abstract+ Complication
1	Gong in Bless Palace	Complication

All ten Taoist informants told Complication, eight told Abstract, six told Orientation,

Resolution and Evaluation, and five told Coda. Six, more than half of the informants, included the all six structure elements, tow others also included the core, Orientation, Complication and Resolution, another two gave the reduced core, Orientation and Complication, and two had Complication and Resolution.

Analysis and Observation

The Taoists referred to 朱木兰 (Zhu Mulan) as General Mulan with respect and worship. All of them agreed that she was a native of 双龙镇 (Shuanglong zhen; Two-dragon Town) on the north of Mulan Mount in the Tang Dynasty (618-907 AD). The tellers in this group could tell the names of her family members: her father, 朱天禄 (Zhu Tianlu) or 朱寿甫 (Zhu Shoufu), her uncle 朱天锡 (Zhu Tianxi), and her grandfather 朱若虚 (Zhu Ruoxu). Her mother, her elder sister and younger brother appeared sometimes, but without many details. No one knew her mother's name. In some versions Mulan had a younger brother, but in most cases she was the only child of her parents.

Her birth is commemorated in the name of 祁嗣顶 (Qisi ding; Praying for a Child Peak), the south peak of the three peaks of Mulan Mount; 祈嗣 means praying for a baby. A Taoist temple there was totally destroyed during the Cultural Revolution and replaced by a microwave station. Her parents were childless at the age of forty or fifty and they prayed for a child on one peak of Mulan Mount. They got a baby girl and named her "Mulan." Later the peak got the name 祁嗣顶 (Qisi ding; Praying-for-a-child Peak) and a temple was built for this fulfilled prayer. Even from her birth, she was not a common person in some versions. 许信慧 (Xu Xinhui)'s

version was very detailed and had a unique plot:

According to the book handed down from the ancient times, that is, the grandpa of General Mulan, her father, a general, in the court. That meant that he was an important minister. That meant, a few generations [of her family] had devoted themselves to the court and to the nation. Her father had no child although he was over fifty years old. He went to Mulan Mount. Her parents, over fifty years old, according to current parlance, had no child although they were over forty years old, and then went to Mulan Mount, ask for help from the Buddha and the religion, pray to the deities and Buddha. They said, if they would get a boy, regardless a boy or a girl, they would build a temple, gild the statue of the Buddha. He prayed like this. (July 7th, 2010, interview at Doumu Palace)

The former part was the same as others, but the latter one changed many details:

The result, en, is like a myth. Jade Emperor says: “This is a loyal minister who has contributed much to the people, an important minister. Who was willing to be his child? Who, eager for the life in the mortal world, was willing to go down? If someone went down, which was a contribution to the nation, he/she would be apotheosized immediately.” 太白金星 (Taibai jinxing; the God of Venus) answered, “no one is willing.” Only a dog, 哮天犬 (Xiaotian quan; Barking-to-the-heaven Dog), was recommended by others. So Taibai Jinxing said: “Barking-to-the-heaven Dog, a god, although it is not apotheosized, it has cultivated for a long time. Let it go down the underworld [to be the child of the couple Zhu] and it will be apotheosized when it came back to the heaven court. (July 7th, 2010, interview at Doumu Palace)

Only 许信慧 (Xu Xinhui) told such a story. I could not trace the source of the dog’s incarnation version, which could be her borrowing or creation. Normally, the legend ended with “her parents got Mulan.” Taoist Gong in 迎恩宫 (Ying’en gong; Bless Palace) believed that “It was destined that Mulan had no offspring. [She] was a young man in the celestial world, a general in the celestial world, not a common person. She could not be married, without son or daughter” (August 2, 2010,

interview at the Blessed Palace).

Unlike other girls, Mulan was smart and curious. She could answer questions quickly and wisely when Monk Sangwu was sermonizing in the temple, which motivated the latter to take her as a pupil. Her grandfather 朱若虚 (Zhu Ruoxu) was a friend of 丧吾和尚 (Sangwu heshang; Monk Sangwu) and 铁冠道人 (Tieguan daoren; Taoist Tieguan). Both of them became her teacher and trainer. Monk Sangwu taught her martial arts, shooting, horsemanship and military strategies. Taoist Tieguan trained her magical power and cultivation as a Taoist.

Before she went to the army, she used a magical sword to cut off one leg of a fox and then the two became enemies when she was learning from Monk Sangwu and Taoist Tieguan. This was a very popular legend among Taoists. Who gave her the sword was various—Monk Sangwu, Taoist Tieguan and Emperor Zhenwu. 展宗一 (Zhan Zongyi), a respected male Taoist over eighty years old who learned many legends from oral tradition and Taoist scriptures, told a very vivid version:

Zhan: 伍云昭 (Wu Yunzhao), and her grandfather became sworn brothers so he called Mulan “granddaughter.” He taught her military strategy and martial arts. One day, he said: “Oh my granddaughter, you will have mischance in one hundred days!”

ZJ: Mischance in one hundred days?

Zhan: Yes, mischance, her mischance would not be a small one. General Mulan said: “I have learnt martial arts, so I’m not afraid of it.”

伍云昭 (Wu Yunzhao) said: “Don’t need to be afraid. I have a magic sword. It can come out automatically. You do not need to worry and have a good sleep. The sword will solve the problem if someone is going to steal your vigor.”

General Mulan got the sword and hung it on her bed. At one midnight, very windy, “wuwuwu,” a demon entered her bedroom. She heard that the sword was flying and a sound. There she found blood on the bed and a fox leg when she got up at dawn. Oh, a fox leg, had been cut off! The fox wanted to steal General

Mulan's vigor. The sword cut off one of its legs when it was going to steal her vigor. Afterward, the fox wanted to take revenge and opposed General Mulan, for its lost leg. (June 27th, 2010, interview at the Bless Palace)

Mulan decided to go to the army in the place of her father, masquerading as a man. Her parents did not permit this at first. She tried to persuade them. Normally, tellers did not use many words to explain how she made such a decision and how she persuaded her parents. 许信慧 (Xu Xinhui), an active female Taoist around fifty years old, was an exception:

However she was a girl. Her parents didn't permit her go outside at all. They didn't agree and asked her: "You are a girl and had wrapped small feet," "how to go out"? "Walking is difficult for you"! She answered: "I can disguise as a man" and tried to persuade them: "the whole family will die unless I would go." The parents asked: "you don't understand anything. How to do if they asked you to show martial arts?" She said: "I can." Her father tested her martial arts. Then he said: "that's fine, go ahead." (July 7th, 2010, interview at Doumu Palace)

She added a long explanation about the inconveniences and discrimination suffered by women in ancient times: the men dodged when they found women with a special smell of herb medicine were approaching; businessmen seldom had contact with women to avoid bad luck; women could not be officials in the royal court. The female identity of Mulan was emphasized several times in Xu Xinhui's telling process.

Mulan's courage and filial piety moved her masters who helped her a lot. 丧吾和尚 (Sangwu heshang; Monk Sangwu) asked Mulan to bring his letter to 靖松道人 (Taoist Jingsong) on 五台山 (Wutai Mount) who gave her the magic camel, and 铁冠道人 (Tieguan daoren; Taoist Tiegua) gave her three embroidery bags with magical

paper symbols in them to help her in serious dangers.

The legend that 靖松道人 (Taoist Jingsong) gave Mulan a magic camel was a most interesting and vivid one among the Taoists. Taoist Jingsong, friend of Monk Sangwu, subdued a snake, and begged for a dying camel. He transferred the soul of the snake to the camel and it became Mulan's magical saddle camel. 展宗一 (Zhan Zongyi) told:

Later, [she] led the troops and arrived at Wutai Mount. Wutai Mount, there is a complicated [legend] in *Mulan Zhuan*. It is not one or two sentences. It emphasized particularly this part. This Taoist Jingsong. Emperor Suiyang did not what he should do, killed many loyal ministers. The resentments accumulated and transformed a boa to eat treacherous ministers. The boa stayed in road with few pedestrians on the mount. Taoist Jingsong tried to subdue it and won. Jingsong painted a magical symbol and a big lotus. The boa had no way to roll on the lotus. Jingsong asked it if it would surrender or not. The boa nodded and surrendered. Jingsong leashed the boa and brought it back to the backyard of the temple. It was locked.

There was a gentleman feeding a white camel. This white camel was too old to eat grass. Taoist Jingsong went there to beg for the white camel. The gentleman said that this camel was too old, and it was its time to die. Taoist Jingsong said: 'It is useful to me. I will feed it well and it will be strong.' The gentleman said OK. Taoist Jingsong leashed it back to the temple too. He painted two magical symbols, and stuck one on the camel's head and the other on the boa's. He switched the magical symbol on the boa to the camel's head and switched the camel's to the boa's head. So the soul of the boa moved to the camel's body, and entered into it. The boa was going to die after the magical symbols on the camel's head switched to its head. It was dead. This camel was growing and growing, stronger and stronger. General Mulan arrived in Wutai Mount. . . . Taoist Jingsong said: 'My girl, I have nothing for you but a camel. You can ride on it in the army. This camel was called 义孝明驼 (Yixiao Mingtuo, Loyal-and-filial Camel). It does not go if there is danger behind. It can cross mountains and rivers. The water cannot flood it and the fire cannot burn it. It can fly and protect you. It can give you a hand in the fighting' (June 27th, 2010, interview at the Bless Palace).

This magical white camel had many supernatural powers such as Zhan mentioned in his legend. Wang Lixing added that it could even identify ghosts and goblins.

In 刘明纯 (Liu Mingchun)'s version, Taoist Tieguan subdued a boa that "wanted to do harm, and wanted to change Mulan Mount to a sea." Taoist Tieguan confined it in the well inside 东泉庵 (Dongquan an; Dongquan Temple) that had been destroyed a few decades ago (August 2nd, 2010, interview at Huiguang Palace). Her legend stopped here, without the plot of switching the souls and the white camel. 刘明纯 (Liu Mingchun), a female Taoist over eighty years old at Wenchang Palace could not tell legends clearly might because of old age and poor memory.

According to the legend, before Mulan arrived at the army camp, the length of her service had been determined according to the legend. The character "斗" appeared, which meant Mulan must stay in the army twelve years. 王理行 (Wang Lixing), the fifty-years old abbot of 帝主宫 (Dizhu gong; Dizhu Palace) who came to Mulan Mount at the age of twenty, told a mysterious legend:

[The troops] lived beside the Yellow River one night. General Mulan was sitting in meditation. A character "斗" appeared above her head. This character 斗 made the general get to know that it should be enough to stay in the army for twelve years. The peace will come after staying in the army for twelve years. The nation will not be peaceful in less than twelve years. She saw the appearance of "斗" above her head and got to know it would be peaceful after twelve years in the army (August 3rd, 2010, interview at Dizhu Palace).

The combat in magic between 独手大仙 (Dushou daxian; Fox Goblin with One-hand) and General Mulan is the most wonderful and highly repeated legend in the repertoire of the Taoist group. They became enemies when General Mulan was

learning from Monk Wangwu and Taoist Tieguan before going to the army because Mulan cut off one of his legs. Mulan and her comrades had won many fights in the battlefield. Their enemies, the northern aboriginals, had to conscript generals to strengthen them and Fox Goblin with One-hand came with his pupils. I made an abstract from 展宗一 (Zhan Zongyi)'s long and splendid version:

The northern aboriginals were beaten and began to recruit. Fox Goblin with One-hand, the fox whose leg had been cut by General Mulan, came and crowed about his abilities. He and General Mulan competed with magical powers in the battlefield. He could not win, so he ordered two young pupils, two foxes, to kidnap Mulan's parents. They seized them, wrapped them and hung them on the rampart. They took off all their clothes and beat them with a wooden stick. The parents were crying and shouted "Mulan, Mulan, you are filial," "Surrender, surrender"! Mulan had no way out and was about to use sword to commit suicide. At that time, her attendant reminded her that Taoist Tieguan had given them an embroidery bag with a magical symbol in it. General Mulan took out the magical symbol and fired it. The symbol became a fire-flag and Fox Goblin with One-hand and Mulan's parents all died. They found that all the three were transformed from foxes [Mulan's parents were not real and were transformed from the Fox Goblin's two pupils]. General Mulan won and the wars ended. She returned and the nation was peaceful. She had nothing to do and came back to build a meditation room (June 27th, 2010, interview at the Bless Palace).

花阿珍 (Hua Azhen) is an important personage in the repertoire of the Taoist group's repertoire. She was a younger sister of a native, 花子麻 (Hua Zima), not a female general or princess of the enemy in the repertoire in an old book 木兰传 (*Mulan Zhuan; the Romance of Mulan*). Normally she was mentioned with regard to the question "Why did Mulan get the surname Hua?" 王理行 (Wang Lixing) told:

There was a woman in the enemy state, and this was the origin of Hua Mulan. This was also from the book. Others told like this. I could not remember clearly.

Her elder brother was a general in that area. He forced her younger sister to marry. That was the beginning. Mulan was disguised as a man. Her [Hua Azhen] meanings were that she would marry only General Mulan if she had to be married. General Mulan was a woman, and she was a woman too. That Hua Azhen was a vegetarian [for religious reasons] and practicing Taoist rules, you know? Nevertheless, they told the truth to each other. Both of them were women and came to an agreement. Why? Their ambitions were meditation. They swore (to be sisters). [So Zhu Mulan] was called Hua Mulan and the other was Hua Azhen (August 3rd, 2010, interview at Dizhu Palace).

The story of how Hua Azhen found out Mulan's gender was very interesting in 展宗一 (Zhan Zongyi)'s version:

(They got married.) General Mulan dared not sleep and read strategies on the table for the whole night. She stayed up one or two nights. [Afterwards] She fell asleep and could not wake up. This Hua Azen was from the north of the Yellow River. All the dramas sing Hua Mulan, sing this right this Hua. . . . Mulan. This Mulan had the surname Zhu, and that one had the surname Hua. General Mulan fell asleep. She took off General Mulan's boots and found that her feet were wrapped by white cloth. The gender of General Mulan was uncovered. She took off her boots and wanted to help General Mulan to sleep in the bed. She found that the feet of General Mulan were very small. Later, they swore to be sisters (June 27th, 2010, interview at the Bless Palace).

Among the group, Zhu Mulan and Hua Mulan were two different women but they were confused with each other by others because they swore to be sisters and stayed together. This legend also explained the competition between Huangpi in Hubei Province and Yucheng in Henan Province to be recognized as Mulan's hometown; Taoist Dong in Mozhen Pavilion added that Hua Azhen was from Henan (July 2, 2010, interview at Mozhen Pavilion).

The wars ended and Mulan returned to the royal court. She declined rewards and marriage with the princess and asked to go back home to be with her old parents. In terms of her death, the Taoists shared the same legend: she was accused of treason by

a treacherous court minister and was ordered to go back to the royal court; she cut open her breast and removed her heart to prove her loyalty in front of the Emperor 李世民 (Li Shimin) (598-649 AD). The emperor felt frustrated and ordered the building of an archway and temple to commemorate her.

许信慧 (Xu Xinhui)'s version was vivid:

Those who wanted to convict her of treason said: "She did not go back to practice her filial piety. She must. She had such abilities. Does she yield to you? She must call up soldiers and buy horses." In fact, she returned and entered into Taoism and built a temple here. Emperor Zhenwu told her: "You have more difficulty, also difficulty and it will be difficult to overcome." She said: "I have to go on and to desire even more difficulty. The people are struggling in difficulties. We had no choice. It was destined." Emperor Zhenwu said: "You may not overcome." She entered into Taoism. They found that she had entered into Taoism and reported to Emperor Li Shimin. Other people [the treacherous ministers] who were going to conspire against the state believed that they could not do so if she was alive because she was safeguarding the state. So they continued their slander: "Did she really enter into Taoism? It was not believable at all." The second and the third edict came. She had no choice, cut open her breast and removed her heart. It was wrapped with a lotus leaf and was moved to the royal court, to Li Shimin. Li Shimin did not believe at that time and came to the Xian River. The heart was still fresh. He was wondering: "If not in the water"? Washed it in the water. The river flew backwards one li! At present, there is a 一里河 (Yili he; One-li River) in 长岭 (Changling Town).

Li Shimin came to understand, and said: "People must be dead if the heart was moved out. This is my fault. Why I still didn't trust her even though the heart was removed in front of me. It was me who forced her to death." (July 7th, 2010, interview at Doumu Palace)

展宗一 (Zhan Zongyi)'s version was very similar to the part in 木兰传 (*Mulan Zhuan; the Romance of Mulan*), with a few nuances:

李靖 (Li Jing)⁸ viewed the sky on the general platform one night. He found an

⁸ 李靖 (Li Jing) (571-649) was a well-known general and strategist in late Sui Dynasty and Early Tang Dynasty. He was also a figure with strong magical power in oral tradition and classical novels.

evil star moving around 紫微星 (Ziwei xing; Pole Star)⁹. He predicted that a woman would take over the nation. The nation was peaceful. Who was the treacherous minister? The son of 伍云昭 (Wu Yunzhao)¹⁰, 伍登 (Wu Deng) looked like a woman. His nickname was “武娘子 (Wu Niangzi; Lady Wu)”. Wu Deng was guarding the border and did not return. The emperor ordered Wu Deng to come back and killed the whole family. This 焦万 (Jiao Wan [Wu Deng’s servant]) brought 伍烈 (Wu Lie [Wu Deng’s son])¹¹ came to the mountains and then disappeared. The Wu family had no offspring. Wu Yunzhao had no offspring. Later, the viewer found the evil star brighter than before. This time Mulan was designated (June 27th, 2010, interview at the Bless Palace).

The following part was almost the same and the treacherous minister was 张昌宗 (Zhang Changzong)¹². The end had some different details:

General Mulan said: “I must die regardless whether I go or not!” She ripped her clothing, cut open her breast with a sword, and take out the heart: “This is my heart, look at this! Am I loyal or treacherous?” She took out the heart. The heart was still beating. Zhang Changzong was scared. He moved one step and kowtowed once, one step and kowtowed once. He put the heart of Mulan General in a golden box, and brought it to the capital. Brought it to the capital, and was kowtowing on the way. The queen had a look and said: “This loyal minister had a very tragic death. She was poor. This General Mulan was a loyal minister, and was young and beautiful. This kind of death was tragic! ”

This queen, the royal court and Li Shimin had no way to proceed, and then decided to build a temple for General Mulan. They came here to build a temple. Who came? 尉迟恭 (Yuchi Gong)¹³ and Li Shimin came together. Li Shimin was living in 朝天宫 (Chaotian gong; Chaotian Palace), and Yuchi Gong was living in 大佛殿 (Dafo dian; Dafo Hall). The temple for General Mulan was here. The Emperor of Tang [Li Shimin] wrote the words “忠孝勇烈 (zhong xiao yong lie; loyal, filial, brave and heroic)” on the archway. The characters were written by the Emperor himself. General Mulan was buried in General Tomb, right was buried there. The General Temple was built there. There were two statues of General Mulan inside, and 十曹 (shicao; Ten Hells) (June 27th, 2010, Interview at the Bless Palace).

⁹ 紫微星 (Ziwei xing; Pole Star) designated the emperor in ancient China.

¹⁰ 伍云昭 (Wu Yunzhao) was not a historical personage but a figure who was a warrior in novels and professional storytelling. There a few variants of his ending on the battlefield, but he survived and converted to Buddhism in local legends in Huangpi.

¹¹ 伍登 (Wu Deng), 焦万 (Jiao Wan) and 伍烈 (Wu Lie) are figures in 木兰传 (Mulan Zhuan; the Romance of Mulan) and also appear sometimes in oral tradition of Mulan legends in Huangpi.

¹² 张昌宗 (Zhang Changzong) (?-705 AD) was a treacherous official and one of lovers of 武则天 (Wu Zetian), the only Empress in Chinese history, in the early Tang Dynasty.

¹³ 尉迟恭 (Yuchi Gong) (585-658 AD) was a well-known general in the late Sui and the early Tang Dynasties.

棋盘石 (Qipan shi; Chess-board Rock) is a well-known scenic spot on Mulan Mount and has two interesting legends about it. One is the origin of 棋盘石 (Qipan shi; Chess-board Rock) . In most versions that I had read, 真武祖师 (Master Zhenwu) and General Mulan were playing chess on a rock. Mulan or Master Zhenwu almost lost the game and she/he pressed down the rock and the rock clapped and was going to roll down. Master Zhenwu glued the pieces of the split rock together with his snot. In a version told only by her, 许信慧 (Xu Xinhui) connected this legend with the legend in which Zhenwu taught and trained General Mulan:

However, when she was pretty young, 真武祖师 (Master Zhenwu) appointed a boy and a girl to tell Mulan (to become his student). In ancient times, girls could not learn knowledge, could not learn knowledge and martial art. [A boy and a girl] took her out through window to learn knowledge and martial art. [She], on 棋盘石 (Qipan shi; Chess-board Rock), on Chess-board Rock, was learning. From then, to her adulthood, she was always taken out [of her room] at five Geng [3-5 a.m.], and then came back after learning. She was with her parents after then got up, weaving and embroidering with her mother. A really filial daughter! Since then, she was.

One day, Zhenwu spoke to her: “You do not need come to learn knowledge and martial art tomorrow.”

She asked: “Why?”

He replied: “But today, you should take an exam of knowledge and martial art.”

Nowadays, it is called “exam,” but in ancient times, to take an exam by thinking, by playing chess, and examine technology performing martial arts. Just like this.

Zhenwu said: “Come on, have a try.”

She answered: “O.K.”

In previous time, everything that master says, though it is questionable, what master says should be followed. So, [Zhenwu] begins to examine her skill of playing chess. [They are] playing chess, playing and playing.

She shouted “Oh no” when she almost loses the game and then presses down the rock with her foot. It was clapping, and it is polite to press down with the

foot.

She said: “Why I do not think about this move?”

She made a crack on the rock.

Zhenwu shouted: “It is bad [the rock will be broken and roll down to the foot of the hill], what can the people on the foot of the mountain do?” It was supernatural before.

“What can we do [for them]?” Mulan was at a loss what to do as a young girl at the age of sixteen. She asked “What can we do?” He [Zhenwu], [uses] his snot to stick [the cracked rocks]. From since on, is there a tiny rock [in the] crack, actually it is mucus.

ZJ: He or she? General Mulan or?

It is Zhenwu who did it. It is he who uses his mucus to fix the crack. He told her: “You must think again and again when something wrong happens.”

She said: “Yes, I remember.”

“It is the end. You need not come again.”

She said: “O.K.”

He [Zhenwu] said: “I have other two gifts for you.” At present, there is a iron-smelting furnace at 仙河店 (Xianhedian, Celestial-river Village). He made a sword for her. And, he gave her a camel. Actually, the camel was a boa. It could tramp over the mountains when it met mountains, could cross the rivers when it met rivers. The boa could tramp over the mountains and cross the rivers. However, a human being could not ride on boa. Its body was too narrow. The people in Henan calls it “snake” (蛇), actually it is called “boa” (蟒). Human beings could not ride boa, but can ride camel. So, from then (the boa) is with her. (July 7, 2010, interview at the Bless Palace)

As the master and trainer, Zhenwu displaced Monk Sangwu and Taoist Tieguan in Xu Xinhui’s repertoire. Zhenwu appeared as a common old man in the Taoists’ repertoire. A similar comic story about him, that he was too drunk to get up early, could be found in Wang Hanqing’s book. Although he is the main god of Mulan Mount, he has lost his sacred features in legends. I think that the beliefs about Zhenwu became localized on the Mount later than the beliefs about Mulan, and are not rooted in the religious system and oral tradition.

As a deity, Mulan made her appearances on the Mount, which were only told about among the Taoists on the Mount during my research. 展宗一 (Zhan Zongyi),

龚信祥 (Gong Xinxiang) and 王理行 (Wang Lixing) told the same legend of how someone stole an expensive piece of clothing and was discovered by General Mulan.

Wang Lixing told:

I heard it from the old. (She) made her manifestation in old society [before 1949] in Mulan Hall and Doumu Palace. Someone's silk pants, very light, were blown away by wind. A water carrier picked it up and kept it in his house. The owner of the silk pants was looking for it up and down the mount. The water carrier had a dream at night. General Mulan ordered him: "Return it." The water carrier took it out and said: "I was guilty." At present, it is said "Buddha on Mulan Mount is not effective." It was said "Buddhas on Mulan Mount are effective." They were in charge of everything. Silk pants were expensive stuff before. It would do harm to Mulan Mount if it was lost. So General Mulan must be in charge of it. At present, Buddha is not in charge of big events. (August 3rd, 2010, interview at Dizhu Palace)

In Zhan Zongyi's version, a copper kettle displaced the silk pants. Regardless whether it was a copper kettle or silk pants, they were expensive belongings. I heard the legend of Mulan's manifestation only on Mulan Mount. The abbess of Mulan temple 曾至刚 (Zeng Zhigang), about sixty years old, talked about her dreams in which she had contact with General Mulan, who was wearing golden armour.

The Sources of the Repertoire

The Taoists ascribe the sources of their legends to two main sources: the old books directly and indirectly, as well as the oral tradition. Even at present, the Taoists on the Mount still tell Mulan legends among themselves.

Written materials play or have played a significant role in the long tradition of the Mulan legend on the Mount, and deserve deep and careful examination. As far as I know, three written sources of Mulan legends among Taoists on Mulan Mount have

been transmitted: 木兰从军 (*Mulan congjun; Mulan Going to the Army*), two Taoist scriptures—朱木兰真经 (*Zhu Mulan zhenjing; Scriptures about Zhu Mulan*) and 木兰将军醮科 (*Mulan jiangjun jiaoke; Scriptures about General Mulan*), as well as 木兰宝传 (*Mulan bgaozhuan; Mulan Baozhuan*) that I could not identify with a specific religion.

In oral tradition, the first one 木兰从军 (*Mulan congjun; Mulan going to the army*) has two titles-- 木兰传 (*Mulan zhuan; The Romance of Mulan*) and 老书 (*Laoshu; the Old Book*) among the Taoists and the natives on and around Mulan Mount. I had read two photocopies of this book and found that they are the same. In the summer of 2004, 黎世炎 (*Li Shiyan*), a retired official who had worked in Mulan Mount Scenic Area Management Office and Culture Station of Huangpi before, gave me a photocopy to look through. I found that it was very similar to the fiction 忠孝勇烈奇女传 (*Zhongxiaoyonglie qinu zhuan; The Legendary Story of a Girl Who is Loyal, Filial, Heroic, and Chaste*), which has been reprinted and published for contemporary readers, reading from left to right, with simplified characters and punctuation. 木兰从军 (*Mulan congjun; Mulan Going to the Army*) is a photocopy of a traditional fiction which reads from right to left, from top to bottom, without any punctuation.

During my later research, many people mentioned the old book and that some of them had read it before it was burned during the Cultural Revolution. I thought that it was wise for the holders to preserve them clandestinely. I did not give up my search but asked everyone if he/she had read it, and if he/she had a copy of it or knew someone who did it. After many disappointments, I saw another copy of the old book

that belonged to Mozhen Pavilion. 唐顺仙 (Tang Shunxian), the middle-aged abbess showed me a photocopy and permitted me to have pictures. According to Tang, she made this copy in the 1990s from an original book which belonged to another Taoist on Mulan Mount but she promised to keep the name secret. Her photocopy is the same as Li Shiyan's, both of which were from the old edition popular among Taoists on Mulan Mount before the Cultural Revolution. I speculated that there must be other such photocopies and even original copies that were still spread among the Taoists.

There are thirty two chapters in the book. Chapters one to seven are not about Mulan, but about two men: her grandfather 朱若虚 (Zhu Ruoxu) and his friend 李靖 (Li Jing). Zhu Ruoxu had built a close relationship with 李世民 (Li Shimin, Tai Emperor of the Tang Dynasty) and his group of warriors and counsellors—李靖 (Li Jing), 尉迟恭 (Yuchi Gong), 魏征 (Wei Zheng). Zhu's friends consisted of the core of the group of Li Shimin, who were the important and well-known generals and ministers of the early Tang Dynasty. In the fiction, some of them led the army that Mulan later joined.

In chapter eight, Mulan was born. 朱若虚 (Zhu Ruoxu)'s oldest son, 朱天禄 (Zhu Tianlu) married with a lady 杨桂贞 (Yang Guizhen) and had a child, though he was over thirty and was worried about it. Then Tianlu prayed on the north part of Mulan Mount, Praying-for-a-child Peak at present. Tianlu dreamed of 玄帝 (Xuandi; Emperor Xuan)¹⁴ who granted a child to him and told him that the god planned to

¹⁴ 真武大帝 (Zhenwu dadi, Emperor Zhenwu), 真武祖师 (Zhenwu zushi; the Master Zhenwu) and 玄帝 (Xuandi; Emperor Xuan) are the same one, an important god in Taoism.

select a deity to go down to earth, to contribute to the flourishing of the Tang Dynasty (618-907 AD), and that the spirit of Mulan Mount had accepted this task. Later lady Yang gave birth to a baby girl. Tianlu named her Mulan. Mulan learnt weaving and embroidery from her mother, studied Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism and showed her knowledge of them in discussion with 丧吾和尚 (Monk Sangwu) in 观音寺 (Guanyin Temple) when she was only nine years old. With the magical sword from Monk Sangwu, she cut one leg off a fox goblin who became her enemy—独手大仙 (Fox Goblin with One-hand). Mulan took the place of her father who had the responsibility to lead his troops as a 千户 (Qianhu, a local officer) of 双龙镇 (Shuanglong zhen; Two-dragon Town). Her twelve-year service in the war period is from Ch.13 to Ch. 25, in which 靖松道人 (Taoist Jingsong) of 五台山 (Wutai Mount) granted her a magical camel. Chapters 17 to 25 are about Mulan's life and wars in the army. At the end, she beat Fox Goblin with One-hand and helped the army win the wars. She married a local woman 花阿珍 (Hua Azhen) and then returned to the royal court with her comrades and soldiers. The Emperor 李世民 (Li Shimin) rewarded them and Mulan asked to go home to see her family. At home, she told Hua Azhen the truth and revealed her gender to the comrades. The two women decided to learn from Monk Sangwu and Taoist Tieguan and to devote themselves to meditation. In Chapter 28, Mulan was seized by 胡秉池 (Hu Bingchi), another Fox Goblin on Mulan Mount, and the master of Fox Goblin with One-hand, and later Taoist Tieguan beat Hu and enclosed him under 棋盘石 (Qipan shi; Chess-board Rock) with his magical symbol. The slander by a treacherous official, and her suicide,

appeared in the final chapter, Chapter 32, in which Mulan removed her heart, placed it in a box and ordered the treacherous official to return to the capital with it. Mulan died and Hua Azhen hung herself later. They were buried at the foot of Mulan Mount. The treacherous official arrived at a river and washed Mulan's heart in the river. The blood flew down for hundreds of meters and the heart was delivered to the emperor. He opened the box and saw a shiny red relic like a pearl. He ordered that it be returned and buried with Mulan's body, and that a huge grave and an archway for her be built, and that she should be called “贞德公主 (Zhende gongzhu; the Chaste and Virtuous Princess).”

Although almost every Taoist interviewee referred to this book as an important reference, few of them had read it because most of the Taoists on Mulan Mount at present came here one after another from the early 1980s, more than twenty years after the Cultural Revolution, indicating that the book that was popular before had not been accessible for a long time. The book survived by a fluke and has been kept secretly by the Taoists on the Mount.

I confirmed that 展宗一 (Zhan Zongyi) had read the book and based his telling on it. He focused on Mulan and skipped some parts about Mulan's grandfather. His telling was very close to the book and even retained some unimportant details. Many Taoists who ascribed their sources of telling to the old book had not read the book at all, 许信慧 (Xu Xinhui), for instance. She just heard her master mention the book and listened to him telling Mulan legends. Unlike Zhan, she based her telling on the plot of the old book and made her own changes. I think tellers of this kind are the

majority among the Taoists. There are a few who have other legend sources, such as Taoist Dong in 磨针涧 (Mozhen jian; Grinding-needle Ravine) and 冯宗利 who read a new publication 花木兰传奇 (*Hua mulan chuanqi; The Romance of Hua Mulan*) by Zhou Dawang, an local official in Cultural Department.

Besides 木兰传 (*Mulan zhuan; The Romance of Mulan*), there are two Taoist scriptures spread among the Taoists. Although I did not know if it could be possible to access them, I kept asking people if they knew of Mulan Scripts. 龚信祥 (Gong Xinxiang), the new abbot of Sanyuan Temple, confirmed the existence of the script and showed it to me on my second visit, which was really beyond my expectation. I could not believe that I had a chance to read such treasured scripts of which others had provided little information. I took photographs of the whole script with permission. Gong Xinxiang told me it was transcribed by his master, Taoist Chen, who had passed away in 2009, but he did not tell me where the old edition was. I understood him and did not ask further.

Like other old Taoist scripts, it is a folded pamphlet with a red cloth hard cover on which appear the titles of the contents, it contains: 北斗赞 (*Beidou zan; Praising the Dipper*) 朱木兰真经 (*Zhu Mulan zhenjing; Scriptures about Zhu Mulan*) and 木兰将军醮科 (*Mulan jiangjun jiaoke; Scriptures about General Mulan*). It is written from right to left, top to bottom. 朱木兰真经 (*Zhu Mulan zhenjing; Scriptures about Zhu Mulan*) is eleven pages long and 木兰将军醮科 (*Mulan jiangjun jiaoke; Scriptures about General Mulan*) is twelve pages. The dates of transcription are different: the former was written down in lunar March of 2002 and the latter in lunar

December of 2004. The paper of the latter is more yellow and was glued to the former, so they were transcribed in different times and were bound together later.

The full title of 朱木兰真经 (Zhu Mulan zhenjing; Scriptures about Zhu Mulan) is 木兰忠烈将军救世真经 (Mulan zhonglie jiangjun jiushi zhenjing; Scriptures about Loyal and Heroic General Mulan Saving the World) or 忠烈将军救世真经 (Zhonglie jiangjun jiushi zhenjing; Scriptures about Loyal and Heroic General Saving the World). The whole script can be divided into three parts: beginning, body and ending. The beginning reminds the listener to be serious and pious to General Mulan and her scripts and then introduces Mulan briefly:

Heroine among the female
 And true deity in the heaven.
 was born in Tang dynasty.
 And was outstanding in the dynasty.
 Elder brother was dead,
 And younger brother was young.
 Be filial and be loyal,
 Listened to the recruitments in her embroidery room,
 The recruitments were astonishing.
 Rode the horse in the battlefield,
 Served the nation in the place of her father,
 And stayed in the army for thirteen years.

 Declined the rewards and the entitlement,
 And then returned to the hometown.
 Her feasts were magnificent.
 She was standing among celestial deities,
 She was as glorious as the sun and the moon.

 She was entitled as celestial deity of Redeemer. (My translation)

The body of the script can be separated into two parts. The first is the General

introducing the scripts. The second part is the seven attendants who thank the General and state their scripts. At the beginning of the body of the script, the context was described. On August 15th, in her shrine 忠烈庙 (Zhonglie miao; Loyal and Heroic Temple),¹⁵ Loyal and Heroic General agreed to the request of her seven attendants to persuade the common people to seek kindness and introduced herself. In her introduction, as a general in heaven, she was selected to go down to the earth to protect the common people in the Tang Dynasty (618-907 AD). She was born in a Zhu family on August 15th in the lunar calendar. Her father was 朱寿甫 (Zhu Shoufu), a 节度使 (Jiedushi; Governor of a State), her mother was lady Zhao, her elder brother 全思 (Quansi), who had died on an earlier battlefield, and her younger brother 孺生 (Rusheng) who was quite young. She had to take her father's place in the army by disguising as a man. With the revelation of 磨针老姆 (Mozhen laomu; Grinding Needle Goddess), she became a deity and was given the title “救世天尊 (Jiushi Tianzu; Celestial Deity Protecting and Saving the people).”

