THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF CHINA

General Editors

DENIS TWITCHETT and JOHN K. FAIRBANK

Volume 9

Part One: The Ch'ing Empire to 1800

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The Cambridge History of China

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Map 1. *The Ch'ing empire – physical features*. John K. Fairbank, ed. *Late Ch'ing, 1800–1911, Part 1, Vol. 10* of *The Cambridge History of China* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1978), Map 1, p. xii.

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THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF CHINA

Volume 9
Part One: The Ch'ing Empire to 1800

edited by

WILLARD J. PETERSON
Princeton University

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GENERAL EDITORS' PREFACE

When *The Cambridge History of China* was first planned, more than three decades ago, it was naturally intended that it should begin with the very earliest periods of Chinese history. However, the production of the series has taken place over a period of years when our knowledge both of Chinese prehistory and of much of the first millennium BC has been transformed by the spate of archeological discoveries that began in the 1920s and has been gathering increasing momentum since the early 1970s. This flood of new information has changed our view of early history repeatedly, and there is not yet any generally accepted synthesis of this new evidence and the traditional written record. In spite of repeated efforts to plan and produce a volume or volumes that would summarize the present state of our knowledge of early China, it has so far proved impossible to do so. It may well be another decade before it will prove practical to undertake a synthesis of all these new discoveries that is likely to have some enduring value. Reluctantly, therefore, we begin the coverage of *The Cambridge History of China* with the establishment of the first imperial regimes, those of Ch'in and Han. We are conscious that this leaves a millennium or more of the recorded past to be dealt with elsewhere and at another time. We are equally conscious of the fact that the events and developments of the first millennium BC laid the foundations for the Chinese society and its ideas and institutions that we are about to describe. The institutions, the literary and artistic culture, the social forms, and the systems of ideas and beliefs of Ch'in and Han were firmly rooted in the past, and cannot be understood without some knowledge of this earlier history. As the modern world grows more interconnected, historical understanding of it becomes ever more necessary and the historian's task ever more complex. Fact and theory affect each other even as sources proliferate and knowledge increases. Merely to summarize what is known becomes an awesome task, yet a factual basis of knowledge is increasingly essential for historical thinking.

Since the beginning of the century, the Cambridge histories have set a pattern in the English-reading world for multivolume series containing chapters written by specialists under the guidance of volume editors. *The*

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Cambridge Modern History, planned by Lord Acton, appeared in sixteen volumes between 1902 and 1912. It was followed by *The Cambridge Ancient History*, *The Cambridge Medieval History*, *The Cambridge History of English Literature*, and Cambridge histories of India, of Poland, and of the British Empire. The original *Modern History* has now been replaced by *The New Cambridge Modern History* in twelve volumes, and *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe* is now being completed. Other Cambridge histories include histories of Islam, Arabic literature, Iran, Judaism, Africa, Japan, and Latin America.

In the case of China, Western historians face a special problem. The history of Chinese civilization is more extensive and complex than that of any single Western nation, and only slightly less ramified than the history of European civilization as a whole. The Chinese historical record is immensely detailed and extensive, and Chinese historical scholarship has been highly developed and sophisticated for many centuries. Yet until recent decades, the study of China in the West, despite the important pioneer work of European sinologists, had hardly progressed beyond the translation of some few classical historical texts, and the outline history of the major dynasties and their institutions.

Recently Western scholars have drawn more fully upon the rich traditions of historical scholarship in China and also in Japan, and greatly advanced both our detailed knowledge of past events and institutions, and also our critical understanding of traditional historiography. In addition, the present generation of Western historians of China can draw upon the new outlooks and techniques of modern Western historical scholarship, and upon recent developments in the social sciences, while continuing to build upon the solid foundations of rapidly progressing European, Japanese, and Chinese studies. Recent historical events, too, have given prominence to new problems, while throwing into question many older conceptions. Under these multiple impacts the Western revolution in Chinese studies is steadily gathering momentum.

When *The Cambridge History of China* was first planned in 1966, the aim was to provide a substantial account of the history of China as a benchmark for the Western history-reading public: an account of the current state of knowledge in six volumes. Since then the outpouring of current research, the application of new methods, and the extension of scholarship into new fields have further stimulated Chinese historical studies. This growth is indicated by the fact that the history has now become a planned fifteen volumes, but will still leave out such topics as the history of art and of literature, many aspects of economics and technology, and all the riches of local history.

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The striking advances in our knowledge of China's past over the last decade will continue and accelerate. Western historians of this great and complex subject are justified in their efforts by the needs of their own peoples for greater and deeper understanding of China. Chinese history belongs to the world not only as a right and necessity, but also as a subject of compelling interest.

JOHN K. FAIRBANK
DENIS TWITCHETT

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PREFACE

Since the initial planning for *The Cambridge History of China* series more than thirty years ago, certain conventions have been observed and certain inconsistencies have infiltrated.

For romanizing proper names (names of persons, places, titles) and selected terms in Chinese, the Wade-Giles system is the standard. The standard is compromised for place names deemed "familiar" in the established (i.e., pre-*pinyin*) literature, such as Peking (for Pei-ching, and not Beijing) and Canton (for Kuang-chou). For place names deemed "not familiar," a Wade-Giles romanization is used. When place names appear in titles in the bibliography, they are consistently in the Wade-Giles romanization system. Generally, the convention for this volume has been to try to observe the practice followed in Volumes 7, 8, and 10, but some arbitrary decisions have been required. Generally, place names (e.g., provinces) in use during the Ch'ing period to 1800 are used in this volume, except in cases where a current geographical term is introduced to clarify the reference. For Manchu and Mongol names, the standard set in A. W. Hummel, ed., *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period*, has been noted and sometimes adjusted for linguistic reasons.

Translations of terms and official titles are uniform between chapters, with some violence done to the preferences of the authors of certain chapters. Translations cannot be consistent between Volumes 7–8 and Volume 10. The glaring difference is "Ministry" for *pu* in the Ming volumes and "Board" in Volume 10; the point is debatable, but the editorial decision was that *pu* in the Ch'ing period considered in this volume were more like ministries than like boards. There are other examples, and they reflect the unfortunate fact that, until recently, nineteenth-century history was treated as part of "modern China" and separate from what went before. The editorial bias for this volume is to seek continuities with the Ming volumes.

The names of the reigns (K'ang-hsi, Ch'ien-lung) of emperors are routinely treated as if they were the names of the emperors themselves. There are several good reasons for this practice, even though it is historiographically erroneous. We adopt it here as a convention that needs no apology.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The editor of this volume, like the editors of the other volumes in *The Cambridge History of China* series, has accrued many debts of gratitude. The foremost debt is to the authors of the chapters gathered here. They generally were prompt in meeting deadlines, responsive to queries, and forbearing toward editorial tinkering. They were long-suffering. Half of them were recruited many years ago by Frederick Wakeman, Jr., who originally planned this volume, and I acknowledge my gratitude to him for them. All of us, chapter authors, the readers, and I are indebted to Denis C. Twitchett, my mentor and former colleague, whose vision and perseverance have been essential for the existence of *The Cambridge History of China*. We are also grateful to Ralph Meyer, whose skill and patience are taxed to find and implement means to process, reconcile, and integrate the disparate information in the chapters, annotations, and bibliographies of several lengthy volumes simultaneously. This editor could not have produced this volume without his valued assistance.

The East Asian Studies Program at Princeton University, directed during the relevant years by Martin C. Collcutt, has generously supported *The Cambridge History of China* project in numerous direct and indirect ways. The project has been privileged to receive financial support from the National Endowment for the Humanities and from the Chiang Ching-Kuo Foundation for International Scholarly Exchange in Taiwan. We are grateful to these institutions for their financial support and the scholarly recognition it implies.

Willard J. Peterson
2002

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ABBREVIATIONS

BIHP	*Chung-yang yen-chiu yüan li-shih yü-yen yen-chiu so (Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica)*
CPYC	*Yung-cheng chu p'i yü chih*, O-erh-t'ai
CS	*Ch'ing-shih*, Chang Ch'i-yün
CSL-CC	*Ta Ch'ing Jen-tsung Jui huang-ti shih-lu*
CSL-CL	*Ta Ch'ing Kao-tsung Ch'un huang-ti shih-lu*
CSL-KH	*Ta Ch'ing Sheng-tsu Jen huang-ti shih-lu*
CSL-SC	*Ta-Ch'ing Shih-tsu Chang huang-ti shih-lu*
CSL-YC	*Ta Ch'ing Shih-tsung Hsien huang-ti shih-lu*
CSWP	*Huang-ch'ao ching-shih wen-pien*, Ho Ch'ang-ling
DMB	*Dictionary of Ming Biography*, Goodrich and Fang
ECCP	*Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing period*, Hummel
HJAS	*Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*
JAS	*Journal of Asian Studies*
PCTC	*Ch'in-ting Pa-ch'i t'ung-chih ch'u-chi*, O-erh-t'ai

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CH'ING RULERS TO 1800

Personal Name	Lived	Chinese Name of Reign Period	Reign Period (Calendar Years)	Chinese Posthumous Names
Nurhaci	1559–1626	—	—	T'ai-tsu, Kao
(Unknown; referred to as	1592–1643	—	1627–1643	T'ai-tsung, Wen
Hung Taiji, a.k.a. Abahai)		T'ien-tsung	1636–1643	
Fu-lin	1638–1661	Shun-chih	1644–1661	Shih-tsu, Chang
Hsuan-yeh	1654–1722	K'ang-hsi	1662–1722	Sheng-tsu, Jen
Yin-chen	1678–1735	Yung-cheng	1723–1735	Shih-tsung, Hsien
Hung-li	1711–1799	Ch'ien-lung	1736–1795	Kao-tsung, Ch'un
Yung-yen	1760–1820	Chia-ch'ing	1796–1820	Jen-tsung, Jui

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INTRODUCTION: NEW ORDER FOR THE OLD ORDER

Willard J. Peterson

In the grand sweep of more than three thousand years of Chinese history, the period from roughly 1680 to 1780 has been celebrated as a prosperous age. From other perspectives, the period has been disparaged as a time when China's people were held down and held back by autocratic foreign rulers. Such dichotomies reveal that the possibilities remain open for both positive and negative assessments of the period of Chinese history from the founding of the Ch'ing dynasty to the end of the Ch'ien-lung emperor's life in 1799. Without promising to resolve the conflicting historical interpretations, this introduction explores some of the issues and problems that are raised in the chapters of this volume and by interpretations of Ch'ing history to 1800 in general.

Simple historical chronology locates the subject matter of this volume after 1644, the conventional date for indicating the fall of the Ming dynasty, and before the end of rule by the Ch'ing imperial house in 1911. In terms of the historiography of the *Cambridge History of China* series, this volume is located between Volumes 7 and 8, with the shared title of *The Ming Dynasty, 1368–1644*, and Volume 10, entitled *Late Ch'ing, 1800–1911*.

Volume 10 was the first volume of the entire series to be published (in 1978). In Volume 10's Introduction, titled "The Old Order," the late John K. Fairbank, who was editor of the volume and a main organizer of the entire series, characterized the late Ch'ing period as the end of the "old China" in conflict with the "outside world," especially as represented by Western and Westernizing nations pursuing imperialist interests. For Fairbank, the avowed purpose of investigating the history of the late Ch'ing and the "old order" was to better understand what he called "the great Chinese revolution," or put more generally, "what has happened in modern China, how and why" (p. 2). Although Fairbank recognized the need to try to reconstruct "views, motives and historical understanding of people at the time when events occurred," he also was committed to being "present-minded" as well as "past-minded" (p. 5), which I take to be an expression of the perspective from which he invited readers of Volume 10 to view late Ch'ing history.

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This perspective implicitly creates a problem for readers of the present volume: If the Ch'ing dynasty after 1800 is characterized as the "old order" (and "old society" and "old China" are similar terms Fairbank also used), then how should we think of Ch'ing history before 1800? Was it also the "old order," but younger? Was it the mature, well-functioning "old order" before the advent of certain types of conflict with the "outside world" revealed its self-absorption and incapacity to effect "quick reaction to a Western invasion" (p. 5)? Nothing in Fairbank's Introduction to Volume 10 suggests or implies that we might expect to look to "earlier" Ch'ing history, that is, prior to 1800, in order to discover the beginning of the old order. By implication, the "old order" was rooted in a historical past well before the proclamation of the Ch'ing dynasty in 1636.

Ten years after Volume 10 appeared, the first of the two volumes on Ming history was published (1988). In his Introduction to the first Ming volume in the *Cambridge History of China* series, F. W. Mote stressed two general points that he held should shape readers' views of Ming history. The first is that the years of Ming rule (1368–1644) are "the only segment of later imperial history from the fall of the Northern Sung capital to the Jurchen invaders in 1126 until the Revolution of 1911 . . . during which all of China proper was ruled by a native or Han Chinese dynasty" (p. 1). Left unsaid is the implication that the Ch'ing is a period of "alien rule." Related to this, and also to Fairbank's emphasis on an "old order," is Mote's second point, that "the Ming Period witnessed the growth of Chinese civilization, . . . the maturing of the traditional Chinese civilization in that last phase of its relatively secure intramural isolation and splendor" (p. 1). This is similar to what Fairbank meant by the "old order," but with less stability and more dynamic changes. Mote pointed to tensions in the Ming experience in such matters as how variously effective the emperors and their governments were in controlling and adapting to crises and long-term trends. He also noticed the possibility of claiming the Ming system of government "as the great achievement of Chinese civilization" (p. 3). He pointed to the Ming state's "stimulating a uniform ideological basis for private and for bureaucratic behavior," which he termed a " 'revised' neo-Confucian ethos" (p. 3). Expansion to the south and overseas, growth in population, literacy, commerce, and urban networks – such long-term developments occurred largely outside of the control of the Ming government but are all manifestations of "the boundless energies of Ming society" (p. 2). Celebrating Ming success, perhaps to be characterized as something like a "mature Chinese order," the perspective Mote offered is not wholly congruent with Fairbank's view of an "old order" bound to suffer revolution. They might agree that "traditional Chinese civilization" existed under the Ming dynasty, but not that it continued to exist into the nineteenth century.

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Of course the Ming dynasty itself was supplanted by the Ch'ing in the mid-seventeenth century, which is where this volume of the *Cambridge History of China* picks up the story.

If the nineteenth century, the late Ch'ing period, is best described as the end of the "old order," and if under the Ming dynasty "traditional Chinese civilization" was flourishing, "mature," perhaps, but not decrepit, then how should we characterize the Ch'ing period from its inception to 1800? This is not a question of what arbitrary label to assign. It is a question involving continuity. Put simply, was the Ch'ing after 1644 predominantly continuous with, even an extension of, the Ming period? Did it somehow represent a decline from the Ming period? And were the late Ch'ing trends, after 1800, predominantly continuous with the previous century, with a decline detectable from 1644? In effect, then, the problem is whether it is appropriate to consider the period from 1644 to 1800 as a continuous transition from a flourishing Ming of the sixteenth century to a Ch'ing order in decline through the nineteenth century and reaching the precipice of the "revolutions" of the twentieth century. Or whether it is more appropriate to think of the period as discontinuous with what happened before 1644. Was the Ch'ing "order" in 1800 an order that was less than two centuries old?

In the most general terms, there are obvious stable characteristics through the three periods. Some of the continuities are institutional. During every year of the three periods there was a reigning emperor. The emperors or their surrogates had effective control over extensive resources, with some exceptions in each of the three periods when an emperor had only nominal control. Each emperor was surrounded by a coterie of especially privileged relatives and favorites. It is worth noting that this volume and the first Ming volume have chapters and chapter titles focusing on the reigns of each of the emperors, while Volume 10 on Late Ch'ing does not, which suggests a changed perception of the relative historical significance of the emperors.

There was a centralized bureaucracy with specialized civil, military, and censorial functions which managed a hierarchy of officials extending down to the county (*hsien*) level with juridical, taxing, and control powers over a population totaling more than a hundred million people. Throughout the three periods, there were fewer than two thousand counties (*hsien*) and independent departments (*chou*). There was an elaborate set of codified law and case precedent that was generally observed as the framework for the administration of justice.

Except for the founding Ming emperor in the fourteenth century, all of the emperors of the three periods acceded to the throne on the basis of who their father was. Other sets of important men also gained access to power because

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they were the sons of their fathers. Although access to privileged positions was inheritable, by and large the incidence of regularly inherited, substantive political or military power – except for the emperors – was low and marginal. The inheriting individual had a claim, not a right. (Inheritance of control of economic resources, both local and regional, is another matter, but it was at least marginally less significant in all three of our periods than in contemporary Western Europe, where systems of primogeniture prevailed.)

There was an elaborate system of competitive examinations to recruit and rank potential appointees to the several tens of thousands of official positions in the regular bureaucracy and to the military officer hierarchy. Passing the civil examinations, which were formally administered at the county, prefectural, provincial, and capital levels, earned the successful candidates at each level a formal title (usually but somewhat misleadingly called a "degree"). By the act of acquiring a degree, a person was separated from commoners. Anyone achieving a higher degree could associate with his new peers on an empirewide basis without regard for whether or not he took up an appointment as an official. Possessing any examination degree, even when it was acquired by purchase rather than by success in an examination, distinguished its holder as a literatus (*shih*). The literati (sometimes called "gentry" in some writing on Ming-Ch'ing China when referring to degree-holders) constituted no more than 1 percent of the empire's adult population alive at any given time through the three periods. Preparing for the examinations involved becoming highly literate in the learned traditions built on the Five Classics associated with the figure of K'ung Tzu (Confucius, 551–479) and, with some fluctuations, the commentaries associated with the teachings of Chu Hsi (1130–1200). Acquiring the skills to read and write in these learned traditions had an indoctrinating effect, and from the perspective of observers from Western countries through the three periods, all of those who studied for and passed the examinations, and thus all those who held high civil office, were Confucians (*ju*). By extension, the governments and even the emperors themselves were characterized as Confucian, at least from these outsiders' perspectives.

In the most general terms, then, the obvious institutional continuities between the three periods might be taken to represent an "old order" and "old China." These would at least include an emperor, an aristocratic elite with some military functions, a civilian bureaucratic elite largely recruited through competitive examinations mostly testing classical learning, a local elite distinguishable from others who had not passed examinations, and all vaguely under a putative umbrella rubric, "Confucian."

There also were two long-term trends that continued from the beginning of the sixteenth century into the nineteenth century, that is, from the mid-

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Ming to the late Ch'ing period. One was population growth, and the other was growth in the economy.

Although the specific numbers are disputable, and all estimates must depend on the validity of their assumptions, it is clear enough that around 1500 the population of the empire was more than 100 million and around 1800 it was more than 300 million. Two big conundrums are when the 200-million mark was crossed and how big a dip occurred during the troubles of the mid-seventeenth century. Answers depend on assumptions about rates of growth in the three centuries. The implications of the answers have an impact on historians' assessments of the period from 1644 to 1800. If the older view is more correct – that the Ch'ing empire had about 100 million people in 1680 or so and the population tripled by 1800 – then there is a strong numerical basis for pointing to the eighteenth century as a "prosperous age." If the revisionist view is more acceptable – that the Ming empire had about 200 million people by 1600 – and recognizing that the evidence does not support a claim that the population was halved during the mid-seventeenth century troubles, then a doubling of the population in the eighteenth century is akin to a doubling during the sixteenth century and not unprecedented. Without choosing between these two views of population curves, we can recognize that population growth was a long-term upward trend, implying a strong continuity across the 1644 dynastic divide. This growth continued into the late Ch'ing period.

Although counting or estimating the numbers of individuals constituting the population is difficult enough, it is more difficult to generate useful numbers to track trends in economic growth over the period from before 1500 to after 1800. It is clear that the total money supply (copper cash plus silver specie plus paper credits) increased. Although any numbers are speculative, trade within provinces, trade between provinces and regions, trade that crossed the empire's frontiers (that is, what later would be called international trade), gross agricultural product (measured in weights of grain or in numbers of calories), and gross imperial product (goods and services measured in some standard monetary unit) all can be characterized generally as exhibiting long-term upward trends from 1500 to 1800. Integration of markets and commercialization of agriculture were processes that accumulated in their effects as long-term continuities.

The mid-seventeenth-century crisis of dynastic change notwithstanding, the structural continuities imply a certain stability which might be taken as a stable "old order." The long-term trends may be a result of such stability: Stable institutions may have promoted economic and population growth. But it is also possible that the significant growth in the economy and in population had a destabilizing effect on the institutions which fostered the growth.

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In other words, the manifest success of the "old order" – notably population increases and economic increases – were presenting challenges to the established order at the same time that external encroachments began to affect both the Ming and the Ch'ing polities, first in seventeenth and then in the nineteenth century.

These several continuities existed with an event which represented an obvious discontinuity that was full of consequences: the failure of the Ming government to defend Peking successfully in 1644. The Ming empire was conquered by military forces commanded by leaders who were not and did not regard themselves as identical in language or customs with the Ming leadership they were replacing or subordinating. They had invented a new name to identify themselves – Manchu – and throughout the Ch'ing period that name was used to denote those who were centrally associated with, or descendents of those associated with, the initial military campaigns for the establishment of the Ch'ing imperial house. In this sense, the establishment of the Ch'ing dynasty marked the success of another "alien" dynasty.

Since the seventeenth century and continuing to today, there have been two contrasting ways to deal with the apparent fact that "Manchus" were not Han (Chinese). The one side emphasizes that the "alien conquerors" from beginning to end remained outsiders, foreigners, to whatever might be reckoned as "truly Chinese." For this side, the foreign conquerors are to be blamed for their encroachment and deserved to be dispossessed because they continued to rule as outsiders, a minority among Han (Chinese). The other side emphasizes that the alien conquerors themselves were transformed as their military success was transmuted into an ongoing political project. This inevitably involved adopting the "Chinese" imperial political system and its values to maintain dynastic viability. In the process of absorbing and assimilating, Manchus were "sinified." The political and social contributions of their regime thus are constituents of the Chinese tradition.

In between these two dichotomous views, less political and more historical interpretations allow that the Manchu leadership of the Ch'ing dynasty was both separate (or alien) and sinified over the period covered in this volume. It is apparent that the characteristics of Ch'ing leadership, in its personnel, institutions, and implicit values, were not identical to either those of Ming dynastic leadership or "proto-Manchu" ones prior to the assumption of the self-identifying label of "Manchu" in the 1630s. In other words, as members of the Ch'ing leadership, including emperors, collectively participated in a process that might be called sinification and moved further from their local roots or origins, they also became less like the Ming leadership had been before its defeat around 1644. This can be illustrated by two further types of discontinuities.

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The administrative tone set through the first century and a half of the Ch'ing dynasty (1636–1796, during which five emperors reigned) contrasts with that of the last century and a half of the Ming dynasty (1488–1644, during which eight emperors reigned). These Ming emperors were mostly dominated by or struggling for control with their leading civil officials and court confidants. The three Ch'ing emperors from 1662 to 1796, except for some uncertain years at the beginning or end of their reigns, made substantial personal efforts to secure intelligence, make decisions, and control the system of governance at their disposal. They ruled. And they adjusted the systems to enhance their command of government. In the late Ming period, the civil bureaucracy led by Grand Secretaries controlled many aspects of government, and even those eunuchs who dominated an emperor had to operate through the bureaucracy. To exercise their commands, Ch'ing emperors nurtured alternative channels. In particular, members of Manchu and Mongol noble families and imperial bond servants were appointed directly to serve the emperor's interests separate from the civilian bureaucratic hierarchies and procedures. If the Ming imperial government represented the "old order," the Ch'ing government transformed it with structural innovations and new procedures.

A second contrast between the Ming and Ch'ing periods is a function of the Ch'ing success in expanding the limits of their territorial control to more than double the size of the Ming empire. The thirteen Ming provinces and the two metropolitan regions were reconfigured as eighteen provinces in Ch'ing. This was the inner territory (the *nei-ti*), known as "China proper" since the nineteenth century. By 1760, vast stretches had been added in the northeast (later partly known as Manchuria), in the north (including what is now known as Mongolia), in the west (Sinkiang and Tibet), and in the southeast (Taiwan). These territories and the non-Han peoples living in them underwent a process of colonization. They were administered by the Ch'ing government as categorically distinct from the eighteen provinces, and generally they were under the command of personnel who were not Han (Chinese). The Ming government included non-Han personnel, particularly Mongols in military units, but the numbers and diversity of the peoples controlled from the center of the Ch'ing empire involved institutions and procedures not known under the Ming systems of government.

Weighing these major continuities and discontinuities between the later Ming period and the Ch'ing period to 1800, each of us may strike a different balance. The possibility of such opposite interpretations suggests an important aspect of the Ch'ing dynasty's success. It held a wide range of factors in balanced tension. The foreign, Manchu, non-Han characteristics of the Ch'ing imperial house co-existed with its sinified aspects. The military

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side of the Ch'ing government, involved in conquest, expansion, exploitation, colonization, and domination, was paired with its civilian, bureaucratic, systemic, regularized aspects. Martial traditions and the traditions of elite, learned culture were simultaneously promoted. The conquest elite centered on imperial relatives and included Manchus, Mongols, and Han-chün bannermen. They vied for power and privilege with the learned elite, men who had passed civil service examinations and maintained social prestige even when not holding official position. One can find many more examples of balanced dichotomies or tensions in nearly every aspect of Ch'ing government, society, and culture during the century from 1680 to 1780. Many decades ago, Ch'ü T'ung-tsu analyzed the interaction of the many groups involved in local government under the Ch'ing. He described the "strains and tensions" among them and rhetorically asked why the existence of tensions did not stimulate more change. His answer for the system of local government was that "all these groups, with the single exception of the common people, secured maximal returns under the existing system" (Ch'ü, *Local Government in China under the Ch'ing*, p. 199). And, I would add, the groups also tended to minimize their risks by compromising. Taking Ch'ü T'ung-tsu's scholarly conclusion and speculatively extending it to all aspects of the period covered in this volume, we might see that the Ch'ing success, involving not only imperial leadership but the complicity of all elite groups as well, was a function of working out ways to maintain the diverse interests in something approximating a balanced tension, which required more or less continuous, expedient, ad hoc adjustments. This was the motive for generating a new order for the old order. Tensions grew, and the balance began to be lost by the last decades of the eighteenth century. In aspect after aspect, balance broke down in the nineteenth century, and finally the Ch'ing dynasty failed.

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CHAPTER 1

STATE BUILDING BEFORE 1644

Gertraude Roth Li

On June 6, 1644, Ch'ing troops entered Peking and claimed the throne for their six-year-old emperor. The military success in 1644 and the subsesquent expansion of the Ch'ing empire were rooted in two centuries of Jurchen[1] multilateral relationships with Koreans, Mongols, and Chinese in the Northeast. By the early seventeenth century, Nurhaci (Nu-erh-ha-ch'ih; 1559–1626),[2] the founder of the dynasty, shifted the goal from seeking wealth and local power to pursuing a vision of an empire, and toward this end he created a sociomilitary organization that was capable of unifying the Jurchens. He laid the foundation for a political system that allowed Chinese and Mongol participation in his endeavor. Following Nurhaci's death, his son, Hung Taiji (Huang T'ai-chi; 1592–1643)[3] built on the accomplishments of his father and consolidated the conceptual and institutional foundation for a Ch'ing empire by drawing heavily on Ming traditions. The glory of taking the throne in Peking fell to Hung Taiji's six-year-old son.

THE JURCHENS DURING THE MING

The place and its people

The Liao valley is the heartland of a region known to Westerners as Manchuria, a place where forest, steppe, and agricultural lands overlap. In the sixteenth century, this region extended southward from the Amur River (Heilungkiang) and included a Ming administrative area in the lower Liao valley and the Liao-tung peninsula. In the east, it reached the Tatar Strait, the Sea of Japan, and the Korean border. In the west, it connected to what

[1] Jurchen, an Anglicized term, is used instead of Jürchen or Jürched, with the final *d* reflecting the Mongol plural ending. However, when referring to the Uriyangkad and Tümed, two Mongol tribes, the Mongol plural ending is retained.

[2] Biography in *ECCP*, pp. 594–9. The name is also written as Nurhachi or Nurgaci. Nurgaci is an old Manchu form and appears in some early Manchu records.

[3] Hung Taiji is erroneously known in some secondary literature as Abahai. The mistake is traced by Giovanni Stary, "The emperor 'Abahai': Analysis of an historical mistake," *Central Asiatic Journal*, 28, Nos. 3–4 (1984), pp. 296–9. His biography, *ECCP*, pp. 1–3, can be found under "Abahai."

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in the twentieth century was Jehol,[4] extending northwest from the Great Wall to the Mongolian pasturelands on the slopes of the Greater Khingan Mountains (Ta Hsing-an ling). Because most Chinese activities in Manchuria were carried out via Jehol, this area – particularly its southern portion, also known as Liao-hsi – was of great importance to the history of Manchuria. During the Ming this area was home to various groups of Eastern Mongols, who in Chinese records are often referred to as Tatars, though this term at times included Jurchens.

Manchuria's main ethnic group was the Jurchens, a people who in the twelfth century had established the Chin dynasty (1115–1234). The name Jurchen itself dates back at least to the beginning of the tenth century, or perhaps, if it is to be identified with the name of the Su-shen tribes, even as far back as the sixth century B.C. "Jurchen," the standard English version of the name, derives from the Chin dynasty Jurchen word *jusen*, which may have reached the West via its Mongolian version of Jürchen.[5] The original meaning of *jusen* remains uncertain.

During the Ming dynasty, Chinese distinguished three groups of Jurchens: the Wild Jurchens (Yeh Nü-chen), the Hai-hsi Jurchens, and the Chien-chou Jurchens. At times they also referred to the three groups collectively as Wild People (*yeh-jen*). The Wild Jurchens occupied the northernmost part of Manchuria, which stretched from the western side of the Greater Khingan Mountains to the Ussuri River and the lower Amur, and bordered on the Tatar Strait and the Sea of Japan. This area was a sparsely populated hinterland to the more populous Liao valley and contained various tribal groups, primarily the Hūrha (Hu-erh-ha),[6] the Weji (Ma. "forest"; Chin. Wo-chi, Wu-chi, or Wu-che), and the Warka (Wa-erh-ha or Wa-erh-k'o). Wild Jurchen hunters and fishermen supplemented their economy by pig raising and, where possible, migratory agriculture. Mongolian influences were considerable, especially in the west.

Named after the Sungari River (Sung-hua chiang), which during the Yüan and Ming dynasties was also called the Hai-hsi River, the Hai-hsi

[4] Jehol was a province from 1929 to 1955. Its southern portion is now part of Hopei and its northern portion is part of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region (Nei Meng-ku tzu-chih ch'ü).

[5] The Chinese transliteration of the original Altaic word is *nü-chen*, which was changed to *nü-chih* as the result of the Liao dynasty taboo on the character *chen*. In the tenth century the character *nü* served to render an affricative ǰu (= džu) and seems to have soon been replaced by characters like *chu*. Henry Serruys, *Sino-Jürčed relations during the Yung-lo period (1402–1424)*, Göttinger Asiatische Forschungen Band 4 (Wiesbaden, 1955), p. 1, n. 1. In Manchu the Jurchen word *jusen* becomes *jušen*, but *nioi jy*, reflecting the Chinese *nü-chen*, also occurs.

[6] After T'ang times Hūrha, sometimes also written as Hūrka (Hu-erh-k'o), referred to the region along the Hūrha River (Hu-erh-ha chiang), an early name for the Mudan River (Mu-tan chiang). By the Chin period Hūrha was also known as Huligai (Hu-li-kai). During the Ming the word Hūrha was used more loosely, referring to the area or the tribes of the Mudan River area, but sometimes including the Weji and Warka tribes. See Lucien Gibert, *Dictionnaire historique et géographique de la Mandchourie* (Hong Kong, 1934), p. 281.

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Jurchens[7] lived in modern Heilungkiang, east of the Nonni River (Nen chiang), around Harbin and on the various tributaries of the Sungari River. Crop cultivation predominated toward the east, and pastoralism predominated toward the west, where the pastoral frontier zone bordered on the Mongolian steppes. The Mongols' cultural influence was most strongly felt among the Jurchens of this area.

The Chien-chou Jurchens lived along the Mudan River and in the vicinity of the Long White Mountain (Ma. Šanggiyan alin or Šanyan alin; Chin. Ch'ang-pai-shan) in what became Kirin province. They hunted for food and for furs, fished, and engaged in agriculture. They also gathered pearls and ginseng, and were proficient at spinning and weaving. The population in this area was mixed, with Koreans and Chinese living alongside Jurchens.

Communication between China and Liao-tung often went by sea from Shantung. When the first Ming emperor sent troops to Liao-tung, military provisions were shipped that way. For a while the established route from Peking to Liao-tung was via Hsi-feng Pass (Hsi-feng k'ou), Ta-ning (modern Ning-ch'eng), and Kuang-ning (north of Pei-chen in Liaoning). However, because the area came to be occupied by the Uriyangkad Mongols after the Ming offered them their patronage in 1389, the main route between China and Manchuria shifted to the Shan-hai Pass route. Since that route, too, was susceptible to disruption by Mongols, the Ming government built strong fortifications along that line.

Communication between the various parts of Manchuria was limited. In the southern part the Ming maintained a horse postal relay system to facilitate military communications, the exchange of official envoys, and government trade. Waterways, and in some places dog relay stations maintained by the Jurchens, supplemented the Ming system.[8]

Jurchen relations with the Ming

After the fall of the Yüan dynasty (1267–1368), various pockets of Mongol power remained in the Northeast, and Ming China continued to be preoccupied with its northern defense.[9] In 1375, Nahacu (Na-ha-ch'u), a local leader loyal to the Yüan dynasty, invaded Liao-tung. He was defeated in 1387, but in order to protect themselves from further Mongol incursions, the Ming

[7] Hai-hsi, meaning "west of the sea," initially referred to Jurchen territory in general. During the second half of the Ming, Hai-hsi referred to the area exclusive of Chien-chou Jurchens. See Henry Serruys, *Trade relations: The horse fairs (1400–1600)* (Bruxelles, 1975), p. 58, n. 33.

[8] Serruys, *Sino-Jürčed relations*, p. 21, n. 39; Li Hsün Hsüeh Hung, ed., *Ch'ing tai ch'üan shih*, Vol. 1 of *Ch'ing tai ch'üan shih*, ed. Hsü Che Kao Hung (Shen-yang, 1991), pp. 19–21.

[9] For a general discussion in English on Manchuria during the Ming, refer to an old but still excellent article by T. C. Lin, "Manchuria in the Ming empire," *Nankai Social and Economic Quarterly*, 8, No. 1 (April 1935), pp. 1–43; also Morris Rossabi, *The Jurchens in the Yüan and Ming* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1982).

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set up a military form of government by dividing the area under its control into twenty-five guards (*wei*), supervised by a Regional Military Commission (*tu-chih-hui shih-ssu*) in Liao-yang. Then, following the traditional policy of using one barbarian group to control another, the Ming courted or "pacified" (*chao-fu*) the Jurchens in order to control the Mongols.

In 1388, immediately after the defeat of Nahacu, the first Ming emperor dispatched a mission to the San-hsing area (I-lan or Ilan Hala)[10] and established contact with the Jurchens at the confluence of the Sungari and Mudan Rivers. Two strong tribes, the Odoli (Wo-to-li) and Huligai (Hu-li-kai; or Hūrha), were ruled by fraternal clans who had split into two groups in the 1380s. Though a relationship was forged between the Ming and these Jurchens, difficulties with maintaining supply lines to their outpost on the Sungari forced the Ming representatives to retreat back south.[11]

A southward push of more northerly people precipitated a general southward migration among the Jurchens. Around 1402 the Hai-hsi group appears to have moved from the Hulan (Hu-lan ho) and Sungari Rivers to the area north of K'ai-yüan. The Odoli, Huligai, and T'o-wen tribes established themselves in the vicinity of the Tumen River (T'u-men chiang), the meeting point of Korea, China, and Russia, the Huligai around Yen-chi, and the Odoli around Hui-ning. Those Jurchens who settled south of the Sui-fen River (Sui-fen ho) became known as Mao-lien Jurchens.[12]

Not long after these southward moves, the Ming Yung-lo emperor (1402–24) sent numerous missions to the various Jurchens – often led by envoys of Jurchen descent – and began establishing Jurchen guards (*wei*) and posts (*so*). In 1403 a special Ming mission to the Huligai obtained the submission of their chief Ahacu (A-ha-chu; d. 1409–10) and extended official Ming recognition to Ahacu as commander of the Chien-chou Guard (Chien-chou wei), named after a Yüan dynasty political unit in the area. In 1405 the Ming also created a Mao-lien Guard to the northwest of Hui-ning under the leadership of one of Ahacu's sons. A Ming embassy reached Möngke Temür (Meng-ko-tieh-mu-erh, or Meng-t'e-mu; d. 1433),[13] chieftain of Odoli, on the Tumen River. Though the Korean government tried to persuade him not

[10] The name San-hsing came into use during the Ch'ing dynasty. The original name was San-wan, a translation of Ilan Tumen, meaning "Three myriarchies." These myriarchies were: Odoli, Huligai, and T'o-wen. Serruys, *Sino-Jürčed relations*, p. 49.

[11] Lin, "Manchuria in the Ming empire," p. 15.

[12] According to Erich Hauer, the name Mao-lien (sometimes also written as Mo-lin) appears to have been derived from the Manchu word *morin* – "horse." See Hauer, "Neue Nachrichten über die Vorfahren des Mandschuhauses," *Asia Minor*, 9 (1933), p. 615. As immediate neighbors of Korea, the Mao-lien tribes are frequently mentioned in the Korean sources, which refer to them as Wu-liang-ha, or Orankha, a name also used for the Uriyangkad Mongols in the West. In Korean the word *orankha* has come to mean "barbarian, a savage." Serruys, *Sino-Jürčed relations*, p. 32.

[13] Biography in *DMB*, pp. 1065–6.

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to yield to Ming pressure and presented him with a title of its own, Möngke Temür accepted Ming recognition as leader of a separate Chien-chou Left Guard.[14] He also accepted the Chinese surname T'ung, a name that generations later the first Manchu emperor, Nurhaci, used to claim descent from Möngke Temür.[15]

Between 1406 and 1440 the two Chien-chou groups undertook several short-distance moves, at times separating, other times rejoining. Between 1406 and 1411 they moved west to evade Wild Jurchen attacks and Korean pressure, but in 1423 Mongol invasions in the west forced their return to the Korean border.[16] In 1436, following several defeats at the hands of the Koreans, the Huligai Chien-chou Guard, then under the leadership of Li-Man-chu (d. 1467), moved west and settled on the Suksuhu River (Su-k'o-su-huo ho or Su-tzu ho), with its headquarters near Hsing-ching in modern Hsin-pin County (Hsin-pin hsien). At about the same time, the Chien-chou Left Guard also freed itself from Korean control and settled to the north of them.[17]

In 1442, a succession dispute between Möngke Temür's son, Cungšan (Ch'ung-shan; d. 1467) and Cungšan's half-brother, Fanca (Fan-cha; d. 1458), led to a division of the Chien-chou Left Guard. Cungšan inherited his father's position in the Chien-chou Left Guard and Fanca received Chinese recognition for a new Chien-chou Right Guard. Cungšan later succeeded in bringing the Chien-chou Right Guard under his control, but for a while there were three Chien-chou Guards.

The Ming created as many as two hundred guards among the Hai-hsi Jurchens. Judging from the level of titles the Jurchen leaders received, the Chien-chou guards were of considerably higher concern to the Ming government than the Hai-hsi or other Jurchen groups. Chien-chou leaders were

[14] The exact date of establishment of the Chien-chou Left Guard is unknown. It is believed to have been first established in 1405, and then reestablished in 1412. Serruys, *Sino-Jürčed relations*, p. 77.

[15] New clan names were used to develop a hereditary consciousness and to strengthen the spirit of local "patriotism" among the different units so as to hinder their mutual amalgamation. They were also intended to inculcate in the chieftains' families a tradition of loyalty and attachment to the benefactor, the Ming imperial house. Lin, "Manchuria in the Ming empire," p. 37.

[16] The Huligai Chien-chou Jurchens settled on Tung-chia River (Tung-chia chiang), then also called P'o-chu chiang, which is the modern Hun River (Hun chiang), a tributary of the Yalu River. Möngke Temür's Chien-chou Left Guard returned to their earlier habitat on the Tumen River around Hui-ning.

[17] Scholars have discussed the various moves of the Chien-chou Jurchens at length and minor differences remain. Compare Wang Chung-han, "The question of the place where the Manchu ancestors originated," *Central Asiatic Journal*, 35, Nos. 3–4 (1991), pp. 279–301; Li, *Ch'ing tai ch'üan shih*, pp. 9–10, 43–5; and Kawachi Yoshihiro, *Mindai joshinshi no kenkyū*, Oriental Research Series No. 46 (Kyoto, 1996), pp. 141–70. For a German translation of the part in the *Ch'ing shih kao* that deals with the Chien-chou Jurchens during the Ming (under Ahacu, in the ninth biography), see Hauer, "Neue Nachrichten," pp. 612–42; Serruys, *Sino-Jürčed relations*, pp. 38–9; and Lin, "Manchuria in the Ming empire," pp. 18–20.

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given titles of commanders (*chih-hui shih)* and commissioners-in-chief (*tu-tu*). None of the other Jurchens were so honored.[18]

In order to oversee the Jurchen guards and subdue additional tribes, the Ming in 1409 established a Nurgan Regional Military Commission (*Nu-erh-kan tu-chih-hui shih-ssu*) near the mouth of the Amur River. Supplying provisions to this northern Ming outpost proved expensive, and the Nurgan Regional Military Commission was abandoned in 1435. The Ming retreat meant the loss of contact with many of the more northerly tribes. Though the existence of Jurchen guards consisted of nothing more than Ming diplomatic and commercial recognition, Jurchen chiefs bore military titles and were viewed as Ming local officials. Since the Ming neither occupied Jurchen territory nor made efforts to tax its population, the Jurchen tribes acquiesced in the fiction of Ming authority. They employed the Ming calendar rather than the traditional twelve-animal cycle; they went by their guard names and their Ming official titles; and they presented tribute and submitted to the required ritual of the Ming court.

The practice of granting titles to native leaders in outlying regions was ancient, but the scope of its use in Ming times was new. Of the 384 guards listed in Ming records,[19] more than a third were created between 1368 and 1426. The guards' territories expanded, contracted, and moved. Tribes that had been recognized as guards might divide or be absorbed into other tribes. If the people moved, the name moved with them. In theory guards needed permission to relocate to another area, but in practice this was not necessarily so. If a guard ceased to exist, its name would likely remain on government books. There is no reason to suppose that Ming officials' fantasies regarding its guards bore much relationship to the local power structure and subdivisions.[20] Even though not all guards were real, those that did exist owed their title and allegiance to the Regional Military Commission, which served the Ming goal of divide and rule.

Jurchen relations with Korea

The Ming effort to stake out its sphere of interest and jurisdiction in the northeast clashed with Korean activities aimed at expanding its influence

[18] Li, *Ch'ing tai ch'üan shih*, p. 45. Other titles bestowed on the Chien-chou Jurchens were vice commissioner-in-chief (*tu-tu t'ung-chih*), assistant commissioner-in-chief (*tu-tu ch'ien-shih*), vice commander (*chih-hui t'ung-chih*), and assistant commander (*chih-hui ch'ien-shih*).

[19] Chang T'ing-yü et al., *Ming shih*, 1736; rpt. Chang Ch'i-yün et al., eds. (Yang-ming-shan, 1962), ch. 90, p. 19b.

[20] Serruys, *Sino-Jürčed relations*, p. 26.

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among its northern neighbors.[21] Korea was itself a participant in the Ming tributary system and valued Ming protection against the northern tribes, but it also sought to draw the Jurchens on its northern borders into its own orbit. Like the Ming, the Korean rulers conferred ranks on the Jurchen chiefs and received Jurchen envoys at court. In some cases Korea even provided monetary stipends to Jurchen chiefs who accepted formal recognition from Korea. Members of the Jurchen elite, and later Jurchen commoners, also served in the Korean royal bodyguard.

Ming embassies sent to the Jurchens usually stopped in the Korean capital before going farther, expecting and usually receiving a Korean official to accompany the embassy to its final destination. This approach served notice to both Korea and the Jurchens that Jurchen allegiance to the Ming was on a higher level than their relationship with Korea. In spite of complying with Ming expectations, the Korean government was apprehensive over Ming penetration into the area to the north, claiming that "its throat was strangled and its right arm held" when the Ming emperor founded the Chien-chou Guard to the northwest of Korea's borders.[22] Overall the Chien-chou Jurchens remained loyal to the Ming, but recognition of Jurchen chiefs did not insure peaceful borders for either the Ming or Korea. Moreover, Ming insistence that its Jurchen and Korean vassals discontinue their relationship with each other was only sporadically obeyed.

When the Chien-chou Jurchens retreated once more toward the Korean border – this time due to a Mongol invasion into Liao-tung around 1450 – their arrival there coincided with a new Korean policy which actively courted the Jurchens. The Korean-Chien-chou relationship recovered, and increasing numbers of Jurchens again went to the Korean court to receive titles and rewards for being vassals of Korea. Later, however, Jurchen border raids provoked renewed conflicts.

In 1467, a joint Korean-Ming counterattack against the raiding Jurchen resulted in the death of Li-Man-chu and his son. Unable to recover from this event, Li-Man-chu's lineage fell into obscurity. Cungšan was assassinated by Ming agents that same year, but even though the Ming reinstated his son as leader of the Chien-chou Left Guard, Chien-chou Jurchens' power was severely weakened. After a second joint Korean-Ming campaign in 1478, major hostilities between the Chien-chou Jurchens and Ming ceased. The Ming government once again invited them to acknowledge

[21] For an excellent study on Jurchen-Korean relations, see Kawachi Yoshihiro, *Mindai joshinshi no kenkyū*, ch. 8, pp. 267–337; ch. 10–12, pp. 365–452; ch. 16, pp. 539–60; and ch. 19–20, pp. 657–716.

[22] Serruys, *Sino-Jürčed relations*, p. 56.

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Ming suzerainty and participate in the tribute system. For several decades the Jurchens did not produce powerful leaders, though border raids continued to increase.

Mongol developments and their impact on the Jurchens

Aside from their involvements with Ming and Korean interests and interventions, the Jurchens were intertwined with Mongol alliances and hostilities. After the fall of the Yüan dynasty in 1368, the Mongols split into three main groups: the nomadic Western Mongols or Oirats (Oyirods), the Uriyangkad in the northeast, and the Eastern Mongols or Tatars between the two. The Uriyangkad, the Jurchens' most immediate neighbors, inhabited the area extending from the Shira Muren River (Hsi-la-mu-lun ho) in the south to the upper Sungari in the northeast and the Greater Khinghan Mountains in the west. Because this was the area the Ming troops traversed on their way to defeat Nahacu in 1387 and 1388, they sought and obtained the allegiance of the Uriyangkad. They organized them into three guards: the Dö-en (To-yen), T'ai-ning, and Fu-yü Guards, collectively referred to as the Three Guards (*San-wei*). When the Uriyangkad subsequently supported the future Yung-lo emperor in his struggle to win the throne, the Ming moved the Jehol Regional Military Commission closer to Peking, abolished the garrison system in Liao-hsi, and invited the Uriyangkad to settle in Liao-hsi (on the upper Lao-ha River). This change neglected the importance of Liao-hsi for the security of North China and Manchuria, and removed from Jehol the Ming defense structure which protected the route leading from the Hsi-feng and the Ku-pei Passes (Ku-pei k'ou) to the northeast.[23]

From their new base the Three Guards participated in the horse markets at Kuang-ning and K'ai-yüan and brought tribute to the Ming court. They also undertook periodic raids into Ming and Jurchen territories and became entangled in the wars between the Ming and the Eastern and the Western Mongols, at different times joining one side or the other. After 1431 Mongol power shifted from the Eastern to the Western Mongols, whose leader Esen (Yeh-hsien; r. 1430–54) united the various Mongols and, with the participation of the Uriyangkad, invaded Ming territory. Since 1408 the Western Mongols had maintained an on-again off-again tribute relationship with the Ming. But disputes over the size and frequency of Mongol missions led to conflicts. In 1449, complaining about defective goods in the tribute trade and hoping for still greater profits, Esen defeated the Ming army at T'u-mu, captured the emperor, and threatened Peking. However, Esen was more inter-

[23] Lin, *Manchuria in the Ming empire*, pp. 10–13.

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ested in economic gain than in conquest, and so withdrew. A year later he sent the emperor back and resumed regular tribute relations. About 1450 the Western Mongols invaded Liao-tung, devastated Hai-hsi territory, and killed many of the local leaders. The Chien-chou Jurchens managed to evade the Mongol threat by temporarily moving back toward the Korean border.

Following Esen's death in 1454 – he was assassinated for his audacity in assuming the title of Great Khan (*khagan*)[24] – power shifted back to the Eastern Mongols, who reasserted their leadership under Batu Möngke (c. 1464–1532), a legitimate heir to the Yüan emperors. Though Batu Möngke, commonly known as Dayan Khan,[25] threatened Ming border areas with almost yearly raids and attacked the environs of Peking in 1523, internal disunity prevented the Eastern Mongols from posing a serious threat. After Batu Möngke's death, the title of Great Khan remained with the Chahar tribe, but power was not in the hands of the holder of this title. The leaders of Batu Möngke's subdivisions, which he had organized into a right and left flank, each consisting of smaller units, became independent. The result was a proliferation of new tribal names among the Eastern Mongols, which besides the Chahars included the Ordos, Tümed, Karachins, Korchins, and the Five Khalkas.[26] The Uriyangkad lost their existence as a distinct group. Their Fu-yü were absorbed by the Korchins after these moved to the Nonni River, and the two other Uriyangkad, the Dö-en and the T'ai-ning, were absorbed by the Five Khalkas.

Power shifted to the Tümed tribe, which was based in Jehol. Under their leader, Altan Khan (1507–82), the Tümed expanded their power by leading successful campaigns into Tibet, Turfan, Dzungaria, and Ming territory. They recaptured Karakorum, the former Mongolian imperial capital, from the Western Mongols. Between 1548 and 1571 Altan Khan raided Ming nearly every year, invading Ta-t'ung in 1548 and marauding near Peking around 1551. He also repeatedly solicited peace with the Ming. Mongol overtures were commonplace throughout the Ming and rarely sincere, but Altan Khan's conversion to Tibetan Buddhism and his reliance on Chinese advisors in his newly built city of Huhehot (also known as Köke khota or Kui-hua ch'eng)

[24] Following the Yüan dynasty, only direct descendents of Chinggis Khan, that is, from sons or nephews on the male side, could hold the title khan and become the leader of all Mongols. Power holders therefore usually picked a suitable candidate from this group, someone who was beholden to them, to serve as legitimate but nominal leader. For Esen, who was not a legitimate heir, the breach of this tradition led to his death.

[25] The name Dayan is derived from Ta Yüan, referring to the Great Yüan Dynasty.

[26] The Five Khalkas are also called the Inner Khalkas. They are not to be confused with the Khalkas of northern Mongolia. The Five Khalkas emerged when the five sons of one of Batu Möngke's sons divided their heritage. Li, *Ch'ing tai ch'üan shih*, pp. 206–7; David M. Farquhar, "The origin of the Manchus' Mongolian policy," *The Chinese world order: Traditional China's foreign relations*, ed. John K. Fairbank (Cambridge, Mass., 1968), p. 330, n. 1.

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may have made him more inclined toward a settled life. A 1571 peace treaty with the Ming earned Altan Khan the title of Obedient Prince (Shun-i wang) as well as trade privileges for the Tümed and Ordos Mongols. But following his death in 1582, the Tümed's dominations of other tribes fell apart.

Altan Khan's activities had an impact on the Jurchens. Getting out of harm's way when Altan Khan went to conquer Karakorum, Tümen Khan (T'u-man; r. 1558–92), leader of the Chahars and legitimate Chinggisid heir, in 1552 led his people eastward over the Greater Khingan Mountains to pastures in Manchuria. From there Tümen Khan fought Altan Khan, and, with the support of Jurchens and Altan's brother, leader of the Karachin Mongols, invaded Liao-tung and Ming territory. Fortunately for the Jurchens, the Chahar khan's overlordship over the other Mongols, limited under Tümen Khan, disappeared under his son's rule. The last legitimate Mongol great khan was Tümen's grandson, Ligdan (r. 1603–34). Ligdan tried to revive the khanate of the Eastern Mongols, but even though a new Jurchen threat in the northeast made the Ming government eager to maintain an alliance with him, Ligdan's unpopularity among the Mongols led to his downfall and eventually to the loss of Mongol independence.

Jurchen cultural concepts

Besides feeling the effects of Mongol political rivalries, the Jurchens' cultural orientation overlapped, to some degree, that of the Mongols.[27] Jurchen chiefs generally lived by traditions that reflected the pastoral culture of the early steppe peoples, the Khitans, and more recently, the Mongols. These included pride in horsemanship, archery, falconry, the battue (shaving the hair on the front of the head and wearing queues[28] behind), and shamanic cults. Superimposed on these was a belief in a supreme sky god (*abka-i enduri*, *abka-i han*, or simply *abka*), identified with the Turco-Mongolian *tengri*, and much later with the Chinese *t'ien* (heaven).[29] The idea of a universal monarch, mandated by Heaven, though it might have been originally developed through Chinese influence on Inner Asia, also came through the Mongolian filter. The founder of the Yüan dynasty, Chinggis, was called *tengri-yin jayaγatu*, "destined by

[27] This section draws on David M. Farquhar, "The origin of the Manchus' Mongolian policy," *The Chinese world order: Traditional China's foreign relations*, ed. John K. Fairbank (Cambridge, Mass., 1968), pp. 199–205; see also Farquhar, "Mongolian versus Chinese elements in the early Manchu state," *Ch'ing-shih wen-t'i*, 2, No. 6 (June 1971), pp. 11–23.

[28] For a general article on queues, see Kurakichi Shiratori, "The queue among the peoples of North Asia," *Memoirs of the Research Department of the Tōyō Bunko*, 4 (1929), pp. 1–69.

[29] For a discussion on the characteristics of the Turco-Mongolian tradition of rulership, see Joseph F. Fletcher, "Turco-Mongolian tradition in the Ottoman empire," *Studies in Chinese and Islamic Inner Asia* (Great Yarmouth, Norfolk, 1984), ch. 7.

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Heaven," a direct model for the later term *abka-i fulingga*, referring to Nurhaci's reign title.

The most striking example of the Jurchens borrowing from the culture of the steppe was in the realm of language. Jurchen language is affiliated with the Tungusic branch of the Altaic language family. The early Jurchens adapted the Khitan script to write their own language. Literary Jurchen died out soon after the fall of the Chin dynasty in the thirteenth century, but spoken Jurchen remained current as the lingua franca of the Manchurian region. For correspondence and record keeping, Jurchen chiefs used Mongolian, though some records, both commercial and governmental, were kept in Chinese with the aid of Chinese scribes.[30] It was not until the end of the sixteenth century that associates of Nurhaci adapted the Mongolian alphabet to write Jurchen and thus created a new Jurchen literary language, which became known as Manchu.

Even prior to the adaptation of the Mongolian script, the Jurchen language contained many words and concepts of Mongol origin. An estimated 20–30 percent of the Manchu vocabulary is of Mongolian origin.[31] The large proportion of Mongolian terminology related to Jurchen political institutions, concepts, and titles reflects the Mongol orientation of Jurchen political culture. Expressions such as *doro*, meaning "government, way," which translates the Chinese *tao*, and *doro šajin*, "the laws ordained by heaven," are borrowed from Mongolian *törö šasin* or *törö šajin*, a concept which sees the world divided into secular and religious spheres.

Both Mongols and Jurchens used the title *han* for the leaders of a political entity, large or small, whether referring to the Chinese emperor (*huang-ti*) or to the heads of their appanages. And Jurchen chiefs, and later the Manchus, used various Mongolian titles for their princes and officials. For example, when a particularly powerful chief succeeded in expanding his power, he might distinguish himself from lesser leaders by assuming the title of *beile* ("prince, nobleman"), cognate with Mongolian *beki* and Turkish *beg* or *bey*. The Jurchens also borrowed the system of dividing officials into two classes: the great ministers or high officials (Mo. *sayid*; Ma. *amban*), and regular officials (Mo. *tüsimel*; Ma. *hafan*), and of reckoning time by combining names of colors and animals.[32]

[30] A 1444 declaration from Jurchen chiefs stated that "in these forty commandries there is nobody who has a command of the Jurchen script and we request that in the future the Tatar (= Mongol) script be used in all documents." Serruys, *The Mongols and Ming China*, p. 141.

[31] Nicholas Poppe, *Introduction to Altaic linguistics* (Wiesbaden, 1965), pp. 160–1.

[32] Examples of other terms taken from Mongolian: *baturu* (Mo. Baγatur) "hero," *jargūci* (Mo. jarγuci) "judge," *taiji* (Mo. tayiji) "male member of the family of Chinggis khan, a noble," *hiya* (Mo. kiya) "guard," *baksi* (Mo. *baγsi*) "teacher, literary advisor to the ruler," and *elcin* (Mo. *elci(n)*), "envoy, messenger."

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Like the Mongols and the Turks, the Jurchens did not observe a law of primogeniture or other regular principles of succession. According to tradition, any capable son or nephew could be chosen to become leader, though in practice, he was ordinarily expected to be one of the deceased ruler's sons. As far as possible, the ruler would try to predetermine the choice during his lifetime, but there was no way to avoid infighting or at least tension among his heirs, with likely candidates forming coalitions of personal supporters and sometimes trying to hasten their father's demise so as to ensure the desired outcome. At a ruler's death, a fast-moving candidate might insure his own accession by killing off his rivals in order to preserve the beileship for himself. Not uncommonly tribes dissolved in succession struggles, sometimes never to be reunited.

After a ruler emerged, no matter how crafty the manipulation or how intense the pressure applied to obtain the position, he likely had to depend – at least initially – on some kind of consultative rule. Often the collegial rule was short-lived, lasting only until the ruler was able to consolidate his power. Confederal decision making among several tribes, on the other hand, was a commonly used strategy when undertaking mutually beneficial warfare, either for defense or attack.

Jurchen social organization

During Ming times the Jurchen people lived in social units that were subclans (*mukūn* or *hala mukūn*) of ancient clans (*hala*).[33] Theoretically Jurchens acquired their clan membership at birth, whereas their subclan depended on their place of residence. But by the Ming period the *hala* were mostly forgotten and the *mukūn* became the primary clan identification. Whether *hala* or *mukūn*, members of Jurchen clans shared a consciousness of a common ancestor and were led by a head man (*mukūnda*). Not all clan members were blood related. If households moved away, they might either join another existing subclan or establish a new one, in which case they would no longer consider themselves related to the earlier lineage. Thus, the Odoli and Huligai, who recognized a common ancestor, could marry into each other's clan after their subdivision. Later, Möngke Temür's clan divided into two sections, one under Fanca, the other under Cungšan. A similar process of division occurred in many clans.

Often the emergence of new clans was accompanied by a disintegration of existing clans. When a ruler made conquests, the conquered people became

[33] For this section on Jurchen clans I have relied on Li, *Ch'ing tai ch'üan shih*, Vol. 1, pp. 31–8. Also see Pamela Crossley, *The Manchus* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 24–33; and Ch'en Wen-shih, "The creation of the Manchu niru," *Chinese Studies in History*, 14, No. 4 (Summer 1981), pp. 18–24.

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members of his clan. In this case their own clan name continued to have significance for marriage and ancestral sacrifices, but they were part of the ruler's clan when organizing for activities. In some cases, an outsider taken into a clan could become that clan's leader. In the region's multiethnic environment this meant that Mongol chiefs at times headed Jurchen clans. The loose structure of the clans suggests that this social unit was evolving into a geographically based group, a trend which was further accelerated by the Ming policy of appointing the clan headmen as guard officers.

Jurchen households (*boo*) lived as families (*booigon*), consisting of five to seven blood-related family members and a number of slaves, usually people from other ethnic groups who had been captured during raids. Though each household owned land independently, they formed squads (*tatan*) to engage in tasks related to hunting and food gathering. For overall coordination of large-scale activities, such as wars or raids, temporary companies (*niru*; literally "arrow") were formed. Both the squads and the companies chose leaders (*tatan-i da* and *niru-i ejen*) for the duration of their tasks.

During early Ming, the Jurchens lived in villages (*gašan*) and continued their traditional hunting and gathering practices while also engaging in agriculture, as seen from their expanding purchases of farm implements and oxen. However, most of the people who worked Jurchen fields were not Jurchens, but Korean and Chinese slaves who had been captured during raids across the Korean and Chinese borders. The connection between Jurchen military activities and an agriculture maintained by slave labor accounted for the simultaneous development of their traditional and agricultural economic sectors. It also accounted for the development of towns. By the mid-sixteenth century, fortified towns and villages with protective earth walls (*hoton* or *hecen*) were common.

Trade and tribute

Because succession was contestable due to the lack of a tradition of primogeniture, Jurchen chiefs sought to receive titles from the Ming or Korean governments in order to bolster their legitimacy over rival claimants to power. They also vied for imperial gifts and the right to trade.[34] When extending official recognition to Jurchen leaders as guard officials, the Ming

[34] For two basic essays on the Chinese tribute system, see Mark Mancall, "The Ch'ing tribute system: An interpretive essay," *The Chinese world order: Traditional China's foreign relations*, ed. John K. Fairbank (Cambridge, Mass., 1968), pp. 63–89; and Joseph F. Fletcher, "China and Central Asia," *The Chinese world order* (Cambridge, Mass., 1968), pp. 206–24. An old but still useful article in English is T. C. Lin's "Manchuria trade and tribute in the Ming Dynasty: A study of Chinese theories and methods of control over border peoples," *Nankai Social and Economic Quarterly*, 9, No. 4 (January 1937), pp. 855–92.

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government presented them with printed patents (Ma. *ejehe*; Chin. *ch'ih-shu*). These credentials appointed the holder to a specific position and also served as identification at the border when they entered China for a tribute mission. Jurchen chiefs who acknowledged Ming suzerainty were expected to visit the capital with a certain number of men and at certain intervals to make symbolic presentations of local products. In return they received gifts, usually far exceeding the value of their tribute goods. They were also allowed to trade in the capital for a given number of days, and along the route during their journey.

During the early fifteenth century (1403–35), the Ming court actively encouraged Jurchen leaders to come to the capital to bring tribute. As long as someone had an official seal, there was no limit on the number of people he could bring. Intense Jurchen interest in trade led the Ming to implement restrictions and introduce patents to try to control the frequency and size of Jurchen tribute missions. The number of Jurchen missions continued to increase as Jurchens changed names or titles on the patents and used them repeatedly in order to overcome the restrictions. During the Ch'eng-hua period (1465–87) Chien-chou missions arrived with eight or nine hundred people, in some years bringing over one thousand. Some Hai-hsi missions came with nearly two thousand people. Such practices led the Ming to deny further entries once a given number of people per patent had entered from a given guard. The effect of this change was an escalation of internal fights over patents, as each Jurchen leader sought to maximize the number of patents under his control.

Apart from the right to lead tribute missions and control the accompanying tribute trade, Ming official recognition meant access to border markets. In 1405, two years after the creation of the Chien-chou Guard, the Ming government opened three horse markets in Liao-tung, two bimonthly ones for the Uriyangkad at Kuang-ning and K'ai-yüan, and two monthly markets for the Jurchens, also at K'ai-yüan, but in locations different from the Uriyankhad market. Not only in the political sphere, but also in the economic sphere, the Ming government adhered to a policy of "divide and rule" by establishing separate markets for separate groups. The time restrictions were later abandoned so that by the late sixteenth century markets were held nearly every day.[35]

Except for the the two Uriyangkad markets, which were closed from 1449 to 1478 as punishment for the Uriyangkads having joined Oirat invasions

[35] For a detailed account of the Liao-tung border markets for the Mongols and Jurchens, see Serruys, *Trade relations: The horse fairs (1400–1600)*.

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into China, the Jurchen markets remained open into the seventeenth century. In the beginning K'ai-yüan was the only trade center for Jurchen traders, but in the 1460s the Chien-chou Jurchens were granted a separate market at Fu-shun. Located in the heart of Liao-tung and close to their home base on the Hun (Hun ho) and Suksuhu Rivers, the Fu-shun market offered the Chien-chou Jurchens excellent trade profits and accelerated their familiarity with Chinese ways. In 1576 another three markets were opened for them at Ch'ing-ho, Ai-yang and K'uan-tien (places southeast of Shen-yang), multiplying the advantages. No other Jurchen group had more than one or two markets.[36]

When the horse markets were first opened during the Yung-lo reign (1403–24), the Ming government had an extreme need for military and postal relay horses. Besides horses, the Jurchens sold camels, furs (sable, leopard, bear, tiger, deer, roebuck, fox, lynx, otter), wax, honey, mushrooms, lumber, ginseng, gold, silver, pearls (including the precious freshwater pearls – *tana*), walrus teeth, copper, mercury, cinnabar, and *šongkon*, a much-admired gerfalcon known in Chinese as *hai-tung-ch'ing*. In return for these goods, the Jurchens acquired foodstuff (grain, pigs, sheep, and salt), textiles, iron implements, and as time went by more farm oxen and agricultural tools. Luxury items received from the Ming court as return gifts were commonly exchanged for more ordinary goods.

Officially the Ming disallowed the trade of weapons, ironware, copper cash, and certain silks. But Jurchens routinely requested and obtained pots and other implements made of iron and copper. Even when special restrictions were announced on iron, as was occasionally the case because the Ming authorities feared that these objects would be melted down and turned into weapons, the Jurchens did not seem to have had much difficulty purchasing them through unofficial channels, both from China and Korea. The Jurchens had their own blacksmiths who supplied soldiers with arrowheads made from iron. After the Ming military's most urgent need for horses was satisfied by the 1420s, the horse markets developed into government-sponsored markets, where the government collected taxes from both sides, but then returned some of the money to the Jurchens in the form of gifts.[37]

Toward the end of the fifteenth century, profits from an expanding sable trade greatly increased the Jurchens' profits. Sable became a fashion item, first at the Ming and Korean courts, then among the broader elite in both countries. By 1500, sable was a main item of trade between the Jurchens and China and Korea, and its volume continued to increase. In 1583, 47,243 pelts

[36] Lin, "Manchuria trade and tribute in the Ming dynasty," pp. 867–70. [37] Ibid., p. 876.

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were said to have been traded within a six-month period.[38] Sable, along with ginseng, presented the Jurchens with an export product that was handsomely priced in relation to the goods they desired themselves.

The flourishing Jurchen trade had several important effects. Trade profits possible outside the tribute system meant that economic opportunities were no longer restricted to patent-holding chiefs. Anybody could accumulate wealth, and thereby power, and aspire to political leadership. Many apparently did. "Brigands and freebooters appeared everywhere, like (swarms of) honeybees. All of them, acclaiming themselves khans, beiles, or ambans, made themselves rulers of every village and heads of every clan and warred against one another."[39] As a result of this development, Jurchen society in the more southerly portions of Manchuria became more differentiated than it had been when group hunting was the major pursuit. There were now rich and poor Jurchens, with the rich increasingly residing in the new fortified towns. Trade profits also enabled the Jurchens to buy more weapons, which in turn meant more effective raids, more captives, and more manpower for the fields.

The sable trade also broadened the Chien-chou Jurchens' contact with the northern Jurchen tribes because high-quality black sable came from Siberia and the Amur River. Connections established and knowledge gained about the northern regions benefited Nurhaci when he later incorporated the Wild Jurchens into his expanding empire. Nurhaci may also have benefited from a growing desire among the Jurchen merchants for a strong administrative power that could deal successfully with the instability of trade conditions.[40]

New Jurchen power through confederation building

A weakening tribal and clan cohesion in the ethnically diverse south made it easier for successful Jurchen chiefs to build confederations that cut across tribal and clan lines. By the mid-sixteenth century, following several decades of a rather murky Jurchen history, the Ming guard structure had mostly disappeared and two Jurchen confederations appeared. The Hai-hsi Jurchens, after having been devastated during the Mongol invasion following the T'u-mu incident in 1450, had moved south to areas north and east of T'ieh-ling and were known as the Hūlun confederation, or the Four Hūlun States

[38] Yoshihiro Kawachi, "Ming dynasty sable trade in Northeast Asia," *Proceedings of the 35th Permanent International Altaistic Conference, September 12–17, 1992, Taipei, China*, ed. Ch'en Chieh-hsien (Taipei, 1993), p. 193.

[39] *Man-chou shih-lu* (ca. 1780, rpt. Taipei, 1964), pp. 20–1. Refers to 1569, when Nurhaci was 10 years old.

[40] Yoshihiro, "Ming dynasty sable trade in Northeast Asia," p. 197.

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(*Hu-lun ssu-kuo*).[41] The Chien-chou confederates, who continued to live to the east of Liao-tung and north of the Yalu River, incorporated five Jurchen groups.

Each of the Four Hūlun States, the Ula[42] (Wu-la), Hoifa (Hui-fa), Yehe (Ye-ho), and Hada (Ha-ta), occupied a certain district (*golo*), often named after a river. Each was ruled by a subclan belonging to the Nara (Na-la) clan. Established in 1403 on the Hulan River north of Harbin as one of the earliest guards recognized by the Ming government, the Ula continued to be the northernmost tribe within the Hai-hsi group even after they moved south to the region around Kirin. The Hoifa were founded by members of a clan from a different tribe, but, for some reason, they were invited to join the Nara clan. The Yehe tribe was founded by a Tümed Mongol who conquered a Nara-ruled tribe, adopted the surname Nara and established his realm on the banks of the Yehe River (Ye-ho ho) south of Ch'ang-ch'un. Living to the south of the Yehe, east of K'ai-yüan, the Hada were the southernmost of the Hai-hsi.

In 1548 Wang T'ai (also called Wan; d. 1582)[43] succeeded as chieftain of the Hada and asserted his hegemony over the Four Hūlun States. He contracted various intertribal marriage ties with both Jurchens and Mongols, and warred energetically to expand his state. Not content with the title of beile, he adopted the grander one of khan and enlarged his khanate so that it came to include not only the Hada, Ula, Yehe, and Hoifa, but also the Hunehe (Hun River) tribe of the Chien-chou Jurchens. Holding all of the Hai-hsi patents, Wang T'ai maintained good relations with the Ming court, which supported him as an ally to help them contain the Mongols and other Jurchens.

After Wang T'ai's death in 1582, Hada control over the Four Hūlun States diminished. The corruption of Wang T'ai's eldest son caused widespread disaffection among his allies and provided an opportunity for two Yehe brothers (Cinggiyanu [Ch'ing-chi-nu or Ch'eng-chia-nu], d. 1584; and Yangginu [Yang-chi-nu or Yang-chia-nu], d. 1584) to assert their leadership. The two detached the Yehe and Ula tribes from Hada control and founded a new Yehe confederation. Recognizing Yehe independence from the Hada, the Ming government gave them separate border markets. From then on the Yehe did business at the North Customs Barrier (Chen-pei-kuan, or Pei-kuan), northeast of K'ai-yüan, and the Hada traded at the South Customs Barrier

[41] Earlier the Hai-hsi Jurchens were also known as Hu-la-wen, or Hu-lan Jurchens, because their first guard was on the Hulan River, north of Harbin.

[42] The world *ula* means "river" in Manchu. By itself *ula* refers to the upper Sungari River around Kirin, which is where the Ula people lived.

[43] Biography in *ECCP*, pp. 799–800.

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(Kuang-shun-kuan, or Nan-kuan). Though holding separate markets for different Jurchens or Mongol groups was part of the Ming political strategy of divide and rule, the effect was counterproductive when applied to the subgroups of the Hūlun confederation. The division of the Hūluns made them a less effective balance against the growing power of the Chien-chou confederation.

Under the leadership of Wang Kao (d. 1575), a contemporary of Wang T'ai, the Chien-chou confederation consisted of the Suksuhu River tribe, the Hunehe tribe, the Wanggiya, Donggo, and Jecen tribes. A few other tribes, such as the Neyen (Nei-yen) and Jušeri (Chu-sheh-li) along the Long White Mountain and the Yalu River tribes, had become distinct entities but were still considered Chien-chou Jurchens. A powerful leader, Wang Kao frequently allied himself with Mongols to harass the Liao-tung frontier. But when he captured and killed the Ming commander at Fu-shun in 1573, he provoked a counterattack during which the Ming military burned Wang Kao out of his fort and killed over a thousand of his followers. Wang Kao fled to Hada territory, where Wang T'ai seized him and handed him over to the Ming general Li Ch'eng-liang (1526–1618),[44] who executed Wang Kao in 1575.

After Wang Kao's death the Chien-chou confederation fell apart, but within the Suksuhu River tribe several leaders stood ready to take his place. Among them were Wang Kao's son Atai (A-t'ai), Nikan Wailan (Ni-k'an Wai-lan; d. 1586),[45] and Giocangga (Chüeh-ch'ang-an or Chiao-ch'ang; d. 1583), chief of Beiles of the Sixes (Ma. *Ningguta-i Beile*; Chin. *Liu wang*), who occupied Hetu Ala[46] on the upper Suksuhu River. Even though only a secondary chieftain under Wang Kao, Giocangga was an established leader who frequented the Fushun market as official delegation leader.[47]

In 1582, when Atai plundered Ming territory, Nikan Wailan hoped to advance his own fortune. He persuaded the Ming commanders to join him in an attack against Atai. Li Ch'eng-liang and Nikan Wailan proceeded against Atai's Fort Gure (Ku-le) in 1583. In the meantime, Giocangga seems to have played both sides. Though secretly allied with Li Ch'eng-liang, he now feared for his granddaughter, who was married to Atai. Taking his fourth son Taksi (T'a-k'o-shih or T'a-shih) with him, Giocangga hurried to Gure. During the ensuing battle Giocangga and Taksi, along with the fort's inhabitants, were massacred.

[44] Ibid., pp. 450–2. [45] Ibid., pp. 591–2. [46] Near Yung-ling in Liaoning Hsin-pin County.

[47] Giocangga's name appears in Ming records on Fu-shun market activities. Wang Wei-pang, comp., *Ming-tai Liao-tung tang-an hui-pien* (Shen-yang, 1985), Vol. 2, pp. 809, 812, 814.

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With the Chien-chou Jurchens weakened by this fighting and the Hada disrupted by a succession struggle following Wang T'ai's death in 1582, the Yehe tried to rebuild the Hūlun confederation under their own leadership. But when they invaded Hada territory, Li Ch'eng-liang, in the spirit of supporting the weak and controlling the strong, assisted the Hada, assassinated the two Yehe brothers, and invaded the Yehe. However, substantial losses in his own ranks forced Li to withdraw. Though another Ming attack on the Yehe in 1588 ended in a similar stalemate, Li Ch'eng-liang's actions prevented the revitalization of the Hūlun confederation and gave Nurhaci, Taksi's eldest son, the chance to tip the balance in favor of the Chien-chou Jurchens.

NURHACI: FORGING A MANCHU POLITY

From Nurhaci's rise to the conquest of Liao-tung (1583–1619)

The background of Nurhaci

While the Hada and Ming troops feuded with the Yehe, Nurhaci sought revenge against Nikan Wailan for having caused his father's and grandfather's deaths. Starting out with thirteen sets of armor left by his father and a core of Chien-chou Jurchens from the Suksuhu River tribe, Nurhaci gradually expanded his power by creating a Manchu nation-at-arms. The term Manchu (*manju*) occurs in the records of Nurhaci's time.[48] However, it was formally adopted only in 1635.[49] At the risk of being anachronistic, this chapter uses "Manchu" to refer to the political entity Nurhaci was constructing and to persons central to that effort.