As the Celestial Redeemer, she was responsible for lustrating evil and upholding justice, protecting the nation and blessing the people, saving those in trouble, differentiating good and evil and rewarding good with good, evil with evil. And then she persuaded the people not to do twenty one evils: being not filial, being not loyal, complaining of the heaven and hating the earth, killing living things, miserliness and so forth. And then she encouraged the people to pray, to light the perfume sticks, and promised that the heaven, the earth and the hell would be peaceful, no wars would be

¹⁵ There is no any other information about the temple except for the name.

started, no evil could occur, no illness and the deities would protect and bless them everywhere. She ended her script:

Although they are simple and common,
My words are really scripts saving the people.
You should respect it and spread it.
Do not ignore it. (My translation)

The second part of the body begins with the seven attendants' song to thank the General and represents the advantages of reading the scripts – to fulfill any wishes of the people, such as praying for babies, for longer life, for good rain, for promotions, for recovering from serious illness. After this, the attendants suggest and encourage the people to transcribe, print and publish the scripts, to enshrine and worship them in the house, and even to bring them with them. The end of the script is *Praise of ending the scripts* which emphasizes the significance and advantages of the scripts yet again.

The second script follows after the True Script of Zhu Mulan, and has a total of twelve pages. The full title is 清微木兰将军醮科¹⁶ (Qingwei mulan jiangjun jiaoke; Qingwei Scriptures about General Mulan). These are scripts that were sung in the ritual, and a guidebook of performance. I divided the document into four parts. At the beginning, two actions 步虚 (buxu; walking solemnly) and 上香 (shangxiang; fix the perfume sticks) refer to the start of the ritual and then poems of eight lines describe the sacred atmosphere, after which follow a few sentences to guide the ritual. The second part is a long list of forty-eight gods, goddesses and deities on Mulan

¹⁶ 醮科 (Jiaoke), abbreviation of 斋醮科仪, designates all kinds of Taoist rituals.

Mount from Taoism, Buddhism and folk religion. The third part focuses on the high glorification of the achievements and virtues of General Mulan, and is not narrative but lyric, ending with her settlement on Mulan Mount as a deity. This part does not provide any new information about Mulan not found in other written materials. The epilogue includes a few lines of a poem in praise of General Mulan's high holy appearance as a deity, as well as her full title: 大悲大显大圣大慈木兰将军祠忠孝勇节文武将军 (Dabei daxian dasheng daci mulan jiangjunci xhongxiaoyongjie wenwu jiangjun; Great Sorrowful, Great Efficacious, Great Saint, Great Merciful Temple of General Mulan, Loyal, Filial, Valorous, Chaste, Civil and Military General).

In the two Taoist scriptures, Mulan was called respectfully "General Mulan" or abbreviated as "General," "Loyal and Heroic General," "Celestial Redeemer." At the end of 清微木兰将军醮科 (Qingwei mulan jiangjun jiaoke; Qingwei Scriptures about General Mulan), her full title was provided 大悲大显大圣大慈木兰将军祠忠孝勇节文武将军 (Dabei daxian dasheng daci mulan jiangjunci xhongxiaoyongjie wenwu jiangjun; Great Sorrowful, Great Efficacious, Great Saint, Great Merciful Temple of General Mulan, Loyal, Filial, Valorous, Chaste, Civil and Military General). Ten virtues had been added to her. On the one side, she was a perfect human being who was loyal to the nation, filial to her parents, valorous in the battlefield and chaste as a woman. On the other hand, she was also a saint and a respected deity with strong power to protect the nation, differentiate good and evil, help and reward the good people in trouble and punish those who do evil. The two scripts emphasized different perspectives: the *True Script* told the whole story of Mulan, and the *Qingwei*

Scriptures glorified Mulan and her great deeds and merits.

According to the scripts, the legend of Mulan can be identified in her own introduction:

My origin is outstanding,
 A celestial Star of warrior.
 I went down to earth in Tang dynasty.
 I got the female body in Zhu family.
 I was born in August fifteenth.
 My father Zhu Shoufu was a governor,
 And my mother was Lady Zhao.
 My elder brother Quansi fell in battle,
 And my younger brother Rusheng was pretty young.
 Turk invaded and staged chaos.
 The emperor ordered the father to lead the troops.
 The father was too weak to do.
 So I disguised as a man,
 Going to the army in the place of my father.
 I was entitled as glorious minister by the emperor,
 But I declined and returned home.
 I kept my chastity heart and soul.
 磨针老姆 (mozhen laomu; Grinding-needle Goddess) gave me introduction,
 And I became a deity when my tasks were finished. (My translation)

There is no doubt that the two scripts are religious, and were accurately followed in Taoist ritual. Gong Xinxiang knew that 醮科 (jiaoke) would be performed if someone asked General Mulan to ward off calamities and overcome adversities. However, such rituals have not been held in his memory.

There is no information about who wrote it, or when it was written. I found that the legend in the scripts is very similar to “木兰古传 (Mulan guzhuan; the Ancient Biography of Mulan)” in the *Chorography of Huangpi in Tongzhi Years* (1862-1874 AD) except at the end. The families are the same, even the name of her deceased elder

brother 全思 (Quansi) which could not be found in other versions from oral and written traditions. Moreover, the names of the seven attendants had been listed in the earlier part, which were the same in the *Ancient Biography of Mulan*, even the sequence of the seven names. It seems that they had the same origin. The difference was the end of Mulan. In the scripts, Mulan became a deity after her experience on the earth. She should be a Taoist deity because the helper 磨针老姆 (mozhen laomu; Grinding-needle Goddess) was a Taoist Goddess. In the old biography, she stayed with her parents and passed away peacefully at the high age of ninety. Her graveyard was located under the foot of Mulan Mount. The main difference is whether Mulan is a human being or a Taoist deity.

The two scriptures are not for reading, but for ritual, for singing and for listening. I heard that Zhan Zongyi mentioned 木兰醮 but he did not designate it as his telling source. Even Gong Xinxiang who gave me the scriptures had not read them carefully. Except for them, no other Taoists mentioned these scriptures. It seems that the two scriptures did not enter into the legend repertoire of the Taoists.

I also gained access to another precious manuscript—木兰宝传 (Mulan bgaozhuan; Mulan Baozhuan)¹⁷ that has been preserved by 马至立 (Ma Zhili) of 古金顶 (Ancient Golden Peak) who took it over from her passed master 曾明霞 (Zeng Mingxia). This is a manuscript in traditional style. From the information on the cover, this copy was hand-made in 1924 A.D. The content of this manuscript is the same as

¹⁷ 宝传 (Baozhuan) should be 宝卷 (Baojuan). In the dialect in Huangpi, the two words have the same pronunciation. In Chinese literature, there is no genre 宝传 (Baozhuan). 宝卷 (Baojuan) is a genre which originated from story-telling in temples in Tang Dynasty and spread among the common people in later dynasties, focusing on long stories for moral education.

Mulan Zhuan, but the style is a mixture of prose and lyric. According to Ma Zhili, this copy was handed down from her master who had delivered it back to her home with many other treasured things during the Cultural Revolution and brought it back in the 1980s when the rebuilding of temples began. She did not remember other information about the history of this copy. It was well preserved by Master Zeng and then by Ma Zhili who just had a look but did not read it carefully. For her, on the one hand, it could not arouse her interest; on the other hand, it is difficult to read because of its traditional style. Taoist Wang Lixing dropped by while we were looking through it together. He was astonished when Ma told him what it was, “Is it 木兰宝传 (*Mulan bgaozhuan*; *Mulan Baozhuan*)? I never saw it although I had lived side by side with you for twenty years.” They began to talk about it and speculated about its origin, but came to no conclusion. I tried to trace the origin and the history of the copy from the very limited information available. Three things can be deduced about the publication and transcription from the information on the cover: firstly, there must be an earlier inscribed copy; secondly, Wang’s transcription by hand could be a part of a process of self-meditation according to a religious doctrine; thirdly, this edition could have spread among religious adherents though I could not identify their religion. Although it has been on the Mount for several decades, only a few know it and maybe fewer have read it carefully. It seems that this manuscript does not influence the repertoire at present.

In sum, there are four old sources among the Taoists, which have been transmitted over several generations. The old book--木兰传 (*Mulan zhuan*; the

Romance of Mulan) is well known among the Taoists, most of whom identified it as the source of their telling. The other three, though they are also held by the Taoists, are not accessible to most of them and likely did not enter into or influence the repertoire much. I could not trace their origins without further information. However, they led me to pay more attention to the relations between Mulan, her legend and the religions on Mulan Mount, which could help trace the origin of the Mulan legend in Huangpi.

The Taoists' Attitudes towards Mulan and Her Legend

Most of the Taoists were friendly and cooperative during the fieldwork. Some were very pleased to help me and be interviewed, such as 许信慧 (Xu Xinhui) and 马至立 (Ma Zhili) who realized that my research would contribute to the popularization and safeguarding of Mulan culture. At the end of the interview, Xu Xinhui recalled proudly that she was asked to tell Mulan legends and the history of Mulan Mount to the students in local schools. In her eyes, both the interview and her telling to the students were contributions to Mulan culture. 马至立 (Ma Zhili) had the same idea and so permitted me to read and take pictures of her treasure, an original manuscript of 木兰宝传 (*Mulan bgaozhuan*; *Mulan Baozhuan*) from her master that was seldom removed from the box in the attic of the temple. Some were friendly and pleased to tell what they knew, even though they said they knew only a little. A few declined my invitation and gave me these excuses: what they knew was the same as others, they did not know much, others had told me, and they had no time.

Only Taoist Dong in Grinding-needle Pavilion and Taoist Gong in Bless Palace

did not speak of General Mulan with respect. Both of them called her Hua Mulan. Both of them came to Mulan Mount in recent years and have not been identified as Taoist, and are treated as newcomers and outsiders. Taoist Gong also knew Hua Mulan through TV, the drama 少年花木兰 (*Shaonian huamulan; Junior Mulan*) and published books on the Mount, but she did not watch or read them. Both of them learned of Mulan and her legends through oral tradition. The various sources of their repertoire, and their short length of stay could be the reasons why they called her “Hua Mulan” instead of “General Mulan.”

Their attitudes towards narration were very serious and pious. They told what they knew very well and skipped those details that they knew little about. Taoist Gong in 迎恩宫 (Ying'en gong; Bless Palace) explained that: “[I] will know everything if I could read the long fiction. It belongs to the temple. Her birth, her death and how to be a general, and the wars and victories, all are in the book. I cannot tell at my will because I don't read. I will offend the ancestors if I tell wrong. I must tell the truth.” (August 1, 2010, interview at the Bless Palace).

The “truth” here can be regarded as “history” or “reality” and authority came from the old book in her viewpoint. 许信慧 (Xu Xinhui) made a similar point. She began to be upset when we switched the topic to the new writings in recent years, such as Mulan's love with 武登 (Wu Deng). She told:

They were rumors (rumor and gossip). Why there were many disasters and chaos around our country after such slanders. I was sure something bad would happen because of such slanders. They brought chaos to us. Look, such bad rumors brought chaos to us. They were rumors. The conscience would be hurt, Taoism and Buddhism would be harmed. . . . Do harm to self, to us and even to the nation.

(July 7th, 2010, interview at Doumu Palace)

I was sure that she sincerely believed such ideas in her mind and in her heart.

Both narrators clearly differentiated between reality and fabrication, showing respect and piety to reality, and excluding the fabrication that they felt would bring harm.

Each believed in the reality of Mulan and her birth in 双龙镇 (Shuanglong zhen; Two-dragon Town) or Dacheng Tan under the reign of Emperor Li Shiming in the Tang Dynasty, even Dong and Gong who I mentioned above. No one added formulas such as “if we talking about idealism,” “it was superstitious” to the supernatural motifs in the legends, for instance the fighting between Mulan and the fox goblins. Their facial expressions were very serious and pious when they were talking about them. In their eyes, “such things were acceptable if listened to many times”; “something that cannot be explained through science, but they still exist in the world.” (Wang Lixing, August 3, 2010, interview at Dizhu Palace). Some of them told me anecdotes about pilgrims whose wishes were fulfilled to support the magical power and efficiency of their religion. No one expressed doubts or suspicions about Mulan and her legends explicitly through formulas, tones, and facial expressions.

In the repertoire of Taoists, Mulan was not an ordinary person at all, even before her birth. She was a member of celestial heaven before her birth, and was selected to go down to the earth to help the ordinary people or to experience her life as a preparation for becoming a deity. Before her birth, she was 哮天犬 (Xiaotian quan; Barking-to-the-heaven Dog) or a maiden in heaven and was selected. She was granted to her father 朱寿甫 (Zhu Shoufu) who prayed piously for a baby in a dream. Her

reincarnation and birth were mysterious and her extraordinary life was predestined; she was to become a pillar of the state. Even as a child, she expressed her wisdom, diligence and perseverance, not only being good at women's works but also at warrior's abilities. "She was very very bright when she was a child. She learnt horse-riding and shooting arrows, reading books and practicing martial arts, weaving and embroidering" (Dong, July 2nd, 2010, interview at Mozhen Pavilion). Her excellent show of knowledge and wisdom amazed 丧吾和尚 (Monk Sangwu) and she became his pupil. She learnt magical power from her Taoist masters, 真武祖师 (Master Zhenwu) or 铁冠道人 (Taoist Tieguan). The conflicts and fighting between Mulan and fox goblins were a necessary part of the Taoists' repertoire, which did not appear often in other repertoires. Although she was very capable, her position was much lower than her masters and god. In the legends, she cut off one leg of the fox goblin with the magical sword in her sleep, beat him again by using the magical symbols from Taoist Tieguan, was saved by Tieguan when Hu Bingchi was beating her. In the legend of 棋盘石 (Qipan shi; Chess-board Rock), 真武祖师 (Master Zhenwu) admonished her not to be impulsive. She was a human being with extraordinary abilities during her life.

She returned home and then resided on Mulan Mount to meditate and then became a deity or an immortal after her death. 许信慧 (Xu Xinhui) believed that "her burial here brought lots of favor to the nation, to the locality and to the temples." After her death, she became an immortal or a deity or accurately a protector of the Mount and the area. The few variants of her manifestations on Mulan Mount

strengthen her position as a local deity even at present. In the repertoire of the tellers around the General Temple, it seems that the temple is mysterious and even sacred, but not Mulan herself. 曾至刚 (Zeng Zhigang) complained to me: “It is very messy in Mulan Hall! Abbot Yu¹⁸ did many things wrong. He broke the glass ball of the shrine of the General, and replaced gold foil with oil paint. The General was angry and often left Mulan Mount. She went around 大悟 (Dawu), 麻城 (Macheng) and other places to help the ill” (August 2, 2010, interview at Thanksgiving Palace).

Almost every Taoist could identify the four virtues of General Mulan: 忠孝勇烈 (zhong xiao yong lie; loyal, filial, brave, heroic), but not 忠孝节烈 (zhong xiao jie lie; loyal, filial, chaste, heroic), the virtues inscribed on the archway, which was granted by 李世民 (Li Shimin), Tai Emperor of the Tang Dynasty. A few Taoists emphasized that it was 烈 (Lie; heroic) not 节 (jie; chaste). According to Xu Xinhui’s interpretation, “节 means no other marriage after she got married,” and 烈 meant that she was staunch, upright, and stern, could sacrifice herself to prove her loyalty. Among the four virtues, the last one should be the focus. The replacement of “节 (jie; chaste)” by “勇 (yong; brave)” is also represented in the legend repertoire where Mulan cut open her belly to prove her loyalty because a treacherous official had accused her of rebellion, but not to prove her chastity.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I focused on the religious group, including Buddhists and Taoists, and their legends about Mulan on Mulan Mount. Mulan Mount, as a well-known

¹⁸ He is the new abbot of Mulan Temple.

tourist site and a religious shrine, has beautiful scenery, long history of religion, and a reputation of Mulan. Most of the Buddhists showed little interest in Mulan and her legends, except for a young monk, Shengming, who told his version that he learnt from a book and added his own changes. The Taoists are the most important group to preserve, transmit and tell the Mulan legends. Their repertoire, obviously larger than those at Dacheng Tan and around the General Temple, is based on the skeleton of the Mulan legends found in other groups, but their versions are much more detailed and vivid, for instance her services in the army; additionally they have a few legends with strong Taoist color that only can be heard among them, particularly her conflicts with fox goblins. Their versions are always long and complete, well connected and logically arranged according to Mulan's life story. Taoists told much fewer local legends because landscape narrative on the Mount has displaced the functions of local legends. Legends told by Taoists involve more mysterious and magical motifs: the white camel that transformed from a snake, the fox goblins' attempts to harm Mulan, Chess-board Rock, as well as Mulan's appearances after her death. For the Taoists, Mulan is not a common woman, but a deity: a selected spirit or a star in the heaven who was sent to help guard the Tang Dynasty (618-907 A.D.), and the common people, and would then return to heaven after her duty was fulfilled. Besides oral tradition, there are several written books and scripts about Mulan that are preserved carefully among the Taoists. They believed in Mulan's reality and worshiped her as a deity who still guards the Mount. 烈 (herosm) displaced 节 (chastity) in their narration, which means that the Confucian influence decreased in the Taoists'

repertoire. The Taoists have access to other materials about Mulan because Mulan Mount is also a busy tourist site, but they preserved their tradition.

I will now move to the non-religious group on Mulan Mount: the businessmen and pedlars, including those running inns, restaurants, grocery stores and other shops, the pedlars taking care of the simple slots, the fortune-tellers, and the door-keepers. Most of them are natives from the villages around the Mount and have worked or lived on the Mount for a long time. Their legends represent a mix of the legends popular among the natives in the villages around the Mount with those from the religious group.

Chapter 5

The Native Group and the Repertoire on Mulan Mount

Besides Buddhists and Taoists, there are other groups on Mulan Mount—the businessmen, the helpers, the pedlars, the fortune-tellers, the door keepers, the bus drivers, and the working staff of Mulan Mount Scenic Area Management Office. As far as I know, except for the working staff, all the others are natives around Mulan Mount, particularly from 张家冲 (Zhangjiangchong Village), 铁屎墩 (Teishi dun; Iron Remains Mound) and 尹家冲 (Yinjiachong Village) where the villagers have a long tradition and priority to run businesses on the Mount. Most of them have been working on the Mount more than twenty years.

Members of this group act as the broker between the native group around General Temple and the Religious Group on Mulan Mount. They were born in the villages around Mulan Mount, grew up in the villages or stayed with their parents who were carrying on their business on the Mount. Although religion separates them from the religious group, they still have frequent contact with them and their legends are accessible to them.

The Native Informants on Mulan Mount and their Repertoire

The natives on Mulan Mount mainly carry on three businesses: inn, eatery, and grocery. All of them have their own house or rent a house or room to run their businesses, which are located on the west side of 木兰胜景广场 (Mulan shengjing

guangchang; Mulan Splendid View Square). There is one inn—满春 (Manchun) Inn and Restaurant, two other tiny eateries without names, one grocery for drinks and bag food, and two selling religious artifacts and ritual objects for pilgrims, such as Buddha statues, candles, perfume sticks, and money paper. Manchun Inn and Restaurant, where I was living for almost three months, is run by 何满春 (He Manchun) and his wife Lady Chen who are from 长岭 (Changling, Changling Town). Their busy season is from June to October, the hot summer and the pilgrim season, so their patrons are the elderly people who stayed on Mulan Mount from late June to late September, and the pilgrims. Except for Manchun and his wife, the owners of the other eatery and grocery live in their house under the Mount and drive to work. Sometimes they do not come and their helpers take care of the business.

The pedlars can be divided into two categories: those who rent and share stalls with others and those holding their own stalls. All stalls are very simple, just open wooden shelves in a fixed and recognized location, which avoid feuds and conflicts. The first set of pedlars is mainly selling ritual objects—paper money, perfume sticks and candles. A few pedlars share one stall and take care of it in turn, so one individual comes three or four times a month. Besides selling, they teach the tourists and pilgrims how to light the staffs in a proper way and sing lucky words as well, which always brings some tips. Although they have their own houses in the villages at the foot of Mulan Mount, they seldom go back home and live in tiny shanties in 小庙 (Xiaomiao, Small Temple) on the middle of the Mount. Obviously, they are much poorer than the businessmen. All the pedlars are old, at least over fifty. The second

group of the pedlars exhibit their products on the shelves: toys for children, bowls and chopsticks, walking sticks for the old, souvenirs, and so forth. Some of them rent rooms in temples and some of them live in their own shanties in 小庙 (Xiaomiao, Small Temple). They are also natives of villages around the Mount. Their financial conditions are better than the first category of pedlars.

The fortune-tellers are another popular group on Mulan Mount. They have their own recognized placement, like the pedlars. Their stalls are very small, just a tiny table and a stool. Normally, their clothing is different from common people but not religious: they wear traditional Chinese attire, hold a folded paper fan in the right hand which is a symbol of traditional intellectuals, wear leather shoes, and sometimes wear a hat. All of this differentiates them from the peasants. They present themselves as knowledgeable, intellectual, wise, uncommon through their clothing, headgear and footwear, speech and deportment. The ways of fortune-telling are various: calculating fate on a patron's birthday, and pointing out the lucky and ominous years, reading the face and palms, glyphomancy, and drawing lots.

In the 1980s, the government organs of Wuhan and Hubei built their own sanatoriums on Mulan Mount, which are used as hotels in the busiest seasons for tourists and pilgrims. The door keepers, normally local men years of age fifty to sixty, take care of them to avoid damage and theft. Their work is not hard, and leaves much leisure time, so some of them are fortune-tellers and pedlars in the daytime as well.

The buses on Mulan Mount belong to the Bus Station of Huangpi and to private drivers. The public buses run in a certain route on their schedule, connecting the Bus

Station of Huangpi and the Square. The fee is reasonable, eight yuan per person. The main routes of the private buses are much shorter, from the downtown of 长岭 (Changling; Changling Town) or the gate of the Scenic Area to Square, but the fee is expensive, thirty or forty yuan each running, regardless of the number of passengers. They provide very flexible routes for the tourists—to the downtown of Changling, to 木兰湖 (Mulan hu; Mulan Lake), 木兰天池 (Mulan tianchi; Mulan Celestial Lake) or other tourism sites in Huangpi, to the bus station of Huangpi, even to Wuhan, and the passengers must haggle with them over the fees.

The working staff of Mulan Mount Scenic Area Management Office are scattered in several locations: the Scenic Area Management Office, the Tourist Centre at the Square, and three entrances, Gate Tower, Rock Garden Entrance and the entrance to the religious site on the north side of the Square. Unlike other folk groups on Mulan Mount, they have official identities and administrative status. Except for the guards, all other members begin their work at eight and leave for the downtown of Huangpi at five. During their work time, I could not interview them because they left at five p.m. I tried to talk with them about Mulan and her legend in the Tourist Centre as a tourist a few times, and they suggested that I read books and interview the Buddhists and Taoists. Most of them are not native people living around Mulan Mount and have arranged to work in this place far away from the downtown. They have to suffer a two-hour trip on the bus twice a day, five days a week. During my research, I finally concluded that the guards are the only members of the working staff who are available as informants. I made acquaintances with them when I went in and out of the entrance

to the religious site. I talked to about twenty and interviewed thirteen among whom eleven told me what they know about Mulan and her legend.

Their legends include:

1. Mulan Mount and Mulan (two variants).
2. Home village and family: Mulan, with the surname Zhu, was a native person from Dacheng Tan in 双龙镇 (Shuanglong zhen; Two-dragon Town).
3. Praying for a child: Her father—朱寿甫 (Zhu Shoufu) and her mother, lady Zhao prayed for a child on Mulan Mount when they were over fifty and then had Mulan.
4. Learning: Mulan had two trainers and masters—丧吾和尚(Sangwu heshang; Monk Sangwu) and 铁冠道人 (Tieguan daoren; Taoist Tieguan).
5. Cutting a fox goblin's leg: Mulan cut off one leg of a fox goblin with a magical sword that Taoist Tieguan gave her when she was sleeping in her bedroom.
6. Disguising as a man and going to the army: Mulan went to the army in the place of her father and made many achievements.
7. Marriage: She met a lady or a princess, Hua Azhen, on the way, or in the battlefield, who fell in love with her and married her, and they went back together after the war.
8. Surname "Hua": She was confused with Hua Azhen and got the surname "Hua".
9. Returning: She returned with triumph, declined the rewards and asked to go back home to be with her parents.

10. Accusing or slandering: Her sister-in-law slandered her, saying that she had lost her chastity and was pregnant.

11. A bet: She and her sister-in-law had a bet.

12. Suicide: Mulan opened her breast and washed her heart, to prove her chastity or loyalty, on the east side of the river. The water with her blood flew backwards one Li, and this was the origin of the village “一里河 (Yili he; One-li River).”

13. Burial and Memorial: She was buried in the General Tomb and the General Temple was built in memory of her.

14. Entitlement: She was entitled “忠孝勇烈 (Zhong xiao yong lie; loyal, filial, brave and heroic)” by the royal court.

Very similar with their Taoist neighbors, the natives on Mulan Mount also focus their telling on Mulan's life story and the two groups share many motifs and themes. Both groups told “Cutting fox goblin's leg.” The natives were born and grew up in the villages around Mulan Mount, and most of them are from the villages around the General Temple, so they must have preserved Mulan legends transmitted around the General Temple. The legend about a bet with her sister-in-law only circulates in the two groups. This group also worked on Mulan Mount for many years, normally at least twenty years, which means they could communicate Mulan legends with the religious group, and they have more possibilities to gain access to other materials about Mulan, for instance, publications and popular culture. This special group learned legends from the Taoist group and the natives around General Temple and combined them in their own repertoire.

They do not show as much interest in place name legends except for “棋盘石 (Qipan shi; Chess-board Rock)” in which Mulan and Emperor Zhenwu played chess. The loser trampled the rock and a crack appeared. Emperor Zhenwu glued the cracked rock with his own snot. Nevertheless they involved many place names in their repertoire. When they told Mulan’s legend, a few place names on Mulan Mount were always mentioned in the telling, for instance, 眼泪洞 (Yanlei dang; Tears Hole) and 脚板石 (Jiaoban shi, Feet Rock), 木兰殿 (Mulan Palace) and the Archway in memory of Mulan, 风洞 (Fengdong; Windy Cave) that is like a maze, 穿剑石 (Chuanjian shi; Sword Split Rock). A series of place names: 剖腹台 (Poufu tai; Opening-breast Plat), 仙河 (Xianhe, Celestial River), 仙合店 (Xianhe dian; Celestial River Village) and 一里河 (Yili he; One-li River) appear frequently in the motifs and themes of Mulan’s death. The informants have involved the place names in their Mulan legends, so there are not many place name legends in their repertoire unless they involve Mulan.

I carry on a linguistic structure examination of Mulan legend in the repertoire of the natives on Mulan Mount.

Table 10. Structural elements in the repertoire of the natives on Mulan Mount

Element	Motif
Abstract	Introduction
Orientation (3)	Mulan Mount and Mulan Birth and families Praying for a child
Complication (10)	Learning Cutting a fox goblin’s leg Disguising as a man and going to the army Marriage Surname “Hua”

	Returning Accusing or slandering A bet
Resolution (1)	Suicide
Coda (1)	Burial and Memorial
Evaluation (2)	Entitlement Attitudes towards the reality of Mulan

The natives on Mulan Mount, most of who are from the villages around Mulan Mount, emphasized that they learnt Mulan legends from the old to start their telling in their Abstract. They always added the relation between Mulan Mount and Mulan before Mulan's life story, and then introduced her home village, family and her parents' prayer in Orientation. They have the same eight motifs with Taoists on Mulan Mount in Complication, and also her suicide in Resolution, burial and memorial in Coda, and entitlement and their attitudes toward the legend in Evaluation.

Table 11. Narrative emphases of individual natives on Mulan Mount

Informant	Abstract	Orientation	Complication	Resolution	Coda	Evaluation
Lady Chen	×	×	×	×		
Wang Shaofang	×	×	×	×		
Wang Youdi	×	×	×	×		×
Wu Qinghua	×		×	×		
Xu Longchun	×	×	×	×	×	
Xu Yuwen	×	×	×			
Xu Zongqi	×	×	×	×	×	
Yuan Guizhi	×		×	×		
Zhang Dasong	×	×	×	×		×
Zhang Yuanbin	×	×	×	×		×
Zhang Zhonghou	×	×	×	×		×
	11	9	11	10	2	4

Table 12. Overview of structural patterns used by individual native on Mulan Mount

Number of Units	Informant	Structure
5	Wang Youdi Zhang Dasong, Zhang Zhonghou	Abstract+Orientation+Complication+Resolution+Evaluation
	Xu Longchun, Xu Zongqi	Abstract+Orientation+Complication+Resolution+Coda
4	Lady Chen, Wang Shaofang	Abstract+Orientation+Complication+Resolution
3	Wu Qinghua Yuan Guizhi	Abstract+ Complication+Resolution
3	Xu Yuwen	Abstract+Orientation+Complication

More than nine among the eleven informants told four elements, Abstract, Orientation, Complication, and Resolution, indicating that the tri-structure is popular and stable, and Coda-Evaluation are unnecessary. Three informants told five elements except for Coda, two told five elements, omitting Evaluation, four told four elements without both. The other six told the reduced core structure with Abstract, three told Complication and Resolution, and three told Orientation and Complication.

Analysis and Observation

The relationship between Mulan and Mulan Mount is definite, but which is earlier is a problem. The members told two versions to explain it. 王有娣 (Wang Youdi), an old lady running her tourist souvenir slot beside 古金顶 (Old Golden Peak Temple), began her telling with this legend: “I will talk about why it is named Mulan Mount. Anyway, Mulan Mount got its name from her, you know? It was not called Mulan Mount, but 青狮岭 (Qingshi ling; Green-lion Mountain) before. She went to the army in the place of her father and returned with triumph. She came to Mulan Mount and camped here, so we called it Mulan Mount” (July 14th, 2010). 张大松 (Zhang Dasong) had the same legend. But 张元斌 (Zhang Yuanbin), a

middle-aged man who worked in Geography Museum had a variant that Mulan was named after Mulan Mount (July 14th, 2010). Regardless which one is former, the relationship between the woman and the Mount is definitely identified.

In terms of her birth and her family, the members of this group share only one legend, without any variant. Except 徐隆春 (Xu Longchun) and 袁桂枝 (Yuan Guizhi) who did not mention it at all, all other informants believed that General Mulan, surnamed Zhu, was from Dacheng Tan of Huangpi, which was 双龙镇 (Shuanglong zhen; Two-dragon Town) before. Except 张元斌 (Zhang Yuanbin), no other can tell Mulan's mother's name which appeared in written resources.

The legend that Mulan became the pupil of Taoist Tieguan and Monk Sangwu is often mentioned, but very briefly, though it is very detailed in the telling of the Taoists. Another legend that Mulan cut one leg of a fox goblin with the help of Taoist Tieguan is also simply told.

The legend about Mulan's service is always abbreviated as "Went to the army in the place of her father" (Xu Zongqi, June 28th, 2010; Wang Shaofang, Wang Youdi, July 14th, 2010) or summed up with one sentence "She won the war and came back" (Xu Longchun, July 13th, 2010). It is obvious that this part of Mulan's saga is not the focus of their telling.

The legend with a few variants of Hua Mulan and Zhu Mulan is often repeated. Among this group, almost everyone knew that there were two woman warriors named Mulan--Zhu Mulan and Hua Mulan--and tried to explain what happened. It is generally believed that Zhu Mulan and Hua Mulan were two different women. The former was native, born in Dacheng Tan, and the latter was from the north of China and was a princess of the enemy, or a daughter of a prime minister, or just a person from Henan Province. One variant with details can be drawn from Zhang Dasong's telling:

General Mulan was from our Huangpi, Huguang. Hubei province was called 湖广 (Huguang) before, you know? She was from our Dacheng Tan of Hubei. Her surname was Zhu, was Zhu, you know? Mulan's surname was originally Zhu, and why there was a Hua Mulan? In that period, China was not a unitary state. A few

ethnic minorities had their own territories and divided the country to many parts. General Mulan was a young woman of Han Chinese... [She decided to disguise as a man and went to the army when the nation was invaded.] She went to the battlefield and met someone. Whom? She met Hua Mulan, from an ethnic minority that could be Mongol at present. Her surname is right Hua. This lady, Hua Mulan had abilities and common people could not win over her. The two went into battle and began to fight. Our Zhu Mulan could not defeat Hua Mulan. In the fight, Hua Mulan fell in love with Zhu Mulan, you know? She said "I will not kill you, but you have to submit to me. If you will marry me, you will be fine. If you will not, not only you but also your nation will be over." In order to protect the nation, Zhu Mulan accepted. They were engaged and promised marriage. The wars were over and we won. The emperor entitled her [Zhu Mulan] as general after she returned to the court. She said: "It is great to be a general! I fought with a lady and almost was defeated. She put forward a condition (to marry with her), and I accepted." He [the emperor] said "That's fine. We won the wars and she will be with our side." At last, the promise will be fulfilled, right? They should get married. Marriage, haha. In the wedding, haha, how [two women] to get married? No marriage. Finally, they swore to be sisters (July 28th, 2010, interview at Jade Emperor Pavilion).

张大松 (Zhang Dasong), a male helper about seventy years old, in 玉皇阁 (Yuhuang ge; Jade Emperor Pavilion), began this narrative in our long interviews and continued with the legend of the birth of Mulan, which is very popular in this group: a few generations of her family were officials in the royal court. Her father went to Praying for a Child Peak to pray for a son. He got a baby girl and named her "Mulan." He brought her to Mulan Mount to learn Taoist magic with Master Tieguan and Kongfu with Monk Sangwu (July 28th, 2010, interview at Jade Emperor Pavilion).

Dasong's wife, 袁桂枝 (Yuan Guizhi)'s version is much shorter and has a difference: General Mulan was from the northern aborigines, and surnamed Hua. It was Hua Mulan. Zhu Mulan took part in the wars there. Hua Mulan thought that she was a man and fell in love with her. They returned together after she surrendered. Zhu Mulan confessed that she was a woman. She gave all her deserved reputation to Hua Mulan because Hua come back with her, so she had nothing (July 28th, 2010, interview at Jade Emperor Pavilion).

In the above two versions, Hua Mulan was an enemy warrior, but in other variants, she was not. In 张元斌 (Zhang Yuanbin)'s telling, she was the daughter of

the prime minister. He told:

A minister Hua Hong married her daughter—Hua Azhen with Mulan... Actually Hua Mulan was Hua Azhen, who had an elder brother Hua Mazi.... Actually, the real General Mulan was just on the way, and did not arrive at Mulan Mount yet. I am telling you like this. [She] opened her breast in Xianhe Dian because the order from the court arrived. The court had known that she was cheating the court because she was disguised as a man. This was the reason why she fell victim. Hua Azhen came back with her because they had been married. Afterwards, Hua Azhen converted to Taoism on Mulan Mount, just in Mulan Palace. Actually, General Mulan was dead at the age of thirty one. She went to the army at the age of eighteen and served twelve years, only thirty one years old. This Hua Azhen lived more than one hundred years! (July 14th, 2010, interview at the Geology Museum)

In his telling, Zhu Mulan disguised as a man to go into the army, committed suicide, and was buried in General Tomb, and Hua Mulan was actually Hua Azhen who meditated in Mulan Palace and passed away at an old age. In his view, other narrators were confused and mixed up the two women's lives.

However, a few informants believed that the two names designated just one woman: Zhu Mulan, who for some reason had two surnames. 王有娣 (Wang Youdi) explained that Zhu Mulan had two mothers: the blood one was in Huangpi, and the foster-mother Hua, was from Henan, so Zhu Mulan had two surnames and was sometimes called Hua Mulan (July 14th, 2010, interview in Xu Yuwen's house).

徐育文 (Xu Yuwen), an old man who had lived with his wife on the Mount more than twenty years, also tried to explain the confusion over the names. In Xu Yuwen's version, Zhu Mulan changed her name to Hua Mulan during her service in the army and kept it. However, he did not know why. His wife 王绍芳 (Wang Shaofang) added one sentence right after her husband: "One was her birth place, the other was

the place where she was a soldier” (July 14th, 2010, Interview in Xu Yuwen’s house).

She did not provide me with more detail. In my speculation, she tried to answer the question why Henan competed with Huangpi of Hubei as the birthplace of Mulan.

The legend of “棋盘石 (Qipan shi; Chess-board Rock)” is the most commonly repeated one among the legends of scenic spots of Mulan Mount. Chess-board Rock is a huge rock, like a chess-board, almost five meters wide and four meters high, with a one-meter deep crack on the surface. It is unique and interesting that there is a round rock in the crack. There are two legend variants about it. 王有娣 (Wang Youdi) told:

Her master was Emperor Zhenwu. She and Emperor Zhenwu were going to compete in their magic power of Taoism. One said “I’m better” and the other said “I’m better.” They chose to play chess and decided that the winner would live on the top and the loser would live on the middle. General Mulan lost and trampled the rock. A crack appeared and it seemed that the rock would roll down. Immediately, her master glued the cracked rock with his own snot. That’s the rock on it. This is the origin of Qipan Shi, you know. As a result, her master is on the top and she is in Mulan Palace. This is a legend, and this is what I can remember (July 14th, 2010, interview in Xu Yuwen’s house).

In 张大松 (Zhang Dasong)’s version, it is Emperor Zhenwu who made the crack and glued it with his own snot. Both the two variants are popular and some folks know both of them. 张忠厚 (Zhang Zhonghou) heard of them and explained that “some said that General Mulan lost and some said that 祖师爷 (Zushi ye; the Master) Ye lost. I don’t know which one is the loser. Hehe, it is not clear. What I heard from the old is that the Master lost...They are legends. There must be some mistakes in the long history” (July 30th, 2010, interview at Jade Emperor Pavilion).

Besides 棋盘石 (Qipan shi; Chess-board Rock), a few place names on Mulan Mount have been mentioned in the telling of this group, for instance, 眼泪洞 (Yanlei dang; Tears Hole) and 脚板石 (Jiaoban shi, Feet Rock), 木兰殿 (Mulan Palace) and the Archway in memory of Mulan, 风洞 (Fengdong; Windy Cave) that is like a

maze where fox goblins lived before, 穿剑石 (Chuanjian shi; Sword-split Rock) which Mulan cut through with her sword.

In terms of her death, it is believed that she cut open her breast in 仙合店 (Xianhe dian; Celestial River Village) in order to refute the slander that she was pregnant as an unmarried woman, or that she planned to rebel. In some versions, a motif of the test of virginity by leaving a piece of red cloth somewhere was added before the idea that she chose to cut open her belly.

徐隆春 (Xu Longchun), a middle aged man who has a fortune-telling slot and also takes care of a hotel, provided a detailed version. At first, he began his telling with a legend about the whole life of Mulan—from her decision to go to the army to her death, and half of his legend was about her death, which was not clear, so I asked him to retell this part with more details. He told:

In ancient times, there was a hot water pot in the house. Put the piece red cloth in the hot water pot and left it in it. If the cloth kept the color forever, she was truly a virgin. Her sister-in-law was always saying that she had extramarital relations. She said: “I didn’t, and you smeared me.” She put a piece of red cloth in the water to see if its color would change. It is common that the color will change in water, isn’t it? Her cloth kept the color, so she had no extramarital relations at all. The true heroine won. She said “You did smear me!” She said “I didn’t.” Her meaning was that girls should change so much when they were eighteen, and everything would change, for instance, getting fatter. This meant that there was a baby in the belly. She [Mulan] said: “what will you do if I have not”? She (the sister-in-law) said “I will cut off my head if you have not.” She [Mulan] went to 仙合店 (Xianhe dian; Celestial-river Village) and cut open her belly. So it got such a name. This is the meaning that the blood dyed the river red. The old people said that a statuery of a female Buddha held the head of the sister-in-law, actually, holding her long hair. The statuery was Mulan. (July 13th, 2010, interview at his fortune-telling stall)

In 王绍芳 (Wang Shaofang)’s version, the red cloth was buried in the wine cellar. Mulan would be chaste if the cloth kept well, and would be not if the cloth rotted. The test of purity by leaving red cloth somewhere did not often appear in the legend of Mulan’s death, but it can be found around General Temple, which means it could have been popular in the past.

The other popular version of Mulan's death is that she cut open her breast and washed her heart in the river to prove her loyalty to the court, which is common among the Taoists.

A series of place names with links to Mulan's death, including 剖腹台 (Poufu tai; Opening-breast Plat), 仙河 (Xianhe, the Celestial River), 仙合店 (Xianhe dian; the Celestial River Village) and 一里河 (Yili he; One-li River) appear frequently in the repertoire of this group.

徐宗齐 (Xu Zongqi), an middle aged apprentice of the Taoists in 朝天宫 (Chaotian gong; Chaotian Palace) told:

I heard it from the old when I was young. After she returned, someone, could be a sister-in-law of one cousin, said that she must not be pure outside for a long time. General Mulan should be very sad. She went to cut open her belly. Do you know 剖腹台 (Poufu tai; Opening-breast Plat)? 夫子台 (Fuzi Tai; Confucius Plat) is Poufu Tai! Poufu Tai is the place where she cut open her belly. Her blood, her blood flew one li immediately. 一里河 (Yili he; One-li River) and there is a place named Yili He. Why is there a place named 仙合店 (Xianhe dian; the Celestial River Shop)? Her blood flew through there (June 28th, 2010, interview in the front of Chaotian Palace).

In this version, Mulan did not die here and was brought to Mulan Mount by Taoist Tiegan and converted to Taoism.

The few place names around General Temple are often mentioned, and they are General Temple and General Tomb, the rock lions and white horses, as well as 铁屎墩 (Tieshi dun; Iron Remains Mound). 王绍芳 (Wang Shaofang) offered a variant of the legend:

In terms of the origin of 铁屎墩 (Tieshi dun; Iron-remains Mound), that is 花木兰 (Hua Mulan) who would go to the army the next day. Only one night! So armor must be made and brought to the battlefield. This is a legend. Only one night, all of them had been done. The remains of iron became a huge mound as big as a village! How to finish so much armor in only one night? Because she was loyal, filial, brave and heroic, making contributions to the nation, the celestial general and soldiers went down to the earth to help her finish the armor in only one night. That place, and that village was got the name "Tieshi," "Tieshi," the remains of iron. This is the only origin of 铁屎墩 (Tieshi dun; Iron-remains

Mound), without another one (July 14th, 2010, interview in Xu Yuwen's house).

This group had no doubt that General Mulan was buried in General Tomb and that General Temple is her shrine. 徐隆春 (Xu Longchun) and 张忠厚 (Zhang Zhonghou) recalled that the old people warned them not to climb on nor ride the white horses and the rock lions, which caused serious pain or even paralysis in contemporary legends told by informants around General Temple. 徐隆春 (Xu Longchun) and 吴华青 (Wu Huaqing) remember the legend that the white horse stole wheat. Longchun told: "Around General Temple, the horse went out to eat the farmer's wheat. They were magical horses. They ate the farmer's wheat, so new statues of soldiers were erected. The statue was leading the horse with a strap. After that, they did not go out to eat wheat, and did not do harm to the folks" (July 13th, 2010, interview at his stall).

The Women and their Repertoire

On Mulan Mount, a few female informants accepted my invitation to be interviewed and contributed their tellings to my research. In comparison with women living in rural villages, they were more accustomed to talking to outsiders after two or three decades living on the Mount. Nevertheless, it was not easy to get them talking. Generally, women are more cautious of strangers. My resolution was to let them become familiar with my face: saying hello to them when I was going up and down the Mount to do my research, having a rest beside their stalls, and asking how was their business. Gradually, they began to smile at me and say hello and ask me to have a rest. Then I began to ask questions about Mulan Mount, particularly about the

pilgrims and about the temples, which I thought they would know about. The topic moved naturally to what I was doing on the Mount. Normally I introduced my research first and then asked if they knew something. Their reactions were not beyond my expectation: they said that they knew little and suggested I ask others, including the monks and Taoists, other old men on the Mount, and the working staff of the Management Office. It was not wise to give up at this moment, instead, I talked about other interesting things or asked next time. I informally interviewed lady Chen and 袁桂枝 (Yuan Guizhi) who told me legends about Mulan after chatting like this. The other practical way was to be introduced by other insiders. 王有娣 (Wang Youdi) and 王绍芳 (Wang Shaofang) were introduced to me by lady Xiong and lady Wang who were selling ritual objects for pilgrimages in the front of 法藏寺 (Fazang temple; Fazang Temple). More patience and strategies were necessary to make contact with the female informants.

The number of female informants is much smaller: only four told at least one legend about Mulan among the total of eleven women whom I asked. All were friendly, enthusiastic, and shared their knowledge of Mulan with me. Others knew some scattered and fragmentary information about Mulan Mount and General Temple. In my opinion, they knew something about Mulan, but they either knew little about her life or they had no confidence or courage to tell me what they knew.

Compared with the male informants, the women told fewer legends and their versions were shorter, more fragmentary, and less well organized. For instance, 王绍芳 (Wang Shaofang) who was interviewed with her husband 徐育文 (Xu Yuwen),

told me seven, most of which were just one sentence:

ZJ: I want to know something about General Mulan.

WSF: General Hua Mulan, is the one who was going to the army in the placement of her father. Do you know going to the army in the place of her father?

XYW: What I will talk is just legend. It has been long years when I heard it from the old at young age. It was said that Hua Mulan's original surname was Zhu and was called "Zhu Mulan." It was changed to Hua Mulan after she went to the army in the place of her father.

ZJ: Why?

XYW: I have no idea.

WSF: One was her birth place and the other was the battlefield where she went as a soldier.

XYW: Yes, yes. She was called Zhu Mulan, Zhu Mulan in her birth place. Where was her hometown? Her home was at Dacheng Tan.

WSF: If she was here, her hometown was Dacheng Tan. There is a General Temple as well. General Temple.

XYW: She was called Zhu Mulan. It was a legend.

WSF: She disguised as a man. Her sister-in-law said some dirty words about her. She said that she went out to go to the army and no girl did like that. Afterwards, she saved her parents. That's it... [to her husband] Hey, old man, you can tell.

WSF: She had a bet with her sister-in-law. Bury a piece of red cloth on the distiller of alcohol. It would be rotten away if Mulan had such things. It would be more colorful if she had not [been pregnant]. That is [the legend]. Mulan won.

ZJ: Why she cut open her breast? She won.

XYW: Why she cut open her breast? She wanted to prove that she had no [baby]. She explained. The sister-in-law lost the bet, lost the bet. The legend was that water flew backwards one li. There is a village 一里河 (Yili he; One-li River) near to Dacheng Tan.

WSF: Blood! Blood flew one li, so it was called 一里河 (Yili he; One-li River). That is.

[She suggested that I go to the General Temple and ask the old. Xu Yuwen talked about his early life in Jade Emperor Pavilion.]

XYW: I was not interested in these. I heard a little. This was the reason why here was called Xianhe Dian.

WSF: The water of 一里河 (Yili he; One-li River) flew there, so it was called 仙合店 (Xianhe dian; Celestial River Village) (June 14th, 2010, interview in their house).

王绍芳 (Wang Shaofang) and her husband 徐育文 (Xu Yuwen), a couple who

stayed on Mulan Mount more than thirty years, told a few legends about Mulan, but none was detailed and complete. Her telling was mixed with her husband's, which was not organized well. It is common that female tellers give the initiative of telling to the males and the men take the authority of telling in group interviews. Generally, the women are passive tellers, kept silence and just listened, but broke in when a man did not know how to continue, went along with them when they knew, and followed the male's cadences.

In another group interview in the front of Fazang Temple on July 30th, 2010, there were five old women in the group. The only male, 张忠厚 (Zhang Zhonghou), a middle aged man, was talking throughout the interview, and all the women were listeners. Only lady Xiong from 尹家冲 (Yinjia Chong) right beside the General Temple added some information about General Tomb and General Temple. Maybe they did not remember, or maybe they had no confidence or courage to tell in public where they felt nervous and shy.

Fortunately, I talked with six women in one-to-one interviews, three of whom did not tell any legends, and three of whom did: 王有娣 (Wang Youdi), 袁桂枝 (Yuan Guizhi) and lady Chen. 王有娣 (Wang Youdi), a seller who had a small stall with toys and other souvenirs on the Mount was the most active one. We got to know each other after a few days when I went up and down the Mount to do my research. We met in 徐育文 (Xu Yuwen) and 王绍芳 (Wang Shaofang)'s house and the interview was unplanned. Yuwen and Shaofang suggested that I ask her when their telling was almost ending and Youdi dropped by. She smiled shyly and began her telling with a

popular formula “I just heard about them” and followed with the legend “why Mulan Mount got its name,” 棋盘石 (Qianpan shi; Chess-board Rock), Cutting open her breast in 仙合店 (Xianhe dian; Celestial River Village), why Mulan’s surname was Hua, 铁屎墩 (Tieshi dun; Iron-remains Mound) and Sword-splitting Rock. She believed that she knew more than most of the Taoists on the Mount because she, as a native, had lived here longer than them. She was born in 周王家 (Zhouwang jia, Zhouwang Village, a few li away from General Temple) and married a man in 上屋咀 (Shangwu Zui Village). Besides her childhood memory, she read *神奇的木兰山* (*Shenqi de mulanshan; the Mysterious Mulan Mount*), that she had been selling there. She paid attention to the competition between Hubei and Henan for recognition as hometown of Mulan because she had to face the tourists who raised the question. Her explanation was that Mulan was born here and served in the army in Henan. Additionally, she cited the relics of Mulan to add credibility: here is Mulan Mount, named after Hua Mulan, and she was buried in General Temple at the foot of the Mount. She consciously or unconsciously called Mulan “Hua Mulan” a few times in her telling, which could reflect influence from outside, particularly when tourists asked if Mulan had been here. Her repertoire includes legends from the oral tradition of the countrymen, from the new written tradition, and from her own creations.

袁桂枝 (Yuan Guizhi), an owner of a tiny grocery on 天街 (Tian jie; Celestial Street) on the Mount, could not read or write. Even so, she based her repertoire on old written tradition. She was from Dawu, a country to the north of Huangpi, and went to 张家冲 (Zhangjiachong; Zhangjiachong Village) to marry 张大松 (Zhang Dasong)

in 1962. Although she had not grown up here, she heard the legends from the old maiden aunt of her husband who contributed her own life to the Zhang family.

According to Guizhi's memory, this aunt, the head of the family, with high education, which means she could read and write, read an old book, 木兰传 (*Mulan zhuan*; *The Romance of Mulan*) that was lost during the Cultural Revolution. She could not remember much but told three legends: Hua Mulan and Zhu Mulan, Mulan cutting her breast and washing her heart, and Mulan persuading her father to let her go. She designated her aunt's telling, that was from the old book, as the source of her own narratives.

The third woman whom I interviewed was lady Chen, a helper around sixty in a grocery besides the Square. We got to know each other after a few chats when I was passing by the stall of which she was taking care. She walked after supper everyday and she invited me to join her one day when we met on the road. Enjoying the sunset and the cool breeze, she told me her version:

It is said that Zhu Mulan was from Hubei, right from a neighboring place very close to our 长岭 (Changling Town). In ancient times, she went to the army. Her father, her father was a leader of a troop, you know? Her old father was aging and was ill. He told her to displace him to go to the army. In ancient times, the female was not permitted [to go outside or go to the army]. It was not good the female to go. So she disguised as a man. She was beautiful, slim and tall. She walked on her foot and arrived in Henan. In Henan, she went in a restaurant. Hua Mulan was the lady [the daughter of the owner]. She saw her [Zhu Mulan] and wanted to marry her because she believed she [Zhu Mulan] was a man. She [Zhu Mulan] could not tell the truth that she was a woman. I'm telling you. The Nation is more important and the individual is less important. What did she say? She said, "Good, get married, I will marry you." Later, Hua Mulan found that she was squatting on the toilet. She [Zhu Mulan] asked why? She said: "I am squatting on the toilet." Would you like to listen to a joke? She [Zhu Mulan] asked her [Hua Mulan's]

surname. She [Hua Mulan] said that her surname was Hua. She [Zhu Mulan] said: “I will give you a name. My name is Zhu Mulan, and your name will be Hua Mulan.” That’s the case. Everywhere know the name Hua Mulan, don’t know Zhu Mulan. The people in Henan like drama, the drama *Hua Mulan* (July 10th, 2010, interview at the Square).

The motif that Hua Mulan saw Zhu Mulan squatting on the toilet, which is a woman’s behavior, is very interesting. She did not tell further details about it because it is impolite to talk about so she switched her topic to why the name Hua Mulan was popular. As a woman, she added a plot that Mulan’s gender was suspected by others. I also heard that 许信慧 (Xu Xinhui) added a plot that Mulan’s gender was suspected at her menstrual periods because of the smell of herb medicine used by Mulan at that time. She also used a sentence to point out that it was impolite to talk of this in public or to others and then again switched her topic to discrimination against women in early times. I heard only women tell this motif emphasizing her gender and her trouble among men. Only two versions are not enough to make any conclusion, but this may be a specific feature of women’s narration of the Mulan legend.

Generally, it seemed that women were passive tellers at the beginning of our chats or interviews. They did not show strong interest, told me that they did not know or knew little, suggested that I ask others and so forth. On the one hand, for women in rural areas of China, these were natural responses and reactions to a stranger and outsider. On the other hand, the women are not identified as “legend”-tellers, not only by the men but by the women themselves. They have no confidence to talk about Mulan and her legends and make the excuses of bad memory, not growing up here, no interest, no time to pay attention, no education, and so forth.

The women on Mulan Mount have more opportunities than women in the villages to contact the outside world through the tourists, the working staff, and the other natives on the Mount, through which they could hear something about Mulan and her legends. On Mulan Mount, I did find a few female informants who knew or had read written materials about Mulan. Their long period working on the Mount brought them more confidence and more ability to narrate to strangers. They also have access to the written tradition, to performances, and programs about Mulan through books sold on the Mount, mass media, and the activities held on the Mount, which drives some of them to give attention to the Mulan legends.

The Sources of the Repertoire

According to my interviews, the legend resources of this group are highly variable and multiple: the oral traditions of the natives and the Taoists, the old written tradition of *Mulan Zhuan*, and new written materials, such as 王汉清's (Wang Hanqing's) *神奇的木兰山* (Shenqi de mulanshan; Mysterious Mulan Mount) and 周大望's (Zhou Dawang's) *花木兰传奇* (Hua Mulan chuanqi; The Romance of Hua Mulan).

The main legend resource of this group is the oral tradition of the countrymen, which is always claimed by the informants themselves in the interviews. Normally, the informant heard the legends from the elders in the villages, and from the old Taoists on the Mount. Except 张大松 (Zhang Dasong) and 张汉明 (Zhang Hanming), all the other informants affirmed that they listened to the legends from others, particularly from the elders in the village. Some of the informants could

remember who told the legends and some pieces of information about the context. For instance, 徐隆春 (Xu Longchu) heard the legends from Wang Shiyao who had been a teacher earlier. One day, Longchun went to the General Temple and was impressed with the statuary with a woman's head in hand. Wang Shiyao told him the legend of the bet of General Mulan and her sister-in-law when Longchun talked about his visit. Longchun had not read any book about Mulan, so all his information came from oral tradition. 吴华青 (Wu Huaqing), 张忠厚 (Zhang Zhonghou) and all the women pointed out that they only listened to the elders, which designates their resource as the oral tradition of the countrymen. Although they have worked and lived on the Mount for at least one decade, the majority of the members of this group do not easily contact the oral tradition of the Taoists. Two old women, lady Xiong and lady Wang, told me that the masters (monks and Taoists) would blame them if they asked about such things (Mulan and her legends) because they were not insiders. So, the gap between the two groups does exist and is obvious, with two separate oral traditions.

Nevertheless, there are two brokers, 徐宗齐 (Xu Zongqi) and 徐育文 (Xu Yuwen), who affirmed that they were in touch with both of the two oral traditions. Xu Zongqi, who grew up in 铁屎墩 (Tieshi dun; Iron Remains Mound), is familiar with Mulan Mount because he was a native from around the Mount. Additionally, as an informal Taoist in Chaotian Palace for almost two years, he always listens to his master talking about Mulan and her legends. 徐育文 (Xu Yuwen) who was born in 铁屎墩 (Tieshi dun; Iron Remains Mound) in 1934, went to be a helper in Jade Emperor Pavilion at the age of eleven and stayed almost twenty years. After the

Cultural Revolution, he returned to the Mount with his wife Wang Shaofang and they began their business in 1975 or 1976. Both of them, on the one side, are native, and on the other side, for personal reasons, they are adherent to Taoism to some extent. They had opportunities to contact the two oral traditions as they pointed out in their interviews.

Written traditions have influenced the legends of this group, both old and new written materials. Three informants mentioned the old written tradition—*木兰传* (*Mulan zhuan*; *The Romance of Mulan*) in their interview, 徐育文 (Xu Yuwen), 张大松 (Zhang Dasong), and 张汉明 (Zhang Hanming) had read this book before. The latter two affirmed that their tellings were from this old book and did not say that they had heard them from older people. The family of 张大松 (Zhang Dasong) had once had a copy but it was burnt during the Cultural Revolution and 张汉明 (Zhang Hanming) even has a copy at present, which is locked in a cabinet in his house at Zhangjia Chong. However, it is extremely difficult for the natives to get access to such old tradition. Many people had heard about this old book but had never seen it. Hanming admitted that he knew the legends from *Mulan Zhuan*, but was unwilling to tell them to me and handed me 周大望 (Zhou Dawang)'s *花木兰传奇* (*Hua Mulan chuanqi*; *The Romance of Hua Mulan*) as a reference.

On the Mount, it is easy to find written materials from the 1980s: 王汉清 (Wang Hanqing)'s *神奇的木兰山* (*Shenqi de mulanshan*; *Mysterious Mulan Mount*), *花木兰传奇* (*Hua Mulan chuanqi*; *The Romance of Hua Mulan*), and *木兰山志* (*Mulan shan zhi*; *The History of Mulan Mount*). The latter two are rarely mentioned as a

legend source. 神奇的木兰山 (*Shenqi de mulanshan; Mysterious Mulan Mount*) must be the most popular one among the new publications about Mulan and her legends on the Mount. 周大望 (Zhou Dawang)'s novel is not popular because two copies which 张汉明 (Zhang Hanming) and a lady Wang¹ gave to me when they declined the interview were brand new. No informant mentioned it in the interviews. This book may not have influenced or entered into the oral tradition. The last one 木兰山志 (*Mulan shan zhi; The History of Mulan Mount*) is very heavy and expensive, and is locked in a display in a store beside the square. No informant mentioned it as his or her source.

Besides the brief introduction to Mulan Mount and the postscript, 神奇的木兰山 (*Shenqi de mulanshan; Mysterious Mulan Mount*) can be divided into three parts: mysterious Mulan Mount, including eleven articles and reports about the buildings, plants, wells and the Red Army on Mulan Mount; legends on Mulan Mount in which fifty-three texts are available; essays and poems about Mulan Mount in which thirty-five poems and three essays have been selected from different dynasties—ranging from the Tang Dynasty (618-907 A.D.) to contemporary China.

Among the fifty-three legends about Mulan Mount, twenty-seven focus on or are related to Mulan. All of them have been arranged chronologically, from her birth to death, and to afterdeath. After examining the texts carefully, I separated the twenty-nine into four categories:

Those about her life, including her birth, and going to the army and her death

1 I talked with her on July 28th, 2010. She did not want to tell me her name.

Those about her helping the local people

Those about her killing monsters for the local people

Others

The first part includes twelve legends:

木兰出世 (Mulan chushi, the Birth of Mulan) (PP.32-34)

观音寺中一神童 (Guanyinsi zhong yi shentong, A Child Prodigy in Guanyin Monastery) (PP.37-40)

泪落石穿 (Lei luo shi chuan; the Tears and the Rocks) (PP.46-49)

木兰从军 (Mulan congjun; Mulan Going to the Army) (including nine legends) (PP.50-58)

木兰娶亲 (Mulan quqin; Mulan's Marriage) (PP.65-68)

棋盘峰镇妖 (Qipanfeng zhenyao; Suppressing the Fox under Qipan Rock) (PP.68-71)

木兰抽剑剖腹 (Mulan choujian poufu; Mulan Cutting Open her Belly with a Sword) (PP.71-76)

宝剑石 (Baojian shi; the Magical Sword (including three legends) (PP.77-81)

红马背石 (Hong mabei shi; Red Horse Rock) (PP.154-155)

眼泪幽和脚板石 (Yanlei dang he jiaoban shi; Tears Hole and Feet Rock) (PP.155-156)

圆石头的来历 the origin of the Round Rock and others (PP.157)

天鹅下蛋石 (Tiane xiadan shi; Swan's Egg Rock) (PP.158-159)

The second part included nine legends:

风洞的蝙蝠 (Fengdong de bianfu; the Bats in Windy Cave) (PP.34-37)

神秘的三姑井 (Shenmi de sangujing; the Mysterious Three-ladies Well)

(PP.43-46)

茶花树的哭声 (Chahuashu de kusheng; the Crying of Camellia) (PP.81-84)

会说话的鸟 (Hui shuohua de niao; the Speaking Bird) (PP.87-91)

舍身崖 (Sheshen ya; Losing life Cliff) (PP.145)

棋盘石 (Qianpan shi; Chess-board Rock) (PP.146)

剑劈石与飞来石 (Jianpi shi he feilai shi; Sword-chopping Rock and Flying Rock) (PP.152-153)

好汉坡 (Haohan po; True Man Slope) (PP.150-151)

犀牛望月 (Xiniu wangyue; Rhinoceros Looking at the Moon helper)

(PP.161-162)

In this part, Mulan helped the natives, the neighbors, the old, the weak, the women and the depressed, the poor and those in trouble and in danger. In some versions, she was an ordinary woman, and in others, she was a strong general; she was a protector with extraordinary wisdom and abilities, and a deity with magical or supernatural power.

The third part includes three legends:

天鹅抱蛋石 Swan's Incubating the Eggs Rock monster slayer (PP.158)

沁水鳖 (Qinshui bie; the Turtle Rock) (PP.164)

Others:

尼姑引出磨针涧 (Nigu yinchu mozhen jian; Nun Huilan and Mozhen Ravine)

(PP.59-61)

鲁班巧助铁屎墩 (Luban qiaozhu tieshi dun; Lu Ban and the Tieshi Mound)

(PP.61-65)

馒头山 (Mantou shan; Mantou Hill others) (PP.150)

癞蚪顶翻船 (Laidou dingfan chuan; the Toad and the Ship Rock) (PP.165)

The twelve legends on page 150 to 165 are also in an early written source 木兰山的传说 (*Mulanshan de chuanshuo; Legends on Mulan Mount*). The texts are the same but the information about the informant and collector has been changed. In *Legends on Mulan Mount*, the names of the collectors are right under the title, for instance, and the names of the informants are at the end of the text. In Wang's book, all the names are moved to the end of the text, and there is no information about who the collector was and who the informant was.

周大望 (Zhou Dawang)'s 花木兰传奇 (Hua Mulan chuanqi; The Romance of Hua Mulan) is likely a composite text using the legends in Wang Hanqing's book and *Mulan Zhuan*, and other written resources as well. Eighteen chapters of the former are very similar to those in the latter, with some expansion and modification. The chapters concerning Mulan in the army are mainly based on those in 木兰传 (*Mulan zhuan; The Romance of Mulan*). Although the title of the fiction is 花木兰传奇 (*the Romance of Hua Mulan*), Mulan's name in the novel was Zhu Mulan but not Hua Mulan, from Dacheng Tan of Huangpi in the early Tang Dynasty (618-907 A.D.). The main differences between the two works are: firstly the love story between Mulan and a young general 伍登 (Wu Deng) has emerged and is expanded; secondly, the strong

color of religions—Buddhism, Taoism and folk religion as well— is erased; thirdly, Hua Azhen is changed to a princess of the enemy, and arranged to marry with another young general by the emperor but does not meditate with Mulan; fourthly, the slander on Mulan by the treacherous official in the royal court which forced Mulan to commit suicide does not appear; fifthly, Mulan's death does not come from cutting open her breast and washing her heart but from natural causes at over the age of ninety.

伍登 (Wu Deng) was not an important character in early written sources. In 木兰传 (*Mulan zhuan; The Romance of Mulan*), Wu Deng, the son of Monk Sangwu, was only Mulan's comrade in the army, and they had no romantic relationship with each other. Among the legends in Wang's book, I found only one legend about love between Mulan and Wu Deng—"眼泪凹 (Yanlei dang; Tears Hole) and 脚板石 (Jiaoban shi; Feet Rokc)." 眼泪凹 (Yanlei dang; Tears Hole) are two holes as large as a fist in a huge rock between Jade Emperor Pavilion and Golden Peak, and 脚板石 (Jiaoban shi; Feet Rokc) are two holes similar to two footprints in a rock close to East Gate. According to the legend, Mulan and Wu Deng admired each other in the army and were engaged after Mulan recovered her female identity when they returned in triumph. Mulan asked for help from Emperor Zhenwu immediately when she heard that Wu Deng was accused of betrayal and was waiting for decapitation. Emperor Zhenwu answered and promised to save Wu Deng early in the morning of the next day. However he didn't come because he had got drunk and woke up late. He was so remorseful that he left his footprints on the rock. Mulan burst into tears and left two holes in the rock.

Both in legends in written sources and in the fiction, Hua Azhen was a local common woman where Mulan and her army were stationed. In Zhou's rendition, Hua Azhen, the adopted daughter of the king of the northern aboriginals, was defeated in the battle with Mulan's forces and was seized. Mulan released her and they swore to be brother and sister. Azhen fell in love with the disguised Mulan and followed her in the army. Mulan revealed her female identity and Azhen was sorrowful but then decided they would be sisters. Finally, Azhen was married to another general by the emperor and had a good life.

At the end of the novel, for the rest of her life Mulan lived quietly, staying in her home village, working on the farm and practicing martial art. She held a memorial ceremony for Wu Deng every year, and visited Azhen in the capital a few times. After her ninetieth birthday party, she passed away while having a rest in her chair. The locals buried her in the huge General Tomb and collected money to build the General Temple and all the statues to commemorate her. Her tranquil death at the old age of ninety was recorded in “木兰古传 (Ancient Biography of Mulan)” in *Chronicle of Huangpi of Tongzhi Years* (1856-1875 A.D.) and the full text is available in the appendix of Zhou's rendition.

The author of this novel, 周大望 (Zhou Dawang), grew up in the folk culture of Huangpi. He has written many poems, essays and fictions about his hometown and its people. His works about Mulan and Mulan Mount include: documentary literature 木兰烽火 (*Mulan fenghuo; Flames of War on Mulan Mount*) (1987), collections of legends and essays – 木兰山和将军们的传说 (*Mulan Mount and the Legends of the*

Generals) in 1986, and 花木兰传奇 (*Hua Mulan chuanqi; Romance of Hua Mulan*) in 1999. His focuses are two: the wars between the Red Army and the troops of the National Party in the 1930s and General Mulan. This small book printed in 1999 is still on sale in the shops of Mulan Mount. As it has been available on the Mount since 1999 it could have influenced the repertoire of those on Mulan Mount and the visitors and pilgrims. However this is only a conjecture because no informant mentioned this book as a legend source.

The oral tradition of the countrymen is still the main resource for the telling of the natives on Mulan Mount, with the addition of oral traditions of the Taoists. However, old and new written materials have added elements to oral narratives and it is now impossible to separate their influences.

Although some informants referred only to old written works as sources of their legends, it seems that some part of their telling is from oral tradition. For instance, in 张汉明 (Zhang Hanming)'s fragmentary narrative, he talked about how Mulan cut open her breast to prove that she had no baby, which is not the version in 木兰传 (*Mulan zhuan; The Romance of Mulan*) in which Mulan tried to prove her loyalty but not her chastity. It is possible that there is another old book in which Mulan cut her belly to prove her chastity because not only 张汉明 (Zhang Hanming) but 雷绍敬 (Lei Shaojing)² who told the same legend mentioned an old book as their legend source. So, two possibilities could be put forward: one is that another old book exists

² 雷绍敬 (Lei Shaojing), about seventy years old, was a native born in 雷家凹 (Leijiang Dang Village) around the General Temple. A few old male informants suggested that I talk with him, but he declined my invitation a few times, so I gave up. According to other informants, he has acted as a helper in rituals in Taoist Temples since a pretty young age. Even at present, he is still living in a temple as a helper with his wife. He went back to his house in the village only in the busy farm season.

but has not been found, the other is that the informants unconsciously mixed the two variants of the legend of Mulan's death in the telling.

The Natives' Attitudes Towards Mulan and her Legends

The natives on Mulan Mount were pleased to be interviewed formally or to talk about Mulan and her legends when they were not busy. Normally they were active tellers, particularly when a few people were sitting together. Generally, their attitudes towards Mulan are similar, they are not sure if she and her legend were real, but they have a tendency to believe. They support their belief by referring to the relics and the scenic spots, as well as the popular legends about Mulan. For instance, when I asked "Do you think General Mulan and her stories are real," Zhang Zhonghou answered:

It is not clear. The old were pleased to talk about these. I didn't question if she was real, and I don't know. These are legends. I'm thinking, they should be real because there are a lot of 典故 (Diangu; Anecdote), Fuzi Tai that we are calling it Poufu Tai, and everyone knows this. Where are these 典故 (Diangu; Anecdote) from? 夫子台 (Fuzi Tai; Confucius Plat), 剖腹台 (Poufu tai; Opening-breast Plat), 仙合店 (Xianhe dian; the Celestial River Village), 一里河 (Yili he: One-li River) and each one has its origin. If there is no 典故 (Diangu; Anecdote), why there are such place names? (July 30th, 2010, interview in the front of Fazang Temple)

Their identities are dual: the natives come from neighboring villages but have also worked on the Mount for a long time, so it is obvious that they brought some legends from their home villages, and learnt some from the Taoists. In comparison with other tellers, they have many more opportunities to have contact with the outside world, and to absorb Mulan legends from other channels: from books, from talking

with the tourists around the country, from television series, movies, cartoons, and other popular culture.

Among this group, Mulan is called “General Mulan” with respect and sometimes “Hua Mulan.” Their attitudes towards the reality of Mulan and her legend were variable. Some villagers believed that Mulan was real and was from Dacheng Tan of Huangpi. For instance, 王有娣 (Wang Youdi) and 张元斌 (Zhang Yuanbin) firmly believed that Mulan was real. When I asked “do you think Zhu Mulan and her stories are real,” Yuanbin answered immediately and raised his tone “Zhu Mulan is affirmatively real!” with his explanations (July 14, 2010, interview at the Geography Museum). But some did not affirm. 张忠厚 (Zhang Zhonghou)’s attitudes represented some natives’ opinions:

It is not clear. I found it interesting when the old were talking about this. But I did not think if she was real. I have no idea. It is legend. However, I’m feeling that it should be real because we have lots of 典故 (Diangu; Anecdote), for instance, 剖腹台 (Poufu tai; Opening-breast Plat), and 仙合店 (Xianhe dian; the Celestial River Village), 一里河 (Yili he: One-li River), all of them had origin and all of them are related to her. If there is no such 典故 (Diangu, anecdote), why named them like these. Right? (July 30th, 2010, Interview in the front of Fazang Temple)

Some people knew Mulan and her legends, but they were confused by the debate on the birthplace between Hubei and Henan. They tend not to believe but they cannot fully disbelieve because many others talked about Mulan and her legends, and some of them believed them. They used others’ attitudes to displace their own or declined to make their own judgment. For instance, 徐隆春 (Xu Longchun) explained: “I heard that others told like this, and I do not know it clearly” when a middle aged man who was passing by asked “Does this young man know these?” during the interview. At

the end of the interview, we talked about this question:

ZJ: Do you think Zhu Mulan and her stories are real?

XLC: General Mulan may be from here.

ZJ: Do you believe this?

XLC: I don't know how to say. Someone said that she was from Henan, and someone said that she was from here.

ZJ: What's your opinion?

XLC: Others said that she was from here.

ZJ: Did you think it over?

XLC: Is there any benefit to think it over? (July 13th, 2010, interview at his fortune-telling slot)

And then, he suggested that I ask 张汉明 (Zhang Hanming) who had told him that he had materials about Mulan.

In the eyes of the natives on Mulan Mount, General Mulan is a human being but not a Taoist adherent, nor a deity, which is similar to what the natives around the General Temple say and is different from the Taoists. The statuary, the temples and the Mount are to commemorate her. 张大松 (Zhang Dasong) explained:

In terms of immaterialism [translated directly from his words, the concept corresponds with superstition], 祖师爷 (the Master Zhenwu) was Buddha, a deity. General Mulan was human being. General Mulan was human being! She made great contributions to the royal court, so people made the statues to commemorate her. It is the same with 毛泽东 (Mao Zedong). All his statues are in memory of him. She was a common person. (July 28th, 2010, interview at Jade Emperor Pavilion)

And he believed that this is the reason why 金顶 (Golden Peak), which is the temple of 祖师爷 (Zushiye, the Master Zhenwu), was on the top and 木兰殿 (Mulan dian; Mulan Palace), which is the temple for General Mulan, was in the middle, lower than the former, which represents their different ranks on the Mount.