According to later, Ch'ing dynasty sources, Nurhaci belonged to the Aisin Gioro (Ai-hsin chüeh-lo) clan. Nurhaci also claimed to be a descendant of Möngke Temür, whose clan name was T'ung.[50] The oddity of belonging to two clans is not explained. Based on recent research, Nurhaci was probably not a T'ung because the two figures (Sibaoci Fiyanggū [Hsi-pao-ch'i pien-ku] and Fuman [Fu-man]) who were to have connected Nurhaci's

[48] In the old Manchu documents, the term *manju* first occurs in an entry for 1613: *Chiu Man-chou tang*, Vol. 1, p. 81; Kanda Nobuo et al., *Mambun Rōtō* (Tokyo, 1955–63), Vol. 1, p. 37. However, according to Huang Chang-chien the term *manju* was already used in a 1605 Korean report. See Chang's "Man-chou kuo kuo hao k'ao," *BIHP*, 37, No. 2 (1967), p. 468. The early significance of the term has not been established satisfactorily.

[49] *Chiu Man-chou tang*, Vol. 9, p. 4509; *Chiu Man-chou tang: T'ien-tsung chiu nien*, trans. Kanda Nobuo et al. (Tokyo, 1972), Vol. 2, p. 318.

[50] According to a diary kept by a Korean visitor to Fe Ala in 1596, Nurhaci signed as "T'ung Nurhaci" in a communication to the Korean king. Shin Chung-il, *Kŏnju jichŏng dorŏk*, Vol. 6 of *Ch'ing shih tzu liao, K'ai kuo shih liao* (3) (Taipei, 1971), p. 20.

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grandfather Giocangga to Möngke Temür's son, Cungšan, seem to have been fictitious.[51] Nurhaci signed his name as T'ung a few times, but did so only during the time he was establishing himself as leader of the Chien-chou Jurchens when it was advantageous to appear as heir to Möngke Temür. Moreover, he did so only vis-à-vis Korea and the Ming. No evidence has been found which would prove that Nurhaci referred to his T'ung lineage when addressing his fellow Jurchens.[52] There is little doubt that Nurhaci was a Gioro, though at the time of his birth probably not an Aisin Gioro. Most likely Nurhaci started a new clan after he became powerful, probably some time around 1612.[53] He named this clan Aisin Gioro. He used the word "gold" (Ma. *aisin*; Chin. *chin*), which alluded to the earlier Jurchen dynasty, for his clan as well as for the name of his new state, the later Chin dynasty.

Due to the untimely deaths of his grandfather and his father, Nurhaci, like Chinggis Khan and Tamerlane, got an early start on his own career. Born in 1559, he lost his mother when he was young, and for a time he made a living by collecting ginseng and cones and selling them in the Fu-shun market. According to several Chinese sources, Nurhaci lived in the household of the Ming general Li Ch'eng-liang in Fu-shun and accompanied his master on official tours to various places, possibly including Peking. He learned to read Chinese, and from Chinese novels he gained some knowledge of Chinese history and military strategy.[54]

Nurhaci appreciated the value of written language. In 1599 he had two of his advisors create what became the Manchu script by adapting the Mongolian alphabet. Many of the earliest documents written in this script are preserved in the Old Manchu Archives (*Chiu Man-chou tang*), a collection of Manchu documents from 1607 to 1636.[55] Nurhaci's personal abilities earned him the appellation of Wise Beile (Ma. *sure beile*; Chin. *ts'ung jui wang*). Yet,

[51] For evidence in support of this interpretation, see Li, *Ch'ing tai ch'üan shih*, Vol. 1, pp. 54–8. Li argues that according to Korean sources Cungšan did not have a son named Sibaoci Fiyanggu and that none of the Ming records regarding border trade or tribute missions ever mention Fuman. Nor does a Korean visitor to Nurhaci's residence in 1595/6 seem to have known about Fuman, who as commissioner-in-chief would have been a famous father of Giocangga, who had died only twelve years earlier. Furthermore, when the graves of Nurhaci's ancestors were moved from Hetu Ala to Liaoyang, there is no mention of Fuman. Walter Fuchs, "Frühmandjurische Fürstengräber bei Liao-yang," *Asia Major*, 10 (1934–35), pp. 94–122. Thus, it appears that Nurhaci was probably not a member of the T'ung clan.

[52] Li, *Ch'ing tai ch'üan shih*, p. 55.

[53] Kanda Nobuo suggests that Nurhaci created the name Aisin Gioro in 1616, at the time he formally acceded to the throne. See "A study of 'Aisin Gioro,'" *Contacts between cultures. Selected papers from the 33rd International congress of Asian and North African Studies, Toronto, August 15–25, 1990*, ed. Bernard Hung-Kay Luk (Lewiston, 1992), Vol. 4, pp. 46–9.

[54] Official Ch'ing sources do not mention Nurhaci's years in Fu-shun. The sources that do contain this information are discussed in Yen Ch'ung-nien, *Nu-erh-ha-ch'ih chuan* (Peking, 1983), pp. 19–22; see also T'eng Shao-chen, *Nu-erh-ha-ch'ih p'ing chuan* (Shen-yang, 1985), pp. 31–7.

[55] *Chiu Man-chou tang*, foreword by Ch'en Chieh-hsien, 10 vols. (Taipei, 1969).

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like any other Jurchen would-be leader, he needed to prove his worth to his peers in the military field.

Jurchen unification and first alliances with the Mongols

Swearing revenge for the deaths of his father and grandfather, Nurhaci demanded indemnification from the Ming government in 1583. The Ming returned the corpses, and along with thirty patents gave him the right to succeed his grandfather Giocangga. But the Ming government did not accede to Nurhaci's demand that they hand over Nikan Wailan. Instead, they threatened to declare Nikan khan of all Jurchens, a possibility that led some Jurchens, including several from Nurhaci's own lineage, to curry the favor of Nikan. Unhappy about Nurhaci's succession to Giocangga's position, Giocangga's brothers and their sons were not willing to submit to Nurhaci's overlordship.

In spite of disapproval and threats on his life from his own relatives, Nurhaci gathered a few friends and went to war against Nikan Wailan. When Nikan fled and sought refuge with the Ming, Nurhaci turned his attention to subduing the neighboring Chien-chou towns and districts. By 1586 Nurhaci's prestige was such that the Ming authorities no longer refused his demand that Nikan Wailan be killed. But by then his goal was beyond eliminating a personal enemy. In 1588 he subjected the Wanggiya tribe and received the submission of the Donggo tribe in the southeast. A year later he attacked smaller Jurchen tribes in the vicinity of the Long White Mountain and along the Yalu River, but before he could subdue them the Yehe demanded his attention in the north. Counting on Ming support, the Yehe demanded that Nurhaci cede some of his territory to them.

Nurhaci rejected their demand and prepared for conflict. At the same time he also attended to his own relationship with the Ming government. Officially he still considered himself a guardian of the Ming border and a local representative of imperial Ming power. In 1589, he endeared himself to the Ming by rescuing several kidnapped Chinese and delivering them to Ming authorities, an act which earned him the title of assistant commissioner-in-chief. In 1590 he led his first of eight tribute missions of Jurchen chiefs to Peking.[56] Two years later he offered the Ming his assistance in their defense of Korea against a Japanese invasion under Toyotomi Hideyoshi. The Ming did not accept the offer, but in 1595 awarded Nurhaci the title of dragon-tiger general (*lung-hu chiang-chün*), an honor which at the same time –

[56] Nurhaci went to Peking in 1590, 1592, 1593, 1597, 1598, 1601, 1608, and 1611. In 1615 he sent others. Yen Ch'ung-nien, "Nu-erh-ha-ch'ih ju ching chin kung k'ao," *Yen pu chi* (Peking, 1989), pp. 27–32.

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undoubtedly for balance – they also bestowed on the Hada leader Menggebulu (Meng-ko-pu-lu).[57]

What earned him rewards from the Ming aroused fear among the neighboring Hūlun Jurchens. In 1593 a force of nine allies, including the four Hūlun tribes, the Korchin Mongols, and tribes from the Long White Mountain region, attacked Nurhaci's Manchus. The allies were defeated, with the result that the Jurchen chiefs no longer dared oppose Nurhaci and instead started offering him their sisters or daughters in marriage. The marriage alliances did not buy peace. After conquering the Long White Mountain tribes, Nurhaci's forces vanquished the Hada between 1599 and 1601, killing his rival dragon-tiger general in the process.[58] Nurhaci conquered the Hoifa in 1607, and the Ula in 1613. The Yehe maintained their independence until 1619.

Nurhaci sent numerous expeditions to the Wild Jurchens in northern Manchuria. The end of Ula independence in 1613 opened up the region of the Warka, who until then had been within the Ula sphere of influence and used the Ula area as a transshipment center for their furs. The Wild Jurchens were ruled by many independent small chiefs, and it took many expeditions and campaigns throughout the pre-1644 period before they were firmly incorporated into the new regime. Neither Nurhaci nor Hung Taiji occupied the northern territories, but military expeditions to these areas regularly returned with prisoners or surrendered people. The Wild Jurchens who stayed behind served the Manchus by bringing tribute to the Ch'ing court.

After defeating the Ula in 1613, Nurhaci made several attempts to win the allegiance of the Mongols in preparation for confronting the Ming. Bordering Nurhaci's state in the northwest were the Korchins, the Five Khalkas, and the Chahars. The Korchin Mongols participated in the nine-member alliance against Nurhaci in 1593, but soon thereafter they concluded a pact of friendship with him and over the years entered countless marriage alliances with the Manchu royal house. The Korchins' loyalty earned them the resentment of the Chahars, but also Manchu protection against Chahar attacks.

Nurhaci was eager to establish friendly relations with the Khalkas and to win their support for campaigns against the Ming, or at least to ward off attacks from that front. The Five Khalka Mongols had exchanged women with Nurhaci as early as 1594, and groups of Khalka Mongols came to submit

[57] *Huang Ch'ing k'ai kuo fang lüeh* (c. 1786; trans. as *Huang-Ts'ing k'ai-kuo fang-lüeh. Die Gründung des Mandschurischen Kaiserreiches*, trans. Erich Hauer, Berlin, 1926), p. 42. Earlier, the Hada chief of T'ai had received the same title as a reward for delivering Wang K'ao to the Ming. Gibert, *Dictionnaire historique*, p. 950.

[58] Menggebulu was accused of plotting with one of Nurhaci's ambans to usurp Nurhaci's leadership position. See Ch'en Chieh-hsien, *Manchu archival materials* (Taipei, 1988), pp. 59–60.

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to the Manchus throughout Nurhaci's reign. In 1607 a Khalka group honored Nurhaci with the title of Honored Great Khan (Ma. *Kundulun khan*; Mo. *Kündelen khagan*).[59] However, most of the Mongols who submitted at this time were minor chiefs. The more powerful among the Five Khalkas refused to cooperate with Nurhaci. They depended on Ming markets to exchange their horses and furs for grain and daily necessities, and they received liberal awards from the Ming to keep them loyal. Therefore, when the Ming government was forced to close the Mongol markets after Nurhaci's attack on Liao-tung, the Five Khalkas came to the aid of the Ming, hoping to restore their trading privileges and continue to receive silver for their cooperation.[60]

Nurhaci's statements referring to the Five Khalkas reflect an ambivalence about the Mongol relationship. In 1619, when proposing joint military action with the Five Khalka Mongols, Nurhaci chose to stress the similarities between the Manchus and Mongols and their dissimilarities with the Koreans and Chinese. "The languages of the Chinese and Koreans are different, but their clothing and way of life is the same. It is the same with us Manchus (Jušen) and Mongols. Our languages are different, but our clothing and way of life is the same."[61] Yet only four months later, on an occasion when no alliance was sought, when, on the contrary, the Mongols had invaded the territory recently conquered by the Manchus, the emphasis is on dissimilarity: "Why do you Mongols take the grain, people, horses, oxen and everything from the Yehe? Did you Mongols help us destroy their towns? Did you help work their fields? You Mongols raise livestock, eat meat and wear pelts. My people till the fields and live on grain. We two are not one country and we have different languages."[62] Thus, the relationship between Nurhaci and the Mongols at this time seemed to be one of mutual opportunism, not a solidarity based on cultural affinity.

Even without a firm commitment from the Mongols across the border, Nurhaci prepared for a break with the Ming. For about twenty years he had maintained his tribute relationship with the Ming court, but as his power grew the relationship became strained and border conflicts multiplied. In 1608 border transgressions by Chinese ginseng diggers led to an agreement which defined a boundary that Ming subjects were prohibited from crossing for the purpose of gathering ginseng or pearls or for cultivating the land.[63] In 1611 Nurhaci arrived in Peking for his last tribute mission, though he

[59] Farquhar, "The origins of the Manchus' Mongolian policy," pp. 198–9.

[60] Li, *Ch'ing tai ch'üan shih*, pp. 206–15.

[61] *Chiu Man-chou tang* (Taipei, 1969), Vol. 1, p. 448; Kanda, *Mambun Rōtō*, Vol. 1, p. 160.

[62] *Chiu Man-chou tang*, Vol. 1, p. 497; Kanda, *Mambun Rōtō*, Vol. 1, p. 201.

[63] *Man-chou shih lu*, c. 1780; rpt. in *Ta Ch'ing man-chou shih-lu. Ta Ch'ing T'ai-tsu Kao huang-ti shih-lu ho ting pen* (Taipei, 1964), p. 136; Hauer, *Huang-Ts'ing k'ai kuo fang-lüeh*, p. 40.

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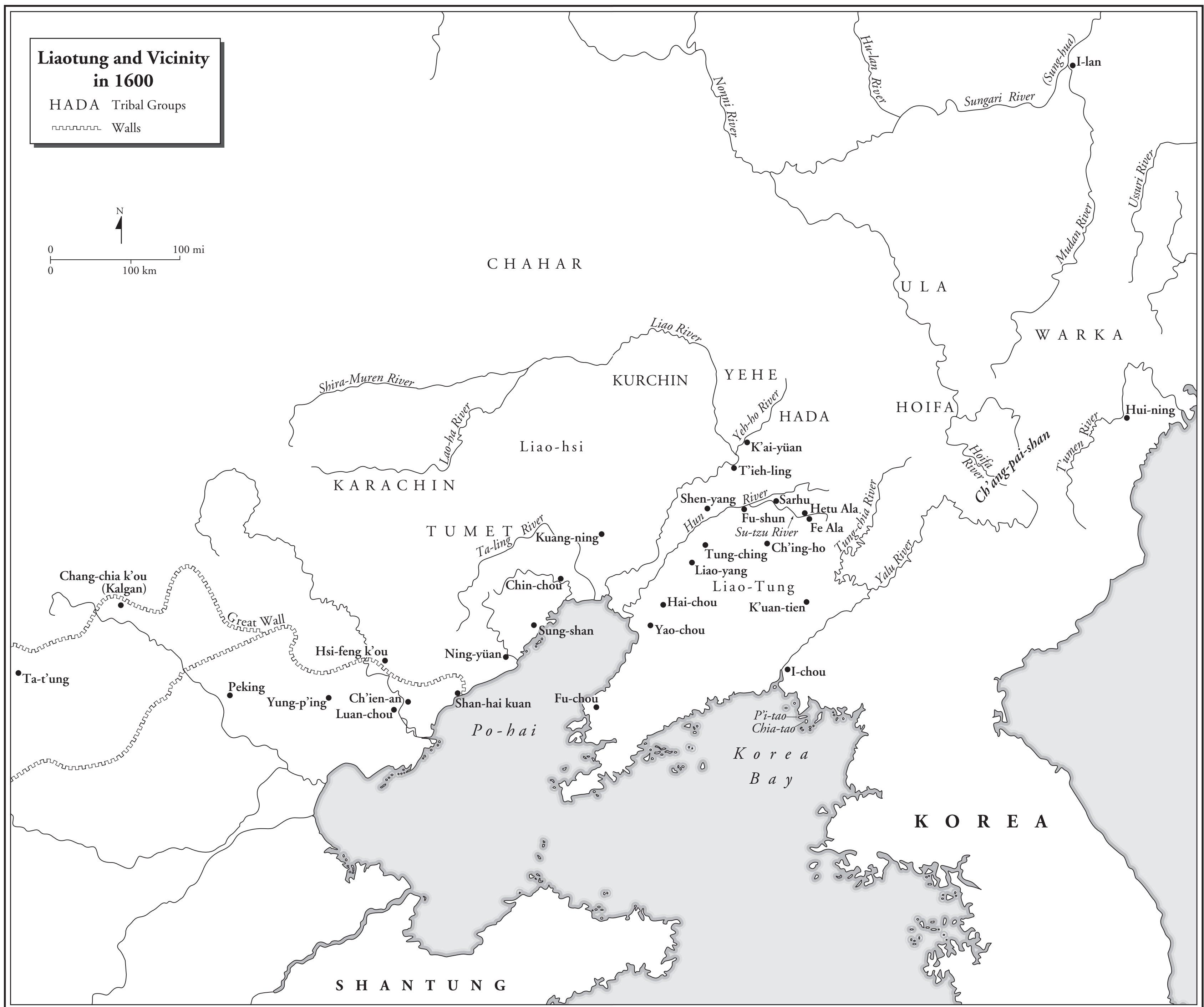

Map 2. *Liaotung and vicinity in 1600*. Frederic Wakeman, Jr. *The great enterprise: The Manchu reconstruction of imperial order in seventeenth-century China* (Berkeley, 1985), p. 40. Secondary source: Jonathan D. Spence and John E. Wills, Jr., eds., *From Ming to Ch'ing: Conquest, region, and continuity in seventeenth-century China* (New Haven, 1979), p. [2].

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seems to have sent a final delegation as late as 1615. Even though the Manchus needed tribute gifts and trade to ameliorate the increasingly difficult economic conditions at home, Nurhaci proclaimed his independence from the Ming in 1616. Three years later he declared war by issuing a list of grievances and attacking Fu-shun. By this time the idea of a Manchu state and recognition for it outweighed the value of Ming imperial gifts.

Manchu organization building

Nurhaci's unification of the Jurchens depended on his ability to deploy his new manpower. Making use of the customary term "company" (Ma. *niru*; Chin. *niu-lu*) for the units under which Jurchen men were organized for hunts and wars, Nurhaci in 1601 subdivided his followers, including the newly captured Hada, into companies, each headed by a company commander (Ma. *niru-i ejen*; Chin. *niu-lu o-chen*). He then joined several companies to form four banners (Ma. *gūsa*; Chin. *ch'i*), each flying a different color (yellow, white, red, and blue). Building on the traditional clan system of squads and companies and an even earlier military system of the Chin dynasty,[64] the early banner system (*pa-ch'i*) did not disturb the pre-existing social units. As tribes, clans, or villages of Jurchens, Mongols, or Chinese submitted to the Manchus, such units remained intact and their leaders retained authority over their people. Gradually tribal and village units were transformed into new, artificial units of more or less equal size. This provided Nurhaci with an organizational system which was expandable as new manpower became available and which was not restricted by clan size or clan loyalties. Unlike earlier uses of squads and companies, the new banner squads and companies were not temporary organizations for specific tasks. They were permanent organizational units.

During the early years of his rule, Nurhaci shared power with his brother Šurhaci (Shu-erh-ha-ch'i; 1564–1611)[65] and his eldest son Cuyen (Chu-ying; 1580–1615).[66] Though Nurhaci retained most of the decision-making authority, his brother and son enjoyed a certain autonomy and maintained their own outside alliances, often strengthened by marriage ties. Šurhaci's personal relationship with the Hoifa leader presented a problem when the Manchus annexed the Hoifa and killed their leader and his son. Noting Šurhaci's lack of enthusiasm for this military action, Nurhaci, in 1609, asserted authority over his brother by claiming that Šurhaci held his position

[64] For a description of this system, the *meng-an mou k'o* organization, see Herbert Franke and Denis Twitchett eds., *Alien regimes and border states, 907–1368*, Vol. 6 of *The Cambridge history of China* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 273–6.
[65] Biography in *ECCP*, p. 694. [66] Ibid., pp. 212–13.

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not by hereditary right but by the generosity of the khan, Nurhaci. Two years later Nurhaci had his brother and two of his brother's sons put to death.[67]

Šurhaci's death left Cuyen as second in command and likely heir apparent. Unhappy with this state of affairs, Cuyen's brothers Daišan (Tai-shan; 1583–1648),[68] Manggultai (Mang-ku-erh-t'ai; 1587–1633),[69] and Hung Taiji (Huang T'ai-ch'i) joined with their cousin Amin (A-min; d. 1640)[70] to sow suspicion in their father's mind against Cuyen. In 1613, Nurhaci placed Cuyen in confinement, and two years later he had his son executed.

Having freed himself from his co-rulers with hereditary rights, Nurhaci began limiting the power of the other beiles. He first turned to five long-term companions-in-arms who owed their positions to him, not to their birth. These Five Grand Ministers (Ma. *sunja amban*; Chin. *li-cheng t'ing-sung wu ta-ch'en*) had direct, individual access to Nurhaci and were to advise him and see to the execution of his commands. All communications to and from the khan, including those of the beiles, had to pass through these grand ministers. This arrangement was the forerunner of a series of short- and long-term official and unofficial "beiles and ambans of counsel" (Ma. *hebe-i beile ambasa*; Chin. *i-cheng ta-ch'en*) in which the interests of the aristocrats and the bureaucracy merged. For further empowerment, Nurhaci gave each of the Five Grand Ministers one of his daughters in marriage, making them not just ambans (high officials) but also sons-in-law (*efu*) and therefore quasi-aristocrats.

Nurhaci also employed other high-level advisors, among them scholarly, multilingual experts who held the title of *baksi* (scholar; Chin. *pa-k'o-shih* or *pang-shih*). Erdeni Baksi (O-erh-te-ni; 1581–1623)[71] helped develop the Manchu script, served as interpreter of heavenly omens, proclaimed calls for surrender, wrote high-level communications, and recorded the khan's laws. Two other advisors, Kurcan (K'u-erh-ch'an, d. 1633)[72] and Dahai (Ta-hai, d. 1632),[73] both multilingual Manchus, also served under Nurhaci, though they became more prominent under his successor, Hung Taiji. Dahai translated numerous Chinese works into Manchu, among them the Ming penal code.

In order to administer the nation's law, Nurhaci created a three-tiered system. He appointed ten supreme judges (Ma. *jargūci*; Chin. *cha-erh-ku-ch'i*

[67] Li Hsüeh-chih, "Ch'ing T'ai-tsu shih-ch'i chien ch'u wen-t'i ti fen hsi," *Ssu yü yen*, 8, No. 2 (1970), p. 63.

[68] Biography in *ECCP*, p. 214. [69] Ibid., p. 562. [70] Ibid., pp. 8–9.

[71] Ibid., pp. 225–6. A German translation of Baksi's biography from the *Pa ch'i t'ung chih*, ch. 236, is available in Bernd-Michael Linke, *Zur Entwicklung des mandjurischen Khanats zum Beamtenstaat* (Wiesbaden, 1982), pp. 121–3.

[72] A German translation of Kurcan's biography from the *Pa ch'i t'ung chih*, ch. 236, is available in Linke, *Zur Entwicklung des mandjurischen Khanats*, pp. 124–33.

[73] Biography in *ECCP*, pp. 213–14. A German translation of Dahai's biography in the *Pa ch'i t'ung chih*, ch. 236, is available in Linke, *Zur Entwicklung des mandjurischen Khanats*, pp. 112–20.

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or *li-shih kuan*) who tried cases and then referred their decisions to the grand ministers, who in turn reviewed the evidence and the law, issued their own opinions, and passed the cases on to the beiles. Thus, the Five Grand Ministers, who as advisors to the khan were functionally equal to, if not above, the beiles, were subordinate to the beiles in the judicial process. Every five days Nurhaci himself came to the seat of government and held court, at which time the plaintiff reiterated his charge, and the khan reviewed the judges', grand ministers', and beiles' findings.

In 1615 Nurhaci reorganized the banner system, and in the process standardized the strength of the companies. He collapsed the earlier, smaller companies into 200 companies of 300 men each and appointed two assistant commanders (Ma. *daise*; Chin. *tai-tzu*) to help the company commander (Ma. *niru-i ejen*; Chin. *niu-lo o-chen*, later *tso-ling*) with overseeing the company's four squads (Ma. *tatan*; Chin. *t'a-t'an*). Each squad was led by an adjutant (Ma. *janggin*; Chin. *chang-ching*), with a "village driver" (Ma. *gašan bošoku*; Chin. *ts'un po-shih-k'u*) as assistant. For military duties, five companies moved together as a regiment (Ma. *jalan*; Chin. *chia-la*). Five regiments in turn formed a banner, led by a banner commander (Ma. *ūgūsai ejen*; Chin. *ku-shan o-chen*, later *tu-t'ung*) who was assisted by two vice-commanders (Ma. *meiren-i ejen*; Chin. *mei-lo o-chen*, later *fu tu-t'ung*), and who reported to a banner beile above him. All banner beiles received the highest princely rank of enfeoffed beile (Ma. *hošo-i beile*; Chin. *ho-shih pei-lo*), with the four elders among them also being called the Four Senior Beiles. Those of Nurhaci's sons and grandsons who did not have a banner command retained their title of beile but, as a member of one of the banners, each served under a banner beile.

Nurhaci set aside a certain number of companies to serve the beiles and ambans as bondservant companies (Ma. *boo-i niru*; Chin. *pao-i niu-lu*), and he and the Manchu beiles also had their own personal guards (Ma. *bayara*; Chin. *ch'in-ping*). In time these personal guards grew into units of elite troops within the overall banner system. Nurhaci's personal guard, the White Guard, protected the person of the khan but also could be deployed in times of war. The other personal guards, the Red Guards, functioned within the individual banners.[74]

Like the Jurchens' traditional clan organization, Nurhaci's banner system combined military, social, and economic functions, included the entire population, and retained a fair degree of collective decision making. In time the banner system served to eliminate the roles of former tribal aristocrats as they

[74] Ishibashi Takao, "Ch'ing ch'u pa-ya-la te hsing ch'eng kuo ch'eng," trans. Wang Hsiung, *Man-tsu yen chiu k'ao tzu liao*, 1 (Shen-yang, 1988), pp. 1–23.

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lost their status as beiles and were transformed into military officers who drew their authority and prestige from their rank in the banner system.

Conceptual empire building

During the early years of his career, Nurhaci pursued power through wealth, which he needed to attract and reward followers. Extensive contacts with Koreans and Chinese introduced new ideas and gave him new goals. The Jurchens knew from first-hand experience that the Ming government viewed trade less as an exchange of goods for mutual benefit than as an integral part of their tributary relations. Such relations manifested the emperor's political power and moral superiority over non-Chinese people. Aware that both the Ming and Korean governments considered the Jurchens politically as well as culturally inferior, Nurhaci, an aspiring leader, rethought his goals and decided that being a Ming official in charge of the Chien-chou Guard was not good enough.

In 1616, he held a formal ceremony to announce his accession to the throne. He assumed the title of Brilliant Emperor Nurturer of all Nations (*geren gurun-be ujire genggiyen han*), inaugurated his own calendar, and, in Chinese fashion, created a reign title (Ma. *abka-i fulingga*, "Mandated by Heaven"; Chin. *t'ien-ming*, "Heavenly mandate"). The Manchu version of the reign title was inscribed on the first Manchu coins.[75] Besides elevating Nurhaci personally above the status he already held as Wise Prince (Beile) or Honored Great Khan, the new titles and reign name were a declaration of independence from the Ming and a statement that he considered his new state a dynasty in the making.

Even before the 1616 ceremony Nurhaci had, at least informally, started using the term Aisin or Chin for his country, alluding to the Chin dynasty which ruled North China in the twelfth century.[76] After the break with the Ming, Nurhaci's communications with the Ming and Korea bear the signature Heavenly Mandated Khan of the Chin country (Ma. *Abka-i fulingga Aisin gurun han-i doro*; Chin. *T'ien-ming Chin-kuo han*). As far as Nurhaci was concerned, he no longer was the Ming government's Assistant Commissioner-in-Chief of the Chien-chou Left Guard, a title he had used in 1589.[77]

To spread the idea that the heavenly mandate was shifting toward Nurhaci and away from the Ming emperor, Nurhaci interpreted unusual occurrences of lights in the sky as heavenly omens of an impending change. Unusual lines

[75] For an illustration of the coin, see Gibert, *Dictionnaire historique*, p. 680.

[76] In the *Chiu Man-chou tang* the term first occurred in 1613 as *aisin doro*, "the Chin government." A few years later, Korean sources confirm that the name of Nurhaci's country was Chin. See Li, *Ch'ing tai ch'üan shih*, Vol. 1, p. 107.

[77] Li, *Ch'ing tai ch'üan shih*, Vol. 1, p. 107.

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of light in the sky appeared in 1612, 1614, and 1615. But the notion that an emperor is endowed by Heaven and receives Heaven's approval or disapproval was adopted with zeal when Nurhaci started to move into Liao-tung. During 1618, an overwhelming number of such heavenly signs allowed Manchus and Chinese to become used to the idea that a dynastic change might be nearing. Lines of light in the sky appeared nearly every month, once staying for the length of an entire month.[78]

Along with the heavenly mandate went the notion that a benevolent ruler attracts people from afar. History provided ample evidence that non-Chinese felt attracted to China and settled within its borders. The Manchus considered it proof that they qualified as a new dynasty because the direction of attraction was now reversed. "There is no precedent for Chinese people going over to another country, but because they have heard that we take good care of our people, they have come to us to submit."[79] Nurhaci was not shy about trying to increase the submission rate. In 1622 he warned Chinese fleeing before his troops in the Kuang-ning area: "Come out of hiding and down from the mountains because even if you go inside the Shan-hai Pass (Shan-hai kuan) . . . my great army will enter the Pass in 1623–4."[80] Nurhaci did not enter the Shan-hai Pass in 1623, nor in 1624. Domestic troubles kept him at home.

Over the course of his expansion, Nurhaci supported his imperial vision as well as his military objectives by repeatedly moving his home base. In 1603 he had left his first residence, the "Old Hill" (Ma. Fe Ala; Chin. Fo a-la),[81] and moved to Hetu Ala (Ho-t'u a-la), only eight *li* to the north. Hetu Ala had a better water supply, and, equally important, it was the former residence of his grandfather Giocangga, whose title Nurhaci had inherited. After occupying Liao-tung, Nurhaci moved his base to Jiefan (Chieh-fan) in 1619, to Sarhū (Sa-erh-hu) in 1620, to Liao-yang[82] in 1621, and to Shen-yang in 1625. Each time he consolidated his previous conquests and moved closer to his

[78] Gertraude Roth, "The Manchu-Chinese relationship, 1618–1636," *From Ming to Ch'ing: Conquests, region, and continuity in seventeenth-century China*, ed. Jonathan D. Spence and John E. Wills, Jr. (New Haven and London, 1979), p. 8. The 1610s and 1620s were a period of spectacular northern lights, with a great surge in sightings of aurorae in Europe. Frederic Wakeman, Jr., *The great enterprise: The Manchu reconstruction of the imperial order in seventeenth-century China* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1985), p. 57, n. 83.

[79] *Chiu Man-chou tang*, Vol. I, 553–4; Kanda, *Mambun Rōtō*, Vol. 1, pp. 164–5.

[80] *Chiu Man-chou tang*, Vol. 2, 1089; Kanda, *Mambun Rōtō*, Vol. 2, pp. 581–2.

[81] For a description and sketch of Fe Ala made by a Korean eyewitness who visited the town in 1596, see Giovanni Stary, "Die Struktur der ersten Residenz des Mandschukhans Nurhaci," *Central Asiatic Journal*, 25, Nos. 1–2 (1981), pp. 103–9.

[82] After moving to Liao-yang, Nurhaci built a new palace and a new city a few miles east of the city, calling it "Eastern capital" (Ma. Dergi hecen; Chin. Tung-ching). Under the Liao and Chin dynasties, Liao-yang was also at times called Tung-ching. Tung-ching ch'eng was also the name of the capital of the old Po-hai empire (712–926), but that city was located south of Ningguta.

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next target. To Nurhaci the strategic value of these moves was obvious. When the beiles disagreed, he admonished them, urging them to look "at the larger picture of establishing the great enterprise."[83]

Social and economic conditions before the conquest of Liao-tung

Prior to the creation of the banner system, people who surrendered or were taken prisoner became members of Nurhaci's clan (*mukūn*). As their numbers swelled, Nurhaci shared them with his brother Šurhaci and his son Cuyen so that each of the three headed one clan. However, after the deaths of Šurhaci and Cuyen, Nurhaci did not appoint new leaders for the two orphaned clans. This fact suggests the possibility that one of his reasons for eliminating his two co-rulers was to rid himself of their clans, which could have slipped from his control if further divisions occurred.[84] The relatively loose clan structures of his time most likely contributed to the ease with which Nurhaci diluted the power of the clan leaders and substituted the banner system as the primary social and military organization. Not surprisingly, the term clan (*mukūn*) temporarily disappears from the records.

There seems to have been no major friction between the Manchus, Chinese, and Mongols during the pre–Liao-tung period. To be sure, the majority of Chinese under the Manchus at this time were captives brought back from campaigns and distributed among the officials and soldiers as private slaves to work the fields. The individual master had complete power over his slaves. He could sell them, or, if he chose, kill them at will. But there were also Chinese who had joined the Manchus at an early time, some before 1600, and who formed their own companies. Of 400 companies in 1614, 308 were Manchu and Mongol, 76 were entirely Mongol, and 16 were Chinese.[85] The members of the Chinese (Han-chün) companies were equal to their Manchu counterparts, and when Manchu–Chinese relations became strained after the conquest of Liao-tung, the newly imposed discrimination did not extend to these early Chinese.[86]

[83] *Ta Ch'ing T'ai-tsu Kao huang-ti shih-lu*, rpt. as Vol. 6 of *Ch'ing shih tzu-liao*, *K'ai kuo shih liao* (2) (Taipei, 1969), ch. 8, pp. 17a–b.

[84] Scholars have generally assumed that Nurhaci tried "to obliterate tribal distinctions without destroying the clan structure." For this interpretation see Robert H. G. Lee, *The Manchurian frontier in Ch'ing history* (Cambridge, Mass., 1970), pp. 24–5; and Morris Rossabi, *China and Inner Asia* (New York, 1975), p. 85. Since Nurhaci had already reassigned original clan functions to the companies in his new banner system, it is just as likely that he tried to obliterate tribal distinctions in order to weaken the clans.

[85] O-erh-t'ai, *Pa ch'i t'ung chih* (1739), rpt. in *Chung-kuo shih hsüeh ts'ung-shu* (Taipei, 1968), Vol. 8, ch. 32, p. 4b (p. 3030).

[86] When a secret command in 1623 instructed the Manchu officials to judge the Chinese more harshly than the Manchus, Nurhaci specifically excluded the Chinese who had been with the Manchus before they moved into Liao-tung. *Chiu Man-chou tang*, Vol. 3, pp. 1585–7; Kanda, *Mambun Rōtō*, Vol. 2, pp. 771–2.

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To some extent, Nurhaci's victory over the other Jurchen tribes was attributable to the geographical location of the Chien-chou Jurchens. Not only did they live in an area which was richer in natural resources than the Hai-hsi Jurchens – only Chien-chou produced pearls, ginseng, and sable[87] – their proximity to China and Korea gave them the leverage to demand and gain more concessions. Access to four border markets stimulated them to exploit their natural resources and accelerated their economic development. By Nurhaci's time the Manchus knew how to smelt iron, and engaged in gold and silver mining as well as sericulture and cotton growing.

As Nurhaci expanded his control over his fellow Jurchens, the accumulation of Ming patents was still a major source of intertribal conflicts. Nurhaci started out with thirty patents, and held 500 patents by the time he unified the Chien-chou Jurchens. With his conquest of the Hada he added another 363 patents, along with access to the Hada K'ai-yüan market. For the Ming, the Manchu takeover of the K'ai-yüan market proved troublesome. Disregarding the rule that this market was not authorized to trade in ginseng, Nurhaci's traders not only traded ginseng at K'ai-yüan, but it was discovered that they added water to their product so that it would be heavier and fetch a higher price. When Chinese traders were unwilling to purchase such ginseng, the Manchus faced the possibility of having their ginseng rot. To solve the dilemma, the Manchus – credit is given to Nurhaci himself – developed a new method of drying the ginseng so that they would not be dependent on a quick sale. The innovation would prevent losses during future market disruptions.[88]

Captives, surrenders, and voluntary submissions brought additional human resources into the Manchu state. This new population was an asset to the Manchus only as long as there was enough land to employ them productively. They became a burden when their number increased out of proportion to the food supply. The first signs of serious economic difficulties appeared in 1615. In that year the beiles wanted to fight the Mongols, but Nurhaci warned them: "We do not even have enough food to feed ourselves. If we conquer them, how will we feed them?" Even without additional Mongol captives, the situation was serious. "Now we have captured so many Chinese and animals, how shall we feed them? Even our own people will die. Now during this breathing spell let us first take care of our people and secure all places, erect gates, till the fields, and fill the granaries."[89]

[87] Hauer, *Huang-Ts'ing k'ai-kuo fang-lüeh*, p. 30.
[88] *Ta Ch'ing T'ai-tsu Kao huang-ti shih-lu*, pp. 8b–9a. Also Li, *Ch'ing tai ch'üan shih*, Vol. 1, p. 74.
[89] *Chiu Man-chou tang*, Vol. 1, p. 103; Kanda, *Mambun Rōtō*, Vol. 1, p. 48.

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Due to Manchu hostilities, the Ming closed the Liao-tung border markets in 1618, creating a situation where "ten people share the ration of one person and ten horses are fed with the fodder adequate for one horse."[90] Hoping to get at least a winter's supply of food, Nurhaci set out to annihilate the Yehe, the last independent Hūlun tribe. He also made a show of negotiating with the Ming for reopening the markets, but his demands were neither realistic nor sincere. Insufficient food supplies were no longer a temporary problem. Within the confines of their borders, all arable land was worked by intensive agricultural methods.[91] There was no room for further expansion of agriculture without conquest. With nearby Liao-tung controlled by the Ming state, economic relief had to come from there.

From the conquest of Liao-tung to the death of Nurhaci (1619–1626)

Military conquests

In 1618, Nurhaci announced his Seven Grievances (Ma. *nadan koro*; Chin. *ch'i ta hen*) against the Ming, listing his father's and grandfather's murders, lack of respect shown to his envoys, and various border violations.[92] None of the grievances were new offenses, but the announcement served as a declaration of war. Under the pretext of holding a big market, Nurhaci sent three thousand merchants to the gates of Fu-shun. When Chinese traders emerged, his troops forced their way into the city and, once in control, obtained the surrender of the city's commander Li Yung-fang (d. 1634).[93] The city was destroyed. The loot and prisoners were divided and carted off to Hetu Ala. Soon thereafter the Manchus besieged and captured Ch'ing-ho, an exit and entry point between the Manchus and Ming Liao-tung. There, too, the Manchus gathered all provisions, killed or captured the population, and destroyed the town.[94]

In retaliation, a year later, a Ming punitive force of about 100,000 men, which included Korean and Yehe troops, approached Nurhaci's Manchus along four different routes. The strategy of dividing the forces turned out to be disastrous because it allowed the Manchus to attack each one separately. After scoring successive victories, the most famous one near the town of Sarhū, the Manchus exploited their advantage and went on to seize the

[90] *Chiu Man-chou tang*, Vol. 1, pp. 482–3; Kanda, *Mambun Rōtō*, Vol. 1, p. 118.

[91] Already in 1596 a Korean eyewitness bore witness to the full use of land around Fe Ala. Shin Chung-il, *Kŏnju jichŏng dorŏk*, p. 5.

[92] *Chiu Man-chou tang*, Vol. 1, pp. 181–4; Kanda, *Mambun Rōtō*, Vol. 1, pp. 86–9; Hauer, *Huang-ts'ing k'ai-kuo fang-lüeh*, pp. 64–5.

[93] Biography in *ECCP*, p. 499.

[94] Li, *Ch'ing tai ch'üan shih*, pp. 118–22.

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K'ai-yüan and T'ieh-ling garrisons. They then conquered the Yehe, who were left without protection.[95]

After these victories Nurhaci and his army did not return to Hetu Ala. There was no room there for the thousands of prisoners and surrendered people, and he was ready for more conquests. In 1621 the Manchus took the major towns of Liao-tung, including Shen-yang, Liao-yang, Hai-chou, Kai-chou, and Fu-chou. This left all of Liao-tung, except for the very tip of the Liao-tung peninsula, in Manchu hands. Moreover, the two Ming commanders in charge of the Liao-tung defense, Hsiung T'ing-pi (d. 1625)[96] and Wang Hua-chen (d. 1632),[97] disagreed on strategy and failed to cooperate. Aware of this discord in the Ming command, the Manchus crossed the Liao River into Liao-hsi in 1622, took Kuang-ning, and routed the Ming army there. Due to mounting difficulties at home, the Manchus were unable to hold Liao-hsi. In 1623, Nurhaci relocated the inhabitants of Kuang-ning to Liao-tung and ordered the city destroyed.

By 1623 Ming presence in Liao-hsi was reduced to the Shan-hai Pass, Ning-yüan (modern Hsing-ch'eng), and Chin-chou. Though the Ming military managed to strengthen Ning-yüan and Chin-chou defenses, their command structure remained unstable, a situation the Manchus could have taken advantage of, had their own internal conditions not been so precarious. The Chinese population in southern Liao-tung was rebelling, the relationship between Manchus and Chinese was tense, famine widespread, and banditry endemic. On the borders, Korea supported a Ming resistance force under Mao Wen-lung (1576–1629)[98] on P'i-tao (modern Chia-tao), a small island near the mouth of the Yalu River, and the Mongols raided Manchu territory in the east. Nurhaci was in no position to undertake major offensives.

Anxious to avoid a two-front war, Nurhaci exerted pressure on Korea to enter an alliance with the Manchus. But Korea remained fearful of its Jurchen neighbors. Throughout the Ming period Korea had repeatedly tried to wipe out centers of Chien-chou power along its borders, and when Nurhaci offered to help the Ming repel the Japanese invaders from Korea in 1592, the Korean court asked the Ming not to accept the offer. Viewing Nurhaci's rise with alarm, the Korean government rejected his requests for an alliance. It pointed out that its vassal relationship with China did not allow it to deal "privately" with Nurhaci. After the battle at Sarhū, in which Korea fought on the Ming

[95] For a detailed account of this punitive expedition, see *The Ming Dynasty, 1368–1644, Part 1*, Vol. 7 of *The Cambridge history of China*, ed. Frederick W. Mote and Denis Twitchett (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 577–82.

[96] Biography in *ECCP*, p. 308. [97] Ibid., p. 823. [98] Ibid., pp. 567–8.

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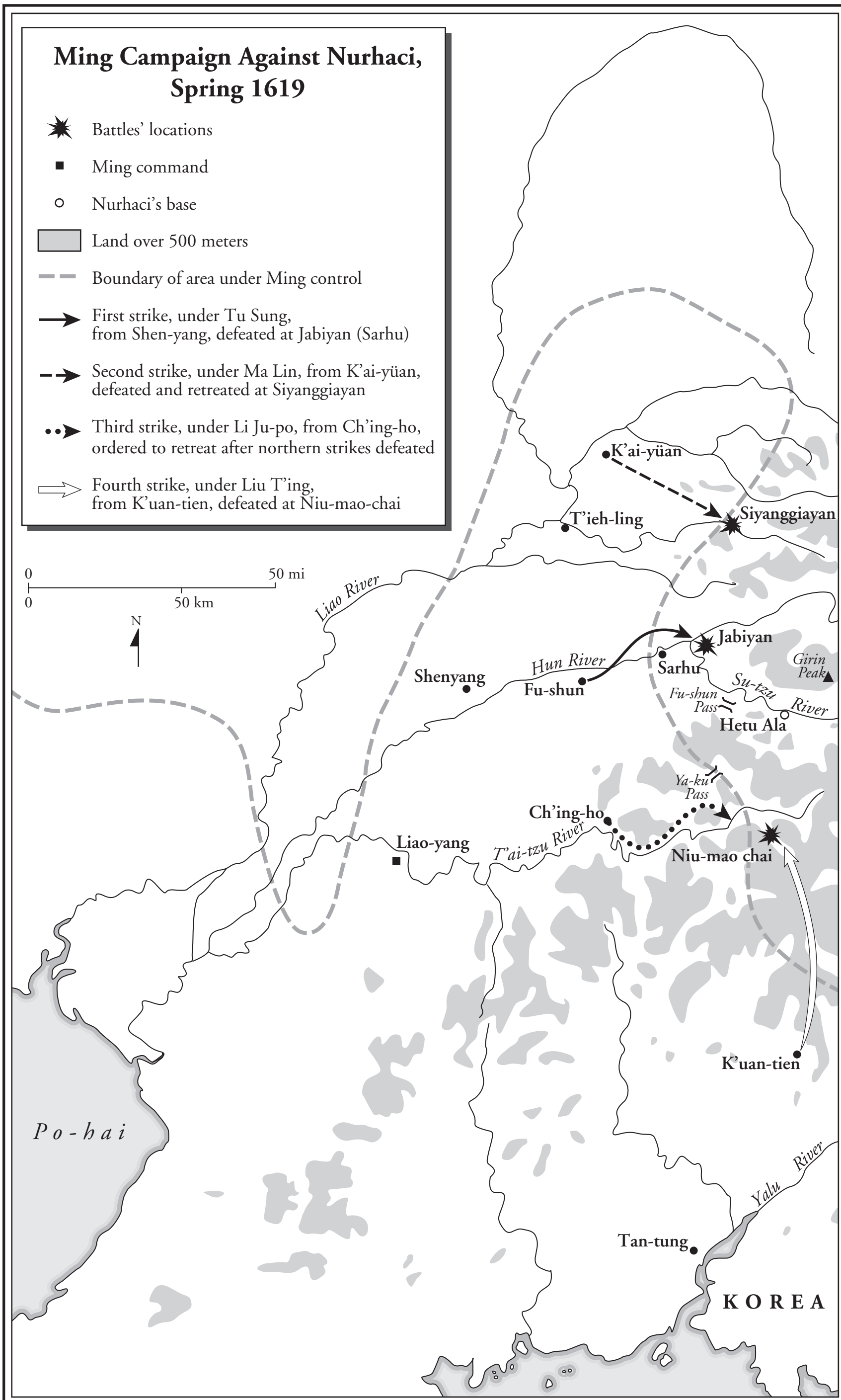

Map 3. *Ming campaign against Nurhaci, spring 1619*. Frederick W. Mote and Denis C. Twitchett, eds. *The Ming Dynasty, 1368–1644, Part 1, Vol. 7* of *The Cambridge History of China* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), Map 25, p. 578.

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side, Nurhaci intensified his pressure on Korea to abandon its relationship with the Ming. Though Korea did not respond, Nurhaci was successful in that Korea refrained from sending further support to the Ming in its defense of the Liao-tung cities.

By 1626 the worst of the internal crises appeared to be over. Though the Manchus were still economically weak, the departure of yet another Ming general, Sun Ch'eng-tsung (1563–1638),[99] from Liao-tung in 1626, seemed like an opportunity too good to pass up. Nurhaci headed once more into Liao-hsi and besieged Ning-yüan. But facing the Ming forces' newly acquired Portuguese cannons (*hung-i ta-p'ao*), the Manchus suffered great losses and Nurhaci withdrew in defeat. Prior to the use of the Portuguese cannons, the Manchu tradition of combining infantry with cavalry tactics was superior to that of the Chinese as long as battles were fought in the open field. But the Chinese troops at Ning-yüan, commanded by Yüan Ch'ung-huan (1584–1630),[100] made effective use of their cannons and Yüan did not expose his troops to an open battle.

Nurhaci's defeat at Ning-yüan had major ramifications. Whereas the Manchus lost some of their confidence to attack Ming fortifications, the Ming gained a boost in morale. Mao Wen-lung, emboldened by the Manchu defeat and stronger Korean support, penetrated deeply into Manchu territory. The Five Khalkas leaned firmly toward the Ming, and Ligdan Khan of the Chahars pursued his goal of unifying the Mongols ever more vigorously.

Maneuvering for political power

Under the banner system the eight banner beiles held strong positions. They participated with the khan in all major decision making, had full charge over their individual banner's affairs, and through it gained economic independence. They gained separate offices and gave commands to the Chinese officials attached to their banners without going through the khan.

Before long the Four Senior Beiles started positioning themselves for the succession struggle. After the death of his first designated heir, Cuyen, Nurhaci had favored his son Daišan as potential successor. But in 1620 he changed his mind when he learned of an inappropriate liaison between his wife and Daišan. A special relationship between the ruler's wife and the designated heir was not unusual, but in this case Daišan's opponents used the incident to tarnish his image and that of Nurhaci's wife and her son Manggultai. It is possible that Hung Taiji was behind this maneuver as he

[99] Ibid., pp. 670–1. [100] Ibid., pp. 954–5.

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sought to improve his own chances to become leader after Nurhaci's death.[101] Cases of improper association between grand ministers and beiles also bore evidence that the struggle over succession was in full swing. Giving up on designating another heir, Nurhaci started a system of rotating shifts for beile supervising administrative affairs. In 1622, he suggested collective leadership after his death.[102]

Amin did not participate in the succession struggle, probably realizing that as Šurhaci's son he stood little chance of succeeding. Instead, he asserted his traditional rights of tribal autonomy and on his own authority moved his people away from the area assigned to his banner. His action reflected his opposition to the new policy of conquest and foreshadowed his later attempt to seek independence. But Amin was not the only beile to question the policy. Nurhaci's decision to move his capital progressively further into the heart of Liao-tung was made over the opposition of the beiles, who favored raids for booty over permanent conquests.[103]

As administrative matters multiplied after the Manchu conquest of Liao-tung, Nurhaci created new positions to cover different areas of responsibilities. Since these appointees remained outside the Eight Banner system, they strengthened the centralized control and had the effect of adding bureaucratic supervision over the beiles and limiting their restiveness over succession and booty. Nurhaci appointed one executive censor (Ma. *du-tang*; Chin. *tu-t'ang*), two judges (Ma. *beidesi*; Chin. *tuan-shih kuan*) – one Mongol and one Chinese – and four ambans per banner. The four ambans were specifically told to "be constantly around the beiles and remind them of the imperial laws." If they failed to speak up, they, instead of the beiles, were to be killed.[104]

Nurhaci also curtailed the beiles' economic powers. He removed a percentage of the Chinese on the beiles' privately owned estates, retaining some himself and enrolling others as registered households under Han-chün banner officials.[105] He also changed the rules governing the distribution of booty in order to equalize the economic strength of the banner beiles. Originally the beiles had participated in campaigns with equal numbers of men, but such a practice did not guarantee an equal amount of booty. Because the former

[101] Li, *Ch'ing tai ch'üan shih*, p. 233.
[102] *Chiu Man-chou tang*, Vol. 3, pp. 1254–7; Kanda, *Mambun Rōtō*, Vol. 2, p. 554. Hauer, *Huang-ts'ing k'ai kuo fang-lüeh*, pp. 142–3. Gertraude Roth Li, "The rise of the early Manchu state: A portrait drawn from Manchu sources to 1636" (diss., Harvard University, 1975), pp. 50–1.
[103] Roth Li, "The rise of the early Manchu state," pp. 45–6.
[104] *Chiu Man-chou tang*, Vol. 3, pp. 1539–41; Kanda, *Mambun Rōtō*, Vol. 2, pp. 653–4.
[105] *Chiu Man-chou tang*, Vol. 2, p. 870; Kanda, *Mambun Rōtō*, Vol. 1, pp. 442–3.

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practice "might lead to disorder," the four ambans attached to each beile in 1623 were to make sure that all high-value items would be divided into eight equal parts.[106]

Restrictions also limited the freedom of the beiles in the social sphere. New regulations determined what items and how many of each kind they could offer in sacrifices. The regulations distinguished between the khan and the beiles, but only minimally between the beiles and the various official ranks.[107]

Social instability and rebellion

The policy change from raid to conquest also impacted the Manchu rank and file. After becoming members in the new banner system, Manchus continued to participate in battle and gain access to material rewards and slaves. However, as the bottom layer in a banner system that included many ranks, they lost some of the freedom they had had as members of earlier, less stratified clans. After they moved into Liao-tung, Nurhaci required strict discipline and restrained their looting activities. One out of two or three Manchus continued to do military duty and go on campaigns. Those who remained behind had to guard borders, towns, and the beiles homes; they had to pasture horses, participate with the Chinese in construction projects, and engage in farming. There even were Manchu slaves. Traditionally Jurchens did not enslave each other, but by the time the Manchus occupied Liao-tung, most beiles and high officials had at least some Jurchen slaves.[108]

Nurhaci's greatest challenge after the conquest of Liao-tung was to establish an appropriate relationship between his Manchu and Chinese subjects.[109] Prior to the conquest of Liao-tung, Nurhaci appealed to the Chinese by letting it be known that he intended to redistribute land and appoint incorruptible officials. When he invited the people of Liao-hsi to move to Liao-tung, he told them: "If you go inside (China) your emperor, being bad, will not take care of you. If you go to Kuang-ning the Mongols will take you. Do they have grain and clothing? But if you come to Liao-tung in the east I shall give you land and treat you well. Come to Liao-tung."[110] In theory, Chinese who submitted voluntarily were not to be maltreated, nor was their property to be taken or their families separated. The only indignity that the surrendering Chinese

[106] *Chiu Man-chou tang*, Vol. 3, pp. 1331, 1541; Kanda, *Mambun Rōtō*, Vol. 2, pp. 644, 654.
[107] *Chiu Man-chou tang*, Vol. 4, p. 1617; Kanda, *Mambun Rōtō*, Vol. 2, p. 797.
[108] Some Manchus were enslaved for having committed crimes. Li, *Ch'ing tai ch'üan shih*, Vol. 1, p. 184.
[109] For a fuller account on the subject, see Roth, "The Manchu–Chinese relationship, 1618–1636," pp. 3–38.
[110] *Chiu Man-chou tang*, Vol. 2, p. 979; Kanda, *Mambun Rōtō*, Vol. 2, p. 508.

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were to undergo was the requirement that they must shave their heads in front and wear the Manchu queue. This token of submission was also a convenient way to make it difficult for them to desert back to the Ming.[111]

Nurhaci did follow through with the reallocation of land in Liao-tung, but before he could do so, he needed to ensure the immediate food supply for his own people. Upon their conquests in Liao-tung, the Manchus confiscated grain and appropriated land for their garrisons. In the case of Liao-yang, three days after its occupation, all Chinese, except artisans, merchants, and certain other professions, were forced to leave the city. If they owned land they were instructed to live on their property. If not, they were expected to seek land that had been abandoned by Chinese who had fled.[112]

Administratively, Chinese fell into several categories: Those who had resisted the Manchus were enslaved, as were indigent Chinese households unable to support themselves. Most of the other Chinese households served as free men (Ma. *haha*; Chin. *chuang-ting*) on estates given to aristocrats or to officials in lieu of salary. For example, after his surrender at Fu-shun, Li Yung-fang was given charge over a certain number of Chinese. Through their masters or officials all Chinese belonged to a banner.

In order to prevent Chinese from escaping, the Manchus stationed troops throughout Liao-tung and guarded the borders. Chinese living in coastal and border areas were relocated to avoid possible collaboration with the enemy. Some Chinese, unwilling to move, requested that they be allowed to stay and share their houses, land, and food with the Manchus. "We are all subjects of the same khan," they pleaded, "Let us live together and eat together. Why should we move?"[113] Anticipating that this proposal would minimize economic disruption, Nurhaci agreed. Less than a month later, co-occupant living began in several areas.

The Manchu–Chinese co-occupant living experiment did not last. The Manchus, in spite of various edicts condemning Manchu chauvinistic behavior, were prone to regard their co-occupant Chinese household as servants instead of working together on an equal basis. They freely used the oxen of their Chinese family, had the Chinese transport grain and grass on their carts for them, sent them on errands as they pleased, or had their women do the household chores for them. Instances of Manchus oppressing and robbing Chinese abounded. Only a month after its initiation, co-occupant households

[111] For a background on the use of the queue, see Shiratori, "The queue among the peoples of North Asia," pp. 1–69.

[112] *Chiu Man-chou tang*, Vol. 1, pp. 632–3; Kanda, *Mambun Rōtō*, Vol. 1, pp. 298; Li, *Ch'ing tai ch'üan shih*, p. 150.

[113] *Chiu Man-chou tang*, Vol. 2, p. 806; Kanda, *Mambun Rōtō*, Vol. 1, pp. 407–8.

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were ordered to divide their land and work it separately, each household using its own labor, oxen, and land.[114]

After the harvest was in and a count of all male adults taken, a redistribution of land took place, in theory allotting each male adult about five *cimari*.[115] But the disruption caused by the moves was severe and was further exacerbated when tens of thousands of Chinese households from the area around Kuang-ning in Liao-hsi relocated to Liao-tung, creating more co-occupant households, this time Chinese living with Chinese. Whether due to social dislocation or Manchu oppression, by the summer of 1622 severe shortages of grain and salt occurred. In 1623 famines triggered revolts. Chinese set fires, poisoned wells, stole grain from government collectors, killed border guards, and tried to escape. The Manchus easily suppressed these uprisings, but as a result of the revolts Nurhaci shifted to a policy of segregation. He discontinued co-occupancy in the countryside and segregated Manchus from Chinese in towns by moving them to separate quarters. Manchus were required to carry weapons and Chinese were forbidden to do so.[116]

The 1623 revolts were a turning point in the Manchu–Chinese relationship. Earlier, the official policy had stressed integration and had reprimanded Manchus for mistreating their Chinese co-occupant households or their Chinese slaves. Nurhaci now adopted a policy not just of segregation, but of explicit unequal treatment. He issued a secret edict to the Manchu beiles in which he chided them for treating the Chinese as equals: "If our Manchus commit crimes, inquire into their merits. Ask what services they have rendered. But if there are Chinese who ought to die or who have been disloyal or have committed robberies, shall you not kill them and have their descendants and kinsmen exterminated too? Why merely give them a beating and let them go?"[117]

Separating Chinese from Manchus and keeping them in separate quarters of the towns may have eliminated some Manchu–Chinese friction among the common people, but continued economic hardships, compounded by the new discriminatory policies, incited further opposition. In 1625 the most serious Chinese uprising of the pre-1644 period broke out. During this upheaval Chinese killed Manchus, sent envoys to the Ming military offering to collaborate with them, but most of all sought ways to escape.[118]

[114] Roth, "The Manchu–Chinese relationship," pp. 16–17.
[115] One *cimari* equals 5–6 *mu*.
[116] Roth, "The Manchu–Chinese relationship," p. 18.
[117] *Chiu Man-chou tang*, Vol. 3, pp. 1585–6; Kanda, *Mambun Rōtō*, Vol. 2, p. 771.
[118] There are many entries in the *Chiu Man-chou tang* attesting to the fact that people escaped or tried to escape from Manchu-ruled Liao-tung. For example, one entry for 1623 reports of two thousand Chinese who were caught and killed while trying to escape. *Chiu Man-chou tang*, Vol. 3, p. 1433; Kanda,

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In dealing with the 1625 uprising, the Manchus blamed primarily the lower officials, relatives of officials, and officials who had first gained their status under the Ming. They purged Chinese from positions of authority, killed everyone they deemed unreliable, and turned the entire civilian Chinese population into bound inhabitants of standardized estates (Ma. *tokso*; Chin. *chuang*) under the khan and the beiles. The establishment of the estates and the separate quarters in the cities were an official recognition of the failure of the policy of co-occupant living.[119]

There is no indication that Mongols participated in the Chinese revolts of 1623 and 1625. Some Mongols who submitted to the Manchus were resettled inside the Manchu borders, but most were sent back to their home territory to serve as outposts and maintain a political buffer zone between the Manchus and the lands beyond. Those who settled within the Manchu state received provisions and land, but after a certain welcome period they were expected to be self-sufficient. Agricultural production was considered the major pursuit under the Manchus and none but the most recent arrivals, the officials, and the nobility were excused from taking part in it.[120]

Even though there seems to have been little direct conflict between Mongols and Manchus, the Manchus did not deem them particularly reliable, expecting them to rob the Chinese whenever they had a chance and to be lacking discipline. Like the Chinese, the Mongols were forbidden to wear weapons. However, the ban cannot have been effective since "one kept repeating not to sell weapons to Mongols, but they were sold secretly nevertheless."[121]

In addition to trying to bind most people to the land and to curb banditry, Nurhaci called on his subjects to follow the Chinese moral code. Official support for Confucian values promoted a form of internal control since "those who are filial to their parents and listen to their elder brothers will not have bad and rebellious hearts."[122]

Economic crises and control

When the Manchus launched their first attack on Liao-tung, they sought grain and other food. They confiscated all available provisions, destroyed

Mambun Rōtō, Vol. 2, p. 712. Li in his *Ch'ing tai ch'üan shih* (p. 171) estimates that about one million Liao-tung Chinese fled into China and another 100,000 to Korea.

[119] Roth, "The Manchu–Chinese relationship," pp. 19–21.

[120] In 1622, a group of Mongols who had been assigned to an area around Kai-chou were told to save grain and start working the fields, because they would not receive any more grain. Furthermore, since the more recently submitted new Mongols would need grain from the khan's granaries, the Mongols at Kai-chou were warned not to wait for the later planting time that was customary among the Mongols. Instead they should adhere to the planting calendar of the Manchus and Chinese. *Chiu Man-chou tang*, Vol. 3, p. 1811; Kanda, *Mambun Rōtō*, Vol. 2, pp. 900–1.

[121] *Chiu Man-chou tang*, Vol. 7, pp. 3264–5; Kanda, *Mambun Rōtō*, Vol. 4, p. 381.

[122] *Chiu Man-chou tang*, Vol. 4, p. 1883; Kanda, *Mambun Rōtō*, Vol. 3, p. 970.

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houses, and returned with their booty and captives to Hetu Ala. When the numbers of new subjects made it impossible to remove them to Hetu Ala, Nurhaci realized that this approach had outlived its usefulness, and that he could gain more by destroying less. He announced, "If we kill you [Chinese] or redistribute you, how much longer could we do this? The gain is only temporary. If we keep you, then you can produce for us and we can sell the products and benefit forever."[123]

As his armies made further conquests in Liao-tung, Nurhaci maintained high discipline among his soldiers. Trying to minimize the disruption to agricultural production, people were ordered to simply shave their heads, live where they were, and till the fields. All corvée labor, used primarily for building towns and walls, and for transporting grain, was to be assigned with care so as not to disrupt agricultural production.

Once Manchus and Chinese were installed on the land, raising livestock ranked only second to crops in economic importance. The government itself owned large numbers of draft animals, which were used for transporting grain and construction materials whenever necessary, primarily during the winter months. The rest of the year the animals remained distributed among the people, usually in return for a fee. Demonstrating a degree of government control, the color and weight of each animal was supposed to be registered in order to make sure that young animals would not be replaced covertly with old ones or weak ones. If someone wanted to raise pigs, he could lodge a request with one of the banner officials to buy an animal, but he was punished if he then slaughtered it for food instead of breeding it. Similarly, animal sacrifices to the dead were disallowed as a luxury that the country could not afford.[124]

Trade with other countries was carried on under the banner system. The government also maintained a monopoly over domestic trade in livestock, furs, pearls, gold, silver, and ginseng. Private merchants had to be registered and could do business only in stipulated locations. Partially for reasons of government supervision and tax collection but also because social unrest in the 1620s had made traveling merchants targets for bandits and fugitives, domestic trade was concentrated in the towns, often at town gates on the bridges over the moats. Later a law put an end to all street merchants by

[123] *Chiu Man-chou tang*, Vol. 2, p. 640; Kanda, *Mambun Rōtō*, Vol. 1, p. 303. Nurhaci even anticipated to benefit from those Chinese who had rebelled or were caught trying to escape. "If the Liao-tung people rebel and escape they are committing a crime. But why kill them? Take them as soldiers and let Chinese fight Chinese. It will be to the benefit of the Jušens." *Chiu Man-chou tang*, Vol. 5, p. 2074; Kanda, *Mambun Rōtō*, Vol. 3, p. 1069.

[124] Roth Li, "The rise of the early Manchu state," pp. 103–4.

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requiring that "all Manchu and Chinese shopkeepers write their name in stone or wood and put it up near the door."[125] Particular care was taken to select trustworthy merchants for the newly acquired southern towns where political reliability was of utmost importance.

Nurhaci valued the economic contribution of people with special skills and talents, such as silkweavers and silversmiths. Captured Korean or Chinese craftsmen were regularly spared, whether they had resisted or not. Even when captured during an attempt to escape, a crime punishable by death, artisans were pardoned. They also received privileges, such as exemption from taxes and corvée labor and special allotments of food, clothing, and servants.[126]

Nurhaci's Death and Legacy

In 1626, prospects for a quick realization of Nurhaci's vision were not good, even though Manchu difficulties – including economic crises, social unrest, and rivalry over succession – contributed to a centralizing government with more systematic control, and therefore to a more powerful position for his successor. This legacy may not have been visible to Nurhaci, who, after his defeat at Ning-yüan, returned to Shen-yang, humiliated, wounded, feeling weak, and without a designated heir. Once more he called his sons together and admonished them to be of one mind and rule collectively after his death. Later, still feeling ill, Nurhaci went to seek a cure in hot springs near Ch'ing-ho. He died on a boat returning from the springs in September 1626.

Even though his final years gave him little cause for optimism, Nurhaci had created a firm basis for a Manchu state, enabling it to weather the social and economic crises of the 1620s, and also to survive its first transition of power.

HUNG TAIJI: BUILDING AN EMPIRE

On the morning after Nurhaci's death, the senior beiles informed Nurhaci's principal wife that her late husband had left instructions that she commit suicide to accompany him in death. She initially demurred but then complied. The beiles then offered the khanship to Hung Taiji, who decorously refused several times before accepting his father's title. Though this much is

[125] *Chiu Man-chou tang*, Vol. 3, pp. 1274–5; Kanda, *Mambun Rōtō*, Vol. 2, p. 613.
[126] Roth Li, "The rise of the early Manchu state," pp. 109–10.

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known with some certainty, the details surrounding Hung Taiji's succession remain uncertain.[127]

After acceding to the position of khan, Hung Taiji continued the system of rotating shifts for administering government affairs that Nurhaci began in 1621. Until 1631, he continued to sit on the same level as the three senior beiles. Like Nurhaci, Hung Taiji earned and consolidated his leadership role by displaying his military and political talents during extensive military campaigns, by curtailing the power of ambitious family members, and by expanding the government structure.

Military campaigns: Starting from both sides

In 1627, the economy was in crisis, the society unstable after several years of ethnic conflict, and borders in the east, south, and west open to attack. Hung Taiji's strategy for the conquest of Ming China included sporadic peace negotiations with the Ming in order first to pursue control over Korea and Mongol tribes. "Taking Peking," he supposedly said, "is like felling a big tree. One needs first to start from both sides and then the big tree will fall."[128] For the Ming, a temporary truce allowed it to concentrate its military forces on a growing peasant uprising in the west and also to gain time to fortify its remaining strongholds in the northeast.

Manchu–Ming negotiations began after Yüan Ch'ung-huan, the general stationed at Ning-yüan, sent a condolence mission on the death of Nurhaci. During the negotiations, Hung Taiji reiterated the Seven Grievances, blamed the Ming court for their hostile relationship, demanded that he be treated as a political equal, and that, in return for peace, the Ming should send him specified amounts of silver and gifts. Because Yüan Ch'ung-huan ignored those demands, insisting instead on the return of occupied Liao-tung, no agreement was reached, though the negotiations brought a short truce. The negotiations sensitized the Ming to the issue of seeking peace with the enemy. By drawing parallels to the disastrous outcome of Sung negotiations with the Jurchens prior to their founding of the Chin dynasty in the twelfth century, opponents to peace negotiations with the Manchus turned public opinion against such endeavors.[129]

[127] It is possible that Nurhaci designated his young son Dorgon (To-er-kun, 1612–50; bibliography in *ECCP*, pp. 215–9) as successor with Daišan as regent. See Walter Fuchs, "Der Tod der Kaiserin Abahai i. J. 1626. Ein Beitrag zur Frage des Opftertodes bei den Mandju," *Monumenta Serica*, 1, fasc. 1 (1935), pp. 71–80; also Gibert, *Dictionnaire historique*, p. 59, n. 1.

[128] Wang Yü, ed., *Ch'ing ch'u nei kuo shih yüan man wen tang an i p'ien*, trans. Kuan Hsiao-lien et al. (n.p., 1986), Vol. 1, p. 479.

[129] The negotiation process, which took place in 1627 and again in 1629, is described in detail in Li, *Ch'ing tai ch'üan shih*, pp. 264–75.

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In the meantime, the Manchus, under the pretext of reproaching the Korean king for not having sent condolences on the death of Nurhaci, invaded Korea in search of grain. Korea was vulnerable. Severe devastation suffered during the Japanese invasion of 1592 had caused long-term economic and political instability. In 1624, a military uprising weakened the country further and made it a relatively easy prey. Threatening the Korean capital, the Manchus forced the Korean king to agree to send annual tribute and recognize the Manchu ruler as "elder brother."[130] Though Hung Taiji's immediate purpose in controlling Korea was to press it into the roles of supplier of resources and of trade partner, he also sought to terminate Korea's support for Mao Wen-lung's resistance on P'i-tao, and to have Korea side with the Manchus, or at least to secure its neutrality, in Manchu–Chinese conflicts.

After signing a treaty with Korea in 1627, Hung Taiji sent envoys to Mao Wen-lung to win him over or, failing that, to discuss a truce. But Mao Wen-lung's successful raids into Manchu territory had gained him friends at the Ming court. Even though it was well known that he did not cooperate with other Ming generals in Liao-tung, the court appreciated his help toward containing the Manchus on the eastern side and rewarded him accordingly. Therefore, the Manchus' attempts to win over Mao Wen-lung were unsuccessful. Fortunately for the Manchus, Mao Wen-lung was killed in 1629 by the Ming's own general, Yüan Ch'ung-huan.

Soon after returning from Korea, Hung Taiji launched an attack against Ning-yüan, Chin-chou, and Ta-ling-ho, three strongholds north of Shan-hai Pass. He failed to take the cities, which confirmed the humiliating lesson Nurhaci had learned a year before, namely that the Manchus' strength in fighting battles on the open field was ineffective against Ming fortifications backed by the long-range power of cannons. The experience led Hung Taiji to modify his strategy. Henceforth the Manchus would besiege Chinese strongholds rather than attack them. In addition, Hung Taiji sought to circumvent the Ming defense line north of Shan-hai Pass by seeking entry into China by way of Inner Mongolia.

To clear the path for their first invasion into China proper via Mongolia, the Manchus drove Ligdan Khan and his Chahar troops from their base on the upper Liao River and forced them westward. The Manchu troops then used this route to enter China through the Hsi-feng Pass and reached the outskirts of Peking in 1629. Charged with defending the capital against the Manchus, Yüan Ch'ung-huan hurried to Peking. Though Hung Taiji withdrew without attacking the capital, the Manchu appearance before Peking

[130] Mancall, "The Ch'ing tribute system," pp. 85–6.

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cost Yüan Ch'ung-huan his life. Blamed for his inability to ward off the Manchu invasion, he was imprisoned. Then, accusing him for having killed Mao Wen-lung and earlier having been involved in peace negotiations with the Manchus – even though they were held with the support of the court at the time – his enemies at court insinuated that he might be a traitor. Their charge contributed to the emperor's decision to have Yüan executed a year later.

Returning from Peking, the Manchus occupied four major cities inside the Great Wall: Yung-p'ing, Luan-chou, Ch'ien-an, and Tsun-hua. Taking along a contingent of Chinese captives who were experts in the casting of Portuguese ("red barbarian") cannons, Hung Taiji left Amin in charge of guarding the four cities and returned to Shen-yang. But with the main Manchu force gone, Tsu Ta-shou (d. 1656),[131] who succeeded Yüan Ch'ung-huan as the commander responsible for the northeastern defense, soon recaptured the cities. Amin avoided battle and withdrew, but not without first plundering Yung-p'ing and massacring its inhabitants despite explicit orders by Hung Taiji to treat the population generously.

In spite of their yielding of the four cities, the Manchus enjoyed several beneficial results from their first China campaign. China was on the defensive, another able Ming commander had been eliminated, and the new route into China had proved feasible. The Manchus soon benefited as well from their captured Chinese artillery experts, who, within two years, developed the Manchus' own first sets of cannons.

The new weapons were tried out in 1631 during a Manchu attack on Ta-ling-ho, an important town in the Ming defense line which linked the Northeast to China proper. Any long-range occupation of Chinese territory inside the Great Wall required that the Manchus be in control of this link because, without it, their troops could be cut off from their home base. Precisely because of the strategic value of the area, the Ming court had ordered Tsu Ta-shou and his officers, several of whom were his sons and nephews, to fortify Ta-ling-ho. About 30,000 people were in the town when Hung Taiji's forces surrounded it, using nearly all his military resources of about 100,000 men. The Manchus' newly organized Chinese troops with their cannons took position outside the city to prevent Ming relief forces from coming to the aid of Ta-ling-ho. After a two-month siege during which two-thirds of the inhabitants died, Tsu Ta-shou surrendered. However, on the promise that he would use his family connections to win the surrender of nearby Chin-chou, Hung Taiji released him. Not entirely unexpectedly, Tsu betrayed the Manchus and

[131] Biography in *ECCP*, pp. 769–70.

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joined the defenders of Chin-chou. Several of the other Tsu generals, however, stayed with the Manchus and served them loyally. It would be nine years before Hung Taiji sent another force against Chin-chou, and ten years before he won Tsu Ta-shou's final surrender.

Following the victory at Ta-ling-ho and the capture of the town's large arsenal of weapons, Hung Taiji's Chinese advisors urged him to pursue the conquest of China immediately. But judging the Manchus' strength insufficient to attack China directly, Hung Taiji insisted on first securing the western and eastern flanks. He started with Inner Mongolia. Here his main target were the Chahar Mongols, whose leader Ligdan Khan had agreed to help contain the Manchus in return for large payments of gold and silver from the Ming. Ligdan's move backfired by alienating some of his own followers and driving other Mongol tribes to forge closer relationships with the Manchus.

An earlier confrontation between Ligdan and a Mongol alliance in 1627 led to considerable losses on both sides. Fearing a Chahar reprisal, a group of Mongol allies, consisting of the Five Khalkas, Ordos, Karachins and others, asked the Manchus for protection. In 1628, a joint Manchu–Mongol force fought the Chahars and drove them westward. A second joint Manchu–Mongol army in pursuit of Ligdan arrived in Inner Mongolia in 1632. Ligdan fled west to Tsinghai, which allowed Kui-hua ch'eng, the main strategic stronghold of Inner Mongolia, to fall into Manchu hands. With Ligdan out of reach, Hung Taiji used the opportunity to gain access to Ming markets and sow discord among the Ming regional commands by pursuing peace negotiations with Chinese border officials at Hsüan-fu and Ta-t'ung. Hoping to buy peace for the territories under their jurisdictions, these local officials cooperated by paying gold, silver, silk, and cotton. They also swore the customary oath demanded by the Manchus. Though done in the name of the two countries, these negotiations were not authorized by the Ming court, and the commanders were imprisoned when their actions became known.[132]

After Hung Taiji got word that Ligdan had died in Tsinghai in 1634, he sent an expedition in 1635 to search for Ligdan's son and wife. Both were found, along with the Mongol state treasure, and Ligdan's seal, the symbol of Mongolian khanship.[133] Ligdan's son's surrender to the Manchus marked

[132] *Ta Ch'ing T'ai-tsung Wen huang-ti shih-lu*, ch. 12, 11a–b; Li, *Ch'ing tai ch'üan shih*, p. 276; Linke, *Zur Entwicklung des mandjurischen Khanats*, pp. 131–2.