In the repertoire of this group, Mulan had no magical power at all. Although supernatural elements can be found in the legends of 棋盘石 (Qipan shi, Chess-board Rock), 一里河 (Yili he; One-li River), 铁屎墩 (Tieshi dun: Iron Remains Mound) and the white horse in General Temple, she was not the one who did such supernatural deeds. The tellers did not tell any legend about her deed of killing monsters and goblins for the natives after her death as well, which indicates that she did not become a deity after her death even though she had her own temple, archway and shrine on the Mount.

As a common person, Mulan had no choice and ended her young life in an extremely miserable way: cutting open her breast to wash her heart in the river, or cutting open her belly to counter slander. Her tragic death aroused strong sympathy. 徐育文 (Xu Yuwen) sniffled and could not speak any word when he was talking about how Mulan's sister-in-law smeared her. His wife, 王绍芳 (Wang Shaofang), and I did not know what happened when he could not help weeping the first time. He calmed himself after a few seconds and tried to go on, but he began to cry a second time. Shaofang understood and explained that "he sympathized with such a good girl." Yuwen burst into tears twice later and asked to have a rest in bed.

In their views, the virtues of Mulan worth high praise are two: a heroine going to the army in disguise as a man and being 忠孝勇节 (zhong xiao yong jie; loyal, filial, brave, chaste) or 忠孝节烈 (zhong xiao jie lie; loyal, filial, chaste, heroic).

张大松 (Zhang Dasong) highly praised Mulan and her deeds:

We respect her. First of all, she, a young girl, had the courage to go to the wars. Common women can't do it at all, right? She had such courage. This is the first one should be confirmed. She had such wisdom, such abilities, and such courage. She was from a noble family. She had everything and why did she leave home to suffer such bitterness? To protect the court, to protect the nation. Loyal, filial, brave and heroic! Loyal! Filial! "Zhong" means loyal to the court. "Xiao" means filial to her parents. "Yong" means courage. "Lie" is not afraid anything. "Jie" means that she, as a woman, did not think about her own marriage, and dedicated herself to the court and the nation. So we are calling her "将军 (Jiangjun; General)" to show respect. (July 28th, 2010, interview at Jade Emperor Pavilion)

张忠厚 (Zhang Zhonghou) only mentioned 忠孝勇节 (zhong xiao yong jie; loyal, filial, brave, chaste) and praised her as a heroine disguised as a man. 张元斌 (Zhang Yuanbin) knew the four virtues and emphasized her going to the army in the place of her father. All the three narrators identified and expressed the four virtues clearly: the main virtue of Mulan was as a special young woman with a heroic and legendary life—going to the army, disguising as a man, in the place of her father.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I examined the native group, composed of businessmen, helpers, pedlars, fortune-tellers, as well as door keepers on Mulan Mount, a special group acting as brokers between two groups—the religious group on the Mulan Mount and the native group around the General Temple. The members of this group are natives who were born and grew up in villages on the foot of Mulan Mount, particularly around the General Temple, and they have established a strong relationship with the religious group on Mulan Mount through long-time employment. The native group on Mulan Mount have learned Mulan legends from the two groups and created their own repertoire centering on Mulan's life story, sharing some special motifs with this group or another. Although they did not tell many place name legends, they involve a series

of place names in their repertoire.

Both male and female informants were willing to share their knowledge of Mulan and her legends. More female informants have been identified among this group than other groups because of their occupation that gave them more access to all kinds of materials about the Mount and drove them to pay attention to Mulan and the Mount. The majority of the members learned Mulan legends from oral tradition, and many of them had access to first or second hand written materials of Mulan including old and new books.

Among this group, most of the informants confirmed or had the strong tendency to believe that Mulan and her legend were real, that she was a woman from Dacheng Tan of Huangpi. Her deeds that brought her respect and worship for one thousand years were going to the army in the place of her father, with loyalty to the court and the nation, with courage, with extraordinary chastity and heroism. In their eyes, she was a human being, and was a local woman who had a tragic death.

I studied the groups of tellers living at the relics of Mulan, Dacheng Tan, the General Temple, and Mulan Mount, as well as their repertoires about Mulan legends. After the examination of the natives and the religious groups, I will now move to the official group that is composed of officials from the local government, amateur folklorists, cultural experts and scholars, who have created a new repertoire of Mulan legends based on oral tradition for their own purposes, who transmit Mulan legends through publications and mass media, and try to establish Mulan as a moral and cultural icon.

Chapter 6

The Official Group and the Repertoire

In addition to the natives who grew up in Mulan's hometown who tell legends about her that are linked to local landmarks, and the religious adherents who tell legends of Mulan in which she is a Taoist goddess, there is also an official group of Mulan scholars and cultural experts who work to establish Mulan as a local cultural icon. Their versions of her story, being published and performed in a range of government approved media, reach much wider audiences than the legends told by the natives or the religious followers. Their "contributions" to the Mulan legends tradition must also be considered, whatever we may think of them from folkloristic perspectives, because of their economic and cultural influence on the evolving Mulan legends.

The official group and their Works

The official group is composed of three sub-groups: officials, amateur folklorists, cultural experts and scholars, among whom the officials have the hegemonic position. Their works have been authorized by the local government.

The officials are the majority of the official group and most of them are or were from related departments 文化局 (Cultural Department), 地方志办公室 (Local Chorography Office), 宣传部 (Propaganda Department), 文学艺术界联合会 (Federation of Literary and Art Circles), all of which are responsible for preservation, safeguarding and popularizing local history and culture. The most active members in

the identification, research and development of Mulan legends, such as 黄锂 (Huang Li), 周大望 (Zhou Dawang), 杜有源 (Du Youyuan), and 黎世炎 (Li Shiyan) are officials. The officials are well educated, have worked in the field of local culture and history for a few decades, and have become interested in Mulan and her legend in their works. Mulan and her legends are a necessary part of their work. They are taking the leading role in the official group: do their own researches, invite scholars and mass media, organize the study, the conferences, and the programs of publication. The main goal of their devotion is to develop the local economy through cultural programs, particularly cultural tourism.

Amateur folklorists are educated natives who became interested in local culture, including Mulan, and then began to collect and study, such as 黎世炎 (Li Shiyan), 杜有源 (Du Youyuan), and 明德运 (Ming Deyun). They are educated, but not professional scholars. Unlike the scholars in academic institutes in Wuhan, they are familiar with the local tradition. Some members of the official group had collected Mulan legends before, such as 黎世炎 (Li Shiyan), 杜有源 (Du Youyuan), but most of them had no direct contact with them, except through legend collections and others' introductions—the second-hand sources. They often quote the *Chorography of Huangpi*, not Hubei or national chorography, so they are more local-oriented than the professional scholars from Wuhan who preferred to search materials in national or more authoritative recordings, meaning that they are more national-oriented. Normally, the local amateur folklorists use the local chorography of Huangpi and Mulan legends in Huangpi, as well as the introductions to the relics about Mulan.

The above two sub-groups have devoted their efforts to Mulan for several decades and continue. The main difference between them is the degree to which they are in touch with folk culture and oral tradition. The officials seldom do fieldwork and pay little attention to materials from ordinary people. The amateur folklorists did fieldwork themselves during their work or personal trips. They listened to the people, wrote down what they said and used their information in their studies. There are two brokers between the two groups—杜有源 (Du Youyuan) and 黎世炎 (Li Shiyan) who are/were officials in the local Culture Station. They have collected Mulan legends and established close relationships with the local people.

Members of the third sub-group are professional scholars specializing in history, local history and culture, and cultural tourism from academic institutes and universities in Wuhan, for instance 皮明庥 (Pi Mingxiu), a researcher in 武汉社会科学院 (the Academy of Social Sciences of Wuhan), 刘玉堂 (Liu Yutang), the vice president of 湖北省社会科学院 (the Academy of Social Sciences of Hubei), and 董玉梅 (Dong Yumei), a researcher in Local Chorography Office of Wuhan. They were invited by the local government to study Mulan and have been involved in this group. They are professional scholars, so their materials and methodology are academic. They are library scholars, and search for records that lie scattered in the vast number of written sources. The materials that they use are mainly from all kinds of chorography. They also cite legend or oral materials that are in publications to supplement their arguments. Although they visit the relics about Mulan, they seldom do serious fieldwork. Their strict academic training orients them far away from the

original folk legends and tellers in the local communities. Few do continuous and deep research on Mulan, they just like to finish an arranged task.

木兰文化研究会 (Mulan wenhua yanjiuhui; the Research Society for Mulan Culture) is the organization of the official group. It was founded on Mulan Mount on August 26th of 2005 in a ceremony which more than one hundred attended, including officials from the local government of Huangpi and Wuhan, members of the Society, and a few well-known authors from Wuhan. Although it is a folk organization, it is still under the leadership of the government of Huangpi. The most active members are from the government, such as 黄锂 (Huang Li), 明德运 (Ming Deyun), 杜有源 (Du Youyuan), 陈堉乐 (Chen Yuanle), and 黎世炎 (Li Shiyan). They study Mulan, Mulan legends and Mulan culture because of their own work and their personal interests. The other active members are scholars from universities, academic institutes and the Local History Office or Cultural Station in Wuhan, such as 皮明麻 (Pi Mingxiu), 刘玉堂 (Liu Yutang) and 梅莉 (Mei Li) whose disciplines are the same—history. Except for 董玉梅 (Dong Yumei) and 梅莉 (Mei Li), all other active members are male and aged from fifty to seventy. The society issues its own publication, 木兰文化报 (*Mulan wenhua bao; Quarterly Mulan Culture*). In 2008, the society finished a draft of 木兰传说申报国家级非物质文化遗产申报书 (*the Application Statement of Mulan Legends as National Intangible Cultural Heritage, the Application Statement* thereafter). The members wrote articles about Mulan, Mulan legends, and Mulan culture and some of them were selected as a collection, 木兰文化 (*Mulan wenhua; Mulan Culture*) (2008).

Among the members, 黄锂 (Huang Li) may be the most prominent name on official publications. As a native, he came back to Huangpi and has worked in the Huangpi government since 1985 after he finished his undergraduate program in history in 吉林大学 (Jilin University). He has worked at 文化馆 (Cultural Station), 宣传部 (Propaganda and) and 中共党校 (Communist Party School) for the past thirty years. During the years from 1987 to 2005, he published eighteen articles in journals about the local history and archeology of Huangpi, and three essays about Mulan. As an official in Propaganda Department, he was one of the first officials whom I contacted. He provided me with contact information for those who were familiar with Mulan and her legends, arranged for me to visit the Archives and Local History Office, and gave me copies of his articles about Mulan. Around the turn of the 21st century, he published three articles that laid the foundation of the establishment of Mulan Culture.

The earliest of the three essays is “花木兰将军三考 (Hua mulan jiangjun sankao; Three examinations on General Hua Mulan)” (1999), in which, after he examined the written materials, local legends and relics he made this conclusion: Mulan was real, she lived in the West Han Dynasty (202 BC-8 AD), and was born in Huangpi. Furthermore he described the development of her legends: “Mulan’s stories were popular and appreciated, and developed into an icon with national spirit” (Huang 1999, 27); the royal court renamed her hometown after her to praise her, the Mount got the name Mulan Mount, and finally the Mount and the heroine became connected and had everlasting vitality (Huang 1999, 27). This article was the main part of his

second essay, “千秋木兰家国情 (Qianqiu mulan jiaguo qing; Mulan and the Family and the Nation)” (2000), after which he added the discussion of two other historians—皮明庥 (Pi Mingxiu) and 刘玉堂 (Liu Yutang) to strengthen the evidence of his own article. At the end, he put forward the concept of “Mulan Culture” and defined it. He established the primary system of Mulan culture in his “木兰文化初探 (Mulan wenhua chutan; Introduction to Mulan Culture)” (2000). He traced Mulan culture to the story of Mulan going to the army as an event that took place during the reign of the Wen Emperor (202-157 BC) of the West Han Dynasty, and described the legend’s origin and development in ancient China, as well as its revival and flourishing in modern and contemporary China. His definition of Mulan culture and statement of its characteristics and features form another part of this article. At the end, he lists the significance of Mulan culture in contemporary China from three perspectives: moral, worldview, and social value. This paper successfully established the system of Mulan culture and has been commonly accepted by others. It was included in the landmark book 木兰文化新论 (*Mulan wenhua xinlun; New Perspectives Towards Mulan Culture*) (2007). Huang’s views have become the major reference when others introduce or discuss Mulan culture in Huangpi. He is very proud of it and read it through when I asked him to tell Mulan legends that he knew, which meant that it was his own version that was in his mind.

In his study, 黄锂 (Huang Li) made two conclusions which are now enshrined in the official version of Mulan legends. One is that he located Mulan legends in the West Han Dynasty, during the reign of the Wen Emperor (202-157 BC). This is totally

different from local legends in which Mulan was born in the late Sui and early Tang Dynasties and joined the army of Emperor Taizong (598-649 AD) of the Tang Dynasty. He traced Mulan legends to a much earlier period. What he has done is to historicize and rationalize the Mulan legend, making it history, not legend, from his historical perspective. The other is that Dacheng Tan in 姚集 (Yaoji; Yaoji Town) in the north of Huangpi was identified as Mulan's home village, 双龙镇 (Shuanglong zhen; Two-Dragon Town) in ancient written records.

In the official publications, there are no different viewpoints. However, his studies arouse doubts and objections. 杜有源 (Du Youyuan) expressed his doubt that the period of Mulan is the Sui (581-618 AD) and Tang (618-907 AD) Dynasties in local legends several times during our discussions. An article “对《木兰文化新论》学术顾问文章和观点的质疑 (dui mulan wenhua xinlun xueshu guwen wenzhang he guandian d zhiyi; Questioning the articles and viewpoints in New Perspective towards Mulan Culture” (Hua Jiangjun, March 1, 2012) under the pseudonym 花将军 (Hua Jiangjun; General Hua) has been very popular on the internet. The focus of their doubts is that Huang used the materials from Wan County to prove his idea that Mulan in Huangpi lived in the West Han Dynasty (202 BC-8 AD), rather than in the Sui (581-618 AD) and Tang (618-907 AD) Dynasties as stated in local legends. The critics only talk in private and on the internet anonymously. In one word, they are accessible only in folk channels. 杜有源 (Du Youyuan), though he disagreed with Huang Li in private, still took Huang Li's idea in public, as did others whose articles were accepted in official publications. Huang Li's studies have become authoritative

and are used as others' primary reference. The historical inaccuracy spread broadly and has taken on unshakable status in the official group and their publications. It is not an accepted result from academic study, but a viewpoint from an official who is an amateur historian. Although a few members disagreed with him and even argued with him, he required them to agree with his version because they are in the one group, on the behalf of the government.

The official group has consciously used their power to preserve, protect and develop the Mulan legend. Its members have conducted research, written novels and drama scripts, compiled books, organized performances, and popularized Mulan, her legend and Mulan culture. They have several achievements: examinations on Mulan and her legend, general studies on Mulan culture, recognition of Mulan and her legend in academic circles, mainstream culture, and among common people, through a series of conferences, festivals, publications and so forth.

The official group has successfully finished the application for the Mulan legend to receive Intangible Cultural Heritage status in Wuhan, Hubei and at the national level in the name of the Huangpi Government. Actually it was initiated and the primary work was done by the Research Society. The president of the society, 明德运 (Ming Deyun), and two other active members, 杜有源 (Du Youyuan) and 叶蔚章 (Ye Weizhang), initiated this project and finished the draft, and Huang Li revised and compiled the final version.

Recognition and acceptance by the academic circle is also significant. Two conferences, 木兰文化研讨会 (Mulan wenhua yantaohui; Conference of Mulan

Culture) and 武汉木兰文化节 (Wuhan mulan wenhuajie; Festival of Mulan Culture in Wuhan) were held in 1999 and 2000. A third one on April 22th of 2007 was even more successful. Besides the members of the Research Society, officials from the Huangpi government and the provincial government, and a few well-known scholars active in the safeguarding of ICH from Beijing and Wuhan attended and presented their abstracts and papers, such as 段宝林 (Duan Baolin), 贺学君 (He Xuejun), 刘玉堂 (Liu Yutang), 皮明麻 (Pi Mingxiu) and 刘守华 (Liu Shouhua). More than fifteen media organizations, from local to national levels, came and reported on the conference. After the conference, the Research Society selected twenty six papers and compiled a collection: 木兰文化 (*Mulan wenhua; The Study of Mulan Culture*) that was published in 2008. Just before this significant conference, another landmark publication 木兰文化新论 (*Mulan wenhua xinlun; New Perspectives Towards Mulan Culture*) (2007) was issued, which includes twenty-two articles discussing Mulan and Mulan culture from cultural, historical, archeological, literary and artistic, and tourist perspectives. Mulan legends and Mulan culture in Huangpi have been recognized and accepted by the officials and academic circles from the local to the national level.

Repertoire of the Official Group and the Sources

I have collected published materials about Mulan and her legends on behalf of the local government of Huangpi over the past ten years during which Mulan culture has flourished as a local cultural emblem: 黄陂史话 (Huangpi shihua; The Brief History of Huangpi) (2004), 黄陂区志 (Huangpiku zhi; the Chorography of Huangpi (1980

to 2004)) (2008), “申报国家级非物质文化遗产保护名录文本” (*Shenbao guojiaji feiwuzhi wenhua yichan baohu minglu wenben; the Application Statement of Mulan Legends as National Intangible Cultural Heritage*) (2007), and *木兰山志* (*Mulanshan zhi; the Chorography of Mulan Mount*) (2009), in all of which Mulan and her legend are a necessary part. Besides these published books, there are other forms of representation of the Mulan legend: *木兰山组歌* (*Mulanshan zuge; The Suite of Songs of Mulan*) and other simple versions scattered on the websites of the local government and official cultural organizations, as well as the folk drama *少年花木兰* (*Shaonian hua mulan; Hua Mulan in Adolescence*). All are published or performed under the leadership of the local government. The forms of the legends are various. In this thesis, I only discuss those narratives that have been told, written and performed, excluding other forms, such as paintings, stamps, sculptures and so forth.

I identified three complete versions of the Mulan legend in the official publications: “木兰将军其人其事” (*Mulan jiangjun chuanqi ji qita; Mulan and her Romance*) (Le 2004, 22-31) in *黄陂史话* (*Huangpi shihua; the Brief History of Huangpi*) (2004), “基本内容 (Jiben neirong; The Basic Content)” in “申报国家级非物质文化遗产保护名录文本” (*Shenbao guojiaji feiwuzhi wenhua yichan baohu minglu wenben; The Application Statement of Mulan Legends as National Intangible Cultural Heritage*) (2007), and “木兰传奇” (*Mulan chuanqi; The Romance of Mulan*))” in *木兰山志* (*Mulanshan zhi; the Chorography of Mulan Mount*) (2009), as well as two series of Mulan legends in other parts of the same book. Although all of them come from official published books, and the compilers and editors overlap, the

differences are evident. All the versions of Mulan legend in official publications and performances—except the Basic Content in “The Application Statement” that can traced back to its original writer, 杜有源 (Du Youyuan)—have been compiled by a group.

“Mulan and her Romance” in *the Brief History of Huangpi*

黄陂史话 (*Huangpi shihua; the Brief History of Huangpi*) is one of the series of *武汉史话* (*Wuhan shihua; the Brief History of Wuhan*). Among the ten chapters, “Romance of General Mulan and others” occupies the third, following two chapters about the ancient history of Huangpi. In this part, “Romance of General Mulan” retells the Mulan legend, and a summary follows:

Hua Mulan was born in Dacheng Tan village of 姚集 (Yaoji Town) of Huangpi. 朱天禄 (Zhu Tianlu) and 赵桂贞 (Zhao Guizen) had no child at the age of fifty and prayed for a child on 青狮岭 (Qingshi Mount) at the suggestion of 醉月和尚 (Monk Zuiyue) in 观音寺 (Guanyin Monastery). One day, Zhu Tianlu fell asleep when he had a rest under a magnolia tree. He dreamed that the Emperor Zhenwu handed him a baby who was a deity selected to make achievements for the Han royal court. They got a baby on April 18th of next year, and named her after the magnolia tree under which he had a dream. She became the pupil of 铁冠道人 (Taoist Tieguan) and 丧吾和尚 (Monk Sangwu), practicing martial arts very hard.

In the years of 文帝 (Wen Emperor) (202-157 BC), the Huns from the north invaded and the conscription began. Zhu Tianlu was old and weak. Mulan decided to disguise as a man to go to the army. She and the soldiers won lots of battles. 花阿珍 (Hua Azhen), the adopted daughter of the king of the enemy, was captured by Mulan in the battle. After Azhen told Mulan her tragic life story, Mulan sympathized with her and suggested that they be sworn brother and sister. Hua Azhen fell in love with Mulan later. She was astonished when Mulan dressed as a lady after they returned home. Mulan felt very sorry and changed her surname to Hua. So Mulan was called Hua Mulan. (my summary)

I carry on a linguistic structure examination of this version:

Table 13. Structural elements of “Mulan and her Romance”

Element	Motif
Abstract (1)	Introduction
Orientation (3)	Home village Praying for a child Her father’s dream Birth
Complication (4)	Learning (with Taoist Tieguan and Monk Sangwu) Disguising Going to the army Marriage Surname “Hua”
Resolution	
Coda (1)	General Tomb
Evaluation	

In the Introduction, the editor emphasized the popularity and reputation of Mulan legends around China, and even abroad. Orientation is about Mulan’s home village, her parents’ praying, her father’s dream in which Emperor Zhenwu bestowed him a baby girl, and then Mulan’s birth and naming. Two thirds of this version is about Mulan and Hua Azhen, a princess and a general in the enemy, who was captured by Mulan and fell in love with her. Her training and her decision to go the army are described very briefly and simply. The end is about the origin of the surname “Hua,” that Mulan got Azhen’s surname when they swore to be sisters after Mulan revealed her female gender. The four motifs compose Complication.

In this version, two thirds is about Mulan and Hua Azhen. Her training and her decision to go to the army are described very briefly and simply. This is not a well integrated version and ends at the surname “Hua,” but answers five important questions about Mulan: where was she born, when was she born, what is her family, what is the connection between Mulan and Mulan Mount, and why her surname was

Hua, not Zhu, all of which are considered by the official group to be the most interesting questions for the public who know little about Mulan in Huangpi.

Both the beginning and the end appear as scholarly findings, providing a real historical background. The first paragraph claimed that Dacheng Tan, a village in north Huangpi, is Mulan's hometown. The last paragraph is the familiar argument that Mulan's years were located in the West Han Dynasty (202 BC-8 AD). Both the beginning and the end appear as scholarly findings, providing a real historical background. I read the text very carefully and found most of it is from an earlier publication, 周大望 (Zhou Dawang)'s *Romance of Hua Mulan*. It is not surprising because he was the associate editor. The second paragraph is simplified from Chapter One and Two of Zhou's, and some parts are the same. Those about Mulan and Hua Azhen basically correspond to Chapters 21 and 22 of Zhou's, and more than eighty percent is verbatim.

“The Basic Content” in “the Application Statement of Mulan Legends as National Intangible Cultural Heritage”

The second official version is “The Basic Content” (166-169) from the “Application Statement” (145-235) as an appendix of 木兰文化新论 (*Mulan wenhua xinlun; New Perspectives to Mulan Culture*) (Jiang 2007), which was finished in March of 2007. The chief compiler was 黄锂 (Huang Li). This version was originally written by 杜有源 (Du Youyuan) who named it “木兰传奇故事完整版” (Mulan chuanqi gushi wanzhengban; the Complete Version of Mulan Romance) and was abbreviated as “the Complete Version.”

This version includes nine individual legends with their own title:

木兰出世 (Mulan chushi; The birth of Mulan)

少年木兰 (Shaonian mulan; Mulan in childhood)

替父从军 (Tifu congjun; Going to the army in the place of her father)

塞外征战 (Saiwai zhengzhan; Fighting outside the Great Wall)

立功凯旋 (Ligong kaixuan; Winning honor and returning in triumph)

皇上封赏 (Huangshang fengshang; Rewards and titles of honor from the emperor)

辞官回乡 (Ciguan huixiang; Declining the rewards and titles and returning home)

生死恋情 (Shengsi lianqing; The tragic romance)

终老故里 (Zhonglao guli; Passing away at an old age)

I will introduce them briefly one by one.

“The birth of Mulan”: In the Western Han Dynasty (202 BC-8 AD), a Zhu family was living on the west side of 潏水 (She shui; She River), in 双龙镇 (Shuanglong Zhen; Two-dragon Town), 西陵郡 (Xiling jun; Xiling County). The spouses 朱天禄 (Zhu Tianlu) and 赵桂珍 (Zhao Guizhen) had no child although about fifty. They went to 青狮岭 (Qingshi ling; Green Lion Mount) to pray for a child and got a baby girl in the spring next year when magnolias were blooming, after which her grandfather, 朱若虚 (Zhu Ruoxu), named the girl. Mulan got a popular nickname “花姑” (Hua Gu; Flowery Maiden) for lovely ladies and so she got the name “Hua Mulan.”

“Mulan in childhood”: Her grandfather Zhu Ruoxu taught her military strategy and tactics, and marksmanship. She learned and practiced embroidery from her mother and was very skilled in it.

“Going to the army in the place of her father”: Under the reign of the Wen Emperor, the Huns invaded. 朱天禄(Zhu Tianlu) could not go because he was old and ill. Mulan went to the army at the age of sixteen and showed outstanding military strategy and skills, and won praise from other comrades. She swore to beat the enemies for the nation.

“Fighting beyond the Great Wall”: During the twelve years in the army, Mulan made twelve military successes and became a general with help of a young man 伍登 (Wu Deng). 花阿珍 (Hua Azhen), the adoptive daughter of the king of the Huns, fell in love with Mulan in the battle and was captured by her. Hua Azhen and Wu Deng found that Mulan was a female when she was hurt. 花阿珍 (Hua Azhen) and Mulan became sworn sisters. 伍登 (Wu Deng) fell in love with Mulan and they were engaged in private.

“Winning honor and returning in triumph”: Mulan led the army’s return in triumph. The emperor permitted her to go back home to see her parents. Mulan changed back into her female dresses.

“Rewards and titles of honor from the emperor”: The emperor gave her the title “武昭侯 (Wuzhao hou; Marquis Wuzhao).” Mulan declined a position in the royal court. The emperor wanted her to be his concubine once he knew her gender. Mulan laid down her life to refuse. The emperor had to let her to go back home to take care

of her parents.

“Declining the rewards and titles and returning home”: In her home village, Mulan lived quietly and happily, caring for her parents, working on the farm and land, weaving and practicing her martial arts. Moreover, she had done a lot for the countrymen—helping the poor, building roads and bridges, resolving conflicts among neighbors.

“The tragic romance”: Wu Deng and Mulan planned to get married, but Wu Deng was falsely accused of rebellion and was executed. Mulan was heartbroken and missed him so much that standing on a rock on Mulan Mount, she left her footsteps and tears on it, which are now 脚板石 (Jiaoban shi; Footsteps Rock) and 眼泪凹 (Yanlei dang; Tears Holes) on the Mount.

“Passing away at an old age”: Mulan passed away on the night of her ninetieth birthday after the celebration. She was buried on the north foot of 青狮岭(Qingshi ling; Green Lion Mount). The emperor titled her “贞德公主”(Zhende gongzhu; Chaste and Virtuous Princess). During the years of Zhenguan (627-649 AD) in the Tang dynasty, the emperor added “忠孝勇烈 (Loyal, Filial, Brave and Heroic).” In memory of her, the countrymen built the Archway of General Mulan, 祈嗣顶 (Qisi ding; 祁嗣顶 (Qisi ding; Praying for a child Peak)), 木兰祠(Mulan ci; Mulan Hall), 木兰殿 (Mulan dian; Mulan Temple), 木兰宫 (Mulan gong; Mulan Palace)¹ etc. As time passed, this mountain got the name “Mulan Mount.”

A linguistic structure examination based on Labov’s model that Bennett (1984)

¹ There is no information about 木兰祠 (Mulan ci; Mulan Hall) and I do not know how the compiler knew of this relic. 木兰宫 (Mulan gong; Mulan Palace) was located in downtown of Huangpi and was ruined in the 1960s.

and Nicolaisen (1987) adapted follows:

Table 14. Structural elements of “the Basic Content”

Element	Motif	Title
Abstract (1)	Introduction	
Orientation (4)	Home village Praying for a child The birth Naming “Hua Mulan”	“The birth of Mulan”
Complication (6)	Learning	“Mulan in childhood”
	Disguising and going to the army	“Going to the army in the place of her father”
	Fighting in the army	“Going to the army in the place of her father”
	Mulan and Hua Azhen	“Fighting outside the Great Wall”
	Returning	“Winning honor and returning in triumph” “Rewards and titles of honor from the emperor” “Declining the rewards and titles and returning home”
	Tragic love	“The tragic romance”
Resolution (1)	Death	“Passing away at an old age”
Coda (3)	Burial Memorial	“Passing away at an old age”
Evaluation	Entitlement	“Passing away at an old age”

This version begins with Introduction to Mulan legends’ popularity, the cultural values in the legend, and its dissemination in Huangpi. Orientation is also about Mulan’s home village, her parents’ praying, her birth, and the surname “Hua” because she was named after 木兰花 (Mulan hua; magnolia). Complication involves six motifs: learning, disguising and going to the army, fighting in the army, marriage, returning and tragic love. She passed away at an old age in Resolution, was buried at the foot of the mount, a series of memorials were built, and the mount was named

after her in Coda, and she was entitled in Evaluation.

This version was originally written by 杜有源 (Du Youyuan) around the turn of 2005 and 2006. After being verified and elaborated by 黄锂 (Huang Li), it has been used as a necessary part of “The Application Statement.” Huang gave this version a title “木兰传奇故事完整版 (Mulan chuanqi gushi wanzheng ban; the Complete Version of the Romance of Mulan).”

I found that “the Complete Version” was a mixture based on the local legends in Huangpi, with many elaborations, fabrications, and individual creations. The differences and changes are more than the similarities, which need to be pointed out and examined. Firstly, how did Mulan get her name? In this version, Mulan’s grandfather 朱若虚 (Zhu Ruoxu) named her Hua Mulan after the blooming magnolia (Magnolia is 木兰 (Mulan) in Chinese) and a popular nickname “花姑” (Hua gu; Flowery Maiden) for girls among the folk. It is different from and could not be found in any other variants, in most of which Mulan got her surname “Hua” from her sworn sister Hua Azhen. This variant accords with the mainstream of Mulan culture by displacing something in local legends with a detail from popular literature.

Secondly, the period when Mulan was living was changed from the Sui (581-618 AD) and Tang (618-907 AD) Dynasties to the West Han Dynasty (202 BC-8 AD). This change began with 黄锂 (Huang Li). Research overcame the folk tradition in this conflict, without credible evidence and examination. The so-called academic research of the local government has gained hegemonic position in the telling of the Mulan legend through mass media.

Thirdly, the masters of Mulan, 丧吾和尚 Monk Sangwu, and 铁冠道人 (Taoist Tieguan), who represented the influence of Buddhism and Taoism, disappeared completely. Instead of them, 朱若虚 (Zhu Ruoxu), Mulan's grandfather, was said to be responsible for Mulan's literal and moral education, as well as for teaching military strategy and martial arts. Zhu Ruoxu, the oldest male, the leader of the family, represents the patriarchy; meanwhile, his close relationship with the royal court, as a retired general, also represents the monarchy. His responsibility for Mulan's education, particularly the reading list of Confucian classics, strengthens filial piety to the family and loyalty to the nation in the version. In "the Complete Version," Confucianism is very strong, and all the influences of Buddhism, Taoism and folk religion have been erased.

Fourthly, 伍登 (Wu Deng) and his love story with Mulan, instead of the relationship between Mulan and Hua Azhen that imply a possible homosexual love, became an important part of "the Complete Version." 伍登 (Wu Deng) was not an important character in folk legend and old written materials. During my fieldwork, a few people knew this name but did not tell any love story about him and Mulan. It is reasonable to draw the conclusion that 伍登 (Wu Deng) originally appeared in the novel, and that the character entered the repertoire of tellers on Mulan Mount. It is 周大望 (Zhou Dawang) who first began the love story in his *花木兰传奇* (*Hua Mulan chuanqi; the Romance of Hua Mulan*), 明德运 (Ming Deyun) followed and expanded it, and finally, it was brought into the official "Complete Version." It is not an individual creation, but a collective one.

Fifthly, “the Complete Version” borrowed a part of the legend from 虞城 (Yucheng) in Henan Province: that the Emperor wanted Mulan to stay with him as a concubine. Mulan refused at the cost of her life. In Yucheng’s version, Mulan died, but in this version Mulan succeeded and was permitted to go home. This legend motif does not appear in the repertoire in Huangpi at all.

Sixthly, passing away peacefully at the old age of ninety occurred at the end of the “Ancient Biography of Mulan” and was continued in 周大望 (Zhou Dawang)’s and 明德运 (Ming Deyun)’s novels, as well as in “the Complete Version.” The motifs of her tragic death by cutting open her breast and washing her heart to prove her loyalty or chastity are rooted in the feudalism that forced officials or poor women to sacrifice their lives to prove their loyalty or chastity in front of the emperor or the locals. In folk legends, a conflict between Mulan and feudalism was emphasized, regardless of whether she was falsely accused of conspiring against the royal court or was blamed for losing her chastity in the army. The idea that Mulan passed away at a very old age without any illness is a very happy way to end the legend, but it could not be popular in oral tradition because I did not hear it during my fieldwork.

Modifications and changes were created through four ways: borrowing something from mainstream and popular works to add or to displace something; deleting those aspects thought to be religious, superstitious, feudal and out-dated; selecting one version from among a few variants; and completely individual creations. The original author, 杜有源 (Du Youyuan), insisted that all of them were from oral legends that he collected in the mid-1980s. However, his notes and manuscripts were damaged

when they were moved out of Cultural Station under renovation and deposited in a leaky storeroom. He finished “the Complete Version” in accordance with his memory. I asked if he heard of the legend about the love between Mulan and 伍登 (Wu Deng) and where it had been disseminated. He became reticent for a few seconds and said he heard it at Dacheng Tan. Maybe he confused stories he collected almost twenty years ago and those he read or learnt later. He expressed his strong dissatisfaction with 黄锂 (Huang Li)’s unreasonable demand that the years of Mulan’s life must have been in the West Han dynasty (202 BC-8 AD), but he has to take Huang’s view in publications.

Regardless whether it is as an appendix in a book or a necessary part of “the Application Statement,” the readers should be professional: all are scholars, experts, and officials in cultural and propaganda departments. The ideology of this group is Marxist: dialectical materialism, historical materialism, scientific socialism, which means that anything incompatible with it cannot be involved. So on the one side, it is normal that everything about religion and feudalism disappeared. On the other side, the characteristics compatible with the main ideology are strengthened and glorified: patriotism, filial piety, and serving the people. She was a perfect general for the nation, loving the nation, loyal to the royal court, fighting bravely, making achievements, wise and full of stratagems, uninterested in fame and fortune. This is just one facet of the image of Mulan, just like a perfect man.

Another facet of Mulan’s image is as a traditional industrious woman good at weaving, embroidery and farming, and a generous local person ready to help the

people, not only when she was a common maiden before the wars but as a respected general after the war. “Besides taking care of her parents, she worked on the farm and vegetable garden, raised silkworms, spun, wove, practiced martial arts, furthermore she cared about the poor and the weak, built bridges and roads, resolved conflicts, handled disputes and so forth” (169). The third facet of her image is as a lady loyal to love. It is a love story with a tragic ending: Mulan and Wu Deng fell in love in the army and were engaged secretly, but unfortunately Wu Deng was killed by the emperor because of others’ false testimony. Mulan climbed on the Mount to look north where they had fought shoulder by shoulder before, and was missing him. Each time, she could not help crying and the tears gushed forth. Countless years later, two holes left on the rock were named as “Tears Holes” (169). Love story without happy ending and the tragic death of Wu Deng strengthened the theme of anti-feudalism and the virginity of Mulan. In this version, Mulan has been portrayed and glorified as a perfect general and a perfect woman.

Before the first individual legend in “the Complete Version,” there is an introduction:

Mulan legend is known to every family and household. [It is a] Folk story passed down for thousand years. It is still the embodiment of the spirit of loyalty and filial piety, an immortal masterpiece integrated with history, literature and art, a long time developing cultural treasure. It originated and developed in Huangpi, has lingered on this land for a thousand years and become a living repertoire of the local people (Jiang 2007, 66).

From this introduction, a few points need to be emphasized: firstly, the Mulan legend is a still living local legend extant for a thousand years. It is historical, literary

and artistic. “The whole Complete Version” ends with “in order to commemorate loyal, filial, brave and heroic General Mulan, the people on and under Lion Mount built General Mulan Archway, Praying-for-a-child Peak, General Temple, Mulan Palace and so forth. The well known mount with the spirits and soul of Mulan has been called Mulan Mount.” (169) The formulas impress on readers that the Mulan legend is local, historical, and cultural.

In “the Application Statement,” five representative bearers have been identified: (皮明麻) Pi Mingxiu,² (周大望) Zhou Dawang,³ (黄锂) Huang Li,⁴ (甘治国) Gan Zhiguo,⁵ 叶蔚章 (Ye Weizhang).⁶ Among the five, no one focused on the Mulan legend in oral tradition, and none are purely from the folk, in the sense of being the bearers of traditions learned in their own families or communities. Local versions and local informants/ bearers were placed lower down, and their importance was weakened in this official version.

“The Romance of Mulan” in the *Chorography of Mulan Mount*

The last official version is from 木兰山志 (*Mulanshan zhi; Chorography of Mulan Mount*) published in 2010. Mulan Mount Management Office compiled this *Chorography of Mulan Mount*, in order to explore and protect the precious historical and cultural resources and natural and environmental resources of the Mulan Mount

² (1931--,) a historian in Wuhan Academy of Social Sciences. Discovered a few entries about Mulan in the vast histories and chorographies and published a few articles.

³ (1942--,) an author, ex-president of Federation of Literary and Art Circles of Huangpi, wrote the long novel *Romance of Hua Mulan*.

⁴ (1958--,) an official in Propaganda Department of local government, a member of Research Society of Mulan Culture, finished a few articles about Mulan culture.

⁵ (1966--,) the president of Mulan Mount Martial Arts School.

⁶ (1963--,) a collector of Mulan culture, opened Exhibition hall of Mulan Culture 2006 which closed in 2009. He is a well-known amateur folklorist of Mulan culture in mass media.

area (Yuan 2009, 1). It is a local chorography about the Mount, which determines its position as a reference work for deposit in archives, libraries, and government offices. The audiences of this book are various: officials, guests invited by the local government, scholars. A book as long as eight hundred thousand words, at the price of 168.00 yuan (28 US\$), is unlikely to attract common readers. The Compiling committee was very large, under the leadership of the four important leading cadres, and six other cadres from the Propaganda and Cultural Department, twenty-four from the Mulan Mount Scenic Area Management Office, as well as five Taoists and two nuns, it is a significant cultural project led by the local government. The Edit Group took the role of compiling and editing, including twenty-two consultants, two group leaders, two chief compilers and eight members who actually undertook the specific works; it includes three amateur folklorists 潘安兴 (Pan Anxing), 杜有源 (Du Youyuan), and 陈堉乐 (Chen Yuanle) from the Research Society of Mulan Culture, and five personnel from the propaganda office of Mulan Mount Scenic Area Management Office.

The editors described “the basic content of Mulan legend popular in Huangpi in the form of ‘Mulan and Mulan’s Hometown’” (preface, 3) which is the fourth part of the book. Besides this, there are two parts about the Mulan legend, which are some entries in the second part “风景名胜 (Fengjing mingsheng; Scenic Spots),” and most of the fourth part “风物掌故 (Fengwu zhanggu; Scenery Anecdotes about the Scenic Spots and Relics)” in the Appendix.

The basic content of the Mulan legend—“Mulan and Mulan’s Hometown” has

been divided into five parts: “双龙镇” (Shuanglong zhen; Two-dragon Town), “Relics and sites,” “Romance of Mulan” including 19 separate legends, “The Development of Mulan Culture,” and “the Dissemination of Mulan Culture.”

The whole chapter “Mulan and hometown of Mulan” begins with the introductions to 双龙镇 (Shuanglong zhen; Two-dragon Town), and the relics and sites about Mulan that still exist in Huangpi. “the Romance of Mulan” follows, and then the topic changes to Mulan culture.

The third part, “the Romance of Mulan,” includes nineteen separate legends:

木兰出世 (Mulan chushi; the Birth of Mulan) (PP. 55)

拜师 (Baishi; Having a Master) (PP. 55)

磨针涧 (Mozhenjian; Grinding-needle Ravine) (PP. 56)

神童说法 (Shentong shuofa ; a Child Prodigy Preaching) (PP. 56)

泪滴石穿 (Leidi shichuan; the Tears and the Rock) (PP. 57)

舍身崖 (Sheshen ya; Losing-life Cliff) (PP. 58)

替父从军 (Tifu congjun; Going to the Army in the Place of her Father) (PP. 58)

铁石墩 (Tieshi dun; Iron Rock Mound) (PP. 59)

暮宿黄河 (Musu huanghe; Sleeping beside the Yellow River) (PP. 60)

仙观拜师 (Xianguan baishi; Having a Master in a Temple) (PP. 61-62)

智胜番兵 (Zhisheng fanbing; Defeating and Outwitting the Enemies) (PP. 62)

诱敌擒主帅 (Youdi qin zhushuai; Catching the Chief Commander) (PP. 63)

血战雄关 (Xuezhàn xiongguan; Bloody Battle) (PP. 64)

戍守边关 (Shushou bianguan; Guarding the Border) (PP. 65)

班师回朝 (Banshi huichao; Returning to the Royal Court after Victory) (PP.
65-66)

五台山谢师 (Wutaishan xieshi; Expressing Gratitude on Wutai Mount) (PP.
66-67)

解甲归田 (Jiejia guitian; Taking off the Armor and Returning to the Farm) (PP.
67-68)

归隐田园 (Guiyin tianyuan; Hermitage in Farm and Garden) (PP. 68-69)

终老林泉 (Zhonglao linquan; Spending Her Remaining Years in Hometown) (PP.
69)

“The birth of Mulan”: The couple 朱天禄 (Zhu Tianlu) and 赵桂贞 (Zhao Guizhen) had no child at the age of fifty and were praying on 青狮岭 (Qingshi ling; Green-lion Mount) with the advice of the Monk in Guanyin Monastery for three years. One day after they prayed, Tianlu fell asleep when he had a rest beside a magnolia tree. In his dream he saw 玄帝 (Xuandi; Emperor Xuan) (Emperor Zhenwu) walking towards him, who told him that the God had selected a celestial general to go down to the earth to make achievements and handed him a baby. Afterwards, the couple had a baby girl and named her Hua Mulan after the magnolia tree and the popular nickname for lovely girls 花姑 (Hua gu; Flower Lady).

“Having a Master”: Mulan was very clever and became the pupil of 铁冠道人 (Taoist Tieguan) of 东泉庵 (Dongquan an; Dongquan Temple) on Mulan Mount when she was six years old. He taught her martial arts, horse riding and archery, literature and strategy.

“Grinding-needle Ravine”: Mulan’s mother was teaching her weaving. She lost patience and was going to give up. One day, she saw an old woman grinding an iron bar on a red rock beside the brook on Mulan Mount. She was curious and asked why. The old woman told her that she was trying to grind it to a needle. Mulan was moved and went back to go on weaving. Later, she was weaving as well as her mother. The local people named the brook 磨针涧 (Mozhen jian; Grinding-needle Brook) and built a temple beside it in which a statue of the old woman Grandma Mozhen was erected.

“A Child Prodigy Preaching”: 丧吾和尚 (Monk Sangwu) from 大悟山 (Dawu Mount) was preaching in 观音寺 (Guanyin Monastery). Mulan disguised as a boy to enter. They had a competition in language. Everyone was astonished by this child prodigy. Later, 丧吾和尚 (Monk Sangwu) recognized her when he visited Zhu’s family and became her second master.

“The Tears and the Rock”: Some boys laughed at Mulan when she was practicing martial arts. Mulan beat them up. The boys were hurt and complained to Mulan’s master 铁冠道人 (Taoist Tieguan). 铁冠道人 (Taoist Tieguan) taught her that learning martial arts was not for herself but for the people and the nation. Mulan knelt on a rock and began to weep. The tears dropped on the rock and two holes were left.

“Losing-life Cliff”: Mulan helped a shepherd to save his sheep that fell down on the tree on the cliff. The shepherd was saved but Mulan fell down. 观音菩萨 (Guanyin pusa; Avalokitesvara) saw it and pushed the cloud to hold her. She was saved but later decided to gather ginseng on the cliff. She fell down and the cloud

gathered to hold her again. The local people named the cliff 舍身崖 (Sheshen ya: Losing-life Cliff) to commemorate Mulan and her deed.

“Going to the Army in the Place of her Father”: In the West Han Dynasty (202 BC-8 AD), the Huns kept invading China. 朱天禄 (Zhu Tianlu) was appointed as the director. He was worrying about it and his wife was crying about it. Mulan found out and decided to go to the army. Mulan shot a flying wild goose to prove her skill in martial arts. Her three masters encouraged her and granted her something.

“Iron Rock Mound”: The local people decided to make a sword, armor and weapons for Mulan and the soldiers. An old blacksmith called his eighteen apprentices to make them. 铁拐李 (Tieguanli), a god in Taoism and folk religion, got to know this and did great favors. He asked the celestial queen to dispatch celestial troops, asked help from the god of fire, the goddess of wind, the god of moon, and the goddess of star. With their help, the blacksmith and his apprentices finished all in one night! The remains of iron were left and piled up as a hill. So the place was named Iron Rock Mound after this.

“Sleeping beside the Yellow River”: Mulan dressed up as a general and was going to the battlefield. 铁冠道人 (Taoist Tieguan) handed her an embroidery bag and urged her to bring it with her and open it in serious danger. The troops arrived at the side of Yellow river and camped. Mulan was missing her hometown and family when she was walking along the river. One comrade consoled her and they swore to be brothers.

“Taking on a Master in a Temple”: Mulan went to 五台山 (Wutai Mount) to see her third Taoist master. The Taoist subdued a snake transformed from a dead loyal

minister. He also asked for a dying white camel from a landlord living under the Mount. He moved the soul of the snake to the white camel and granted it to Mulan to ride. It was magical and could help Mulan a lot in the battlefield. Mulan went back to the military camp.

The parts “Defeating the Enemies,” “Catching the Chief Commander,” “Bloody Battle,” “Guarding the Border,” “Returning to the Royal Court after Victory” are about her life in the army, and are almost all borrowed from fiction.

In “Expressing Gratitude,” Mulan went to 五台山 (Wutai Mount) to see her third master and his friends.

“Taking off her Armor and Returning to the Land”: Mulan asked to go back to her hometown after they returned to the royal court. She returned to dressing as a woman at home and her comrades in the army were astonished.

“Hermitage in Farm and Garden”: Mulan invited stonemasons to build walls for the town. She was practicing sword arts and was highly praised by the villagers.

“Spending her Remaining Years in Hometown”: She was happy with life on the farm. One spring, she rode to 青狮岭 (Qingshi ling; Green-lion Mount) and had to stop because a huge stone was in the way. She used the sword to separate the stone into two parts and passed through. The god of the Mount was so upset that he ordered demons and ghosts to catch Mulan. 观音菩萨 (Guanyin pusa; Avalokitesvara) stopped him and changed him to a stone. Mulan lived happily ever after. The neighbors and her family celebrated her ninetieth birthday. A boy found that she had passed away when he asked her to drink tea after the banquet. The local people burst

into tears. She was buried on the north foot of 青狮岭 (Qingshi ling; Green-lion Mount) and its name was changed to Mulan Mount to commemorate her. The General Tomb and the General Temple were built with funding from the local people.

A linguistic structure examination of this version follows:

Table 15. Structural elements of “the Romance of Mulan”

Element	Motif	Title
Abstract (1)	Introduction	
Orientation (4)	Home village Praying for a child Her father’s dream Birth Naming	“The birth of Mulan”;
Complication (6)	Learning Grinding needle A child prodigy Helper	“Having a Master”; “Grinding-needle Raving”; “A Child Prodigy Preaching”; “The Tears and the Rock”; “Losing life Cliff”
	Disguising and going to the army	“Going to the Army in the Place of her Father”
	Iron Rock Mount; The magical camel; Fighting in the army;	“Iron Rock Mound”; “Sleeping beside the Yellow River”; “Having a Master in a Temple”; “Defeating and outwitting the Enemies”; “Catching the Chief Commander”; “Bloody Battle”; “Guarding the Border”;
	Returning	“Returning to the Royal Court with triumph”; “Expressing Gratitude on Wutai Mount”; “Taking off the Armor and Returning to the Farm”; “Hermitage in Farm and Garden”
Resolution (1)	Death at an old age	“Spending her Remaining Years in the Hometown”
Coda		
Evaluation		

Introduction is about the popularity, reputation, and cultural values of Mulan legends.

Orientation includes five motifs: home village, praying, her father's dream, birth and the surname "Hua" because of 木兰花 (Mulan hua, magnolia). Complication involves Mulan's hard learning (learning, grinding needle, a child prodigy), helping the villagers, disguising and going to the army, her weapons, her riding camel, brave fighting in the army, returning (returning with triumph, declining rewards, returning home to be with parents, peaceful life in home village). She passed away at an old age in Resolution where the narrative ends.

The nineteen legends can be divided into four parts according to Mulan's life: birth; adolescence; life in the army; life after returning. Except for a few, all the episodes can be traced back to other written materials, particularly to 周大望 (Zhou Dawang)'s and 王汉青 (Wang Hanqing)'s book as well as the old novel. This "Romance of Mulan" does not only correspond with some chapters of Dawang's novel, but many passages are verbatim or almost the same with little nuances.

The main and obvious changes are that: Mulan was born and living in the West Han Dynasty (202 BC-8 AD); 伍登 (Wu Deng) and 花阿珍 (Hua Azhen) completely disappeared with those plots about them; a few characters lost their accurate names, such as Monk Sangwu, Taoist Jingsong, being called a monk or a Taoist instead, but ridiculously the names of the enemies were kept; the nineteen legends in the romance are likely fragmentary, and connected loosely. Although the title of 周大望 (Zhou Dawang)'s is *the Romance of Hua Mulan*, he did not explain why Zhu Mulan got this surname. In *the Romance of Mulan*, an episode is added: "朱

天禄 (Zhu Tianlu) named her Mulan after the popular nickname 花姑 (Hua Gu, Flower Hua) for lovely girls among the folk and the dream under the magnolia tree” (55). The endeavor to establish a rational connection between Zhu Mulan and Hua Mulan is obvious.

“The Romance of Mulan” developed from local legends in publications through an intermediary source, 周大望 (Zhou Dawang)’s book. A route can be identified: oral legends→ legends in publications (particularly 王汉青 (Wang Hanqing)’s book) →周大望 (Zhou Dawang)’s novel→ “the Romance of Hua Mulan.” Although through two intermediary sources, the connection between “The Romance of Mulan” and the oral legends as well as early written materials can still be identified. Each compiler and author added, deleted, strengthened, or simplified something. This romance, different from Dawang’s romance, is not a complete novel, but a loosely structured version composed with nineteen episodes in the order of Mulan’s life story from birth to death. Unlike other versions, “The Romance of Mulan” is told on an invented background of a real, historical, continuous, uninterrupted Mulan culture, with introductions to its historical and geographical situation, development, transmission and dissemination.

The two opening parts about Mulan’s hometown and relics describe a historical, specific, and real background for “the Romance of Mulan”. The two ending parts about Mulan culture promote the Mulan legend from local culture, folk culture, grass-roots culture to mainstream, historical, and orthodox culture. Moreover, they make the Mulan legend tangible through all kinds of representational forms, arts,

literature, statues and so forth.

The other two Versions of Mulan Legend in *the Chorography of Mulan Mount*

In my opinion, the other two versions concerning Mulan are much more like folk legend. The first one, “Scenic Spots,” is chapter two, having seven subcategories:

古木兰山八景 (Gu mulanshan bajing; the Ancient Eight Splendid Landscapes of Mulan Mount) (8 entries) (p.17)

古木兰川八景 (Gu mulanchuan bajing; the Ancient Eight Landscapes of Mulan Valley) (8 entries) (pp.17-18)

古庙景区景点 (Gumiao jingqu jingdian; the Scenic Spots in Ancient Temple Area) (10 entries) (pp.18-20)

石景区景点 (Shijingqu jingdian; the Scenic Spots in Rocks Park) (19 entries) (pp.21-25)

花苑区景点 (Huayuanqu jingdian; the Scenic Spots in the Garden) (8 entries) (pp.25-27)

避暑区景点 (Bishuqu jingdian; the Scenic Spots in the Summer Resort) (8 entries) (pp.27-28)

其它景点 (Qita jingdian; others) (14 entries) (pp.28-30)

All the entries appear in the form of place name legend. In total 19 texts are about Mulan. The following are my statistics:

龙石云驭 (Longshi yunyu; A Dragon Rock on the Cloud) (p.17)

棋盘太极 (Qipan taiji; the Supreme Ultimate on the Chess-board Rock) (p.17)

(No. 4 and No. 6 in “the Ancient Eight Splendid Landscapes of Mulan Mount”)

眼泪幽 (Yanlei dang; Tears Rock) (p.19)

(No. 6 in Ancient Temple Area)

铠甲石 (Kiajia shi; the Armor Rock) (p.21)

穿箭崖 (Chuanjian ya; the Flying Arrow Cliff) (p.22)

第一山 (Diyi shan; the First Mount) (p.23)

北顾亭 (Beigu ting; the Watching North Pavilion) (pp.23-24)

龙尾石 (Longwei shi; the Dragon Tail Rock) (p.24)

棋盘石 (Qipan shi; the Chess-board Rock) (pp.24-25)

舍身崖 (Sheshen ya; the Losing Life Cliff) (p.25)

(No. 3, 6, 11, 15, 17, 18, 19 among the nineteen entries in “the Scenic Spots in Rocks Park”)

木兰树 (Mulan shu; Magnolia Tree) (p.26)

下马石 (Xiama shi; Dismounting from the Horse Rock) (p.26)

木兰仙池 (Mulan xianchi; Mulan Celestial Lake) (pp.26-27)

(No. 3, 5, 6 in “the Scenic Spots in the Garden”)

龙头石 (Longtou shi; Dragon Head Rock) (p.28)

祈嗣顶 (Qisi ding; Praying-for-a-child Peak) (p.28)

剑劈石 (Jianpi shi; Sword-splitting Rock) (p.28)

(No. 4, 7, 8 in “the Scenic Spots in the Summer Resort”)

将军庙 (Jiangjun miao; General Temple) (p.29)

铁石墩 (Tieshi dun; Iron-rock Mound) (p.29)

剖腹台 (Poufu tai; Opening-breast Plat), 洗心河 (Xixin he; Washing-heart River) and 一里河 (Yili he; One-li River) (p.29)

(No. 7, 8, 11 in “the Others”)

Each scenic spot is presented in an identically structured narrative comprising two parts: the description and the origin, normally with a picture below. For instance:

It is located on south side of the cliff of Jade Emperor Pavilion, as long as 4.3 meters. It is precipitous, projecting from the top of the cliff, and half separated from the cliff. According to the legend, General Mulan and Emperor Zhenwu were playing chess on the Chess-board Rock. At evening, an evil dragon was passing by and doing bad things. General Mulan saw it and got angry. She took the sword and cut it into two parts. The head flew away and fell down on the Water-drop Cliff close to Dongquan Temple. General Mulan picked up a rock and threw it at the body of the dragon. It changed to this Dragon-tail Rock after thousands of years (Mulanshanzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui 2009, 24).

If it is an artificial landscape, the year when it was first built, destroyed and rebuilt, and any change of the location, is normally available. The description is simple and short with historical, geographical and physical information. The formula “according to legend” separates the description and the legend that is always simplified. Although they look like place name legends, the focus is different. Such entries serve as introductions to the scenic spots, and the latter parts add cultural values to the former, which are not very necessary.

The other legends are in the fourth part of the Appendix, “风物掌故 (Fengwu zhanggu; Scenery Anecdotes about the Scenic Spots and Relics).” I separated the twenty three legends into four parts: those about her life, including her birth, her studying, going to the army, her death and even her afterlife; those about her helping the local people; those about her killing monsters for the local people; others.

The first subcategory includes seven legends:

木兰为什么姓花 (Mulan weishenm xing hua; Why Mulan's Surname was Hua?)

(p.417)

祈嗣顶 (Qisi ding; Praying-for-a-child) (p.417)

木兰树 (Mulan shu; Magnolia Tree) (p.422)

剖腹台和洗心河 (Poufu tai he xixin he; Cutting Open Belly Plat and Washing-heart River) (p.425)

华严阁内考木兰 (Huayange nei kao mulan; Test of Mulan in Huayan Pavilion)

(p.426)

夫子山的来历 (一) (Fuzi shan de laili; the Origin of Confucius Hill 1) (p.429)

These legends are about her mother dreaming of a golden phoenix and then having a baby; her hard work learning weaving with her mother, the test of her piety by 铁冠道人 (Taoist Tieguan) in 华严阁 (Huanyan Pavilion), her playing chess with Emperor Zhenwu whom she asked to move from Confucius Hill to Mulan Mount.

Those about her helping the local people:

舍身崖 (一) (Sheshen ya; Losing-life Cliff 1) (p.417)

木兰送暖 (Mulan songnuan; Mulan's Help) (p.420)

犀牛望月 (Xiniu wangyue; Rhinoceros Looking at the Moon) (p.421)

好汉坡 (Haohan po; True Man Slope) (p.421)

剑劈石和飞来石 (Jianpi shi he feilai shi; Sword-split Rock and Flying Rock)

(p.423)

棋盘石 (Qipan shi; Chess-board Rock) (p.424)

As a helper, she searched for dishes of bats as medicine for a blind old woman in the village when she was a child; she pushed the millstones for an old and weak rhinoceros; she made steps for the pilgrims and tourists; she split the rock impeding the way of pilgrimage with her sword; she bought treasured salt from the people. In such legends, she was like an ordinary woman without magical power. As a monster slayer, she expelled a turtle that ate crops on the farms; she killed a fox that tried to steal the swan's eggs.

Those about her killing monsters for the local people:

沁水鳖 (Qinshui bie; Turtle Rock) (p.418)

天鹅抱蛋石 (Tiane baodan shi: Swan-incubating-egg Rock) (p.419)

Others:

天鹅下蛋石 (Tiane xiadan shi; Swan's Egg Rock) (p.419)

雷打石 (Lei das hi; Lightning Rock) (p.422)

铁石墩 (Tieshi dun; Iron-rock Mound) (p.423)

圆石头的来历 (Yuan shitou de laili; the Origin of the Round Rock) (p.424)

This subcategory includes those legends in which Mulan was just mentioned at the beginning or at the end, but was not the protagonist. All twenty three legends are selected from among the twenty five legends of Mulan from *木兰山的传说* (*Mulanshan de chuanshuo; Legends on Mulan Mount*), even in the same order. It is very interesting that the names of the collectors have remained, but those of the tellers are not given.

The location of these legends in the Appendix represents their much lower position in this book. The title “风物掌故 (Fengwu zhanggu; Scenery Anecdotes about the Scenic Spots and Relics)” means that the genre is interesting or historical-like, for entertainment as a supplement to official historical recordings.

The Others

Most of the above publications, in the form of research into history and chorography, are limited to a small group of readers, and are not intended for the public. The local government also pays attention to the popularization of the Mulan legend, not only in Huangpi, but also in Wuhan, Hubei and even the whole country. 2006 was a most significant year for the development of Mulan legend and culture in Huangpi when 木兰山组歌 (*Mulanshan zuge; Suite of Songs of Mulan Mount*) and Chu drama 少年花木兰 (*Shaonian hua mulan; Junior Hua Mulan*) were performed for the public, and the Mulan Legend was inscribed on the list of Wuhan Intangible Cultural Heritage.

木兰山组歌 (*Mulanshan zuge; Suite of Songs of Mulan Mount*) held its premiere performance at 木兰胜景广场 (*Mulan shengjing guangchang; Mulan Splendid View Square*), on September 20th of 2006. It focuses on Mulan culture, in order to glorify and make propaganda of it, including four movements—“文化之源 (*Wenhua zhi yuan; Cultural Origins*)” including two songs, “木兰歌 (*Mulan ge; the Song of Mulan*)” and “追寻木兰 (*Zhuixun mulan; Seeking Mulan*,” “山水之韵 (*Shanshui zhi yun; the Charm of the Mounts and the Rivers*)” praising the landscape of Huangpi, “和谐之地 (*Hexie zhi di; the Harmonious Land*)” concerning the religious culture,

“红色之魂 (Hongse zhi hun; the Communist Soul)”concerning the Communist culture, and an epilogue. There are thirteen songs accompanied by dancing, each of which begins with a poem recitation. The well-known anchorpersons and singers from the capital and the dancers and choir from Huangpi co-operated very well.

In this version, although Mulan is local, her surname is changed to the popular one Hua, but not Zhu as in local legends. The “Song of Mulan” highly praised her national heroism. In “Seeking Mulan,” Mulan is a representative of Chinese women, and is not unequal to men. Feminism is an everlasting topic of Mulan legends. This version did not provide us with a complete legend, but only fragments about Mulan.

On that day, the Wuhan TV station took the live show, and CCTV filmed it. Afterwards, the Wuhan and Huangpi TV Stations replayed it several times. Furthermore, it stepped on the national stage when it was played on the Music Channel of China Central Television (CCTV) on October 15th. Half a year later, it was performed in the Great Hall of the People on May 15th of 2007, meaning that it had entered the political and cultural center of China, and was accessible to people around China. Such a project could not have been finished without close co-operation between the local government and artists from national organizations in Beijing, and the support and contribution of the Wuhan and Hubei government could not be ignored.

The other version of Mulan legend in Huangpi accessible to the public is local Chu Drama 少年花木兰 (*Shaonian hua mulan; Junior Hua Mulan*). It held its premiere on December 4th, 2005 after three years preparations with cooperation

between playwrights and artists from Huangpi and Wuhan, after which it was performed more than twenty times in Hubei. Furthermore, it moved to the national level when it was filmed and broadcast by CCTV 11 on July 17th, 2006. The drama includes six parts with a prologue and an epilogue: her birth, learning martial arts, gathering medical herbs, exposing a lie, the conscription and going to the army.

The drama tells:

At Dacheng Tan, 双龙镇 (Shuanglong zhen; Two-dragon Town), the couple 花天禄 (Hua Tianlu) and 赵桂贞 (Zhao Guizhen) had a baby girl with 印远道长 (Taoist Yinyuan)'s prescription of magnolia bud as medicine. They named her after magnolia and hoped she would learn hard to serve the country though she was a girl. Although others discriminated against her, she still learnt and trained hard with her father's encouragement and support. Mulan was industrious, kind, witty and brave, friendly to the locals and filial to her parents. One of her neighbors, Grandma Sun cried so much for her dead son in the battlefield that she went blind. Mulan decided to gather medical herbs on the dangerous 舍身崖 (Sheshen ya; Losing-life Cliff) on 青狮岭 (Qingshi ling; Green-lion Mount). She met Fat Huang, and competed for the herb. He did not get the herb so he pretended to be hurt by Mulan. With the help of families and friends, finally Mulan got the herb. The conscription came and Hua Tianlu was enrolled. Mulan took armor to disguise as a young soldier. Tianlu and Taoist 印远道长 (Taoist Yinyuan) tested her military strategy and tactics. The parents worried about a young girl serving in the army. Mulan tried to comfort them to represent her dream to fight for the parents, for the family, for the master, for the nation and for herself as a heroine. At the end, Mulan was riding her horse to the battlefield with other soldiers. (My summary)

I also carry on a linguistic structure examination of this version:

Table 16. Structural elements of “Junior Hua Mulan”

Element	Motif
Abstract (1)	Introduction
Orientation (3)	Home village Birth Naming
Complication (4)	Learning Helper

	Disguising Going to the army
Resolution	
Coda	
Evaluation	

This version centering on Mulan's childhood, is incomplete, ending at the motif "going to the army." Obviously, Mulan in the drama is a senior moral icon to educate young people to help the oppressed and the poor, to be strong minded, and to be as capable as a man.

Very different from other works about Mulan, the drama focuses on her childhood to which other works did not pay much attention. Most of the names of characters are different from those in legends and literary works in Huangpi except Mulan and her parents whose surname is displaced by the most popular surname Hua. All the others' names are new. Mulan had a younger brother 朱金兰 (Zhu Jinlan) in folk legends, but his name was changed to Hua Mudi which appeared in Xu Wei and 常香玉 (Chang Xiangyu)'s dramas. It seems that the playwrights did not hide their intentions to draw close to mainstream and popular versions of the Mulan legend at the national level. Although the others' names could not be found in all the materials I had read, the prototypes did exist in folk legend and literature in Huangpi. For instance, 印远道长 (Taoist Yinyuan) almost corresponds with 醉月和尚 (Monk Zuiyue) in Guanyin Monastery.⁷ The plot that Mulan helped the blind neighbor to gather herb medicine on a dangerous cliff can also be traced in folk legends.⁸ The

⁷ See chapter 9, 67-69 in the Taoist novel.

⁸ See 风洞的蝙蝠 (Fengdong de bianfu; the Bats in Feng Cavity), p.34-37 in Wang Hanqing's book, in which Mulan helped a blind woman to gather the shit of bats as

competition between Mulan and Fat Huang represents the conflict between the oppressed people and the ruling class, the principal contradiction in ancient China. However, this cannot be found in original texts and has been added in new rewritings. Class antagonism is added and emphasized in new versions in order to create a hero for the oppressed people. As a local drama, it is based on the Mulan legend in Huangpi, with the professional playwrights' additions, modifications and creations.

The Chu Drama Troupe of Huangpi, sponsored by the Culture Department of the local government, led the whole process, from conceiving, writing, rehearsal and performance, with the help and cooperation of cultural organizations and artists in Wuhan. At the beginning, they proposed to create a new Chu drama to strengthen the development of Mulan culture and local culture in Huangpi. Officials, artists, and amateur folklorists such as Ming Deyun attended a meeting in May of 2004. They visited related localities and did some fieldwork. They found that the childhood and adolescence of Mulan was still a blank among the vast literature and verbal art about Mulan and decided to center on this part to conceive the drama (Hu Pei, Feng Tao, posted November 8, 2005).

The Official Group's Attitudes towards Mulan and her Legends

I have tried several times to ask these cultural animators to tell Mulan legends, and I always failed, which did not mean that they were displeased to be interviewed. Actually they were very friendly and cooperative. They believed that to help me was a part of their work and our topic was their interest as well. During our contacts, I found

medicine, as well as 舍身崖 (Sheshen ya; Losing-life Cliff), 145 in Wang Hanqing's book.

that they were likely to refer me to their essays instead of their own versions of Mulan legends. Normally, they stood up to look for books and articles, some gave them to me and told me that what I needed was in them, and some began to read them to me when I asked them to tell me something about Mulan and her legends if they had written about them. 黄锂 (Huang Li), 黎世炎 (Li Shiyan), 杜有源 (Du Youyuan), 黄英 (Huang Ying) and others gave me lots of books and photocopies of articles and essays. They always suggested that I ask the officials in culture departments and the few well-known amateur folklorists and did not understand why I planned to go to the countryside to ask those uneducated natives. Even Du Youyuan and Li Shiyan who had collected Mulan legends before did not tell their versions to me, but instead referred me to their publications. They preserved their own publications very well but did not do the same thing for their collections. Both of them have their own study rooms and bookshelves to place them. I asked them if they still preserved their recordings, collections, diaries and notes and they said no. They had not been trained to do serious fieldwork and did not understand the importance of archiving their recordings. In their mind, written materials and studies are much more significant than oral tradition and folk legends.

The attitude of this group towards telling Mulan legends has changed in the past few decades. With the development of cultural tourism, and the movement of safeguarding ICH around China, their attitudes became more and more active. The first few officials who began to collect and tell Mulan legends regarded this work as a part of their job. Under the leadership of the local government, this group plans more

publications, studies and rewritings. The range of the audience has expanded, from the locals, to those in Wuhan and Hubei, and then to those around China. 木兰山组歌 (*Mulanshan zuge; Suite of Songs of Mulan Mount*) that was performed through federal mass media and in the Great Hall of the People in Beijing shows that Mulan in Huangpi has entered mainstream culture.

Mulan has become real and even historical when the official group answers the three basic questions about Mulan: was Mulan real, in which dynasty was she living, where was Mulan from? In 木兰文化新论 (*Mulan wenhua xinlun; New Perspectives Towards Mulan Culture*), four articles discuss such problems, and 明德运 (Ming Deyun) summarized the results of previous studies and systematically answered them in his “木兰考 (Mulan kao; Examination on Mulan)”: “Mulan was real in our history” (2008, 10) “the years when Mulan was living is the West Han Dynasty (202 BC-8 AD)” (2008, 12), “Mulan was born in Huangpi, and died in Huangpi, so she was from Huangpi” (2008, 14). Besides them, Ming discussed another problem: why Mulan’s surname was Hua: Zhu Mulan and Hua Azhen swore to be sisters and then she got the surname Hua (2008, 14). After answering the above questions, Mulan legends in Huangpi were basically historicized, transformed from local legend to reasonable and believable history. All the officials borrowed their studies and mixed them with their own rewritings regardless if they corresponded with folk legend in oral tradition or earlier written records.

The process of rewriting the Mulan legend can be shown to have gone through certain phases: folk legend in oral tradition → collected legends in publications in

the 1980s → novels and essays written by the locals → the draft → the final text, and each phase is a re-creation of the early texts. The genre has been changed from legend to popular literature, and to chorography, with strong local and cultural values. This is a process of gradual distancing from folk legend, approaching history, through a series of rewritings. The collectors, the editor of the collection of folk legend, and those participants in the compiling of the *Chorography of Mulan Mount* were all involved in this process. Regardless of the sources and the writers of such versions, all of them have the form of official history, meanwhile, the literary features of Mulan's legend are emphasized.

In official versions, Mulan has been portrayed as a perfect woman, a valorous warrior and a moral icon as capable as or even better than a man. As a woman, she was as lovely as magnolia, good at weaving and embroidery and loyal in love. In folk legends, learning or being good at weaving and embroidery are not a necessary part of Mulan's story, and many tellers did not mention it. There is a reference to weaving, 磨针涧 (Mozhen jian; Grinding-needle Ravine), in "the Romance of Mulan" in *The Chorography of Mulan Mount*, in which Mulan learnt weaving from her mother. The legend is:

Mulan learnt weaving from her mother when she was nine years old. She found it was very difficult and boring so she gave up. Next morning, Mulan went out to play on Mulan Mount and met an old lady who was grinding an iron bar beside a spring. She was curious and asked her what she was doing. The old lady answered that she was going to grind it to a needle and told her that she could do it if she continued. Mulan felt very shy and returned home to go on weaving. She learnt it after forty nine days hard working and was doing it as well as her mother. The natives named the spring 磨针涧 (Mozhen jian; Grinding-needle Ravine) and built a temple that had the same name. (My summary, the full text is on page 56)

Actually this legend has its origin in folk legends and published legends. In folk legends in oral tradition, the protagonist is Emperor Zhenwu and not Mulan. 周大望 (Zhou Dawang) rewrote the episode in his novel (chapter 3, 4-6) and made the change, in which Mulan was learning martial arts. In the above official version, the compiler and editor made further changes to strengthen the image of a perfect woman.