[133] For a somewhat mythical description of the fate of the seal since the fall of the Yüan dynasty, see Hauer, *Huang-Ts'ing k'ai kuo fang-lüeh*, p. 383.

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the end of Chahar independence and of the Mongol khanate that began with Chinggis Khan. The submission of the Chahar Mongols left the Khalkas of northern Mongolia as the only major independent Mongol group.

For the Manchus, the defeat of the Chahars was of great significance. Militarily, possession of Inner Mongolia gave them control over entry to China from the north. They also gained Mongol military manpower and eliminated the Ming option of playing one barbarian off against another. Politically, the capture of Ligdan's seal allowed the Manchus to style themselves successors to the Mongol khans, and economically, they obtained excellent grazing lands and access to the Chinese trading post at Kalgan (Chang-chia-k'ou).

With the western flank secured, Hung Taiji turned to Korea. In spite of the brotherly relationship imposed on Korea in 1627, the Korean king did not fully cooperate in trade activities or diplomatic exchanges. In 1636, Hung Taiji personally led a campaign against Korea and forced the Korean king to renounce his allegiance to the Ming court. Under the new agreement Korea was obliged to send dignitaries on all important occasions, pay tribute with specified amounts of gold, silver, paper, and other goods, and provide support for Manchu campaigns against the Ming.[134]

With Korea and Inner Mongolia under Manchu control, Hung Taiji in 1636 turned his attention toward the Ming. In addition to countless smaller raids, the Manchus undertook three large-scale invasions into China between 1636 and 1643. These invasions were designed to reconnoiter, intimidate, and acquire booty. They were not intended to make permanent conquests, and none of them was led by Hung Taiji personally.

The first of the three incursions, in 1636, took only a month but damaged Ming imperial tombs near Peking and attacked many cities, but not the capital itself. The Ch'ing forces won all of the battles and returned with a large number of captives and booty. The second incursion, which lasted for nearly six months in 1638–9, destroyed places to the south of Peking and then turned into Shantung before returning with over 400,000 captives, and huge amounts of gold, silver, and other loot. The third and last large Ch'ing incursion in 1642 brought back nearly as much.

While the Ch'ing army was pillaging towns and provinces in China during the second incursion, Hung Taiji attacked Chin-chou and Ning-yüan, in part to keep Ming forces occupied in the northeast and prevent them from confronting the Ch'ing force within China. He failed to take the towns. Another attempt in 1640 was also unsuccessful. Then, using all his forces in a technique similar to that used at Ta-ling-ho, he besieged Chin-chou in 1641.

[134] *Ta Ch'ing T'ai-tsung wen huang ti shih lu*, ch. 33, 30a–32a; Li, *Ch'ing tai ch'üan shih*, pp. 369–70.

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Anxious to keep their northeastern defense line intact, the Ming ordered Hung Ch'eng-ch'ou (1593–1665),[135] who had been fighting the peasant armies on the western front, to rescue Chin-chou. But Hung's force of nearly 200,000 men was defeated by the Ch'ing. Some of his generals fled and nearly 50,000 soldiers were killed. Hung Ch'eng-ch'ou, with a remaining force of 20,000, retreated into nearby Sung-shan (six miles south of Chin Hsien). After a siege that lasted several months, a Ming general from within betrayed the town. This allowed the Ch'ing to capture Hung Ch'eng-ch'ou, the highest ranking Ming official to fall into their hands thus far, and to carry off over two thousand large and small cannons.

With no relief in sight after the fall of Sung-shan, Tsu Ta-shou himself surrendered Chin-chou. Hung Taiji willingly accepted this second surrender of Tsu Ta-shou, partly because Tsu's nephew, Brigade-General Wu San-kuei (1612–78)[136] commanded the Ning-yüan garrison, the only remaining Ming defense outside the Great Wall and the only significant military force between the Ch'ing armies and Peking. Hung Taiji celebrated his successes, but he did not live long enough to exploit them. He died in 1643, at the age of fifty-two.

Military organization

Throughout Hung Taiji's reign the eight Manchu banners, though organizationally complete since 1615, continued to be replenished by new recruits drawn from the Wild Jurchens. Hung Taiji undertook expeditions into Manchuria's northern regions nearly every year, usually returning with hundreds, sometimes thousands, of captured or submitted people in tow. Those who stayed behind were obliged to bring tribute to the Ch'ing court. By 1643 most of northern Manchuria was under Ch'ing control.

The non-Manchu component of Hung Taiji's military organization was also expanding. Both in the military and governmental sphere the principle of separate but equal – equal at least in theory – applied. In 1629, Hung Taiji organized three thousand Chinese soldiers as "Han-chün troops" (Ma. *nikan cooha*; Chin. *han chün*) and placed them under the command of T'ung Yang-hsing (d. 1632).[137] Responding to T'ung's request for more men in order to properly maintain and deploy the many cannons available after the 1631 victory at Ta-ling-ho, Hung Taiji added experienced soldiers taken from the ranks of the Manchu banners. He also drafted one out of every ten Chinese men belonging to Manchu households. By 1633 the enlarged Han-chün force,

[135] Biography in *ECCP*, pp. 358–60. [136] Ibid., pp. 877–80. [137] Ibid., pp. 797–8.

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which was called Heavy Troops (Ma. *ujen cooha*; Chin. *chung-chün*), consisted of approximately 4,500 soldiers divided into about twenty companies of different sizes, all flying black standards.

There were other Chinese armies under the Manchus. Keng Chung-ming (d. 1649),[138] K'ung Yu-te (d. 1652),[139] and Shang K'o-hsi (d. 1676),[140] three military officers[141] who had been part of Mao Wen-lung's resistance at P'i-tao but defected to the Manchus in 1633–4, retained their commands and flew standards that distinguished them from other Chinese troops. This independence gave them special recognition and also avoided mixing Liao-tung farmer soldiers with non–Liao-tung mercenary soldiers.

In 1637 the Han-chün troops were divided into two banners, and in 1639 into four banners. Additional manpower after the Sung-shan and Chin-chou victories made it possible to add another four Han-chün banners in 1642, for a total of eight. The Mongols had been organized into eight banners after the submission of the Chahars in 1635. Though some Chinese and Mongol soldiers remained within the Manchu banners, most of them were now in their separate banner units. Mongols who had submitted to the Manchus but remained in Inner Mongolia and outside the eight-banner system also had strictly enforced obligations to participate in Ch'ing campaigns.[142]

Political empire building

Apart from military manpower, political leadership and other domestic issues greatly influenced the outcome of the Manchu struggle against the Ming. Immediately upon his succession to the throne, Hung Taiji followed his father's precedent by appointing his own officials to oversee administrative matters in each banner. The highest ranking appointee among five new positions in each banner accompanied its beile at all times and together with the other members of the aristocracy participated in the collective decision making concerning military campaigns and governmental affairs. Two other officials accompanied the banner troops that went on garrison duty or campaign, and another set of two officials stayed at home to supervise the banner while its beile was away. This arrangement curtailed the power of the individual beiles over their banners.[143]

[138] Ibid., pp. 416–17. [139] Ibid., pp. 435–6. [140] Ibid., pp. 635–6.

[141] Before joining the Manchus, the three generals had pillaged towns in Shantung and even captured the province's governor for a while. Because of their humble background and their marauding activities, Chinese officials serving under the Manchus sometimes derogatively referred to them as "the three miners of Shantung" (*Shantung san k'uang-t'u*).

[142] These obligations are spelled out in detail in Li, *Ch'ing tai ch'üan shih*, Vol. 1, pp. 315–20.

[143] Roth Li, "The rise of the early Manchu state," p. 128.

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Even though the three senior beiles had supported the succession to the khanship by Hung Taiji, all three seemed to have harbored hopes of not subordinating themselves to the khan's rule. Amin had approached Hung Taiji directly and said: "I have consulted with all the beiles; we will make you king, but after you succeed to the position of khan, let me leave and live on the outer frontier." Hung Taiji rejected Amin's request. He explained that "if I let him live outside, then also the two Red, the two White, and the Plain Blue Banner could all go across the border and live outside. Then I am without a country, and whose emperor shall I be?"[144] None of the three senior beiles succeeded in separating his banner, yet each one of them, in due course, resorted to some form of opposition. As son of Šurhaci, Amin may have felt particularly prone to opposition and revenge.

When serving as supreme commander of the Manchu force invading Korea in 1627 Amin, against the wishes of the other beiles and ambans, decided to proceed to the Korean capital even though the Korean king had already acceded to Manchu demands. Though the other leaders on the campaign overrode Amin's decision and withdrew, Amin allowed his own forces to pillage the Korean countryside for three days. Two years later when charged with the defense of Yung-p'ing, he massacred the civilian population of the city against the khan's explicit order that the people be treated with special consideration. He also defied the khan on other occasions and did not respect the khan's assumed monopoly over communications with the Khalka Mongols. On the basis of such changes, he was accused of "behaving like the khan." Amin was imprisoned in 1630, where he died ten years later.[145]

Manggultai ran afoul of his brother in 1631, when Hung Taiji reprimanded him for being slow in the movement of troops. Angry over the criticism, Manggultai drew his sword against the khan. Manggultai died in 1633, but two years after his death a plot was discovered in which he and his younger brother Degelei (Te-ko-lei) had been involved. Found among their possessions were imperial seals with the inscription "Emperor of the Great Chin." Whereas Amin appears to have opposed Hung Taiji's idea of an empire and hoped to withdraw, the existence of Chin seals indicates that Manggultai's conspiracy was directed against the khan and not against the kind of empire he wanted to create.[146]

[144] Wang Hsien-ch'ien, comp., *Shih erh ch'ao tung hua lu* (1884; rpt. Taipei, 1963), ch. 3, p. 14a.

[145] *Chiu Man-chou tang*, Vol. 7, pp. 3309–13, 3333–46; Kanda, *Mambun Rōtō*, Vol. 4, pp. 404, 410–15; Roth Li, "The rise of the early Manchu state," pp. 120–3; Li, *Ch'ing tai ch'üan shih*, p. 244; *ECCP*, pp. 8–9.

[146] *Chiu Man-chou tang*, Vol. 7, pp. 3501–7; Kanda, *Mambun Rōtō*, Vol. 5, pp. 539–43; *ECCP*, pp. 562–3; Li, *Ch'ing tai ch'üan shih*, pp. 246–7.

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Daišan, the most senior of the original four senior beiles, was also found guilty. In 1635 Hung Taiji accused him of having wanted to turn back from campaigns before their completion. Moreover, like Amin, he was said to have disobeyed the khan's orders to treat Chinese captives with special care. Hung Taiji pardoned Daišan and those connected with his crime, but by drawing a parallel between Daišan's and Amin's crimes, Hung Taiji served a warning to Daišan that he, too, might be imprisoned.[147]

Hung Taiji was successful in silencing opposition through the use of loyal ambans and by rallying the support of an increasingly strong group of Chinese high officials. Serving as intermediaries between the khan and the beiles, the ambans under Hung Taiji continued to be close to the khan. When they informed the khan that Abatai (A-pa-t'ai; 1589–1646),[148] one of Nurhaci's sons, complained about not having been given the proper rank and about having to sit on an equal level at a banquet with the junior beiles, Hung Taiji rebuked them: "Why did you two not admonish him (Abatai) instead of coming to tell me this?"[149] According to Hung Taiji's rules, the beiles were to obey the ambans. In reality that was not necessarily so.

To bolster his political support, Hung Taiji promoted Chinese officials to high positions, initiated official recruitment through civil service examinations, and adapted Ming laws. These Chinese officials were supportive of him and of his vision of an empire. In their memorials, Chinese officials advocated the centralization of power, which meant a reduction in the power of the beiles. Comparing the Manchu situation to "ten sheep with nine shepherds,"[150] they proposed that Hung Taiji discontinue the equal distribution of booty among the eight banners: "If you are in control of all rewards, generous or not, and if you are in control of all taking and giving, then the hearts of the people will also be directed to one source."[151] Such proposals suited a khan who was in the process of eliminating his rivals.

With the Chinese population in Liao-tung outnumbering the Manchus ten to one,[152] Hung Taiji needed to devise an administrative system that would avoid the kind of disruption that had occurred under Nurhaci. Under the inherited system the main governmental functions were channeled through the eight banners' leadership. Hung Taiji began to transfer governmental authority away from the banners to a newly created central bureaucracy under his direct control. During the process, which was largely

[147] Wang, *Shih erh ch'ao tung hua lu*, ch. 2, pp. 32a–33b. [148] Biography in *ECCP*, pp. 3–4.

[149] *Chiu Man-chou tang*, Vol. 4, pp. 2712–13; Kanda, *Mambun Rōtō*, Vol. 4, pp. 108–9.

[150] Lo Chen-yü, comp., *T'ien-ts'ung ch'ao ch'en kung tsou-i* (hereafter *Tsou-i*) (Peking, 1924), part 1, p. 35b.

[151] *Tsou-i*, part 1, p. 11b. [152] Li, *Ch'ing tai ch'üan shih*, p. 330.

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completed by 1638, the Ming system served as a model.[153] The result was a Ch'ing government which looked similar to that of the Ming, but which had its differences.

The first formal office to be created (1629) was the Literary Office (Ma. *Bithe-i yamun*; Chin. *Wen-kuan*). Staffed by Manchu, Chinese, and Mongol scholars, the Office served as transmission office for foreign communications and memorials to the khan, drafted proclamations and responses, and routinely recorded daily events and developments. Lacking a bureaucratic tradition the office did not function well after Dahai, its first leader, died in 1632.

> The five baksi (in the office) do not know Chinese and three Chinese officials have no responsibilities. The eight or nine Cultivated Talents (*hsiu-ts'ai*) quarrel with one another and come and go as they please. If somebody accomplishes something, he is considered brusque and out for power. Those who stay in the background are looked upon as modest. Everyone hides behind another. If there is a memorial about a certain event, the event has already passed before the khan reads the memorial.[154]

To make it more effective, the Literary Office was reorganized in 1636 into the Three Palace Academies (Ma. *Bithe-i ilan yamun*; Chin. *Nei san yüan*).[155] In the Academies, as well as in two other new government structures – the Six Ministries (Ma. *Ninggun jurgan*; Chin. *Liu pu*), set up in 1631, and the Censorate (Ma. *Baicara jurgan*; Chin. *Tu-ch'a-yüan*), established in 1636 – Hung Taiji maintained a balance between Manchu, Mongol, and Chinese officials. Each of the Six Ministries, for example, had four presidents – two Manchus, one Mongol, and one Chinese. Beile participation – initially beiles held at least nominal appointments in each of the Six Ministries – was gradually eliminated.

By 1636 the Ch'ing government had counterpart versions of most of the Ming governmental functions in place, though the distribution of these functions among the offices differed somewhat and reflected the conscious effort of the Manchus to imprint their own characteristics. The responsibilities

[153] Even Ning Wan-wo, a Chinese official who wrote many memorials in support of adopting Chinese bureaucratic features, proposed to "take the Chinese model as a reference but consider the Manchu situation" (*ts'an Han chuo Chin*). *Tsou-i*, part 2, p. 35a. A blending of Manchu and Chinese concepts also took place in the architectural realm. Both Nurhaci's tomb and the new imperial palace in Shenyang, built between 1626 and 1636, bear testimony to a complex cultural interaction between Manchu and Chinese features. Fred Drake, "The Mukden palace and Nurhaci's tomb as symbolic architecture," *Proceedings of the 35th international Altaistic conference, September 12–17, 1992, Taipei, China*, ed. Ch'en Chieh-hsien (Taipei, 1993), pp. 85–95.

[154] *Tsou-i*, part 1, pp. 25b–26a.

[155] The Three Palace Academies consisted of the Palace Historiographic Academy (Ma. *Gurun-i suduri ejere yamun*; Ch. *Nei kuo-shih yüan*), the Palace Secretariat Academy (Ma. *Narhūn bithei yamun*; Ch. *Nei pi-shu yüan*), and the Palace Academy for the Advancement of Literature (Ma. *Kooli selgiyere yamun*; Ch. *Nei hung-wen yüan*).

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covered by the Three Palace Academies, for example, corresponded to tasks which in the Ming government were carried out by the Hanlin Academy (*Han-lin yüan*), the Grand Secretariat (*Nei-ko*), the Six Offices of Scrutiny (*Liu k'o*), and the Office of Transmission (*T'ung-cheng shih-ssu*).

Hung Taiji also created one office which fulfilled a crucial function in the Ch'ing government and which had no Ming precedent. This was the Mongolian Bureau (Ma. *Monggoi jurgan*; Chin. *Meng-ku ya-men*), set up in 1636 and renamed Court of Colonial Affairs (Ma. *Tulergi golo be dasara yamen*; Chin. *Li-fan-yüan*) in 1638. This office was responsible for the administration of Mongolian affairs inside and outside Manchuria, for religious matters related to Lamaism, and the Ch'ing court's relationship to Tibet. Later, its responsibilities included other Inner Asian affairs.

Whereas the Mongols within Manchuria were administratively part of the banner system, the Mongol tribes who remained in Inner Mongolia after submitting to the Manchus fell under a different system of Ch'ing control. Their chiefs received titles and retained their hereditary positions, but were assigned territories and forbidden to encroach on their neighbors' land. Each of these Mongol units was called *hošo* ("corner"; Mo. *khoshun*), a term which, rather unfortunately, is translated into English as "banner" even though these units were not part of the eight-banner system and had no colors assigned to them.[156] In time the Ch'ing subdivided these Mongol *hošo* into companies (*niru*) of fifty households and administered them through the Court of Colonial Affairs.

Hung Taiji's Chinese advisors were eager memorialists who assisted in the organizational process and policy formulation. They urged the khan repeatedly to take advantage of the deteriorating conditions in Ming China: "This is the opportunity to enter . . . If the khan does not take the opportunity at once, there is no telling whether such a large country will continue to be weak."[157] Such advice demonstrated their support for the khan's plan to conquer Ming.

Conceptual empire building

Hung Taiji did not follow the urging of his Chinese officials to conquer the Ming Empire. Though he did not rush, he needed little prodding to prepare for an empire on an ideological level. By the mid-1630s, Hung

[156] Owen Lattimore, *The Mongols of Manchuria. Their tribal division, geographical distribution, historical relations with Manchus and Chinese and present political problems* (New York, 1969), p. 111.

[157] *Chiu Man-chou tang*, Vol. 9, p. 4141; *Chiu Man-chou tang: T'ien-ts'ung chiu nien*, Vol. 1, p. 54.

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Taiji had secured his place by eliminating his rivals and achieving military successes on the Korean and Mongol fronts. At this point he was ready to break the Manchus' ties to the former Chin dynasty. He told his Chinese officials that "neither is your Ming ruler a descendant of the Sung nor are we heir to the Chin. That was another time."[158] The Chin dynasty had lost its mandate to the Mongols, and the name had unpleasant connotations for Chinese.

In 1635, as the *Veritable Records* for Nurhaci's reign were being produced – itself an act reflecting Manchu dynastic ambitions – Hung Taiji changed the name of his people. The label *jušen* was to be replaced with *manju* because "our country used to consist of Manchu, Hada, Ula, Yehe and Hoifa. Those who did not know better called us Jušen."[159] From this it appears that *manju* was an old term for the Chien-chou Jurchens.[160] Whatever the origin or meaning of the word, it appears that Hung Taiji discarded a term that referred back to the Chin Jurchens in favor of one that referred more narrowly to Chien-chou Jurchens, in spite of the fact that his "Manchus" in the 1630s included many non–Chien-chou Jurchens.

In the following year, 1636, Hung Taiji further distanced his state from the Chin precedent by adopting a new name for his polity. Instead of Chin or Ta Chin it was to be called Ch'ing or Ta Ch'ing.[161] Along with a new dynastic name came a new reign title (Ma. *Wesihun erdemungge*; Chin. *Ch'ung-te*), an honorary title for himself (Ma. *Gosin onco hūwaliyasun enduringge han*; Chin. *Jen k'uan wen sheng huang-ti*) and equally illustrious posthumous names for his dynastic predecessors.[162]

While honoring the ancestral line, Hung Taiji found it expedient to elevate his closest relatives, those descended from his grandfather Taksi. Allowed to wear yellow (royal color) sashes, Taksi's descendants were called Yellow Belts (Ma. *Suwayan umiyesun*; Chin. *Huang-tai-tzu*). The other descendants of the Beiles of the Sixes could wear a red sash, and therefore came to be called Red Belts (Ma. *Fulgiyan umiyesun*; Chin. *Hung-tai-tzu*). This division had

[158] *Ta Ch'ing T'ai-tsung wen huang-ti shih-lu* (1734–40; rpt. Taipei, 1964) ch. 9, p. 32a.

[159] *Chiu Man-chou tang: T'ien-ts'ung chiu nien*, Vol. 2, p. 318.

[160] The origin and meaning of *manju* continues to be debated. For a review of interpretations see Giovanni Stary, "The meaning of the word 'Manchu': A new solution to an old problem," *Central Asiatic Journal*, 34, Nos. 1–2 (1990), pp. 109–19.

[161] Hung Taiji did not explain why he chose this particular name. Some scholars have suggested that he chose Ta Ch'ing because it was close in sound to the one in use and because it was a good parallel to the dynasty he wanted to replace. See Li, *Ch'ing tai ch'üan shih*, Vol. 1, p. 327. This interpretation is strengthened by the fact that Hung Taiji's new reign name Ch'ung-te also parallels Ch'ung-chen, his opponent's reign name.

[162] Hauer, *Huang-Ts'ing k'ai-kuo fang-lüeh*, pp. 396–7. Also see Ch'en Chieh-hsien, "A study of the Manchu posthumous titles of the Ch'ing emperors," *Central Asiatic Journal*, 26, Nos. 3–4 (1982), pp. 187–92.

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multiple significance. The distinction elevated the royal house and limited the size of this select group. It also reflected the separation of the Aisin Gioro from the Gioro clan and involved a new use of strict genealogical descent – more Chinese than Jurchen in its conception – as the criterion for clan membership.[163]

The new emphasis on strict genealogical descent raises the interesting possibility that this was the time the Manchu royalty adopted an account which, according to a visitor to the Manchu court in 1634, described the origin of a Hūrha tribe.[164] To demonstrate the reputable origin of their royal clan, if Nurhaci was not to be a descendant of Möngke Temür, they modified the Hūrha myth to include the origin of the Aisin Gioro clan. The myth, which contains ancient Chinese as well as shamanistic elements, makes no mention of either Möngke Temür or the Chin dynasty.[165] Later official Ch'ing sources consistently accept it as the account of the origins of the Ch'ing imperial house.

Concern with military conquest, interest in Ming government structure, and recognition of some basic Chinese values did not exclude or diminish Manchu attention to non-Chinese people and cultures. Control over Inner Mongolia gave the Manchus the opportunity to style themselves as protectors of Tibetan Buddhism, which helped consolidate their rule over the Mongols and foreshadowed their claim to Tibet. After converting to Buddhism during the late sixteenth century, some chiefs of the eastern Mongol tribes had turned their residences into centers of religious and literary activities with ties to the religious authorities in Tibet. The Manchu leaders showed little interest in becoming Buddhists themselves. Hung Taiji did not shy away from condemning Buddhist lamas as "liars," "incorrigibles,"

[163] *Hauer, Huang-Ts'ing k'ai-kuo fang-lüeh*, p. 368. Since Jurchen clans had been disintegrating during the Ming period, Hung Taiji's revitalization was somewhat artificial, undoubtedly related to the fact that by the 1630s the Manchus were vastly outnumbered by Chinese. The official promotion of clans requires caution about reading later information regarding clans back into the early period. For example, information gathered by Shirokogoroff in the early twentieth century should not necessarily be considered valid for Manchu clans of the sixteenth or early seventeenth centuries. S. M. Shirokogoroff, *Social organization of the Manchus: A study of the Manchu clan organization* (Shanghai, 1924).

[164] *Chiu Man-chou tang*, Vol. 9, pp. 4141–2; *Chiu Man-chou tang: T'ien-ts'ung chiu nien*, Vol. 1, pp. 124–5.

[165] The *Chiu Man-chou tang*, the oldest and most reliable Manchu historical source, only mentions the Hūrha myth. In contrast, later sources refer to the Aisin Gioro myth but make no mention that the nearly identical story was told in 1634 as a Hūrha legend. The discrepancy suggests that the Hūrha legend was modified at some point to serve as foundation myth for the Ch'ing imperial house. For a brief but excellent discussion of the ancient and shamanistic ingredients of the myth, as well as the possible forgery of applying it to Nurhaci's ancestors, see Giovanni Stary, "Mandschurische Miszellen," *Asiatische Forschungen*, Band 80 (Wiesbaden, 1982), pp. 76–9. A more general discussion of the foundation myth is in Pamela Kyle Crossley, "An introduction to the Qing foundation myth," *Late imperial China*, 6, No. 1 (December 1985), pp. 12–23.

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and "people who squander goods."[166] But he also took advantage of the Mongols' adherence to Buddhism. He invited the Fifth Dalai Lama to Shen-yang in 1637, and a year later he completed the construction of a Yellow Temple to house a Buddhist statue which originated from the Yüan period and had belonged to Ligdan Khan. In 1640 he received a letter from the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama in which the two religious leaders recognized him as a bodhisattva and called him "Mañjuśrī–Great Emperor."[167] However, perhaps aware that reincarnations appealed to Mongols and Tibetans, who were used to the combination of secular rule with religious authority but did not appeal to Chinese Buddhists, Hong Taiji was careful about exploiting this honor.

Even though Hung Taiji did not achieve the conquest of China during his lifetime, he felt he was close to reaching this goal when Hung Ch'eng-ch'ou surrendered. Brushing aside criticism for his generous treatment of the Ming general, he pointed out that Manchus had fought hard in the past to conquer Ming China and needed help with the final takeover. "We are all blind. Today, we have obtained a guide. How could I not be happy?"[168]

Social foundation for a multinational empire

Both Nurhaci and Hung Taiji at some point during their reigns proclaimed the equality of Chinese and Manchus, but because the last years of Nurhaci's reign were wrought with difficulties, discrimination, and large-scale killings, Hung Taiji benefited by making comparisons between his own policies and those of his father. Appealing to the Chinese, Hung Taiji acknowledged that his father had violated their principle of government (*gurun-i doro*) by having so many Chinese killed after the 1625 rebellion: "The killings of the people of Liao-tung was the former khan's fault. I think it would compare with the killing of one body if we had two, or destroying one head if we had two, at a time when the principles of government were not understood."[169]

Hung Taiji tried to establish Chinese equality with Manchus. Immediately upon his succession to the throne he took Chinese away from the control of Manchu officials and made them independent registered households under Chinese officials. Manchu officials were left with only small numbers of

[166] *Ta Ch'ing T'ai-tsung wen huang-ti shih-lu* (1739; rpt. Taipei, 1964), ch. 28, pp. 5a–b. The paragraph is translated into English in David M. Farquhar, "Emperor as bodhisattva in the governance of the Ch'ing empire," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 38, No. 1 (June 1978), p. 21.

[167] Mañjuśrī is the personification of Buddha's intellect and is one of the most important bodhisattvas in Buddhism. See Farquhar, "Emperor as bodhisattva," pp. 19–21.

[168] Chang Ch'i-yün et al., eds., *Ch'ing shih*, 8 Vols. (Yang-ming-shan, 1961, 1963), ch. 238, biography 214, Vol. 5, pp. 3720–5.

[169] *Chiu Man-chou tang*, Vol. 7, p. 3579; Kanda, *Mambun Rōtō*, Vol. 5, p. 583.

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Chinese as private servants. Decrees equalized corvée obligations and forbade discrimination. Because Hung Taiji intended to practice what he preached, Amin's massacre of the Chinese at Yung-p'ing was a major blow. In order to preserve his credibility, he made Amin an enemy of the state and cleared himself of the blame for what had happened. After the Yung-p'ing massacre, Hung Taiji repeatedly warned the Manchus not to rob and molest Chinese and to treat Chinese officials well. Not only was mass killing not permissible, individual cases of killing or robbing Chinese became capital crimes.[170]

Nurhaci had ordered his Chinese officials to record the various customary laws of the Chinese. Hung Taiji also favored the adoption of suitable Chinese laws and made adjustments which could not fail to impress his Chinese officials. After 1631, the punishment for a crime depended on the status of the offender. People were no longer required to report the misconduct of their family members, a law which stood in conflict with the Chinese concept of family relationships. Henceforth the obligation of a son to report his father, or the wife her husband, was restricted to serious rebellious behavior. Hung Taiji also abolished the practice among the Manchu elite of marrying the wife of a deceased uncle or brother, a custom which was offensive to the Chinese sense of proper conduct. Thus, with the incorporation of a sizable Chinese bureaucracy and increasing familiarity with Chinese traditions, Ch'ing law began to reflect the Chinese concepts of social relationships.[171]

Hoping that an understanding of Chinese principles of relationships would increase a Manchu's loyalty to his ruler even when facing death in battle, Hung Taiji decreed that boys between the ages of eight and fifteen must register for schooling. He threatened that if a Manchu father failed to make his son study, the father and the older brothers would not be permitted to go on campaigns and instead "should sit idle at home with the sons."[172] But the Manchus resisted. They did not want an education for themselves or for their sons. In the end, Hung Taiji did not force the issue. Instead, he emphasized the importance of Manchu cultural traditions, such as hunting, archery, and Manchu clothing. The change in attitude stemmed from his growing realization that the Manchus were losing their cultural identity and

[170] *Chiu Man-chou tang*, Vol. 6, p. 2907; Kanda, *Mambun Rōtō*, Vol. 4, p. 249; *Ta Ch'ing T'ai-tsung wen huang ti shih lu*, ch. 14, pp. 10a–b.

[171] *Chiu Man chou tang*, Vol. 2, p. 644; Kanda, *Mambun Rōtō*, Vol. 1, pp. 305–6; *Ch'ing ch'u nei kuo shih Yüan Man-wen tang i pien* (Peking, 1986), Vol. 1, p. 214; Li, *Ch'ing tai ch'üan shih*, p. 344.

[172] Hung Taiji had been impressed by the bravery the Chinese exhibited when resisting the Manchus at Ta-ling-ho and Chin-shan and attributed the valor to the Confucian value of loyalty to the ruler. *Ta Ch'ing T'ai-ts'ung wen huang ti shih lu*, ch. 10, pp. 28a–29a. Also Li, *Ch'ing tai ch'üan shih*, p. 346.

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that their involvement with aspects of Chinese civilization was weakening their military prowess. Instead of practicing martial skills, young Manchus preferred to "hang around the market place and simply amuse themselves."[173]

Rather than imposing a single standard for all of his subjects, Hung Taiji encouraged each group to adhere to its own traditions. He chided the Mongols for neglecting their own language by using Tibetan names, and he asserted Manchu autonomy by changing names, such as Mukden ("The Flourishing"; Chin. Sheng-ching) for Shen-yang, and Yenden ("The Rising"; Chin. Hsing-ching) for Hetu Ala. He also acknowledged the Manchus' Chin cultural heritage and drew on Chin historical precedents even though he rejected a political connection between the Chin and the Ch'ing.

Perhaps because of the emphasis on their cultural heritage, and also because of being vastly outnumbered by Chinese, the Manchus' relationship to the Mongols was sometimes emphasized. In 1631, Hung Taiji appealed to a contingent of Mongol mercenaries within the besieged town of Ta-ling-ho: "We Manchus and you Mongols originally belonged to the same country. The Ming is a different country. It makes no sense for all of you to die for a different country and I pity you all the more for that."[174] Intermarriage between Manchu and Mongol elites had already been common under Nurhaci. After the conquest of the Chahars in 1635, many more such marriages took place. For Hung Taiji, an enlarged Mongol elite in positions of social equality with the beiles had the added benefit of diluting the status of the Manchu beiles. Encouraging the Mongols to marry Manchu women, Hung Taiji told them: "You are like one of our Eight Houses, that is to say, I will treat you just like my own sons."[175] The new Ch'ing hierarchy had room for an expanded Mongol elite.

Some of the new official positions available within the central government were filled through a formal recruitment process. Nurhaci had used a kind of civil service examination in 1625 when he recruited over three hundred men by "selecting and examining them in the Chinese manner."[176] Under Hung Taiji examinations took place on a more regular basis. In 1633 Chinese, Manchus, and Mongols could take examinations in their own or in another language. Further examinations were held in 1638 and 1641. Although the number of officials recruited in this way was small, the examinations offered a way to secure an official appointment.[177]

[173] *Chiu Man-chou tang*, Vol. 10, p. 4992; Kanda, *Mambun Rōtō*, Vol. 4, pp. 1211–12.
[174] *Ta Ch'ing T'ai-tsung wen huang ti shih lu*, ch. 9, p. 24b.
[175] *Chiu Man-chou tang*, Vol. 2, p. 1104; Kanda, *Mambun Rōtō*, Vol. 2, pp. 588–9.
[176] *Chiu Man-chou tang*, Vol. 4, p. 1940; Kanda, *Mambun Rōtō*, Vol. 3, p. 994.
[177] Roth Li, "The rise of the early Manchu state," pp. 145–6; O-erh-t'ai, *Ch'in ting pa ch'i t'ung chih*, 1799 ed., repr. *Chung-kuo shih-hsüeh ts'ung-shu*, 2 (Taipei, 1968), ch. 17, pp. 5779–81.

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The proliferation of offices created a more stratified society. The two hundred persons selected during the first examination in 1629 all had been bondservants or slaves in the households of Manchus or Mongols. Later, Chinese officials objected to promoting men of humble backgrounds and pointed to the hazards of recommendations by those without proper education: "Merchants recommend merchants, lazy ones their lazy friends, drunkards recommend drunkards, gamblers their gambler friends."[178] In 1638 slaves were no longer allowed to participate in the examinations. However, the change came about not only because of the humble status of slaves. It was also because the Chinese who were enslaved in the 1630s had actively resisted the Manchus and therefore were not trustworthy.[179]

As a new Chinese upper class emerged in pre-1644 Liao-tung society, Manchus generally declined in status. The former Manchu elite resented Hung Taiji's pro-Chinese policies and complained that some Chinese held high titles while some imperial relatives were commoners. "How could we fall this low?"[180] they asked. As for rank-and-file Manchus, they too lost the privileged status of being full-time warriors and supervisors of Chinese and Korean agricultural slaves. In the new Liao-tung they were farmer-soldiers with heavy corvée responsibilities. Among all Manchus, Mongols, and Chinese a new disparity between rich and poor emerged, influencing military performance in the banners. "If one pursues the enemy more than two thousand *li*, the rich who have (good) horses can still proceed, but the horses of the poor are tired and fall behind."[181]

Economy and trade

Throughout most of Hung Taiji's reign the economy was in a state of crisis.[182] The reorganization of the Chinese population after 1625, the large number of Mongol submissions, and the widespread food shortage from bad weather that extended from northwestern China to Manchuria and on into Japan contributed to the Manchus' economic difficulties. Famine drove people to banditry, and, in some cases, to cannibalism. "If we alone had to live on the grain produced in our country," Hung Taiji wrote to the Korean king in 1627, "there would be enough. But you must have heard that the Mongol khan (Ligdan) is bad and that the Mongols have been coming over to us in

[178] *Chiu Man-chou tang*, Vol. 9, p. 4159; *Chiu Man-chou tang: T'ien-ts'ung chiu nien*, pp. 70–1.
[179] *Ta Ch'ing T'ai-tsung wen huang-ti shih-lu*, ch. 40, pp. 11b–13a.
[180] *Ta Ch'ing T'ai-tsung wen huang-ti shih-lu*, ch. 64, p. 8a. [181] *Tsou-i*, part 1, p. 16a.
[182] For an expanded version of this section see Roth Li, "The rise of the early Manchu state," pp. 155–75.

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an endless stream. These people need to be fed, yet there is not enough grain."[183] Conditions were no better in 1632, when a memorialist noted: "If it happens to be a year with a good harvest, the government and the people have just enough for one year. If it is a poor year, the people do not even have enough to live on."[184]

Convinced that conquest offered a solution to the Manchus' problems, Chinese officials under the Manchus urged the khan to take advantage of Ming weakness: "As soon as the Shan-hai Pass is open, the eight cities inside China will inevitably be ours. Once the eight cities are taken, the great empire will follow, and how would we then have to worry again about our people going hungry?" But "one mistake, missing the opportunity, and the poor people will have nothing to eat and will run away, and our undertaking will suffer."[185]

International trade continued as a monopoly of the eight banners. Banner missions went to northern Manchuria in search of sable and to Ming borders to buy Chinese goods.[186] The Manchus' keen interest in Chinese markets is evident from a minor incident in 1634 when, while pursuing Ligdan khan, they gained access to the Chinese–Mongol trading post at Kalgan. After some of the Manchus' Mongol allies went across the Chinese border and stole cattle, Manchu troops caught them, dragged the leaders of the Mongol group back to the Chinese border, and beheaded them in front of the Chinese.[187]

The Manchus' economic relationship with the Mongols had broad implications. In order to keep the Mongols from allying themselves with the Ming, the Manchus had to provide the Mongols with tributary and trading privileges that compared to those they might have obtained from the Ming. This was a costly arrangement. Korchin tribute missions, which came regularly from the early 1620s on, had by 1629 already taken on such proportions that the khan was anxious to limit them. When the first Khalka mission from northern Mongolia appeared in the Manchu capital, it consisted of only six envoys but had 156 merchants in its train.[188] Similar to the procedures in Peking, which also were expensive for the Ming court, the tribute bearers received presents, were entertained at the khan's expense, and could trade for three days after the reception. Hung Taiji needed to be careful not to

[183] *Chiu Man-chou tang*, Vol. 7, p. 2717; Kanda, *Mambun Rōtō*, Vol. 4, pp. 111–12.
[184] *Tsou-i*, part 1, p. 8b. [185] *Tsou-i*, part 1, 28a.
[186] For example, in 1637, one such banner mission went to the Kui-hua-ch'eng. Hauer, *Huang-Ts'ing k'ai-kuo fang-lüeh*, pp. 450–1.
[187] *Chiu Man-chou tang*, Vol. 8, p. 3803; Kanda, *Mambun Rōtō*, Vol. 5, p. 802.
[188] *Chiu Man-chou tang*, Vol. 10, p. 5285; Kanda, *Mambun Rōtō*, Vol. 7, pp. 1434–5.

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antagonize the Mongols, because "with booty from China and goods bought from Korea we buy horses from the Mongols and set out against China."[189] Good horses were crucial to military success. The Manchus needed to secure their own supply, while at the same time preventing the Mongols from selling this valuable military resource to the enemy.

Economic need was behind some of the Manchus' military initiatives. The Korea campaigns sought grain and provisions. Backed by military force, the Manchus pressed Korea for trade, but the prices they asked made bad business for Korea. Manchu merchants came by the hundreds, but Korean traders stayed away. In 1636 the Manchus once again looked to Korea for relief. But because they needed more than the moderate profits possible through fair trade, their prices were as unfavorable to Korea as before.[190] The new treaty imposed onto Korea in 1637 stipulated that Korea send annual tribute to the Ch'ing court. However, because of extensive devastation from war, Korean sources of grain had all but dried up, forcing Hung Taiji to reduce Korea's tribute obligations. In 1640 Korea could pay only one-tenth of its quota.[191]

Economic difficulties persisted right down to the Ch'ing conquest of Peking. In 1641 hoarding of grain was forbidden; so was brewing wine from grain. In 1643 Hung Taiji stopped construction projects during the agricultural season. Revenue-enhancing ideas, familiar to the Chinese from their own history, were floated: The conversion of punishments, such as beatings and banishment, into specified amounts of grain and the sale of lesser government functionary posts.[192] Earlier Chinese memorialists had proposed to increase productivity by encouraging farmers to cultivate new land and by giving oxen, tools, and seed to those with inadequate resources. Then, by collecting a fixed 10 percent in taxes, they suggested that "in one year one will harvest the amount of three years, and in three years that of nine years."[193] It is not clear whether any of these proposals were implemented.

Hung Taiji's death, Fulin's succession, and taking the prize

In the aftermath of the Ch'ing victory at Sung-shan in 1641 and their successful invasions of China, Hung Taiji's death in September 1643 was most untimely. With succession crises common in Jurchen history, it is remarkable that Hung Taiji's death did not divert the Ch'ing conquest of China. The organizational and conceptual foundations laid during Nurhaci and

[189] *Chiu Man-chou tang*, Vol. 7, p. 3478; Kanda, *Mambun Rōtō*, Vol. 5, p. 525.
[190] *Chiu Man chou tang*, Vol. 6, pp. 2717, 2796–7; Kanda, *Mambun Rōtō*, Vol. 4, pp. 111–13, 117.
[191] Hauer, *Huang-Ts'ing k'ai-kuo fang-lüeh*, p. 437.
[192] Hauer, *Huang Ts'ing k'ai-kuo fang-lüeh*, pp. 535–6, 571. [193] *Tsou-i*, pt. 1, 8b–9a.

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Hung Taiji's reigns allowed the Manchus to make the successful transition and take advantage of events in north China. Because Hung Taiji's death was unexpected, he had made no arrangements for a successor. A struggle ensued between two powerful contenders, Dorgon (To-er-kun; 1612–50), who was Nurhaci's son and Hung Taiji's younger brother, and Haoge (Hao-ko; 1609–48),[194] Hung Taiji's eldest son. Haoge stood out within his generation. He had been made beile at the age of seventeen, and was later promoted to enfeoffed beile and imperial prince (Ma. *hošo-i beile*; Chin. *ch'in-wang*). Moreover, Manchu opinion favored selecting one of Hung Taiji's sons. With Dorgon and his supporters opposing a strong leader like Haoge, a compromise was reached. Following Dorgon's proposal, the princes selected Hung Taiji's ninth son, six-year-old Fulin (Fu-lin; 1638–61)[195] to succeed as ruler, with Dorgon and Jirgalang (Chi-erl-ha-lang; 1599–1655),[196] son of Šurhaci, serving as regents. Since Jirgalang had no ambition to be ruler, Dorgon in effect had secured the basis for several years of dominant power for himself.

Seven months after Hung Taiji's death, Li Tzu-ch'eng (1605?–45),[197] a rebel leader in China, captured Peking. When Wu San-kuei, Ming commander based at Ning-yüan outside Shan-hai Pass, learned that Peking had fallen and that the Ming emperor had committed suicide, he chose to ally himself with the Manchus.[198] Before receiving Wu San-kuei's invitation to join him in the "righteous cause" of eliminating the rebels, the Ch'ing court had entertained the possibility of an alliance with Li Tzu-ch'eng in order to take the Central Plains.[199] Instead, Ch'ing forces, allied with Wu San-kuei's army, routed Li Tzu-ch'eng's forces and entered Peking on June 6, 1644. Unlike previous Ch'ing campaigns into China, which had been campaigns for loot and pillage, this was different. This time the Ch'ing leadership promised discipline and prepared their entry into the capital by distributing a proclamation to the Chinese people reassuring them that those who surrendered would not be harmed.

When rumor had it that Wu San-kuei would arrive with the crown prince – although which crown prince was not clear – respected elders of Peking went outside the city for a welcome and authorities readied the paraphernalia for an imperial procession. "Then the one man under escort dismounted from his horse, stepped into the imperial carriage, and said to the common

[194] Biography in *ECCP*, pp. 280–1. [195] Ibid., pp. 255–9. [196] Ibid., pp. 397–8.

[197] Ibid., pp. 491–3.

[198] Because Wu San-kuei later rebelled against the Manchus, the circumstances of his collaboration with the Manchus in 1644 may have been later distorted. For a full account see Angela N. S Hsi, "Wu San-kuei in 1644: A reappraisal," *JAS*, 34, No. 2 (February 1975), pp. 443–53.

[199] Wakeman, *The great enterprise*, Vol. 1, pp. 302–3, n. 237.

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people looking on, 'I am the prince regent (Dorgon). The crown prince will arrive in a while. Will you allow me to be the ruler?' The crowd, astonished and uncomprehending, was only able to lamely answer yes."[200] Such was the beginning of the Ch'ing dynasty in China.

[200] Liu Shang-you, *Ting ssu hsiao chi* (1644) in Lynn A. Struve, trans. and ed., *Voices from the Ming-Qing cataclysm: China in the tiger's jaws* (New Haven, Conn., 1993), pp. 18–19.

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CHAPTER 2

THE SHUN-CHIH REIGN

Jerry Dennerline

The brief period between the death in 1643 of Hung Taiji, who turned Nurhaci's banner confederation into the Ch'ing state, and the death of his successor at the age of twenty-two in 1661 is known as the Shun-chih reign. It is a poorly documented and not well understood period. The effects of the previous decade's devastation, including the collapse of the Ming economy and the resulting wars, were overwhelming. When the Ming capital at Peking fell to peasant rebels on April 25, 1644, the most effective fighting force on the continent belonged to the Manchus. But the ultimate success of the Ch'ing empire, the settling of the countryside, the stabilization and expansion of the economy, and the revitalization of the culture could not be predicted. The future rested primarily with a handful of mostly young men on horseback and a few multilingual academicians encamped in tents beyond the Great Wall at Shanhaikuan. Central among them was the Prince Regent, Dorgon, who was vilified after his death in 1650 for the imperial pretensions he displayed, and the small group of commanders and banner officials who vilified him.

The key to the emergence of the Ch'ing as one of the most successful imperial states the world has known was the ability of those young men who survived the continuous political intrigues of the period to maintain sufficient discipline and unity of purpose to complete the conquest. They were aided in their pursuit of conquest by important legacies of Nurhaci's banner confederation, such as consensus decisions in deliberative councils, blunt and open discussion of political issues, ruthless punishment of insubordination, lightning mobilization and dispersion of forces, the distinction between field commanders and banner-owning princes of the blood, and the momentum provided by the need to reward and use new allies and captives. On the other hand, they were aided in constraining the power of ambitious princes by more recent legacies of Hung Taiji's state-making, such as the influence of academicians, the centralized appointment and enhanced power of banner officials, and the recruitment of Han Chinese civil officials. This chapter describes the process of political and military

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consolidation and the integration of the Han Chinese scholar-official elite into it.[1]

THE SUCCESSION DISPUTE AND THE CH'ING MANDATE

The death of Hung Taiji on September 9, 1643, presented the young Ch'ing state with its first major political crisis. Twenty-six years earlier, Nurhaci had hoped that his sons and nephews could rule by consensus after he died. The four senior *hošoi beile* – Daisan, Manggultai, Hung Taiji, and Amin – were to share the supreme command by turns, and the banners were to be distributed evenly among the eight princes who were *hošoi beile* (see Table 2.1). But Hung Taiji had appropriated the two yellow banners, leaving the youngest of the *hošoi beile*, Ajige, with none. He had then eliminated his cousin Amin. After Manggultai's death in 1633, he expelled his heirs, eliminated his uterine brother Degelei, and added the Plain Blue Banner to the two already under his control. With Daisan's support, he was elevated from khan to emperor in 1636.[2]

Hung Taiji had left the remaining five banners under the ownership of Daisan and the younger princes, among whom were now counted Dorgon and Dodo, Ajige's uterine brothers. Ajige could claim only a number of companies of his own, carved from the banners of the other two. These three were the sons of Nurhaci's third wife, who had been persuaded by the elders to follow the ancient custom of committing suicide at the time of her master's death. Hung Taiji had promoted his own mother, a secondary consort, posthumously to the title of empress and further buttressed the imperial throne against the collective power of the three princes by appointing grand ministers (*ta-ch'en*) to govern the banners that were still under the princes' control. Also beholden to the new emperor were certain key military leaders from outside the Aisin Gioro clan who had distinguished themselves in battle and risen to positions of command within the banners (*gûsa ejen*), or the Guards Brigade (*bayala ejen*), which protected the capital, or the Vanguard

[1] The principal sources on which this account is based are *Ta-Ch'ing Shih-tsu Chang huang-ti shih-lu* (Mukden, 1937; photo rpt., Taiwan, 1964, hereafter *CSL-SC*); O-erh-t'ai et al., eds., *Ch'in-ting Pa-ch'i t'ung-chih ch'u-chi* (1739; photo rpt. Taipei, 1968, hereafter *PCTC*); Chang Ch'i-yün et al., eds., *Ch'ing-shih* (Yang-ming-shan, 1961, 1963, hereafter *CS*). Biographical details and some bibliography on many of the principle figures can be found in *ECCP*. For a detailed account in two volumes, and extensive bibliography to 1985, see Frederic Wakeman, Jr., *The great enterprise: The Manchu reconstruction of imperial order in seventeenth-century China* (Berkeley, 1975). For another detailed account and bibliography from the perspective of the losing side, see Lynn A. Struve, *The southern Ming, 1644–1662* (New Haven and London, 1984).

[2] It is common to refer to the four senior *hosoi beile* whom Nurhaci hoped would rule collegially as the only ones, but in fact the eight princes who acted as *beile* to their banners were all so designated. See Pamela Crossley, *The Manchus* (Oxford and Cambridge, Mass., 1997), pp. 64, 67.

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Table 2.1. *Princes of the Blood (with dates of birth and death where known)*

This is not a complete list. It includes the 16 sons of Nurhaci and 4 sons of his younger brother Surhaci who are relevant to this chapter. In all, Nurhaci had 4 younger brothers, three wives, and a number of secondary consorts, 13 nephews, 47 grandsons, and 29 grandnephews.

I. Nurhaci (1559–1626)
- 1:*A Cuyen (1580–1615) **(X–1613)**
  - 1.3. **Nikan** (1610–1652)
    - 1.3.1. Lambu (d.1678)
    - 1.3.2. **Nissa** (d.1660)
- 2:*A ***Daisan*** (1583–1648)
  - 2.1. ***Yoto*** (1598–1638) **(X–1636)**
  - 2.2. Soto (c.1600–1643) **(X–1643)**
  - 2.3. Sahaliyen (1604–1636)
    - 1. Adali (c.1618–1643) **(X–1643)**
    - 2.3.2. Lekedehun (1619–1652)
  - 2.7. **Mandahai** (1622–1652) **(X–1659)**
    - 1. **Canggadai** (1633–1665) **(X–1659)**
  - 2.8. Huse (c.1623–1648)
    - 3. **Giyesu** (1645–1697)
- 3:# Abai (1585–1648)
- 4:# Tangguldai (1585–1640)
- 5:*B *Manggultai* (1587–1633) **(X–1635)**
- 6:# Tabai (1589–1639)
- 7:# Abatai (1589–1646)
  - 7.2. Bohoto
    - 4. Jangtai (1636–1690)
  - 7.3. **Bolo** (1613–1652) **(X–1652)**
  - 7.4. **Yolo** (1625–1689) **(X–1665)**
- 8:# ***ABAHAI, HUNG TAIJI, EMPEROR T'AI-TSUNG*** (1592–1643/r.1626–1643)
  - 8.1. **Haoge** (1609–1648) **(X–1648)**
  - 8.5. **Sose** (1629–1655)
    - 1. Boggodo (1650–1723)
  - 8.9. **FULIN, SHUN-CHIH EMPEROR, SHIH-TSU** (1638–1661/r.1643–1661)
    - 2. **Fu-ch'üan** (1653–1703)
    - 3. **HSÜAN-YEH, K'ANG-HSI EMPEROR, SHENG-TSU** (1654–1722/r.1661–1722)
    - 5. **Ch'ang-ning** (1657–1703)
    - 7. **Lung-hsi** (1660–1679)
- 9:# Babutai (1592–1655)
- 10:*B *Degelei* (1596–1635) **(X–1635)**
- 11:# Babuhai (1596–1643)
- 12:*C ***Ajige*** (1605–1651) **(X–1651)**
- 13:# Laimbu (1611–1646)

(*continued*)

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Table 2.1. (*continued*)

14:*C **Dorgon** (1612–1650), Prince Regent **(X–1651)**
  1. adopted Dodo's #5, Dorbo
15:*C **Dodo** (1614–1649) **(X–1652)**
  2. **Doni** (d.1661) **(X–1652)**
  5. Dorbo (Dorgon heir)
16:? Fiyanggu (d.1636) **(X–1636)**

III. Surhaci (1564–1611) **(X–1611)**
  2. *Amin* (1586–1640) **(X–1630)**
  4. Tulun
    2. Tunci (1614–1663)
  5. Sesanggu
    1. Loto (1616–1665)
  6. ***Jirgalang*** (1599–1655), Prince Regent
    2. **Jidu** (1633–1660)
      2. **Labu** (1654–1681) **(X–1682)**

Key: *A = First wife's son; *B = Second wife's son; *C = Third wife's son; # = Son of a secondary consort. *Italics* indicate *hošoi beile* (eight "cardinal" beile designated under Nurhaci); *All bold uppercased* indicates **EMPEROR**; *Bold* indicates **Imperial Prince** (one who achieved the highest noble rank at some point in his career); **(X-date)** = one who was imprisoned, demoted from prince, outcast, executed, or posthumously demoted or expelled from the Aisin Gioro clan.

Brigade, which took the lead in processions and campaigns, or the Imperial Bodyguard. In addition, Hung Taiji had brought a few key surrendered Han Chinese civil officials into the inner circle as "Grand Academicians" (*ta-hsüeh shih*) of the Three Inner Courts (*nei-san-yüan*), the new Ch'ing counterpart to the Ming Grand Secretariat and Han-lin Academy.[3] There they joined a handful of multilingual Manchus in ordering the affairs of the nascent imperial state. These men, who by 1643 were included in the Deliberative Council of Princes and Grand Ministers, were the political force that had enabled Hung Taiji to displace the clique of Manggultai and his maternal kin while discouraging open conflict among the younger princes. The succession of 1643 was as much a test of their role and, indeed of the whole new imperial structure, as it was a test of cooperation among the princes.

Dorgon's ascendancy among the princes guaranteed that the structure would be tested. He and his older brother, Ajige, had provided essential military leadership under Hung Taiji, and Ajige had not forgotten the slight he suffered in being denied control of a banner after Nurhaci's death. As the

[3] The term *ta-hsüeh shih* is normally translated "Grand Secretary," designating the highest officials in the *nei-ko* (Grand Secretariat) of the Ming and Ch'ing periods. The translation "Grand Academician" is used for officials with the same title and rank in the Ch'ing academies prior to the reform of 1658, when the Ming system was reinstated. See below, p. 113.

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other Banner Princes lost autonomy to the emperor in the late 1630s, Dorgon's position was enhanced. By 1643, only Dorgon's Plain White, his younger brother Dodo's Bordered White, Daisan's Plain Red, and Jirgalang's Bordered Blue remained in the hands of imperial princes. The two yellow banners and Manggultai's Plain Blue were controlled by the emperor and his trusted commanders. The Bordered Red had already begun to fragment as a unit after Yoto's death in 1638. Ajige, Dorgon, and Dodo, three sons of Nurhaci and his third wife, were only thirty-eight, thirty-one, and twenty-nine years of age and claimed the loyalty of the two white banners. They were in a strong position to contend in deliberations over the succession.

Had the Ming imperial rule of succession been followed, Hung Taiji's eldest son, Haoge, would have been the prescribed choice. At thirty-four, he was also a proven military leader and the only son over the age of sixteen. But Hung Taiji had not especially favored Haoge and had even taken away his title of Imperial Prince, the highest princely rank, more than once for alleged intrigues. The emperor's success in consolidating imperial control over three banners had left Haoge with no banner of his own, so that he needed independently to gain the support of commanders who were beholden to his father. There was a negative precedent. Nurhaci had raised his eldest son, Cuyen, to the position of co-ruler, designating him as beile when that was the title Nurhaci himself held, but then had had him imprisoned, if not executed, when he was suspected of an intrigue. Not only was there no precedent for primogeniture, Nurhaci also had shared formal authority with his younger brother, Šurhaci, before having him executed, and had included a nephew among the four who should implement the collegial khanate. The only precedent, and indeed the only prudent course under the circumstances, was to call a deliberative council.

It fell to Daisan, as senior member of the clan and eldest surviving son of Nurhaci, to convene the Deliberative Council of Princes and Grand Ministers. By the time the group had assembled, the positions of the protagonists were clear but the outcome could not be predicted. Dorgon had approached the Manchu officials of the Three Inner Courts, the scholars who would have to explain the legitimacy of the outcome, and learned that as long as a son of Hung Taiji lived, only a son could succeed him. Dorgon's inquiry had set one of these officials, Soni, to making rounds among powerful friends in the Guards Brigade to ensure that the deceased emperor's appointees would remain united in their insistence on this point.

Soni was a grand minister of the imperial bodyguard and a nephew of the multilingual Grand Academician Hife, the two of them being key negotiators in the developing web of imperial politics. Among his allies were Tulai, who was Commander-general of the Guards Brigade; Tantai, who was

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Commander-in-chief of the Plain Yellow Banner; Oboi, who was a nephew of Tulai and a lesser commander in the Guards; and others. These men, all members of the great clans that had been brought into the confederation by Nurhaci, were destined to play major roles in the regencies of the Shun-chih and K'ang-hsi reigns. By securing a loyal guard unit for the council in 1643, they brought the influence of Hung Taiji's centralizing efforts to bear on the princes' deliberations.

Although Hung Taiji had set some new imperial institutions in motion, the deliberative council continued to be a forum of open and heated exchange. According to Soni's biographers, Ajige and Dodo announced that Dorgon was the most capable of the princes and that he should become emperor. When Dorgon refused, Ajige put in a claim for himself. Not only was he a capable leader, but he had been designated *hošoi beile* by Nurhaci himself. Dorgon pointed out that the academicians and guards were determined to have the throne pass to a son of the previous ruler. If princely status and age were the determining factors, then the finger would point to Haoge, rather than to himself. According to the biographers, Ajige then appealed to Daisan, as the senior prince. Pleading advanced age, Daisan refused to force a decision, but urged that as long as Dorgon would not accept, the council should designate one of Hung Taiji's younger sons as successor. The story suggests that consensus was achieved only after Hung Taiji's surviving half-brothers had made it clear that Dorgon, not Haoge, was their choice. The princes thus reached a compromise with the commanders and officials who promised to see Dorgon's succession as illegitimate. The council followed Daisan's lead in choosing Fu-lin, the five-year-old ninth son of Hung Taiji, and designating Dorgon and Jirgalang as co-regents.[4] (See Table 2.2.)

The effect of the compromise was not clear until some months after the new emperor ascended the throne. In the days immediately following the council, a group of Dorgon supporters who refused to accept the compromise, including a son and a grandson of Daisan himself, tried to urge the senior princes to rescind their decision and place Dorgon on the throne instead. The princes confirmed their solidarity by having the rebels executed. On October 4, the regents-elect received a formal pledge of loyalty from the whole body of officers of the two yellow banners, Soni and Tantai included, and two days later the new emperor was enthroned. The regents pledged to serve their emperor as sovereign and to get on with the military campaign. But Dorgon's power did not just derive from his status as Imperial Prince and regent. He was a successful warrior and the Ch'ing was at war. By the following spring,

[4] See the biography of Soni in *CS*, p. 3803.

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Table 2.2. *Princes of the Blood in 1643, by age, with Banners they headed*

Prince	Banner
I.2. ***Daisan* (60) Imperial Prince**	[Red and Bordered Red]
I.3. Abai (58)	
I.7. Abatai (54)	
I.9. Babutai (51)	
III.6. ***Jirgalang* (44) Imperial Prince, Regent, nephew of Nurhaci**	[Bordered Blue]
I.12. ***Ajige* (38) Imperial Prince**	
I.13. Laimbu (32)	
I.14. **Dorgon (31) Imperial Prince, Regent**	[White]
I.15. **Dodo (29) Imperial Prince**	[Bordered White]
I.8.1 **Haoge (34) Imperial Prince**	[Blue]
I.1.3 Nikan (33)	
I.7.2 Bohoto (?28)	
I.7.3 Bolo (30)	
I.2.7 Mandahai (21)	
I.2.8 Huse (c.20)	
I.7.4 Yolo (18)	
I.8.5 Sose (14)	
III.6.2. Jidu (10); second son of Jirgalang	
I.8.9 **FULIN (5) SHUN-CHIH EMPEROR**	[Yellow and Bordered Yellow]
I.2.3.2 Lekedehun (24)	
I.1.3.1 Lambu (?15)	
I.1.3.2 Nissa (?12)	
I.2.7.1 Canggadai (10)	

Key: see Table 2.1.

he had secured the personal loyalties of the two yellow banner commanders, Tantai and Holhoi, who were to be his agents both in the field and at court. Holhoi soon accused Haoge of conspiring with the grand ministers of the yellow banners to undermine the regency. The case led to Haoge's demotion from Imperial Prince, the execution of the guilty grand ministers, and their replacement by Dorgon supporters. Holhoi was made Grand Minister of the Imperial Household Department. Soni and the others now found themselves part of a regime falling rapidly under the control of Dorgon himself.[5]

Fortunately for the Manchus, the succession crisis followed closely on the heels of victory in Liao-tung. Their victories at Chin-chou and Sung-shan the year before had swollen the ranks of the Han-chün banners by some thirty thousand men.[6] Now the Ming capital was beginning to appear ripe for the

[5] *CSL-SC*, 4, pp. 1–4. The biography of Holhoi in *CS*, p. 3791. "Pa-ch'i ta-ch'en nien-piao," in *PCTC*, ch. 113.

[6] Fang Chao-ying, "A technique for estimating the numerical strength of the early Manchu military forces," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 13 (1950), p. 204.

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picking, with only Wu San-kuei, the last of the Ming generals, standing between the Ch'ing armies and Peking. Li Tzu-ch'eng's rebels were consolidating their hold on the central plain and the Ming government's loss of its elite forces to the Ch'ing had left it thoroughly demoralized. Perhaps the greatest blow to Ming morale was the news that the most effective of all the Ming governor-generals, Hung Ch'eng-ch'ou, had not been killed in the fighting but had surrendered along with his men. Hung became the Manchus' most important strategic advisor. As the tide continued to turn in favor of the rebels and against the Ming, the Manchu leadership could well put aside their internal squabbles and look to the south for a unifying cause.

In late winter 1644, in Sian, the rebel Li Tzu-ch'eng announced his claim to the mandate of Heaven as the Prince of Shun. His troops then swept across the north China plain in seventy-five days and took Peking by surprise. Entering the city on April 25 and discovering the Ch'ung-chen emperor's suicide three days later, he nonetheless failed to claim the title of emperor for himself until June 3. By then the tide had turned decisively in favor of the Ch'ing, leaving Li scarcely enough time to set the palace afire and escape west. In the interim, the people and the imperial officials in Peking suffered sufficiently to enable them to see the invading Ch'ing armies as avengers. When Dorgon entered the city on June 5, this was precisely the role he played.

Li Tzu-ch'eng had been no better prepared for victory than the Ming court had been prepared for defeat. During the three short weeks he spent in the palace before marching eastward to defend the pass at Shanhaikuan, he tortured the surrendered officials who might have helped him establish his regime in the provinces, alienated the populace by allowing his soldiers to kill, rape, and steal, and failed to establish his primacy among the rebel chieftains who had followed him to Peking. Hoping to win over the Ming general Wu San-kuei, who had recently moved his forces from north of the Great Wall at Ning-yüan through the pass at Shanhaikuan in response to the Ming emperor's call to defend Peking, Li proceeded to take the general's father hostage in Peking. Accounts vary as to what happened next. One story has it that Li offered Wu a high command post and that Wu's delay in responding led to his father's brutal execution. Another has it that Wu's father got word to Wu that submitting to Li would bring disgrace upon his father, who remained loyal to the Ming house. In any case, Wu San-kuei submitted to the Ch'ing forces. The last week in May, when Li set out with characteristic bravado to confront Wu San-kuei as the last Ming defender, he found himself facing the Ch'ing armies instead.[7]

[7] For differing analyses, see Wakeman, *The great enterprise*, pp. 290–301; and Angela Hsi, "Wu San-kuei in 1644: A Reappraisal," *JAS* 34, No. 2 (1975), pp. 443–53.

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Dorgon's compromise with Hung Taiji's appointees served him well at this juncture. With multilingual Grand Academicians like Hife and Ganglin on his side, and with the aid of translators like Soni and others in the Three Inner Courts, Dorgon had the counsel not only of some very able Han Chinese statesmen but of the Chinese classics as well. When news of the fall of Peking reached the Ch'ing court, Hung Ch'eng-ch'ou, that master of rebel extermination and pacification now on the Ch'ing side, urged Dorgon to adopt a strategy of pacification himself. Rebels characteristically advance when they are weak and withdraw when they are strong, he argued, seeking only to win and keep treasure. Now that they were in Peking, they had plenty and were sure to flee when they saw the Ch'ing leading from strength. If the Ch'ing armies refrained from behaving like rebels in their pursuit of Li Tzu-ch'eng, taking advantage of their esprit de corps, the solidarity of their leaders, and the pride and discipline of their troops, the beleaguered natives of Peking would surely welcome them. He went on to outline a strategy for consolidation of the empire in the northwest, knowing well the strengths and weaknesses of the rebels and the Ch'ing alike.[8]

Hung Ch'eng-ch'ou's advice, in effect, was to abandon the khanate's successful strategy of marauding for land, loot, and slaves for its clients, and realize the potential of the banner forces as the pacifying agents of a sage king. If Dorgon was able to follow this advice, then he would be the sage king – or at least the sage regent – and Hung would be the minister he could never quite be under the decadent Ming house. The resources commanded by such a ruler would, of course, provide much better for the bannermen than the spoils of war ever could. Hung's advice was seconded by Fan Wen-ch'eng, the Grand Academician who for the past decade had been urging caution on Hung Taiji in his pursuit of the "great enterprise." Fan set about drafting letters, manifestos, and edicts explaining the Ch'ing's role as avenger of the now defunct Ming.

One such letter was in response to Wu San-kuei. On May 20, the Ch'ing court learned of Wu's willingness to ally himself in order to recapture Peking from Li's rebels. Wu's letter spoke of an alliance between himself as a loyal servant of the departed Ming emperor and Dorgon as a prince of the "northern dynasty." The Ch'ing were only right in taking up arms against the "ministers who bring disorder and sons who turn thieves" when the Ming had failed. Now that the previous Ming emperor was dead, the Ch'ing forces were no different from the mass of loyalist forces reported to be rising all over the realm. If they would join in the loyalists' fight against the bandits

[8] *CSL-SC*, 4, pp. 11–13.

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– a fight in which they had never been involved – and if they could present themselves as forces of benevolence, righteousness, and peace, then loyal ministers and war-weary people would eagerly welcome Dorgon's occupation of Peking.

Dorgon's reply, drafted by Fan Wen-ch'eng, avoided reference to the common heritage of both Wu San-kuei and the Manchus as subjects of Ming emperors who were betrayed by bad ministers. Instead, it referred to Nurhaci's grievance against the Ming for not acknowledging responsibility for the death of his father and grandfather.[9] This was why the Manchus earlier had thrice invaded the Ming "state." But, with the current turn of events, the Ch'ing leadership wished only to bring an end to the fighting. The Ch'ing state was ready to play the role of righteous avenger and would gladly accept the services of Wu San-kuei in their efforts to establish a righteous and benevolent regime. Wu had referred to the proposed alliance as a "restoration," like that of the later Han dynasty. Dorgon's letter used a different historical metaphor, likening Wu San-kuei to the ancient statesman Kuan Chung who had surrendered to Duke Huan of Ch'i after trying to kill him while in the service of his brother. After shifting his loyalty to the winning side, Kuan Chung was able to help Duke Huan build the strongest state then known in China. If Wu would pledge allegiance to the Ch'ing he, too, would be rewarded with wealth and power.[10]

While this exchange was taking place, Dorgon was moving his troops to the pass at Shanhaikuan. Reaching the pass on May 27, he was greeted by Wu, who was ready to accept Ch'ing terms. Two days later Dorgon led his armies through the pass and joined the battle against Li Tzu-ch'eng. The Ch'ing forces routed the rebels, who returned to Peking, burned the palace and fled. The following week Dorgon and his banner troops occupied the city in the name of the Ch'ing Shun-chih emperor. To the assembled officials who had survived the ravages of Li Tzu-ch'eng's regime, Dorgon had a proclamation read. In the words of Fan Wen-ch'eng, most likely, the prince vowed to avenge the death of the Ming emperor and see to it that the imperial tablets were properly arranged and that public mourning was properly observed. With this promise the Ch'ing administration began recruiting officials for the Ministry of Rites. The mandate was transferred.

[9] For details, see above, Chapter 1, and also Ray Huang, "The Lung-ch'ing and Wan-li Reigns, 1567–1620," *The Ming dynasty 1368–1644, Part 1*, Vol. 7 of *The Cambridge history of China*, ed. Frederick W. Mote and Denis Twitchett (New York, 1988), pp. 575, 577.

[10] *CSL-SC*, 4, pp. 15b–16b. The *locus classicus* of the Kuan Chung story is in the *Tso Chuan* (Tso commentary on the Spring and Autumn Annals), the ninth year of Chuang Kung. See James Legge, *The Ch'un Ts'ew with the Tso Chuen*, 2d ed. (Hong Kong, 1960).

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THE CONQUEST OF NORTH CHINA AND THE LOWER YANGTZE VALLEY, 1644–1645

With the mandate now established, the conquest of China began. Just as Hung Ch'eng-ch'ou and Wu San-kuei had predicted, the rebels fled quickly to the hills of northwest China. Before the Ch'ing could claim to have pacified the empire, it would have to finish the job that Hung Ch'eng-ch'ou, Wu San-kuei, and others had been engaged in before their transfer to the frontier in 1642. Not only were Li Tzu-ch'eng and his fragmented allies alive and well, but the cities and towns they did not control all across the north were in the hands of militarized, and equally fragmented, local elites. Former Ming commanders held sway in important cities like Ta-t'ung in Shansi and Kaifeng in Honan, the ranks of their armies swollen by a decade of conflict. Farther to the northwest in Kansu the Ch'ing faced a frontier hitherto isolated from them by the Mongol steppes; they found communities of Turkic and Chinese Muslims, mobilized during the decade of rebellion and armed with a militant religious ideology as well. In Szechwan, the rebel Chang Hsien-chung gained control by terrorizing the populace. Between him and the newly established Ming loyalist regime in Nanking were the armies of Tso Liang-yü, the loyal but nearly autonomous Ming general. In the Yangtze delta and down the southeast coast, privileged literati, protectionist gangs, and peasant hamlets mobilized for self-defense, here in concert, there in opposition to one another. Rice riots turned into political vendettas, local militia into extortionist gangs, smugglers into pirates.

Separating north from south, spread out along the Southern Ming defense perimeter from Kaifeng to Yangchow, were some half million soldiers under four "defense commands" (*ssu ch'en*) loyal to the Ming Prince of Fu in Nanking. In late June they were joined by Shih K'o-fa, the head of the Nanking Ministry of War, who moved his capital brigade to Yangchow to guard against mutiny and to demonstrate the regime's commitment to retaking the north. Before the Ch'ing could face this formidable opponent, it would have to clear its flank of rebels and win the loyalty of the northern elite.

From the day of arrival in Peking, the Ch'ing announced a general amnesty for former officials and literati. Any official who surrendered would be allowed to keep his current rank. During the summer Dorgon had appointed as grand academicians Sung Ch'üan, the last Ming prefect of the capital district; Feng Ch'üan, the former Ming Grand Secretary who was senior member of the Peking official elite; and Hung Ch'eng-ch'ou, the highly respected advocate of "pacification." Dorgon rescinded his initial order demanding that former

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officials and literati shave their heads as a sign of submission when the order encountered resistance. He appointed civilian pacification commissioners, rather than bannermen, as governors for Chihli and Shantung, and invited recommendations for official posts from the provinces. He strictly enforced regulations prohibiting rape and enslavement. He abolished the Ming military surtaxes that had encouraged tax resistance, and he reduced the rates by one-half for areas touched by the Ch'ing campaigns, by one-third for areas that surrendered registers peacefully.[11]

The pacification strategy succeeded in bringing most of Chihli and Shantung rapidly into the Ch'ing fold. Chiang Hsiang, commander of the important Ta-t'ung brigade, assassinated the rebel official in charge and surrendered on July 7. By autumn the Ch'ing had governors in Shantung and Shansi. So confident was Dorgon that he sent a letter to Shih K'o-fa, the Ming Minister of War in Yangchow, urging him to abandon the southern Ming regime for a princedom. Shih responded saying he would die first, and these were words he stood by when Dodo led his army south the following spring. The Ch'ing campaign progressed at lightning speed. Not until after the suicidal loyalists of the Yangtze delta and the southeast had been crushed did the Ch'ing learn that consolidation would require more than wooing Ming officials, eliminating princes, and capturing cities. As the new rulers inherited Hung Ch'eng-ch'ou's problem in the north, they also inherited Shih K'o-fa's problem in the south. The difficulty in each case was how to pacify local and regional populations who were highly militarized and divided countless ways against themselves.

It is remarkable that the Ch'ing conquerors did not succumb to a similar division. They benefitted in this regard from three major advantages: the relatively even distribution of military strength among a large number of loyal banner commanders, a solid income base in banner estates and limited expenditures for banner forces, and the momentum of the campaign itself. There

[11] The Ch'ing made no significant changes in the Ming provincial and subprovincial civil administrative structure, nor did it change the civil service examination system. The first metropolitan and palace examinations were held in 1646 and 1647, with members of the academies as examiners. But the appointment policies of the first several decades were new. Provincial governors, prefects, and county magistrates were mostly Han-chün bannermen. A quick survey of local gazetteers suggests that their subordinates, including tax and educational officials, tended to be local men of the same class that had served the Ming at this level. Under the Ming, the regular military administration was quite small, including a governor's brigade and local police brigades, while the registered descendants of early Ming military households no longer served as troops. The huge Ming armies that resisted or surrendered to the Ch'ing included strategic forces paid for by military surtaxes, and permanent garrison forces along the northern frontier paid for by central government taxes. Those that surrendered entered the new Green Standard Army and were supported by provincial treasuries as the Ch'ing took over the registers. Banner forces in the beginning lived off the tenants of land confiscated from Ming princes, especially in the environs of Peking.

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were some 80,000 banner troops ready for service in 1644, if the general rule of one in three able-bodied enlisted men was followed. About half this number is believed to have taken part in the occupation of Peking.[12] Wu San-kuei commanded some 40,000 Ming troops at the time, while the forces of Li Tzu-ch'eng are estimated to have numbered 60,000.[13] During the years of conquest, the banner troops were strictly forbidden to take booty. Their income was assured by the existence of estates in Manchuria and around the capital, and, while in the field, supplies were managed by support troops from the fighting men's own companies. Since the troops in any given army were drawn equally from each of more than five hundred companies, any army of ten thousand would include no more than twenty men from a single company, along with their retainers. Commanders-in-chief of the banners (*gûsa ejen*), of which there were a total of twenty-four, and sometimes commanders of the Guards Brigade, generally served as field commanders. When two or more such commanders were needed, a general-in-chief (*ta-chiang-chün*) would serve as coordinator. When the army returned to Peking, it was dispersed. Loyalties that developed in the field did not serve the princes and factional leaders in their disputes over power in Peking.

What the Ch'ing lacked in numbers, therefore, it made up in solidarity and discipline. Dorgon sent Ajige in pursuit of Li Tzu-ch'eng's forces to the west shortly after the occupation of Peking. He sent Holhoi to Sheng-ching to prepare an escort for the emperor and to take charge of Ch'ing administration there. Holhoi was the banner commander who had exposed the Haoge conspiracy. Haoge himself was reinstated as an Imperial Prince in the fall of 1644 and placed briefly in charge of the Shantung campaign, but he was soon replaced by Tantai and others who led the Vanguard Brigade. Haoge was given no further command until two years later. Other commanders who had provided essential support for Dorgon in the white and yellow banners joined Ajige and Dodo in the west.