伍登 (Wu Deng), who was not in the folk legend and only a comrade in the old book, 木兰传 (*Mulan Zhuan; the Romance of Mulan*), became Mulan's close comrade and love in contemporary rewritings. Their love story also became a vivid part in "The Basic Content" of *The Application Statement*, and attracted the interest of the literati. It tells:

伍登 (Wu Deng) and 花阿珍 (Hua Azhen) found that Mulan was a female when Mulan was injured. Mulan and 伍登 (Wu Deng) fell in love and were engaged in private. After wars, 伍登 (Wu Deng) was arranged to guard the northern borderline and Mulan returned home. They were going to get married. Unfortunately, 伍登 (Wu Deng) was accused of treason and was killed. Mulan grieved and stood on a rock to miss her lover. Her tears dropped down and left two tiny holes. The natives named it 眼泪幽 (Yanlei dang; Tears Rock). (My summary, the full text is on page 169)

Among the native and religious groups, I found no one to tell this familiar legend but some of them knew it. 许信慧 (Xu Xinhui), a devout Taoist nun, became upset when she was talking about it and said that the newly created love story were an affront towards the gods and Taoism in which love and marriage were not permitted, which is the origin of the chaos at present (July 7th, 2010, interview at Doumu Palace).

As a capable general, Mulan learnt martial arts and military strategy from a very young age. In the battlefield, she was a brave and resourceful warrior, as well as a general who took care of her soldiers and comrades. Normally, the compilers and the editors borrowed chapters and plots from the old novel to tell Mulan's life in the army. In *the Romance of Mulan* in the Chorography, there are five parts among the nineteen legends about her life in the army, which is similar to the old novel and 周大望 (Zhou Dawang)'s book. However, the natives and religious group seldom told detailed and complete legends about this but only used a simple sentence to cover it. This part originated from the old novel and was continued in new publications, but the writers only borrowed from the old novel, and did not make many changes and elaborations.

The official group emphasizes and glorifies the moral virtues represented in the Mulan legend. In 黄锂 (Huang Li)'s viewpoint, Mulan culture is “a kind of moral culture...centered on patriotism, based on loyalty, filial piety, heroism, and chastity” and Mulan “is not a specific person, but rather a spiritual icon whose behaviors have been refined, epitomized, sublimed, and developed” (Huang 2000, 18). Besides the four well-known virtues—loyalty, filial piety, heroism and chastity—黄锂 (Huang Li) began to emphasize “patriotism” and located it above the other four virtues. Moreover, he pointed out clearly that Mulan is “a spiritual icon” (Huang 2000, 18), and explained this from four perspectives: “firstly, from political perspective, laying the country and the nation above all” (Huang 2000, 19); “secondly, from the ethical and moral perspective” (Huang 2000, 19) connecting the emotion to both the family and the country, connecting the individual and the collective; “thirdly, from the

perspective of worldview, to establish the correct values and view of life” (Huang 2000, 20); “fourthly, from the perspective of social view, holding the strong consciousness of anti-feudalism” (Huang 2000, 21). Furthermore, “家国情怀 (Jiaguo qinghuai; Affection and Devotion to the Homeland and the Country)” has been added (Feng 2007, 3).

The Brokers

Four amateur folklorists and cultural officials have acted as brokers: 杜有源 (Du Youyuan), 黎世炎 (Li Shiyan), 明德运 (Ming Deyun) and 王汉青 (Wang Hanqing). 杜有源 (Du Youyuan) is the most representative and has made great contributions to the collection, preservation, and popularization of the Mulan legend.

I learnt his name a few years ago when I read 王汉青 (Wang Hanqing)’s book which includes several legends collected by him. 黄英 (Huang Ying), the general secretary of the Research Society of Mulan Culture gave me Du Youyuan’s cell phone number when I asked for help to arrange my fieldwork to observe the celebration of the Lantern Festival around General Tomb and General Temple. He arranged for my visit on the early morning of lunar January 15th, the first day of the celebration. I met Du in the early morning and we waited for a photographer from the *Daily Hubei* together in the bus station. He was very late and arrived at noon. Unfortunately, we missed the celebration. To compensate, Du Youyuan led us to 张家冲 (Zhangjiangchong Village), a village under the foot of Mulan Mount famous for its dragon dance. I stayed there for three days and then asked him to help arrange my

fieldwork around the General Temple. He told me that he was moved by my devotion to my fieldwork and research that few Chinese scholars could do and decided to try his best to help me, which was the beginning of our friendship.

杜有源 (Du Youyuan) was born in October of 1955 in 岗上湾 (Gangshang Village) of 长岭 (Changling Town) in Huangpi. After finishing his formal education in high school in 1973, he was recruited to the army and stayed in Henan Province from December of 1973 to April of 1977. He has worked in Cultural Station of Changling Town since January of 1980 when the reconstruction of Mulan Mount began. He and his colleagues visited the villages around the Mount, and collected oral information about history and religion about Mulan Mount including legends about Mulan. Unfortunately, the collected materials were destroyed by a roof leaking in the 1980s. The compiler was dissatisfied with the draft of the section on religion in *the Chorography of Mulan Mount*, written by someone else, and invited Du to take it over. He finished it and many other parts in *the Chorography of Mulan Mount* on the basis of his memory about the collection made early in the 1980's (February 18, 2011, interview in his house).

As an official working in Cultural Station of a town, the lowest in the hierarchy of the administrative system, he is in charge of the identification, investigation, collection, study and the performances of local culture. The Cultural Station, an old three-floor building downtown, has only three employees. He has little income but much work to do. However, he loves his job. Besides Mulan, he is also interested in well-known local personages, traditional buildings, modern local history, as well as

folk arts.

He is a representative local cultural expert and an amateur folklorist; well educated, knowledgeable, erudite, thoughtful, loving reading and writing. I felt this at first sight through his dress and behavior. His difference from the common people in the rural areas was further ascertained when I visited his house. His three-floor house is located on the south-west corner of the village, 岗上湾 (Gangshang Village), where an old town, 方家潭 (Fangjiatan Town) was submerged in a reservoir in the 1950s. His house is very different from those of other villagers and impressed me deeply. In his tiny front garden osmanthus, chrysanthemums, and other flowers are growing very well. Such plants are favorites of Chinese literati who are well educated, loving peaceful lives, but are not popular among the countrymen in rural areas. Du collected a few rocks from the submerged town and thought that they were relics and memorials of the brilliant local history. The living room is decorated with traditional Chinese paintings and calligraphies, rather than a painting with one hundred “寿 (Shou, longevity)” characters which is normal in rural areas around China. I was really amazed that he had a reading room with many books, magazines, and newspapers which are seldom seen in countrymen’s houses but are very popular among the well educated literati.

Although they have a house downtown, Du Youyuan and his wife chose to live in an isolated village because they loved the tranquil life and clean environment, but the common people living in rural areas rush into cities and towns. He takes a motorbike to work and returns in the evening, which costs extra money.

He works hard and often stays up late. Beside his work in the Cultural Station, he devotes most of his leisure time to writing, for supplements of newspapers and for his studies on local culture, not only as an official but also as an amateur folklorist. He complained that his official work was a little bit heavier and occupied his leisure time. Almost every night, he was reading and writing, which he liked. In terms of the current studies about Mulan, he was not satisfied at all. Although he is an official, he complained that all the studies, publications and other safeguarding actions had been limited to a small group of officials and amateur folklorists who seldom engaged Mulan and her culture directly, and paid most of their attention to historical and written materials. His greatest dissatisfaction was with their ignorance of folk legend and folk culture as well as their fabrications in their studies and publications in order to rationalize them to accord with mainstream opinion, for instance the changing of Mulan's eras from the Sui (581-618 AD) and Tang (618-907 AD) Dynasties to the West Han Dynasty (202 BC-8 AD) in accordance with Huang Li's study. As a local man who was born and grew up in, and now works in, north Huangpi where Mulan legends were popular, unlike other officials who are living downtown, he has strong protective feelings for the folk legends and folk culture, furthermore, he shows respect for them and believes them. In his view, fabrication is a lie that causes conflicts and disputes among those studying and working on Mulan and Mulan culture. He mentioned the academic conflicts between him and Huang Li and his unwillingness to follow Huang's ideas in his own writings. His emotions, respect and attention to the folk materials differentiate him from other members of the official group who are far

away from the folk culture and closer to the mainstream. The dissatisfaction makes him keep a distance from other officials.

Du Youyuan's contributions deserve more recognition, however his methods for collection and study also need re-examination. He has never received serious training in how to do fieldwork. In our first visit to 尹家冲 (Yinjia Chong Village) around General Temple, he brought only his notebook and pen, without a camera or a voice-recorder. He admitted that he did not take notes word for word, but only those he considered deserving to be written down. Those notes were seldom preserved but discarded after publications based on them were finished. Although he shows respect to the folk legends and folk culture, it seems that he still looks down upon the folk whom he believed to be uneducated, lacking in ability to tell legends fluently, and unable to express their ideas clearly.

He has devoted thirty years to Mulan, her legends and culture: collection, investigation, study and publication. In the early 1980s, he visited the villages around Mulan Mount to collect materials about the Mount, including those about Mulan. He extended his investigation to General Temple and General Tomb, as well as Dacheng Tan, which are always ignored by other researchers. He is very familiar with the relics about Mulan and the natives living there, so he gave me a lot of help during our research.

Du Youyuan is acting as the broker between the folk group and the official group. On the one side, he is a local who was born, grew up and worked in the north of Huangpi where the relics were located and Mulan legends were popular, on the other

side, he is an official working in the local cultural station. His dual identity has been fused and cannot be separated. As a native living in the area where Mulan legends are popular, he was familiar with them when he was young. His work ignited his interest in Mulan and began his thirty-year devotion to Mulan and Mulan culture. He listened to and collected the legends, saw and investigated the relics, reported and wrote essays about them. What he knows is at first hand, which is an important difference from the members of the official group who did not enter into the folk community but just touched the surface. The second difference is his respect for folk legends, insisting that Mulan lived in the Sui (581-618 AD) and Tang (618-907 AD) Dynasties in accordance to the legends. The third difference is that there is no gap between him and the folk. He is a respected personage among the local people who make friends with him, trust in him, like talking with him, and tell interesting things to him.

However, he is an official in local government, and separate from the local people from several perspectives. Firstly, besides the folk legends of Mulan that he listened to as a local, he is aware of other materials about Mulan, such as all the publications, archives, chorography, and studies. He is familiar with not only the folk legends of Mulan and the records in chorography in Huangpi, but also those about Mulan in 虞城 (Yucheng) of Henan Province through publications and studies, which could be the reason why his mixed version involved a plot from legends in 虞城 (Yucheng). Furthermore, he has read others' rewriting about Mulan, for instance 周大望 (Zhou Dawang)'s novel. His version is a mixture, by reference to oral folk legends, old written records in chorography, and others' rewritings in Huangpi, the

studies, and the legends in 虞城 (Yucheng). Secondly, as a local official well educated and good at writing, he has a strong and conscious trend to embellish the rough materials, to historicize, to rationalize and make literary versions of the legends. Thirdly, like other members of the official group, he did not tell Mulan legends orally to me but asked me to read the books.

Not only among the folk but also in the official group, he is a respected and commonly identified expert on Mulan and Mulan culture. But he has almost lost his voice in the official group, though he has done lots of necessary work. Except for his own publications, his name seldom appears. He is an active member of the official group, but he has not entered the core which is composed of a few personages with higher positions who have monopolized the research society and control the channel to make propaganda and disseminate Mulan legends. Compared with his contribution and laborious work, he has not gained the fame and honor he deserves.

As a community member, he loves and respects folklore in his hometown; as an amateur folklorist, he collects, investigates and does research on local tradition; as an official, he liaises with the local government. His multiple identities make him a representative broker between the two groups—local and official.

Conclusion

The official group, composed of officials, amateur folklorists, cultural experts and scholars plays a hegemonic role in telling Mulan legends in mainstream Chinese culture through mass media, such as all kinds of publications, performances, and cultural festivals. All the versions I examined in this chapter are necessary parts of

cultural projects of the local government and legend versions have been influenced by this. The style of such versions is similar to literary works. Based on the skeleton of folk legends, the official group has elaborated and fabricated them. Although the members of the official group were very pleased to talk about Mulan, they did not prefer to tell the legends orally, instead reading them to me and writing them down. They always added their own creations to the fixed skeleton of Mulan legends. The plots and episodes are the same, but the words and style are changed. “Legend” rarely appears in the title of these official versions, “Romance” appears instead. The official versions are normally long and complete, though some are connected with independent legends. The narrative generally follows the life story of Mulan: from her birth to her death, normally with the opening formula that she was born in the West Han Dynasty (202 BC-8 AD) in Huangpi and with the ending that she was buried under the foot of Mulan Mount, and the mention of a few relics in memory of her. In comparison with those told by the folk groups I examined in the earlier chapters, the several versions told by the official group have a few obvious variations: strengthening the love story between Mulan and Wu Deng, weakening religious (Buddhist, Taoist, Folk religion) influence, disappearance of accusation of rebellion or slandering of losing chastity, and displacement of tragic death by a happy ending.

The official versions do not involve local legends which are necessary parts in repertoires of the four groups I examined earlier. Instead, literary descriptions of the birth village of Mulan normally begins their versions, and series of places are mentioned at the ending, for instance in “the Basic Content” of “the Application

Statement of Mulan Legends as National Intangible Cultural Heritage”:

In the Western Han Dynasty (202 BC-8 AD), there was a 双龙镇 (Shuanglong Zhen; Two-dragon Town) in the north of 西陵郡 (Xiling jun; Xiling County). The town is surrounded with water and hills, and with many willows and bamboo, in which there is a stone road with hundreds houses and dozens stores on both side.

.....

The countrymen buried Mulan on the north foot of 青狮岭 (Qingshi ling; Green Lion Mount)... the countrymen built the Archway of General Mulan, 祈嗣顶 (Qisi ding;), 木兰祠 (Mulan ci; Mulan Hall), 木兰殿 (Mulan dian; Mulan Temple), 木兰宫 (Mulan gong; Mulan Palace)⁹ etc. As time passed, this mountain got the name “Mulan Mount.” (Jiang 2007, 166,169)

Although they are involved, local legends are separated from parts about Mulan and her legends.

The official versions of Mulan legends were seldom told independently, but normally emerged as a part of longer discussions of Mulan culture, including historical and geographical introductions, the transmission of legends at present and so forth. The tellers set Mulan legends within the background of Mulan culture to demonstrate that they are local, historical and real, and filled with virtues and values, moreover, that they are resources worthy of research, utilization and exploitation.

The sources of such versions are various: legend collection in the 1980s, ancient biography, other ancient written materials, contemporary literature by local authors, studies and researches, outer influences and individual creations. The official group seldom collected folk legends by themselves, examining written sources at hand was a commonly accepted way to collect materials.

⁹ There is not any information about 木兰祠 (Mulan ci; Mulan Hall) and I do not know how the compiler came to know of this relic. 木兰宫 (Mulan gong; Mulan Palace) was located in downtown of Huangpi and was ruined in the 1960s.

The official group writes new versions of Mulan legends to create Mulan as a perfect woman, a capable general, a local cultural representative, and a moral icon. They have their own political, cultural and economical purposes in the process of rewriting. Although they base their versions on legends collected from oral tradition, they have little faith in the folk from whom this wonderful story has ultimately been derived. Like the folks, the official group is one group among the tellers of Mulan legends in Huangpi. Different telling-groups have their own repertoires, attitudes towards Mulan and her legends, and ways to tell. All of them participate in the telling of Mulan legends in modern times, and have created Mulan as an iconic figure holding multiple meanings and conveying various social and political messages.

Conclusion

Mulan has become a collective cultural icon in China through continuous retelling and rewriting of her legends in various forms, such as ballads, poems, drama, and novels in ancient China, as well as in movies, TV series, opera and other art forms in modern China. There were three peaks in the retelling and rewriting of her legend: the acceptance of “木兰辞 (Mulan ci, Ballad of Mulan)” in multiple literary selections in the Song Dynasty (960-1279 AD); her complete and elaborated legend in drama and novels in the Ming (1368-1644 AD) and Qing (1644-1912 AD) Dynasties; and a few movies and dramas in the 1930s. The emergence and the development of Mulan legends as a part of national culture have been closely related with invasions and wars in ancient and modern China. In contemporary China, Mulan legends as a part of national culture underwent a new climax of rewriting in various forms from the middle 1990s. Almost all Chinese people, regardless of status, age, gender, level of education, know of Mulan and her legend, how she disguised as a man and joined the army in the place of her father. For Chinese people, she is a filial daughter, a loyal general, a heroic woman, and a moral icon who was not interested in fame and wealth. Though the intervention of literary and academic writers, Mulan legends became longer and more complete, more and more elaborated. The earliest version, *Ballad of Mulan*, gave no accurate personal information, not her surname, birth place, age, or even her ending. The gaps were filled in following rewritings based on 徐渭 (Xu Wei)’s 雌木兰替父从军 (*Ci mulan tifu congjun; Female Mulan Took Her Father’s Place in the Army*) in the sixteenth century. However, the information added was very

different and it seems that there is no commonly accepted version. Furthermore, her legends have been localized in several places in China: Yucheng in Henan province, Bo County in Anhui province, Wan County in Hebei province, Huangpi in Hubei province, and Yan'an in Shanxi province, each of which has local legends of Mulan, written materials, relics, and ceremonies of worship. Mulan legends have grown into a long story which has acquired different meanings for different groups. The story migrated early in its history, stayed and rooted in specific regions where it established strong relations with “natural or environmental influences,” “cultural influence,” and then developed eco(oico)types (Sydow 1948, 16, 213, 243; Cochrane 1987; Tangherlini 1994, 22, 66). In terms of Mulan legends in Huangpi, the story perhaps began its process of ecotypification in the Tang Dynasty (618-907 AD): Mulan became the daughter of the Zhu family at Dacheng Tan, the pupil of 丧吾和尚 (Monk Sangwu) on 大悟山 (Dawu Mount) and 铁冠道人 (Taoist Teiguan) on Mulan Mount, a goddess of the Taoists on Mulan Mount and in General Temple; the villages, rivers and mounts in the north of Huangpi composed the inner world of her legend; and some local legends were transplanted to the Mulan story. The natives, the religious adherents, the local intellectuals and the local government all participated in this process.

Mulan has become a cultural resource in her “hometowns.” Local governments, particularly Huangpi and Yucheng, among the five claimed “hometowns,” have actively participated in activities since the 1980s to protect, develop and exploit Mulan Culture. They re-discovered Mulan and her legend, identified political,

economic and cultural values, and showed strong interest in how to use them to benefit their regions. The local governments of Yucheng and Huangpi organized related departments and institutes, invited intellectuals to research and discuss, held seminars and created propaganda through mass media, devoting themselves to winning the competition to be acclaimed as the “Hometown of Mulan.” This competition has influenced the natives’ attitudes towards Mulan and her legends that they learned in childhood, has entered repertoires of Mulan legend in oral tradition and has motivated new creations, for instance, why Mulan’s had the surname “Hua.” New versions of the Mulan legend have been created in official publications, in literary and art works by local literati. These new versions could be history, legend, novel, drama, or other forms, all of which appear in mass media, the main conduit for dissemination of Mulan legend at present, particularly among the youth.

Cultural tourism should be the most applicable way to use Mulan legend to benefit regions. Local governments of Yucheng and Huangpi re-built the destroyed relics about Mulan as tourism destinations, for instance, 木兰祠 (Mulan ci; Mulan Temple) in Yucheng and Mulan Mount in Huangpi. The local government of Huangpi has made great achievements in the development of cultural tourism since the early 1980s when they began to rebuild temples on Mulan Mount and established a scenic area. They continue their work to 木兰湖 (Mulan hu; Mulan Lake) and 木兰天池 (Mulan tianchi; Mulan Celestial Lake), which were reservoirs before, to 清凉寨 (Qingliangzhai; Qingliang Village), and to 云雾山 (Yunwushan; Yunwu Mount), and finally the four scenic areas compose 木兰文化生态旅游区 (Mulan wenhua

shengtai lüyou qu; Mulan Cultural and Ecological Tourism Zone) in 2014. The local government made efforts to build the relationships between Mulan and scenic areas that had no prior link to her. In the introduction to the scenic zones, Mulan was riding around Mulan lake, went to see her maternal grandmother beside Mulan Celestial Lake, and enjoyed her leisure time on Yunwu Mount after returning home. New legends were created during the development of cultural tourism. The successful development of cultural tourism increases economic growth, improve traffic, creates employment opportunities, and raises the reputation of Mulan legend in Huangpi.

Five regions claim that Mulan was born there and participate in the competition for recognition as the hometown of Mulan. Yucheng in Henan Province, Wan County in Hebei Province and Bo County in Anhui Province share similar legends in a Mulan legend cycle. Yan'an in Shanxi Province and Huangpi in Hubei Province have different legends and I focused my research on Huangpi.

Mulan legends in Huangpi have a long history from the middle Tang Dynasty (618-907 AD) and are still popular today. Many people are interested in Mulan and her legends in Huangpi and have contributed to the preservation, collection, rewriting and usage of them. I narrowed my fieldwork to discussion with people in areas where there are relics associated with Mulan: her birthplace: Dacheng Tan; her shrine: Mulan Mount; and her gravesite: General Temple, as well as to conversation with officials in related government departments.

Almost all tellers whom I met at the relics were older than sixty, which could be because of the decline in population and loss of labor in rural areas. Among them, the

old men are commonly respected as active tellers who hold more legends, while the women are not believed to be good tellers, not only by the men, but also by themselves. In fact, women knew much less than men, and were not good at telling complete legends. There were one or a few commonly recognized tellers in each group and subgroup. All Taoists could tell some Mulan legends. Besides them, amateur folklorists and officials from the Cultural Station and Departments became interested in Mulan legends and made them accessible to scholars, the various levels of governments, and mass media. An official group emerged to study, make propaganda, and exploit Mulan legends as a local cultural resource. In Huangpi, the natives growing up with the oral tradition of Mulan legends, the religious adherents, the officials, and the scholars have all participated in the telling, retelling and rewriting of Mulan legends.

The local group, including the natives at Dacheng Tan, around General Temple, the Buddhists and Taoists on Mulan Mount, and the natives working on the Mount, and the official group composed of officials, amateur folklorists, cultural experts and scholars, have very different repertoires of Mulan legends, attitudes regarding Mulan and her legends, and ways of telling. The place where they are living, their religion and belief, their gender, their relations with oral or written tradition of Mulan legends, their education, and their attitudes towards Mulan and her legends have all influenced their repertoires.

The four local groups' repertoires of Mulan legends are composed of necessary motifs and optional motifs (see appendix 9). The ten necessary motifs consist of the

basic structure of Mulan legends (table 18), including her personal information, her growth, life in the army, her death, as well as burial and memorial.

Table 17. The basic structure of the four local groups repertoire

Element	Motif
Abstract	Introduction
Orientation	Home village and family
Complication	Learning Disguising and going to the army Surname “Hua” Accusation or slander
Resolution	Suicide
Coda	Burial Memorial
Evaluation	Attitudes towards the reality of Mulan.

Although the four groups’ repertoire is based on this basic structure, there are also many nuances. The natives at Dacheng Tan knew fewer details than the three groups around Mulan Mount. The natives at Dacheng Tan emphasized that she was born in 朱家台子 (the Foundation of the Zhu Family), without information about her and her family; the other three groups always added something about family, specially her father’s name, and also knew when she was living. The natives at Dacheng Tan only mentioned her learning and her disguising without many details, the other three groups knew the two masters (Monk Sangwu and Taoist Tieguan), and what she learnt and what happened during learning. The natives at Dacheng Tan gave few words to “disguising and going to the army,” but the other three groups showed strong interest in how she persuaded her parents and disguised as a man, and even what happened on the way to the army. Concerning the surname “Hua,” the natives at Dacheng Tan have several explanations, and other three groups have a similar reason that Mulan got this

surname from another woman, Hua Azhen, who was engaged or married with Mulan. The natives at Dacheng Tan only knew that an accusation or a slander caused Mulan's suicide, the other three groups told what the accusation or slander was. The natives around General Temple and on Mulan Mount believed that the villagers slandered her by saying she was pregnant so Mulan cut open her belly to prove her chastity, and the Taoists told that she was accused of cheating or rebellion so she cut open her breast to wash her heart to prove her loyalty. All the four groups believed that Mulan was buried in General Tomb and General Temple is located beside it, but the natives at Dacheng Tan only mentioned it, the other three groups knew more, for instance it is in memory of Mulan. Taoists and the natives on Mulan Mount talked about memorial relics about Mulan on the mount—the Archway and Mulan Temple.

The natives at Dacheng Tan have no optional motifs, the natives around the General Temple have seven, Taoists on Mulan Mount have seventeen, and the natives on Mulan Mount have eight (see table 19). The repertoire of the natives at Dacheng Tan is the smallest, and the Taoists' is the biggest. The three groups around or on Mulan Mount share four motifs: Mulan and Mulan Mount (normally Mulan Mount was named after Mulan), her parents praying for a child on Mulan Mount, Marriage with Hua Azhen, and Entitlement (from the royal court). The two groups living on Mulan Mount, the Taoists and the natives working on it, have more of the same motifs in their repertoire: Chess-board Rock, Cutting fox goblin's leg, Marriage with Hua Azhen, Returning (and declining the rewards), (Taoist Tieguan) Imprisoning fox goblin (under Chess-board Rock), and Entitlement (from the royal court).

Table 18. The necessary and optional motifs of the four local groups

Element	The natives at Dacheng Tan		The natives around the General Temple		Taoists on Mulan Mount		The Natives on Mulan Mount	
	Necessary	Optional	Necessary	Optional	Necessary	Optional	Necessary	Optional
Abstract				1		1		1
Orientation	1		1	2	1	2	1	1
Complication	4		4	2	4	11	4	5
Resolution	1		1	1	1	1	1	
Coda	2		2		2	1	2	
Evaluation	1		1	1	1	1	1	1

The repertoire of the natives at Dacheng Tan is small, and legends are simpler or even fragmentary, which means it is not the centre of the cycle of Mulan legend in Huangpi.

In my opinion, the emigration of the Zhu family that could have preserved many legends, the ruin of the relics, the loss of written sources could be the reasons for this. More important, Mulan legends do not have any practical value in their lives once the legends lost their religious background, and were not regarded as cultural tourism resources or family and village history.

Mulan Mount is acting as the centre for the cycle of Mulan legends in Huangpi because of the amount of active informants, the big legend repertoire of the groups around or on it, the completeness and elaboration of the legends. The informants are willing to tell legends about the relics related with Mulan in their eyesight: the Tomb, the Temple, the Archway and the rocks, and also have good memory about the key points in her life: disguising, fighting in the army, marriage with another woman, accusation or slander, and her tragic death. The folk religion and Taoism among them, the existence of relics, and the development of cultural tourism, all attract the natives'

and Taoists' interests in Mulan and her legends, and keep them alive in oral tradition. The Taoist group has the biggest repertoire and has as many as sixteen optional motifs among which eight motifs were collected only in this group. The majority of these optional motifs and the special motifs in this group can be found in the written materials popular among the Taoists at present or before, which indicates that the written sources make a very significant role in the preservation of Mulan legends in oral tradition. The natives on Mulan Mount who were born and grew up in the villages around Mulan Mount, and also stayed on the Mount for many years, share a few motifs with the Taoists, which could have resulted from the continuous and frequent communication between the two groups.

It is difficult to summarize a repertoire of the official group because of the variation of forms and contents. I attempted to fit the four well formed narratives into Nicolaisen's structure (see appendix 9) and identify the basic structure (see table 20) including five motifs: home village and family, birth, learning, disguising, and going to the army. Two versions do not cover the whole life of Mulan and the other two are complete. The above basic structure will be complete if I examine the two versions covering the whole life of Mulan. One motif "Naming as Hua Mulan" could be added in Orientation, two motifs, "Fighting in the army" and "Returning" in Complication, one motif "Death" in Resolution, and three motifs, "Burial," "Memorial," as well as "Mulan and Mulan Mount" in Coda. The two complete versions, "the Basic Content" and "the Romance of Mulan" share seven optional motifs (those in parenthesis). The versions in the official group are more variable, which could be because the editors

had more sources from oral tradition, written materials, and mass media. They integrated motifs from legends in collections, early literary works, researches, old written records. They even involved motifs from other regions, for instance, the motif that Mulan declined the emperor's courtship which appears in Mulan legends in Yucheng of Henan province. Independent invention by these authors is another possibility that can't be ignored.

Table 19. The basic structure of the official group's repertoire

Element	Motif
Abstract	Popularity and reputation of Mulan legends; Huangpi and Mulan
Orientation	Home village and family Birth (+Naming as "Hua Mulan")
Complication	Learning Disguising Going to the army (+Fighting in the army) (+Returning)
Resolution	(+Death at an old age)
Coda	(+Burial); (+Memorial); (+Mulan and Mulan Mount)
Evaluation	Emphasis on Mulan's reality

In publications, a specific introductory opening that normally points out the popularity and reputation of Mulan and her legend in China and abroad, as well as the relation between Mulan and Huangpi is very common. Emphasis on Mulan's reality is mentioned in Evaluation at the end. This fixed formulaic opening and ending has strengthened the historical features of Mulan legend in Huangpi. The repertoire of the official group has five motifs that do not appear in the repertoire of the local groups:

Her father's dream (in which Emperor Zhenwu bestowed on him a baby girl), Mulan as a helper (for the natives), her Name "Hua Mulan" that is from 木兰花 (Mulan Hua, magnolia), Fighting in the army and Tragic love with another general 伍登 (Wu Deng). Her father's name and fighting in the army are from the old book *Romance of Mulan*, the Name "Hua Mulan" and her tragic love are new creations in the official group. Two motifs have changed, one is Marriage with Hua Azhen who fell in love with Mulan but they only swore to be sisters, without engagement or wedding. The other is Mulan's death that changed from a tragic suicide to a happy passing away at an old age.

The differences in the repertoire between the official and local group are very obvious:

1. The period when Mulan was living was changed to the Wen Emperor (180-157 B.C.) of the West Han Dynasty.
2. Fighting in the army was added and emphasized.
3. Marriage with a woman was changed to a tragic love story with a man, Wu Deng.
4. Mulan's tragic death, with the accusation or slander, was displaced by a happy ending, in which she passed away at an old age.
5. The link and relations between Mulan and specific localities became weaker.
6. Confucianism was strengthened. Those motifs about religion were deleted. Taoist and Buddhist influences decreased.
7. The authors and compilers added many their own creations, motifs from

researches, contemporary popular culture and even from legends in other areas.

8. The texts are well formed, elaborated, and much longer.

9. Legends became more historical, less supernatural.

All the groups and sub-groups agree on the essential personal information about Mulan and the skeleton of Mulan legends, that Mulan, surnamed Zhu, was born in a Zhu family at Dacheng Tan and her father was Zhu Tianlu in the early Tang dynasty; she had two masters, Taoist Tieguan at Guanyin Temple and Monk Sangwu on Mount Mount; she disguised as a man and went to the army in the place of her father; she met a woman, Hua Azhen, and married her; she returned to the royal court in triumph and asked to go home to be with her parents; she cut open her belly or breast to prove her loyalty or chastity; she was buried in General Tomb and General Temple was built in memory of her.

There is another difference of the repertoire between the folk and official groups: local legends and place name legends. Local legends are a necessary part of repertoire of three groups: the natives at Dacheng Tan, around General Temple and on Mount Mount, and play their roles in narration: creation of the world in which legends took place, strengthening of credibility, representation of tellers' feelings and worldview. Landscape narrative has a similar function in the Taoists' repertoire in which local legends are seldom told. Local legends and place name legends are acting as "physical evidence"(Oring 2008, 151) in legends.

Local legends have disappeared or become separated from legends about Mulan in the several official versions, displaced by description of Mulan's home village at

the beginning and a few place names at the end, for instance General Tomb and General Temple. I think it is because the official tellers are telling Mulan legends as history and their written sources (Oring 2008, 129), are intended to confirm the credibility of their versions.

Each group focuses on different parts of her legend in their repertoires. The natives at her birthplace, Dacheng Tan, and around her graveyard, involve the legends about the local relics in their repertoire, most of which are supernatural. The natives at Dacheng Tan emphasized that Mulan was born in a place with good feng-shui that was damaged by the emperor, and the natives around General Temple focused their telling on Mulan's tragic death. The Buddhists are not interested in Mulan and told few legends. The Taoists show much interest in Mulan's learning with Taoists, her meditation on Mulan Mount, the conflicts and fights between Mulan and fox goblins, all of which have strong Taoist colors. The repertoire of the natives working on Mulan Mount is a mixture of the repertoires of the natives around General Temple and the Taoists on the Mount. The official group stresses her life and glorious victories in the army, as well as her birth and death in Huangpi.

Legends reflect the values, the morality, the world view of those telling them, all of which are the key and deepest reason why legends are living in oral and literary tradition. All patriotic people are admirable, including Mulan. Mulan's legendary life story is attractive: she disguised as a man and made achievement in male spaces. They are the main reasons why Chinese people are interested in Mulan and her legends.

Each group or subgroup has certain legends that are told only among them. The

official group has obvious and strong nationalistic and political purposes, the Taoists also have their religious purposes, the various levels of local government use the stories to promote, via ICH, tourism and economic development. It is not difficult to see that the rewriting of Mulan stories has peaked in times when China was attacked by foreign aggressors.

The most obvious differences between the local group and the official groups occur on two topics: Mulan's love story and her death. In most versions, Mulan had no lover at all, though she married another woman, Hua Azhen. The motif that the woman disguised as a man married or became engaged to another woman was very common in classical Chinese literature about cross-dressing women. Homosexuality was not suggested, or acknowledged, rather the relationship was presented as "friendship". Normally, the two women would swear to be sisters, or both of them got married with and shared a man together, or one married the other's brother. In a word, the two women finally became members of a single family. In all official publications, or actually all new publications from the 1990s, Mulan had a romantic heterosexual love story in which she and Wu Deng fell in love, but Wu Deng died and Mulan stayed single until her death.

At the surface, the Mulan legend is a story about a hero/heroine who deserves respect, glory, and some kinds of rewards. But why did she ask to go back home, why did she decline the rewards (high rank official, treasure, and even a princess)? She gave up the glory of recognition as a hero/heroine so she did not want to be a hero/heroine at all. In the repertoire of the local group, Mulan had a tragic death, she

proved her chastity or loyalty by cutting open her belly or breast. Mulan's tragic death resulted from feudalism, the idea of chastity, or imperial power. Why did the accusation and slander arise, and why she chose to commit suicide? She should have had a happy ending but did not and what caused her tragic death? In my view, she violated the moral codes governing women and blurred the boundary of how women ruled their feelings and behavior in ancient China. Mulan legend is a narrative of morality and ethics, about violation of norms resulting in punishment.

Mulan crossed the borderline between female and male, she also crossed gendered spaces (Spain 1992; Niranjana 2001) and social roles. Each gender corresponds with a specific space and certain social roles (see table 21).

Table 20. Gender-space-role of the Mulan legend

Gender		Space	Role
Female		Home	Daughter
Male		Army and Royal court	General and Husband
Blurred	Neutral	Mulan Mount	Deity and Pupil
	Opposing	Home and village	Daughter and General

As the table shows, Female is limited to the space "Home," and acting as a social role "Daughter." Male space is "Army" and "Royal Court" where Mulan was a general and a husband. There is a blurry spectrum between the two polar genders, some are neutral (N in the chart below) meaning that the blurry condition is reasonable and acceptable in Chinese culture, and some are opposing indicating that the confusion results in conflicts.

Table 21. Structural overview of gender-space-role of the Mulan legend

Element	Motif	Gender	Space	Role	Cross
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Orientation	Mulan and Mulan Mount	N	Mulan Mount	Deity	1
	Incarnation	N	Mulan Mount or the celestial Heaven	Deity	
	Praying for a child	N	Mulan Mount	Daughter	
	Birth	N→F	Home	Daughter	
Complication	A child prodigy	M	Guanyin Temple	Pupil	2
	Learning	N	Mulan Mount	Pupil	
	Chess-board Rock	N	Mulan Mount	Pupil	
	Cutting fox goblin's leg	N	Mulan Mount	Pupil	
	Disguising	F→M	Home	Daughter	3
	Going to the army	M	Army	General	
	The three embroidery bags	M	Army	General	
	The magical saddle camel	M	Army	General	
	The danger of revealing gender	M	Army	General	4
	Fighting with fox goblins	M	Army	General	
	Marriage	O	Camp in the army	General; Husband; Daughter	
	Surname "Hua"	F		Sister	
	Returning	M→O	The royal court	General; Daughter	5
	Imprisoning fox goblin	O	Mulan Mount	Pupil	
	Accusation/slander	O	Home and village	Daughter: General	
Resolution	Suicide	O	Village	Daughter: General	
	Selection of graveyard	N	The General Temple	Deity	
	Becoming an immortal	N	Mulan Mount	Deity	
Coda	Burial	N	The General Temple	Deity	
	Memorial	N	Mulan Mount	Deity	
	Appearance	N	Mulan Mount	Deity	

M: male; F: female; N: neutral; O: oppsing

Mulan's gender was neutral when she was a deity before her birth and after birth, as well as when she was a pupil before she went to the army because both the female and the male could be deity and pupil in Chinese culture. Both male and female could be immortal, a local deity or deity in the celestial heaven in Chinese folk religion,

Buddhism and Taoism. Chinese women were permitted to learn literary and martial arts at home just like their brothers. Learning with Monk Sangwu and Taoist Tieguan, who were Mulan's family's close friends on nearby Mulan Mount, can be seen as learning in an expanded "Home" as a maiden, and it was normal for a young female to learn from Buddhists and Taoists. Another consideration is that Mulan Mount was a sainted shrine, where moral codes are different, where gender is not a problem for men and women, and where love and marriage are not preferred, as they are in the secular world. Gender created chaos and tragedy when Mulan was not in an appropriate role in the correct space. She was in a confused condition after her return because as a daughter she should stay at home, but she was also a general in the public area where she practiced her martial arts and helped the natives.

Mulan crossed the borderline between Gender, Space and Roles five times, succeeding four times but failing finally. Successful crossing resulted when she had a specific gender, in a correspondent space and in a suitable role. For instance, she was at home as a daughter when she was female, and was a general or husband in the army when she was a male. The five gender crossings make a rounded process from a balance to another balance: Neutral→Female→Male→Opposing→Neutral.

Table 22. Gender crossings in the Mulan legend

Crossing	Motifs	Shift (Gender, Space and Role)	Method	Result
1	Incarnation and birth	Neutral to Female	Praying for a child	Success
		Mulan Mount to Home		
		Deity to Daughter		

2	A child prodigy	Female to Neutral	Disguising	Success
		Home to Guanyin Temple		
		Daughter to pupil		
3	Disguising and going to the army	Female to Male	Disguising	Success
		Home to Army		
		Daughter to General		
4	Marriage	Male opposing Female	Telling the truth that she was in the place of her old and weak father.	Success
		Army to Camp		
		General to Daughter		
5	Accusation/ slander, and suicide	Female opposing Male	None	Conflict
		Army to Home		
		General to Daughter		

The first crossing took place when Mulan was born, through an extraordinary birth.

Disguising as a man was a practical way in the second and the third crossing. The confusion of gender caused trouble and danger at the fourth and the fifth crossing.

Mulan's wife/fiancée almost discovered her real female gender when they entered into a private and personal space, Mulan's camp in the army. Mulan chose to postpone the marriage or sex activity in the name of being a general who should defend the nation first of all, or confessed that she disguised and went to the army in the place of her father and asked for Hua Azhen's respect and sympathy. Loyalty and filial piety are reasonable and acceptable excuses which help Mulan scrape through the crisis.

Marriage that took place in a private space could be a reason. The final failed crossing brought Mulan to a dangerous situation in which she could not deal with conflicts of

gender: a daughter in female space (at home) vs. a general in man's space (in the army and royal court). The conflict is represented as accusation of rebellion from a treacherous official in the repertoire of the Taoists on Mulan Mount, or as a slander of losing her chastity from her sister-in-law in legends. Mulan was loyal to the nation and made many achievements, why did the official accuse her and the emperor also accept the accusation after Mulan declined all rewards? Mulan went to the army in the place of her old father and sacrificed her twelve years for the family, why did her close relative slander her and no one help her? Envy could be a reason, but is very superficial. The accusation or the slander, a kind of gossip, "serves to highlight and reproduce certain socio-moral boundaries by emphasizing the spaces and behaviour appropriate to a 'good woman'" (Niranjana 2001, 98). The underlying conflict of gender caused Mulan's suicide since she was bi-gendered and acting as a female role (daughter) and a male role (general) at the same time. She must serve the royal court in the army if she was a general, or give up everything, including the title, the capability if she chose to turn back to be a woman, but she still kept them, although she gave up the rewards of high official rank and treasure. She should be limited to home if she was a daughter, and should live in accordance with the rules for a maiden, for instance, obeying her parents and the elders in her family, getting married and becoming a mother, however she chose to be single. Marriage and fertility were expected and normal behavior after Mulan returned to her female gender. Furthermore, she was out of control when she was *at home* as a general, and when she was *out of home* as a daughter, so the accusation of rebellion and the slander of losing chastity

appeared and no one defended her in the royal court or in the family. Suicide to prove her loyalty or chastity could be the only choice to escape from the predicament. The tragic death in legends represents punishment,

The happy endings of Mulan in some popular fiction or drama could demonstrate my opinion. In Xu Wei's drama, Mulan was married with Gentleman Wang who was moved by her filial piety. Mulan also married and had children in Zhang Shaoxian's novel. Mulan returned to her real gender, stayed in her space, Home, and took her role as Daughter, Wife and Mother.

How to interpret the supernatural motifs after Mulan's death in legends? Mulan's blood flowed back against the current in the river and a village was named after this; she chose her gravesite herself and was buried in a location with perfect feng-shui; the natives and the royal court built a memorial for her; she became an immortal or a deity to protect the natives after her death; and her shrine, the General Temple and Mulan Mount, are mysterious and sainted. Those who forced her to commit suicide also respect and glorify her, which indicates the ambivalent feeling about Mulan: respect for a "loyal, filial, brave and heroic" woman, and fear about a woman with abnormal experiences.

In contemporary official versions, the motifs about Mulan's death have been omitted or changed to avoid conflict between Mulan and Confucianism. The supernatural motifs are also deleted because of the ideology of materialism. The conflicts between Mulan and the nation/ family resulting from crossing gender did not appear in contemporary official versions. The borderlines between male and female,

as well as the spaces and roles are blurred in contemporary China where we encourage women to be as capable as men and to “hold up half the sky”. The changes of context, tellers, and ideology brought changes in content, structure and underlying meanings of the Mulan legend.

In the repertoire of the local group, Mulan had a tragic death, she proved her chastity or loyalty by cutting open her belly or breast. Mulan’s tragic death resulted from feudalism, the idea of chastity, or imperial power. She sacrificed herself to the family and the nation, but she had to prove herself at the cost of her life under pressure from the family or the nation. This woman warrior who entered male space and showed her abilities and wisdom, though she gave up all rewards and returned to her family, had to pay a price. She was a victim of Confucianism. She did not return to female space, to get married and have children, but meditated and protected her people, which meant she still stayed in male space. Regardless whether the slander concerned treason or losing chastity, she was punished and sacrificed her life. In contemporary official versions, the above motifs have been omitted or changed to avoid conflict between Mulan and Confucianism. Her life after returning home is against traditional moralities, the royal court or her family punished her on the behalf of feudalism. Ordinary people absolutely admired Mulan, however they also suspected that Mulan had lost her chastity in her twelve-years service in the army. They could not admire Mulan’s sacrifice and could not accept Mulan’s choice to be single and meditate. The wager about chastity between the sister-in-law and Mulan was a metaphor of the conflict among women in a family and finally only feudalism

won. Conflicts between women in a family may also be a theme in Mulan legends. A woman who does not get married and stays single infringed the right of her sister-in-law who entered the family and was eager for some rights in the family. The women tellers show more interests in Mulan's difficulties and dangers in revealing of her gender in the men's world, and have more sympathy with Mulan's tragic death. Mulan legends are inspiring stories, and also can be seen as a warning to the women.

Both oral and written tradition are playing crucial roles in the preservation and transmission of Mulan legends, not only in Huangpi but also in other places, which is very common in Chinese folk literature. The natives at Dacheng Tan and around General Temple told their legends according to versions they learned from older generations and old books, without many modifications. Normally there are one or a few members who are recognized as authoritative tellers. The main source of the two groups is oral tradition that they have absorbed since childhood. The Buddhists and Taoists also based their telling on oral tradition and written tradition, borrowing some motifs from religious literature, and wove them together in their repertoire, with some ideas from their own imaginations. The written sources are playing a significant role in the transmission and preservation of Mulan legends among the Taoists, most of whom designated old books as their telling source, regardless of whether they read them, or if those who told legends to them could read. It is obvious that the tellers who had read books could tell more, and more complete, legends, and their repertoires are larger and more logical. The members of the official group have chances to come in contact with much more material, including the collections of Mulan legends made

by amateur folklorists in the 1980s, the studies, the records in chorography, materials from Mulan's other hometowns, as well as novels; they selected some motifs and mixed them together, with conscious modification and imagination. Among the official group, there is no single commonly accepted teller and they always cooperate as an editorial committee.

The members of the local group grew up or lived in the tradition of Mulan legends for a few decades, and show respect to the tradition. Although their repertoires have some difference, there are no conflicts between them. The official groups are far away from oral tradition and have a prejudice against the natives and Taoists whom they believe are not educated, know little, and cannot tell good stories. Generally speaking, the members of the local group do not believe the official versions of Mulan legends, even expressing strong discontent with them, particularly the love stories that could not be found in old books nor be heard in oral tradition.

It seems that the two groups are independent, but they connect with each other through the collections and publications of the 1980s, as well as through brokers. The few official versions of Mulan legends underwent a process of rewriting, and gradually went far away from oral tradition. The officials from Cultural Stations and Departments, who are also amateur folklorists, collected folk legends, compiled publications, and wrote reports and essays, which are acting as the basis for further rewritings. They also participated in the recent publications about Mulan Culture in which Mulan legends are a necessary part. On the one side, they respect oral tradition, on the other side, they also believe that the natives cannot tell complete and good

legends. They omit, add or change some motifs to bring their telling in line with politically acceptable versions of Mulan's story.

Although most of the members of the official group do not undertake fieldwork, they could access oral tradition through the above medium. However, it is hardly likely that the natives know the official versions. Some of them have read Wang Hanqing's book that is popular on and around the Mount, but only a few have read other publications. Generally, the natives do not like reading, nor do they believe stories about Mulan in the books, so the official version has not influenced the repertoires of the folk group.

The reality of Mulan and her legend has not been proved by any written recordings or historical discoveries despite discussions and studies that have continued for hundreds of years. But in the claimed hometowns of Mulan, she and her legends are believed to be real and historical. All my informants know Mulan and their attitudes towards the reality of Mulan and her legends are on a spectrum between belief and disbelief. Some are on the pole of believing and they explain that the old generation told the legends, and that relics, her home village, tomb, temple and shrine are tangible evidence. Only a few could be located on the pole of unbelieving and their excuses are reasonable: she and her legends are not recorded in history books, no one can prove that Mulan was buried in General Tomb. The tellers on the pole of unbelieving share some similarities: they are male, are better educated than their countrymen, are not purely farmers and run their own businesses, have left their hometown and have or had worked in big cities for a long time. Compared with other

natives, they are far away from tradition, have more opportunities to contact the outside world, and have their own thoughts. They did not explicitly say that they did not believe, but express doubts. Most of the tellers in the middle of the spectrum, believed in the existence of Mulan in Huangpi and her personal information, but are not sure of some parts of her legends, particularly the supernatural aspects. The Taoists are on this pole and believe the supernatural motifs because of their religion in which Mulan has been a strong local goddess. In all official versions, Mulan is portrayed as historical by unserious and incredible evidence. The goal of the official group is obvious: to win the competition to be recognized as the hometown of Mulan, strengthen the localism of Mulan and her legends, and to promote the development of cultural tourism.

The image of Mulan varies in different groups and subgroups. For the natives, she was a local maiden from the Zhu family. Among the local group at Dacheng Tan, she was an extraordinary maiden who made great achievements that even men could not do. In the eyes of the people around General Temple, she was born as a human being and after death became a local goddess and held magical power, and her shrine has become supernatural. The Taoists believed Mulan was a goddess from heaven, she had her mission to save the common people and help guard the nation, she had magical power and strong helpers, and returned to the group of deities after she finished her journey on earth. The official group tried to portray Mulan as a moral icon who held almost all the virtues not only as a woman but also as a common personage: women's abilities in ancient China, chastity in the army and after her

lover's death, loyalty to this love all her life; patriotism, loving the people and the nation, being brave and wise, and indifferent to fame and wealth. In contemporary versions, legends about Mulan's romantic heterosexual affair were created and attracted more and more attention, which is a big change from the old versions in which she was portrayed as behaving as a man, without any female features. The official group tried to create a perfect woman, with qualities which added to but did not displace the old virtues. In old versions, Mulan had no love story and sex was not mentioned at all. Love and sex were not accepted in the system of Confucian values. This is one of the reasons why some local people criticized strongly the new official versions in which a love story was added. The other reason could be their respect for tradition.

My study focuses on Mulan legends in recent years, the tellers and telling-groups and their repertoire, their attitudes towards telling Mulan legends, the reality of Mulan and her legends, as well as her virtues. I pointed out and recorded the differences and variations of the telling-groups and their legends, and tried to answer why. With rapid modernization and urbanization, the society, community, village and family change and become disorganized in rural China, and the oral tradition vanishes quickly, which always attracts attention. At the end of the twentieth century, the government began to notice this problem and the ICH movement was initialized officially in 2006. I did not meet any young teller in the traditional communities during my fieldwork and I heard that a few good informants had passed away in recent years. Mulan legends have lost their vitality in traditional communities that transmitted them for

hundreds of years. Maybe local Mulan legends will disappear in oral tradition after twenty or thirty years when my tellers pass away because they could not transmit them to a younger generation who have left and are now resident in cities. We cannot stop this vanishing of tradition, but we could record these narratives and study them as soon as possible. This is the main goal of my research and I regard it as my mission as a folklorist.

Mulan legends may have been active in oral tradition for hundreds of years but there are only a few records and fragments from ancient China. Collection and publication began in the 1980s but Mulan legends in oral tradition did not attract enough attention from government and academics. Ballads, novels, dramas, and modern visual arts have entered academic studies and the mainstream, but folk Mulan legends did not.

Although Mulan is well-known around the world, the multiple local and folk Mulan legends of her are not. Chinese people know her legends through popular incomplete versions, “Ballad of Mulan,” and parts of local dramas, as well as modern visual arts with creations and elaborations, far away from oral tradition, through which we know more about this extraordinary woman and her legends, examine why they survived in long history and are deeply rooted in our hearts, and understand why they touch and move us. People outside China know Mulan mainly through Disney’s animation and Maxine Hong’s novel in which Mulan has been Americanized. They have no chance to contact various Mulan legends in different places in China where Mulan has been a goddess. I collected Mulan legends from oral tradition where Mulan

was born, was trained and was buried and cited many translated versions in my thesis in order to make them accessible to people who are interested in Mulan within and beyond China.

As a folklorist, I became interested in the genre of legend from my M.A. program in Chinese folk literature. Normally Chinese folklorists tried to establish the history of a legend, just like the Finnish School scholars did, and then to search for the factors that promoted its development and variation from social, cultural, and economic perspectives. Text was the definite centre of study, regardless of tellers and context. The concept of “cycle of legend” by Yanagita Kunio (1985, 26) has been applied in legend studies since the 1990s. Chinese folklorists identify cycles of a particular legend and compare them to differentiate the fixed and changed motifs. I studied only one cycle of Mulan legends, Mulan legends in Huangpi, and tried to show the differences and variations of legends in this cycle and to involve discussion of the tellers in the study. Chinese folklorists have shown interest in tellers of fairy tales and epic singers, but not legend tellers. Chinese legend scholars focus on texts, involving all forms of texts in their studies, regardless of who told them, why they told them and the context of telling. Legend scholarship in Western folkloristics provides new approaches. Tangherlini’s definition of legend, and methodology for interpretation, are enlightening. Tangherlini emphasized that legend tradition is dynamic. He defines legend as “a tradition, (mono) episodic, highly ecotypified, [a] localized and historicized narrative of past events told as believable in a conversational mode” (1994, 22). “Psychologically, legend is a symbolic representation of folk belief and

reflects the collective experiences and values of the group to whose tradition it belongs” (1994, 22). He separates his methodology into three sections: evaluation of the tradition group, study of exceptional informants, and in-depth analysis of three informants, in order to answer “who tells what to whom in the form of a legend, and why?” His definition locates legend in a specific tradition, group and context, concentrating on the bonds between legends, informants, performance, and contexts. He was influenced by Holbek’s “craftsmanship viewpoint” and emphasizes “the role of the individual in shaping and creating tradition as a performer, as an audience and as part of a larger cultural system” (1994, 34). Tangherlini’s focus on exceptional legend informants initiated my interest in legend tellers and telling-groups.

In my study, I pay attention to the dynamics of legend tradition in a specific area, the bonds of legend, tellers and context, and try to answer “who” tells “what,” and “why.” Serious fieldwork becomes necessary if we apply Tangherlini’s methodology. However, Chinese legend tradition is very different from legendry in the West. Most Chinese people are literate and educated to some extent. Some old people got formal education in traditional private schools that were popular in rural areas before 1949, and some learnt to read and write in family and community. Although not all can read or write, they take part in a flourishing popular culture, which has both oral and written forms. Chinese legend bearers and tellers are from various social strata: officials, religious adherents, ordinary people, scholars and even businessmen, and they have their own life stories, educational backgrounds, and purposes of telling. The contexts of a legend tradition, for instance Mulan legends, are much more

complicated, particularly against the background of modernization, urbanization, the ICH movement, as well as the great development of cultural tourism and mass media. A legend tradition does not live in an isolated and simple situation, but in a context influenced by politics, economy, and culture. Another very different factor in the dynamics of legend tradition in China is the availability of written materials and all kinds of popular culture, which make legend telling and transmission very complicated. Multiple legend tellers, sophisticated contexts and complicated transmission conduits increase the difficulty of legend study. In my thesis, I concentrate on legend telling-groups rather than exceptional tellers in order to involve more tellers from different backgrounds, as well as the brokers among the groups. I also add a literary-historical dimension, for the sources of legend tradition, and study their influence and interaction in the oral Mulan legend tradition. Basically, I apply Western methodology for legend study and try to modify it to be applicable in the Chinese situation.

Cross-dressing women warriors are also popular in Western culture. These women in Western and Chinese culture have a similar story: she leaves home and family, masquerades as a man, and ventures off to a strange and dangerous place with her male colleagues. This legendary experience is the core of literature about them. Women warriors have a long history in the West and in China, but they have very different themes. The Western woman warrior “ventures off to war on land and on sea for love and for glory” (Dugaw 1989, 1) and they did this for their own gratification. Filial piety and loyalty are the main theme of Chinese versions. Chinese women

warriors, and most cross-dressing women, were not eager to leave their female space and to take on men's responsibilities in place of their father or brother. They were not doing this for themselves, but for their families. Love and sex, even homosexuality, are common in Western versions, but are seldom found in Chinese narratives, particularly in old versions. However, the "friendship" between Mulan and Hua Azhen can also be thought of as a metaphor of homosexuality. Homosexuality is recorded in official history as early as the West Han Dynasty (202 B.C.—9 A.D.). As a literary theme, male homosexuality reached its climax in the Ming (1368-1644 AD) and Qing (1644 AD- 1912 AD) Dynasties. In ancient China, people held a tolerant attitude towards homosexuality if it was unrelated to politics. Lesbianism also appeared in history and literature in ancient China, but it was more private. Normally it resulted from close friendship between women and was always presented as being Platonic love. In modern and contemporary China, lesbianism became related to the liberation of women who tried to get rid of control of personality and sex from men. In Mulan legends, Azhen fell in love with disguised Mulan, they lived as a couple in the army, swore to be sisters after Mulan recovered her gender, and meditated together after they returned to Mulan's home. Normally, Azhen could have married a man when Mulan recovered her gender but she did not. They did not separate and lived together for the rest of their lives, which could be interpreted as a lesbian marriage. Their "friendship" as "sworn sisters" protected and hid their relationship. A heterosexual love story was added to movie versions of the Mulan legend in the 1930s with the movement for liberation of women that began at the turn of the twentieth

century. Some Chinese women left their space, home, and entered men's space to get education, to work, and to be creative in literature and arts, and even politics. Women in modern literature and arts have a very new image: independent, educated, self-confident, and seeking love. The love story became a common theme in rewritings of Mulan, not only in popular culture, in which the Mulan legend was based on classical literature, but also in rewritings by local literati, employed by local governments, who based their versions in oral tradition and written materials. The popular theme of Mulan's tragic death in folk oral legends, which resulted from the conflict between women who entered men's space and feudalism, was replaced by the separation of the lovers in war time, so the conflict between the individual and the nation was solved and displaced by a new theme, patriotism, which is highly praised by the elite. Nevertheless, a love story is not the topic of rewritings of Mulan legends in which filial piety and loyalty are dominant. Those who respect this aspect of the tradition still exclude any love story from their Mulan legends. Sex is still not found in new official versions because sex could tarnish the image of a perfect woman and a moral icon in our culture.

The secrets about Mulan that emerged in my mind on my first trip to Mulan Mount in my adolescence are still not solved. Moreover, I have more questions about this woman in my study and plan to continue my research along the following lines:

1. There are a few clues about the origin of Mulan legends in Huangpi, the Zhu family in Huangpi, and the old Taoist scripts. For the Zhu family, Mulan is an ancestor, and for the Taoists, Mulan is a goddess and worshipped. Both groups

are supposed to have more motivation to preserve and transmit Mulan legends and could hold some treasured information and materials. I also found that the old book, *Romance of Mulan*, that is still popular in Huangpi, and can be found among the people in Yucheng of Henan, may have played a crucial role in the transmission and preservation of Mulan legends. I think it is worth following the above clues to trace the location or origin of Mulan legends in Huangpi.

2. The youth are far away from oral tradition and learn Mulan legends through books and mass media. They could contact, and construct, very different versions of Mulan legends. I can study what has taken place, and what may develop.

3. With the development of local cultural tourism, the local government has used Mulan as a cultural brand to develop new scenic spots and has created new Mulan legends that are more accessible to tourists and visitors than those in oral tradition and written materials. How do the new legends influence local Mulan culture?

In the future, I will extend my study of Mulan legends beyond Huangpi or even outside China. Comprehensive studies of Mulan legends in China and comparative studies of cross-dressing women warriors between Western and Chinese literature will be worthwhile. Although this woman and her legend have been rooted in Chinese culture for more than one thousand years, studies are limited to the fields of history, literature and popular culture. Mulan and her legend originated from the folk, and her legends have been told among the folk. As a folklorist, I should enter this field and make her story accessible to those who are interested in this woman warrior and her multiple legends.

Appendix 1: Mulan from Classical Literature to Modern Media

I. Classical Literature

1. 木兰诗 (*Ballad of Mulan*)

The earliest full text was recorded in 乐府诗集 (*Yuefu Shiji, Collection of Music-Bureau Poems*), compiled by 郭茂倩 (Guo Maoqian, 1041-1099 AD).

According to Guo's footnote, "Ballad of Mulan" was from 古今乐录 (*Gujin Yuelu, Musical Record Old and New*), a manuscript that no longer exists, by 智匠 (Monk Zhijiang) in approximately 568 A.D.

2. An entry in 李冗's (Li Rong) 独异志 (*Duyizhi*) that is believed to have been compiled in the early Tang Dynasty (618-907 AD):

"There was a Mulan in ancient times. She displaced her father to go the army, wearing martial attire. Those soldiers living in the same barracks did not know her female gender" (Li 1983, 7).

3. A variant of "Ballad of Mulan"

It is believed to have been written by 韦元甫 (Wei Yuanfu, ?-771 AD) in Guo Maoqian's 乐府诗集 (*Yuefu Shiji, Collection of Music-Bureau Poems*).

4. 雌木兰替父从军 (*Ci mulan tifu congjun; Female Mulan Took Her Father's Place in the Army*)

This was a drama written by 徐渭's (Xu Wei, 1521-1593 A.D.) and was completed around 1580.

5. A novel 北魏奇史闺孝列传 (Beiwei Qishi Guixiao Liezhuan; The Legendary Story of a Filial and Heroic Girl from the Northern Wei)

A novel was written by 张绍贤 (Zhang Sahoxian); and the first edition is dated 1850

in the Qing Dynasty.

6. 忠孝勇烈奇女传 (Zhongxiaoyonglie qinu zhuan; *The Legendary Story of a Girl Who is Loyal, Filial, Heroic, and Chaste*)

A novel, by a pseudonymous author, was written in the decades after 1732.

7. 双兔记 (Shuangtu ji; *A Couple of Hares*)

A forty-scene play was written by 永恩 (1727-1805 AD).

II. Drama, movies and TV series since the 1910s

1. 木兰从军 (Mulan congjun; *Mulan Going to the Army*)

Peking opera, 1912

Peking opera movie, 1926

Mulan: Mei Lanfang (梅兰芳)

2. 花木兰从军 (Hua Mulan congjun; *Hua Mulan Going to the Army*) (1927)

Movie

Director: 李萍倩 (Li Pingqian)

Scenario: 刘豁公 (Liu Huogong)

Mulan: 胡珊 (Hu Shan)

3. 木兰从军 (Mulan congjun; *Mulan Going to the Army*) (1928)

Movie

Director and Scenario: 侯曜 (Hou Yao)

Mulan: 李旦旦 (Li Dandan)

Company: 民新公司 (Minxin Company)

4. 木兰从军 (Mulan congjun; *Mulan Going to the Army*) (1939)

Movie

Director: 麦啸霞 (Mai Xiaoxia)

Mulan: 陈云裳 (Chen Yunshang)

5. 木兰从军 (*Mulan congjun; Mulan Going to the Army*) (1939)

Movie

Director: 卜万苍 (Bu Wancang)

Scenario: 欧阳予倩 (Ouyang Yuqian)

Mulan: 陈云裳 (Chen Yunshang)

Company: 华成影业公司 (Huacheng Film Company)

6. 花木兰 (*Hua Mulan*) (1941)

Drama

Author: 周贻白 (Zhou Yibai)

7. 花木兰 (*Hua Mulan*) (1951, Hongkong)

粤剧电影 (Yue drama movie)

Director: 陈皮 (Chen Pi)

Scenario: 顾文宗 (Gu Wenzong),

Mulan: 任剑辉 (Ren Jianhui)

8. 花木兰 (*Hua Mulan*) (1956, Mainland)¹

¹ Yu drama *Hua Mulan* has been the most well known one since its first performance by 常香玉 (Chang Xiangyu) -- the great master of Yu Drama, in 1951. It was filmed in October of 1956 and has remained famous around the country even to the present. The content follows:

In North Dynasties, the marshal 贺廷玉 (He Tingyu) and the troops were defeated by the aboriginal army led by 突力子 (Tulizi). The royal court enrolled soldiers and Mulan's father 花弧 (Hua Hu) was on the list. Hua Mulan had a younger sister 木蕙

豫剧电影 (Yu drama movie)

Director: 刘国权 (Liu Guoquan), 张辛实 (Zhang Xinshi)

Scenario: 河南豫剧院编剧小组 (Compiling team of Yu Drama Institute)

Mulan: 常香玉 (Chang Xiangyu)

Company: 长春电影制片厂 (Changchun Movie Studio)

9. 花木兰 (*Hua Mulan*) (1961, Hongkong)

粤剧电影 (Yue drama movie)

Director: 黄鹤声 (Huang Hesheng)

Scenario: 李寿祺 (Li Shouqi)

Mulan: 凤凰女 (Fenghuang Nv; Maiden Phonex)

10. 花木兰 (*Hua Mulan*) (1964, Hongkong)

黄梅戏戏曲片 (Huangmei drama movie)

Director: 岳枫 (Yue Feng)

Scenario: 葛瑞芬 (Ge Ruifen), 费安娜 (Fei Anna), 董千里 (Dong Qianli)

Mulan: 凌波 (Ling Bo)

Company: 邵氏电影公司 (Shaw Brothers)

11. 花木兰 (*Hua Mulan*) (2009, Co-productions of Mainland and Hongkong)

(Muhui) and a younger brother 木力 (Muli). Mulan decided to disguise as her brother to go to the army in the place of her old and weak father. Mulan got on very well with her comrades and was promoted to a general through her achievements. Twelve years later, the wars ended. The marshal planned to reward Mulan and marry his daughter with her. Mulan declined the rewards and the marriage and begged to go back home to see her parents. Mulan arrived home, took off her male attire and took on female dress. The marshal and the others were astonished and praised her as a true heroine after Mulan told them the whole story.

Movie

Director: 马楚成 (Ma Chucheng)

Scenario: 张挺(Zhang Ting)

Mulan: 赵薇 (Zhao Wei)

Company: 星光国际传媒 (Starlight International Media)

12. 排山倒海花木兰 (Mulan topples the mountains and overturns the seas) (1995, Taiwan)

TV series

Mulan: 杨丽菁 (Yang Lijing))

13. 花木兰 (*Hua Mulan*) (1996, Mainland)

TV series

Mulan: 时爱红 (Shi Aihong))

14. 花木兰 (*Hua Mulan*) (1998, Hongkong)

TV series

Mulan: 陈妙瑛 (Chen Miaoying)

15. 花木兰 (*Hua Mulan*) (1998, a co-production between Mainland and Taiwan)

TV series

Mulan: 袁咏仪 (Yuan Yongyi))

Appendix 2. A Brief Chinese Chronology

夏 Xia Dynasty			2100—C.1600 BC
商 Shang Dynasty			1600—C.1100 BC
周 Zhou Dynasty	西周 Western Zhou		1100—771 BC
	东周 Eastern Zhou	春秋 Spring and Autumn period	770—476 BC
		战国 Warring States	475—221 BC
秦 Qin Dynasty			221—206 BC
汉 Han Dynasty		西汉 Western Han	206 B.C. —24 AD
		东汉 Eastern Han	25—220 AD
三国 Three Kingdoms		魏 Wei	220—265 AD
		蜀汉 Shu Han	221—263 AD
		吴 Wu	222—280 AD
西晋 Western Jin Dynasty			265—316 AD
东晋 Eastern Jin Dynasty			317—420 AD
南北朝 Northern and Southern Dynasties	南朝 Southern Dynasty	宋 Song	420—479 AD
		齐 Qi	479—502 AD
		梁 Liang	502—557 AD
		陈 Chen	557—589 AD
	北朝 Northern Dynasty	北魏 Northern Wei	386—534 AD
		东魏 Eastern Wei	534—550 AD
		北齐 Northern Qi	550—577 AD
		西魏 Western Wei	535—556 AD
		北周 Northern Zhou	557—581 AD
隋 Sui Dynasty			581—618 AD
唐 Tang Dynasty			618—907 AD
五代 Five Dynasties			907—960 AD
宋 Song Dynasty	北宋 Northern Song Dynasty		960—1127 AD
	南宋 Southern Song Dynasty		1127—1279 AD
辽 Liao Dynasty			916—1125 AD
金 Jin Dynasty			1115—1234 AD
元 Yuan Dynasty			1271—1368 AD
明 Ming Dynasty			1368—1644 AD
清 Qing Dynasty			1644—1911 AD
中华民国 Republic of China			1912—AD
中华人民共和国 People's Republic of China			1949—AD

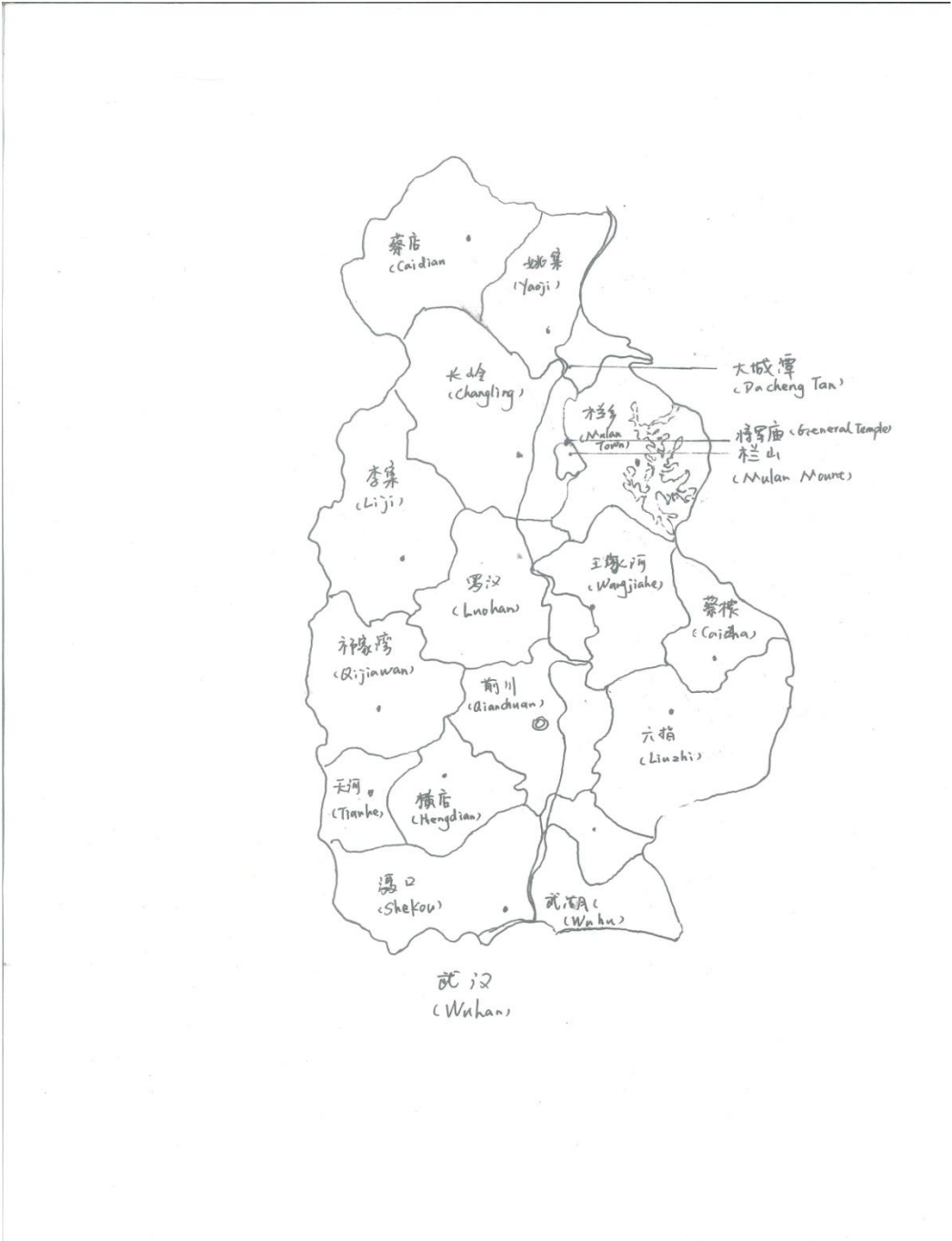
A Modern Chinese-English Dictionary. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 2001: 1281.