In the spring of 1645, Ch'ing forces converged on Li Tzu-ch'eng's stronghold in Sian from two directions. Ajige's army, having penetrated the Yenan region from Mongolia, descended on Sian from the north. Dodo's forces, having obtained the surrender of the Honan provincial commander, Hsü Ting-kuo, were poised east of the T'ung-kuan pass, gateway to Shensi. An elite cavalry force under the Guards Commander-general Tulai routed Li's troops at the pass. When Ajige and Dodo led their armies to Sian, Li Tzu-ch'eng fled via the Han River valley to the south.

[12] Using Fang Chao-ying's method. Wakeman, *The great enterprise*, p. 470, estimates "more than 40,000 bannermen" received plots of land in 1645.

[13] Wakeman, *The great enterprise*, p. 296.

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With the capture of Sian, Dorgon appointed Meng Ch'iao-fang governor-general of the northwest. Meng was a Han-chün military man who had been with the Manchus since 1630. He joined the banner commanders Bayan and Li Kuo-han, who were to be mainstays of Ch'ing power in the northwest and west for a troubled decade. Dodo was named general-in-chief for the campaign against the Ming regime in Nanking, and Ajige was charged with pursuing Li Tzu-ch'eng through the Han valley.

Dodo's march to Yangchow was startlingly swift. The Nanking regime had lost control of its generals in February when one of them, Kao Chieh, ventured to Kaifeng to check on the loyalties of the provincial commander Hsü Ting-kuo. Concealing the fact that he had already joined the Ch'ing, Hsü gave a banquet for Kao at which he had the general murdered. Shih K'o-fa had depended on Kao to maintain discipline among the forces north of the Yangtze, many of whom had begun their careers as Kao had with Li Tzu-ch'eng and later surrendered to the Ming. Now Kao's lieutenants began fighting among themselves for control of his army, threatening the balance on which the defense of Yangchow depended.

By April, when Dodo began his campaign, Nanking had found it necessary to transfer the most trustworthy of the northern generals to the west of the southern capital to defend against the mutineers of Tso Liang-yü. Knowing full well of the Ch'ing successes in the northwest and of the incompetence of the northern defenders whose influence held sway at court, Tso apparently hoped to gain control of the Ming effort. The internecine conflict spelled the end of the southern defenses. Tso died en route to Nanking, his armies were turned back, and his son and successor surrendered to Ajige shortly after the collapse of the Ming regime.

In one month's time, Dodo obtained the surrender of 138,000 Ming troops who then accompanied him in the siege of Yangchow. Shih K'o-fa defended to the death, and the armies under Ch'ing command massacred the populace. Leaving the Han Chinese troops behind to rape, murder, and pillage, Dodo's army crossed the Yangtze by tricking the defenders with decoys and marched on to Nanking. On June 8, just one year after Dorgon's triumphant entry into Peking, the southern capital's noblemen and a handful of officials sallied forth to greet his brother Dodo and surrender the city without a fight. Another 100,000 troops were joined under the victors, and their commander marched them up the Yangtze to Wu-hu with the prince Nikan to capture the fleeing Ming Prince of Fu.[14]

[14] For a different perspective on these events, see Lynn A. Struve, "The Southern Ming," Frederick W. Mote and Denis Twitchett, eds., *The Ming dynasty 1368–1644, Part 1*, Vol. 7 of *The Cambridge history of China*, (New York, 1988), pp. 656–8.

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The massacre at Yangchow was a warning to the people of the Yangtze delta. Its meaning was not lost on the officials who surrendered to Dodo in Nanking. Among them was the prominent Han-lin scholar and literary patron, Ch'ien Ch'ien-i, a native of Ch'ang-shu in Soochow prefecture. Knowing the stubbornly idealistic spirit of many of his delta literati colleagues – indeed, one who was to lead the suicidal resistance in Chia-ting city two months later had been a resident tutor of his own son – and of their admiration and support of Shih K'o-fa, Ch'ien made a compelling case for surrender to the Ch'ing. In a manifesto that circulated with the Ch'ing pacification commissioners in the lower Yangtze region, he praised Dodo's troops for their discipline and appealed to the literati to remember the "myriad souls" of the people. The case for the Ch'ing as righteous avenger was even stronger now than it had been in Peking. Dorgon had already seen to the performance of the rites of mourning for the Ch'ung-chen emperor and preserved the sanctity of the northern Ming tombs. The banner forces had already destroyed Li Tzu-ch'eng's army, and the Prince of Fu and all his generals had already surrendered or died. Resistance in Yangchow had brought terror. Accepting the Ch'ing mandate in Nanking had brought peace in the marketplace. The choice, Ch'ien argued, could not be more obvious.[15]

Most of the southern literati heeded Ch'ien's advice. But the commissioner who was sent to the prefectural capital of Soochow encountered a Ming governor's brigade in retreat. The loyalist governor who had failed to defend the Yangtze crossing, Yang Wen-ts'ung, murdered the commissioner and fled. Dodo countered by sending a thousand bannermen to occupy the city. In addition, he sent the beile Bolo to Hangchow, where the naval commander Cheng Hung-k'uei had headed with another Ming prince. Still, the newly surrendered and less disciplined Han Chinese forces were not deployed. The Ming prince surrendered to Bolo, and Cheng sailed southward. On August 14, 1645, Dodo reported that all the prefectures and counties of the southern capital region had been pacified.

Would that the report were true. As Ch'ing commissioners returned to Nanking with seals, maps, and registers, loyalist literati prepared a siege of Soochow. In the towns and villages fighting broke out among various armed groups – street gangs, village defense corps, literati retainers, protection racketeers, private armies, and slaves of households whose privileges were now in doubt. In mid-July Dorgon made the most untimely promulgation of his career. He reinstated the order that Han Chinese in pacified areas

[15] Ch'ien Ch'ien-i's manifesto is recorded in Hsü Tzu, *Hsiao-t'ien chi-nien* (1861; rpt. Taipei, 1962), p. 467. For a translation and fuller narrative see Jerry Dennerline, *The Chia-ting loyalists: Confucian leadership and social change in seventeenth century China* (New Haven and London, 1981), pp. 267–8.

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shave their heads in the Manchu style to express their acceptance of the Ch'ing mandate.

In response to the head-shaving decree, police officials involved in negotiations over the transfer of authority in the river port of Chiang-yin revolted. The new Ch'ing magistrate was murdered and the city prepared itself for a defense. Throughout the delta, literati whose hands were forced began to choose between resistance and suicide. The news of suicides in Soochow inspired friends in the hinterland. Some went to join the guerrillas preparing the siege of Soochow. Some contributed money. Some chose suicide themselves. Some moved to regain control of county yamens. Some warring parties shaved their heads to legitimize the terror they imposed on enemies, and anyone who shaved his head became a target for terrorists choosing the other side. The literati of T'ai-ts'ang, center of the great Restoration Society literary and political movement of the 1630s, shaved their heads en masse and employed a local defense corps to defend the city against a hostile countryside. Into the fray, Dodo deployed the surrendered armies of Liu Liang-tso and Li Ch'eng-tung.

Liu's troops went to Chiang-yin to mount a siege. At that point resistance was nowhere else in evidence to the Ch'ing agents. Li Ch'eng-tung's mission was to occupy the brigade headquarters at Wu-sung, the defense outpost at the mouth of the Yangtze north of Shanghai, which he did at the end of July without a fight. In a market town en route, however, his troops violated some women, a number of whom died resisting rape. The incident incensed the people and united a number of armed groups in their resolve to expel the northern soldiers or die in the effort. The sudden upsurge of armed resistance further inspired loyalist literati to take the lead. In concert with the guerrilla siege of Soochow, a small group took control of the city of Chia-ting, located between Wu-sung and Ch'ing reinforcements at T'ai-ts'ang. Others took control elsewhere, and some stormed the bastion at T'ai-ts'ang, where the shorn literati defended. The local head-shaving decree, the rape incident, the upsurge of resistance, and the guerrilla siege of Soochow occurred within a single volatile week.

Three weeks of bloody fighting ensued. The loyalist siege of Soochow failed utterly as the banner troops feigned ignorance and let half the loyalists enter the city to trap them. Failing to locate the enemy, the guerrillas fell victim to an urban ambush. By the time Li Ch'eng-tung reunited his forces and mounted a siege of Chia-ting, he had lost his brother and many troops. He took vengeance on Chia-ting's populace in a massacre that left 20,000 dead. Elsewhere the loyalists were chased forcibly from their positions. Brutalized, the people of the delta fell once more to fighting amongst themselves. Li Ch'eng-tung joined Bolo at Sungkiang and the two armies moved north to

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join Liu Liang-tso in the siege of Chiang-yin. That city fell on October 9, paying more in blood than all the others combined. Now the delta was "pacified," but at a cost no one had dreamed of. On October 24, Dodo, the general-in-chief, returned to Peking, mission accomplished.[16]

The resistance and massacres at Yangchow and Chia-ting became legendary and would inspire anti-Manchu sentiments 250 years later. To the Ch'ing in 1645, the events spelled the end of all hope that loyalists would accept the new government as righteous avenger. By using the undisciplined northern Chinese troops, the Ch'ing had made a mockery of the glowing appeals of Wu San-kuei, Hung Ch'eng-ch'ou, and Ch'ien Ch'ien-i. Not only was peace in the marketplace achieved by mass rape and mass murder, but the perpetrators of this evil – men like Li Ch'eng-tung and Liu Liang-tso – had themselves begun as rebels. They owed their bloody prizes to their disloyalty first to Li Tzu-ch'eng and then to Shih K'o-fa. Theirs was the revenge of the poverty stricken, brutalized survivors of war in the north against the dominant wealthy, southern literati. This particular Ming legacy was to weigh heavily on the conquest of the south.

PRINCE REGENT DORGON AND FACTIONAL POLITICS

As the imperial princes and field commanders returned from their victories in the south, factional lines reflecting the unstable power relations that had emerged after Hung Taiji's death were clarified. On the one hand, Dorgon needed to prevent coalitions among princes and field commanders that would challenge his power as supreme commander. On the other, he needed to limit the power of those members of the Deliberative Council and imperial household who might challenge his authority as regent. Yet a third need was inherited from the khanate established by Nurhaci. The Ch'ing regime needed to provide sufficient material wealth to maintain the loyalties of all the constituents of the banner system and the newly surrendered Ming forces. The momentum of conquest seems to have kept the Manchus together, as it had under Hung Taiji, but the factional rifts grew deeper as Dorgon acted more and more like the emperor his brothers Ajige and Dodo had wanted him to be.

The intrigues of 1645 involved some of the key figures in the succession disputes of 1643 – Tantai, the Commander-in-chief of the Yellow Banner;

[16] For detailed accounts of siege and resistance in Chiang-yin and Chia-ting, see Frederic Wakeman, Jr., "Localism and loyalism during the Ch'ing conquest of Kiangnan: The tragedy of Chiang-yin," in *Conflict and control in late imperial China*, ed. Frederic Wakeman, Jr., and Carolyn Grant (Berkeley, 1975), pp. 43–85; and Dennerline, *The Chia-ting loyalists*, pp. 251–301.

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Soni, the Grand Minister of the Imperial Bodyguard; and Tulai, the Commander-general of the Guards Brigade. In the western and southern campaign, Tantai was Ajige's field commander while Tulai was Dodo's. Tulai's nephew, Oboi, was with Tantai, and Soni remained at the communications center in Peking. Tantai had been the defector of sorts in 1643, bringing conspiracy charges against Haoge and becoming Dorgon's loyal supporter. He had since then succeeded in getting Soni's uncle, Hife, dismissed from his post as grand academician, and he had supported Dorgon's move in 1644 to have an imperial decree change his title from Prince Regent to Uncle Prince Regent while demoting Jirgalang from Prince Regent to Trusted Assistant Uncle Prince. Upon his return to the capital in 1645, Tantai was met by an angry Dorgon and a Soni trap.

To begin with, Ajige had inaccurately reported the final defeat and death of Li Tzu-ch'eng in Hu-kuang. The mistake was a serious offense, as the false report had been made public. Therefore, when Ajige arrived in Peking he was confined to the palace and a hearing was set in the Court of Judicial Review to consider a number of charges brought against him and his officers. This was not all there was to Ajige's case. Dorgon, whose style continued to favor the blunt and open argument that had characterized the Deliberative Council in the past, had previously faulted his older brother for his failure to maintain proper discipline among his subordinates. The failure reflected a bad attitude, Dorgon thought. Ajige was known to have made disparaging remarks about the emperor as a dependent child, showing his disrespect. Dorgon had sent a formal complaint about this behavior to Tantai in the field, ordering him to publicize it among the commanders as a warning, but Tantai had concealed the complaint for fear of Ajige's ire. Soni, from his position in the Academy, followed the communications between Dorgon and his officers. At Ajige's hearing, Soni exposed Tantai's failure to publicize Dorgon's complaint, implicating Tantai and his lieutenant, Oboi, in the charges of disrespect. Under the circumstances, the court could not but find them guilty as well.

Tantai, not to be outdone, then charged Soni with disrespect equal to Ajige's. Soni had mocked the proposal of Kung-a-dai, an imperial clansman and Minister of Personnel, for drafting a proclamation of merit when Dorgon's forces captured Peking. According to Kung-a-dai, Soni's comment was "Peking is still an empty city. The bandits still survive. So, where is the merit?" If Ajige's disrespectful comment was worth airing at the hearing, then Soni's disrespectful comment should also be considered in relation to a number of improprieties involving imperial property. For example, Soni had grazed his horse in the courtyard of the library and allowed his retainers to fish in sacred pools.

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Tantai had used a dispute over housing to get Soni's uncle, Hife, dismissed from his post as grand academician. Soni, in turn, had evoked the wrath of Dorgon for defending an official who complained about the haste with which the carpenters went about constructing the prince regent's mansion amidst the rubble of the imperial city. On such issues hinged the fate of the alliance. Now Soni brought witnesses to prove that his remarks about merit had been made in casual conversation and that he had explained himself at the time. What he meant was that proclamations of merit should await the emperor's arrival and the deployment of forces to engage Li Tzu-ch'eng. His concern had been propriety. As for fishing in the pools, he was not the only one who allowed that.[17]

The court found Soni guilty, and recommended death. His supporting witnesses were guilty of covering up for him, and a number of others were guilty of allowing people to fish in sacred pools. Confronted with the court's decision, Dorgon lightened the punishments. He had learned that accusing his brothers and half-brothers of disrespect could have far-reaching political consequences. For the time being, Tantai had lost his post as Commander-in-chief of his banner, Soni was dismissed, and factional lines that continued to dominate the Ch'ing court for some years were drawn.

Then, in February 1646, Dodo's commander Tulai, hero of the Sian campaign, brought a more serious charge against Tantai. According to Tulai, Tantai had requested that he delay Dodo's entry into Nanjing so that he could claim the victory for Ajige's forces. Tulai had tried to report this action to Dorgon from the field by sending a message to Soni, but when he returned to Peking he learned that Dorgon was not informed. Friends of the messenger, who supported Tantai, had tried to persuade Tulai that Soni had received the message and kept it from Dorgon. Much perplexed by the renewal of conflict among his counselors, Dorgon called a meeting of princes and officials before the Meridian Gate to hear the protagonists. Soni asked rhetorically if he, who had attacked Tantai for concealing Dorgon's complaint in the first instance, would likely conceal a report attacking Tantai in the second. After this hearing Dorgon had Tantai jailed and Soni reinstated.

Soni had succeeded in displacing Tantai, a man on whom Dorgon depended for his hold on the Yellow Banners. Yet, Dorgon was equally dependent on men like Soni and Tulai if he were to complete the conquest and establish the empire. During the hearing, Tulai bluntly asked Dorgon why he would personally waste three days on Tantai's case. In a fit of anger Dorgon warned Tulai that he had also promoted himself as vanguard of the southern

[17] *CSL-SC*, 19, p. 18; 20, pp. 3b, 11–17.

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campaign, of which Dodo and Ajige were generals-in-chief, and that he was at this moment pressing the Uncle Prince Regent to his limits. Dorgon's anger persuaded the princes to detain Tulai for investigation. But Dorgon, in a calmer mood, admitted that Tulai was indispensable and that his loyalty was beyond question. He was released, promoted to replace Tantai as Commander-in-chief of the Plain Yellow Banner, and assigned to the next phase of the southern campaign with the new general-in-chief, Abatai's son, Bolo.

Dorgon could ill afford factional conflict. All of China south of the Yangtze remained to be settled, and Chang Hsien-chung still controlled Szechwan. That winter two more Ming loyalist centers claimed legitimacy, one at Foochow and the other at Shao-hsing in northern Chekiang. In hopes of renewing the righteous avenger's appeal to the southern literati, the Ch'ing appointed Hung Ch'eng-ch'ou governor of the newly created province of Chiang-ning with its capital in Nanking. There he used Chang T'ien-lu, erstwhile commander of Shih K'o-fa's capital brigade, to quell uprisings to the south. Li Ch'eng-tung and other distasteful northern generals were transferred out of the lower Yangtze. Daisan's grandson Lekedehun replaced Dodo as general-in-chief in the south, taking charge of a number of seasoned banner commanders in Kiangsi and Hunan. Bolo and his contingent went to Hangchow, whence they launched the campaign for the southeastern coastal provinces.

The fighting went on for another thirty-five years. The Kan River valley was won, lost, and won again. The Hsiang remained contested for a decade. These were the trade and communications routes into Kwangtung and Kwangsi, where first southern Ming forces and then warlords were to retain control until the 1680s. Ch'ing forces captured and killed Chang Hsien-chung, the butcher of Szechwan, in 1647, but could not establish control of the province until the final campaign against the last of the southern Ming princes in Yunnan in 1659. Bolo's force drove the southern Ming loyalists from the southeastern coastal region in 1646, but the region was torn repeatedly by fighting among Ch'ing forces, the autonomous naval commander Cheng Ch'eng-kung, the warlord Keng Ching-chung, and local defense corps until the final peace in 1683. The military demands raised by the conquest therefore continued to press on Peking throughout the Shun-chih reign and well into the K'ang-hsi period that followed.

THE SOUTHERN AND WESTERN CAMPAIGNS AND DORGON'S ASCENDENCY, 1646–1648

With the campaign in the central Yangtze region, the Ch'ing for the first time faced the possibility of having its banner forces bogged down in inde-

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Map 4. *Ch'ing campaigns into Ming territories, 1645–1650.* Frederick W. Mote and Denis C. Twitchett, eds. *The Ming Dynasty, 1368–1644, Part 1*, Vol. 7 of *The Cambridge History of China* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), Map 28, p. 659.

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finite maneuvering for advantage against a well-entrenched enemy. Dorgon responded daringly by mobilizing former Ming commanders from Liao-tung. This phase of the conquest began when Lekedehun and Bolo reached the field. The Ch'ing forces moved quickly to Wu-ch'ang in the central Yangtze valley and secured that city for a newly appointed governor-general, but over the summer Ch'ing forces found themselves unable to dislodge the armies of the Hunan provincial commander, Ho T'eng-chiao. Lekedehun was recalled as Dorgon began searching other alternatives for staffing the campaign. By autumn, he had decided to place the most successful of the Ming defectors in command of the Ch'ing forces in Hunan, Kiangsi, and Kwangtung. K'ung Yu-te became the first Han Chinese general-in-chief. He was joined by Shang K'o-hsi and Keng Chung-ming. These three were the only Han Chinese commanders to have been honored as princes by Hung Taiji, and it was as Ch'ing princes that they took command. With this move, Dorgon displayed his faith in their loyalty and their abilities, as he acknowledged that Manchu princes and banner commanders alone were no longer sufficient to the task.

The campaign in the southeast coastal region, on the other hand, continued to unfold as rapidly as the campaign against the Nanking regime had. Bolo's commanders included Tulai and Li Ch'eng-tung, the butcher of Chiating. Capturing Shao-hsing from Ming forces in the spring of 1646, they moved on through southern Chekiang and Fukien to Foochow, forcing the court of the Ming Prince of T'ang (the Lung-wu Emperor) to flee into the mountains to the west, where he hoped to link up with Ho T'eng-chiao in Hunan. In early October Tulai captured Foochow and obtained the surrender of the naval commander Cheng Chih-lung, who returned with Bolo to Peking. Under Ch'ing pressure, Cheng continued to plead with his son, Cheng Ch'eng-kung, to surrender until the latter finally denounced his father as a traitor in 1653. Of no more use to them, the Ch'ing had Chih-lung executed for his failure. While Tulai was in Foochow, Li Ch'eng-tung pursued the fleeing prince to T'ing-chou where he captured him, bringing an end to the second southern imperial regime.

From the mountains of Fukien, Li Ch'eng-tung pressed on into southern Kiangsi and through the pass toward Canton, where the Prince of T'ang's brother proclaimed himself successor in early December. By January 1647, Canton was in Ch'ing hands, Kiangsi province was under the military thumb of Chin Sheng-huan, a Ming general who had surrendered to Ajige the previous year, and the campaign against Ch'ang-sha was newly invigorated by the forces of K'ung Yu-te. Bolo left Canton in the hands of the lieutenant commander T'ung Yang-chia and Li Ch'eng-tung, and returned to Peking. The southeast was now pacified, but the armies that occupied that region and the overland transportation routes were made up of Ming defectors, while

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Cheng Chih-lung's navy under his brother and his son continued to dominate the islands off the coast. And Bolo returned without one of Dorgon's most able commanders, Tulai, who died fighting Ming holdouts on the treacherous route home.

The third, the largest, and for the Ch'ing the strategically most important campaign of 1646 and 1647 was directed against Chang Hsien-chung in Szechwan. Dorgon appointed Haoge general-in-chief in February after the case against Tantai was settled. Together with him on this campaign would be two other princes of the blood, Nurhaci's grandsons, the *beile* Nikan and the *beise* Mandahai. Dorgon's confidante, Holhoi, who had brought on Haoge's demotion in 1644, and who now replaced Tulai as Commander-in-chief of the Plain Yellow Banner, was already in the field, with the Shensi governor Meng Ch'iao-fang and the banner commanders Li Kuo-han and Bayan under his command. Chang's forces remained in control of most of the province, with other rebels that had spun off from Li Tzu-ch'eng's forces still plaguing the Ch'ing to the south and north, until the Ch'ing armies finally penetrated the province in early winter. On January 2, 1647, the Guards lieutenant-commander Subai met Chang, who was pushing northward toward Sian, and killed him during the attack. According to reports, the Ch'ing armies annihilated more than 130 companies in the attack, sending two of Chang's generals, Sun K'o-wang and Li Ting-kuo, with their troops into Yunnan, where some years later they were to seek out the last Ming pretender, the Yung-li emperor, and mount a new attack on the Ch'ing from the southwest.

The death of Chang Hsien-chung came less than a week before the Ch'ing occupation of Canton and less than three months before Ch'ang-sha fell to the forces of K'ung Yu-te. From then until the winter of 1648 it appeared as if the Ch'ing had established itself everywhere but in the extreme southwest. Haoge remained in the west as general-in-chief until January, presiding over campaigns against fragmented rebel armies. Li Ch'eng-tung was occupied with a persistent literati resistance movement in the hinterlands of Canton until November, after which he was free to assist the Han Chinese princes in their faltering efforts to secure Kweilin, the capital of Kwangsi province and the key city on the route from Hunan into Kwangtung. When Haoge returned to Peking in February, it appeared time for another strategic reshuffling and a final major campaign into the southwest.

But the final southwestern campaign was not to occur for another decade. By the time Haoge reached Peking, Kiangsi province was in revolt. By late spring, Kwangtung had joined. News of Chin Sheng-huan's revolt in Kiangsi reached the capital one week after Haoge's triumphal return from the west. Chin was a Liao-tung man who had risen to a commander's position in the army of the Ming general-in-chief Tso Liang-yü. When Tso's army

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surrendered to Ajige at Kiukiang in 1645, Chin remained in Kiangsi and succeeded in keeping the province under control during the campaigns against the southern Ming in the southeastern coastal region and the provincial army of Ho T'eng-chiao in Hunan. Once the south was pacified, however, the Ch'ing began to appoint civilian governors. Observing the princely rank and power of the Han Chinese generals in Hunan who had not yet succeeded in defeating Ho T'eng-chiao, Chin thought he deserved better than a provincial brigade for his accomplishments. In February, he killed his civilian superiors and switched his allegiance to the Southern Ming court in Kweilin. Li Ch'eng-tung, the northern turncoat who found himself in a similar position in Canton, did the same in early May. The tide in the south suddenly had turned against the Ch'ing conquest.

Meanwhile, in Peking, jubilation over the defeat of Chang Hsien-chung soon turned to suspicion. On February 25, 1648, Haoge was fêted in the palace by the child emperor and the princes and grand ministers for his merit. On March 29, he was imprisoned for having challenged Dorgon's authority in the field. Specifically, Haoge had failed to credit Subai, a Dorgon supporter and member of Dorgon's White Banner, in the crucial battle against Chang. He had also tried to appoint his own men as commanders in the Vanguard and Guards Brigades. When initiating a military campaign, Dorgon granted the general-in-chief final authority in strategic planning, but personnel decisions were to be made by the princes and commanders in the field as a body. The principle of consensus that had helped to balance power among the Manchu leaders since Nurhaci's time still had a role to play in the field. Dorgon himself had accepted this principle in the succession dispute of 1643, and again in his dispute with Tulai and Soni over Tantai's behavior in 1646. Haoge's crime, it appears, was his attempt to enhance his authority as general-in-chief by appointing his own favorites to key positions against the consensus of his commanders.

But Dorgon was not a champion of collective rule for its own sake, and the case against Haoge did not begin with his behavior in the field. Having smelled conspiracy in Soni and Tulai's attack on Tantai, Dorgon and his supporters now suspected a broader one, rooted in the succession dispute five years earlier. This time the charge of conspiracy was expanded to include Haoge, Jirgalang, and all the officers of the two yellow banners who had insisted that succession should pass to a son of Hung Taiji. On March 27, Tunci, who was a nephew of Jirgalang and now Commander-in-chief of Jirgalang's Bordered Blue Banner, told the Deliberative Council that his uncle had met with Soni and Tulai in private in 1643 to discuss the possibility of supporting Haoge for the succession. Jirgalang was reported to have agreed with the others that Haoge should succeed, but to have warned them that he

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did not yet know what Dorgon thought. No harm in that, but Dorgon's supporters now argued that the group continued to support Haoge as a challenger to the Prince Regent. As evidence, they pointed to the order of the Manchu banners in the procession that had brought the child emperor to Peking in 1644. With Dorgon's Plain White already in Peking, Jirgalang's Bordered Blue had been followed first by the demoted Haoge's Plain Blue and only then by the Imperial Prince Dodo's Bordered White. This meant that Haoge's wife had preceded the wives of Ajige and Dodo to Peking. The privilege thus shown to Haoge's wife in the order of procession which was authorized by Jirgalang showed Soni's influence, and was certainly understood by Haoge to indicate Jirgalang's support. The real conspirators, however, were Soni, Tulai, Oboi, and the others who had vowed to stand fast against Dorgon. Tantai, who had since broken with the group, escaped blame.[18]

As punishment for his complicity in the plot, Jirgalang lost his position as secondary regent. Soni – grand minister of the imperial bodyguards – was sent to guard the ancestral tombs. Oboi and others were fined or lost property. Dorgon's brother Dodo became Assistant Regent and the Plain Blue Banner came under Dorgon's control. Before this eventful week was over, Dorgon had also shuffled his commanders and made assignments for a new campaign against Chin Sheng-huan in Kiangsi. Holhoi was shifted from his command of the Manchu Plain Yellow Banner to the Bordered White. Tantai became Commander-in-chief of the Plain Yellow Banner and general-in-chief for the southern campaign, with Holhoi his second in command. By the time they set out, Haoge had died in prison.

THE POLITICS OF CRISIS, 1648–1649

Once the alleged conspiracy against Dorgon was silenced, he was virtual dictator. Over the next two and a half years, Ch'ing dominance was seriously challenged, but Dorgon's responses reasserted Ch'ing control and repaired the political fabric. The first sign that Chin Sheng-huan's revolt in Kiangsi would not be an isolated event came in May 1648 when the governor-general of the northwest, Meng Ch'iao-fang, reported a rebellion of militant Muslims in Lan-chou and other frontier cities. Muslim communities had suffered along with non-Muslim ones during the general breakdown of Ming imperial control, and Muslims had been among the rebels of the northwest since the 1620s. New Ch'ing regulations controlling the tea and horse trade on which the Muslims might have depended to improve their economic situation were not to their benefit. And, there is circumstantial evidence that a militant form

[18] *CSL-SC*, 37, pp. 2–14.

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of Sufism, which had reached Su-chou on the Chinese side of the Chia-yü pass by the 1640s, influenced the rebels in their efforts to join forces with other groups.[19]

Meng Ch'iao-fang managed to suppress the Muslims in June, but not before they had attracted attention by setting up a Ming prince. Soon they had spawned Ming loyalist revolts in Tientsin and the bandit-prone Huai River valley, and the Ming rallying cry echoed a conspiracy between loyalist literati and the provincial brigade commander in Soochow that had been exposed the previous year. Meanwhile, Cheng Ch'eng-kung was taking advantage of the Canton revolt to consolidate local defense groups along the southeast coast in eastern Kwangtung. Even the remnants of Li Tzu-ch'eng's armies in northwestern Hu-kuang, the very rebels that had toppled the Ming in 1644, were now professing loyalty to the Yung-li Emperor in Kweilin.

Dorgon recognized the seriousness of the northwestern revolt at the outset and mobilized his forces strategically to prevent a major Ming coalition. The pivotal garrison town of Han-chung on the upper reaches of the Han River between Shensi and Szechwan had served as Ch'ing headquarters for the recent successful campaign against Chang Hsien-chung. Dorgon despatched additional banner forces there to block communications between the northwestern rebels and loyalists in Hu-kuang and sent Wu San-kuei and Li Kuo-han to secure Szechwan. Ajige led banner forces to Tientsin and the Huai, and Jirgalang's accuser Tunci was made general-in-chief of a new western campaign to block coalitions with Kweilin. Dorgon sent Jirgalang himself as general-in-chief of another force to help K'ung Yu-te in the middle Yangtze. The banner forces were suddenly back in action and nearly fully deployed.

At this critical juncture, late in 1648, a break in discipline among the Khalka Mongols threatened the Ch'ing state at its roots. One of the Ch'ing's legitimizing claims was its control of the Mongol tribes and its ability to prevent marauders from encroaching on Chinese settlements. Dodo had been sent to curb rebelliousness among the Khalkas after his return from the south in 1645, and since then all had been quiet on the Mongolian frontier. Now, without authorization, the Khalkas were gathering on the border for a hunt. Fearing they would enter in full force, for whatever reason, Dorgon called a council at which it was decided that Ajige, who had put down the Huai revolt, and Bolo should lead a special expeditionary force to Ta-t'ung to prepare a defense.

[19] The evidence for the argument that the teachings of Naqshbandiyya influenced the uprising is presented in Joseph Fletcher, "China's Northwest at the Time of the Ming-Ch'ing Transition," unpublished paper prepared for the "From Ming to Ch'ing" conference (Palm Springs, 1974).

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Soon Dorgon himself was in the field, fighting not the Khalkas but the garrisons meant to defend against them. Chiang Hsiang, the Ch'ing brigade commander at Ta-t'ung, apparently had reason to fear the advancing banner troops. Sending his subordinates out to greet them, he barred the city's gates and declared himself in revolt. The rapid spread of the revolt to eleven more cities in northern Shansi suggested a plot and an explanation for the Khalka movements, as they had likely caught wind of the rebellion and hoped to take advantage of it. The addition of banner forces under Nikan and Tunci, who was withdrawn from the northwest, held the Khalkas at bay as the Ch'ing force tested the garrisons that had joined the revolt.

At this inopportune moment, the Assistant Regent Dodo fell ill with smallpox in Peking. Dorgon returned to take charge of the capital, where his brother died on April 29, 1649. Before taking to the field again, Dorgon recalled his older brother Ajige to take charge of the capital with the title of Supreme Commander of the Left. Nikan, Bolo, and Mandahai – grandsons of Nurhaci serving on the northern front – were promoted to Imperial Prince. Later they would serve as a triumvirate for the management of routine administrative affairs. News that Tantai and Holhoi had finally retaken Nan-ch'ang from Chin Sheng-huan and that the Ming provincial commander Ho T'eng-chiao had been captured and executed in Hunan in early March reached the capital while Dorgon was there, as did the news that Li Ch'eng-tung had met his end while retreating from southern Kiangsi. In early summer, Dorgon ordered his trusted Han Chinese generals, K'ung Yu-te, Keng Chung-ming, and Shang K'o-hsi south from Hunan and Kiangsi in a two-pronged assault on Kwangtung. That done, Dorgon was ready to rejoin the siege of Ta-t'ung.

By the time Dorgon set out again on August 8, 1649, such a grandiose gesture of imperial command in the field was surely unnecessary. Victory in the south had relieved the pressure on Han-chung, the northern garrison rebels were being suppressed, and Ch'ing pressure on Ta-t'ung was already great. Moreover, Dorgon's leave from the capital was troublesome. He had to convene the Deliberative Council to resist a bid by Ajige to assume Dodo's title of Assistant Regent in his absence. The council agreed with Dorgon that Ajige's demand so soon after his brother's death was highly improper, if not suspect, and recommended that Ajige be demoted from Imperial Prince. Dorgon then spared Ajige that humiliation in return for his acceptance of the lesser title of Supreme Commander of the Left (see Table 2.3).

Yet, Dorgon was determined to leave the capital. He appeared tired of bureaucratic politics and princely intrigues. He warned his officials that they were not to interfere in the regular processes of promotion within the various bureaus of the government. No one, including princes, was to recommend

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Table 2.3. *Ages of Princes of the Blood in 1649 with Banners they headed*

Prince	Banners
I.9. Babutai (57)	
III.6. ***Jirgalang*** **(50) Imperial Prince, Regent**	[Bordered Blue]
I.12. ***Ajige*** **(44) Imperial Prince**	
I.14. **Dorgon (37) Imperial Prince, Regent**	[White, Bordered White, and Blue]
I.1.3 **Nikan (39) Imperial Prince**	
I.7.3 **Bolo (36) Imperial Prince**	
I.2.7 **Mandahai (27) Imperial Prince**	
I.7.4 Yolo (24)	
I.8.5 Sose (20)	
III.6.2. Jidu (16); second son of Jirgalang	
I.8.9 **FULIN (11) SHUN-CHIH EMPEROR**	[Yellow, Bordered Yellow]
I.2.3.2 Lekedehun (30)	
I.1.3.1 Lambu (?21)	
I.1.3.2 Nissa (?18)	
I.2.7.1 Canggadai (16)	

Key: see Table 2.1.

favorites no matter what their merit. He established a system of communications so that he could make important decisions from the field and instructed the heads of the Six Ministries and other offices that they should take responsibility upon themselves in his absence. He appointed a small committee consisting of the returned trusted commanders Tantai and Holhoi, the grand academicians Ganglin and Fan Wen-ch'eng, and one grand minister of the imperial guard to manage routine administrative affairs. For important state matters they were to direct Ajige to convene the Deliberative Council of Princes and Grand Ministers, which would then decide whether or not the issue was indeed sufficiently pressing to require an immediate response from Dorgon himself. If it was not, they should await his return. The wheels of government thus locked into place, Dorgon set off to join in the fighting at Ta-t'ung.[20]

On October 4, 1649, Chiang Hsiang was betrayed by a subordinate. The banner troops entered Ta-t'ung and the revolt was over. Ch'ing forces continued to divide and conquer rebel groups in the northwest. With the pressure off in Shansi, banner troops returned to Han-chung and Meng Ch'iao-fang was able to mount a sustained attack on the Muslim rebels in Kansu. There, rebels under a local leader by the name of Mi-la-yin had reclaimed control of the major frontier towns of Kan-chou and Su-chou as soon as Ch'ing forces were drawn from the region. The rebels had gone so far

[20] *CSL-SC*, 44, pp. 21b–27.

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as to offer their throne to Turumtay ibn Said Baba, the Muslim ruler of Hami, a state beyond the Chia-yü pass. By year's end the revolt that had first signaled crisis in the north was finally crushed. Dorgon, meanwhile, apparently preferring the taste of battle to the taste of Peking politics, had set out for the Mongolian steppes in pursuit of rebellious Khalkas.

Once the tide turned in the south, the Ming Yung-li emperor had to seek protection where he could find it. As Ch'ing forces moved into Kwangtung in February 1650, the Ming court left Chao-ch'ing and moved to Wu-chou in southwestern Hunan. Within the year it would move farther to the southwest, to Nan-ning, and a year later to Yunnan. K'ung Yu-te's Kwangtung campaign had been delayed by scandal in Keng Chung-ming's command, leading to Keng's suicide and succession by his son, Keng Chi-mao. Once the campaign got rolling in January, it succeeded in isolating Canton from the Ming court. After a year of fighting in the hinterlands, Shang K'o-hsi finally captured Canton on November 24, 1650, brutally massacring the city's inhabitants and setting up his own princely command post there. Two days later, K'ung Yu-te took Kweilin, capturing the loyalist minister Ch'ü Shih-ssu, chief of the dominant literati faction. One month earlier, Ch'ing forces had taken control of Chou-shan, the island off the Chekiang coast where the Ming Prince of Lu had held out until then, forcing the prince to move to Amoy to seek the Chengs' protection. The Ch'ing once again appeared equal to the challenge of conquest.

THE DEATH OF DORGON AND TRANSITION TO DIRECT IMPERIAL RULE

When news of the southern victories reached Peking, Dorgon was absent. In poor health but determined to undertake a hunting expedition in the steppes before the winter grew too harsh, he overextended himself and died, near Jehol, on December 31, 1650. His death at the age of thirty-eight signaled the end of an era. Of Nurhaci's sixteen sons, only Babutai, who never figured prominently in the conquest, and Ajige survived. Of the banner princes of Hung Taiji's reign, only Šurhaci's son Jirgalang survived. Overseeing the civil administration in Peking was the triumvirate of Nurhaci's grandsons Nikan (age forty-six), Bolo (thirty-six), and Mandahai (twenty-seven), who had been appointed by Dorgon. But these men did not control banners, as their predecessors had, nor did they have influence over the grand ministers and banner commanders who had survived the factional struggles of Dorgon's regime. It fell to Ajige and Jirgalang to convene the Council of Princes and Grand Ministers, who would decide how to proceed.

The first move came from within the two white banners, where Dorgon's men held sway. On January 26, 1651, less than one month after Dorgon's

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death, Ajige was imprisoned for plotting a coup. Most prominent among his accusers was Subai's brother Ubai, another of Dorgon's men who had emerged from command positions in the two white banners to the post of Grand Minister of the Imperial Bodyguard. Speaking in the Deliberative Council for the commanders of the two white banners, he told of Ajige's attempts to lead them in a coup immediately after Dorgon's death.[21] As the council met to hear Ajige's case, Ubai and Tantai, who was still Commander-in-chief of the Plain Yellow Banner, transmitted the results of the council's deliberations to the twelve-year-old emperor and returned with his edict. In effect, the committee established by Dorgon to rule in his absence had now prevented Ajige from taking Dorgon's place, leaving Ubai, Tantai, Holhoi, and Ganglin to mediate imperial authority.

It is apparent that after Ajige's demise in 1651, this small clique of Dorgon's men was not sufficiently organized to propose an alternative to Ajige. Dorgon's heir, Dorbo, was too young to serve as regent, and Dodo's other son, Doni, did not have the stature necessary to command the other princes. On the other hand, neither Jirgalang nor the triumvirs appeared ready to claim the regency. The politics of the previous decade had left the princes without loyal followers and set Dorgon's clique against the remnants of Hung Taiji's inner court band. The council decided to leave well enough alone and allow the child emperor himself to exercise authority. The struggle for power among the princes and grand ministers then continued within the Deliberative Council, with Jirgalang as convener and Tantai as chief transmitter. A very unstable consensus prevailed.

Before the emperor's thirteenth birthday in March, however, the tide had turned against Ubai and the leaders within the two white banners. Among the new grand ministers of the council was Suksaha, a member of the Plain White Banner, who served as a prime witness against Dorgon's clique. Ubai and his brother Subai lost their rank and office, and gradually the Dorgon regency fell into disrepute. Holhoi, still Commander-in-chief of the Bordered White Banner, was executed for his complicity in Dorgon's self-aggrandizement during his regency. Tantai, clinging to his more favored position as Commander-in-chief of the Plain Yellow Banner directly under the emperor's personal control, supported the opposition against Holhoi and the others. The opposition now included Soni, his uncle and erstwhile grand academician Hife, Oboi, Ebilun, and other members of the two yellow banners who had been recalled from political exile to join the deliberative council in investigating Dorgon's high-handed methods. Dorgon's favored

[21] *CSL-SC*, 51, pp. 11–12; *Tung hua lu* entry, cited in Meng Sen, "Pa-ch'i chih-tu k'ao-shih," *BIHP* (1930 ff., rpt. in his *Ming-Ch'ing shih lun chu chi-k'an*, Taipei, 1965), pp. 252–5.

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grand academician, Ganglin, was dismissed and executed. Hife was reinstated and Soni was put in charge of imperial household affairs. With the regency abolished, the Three Inner Courts and the imperial household administration were becoming the agents of imperial authority vis-à-vis the six ministries and the banners. The old opposition had won the day, and with their victory the institutions that would define the next stage of imperial rule emerged.[22]

Once the realignment of princes and grand ministers became clear, the cases against Dorgon and Ajige were extended to implicate others who might upset the new balance of power. With Jirgalang in charge of the council, the triumvirs were relieved of their responsibilities for overseeing the routine administration of the government. Bolo and Nikan were demoted temporarily for trying to excuse Ajige. Dorbo's status as Dorgon's heir was denied. Finally, in September 1651, Tantai suddenly found himself out of favor with the young emperor on whom he depended for his own salvation.

Tantai's problems with the young emperor presaged the changing nature of inner court politics. As part of the accession to personal imperial rule, the emperor had been advised to proclaim a general amnesty, as was the Chinese custom. But the emperor was now taking a personal interest in the problem of corruption within the civil bureaucracy. When a Han Chinese censorial official brought corruption charges against Ch'en Ming-hsia, a southerner and grand academician recently appointed by Dorgon, Tantai pointed out to the emperor that the censor had been in a position to bring these charges against Ch'en before the amnesty was declared. Why had he failed to bring them in a timely fashion, and why had he brought them now, after the emperor had excused those previously charged? Tantai explained that the deliberative council found the censor's conduct questionable, and advised the emperor to dismiss the charges. The emperor followed Tantai's advice, dismissing the censor and acquitting Ch'en Ming-hsia. But the emperor is said to have regretted this decision, as he was especially eager to root out corruption and political collusion among his officials. Perhaps his new tutors encouraged his regret. The case raised doubts in the emperor's mind about the intentions of this battle-hardened official who had served Dorgon so faithfully from beginning to end. Oboi, the rehabilitated imperial bodyguard, sensed that the time was ripe to charge Tantai with arrogant abuse of power. Tantai's support of Dorgon was now being called part of a conspiracy against the throne. On October 1, Tantai was executed for his part in the conspiracy. The transition to imperial rule was complete.

[22] The biography of Soni in *CS*, p. 3803, states that he became manager of the imperial household. For indications of his exalted position after 1651, see *CSL-SC*, 55, p. 16, and 60, p. 2.

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It was the apparent end of the conquest generation, one that had fought mightily and died young. Ajige was forced to commit suicide in prison before the end of 1651. By that time, the triumvirate of grandsons had also dissolved. All three were dead before another year had passed, as was the former general-in-chief Lekedehun. Oboi and Soni joined Suksaha and the Haoge supporter Ebilun at the core of the new regime. They would emerge as regents for Fulin's successor in 1661. But for the time being, the reins of government passed into the hands of the young emperor himself. A few trusted Han Chinese and Manchu officials advised him, while the consolidation of the south was left to the older generation of Ming turncoats – K'ung Yu-te, Shang K'o-hsi, Hung Ch'eng-ch'ou, and Wu San-kuei.

The first three years of direct rule by the Shun-chih emperor saw major changes in the political process. The changes reflected the new balance of power that emerged after Dorgon's death. Dorgon's crimes were described as breaches of the ritual order demanded of a legitimate ruling family. He had called himself "imperial father" and begun to rearrange the tablets in the imperial ancestral shrine, placing his own mother beside the mother of Hung Taiji with the title of "empress." He further offended the court's sense of propriety by taking Haoge's widow to wife after his own wife's death in 1649.[23] He had authorized alterations in the Veritable Records of Hung Taiji's reign to show that Nurhaci favored Dorgon's mother and may well have wanted Dorgon to be his successor. The principal crime of Ganglin and the other grand academicians was their complicity in this changing of the record. Holhoi and Tantai were guilty of encouraging Dorgon's improprieties while benefitting themselves.

The new imperial advisors were quick to oppose such capriciousness with strict ritual order in accordance with ancient Confucian codes. The historical record of the intrigues of 1651 is punctuated with detailed regulations concerning the proper order of procession, the proper manner of mounting and dismounting, the correct nature of the privileges and the prescribed apparel attached to each rank, and so on. In 1652 the Ministry of Rites recommended fixing the number of imperial audiences – formal gatherings to be distinguished from the Deliberative Council of Princes and Grand Ministers – at three per month. An Imperial Clan Court was established to manage the ritual affairs and genealogical records of the imperial clan. This new institution replaced offices originally established by the eight banner princes in Nurhaci's time, further verifying the break-up of the banners and consolidation of imperial rule.

[23] On Manchu marriage and the levirate, see Evelyn S. Rawski, "Ch'ing imperial marriage and problems of rulership," in *Marriage and inequality in Chinese society*, ed. Rubie S. Watson and Patricia Buckley Ebrey (Berkeley, 1991), pp. 170–203.

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The demise of the commanders and grand ministers of the Plain White, Bordered White, and Blue Banners, which Dorgon had controlled, finally allowed the emperor and his advisors to centralize military power. The Manchu Banners were reorganized. The Plain Yellow, Bordered Yellow, and Plain White Banners were now assigned to the imperial household. Although the Imperial Household Department was not formally established until Oboi's regency in 1661, certain "inner" grand ministers had served as managers of imperial household affairs since the beginning of the Shun-chih reign. At the same time, the Imperial Bodyguard – originally conceived as the elite forces of Nurhaci and his sons and brothers but later expanded to include members of allied clans – was transformed into a special force whose commanders also were called "inner" grand ministers and who were members of the three "inner," or imperial household, banners. After Dorgon's death, the three banners were combined for administrative purposes. Although the precise relationship between the three banners and the still shadowy household administration remains unclear, control of the banners passed into the hands of the "inner" grand ministers while routine administration fell to appointees who were imperial bondservants.[24]

Direct imperial rule also brought changes in the relationship between the rulers and the civil administration. Shortly after Dorgon's death imperial edicts began to present a new theme. The Ch'ing regime could no longer rest on its reputation as righteous avenger of the Ming. The conquest was over, the new emperor seemed to think, but the evils of Ming maladministration had not been corrected. Dorgon had tired of the campaign to prevent corruption and factional division within the Chinese bureaucracy. In 1649, during the Ta-t'ung campaign, he had ordered his officials to avoid making personnel recommendations and left the problem of how to control the government to a select committee. With Dorgon in disrepute, the Censorate and the Six Ministries began to influence personnel and policy decisions.

In his last year Dorgon had also completely reversed the image created by his abolition of Ming military surtaxes by appropriating 2,490,000 taels in tax revenues from nine provinces for the construction of a summer palace for himself in Jehol. The effects of his earlier attempts to halt the accumulation of land and peasants by bannermen in north China also appeared undone by his own personal appropriations. By allowing his estate to attach retainers and their lands on behalf of his adopted heir he had, in effect, doubled the legal limit for himself. This news accompanied reports from the Ministry of Revenue that retainers of banner estates were engrossing larger and larger

[24] *CS*, pp. 1397 and 1420; *PCTC*, ch. 113. For a general discussion of the antecedents of the Imperial Household Department, see Preston M. Torbert, *The Ch'ing Imperial Household Department: A study of its organization and principal functions, 1662–1796* (Cambridge, Mass., 1977), pp. 21–6.

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amounts of revenue that should have gone to the state. Engrossment by banner estates threatened to renew the problems of fiscal insolvency and popular discontent that had brought disaster to the Ming in recent decades. With Dorgon and his party as scapegoats, the emperor and his advisors could turn to the Six Ministries to counter this tendency toward erosion of centralized fiscal control.[25]

THE ANTICORRUPTION CAMPAIGN AND THE REVIVAL OF LITERATI POLITICS

Over the next decade, as the young emperor himself began to feel the power that resided in his authority, he turned to Han Chinese tutors, academicians, eunuchs, and Buddhist monks for advice and personal support in ways that would counter the influence of the grand ministers and bodyguards. The immediate concern for "corruption" among the officials became one of the emperor's driving passions. It may have led him to a stronger personal interest in his officials as he came to trust in one or another personality schooled in Confucian ethics. In any case, the campaign to root out corruption began with an imperial edict of April 7, 1651, scarcely two months after the emperor assumed personal control. The edict was clearly aimed at officials whose indiscretions Dorgon had tolerated or who had tolerated Dorgon's own biases in personnel matters. If the empire was to command the people's respect, the edict argued, then it must weed out those officials who sought or accepted private advantage in obvious disregard for the poverty that surrounded them. It touched on injustices in tax collection, nepotism, and bribery among Dorgon's officials, and singled out a number of them for dismissal, demotion, or worse.

Most prominent among the officials who were dismissed by this edict was the grand academician Feng Ch'üan. Feng had been one of the first truly prominent Ming officials to return to the capital from the provinces in response to Dorgon's plea in 1644. Among the surrendered officials, only he and Hung Ch'eng-ch'ou had been honored with the position of grand academician. Dorgon had set aside charges against him that he had accepted a bribe of thirty thousand taels from Chiang Hsiang, the commander who later rebelled in Ta-t'ung, on the grounds that his willingness to serve the Ming's avengers was a more significant example of the behavior the Ch'ing wanted to encourage. The new ruling party thought otherwise. The anticorruption edict shamed the officials of the Ministry of Personnel for allowing Feng

[25] *CSL-SC*, 31, pp. 10–11; 58, p. 2; 59, p. 12b.

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to remain in office for seven years while the charges of bribery remained unanswered.[26]

Yet, Feng Ch'üan's case opened more than a campaign against corruption. It signaled a new round of factional fighting among the literati as well. As Feng's accusers in 1645 also pointed out, he had brought disgrace on the office of grand secretary once before, in the 1620s. Then, he had acquiesced to the demands of the infamous eunuch, Wei Chung-hsien, who was credited with bringing the Ming empire to the brink of destruction. It was he who had edited the imperial report called *Essential Documents of Three Reigns* (*San ch'ao yao tien*), accusing the Tung-lin party of seditious conspiracies, and he was considered a leader among northern literati since that time. When Dorgon heard the case against Feng, he heard a southern censor by the name of Kung Ting-tzu, who had helped to organize the last great meeting of the coalition of literary societies known as the Restoration Society (Fu She) in 1642. What Dorgon heard was a revival of the bitter contest between the old "eunuch" faction and the advocates of Confucian renewal associated with the Tung-lin party, the former party drawing heavily on northern literati and the latter drawing heavily on southerners, especially of the lower Yangtze region. It was no coincidence, surely, that the man who was head of the Ministry of Personnel at the time of the anticorruption edict was Kung Ting-tzu's colleague in the Restoration Society organization in 1642, Ch'en Ming-hsia. And it was no accident that Ch'en quickly replaced Feng as grand academician in 1651.[27]

The anticorruption edict opened a Pandora's box of literati politics that continued to frustrate and infuriate the young emperor until his death. It

[26] The biography of Feng Ch'üan in *CS*, p. 3786. For the anticorruption edict, see *CSL-SC*, 54, pp. 12–14.

[27] Fu She (Restoration Society) was originally the name of a literary society in T'ai-ts'ang, east of Soochow. It was one of several societies in the region to appear in response to the attack on Tung-lin partisans during the eunuch Wei Chung-hsien's regime. In 1629 its leader, Chang P'u, called a meeting of a large number of such literary societies at Tiger Hill in Soochow, after which the name referred to this larger coalition. Various lists of society members who attended this and later meetings, together with other sources that chart the movement's history and the agreements and disagreements among the various groups, describe a vigorous movement especially of younger scholars who at first sat for the civil service examinations and later served as censors, Han-lin academicians, and civil service examiners. One source claims that although the scholars of the region initially looked down on Chang P'u and his association, within a few years there were none who lacked some sort of connection to them. Between 1631 and 1643, no fewer than 205 Fu She associates passed the *chin-shih*, or highest level exam, representing 12% of all *chin-shih* selected during those years. Of the 205, all but 22 were from the southern provinces of Nan-chihli, Chekiang, Kiangsi, Hu-kuang, and Fukien. Wang Hsi's father was one of the other 22. For the Tung-lin debacle, the *San-ch'ao yao tien*, and the rise of the Fu She, see William S. Atwell, "The T'ai-ch'ang, T'ien-ch'i, and Ch'ung-chen reigns," *The Ming dynasty 1368–1644, Part 1*, Vol. 7 of *The Cambridge history of China*, ed. Frederick W. Mote and Denis Twitchett (New York, 1988), pp. 605–14, 634, n. 154. For details and further bibliography, see Dennerline, *The Chia-ting loyalists*, ch. 1, 11; and Atwell, "From Education to Politics: the Fu She," in *The unfolding of Neo-Confucianism*, ed. Wm. Theodore de Bary (New York and London, 1975), pp. 333–67.

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called for stricter surveillance and wider reporting and airing of accusations of unethical conduct. Charges of corruption soon were brought against Ch'en Ming-hsia. Ch'en's accusers charged him with appointing friends and relatives to office during his tenure as head of the Ministry of Personnel. Even worse, he was said to have arranged a secret meeting at the Temple of the God of Fire on the outskirts of Peking to plan a series of appointments favoring his own faction. The alleged meeting was with Hung Ch'eng-ch'ou, whom the emperor had just put in charge of the censorate to oversee the anticorruption campaign, and the newly appointed head of the Ministry of Rites, Ch'en Chih-lin, who was also a southerner and an associate of the Restoration Society group since the 1630s.[28]

There is no way of knowing who initiated the anticorruption campaign and the attack on Feng Ch'üan. On the other hand, it is clear that Tantai acquiesced in that case but not in the case against Ch'en Ming-hsia. Perhaps the latter case threatened to implicate him. Once Tantai was executed, the emperor reopened Ch'en's case. Ch'en, too, was dismissed. Hung Ch'eng-ch'ou and Ch'en Chih-lin were excused on the basis of Hung's defense that the meeting with Ch'en Ming-hsia had only been to determine the number and rank of new censors to be appointed. Ch'en Chih-lin then replaced Ch'en Ming-hsia as grand academician, and the emperor proclaimed anew his interest in pursuing the anticorruption campaign, apparently undaunted by the shakeup.

From the Manchu point of view, the elimination of Tantai was far more significant than the elimination of one or another literati faction. By 1653 no one had taken Tantai's place as chief transmitter and interpreter of communications between the emperor and his officials. Early that year the emperor asked the Three Inner Courts to explain how the Ming emperors had handled communications with their officials. He was worried that the decisions he authorized were too many for him to remember and that his officials might make mistakes without his knowing. His intention to lighten the punishment recommended to him in a recent personnel decision had not been carried out. What if someone were executed against his will? That would not reflect well on his regime. The Ming emperors had relied on their grand secretaries to draft rescripts to memorials and then to submit them for imperial approval. On February 7 the Shun-chih emperor, who probably had not yet mastered classical Chinese and whose advisors included some who never

[28] On Wang Hsi's father, Wang Ch'ung-chien, and his association with the Fu she, see Wu Ming-tao, comp., *Fu she hsing shih* (1713 ed.), 3 pts., Pt. I, "Shun-t'ien." For Ch'en Chih-lin's association with the Fu She, see Lu Shih-i, *Fu-she chi-lueh* (n.d.; rpt. Taipei, 1966), ch. 4, p. 248. For Wang and Kung's role in the Tiger Hill meeting, see Tu Teng-ch'un, *She shih shih-mo* (*Chao-tai ts'ung-shu*, n.d.), pp. 3b, 11b.

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would, decided to have the academicians copy his own oral commands and resubmit them in Chinese and Manchu for his approval before transmitting them to the appropriate administrative office for execution. By the end of the year he was authorizing grand academicians to draft rescripts. This simple decision not only allowed the emperor and his closest advisors to oversee the Six Ministries and the censorate directly (the assignment of princes as overseers had ceased the previous year), it also signaled the emperor's new interest in the world of the academicians.[29]

No sooner had the new communications procedure been authorized than Ch'en Ming-hsia was appointed grand academician once again. Soon the emperor was visiting the Three Inner Courts to which the grand academicians were assigned, and he discussed history, classics, and politics with them. On one occasion he asked Ch'en Ming-hsia who Ch'en thought was the greatest emperor in history. Ch'en chose the great consolidator of the seventh century, T'ang T'ai-tsung. The emperor announced that he preferred the Ming founder, the Hung-wu emperor, because his laws and institutions – autocratic to the core – were comprehensive and his moral power supreme. At the same time the emperor was approving recommendations to tighten regulations concerning the punishment of officials – specifically to make the punishment fit the crime – and to implement the ancient Han system of official appointment by recommendation, which made the recommender responsible for the conduct of the appointee. The young emperor appeared ready to take charge of his officials, the better to shape his own destiny.

Scandal soon brought the emperor back to earth. It seems there was an underground network in Peking that specialized in peddling influence. Influence peddling was a profession of sorts in the late Ming period. In the lower Yangtze region, whence Ch'en Ming-hsia, Ch'en Chih-lin, and other officials came, men who knew how to bend the law and who cultivated friendships among yamen functionaries were likened to commodity brokers. They were ubiquitous, perhaps indispensable in practice, but reform-minded literati nonetheless hoped someday to expel them from the body politic and they remained in disrepute. On a grander scale, political coalitions in the capital depended on intermediaries who could define the terms of the political contract, which perforce remained unwritten. As the young emperor turned his ear to his Han Chinese literati officials, the last of his princely uncles, Jirgalang, raised the issue of influence peddling with the princes and grand ministers. Jirgalang confirmed rumors that a handful of brokers controlled a

[29] *CSL-SC*, 71, p. 8. For the development of grand secretary functions in this period, see Silas Wu, *Communication and imperial control in China: The evolution of the palace memorial system, 1693–1735* (Cambridge, Mass., 1970), pp. 15–16.

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number of houses whose primary function was to provide space for informal political meetings. The brokers were, in effect, intermediaries in a vast influence market. Breaking up the network once it was discovered proved no problem, but the emperor now wanted to know why the continuous pleas to his officials for honest reporting of corrupt practices had failed to bring the influence market to light.

Following the ceremonies that celebrated the fifteenth anniversary of the emperor's birth on February 27, 1653, he summoned Ch'en Ming-hsia to explain to him what made for order and what for disorder. Ch'en placed the selection of good men at the heart of the matter. The emperor asked how one could distinguish between the good and the bad. Ch'en offered some homilies about how as long as the emperor continued to urge his officials to speak openly and critically, good men would be encouraged to come forward. The emperor then wondered how it was that no one had dared expose the influence market. Ch'en replied that it was not the job of grand academicians to expose petty criminals and that since their network was so influential it would have invited personal disaster to be the first to speak out. The emperor should understand that it is also quite natural for officials to avoid personal disaster. Political vendetta, after all, had almost cost Ch'en his life a year earlier.

The time now appeared ripe, Ch'en went on, for civil officials to speak more boldly with the emperor's assurance that they were of a single family with the Manchus. The emperor then pressed for more details concerning the influence peddling and agreed to drop the subject provided Ch'en and the others understood his real concern, that is, that they keep him informed. He also asked for opinions on the value of exorcism of ghosts and Buddhist prayers, as if to say that Ch'en's Confucian explanation of order and disorder was still somewhat in doubt. Finally, he sent him back to warn his colleagues, especially Ch'en Chih-lin and Ning Wan-wo, who had been implicated in the influence peddling racket, to be more straightforward with him in the future.

They soon had their chance, only to learn that straightforward talk could also pique the emperor's anger. In early May Ch'en Ming-hsia, Ch'en Chih-lin, and a third southern minister, Chin Chih-chün, led twenty-eight Han Chinese officials of the highest rank in attaching a dissenting opinion to a decision made by a special judicial review commission that had been appointed by the emperor. The commission, which included all the highest Manchu and Han Chinese officials, had decided to support a recommendation by the Ministry of Justice that a heroic brigade commander in the northwest be executed. The commander had murdered his wife and concubine after learning of their infidelity and then he had bribed officials in the Ministries of War and Justice to cover for him. The emperor had recently decided to

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pardon him, although a number of Manchu officials were dismissed for accepting the bribes. The commander nonetheless resented being punished at all – his fee of nobility was cut in half – and had since been overheard threatening drastic action if the verdict were not reversed. The emperor now seemed in need of a unanimous recommendation for execution before he could bring himself to order the war hero dead.

The Han Chinese officials objected to the death sentence because the commander would not admit his guilt in the bribery case. It would be divisive to execute a hero who protested his innocence. The punishment should be made to fit the crime, they argued. The emperor demanded clarification. Ch'en Ming-hsia explained that others might take the commander's side, dividing the officials and raising questions of loyalty, and that the commander's real crime in this case was his refusal to acknowledge the emperor's grace. He should be asked to commit suicide, an honorable way out for a warrior although the code did not stipulate such a recommendation. The emperor grew impatient. If the commander failed to acknowledge his guilt, how could the emperor ask him to commit suicide? The Han Chinese officials had already introduced a division. Why did they believe their arguments to be less divisive than the commander's? And, why did they recommend something that was not stipulated by the code?

Their backs to the wall, Ch'en Ming-hsia and his colleagues admitted they were wrong to recommend what the code did not stipulate. They had failed to prevent the division they feared. But, the crime was so heinous that it had led them to an error of judgment. On these grounds they awaited the emperor's verdict. This response only made things worse, the emperor argued. Now they were only trying to play innocent. They had intentionally formed a clique and urged the emperor to act unjustly. Why did they claim to be misled when it was they who were misleading him? Ch'en Ming-hsia and Ch'en Chih-lin had been pardoned for political crimes. Why did they fail to reform themselves?

The emperor ordered the entire body of higher metropolitan officials to assemble in front of the Meridian Gate to deliberate the fate of the dissenters. The charge was no less than treason. The extraordinary body recommended death to Ch'en Ming-hsia and dismissal and banishment for the others, leaving it for the emperor to pardon them all and plead once more for cooperation. The plea seemed to contradict the emperor's earlier cry for critical debate. Now he longed for consensus. Why is it that all the dissenters were Han Chinese, he asked, while all the Manchus were on the other side? The Han Chinese officials promised to try harder, but the chances for pragmatic political adjustment appear to have been slight. Before the year was over, Ch'en Ming-hsia's enemies brought him down with charges ranging from

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Table 2.4. *Ages of Princes of the Blood in 1653*

I.9.	Babutai (61)
III.6.	***Jirgalang*** **(54) Imperial Prince**
I.7.4	Yolo (28)
I.8.5	**Sose (24) Imperial Prince**
III.6.2.	**Jidu (20) Imperial Prince; second son of Jirgalang**
I.8.9	**FULIN (15) SHUN-CHIH EMPEROR**
I.1.3.1	Lambu (?25)
I.1.3.2	**Nissa (?22) Imperial Prince**
I.2.7.1	**Canggadai (20) Imperial Prince**

Key: see Table 2.1.

latent Ming loyalism to moral insensitivity. Chief among his accusers was the old grand academician from Liao-tung, Ning Wan-wo. Ch'en was sentenced to death by strangulation.[30]

PERSONAL RULE, REFORM, AND CONFRONTATION

The young emperor's debut on the literati political scene coincided with his self-assertion in personal matters (see Table 2.4). The day before the brigade commander's murder and bribery case reached the palace, the emperor appointed a young friend by the name of Fiyonggu to the Council of Princes and Grand Ministers. Three years later he would select Fiyonggu's sister, Hsiao-hsien, to be his favorite consort, rejecting the second wife chosen for him by his mother. In 1653 he rejected his mother's first choice, who had been designated empress two years before. He also began to find young friends in official circles. The twenty-five-year-old Wang Hsi, a recent *chin-shih* from Peking whose father was a Restoration Society friend of Ch'en Ming-hsia and himself a member of the Three Inner Courts, had by then distinguished himself as a master of the Manchu language. Father and son were advancing through the ranks of the academicians and Wang Hsi was to become a close confidante of the emperor. Another young Manchu linguist emerged from the first *chin-shih* exams for Manchus in 1652 and began to tutor the palace eunuchs. Eunuchs, in turn, were given imperial household functions in 1653 for the first time since the conquest. The character of the group closest to the emperor was changing rapidly.

[30] *CSL-SC*, 72, p. 13; 74, pp. 6–10. Wakeman, *The great enterprise*, pp. 959–87, describes the impact of the case in great detail, with a slightly different interpretation.

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The impact of these changes was remarkably clear. By the time the Shun-chih emperor died at the age of twenty-two in 1661, he had succeeded in freeing himself from the influence of his mother and the imperial household grand ministers of the old guard. In the process, he had established a new imperial household administration consisting of thirteen yamen employing both eunuchs and imperial bondservants of the combined upper three banners. The chief eunuch Wu Liang-fu had emerged as an influential intermediary whose relationship with important officials like Ch'en Chih-lin entailed the exchange of favors. Eunuchs had been banned from household service by Dorgon, who even went so far as to prohibit the entry of new eunuchs into Peking. Manchu noblemen now feared a resurgence of the eunuch scourge that had plagued the Ming. The emperor also turned to Lamaist and Ch'an monks for friendship with increasing frequency as he approached maturity, and enjoyed the company of the Jesuit astronomer and proselytizer, Adam Schall von Bell.[31] As the old problems of corruption and factionalism impressed him with their intransigence, foreign ideas and religious mentalities appeared more attractive. Officials charged with the emperor's education feared a turn away from the pressing problems of practical administration.

In 1658 the emperor formally established the Han-lin Academy and Grand Secretariat on the Ming model, further enhancing the revival of literati politics. As they had under the Ming, grand secretaries (*ta-hsüeh shih*) now headed up the unified body of academicians whose ranks included only the top performers in the metropolitan and palace examinations. The successful Han-lin academicians, in turn, could expect to compete for the position of grand secretary themselves someday, serving in the meantime as examiners in the provinces and interpreters of the political scene for the emperor. And, of course, the grand secretaries were now drafting rescripts to memorials. Critics who blamed the Ming's problems on the intensely violent competition among factions attached to grand secretaries and on the literary patronage entailed in this system now feared that a resurgent literati – especially a predominantly southern literati – would ossify the government and prevent meaningful reform. The case of the dynamic literati leader Ch'en Ming-hsia was sufficient evidence.

The legitimate fears of the conquest's old guard came to a head in 1661 when the emperor died. Yet, while these political trends were making their impression on Peking, the emperor's initial charge to his officials to root out corruption and injustice had other effects. Among them was the beginning

[31] See the classic account of Adam Schall von Bell by Jonathan D. Spence in *To change China: Western advisers in China, 1620–1960* (Boston, 1969), pp. 3–33.

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of a major fiscal reform effort. The anticorruption edict of 1651 had specifically attacked the Ministry of Revenue for ignoring inequities in tax collection. In 1654, with Ch'en Chih-lin as head of the ministry, work began on the compilation of an entirely new edition of the *Complete Book of Land Tax and Services*. The intention was to provide a central record by which revenue officials and censors could check reports from the provinces. Many of the wealthier southern districts were hopelessly in arrears and the emperor could only grant remissions to his officials until new registration records were ready.

In 1657, the Ministry of Personnel published a new set of regulations for magistrates, imposing fines and limiting advancement for those who fell short of their tax quotas. Under pressure from the ministry and from hard-liners in the Ministry of Revenue, the Ch'ing governor in Soochow decided to test the new records the following year against some of the most notorious tax evaders in the Yangtze delta. In a case that set a precedent for the full-scale purge of southern literati the year after the Shun-chih emperor's death, the governor sent a bannerman to Chia-ting, the county made famous by resistance and massacre in 1645, to make a list of those taxpayers the record showed to owe more than one hundred taels in back taxes. He returned with 170 names. Before the alleged evaders learned of their jeopardy, a Han Chinese civil intendant in Soochow rushed to Chia-ting, called the landowners to a meeting, and arrested them without warning. The surprise move prevented a formal confrontation between the governor and the literati as the intendant's office mediated a settlement between them. The offenders and other Soochow notables paid 108,000 taels to the governor's office in return for an official pardon.[32]

The 1658 settlement in Chia-ting dramatized the need for fiscal reform. Yet, fiscal reform was not an isolated issue. The Ming had granted tax privileges to literati in part to ensure their cooperation with the government in preventing land speculators, commodity brokers, rice and cotton merchants, or wealthy peasant farmers from exploiting the cultivators on whom the state depended for revenues and stability. Reform-minded literati recognized that speculators and big landlords with financial and commercial interests were using literati privileges to capture village surpluses. They even blamed literati abuses for the Ming's failure. Yet, to abolish the privileges without providing some other incentive for the literati would cost the Ch'ing its most important ally – the larger body of Confucian-educated teachers and village

[32] On tax evasion and the confrontation in Chia-ting, see Dennerline, *The Chia-ting loyalists*, pp. 323–31, and "Fiscal reform and local control: The gentry-bureaucratic alliance survives the conquest," in *Conflict and control*, ed. Wakeman and Grant (Berkeley, 1975), pp. 86–120.

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leaders who provided the state with a pool of civil service candidates. In the case of Chia-ting, for example, there were yet a thousand privileged literati who were not arrested as large evaders in 1658. These men, their sons and their students were the ones Ch'en Ming-hsia had argued would be encouraged by the emperor's plea for help in fighting corruption.

In 1659, the new *Complete Book of Land Tax and Services* was formally published and a new Statement of Accounts (*tsou hsiao*) listing all those in arrears was required of all magistrates. By then the emperor had already reestablished the Han-lin Academy, confirming his faith in his literati allies. He even ordered an extraordinary metropolitan examination that spring to celebrate final victory against the Ming in the southwest. The top three candidates, all from extremely influential literati families in the Soochow region, entered an Academy that was increasingly dominated by sons and students of the old Restoration Society coalition and increasingly southern in character. The Academy's chancellor was the aforementioned Wang Hsi, himself a northerner, but the son of a Restoration Society member. The Han-lin Academy, therefore, was rapidly becoming the spearhead of a revival not only of southern literati influence but of the old-style political networks as well. And, it was doing so just as the confrontation between Ch'ing officials and the benefactors of literati privilege was coming to a head.

The emperor sanctioned this literati political revival in spite of clear evidence that corruption was endemic. Scandal in the Peking provincial examination of 1657 had threatened to undo the literati networks entirely. In that year, a group of assistant examiners was found to have accepted a number of large bribes through intermediaries – the successors of the men Jirgalang had brought to the emperor's attention four years earlier. A number of grand ministers were implicated, including one grand academician whose nephew passed the examination. Investigation led to the execution of some of the principals and the dismissal of others. It also raised doubts about the large number of official relatives who had passed the provincial examination in Nanking. Investigators found no evidence of bribery there, but forced the successful candidates to sit for another round of examinations to see if they could produce essays of the same quality as those attributed to them. Some failed just from fright.

To the conquest's old guard, the line between outright bribery and coded examinations on the one hand and family connections and favored literary style on the other must have seemed thin. In fact, one of the men banished for paying a bribe in the Peking scandal had been part of a clique attached to the Restoration Society movement in the 1630s. Organizers of literary societies in Soochow in the 1650s included his colleagues, some of them relatives of loyalist martyrs. As fate would have it, his brother proved to be the

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emperor's personal choice for Principal Graduate, first place in the palace examination the following year. The emperor is said to have asked Wang Hsi if the two were related when he learned the name of the favored essay's author. Knowing full well who they were, Wang consulted with the candidate and reported back that he admitted to being the offender's brother. The emperor chose him anyway, commending the candidate for his honesty. The revival continued apace.[33]

The emergence of southern literati networks in the Han-lin Academy thus carried one message for the literati while the examination scandal of 1657 carried another, contradictory one. The anticorruption campaign of 1653 had led Ch'en Ming-hsia to speak critically at the cost of his life. Imperial favor was also leading many of Ch'en's colleagues into positions of great influence, but endemic corruption threatened to implicate them in a vast purge if the emperor or his advisors lost patience with them. Some had begun to organize literary societies in Soochow as early as 1648, perhaps in response to Dorgon's initial appointment of Han Chinese heads to the Six Ministries, in hopes of reviving the spirit of the 1630s. With the emperor's call for literati assistance in 1653, Wu Wei-yeh, who was a renowned intellectual and poet, Principal Graduate in the palace examination of 1630, and prominent leader of the Restoration Society faction, presided over a meeting of three major literary societies at Tiger Hill, site of the great meetings of the late Ming. Although the new attempt at coalition failed, the three literary societies set about publishing essays as before. Wu Wei-yeh also accepted the post of Chancellor of the National University in Peking. With the scandal of 1657, Wu Wei-yeh begged to retire in a gesture that symbolized the fears of the exposed literati organizers. The literary societies fell silent in anticipation of the reaction that finally came in 1661.

THE END OF THE REIGN AND THE RETURN OF THE OLD GUARD

For all the unresolved tensions, however, the spirit of the regime was high after ten years of direct imperial rule. The primary reason was continued military success from 1653 on. At the time of Dorgon's death, Kweilin was newly in the hands of the Ch'ing general-in-chief K'ung Yu-te. There was little news from the southwestern frontier until the former rebels Sun K'o-wang and Li Ting-kuo began to move their large armies into Hunan and Kwangsi in support of the Ming in late winter 1652. By August, Li Ting-kuo had recaptured Kweilin and K'ung Yu-te committed suicide in defeat. The young

[33] The biography of Sun Ch'eng-en in *Ch'ang-chao ho chih* (1797 ed., rpt. 1898), 9 p. 15b.

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emperor responded to the crisis characteristically by turning to his trusted Han Chinese advisors. Scarcely a month after publicly upbraiding the twenty-eight dissenters, in June 1653, he ordered the Three Inner Courts to recommend the central government official they thought best qualified to win the confidence of the people while coordinating a new southwestern campaign. The academicians chose Hung Ch'eng-ch'ou, the old rebel fighter whose advice had colored Dorgon's pacification policies and who had served as grand academician as well as pacification commissioner in Nanking.

As governor-general of five provinces, Hung Ch'eng-ch'ou carefully extended Ch'ing control into the hinterlands of the major cities from his headquarters in Ch'ang-sha. Rather than attack Kweilin prematurely, he chose to let Sun and Li struggle for control in the poorer provincial border areas while he built up resources and developed the logistical capability to supply a large banner force. The policy succeeded. Keng Chi-mao retook Kweilin in 1654 without drawing on the Ch'ing force in Ch'ang-sha. When Sun K'o-wang tried to raid in Ch'ing-controlled territory north and west of Ch'ang-sha the following year, he was driven back. Ch'ing supplies increased as the rebels grew leaner.