Appendix 3. Maps

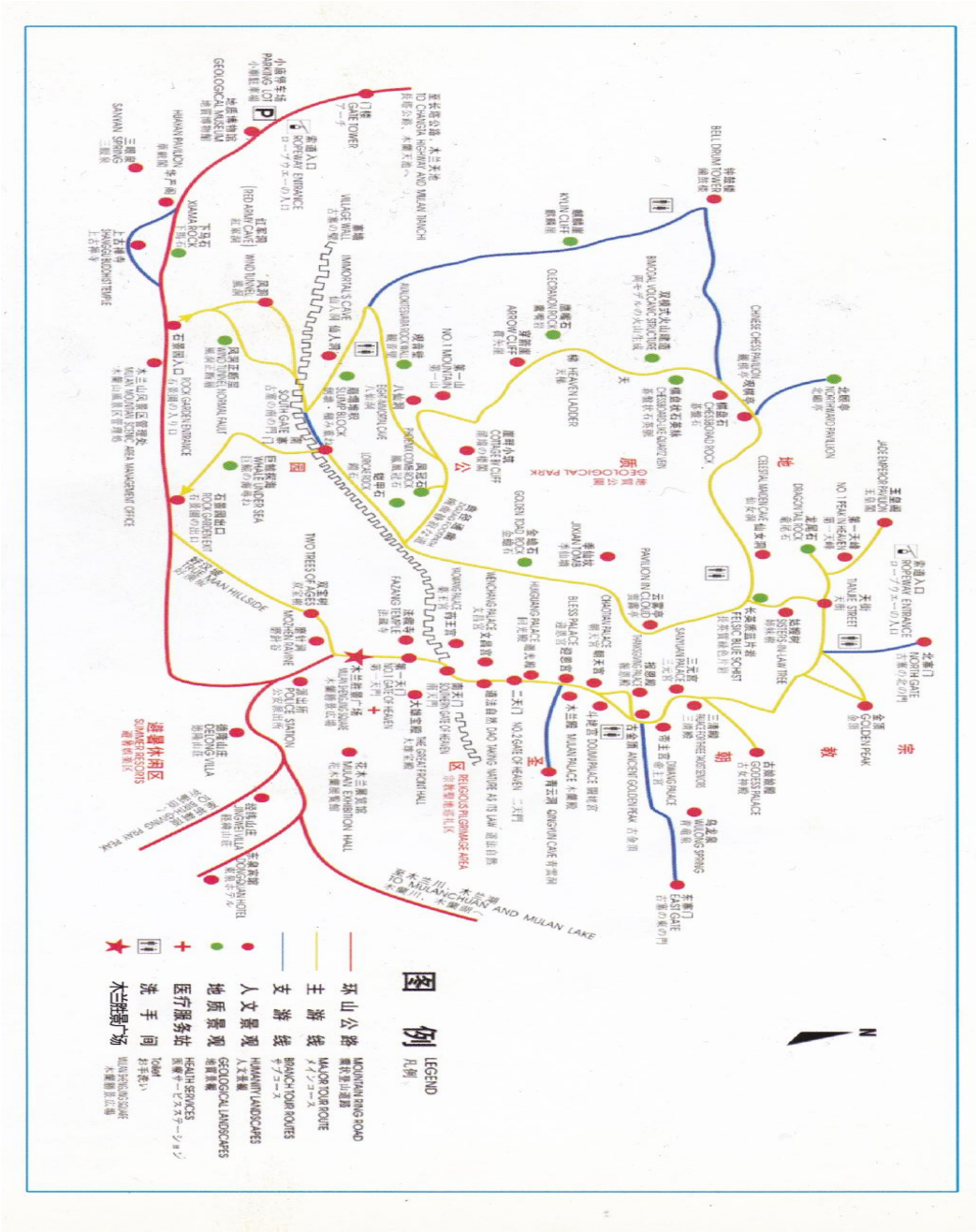
Mulan legends in China



Map of Huangpi



Map of Mulan Mount



Huangpi quzhi [The Chorography of Huangpi District; 黄浦区志] (1980-2004).
Wuhan: Wuhan chubanshe, 2008.

Appendix 4. Photographs

1. Dacheng Tan

1.1 潞水、珠石和小寨 (She River, the Pearl Rock and the Small Stockade)



By Jing Zhang in October, 2011

2. 朱家台子(The Foundation of Zhu Family)



By Jing Zhang in October, 2011

3. 东门桥 (the East Gate Bridge)



By Jing Zhang in October, 2011

4. The remains of the wall



By Jing Zhang in October, 2011

2. The General Temple and the General Tomb

2.1. The General Temple



By Jing Zhang in April, 2010

2.2. The General Tomb and the new tombstone



By Jing Zhang in April, 2010

2.3. Xianhe Dian (仙合店, the Celestial River)



By Jing Zhang in April, 2010

2.4. The Villages around General Tomb



By Jing Zhang in April, 2010

3. Mulan Mount

3.1. Mulan Mount and Temples



By Jing Zhang August, 2010

3.2 The Archway and Mulan Temple



By Jing Zhang August, 2010

3.3. Mulan Sculpture in Mulan Temple



By Jing Zhang August, 2010

3.4 Pilgrimage (Setting fire to perfume sticks and paper money)



By Jing Zhang September, 2010

3.5 Mulan Baozhuang (manuscript)



By Jing Zhang August, 2010

3.6. Chess-board Rock (棋盘石)



By Jing Zhang August, 2010

Appendix 5. Informants' Biographies

Informants at Dacheng Tan

Name: Anonymous woman (working on her farm)

Gender: Female

Date of Birth: 1952

Place of Birth: Shizidian

Education: None

Religion: None

Marriage: She married in 1975 and told nothing about her family.

Life Story: She has been a farmer and a housewife for her whole life.

Interview: October 11th, 2011 when she was working on the farm

Name: Anonymous man (in his meat store)

Gender: Male

Date of Birth: 1925

Place of Birth: Dacheng Tan

Education: Untold

Religion: None

Marriage: Untold

Life Story: He was running his business of material engineering and retired in early 1990s, returned home and lived with his second son, and helped take care of the meat store and grocery.

Interview: October 13th, 2011 in his meat store

Name: 陈家泰 (Chen Jiatai)

Gender: Male

Date of Birth: 1933

Place of Birth: Chenjiawan Village of Zhaofan

Education: Untold

Religion: None

Marriage: Untold

Life Story: He was a local official before.

Interview: October 13th, 2011 in tailor shop

Name: 陈甫国 (Chen Fuguo)

Gender: Male

Date of Birth: June 6th, 1947

Place of Birth: Chenjiachong Village (close to Dacheng Tan)

Education: Middle school

Religion: None

Marriage: Single

Life Story: He moved to Xinjian Village in the middle of 1980s. He has been a farmer for his whole life.

Interview: October 12th, 2011 in the front of his house

Name: Dan Shirong

Gender: Female

Date of Birth: 1921

Place of Birth: Untold

Education: None

Religion: None

Marriage: Her husband passed away two or three decades ago and they have three sons and three daughters;

Life Story: She was adopted by her husband's family at the age of three. She is living alone in an old house. She has been a farmer and a housewife for her whole life.

Interview: October 12th, 2011 in the front of her house

Name: 黄顺洲 (Huang Shunzhou)

Gender: Female

Date of Birth: 1937

Place of Birth: Untold

Education: None

Religion: None

Marriage: Untold

Life Story: She is living in Yangjia Village and has been a farmer and a housewife for her whole life.

Interview: October 12th, 2011 in Shen Zhangqiang's house

Name: 胡生富 (Hu Shengfu)

Gender: Male

Date of Birth: 1936

Place of Birth: Dacheng Tan

Education: He was uneducated, can read but cannot write

Religion: None

Marriage: He married Chen Jifen in 1967 and they have two sons.

Life Story: He built a railway from 1951 to 1961. He returned home and began working on the farm from 1961, and also doing some part-time jobs such as planting herbs for medicine, and constructing roads.

Interview: October 13th, 2011 in his house

Name: 李春生 (Li Chunsheng)

Gender: Male

Date of Birth: Untold

Place of Birth: Yilihe Village

Education: Middle school

Religion: None

Marriage: He married Liu Shunzhen.

Life Story: He is a stonemason, working in Hanyang of Wuhan.

Interview: October 14th, 2011 in Li Xian Yao's house in Yili He

Name: 李闰之 (Li Runzhi)

Gender: Female

Date of Birth: Untold

Place of Birth: Untold

Education: Untold

Religion: None

Marriage: Untold

Life Story: She has been a farmer and housewife for her whole life.

Interview: October 7th, 2011 in Shen Zhangqiang's house

Name: 李先耀 (Li Xian Yao)

Gender: Male

Date of Birth: 1941

Place of Birth: Yilihe Village

Education: Primary school

Religion: None

Marriage: His wife is Shen Wenfen.

Life Story: He has been a farmer for his whole life.

Interview: October 14th, 2011 in his house in Yili He

Name: 柳顺真 (Liu Shunzhen)

Gender: Female

Date of Birth: Untold

Place of Birth: Untold

Education: Untold

Religion: None

Marriage: She married Li Chunsheng.

Life Story: Untold

Interview: October 14th, 2011 in Li Xian Yao's house in Yili He

Name: 谌文芬 (Chen Wenfen)

Gender: Female

Date of Birth: Untold

Place of Birth: Dacheng Tan

Education: Untold

Religion: None

Marriage: Her husband is Li Xian Yao.

Life Story: Untold

Interview: October 14th, 2011 in Li Xian Yao's house in Yili He

Name: Name: 谌文焱 (Shen Wenyan)

Gender: Male

Date of Birth: 1957

Place of Birth: Dacheng Tan

Education: Middle school

Religion: None

Marriage: He married Zhu Yanzhi in 1985 and has a daughter and a son.

Life Story: He was an accountant from 1976 in the village. He took over his father's meat store in 1980s and continues to the present.

Interview: October 13th, 2011 in his house

Name: 谌文正 (Shen Wenzheng)

Gender: Male

Date of Birth: May, 1936

Place of Birth: Dacheng Tan

Education: A few years in traditional private school until 1952

Religion: None

Marriage: Single

Life Story: He was an employee of Town of Yaoji from 1954-1956. He was a worker of Wuhan Iron and Steel Group from 1958-1962. He was working as the head of the village from 1966-1988; working on the farm and running a Toufu store from the early 1980 to the middle of 1990s; living with the family of his nephew.

Interview: October 5th, 2011 in his house; October 13th, 2011 in Shen Wenyan's house

Name: 谌章强 (Shen Zhangqiang)

Gender: Male

Date of Birth: 1970

Place of Birth: Dacheng Tan

Education: Middle school

Religion: None

Marriage: He married Zhang Xiaomei in 1995 and they have two young daughters who are studying in middle school in 姚集 (Yaoji; Yaoji Town).

Life Story: He has been a farmer for his whole life.

Interview: October 12th, 2011 in his house

Name: 谌宗华 (Shen Zonghua)

Gender: Male

Date of Birth: December of 1954

Place of Birth: Dacheng Tan

Education: Primary school

Religion: None

Marriage: Untold

Life Story: He joined the army in 1974 and stayed four or five years. He began to run

his own tiny ferryboat from the late 1970s. He left the village and began his business in Wuhan from the early 1980s and continues to the present.

Interview: October 14th, 2011 on the side of the She River

Name: 姚引弟 (Yao Yindi)

Gender: Female

Place of Birth: Yaojia Village of Town of Yaoji

Date of Birth: June, 1952

Education: Uneducated

Religion: None

Marriage: She married Shen Wenzheng's nephew in the early 1970s.

Life Story: She was adopted by her husband's family at the age of three, and has been a farmer and a housewife for her whole life.

Interview: October 11th, 2011 when she was working on her farm

Name: 张小梅 (Zhang Xiaomei)

Gender: Female

Date of Birth: 1972

Place of Birth: Zhangjia Village of Town of Yaoji

Education: Three years in primary school

Religion: None

Marriage: She married Shen Zhangqiang in 1995 and they have two young daughters who are studying in middle school in Yaoji.

Life Story: She is a farmer and a housewife in her whole life.

Interview: October 12th, 2011 in her house

Name: 郑先文 (Zheng Xianwen)

Gender: Male

Date of Birth: November of 1941

Place of Birth: Zhengjia Village (close to Dacheng Tan)

Education: Primary school

Religion: None

Marriage: Untold

Life Story: He has been a farmer for his whole life.

Interview: October 15th, 2011 in Shen Wenyan's house

Name: 朱卫华 (Zhu Weihua)

Gender: Male

Date of Birth: 1951

Place of Birth: Dacheng Tan

Education: Middle school

Religion: None

Marriage: His wife passed away a few years ago.

Life Story: He was a blacksmith for more than ten years when he was young. He has

been running a store in the village since 1981.

Interview: October 5th, 2011 in his house

Name: 朱延芝 (Zhu Yanzhi)

Gender: Female

Date of Birth: 1964

Place of Birth: Hebian Village

Education: Primary school

Religion: None

Marriage: She married Shen Wenyan in 1985.

Life Story: She is a farmer and housewife.

Interview: October 13th, 2011 in her house

Informants around General Temple

Name: 陈克念 (Chen Kenian)

Gender: Male

Date of Birth: August 20th of Lunar Calendar in 1935

Place of Birth: Xiaojiatian Village

Education: He did not go to school, but learnt to read and write when he was working.

Religion: Buddhism

Marriage: He married Chen Yinchun in 1955.

Life Story: His family was good at making statues in temples. His father and uncle believed in Buddhism. He went to Xianning to work in a transportation company in 1955 and returned home when he retired in 1988. He and his wife have pensions so they only plant vegetables for everyday life. They enjoy life in the countryside and are taking care of a granddaughter.

Interview: April 17th, 2010

Name: 雷道平 (Lei Daoping)

Gender: Male

Date of Birth: 1943

Place of Birth: Yinjiachong Village

Education: A few years in traditional private school

Religion: None

Marriage: Untold

Life Story: He is a farmer.

Interview: April 21th, 2010 in Liu Jinhua's house nearby the General Temple

Name: 雷建国 (Lei Jianguo, Lei Jianhuai's younger brother)

Gender: Male

Date of Birth: September of Lunar Calendar in 1952

Place of Birth: Yinjiachong

Education: Primary school

Religion: None
 Marriage: Untold
 Life Story: He is a farmer.
 Interview: April 18th, 2010 in the front of Jianhua's house

Name: 雷建怀 (Lei Jianhuai)
 Gender: Male
 Date of Birth: December of Lunar Calendar, 1948
 Place of Birth: Yinjiachong
 Education: High school
 Religion: None
 Marriage: Untold
 Life Story: He was a farmer after his graduation in 1966 and sometimes worked at construction.
 Interview: April 18th, 2010 in the front of his house

Name: 雷绍仁 (Lei Shaoren)
 Gender: Male
 Date of Birth: December 29th, 1936
 Place of Birth: Yinjiachong
 Education: He went to traditional private school at the age of 14 and stayed there for 4 or 5 years.
 Religion: None
 Marriage: He married Zheng Xianfu in 1960 and they have four daughters and one son. His wife passed away in 1986.
 Life Story: He went to work in Wuhan Heavy Duty Machine Tool Factory in 1958 and returned in 1960. He is living with his only son. He stopped working on the farm a few years ago.
 Interview: April 2nd, 2010 in his house and April 7th, 2010 beside a pond where he was fishing.

Name: 雷绍云 (Lei Shaoyun)
 Gender: Male
 Date of Birth: 1917
 Place of Birth: Loufangwan Village
 Education: Military Academy
 Religion: Christianity
 Marriage: His wife passed away.
 Life Story: He went to the Huangpu Academy in the late 1930s and then joined the army of Nationalist Party. He returned home in 1949 and became a farmer.
 Interview: April 2nd, 2010 in his house

Name: 雷用寿 (Lei Yongshou)
 Gender: Male

Date of Birth: March 4th of Lunar Calendar in 1947

Place of Birth: Xiaojiatian Village

Education: He did not go to school, but can read.

Religion: None

Marriage: He is single, has no child and lives with his nephew who treats him badly.

Life Story: He helped his parents run a tiny restaurant on Mulan Mount between 1947 to 1957 or 1958 and from the late 1970s to the middle 1980s. He left the farm and worked as a construction laborer in Wuhan. He could marry a widow with children. This woman is living with her son in Wuhan and only came back to see him during the Spring Festival.

Interview: April 16th in the front of Luo Dengfeng's house and April 17th in his house

Name: 刘金华

Gender: Male

Date of Birth: 1944

Place of Birth: Yinjiachong Village

Education: A few years in traditional private school

Religion: None

Marriage: Untold

Life Story: He is a farmer.

Interview: April 21th, 2010 in his house nearby the General Temple

Name: 柳云林 (Liu Yunlin)

Gender: Male

Date of Birth: 1930

Place of Birth: Yinjiachong Village

Education: Ten years in traditional school

Religion: None

Marriage: Untold

Life Story: He is a farmer.

Interview: March 19th, 2010 in his house

Name: 罗登凤 (Luo Dengfeng)

Gender: Female

Date of Birth: March 21th of Lunar Calendar in 1937

Place of Birth: Luojiachong Village

Education: None

Religion: She did not tell her official religion, but she believed in supernatural power very much.

Marriage: She was married in 1955, has three sons and two daughters.

Life Story: She got seriously sick and was cured after her parents prayed and donated on Mulan Mount when she was fourteen or fifteen years old. She married in 1954. She was working hard on the farm until she suffered a stroke in 2006. She is living with her youngest son.

Interview: April 16th, 2010 in the front of her house

Name: 徐建新 (Xu Jianxin)

Gender: Male

Date of Birth: 1971

Place of Birth: Tieshidun

Education: Primary school

Religion: None

Marriage: Single

Life Story: He is a farmer.

Interview: May 25th, 2010

Name: 徐占魁 (Xu Zhankui)

Gender: Male

Date of Birth: August 8th of Lunar Calendar in 1933

Place of Birth: Shangwuzui

Education: Five years in traditional school

Religion: None

Marriage: He married in 1962 and has three daughters and one son.

Life Story: He was working on Mulan Mount from 1956 to 1966. He was working as an accountant of the village from 1966 to the late 1970s. He and his wife built a tiny cottage at Xiaomiao and ran a grocery from 1986 to 2008, during which he was asked to help take care of Jade Emperor Pavilion for one year. The couple returned to their home village in 2008 and he began to write the history of the Xu family.

Interview: May 19th, 2010 in his house

Name: 徐治芳

Gender: Male

Date of Birth: November 5th of Lunar Calendar in 1952

Place of Birth: Yangjiatian

Education: Primary school

Religion: None

Marriage: He married Zhou Hechi in 1977 and has one son and two daughters.

Life Story: He was a farmer after he graduated. He became a tractor driver and always worked downtown in Huangpi from 1988. He returned to his home village when he had a stroke in 2005. The couple runs a tiny grocery and the wife is planting tea and vegetables.

Interview: April 12th, 2010 in his house

Name: 徐治魁 (Xu Zhikui)

Gender: Male

Date of Birth: 1936

Place of Birth: Shangwuzui

Education: One and a half years in traditional school

Religion: None

Marriage: His wife passed away and they have two sons and two daughters.

Life Story: He led his construction team to work in Wuhan from the early 1950s and took part in the reconstruction of Mulan Mount from 1984 to 1994. His family is rich and he is enjoying his time in the home village.

Interview: May 27th, 2010 beside a pond where he was fishing.

Name: 尹维正 (Yin Weizheng)

Gender: Male

Date of Birth: January 2nd, 1938

Place of Birth: Yinjiachong

Education: He studied in traditional school from seven or eight years old before 1949 and continued his education in a new school until 1956.

Religion: None

Marriage: Untold

Life Story: He was teaching mathematics in the local primary school after his graduation. He retired in 1998 and lived with his nephew.

Interview: April 14th, 2010

Name: 张保华 (Zhang Baohua)

Gender: Male

Date of Birth: 1942

Place of Birth: Zhangjiachong on the west foot of Mulan Mount

Education: He learnt to read and write in Jade Emperor Pavilion on Mulan Mount.

Religion: He was a Taoist until 1966.

Marriage: He married a woman in Yangjiation in 1968.

Life Story: He was given to Taoist Wan Zhaoxu in Jade Emperor Pavilion in his childhood because of extreme poverty. He became a Taoist and helped take care of the temple. He was forced to leave the temple in 1966 and got married with a woman in Yangjiation in 1968. He gave up Taoism and became a farmer for the rest of his life.

Interview: April 16th, 2010 in his house

Name: 张辉魁 (Zhang Kui Kui)

Gender: Male

Date of Birth: March of Lunar Calendar in 1938

Place of Birth: Xianhedian

Education: Three years in traditional school

Religion: None

Marriage: He married in 1958 and has three sons and three daughters

Life Story: He has been a farmer for all his life.

Interview: May 17th, 2010 in his house

Religious Informants on Mulan Mount

Name: Taoist Dong in Mozhen Pavilion

Gender: Female

Date of Birth: October of 1961

Place of Birth: Yingcheng

Education: Middle School

Became a Taoist: 2003

Temple: Mozhen Pavilion

Life Story: Untold

Interview: July 2nd, 2010 in Mozhen Ravine

Name: 冯宗利 (Feng Zongli)

Gender: Male

Date of Birth: 1968

Place of Birth: Tuanfeng of Hubei

Education: High School

Became a Taoist: 1995

Temple: Golden Peak

Life Story: Untold

Interview: July 1st, 2010 in the front of Golden Peak

Name: 付明义 (Fu Mingyi)

Gender: Female

Date of Birth: 1922

Place of Birth: Huangpi

Education: She did not go to school, but can read and write.

Became a Taoist: 1946

Temple: Goddess Palace

Life Story: Untold

Interview: August 4th, 2010 in Goddess Palace

Name: Taoist Gong in Bless Palace

Gender: Female

Date of Birth: January 9th of Lunar Calendar of 1957

Place of Birth: Huangpi

Education: None

Became a Taoist: 1999

Temple: Bless Palace

Life Story: She went to Thanksgiving Palace in 1999, was forced to move out because of the conflicts among the Taoists. She lingered in tiny temples in Wuhan and Xinzhou, and returned in 2010. She was not an approved Taoist. She helps Taoist Zhan take care of the temple.

Interview: August 2nd, 2010 in Bless Palace

Name: 龚信祥 (Gong Xinxiang)
 Gender: Male
 Date of Birth: 1938
 Place of Birth: Qianjiang
 Education: Middle School
 Became a Taoist: 1994
 Temple: Sanyuan Palace
 Life Story: Untold
 Interview: July 1st and 13th, 2010 in Sanyuan Palace

Name: 黄理松 (Huang Lisong)
 Gender: Female
 Date of Birth: 1965
 Place of Birth: Xinzhou of Hubei
 Education: Primary School
 Became a Taoist: 1989
 Temple: Goddess Palace
 Life Story: Untold
 Interview: August 4th, 2010 in Goddess Palace

Name: 刘明纯 (Liu Mingchun)
 Gender: Female
 Date of Birth: 1931
 Place of Birth: Macheng of Hubei
 Education: She did not go to school but can read and write.
 Became a Taoist: 1945
 Temple: Huiguang Palace
 Life Story: Untold
 Interview: August 5th, 2010 in Huiguang Palace

Name: 马至立 (Ma Zhili)
 Gender: Female
 Date of Birth: 1963
 Place of Birth: Huangpi of Hubei
 Education: High School
 Became a Taoist: 1986
 Temple: Ancient Golden Peak
 Life Story: Untold
 Interview: August 2nd, 2010 in Ancient Golden Peak

Name: 圣明 (Shengming)
 Gender: Male
 Date of Birth: January 16th of Lunar Calendar in 1976
 Place of Birth: Xiaogan of Hubei

Education: High School

Became a Buddhist: 1999

Temple: Fazang Temple

Life Story: He graduated in 1996 and helped his parents to take care of a grocery in Xiantao in 1997 and 1998. He met his master there and helped him to rebuild the temple for almost half a year. And then he followed the master to Mulan Mount in 1999.

Interview: June 29th, 2010

Name: 王理行 (Wang Lixing)

Gender: Male

Date of Birth: 1962

Place of Birth: Huangpi

Education: Middle School

Became a Taoist: 1983

Temple: Diwang Palace and Place of the Three Taoist Seniors

Life Story: Untold

Interview: August 3rd, 2010 in Diwang Palace

Name: 许信慧 (Xu Xinhui)

Gender: Female

Date of Birth: 1963

Place of Birth: Dawu of Hubei

Education: Primary School

Became a Taoist: 1990

Temple: Doumu Palace

Life Story: Untold

Interview: July 7th, 2010 in Doumu Palace

Name: 曾至刚 (Zeng Zhigang)

Gender: Female

Date of Birth: 1956

Place of Birth: Huangpi of Hubei

Education: Primary School

Became a Taoist: 1988

Temple: Mulan Temple and moved to Thanksgiving Palace in 2009

Life Story: Untold

Interview: July 30nd, 2010 in Thanksgiving Palace

Name: 占至心 (Zhan Zhixin)

Gender: Female

Date of Birth: 1933

Place of Birth: Huangpi of Hubei

Education: She did not go to school, but can read and write.

Became a Taoist: 1961
 Temple: Goddess Palace
 Life Story: Untold
 Interview: August 4th, 2010 in Goddess Palace

Name: 展宗一 (Zhan Zongyi)
 Gender: Male
 Date of Birth: 1921
 Place of Birth: Zhoukou of Henan
 Education: He did not go to school, but can read and write very well.
 Became a Taoist: 1946
 Temple: Bless Palace
 Life Story: He left his hometown and went to Huangpi because of the Japanese invasion in 1939. He worked in a traditional pharmacy for two years and then became a Taoist on Mulan Mount. He stayed in Mulan Palace for a few decades and then was forced to leave in 1966. He lingered around the Mount for more than ten years and returned in the early 1980s. He asked for donations to rebuild Thanksgiving Place and stayed there.
 Interview: June 27th, 2010 in Yingen Palace

The Native Informants on Mulan Mount

Name: An old woman surnamed Chen
 Gender: Female
 Date of Birth: 1943
 Place of Birth: Xujiatian Village around the General Temple
 Education: None
 Religion: None
 Marriage: She married a man in Zhangjiachong Village and has a son.
 Life Story: She went up to the Mount in the middle 1990s. She is hired by a store-keeper to take care of slots to sell fire crackers, paper money, perfume sticks and candles.
 Interview: July 28th, 2010 in the front of the store

Name: Old woman surnamed Wang.
 Gender: Female
 Date of Birth: 1943
 Place of Birth: Untold
 Education: None
 Religion: None
 Marriage: Untold
 Life Story: She and her husband are living in Yinjiachong village. She shares a tiny slot to sell perfume sticks and candles. She works only two or three days a week.
 Interview: July 14th, 2010 in the front of Fazang Temple

Name: Old woman surnamed Xiong
 Gender: Female
 Date of Birth: 1966
 Place of Birth: Untold
 Education: None
 Religion: None
 Marriage: Untold
 Life Story: She and her husband are living in Yinjiachong Village. She shares a tiny slot to sell perfume sticks and candles. She works only two or three days a week.
 Interview: July 14th, 2010 in the front of Fazang Temple

Name: 徐隆春 (Xu Longchun)
 Gender: Male
 Date of Birth: 1953
 Place of Birth: Tieshidun Village (close to the General Temple)
 Education: Primary School
 Marriage: Untold
 Life Story: He went to Mulan Mount in 1996 and learned to be a fortune-teller.
 Interview: July 13th, 2010 at his fortune-telling slot under the South Heaven Gate

Name: 王绍芳 (Wang Shaofang)
 Gender: Female
 Date of Birth: 1937
 Place of Birth: Dawang Village (on the south of Mulan Mount)
 Education: None
 Marriage: She married 徐育文(Xu Yuwen) .
 Life Story: She went to Mulan Mount with her husband Xu Yuwen and they began their business in 1975 or 1976.
 Interview: June 14th, 2010 in her tiny house beside 小庙 (Xiaomiao; Small Temple)
 Close to the Geological Museum)

Name: 王有娣 (Wang Youdi)
 Gender: Female
 Date of Birth: 1943
 Place of Birth: Dawang Village (on the south of Mulan Mount)
 Education: Middle School
 Marriage: She married a man in Tieshidun Village
 Life Story: She went to Mulan Mount in 1983 and has a souvenir slot on the left side of Old Golden Peak Temple.
 Interview: June 14th, 2010 in Xu Yuwen's house

Name: 吴华青 (Wu Huaqing)
 Gender: Male
 Date of Birth: April of 1944

Place of Birth: Qijiawan (a town in the west of Huangpi)

Education: None

Marriage: Single

Life Story: He went to Mulan Mount in 1984 and worked in a construction team. He is also a doorkeeper of the Agricultural Bank of China.

Interview: July 30th, 2010 in his apartment

Name: 徐育文 (Xu Yuwen)

Gender: Male

Date of Birth: 1934

Place of Birth: 铁屎墩 (Tieshi dun; Iron Remains Mound)

Education: Untold

Marriage: He married 王绍芳 (Wang Shaofang).

Life Story: He went to be a helper in Jade Emperor Pavilion at the age of eleven and stayed almost twenty years. After the Cultural Revolution, he returned to Mulan Mount with his wife Wang Shaofang and they began their business in 1975 or 1976.

Name: 徐宗齐 (Xu Zongqi)

Gender: Male

Date of Birth: December on Lunar Calendar of 1963

Place of Birth: Leijiadang Village (close to the General Temple)

Education: High School

Marriage: Untold

Life Story: He graduated in 1983, worked in Wuhan for a decade, returned to his hometown in 1991 or 1992, ran small business. He went to Chaotian Palace in 2008. He studies Taoism and prepares to be a Taoist.

Interview: June 28th, 2010 in the front of Chaotian Palace

Name: 袁桂枝 (Yuan Guizhi)

Gender: Female

Date of Birth: August of 1943

Place of Birth: Dawu of Hubei

Education: None

Religion: None

Marriage: She married Zhang Dasong in 1962.

Life Story: She and her husband had an inn at Xiaomiao before the Cultural Revolution. They came back to the Mount in the late 1970s. She takes care of their tiny souvenir store close to the Jade Emperor Pavilion.

Interview: July 28th, 2010 in the front of the store

Name: 张大松 (Zhang Dasong)

Gender: Male

Date of Birth: 1940

Place of Birth: Zhangjiachong Village

Education: Middle School

Marriage: He married Yuan Guizhi in 1962.

Life Story: He and his wife had an inn at Xiaomiao before the Cultural Revolution. He learned to be a tailor and ran his tailor shop in Changling for more than ten years. He was asked to help take care of the Jade Emperor Pavilion in the late 1970s. The wife Yuan Guizhi takes care of their tiny souvenir store close to the Jade Emperor Pavilion.

Interview: July 28th, 2010 in the Jade Emperor Pavilion

Name: 张元斌 (Zhang Yuanbin)

Gender: Male

Date of Birth: September 11th, 1963

Place of Birth: Zhangjiachong Village

Education: High School

Marriage: Untold

Life Story: He has stayed on Mulan mount for more than thirty years. He built Migong in 1991 and ran it to make money. Migong was very similar to Shicao in the General Temple and was displaced by a Geological Museum in 2008. He is working in the Museum as a guide, meanwhile he is running a tea garden on the Mount.

Interview: June 14th, 2010 in the Geological Museum

Name: 张忠厚 (Zhang Zhonghou)

Gender: Male

Date of Birth: May of 1956

Place of Birth: Zhangjiachong

Education: High school

Religion: None

Marriage: Untold

Life Story: He stayed in the village as a farmer and as an accountant after graduation. He went to the Mount to begin his business selling toys in 1985.

Interview: July 14th, 2010 in the front of Fazang Temple

Appendix 6. Narrators and motif choices in the repertoire at Dacheng Tan

Name (Gender)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Anonymous man (at his meat store)	×	×				×		×				
Anonymous woman (working on her farm)		×	×	×		×			×			
Chen Jiatai (M)						×	×	×				×
Chen Fuguo (M)		×	×	×		×		×		×	×	×
Dan Shirong (F)						×		×	×			×
Hu Shengfu (M)	×					×	×	×		×	×	×
Huang Shunzhou (F)		×				×						
Li Chunsheng (M)						×		×		×	×	×
Li Runzhi (F)	×	×						×		×	×	×
Li Xian Yao (M)	×	×	×	×		×				×	×	×
Liu Shunzhen (F)		×	×			×		×	×	×		
Shen Wenfen (F)		×	×	×		×					×	
Shen Wenzheng (M)	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×		×	×
Shen Wenyan (M)	×	×	×			×		×	×		×	
ShenZhangqiang (M)	×	×		×	×	×	×	×		×	×	×
Shen Zonghua (M)	×	×	×	×	×		×		×	×		×
Yao Yindi (F)	×	×										
Zhang Xiaomei (F)	×	×		×		×		×				×
Zheng Xianwen (M)						×	×	×	×	×	×	×
Zhu Weihua (M)	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×				×
Zhu Yanzhi (F)	×	×	×	×	×							

Appendix 8. Narrators and motif choices in the repertoire of Taoists on Mulan Mount

Name (Gender)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Dong in Mozhen Pavilion (F)	×	×			×			×								×		×	×	×			×	
Fu Mingyi (F)																								
Feng Zongli (M)														×	×				×					
Gong in Bless Palace (F)			×					×								×								×
Gong Xinxiang (M)	×	×			×																		×	
Huang Lisong (F)																								
Liu Mingchun (F)					×		×			×			×			×		×						
Ma Zhili (F)																								
Wang Lixing (M)	×	×			×					×	×			×	×	×		×	×					×
Xu Xinhui (F)	×	×	×		×	×		×		×		×				×		×	×				×	
Zeng Zhigang (F)						×														×				
Zhan Zhixin (F)	×	×			×		×		×	×			×	×	×		×	×	×		×	×		
Zhan Zongyi (M)	×			×	×		×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×		×	×	×	×

Appendix 9. Narrators and motif choices in the repertoire of the Natives on Mulan Mount

Name (Gender)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13	14
Chen (F)		×				×	×		×		×	×			×
Wang Shaofang (F)		×				×		×	×		×				×
Wang Youdi (F)	×	×				×						×	×	×	
Wu Qinghua (M)						×		×				×		×	×
Xu Longchun (M)		×				×		×	×				×	×	×
Xu Yuwen (M)		×				×							×	×	×
Xu Zongqi (M)		×		×		×			×			×	×	×	×
Yuan Guizhi (F)						×	×		×						
Zhang Dasong (M)	×	×	×	×	×	×	×		×				×		
Zhang Yuanbin (M)	×	×	×			×	×						×		
Zhang Zhonghou (M)				×	×						×	×	×		×

Appendix 9: Necessary and Optional Motifs of the Repertoire

The Local Groups

Element	Necessary motif	Optional motif			
		Group	Common motif		Special motif
Abstract		The Natives at Dacheng Tan			
		The Natives around General Temple			
		Taoists on Mulan Mount			
		The natives on Mulan Mount			
Orientation	Birth and families	Dacheng Tan			
		General Temple	Praying for a child	Mulan and Mulan Mount	
		Taoists on Mulan Mount			
		The Natives on Mulan Mount		Mulan and Mulan Mount	
Complication	Learning Disguising as a man and going to the army Surname “Hua” Accusing or slandering	Dacheng Tan			
		General Temple	Marriage	A bet	
		The Natives on Mulan Mount			
		Taoists on Mulan Mount		Cutting a fox goblin’s leg Returing	Incarnation A child prodigy Chess-board Rock

					The three embroidery bags The magical saddle camel The character “ ㄣ ” Danger of revealing Her female gender Fighting with the fox goblins Imprisoning the fox goblin
		The Natives on Mulan Mount			
Resolution	·Suicide	Dacheng Tan			
		General Temple			Selection of graveyard
		Taoists on Mulan Mount			Becoming an immortal
		The Natives on Mulan Mount			
Coda	·Burial and ·Memorial	Dacheng Tan			
		General Temple			
		Taoists on Mulan Mount			Appearance after death
		The Natives on Mulan Mount			
Evaluation	·Attitudes towards the reality of Mulan	Dacheng Tan	Entitlement		
		General Temple			
		Taoists on Mulan Mount			
		The Natives on Mulan Mount			

The Official Group

Element	Necessary motif	Optional motif		
		Title	Common motif	Special motif
Abstract	Popularity and reputation; Huangpi and Mulan	Mulan and her Romance		
		The Basic Content	Cultural values	
		The Romance of Mulan		
		Junior Hua Mulan		
Orientation	Home village and family Birth	Mulan and her Romance	Praying for a child;	Her father’s dream;
		The Basic Content	Praying for a child	
		The Romance of Mulan	Naming as “Hua Mulan”	Her father’s dream;
		Junior Hua Mulan	Naming as “Hua Mulan”	
Complication	Learning Disguising Going to the army	Mulan and her Romance		Surname “Hua
		The Basic Content	Fighting in the army; Returning;	Tragic love story
		The Romance of Mulan		
			Junior Hua Mulan	Helper
Resolution		Mulan and her Romance		
		The Basic Content	Death	
		The Romance of Mulan	Death	
		Junior Hua Mulan		
Coda		Mulan and her Romance	Written records	The General Tomb
		The Basic Content		

			Burial; Memorial; Mulan and Mulan Mount	
		The Romance of Mulan		
		Junior Hua Mulan		
Evaluation	Emphasis on Mulan’s reality	Mulan and her Romance		
		The Basic Content		Entitlement
		The Romance of Mulan		
		Junior Hua Mulan		

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