The emperor gave Hung free rein. When a Manchu banner commander disputed his strategy in 1656, the emperor replaced the commander. The Ch'ing gathered strength for yet another year. Finally, in the fall of 1657, Li defeated Sun decisively and Sun went to Ch'ang-sha to surrender. By that time, Hung was ready to supply banner forces for the drive into Kweichow and Yunnan. The emperor appointed three generals-in-chief but left Hung in command. Advancing with Hung from Ch'ang-sha to Kweiyang was Jirgalang's nephew Loto. Advancing to Kweiyang from Kwangsi was the imperial bodyguard Oboi's younger brother Jobtei. Entering Kweichow from Szechwan and remaining in the north was the old rebel fighter and conquest hero Wu San-kuei. The Ch'ing armies waited for another whole year.

In the summer of 1658, the emperor sent Dodo's second son Doni to serve as general-in-chief of the Yunnan campaign. Not until the fall grain tax had been collected and supply lines established did Hung allow the banner troops to proceed. When the campaign got under way, it had one-half the total autumn grain for the province of Kweichow at its disposal. The well-fed, well-disciplined banner troops found Li Ting-kuo's huge army in disarray and were welcomed by a starving and war-ravaged populace. Ch'ing forces entered Yunnanfu on January 25, 1659, as the Ming Yung-li emperor fled to Burma with Li Ting-kuo fleeing after him. An effective combination of Chinese statecraft and Manchu discipline had finally been achieved, and the great southwest was the prize. Although the fighting was not yet over, the conquest was.

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Victory in Yunnan inspired the emperor to call the extraordinary metropolitan examination of 1659. Before the examination was held that fall, the regime was shaken by one more extraordinary military challenge, which it barely disposed of in time for the celebratory event. The independent naval commander Cheng Ch'eng-kung, who had continued to control portions of the southeast coast, especially around Ch'üan-chou in southern Fukien since the failure of his father's plea for him to surrender in 1653, unexpectedly sailed into the Yangtze estuary with a thousand troops in early August. Cheng's forces defeated the Ch'ing defenders in battle after battle until they reached Nanking. Banner forces returning from the southwest finally succeeded in turning Cheng back after a siege of two weeks, but a startlingly large number of county yamens in the lower Yangtze region had submitted temporarily to Cheng's authority in the interim. The apparent passivity of the Ch'ing's southern subjects at a time when the emperor was sharing his glory with their literati politicians could only serve to enhance doubts in the minds of military men like Jobtei. Whatever glory there was, after all, was due to them.

In the year that followed, however, a spirit of confidence prevailed. Despite the memory of Jirgalang's warnings of the previous decade, the regime did nothing to restrain its old Han Chinese war heroes in the south. When Hung Ch'eng-ch'ou retired from his governor-generalship, the emperor appointed Wu San-kuei governor of Yunnan, combining civil and military offices. Soon Wu would be named an Imperial Prince. Keng Chi-mao was transferred to Fukien where he continued to hold his father's princely title. Shang K'o-hsi remained in charge of Kwangtung, with his own princely office in Canton. These arrangements were to develop into the last great challenge to Ch'ing rule, the rebellion of the Three Feudatories, in the 1670s. But, for the time being, the most pressing concerns were matters for the attention of civilian administrators: the rebuilding of the transportation and irrigation systems, the reconstruction of agriculture, and fiscal reform.

The Shun-chih emperor himself did not oversee the shift from conquest to statecraft priorities. By 1659 he had given himself over to devotionalism. On the one side he was devoted to Ch'an Buddhism, spending more and more of his time in the company of monks he had moved into the palace. He even talked of entering the priesthood. On the other side, he was devoted to his favorite consort, Hsiao-hsien, to whom he had turned against the wishes of his mother, Hsiao-chuang. He was subject to fits of anger and is said to have slashed his throne with a sword and threatened to travel to Nanking when it was besieged by Cheng Ch'eng-kung. In September 1660, Hsiao-hsien died. The emperor entered a deep depression from which he never recovered. He was stricken with smallpox on February 2, 1661, and died three days later.

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During the last three days of the Shun-chih emperor's life, the conquest's old guard resumed control. They must have been preparing for some time. The emperor is said to have written a will in consultation with his literatus confidante, Wang Hsi. The will that became public after his death was another, dictated by the empress dowager Hsiao-chuang in consultation with the inner grand ministers of the imperial bodyguard. Soni, the manager of imperial household affairs and a veteran of the succession struggles of 1643 and 1651, emerged along with Oboi, Ebilun, and Suksaha as regents for the newly designated heir, Hsüan-yeh. The new emperor was the smallpox-immune third son of Fulin by a secondary consort. Not yet seven years old, he was to endure a period of imperial household reaction to his father's style before recapturing the best of it to the greater glory of the Ch'ing. The foundation had been laid in the Shun-chih reign.

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CHAPTER 3

THE K'ANG-HSI REIGN

Jonathan D. Spence

Hsüan-yeh, born in 1654, reigned from 1661 to 1722 as the K'ang-hsi Emperor. He was one of China's greatest rulers, and his reign was not only the longest but also one of the most vibrant and complex in the history of imperial China. Though he could be callous or negligent at times, and made errors of judgment, he possessed a self-analytical acuity and a sense of imperial mission that mark him as one of those rare individuals who, by acts of will, change the course of human history. It has not escaped the notice of numerous historians – Chinese, Japanese, and Western – that his reign coincided chronologically with those of Tsar Peter the Great in Russia and King Louis XIV in France, and that the three shared certain common characteristics that marked perhaps the apogee of traditional kingship in pre-industrial societies.[1]

Any emperor of China was, of course, merely one individual, occupying a special position within his society but unable to comprehend all that society's ramifications. Also, the actions and thoughts ascribed to him were often those of others, of relatives, courtiers, eunuchs, bureaucrats. Therefore we must be cautious about seeing the ruler as the reign, of narrowing our own vision to the emperor's own. Nevertheless, the K'ang-hsi Emperor acted decisively in so many matters, and took so great an interest in affairs of governance and of culture, that his actions and his personality serve as a valid entry point for comprehending the myriad elements that led to the consolidation of Ch'ing rule.[2]

[1] See the opening sections of Liu Ta-nien's influential article "Lun K'ang-hsi," *Li-shih yen-chiu*, 3 (1961), pp. 5–21; or Gotō Sueo's "Koki Tei to Rui jushisei," *Shigaku zasshi*, 42, No. 3 (1931), on the K'ang-hsi Emperor and Louis XIV, which was translated into Chinese in 1936. The earliest European exemplar was Father Joachim Bouvet's *Histoire de l'empereur de la Chine presentée au roy* [i.e., to Louis XIV] (The Hague, 1699).

[2] Two useful recent editions of K'ang-hsi's pronouncements on government and ethics are Chang Ch'in, Ch'u Chia-wei, and Cheng T'ien-i, eds., *K'ang-hsi cheng-yao* (Peking, 1994); and Wang Ch'un-yü, ed., *K'ang-hsi cheng-feng lu* (Peking, 1996). The overall imperial context within which the K'ang-hsi Emperor operated is richly analyzed in Evelyn S. Rawski, *The last emperors: A social history of Qing imperial institutions* (Berkeley, 1998). For a comprehensive study of the Eight Banner System, see Pamela Kyle Crossley, *A translucent mirror: History and identity in Qing imperial ideology* (Berkeley, 1999).

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This chapter begins with a brief chronology of the K'ang-hsi reign, and then presents the political history of the reign under six broad topical headings: the accession to power of the young emperor; his reunification of the realm; his consolidation of imperial borders; the factional politics of his reign; the major administrative and economic policies carried out during the reign; and some reflections on the cultural life that flourished during the same time span.

A BRIEF CHRONOLOGY OF THE K'ANG-HSI REIGN

In the confused years following the sudden death of the Shun-chih Emperor in February 1661, a group of powerful Manchu regents struggled to prevent the imposition of Chinese values on their world.[3] To give strength to their cause they publicized the Shun-chih Emperor's "will," a curious document full of inconsistencies, professing to be the late monarch's expression of regret over his abandonment of the vigorous ways of his Manchu ancestors. But any concerted Manchu attempt to reinforce their strength, whether bringing more land under their immediate control or forcing the richer Han Chinese families to pay their arrears of taxes, was vitiated by squabbling among the four regents, Suksaha, Ebilun, Soni, and Oboi. Soni died in 1667, though not before he had arranged for the daughter of his eldest son to be married to the young K'ang-hsi Emperor – a move bitterly opposed by Oboi. In 1669 Soni's

[3] In increasing order of detail, the Chinese chronological surveys of the reign run from the *pen-chi* (annals sections) sections in the *Ch'ing shih kao* and the *CS*, through the *Tung-hua lu*, to the *Ta-Ch'ing Sheng-tsu Jen Huang-ti shih-lu*. The daily court diaries (*ch'i-chü chu-ts'e*) also exist for several periods of the reign; the exact months and years still preserved are listed in "K'ang-hsi 'Ch'i-chü chu ts'e' cheng tsai chia-chin cheng-li ho pien-chi," *Li-shih tang-an*, 1 (1981), p. 91. The palace memorials (*tsou-che*) of the reign that are preserved in the Palace Museum, Taipei, have also been arranged chronologically and printed in Kuo-li ku-kung po-wu-yüan, comp., *Kung-chung tang K'ang-hsi-ch'ao tsou-che* (Taipei, 1976). Many individual studies on the K'ang-hsi period are now appearing in both Taiwan and the People's Republic, but to date there is nothing that presents greater detail on the general political scene than Hsiao I-shan's magisterial treatment in his *Ch'ing-tai t'ung-shih* (Shanghai, 1928), Vol. 1. A fine overview, topically arranged, is presented in Liao-ning ta-hsüeh, comp., *Ch'ing-shih chien-pien*, prepared by the history staff at Liaoning University (Shen-yang, 1980); and a good, clear summary is given by Ch'ien Tsung-fan in his *K'ang-hsi* (Kuang-hsi, 1975). Bouvet's eulogy was also available in Japanese after 1941 in the translation by Gotō Sueo. In English, the biographical essay "Hsüan-yeh," by Fang Chao-ying in *ECCP*, pp. 327–31, is a masterpiece of accuracy and concision. A more detailed chronological panorama can be formed by juxtaposing Robert Oxnam, *Ruling from horseback: Manchu politics in the Oboi regency, 1661–1669* (Chicago, 1975); Lawrence Kessler, *K'ang-hsi and the consolidation of Ch'ing rule, 1661–1684* (Chicago, 1976); Jonathan Spence, *Ts'ao Yin and the K'ang-hsi emperor: Bondservant and master* (New Haven, 1966); Silas Wu, *Communication and imperial control in China, evolution of the palace memorial system, 1693–1735* (Cambridge, Mass., 1970); Silas Wu, *Passage to power: K'ang-hsi and his heir apparent, 1661–1722* (Cambridge, Mass., 1979); and Pierre-Henri Durand, *Lettres et pouvoir* (Paris, 1992). An overview of the K'ang-hsi Emperor's character and attitudes is presented in Jonathan D. Spence, *Emperor of China, self-portrait of K'ang-hsi* (New York, 1974). An excellent guide to the sources for the early K'ang-hsi reign is Lynn Struve, *The Ming-Qing conflict, 1619–1683: A historiography and research guide* (Ann Arbor, 1998).

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third son, Songgotu, a senior member of the Imperial Bodyguard, helped the boy K'ang-hsi Emperor to expel the last of the regents and inaugurate the years of the emperor's personal rule.

Before the young emperor could make much mark on policy, Ch'ing rule was disrupted by the eight-year civil war of 1673–1681, known as the War of the Three Feudatories (*san-fan*). The three were Wu San-kuei, Shang Chih-hsin, and Keng Ching-chung, each of whom had been enfeoffed with enormous domains in southern China as a reward for serving the conquering Ch'ing in the 1640s and 1650s. The war was bitter and protracted, many Chinese officials defected to the feudatories' side, and only slowly could the K'ang-hsi Emperor organize a successful counterattack.

In 1678, before the war was over, the K'ang-hsi Emperor began to try and rally the Han Chinese literati more firmly behind the Ch'ing dynasty. Not only did his own education in the Classics continue with considerable public display, and his own knowledge of the spoken language advance steadily, but in 1678 he announced a special examination to lure previously reluctant scholars back into government service. This *po-hsüeh hung-ju* examination, held in Peking in 1679, though spurned by a few Ming loyalist scholars, brought many aspirants to the capital, and enabled the K'ang-hsi Emperor to put together a prestigious group of scholars who were assigned to work on the compilation of the history of the fallen Ming dynasty. The examination itself was followed by changes in appointment procedures to bring more parity between Manchus and Chinese in provincial offices. These changes took place in a political environment where the "peace" party (those who had resisted the decision to attack the three feudatories in 1673, especially the group around the K'ang-hsi Emperor's powerful uncle Songgotu) lost out in prestige to a fresh group of courtiers.

A logical continuation to the civil war in the south, in view of the role played by Cheng Ch'eng-kung's descendants in backing the feudatories, was the capture of Taiwan, which the K'ang-hsi Emperor achieved in 1683. Even before that conquest was assured, the emperor's focus was switching to the northern borders, where reports of clashes between Russian settlers and Mongol or Manchu residents had become more frequent. A series of Ch'ing punitive expeditions, carefully prepared and effectively mounted, led to the destruction of Russian settlements at Albazin and the signing of a treaty between the Ch'ing emperor and the Russian tsar at Nerchinsk in 1689, a treaty rightly seen as marking a milestone in the history of Chinese foreign relations. Rounding off this sequence of policy decisions, with Russia safely bound by treaty, the K'ang-hsi Emperor was free to strike against the Ölöds, led by their formidable commander Galdan. They proved harder to subdue than the scattered Russian settlers had been, but a successful strike by Ch'ing

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armies across the Gobi Desert led to the defeat of Galdan's troops at Jao Modo near the Kerulen River in 1696. A follow-through campaign the next year, in which Ch'ing armies moved even farther westward, led to Galdan's suicide.

During 1696, while he was out of Peking and supervising the campaign against Galdan in the northwest, the K'ang-hsi Emperor delegated the day-to-day matters of governance in the capital of his second son and heir-apparent, Yin-jeng. A man with views as firm as this particular emperor was bound to have some friction with his heir-apparent, but the unpredictability of Yin-jeng's own character, and the inevitable coalescing of a faction around him, brought a series of rumors to the emperor's ears that made him uneasy and angry. Imperial truculence was matched by princely arrogance, and by the end of the 1690s the two men were caught in a web of mutual miscomprehensions. In 1708, as the attacks on Yin-jeng grew in stridency, and reports of his erratic behavior grew more frequent, the emperor made the harsh decision to remove the "heir-apparent" designation from Yin-jeng and to place him under house arrest along with many of his senior backers.

One of the most important political innovations made by the K'ang-hsi Emperor was in the field of communications, particularly in the development of the "palace memorial" system. These confidential memorials were first requested by the emperor in 1693 to supplement the regular bureaucratic channels of information. The system became increased in scale and refined in method during the later 1690s and first decade of the eighteenth century in order to give the emperor access to confidential reports on his heir-apparent's behavior, and on the plots of court factions supporting Yin-jeng. Even after Yin-jeng's dismissal, the palace memorial system continued to grow. Originally limited mainly to bondservants from the Imperial Household employed in managing various imperial monopolies, the system was extended to include key figures in the metropolitan bureaucracy in Peking, and finally to a wider range of officials in the provinces.

Anxieties about imperial prerogative haunted the K'ang-hsi Emperor from the 1690s onward, despite his many successes. For instance, his decisive quarrel with a papal legate, sent to Peking by Pope Clement XI in 1705 to evaluate the problems of Jesuit doctrinal accommodation to aspects of the Confucian rites, seems to have been triggered by the emperor's anger over papal claims to universality. The emperor's fiery response ended the period of major Catholic expansion and conversion in the Ch'ing state, which had been growing again since the 1660s. From 1715 onward, the emperor also extended his interests into Tibet, and eventually imposed a Ch'ing military presence at Lhasa to prevent the development of independent policies by the Dalai Lama. He also called a halt after 1707 to the elaborate series of tours

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that he had conducted in central China as far south as Hangchow and Nanking during the preceding twenty years. Finally, by a series of economic acts, culminating in the freezing of the tax assessors' lists for 1711, the K'ang-hsi Emperor crucially affected the empire's economic policy on grounds largely derived from his own determination to be seen as an omniscient and sage ruler.

The last few years of the K'ang-hsi reign, though prosperous economically with considerable growth in overseas trade, were bleak in both military and political terms. Even though the Russian treaties continued to hold, the new sequence of campaigns in the northwest against the Ölöds led by Tsewang Araptan were costly and protracted, and proved that the victories over Galdan in the 1690s had been less definitive than hoped. In the domestic political sphere, minor crises unfolded in swift succession, and the emperor's attempts at personal involvement were often ineffectual or counterproductive. Scandals in the *chü-jen* examinations, intricate arguments between senior Manchu and Chinese bureaucrats, massive deficits run up by the bondservant overseers of imperial monopolies, major cases of corruption at senior levels in the civilian bureaucracy – all led to a sense of malaise and uncertainty. The heir-apparent controversy continued to poison everything, not merely because Yin-jeng (released briefly in 1709 and then reimprisoned in 1712) turned out to have more tenacious backers than the K'ang-hsi Emperor had expected. Princely claimants continued to compete for the succession, and almost any charge of corruption or inefficiency now had to be assessed for its relationship to the princely squabbles as much as for the intrinsic basis of the charges themselves.

The general uneasiness was exacerbated by the emperor's emotionally moving but ultimately querulous appeals for the sympathy of the court and people in his struggle to contain the ambitions of his own children. As the emperor's health began to fail, and he himself lamented his fading memory, uncertainty at the court grew. The controversies concerning the K'ang-hsi Emperor's "choice" of his fourth son Yin-chen to be his heir will doubtless never abate, for the evidence is ambiguous and contradictory. Though charges that Yin-chen was not his father's choice still continue, there is certainly a probability that the K'ang-hsi Emperor did choose Yin-chen of his own volition. Yin-chen (whose scholarly and intellectual capabilities have never been questioned) had in addition shown qualities of self-control, overt filiality, pragmatic common sense, and patience during the entire heir-apparent crisis – and these attributes had been conspicuously lacking in most of the other princely claimants. But when the K'ang-hsi Emperor's death came, in the summer of 1722, the mystery and confusion were not much less than they had been in 1661 as the Shun-chih Emperor lay dying. Though now at least,

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in 1722, a mature, experienced prince stood ready to inherit the throne, the empire was geographically unified, the treasury was well stocked (though not overflowing), and the borders were generally secure.

THE K'ANG-HSI EMPEROR'S ACCESSION TO POWER

The boy Hsüan-yeh, third son of the Shun-chih Emperor, was named heir-apparent to the imperial throne on February 4, 1661, when he was seven years old. The next day his father died. On February 7, Hsüan-yeh ascended the throne with K'ang-hsi as his reign title. The historical sources do not explain these momentous events in any detail. The Shun-chih Emperor was still a young man in his twenty-third year when he died, and the exact cause of his death is not known. Indeed, rumors soon circulated that he had not died at all, but retired to a monastery, either voluntarily out of grief for the death of his favorite concubine Donggo, or involuntarily, forced from the throne by powerful nobles who resented his policies and feared his mental instability. But the fact that a senior officer in the Imperial Bodyguard, and a ranking concubine (also from the Donggo clan) both committed suicide in order to serve the Shun-chih Emperor in the underworld, would seem to suggest these rumors were without foundation. It is unlikely that a secret retirement could have been so well carried through that these close attendants of the emperor's were deceived, and even more unlikely that their suicides were staged in order to give credibility to Shun-chih's official "death."[4]

The terseness of the official sources, the air of intrigue surrounding the Shun-chih Emperor's death and the K'ang-hsi Emperor's accession, the curious nature of the Shun-chih Emperor's last will and testament, the policies followed by the regents who ruled for the boy who was the K'ang-hsi Emperor, and much of the entire history of the K'ang-hsi reign, can only be understood if we look at this period from the standpoint of the leading princes and banner officers. The official historiographers, with their emphasis on normative bureaucratic practice and cyclical imperial patterns, are of secondary importance here. We must focus instead on events through the lens of baronial intrigue, and see imperial power as the prize of conquest, fought over by the great Manchu clans. There seems to have been a strong feeling among many powerful leaders that the Shun-chih Emperor was a weak ruler who had betrayed the best traditions of the martial virtues of his forebears. Instead of carving out in the newly conquered empire a permanent, dominant place for the conquest elite, the Shun-chih Emperor was conciliatory to the Han

[4] T'ang Pang-chih, comp., *Ch'ing Huang-shih ssu-p'u* (Taipei, 1966), p. 50. The suicides are listed in *CSL-KH*, ch. 1, p. 20b and ch. 2, pp. 11b–12.

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Chinese and seemed willing to adapt existing Ming bureaucratic structures. Physically weak, intellectually inclined, strongly drawn to mystical Buddhist practices and to Catholic missionaries, passionately attached to a few chosen concubines, and willing to delegate wide powers to his eunuchs, the young Shun-chih Emperor in the 1650s clearly conjured up to his anxious nobles visions of effete Ming emperors rather than memories of Nurhaci and Hung Taiji. By 1660 his policies and his behavior had alienated important people at the court, among them several chamberlains of the Imperial Bodyguard and his own mother (Hung Taiji's widow, the empress-dowager Hsiao-chuang), whose two successive choices of empress for him had both been flouted by the Shun-chih Emperor.

We discounted, above, stories that the Shun-chih Emperor retired in 1661 to a monastery. Although it seems certain that he died in early February that year, there remains the possibility that his death was the result of a palace coup. Sources relate that on February 4, too weak to carry out any official duties, the Shun-chih Emperor summoned two secretaries to the Yang-hsin palace and dictated his will. After they had made a fair copy, it was taken back to the emperor by an officer in the Imperial Bodyguard, and it was then taken to the empress dowager and certain "princes and high officials." The will was made public on February 6, the day after the Shun-chih Emperor's death. In this extraordinary document, which scholars now generally regard as being a blatant forgery, the Shun-chih Emperor chastized himself for a variety of faults: idleness, extravagance, neglect of the military, bias toward eunuchs and civil officials, distrust of senior Manchus, and rejection of the empress dowager's advice. After listing his faults, he named his third son heir-apparent, and listed four regents who were to rule during the new emperor's minority: Soni, Suksaha, Ebilun, and Oboi.[5]

Whether these regents had arranged the Shun-chih Emperor's death, or simply acted swiftly to take advantage of his fatal illness, will perhaps never be known. But as soon as they were in power, they initiated a full-scale review of government institutions, abolished the Thirteen Offices (*shih-san ya-men*) established by the Shun-chih Emperor, and executed the late emperor's favorites. Over the next five years they developed or enhanced organs of government dominated by the conquest elite, such as the Imperial Household Department (*nei-wu-fu*), Court of Colonial Affairs (*li-fan-yüan*), and the Council of Princes and High Officials (*i-cheng wang ta-ch'en*). They restructured and downgraded the censorate and the Han-lin academy. Bannermen were barred from taking the civil examinations, and the eight-legged essay was abolished. The values of military efficiency and military men's paramount

[5] Oxnam, *Ruling from horseback*, pp. 62–3, 205–7.

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roles were declared in the provinces as in the capital. They sanctioned savage punishment of tax delinquency, as in the Kiangnan tax arrears cases of 1661, when eighteen Han Chinese were beheaded after a lengthy trial. In Fukien and other coastal provinces they ordered the rural population moved inland, at the cost of untold suffering, in an attempt to stop supplies reaching Cheng Ch'eng-kung's forces on Taiwan. In a further attempt to impose their will on the Han Chinese, the regents reissued an earlier edict from the conquest period of 1645 that ordered everyone to cease binding the feet of their female children. (Manchus had been forbidden to bind their girls' feet much earlier, and had never adopted the practice.) Those officials whose families were violating the prohibition were to be investigated by the Ministries of War and Civil Office and suitably punished. Han Chinese soldiers whose families were binding their daughters' feet were to be given forty blows with the bamboo by the Ministry of Punishments. The heads of commoner households were to receive a similar beating and forced to wear the punitive heavy wooden collar (the cangue) for one month.[6]

The four regents who ordered these policies in the name of the boy emperor all had extensive military experience at the time of the Ch'ing conquest, and had all been involved in the factional battles under the Dorgon regency in the late 1640s. All four had been made Chamberlains of the Imperial Bodyguard by the Shun-chih Emperor in the 1650s, were enrolled in one of the three most prestigious banners (bordered and plain yellow, plain white), and were from great Manchu clans: Soni from the Heseri, Suksaha from the Nara, Ebilun from the Niohuru, and Oboi from the Guwalgiya. They were ambitious men who, it must be emphasized, were not mere "officials." They were baronial leaders whose titles of office and ranks of nobility were re-enforced by family and military connections. Each of them had personal control of large numbers of armed men: They had banner companies (*tso-ling*) under their direct command, had relations serving as officers in the Imperial Bodyguard that patrolled the precincts of the Forbidden City itself, and had other loyal followers in the various guards divisions that garrisoned the capital. Had they been duly appointed regents, pledged in total fealty to the boy K'ang-hsi Emperor, this would of course have been unimportant. But their motives were ambiguous, and it was by no means clear that they intended to let their young charge take over.

The new K'ang-hsi Emperor clearly had been a mere pawn in the events of 1661. At his death, the Shun-chih Emperor had left six surviving sons, ranging in age from eight years to two weeks, but only Hsüan-yeh was the

[6] Feng Erh-k'ang, "Ch'ing-tai ti hun-yin chih-tu yü fu-nü ti she-hui ti-wei shu-lun," *Ch'ing-shih yen-chiu chi*, 5 (1986), p. 336.

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son of a senior concubine from a great clan. His mother was a Tunggiya, daughter of duke T'ung T'u-lai. His other brothers either had Chinese mothers (obviously unacceptable to the regents) or were from clans that were disgraced (Donggo) or insignificant (Muktu). So he had been chosen, the choice also reinforced by the fact that he had survived a childhood attack of smallpox. As a child he had never spent any time with his father, and had been raised outside the palace. Despite his imperial title, the boy had no clear base of power unless others chose to build one for him.

The initial push on behalf of the K'ang-hsi Emperor seems to have come from his grandmother, the empress dowager Hsiao-chuang, in whose palace he was living. For some reason – perhaps because of the regents' arrogance – she became his fervent supporter, a role made the easier by their shared residence and the ties of blood. It was she who consoled him in March 1663 when his mother, the empress Hsiao-k'ang, died, and, in a curious incident, forbade him to accompany his mother's coffin to the northern mausolea. She may either have feared that the experience would be too much for the grief-stricken child, or that the regents would use the occasion to do him harm. And it was she who apparently masterminded the first key political act in the K'ang-hsi Emperor's public career, his marriage to Gabula's daughter. The significance of this marriage was that Gabula, a chamberlain of the Imperial Bodyguard, was the eldest son of Soni. The marriage, strongly opposed by Oboi, split the united front of the regents, and brought the powerful Heseri clan firmly into the young emperor's camp. An ally of great importance obtained at this same time was Songgotu, an officer in the Imperial Bodyguard and younger brother of Gabula. Though all the ramifications of this marriage cannot be known, we should note that Songgotu's younger sister was the concubine of Yolo. This Yolo was a prince of the first class, a grandson of Nurhaci. He had been president of the Imperial Clan Court since 1653, and was an energetic voice in the Council of Princes and High Officials, as was his young colleague, prince Giyesu. The empress dowager and Soni's family acted so fast that no successful opposition was marshalled by the other regents: Gabula's eleven-year-old daughter was betrothed to the K'ang-hsi Emperor in August 1665, and on October 16 was formally named empress.

Though there was now the nucleus of a strong faction behind the K'ang-hsi Emperor, its members were not yet ready to press his claims. A bold memorial by a censor in August 1666, requesting that the emperor should take over the government in person as he was now approaching the age at which his father the Shun-chih Emperor had taken over from *his* regent, Dorgon, was filed without comment. In the meantime, Oboi acted with increasing independence and toughness. He launched a campaign to

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get better land for his followers in the Bordered Yellow Banner, savagely punishing those who opposed the plan. He packed the metropolitan bureaucracy and major military posts in the palaces with his own relations and supporters.

It was Soni's failing health in the spring of 1667 that prompted the K'ang-hsi Emperor's allies to move, as Soni's death might have enabled the other regents (or Oboi alone) to secure a tighter hold on power. How carefully the ground had been laid can be seen by the sequence of events in 1667. Soni died on August 12. On August 21, lengthy discussions took place between the three remaining regents, the K'ang-hsi Emperor, and the empress dowager. The emperor explained that Soni had urged him to take over the government in person (a claim that Soni was in no position to affirm or deny), but that he felt himself still too young to rule. The empress dowager concurred, pointing out that the regents should continue to rule for one or two years. Afraid of pressing their claims too bluntly, the regents said that the emperor should be allowed to rule in person, but that they of course would continue to assist him. At this, the empress dowager suggested that the Ministry of Rites be told to choose an auspicious day for the K'ang-hsi Emperor's personal rule to begin. The regents agreed to this, since the implication was clearly that no actions would be taken for a couple of years. The Ministry of Rites promptly named August 25 as the auspicious day, and thus, only four days after the great debate, the K'ang-hsi Emperor formally took over the reins of government, and held audience in the T'ai-ho throne hall. The Minister of Rites, Huang Chi, was presumably the key agent in this geomantic coup; the K'ang-hsi Emperor subsequently made him Minister of Revenue, Minister of Civil Office, and Grand Secretary.[7]

The emperor's first official independent act, on August 28, 1667, was to ennoble the wife of the deceased prince Huse. In this roundabout way he acknowledged where a crucial part of his support in the August intrigues had come from, for the lady in question was the mother of prince Giyesu, a leader in the Council of Princes and High Officials. The next day, August 29, a special edict ordered that Council to decide on suitable honors for the three surviving regents, Oboi, Ebilun, and Suksaha. Reading the wind, Suksaha memorialized on August 31 that he had been seriously ill for some years, had never wanted to be a regent, and now begged permission to retire and become a guardian at the Shun-chih Emperor's mausoleum. The emperor or his advisors – it is not possible to determine who made the decision – pounced on

[7] *CSL-KH*, ch. 23, pp. 2b–4b. The depth of the K'ang-hsi Emperor's affection for his grandmother, the empress dowager, is vividly shown in Norman Kutcher, *Mourning in late imperial culture: Filial piety and the state* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 92–7.

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this injudicious memorial, and ordered the Council of Princes and High Officials to investigate Suksaha's motives. The speed with which matters had moved over the previous ten days was maintained. On September 2, the Council recommended that Suksaha, all his sons and grandsons together with the other members of his clan in the plain white banner, should be arrested and interrogated. Two days later the Council, acting under Giyesu's guidance, found Suksaha guilty on twenty-four counts. Claiming to have received conclusive testimony from a dozen witnesses that Suksaha had resisted the decision to allow the K'ang-hsi Emperor to rule in person and had been guilty of numerous acts of arrogance and disloyalty, the Council recommended that Suksaha and his son Cakedan, who was also a chamberlain of the Imperial Bodyguard, should be executed by slicing. Two other sons, a nephew, and a grandson should be beheaded, even though some of them were minors, as should a number of senior military officers who had connived at his schemes. All the families of those involved were to be enslaved, and seventeen other officers in the imperial guards were reduced to the ranks. The emperor approved these penalties, with the exception of Suksaha's execution by slicing: that was commuted to death by strangulation. On September 8, the two surviving regents, Oboi and Ebilun, were made dukes of the first rank.[8]

Thus the young K'ang-hsi Emperor gained political experience in a harsh world. We may read through the glosses put on these events by later official historians, and offer this interpretation. Oboi, as the most dangerous of the regents, had to be isolated. He had been getting on badly with Suksaha since maneuvering for reallocation of banner lands the previous year, and his vanity and jealousy made it certain that he would strike at Suksaha if he had the chance. The chance came, and the Council of Princes and High Officials gave an appearance of legality to the proceedings. In order to remove Suksaha, and lull Oboi into a sense of security, the K'ang-hsi Emperor ratified the unusually savage penalties, fully aware that many of the charges were trumped up. Ebilun could be discounted as a threat. He was a cautious man and, though completely under Oboi's thumb, had not followed Oboi's example in trying to carve out a territory for himself and his family. It may have been at this time that the emperor, following the successful Soni precedent, took Ebilun's daughter as a concubine, but this must remain speculation. The date that she entered the palace is not recorded. The girl became the K'ang-hsi Emperor's second empress in 1677, three years after the death of Soni's granddaughter.

[8] *CSL-KH*, ch. 23, pp. 7–19b.

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From this summer of 1667, the K'ang-hsi Emperor began making his own decisions, although he was still only thirteen years old. He had emerged from his first major crisis successfully, even if without honor. His first son was born in November that same year, to a junior concubine in the Magiya clan. (There is no good reason to doubt that the child was his; she bore him five other children, advanced by regular promotions up the hierarchy of palace women, and outlived the K'ang-hsi Emperor by five years.) True here to the martial traditions that had been emphasized by the regents, he was already an accomplished archer and rider and led his own hunting parties in the game reserves of the Nan-yüan, outside the capital. He had not yet had much exposure to the written word. His main teacher of Manchu script was one of his grandmother's female retainers, a woman named Sumara, who held the young emperor's hand as he learned to write. His knowledge of Chinese writing came from two eunuchs named Chang and Lin who had lived on in the palace since the Ming dynasty. Much later in his life the K'ang-hsi Emperor told his old confidant Kao Shih-ch'i that the Chinese language lessons he had with his two eunuchs had to be conducted in secret. It is possible that the regents had tried to prevent him from learning Chinese at all in order to preserve the imperial pose of Manchu warrior.[9] Those around the emperor ignored a censor's request that now that he was taking over the government in person, he might take his father's Manchu translations of the Confucian classics out of storage in the Imperial Household and begin to study them. The emperor only began a regular, intensive course of study in reading and writing in 1673.[10] The K'ang-hsi Emperor told his children that it was late in the 1660s that he had determined to understand Western mathematics so that he could understand the quarrels over calendrical techniques that rocked the court following the attack on Verbiest and the official staff of the Bureau of Astronomy.

A scattering of unofficial contemporary sources supply a few other details concerning the young emperor's character. Observers in the Van Hoorn embassy of 1668 from the Netherlands noted his curiosity and eagerness. The K'ang-hsi Emperor hurried them through the rituals so that he could go out and personally inspect the horses they had brought. He carefully checked over some glass lamps, had some of his servants test out one of their carts, and asked the Dutch who was responsible for sending their embassy, and what was the distance of the Netherlands from Batavia.[11] Fan Ch'eng-mo, in the

[9] Kao Shih-ch'i, *P'eng-shan mi-chi*, in *Ku-hsüeh hui-k'an*, ed. Teng Shih (Shanghai, n.p., 1912).

[10] For these Manchu language lessons see Yang Chen, "Sumara Ku yen-chiu," in *Ch'ing-shih yen-chiu t'ung-hsün* (1990), 2, pp. 25–37. On the first Chinese lessons, see Wang Ch'un-yü, *K'ang-hsi cheng-feng lu*, pp. 307–8. For these and other references, the author thanks Zhao Yilu.

[11] John E. Wills, Jr., *Embassies and illusions, Dutch and Portuguese envoys to K'ang-hsi, 1666–1687* (Cambridge, 1984).

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autobiography that he wrote in jail prior to his death at the hands of the rebel Keng Ching-chung in 1676, recalled being at court with his father before 1666, while the K'ang-hsi Emperor was a young child. The emperor asked a string of questions: "Whose son are you? What rank did your father have? Is he still alive? What is his age?" At a later meeting with Fan's father, the emperor recalled the earlier conversation, and showed considerable knowledge of the family's background. This story is credible. Fan's father, Fan Wen-ch'eng, had been one of the earliest key Ming defectors to Nurhaci and was a Han-chün bannerman who was appointed to the Council of Princes and High Officials, before retiring in 1654. The emperor would have known of him, but would not have met him.[12] As a minor sidelight, we know that the K'ang-hsi Emperor smoked tobacco as a child, while in the company of his nurses.[13]

In the last months of 1667 and into 1668, a shifting battle was fought between the K'ang-hsi Emperor and Oboi. Some of the clashes can be seen in the official sources, as one side or the other made executive decisions that reflected its own views. In October 1667, Grand Secretary Bambursan was made chief editor of the Veritable Records for the Shun-chih Emperor's reign. This would enable Oboi to control what was written, for Bambursan was one of his closest confidants. Also in October 1667, Manchu, Mongol, and Han-chün bannermen were again authorized to sit for the regular *chin-shih* degrees. This might be seen as a decision by the young emperor to encourage traditional learning, as was the restoration in August 1668 of the eight-legged essay which had been abolished by Oboi. In January 1668, Marsai was named as the third co-president of the Ministry of Revenue. Presumably this was a move by Oboi, as there were usually only two presidents, and Marsai was close to Oboi. In February 1668, an effusive eulogy to the deceased Shun-chih Emperor was issued; implicitly, this was an anti-Oboi gesture that repudiated the Shun-chih "will." Then came a flurry of the K'ang-hsi Emperor's initiatives: the new Grand Secretary Duikana to replace Bambursan as chief editor of the Shun-chih Veritable Records; promotions for Songgotu, Mishan, Mingju; reevaluation of the southern coastal removal program; and the restoration of Jesuit astronomers to favor.

This last action was an attack on Oboi, who had been responsible with the other regents for removing Adam Schall and his Christian astronomer colleagues from all their posts in 1664 and imprisoning them on charges of incompetence and treason even though Schall had been favored by the Shun-chih Emperor. Schall died, but in December 1668 the K'ang-hsi Emperor

[12] Tu Lien-che, "Fan Ch'eng-mo," in *ECCP*, pp. 228–9.
[13] For these examples, see *T'ing-hsün ko-yen* (Preface dated 1730; rpt. n.p., 1862).

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ordered Verbiest to review the accuracy of the calendars submitted by the regents' appointees who had initiated the charges against Schall. In January 1669, Verbiest formally impeached them for serious errors in their calculations. The commission named to investigate Verbiest's charges later that month was packed with the K'ang-hsi Emperor's supporters: Tuhai, Li Wei, Mingju, Huang Chi, Ho Wei-na, Wang Hsi, Songgotu. The commission backed Verbiest who, after some further checking by the Ministry of Rites, was named assistant director of the Bureau of Astronomy in April.[14]

If all this was humiliating to Oboi, it still did not make his removal any easier. Oboi's power stemmed from his control of troops and the large numbers of his nominees in senior official positions. And Oboi controlled the Forbidden City. As the K'ang-hsi Emperor explained in an edict after Oboi's fall, Oboi had been able to treat the emperor with contempt and act in whatever reckless manner he chose because the members of his clique, that is, officers in the Imperial Bodyguard and other troops loyal to him, were in control of the key roads and gates. This situation explains the significance of an apparently innocuous edict by the empress dowager. In February 1669 she announced that the K'ang-hsi Emperor, as he was now ruling in person, should leave her palace, the Ch'ing-ning kung, and move to the Ch'ien-ch'ing kung. But as the latter needed extensive refurbishing, he should live in the meantime at the Wu-ying palace. The Wu-ying palace, to which the emperor moved that spring, was outside the central palace compound, to the southwest, near the offices of the Imperial Household. It must have been here that the emperor laid his final plans, with the help of his grandmother, of Songgotu (who had specially petitioned to leave his new senior post in the Ministry of Civil Office and return to duty as a guards officer), and other carefully chosen guards officers such as Garu (who was made director of the Imperial Household by the K'ang-hsi Emperor during the Oboi trial, and later entrusted with the upbringing of the emperor's eldest son).[15]

On June 14, 1669, the K'ang-hsi Emperor struck. There was no attempt to precede judgment by judicial investigation. In an angry edict he accused Oboi of insulting behavior, making rigged appointments to the bureaucracy, blocking the passage of memorials to the emperor, and organizing a clique for the purpose of privately discussing government matters. The K'ang-hsi Emperor named fourteen members of the clique, which was composed of senior military officers, four ministers, and other high-ranking civil officials.

[14] *CSL-KH*. Trial memorials and edicts, ch. 27, pp. 18, 24, and astronomy commission roster on ch. 27, p. 25. For an evaluation of the details of the Schall case, see An Shuang-ch'eng, "T'ang Jo-wang an shih-mo," *Li-shih tang-an*, 3 (1992), pp. 79–87.

[15] The key, but brief, edict is in *CSL-KH*, ch. 28, p. 4.

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The second regent Ebilun was censured for his failure to oppose Oboi. All were to be arrested immediately and examined by the Council of Princes under Giyesu.[16]

The entire trial took only twelve days. Oboi, Ebilun, the clique listed by the emperor, and ten other principals were found guilty of varying degrees of arrogance and treasonous behavior. The presiding investigator, Giyesu, recommended that they all be executed, in many cases with their families as well, that their property be confiscated, and their women and children enslaved. But the K'ang-hsi Emperor wanted a limited purge, not a general blood bath. After ratifying the death sentences of nine on his original list, he sentenced the remainder to a hundred lashes, or pardoned them altogether. Oboi was imprisoned and died in confinement. Ebilun was reprieved. A general amnesty was issued to all other officials, military and civil, who had been involved with Oboi's clique, conditional on their sincere repentance and moral regeneration.[17]

The K'ang-hsi Emperor was now, at the age of fifteen, in charge of his own government. As if to compensate for the stress of the previous two years, the public imperial style that he adopted was portrayed as relaxed and compassionate. In a number of edicts he expressed concern for the slaves who were often driven to suicide by their masters' cruelty, for the poor peasants evicted when new banner lands were enclosed, for the harsh lot of prisoners banished to Manchuria who died on the road, and for suspects in criminal cases, savagely tortured without due cause. The emperor repeated the general post-Oboi amnesty, and appointed commissions to review the cases of officials and imperial clansmen who had been dismissed by the regent. He moved to end inequalities of rank or salary between Manchu and Chinese officials who were incumbents in parallel posts. He boosted the pay of ordinary soldiers, and ordered the roundup of gangs disrupting the area around Peking.

These were conventional actions for a new emperor, proving before heaven and before the people his right to his title. They do not reveal much about the emperor as a man. The administrative records reveal how carefully he brought in men whom he knew and trusted. In the first months after Oboi's fall, he often gave senior appointments to first-rank officers in the Imperial Bodyguard, not to career bureaucrats. Guards officer Amuhulang was named

[16] *CSL-KH*, ch. 29, pp. 6b–19.

[17] *CSL-KH*, ch. 29, pp. 3b–5, lists thirty charges against Oboi, twelve against Ebilun, twenty-one against Bambursan, other charges, and the emperor's final decisions. A different Manchu version of twelve specific charges against Oboi has been translated in Kuan Hsiao-lien and Ch'ü Liu-sheng, eds., *K'ang-hsi ch'ao Man-wen Chu-p'i tsou-che ch'üan-i* (Peking, 1996) (hereafter *Man-wen*), item 2, pp. 1–2.

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vice-president of the Court of Colonial Affairs and later promoted to president of the same bureau, a post which he held for thirteen years. Guards officer Gioro Cahala became vice-president of the Ministry of Works, Guards officer Songgotu was promoted to Grand Secretary, Guards officer Ledehun became vice-president of the Ministry of Civil Office. The presidency of the Ministry of Revenue went to Mishan, a former guards officer and director of the Imperial Household, who had been one of Suksaha's interrogators. The emperor named Mingju, who had served a year as president of the Ministry of Punishments and two years as Director of the Imperial Household, but who, before 1664, had held no high office, president of the censorate. These were new men in a new government.

Occasionally the sound of the K'ang-hsi Emperor's voice breaks through in the official record. There are snatches of it in the edict condemning Oboi and again in two edicts that report his views on various magistrates and junior officers encountered near Peking. The first edict that gives the impression of being written entirely by the young emperor is one of late August 1669, dealing with a problem that was to concern him for the rest of his reign – the maintenance of secrecy concerning important policy discussions. Probably drafted by the emperor in Manchu, and then translated by a secretary into simple Chinese that the K'ang-hsi Emperor was just beginning to understand, it made a straightforward point without literary or historical allusions, or flourishes of any kind.

All matters that are sent to the Council of Princes, Beile, and High Officials for discussion are of dynastic importance and of a confidential nature. Secrecy must be maintained in these discussions. Now I have learned that even before a report has been drawn up on the matters discussed, outsiders have heard all about it. This is caused by inadequate secrecy during the discussions, and by a failure properly to control the various loafers who accompany the principals, so that rumors circulate, and there are leaks on matters of dynastic importance. This is grossly improper.

The K'ang-hsi Emperor accordingly forbade attendance at these discussions to anyone but the principals. From this time on, the emperor sought to be the one who would control information, and the manifold uses that could be made of it.[18]

[18] *CSL-KH*, ch. 31, p. 1. The Manchu version of this particular edict has not been preserved among the sources translated in *Man-wen*. The first of all the Manchu memorials in that collection, however, shows the K'ang-hsi Emperor as early as 1664 worrying about secrecy in the case of the imprisoned Prince No-min; the emperor even ordered his guards to search No-min's food for hidden messages before every meal, *Man-wen*, item 1, p. 1, dated K'ang-hsi 3/6/26. The Council of Princes and High Officials was a key institution in the K'ang-hsi reign: see Tu Chia-chi, "Ch'ing-tai I-cheng-ch'u k'ao-lüeh," *Ch'ing-shih yen-chiu t'ung-hsün*, 3 (1991), pp. 33–5.

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THE REUNIFICATION OF THE REALM

Chinese official historiography reserved some of its highest accolades for the ruler who functioned as a unifier by drawing the country together after a period of civil war. Because the fall of the Ming appeared to be so swift, and the concurrent rise of the Ch'ing seemed so assured, we sometimes forget the baleful possibility of a breakup of China at the time of this particular dynastic transition. Much of the credit for unification must go to the K'ang-hsi Emperor, giving him, if not the aura of a Ch'in Shih-huang-ti or a Sui Wen-ti, at least that of a Han Kao-tsu or Sung T'ai-tsu. The steps toward reunification in the K'ang-hsi reign included suppressing the last Ming claimants, breaking the Three Feudatories (*san-fan*) revolt, conquering Taiwan, and integrating Han Chinese into networks of official service to the state.

Though chronologically within the K'ang-hsi reign period, the final suppression of the last Ming claimants must be seen as a triumph of the Oboi regency, which itself followed policies initially formulated by Dorgon in the Shun-chih period. By 1661 the Ch'ing armies had eliminated all the major Ming claimants except for Chu Yu-lang, the Prince of Kuei, who was a grandson of the Wan-li emperor. Even Chu Yu-lang had been forced out of Yunnan into Burma, where the Burmese King Bintale kept him under virtual house arrest in Sagaing, across the Irrawaddy River from the town of Ava. Two of Chu's generals, Li Ting-kuo and Po Wen-hsüan, kept sizeable armies and occupied much of northeastern Burma, but they could not break through to Sagaing to liberate their ruler. In August 1661, King Bintale was killed in a palace coup and his successor imprisoned Chu. When Wu San-kuei approached Ava in early 1662 with a large force, the new Burmese King handed over Chu Yu-lang and Chu's son, Chu Tz'u-hsüan, to Wu San-kuei. Without more ado, Wu had the two executed by strangulation. General Li Ting-kuo died a few weeks after hearing the news of Chu Yu-lang's death, and with the death of the last claimant to the Ming throne who possessed both title and an army, the life went out of the main Ming loyalist resistance.[19]

Shortly before his death, however, Chu Yu-lang had enfeoffed the loyalist commander Cheng Ch'eng-kung with the new title Prince of Ch'ao, which was in addition to the honorific title of Prince of Yen-p'ing conferred on Cheng in 1655. Cheng, known as Koxinga in Western accounts of the time, continued supporting the Ming cause and resisting the Ch'ing. Cheng and a sizeable army landed on Taiwan in April 1661, just after the K'ang-hsi

[19] *ECCP*, pp. 194–5, for the biography of Chu Yu-lang; and p. 490, for the biography of Li Ting-kuo. Also, Lynn Struve, *The southern Ming* (New Haven, 1984).

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Emperor's accession, and after a hard siege they seized Castle Zeelandia from the Dutch early in 1662. Though Cheng died that same summer, his son Cheng Ching continued to hold Taiwan after being forced to abandon his base in Fukien. Cheng held out in Taiwan despite Dutch attempts to link up with Ch'ing forces in a counterattack, and despite the draconian policy, instituted by the Oboi regency on the advice of general Huang Wu, of removing the inhabitants of southeastern coastal areas ten to twenty miles inland in an attempt to deny all supplies and recruits to the Cheng regime.[20]

At approximately the same time that Chu Yu-lang enfeoffed Cheng Ch'eng-kung, the Ch'ing government at the urgings of Hung Ch'eng-chou, the former Ming governor-general of Liaotung who was now a Grand Secretary, granted Wu San-kuei both civil and military authority over the province of Yunnan. After the execution of Chu Yu-lang, Wu's jurisdiction was extended to Kweichow. In the next decade Wu consolidated his power over the administration, tax structure, and appointments processes in both provinces, and also took monopoly control over salt and copper mining, ginseng distribution, and trade with Tibet. He built costly palaces and maintained a powerful army despite steady Ch'ing attempts to reduce the troops under his command. By 1670, when his influence had spread to include much of Hunan, Szechwan, Kansu, and even Shensi, he was costing the central government an estimated twenty million taels a year, much of which had to be siphoned off from the revenues of the Kiangnan region.[21] Two other powerful military leaders whose families had defected to the Ch'ing also developed similar powers, though on a lesser scale: Shang K'o-hsi in Kwangtung and Keng Ching-chung in Fukien. They ruled these territories as their own domains, and their strong personal power, backed by wealth and trained troops, meant that the Ch'ing court had virtually no control over the provinces in the south and southwest.

By 1672 the young K'ang-hsi Emperor and a small group of advisors, working within the broader framework of the Council of Princes and High Officials, determined that the main threat to continued survival of the Ch'ing

[20] *ECCP*, pp. 108–9, under Cheng Ch'eng-kung, and p. 111 under Cheng Ching; *Ch'ing-shih chien-pien*, pp. 104–12; John Wills, *Pepper, guns and parleys* (Cambridge, 1974), pp. 25–58. Cheng's life and historiography is considered in detail in Ralph C. Croizier, *Koxinga and Chinese nationalism: History, myth, and the hero* (Cambridge, Mass., 1977). The coastal removal policy is discussed in Hsieh Kuo-chen, "Removal of coastal population," trans. T. H. Chen, *Chinese social and political science review*, 15 (1931), pp. 559–96, and by Kessler, *K'ang-hsi and the consolidation of Ch'ing rule*, pp. 40–6.

[21] A detailed evaluation of Wu San-kuei's Yunnan base is given by Kanda Nobuo, in *Heiseiō Go Sankei no kenkyū* (Tokyo, 1952). See also *ECCP*, pp. 878–9 for a fine treatment by Fang Chao-ying. An extended study that analyzes the formation of the Feudatories is Liu Feng-yün, *Ch'ing-tai san-fan yen-chiu* (Peking, 1994). The various attempts to reduce Wu's troop strength from fourteen major divisions to four are analyzed in Hsieh Chih-ning, "P'ing-hsi-Wang Wu San-kuei fan-hsia shih-ying ssu-chen pien-ch'ien k'ao," *Li-shih tang-an*, 1 (1992), pp. 133–4.

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regime came not from Chinese values, as Oboi seemed to have feared, but rather from the independent military power of these three feudatories. Since the feudatories had numerous friends in Peking and within the Council of Princes and High Officials – Songgotu was one of the leaders of the peace party seeking to avoid any conflict – coherent planning for any campaign was extremely difficult and security leaks were frequent. An opportunity presented itself in the summer of 1673, when Shang K'o-hsi submitted a memorial requesting permission to retire. The emperor passed the matter on to the Council of Princes for discussion. Their recommendation was that the transfer request be accepted, though Grand Secretary Tuhai, and perhaps some others, disagreed strongly. "Since I had already made up my mind," the K'ang-hsi Emperor wrote later, "I thereupon ordered his transfer."[22]

In August, a transfer request also arrived from Wu San-kuei, which radically altered the picture. This time, according to the K'ang-hsi Emperor's later reminiscences, only five men in the whole council went along with the young emperor's decision to grant Wu San-kuei's request. The five were Molo, Mishan, Mingju, Subai, and Sekde. With only this minority backing, the K'ang-hsi Emperor decided to challenge Wu and ignore the majority's vague warnings of disaster. As the emperor rather apologetically reflected on his decision eight harsh years later, "These others did not explicitly say that transferring Wu San-kuei would certainly lead to rebellion." Interestingly enough, the editors of the Veritable Records dropped the word "explicitly" (*ming*), thus erasing from the formal historical record the admission of ambivalence or even misjudgment that K'ang-hsi had privately been willing to make about himself.[23] The court's acceptance of Wu San-kuei's request, which was designed to test the court's intentions, made Wu determine to revolt.

The news of Wu's rebellion reached Peking in January 1674, and the same day there was a rising in that city, led by a pretender to the Ming throne (self-styled Chu San-tzu), who managed to rally several hundred household slaves from the plain yellow and bordered yellow banners before troops cut them down as they fought through the streets. This local rising, occurring as it did in the context of the larger rebellion, almost certainly led to random reprisals against Han Chinese in Peking by Ch'ing troops. Edicts were issued

[22] The exchange with Tuhai appears in *CSL-KH*, ch. 99, p. 8.

[23] The emperor's analysis of this period of danger, and his praise for these five supporters, was issued in 1681, and is printed in the *CSL-KH*, ch. 99, pp. 8–9. Molo, Mishan, and Mingju all became great officials; the exact identities of Sekde and Subai cannot be traced with precision – there were several fairly influential officials with similar names. See also Spence, *Emperor of China*, pp. 37–9. The available court diaries (*Ch'i-chü chu*) of the 1673 period are blank for the days of key debate, perhaps as an added security measure. The history and dominating role of the *I-cheng wang ta-ch'en* is presented by Wu, *Communication and imperial control*, pp. 10–12.

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urging those who had fled the city in panic to return, and the city gates were kept closed to prevent further exodus. While coping with this local crisis, the emperor was swamped with news of defeats of Ch'ing troops, the suicides of loyal officials, and the defection to Wu of the majority of the southern bureaucracy. The emperor's response was to send a vanguard at top speed to hold Ching-chou, two hundred miles up the Yangtze River from Wuhan, with orders to press down into Hunan from that base. The garrison troops in Sian were ordered to move to Szechwan. Sun Yen-ling was ordered to hold Kwangsi, and messengers were sent to recall the transfer orders sent to the other two feudatories, Shang K'o-hsi and Keng Ching-chung. At the end of January 1674, the emperor had established two main staging areas for all troops and supplies that were to be used in the war. One, at Yen-chou in Shantung near the Grand Canal, was to handle all logistics for Kiangnan and Kiangsi and, by implication, for Fukien and Kwangtung if the other feudatories should revolt. The other at T'ai-yüan, the key river and road junction in Shansi, was to control the flow to Shensi, Szechwan, and the southwest. Prince Lergiyen was named commander-in-chief of the pacification armies.[24]

The appointment of Lergiyen is worth brief consideration, not least because he proved to be an extremely inept general who severely hampered the war effort. We can only guess at the reasons for his selection, but one important reason was undoubtedly that he was his father's son. Throughout his reign, the K'ang-hsi Emperor showed a deep faith that the sons of capable or loyal men would prove as loyal and capable as their fathers had been. Though the results of this policy were often unfortunate, he never seems to have wavered from it, but continued to appoint sons to the same kinds of jobs in the same areas where their fathers had served. Lergiyen was the son of Lekedehun. Lekedehun, bearing the title "General who pacifies the South" (*p'ing-nan ta chiang-chün*), had defeated the Ming armies in Chekiang in 1645, in Hupeh in 1646, and in Hunan and Kwangsi in 1649. Furthermore, the family were direct descendants of Nurhaci, and Lergiyen was famous for his physical strength as well as being head of the Imperial Clan Court. Lekedehun had been called the "P'ing-nan" general, and accordingly Lergiyen was named

[24] The most detailed military history of the war in English is given by Tsao Kai-fu, "The rebellion of the Three Feudatories against the Manchu throne in China, 1673–1681: Its setting and significance" (diss., Columbia University, 1965). The official Ch'ing account, entitled *P'ing-ting san-ni fang-lüeh*, compiled by Ledehun, Han T'an, and others, was compiled between 1682 and 1686. Important additional documents from the Palace Museum archives were printed in Ku-kung po-wu-yüan, comp., *Ch'ing San-fan shih-liao*, in *Wen-hsien ts'ung-pien*, n.d., Taipei, Kuo-feng ch'u-pan-she reprint, pp. 1121–420. A full analysis of the timing and reasons behind the war's outbreak is given by Liu Feng-yün, *Ch'ing-tai san-fan*, ch. 4.

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"Ning-nan" (Southern-pacifying) general, a synonymous echo of his father's greatness.[25]

In the fighting during early 1674 the Ch'ing forces did astonishingly badly. The armies of Wu San-kuei moved swiftly northward. They captured most areas south of the Yangtze and, in the west, pushed up through Szechwan toward Kansu and Shensi. Hundreds of senior Ch'ing officials in southern provinces defected to the rebel side, and the situation was rendered more dangerous by crises elsewhere. In Kansu, general Wang Fu-ch'en, a former Wu San-kuei subordinate thought to be completely loyal to the Ch'ing, defected after being (he claimed) insulted by Molo, his nominal superior officer, and took much of Kansu and Shensi into the rebel camp. In Kwangsi general Sun Yen-ling, a member of the Council of Princes and High Officials and ennobled as the consort of an imperial princess, killed his Ch'ing fellow officers and threw in his lot with Wu San-kuei. Keng Ching-chung followed suit with his huge Fukien feudatory region. These two defections lost the Ch'ing virtually all south China except for Kwangtung, where Shang K'o-hsi remained loyal to the Ch'ing, even though his son was known to be dangerous and unpredictable. Swallowing his pride, the K'ang-hsi Emperor offered Wu San-kuei and Wu's entire family an amnesty in the summer of 1674, just before fighting began at Yüeh-chou. Wu rejected the offer.

In the spring of 1675, the Mongol leader Burni revolted in Manchuria and led an army on Mukden, where his father had earlier been imprisoned on orders from the K'ang-hsi Emperor. A major war on the northern front, possibly linked to Mongol risings farther west, became an added threat to a Ch'ing court that was running dangerously low on troops. The army that was finally assembled for the Mukden campaigns under generals Oja and Tuhai (Tuhai was also president of the Ministry of Revenue at the time) was a motley one, made up of untrained bannermen and even some of their household slaves, reinforced with guards from the northern mansolea. However, they managed to rout Burni, and he was killed by the Korchin Mongols.[26]

During the Oboi regency, the young K'ang-hsi Emperor was almost certainly helped to power by his grandmother. This lady, widow of Hung Taichi, was a Korchin Mongol from the Borjigit clan. As Grand Empress Dowager (*t'ai-huang t'ai-hou*), she also played a major part in breaking Burni. The politics of this brief war are intriguing, and serve as a useful reminder, in the middle of the larger civil war in the south, that the K'ang-hsi Emperor

[25] On Lekedehun, see *ECCP*, pp. 443–4.

[26] See *ECCP*, p. 816 for Wang Fu-ch'en; the Peking rising is discussed in *CSL-KH*, ch. 45, pp. 4–14; for Burni, see *ECCP*, pp. 304–5; for Sun Yen-ling, see *ECCP*, p. 683. The emperor's letter to Wu San-kuei, delivered by Prince Shang-shan, is printed under the title "Pei-le shang-shan ch'i wu san-kuei shu," in *Ch'ing-shih yen-chiu t'ung-hsün*, 3 (1990), pp. 42–3.

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had important Mongol ties. Early in 1675 Sinju, a guards officer in the entourage of Burni's stepmother, learned that Burni was planning a coup. Though this guards officer could not absent himself without arousing suspicion, he was able to send his own younger brother to Peking to warn the K'ang-hsi Emperor. The emperor was now in the same sort of quandary he had been in with the three feudatories. If he took direct action, he might precipitate the very crisis he was trying to avoid. So he had his grandmother send one of *her* trusted bodyguards, named Sereng, to invite various Mongol princes and leaders to Peking. Suspecting a trap, Burni arrested Sereng and tried to rally the Tumet Mongols to his cause, but the Tumets informed the K'ang-hsi Emperor. At about the same time, Sinju arrived in Peking with a full report.[27]

In addition to sending off the army under Oja and Tuhai, the K'ang-hsi Emperor offered Burni full amnesty and a princedom if he would return to his allegiance. This dual policy of marshalling force and offering amnesty at the same time was a common tactic of the K'ang-hsi Emperor, but on this occasion he carried it in a new direction, by preparing for a much more serious crisis. A director named Mala from the Court of Colonial Affairs (*Li-fan-yüan*), the Manchu- and Mongol-staffed department which handled policies in the northern and western regions, was appointed as coordinator of troops who were to be drawn from a wide range of tribes: Khorcin, Aru Khorcin, Ongniot, Barin, Kharacin, Tumet, and Djarud. Thus we see that the concept of a "federation" of Mongol troops was used by the Ch'ing court, just as such a federation could be used against it. It is within this specific context that we should evaluate a brief item in the Veritable Records in which it is stated that at just this time the K'ang-hsi Emperor ordered his diarists to cease accompanying him when he visited the empress dowager and grand empress dowager. They were just routine visits in accordance with filial piety, said the emperor, and there was no need for anyone else to come along. But if we are right in assessing the key political role that the K'ang-hsi Emperor's grandmother played, then we can infer that he would wish to have certain conversations with her in absolute privacy.[28]

Despite the victory over Burni, the war in the south continued to go badly, and it is at this juncture – around the spring and early summer of 1675 – that the balance of documents in the Veritable Records and the thrust of the emperor's edicts begin to shift in an important way. Sarcasm and anger with Manchu generals becomes increasingly common, as does warm praise for certain Han-chün banner generals. Part of this was to boost Chinese morale,

[27] *CSL-KH*, ch. 53, pp. 21b–2.
[28] *CSL-KH*, ch. 54, p. 13b, edict to chief Diarists Fudari and Lashari.

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and to prevent any more mutinies like that of Wang Fu-ch'en. But it also seems clear that the K'ang-hsi Emperor had grown disillusioned with the performance of his Manchu commanders. In July, the emperor ordered the execution of a Manchu general for desertion in the face of the enemy. At the same time, he began to lavish praise on Han Chinese generals like Wang Chin-pao, Sun Ssu-k'o, Chang Yung, and Ch'en Fu. This evidence, plus the fact that at the war's end the K'ang-hsi Emperor had large numbers of senior Manchu generals investigated and degraded for incompetence, strongly suggests that the Manchu banner forces were in disarray as early as this time – a full century before the Ch'ien-lung reign, which is generally given as the date the decline began to be obvious.[29]

Undoubtedly, the nadir for Ch'ing forces came in early 1676. The third feudatory, Shang Chih-hsin, who had long been fence-sitting, rebelled in Kwangtung, and one of the emperor's most vaunted generals, Ch'en Fu, was killed in a mutiny in Ninghsia. The campaigns were bogged down in Chekiang, Shensi, and Hunan. The Ch'ing dynasty was not to be in such serious military trouble again until the Taiping rebels' triumphs in 1853, and even then the Ch'ing court kept control over more areas than they had in 1676. The K'ang-hsi Emperor later told his children that this was the only period he could not prevent his despair from showing in his face. Morale had grown so low that posters openly criticizing the emperor were displayed near Peking.[30]

Then, with startling suddenness, the course of the war turned. The government forces were shown, after all, to have the greater resources. The dissident generals and the feudatories began to weary of the protracted conflict and to fight among themselves. Though Wu San-kuei had minted his own currency, and developed a moderately systematic tax collection scheme, the rebels as a whole never developed a coherent administration that would recruit promising new leaders and apportion revenue efficiently. For these reasons, and perhaps also because Wu San-kuei was demanding and arrogant, the rebel forces fragmented. Wang Fu-ch'en returned to Ch'ing allegiance in July 1677, shaving his head and regrowing his queue in sign of submission. The K'ang-hsi Emperor promptly renamed him a general in the Ch'ing army, and used his troops in Western China. In November, the Feudatory Keng Ching-chung surrendered to general Giyesu in Fukien, and his troops were sent to Kiangsi, so that an attack from the east could be launched into Hunan.

[29] Some of the emperor's specific mistakes in personnel appointments during this war have been examined in Wang Hsiao-yao, "Erh Wei pi-p'ing," *Ch'ing-shih yen-shiu t'ung-hsün*, 2 (1990), pp. 31–7.

[30] *T'ing-hsün ko-yen*, pp. 17–19, 41–2. A major collection of documents from military officers in the field about the war has been assembled in "K'ang-hsi nien-chien p'ing-ting Wu San-kuei p'an-luan shih-liao hsüan," *Li-shih tang-an*, 2 (1990), pp. 3–12.

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The feudatory Shang Chih-hsin surrendered in January 1677, and later that year Wu San-kuei had Sun Yen-ling murdered in Kweilin because it was believed that he too was about to surrender. Thus, the only major threats remaining to the Ch'ing forces were Wu San-kuei himself in the southwest, and Cheng Ching, son of the Ming loyalist general Cheng Ch'eng-kung ("Koxinga"), who threatened the southeast coast from his base in Taiwan. In April 1677, a now-confident K'ang-hsi Emperor announced that since the war was going so well, he would have time once again to take up his work on poetry and calligraphy in earnest.

The last four years of the war saw a steady series of Ch'ing victories, first against Wu San-kuei and then, after Wu's death from apparently natural causes in 1678, against Wu's grandson Wu Shih-fan, who finally committed suicide in Yunnan in December 1681. This effectively ended the war, since Cheng Ching had been defeated near Amoy in 1680 and forced to withdraw to Taiwan, dying there in 1681. In early 1682, the Council of Princes and High Officials and the Ministry of War recommended that large numbers of rebel generals be executed and their families enslaved. Though there was no general bloodbath, it cannot be said that the K'ang-hsi Emperor was immensely lenient. He approved death sentences on many, and slicing to death for Keng Ching-chung and several others. Unknown hundreds were also beheaded or hacked to death in front of the victorious troops. Some of those killed were men who had surrendered in good faith, believing that they would receive amnesty from the K'ang-hsi Emperor, as he had repeatedly promised. An edict which the emperor sent to General Giyesu in 1680 proves that the emperor had no intention of keeping his word in all cases:

> I think that whenever you are going to do something, you must think through both the background and the consequences. If it will be to the benefit of the state (*kuo-chia*), then you can take action. But lightly embarking on a dangerous course will inevitably lead to trouble. At the present time . . . the remaining rebel groups who are stretching out their necks in their desire to return to the right path cannot just be numbered by hundreds or thousands. If we now kill Keng Ching-chung, then not only will those who have already surrendered expect to receive the same punishment at a later date, but those who have not yet surrendered will note this example and grow cold at heart – with unknown consequences. . . . If you are really able to do what I have ordered and get him to come to Peking, then everything will be settled peacefully.[31]

Two years later, having traveled to Peking in good faith, Keng was executed by slicing and his head displayed in public. As a "peaceful settlement," such a policy was both ruthless and successful. The K'ang-hsi Emperor had learned a great deal in the course of the war. He acknowledged that the war, engaged

[31] *CSL-KH*, ch. 88, pp. 2b–3.

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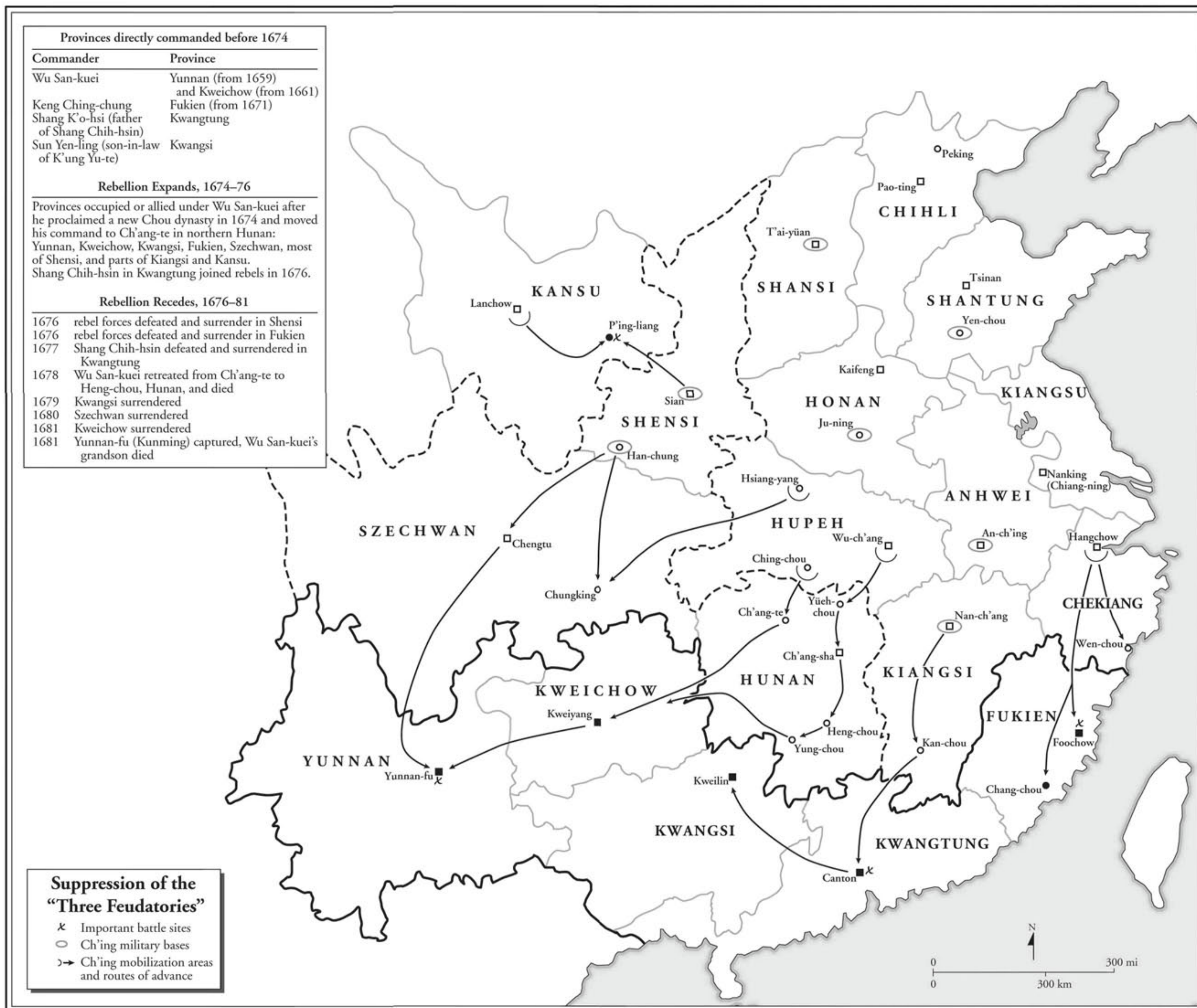

Map 5. *Suppression of the "Three Feudatories."* Partly based on: Wang Ya-hsüan, *Chun kuo ku-tai li-shih ti-t'u chi* (Shenyang: Liao-ning chiao-yü, 1990), p. 163.

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in with protracted bitterness, brought immense hardship to the civilian population of south China, and expressed his regret in numerous edicts. The one inescapable triumph, however, was that the empire was now reunited and the Ch'ing leader secure on the throne. Yet even to the end of the Ch'ing dynasty, neither the K'ang-hsi Emperor nor any other Ch'ing emperor ever travelled farther south than Hangchow, and none ever visited the southwest or Szechwan.[32]

After the suppression of the three feudatories, the tenacity of the Cheng family's rebel regime off the coast of Fukien continued to be troublesome. They maintained a hold over several offshore islands as well as their fortified base on Taiwan. Their presence there, and the strength of their fleet in conjunction with the coastal population prohibitions, hampered trade along the whole Fukien coast, as well as in parts of Chekiang and Kwangtung. Despite the factional struggles within the family and Cheng Ching's own unpredictability, there was little chance of moving against him while the Three Feudatories war continued. But as soon as that war was over, the K'ang-hsi Emperor sought a possible leader for an amphibious operation against Taiwan and, following the advice of Li Kuang-ti, chose Shih Lang. Shih had served as an admiral of the Cheng family fleets during the early 1640s. When he defected to the Ch'ing, Cheng Ch'eng-kung had killed Shih's father, brother, and son. Thus, Shih's personal history was intricately and tragically combined with his knowledge of the coast and of naval warfare. An additional advantage was the intimate network he had established with merchants and officials in the major trading ports. Shih Lang insisted on having an independent command, not one shared with the veteran governor-general of Fukien, Yao Ch'i-sheng, who might have used the campaign to strengthen his own commercial contacts. Shih was independent, too, of Wu Hsing-tso, the powerful bondservant serving as governor-general of Kwangsi and Kwangtung, who had gained his office, according to contemporary rumors, by offering to the court ten thousand taels more for the post than Yao was willing to pay. Wu had profited hugely from confiscating the fortunes of the southern merchants who had thrown in their lot with the now defeated feudatory Shang Chih-hsin, and was building up his own commercial and administrative power base. Backed by the K'ang-hsi Emperor, Shih assembled a fleet of three hundred vessels and defeated the Cheng family's leading naval commander Liu Kuo-hsüan in a major engagement near the Pescadores. A few weeks later, in October 1683, the last members of the Cheng family in Taiwan surrendered.[33] Following the campaign, Taiwan was divided into three counties

[32] The pacification policies are detailed in Liu Feng-yün, *Ch'ing-tai San-fan yen-chiu*, ch. 6.

[33] John E. Wills, Jr., "Maritime China from Wang Chih to Shih Lang," in *From Ming to Ch'ing: Conquest, region and continuity in seventeenth-century China*, ed. Jonathan D. Spence and John E. Wills, Jr. (New Haven, 1979), pp. 228–32. On Shih Lang see *ECCP*, p. 653. On Shih's commercial background and

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(*hsien*) and established as a prefecture of Fukien province. Slowly, over the next fifty years, despite a nominal ban on immigration and settlement, the island became an attractive area for Chinese trade and agricultural development. The western shore-plains of the island were steadily transformed to rice and sugar production, though the K'ang-hsi Emperor and his officials showed considerable resolve in helping to maintain the economic livelihood and contracted rights of the aboriginal inhabitants.[34]

The reunification, or re-establishment of central control, was accompanied by specific cultural policies designed to integrate the members of the Chinese literate elite into the Ch'ing state. The vigorous policies of the Oboi regency directed against major delinquent taxpayers and against the alleged cultural accommodations of the Shun-chih regime were now deliberately reversed by the K'ang-hsi Emperor. The emperor himself gained skill with Chinese language by different means. During the Oboi regency he learned surreptiously from his personal eunuchs such as Chang Hsing-ch'eng. During the Three Feudatories war he studied with a small nucleus of trusted Chinese-speaking Manchu tutors like the erudite Lasari and Fudari. He read extensively with accomplished Chinese senior tutors and diarists in the Han-lin Academy such as Hsiung Tz'u-li and Sun Tsai-feng, and he studied formally with several erudite scholars who became his personal favorites, like Kao Shih-ch'i and Chang Ying. Thanks to such training, despite the interruptions caused by warfare, by the late 1670s he was making interpretive comments on Chinese classical texts with some conviction to his own educated subjects, though it remains an important aspect of his reign that it was largely a bilingual one, and many of the emperor's most important Chinese confidants – men as different as Li Kuang-ti, Sun Wen-ch'eng, and Nien Keng-yao – spoke and wrote fluently in Manchu.[35]

experience, see also Wills, *Pepper, guns and parleys*, pp. 118–32. Chao Erh-hsün, et al., comps., *Ch'ing-shih*, ed. Chang Ch'i-yün, et al. (Taipei, 1961), pp. 2867–9, shows Yao's tenure from 1678 to his death in January 1684. A somewhat different view of Yao's part in the Taiwan campaign is given in *ECCP*, p. 899.

[34] A fine analysis is John Shepherd's *Statecraft and political economy on the Taiwan frontier 1600–1800* (Stanford, 1993). See also Johanna Meskill, *A Chinese pioneer family: The Lins of Wu-feng, Taiwan, 1729–1895* (Princeton, 1979), pp. 26–33, and Wills, "Maritime China," pp. 231–2.

[35] See Kao Shih-ch'i, *P'eng-shan mi-chi* (Shanghai, 1912), p. 3, for eunuch Chang's training. For Fudari and Lashari see numerous edicts, especially *CSL-KH*, ch. 42, p. 3 on Fudari's Manchu–Chinese dictionary and phrase book, or *CSL-KH*, ch. 86, p. 7b for Lashari as a teacher. Kao, Chang, and Hsiung all have biographies in *ECCP*. For Sun Tsai-feng, second in the first class of the 1670 *chin-shih* examination in which Hsü Ch'ien-hsüeh was third, see Li Huan, ed., *Kuo-ch'ao chi-hsien lei-cheng ch'u-pien* (Taipei, 1966), ch. 56, p. 1. Various diary entries in Chung-kuo ti-i li-shih tang-an kuan, comp., *K'ang-hsi ch'i-chü-chu* (Peking, 1984), *CSL-KH*, ch. 55, p. 13, and *ECCP*, p. 473, discuss Li Kuang-ti's knowledge of Manchu. A selection of Sun's Manchu memorials are in Chuang Chi-fa, ed. and trans., *Sun Wen-ch'eng tsou-che* (Taipei, 1978). A selection of Nien Keng-yao's are in Ku-kung po-wu-güan, comp., *Ku-kung wen hsien*, 5, No. 1 (1973), pp. 77–92. For a dissenting view of the K'ang-hsi Emperor's scholarly abilities, see Li Fang-ch'en, *Chung-kuo chin-tai shih* (Taipei, 1956), p. 127. Meng Sen, in his *Ch'ing tai shih* (Taipei, 1990), p. 139, is also somewhat skeptical, but suggests that some of the emperor's less elegant calligraphy may have been written by his eunuchs.

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The emperor had to exercise both tact and caution with respect to cultural unity and integration. The refusal to serve the Ch'ing on the grounds that such refusal was mandated by the idea of continuing loyalty to the Ming dynasty was still present in the 1670s and 1680s, even though some of those taking "loyalist" stances had been children at the time the Ming fell in 1644. The *po-hsüeh hung-ju* examination of 1679, open to scholars recommended for having outstanding ability and summoned by imperial order, was a calculated act of cultural public relations on the part of the K'ang-hsi Emperor. The special examination was designed to integrate those of wavering or unproven loyalty into the regime. The key inducement offered was an opportunity for successful candidates to work on the compilation of the official history of the Ming. Though 36 men out of the 188 invited – including such famous names as Tu Yüeh and Fu Shan – managed to evade the honor, or used the opportunity to meet in private with like-minded scholars who resented or even hated the Manchus, and some eminent scholars like Ku Yen-wu and Huang Tsung-hsi were able to ensure that they were not asked to participate, all of the fifty who were successful in the examination became officials for the new dynasty. The *po-hsüeh hung ju* examination was directed to those in the Yangtze delta region, which was the center of scholarly endeavors and was where much of the initial resistance to the Ch'ing conquest had been concentrated; almost half (twenty-three) of the fifty successful candidates were from Kiangsu, and an additional thirteen were from Chekiang.[36]

The *po-hsüeh hung ju* examination did not, of course, solve all problems either with the loyalists or with the analytical difficulties of Ming historiography. Neither Wang Fu-chih nor Ku Yen-wu would have anything to do formally with the project. Neither would Huang Tsung-hsi, though he consented to having his own works copied and made available to the compilers, and to letting his youngest son Huang Po-chia work on the project. Also two of Huang's most brilliant pupils, Wan Ssu-t'ung and Wan Yen, worked on the Ming history project for many years. Wan Ssu-t'ung in particular found an outlet for his scholarly skills in the Peking home of the Ming history director Hsü Yüan-wen, who was a nephew of Ku Yen-wu. Despite the talents of these and other compilers, and despite the K'ang-hsi Emperor's flow of edicts

[36] On the *po-hsüeh hung ju* exam, see the essay by Hellmut Wilhelm, "The *Po-hsüeh hung-ju* examination of 1679," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 71 (1951), pp. 60–76; and the biographies of P'eng Sun-yü and Huang Tsung-hsi in *ECCP*, pp. 616 and 353. For those declining, see *ECCP*, pp. 261, 422, and 780, under Fu Shan, Ku Yen-wu, and Tu Yüeh. For Fu Shan's refusal to take the examination, in the context of social and intellectual protest, see Nelson I. Wu, "The toleration of eccentrics," *Art news*, No. 56, 3 (May 1957), n.p.; and Bai Qianshen, "Fu Shan (1607–1684/85) and the transformation of Chinese calligraphy in the seventeenth century" (diss., Yale University, 1996) for the meetings with like-minded resisters.

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concerning the urgency of the search for accurate data, including such devices as intensive interviews with former officials and eunuchs who had lived through the Ming dynasty's fading years, the project was hindered by incompetence, by numerous resignations among the staff, by delays and factional squabbles involving powerful administrators such as Hsü Yüan-wen and his brothers, and by the deceitful editorial practices of senior court politicians like Wang Hung-hsü.[37] On a darker level, problems endured for decades. The discovery and swift execution in 1708 of the last Ming direct imperial descendant, Chu Tz'u-huan, who though living peacefully as a scholar and teacher was invoked by some rebels in Chekiang as "The Third Crown Prince Chu" (Chu San T'ai-tzu), highlighted the state's jumpiness over the issue of the vanquished Ming imperial house. The 1713 execution of the talented and well-connected scholar Tai Ming-shih on charges of misusing oral history data and treasonously employing Ming reign titles after the Ch'ing dynasty was already established, showed that historiography remained politically sensitive.[38]

In general, after the special *po-hsüeh* examination of 1679, the examination system functioned successfully as an integrative mechanism, and the emperor worked hard to make it so. In the years immediately following the suppression of the three feudatories, there were repeated efforts to modify the arbitrary north and south *chin-shih* quotas which continued to discriminate against qualified candidates in the northwestern and southwestern provinces. In 1685 an attempt was made to have three main zones. In 1691, the K'ang-hsi Emperor tried a more complex system that would place candidates into six separate zones: those from Kiangnan and Chekiang would be in the so-called "South-left" division; Kiangsi, Hu-kuang, Fukien, and Kwangtung in the "South-right"; Chihli and Shantung in the "north-left"; Honan, Shansi, and Shensi in the "north-right"; Szechwan and Yunnan in the "center-left";

[37] See *ECCP*, pp. 327, 353, 802, 804, and 826 for Hsü Yüan-wen, Huang Tsung-hsi, Wan Ssu-t'ung, Wan Yen, and Wang Hung-hsü. The historians, Wang Yüan and Wen Jui-lin, also worked on the *Ming shih*; their cultural attitudes and their friendships are discussed by Lynn Struve, "Ambivalence and action: Some frustrated scholars of the K'ang-hsi period," in *From Ming to Ch'ing: Conquest, region and continuity in seventeenth-century China*, Jonathan D. Spence and John Wills, eds. (New Haven, 1979), pp. 328–40, 347–50. Some of the K'ang-hsi Emperor's views on the *Ming shih* compilation are given in Spence, *Emperor of China*, pp. 86–9. The intricacy of these scholarly struggles in the Ming history compilation, with special reference to the classification of Ming scholars by scholarly category, is well shown in Thomas A. Wilson, "Confucian sectarianism and the compilation of the *Ming history*," *Late imperial China*, 152 (December 1994), pp. 53–84.

[38] On the Chu San T'ai-tzu case, see Ku-kung, po-wu-kuan, comp., *Shih-liao hsün-k'an* (Peking, 1930–1931), Vol. 2, pp. 33–7; Spence, *Ts'ao Yin and the K'ang-hsi emperor*, p. 236; and Chikusa Masaaki, "Shusantaishi-an ni tsuite," *Shirin*, 62, No. 4 (1979), pp. 1–21. For Tai Ming-shih, see *CSL-KH*, ch. 249, p. 3 and ch. 253, p. 13; *ECCP*, pp. 701–2; Lucien Mao, "Tai Ming-shih," *T'ien-hsia monthly*, 5 (1937), pp. 382–99; and Tu Wei-yün, "Tai Ming-shih chih shih-hsüeh," in *Ku-kung wen-hsien*, 5, No. 1 (1973), pp. 1–4. A major overview and analysis of the Tai case is given in Durand, *Lettrés et pouvoirs.*

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and Kwangsi and Kweichow in the "center-right." When even this breakdown proved fruitless in getting successful candidates from every province, the emperor decided in 1712 to abolish the broader groupings and go for a precise quota system based on province or affiliation with Manchu, Mongol, or Han-chün banners. The exact numbers would vary in proportion to qualified *chü-jen* available.

Some years before, in 1705, the emperor had also begun an informal system of applying the principle of geographical quotas to admission into the prestigious Han-lin Academy, which up to this time had seemed the pinnacle of scholarly attainment. Now men from poor or border areas such as Kansu, Yunnan, Shensi, or Kweichow could join a scattering of bannermen among those from Kiangsu or Chekiang. As if to reinforce these provisions even further, the emperor took the unusual step in 1716 of ordering the Grand Secretariat to consider the proposition that all officials from border provinces who were retiring from office should return to their ancestral homes, taking their culture and money with them, and not settle in some more culturally advantaged place. So successful had the balanced pattern of Han-lin admissions become that when it was abandoned, apparently by an oversight, during the first years of the Yung-cheng reign, there was prompt protest from scholars. The idea of geographical as well as ethnic and civil-military unification had become an accepted part of maintaining the status quo.[39]

THE CONSOLIDATION OF CH'ING BORDERS

Domestic consolidation and frontier stability were intimately linked as aspects of politics in the K'ang-hsi Emperor's thinking. Soon after Ch'ing troops captured Taiwan in 1683, the emperor began to direct his energies toward the problems with Russia on the northern border. He underscored his sense of the interconnections between the earlier antirebel campaigns and the projected Russian ones by summoning two officers who had served under Cheng Ch'eng-kung and under Wu San-kuei and ordering them to join the forces of Duke Pengcun in Ninguta. These officers were accompanied by five hundred soldiers who had been part of the Cheng's Taiwan garrison force.[40]

[39] For the history of the basic quotas, see *Ta-Ch'ing hui-tien shih-li* (rpt. Taipei, 1963), pp. 9717–18. See also the discussion of long-term trends in Ho Ping-ti, *The ladder of success in imperial China* (New York, 1962), pp. 112–13, 186–9. For the palace memorial on retirement to poor areas, sent by Pai Huang from Kweichow and passed on to the *nei-ko*, see Ku-kung po-wu-yüan, comp., *Ku-kung wen-hsien*, 1, No. 1 (1969), p. 131; the emperor added circled emphasis marks at the key passage. Interesting insight into the Han-lin quota system is given in the analysis made by Li Chung-o in 1725, printed in 1899, in *Ta-Ch'ing hui-tien shih-li*, pp. 17, 520–1. See also Li's biography in *Kuo-ch'ao chi-hsien lei-ch'eng* (ch'u-pien), p. 3766.

[40] See the biography of Pengcun in *ECCP*, p. 621. The two officers were Lin Hsing-chu and Ho Yu. On the post-San-Fan northern transfer of troops, see Liu Ju-chung, "Shih-hsi K'ang-hsi p'ing-ting Wu San-kuei p'an-luan hou ti shan-hou chao-yü," *Li-shih tang-an*, 1 (1990), pp. 83–6.

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Ch'ing-Russian relations during this period passed through three phases: awareness, confrontation, and settlement. It was only in the mid-seventeenth century that the Russians became aware that the Ch'ing had conquered China and that the Amur region was therefore controlled by the emperor in Peking. At the same time, the Ch'ing gradually realized that the tsar of O-lo-ssu (Russia) also ruled the Lo-ch'a, that is, settlers and raiders in the Amur region. Before this, contact had mainly been between caravan traders, and the Russians knew far more of the Mongols than they did of Ming. Nerchinsk was founded in 1658, and Albazin in 1665. The early diplomatic contacts reflect this lack of knowledge. A Ch'ing official came to Nerchinsk in 1670 to discuss the problem represented by Ghantimur, a Solun tribesman who had settled under Russian protection. In return, the officer in charge of Nerchinsk dispatched the Cossack Milovanov as an envoy with instructions to secure the submission of the "bogdokan," there still being no clear awareness that the Ch'ing emperor ruled China *and* the Amur regions. The Spathar-Milescu embassy of 1675–76, officially sent by the Tsar, ran into trouble in Peking as Spathar-Milescu would not kowtow, and was not authorized to discuss territorial problems in the Amur region, which was the one topic that the Ch'ing wanted to discuss.[41]

Agitated by news of a growing number of settlers moving along the Amur River and around Nerchinsk and Albazin, the K'ang-hsi Emperor sent letters to the Tsar in an attempt to work out the relationship between these settlers and the Russian state. In the absence of good maps on either side, with cumulative pressures from churchmen and civilian settlers, and with the further complicating factor of the numbers of Russian deserters from border stockades, the settlement of grievances was slow and confusing.[42] Ch'ing hostility to the idea of Russian fortifications on the border was implacable, despite the reasonable benefits accruing from Russian trade. In late 1682, the K'ang-hsi Emperor ordered generals Langtan and Pengcun to undertake reconnaissance missions in the Amur region from their carefully prepared and staffed bases at Ninguta and Wu-la. The result of this foray was the conclusion that three thousand troops equipped with twenty cannon could probably overwhelm the wooden walls of Albazin, though they would have to be conveyed and serviced by river transport. After various delays, caused in part by the K'ang-hsi Emperor's extreme caution and in part by the incompetence (amounting

[41] Mark Mancall, *Russia and China: Their diplomatic relations to 1728* (Cambridge, 1971), pp. 30–1; Joseph Sebes, *The Jesuits and the Sino-Russian treaty of Nerchinsk (1689), The diary of Thomas Pereira, S. J.* (Rome, 1961), ch. 3. The stages of the early Russian buildup and plans for new settlements and immigrants are discussed in Hsü Shu-ming, "Shih-liu chih shih-ch'i shih-chi sha-huang cheng-fu ti ch'in-Hua huo-tung," *Ch'ing-shih yen-chiu-chi* (1980), pp. 243–68.

[42] Eric Widmer, *The Russian ecclesiastical mission in Peking during the eighteenth century* (Cambridge, 1976), pp. 11–17. The 1675 Milescu embassy is richly detailed in Mancall, *Russia and China*, ch. 3. See also *ECCP*, p. 269, on Ghantimur.

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to virtual insubordination) of the local commander Sabsu, Albazin was seized on June 26, 1685. Its wooden walls were burned, and 600 defenders captured. Most were allowed to retreat westward to Nerchinsk.[43] Others, however, were shipped back to Peking, some by force and some at their own request. There, under the "protection" of the Ch'ing government, they were merged with a Russian proto-banner company that had been inaugurated in 1685. They were allowed to maintain their own Russian orthodox church. In some cases they took Chinese wives, and they formed the nucleus of a small Russian community that maintained itself as a kind of commercial and diplomatic listening post into the nineteenth century. The banner company itself later in the K'ang-hsi reign came under the overall command of the powerful Grand Secretary Maci.[44]

The K'ang-hsi Emperor had taken the military logistics of the 1685 Russian campaign extremely seriously, ordering the preparation of grain boats and transportation teams of draft animals, drilling troops in riverine combat, and deploying reserves into the northern regions. He was correspondingly overjoyed at the news of the decisive Ch'ing victory. He was, therefore, all the more astonished to hear that Russian settlers and troops had returned to Albazin in September 1686, rebuilt the walls (this time with earth), harvested crops, and killed patrolling Ch'ing troops. A new siege of Albazin was ordered, to be directed by Sabsu in conjunction with Mala and Pengcun, whose troops were reinforced by veteran troops from Fukien (presumed to be adept at cannon and riverine warfare). But the Albazanians defended their fort stubbornly through the summer and autumn of 1686, and late in that year, having received peace-feelers in the form of a letter from the tsar, the emperor ordered the siege raised and decided to seek a diplomatic solution.[45]

The Russian and Chinese negotiators met at the mutually agreed-on town of Nerchinsk in August 1689. In the absence of qualified interpreters on either side, the K'ang-hsi Emperor selected two Jesuit missionaries, Jean-François Gerbillon and Tomé Pereira, to accompany his delegates, giving them the temporary rank of colonel. With their knowledge of Latin and Manchu, the Jesuits were able to communicate with both sides in the dispute. The delegation included two of the K'ang-hsi Emperor's uncles, Songgotu and T'ung Kuo-kang, as well as general Mala. The Russian staff was led by

[43] Mancall, *Russia and China*, pp. 117–19, 131–3. Major documents on the early disagreements are translated in Fu Lo-shu, *A documentary chronicle of Sino-Western relations (1644–1820)* (Tucson, 1966), Vol. 1, pp. 62–85. Sabsu's biography is in *ECCP*, pp. 630–1.

[44] Widmer, *Russian ecclesiastical mission*, pp. 19–21.

[45] Mancall, *Russia and China*, pp. 136–9. It is interesting to note that the Ch'ing banner troops were also trained in ice-skating at this time, as is shown by Fu Chin-hsüeh, "Ch'ing-tai 'Ping-hsi t'u'," *Tzu-chin ch'eng*, 3 (1980), pp. 36–8.

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Fedor Alekseevich Golovin and Ivan Astafievich Vlasov, who served respectively as the commanders of Astrakhan and of Nerchinsk. Shuttling between the Manchu and Russian delegations, the two Jesuits prepared a multilingual document that delineated the frontier between Nerchinsk and Albazin, stipulated the destruction of Albazin as a settlement, thus giving the Ch'ing a dominating position on the Amur River, arranged for formalized procedures in handling fugitives, permitted trans-border trade to those holding valid passports for that purpose, and agreed that ambassadors would be received by each country in a correct manner. These interlocking agreements had the additional effect of rendering any Russian aid to the border tribes of Ölöds extremely unlikely.[46]

The K'ang-hsi Emperor, taking great interest in the Albazin campaigns and Nerchinsk negotiations, worked over the projected routes in detail and discussed the campaigns at length. From the time that the Treaty of Nerchinsk was signed, he gradually shifted in his feelings toward the Russians, until he ended up with a distinctly favorable attitude. In 1693, for example, at the time of the Ides mission, he could still note in an edict that Russians are "narrow-minded, obstinate, and their argument is slow." By 1700 he had learned more about them, and was particularly pleased that they had not backed the Ölöd Galdan, so he wrote that "the people of Russia are loyal and respectful." In 1712, Tulisen, sent by the K'ang-hsi Emperor as an envoy to the Torgut Khan, was instructed to proceed to St. Petersburg if an invitation was forthcoming, and to "conform to the customs and ceremonies" of the Russians, as necessary.[47] Though nothing came of these plans, when Izmailov came to Peking in 1720, the K'ang-hsi Emperor was fairly familiar with such subjects as Russian geography and Russian drinking habits (he referred laughingly to the Russian habit of throwing glasses to the ground after a toast), as well as with some of the idiosyncracies of Tsar Peter.[48]

The threat of any Russian alliance with potential enemies of the Ch'ing in the northwest was removed by the Nerchinsk treaty, as the Russians immediately showed by rejecting feelers from the Ölöds concerning a joint anti-Ch'ing campaign. The K'ang-hsi Emperor was free to move against Galdan, leader of the Ölöds. Galdan was a brilliant military strategist who had

[46] A fascinating translation of Tomé Pereira's diary of the trip and the negotiations is given in Sebes, *The Jesuits and the Sino-Russian treaty*, pp. 174–303. See also Mancall, *Russia and China*, pp. 143, 156–9. Fu Lo-shu, *Documentary chronicle*, Vol. 1, pp. 94–103. On the background to Russian-Ölöd relations see Hsü Shu-ming, "Sha-huang cheng-fu ti ch'in-Hua huo-tung," pp. 243–68. The Jesuits' language work at Nerchinsk is examined in An Shuang-cheng, "K'ang-hsi huang-ti yü hsi-yang chuan-chiao shih," *Li-shih tang-an*, 1 (1994), pp. 91–3.

[47] For these three examples see Fu Lo-shu, *Documentary chronicle*, Vol. 1, pp. 106, 110, 116.

[48] J. L. Stevenson, *A journey from St. Petersburg to Pekin, 1719–1722*, ed. John Bell (Edinburgh, 1965), p. 162.

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defeated a broad range of Khoshote, Khalka, and Muslim enemies across a band of country stretching from Kashgar and Yarkand to Hami and Turfan. Galdan's power was the more dangerous in that he had been trained as a lama in Lhasa under the Fifth Dalai Lama, and hence had considerable spiritual authority among the Ölöds and other devout Buddhist Mongols. By 1690, Galdan had moved down the Kerulen River into Jehol and was potentially in a position to threaten Peking itself. The K'ang-hsi Emperor, perhaps flushed with the military and diplomatic victories of the previous decade, seems to have seen this new crisis as a chance to further improve the prestige of the ruling house. In what was for him an unprecedented military gesture, in 1690 he commissioned his own two half-brothers, Fu-ch'üan and Ch'ang-ning, as the commanding generals of an anti-Galdan force, dispatching Fu-ch'üan with an army north through the pass at Ku-pei-k'ou, and Ch'ang-ning with a second force through the Hsi-feng-k'ou pass. The emperor also sent his eldest son Yin-t'i as an assistant to Fu-ch'üan, and was himself preparing to join the forces in the field, when he was stricken by illness. The campaign was in fact botched, Galdan holding off the imperial forces at Ulan-Butung. The K'ang-hsi's Emperor's uncle T'ung Kuo-kang was among those killed.[49]

By 1696 the K'ang-hsi Emperor was ready for another campaign against Galdan. This time, assuming personal command of the Ch'ing forces, and again commissioning his two half-brothers as generals, he made considerably more careful logistical preparations, and delegated most of the power to two outstanding generals, Fiyanggu (the brother of the Shun-chih Emperor's beloved consort from the Donggo clan) who was garrison commander at Kuei-hua-ch'eng in northwest Shansi, and Sun Ssu-k'o, once a bodyguard to the regent Dorgon and now commander-in-chief at Ninghsia in Kansu.[50] With the exception of the abandoned 1690 adventure, this was the first and only military campaign upon which the K'ang-hsi Emperor embarked in person. Not only had the feud against Galdan apparently taken on the qualities of a personal vendetta, but at forty-two the emperor seems to have felt especially bold and healthy. He enjoyed drawing up meticulous rules for the

[49] See *ECCP*, pp. 69, 251, 266–7, for biographies of Ch'ang-ning, Fu-ch'üan, and Galdan. There has long been controversy about the exact location of this battle: see Yüan Shen-po, "Ulan Butung K'ao," *Li-shih yen-chiu*, 8 (1978), pp. 86–91. Galdan's dealings with the Tibetans and the fifth Dalai Lama are explored by Wang Yao, "Ti-pa Sang-chieh Chia-ts'o tsa-k'ao," *Ch'ing-shih yen-chiu chi*, 1980, No. 1, pp. 183–99.

[50] See *ECCP*, pp. 248–9, 682, for biographies of Fiyanggu and Sun Ssu-k'o. Fiyanggu's Kuei-hua-ch'eng appointment had marked an important shift in military garrison placement; see *CS*, p. 3178. Some of Fiyanggu's Manchu memorials on the campaign and other important Manchu materials have been collected and translated into Chinese by Chuang Chi-fa as *Ch'ing-tai Chun-ko-erh shih-liao* (Taipei, 1977). The official contemporary account was edited by Chang Yü-shu, who accompanied the K'ang-hsi Emperor on the 1696 campaign, and completed in 1708. It is entitled *P'ing-ting Shuo-mo fang-lüeh*.

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order of march, the conduct of his troops, the pitching of tents, the posting of patrols, the grazing of pack animals, and the tracking of Galdan's soldiers via telltale signs of hoofprints and horse dung. In vivid letters to the Empress Dowager Hsiao-hui (second empress of the late Shun-chih Emperor) he described his travels across the Gobi Desert and the conditions of abandoned Ölöd campsites, where dead women and children lay among the hastily abandoned fishing nets, saddles, leather skins of koumiss, and Buddhist scriptures. In the ensuing battle at Jao Modo, near the west end of the Kerulen River, Galdan's troops were routed, his wife was killed, and his son was seized by the Muslim beg of Hami, though Galdan himself escaped with a remnant of his army.[51]

During the 1696 campaigns the Ch'ing government had been left in the care of the K'ang-hsi Emperor's second son, the twenty-two-year-old heir-apparent Yin-jeng, and throughout the campaign the emperor showed his concern and affection for his son, as can be seen by their Manchu correspondence.[52] Even if he had some worries about Yin-jeng's performance of his duties, the emperor made it clear that he planned to continue the chase of Galdan in the following year. In the spring of 1697, as Ch'ing troops pushed farther west, to the edge of the Altai mountains where Galdan had fled, the K'ang-hsi Emperor set off again with a smaller retinue. The emperor was in fine spirits, and as a small batch of letters to his favored eunuch, Ku Wen-hsing, show, he took delight in the hard riding, the new foods he tasted (especially the white noodles and sun-dried musk-melons), and the large numbers of Galdan's former supporters who surrendered to the Ch'ing. The emperor was near Ninghsia when he heard news of Galdan's death, and in a hurried letter to Ku Wen-hsing on the seventeenth day of the fourth lunar month (June 5, 1697), he expressed his joy.[53]

> Now Galdan is dead, and his followers have come back to our allegiance. My great task is done. In two years I made three journeys, across deserts combed by wind and bathed

[51] The K'ang-hsi Emperor's sense of the campaign and his letters are described in Spence, *Emperor of China*, pp. 20–1. An eyewitness account by a Ch'ing military officer of the campaign and the Jao Modo battle is Yin Hua-hsing's *Hsi-cheng chi-lüeh* (n.d.; rpt. in *Chao-tai ts'ung-shu*, n.p., 1844, Vol. 47). Also see *ECCP*, p. 267. Valuable illustrations of logistical details appear in Wang Yü-ch'ih's "T'an Ch'ing-tai p'ing-ting Tsun-ko-erh p'an-luan ti chi-fu li-shih hua," *She-hui k'o-hsüeh chan-hsien*, 1 (1981), pp. 110–13.

[52] A moving example of this father-son relationship in correspondence form can be found in the long Manchu memorial by Yin-jeng with frequent imperial interjections, in Ku-kung po-wu-yüan, comp., *Ku-kung wen-hsien*, 5, No. 1 (1973), pp. 65–76. On this brief "regency" period in the context of the heir-apparent problem, see Wu, *Passage to power*, ch. 6.

[53] For these and other letters written in person by the K'ang-hsi Emperor, see Okada Hidehiro, *Kōkitei no tegami* (Tokyo, 1979). The sequence of letters written by the emperor to his eunuch Ku Wen-hsing has been chronologically ordered and translated in Spence, *Emperor of China*, pp. 157–66. Ku's first rise to prominence is noted in *CSL-KH*, ch. 101, p. 8 in the year 1682; in 1697 he was *tsung-shou-ling t'ai-chien* (chief of the eunuchs).

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with rain, eating every other day, in the barren and uninhabited deserts – one could have called it a hardship but I never called it that; people all shun such things but I did not shun them. The constant journeying and hardship has led to this great achievement. I would never have said such a thing had it not been for Galdan.

Now heaven, earth, and ancestors have protected me and brought me this achievement. As for my own life, one can say it is happy. One can say it is fulfilled. One can say I have what I wanted.

In a few days, in the palace, I shall tell you all about it myself. It is hard to tell it with brush and ink – these are just the main points.

In a Manchu message to his son Yin-jeng, the emperor showed concern that the campaign not be seen as the kind of self-glorifying enterprise that Ming emperors had so wastefully and unsuccessfully waged in the northwest a century and more before. Referring to the most feckless and personally immoral of the Ming emperors, the K'ang-hsi Emperor told his son that, "if I behaved like Ming Wu-tsung, then I am sure I would never get back to court." Clearly the emperor thought that the Ölöd problem was solved, and that he had avoided the bungling that had plagued Ming emperors.[54]

As the emperor celebrated his victories and forged new alliances with Mongol leaders to consolidate the gains just made in the military campaign, he shifted his focus to the European Catholic missionaries residing in Peking. The Jesuits, led by Fathers Gerbillon and Pereira, had gained significant prestige by their part in the Nerchinsk negotiations. This, combined with the high regard that other members of the group of five French Jesuits who had arrived in 1687 had already won for their ongoing help to the emperor in the Bureau of Astronomy and in the field of medicine (they cured the emperor of malarial fever in 1693 by using quinine), made the 1690s the high point of Jesuit initiative and success in the entire history of their China mission. The so-called "Edict of Toleration" issued in 1692 won them permission to preach more widely in China, and to build churches in certain cities.[55]

[54] The K'ang-hsi Emperor's reference to Ming Wu-tsung is in *Man-wen*, item 290, p. 147. For Wu-tsung (original name Chu Hou-chao, reign name Cheng-te, 1491–1521) and his many eccentricities, see *DMB*, pp. 307–15, and James Geiss, "The Cheng-te reign," *The Ming Dynasty 1368–1644, Part 1*, Vol. 7 of *The Cambridge history of China*, ed. Frederick W. Mote and Denis Twitchett (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 403–39.

[55] On the initial reception of this remarkable group – Jean de Fontaney, Louis LeComte, Claude de Visdelou, Joachim Bouvet, and Jean-Francois Gerbillon – see the memorials and edicts translated in Fu Lo-shu, *Documentary chronicle*, Vol. 1, pp. 93, 98–9. See also their five biographies in Louis Pfister's *Notices biographiques* (San Francisco, 1976), pp. 419–57. On the emperor's initial testing and then use of quinine see Spence, *Ts'ao Yin and the K'ang-hsi emperor*, pp. 260–1. For the emperor's general policy to missionaries see Liu Lu, "K'ang-hsi ti yü hsi-fang ch'uan-chiao-shih," in *Ku-kung po-wu-yüan yüan-k'an*, 3 (1980), pp. 25–32, 96; and Kao Chen-t'ien, "K'ang-hsi yü Hsi-yang ch'uan-chiao-shih," *Li-Shih tang-an*, 1 (1986), pp. 87–91. For a detailed history of the missionaries in this period, see Paul A. Rule, *K'ung-tzu or Confucius? The Jesuit interpretation of Confucianism* (Sydney and London, 1986), ch. 2. The Chinese texts of the discussion and decision on the toleration edict are translated in Fu Lo-shu, *Documentary chronicle*, Vol. 1, p. 105.

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Emboldened by these signs of imperial favor, and encouraged by the K'ang-hsi Emperor to undertake the effort, Father Joachim Bouvet returned to France from Peking in 1693 and embarked on a major recruiting effort to bring more Jesuits with scientific and technical skills to China. In a lengthy report on the K'ang-hsi Emperor, written in 1697 and presented to Louis XIV, Bouvet praised the extraordinary martial and moral attainments of the Ch'ing ruler, and pointed out that if China were to be converted to the Christian faith within the lifetime of Louis XIV, an act that would bring untold glory on Louis himself, it would only be by reaching the heart of the K'ang-hsi Emperor using the technical achievements of Western civilization. As Bouvet expressed it:

> The experience of more than a century has made us realise that the sciences are the principle natural means that God has wished missionaries to use, up to the present time, to introduce and to plant the true faith in China. . . . This emperor being absolute . . . one can say that his conversion would have such a powerful effect that in its wake would follow [the conversion] of the whole of this vast empire.[56]

The success of Bouvet's venture – which resulted in the return of the *Amphitrite* in 1698 – brought Dolzé, de Prémare, Régis, Parrenin, and several other talented French Jesuits to China. It was followed by a second voyage on the same vessel by Jean de Fontaney, who returned in 1701 with eight more missionaries.[57] In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, Western scientific concepts were being heard at the Ch'ing court. The Jesuits laid missionary work on a firm layer of technical and mathematical expertise. By the 1690s mathematicians like Mei Wen-ting were collaborating with senior officials like Li Kuang-ti on calendrical and other works. Mei wrote detailed treatises comparing Western and Chinese systems of calculation, and tried to sort out what he considered were the superior aspects of Western techniques. At the same time, provincial Chinese generals had learned enough about firearms to be manufacturing their own. Craftsmen in Peking were making clocks which the K'ang-hsi Emperor considered better than imported ones. The K'ang-hsi Emperor's role in the dissemination of Western mathematics and his own skill in this discipline were widely written up by the Jesuits in their letters to Europe. The Jesuits had their own reasons for portraying the K'ang-hsi Emperor as a sage ruler on the verge of conversion to

[56] J. Bouvet, *Histoire de l'empereur*. On the exact date of composition of this work, see the internal evidence on p. 10 that it was currently the 36th year of the K'ang-hsi reign. The passage was quoted from pp. 160, 166–7.

[57] Pfister, *Notices biographiques*, pp. 430–1, 434, 590 on the two *Amphitrite* voyages. Biographies of the two groups of missionaries arriving in November 1698 and August 1701 are on pp. 493–590 passim. The first voyage is discussed in detail in Paul Pelliot, "L'Origine des relations de la France avec la Chine. Le premier voyage de l'"Amphitrite en Chine," *Journal des Savants* (1928 and 1929).

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Christianity, and it is almost certain that his knowledge was much less than they claimed. Nevertheless, even if we work strictly within the limits of Chinese source materials, we find that the K'ang-hsi Emperor made attempts to patronize Western science. He consistently appointed Jesuit astronomers to the calendrical department in Peking; he read and commented on Mei Wen-ting's work, and summoned Mei's grandson to come and work at court; he publicly praised Western algebra, and showed how it could be used to increase the accuracy of local land surveys; he conducted experiments in connection with river conservancy, in which his sons and various senior officials were introduced to the basic science of surveying, and the calculation of water volumes and currents; and he learned to play some Western music on the harpsichord.[58]

Ironically, at the moment of greatest success, the Jesuit role was already being undercut from within the Church establishment. Angered at reports that Jesuits in China were going even further than Matteo Ricci a century before in accommodating Christian practices to the Chinese rites, in 1701 Pope Clement XI ordered a special papal legation, led by Bishop (later Cardinal) Maillard de Tournon, to go to China and investigate the situation there. The de Tournon mission, which arrived in Peking in December 1705, precipitated a crisis in which the K'ang-hsi Emperor, sensing a threat to the whole spectrum of imperial prerogatives in the pope's claims to spiritual primacy over the Jesuits in China, angrily backtracked from his former policies and demanded that the Jesuits in China accept his own interpretations of the correct stance toward rites and ceremonies. A series of well-documented first-hand accounts of these meetings in Chinese, Manchu, and various Western languages give good insight into the tougher and more intransigent side of the K'ang-hsi Emperor's character, and his mounting anger toward Maillard de Tournon and de Tournon's incompetent assistants. The result, for the Jesuits, was a catastrophic choice between signing a certificate of acceptance of the emperor's pronouncements on the rites (the *p'iao*), in which case they faced excommunication, or refusing to sign the *p'iao* and facing expulsion from the Ch'ing empire. For the emperor himself, the confrontation reinforced the view that foreigners from the West were interfering meddlers who must be subject to the direction of the Ch'ing court and not allowed to gain an independence that they would only abuse.[59] He maintained the same tough

[58] For careful examination of the scientific potentials for exchange, see Federico Masini, ed. *Western humanistic culture presented to China by Jesuit missionaries (XVII–XVIII centuries)* (Rome, 1996), and Peter M. Engelfriet, *Euclid in China* (New York and Leiden, 1998), esp. chs. 5 and 6.

[59] The de Tournon embassy is analyzed in detail in Antonio Sisto Rosso, *Apostolic legations to China of the eighteenth century* (South Pasadena, 1948), pp. 149–86, and in Francis Rouleau, "Maillard de Tournon, papal legate at the court of Peking," *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu*, 31 (1962), pp. 264–323, where

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attitude with another papal legate, Cardinal Mezzabarba, who came to Peking in 1720 in an attempt to reopen the issue.

The Jesuits, accordingly, became more than ever court figures after 1706, watched over and ordered around by the staff of the Imperial Household and performing services on demand for the emperor. Other Westerners who came to Peking at this time, such as the Dutch and the Portuguese, far from being allowed the small measure of initiative in trade that the Russians had been allowed after Nerchinsk, were closely supervised and limited in scope. The previously conventional tributary system that was instituted at Canton, as far away from Peking as possible, was similarly circumscribed and supervised, and much of the extra revenues accruing were treated as imperial perquisites and flowed directly into the Imperial Household treasury. Handling "Western relations" in the K'ang-hsi reign period never gained the status of "foreign policy" to be managed by the bureaucracy; it remained a matter of court affairs, designed for the emperor's personal edification, amusement, or enrichment.[60] The emperor's Manchu language exchanges with his court officials in the Wu-ying tien who were specially assigned to handle Westerners show his sckepticism over the Westerners' levels of Chinese scholarship. Even Father Bouvet's life work on the *I-ching*, which the Jesuit regarded as the pinnacle of his attainments, was described by the emperor in his private comments as an essentially incomprehensible jumble of misunderstood textual and historical references. The emperor remained watchful enough to instruct his agents to find out which Chinese scholars, if any, were helping the Frenchman with his scholarship. In fairness to the foreigners it should be added that the emperor also considered a bilingual Manchu-Chinese edition of the *I-ching*, prepared by his own court scholars at around the same time, to be "a complete muddle (*shen hu-t'u*)."[61]

Rouleau also presents an annotated version of Bernhard Kilian Stumpf's important diary. See also Paul Rule, *K'ung-tzu or Confucius*, ch. 3. An important selection of Chinese documents on the visit was collected by Ch'en Yüan and published in facsimile in Peiping (Peking) in 1932 as *K'ang-hsi yü Lo-ma shih-chieh kuan-hsi wen-shu ying-yin pen*. The K'ang-hsi Emperor's views of the legation and the Jesuits are summarized in Spence, *Emperor of China* pp. 74–85. On the Rites Question more broadly, see D. E. Mungello, ed., *The Chinese rites controversy, its history and meaning*, Monumenta Serica Monograph Series, XXXIII (Nettetal, 1994).

[60] Some of the intellectual endeavors of Jesuits and other missionaries after de Tournon can be gauged from David E. Mungello, *Curious land: Jesuit accommodation and the origins of sinology* (Stuttgart, 1985) and from John W. Witek, S. J., *Controversial ideas in China and in Europe: A biography of Jean-François Foucquet, S. J. (1665–1741)* (Rome, 1982). A different view is presented in Rosso, *Apostolic legations*, pp. 303–90. On Jesuits and bondservants see also Spence, *Ts'ao Yin and the K'ang-hsi emperor*, pp. 134–8. Early Canton trade and "Hoppos" are discussed in Preston Torbert, *The Ch'ing imperial household department* (Cambridge, 1977), pp. 98–101, and Chang Te-ch'ang, "The economic role of the imperial household in the Ch'ing Dynasty," *JAS*, 31, No. 2 (1972), pp. 256–8. For overviews of the early embassies, see John Fairbank and Teng Ssu-yü, "On the Ch'ing tributary system," *HJAS*, 6 (1941), pp. 107–218.

[61] For the K'ang-hsi Emperor's tracking of Bouvet's work on the *I-ching*, see *Man-wen*, item numbers 1719, 1724, 1734, 1738, 1755, 1760, 1764. For his comment on the Manchu-Chinese edition, see item number 2535.

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If Westerners could be safely contained in Canton or kept docilely at work within the Peking palace organization, and if the Russians received embassies like that of Tulisen with tactful politeness while building up their modest religious and linguistic presence in Peking, the same was by no means true of the Ölöds in the northwest. The defeat of Galdan, apparently so triumphant in its completeness, gave the Ch'ing forces only a brief respite. In 1715 a new Ölöd leader, Tsewang Araptan, attacked Hami in force. In 1717 his cousin Chereng Dondub achieved the astonishing feat of marching an army through the K'un-lun mountains and seizing control of Tibet. Having failed to gain control of the new Dalai Lama (who was held captive by Ch'ing forces in Sining) or to control his own troops who looted Lamaist temples and homes, Tsewang Araptan could not use Lamaism as a cohesive device for the scattered Ölöds to reawaken the possibility of a major alliance with the Mongols that might in some way be turned against the Ch'ing. Nevertheless, Chereng Dondub's successes galvanized the K'ang-hsi Emperor into action. In 1719 he dispatched his fourteenth son Yin-t'i to supervise campaigns in Sining and Lhasa, which Ch'ing forces occupied in 1720. With the support of both Tibetans and the Kokonor Mongols the Ch'ing government successfully established its own claimant as the Seventh Dalai Lama. After the main armies commanded by generals Yen-hsin and Garbi had withdrawn, the emperor ordered a strong garrison force left in Lhasa, thus inaugurating the period of direct Ch'ing intervention in Tibetan life and politics. Several of the Ölöd lamas installed by Tsewang Araptan were executed, and sections of eastern Tibet were put under the direct rule of Nien Keng-yao, the governor-general of Szechwan who at this time was one of the K'ang-hsi Emperor's favorites. Despite their Tibetan military successes, however, the Ch'ing armies were not able fully to break Ölöd power, and even in Tibet itself there were bitter protests against the cost of the Ch'ing garrisons. At the time of the K'ang-hsi Emperor's death in 1722, though most of China's borders were certainly "secure" in a conventional sense, in Tibet and its borderlands the Ch'ing remained embroiled in a costly and logistically complex struggle from which no easy extrication appeared possible.[62]

FACTIONAL POLITICS

The interconnections between administrative changes and factional alliances were always close throughout the K'ang-hsi reign. From the first years of the

[62] On the Chereng Dondub campaign, see Luciano Petech, *China and Tibet in the early 18th century* (Leiden, 1950), ch. 3; on the Chinese protectorate, see ch. 6. Also see *ECCP*, pp. 757–8, 759–60, 907–8, and 930 under Tsewang Araptan, Tshangs-dbyangs-rgya-mtsho, Yen-hsin, and Yin-t'i (14th son). For full details on these later Dzungar campaigns in Tibet, see Lo Li-ta, "1717 nien Chun-ko-erh ch'in-jao Hsi-tsang chi Ch'ing cheng-fu p'ing-ting Hsi-tsang ti tou-cheng," *Ch'ing-shih yen-chiu chi*, 2 (1982), pp. 196–212.

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reign, when the Oboi and Soni factions split the solid front of the regents after the death of the Shun-chih Emperor, this pattern was apparent. In the guise of presenting their ideas as being the Shun-chih Emperor's own deathbed statement, the regents condemned the Shun-chih Emperor for failing to follow the heroic examples of his Manchu forebears, for employing inept Chinese officials, and for instituting a series of policies that harkened back to the last years of the Ming. They especially blamed him for relying on eunuchs in matters that were not purely internal to the Palace. To remedy this sorry state of affairs, the regents set about restoring the management of the Imperial Household (*nei-wu-fu*) to what they believed to be its proper state. The "thirteen yamen" structure, developed during the late 1650s to bring more levels of financial power under eunuch control, were abolished, and the Shun-chih Emperor's favorite eunuch, Wu Liang-fu, was executed. The system of storage and accounting was placed more firmly in Manchu hands, and more bondservants (*pao-i*), Manchu, Mongol, and Chinese, were employed in assignments for the Imperial Household in the provinces. Various offices within the Grand Secretariat, and the Han-lin Academy itself, which had been reinstituted on Ming dynasty lines during the late Shun-chih reign, were again abolished and replaced by the so-called "Three Inner Courts" (*nei-san-yüan*) in which Manchus were to have numerical parity with Chinese in the senior positions. Also, the bureau designed by Hung Tai-chi to handle border affairs with the Mongols, the *li-fan-yüan*, which was staffed by Manchus and Mongols but not by Han Chinese, was elevated to a status parallel to that of the Six Ministries, and thus placed ahead of the censorate in the metropolitan bureaucracy table of organization.

In related moves designed to highlight the importance of Manchu tradition as opposed to Chinese, tax-delinquent landowners in the Yangtze delta were fined, often after draconian investigations, the number of *chin-shih* examination degrees awarded was drastically reduced, the "eight-legged essay" system was abolished, and the forms of bureaucratic evaluation were altered to give more power to the regents in assessing career performance.[63]

Despite the consistency of many of the regents' proposals for strengthening elements of Manchu presence within the Ch'ing polity, the regents themselves seldom acted in concert. Their backgrounds and lineage connections were different, and their characters varied greatly. While Oboi was the most martial and perhaps mentally the toughest, Suksaha was more of a political

[63] On the contents of the "Will" and the various arguments for its forgery, see Oxnam, *Ruling from horseback*, especially pp. 52–9 and Appendix 1; and Kessler, *K'ang-hsi and the consolidation of Ch'ing rule*, pp. 25–30. The main changes in Imperial Household structure, including those that occurred in 1661, are discussed in Torbert, *The Ch'ing imperial household department*, pp. 27–51. Torbert also provides a careful analysis of the nature and role of bondservants on pp. 53–80 that moves beyond the analysis offered in Spence, *Ts'ao Yin and the K'ang-hsi emperor*, ch. 1.

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opportunist, and Soni the most diplomatic and intellectually versatile. Ebilun remains a shadowy figure, living off inherited honors rather than the fruits of recent accomplishment, though he was a loyal friend to Oboi, and both of them were in the Manchu bordered yellow banner and thus held various economic interests in common. Inevitably the regents struggled with each other for long-term control over the boy emperor, and marriage politics played their role. Soni seems to have gained the victory here, in that he arranged for his granddaughter to be married to the K'ang-hsi Emperor (as the empress Hsiao-ch'eng) in 1665. By contrast, Ebilun had to be content with seeing his own daughter made a lower ranking consort, and Oboi with marrying off his nephew to one of the Shun-chih Emperor's daughters. The regents also quarreled over the plan by Oboi and Ebilun to redistribute certain important blocks of banner land in favor of their own bordered yellow banner, and there were numerous minor conflicts between the regent's retainers and confidantes.[64]

If the regents formed, for a time, a sometimes united faction, to break their power the young K'ang-hsi Emperor needed his own power base, and this explains the importance in his life of his grandmother, the Empress Dowager Hsiao-chuang. Linking grandmother and grandson were selected officers from within the three-tiered ranks of the imperial palace guards (*shih-wei*). Members of this inner elite, often descended from powerful warrior families prominent in the conquest of the Ming, were able to move freely within the imperial palace complex and to mingle informally with the boy emperor on hunting expeditions and at other military exercises. Perhaps the most important of these guards officers were Songgotu and Mingju, but several others, such as Bandi, Po-lo-t'e, Udan, and Tui-ch'in, can be identified as imperial favorites in the early years of the reign. Many of them remained close to the K'ang-hsi Emperor until their deaths, and they gave him a network of supporters that cut across Manchu lineage lines. Several of this group were promoted to the highest positions, as directors of the Imperial Household, as senior generals in the Eight Banners, or as Ministers in the regular bureaucracy. The K'ang-hsi Emperor's immediate moves to cancel the regents' "reforms" to the Imperial Household were linked to this group of supporters. Maci, Mawu, and others who supported an activist role against the Three Feudatories were prominent here, as were the men the K'ang-hsi Emperor chose to be his leading generals in the war against Wu San-kuei, especially Giyesu and Yolo. So was T'ung Kuo-wei, brother to the K'ang-hsi Emperor's

[64] Oxnam, *Ruling from horseback*, pp. 64–5, 81–9, 102–8. See also the regents' biographies in *ECCP*. On marriages and banner politics, see Oxnam, *Ruling from horseback*, ch. 8, and T'ang Pang-chih, comp., *Ch'ing huang-shih ssu-p'u*, ch. 2, pp. 10b–11 (rpt., pp. 52–3).

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mother and also a guards officer in the 1660s, whose own son Lungkodo and nephew Olondai were to play crucial roles in the political battles over succession to the throne in the K'ang-hsi Emperor's old age.[65]

Even from such a brief summary we can see that Manchu politics during the early K'ang-hsi reign were conducted in a spirit of intense factional strife. Though all of the infighting and alliances cannot be reconstructed in full detail, there were numerous occasions when the hostility flared out in open denunciations and impeachments, giving us a sense of the stakes and personalities involved. At such times the emperor usually responded vigorously, removing the offending group from office and appointing new men in their stead. So repetitive was this pattern, and so predictable were the K'ang-hsi Emperor's responses, that one is tempted to characterize the political changes at court as a sequence of changing, Manchu-dominated "ministries" under a single imperial chief executive.

From the suppression of the Three Feudatories' rebellions by 1681 down to the year 1688, the most important group at court centered around Mingju of the Nara clan. We can judge from Mingju's rapid promotions that he had been one of the key persons aiding the K'ang-hsi Emperor to break free of Oboi, and he had gained additional credit from the emperor for taking a hard line against Wu San-kuei. The ostensible reason for the fall of Mingju's party was a series of corrupt actions brought to the K'ang-hsi Emperor's notice by the censor Kuo Hsiu. Though none of the named offenders was seriously punished, all of them were dismissed or demoted. Besides Mingju, three other grand secretaries with high seniority fell: Ledehun, Yü Kuo-chu, and Li Chih-fang. There were also numerous dismissals and transfers among the ranks of the ministers and vice-ministers of the six ministries – so many, in fact, that clearly some kind of purge was taking place. In the middle of this crisis, in January 1688, the K'ang-hsi Emperor's grandmother died, after being of great support to him throughout his entire life, and her death left him bereft. Whether this influenced his behavior in the anti-Mingju shake-up cannot be precisely demonstrated. Certainly during Mingju's period in power both Mingju personally and many of his children and colleagues amassed major fortunes. After his dismissal, Mingju continued to be involved in numerous business enterprises, including the monopoly distribution of salt, and his huge personal fortune ensured his continuing prestige. He also was able to

[65] On the almost unstudied question of *shih-wei* generally in the Ch'ing, see Saeki Tomi, "Shindai no jiei ni tsuite," *Tōyōshi kenkyū*, 27, No. 2 (1968), pp. 38–58, and Oxnam, *Ruling from horseback*, pp. 186–8. In addition to the major figures like Mingju, Maci, Mawu, Songgotu, and T'ung Kuo-wei, for which see *ECCP*, one can also follow the careers of Bandi starting from *CSL-KH*, ch. 36, p. 1b; of Po-lo-t'e, from *CSL-KH*, ch. 36, p. 7; of Udan, from *CSL-KH*, ch. 41, p. 7b; and of Tui-ch'in, from *CSL-KH*, ch. 41, p. 13b.

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arrange the best possible Chinese classical education for his sons, two of whom, Singde and K'uei-hsü, became distinguished poets.[66]

From the political fall of Mingju in 1688 down to 1708, the world of Manchu power-politics centered around the heir-apparent, Yin-jeng, and his various rivals. Yin-jeng was born in 1674. The K'ang-hsi Emperor's second surviving son, but the first born to an empress (though she died on the day of his birth), he was named heir-apparent in 1676. Assigned a truly lustrous array of scholarly tutors by his father, including Chang Ying, Li Kuang-ti, and Hsiung Tz'u-li, Yin-jeng served as acting regent in Peking during 1696 and 1697 while his father was absent on the campaigns against Galdan. Thereafter, the Manchu grandees coalesced into two factional groupings. One centered around Songgotu, who as a guards officer had helped the K'ang-hsi Emperor break Oboi. Songgotu's niece was heir-apparent Yin-jeng's mother, and thus Songgotu had close personal connections to the young prince. The other major faction centered around the able administrator Maci, son of Mishan, the anti–Wu San-kuei stalwart. Maci became chief of the Censorate in the purge year of 1688, and Minister of War in 1691. During 1696 and 1697 the K'ang-hsi Emperor assigned Maci to keep an eye on the heir-apparent Yin-jeng. Perhaps because he learned too much at that time about the heir-apparent's failings, Maci became an antagonist of Yin-jeng, and hence of Songgotu, and became a leader among those who swung to support Yin-jeng's younger brother, the emperor's eighth son, Yin-ssu, to be successor to the throne.[67]

New and bitter notes were introduced into factional fights after 1703 because of the mounting controversies over the fitness of the heir-apparent to rule. Songgotu fell in 1703, and died (or was killed) in prison for backing Yin-jeng too eagerly. Two surviving reports in Manchu, dated late August and early September 1703, show that at that time Songgotu was still alive, though kept shackled hand and foot to one of his accomplices in a special jail in the Imperial Household Department. The remarks of his accomplice suggest the two had already been incarcerated for over a year, and the reporters (the emperor's third and fourth sons) state that Songgotu wept and begged for clemency. The heir-apparent is not mentioned by name, but the investigators were clearly trying to track down anyone who might have been relaying messages or information into Songgotu's prison chamber. They were also tracking down Songgotu's supporters, interrogating them, and unravelling

[66] The *CSL-KH*, ch. 133, shows the interweaving of the mourning and the impeachments. See also *ECCP*, pp. 430, 577.

[67] See *ECCP*, under the various princes. See also Wu, *Passage to power*; Spence, *Emperor of China*, ch. 5; and Shih Sung, "K'ang-hsi ch'ao Huang-wei chi-ch'eng tou-ch'eng ho Yung-cheng ti chi-wei," *Ch'ing-shih yen-chiu chi*, 4, (1986), pp. 139–66.

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the complexities of Songgotu's business empire scattered across several provinces along with identifying the managers who handled his business for him. Unmoved by the personal details, the K'ang-hsi Emperor merely commented drily that the investigation was confused and should be pushed more rigorously at a later date. Thereafter Songgotu disappears from the historical record.[68] In 1708, when the emperor made the decision to dismiss Yin-jeng as heir-apparent, Maci and his supporters were disgraced for daring to suggest that the eighth son Yin-ssu should be chosen as the future emperor. In 1712, when Yin-jeng was deposed for a second and final time, the general in charge of the troops in Peking, T'o-ho-ch'i, and several other generals and ministers were executed. Thereafter, though factions continued to form around the K'ang-hsi Emperor's eighth son Yin-ssu and a couple of other brothers, the bureaucracy was fragmented, and no clear decision on the heir-apparent question had been taken when the K'ang-hsi Emperor died in 1722.

Songgotu's disappearance after 1703 may be taken as a dividing point between the old politics and the new. Before that time, the K'ang-hsi Emperor trusted various groups of ministers in turn, and seems to have been at least tacitly receptive to factional interests. For the earlier period, we can trace Manchu "baronial factions" led by great generals and powerful clan leaders or imperial relatives, just as we can trace other groups in the government coalescing around such figures as Kao Shih-ch'i and the Hsü brothers. After 1703, many of the emperor's edicts betray real fear and anger. For many of the later years of his life he seems to have been truly fearful that some combination of his sons' backers would try to assassinate him. It does not seem accidental that it was during this later period of K'ang-hsi's reign that the confidential palace memorial system was developed as a major source of intelligence gathering.

Over the years that important shifts were taking place among Manchu factions, the emperor also sought to develop a group of Chinese advisors. The courageous scholar Hsiung Tz'u-li, who dared to memorialize in 1667 to the regents that the K'ang-hsi Emperor should be permitted to take the reins of government in person, might be seen as the first of this group. In Hsiung's old age, the emperor took care to have his bondservants report confidentially on Hsiung's health and resources.[69] But Hsiung always kept an independent scholarly base and stance, so it is more appropriate to identify Kao Shih-ch'i as the emperor's first scholarly favorite. Kao has been identified as a former

[68] *Man-wen*, pp. 288–92, item numbers 534 and 535. The reports are signed by the emperor's sons Yin-chih and Yin-chen.

[69] Oxnam, *Ruling from horseback*, pp. 183–5; Spence, *Ts'ao Yin and the K'ang-hsi emperor*, pp. 229–32; *ECCP*, pp. 308–9.

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slave of Songgotu. In terms of the administrative system, Kao is the first of a succession of Chinese confidants of the emperor in a line that ran through Chang Ying and Hsü Ch'ien-hsüeh to Wang Hung-hsü. These men helped the emperor with his classical studies at the highest level and also provided him with confidential information on political developments in the court and the provinces, supplementing the data he might receive from the regular sources, such as the censorate. The imperial Southern Study (*Nan-shu-fang*) became a new base of political influence within the Forbidden City itself. Its staff members were constantly available for informal consultation with the Emperor.[70]

Overlapping to some extent with the Southern Study, or at least acting as a conduit for talented personnel toward it, was another group whose influence was at times important in factional struggles and within the administrative structure. This consisted of those few Manchus and Chinese who worked in the office for compiling the imperial diaries (the *Ch'i-chü chu*). Often bilingual, in almost daily attendance on the emperor, privy to confidential information, and responsible for the historiographical image of the reign, they had a web of contacts inside the Han-lin Academy and throughout the bureaucracy. When the K'ang-hsi Emperor was at the height of his uncertainty over the handling of the Three Feudatories crisis he used diarists in addition to trusted guards officers to acquire crucial information. Their influence probably waned as the emperor grew more assured in using Chinese language and began to spend more time with staff members of the Southern Study.[71]

Bitter attacks on eunuchs and the execution of Wu Liang-fu had been central acts in the aggressively "Manchu" stance of the regents at the beginning of the reign, and an ongoing wariness about the role of eunuchs in the fall of the Ming dynasty persisted long after the K'ang-hsi Emperor rejected many of the regents' Imperial Household reforms. Nevertheless, certain eunuchs exerted influence during the K'ang-hsi reign. Besides Chang

[70] Kao, Chang, Hsü, and Wang all have *ECCP* biographies. On the personnel of the *Nan-shu-fang* and their general functions, see Adam Lui, *The Hanlin academy: Training ground for the ambitious, 1644–1850* (Hamden, Conn., 1981), pp. 30–44; and on the development of the memorial system within the *Nan-shu-fang* see especially Wu, *Communication and imperial control*, pp. 44–6. Kao Shih-ch'i and Chang Ying both left valuable informal records of the K'ang-hsi Emperor in action; see Spence, *Emperor of China*, passim for Kao, and Spence, *Ts'ao Yin and the K'ang-hsi emperor*, pp. 141–4 for Chang Ying. For these and other men as tutors to the emperor, and for their roles and contents of their discussions, see Kessler, *K'ang-hsi and the consolidation of Ch'ing rule*, pp. 138–46. A broad survey of factional groupings for the period 1661–90 is given in Harold Lyman Miller, "Factional conflict and the integration of Ch'ing politics" (diss., George Washington University, 1974).

[71] On early diarists see Katō Naoto, "Shindai kijūchū no kenyü," *Tōhō gaku*, 57 (January 1979), pp. 62–83 and the names appended to each entry in the *K'ang-hsi ch'i-chü-chu*. Also see the description in Lui, *The Hanlin Academy*, pp. 30–1.

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Hsin-ch'eng's role in the young emperor's education, and Ku Wen-hsing's in receiving and relaying news of the emperor's feelings and actions on the 1697 Galdan campaign (both noted above), there are several other eunuchs who can be traced in the record as filtering information through to selected officials, keeping an eye on Manchu-Chinese disputants, or relaying confidential edicts to key political figures. At the very least the list includes Li Yü and Liang Chiu-kung, who performed crucial assignments for the emperor, along with the eunuch Ts'un Chu, who directed the "inner memorial receiving office" during the second half of the K'ang-hsi reign.[72]

The shift in the memorial system that was to have such an impact on the K'ang-hsi Emperor's knowledge of factional politics seems to have begun almost accidentally in 1693, when the textile commissioner (*chih-tsao*) of Soochow, Li Hsü, sent the emperor some extra information about weather conditions and local grain price fluctuations in one of his routine greetings memorials. The textile commissioner of Nanking, Ts'ao Yin, followed suit, as did Sun Wen-ch'eng in Hangchow. By the mid-1690s the emperor had expanded the system to senior officials throughout the provinces and was receiving a stream of information not only from the economically vital Kiangnan area but also from key military areas from Yunnan to Kansu. These secret palace memorials (*tsou-che*) were delivered by the senders' own confidential servants in special containers to specially designated guards officers and eunuchs in the palace. After the emperor had read them in private he returned the originals, with his personal notations in vermilion ink, by the same hand to the original sender.[73]

By the late 1690s, perhaps earlier, this system had come to include the Southern Study officials, who used the Southern Study as a dropping-off point for confidential reports of their own. The importance of this development was

[72] For Liang Chiu-kung and Li Yü see *CSL-KH*, ch. 235, pp. 20, 27. On Li Yü's role receiving memorials, and also on Ts'un Chu (Ts'un-chu) as director, see Wu, *Communications and imperial control*, p. 163 n. 59 and p. 164, n. 69.

[73] The details of this early palace memorial system have been described in Spence, *Ts'ao Yin and the K'ang-hsi emperor*, ch. 6, and analyzed in great detail from the institutional point of view in Wu, *Communication and imperial control*, passim. Since those studies were written, much new evidence on the Ts'ao family has come to light: see Liu Ch'ang-jung, "Hsüan-yeh ho Ts'ao Yin kuan-hsi ti t'an-k'ao," *Hung-lou-meng hsüeh-k'an*, 2 (1981), pp. 301–35, and Wu Hsin-lei, "Kuan-yü Ts'ao Hsüeh-ch'in chia-shih ti hsin tzu-liao," *Nan-ching ta-hsüeh pao*, 2 (1976), pp. 69–78. Several recent publications of the original documents of the three *chih-tsao* (textile commissioners) (and in Ts'ao Yin's case of his children) will make further intensive study of this fascinating phenomenon feasible. Cf. especially Ku-kung po-wu-yüan, comp., *Kuan-yü chiang-ning chih-tsao Ts'ao-chia tang-an shih-liao* (Peking, 1975), Ku-kung po-wu-yüan, comp., *Li Hsü Tsou-che* (Peking, 1976), and Chuang Chi-fa, ed. and trans., *Sun Wen-ch'eng tsou-che*, as well as the Manchu memorials by Sun translated into Chinese in *Man-wen*, passim. In addition, a vast range of K'ang-hsi reign *tsou-che* (palace memorials) in facsimile, arranged by sender, have been published by the Taiwan Palace Museum in the periodical *Ku-kung wen-hsien*; these and other memorials have been rearranged chronologically and published by the Kuo-li ku-kung po-wu-yüan as *Kung-chung tang K'ang-hsi ch'ao tsou-che*, 7 Vols. (Taipei, 1976).

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confirmed after 1707 when Wang Hung-hsü began to report – obliquely, it is true, out of fear for the consequences – on the erratic and immoral behavior of the heir-apparent. Alarming disclosures had been made about the arrogance of Yin-jeng and of his maternal uncle Songgotu, and in 1703, the K'ang-hsi Emperor had the latter imprisoned, despite his prestige and age. Further reports on Yin-jeng's sexual improprieties on a Western tour to Sian in 1703 angered the emperor even more, but it was only in 1707, when Wang Hung-hsü listed several improprieties committed by a certain person, including the purchase of young boys from the Soochow area, and identified a man named Fan P'u as the chief procurer, that the emperor publicly ordered Yin-jeng deprived of the title of heir-apparent and placed under house arrest. From the deep fear of discovery that Wang expressed in these memorials, and from the K'ang-hsi Emperor's repeated reassurances that the correspondence was being conducted in total secrecy, we can guess that "the number one man" referred to in one of the documents was the heir-apparent Yin-jeng, especially as some of the charges of sexual misconduct later brought against Yin-jeng coincide with Wang's disclosures. The emperor's endorsement on this memorial, in vermilion ink and cursive writing, is perhaps the most secret comment that he ever wrote that will come down to us: "Still not a person knows about this Fan P'u business. If anyone spoke out about it, it was not guards officer Ma-wu. So the number one man does not have an inkling of who brought up the information." Apart from this fleeting glimpse of the K'ang-hsi Emperor in operation with his intelligence source, we know nothing definite about the pattern of intrigues that led to Yin-jeng's downfall, but that glimpse is enough, when added to the evidence about practical administrative affairs that we can learn from other surviving palace memorials to demonstrate that with the K'ang-hsi Emperor we can truly talk of "personal government." In the violent and angry debates that poisoned the atmosphere at court for the rest of the reign, and led to the imprisonment and death of many of Yin-jeng's supporters, the secret memorials played an important role, as did a select group of loyal guards officers and eunuchs who supervised the major meetings in which decisions about the heir-apparent were discussed.[74]

The nature of these conflicts, and the way the emperor chose to handle them, inevitably meant that the power of the Grand Secretariat as a central clearinghouse was significantly impaired, along with that of the ministers and vice-ministers of the six ministries. Conventional bureaucratic practice

[74] See the documents in Ku-kung po-wu-kuan, comp., *Wen-hsien ts'ung-pien*, rpt. pp. 90–1. The major analysis of Yin-jeng's arrest, on the "lure of the south" and his probable homosexual activities, is given in Wu, *Passage to power*, chs. 7 and 8. See also Spence, *Emperor of China*, ch. 5, and *ECCP*, pp. 924–5. For guards officers and eunuchs, see references above in notes 65 and 72.

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was further modified by the K'ang-hsi Emperor's habit of appointing special commissioners (*ch'in-ch'ai ta-ch'en*) to attend to almost any crisis situation, and he seems to have appointed these men entirely on his own advisement, often using guards officers or quite junior officials.[75] A few censors, such as Kuo Hsiu, attained considerable renown through their use of conventional channels of criticism and policy recommendations, but in the main it seems to have been those with strong networks of contacts running across the entire bureaucracy who attained the most influence. Examples would include the three Hsü brothers, Ch'ien-hsüeh, Ping-i, and Yüan-wen, who held an overlapping series of appointments in ministries; manipulative politicians with special imperial backing, such as Li Kuang-ti and Chang P'eng-ko; or the families of those like Mingju and Nien Hsia-ling, favored either by the emperor or one of his sons, who combined banner positions with regular bureaucratic rank. In public, by rhetoric and by direct action in the matter of both provincial and metropolitan appointments, the K'ang-hsi Emperor kept alive the notion of an elaborate balance between Manchus, Mongols, and Han-chün bannermen on the one hand, and examination-route Han civilian officials on the other. Just below this public bureaucratic surface, he was waging a series of tense battles with various members of his own family, the military establishment, and the civil bureaucracy. The Yin-jeng heir-apparent crises (which also involved the K'ang-hsi Emperor's eldest, fourth, eighth, ninth, and fourteenth sons) almost totally dominated the politics of the last decade of the reign. Even complex factional and bureaucratic conflicts, such as those that flared between Gali and Chang Po-hsing in Kiangnan during 1712, may be traced in part back to Gali's relationship with Yin-jeng.[76] Some of the K'ang-hsi Emperor's comments in Manchu also show that he was well aware that even his confidential bondservant textile commissioners had various direct dealings with the heir-apparent. Factionalism was present even within the system designed to prevent it.

[75] The topic of "imperial commissioners" is an important and absorbing one, as yet little studied. To give an indication of the numbers involved, following the references in the *CSL-KH*, the K'ang-hsi Emperor sent out at least five teams of commissioners in 1671 and 1672, dozens during the first phase of the Three Feudatories rebellion, one or two a year during the late 1680s, and then steadily built up the numbers again in the early eighteenth century to dozens during 1718, 1719, and 1720 and perhaps a score in 1721. The commissioners were often as junior as Department Directors (*lang-chung*), but could also be guards officers, ministry presidents and vice-presidents, or members of the *li-fan-yüan* (Court of Colonial Affairs).

[76] The Hsü brothers, Kuo Hsiu, Li Kuang-ti, Chang P'eng-ko, Chang Po-hsing, and Gali all have *ECCP* biographies. On appointment to office by banner or Chinese ethnic affiliation, see especially Lawrence Kessler, "Ethnic composition of provincial leadership during the Ch'ing Dynasty," *JAS*, 28, No. 3 (1969), pp. 489–511; also Spence, *Ts'ao Yin and the K'ang-hsi emperor*, pp. 71–5; on Gali, see Spence, *Ts'ao Yin*, pp. 241–53, and Wu, *Passage to power*, pp. 17, 82. See Wu, chs. 9–14 for a detailed analysis of the battles for the succession.

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THE POLITICS OF ADMINISTRATION

The charges of corruption that were leveled against the Hsü brothers, Kuo Hsiu, Mingju, and many of Songgotu's and Yin-jeng's henchmen, point to another pervasive problem for the emperor: the difficulty of deciding when to condone an official and when to condemn him. Accurate information was essential to effective central control, and the K'ang-hsi Emperor used a variety of methods to keep himself informed: private conversations at court audiences, informal discussions on hunting trips, and careful observation of the towns and countryside in north and central China on the many tours that he made during his reign, supplemented by often lengthy interviews with incumbent or retired local officials in the towns he passed through. But the bulk of his information came from the flow of memorials, both regular and secret, that enabled him to follow not only the faction-ridden succession struggles, but also the routine matters of local finances and the personal behavior and characteristics of his officials.[77]

The accumulated charges leveled against the family of Hsü Ch'ien-hsüeh during the years 1689–91 by various commoners and junior degree-holders in the counties of K'un-shan and T'ai-ts'ang, Kiangsu, serve to illustrate the general scale of the problem. These charges, in most of which the accuser is named and at least one other local resident was willing to appear as a witness for the prosecution, show that the younger relatives of the Hsü family tyrannized the area. A common technique was to use the threat of violence to force local residents to make over the deeds to their property to members of the Hsü family. Those who resisted were beaten, sometimes to death, or else had their buildings wrecked or burned. Another technique was to compel people to take loans, or to lure them into contracting gambling debts, and then to use the threat or reality of physical violence to keep them paying exorbitant rates of interest. There were also many complaints of rape. One plaintiff appended to his charges a list of those men in the area who worked together in these illegal activities. The list included a couple of literati, but was mainly composed of local toughs who were associated in one way or another with the staffs of the various yamen in the district, both official clerks and professional secretaries (*mu-yu*). Other documents show that the Hsü

[77] For the K'ang-hsi Emperor's use of personal interviews, see Huang Shih-ch'ing, "Ch'ing-tai ti yin-chien chih-tu," *Li-shih tang-an*, 1 (1988), pp. 79–86. On imperial tours in the K'ang-hsi reign, see Spence, *Ts'ao Yin*, ch. 4; Li Lin, "Ch'ing-tai huang-ti ti nan-hsün yü tung-hsün," *Ch'ing-shih yen-chiu t'ung-hsün*, 1 (1991), pp. 29–32; Wang P'ei-huan, "K'ang-hsi tung-hsün shih-shih kou-pu," *Li-shih tang-an*, 1 (1987), pp. 89–93. For the pictorial record of the tours, see Maxwell Hearn, "The Kangxi southern inspection tours" (diss., Princeton University, 1990). The Southern tours of the K'ang-hsi and Ch'ien-lung emperors are compared in Wu Chien-hua, "K'ang-hsi Ch'ien-lung nan-hsün ti pi-chiao," *Ch'ing-shih yen-chiu t'ung-hsün*, 1 (1990), pp. 13–20.

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family could call on a gang of about fifty men when they wished to assault someone. Such documents can be corroborated by a number of other sources, and sometimes by secret memorials. Judicial proceedings in Peking itself were frequently disrupted by mounted men who reviled and threatened officials who seemed inclined to oppose the wishes of certain powerful families. Elsewhere, children of both sexes were purchased and in some cases kidnapped or forcibly purchased from respectable homes to be shipped to Tientsin and sold.[78]

Such abuses sometimes were offshoots of the political situation in the capital. Though the Hsü family was among the most powerful in Kiangsu from around 1675 to 1690, they moved constantly in and out of overlapping factional groupings. Hsü Ch'ien-hsüeh first allied with Mingju against Songgotu. After Songgotu lost imperial favor in 1683, Hsü joined forces with Hsiung Tz'u-li and Li Kuang-ti to oppose Mingju, and they finally managed to have Mingju ousted for corruption in 1688. Mingju, through relatives still in office, managed to have Hsü and his brothers dismissed only two years later. The emperor's confidant, Kao Shih-ch'i, also fell from favor after corruption charges were leveled against him at this same time, leaving Chang Ying and Li Kuang-ti as the two leading Chinese officials at court.

Any summary of K'ang-hsi politics is inadequate. Scores of junior officials were removed or transferred in each of these major shuffles, and we cannot neglect the complex role of powerful censors like Kuo Hsiu, who instigated many of the proceedings that later led to these men's downfall. The political scene included Manchus who held office as Grand Secretaries or ministers, Manchus who were Chamberlains of the Imperial Household, trusted guards officers, and commanding generals of banners. It also included members of the imperial family, the fathers and other relations of the empresses and concubines, and the emperor's own sons who were growing up by this time and beginning to assemble their own cliques.

Some of these senior officials accumulated enormous fortunes while in office. We have considerable detail about several of them. Besides his large house in the northwest of the outer city of Peking, Kao Shih-ch'i had other residential holdings in Peking, as well as a partnership in a satin-selling operation capitalized at 400,000 taels. In Chekiang he had an estimated 15,000 acres of land, as well as estates in Hangchow and Soochow. He had also bought into various other ventures, including threshing mills, which he operated through agents. Hsü Ch'ien-hsüeh had large amounts of capital in the cotton and salt trade, as well as pawnshops, Peking residential properties

[78] The documents on the Hsü family have been collected in Ku-kung po-wu-kuan, comp., *Wen-hsien ts'ung-pien* (rpt.), pp. 113–29.

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(including the construction of new houses), and large landholdings in Kiangsu. Mingju was even wealthier, and extended his fortune by working closely with the An family, who dominated the salt trade in Chihli province. Some surviving documents give us a glimpse of the incredibly complex nature of these business ventures. The officials worked with underlings and agents, through nicknames and pseudonyms, borrowing and loaning money, bringing pressure to bear on local officials at key moments, even using government money as investment capital.[79] The emperor does not seem to have felt that such goings-on were particularly reprehensible. Officials guilty of extensive corruption were sometimes dismissed and ordered to return home, but not usually punished in any other way or even fined. Throughout his reign the K'ang-hsi Emperor accepted large donations from his officials, even though he knew that they came from the exploitation of the communities they were administering.[80]

This leniency was not extended to cases when corruption was practiced by officials who were also involved in one of the cliques centered on the K'ang-hsi Emperor's sons. The problem of the imperial succession dominated politics from 1703 until the emperor's death in 1722. When Manchu officers like Ch'i-shih-wu or T'o-ho-ch'i who were involved in the heir-apparent controversy were accused of corrupt practices, they were executed. The K'ang-hsi Emperor was content to tolerate a certain level of corruption, but he encouraged censors and others to bring information about corruption to his attention so that, when it suited him, he could use it as the pretext for removing someone from office.

The K'ang-hsi Emperor did not make any dramatic changes to the financial organization of the empire after his accession. He abandoned the vigorous pursuit of tax-delinquent landowners in Kiangnan that had been initiated by his regents, and after the final defeat of the Cheng family and the conquest of Taiwan, allowed a return of the coastal population to their towns and villages. His reign then witnessed a steady growth of overseas trade, especially with southeast Asia.[81] The administration of river control, managed at times by exceptionally able men like Chin Fu, remained largely unchanged, though the emperor's interest in Western techniques for measuring river flow and surveying riverine courses had some beneficial effects. Basic patterns of taxation were maintained. Rural areas suffered on the margin between tax

[79] The holdings of Hsü and Kao can be seen in *Ch'ing-shih lieh-chuan* (Taipei, 1962), ch. 10, pp. 8b, 11b. For Mingju and Chang Lin, see the biography of An Ch'i, *ECCP*, pp. 11–12.

[80] On the cash contributions to the K'ang-hsi Emperor, see Kuo Sung-i, "K'ang-hsi ch'ao kuan-yüan ti chuan-chu huo-tung," *Li-shih tang-an*, 1 (1989), pp. 84–9.

[81] An important study of the growth of Southeast Chinese coastal trade during this period is that by Ng Chin-keong, *Trade and society: the Amoy network on the China coast, 1683–1735* (Singapore, 1983).

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deficits and food shortages, and with the carrot of tax relief to selected localities ever dangled before the local landowning families and the officials who oversaw them. The emperor had a compassionate side, and took an interest in food prices, weather conditions, and water supplies. He ordered a level of famine relief of one *sheng* of grain per diem for each famine victim, which seems to have been double the rate prevailing in the Ch'ien-lung reign. Nonetheless his reign is full of instances of the gravest deprivation, accompanied quite often by famine conditions that the bureaucracy seemed ineffective in managing.[82]

In the second half of the seventeenth century there was a "depression" brought on by a decline in population during the warfare in the period of dynastic transition, a harsh mix of unemployment and labor scarcity at the same time, and a steady rise in the value of silver in relation to copper cash. These factors significantly lowered land prices and the purchases of agricultural land, and turned investors away from the land and back to speculative trade ventures, to the hoarding of silver, or to usury.[83] It is possible that on this particular topic the emperor had been sensitized by the major mutiny that broke out in Wu-ch'ang in the summer of 1688. The mutineers, numbering more than ten thousand at their peak, were former troops of the Green Standard Army who had been demobilized following the suppression of the Three Feudatories rebellion. They seized the capital city of Hupeh in an attempt to recover arrears of pay and receive food for their families. The K'ang-hsi Emperor took the mutiny with the utmost seriousness. He not only carefully monitored the campaign to ensure the marshalling of adequate government force, but also established careful procedures to screen out the misled local populace from the inner corps of mutinous former army men.[84]

The way that the K'ang-hsi Emperor approached military affairs during peacetime can also be clearly seen from his endorsements on memorials. His comments on a thirteen-hundred character palace memorial from the

[82] The range of famines and the attempts to deal with them are finely analyzed by Pierre-Étienne Will in his *Bureaucratie et famine en Chine au 18e siècle* (Paris, 1980), which gives full details on the relief work in Hupeh by Yü Sen during 1691 and 1692. On the K'ang-hsi reign relief rate of one *sheng* per diem see *CSL-KH*, ch. 35, p. 18. The range of local violence and poverty in Shantung in the 1660s and 1670s is chronicled in Jonathan D. Spence, *The death of Woman Wang* (New York, 1978), drawing especially on the contemporary observations of a Shantung magistrate, Huang Liu-hung. Chin Fu's river conservancy skills are discussed in *ECCP*, pp. 161–3 and by Robert Hackmann, "The politics of regional development: Water conservancy in central Kiangsu Province, China, 1850–1911" (diss., University of Michigan, 1979), pp. 40–2. Integration of the Southern Tours with river work is analyzed by Shang Hung-k'uei, "K'ang-hsi nan-hsün yü Chih-li Huang-ho," *Pei-ching ta-hsüeh hsüeh-pao*, 4 (1981), pp. 42–51.

[83] Richard von Glahn, *Fountain of fortune: Money and monetary policy in China, 1000–1700* (Berkeley, 1996), pp. 241–4.

[84] The 1688 mutiny is covered in the *CSL-KH*, from ch. 135, p. 22 to ch. 137, p. 27. Also see Wu Po-ya, "Wu-ch'ang ping-pien yü K'ang-hsi," *Ch'ing-shih yen-chiu t'ung-hsün*, 4 (1991), pp. 14–19.

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provincial Commander-in-chief in Kiangnan, Shih I-te, allow us to follow the emperor's train of thought. He followed Shih's argument closely, stopping now and again to note his comments in vermilion ink at the top of the relevant column. Shih began by reporting that he had found serious deficiencies in the military personnel available to him: Officers were old and weak, discipline was slack, archery poor, and so on. But he was unwilling to send in an impeachment memorial naming a lot of names, lest this lead to blanket dismissals by the Ministry of War and the appointment of new officials who might prove even less suitable than the old ones. To this the emperor commented, "all the foregoing should be in an open memorial." In other words, the palace memorial system should not be used for routine reports of this kind. But as the report progressed, we see the emperor growing increasingly interested and sympathetic. Shih's request for the transfer of able guardsmen from Chihli to replace some of the training lieutenants who had no combat experience was capped with the imperial notation, "I have already sent someone [to see to it]." At the end of the following section of the memorial, which dealt with patrol boats and river markers, the emperor wrote "so be it" (*shih*), an endorsement that in his usage seems to have had the implication of "excellent," or "well thought-out." Shih I-te's memorial concluded with recommendations on bandit prevention and the locations of garrison forces. The emperor's final words were, "All the contents of this memorial are to the point. But this serious and protracted decline in military matters is the same in all the provinces. Do not move too abruptly. If you are too hasty then you will cause some other trouble that you had not known about."[85]

"Not causing trouble" is a recurrent theme throughout the confidential endorsements by the K'ang-hsi Emperor. It was one of his major guidelines in administration. The bondservant Ts'ao Yin, seeking to start a major investigation of corruption within the imperial salt monopoly, was told by the emperor that, "Causing trouble is not as good as preventing trouble." Chang Po-hsing as governor of Kiangsu was exhorted to watch out for those "who spread rumors and start trouble." Lang T'ing-chi, governor of Kiangsi, was given a brief lecture on the subject: "To be a good official you need do no more than this – be sincere in your heart and sincere in your work, and do not cause too much trouble." The Manchu governor-general of Liang-chiang, Asan, was told by the emperor in 1704 that though previous governor-generals had been no better than Asan at least they – unlike Asan – had "Stayed quiet and not stirred up trouble."[86] All these imperial comments fit

[85] Ku-kung po-wu-yüan, comp., *Ku-kung wen-hsien* (1969), Vol. 1, No. 4, pp. 92–3.

[86] For Ts'ao Yin, see Spence, *Ts'ao Yin and the K'ang-hsi emperor*, p. 186; for Chang and Lang, *Ku-kung wen-hsien* (1969), Vol. 1, No. 4, pp. 67 and 68; on Asan, see *Man-wen*, item 678, p. 353.

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in well with the assessment that the K'ang-hsi's Emperor's principle demand was for "harmony" (*ho*). His policies were governed by caution, tolerance of moderate dissent, and reliance on moral suasion rather than force.[87]

In practical ways this meant that the K'ang-hsi Emperor, despite his energy in intellectual and military matters, tended to support the status quo in provincial administration. More than that, he yearned for continuity. We see this particularly in the case of his senior provincial generals. Shih I-te owed his career to the fact that the K'ang-hsi Emperor had admired his father, general Shih Ti-pin. While on a campaign in western China, the emperor promoted Shih I-te from the ranks in memory of his father's ability. Twelve years after this first promotion, Shih I-te was commander-in-chief in Kiangnan, one of the most prestigious military posts in China. The same pattern occurred with Shih Lang's son, Shih Shih-p'iao, and many others. Once he found a military man who was good at his job, the K'ang-hsi Emperor did not like to transfer him. Shih I-te held the post in Kiangnan for five years. Two of his predecessors in the same post in K'ang-hsi's reign held the post respectively for thirteen and for eighteen years. The same pattern held true for the Manchu and Chinese generals-in-chief (*chiang-chün*) in Kiangnan at this time: One was in office for twenty years, and six held their posts for over a decade; two of these six had already served as military commanders at a lower level in the same province for long periods before their final promotion.[88]

The surviving palace memorials from the K'ang-hsi reign enable us to view aspects of the bureaucratic process that are usually concealed by traditional Chinese historiography: how an official worked his way into a new post, and changed his attitudes to adapt to local conditions, and how the emperor tracked his officials' progress. Wang Tu-chao in Chekiang learned how to distinguish different types of pirates, and to assess who would benefit from which kind of tax reduction. Lang T'ing-chi in Kiangsi charted monthly fluctuations in the price of rice, the volume sold, and the patterns of interprovincial shipments. He began to write his own memorials, rather than to entrust the task to a scribe, after the emperor told him, "Hereafter write out your palace memorials in your own hand. If the calligraphy is poor it does not matter." Lang T'ing-chi replied in appropriately wobbly calligraphy that "I only had someone write out my memorials for me because I feared that my bad writing might seem disrespectful."[89]

[87] Wu, *Communication and imperial control*, p. 111.

[88] These figures are drawn from the tables in Huang Chih-chün, comp., *Chiang-nan t'ung-chih* (n.p., 1736).

[89] For Wang, see *Ku-kung wen-hsien* (1969), Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 63–70; for Lang, *Ku-kung wen-hsien* (1969), Vol. 1, No. 4, pp. 68 and 78.

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The K'ang-hsi Emperor made some appointments as tests. When he appointed Ch'en Yüan-lung as Kwangsi governor, he said, "You have served many years in the Han-lin. Now I am going to specially try you out in a frontier post, to see what you are like at doing the job." It also seems that he did not consider the experiment particularly successful. After Ch'en's recall, he reverted to the practice of appointing Han-chün bannermen as governors in Kwangsi.[90]

The K'ang-hsi Emperor was aware of the differences and tensions that existed between Manchu and Chinese officials. Han-chün bannermen, descended in the main from northeasterners who had submitted to the Ch'ing cause before or just after 1644, were in an intermediate position, and the emperor drew many of his governors-general and provincial governors from the Han-chün banners. Bondservants, descended from those enslaved or incorporated into Manchu banners before 1644, were another such intermediate group, often bilingual and with both Manchu and Chinese antecedents. But the number of appointable officials from these groups was limited. In his public edicts, the emperor referred to maintaining a balance among Manchu and Chinese officials. Commenting on the struggle that flared up in 1712 between the Chinese governor of Kiangsu, Chang Po-hsing, and his superior, the Manchu governor-general of Liang-chiang, Gali, in which the two traded bitter charges of incompetence, cruelty, and corruption, the K'ang-hsi Emperor declared, "Manchus and Chinese are all my officials, I look on them alike and make no distinctions." He continued, "Manchu officials shall not say that I am partial to the Chinese," but neither should the Chinese feel that the emperor would "shelter the Manchus only."[91] The K'ang-hsi Emperor's confidential rescripts in Manchu, however, tell a more complicated story, as can be seen in comments he appended to a memorial by the Manchu governor-general Asan in 1704. Asan had risen from lowly beginnings to become the powerful governor-general of Liang-chiang in the early 1700s. His Manchu language memorials to the emperor are punctuated throughout by the emperor's constant interlinear vermilion comments, some arguing about local officials' comparative abilities or honesty, some commenting on the various levels of extra fees that should be tolerated among senior administrators, others teasing or scolding Asan for his muddle over financial details. But however apparently niggling or hostile the emperor's comments, it is clear that he is fond of Asan, and ultimately trusts him. As the K'ang-hsi Emperor wrote in a long comment to Asan after the governor-general expressed gratitude for not being dismissed:

[90] *Ch'ing-shih lieh-chuan*, ch. 14, p. 13.
[91] Spence, *Ts'ao Yin and the K'ang-hsi emperor*, pp. 253–4; *CSL-KH*, ch. 251, pp. 15b–18b.

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When we are considering the characteristics of particular officials, we should be looking at their actions not at their words. If what they say is not fully realized, then the actions will not accord with the role. Our Manchu elders used to say, "When words are pedantic they won't accord with reality." Your words are crude, but they really echo my feelings. We who bear the name of Manchus should be true to the way of the Manchus. If we just clumsily follow the methods of the Han-jen (Chinese), then we will be laughed at and reviled by them, and have to take the consequences. . . . As a governor-general you are of average ability. There is nothing particularly special about you. Manchu generals and their troops work as one. They should be compassionate and frugal. When you were in the Manchu military forces, you were both compassionate and frugal, so I never intervened. Now you are old and approaching death; when it comes time for you to leave your post, if not a single Manchu comes to say goodbye to you, where will any trace of your memory be recorded? As Confucius said: "Even if one has all the wondrous abilities of the Duke of Chou, but is miserly and arrogant, the rest would not redress the balance."[92]

Such imperial interventions could be sharp, but with regard to many aspects of the lucrative benefits of holding high office, the emperor followed a laisséz-faire policy. The profits were enormous, and the emperor's exhortations regarding frugality must be seen as largely rhetorical, even if he did choose to appear at times at state functions with patches rather ostentatiously showing on his imperial robes.[93] The lucrative salt monopoly and trade in ginseng were kept as imperial monopolies. Receipts from the sale of the rights to distribute and manufacture salt, and the large revenues derived from the major harbor and transit tolls on foreign and domestic trade, mainly passed through the hands of Chinese or Manchu bondservants (*pao-i*) supervised by the Imperial Household Department, and they remitted all "surplus" directly to it. Bondservants also managed the major imperial textile manufactories in Soochow, Nanking, and Hangchow, and the establishments in these three cities were used as the "travelling palaces" (*hsing-kung*) where the emperor could stay during the six southern tours that he took between 1684 and 1707. Other bondservants and members of the Imperial Household Department directed the huge porcelain industry at Ching-te-chen in Kiangsi. Bondservants were also in charge of procuring "exotic" foreign products for the emperor's amusement and edification, and of keeping a close eye on the activities of the small but flourishing Chinese merchant community based at Nagasaki in Japan.[94] The mixture of conventional and

[92] *Man-wen*, item 678, p. 353. There are scores of other memorials by Asan, with the emperor's comments, in the same collection.

[93] The detail of the patched robe was noted by K'ung Shang-jen and is recorded by Richard Strassberg in "K'ung Shang-jen and the K'ang-hsi emperor," *Ch'ing-shih wen-t'i*, 3, No. 9 (1978) pp. 31–75.

[94] On the bondservant textile and salt activities, Southern Tours, and procurements, see Spence, *Ts'ao Yin and the K'ang-hsi emperor*, chs. 3, 4 and 5, and Torbert, *The Ch'ing imperial household department*, ch. 4. The overall revenue-collecting structure is analyzed by Chang Te-ch'ang in "The economic role of the

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irregular systems brought in revenue to meet the expenses of the Imperial Household.

In the early eighteenth century, the K'ang-hsi Emperor decided to make a dramatic gesture that would proclaim the prosperity of his realm. His 1712 decision to freeze the *ting* tax at the 1711 levels was one of the most unfortunate economic and political acts of the first century of Ch'ing rule. The *ting* was a unit of taxation that ostensibly correlated directly with one adult taxable male, and indirectly with his associated household (females, children, and other adult males, including servants). Because local labor service tax quotas were denominated in *ting* units and set by higher governmental levels, there was a reluctance on the part of the local officials to report any population increases. By freezing the quotas of *ting* imposed on local government units, the K'ang-hsi Emperor encouraged all local agencies, from householders through *pao-chia* headmen and up to magistrates' staffs, to report actual population figures.[95] Though the effect on the registers was not initially dramatic (at least according to the figures recorded in the *Veritable Records* annual summaries), by the Yung-cheng and Ch'ien-lung reigns the population figures in the four categories of adult and minor males and females began to reflect the climb of the population past 300 million. On the negative side, however, veneration of the K'ang-hsi Emperor in those years meant that reversing his decision was unthinkable. The Ch'ing bureaucracy was stuck with assessments that could not take account of growth, internal migration, or shifts in agricultural practice. In the context of shrinking revenues on a per capita basis, the Ministry of Revenue and the Imperial Household Department became proportionally more reliant on other, often irregular, sources.[96]

imperial household in the Ch'ing Dynasty." *JAS*, 31, No. 2 (1972), pp. 243–73. The ginseng trade has been separately studied by Van Jay Symons, *Ch'ing ginseng management: Ch'ing monopolies in microcosm*, Arizona State University, Occasional Papers, 13 (Tempe, Ariz., 1981), while valuable material on the silk *chih-tsao* (textile commissioners) operation is given in E-tu Zen Sun, "Sericulture and Silk Textile Production in Ch'ing China" in *Economic organization in Chinese society*, W. E. Willmott, ed. (Stanford, 1972), pp. 79–108; Lillian Li, *China's silk trade* (Cambridge, 1981), ch. 2; and P'eng Tse-i, "Ch'ing-tai ch'ien-ch'i Chiang-nan chih-tsao ti yen-chiu," *Li-shih yen-chiu*, 82, No. 4 (1963), pp. 91–116. See also the three collections of *chih-tsao* (textile commissioners) memorials cited above. *Chih-tsao* staff's activities in Nagasaki are described by Matsuura Akira, "Kōshū shokuzō urintatsu Bojishin no Nagasaki raikō to sono shokumei ni tsuite," *Tōhōgaku*, 55 (January 1978), pp. 62–75. The technical data on the production times and personnel of the Soochow *chih-tsao* were carefully analyzed by Sun P'ei in 1686, and have been reissued under the title *Su-chou chih-tsao-chü chih* (Nanking, 1959).

[95] *Ting* tax edicts are in *CSL-KH*, ch. 249, pp. 15–16b, and examples of official discussion (by Wang Tu-chao and Hu Tso-mei) in *Kung-chung-tang K'ang-hsi ch'ao tsou-che* (Taipei, 1976), pp. 349–54, 773–7. See also the discussions in John Watt, *The district magistrate in late imperial China*, pp. 200–2; Ping-ti Ho, *Studies on the population of China* (Cambridge, Mass., 1959), pp. 24–35; and Wang, *Land taxation in imperial China, 1750–1911*, pp. 20–6.

[96] The details of population registration can be noted in any local gazetteers from the Ch'ien-lung period. The extraordinary payments are charted in Chang Te-ch'ang's "The economic role of the imperial household," pp. 243–73. Confiscations as an income source are listed in Wei Mei-yüeh, "Ch'ing-tai Ch'ien-lung shih-ch'i chün-ch-ch'u yu-kuan ch'ao-chia tang-an," *Ku-kung chi-k'an*, 15, No. 1 (1980), pp. 1–42. For the rationale behind the *Ting* registration reforms, and some effects, see Ch'en Hua, "Ch'ing-tai jen-ting pien shen chih-tu ch'u-t'an," *Ch'ing-shih yen-chiu chi*, 6 (1988), pp. 169–94.

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In the decade before his death, the K'ang-hsi Emperor fretted about his historical image. He pleaded with his own ministers for sympathy, or else ranted at them for their lack of it. He spoke publicly of the physical ailments that afflicted him – lameness in the legs, dizziness – and even of the loss of memory that was beginning to cloud his judgment. Uncertainty over the succession continued until the moment of the K'ang-hsi Emperor's death. This was the last echo in the Ch'ing of the competition for succession among brothers known as "tanistry," so prominent earlier in Mongol and Manchu history. Of the K'ang-hsi Emperor's various administrative initiatives and innovations, only the palace memorial system was successfully developed. Under the Yung-cheng Emperor it provided a new flow of information to the center of government and, brought under effective imperial supervision, was incorporated into the military command apparatus and contributed to the founding of the Grand Council (*chün-chi-ch'u*).[97]

IMPERIAL PATRONAGE OF LEARNING AND CULTURE

The K'ang-hsi Emperor was aware of his role as leader of the Han Chinese and made an effort to support scholarly enterprises. His initial informal education in Chinese language was received from eunuchs and serving women, but he chose to undergo rigorous training as he began to rule. The sixteen moral maxims that were issued in 1670 in the young emperor's name may have been drafted for him by Chinese advisors, but the meticulous reports of his earnest sessions with a series of classical scholars as they worked together, line by line, through each of the major Confucian classics, should not be taken as either hyperbole or hypocrisy. Rather, they were part of the same policy that led to his convening of the special *po-hsüeh hung-ju* examination in 1679, the balancing of provincial and metropolitan appointments between Manchus and Chinese, and the planning of the six southern tours to those areas of the Yangtze delta that had been most famous for resistance in the 1640s.[98]

[97] For discussions on tanistry, I am indebted to the late Professor Joseph Fletcher. On the Grand Council, see especially Wu, *Communication and imperial control*, chs. 7 and 8, and Beatrice S. Bartlett, *Monarchs and ministers* (Berkeley, 1991). Wu's *Passage to power*, chs. 14 and 15 gives convincing arguments on the legitimacy of the Yung-cheng accession. The arguments for Yung-cheng's usurpation continue, however, to be pressed by committed scholars; see the materials assembled in Robert King, "Emperor Yung-cheng's usurpation," *Ch'ing-shih wen-t'i*, 3, No. 9 (1978), pp. 112–22, and the arguments in Feng Erh-k'ang, "K'ang-hsi ch'ao ti ch'u-wei chih cheng ho Yin-chen ti sheng-li," *Ku-kung po-wu-yüan yüan-k'an*, 3 (1980). A nice call for restraint on the whole question is issued by Lin Yü-hui and Shih Sung in "Yung-cheng p'ing-i," *Ch'ing-shih yen-chiu chi*, 1 (1980), p. 61.

[98] On the sixteen maxims, later called the Sacred Edict, or *Sheng-hsün*, see *ECCP*, p. 329, and Victor Mair, "Language and ideology in the written popularizations of the *Sacred edict*," in *Popular culture in late imperial China*, ed. David Johnson, Andrew J. Nathan, and Evelyn S. Rawski (Berkeley, 1985), pp. 325–59. The structure of surviving court diaries of the *Ch'i-chü chu* enables us to trace the emperor's day-by-day progress through the classics. The Southern Tours are discussed in Spence, *Ts'ao Yin and the K'ang-hsi emperor*, ch. 4. The K'ang-hsi Emperor's almost daily Manchu-language accounts of various tours, sent back to his sons in Peking, can be tracked in *Man-wen*, passim.

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The imperially sponsored scholarship during the K'ang-hsi reign was of high quality. Though the compilation of the *Ming History* was marked by partisan friction and numerous delays, many other projects moved smoothly. The thesaurus arranged by rhymes, entitled the *P'ei-wen yün-fu*, and the immense marshalling of material for the *Complete T'ang Poems* were coordinated by Chinese scholars and printed with the financial and administrative resources of the textile commissioner of Nanking, the bondservant Ts'ao Yin. Work on the encyclopedic collection of writing of the past arranged by topic, known as the *Ku-chin t'u-shu chi-ch'eng*, swung between imperial sponsorship and supervision by wrangling editorial directors, but when completed, it was one of the great monuments of Chinese scholarship. The progress and level of skill employed in such projects as a bilingual Chinese-Manchu edition of the Classics, and a Manchu translation of the celebrated late Ming picaresque-Buddhist novel *Hsi-yu chi* (*The Journey to the West*), were carefully watched by the emperor. Other imperially sponsored compilations in the fields of mathematics, astronomy, history, and geography, along with the famous dictionary, the *K'ang-hsi tzu-tien*, enhanced the scholarly aura of the reign. The projects gave lucrative employment, or at least short-term commissions, to numerous scholars.[99] Nor was the emperor the only patron of scholarship. His own elder half-brother, Fu-ch'üan, built a center for scholars in his Peking garden, the Mu-keng yüan. The emperor's third son, Yin-chih, supported scholars like Ch'en Meng-lei in assembling the sources for the *Ku-chin t'u-shu chi-ch'eng*. In addition, some of the K'ang-hsi Emperor's more favored officials, men as disparate in career and background as Hsü Ch'ien-hsüeh and Ts'ao Yin, supported numerous scholars in Kiangnan.[100]

Painters also received imperial support. The prestige of academic court painters had waned in the late Ming, but revived in the K'ang-hsi reign with the productions of Chang Chao, Chiang T'ing-hsi, Chiao Ping-chen, and Leng Mei. These and other painters were assigned to the Southern Study (*Nan-shu-fang)* or the Han-lin Academy, and some learned techniques from European artists such as Gherardini and the young Castiglione, who were skilled in chiaroscuro and perspective. Earlier styles of landscape painting were revived to impressive levels by the works of Wang Hui and the other

[99] On the *P'ei-wen yün-fu* and *Ch'üan T'ang-shih*, see Spence, *Ts'ao Yin and the K'ang-hsi emperor*, pp. 157–65, 258; for the *Ku-chin t'u-shu chi-ch'eng*, see *ECCP*, pp. 93–4 under Ch'en Meng-lei. On the *Classics* and *Hsi-yu chi*, see Man-wen, item 2169, p. 867, and item 2529, p. 988.

[100] On other patrons, see *ECCP*, p. 251 under Fu-ch'üan and p. 922 under Yin-chih. On Hsü Ch'ien-hsüeh as patron, see especially Struve, "Ambivalence and action," pp. 350–3; on Ts'ao Yin in Nanking, see Spence, *Ts'ao Yin and the K'ang-hsi emperor*, pp. 65–81. For the productions by Ts'ao Yin and others at the Yangchow printing offices, see Hsieh Kuo-chen, "Ts'ung Ch'ing Wu-ying-tien-pan t'an-tao Yang-chou shih-chü ti k'o-shu," *Ku-kung po-wu-yüan-k'an*, 1 (1981), pp. 15–18. There are scores of reports on the Wu-ying-tien publications in *Man-wen*, passim.

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"Four Wangs." Manchu painters such as Po-erh-tu also had acquired enough skill to make contributions to this genre. The tours and festivities of the K'ang-hsi Emperor's later years were celebrated in a series of enormous and beautifully executed scrolls, the composition of which was directed by famous artists, such as the *Wan-shou sheng-tien* by Wang Yüan-ch'i, produced for the emperor's sixtieth birthday, or the *Nan-hsün sheng-tien*, directed by Wang Hui, which commemorated his southern tours. The production of these works in their varied forms as painted scrolls, black and white copies, and wood-block prints, gave employment to countless skilled painters and artisans. The high quality of these productions contrasts sharply with the weak wood-block prints made in the Ch'ien-lung reign to record similar moments of glory in the mid-eighteenth century.[101]

Major scholars such as Hsiung Tz'u-li, Chang Po-hsing, and Li Kuang-ti held senior appointments within the bureaucracy.[102] Partly under their influence, the K'ang-hsi Emperor endorsed the Chu Hsi interpretations of the Classics and sponsored the compilation of new editions of the works of Chu Hsi and other Sung thinkers identified with the Learning of the Way (*Tao hsüeh*). In some of his private comments – especially those in Manchu – the emperor sometimes expressed irritation or sarcasm about Confucian moral philosophy. Commenting to a Manchu governor-general about the righteous Confucian scholar Chang Po-hsing, who constantly emphasized *li* (principles) and *hsing* (human nature), the emperor noted that Chang Po-hsing's political actions showed no clear understanding of either principles or human nature.[103] But the emperor rarely took harsh action against a distinguished

[101] Pioneering work on these court painters has been done by Daphne Rosenzweig, "Court painters of the K'ang-hsi period" (diss., Columbia University, 1973). The other mainstream painters have biographies in *ECCP*, pp. 24–5, 142–3, 329, 823, 844, 960. The Wang Yüan-ch'i birthday scroll has been published in various forms as *Wan-shou sheng-tien* and the quality of woodcuts is startlingly high compared with the Ch'ien-lung era scroll with the same title. The southern tour scrolls (a version of Wang Hui's is now in the Metropolitan Museum in New York) are more nearly comparable with the Ch'ien-lung scrolls. See Walter Fuchs, *Die Bilderalben für die Südreisen des Kaisers Kienlung* (Wiesbaden, 1976) and the recent essays on, and reproductions of, the K'ang-hsi tour scrolls in Nieh Ch'ung-cheng, Yang Hsin et al., comps., "K'ang-hsi nan-hsün t'u ti hui-chih," *Tzu-chin ch'eng*, No. 4 (1980), pp. 16–25; 5 (1981), pp. 24–9; 6 (1981), pp. 24–9. See also Hearn, "The Kangxi southern inspection tours."

[102] On three famous early Ch'ing scholars see especially Willard Peterson, "The life of Ku Yen-wu 1613–1682," *HJAS*, 28 (1968), pp. 114–58, 29 (1969), pp. 201–47; and Ian McMorran, *The passionate realist: An introduction to the life and political thought of Wang Fuzhi* (Hong Kong, 1992), on Wang Fu-chih. Wm. T. de Bary, *Waiting for the dawn: A plan for the prince*, *Huang Tsung-hsi's Ming-i tani-fang lu* (New York, 1993), is a translation and study of Huang Tsung-hsi. On Ch'ing philosophical traditions, see Benjamin Elman, *From philosophy to philology: Intellectual and social aspects of change in late imperial China* (Cambridge, Mass., 1984); and Chow Kai-wing, *The rise of Confucian ritualism in late imperial China: Ethics, classics, and lineage discourse* (Stanford, 1994).

[103] For an analytical survey of the K'ang-hsi Emperor's thought, see Sung Te-hsüan, *K'ang-hsi ssu-hsiang yen-chiu* (Peking, 1990), especially chs. 5, 8, 10; Kao Hsiang, *K'ang Yung Ch'ien san-ti t'ung-chih ssu-hsiang yen-chiu*, (Peking, 1995), chs. 1 and 4; Wang Chung-han, "K'ang-hsi yü Li-hsüeh," *Li-shih yen-chiu*, No. 3, 1994, pp. 116–22. The emperor's comments on Chang Po-hsing, to Governor-general Ho-shou, are in *Man-wen*, p. 955, endorsement to item number 2438.

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scholar on the grounds of his writing. The most famous exception was Tai Ming-shih, who had ranked second in the *chin-shih* examinations of 1709. Tai's fatal mistake was to have publicly expressed his interest in learning more about the Southern Ming regimes of the post-1644 era, and to have used Ming reign names for the post-1644 period. He was executed in 1713.[104] But this exception, grim though it was, should not be allowed too great a weight in our overall assessment of the politics of the K'ang-hsi reign.

As a ruler, the K'ang-hsi Emperor was in the main imaginative and flexible, open to new ideas, and constantly seeking men of talent from a wide range of backgrounds to help him with the task of ruling. The emperors of China have often been viewed as – and no doubt often were – men who cut themselves off from their subjects, extracting the wealth of the country and giving back little in return. The K'ang-hsi Emperor, however, sought to break out of such a restrictive pattern. And to a perhaps surprising extent, he succeeded.

[104] On Tai see *ECCP*, p. 701, and Durand, *Lettrés et pouvoir*.

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CHAPTER 4

THE YUNG-CHENG REIGN

Madeleine Zelin

Sandwiched between the sixty-year reigns of both his father and his son, the comparatively short rule of the emperor Shih-tsung marked a turning point in Ch'ing statecraft. Between 1723 and 1735, the Ch'ing state launched a program of bureaucratic and fiscal reform that addressed some of the key structural obstacles to the development of a modern state. Public programs were directed at expanding the agricultural base and making local government more responsive to the needs of the rural population. Frontier policy pursued a path that ultimately extended the reach of the Ch'ing state deep into central Asia and Tibet and consolidated control of neglected regions of China itself.

The achievements of these thirteen years owed much to the emperor's own vision, and his commitment to efficient and effective centralized government. However, the innovation and activism of the Yung-cheng reign were not always welcome, particularly when they challenged the power and privilege of the degree-holding elites. In addition, government policy during these thirteen years was played out against the background of the succession crisis of the 1710s and 1720s. The emperor who ruled under the reign title Yung-cheng was accused of usurpation and patricide during his lifetime. Upon his death, rumors circulated that he was the victim of an assassin's hand. For a time, controversy over the emperor's personal behavior threatened the reconciliation of Manchu and Chinese that had been one of the greatest achievements of the K'ang-hsi period. While questions of his legitimacy followed the Yung-cheng emperor to his grave, his enduring legacy was an approach to statecraft that strengthened both the objectives and the capacities of the late imperial state.

USURPER OR RIGHTFUL HEIR?

The man who ruled during this critical period was born Yin-chen[1] in 1678, the fourth of the K'ang-hsi emperor's sons to survive to adulthood. His

[1] *ECCP*, pp. 915–19.

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mother, Empress Hsiao-kung, was one of K'ang-hsi's favorite consorts and it is thought that, because of this, the young prince received more attention from his father than did most of his brothers. While imperial hagiography is always injudicious in its praise of an emperor's erudition, both his writings and his calligraphy are testimony to the classical education and literary achievements of the man who became the Yung-cheng emperor. Deeply committed to imperial Confucian teachings as emperor, Yin-chen was at ease in the world of Confucian political discourse and made liberal use of classical allusions in constructing justification for his imperial policies. At the same time, the Yung-cheng emperor had a lifetime interest in Ch'an Buddhism which influenced both his approach to government and his personal religious commitment.[2]

We know little about Yin-chen the prince. The official record was constructed to portray a man aloof from the factional strife that plagued the last years of the K'ang-hsi reign. Raised to the position of third-class prince in 1689 and first-class prince (Yung *ch'in-wang*) in 1709, Yin-chen was the recipient of imperial favor on many occasions. K'ang-hsi entrusted him with special assignments fifteen times during the last years of his reign.[3] He was also a frequent choice to participate in imperial sacrifices and at the time of his father's last illness had been sent to the Temple of Heaven to represent the emperor in the Winter Solstice Sacrifices.[4] For his part, Yin-chen appears to have repaid his father with sincere filial devotion, ministering to him when he was sick[5] and entertaining him often at his princely villas, themselves imperial gifts.[6] While not overtly engaged in building a clique around himself, as were some of his brothers, Yin-chen cultivated members of the Manchu and Chinese elite in the capital whose friendships proved useful in the final struggle for the throne and in the early years of his rule.

The K'ang-hsi emperor's refusal to designate a new heir-apparent, after finally removing his second son in 1712, guaranteed that the conflict surrounding succession would continue long after his death. The legitimacy of any victor in the almost fifteen-year contest was bound to be questioned by the supporters of those passed over. By the time of the K'ang-hsi emperor's

[2] For a discussion of the Yung-cheng emperor's ideas on the unity of Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism (*san-chiao ho-i*), see Tsukamoto Shunkō, "Yoseitei no Ju-Bu-Dō sankyō ittaikan," *Tōyōshi kenkyū*, 18 (1959), pp. 44–60.

[3] Huang Pei has shown that Yung-cheng was used for special assignments on fifteen occasions as opposed to fourteen for Yin-jeng, and eighteen for Yin-chih. Huang Pei, *Autocracy at work, a study of the Yung-cheng Period, 1723–1735* (Bloomington and London, 1974), p. 73.

[4] *ECCP*, p. 916.

[5] *Ta-Ch'ing Sheng-tsu Jen huang-ti shih-lu* (Mukden, 1937–1938; rpt. Taipei, 1964; hereafter, *CSL-KH*), ch. 235, p. 27, Dec. 29, 1708; ch. 237, p. 5, April 19, 1709.

[6] Yang Chen, "Yung-cheng chi ch'eng huang wei wen t'i t'ao lun tsung shu," *Ch'ing shih yen chiu t'ung hsün* 1, No. 7 (1984), p. 20.

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death, the field of contenders for the throne had narrowed, probably to no more than three sons, Yin-chih,[7] Yin-t'i,[8] and Yin-chen. K'ang-hsi's third son, Yin-chih, was raised to the rank of first-class prince in the same year as Yin-chen. Like Yin-chen, Yin-chih hosted the emperor at his villa. However, K'ang-hsi's greatest display of favor toward Yin-chih came in the last decade of his reign, when he trusted the editorship of the imperial encyclopedia, the *Ku-chin t'u-shu chi-ch'eng*, to Yin-chih and the scholar Ch'en Meng-lei.

Yin-t'i was K'ang-hsi's fourteenth surviving son and he was by the same mother as Yin-chen. An earlier supporter of Yin-t'ang and Yin-ssu, Yin-t'i was not considered a contender until 1718, when he was appointed *fu yüan ta chiang chün* (border pacification general-in-chief) of the armies in the northwest. Sent off with the honors befitting a first-class prince, Yin-t'i led the campaign against the Khoshote Mongols for domination over Tibet. In 1721 he was called back to Peking, only to be reassigned to the front in May 1722.

The K'ang-hsi emperor died on December 20, 1722. Yin-t'i was in the northwest at the time. The official account of the day's events notes that Yin-chen, who was acting in the emperor's stead at the imperial sacrifices at the Temple of Heaven, was summoned in the middle of the night to the emperor's favorite villa outside Peking. Before dawn, K'ang-hsi called to his bedside seven of his sons and the General Commandant of the Peking Gendarmerie, Longkedo (d. 1728) and delivered a verbal edict in which he praised his fourth son Yin-chen. Calling him a man of moral character who was much like the emperor himself, K'ang-hsi is said to have declared to the assembled group that Yin-chen was the man to succeed him on the imperial throne. Yin-chen visited his father three more times before he finally passed away. His will, which included his reminiscences of his reign, repeated the words relayed in the verbal edict delivered earlier that day and declared Yin-chen to be the emperor's choice as his successor.[9] That same night the body of the deceased was dressed and carried back to Peking accompanied by Yin-chen, his brothers, their children and other relatives, the procession of mourners escorted by a "countless host of soldiers with drawn swords."[10]

We do not have to guess what questions were raised regarding these events. The contours of the debate were fixed by rumors that began to circulate as soon as the Yung-cheng emperor ascended the throne. The new emperor was accused of forging his father's will by changing the Chinese characters for the number "fourteen" (*shih ssu*) in "the fourteenth son" to "to the fourth" (*yü*

[7] *ECCP*, pp. 922–3. [8] *ECCP*, pp. 929–30. [9] *CSL-KH*, ch. 300, Dec. 20, 1722.

[10] Matteo Rippa, *Memoirs of Father Ripa during thirteen years residence at the court of Peking in the service of the emperor of China*, trans. Fortuna Prandi (London, 1855), p. 119, cited in Huang, *Autocracy at work*, p. 80.

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ssu), although the wording of the imperial will as recorded in the Veritable Records of the K'ang-hsi reign would not have permitted such an alteration. The case for the fourteenth son, Yin-t'i, as the rightful heir was strengthened by accusations that Yin-chen had commissioned Szechwan-Shensi Governor-General, Nien Keng-yao (1643–1727), a Han-chün bannerman, with the task of keeping an eye on Yin-t'i and preventing him from coming home when news of the emperor's illness became public. As a final touch, Yin-chen was said to have hastened the death of his father by bringing him a bowl of ginseng soup laced with poison to ensure the emperor's departure from this world before the arrival of Yin-t'i from the northwest.[11] Even Longkedo's protection of the new emperor is seen as evidence that he was morally suspect and needed to be escorted away under armed guard.

Given the intensity of the struggle over the throne, we do not have to interpret these charges as evidence of wrongdoing by Yin-chen. Their circulation may just as easily be read as an act of vengeance by the losing side. The new emperor's treatment of the brothers who fell into this category is no more revealing. While some scholars view the emperor as attempting a reconciliation with the supporters of his brother's claim to the throne, others have labeled such gestures an effort to buy time until Yung-cheng's position as ruler was consolidated.[12] Yin-ssu (1681–1726), often considered the leader of the opposition faction, was made a first-degree prince by the new emperor and appointed an official in the Ministry of Works and the Li-fan yüan.[13] Although he soon fell into disfavor, Yin-ssu was also a founding member of the Plenipotentiary Council, the all-Manchu advisory group formed by Yung-cheng to aid him in the period of transition.[14]

The emperor's treatment of Yin-t'i, his chief rival for the throne, was less conciliatory. Recalled to the capital to attend his father's funeral, Yin-t'i appears to have offended his brother on a number of occasions. Rather than allow his return to the military, where he could consolidate his power base, the hero of the Tibetan campaigns was sent to a hot springs near Peking and close to K'ang-hsi's mausoleum. There he was charged with performing sacrificial duties for his deceased father. Yin-t'i was allowed to return to Peking later that year when his and Yung-cheng's mother died. Yung-cheng pro-

[11] We are privy to these rumors because the Yung-cheng emperor himself addressed them in a series of edicts later distributed as the *Ta-i chüeh-mi lu*: see Vol. 3, p. 21.

[12] There are good reasons to question the usurpation theory. Most compelling is that in an atmosphere of intense factional fighting it is unlikely that the K'ang-hsi emperor, knowing that his own health was poor, would have sent his appointed heir back to the western front. For a review of the twentieth-century scholarly debate in Chinese over the succession issue see Yang Chen, "Yung-cheng," pp. 19–22.

[13] *ECCP*, p. 927.

[14] Beatrice S. Bartlett, *Monarchs and ministers: The grand council in mid-Ch'ing China* (Berkeley and London, 1991), p. 30.

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moted him to first-rank prince, perhaps in the hope of a reconciliation. Soon afterwards he was sent back to the imperial tombs.

Yin-t'ang fared somewhat better. Sent to the northwest right after Yung-cheng ascended the throne, Yin-t'ang was allowed considerable freedom of movement. In 1724 his family was permitted to join him, with the exception of one son who was left behind to manage the household in Peking.[15] However, Yin-t'ang soon fell into disfavor when reports of his usurpation of imperial prerogatives and harassment of local people began to filter back to Peking. Yung-cheng deprived him of his fourth-degree princely title and his banner retainers in 1725, but allowed him to remain in the northwest. In 1726, Peking police seized a letter written by Yin-t'ang to his son in a secret code using Latin letters devised by Father Mourao, a Jesuit who had also been exiled to the northwest for his involvement in the K'ang-hsi succession struggles. Only then was Yin-t'ang ordered to return to Peking for trial. He was convicted on charges including engaging in a struggle for the throne, factionalism, and disobedience of the imperial will.

By the time of Yin-t'ang's arrest, the clique that had surrounded the alternative heir was under attack. In May 1724 another brother, Yin-e, had been stripped of his ranks for the crime of disobedience to imperial orders. Yin-ssu was arrested and expelled from the imperial clan early in 1726. High court officials accused him of crimes including treason and a lack of filial respect toward the late emperor.[16] Their request that Yin-ssu be executed was denied. Rather than pass sentence on his brothers, the emperor allowed them to remain in prison, where both Yin-ssu and Yin-t'ang died the following year.[17]

The deaths of two high-ranking officials have also been linked to Yung-cheng's alleged usurpation of the throne.[18] Each is believed to have had information about the succession that the new emperor did not want revealed. However, the presumptuous manner in which these two men so close to the emperor comported themselves in office may also explain their rapid fall from grace. Nien Keng-yao,[19] a member of the Han-chün bordered yellow banner and a 1700 *chin-shih*, had already established himself as both an administrator and a military leader before the Yung-cheng reign. During a long career in the southwest, he served as Szechwan governor and governor-general and was Shansi-Szechwan governor-general when Yung-cheng took the throne.

[15] *ECCP*, p. 928.

[16] See the items entitled "Yin-ssu Yin-t'ang an" in *Wen hsien ts'ung pien* (Peking, 1930–1943), No. 3, pp. 26–34.

[17] Huang, *Autocracy at work*, pp. 97–8, 100.

[18] See, for example, Meng Sen, *Ch'ing tai shih* (Taipei, 1962), pp. 492–9.

[19] See *ECCP*, pp. 587–90.

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During the last years of the K'ang-hsi reign, Nien aided Yin-t'i in the campaign against the Khoshotes during which the Ch'ing reinstated the sixth Dalai Lama in Lhasa under imperial protection. Although there is no evidence that Nien belonged to a Yin-chen faction during this period, his sister was a concubine of the then prince.

It is more likely that the relationship between Nien and the Yung-cheng emperor developed after the latter took the throne. Nien repeatedly requested an audience with the new emperor. Following their meeting, the emperor's fondness for Nien was expressed in frequent gifts and in solicitous remarks in his rescripts to Nien's memorials.[20] In 1723, Yung-cheng placed Nien in command of the forces sent to put down the uprising of the Khoshotes under Lobzhan Dandzin. Following this victory, Nien was granted the rank of first-class duke and given other honors befitting an imperial prince.

Nien's behavior during the second year of the Yung-cheng reign became increasingly arrogant. Despite warnings from the emperor, Nien's breaches of etiquette, including sitting in the imperial presence, and his misuse of power continued. In 1725 it was discovered that Nien had been corresponding with Yin-t'ang. Transferred to serve as general at Hangchow, Nien became the object of a campaign of denunciatory memorials and was demoted and brought back to Peking by the end of the year. Accused of ninety-two crimes, Nien was sentenced to death by decapitation. The emperor saved Nien from humiliation by commuting the sentence to suicide, and Nien took his own life in 1726.

The relationship between Nien's case and that of Longkedo was a close one.[21] A member of the Manchu bordered yellow banner, Longkedo's aunt was the mother of the K'ang-hsi emperor. When Yung-cheng took the throne, Longkedo was General Commandant of the Peking Gendarmerie and President of the Court of Colonial Affairs. As in Nien's case, there is no evidence that Longkedo played an important role in the factional struggles surrounding the K'ang-hsi succession, although both official and unofficial accounts place Longkedo at the K'ang-hsi emperor's bedside when he announced his choice of sons to take his place as emperor. Longkedo was also responsible for the military escort that guaranteed an orderly transition by escorting Yung-cheng and his father's remains back to the Forbidden City.

Longkedo was well rewarded for his loyalty. A member of the new emperor's Plenipotentiary Council, Longkedo was granted a dukedom and

[20] For example, during the summer of 1724 Nien Keng-yao sent a memorial thanking the emperor for two snuff bottles, four boxes of new tea, and four fresh lichees. Silas Wu, *Communication and imperial control in China: Evolution of the palace memorial system, 1693–1735* (Cambridge, Mass., 1970), p. 149.

[21] *ECCP*, pp. 552–3.

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the title Maternal Uncle. In 1723 he was made a Minister of Civil Appointments and was bequeathed honors and ranks for two of his sons. The new emperor encouraged a strong relationship between Longkedo and Nien, urging Longkedo to adopt one of Nien's sons in 1724.[22]

Longkedo came under suspicion in 1725 for reasons similar to those that brought down Nien Keng-yao. Confident that he had the total support of the emperor, perhaps as a result of his role in the Yung-cheng succession, Longkedo also appears to have exceeded the bounds of appropriate official behavior. Accusations of accepting bribes and usurping imperial prerogatives aggravated the emperor's annoyance at Longkedo's protection of Nien Keng-yao during the latter's impeachment from office. Longkedo was stripped of his official positions and sent to present-day Ninghsia to supervise military preparations. While there he also headed a commission whose negotiations of the border between Mongolia and Siberia ultimately resulted in the Treaty of Kiakhta with Russia.

Longkedo was recalled to Peking in the summer of 1727, when a set of the imperial genealogy was found in his house.[23] Tried for forty-seven crimes, including possession of the genealogy, receiving bribes, and usurping imperial prerogatives, Longkedo was sentenced to death by slicing. The emperor commuted his sentence and allowed him to remain in prison, where Longkedo died in 1728.

The failure of K'ang-hsi's attempt to follow Chinese tradition and name the eldest son of his primary wife to be his heir induced Yung-cheng to revert to a modification of Manchu inheritance practice. None of the emperor's sons was shown favor in education or grooming for the throne. Rather than designate an heir-apparent, the emperor concealed the name of his chosen successor in a locked box kept behind a tablet in the Ch'ien-ch'ing kung in the imperial palace. Only upon Yung-cheng's death was its contents revealed to name the fourth of the emperor's ten sons, Hung-li, to be the new sovereign.

LITERARY INQUISITIONS

The question of Yung-cheng's legitimacy as emperor was not put to rest by the elimination of those closest to the succession struggle. During the 1720s, a number of literati were punished for their views on the state, Ch'ing

[22] For the circumstances surrounding this adoption and an insight into the emperor's superstition, see Wu, *Communication and control*, pp. 148–9.

[23] Scholars have speculated that the imperial geneology, given to Longkedo by Ablan, a sixth-degree prince and supporter of Yin-t'i, might have contained evidence that Yin-t'i was K'ang-hsi's designated heir. *ECCP*, p. 554. In an unpublished essay, Silas Wu has suggested that this was unlikely, inasmuch as the geneology was updated every nine years and had not been officially updated since the time when the then heir-apparent Yin-jeng was deposed.

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legitimacy, and the Yung-cheng emperor's own right to rule.[24] Foremost among these so-called literary cases (*wen-tzu yü*) was that of Tseng Ch'ing.

Tseng Ch'ing (1679–1736)[25] was a failed degree candidate from Hunan province. While working as a teacher he became aware of the writings of the seventeenth-century scholar and critic of the Ch'ing regime, Lü Liu-liang (1629–1683).[26] According to the record of Tseng's interrogation, his growing philosophical objections to alien rule were intensified in 1727 when he heard disparaging rumors about the Yung-cheng emperor and his conduct in office.[27] When natural disasters struck Hunan and neighboring provinces in 1728, Tseng became convinced that it was Heaven's retribution for Yung-cheng's sins, and he began to plot to overthrow the Ch'ing dynasty.

The central figure in Tseng's rebellion was to be the Shensi-Szechwan Governor-General, Yüeh Chung-ch'i (1686–1784).[28] Yüeh was a descendent of the famous Sung dynasty general Yüeh Fei, whose role in defending against the Chin dynasty of the Ju-chen (from whom the Manchus were thought to be descended) had made him one of the great heroes of Han Chinese.[29] In October 1728, Tseng sent his disciple, Chang Hsi, to Shensi with a letter to Yüeh Chung-ch'i urging him to take the lead in the great enterprise to overthrow the Ch'ing. Chang portrayed himself and Tseng as anonymous *ronin*, wandering heroes without a lord, signifying their rejection of the Ch'ing as rightful rulers. Only by means of a masterful performance by Yüeh, who convinced Chang of his desire to join in his conspiracy, was the governor-general able to determine Tseng's true identity and the source of his ideas in the writings of Lü Liu-liang.

Tseng leveled nine accusations against the Yung-cheng emperor. Among them were several directly related to the succession, including the charge that he murdered the K'ang-hsi emperor, hounded his mother to death, killed his brothers, and executed loyal officials, a reference to the cases of Nien Keng-yao and Longkedo. In addition, Tseng labeled the emperor a greedy, womanizing drunk who killed with abandon and demanded flattery and

[24] Several literary cases emerged in connection with the prosecution of Nien Keng-yao and Lungkodo. Wang Ching-ch'i, a scholar from Chekiang, was an admirer of Nien and an open Ch'ing detractor, as was Ch'ien Ming-shih. Cha Ssu-t'ing and Lu Sheng-nan were punished because of their implication in the Longkedo case. See Huang, *Autocracy at work*, pp. 208–12.

[25] See *ECCP*, pp. 747–9; Feng Erh-k'ang, *Yung-cheng chuan* (Peking, 1996), pp. 222–31.

[26] *ECCP,* pp. 551–2.

[27] Ch'ing Shih-tsung, *Ta-i chüeh-mi lu* (c. 1730, ms. in Columbia University Starr East Asian Library rare books room; rpt. in *Ch'ing-shih tzu-liao*, No. 4, ed. Chung-kuo she-hui k'e-hsüeh-yüan, Ch'ing shih yen chiu so, Peking, 1983), ch. 3, pp. 1–11.

[28] *ECCP*, pp. 957–9.

[29] According to Feng Erh-k'ang, rumors that Yüeh Chung-ch'i could not be trusted, in part due to his illustrious family history, were circulating within official circles prior to the Tseng Ch'ing incident. Feng Erh-k'ang, *Yung-cheng*, pp. 222–3.

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sycophancy from his ministers.[30] Given his treatment of others who had challenged his right to rule, one would have expected this harsh indictment to be met with equal severity. However, the emperor was far more concerned with the larger implications of the case than with the actions of two small men. In a rescript to a memorial by Yüeh Chung-ch'i, dated November 1728, Yung-cheng noted, "I have read the traitorous document and never dreamed that there were people saying such things about me."[31] In addition to bringing Tseng and Chang to Peking for trial, the emperor ordered an immediate inquiry into the writings of Lü Liu-liang and a search for the source of the rumors cited by Tseng Ch'ing.

Lü Liu-liang and his descendants received the harshest treatment for the former's challenge to the Ch'ing right to rule. Lü's writings were proscribed and, in 1733, his body and that of his eldest son were disinterred and their bones scattered and exposed to the elements. Surviving members of their family were exiled and a number of disciples were punished. Investigation into the source of the rumors turned up several retainers of the emperor's brothers, Yin-ssu and Yin-t'ang, who had passed through Hunan en route to exile at the southern frontier. Tseng and Chang were given the opportunity to repent for their crimes of sedition and rebellion, and were treated as the pitiful dupes of devious plotters against the throne. Rather than punish Tseng, the emperor thanked him for bringing to light the vicious rumors and sent him back to his native Hunan as a minor official charged with rectification of local customs.[32]

RULERSHIP UNDER THE YUNG-CHENG EMPEROR

The Ta-i chueh-mi lu *and Ch'ing legitimacy*

Tseng Ch'ing's impeachment, taken together with the writings of Lü Liu-liang, posed a grave challenge to the Ch'ing mandate to rule and to the Yung-cheng emperor's legitimacy as sovereign. Rather than suppress its contents, the emperor chose to address each charge in the most public of forums. One year after Chang Hsi's encounter with Yüeh Chung-ch'i, Yung-cheng ordered the publication of the documentary record relating to the Tseng Ch'ing case. Bound in four *chüan* under the title *Ta-i chüeh-mi lu* (*A record of righteous principles to awake the deluded*), the work included ten imperial edicts, forty-seven sections (*p'ien*) covering Tseng Ch'ing's interrogation and his answers, and two sections recording Chang Hsi's interrogation, as well as an appendix in

[30] *Ta-i chüeh-mi lu* (ms), ch. 1.
[31] Ku-kung po-wu-yüan, ed., *Wen hsien tsung pien* (Peiping, 1930–1943), No. 1, p. 4.
[32] Huang, *Autocracy at work*, p. 220.

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which was reprinted Tseng's retraction of his indictment of the emperor, entitled "On Returning to Benevolence."[33] The text was to be distributed to every prefectural, district, and county school, and its contents disseminated to all literati in the empire.[34]

Although much of the *Record of righteous principles* (*Ta-i chüeh-mi lu*) was devoted to refuting the accusations directed against the emperor himself, Yung-cheng devoted equal attention to Lü Liu-liang's position that the Manchus as a race should not rule China. Lü Liu-liang was one of a number of seventeenth-century thinkers who had developed a notion of race as something immutable and fixed by descent. No amount of assimilation could change their essential nature, and their presence among the Chinese could only be damaging to civilization.[35] Therefore, under no circumstances should barbarians be allowed to rule China. In the edicts included in the *Record* (*Ta-i chüeh-mi lu*), Yung-cheng represented the early Ch'ing rendition of Manchu legitimacy. Rather than usurping the throne from the Ming, the present ruling house had defended the honor of the Ming against Chinese rebels and was chosen to rule because it possessed virtue. The Ming had already fallen when the Ch'ing armies entered China, and, since their arrival, life for the Chinese people had been immeasurably improved.

Countering Lü's "impenetrable distinction between Chinese and barbarians" (*hua i chih fen*), the *Record* (*Ta-i chüeh-mi lu*) begins with the statement that Heaven bestows the mandate to rule on those who have virtue.[36] As for the notion that provenance determined fitness to rule, Yung-cheng reminded his subjects:

> In the minds of the traitors, our dynasty are the rulers of Man-chou and came in and took over China. [In so viewing the situation] they selfishly perpetrate the mistaken notion that there is a distinction between our [two] peoples and the lands from which they come. They only talk like this to defame us. Do they not know that Man-chou is our native place like people in China have native places? Shun was a man of the Eastern barbarians (*tung i*) and King Wen [of Chou] was a man of the Western barbarians (*hsi i*). Did this mean they did not have sagely virtue?[37]

Native place was not a marker of distinction among peoples. In establishing his revisionist racialism, Lü had also disregarded the Mencian principle that held that all humans are capable of moral transformation. As the emperor noted, if barbarians could not be transformed and their leaders attain sagehood, then Confucius would never have gone to the state of Ch'u and accepted a position there.

[33] *Ta-i chüeh-mi lu* (ms), ch. 4, p. 31. [34] *Ta-i chüeh-mi lu* (rpt.), 1983 rpt., p. 2.
[35] Pamela Kyle Crossley, "Emperorship and identity in Qing and Nationalist thought," Modern China Seminar, Columbia University, Feb. 14, 1991, p. 13.
[36] *Ta-i chüeh-mi lu* (ms), ch. 1, p. 1. [37] Ibid., ch. 1, pp. 2–3.

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Activist emperor and activist state

The Yung-cheng emperor's argument with thinkers like Lü Liu-liang went beyond racial exclusion to the fundamental conception of the state. Many political theorists in the last years of the Ming had come to support the idea of a decentralized political structure, based on self-governing and self-sustaining communities under the leadership of local elites. Often referred to as *feng chien* (feudal), this mode of political organization would require little intervention from the central state for the creation of public goods. By contrast, the Ch'ing adopted a statist ideal that required considerable central government supervision of provincial and local government.[38] Rather than build on the particularistic ties that bound men to each other, the Ch'ing political ideal sought the elimination of all mediating influences that came between ruler and minister and ruler and subject. It was the responsibility of the state, and not intervening elites, to guarantee the well-being of the people, and it was for this reason that the state's coffers needed to be full. In this regard, the emperor could also justify Ch'ing rule by its accomplishments: nearly a century of peace, control of banditry, expansion of the territory of the state, a growing population, and an increase in cultivated acreage.

To Yung-cheng, the emperorship was the key to the functioning of the state. Like his father, he took seriously his role as moral exemplar and transformer of the people. The Yung-cheng emperor's communications with officials are replete with moral advice and admonitions. His initial approach to the territories of the northwest and the southwest under the local control of native chiefs reflected a belief that education was the key to pacification. Early in the second year of his reign, the emperor wrote an essay entitled "On Factions" (*P'eng tang lun*), which, along with his *Amplified Instruction on the Sacred Edict*, were to be distributed to schools throughout the empire. Their contents represented the distillation of this emperor's views on the proper behavior of subjects and ministers and were to be expounded at bimonthly village compact meetings (*hsiang yüeh*).[39]

As important as the emperor's moral leadership was his role in ensuring the efficiency and probity of the administration under his stewardship. Chosen for his superior wisdom, the emperor understood that the achievements of his reign depended in great measure on his attention to detail and

[38] For a discussion of early Ch'ing measures to centralize fiscal administration and create a direct relationship between the individual taxpayer and the state, see Madeleine Zelin, *The magistrate's tael: Rationalizing fiscal reform in eighteenth century Ch'ing China* (Berkeley, 1984), pp. 9–37.

[39] Victor H. Mair, "Language and ideology in the written popularizations of the Sacred Edict," in *Popular culture in late imperial China*, ed. David Johnson, Andrew J. Nathan, and Evelyn S. Rawski (Berkeley, 1985), pp. 336–7.

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his active leadership in government. At the same time, because he was above the petty private interests of an individual, he alone stood for the interests of all. For this reason he deserved the absolute loyalty of his ministers. "The essential duty of a minister is simply that he be aware that he has a prince. For then his dispositions will be firmly disciplined and he will be able to share his prince's likes and dislikes; hence the saying, 'One in virtue, one in heart, high and low are bound together.' "[40]

The greatest obstacle to good governance, in the Yung-cheng emperor's opinion, was factionalism. Officials formed cliques to get ahead and promoted members of their own faction, regardless of their merits. Factionalism not only led to corruption and bad judgment, it inserted a barrier between ruler and minister. In composing his diatribe against factions, Yung-cheng singled out the nascent pluralism of the eleventh-century essayist Ou-yang Hsiu, whose famous essay by the same name supported cliques as appropriate associations of men of character who held similar views. How could this make sense when the only point of view that mattered was that of the emperor?[41]

Not simply an authoritarian manifesto, "On Factions" also underlined the emperor's disdain for the vast majority of degree-holding officials. Their ranks were filled with men who were careless and perfunctory in their execution of official business. While the emperor himself was meticulous in his attention to details, few officials knew how to keep decent records.[42] Worse yet, many were corrupt and did not abide by the law. The particularistic ties that bound the scholarly class was what made the examination system so damaging.[43]

> The practice of teacher-student and classmate relationships associated with favoritism and appeals to feelings is seen everywhere and is unbreakable. If the official career should be left completely to those who rise through examinations, they would just firmly join together and work for their private interest against the public interest. This is of great harm to the public welfare and to the livelihood of the people. The purchase system should be appropriately expanded.

Because of his distrust of literati officials, Yung-cheng devoted many hours each week to the selection of men for office and many more to their subse-

[40] "On Factions," is published in *Ta Ch'ing Shih-tsung hsien huang-ti shih-lu* (Mukden, 1937–1938; rpt. Taipei, 1964; hereafter *CSL-YC*), ch. 22, pp. 11–24, Sept. 3, 1724 and translated in part in David S. Nivison, "Ho-shen and his accusers," in *Confucianism in action*, ed. David S. Nivison and Arthur F. Wright (Stanford, 1959), p. 225.

[41] Imperial concern with factionalism promoted the posting of special commissioners charged with monitoring the morals and the activities of the literati in the provinces. These *kuan-feng cheng-su shih* (Inspectors and Rectifiers of Popular Customs) were assigned to Chekiang, Fukien, Kwangtung, Kwangsi, and Hunan during the years 1726–30. Huang, *Autocracy at work*, pp. 197–8.

[42] *CSL-YC*, ch. 87, pp. 26–30, Dec. 14, 1729.

[43] Chang Chung-li, *The Chinese gentry: Studies on their role in nineteenth-century Chinese society* (Seattle, 1955), p. 115.

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quent evaluation. Rather than appoint county magistrates by lottery, as was the ostensible practice in the Ming and the early Ch'ing, the Yung-cheng emperor frequently relied on recommendations from officials in the field to match qualified candidates with their posts. Governors were also permitted to request the retention of local officials who had completed their term of office. The assessment of subordinates occupied a large portion of the correspondence between the emperor and his officials in the field. Noting that his policy was to look far and wide to find good candidates for official positions, Yung-cheng once declared,

> After I have appointed them and in due course observed them, then if I find them unworthy I have no choice but to change them. Therefore, every time there is an opening from governor-general . . . down to local magistrate, if I do not find the right men, I pore through the monthly records of the Board of War and the Board of Civil Office repeatedly. Often I go without sleep all night. I must get the right man before I can relax.[44]

Institutions of the inner court

Rather than leave the management of the empire to the bureaucrats, Yung-cheng employed a highly personal ruling style that depended on building a strong coterie of loyal officials in the inner court to control the bureaucracy in the outer court and in the provinces to provide a bulwark against what he took to be the pursuit of self-interest by most members of the mandarinate. Following on the sixty-year reign of K'ang-hsi, Yung-cheng inherited an entrenched outer court and an inner court dominated by princes and the conquest elite. As a young man, the K'ang-hsi emperor had had to win the right to rule away from his elders and courtiers, and Yung-cheng did the same, taking control over and bureaucratizing the administration of the five lower banners.[45] Within the palace, the new emperor allowed inner court bodies which had served K'ang-hsi to atrophy as new groupings of advisors loyal to him took over the role of imperial councilors. During the early years of his reign the importance of the Deliberative Council of Princes[46] diminished, as did that of the Southern Study.[47] A new body, the Plenipotentiary Council, was charged with handling the imperial transition. Composed of Manchus including Lungkodo, Maci, and two of the emperor's brothers, the Yi Prince Yin-hsiang, and Yin-ssu, it was disbanded in 1725.

[44] Kent Clarke Smith, "Ch'ing policy and the development of southwest China: Aspects of Ortai's governor-generalship, 1726–1731" (diss., Yale University, 1970), p. 15.

[45] For a discussion of the bureaucratization of the banners, see Huang, *Autocracy at work*, pp. 168–84.

[46] For information on the Deliberative Council of Princes see the chapter on the Shun-chih reign by Jerry Dennerline in this volume.

[47] For information on the Southern Study (*Nan-shu fang*), see the chapter on the K'ang-hsi reign by Jonathan D. Spence in this volume.

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Until 1729 the emperor relied largely on informal and ad hoc groupings of trusted officials. Functioning as inner court deputies, these men also maintained high positions within the central bureaucracy from which they derived their rank and their income. This dual status allowed the emperor to supervise the outer court while maintaining the flexibility of an extralegal body of advisors with whom he met on a nearly daily basis.[48] In the course of the reign, institutions such as the Grand Secretariat were relegated to the management of routine administrative matters, as policy-making functions shifted to the inner court bodies.

Until the onset of the Dzunghar campaign in the late 1720s, three men formed the core of Yung-cheng's inner court. Most important was the Yi Prince Yin-hsiang (1686–1730).[49] One of the few sons of K'ang-hsi who does not appear to have taken part in the factional struggles of his reign, Yin-hsiang was promoted to first-class prince early in the Yung-cheng reign and repaid the new emperor with unswerving loyalty. The emperor came to rely on Yin-hsiang to handle some of the most difficult and sensitive matters of state, including the reform of Ch'ing fiscal administration during the early 1720s.[50] Yin-hsiang was in charge of the planning for the Dzunghar war when he died. In an edict mourning his brother's death, the emperor confessed his despair at losing so incorruptible and capable a confidant, stating that his brother's passing left him unable to eat or sleep.[51]

In addition to his brother, Yung-cheng was served in the inner court by two Chinese officials, Chiang T'ing-hsi (1669–1732)[52] and Chang T'ing-yu (1672–1755).[53] Both men came from prominent Kiangnan literati families. Chang's father served as a Grand Secretary during the K'ang-hsi reign, and Chiang's father was a well-known painter. Chiang himself was renowned as a painter and poet. The emperor rewarded each of them for their integrity and skill with high positions in the central government bureaucracy. In addition to their other posts, Chang served as a superintendent of the Ministry of Civil Appointments and was made a Grand Secretary in 1726, and Chiang ended his career as both a Grand Secretary and Minister of Revenue. In their informal capacities as inner court advisors, Chiang, Chang, and Yin-hsiang drafted edicts and aided the emperor in policy deliberations.[54] In 1726 they joined Yin-hsiang in the secret preparations for the campaign that was eventually launched against the Dzunghar Mongols three years later.

[48] Bartlett, *Monarchs and ministers*, p. 5. [49] *ECCP*, pp. 923–4.

[50] In a rescript dated Yung-cheng 2,11,20 the emperor told T'ien Wen-ching "I want you to know, today, of all the officials and princes in the court. the only one I trust is Prince Yi." *Yung-cheng chu p'i yü chih* (1732; rpt. Taipei, 1965; hereafter, *CPYC*), T'ien Wen-ching, January 4, 1725, p. 3050.

[51] *CSL-YC*, ch. 94, pp. 2–9, June 15 and 21, 1730. [52] *ECCP*, pp. 142–3. [53] *ECCP*, pp. 54–6.

[54] Bartlett, *Monarchs and ministers*, p. 94.

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Although he did not lead troops to the front, Yung-cheng took a personal interest in every aspect of the Dzunghar war. The complex logistical and strategic issues surrounding the fighting in the northwest, as well as the opportunities that war created for corruption within the military and civilian bureaucracies, prompted the emperor to create a Military Finance Section (*Hu pu chün hsü fang*) under the Ministry of Revenue in 1729. In 1730, the death of Yin-hsiang brought a temporary halt to the war against the Dzunghars and prompted the emperor to establish a more formal advisory framework within the inner court. This body, known initially as the High Officials in Charge of Military Finance (*Pan li chün hsü ta ch'en*), was later referred to as the High Officials in Charge of Military Strategy (*Pan li chün chi ta ch'en*). Both bodies remained informal and outside the statutory administrative structure. Until the end of the Yung-cheng reign, the Military Finance Section and the High Officials in Charge of Military Strategy joined an expanded coterie of inner court advisors in dealing with military affairs.[55]

Governing the provinces and territories

The Yung-cheng emperor's handling of provincial administration manifested his distrust of degree-holders and his attention to the institutions of governance.[56] Here, as in the central administration, he relied on a small group of trusted officials in whose loyalty and honesty he had complete confidence. Many of them came to office through the "irregular route," by purchasing their degrees, and a number were Manchu or Han-chün bannermen. He turned to these men to implement the most controversial policies during his reign: fiscal reform, incorporation of native chiefdoms, and territorial consolidation in the northwest.[57] He set these men before officialdom as models of practical governance and a willingness to take risks in the interest of the people and the state.

Yung-cheng's most important supporters within the provincial bureaucracy were O-erh-t'ai, Li Wei, and T'ien Wen-ching. All three were minor officials during the K'ang-hsi reign and rose rapidly as a result of the patronage of the new monarch. For much of the Yung-cheng reign these three men were the emperor's eyes and ears in southwest, central, and northern China,

[55] Ibid., pp. 120–34. Bartlett has argued that despite their similarities in nomenclature, no single body established during the Yung-cheng reign was *the* precursor of the Grand Council (*Chün chi ch'u*) established during the reign of his successor.

[56] Lawrence Kessler has shown that the turnover rate of provincial officials was higher under Yung-cheng than during any other period in the Ch'ing. Lawrence D. Kessler, "Ethnic composition of provincial leadership during the Ch'ing dynasty," *JAS*, 28 (1969), p. 497.

[57] All four of the officials who spearheaded the Yung-cheng fiscal reforms, No-min, Yang Ts'ung-jen, Shih Wen-chuo, and T'ien Wen-ching, were purchased degree-holders and bannermen.

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respectively. O-erh-t'ai (1680–1745)[58] was a member of the Bordered Blue Banner and a 1699 *chü jen*. Educated in both Manchu and Chinese, O-erh-t'ai had attained the position of assistant department director in the Imperial Household Administration by the time Yung-cheng became emperor. Soon after coming to the throne, Yung-cheng sent O-erh-t'ai to Yunnan to proctor the provincial examinations and upon his return promoted him to be Kiangsi financial commissioner. In 1725, O-erh-t'ai was made governor of Yunnan and acting Yunnan-Kweichow governor-general. He remained in the southwest until 1732, when he was called back to Peking to take the place of Yin-hsiang as a leading member of the inner court and advisor on military affairs in the northwest. O-erh-t'ai exemplified the activist official. It was his enthusiasm that convinced the Yung-cheng emperor to undertake the incorporation of native chiefdoms in Yunnan and Kweichow.[59] In addition to supervising this major military venture, O-erh-t'ai made important contributions to land and salt tax administration and the improvement of transportation, water control, mining, and the minting of copper coins in the southwest.[60]

Li Wei (1687?–1738)[61] was a native of Hsü-chou, Kiangsu and a holder of a purchased rank. A department director in the Ministry of Revenue when Yung-cheng succeeded K'ang-hsi, Li was sent by the new emperor to Yunnan as a salt intendent. Li's activist approach to corruption in Yunnan's civil and salt administration won him the trust of the new emperor. In 1727 the position of Chekiang governor-general was created for Li, and in 1728 his responsibilities were expanded to include Fukien as well. A steadfast opponent of literati privilege and corruption within the bureaucracy, Li Wei was often the target of attacks by fellow officials. His practical approach to administration was recognized by the emperor with a request that he and T'ien Wen-ching, also the holder of a purchased rank, join in authoring a manual for magistrates which was published under the title *Ch'in-pan chou-hsien shih-i* (*An imperially commissioned guide to county and district administration*).[62]

The most controversial of Yung-cheng's provincial confidantes was T'ien Wen-ching (1662–1732).[63] The oldest of the triumvirate, T'ien had served in several posts as magistrate, as controller of the Ch'ang-lu salt administration, and in middle-level ministerial positions under K'ang-hsi. In 1723 Yung-cheng tapped T'ien to supervise famine relief in Shansi. T'ien went on to serve briefly as financial commissioner in Shansi, working with Governor

[58] *ECCP*, pp. 601–3.
[59] Herman, "National integration and regional hegemony" (diss., University of Washington, 1993), pp. 228–9. See pp. 223–5 of this chapter.
[60] Smith, "Ortai's governor-generalship," p. 27. [61] *ECCP*, pp. 720–1.
[62] T'ien Wen-ching and Li Wei, *Ch'in pan chou hsien shih i* (Kiangsu, 1868 ed.).
[63] *ECCP*, pp. 719–20.

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No-min to clean up provincial deficits. In 1724, T'ien was transferred to act as Honan financial commissioner before being promoted to governor. T'ien ended his career as Honan-Shantung governor-general, a post specially created for him.

The relationship between T'ien Wen-ching and Yung-cheng is emblematic of the emperor's use of trusted officials in provincial administration. Throughout his tenure in office, T'ien devoted himself to cleaning up government and attacking literati privilege. He declared war on literati who engaged in litigation-mongering and tax-farming, and diligently enforced the emperor's ban on literati tax exemptions.[64] T'ien was also one of the officials used by Yung-cheng to develop a model for the implementation of the return of the meltage fee to the public coffers.[65] Their sharing a common purpose is clear in all of the correspondence between ruler and minister. Yung-cheng expected honesty, hard work, and that ability to know the sovereign's mind to which he referred in "On Factions." He rewarded this devotion with his support even in the face of the most intense criticism. During the summer of 1724, when opposition to T'ien's handling of emergency dike repairs resulted in a boycott of the Feng-ch'iu, Honan county examinations, Yung-cheng assured T'ien that he need not worry about his detractors. "If you are fair and loyal, what have you to fear. If you had even a tiny bit of private self-interest in this, you could not fool me. *You are one of those who really understands my wishes* and I trust you to do your best" (italics added).[66] In 1726, T'ien Wen-ching was impeached by Chekiang Governor-General Li Fu for his harsh treatment of degree-holding officials. Following a thorough investigation, Yung-cheng again sided with T'ien, concluding that Li's accusations were part of a factional attack by scholars who passed the examinations in the same year.[67]

T'ien's disdain for degree-holders stemmed from his experience with them as officials and as literati out-of-office. T'ien felt that government should be run by trained administrators whose favored reading matter was not the Confucian classics, but the *Sacred Edict* and the *Collected Statutes and Precedents*.[68] Particularly in matters like water control, he encouraged functional specialization, calling for the reinstitution of circuit intendents dedicated to Yellow River conservancy[69] and the transfer of the actual management of water works from county magistrates to special river officials (*ho ch'en*).[70] In the *Imperially Commissioned Guide to County and District Administration*, T'ien and Li also

[64] See the section "Attacks on Literati Privileges" in this chapter. [65] See also pp. 203–13 in this chapter.
[66] *CPYC*, T'ien Wen-ch'ing, June 13, 1724. [67] Feng Erh-kang, *Yung-cheng*, pp. 211–13.
[68] See the essay "Chiang tu lü lie" in T'ien Wen-ching and Li Wei, *Ch'in pan chou hsien shih i*.
[69] Yung-cheng approved of T'ien's idea and ordered him to propose it to the court in a routine memorial. *CPYC*, T'ien Wen-ching, Jan. 22, 1727.
[70] *CPYC*, T'ien Wen-ching, Sept. 24, 1724.

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warned officials against forming too close ties with out-of-office literati living in one's jurisdiction. "Do not entertain them or be entertained by them except when absolutely necessary. Above all do not accept their gifts or their requests to become your student or vice versa. This can only lead to entanglements which will make it impossible for you to deal with them impartially and according to the law."[71]

T'ien first broached the idea of having expectant officials sent to the provinces for a period of apprenticeship while awaiting assignment to their first substantive post. According to T'ien, the problem with most officials was that their understanding of affairs all came from books. As a result, "they follow the old beaten path without question . . . Even if there are some among them who have read extensively in 'statecraft' (*ching shih*), if they cannot adapt themselves to circumstances, but only hold to the fixed and established sayings of the ancients, [they will not see] that that which was appropriate in ancient times is not appropriate now."[72] T'ien's proposal intrigued the emperor, though he found it too radical to implement at first. However, by the end of the Yung-cheng reign the institution of the official-in-training (*shih yung kuan*) appears in the reports of a number of provincial officials.

Secret palace memorials

The key to Yung-cheng's personal ruling style was his elaboration of the system of secret palace memorials first utilized by K'ang-hsi during the succession crisis in the last years of his reign.[73] Whereas the K'ang-hsi emperor had depended on secret palace memorials to monitor the factional struggles surrounding the succession and to communicate with a select group of confidantes, Yung-cheng developed them into the means by which all but routine government business was conducted. Immediately upon taking the throne he extended the privilege of memorializing in this new way to officials below the rank of provincial governor and to many more members of the central bureaucracy.[74] Throughout his reign, he utilized secret palace memorials as a means to gather information on government matters and as a medium through which to experiment with new solutions to administrative problems.

Along with his informal groupings of inner court officials, secret palace memorials operated as a means by which the Yung-cheng emperor bypassed

[71] See the article "Tai shen-shih" in T'ien Wen-ching and Li Wei, *Ch'in pan chou hsien shih i*.
[72] *CPYC*, T'ien Wen-ching, March 10, 1727.
[73] See the discussion on the development of secret palace memorials under the section on "Factional Politics" in the chapter by Jonathan Spence on the K'ang-hsi reign in this volume, pp. 160–69.
[74] Wu, *Communication and control,* p. 115.

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the workings of the outer court. Secret palace memorials went straight to the emperor, avoiding the handling and scrutiny of the Grand Secretariat. Delivered directly to the inner court by the memorialist's personal retainer, they were generally returned to the memorialist by the same route. Because secret palace memorials were read and endorsed by the emperor alone, officials could use this medium without fear of reprisal and in the knowledge that their suggestions would not be buried by an unsympathetic outer court. Moreover, while formal responses to routine memorials had the force of an edict, the emperor could freely exchange ideas in the private communications that took place between himself and his ministers by this new channel.[75]

Secret palace memorials were also the chief means by which the emperor developed bonds of trust between himself and certain officials, and attacked what he took to be inefficiency, incompetence, and corruption among others. Imperial rescripts are filled with inquiries after people's health and that of their families, and were often written in an intimate and personal tone. Before he fell out of favor, Nien Keng-yao was the recipient of many such communications, as well as gifts expressing the emperor's gratitude for his good service. During Nien's term as Szechwan-Shensi governor-general, Yung-cheng sent him a number of gifts, including a valuable pearl and a pair of earrings for Nien's wife "as a sign to predict that you will be successful in carrying out your duty, and that both you and your wife will be happy and blessed by Heaven, and that we will have a happy reunion in the future."[76] In 1729, illness prevented T'ien Wen-ching from performing the ceremonial duties expected of a governor at the New Year. T'ien thanked the emperor for his rescript to a previous memorial, in which the emperor ordered him not to work himself to death. In his rescript, Yung-cheng expressed concern for T'ien's health and once again revealed his conviction that obedience to the emperor was more important than the observance of ritual in the ordering of the state.

> You should rest and recuperate in a warm room and you should wait until you are completely normal before you go out and move around. Even if it is the New Year, you need not over exert yourself to participate [in ceremonial activities]. Showing respect for your sovereign and fulfilling your ritual responsibilities does not require that you perform ceremonies, but that you follow my orders. Even if it causes ignorant types to engage in unfavorable criticism, you have me to stand up for you. What is the harm?[77]

[75] Yung-cheng also developed a system of court letters by which his advisors communicated imperial policy to members of the bureaucracy, thereby avoiding the use of imperial edicts which had the force of law. Bartlett, *Monarchs and ministers*, pp. 103–6.

[76] Wu, *Communication and control*, pp. 148–50, contains translations of several rescripts to memorials by Nien Keng-yao before his fall from favor.

[77] *CPYC*, T'ien Wen-ching, Jan. 4, 1730.

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Because secret palace memorials were read and endorsed by the emperor alone, and did not pass through the outer court, they could be used to discuss ideas that the emperor was not yet ready to make public. Following what was often lengthy correspondence, if the emperor decided to endorse a proposal, he would order the official to memorialize about it in a routine memorial and would himself guide it through the court approval process. The return of the meltage fee to the public coffers, incorporation of the labor-service tax into the land tax, and the appointment of "officials-in-training" – policies that were extremely unpopular among some members of the elite – received a hearing from the court because they were first recommended in secret palace memorials.

The emperor's attention to the minutia of government is vividly reflected in these documents. Yung-cheng received an average of ten, and sometimes as many as fifty or sixty of these lengthy communications a day.[78] Until the middle of his reign, each one was read by him alone and answered in his own hand. Later, when the press of business became too great, only a tiny group of Yung-cheng's most trusted confidantes, most notably his brother, the Yi Prince Yin-hsiang, helped him with this task. As Yung-cheng himself noted,

> I am determined to be the first in the empire in diligence and though outsiders do not believe this, I endorse personally the palace memorials of all the major and minor officials. During the day there are innumerable oral memorials and palace memorials from the ministers at Court and I get no peace. This is not as good as working at night when I can operate as I please. Of all the memorials which come in from the provinces, I endorse 80 or 90 percent of them in the evening.[79]

Secret palace memorials addressed every aspect of local governance, from water control to the pursuit and trial of criminals and bandits. High provincial officials also used secret palace memorials to report on the performance of their subordinates and to consult with the emperor on promotions, appointments, and impeachments. Whereas strict regulations governed who could report on what in a routine memorial, anyone could recount his observations in a secret palace memorial. As a result, officials were less likely to try to cover up problems which arose in their jurisdictions, lest someone else's memorials reveal their deception. The abundance of information Yung-cheng received from the provinces each day gave him all the ammunition he needed to attack the inefficiency and corruption which he saw to be the legacy of his father's reign.

[78] Wu, *Communication and control*, p. 119. [79] Smith, "Ortai's governor-generalship," p. 5.

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REFORM DURING THE YUNG-CHENG REIGN

Yin-chen was forty-five years old when he took his place on the dragon throne. A keen political observer and frequent participant in matters of state, the prince-turned-emperor was confident that he had far more knowledge and experience of the world than did his father when he took over the affairs of state. Yung-cheng saw being emperor as a duty entrusted to him by Heaven and he felt uniquely equipped for the job not simply because Heaven had singled him out as possessing virtue. He understood how things really worked. Moreover, he came to the tasks of government with a zeal that was firmly embedded in the knowledge that his father had been too soft and that reform of the bureaucracy was his sacred duty as the new ruler of the Ch'ing empire.

It was in this spirit that Yung-cheng delivered his first major message to his ministers, issued even before the official beginning of his own reign. In it he set the tone for his administration, stating "if you know of any aspect of governance that should be carried out or that should be eliminated to the benefit of the government's finances or the people's livelihood (*kuo chi min sheng*) . . . you should write to me about each one by secret palace memorial."[80]

The crisis in government accounts

Foremost on the emperor's list of matters deserving immediate imperial attention was the plague of deficits in government treasuries.[81] Despite twenty years of relative peace at the end of the K'ang-hsi reign, in 1722 the treasury of the Ministry of Revenue, the main repository of central government income, had only eight million taels in store. This was the equivalent of about 27 percent of the central government's annual tax quota. Equally alarming were the deficits in other treasuries and granaries around the capital.[82] The emperor's reaction reflected that knowledge of affairs of which he was so proud. While his father's administration had been content to lay the blame for tax shortages on the people, Yung-cheng placed it firmly within the yamen. By shifting responsibility for shortfalls from nonpayment by taxpayers to official mismanagement of revenue, the emperor inadvertently opened the door to an examination of the weaknesses within the regular tax system itself.

[80] Jan. 5, 1723 edict, cited in Feng Erh-kang, *Yung-cheng chuan*, p. 80.
[81] A detailed discussion of all the issues raised in this section may be found in Zelin, *The magistrate's tael*.
[82] Zelin, *The magistrate's tael*, p. 4.

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If arrears were the cause of the central government's fiscal deficiencies, then the solution was greater efforts to improve tax collection. The abolition of the *li chia* (tithing unit) heads as tax collectors and their replacement by rolling lists to inform individual taxpayers of their responsibilities to the state were among the measures undertaken in earlier reigns to have the people to pay their taxes directly and on time. While officials could be held accountable for laxity in this regard, under the K'ang-hsi emperor a certain sympathy was shown for the officials whose job it was to wring money out of an unwilling populace.[83]

The Yung-cheng emperor made it clear from the start that this would not be his approach. For this emperor, the cause of deficits was embezzlement. Taxes collected were not being remitted to the central government. As a result, the state had neither the cushion it needed to cope with future disasters nor the money it needed to perform its current duties. Both officials and their clerks were implicated in an epidemic of corruption that reached into every corner of the bureaucracy. Local officials were able to steal from the state because their superiors protected them. Monies embezzled were labeled "funds shifted for public expenses." And time limits placed on their restitution were ignored until the officials originally responsible were long gone from office.[84]

Even the Ministry of Revenue was deemed complicit by covering up embezzlement and accepting fees and bribes from local officials. Early in 1723 an independent accounting office called the Office of the Audit (*Hui k'ao fu*) was established, headed by four of the emperor's most trusted officials, including his favorite brother, Yin-hsiang, and his uncle, Longkedo.[85] The Office of the Audit was charged with investigating all questionable annual accounts from the provinces in order to put an end to the practice of evading Ministry scrutiny through bribery. At the same time, the Office was given the task of auditing the accounts of the six Ministries in an effort to clear up deficits at the central government level.[86]

The emperor attacked the problem of local-level corruption more indirectly. Rather than provoke animosities between central and local government by sending imperial commissioners to pry into local affairs, Yung-cheng called upon the governors and governors-general of each province to investigate the source of the deficits in their subordinate jurisdictions. No one would be punished for the shortfalls he reported in his own accounts or for prior

[83] *Huang ch'ao shih huo chih* (1710; Imperial Edition, National Palace Museum Archives, Taipei), *fu i* 6, 1710.

[84] Zelin, *The magistrate's tael*, pp. 78–80.

[85] *CSL-YC*, ch. 3, pp. 34–35, Feb. 18, 1723; ch. 4, p. 32, March 31, 1723.

[86] The Office of the Audit was disbanded in 1725 and its duties restored to the Ministry of Revenue.

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failure to uncover deficiencies in the accounts of his subordinates. However, all deficits were to be repaid within three years, and anyone failing to report honestly or engaging in extortion in order to cover his accounts would be severely punished.

The Yung-cheng emperor's hard line on corruption sent notice to the bureaucracy that this was an emperor with an eye on the details of administration and a strong distaste for his father's leniency toward substandard performance in the provinces. At this point, at least, it did not necessarily portend a new approach to the management of fiscal affairs, much less a new vision of the role of the state at the local level. Indeed, during the early months of the campaign to clean up state finances, the emperor viewed with unremitting skepticism the cries of officials hoping to be spared responsibility for the repayment of deficits because the funds in question had not been embezzled, but merely used for public purposes other than those for which they were legally authorized (*yin kung no i*). His insistence that all treasuries and granaries be replenished within three years put enormous pressure on an already strained local bureaucracy. Reports flooded the capital but no consensus could be reached on the cause of deficits or who should be responsible for their repayment. Most deficits were of such long standing that the official at fault was already gone. To dun him at his home placed a new burden on the officials in whose jurisdiction he lived. A strict interpretation of the law held that any official who accepted the accounts of his predecessor was responsible for any discrepancies that turned up during his term of office. This allowed the Ministry of Revenue to argue that officials now in the posts should repay all deficits in their treasuries, however they had occurred. At the same time, in an effort to avoid future deficits, the Ministry called for more stringent supervision of provincial accounts.

As the first year of his reign drew to a close, the Yung-cheng emperor leveled the decisive blow to prevailing Ch'ing fiscal practices. Convinced by the growing number of reports from the provinces that high provincial officials' extortion of their subordinates was a key factor in the diversion of tax revenues that should have been remitted to the central government, the emperor issued a ban on the imposition of customary fees and salary contributions by local officials to pay for public projects.[87] Were officials to abide by this requirement, the entire Ch'ing fiscal administration would have crashed to a halt. Magistrates no longer would have been able to pay for even

[87] Among the reports that prompted this ban was a memorial from Governor Huang Ping, that, during a famine in 1719–20, over 117,000 piculs of grain had been distributed from Shantung's provincial granaries, all of which had been replenished with funds contributed from the salaries and wages of the local bureaucracy. *CPYC*, Shantung Governor Huang Ping, January 8, 1724.

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the most basic functions of county and district government. And higher officials, deprived of their customary fees, would no longer have been able to operate their yamen. Fortunately, the emperor's moratorium on sanctions for fiscal malfeasance had allowed officials to report on local fiscal affairs with an unprecedented candor that revealed the truth about the shaky foundations upon which public financing was based in the Ch'ing.

The informal system of funding

What the memorials that poured into the capital revealed was simple. The Ch'ing fiscal system did not provide local and provincial government with adequate revenues to carry out the tasks that the Ch'ing state expected them to perform. Land and labor-service taxes provided the largest portion of the Ch'ing revenue stream.[88] Taxes on the sale of salt provided the second major source of state income, followed by a variety of smaller levies which varied from place to place.[89] Of all these taxes, only the land and labor-service taxes were legally shared with local governments. According to the Yung-cheng edition of the *Ta Ch'ing hui tien*, in 1685 approximately 21 percent of the revenues derived from this source were retained (*ts'un liu*) in the provinces.[90]

The uses to which these revenues could be put, closely monitored under the fiscal auditing systems inaugurated by the Ch'ing regime, were limited. Small government stipends were allotted to all ranking officials (*kuan feng*). Government stipends ranged from 80 taels for a magistrate to 155 taels for a governor and 180 taels for a governor-general with responsibilities for more than one province. Retained funds were primarily earmarked for the wages of yamen runners, ceremonial expenses, student stipends, and welfare contributions for the support of the orphaned, widowed, and poor.[91] It was not uncommon for the central government to command the transfer of a portion of the retained tax quota to which local officials were entitled.[92] The vast majority of expenses encountered by local government officials had no corresponding budgetary category in the fiscal system inherited by the Ch'ing from the Ming. Local officials faced with the need to repair or build city walls, roads, dikes, embankments, bridges, and ferry crossings had to find alternative sources of funds. To these expenses were added wages for supernumerary runners and clerks and the growing entourage of private secretaries upon whom provincial officials relied for expert advice and help in matters fiscal

[88] Wang Yeh-chien, *Land taxation in imperial China, 1750–1911* (Cambridge, Mass., 1973), p. 72.

[89] Ch'ü T'ung-tsu, "Local government in China under the Ch'ing," *Harvard East Asian Studies*, 9 (Cambridge, Mass., 1962), pp. 140, 144–7.

[90] *Ta Ch'ing hui tien*, Yung-cheng edition, ch. 32, *Hu pu* 10, *fu-i* 2, *ch'i yün*.

[91] Zelin, *The magistrate's tael*, pp. 27–37. [92] Ibid., pp. 43–6.

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and judicial. In the event of an emergency, the central authorities' revenues could be called upon for a modest contribution to flood or famine relief, but the greater part of the responsibility to address the needs of the victims fell to the local bureaucracy on the county, prefectural, or provincial levels.

In the end, if local officials were to do their jobs, they had only two options. Either they siphoned off funds allocated by the central government for other purposes or earmarked for remittance to the central treasuries, or they squeezed the necessary revenues from the people in the process of collecting taxes. In fact, they did both. What the emperor and his advisors discovered was that government functioned because of the existence of a complex informal system of revenue generation that operated parallel to, and in coordination with, the regular fiscal administration. It was informal only in that it was not part of the regular system of revenue sharing. It operated outside the scrutiny of state auditing bureaus and was beyond the control of the central authorities. Most of the methods officials used to obtain money through this informal network of funding were illegal. More damaging than the methods themselves were the effects that they had on official discipline and official morale. And most insidious was the fact that because it worked so well, generations of central government officials had been unable to see the dysfunctions in the statutory fiscal structures of the state which had led to the development of the informal network of funding.

Magistrates, as the officials closest to the people, bore the main responsibility for funneling the wealth of the countryside into the coffers of local- and provincial-level officials. By levying surcharges of various kinds on the regular taxes of the people, magistrates were able to accumulate, in bits and pieces, most of the funds needed to maintain the operations of local government. Because the levying of surcharges was illegal, magistrates and their staffs had to be creative in adding to their coffers. Wastage allowances were the most common form of surcharge. Called *hao mi* in the case of tribute grain and *hao hsien* or *huo hao* (meltage fees) in the case of taxes paid in silver, wastage allowances originated in an attempt by government to collect slightly more than the statutory tax rate to make up for the small amounts of grain that were lost in transport and the losses in the value of silver that occurred when it was melted down into large ingots for shipment to the capital. A lucrative and easily assessed surcharge, wastage allowances had risen in some provinces to as much as 50 percent or more of the regular tax quota. Funds were also raised by means of weighted scales and a variety of fees for weighing, assessing, and collecting taxes.[93] When these methods

[93] Ibid., pp. 47–54.

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proved insufficient, magistrates were often forced to move funds from a legally designated budget category and use it for something else. And at one time or another, almost all magistrates had to resort to falsifying arrears in order to avoid remitting the full statutory quota of regular taxes to the central government so that they could be used locally.

High-ranking officials, most of whom did not have direct responsibility for tax collection, also relied on the informal funding network to operate their yamen, support their families and retainers, and perform the numerous public services for which they were responsible. Funds flowed from the lower levels to the offices of the provincial governors and others through a variety of customary fees. The expenses of the provincial yamen were also offset by contributions from the customs and salt administrations operating within their territories, from a percentage deduction from the regular taxes being remitted to the central government, and from sums skimmed off in the process of purchase and allocation of materials used in the course of undertaking government projects.

The informal funding network was remarkable for its efficacy and for the regularity with which it functioned. Both the paths of transmission and the types and amounts of fees and payments were standardized and they were followed consistently over decades and despite many changes in personnel. It was not merely a means to private aggrandizement, but was the main revenue stream that allowed Ch'ing local government to function. Nevertheless, it posed enormous challenges to a state determined to end corruption and guarantee remittances to the central government. Some of the methods employed to raise funds for use within the provinces did not create new income, but simply moved monies from one category of expenditure to another. When a magistrate shifted funds meant to purchase relief grain to pay for the wages of workers building new dikes, he gambled that famine would not occur while he was in office and that the new dikes might fend it off for years to come. His actions were not corrupt in that he did not steal the funds for personal use. But he did violate the administrative code. And because he had to keep his actions secret, chances were that when the relief grain was needed, it would not have been replenished.

Falsifying arrears contributed directly to the central government's deficits and generated pressure on the taxpayer rather than where it belonged. The proliferation of surcharges added to the problem by raising the real tax burden on the people and the real incidence of arrears. Surcharges were unregulated and when they became accepted as a source of funds for legitimate expenses, it became easy to take a bit more to line one's own pockets. Finally, the reliance of higher officials on customary fees meant that official discipline at every level was compromised. Under conditions by which higher

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officials could only operate their yamen with the aid of funds from their subordinates, magistrates had to squeeze more money from the people, and their superiors were inclined to condone the misconduct that enabled them to do so.

By the end of 1723, the full extent of the problem facing the government was laid bare. The moratorium on punishments had encouraged disclosure of most of the deficits in local and provincial treasuries and had brought to light the inadequacies of the existing statutory revenue-sharing framework. The emperor's ban on customary fees and salary contributions had relieved part of the pressure on county-level officials, but the new attention focused on surcharges in all their manifestations meant that local officials and their superiors were left without recourse to pay off their deficits, much less fund the operations of their yamen. The solution, which began to take form in the last months of the year, came to be known as *huo hao kuei kung* (the return of the meltage fee to the public coffers).

Return of the meltage fee to the public coffers

The return of the meltage fee to the public coffers set in place a comprehensive system of revenue sharing between local and central government. For the first time in Chinese history, the state took account of both the administrative needs of officials and the duty of local government to provide a substantial level of public services and infrastructural improvements. While allowing local officials considerable flexibility in responding to the changing needs of local governance, the reforms incorporated mechanisms for provincial supervision of local fiscal activity and for the intraprovincial redistribution of fiscal resources. By no means perfect in its execution, the return of the meltage fee to the public coffers was a central component of the Yung-cheng emperor's state-building project.

The manner in which the return of the meltage fee to the public coffers became state policy bears some resemblance to the manner in which the Single-whip reforms were implemented in the late Ming. Initiative appears to have been taken by provincial officials. However, unlike his Ming counterparts, the Yung-cheng emperor played a key role in mediating competing interests and pushing forward the reform process. The secret palace memorial system was critical here, as it had been in unraveling the deficit problem in the first place. Secret palace memorials provided a means by which provincial officials could communicate directly with the emperor, keep him informed of local conditions, experiment with possible solutions, and work out the details of a reform program removed from the scrutiny of potential critics.

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The earliest evidence of a plan to use legalized meltage fees for public purposes appears in a memorial from Hu-kuang Governor-General Yang Tsung-jen.[94] The emperor's reaction was one of enthusiasm, tempered by warnings that caution be observed in carrying out the plan. Yung-cheng's rescript to a similar memorial from Honan Governor Shih Wen-chuo lays bare the new emperor's attitude toward administrative reform. Praising Shih's plan, the emperor noted that only by calculating total available funds and determining how much was needed to make up deficits and to pay for officials' personal and public expenses could the smooth functioning of government be guaranteed. Platitudes about morality and good government were not enough. "If one speaks in imprecise and confused generalities, uttering phrases such as 'taxes are important,' then what one says amounts to empty words on paper. What practical use does it have?"[95]

During the first winter of the Yung-cheng reign, the governors of Chihli and Shantung forwarded similar submissions by secret palace memorial. Differing in the rate at which the meltage fee should be collected, each recommended the legalization of a fixed percentage meltage fee, to be collected by county magistrates and retained at the local level except for a portion to be remitted to the provincial treasury for provincial expenses and to clear remaining deficits. While they recognized the need for adequate funding at the local level, the solution they proposed called for little more than incorporation of previously illegal levies into the regular tax system. The proposal that would ultimately become the model for the return of the meltage fee to the public coffers reforms was submitted by Shansi Governor No-min and Financial Commissioner T'ien Wen-ching during the spring of 1723. Rather than allow magistrates to retain the bulk of the meltage fees collected in their jurisdiction, No-min and T'ien recommended that it be remitted in full to the provincial capital. There, based on periodic calculations of local need, the provincial financial commissioner would determine how much of the total provincial intake would be redistributed to each county and other provincial administrative units in the form of *kung fei* (public expense funds) and *yang lien yin* (nourishing virtue silver).[96]

Despite the secrecy with which the return of the meltage fee to the public coffers was carried out, the experiment soon became public. Officials passing

[94] *CPYC*, p. 131.

[95] *Kung chung tang Yung-cheng ch'ao tsou che* (Shih lin, Taipei: National Palace Museum Archives, n.p., n.d.; hereafter cited as *Yung-cheng ch'ao tsou che*), Honan Governor Shih Wen-chuo, Feb. 6, 1724, emperor's rescript.

[96] The memorial in which this proposal was originally made no longer survives. According to a memorial by Shansi Financial Commissioner Kao Ch'eng-ling, No-min first suggested the use of meltage fees in this way in a memorial dated June 15, 1723. *Yung-cheng ch'ao tsou che*, Shansi Financial Commissioner Kao Ch'eng-ling, March 21, 1725.

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through provinces in which the experiment was taking place brought the news to the capital, where it became the subject of a heated debate. Of particular concern was the requirement that magistrates remit all of their quota of meltage fees to the provincial treasury. Some critics saw this as a needless waste of transportation costs. Lo Ch'i-ch'ang, who witnessed the reforms while proctoring the provincial examinations in Honan, saw the plan as a way to commandeer the only source of revenues at the magistrates' disposal. Others raised the specter of tax increases, seeing the reforms as a violation of the most fundamental principles of good governance, low taxation, and minimalist government. Shen Chin-ssu, a prominent philosopher and poet who had himself served as a county magistrate, insisted that frugality was the answer to the shortage of funds at the local level and efforts to repay the debts of embezzlers only served to obscure the importance of morality in governing the empire.[97] Opposition to the reforms in Shansi prompted a number of magistrates to refuse to remit their meltage fees to the provincial treasury. While rapid impeachment of the offenders ended resistance there, in Honan literati joined with local officials in a protest which culminated in a boycott of the official examinations in Feng-ch'iu county.

At the height of the Honan protests, the Yung-cheng emperor chose to put the reform of government finances before the court. The opposition that the proposed system of revenue sharing engendered and the emperor's response tell us much about the political process in the High Ch'ing and the limits that it placed on the exercise of imperial authority. In July 1724, Yung-cheng had Shansi Governor No-min submit to the Grand Secretariat a request to implement the return of the meltage fee to the public coffers. Echoing the concerns of Lo and Shen, the grand secretaries presented the emperor with a long list of objections. Rather than respond to them himself, Yung-cheng had the new Shansi financial commissioner, Kao Ch'eng-ling, submit an item-by-item rebuttal in the form of a memorial. Armed with Kao's penetrating analysis, the emperor then went back to the court. Expanding the discussants to include the Censorate and the Council of Ministers and Princes, the emperor urged a deliberation that was calm and fair. Anticipating continued disagreements, he even authorized each body to submit split opinions if that became necessary.

Given the emperor's commitment to reform, it is not surprising that the court endorsed the plan. That they did so only grudgingly, on an experimental basis, beginning in Shansi, and only for as long as it would take to clear up the current deficit crisis belies the notion that even as powerful an

[97] Zelin, *The magistrate's tael*, pp. 97–100.

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emperor as Yung-cheng ruled absolutely. The emperor's disgust with the shortsightedness of his ministers is palpable in the edict he issued in response to their judgment. Yung-cheng made it clear that the return of the meltage fee to the public coffers was a policy that both reduced the real tax burden of the people and provided the essential basis for morality in office. In the end, however, rather than institute the reforms by fiat, the emperor felt constrained to leave implementation to the discretion of individual governors and governors-general. Once again, the secret palace memorial system of communication between emperor and minister provided the vehicle to ensure that discretion was exercised in the way that the emperor intended.

As it finally evolved, the return of the meltage fee to the public coffers contained most of the elements of the original proposal submitted by No-min and T'ien Wen-ching and refined under T'ien's administration as governor of Honan. Revenues for local use were to be generated by collecting an additional fixed percentage of the regular land and labor-service tax, to be known as the meltage fee. Meltage fees were to be remitted by taxpayers along with their regular taxes and forwarded to the provincial financial commissioner. The latter redistributed the income generated to local officials in two pieces. *Yang-lien yin* (nourishing virtue silver) provided officials with substantial salary increases, ranging from one or two thousand taels for magistrates to as much as ten or twenty thousand taels for governors and governors-general. Often translated as "supplemental salaries," nourishing virtue silver is better understood as those funds allocated to deal with the "inner" expenses of the official yamen, both personal and administrative. To this was added *kung fei* (public expenses) to cover "outer" expenses such as wall, road, and bridge repairs; granary construction; waterworks and the like. In many provinces, a provincial discretionary fund was also created to meet emergency expenses such as famine relief and dike repairs after floods. Moreover, by requiring that each county and district remit its meltage fees to the provincial capital, provinces were able to redistribute a portion of their resources from wealthy regions to poorer ones.

One of the key points of tension in the imperial system of rule was between centralization and decentralization. Central control favored uniformity of practice, which was easier to monitor. However, its failure to respond to local needs and conditions had helped produce the fiscal crisis in the first place. The emperor's use of secret palace memorials to guide the implementation process in each province permitted a combination of oversight and decentralized control. Through consultations between the emperor and the provincial authorities, provinces were permitted to adjust the general policy guidelines to meet the needs of their particular economies. In provinces like Kweichow and Yunnan, where land taxes were low, commercial taxes were

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integrated into the new system of local funding. The rate at which meltage fees were collected was set in an inverse relationship to the volume of each province's regular tax quota. And the amount of each official's nourishing virtue silver was set according to the responsibilities attached to his post. Of equal importance, the emperor ordered local officials *not* to report their meltage fees and how they were used to the Ministry of Revenue. Magistrates were not to be hemmed in by rigid quotas and budgetary categories that governed their use of regular retained funds.

The most radical implication of the return of the meltage fee to the public coffers, however, was the one that was never directly articulated. The institutionalization of a predictable source of funds for public expenses nurtured an activist ethos that took the provision of public services and the development of local infrastructures as the responsibility of the state. When the Yung-cheng emperor argued against charges that the return of the meltage fee to the public coffers violated the ideal of low taxes as a fundamental tenet of good government, he was not simply proposing that the people would ultimately pay less if surcharges were regulated. He was also taking a stand for a larger vision of the central state, one that challenged the decentralized (*feng chien*) ideal of literati-led community self-management supported by influential and often anti-Manchu Chinese thinkers in the early Ch'ing.

Government finances and the people's livelihood

The duty of the state to ensure the conditions under which the people could live their lives content in their occupations was basic to all political thought in the eighteenth century. For the Yung-cheng emperor and his most trusted officials this meant finding a way to balance the need of the state to generate sufficient income to perform its duties and the need of the people to sustain a certain standard of living without fear of excessive exactions by that same state. *Kuo chi* (government finances) and *min sheng* (people's livelihood) were paired in most discussions of fiscal policy during the early Ch'ing. The Yung-cheng emperor's leaving sixty million taels of silver in the state treasury when he died is testimony to the success of his administration in addressing the state finance side of the pair. The measures undertaken to address the people's livelihood were no less significant.

The incorporation of the labor-service tax into the land tax

The most important components of the early Ch'ing tax system were the land tax (*ti*) and the labor-service tax (*ting*). In the Ch'ing period, the labor-service tax, imposed on all adult males aged sixteen to sixty, was no longer paid in

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actual labor service to the government. Instead it was levied in silver according to payment schedules that varied widely among provinces. Because the tax was not linked to any particular source of income, or land ownership, it placed an inordinate burden on each county's poorest households. The incorporation of the labor-service tax into the land tax (*ting sui ti*) had been recommended in the late Ming. Such a policy would eliminate the tax obligations of landless households. However, as long as the labor-service quota was based on the number of adult males (*ting*) and subject to periodic revision to take account of rising population, merger of the two taxes was difficult. Once the labor-service tax was frozen in 1711, merger became practical, although little progress was made until the Yung-cheng reign.[98]

The process by which the incorporation of the labor-service tax into the land tax became government policy bore some important similarities to that of the return of the meltage fee to the public coffers. As in the latter case, the emperor played the role of elicitor of reform proposals which he then championed during the court approval process and guided through implementation. Opposition to the incorporation of the labor-service tax into the land tax came from many quarters. Landowners objected to the rise in land taxes that incorporation would entail, particularly since the degree-holding elite had managed to evade at least part of the labor-service tax. Some critics argued that all subjects should pay some tax, regardless of their landholding status. Others felt that because the size and productivity of the *mou* (the taxable unit of land) differed from province to province, incorporation of the labor service tax into the *mou* would lead to inequities among taxpayers.

In August 1723, the Chihli Governor, Li Wei-ch'ün, sent a secret palace memorial to the emperor calling for immediate implementation of such a policy. Governor Li indicated that he was sending his request to the emperor and not the Ministry of Revenue because he recognized the hostility that his proposal would encounter. Only submission by the emperor guaranteed a fair hearing. Yung-cheng did submit Li's proposal, and three months later the Ministry of Revenue approved. However, to ensure a consensus on this controversial issue, Yung-cheng circulated Li's memorial to the nine ministers and all relevant offices in the capital for reactions. A number of questions were raised which the emperor asked Li to address. Even then, execution of the policy was left to the provinces in consultation with the emperor through secret palace memorials so that local conditions could be addressed. Because the land tax itself already took into account the productivity of each taxable

[98] Some progress was made in Szechwan and Kwangtung during the last decade of the K'ang-hsi reign. Ch'u, *Local government*, pp. 131–2; p. 286, n. 23.

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unit of land, in most provinces a fixed unit of labor-service tax was added to every tael of land tax.[99]

Land reclamation

State programs to encourage land reclamation and increase the area of cultivated land registered for taxation date back to the earliest days of Ch'ing rule. The abandonment of farmland and the flight or death of populations as well as the disruption of local control during the Ming-Ch'ing transition lowered the amount of registered arable land in the mid-seventeenth century by almost two million *ch'ing*[100] from that recorded during the Wan-li reign (1573–1619). Deadlines were set for officials to increase their tax rolls and rewards were offered to those who succeeded in bringing significant numbers of settlers into their jurisdictions. During the K'ang-hsi reign, tax exemptions were offered for newly reclaimed land, and local officials were authorized to assist individuals willing to open new lands by providing them with loans for the purchase of seed, cattle, and tools.[101] However, early Ch'ing revenue-sharing policies and the devastation that had turned farmland in many areas of China to waste at the end of the Ming denied the local governments of those same areas the tax resources necessary to provide substantial aid. By the beginning of the Yung-cheng reign, total landholdings registered for taxation slightly exceeded that recorded for the late Ming.[102] In all, a total of 1,733,225 *ch'ing* were added to the tax rolls between 1661 and 1724.

Most of the land reclaimed during the first two Ch'ing reigns was in the economic heartland of China. Reclamation and land registration during the Yung-cheng period was concentrated in the more distant provinces. Although the acreage involved was not large, it made a significant contribution to state income. This land was not the marginal land forced into cultivation during the reclamation drives of the mid- and late-Ch'ien-lung reign. Located in areas of relatively low population density, it helped to feed a growing

[99] Feng Erh-k'ang, *Yung-cheng chuan*, pp. 176–8.

[100] A *ch'ing* is a traditional Chinese measure of land equivalent to 100 *mou*, or appoximately 6 hectares. However, during the dynastic period, the measurement of land was never standardized, making the study of Chinese land use and taxation difficult. For a discussion of the use of the "fiscal mou" see Ho Ping-ti, *Studies on the population of China, 1368–1953* (Cambridge, Mass., 1959), pp. 101–16. For the purposes of gross comparisons, the *mou* and *ch'ing* will be treated here as a standard measurement.

[101] Kuo Sung-i, "Ch'ing-ch'u feng-chien kuo-chia k'en-huang cheng-ts'e fen-hsi," *Ch'ing shih lun ts'ung*, 2 (1980), pp. 117, 123–4.

[102] Sun Yu-t'ang and Chang Chi-ch'ien, "Ch'ing tai ti ken-t'ien yü ting-kou ti chi lu," *Ch'ing shih lun ts'ung*, 1 (1970), p. 112.

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population in more densely settled areas and in areas where mining and handicraft industry and cash cropping had created a need for food imports. This was particularly true of Szechwan, where most of the extremely fertile Red Basin was resettled during the first several decades of the eighteenth century.[103] This period also saw a dramatic extension of Han settlement in the northwest and into former native chieftain areas in Hu-kuang, Kweichow, and Yunnan. Cultivation was pushed into the mountains of Kwangtung and Kwangsi, and the process of transforming Honan's former imperial estates into taxable commoner farms was completed. The geographic shift of land reclamation to the frontier made government assistance to migration and resettlement far more important than it had been during the first eighty years of the Ch'ing. Moreover, growing concern during the early eighteenth century that China's population would soon outstrip the capacity of its agricultural resources focused new attention on the need to extend the empire's cultivated acreage for subsistence reasons as well as to augment government tax revenue.

The techniques used to promote reclamation during the Yung-cheng period were not substantially different from the policies pursued during the seventeenth century. Measures used to promote land reclamation during the Yung-cheng period can be divided into three categories: (1) liberal grace periods during which no tax had to be paid on newly opened land; (2) rewards to officials and members of the local elite responsible for promoting resettlement of large tracts of waste; (3) loans to poor individuals migrating to frontier areas. Their effectiveness was due to the vigor with which they were pursued. The successful implementation of the return of the meltage fee to the public coffers gave local government a revenue stream with which to subsidize immigrant farmers. Moreover, Ch'ing frontier policy extended the reach of the state into areas previously left to native rule. In 1723 an imperial decree gave all persons opening land to cultivation six years on paddy fields and ten years on dry fields before any tax had to be paid.[104] In 1729 the emperor reiterated his interest in the reclamation of all potential arable lands. However, growing concern with tax evasion and the reform of fiscal administration encouraged a retreat from the generous policies of the emperor's inaugural year. Subjects would now have three years to repay government land development loans, but only five years before they were obligated to register their fields and begin to pay tax.[105] Confusion created by

[103] For a discussion of the settlement of Szechwan in the Ch'ing period, see Robert Entenmann, "Szechwan and Ch'ing migration policy," *Ch'ing-shih wen-t'i*, 4, No. 4 (December 1980), pp. 35–54.

[104] *CSL-YC*, ch. 6, p. 25, May 30, 1723. As in the case of other fiscal policies, considerable leeway appears to have been exercised in the interests of "suiting the policy to the time and place."

[105] *CSL-YC*, ch. 80, p. 14, May 10, 1729.

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frequently contradictory regulations governing such lands contributed to a growing problem of tax evasion and unreported land.

Time limits were also used to pressure officials and landowners to hasten the reclamation process. Each province during the Yung-cheng reign was ordered to survey its uncultivated land to determine the precise acreage suited to agricultural use. This total was then divided into ten equal parts, and officials wishing to avoid impeachment were instructed to see that three-tenths were reclaimed each year. In 1725, the government ordered a survey of Kansu wastelands and gave all persons claiming ownership of uncultivated hillsides one year to plant them or turn the property over to someone who would.[106] In Fukien and Hupei similar attempts were made to prevent the hoarding of wasteland by giving owners three years to demonstrate their intent to put their fields to productive use and register them for taxation.[107]

Many resettlement programs sponsored by government during the Yung-cheng period were directed toward enabling the individual to reclaim his own fields. Government surveys of wasteland in Kansu helped identify sites suitable for reclamation in areas where few settlers had yet to venture. In 1728, Governor Hsien-te announced a program of land allocation to migrants to Szechwan. Each new household was allowed 30 *mou* of irrigated or 50 *mou* of dry agricultural land.[108] In parts of the newly pacified territories of Ninghsia and An-hsi, the government returned control to the provinces of land that had been used by the military as horse pasture. Plans were made to attract 20,000 households with offers of farms of 100 *mou* apiece. Over 100,000 taels of regular tax funds were allocated to build the water conservancy facilities necessary for cultivation of the newly created fields.[109] By 1728 only 4,600 families had moved to the first of the government settlements, and efforts to open the area were intensified by offering land to officials and military officers.[110] The transformation of pastureland to the cultivation of cereal crops was also encouraged in Yunnan, where level land was at a premium, as well as in parts of Honan, Chihli, and Liaoning. At least some of these lands were drained and irrigation facilities provided at government expense. In such cases peasants were usually expected to rent their plots as tenants of the resident army unit to which the land belonged. However, where peasants were allowed to reclaim the land themselves, permanent deeds of ownership were granted and the new occupant was registered with the local government for the purpose of taxation.

[106] *Yung-cheng ch'ao tsou che*, Chung Pao, Jan. 23, 1726.
[107] Ibid., Lu Chuo, June 24, 1735; Fu Min and Hsien-te, April 7, 1727.
[108] Entenmann, "Szechwan and Ch'ing migration policy," p. 42.
[109] *Yung-cheng ch'ao tsou che*, Yüeh Chung-ch'i, May 7 and 20, 1726.
[110] Ibid., Li Ju-po, Feb. 25, 1729.

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Migrants to other parts of the northwest as well as the newly absorbed territories of the southwest were offered travel expenses and land. Before setting out for the newly established Chao-t'ung prefecture in Yunnan, a migrant could receive 0.05 taels for each day spent on the road. Upon arrival in the prefecture he could expect allocation of a homestead of approximately 20 *mou*.[111] Despite the location of this land in former Lolo territory, by Yung-cheng 10 (1732) over 1,000 households had been enticed to move and 20,000 taels had been disbursed from the provincial treasury to buy rice in Szechwan to support the settlers until they could produce a crop.[112]

The most important government contribution to the reclamation of wasteland by individual households came in the form of loans for the purchase of seed, cattle, tools, and food. Whereas little support of this kind could be expected during the seventeenth century, there is evidence that during the Yung-cheng period needy peasants had access to some form of assistance in almost every province in which large-scale reclamation took place. In Honan, government aid was provided for peasants attempting to return to lands recently ravaged by flood, as well as those opening wasteland that previously had been tilled.[113] Local officials in Shantung were instructed to distribute seed, cattle, and food to poor peasants opening fertile fields in the flatlands, while reclamation of the more difficult mountain and marsh lands was left to wealthy local households with the means to engage tenants and invest in drainage, irrigation, and terracing.[114] At both the northern and southwestern frontiers, the remoteness of new settlements from centers of population often compelled the government to go beyond simple cash allowances. In areas unsuited to paddy rice, local officials in Yunnan imported buckwheat seeds and instructed Han Chinese and aborigine settlers in its cultivation.[115] In parts of Wei-ning county, Kweichow, the magistrate took responsibility for supplying the population with lime to "warm up" the soil. Local officials were even known to import plow animals to allow the cultivation of virgin soil in newly settled areas in Kansu and in the heart of the aborigine territory of Yunnan.[116]

Attacks on literati privileges

From the perspective of the Yung-cheng emperor, protection of the people entailed reform of the behavior of the literati, the degree-holding elite, as

[111] Ibid., Kao Ch'i-chuo, Jan. 12, 1732. [112] Ibid., Ch'ang Yün-sui, April 6, 1732.
[113] See, for example, *Yung-cheng ch'ao tsou che*, Vol. 3, pp. 911–14, T'ien Wen-ching, April 11, 1725.
[114] Ibid., Vol. 20, pp. 780–1, Yüeh Chun, May 8, 1734.
[115] Ibid., Vol. 18, p. 689, Ke-sen, Sept. 19, 1731.
[116] Ibid., Yüeh Chung-ch'i, Feb. 28, 1729; O-erh-t'ai, Jan. 12, 1727.

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well as cleaning up government and encouraging production. The abuse of their degree-holding status to evade taxation and exert control over the local community was a common charge leveled against the literati in the early Ch'ing. The Yung-cheng emperor was relentless in his attack on literati privilege, targeting three specific areas in which its exercise was damaging to both the state treasury and the people's livelihood.

Most important was the emperor's attempt to eliminate differential assignment of tax obligations. Recognizing existing practices inherited from the Ming, the Ch'ing founders had authorized the classification of taxpayers by status, using titles such as *ta hu* and *hsiao hu* (large and small households) or *kuan-hu* and *min-hu* (official and commoner households). Those declared as official households were often assessed at lower rates and were generally absolved of the extralegal charges levied on the average taxpayer. The emperor outlawed these distinctions in 1724.[117] Closely related to this was the elimination of abuses of the labor-service tax exemption. In previous dynasties, the belief that it was beneath the dignity of a literatus to do manual labor had led to the exclusion of degree-holders from labor service. By the late Ming period this privilege had been arrogated by non-degree-holding members of the degree-holder's family and had motivated commoners to consign their land to members of literati households in order to lower their tax payments. Because labor-service quotas were assigned to each administrative unit, the amount of tax not paid by degree-holders and their associates became an additional burden on the other taxpayers. In 1726 the emperor issued an edict that clarified the law, ordering that degree-holders be granted only one exemption, for themselves as individuals.[118]

The return of the meltage fee to the public coffers went a long way toward clearing up deficits in provincial accounts, but the emperor remained concerned with reports of arrears, particularly in the most prosperous provinces in Kiangnan, where tax resistance and the practice of tax farming often kept more than 50 percent of the statutory tax from being delivered to the provincial treasury. Beginning in 1726, Yung-cheng ordered a large-scale investigation of Kiangnan tax arrears that lasted until 1730.[119] In addition to disclosing weaknesses in Kiangnan tax registration and administration, the investigation focused attention on elite tax resistance throughout the realm. In 1728 the emperor issued an edict requiring local officials to note the fact that a taxpayer was a degree-holder in the county tax registers and on his tax receipts. Degree-holders who had arrears at the time of the annual tax reporting to the Ministry of Revenue would be named in a separate list and

117 Ch'u, *Local government*, p. 332, n. 127. 118 *CSL-YC*, ch. 43, pp. 22–3, May 27, 1726.
119 See Zelin, *The magistrate's tael*, pp. 220–63.

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punished for the crime of tax resistance (*k'ang liang*). Any magistrate failing to file such a report would be punished according to the regulations for covering up a crime (*hsün p'i*). In 1730, the emperor stepped up the pressure on literati tax evaders by ordering magistrates to make a list of the *sheng-yüan* (first-degree holders) under their jurisdiction, noting the amount of tax each owed. These lists would be sent to the local education officials, who would be responsible for notifying *sheng-yüan* of their tax obligations and marking off on the list how much they had paid.[120]

The Yung-cheng emperor's efforts to check the abuses of literati who were out of office extended to their treatment of the common people as well. Following on a number of cases of homicide by landlords, the emperor and his advisors promulgated a series of regulations dealing with degree-holders' treatment of agricultural tenants. Any degree-holder using excessive force against a tenant would be stripped of his rank and regalia. Any local official who failed to report such an act would be impeached and punished under the regulations for covering up a crime. If a superior official failed to report the actions of a subordinate in this regard, he would be punished according to the regulations for failure to report a corrupt official. However, if a tenant did not pay his rent, the state would punish him, dun him for his rent, and give it to the landlord.[121]

The elimination of hereditary classifications

The regulations protecting tenants against their literati landlords acknowledged that degree-holders were not immune to the laws which governed the behavior of the rest of the population. A similar impulse lay behind the emancipation of the so-called "mean people" (*chien min*) during the Yung-cheng reign.

The "mean people" referred to specific groups of people whose political and social rights had been circumscribed as a result of historical circumstances dating back hundreds of years. Among the groups affected were "boat people" of the southeast coast, "tent people" (*p'eng min*) who had migrated to the hilly regions of the southeast, hereditary servants of Anhwei, the "fallen people" of Shao-hsing, Chekiang, and the singing people of Shansi and Shensi.[122] Over the course of his reign the emperor responded to requests by provincial officials to address the political status of these people in an effort to remove

[120] Feng Erh-k'ang, *Yung-cheng chuan*, p. 167.

[121] Kuang-hsü, *Ta Ch'ing hui tien*, cited in Feng Erh-k'ang, *Yung-cheng chuan*, pp. 169–70. A first-degree licentiate (*sheng-yüan*) caught mistreating a tenant would be stripped of his rank and punished with 80 blows.

[122] Huang, *Autocracy at work*, pp. 226–31.

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potential sources of discontent among local populations. Formerly despised by the majority in their local areas, "mean people" had been barred from holding other occupations and were not permitted to take the civil service examinations. While the emancipation efforts during the Yung-cheng reign were not always successful,[123] they represented an ideological shift which viewed all people as equal before the law.

EXTENDING THE REACH OF THE STATE

Of all the policies pursued during the Yung-cheng reign, military actions initiated in the mid-1720s would have the most enduring impact on the future of the Ch'ing empire. These policies should not be viewed as part of a coordinated plan of expansion. Nor did they arise from a coherent set of policy objectives. Nevertheless, the extension of Ch'ing authority during the Yung-cheng reign took place along two frontiers, one in the northwest and one in the southwest. The former was a continuation of a confrontation with segments of the Mongol population which brought the Ch'ing into a more direct relationship of authority over Tibet. The second involved the extension of Ch'ing political control into territories nominally governed from Peking, but in fact under the rule of local non-Han tribal chiefs.

Consolidation of Ch'ing administrative control in the southwest

Prior to the 1720s, large areas of Hunan, Hupei, Kwangtung, Kwangsi, Kweichow, Szechwan, and Yunnan were inhabited by non-Han peoples over whom the state exercised only limited political and no social control. Known in the seventeenth century as Miao, Yao, and Lolo, the criteria for classification of these populations is still a matter for debate.[124] During Ming, a system of native chiefs (*t'u ssu*) was developed under which these and other minority peoples were ruled by their own leaders, who in turn received investiture from the imperial government. During Ch'ing, native chiefs owed the state land and labor-service taxes, played an important role in frontier military expeditions, and were expected to send tribute missions to Peking every three years.

[123] Huang Pei has noted that as long as these people had no alternative occupation their emancipation was partial at best. The social stigma attached to their means of livelihood remained and in the case of the singing people, emancipation left them vulnerable to extortion by officials who now treated their singing as illegal. Huang, *Autocracy at work*, pp. 230–1.

[124] For recent discussions of the categorization of these minority groups see Stevan Harrell, ed., *Cultural encounters on China's ethnic frontiers* (Seattle and London, 1995).

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Map 6. *Eighteen provincial administrative areas ("China proper," nei-ti)*. John K. Fairbank, ed. *Late Ch'ing, 1800–1911, Part 1*, Vol. 10 of *The Cambridge History of China* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1978), Map 2, p. 7.

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For the Yung-cheng emperor, the ambiguous relationship of native chiefdoms to the state posed both philosophical and practical problems. His vision of the state as a centralized entity in which law was applied uniformly and the emperor extended unmediated benevolence to his subjects was offended by the imposition of native chiefs between himself and some of the people. To make matters worse, many native chiefs appeared to oppress the people in their charge. This was particularly true of northeast Yunnan, where so-called Black Lolo dominated a serf population composed of White Lolo, Miao tenants, and kidnapped Chinese.[125] In addition, frequent raids on Han Chinese communities and occasional uprisings by native chiefs made them a threat to public order, especially when joined by agent provocateurs from among Chinese merchants in this region.

During the K'ang-hsi reign, efforts had already been made to control native chief territories by intensifying the "civilizing" mission of the state. Sinification of native elites was encouraged by the building of charitable schools in minority territories and by requiring attendance by the sons of native chiefs. New inheritance rules enforcing patrilineal descent also gave the state more control of who would succeed to native chief positions, but disempowered large numbers of their retainers and family members who had shared in property and authority under the old native chief system.[126] By the Yung-cheng reign these new policies had produced increasing outbreaks of internecine warfare in the native chief areas of the southwest. In 1725, as a measure to address the unforeseen consequences of his father's policies, the Yung-cheng emperor ordered the existing native chiefs to give up as much as half of their land to their retainers to create new native chiefdoms. The failure of this policy to restore order formed the background to a reevaluation of the native chief policy as a whole.[127]

The first area in which native chief policy was addressed was Kweichow. A difficult province to govern, Kweichow was plagued by poverty, inadequate communications, poorly staffed yamen, and low official morale. Beginning in 1724, provincial officials attempted the pacification of the Miao in the Ting-fan and Kuang-shun districts of Kweiyang prefecture. Despite widespread destruction by Ch'ing troops, the Ting-Kuang Miao persisted in their raids on neighboring territories as the emperor continued to procrastinate over how to handle the unrest. It was not until the transfer of O-erh-t'ai to the concurrent posts of governor of Yunnan and governor-general of

[125] Smith, "Ortai's governor-generalship," pp. 108–9.
[126] John Herman, "Empire in the Southwest: Early Qing reforms to the native chieftain system," *JAS*, 56, No. 1 (Feb. 1997), pp. 56–8.
[127] Herman, "National integration and regional hegemony," pp. 30–1.

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Yunnan-Kweichow in 1725 that the activist policy associated with the Yung-cheng emperor was implemented in the southwest.[128]

The battle for Ting-Kuang began in June 1726 and lasted about a month. O-erh-t'ai's treatment of the region in the aftermath of the fighting became the model for the policy of administrative incorporation of native chiefdoms (*kai t'u kui liu*).[129] Amnesty was offered to all but the leaders of the local population and government assistance was provided to attract people back to the land. Anyone returning within a month would receive a deed for his property. Those who did not would find their farms turned over to Ch'ing soldiers to settle. All native residents were to have their names inscribed in Ch'ing population registers and to be enrolled in *pao-chia* decimal mutual surveillance groupings. Native men were forced to shave their hair and wear a queue and persons without surnames were given them in accordance with Chinese custom. Most important from the point of view of the state, native chiefs were removed from their territories and were replaced by regular resident Ch'ing civil administrators.[130]

Before his campaign against the Miao in Kweichow, O-erh-t'ai declared to the emperor his conviction that he could excise Lolo influence from along the Szechwan-Yunnan border within one year. Particularly problematic were Tung-ch'uan, Wu-meng, and Chen-hsiung, one regular and two native prefectures under Szechwan administration. Szechwan's inability to respond quickly to disorders in the region prompted O-erh-t'ai to request the revision of the Szechwan-Yunnan border, placing these territories under Yunnan jurisdiction in 1725. With the end of the Ting-Kuang campaign and increasing internecine violence among Lolo chiefs, O-erh-t'ai determined to fulfill his pledge, starting with Wu-meng.

The campaign in Wu-meng was to be a joint Szechwan-Yunnan effort, joining the talents of two of Yung-cheng's key military strategists, Yüeh Chung-ch'i and O-erh-t'ai. O-erh-t'ai schemed to remove the native prefect and win over his uncle, the leader of the Wu-meng Lolo. The latter would then convince the other native chiefs to surrender to Ch'ing authority. In December 1726, O-erh-t'ai's plan failed, in part due to Yüeh Chung-ch'i's effort to enlist the native prefect in a campaign against neighboring Lolo

[128] John Herman has argued that Yung-cheng was hesitant to take aggressive measures against the native chiefs and was converted to such a policy in part because O-erh-t'ai convinced him that it could be accomplished quickly and at modest cost because the majority of people in these territories yearned for Chinese civilization and Chinese rule. Herman, "National integration and regional hegemony," passim.

[129] For a review of recent analyses of administrative incorporation of native chiefdoms in the People's Republic of China, see Hsiao Ku, "Chin nien lai kuan yü Yung-cheng kai t'u kui liu ti yen-chiu," *Ch'ing shih yen-chiu t'ung hsün*, 2 (1982), pp. 18–20.

[130] Smith, "Ortai's governor-generalship," pp. 96–7.

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based in the Liang-shan mountains to the west.[131] In the end, Yunnan troops attacked Wu-meng and Chen-hsiung without the cooperation of Szechwan. Competition between Szechwan and Yunnan for jurisdictional authority over these two prefectures was resolved by the emperor in favor of Yunnan. O-er-t'ai's campaigns in Chen-yüan and Wei-yüan also brought under civilian administration a large portion of southernmost Yunnan.[132]

The importance of these territories went beyond Yung-cheng's desire to bring stability to the southwest and extend his benevolence to what he saw as oppressed people. While many areas were hilly and poor, scattered within them were highly fertile valleys. The rapidity with which Chinese immigrants began to flow into the southwest once direct Ch'ing administration was installed is evidence of the economic potential of the region. State assistance in the form of subsidies and rewards also facilitated land reclamation in territories formerly controlled by native chiefs.[133]

Untapped mineral resources also were made available by consolidation of authority in the southwest. Northwest Yunnan contained some of the richest copper deposits in China, and Kweichow was an abundant source of lead. Both were components of Ch'ing coinage that was in short supply during the early eighteenth century. A combination of growing demand for coins and drastic cuts in Japanese exports of copper to China had already led the Ch'ing government to attempt an expansion of copper output. However, by the Yung-cheng reign the value of copper was so high the government had difficulty keeping coins in circulation. Severe punishments were decreed for melting down copper coins, a ban was placed on the manufacture of copper utensils, and a campaign was launched to buy scrap copper and household items to stock the metal required by government mints.[134]

Yung-cheng was not a strong supporter of expanding mining operations, fearing the destabilizing effects of concentrations of unruly miners in remote areas. In Yunnan, however, the urgent need for copper, and his faith in the administrative abilities of O-er-t'ai, compelled the emperor to approve both mining and the reopening of Yunnan's long inoperative mints. Resumption of coin production in the province proved a mixed blessing. Yunnan suffered from a coin shortage. However, high transportation costs meant most coins

[131] Ibid., pp. 132–4.

[132] This region is now known as the Thai Autonomous Region. Smith, "Ortai's governor-generalship," pp. 226–30.

[133] See p. 216 of this chapter.

[134] Saeki Tomi, "Shindai Yoseichō ni okeru tsūka mondai," *Tōyōshi kenkyū*, 18, 1959, pp. 407–15. Wei Ch'ing-yüan, "Ch'ing tai ch'ien ch'i ti shang p'an k'uang ye ho tzu-pen chu-i meng-ya," *Chung-kuo jen-min ta-hsüeh, Chung-kuo tzu-pen chu-i meng-ya wen-t'i hsüeh-shu t'ao-lun lun wen*, 5 (1981), p. 3.

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minted in Yunnan continued to circulate there. In the end, an overabundance of coins in the province led to the closure of the Yunnan mints.

Mining, on the other hand, proved enormously successful. Private mining was encouraged, and the state procurement monopoly instituted under the K'ang-hsi emperor was abandoned. The government took its share in the form of taxes and purchase. The state purchase price was also adjusted upward to encourage production and sale to state mints.[135] Within a few years of the implementation of the free market in Yunnan copper, output rose from 800,000–900,000 *chin* to as much as four million *chin* per year.[136] By the end of the reign total output had risen tenfold, allowing Yunnan to supply almost all the needs of the mints in Peking.[137]

Territorial expansion in the northwest

During the Yung-cheng reign, Ch'ing borders were extended to incorporate the Kokonor and Eastern Tibet, and the Ch'ing dynasty replaced its Mongol neighbors as the "protectors" of the Dalai Lama. The circumstances leading up to these territorial annexations date back to the early eighteenth century. Until that time, the Ch'ing had relied on loyal Mongol tribes to ensure stability along the northwest borders. The 1705 occupation of Tibet by Khoshote Mongols and the 1717 invasion of Tibet by Dzunghar Mongols convinced the K'ang-hsi emperor that a more active policy was needed to guard Ch'ing access to Tibet and protect the northwest frontier. By the time of K'ang-hsi's death, the Ch'ing had already occupied Lhasa and established a series of outposts along the route to Tibet.

Immediately upon taking the throne, Yung-cheng issued an order to withdraw from Lhasa, noting that the Ch'ing did not need Lhasa as long as communications routes to Tibet remained open. An uprising by Khoshote Mongols led by Lobjang Danjin convinced the emperor to pursue a more active policy in the region. Approximately 2,000 Green Standard and native chief forces were sent to Tibet under the leadership of Nien Keng-yao, Yüeh Chung-ch'i, and the commander of the Sung-p'an Brigade. These troops were joined by approximately 1,000 soldiers from Yunnan. The leaders of non-Han peoples along the route to Tibet were enrolled in the native chiefdom system or destroyed, providing a foundation for the incorporation of the region once the fighting was concluded.[138]

[135] Smith, "Ortai's governor-generalship," pp. 194, 204.
[136] *Ch'ing shih kao*, ch. 124, "Shih huo chih," and "K'uang cheng."
[137] Smith, "Ortai's governor-generalship," pp. 202–3. [138] Herman, "National integration," pp. 137–9.

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The Lobjang Danjin revolt was put down in 1724, leaving the Ch'ing with the problem of what to do about Tibet. Officials such as Nien Keng-yao, still in favor at this time, and Yüeh Chung-ch'i, pressed the importance of Eastern Tibet to the security of the western provinces. With a series of military outposts in place and the allegiance of native chiefs, they argued, control in this region would not be difficult. While the policy was still being debated in Peking, one of Tibet's ministers who supported an alliance with the Ch'ing was murdered in Lhasa, vindicating those who insisted upon the urgency of annexation. In 1729, the territory that had been Eastern Tibet became Ya-chou prefecture, to be ruled under the native chieftain system.[139]

The continued threat presented by the Dzunghar Mongols led to military preparations beginning in 1726. In 1727 the Ch'ing concluded the Treaty of Khiakta with Russia, settling the border between Siberia and Mongolia.[140] In 1729, Yüeh Chung-ch'i led Ch'ing forces along the Kansu corridor into the region that would later become Sinkiang. Despite a total expenditure of almost 130 million taels,[141] the forces assembled by Yung-cheng were almost wiped out in 1731. A minor victory in 1732 allowed the Ch'ing the opportunity to call a truce with the Dzunghars without a complete loss of face. The final consolidation of Ch'ing control in this region was not achieved until 1759.

Settlement of Taiwan

Prior to 1723, the Ch'ing state pursued a cautious policy in Taiwan. Its strategic importance lay largely in its prior history as a staging area for rebels. The dangers of aboriginal reprisal as Han settlers began to make their way to the island prompted the promulgation of regulations limiting the ability of non-natives to own land, setting boundaries past which migrant settlement was prohibited and banning the migration of whole families to the island.

Under the Yung-cheng emperor a series of measures were taken which hastened the colonization of Taiwan and the displacement of native populations. As in parts of the southwest, the state moved to increase the presence of civilian administrators in Taiwan. Taiwan's growing importance as an exporter of

[139] Ibid., pp. 153–5. Herman argues that the Yung-cheng emperor did not initiate the activist policy pursued in both the northwest and the southwest. Rather, they were the result of intense campaigning by officials in those regions like Yüeh Chung-ch'i and O-erh-t'ai.

[140] This treaty also allowed the Russians to send a trade mission to China every third year, establish a church on the site of the Russian hostel in Peking, and permitted a handful of Russians resident in the hostel to study Manchu, Mongol, and Chinese. *ECCP*, p. 786.

[141] Bartlett, *Monarchs and ministers*, p. 122.

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rice, particularly to feed Chinese garrisons along the southeast coast of the mainland, also prompted measures to encourage reclamation. In 1724 and 1725 the emperor decreed that Han settlers could rent land on which deer ranged from natives for cultivation, and that such lands would be subject to land tax. In 1731 the government moved to encourage the registration of farmland by lowering land taxes. The 1732 removal of the ban on family migration opened the way for long-term Han settlement, to be facilitated by the enlargement of Ch'ing garrisons on the island.[142]

Ch'ing policy under Governor-General Kao Ch'i-cho aimed to lessen aborigine unrest by tightening the boundary between Han settlement in the plains and aboriginal lands at higher elevations. However, competition for resources among Han settlers, "civilized" plains-dwelling aborigines, and mountain aborigines whose activities were beyond Ch'ing control continued despite government efforts to separate the spheres of these populations.[143] Increased government presence also created tensions. In 1731 the government's decision to expand the taxation and other administrative duties of Tan-shui prefecture, created in 1723, led to a rebellion by aborigines in Ta-chia-hsi, a village along the coastal plain of central Taiwan. While government troops were diverted from southern Taiwan to put down this revolt, Han settlers rose up under the leadership of Wu Fu-sheng in Feng-shan county in the south. By 1732 tribes from five different ethnic groupings had joined in the struggle against the Ch'ing. The rebellion was crushed by the end of the year. However, the expansionist policies followed under Yung-cheng set the stage for the unrest that would plague Taiwan during the Ch'ien-lung reign.

ASSESSING THE YUNG-CHENG REIGN

The policies undertaken during the Yung-cheng reign laid the foundation for the development of a strong, modern state apparatus in the eighteenth century. Reform of fiscal administration expanded the state's revenue base and addressed the problem of debilitating deficits and arrears. The introduction of rationalized revenue-sharing mechanisms enabled the government to attack the main source of corruption within the bureaucracy. Of equal importance, the return of control of the meltage fee to government accounts established the means to realize the principles of activist government at the local and provincial levels.

[142] John Shepherd, *Statecraft and political economy on the Taiwan frontier, 1600–1800* (Stanford, 1993), pp. 17–18.
[143] Ibid., p. 263.

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Fiscal reform was closely related to the expansion and consolidation of the state itself. The most obvious arena in which this took place was at the frontier, where the Yung-cheng emperor extended the boundaries to include Kokonor and Eastern Tibet and where the modern border between Mongolia and Siberia was drawn by treaty with the Russian tsar. The state also extended its reach inward in the large-scale incorporation of aborigine territories into the civil administrative structure in the southwest, parts of the northwest, and Taiwan. At the same time, the Yung-cheng emperor also attempted a reordering of the relationship between state and elites. The Yung-cheng emperor's distaste for degree-holding officials both in office and in their roles as private individuals and local community leaders focused attention on a critical tension in Chinese political thought.

At stake during the Yung-cheng reign was not Confucian rule versus Legalist rule, but a statist ideal in which the government took responsibility for popular welfare and its public servants occupied their positions because of their expertise and devotion to state goals. The emperor did not require a new philosophical formulation in order to promote this ideal. In his official pronouncements he couched his arguments in terms that were familiar to students of Ch'eng-Chu Confucianism. Yung-cheng also shared many of the beliefs of those who challenged his more radical policy initiatives. Yung-cheng was a superstitious man, moved by portents and omens, and a firm believer in Taoist longevity techniques.[144] His defense of Ch'ing rule drew on Mencian principles of legitimacy. His policies in the northwest and southwest were motivated as much by a quest for stability as an impulse to expansion.

The Yung-cheng emperor was a man of intense personal dedication and commitment to efficiency and problem-solving. His employment of officials who shared these qualities, his encouragement of innovation, and his development of the secret palace memorial system to bypass the inherent conservatism of outer court institutions account for the achievements of his reign. The great irony of his rule was that in his distrust of the bureaucracy the Yung-cheng emperor failed to build the institutions that would guarantee the continued strengthening of the state and of the economy. A political system that depended on the personal intercession of the emperor in every aspect of governance could not address the challenges that China would face in the century after Yung-cheng's death.

[144] Taoist elixirs are thought by many to have been responsible for the emperor's sudden death in 1735. For a summary of the theories relating to Yung-cheng's death, including assassination by the granddaughter of Lü Liu-liang, see Fu Ch'en, "Yung-cheng ssu-wang chih mi," *Wen wu*, 5 (1985), pp. 178–80.

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CHAPTER 5

THE CH'IEN-LUNG REIGN

Alexander Woodside

INTRODUCTION: PLACING THE REIGN IN CHINESE HISTORY

Hung-li (1711–1799), the Manchu prince who became Ch'ing emperor in October 1735 and is now best known by the reign title, Ch'ien-lung, in use between 1736 and 1796, may well have been the strongest ruler in Chinese history. Ch'ien-lung was, first of all, the emperor who finally ended independent nomad power in central Asia, with his defeat of the Dzungars in the 1750s. As a result, the lands inside the present borders of the People's Republic of China, but also those of the present republic of Mongolia, the Ili valley in Kazakhstan, and parts of Siberia, were incorporated into the Ch'ing empire, itself the heir to the older Chinese political system. To gain this unprecedented control from Peking of both the Central Asian steppe and the Chinese heartland, Ch'ien-lung and his generals, it has been shown, solved logistical problems that had previously prevented the extended deployment of large armies in the northwestern deserts, forests, grasslands, and high mountains. Ch'ien-lung successfully sent out military expeditions that exceeded the distance of Napoleon's failed march on Russia.[1]

The Ch'ien-lung reign's domestic achievements were equally striking. The most important one was the development of a capacity to feed as many as three hundred million people, however badly, in a century in which China's population may well have doubled. The dramatic increase in agricultural output such a capacity required had a political context. Peanuts, maize, and sweet potatoes, the new crops introduced into China from the Americas at the end of the Ming dynasty, could have been only one of the forces behind the breakthrough in agricultural productivity. Political peace, and the enormous skills it required, must have been another, even if Western scholars have given it less attention. For much of Chinese history, centralized imperial power had been as much myth as reality. Empresses, relatives of the empress or of the emperor's mother, eunuchs, and regional warlords had shared the

[1] Peter C. Perdue, "Military mobilization in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century China, Russia, and Mongolia," *Modern Asian Studies*, 30, No. 4 (October 1996), pp. 757–93.

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throne's power in ceaseless struggles with each other. To a greater degree than the idealized model of the Chinese political system had suggested, central power was often subject to illicit centrifugal forces. But Ch'ien-lung, it has been plausibly claimed, completed the work of his two predecessors by reducing the destructive fragmentation of the center's authority to its "lowest level" in history.[2] The social as well as the political stability that came with this success freed Chinese farming from major disruption, allowed the Ch'ien-lung court to promote the expansion of the cultivated acreage of its empire along with its military frontiers, and further allowed it to reduce land taxes, reward the clearing of empty fields, and magnify and systematize famine relief. The court's intimate interaction with big Chinese merchants during the golden age of premodern Chinese merchant guilds was essential in this work.

Personal and political paradoxes

For all of these accomplishments, the Ch'ien-lung emperor never received excessively indulgent estimates from historians. The disasters that afflicted the Chinese people in the nineteenth century undermined the memory of much of what the emperor had done. Beyond that, Ch'ien-lung as a political figure remains a puzzle. Book burner, war maker, poet, artist, patron of the poor: Who among the various Ch'ien-lung emperors was the real one? The challenge of deciding who Ch'ien-lung was is only partly personal. The huge territorial expansion that he undertook had to be accompanied by an imperial ideology in which he starred, but no imperial ideology without a heroic degree of improvisation and eclecticism could serve such diverse lands and peoples and avoid fatal stresses and strains. The challenge was personal. The emperor's loves and hatreds were extravagant. Even to the Westerners who knew him at the time, the Ch'ien-lung emperor was an enigma.

The Yung-cheng emperor, supposedly harsh and mercurial, had apparently comfortable face-to-face dialogues in Manchu with Jesuit missionaries in Peking about topics as diverse as earthquakes and the war between Sweden and Russia. With Ch'ien-lung, there was a screen between them. At one moment he might show the Jesuits outward acts of kindness, even expressing the desire to own a painting of the Christian nativity as painted by Giuseppe Castiglione (1688–1766), the Jesuit artist whom he much admired. At the next moment he would launch fresh persecutions of Christianity, despite – or because of – the fact that the ranks of Peking Christians included

[2] Tai I, *Ch'ien-lung ti chi ch'i shih-tai* (Peking, 1992), pp. 13–16.

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members of the imperial house.[3] Nobody could doubt the energy and the mental power of this enigmatic emperor. In 1793, the secretary of the Macartney embassy to Peking observed an octogenarian ruler who marched firmly and erectly, looked barely middle-aged, and took a shrewd interest in British warships.[4]

Then there was the seemingly softer side of the Ch'ien-lung emperor: the imperial war maker as literatus, artist, and patron of the arts. His activities had a self-advertising (or self-deluding) compulsiveness that seems almost fantastic to modern eyes. As a writer, Ch'ien-lung claimed to have produced over 42,000 poems, more than 7,000 of them in the last four years of his life, plus roughly a thousand prose pieces of various kinds, thus setting an all-time literary productivity record for all known emperors, Asian or Western.[5] Apart from being a writer and artist himself, Ch'ien-lung, unlike his two imperial predecessors, had an omnivorous fondness for collecting art. This meant not just printing and calligraphy, but such things as Shang, Chou, and Han dynasty bronze vessels and implements, Sung, Yüan, and Ming porcelains, and even the inkslabs of various dynasties. Ch'ien-lung littered the antique paintings that he collected with his own obtrusive seal imprints and calligraphy, his duty being "to remain at the head of the arts even if, in the process, the art was destroyed."[6]

Images of the monarch were often what the art and its cultivation were used to convey. The portraits of himself that the Ch'ien-lung emperor sponsored or allowed to be painted have astonished and exercised scholars and art critics all over the world by the variety of the real or fictive identities they conferred upon him. The capacities that Ch'ien-lung embodied in such portraits included Ch'ien-lung as hunter, Ch'ien-lung as Buddhist saint, Ch'ien-lung as literatus, Ch'ien-lung as a banquet host who facilitated hierarchical consciousness, Ch'ien-lung as filial son, and even Ch'ien-lung as a painter who does not actually paint.[7] Even now, or especially now, a full understanding of the purposes behind at least some of these paintings is beyond our reach. Of course the use of art to construct multiple images of rulers is a commonplace in both Chinese and Western history. For parallels, there are

[3] Antoine Gaubil, *Correspondance de Pékin 1722–1759*, ed. Renée Simon (Geneva, 1970), pp. 184, 267, 428–9, 545–7, 843.

[4] Sir George Staunton, *An authentic account of an embassy from the king of Great Britain to the emperor of China* (London, 1798), Vol. 2, pp. 238.

[5] Sugimura Yūzō, *Ken-ryū kūtei* (Tokyo, 1961), pp. 29–30.

[6] Harold L. Kahn, *Monarchy in the emperor's eyes: Image and reality in the Ch'ien-lung reign* (Cambridge, Mass., 1971), p. 136.

[7] Angela Zito, *Of body and brush: Grand sacrifice as text/performance in eighteenth-century China* (Chicago, 1997), pp. 17–43. Also see Wu Hung, *The double screen: Medium and representation in Chinese painting* (Chicago, 1996), pp. 221–36.

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the rulers of Renaissance Europe who linked themselves through art and literature to mythic figures like Hercules and to such real but conflicting historical ideals as the pagan emperor Marcus Aurelius and the Christian knight emperor Charlemagne. In the multiple capacities Ch'ien-lung so confidently suggested in the paintings about himself, it is possible to detect a less confident hint of the corresponding incapacities: Manchus who could not hunt, banquet hosts who condoned breakdowns in hierarchy, sons who were not filial.

The Ch'ien-lung emperor's paradox was this: He combined an amazing self-confidence with an equally extraordinary insecurity. There were always grim hues in this particular emperor's sunshine. At no point in the reign were the self-confidence and insecurity shown more remarkably than in 1778, when the aging emperor had to confront a political crisis brought about by his failure to name a crown prince or to establish a predictable public framework for transferring his power. A provincial student (who was executed for his presumption) openly accosted the emperor during his October 1778 progress through Liaoning in order to petition him to proclaim a successor.[8] The emperor subsequently conceded that he was aware that there was private speculation inside his own government that he lusted for power too much to recognize an heir, and thus his own end. His response was a public announcement that may have been one of the more reliable theoretical projections of Ch'ien-lung's own personal view of politics. Its skepticism about the full power of government institutions ever to civilize the raw material of human society, and its equally sharp skepticism about family relations, were both self-serving in the circumstances, but also reveal the man.

In the 1778 announcement, Ch'ien-lung stated that he would rule for another seventeen years before "withdrawing into leisure" by his eighty-fifth birthday at the end of 1795. Through this planned retirement he would not remain on the throne for as long as his beloved grandfather, the K'ang-hsi emperor, upon whom he claimed to model himself and with whose memory "I would not dare" to compete. He added that he had made the decision to rule for sixty years and then retire at the very outset of his reign. He had simply not communicated it, for over four decades, because the masses of people whom he ruled would be unable to understand it fully. Ch'ien-lung then mocked emperors of the T'ang and Sung dynasties who had failed to name heirs because they feared unemployment, or who had named successors and then drowned in their own melancholia. He declared that he had secretly chosen and sealed the name of the prince who would succeed him. He pointed out that there had been no crown princes at the time of the sage emperors of

[8] Kahn, *Monarchy in the emperor's eyes*, pp. 243–7.

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antiquity, merely from the Chou, and that royal primogeniture was not politically efficacious.[9]

In his own eyes, Ch'ien-lung was a political prodigy and entitled to be regarded as such. As he reminded his court, emperors who ruled for forty or fifty years and then planned their own exits were rare. Yet this same self-confident 1778 prediction of his own self-determined retirement after another seventeen years also contained a memorable discussion of the chronic tensions among royal brothers, which Ch'ien-lung clearly regarded as unresolvable by Confucian ideology or established practices, and an alarmist view of the moral savagery of the "masses," who would "secretly watch" the movements of any publicly designated successor in order to take advantage of him. Here were the emperor's contrapuntal pessimism and insecurity. For Ch'ien-lung, political stability was created not just by political institutions, but by minimizing the exposure of the monarchy's techniques of self-regulation to public opinion, given its presumed shallowness or malignancy. For these reasons, Ch'ien-lung was unlikely ever to be much of an institutional reformer. Significantly, Ch'ien-lung condemned publicly established royal successions in 1778 by linking them to the egalitarian well-field system, as one more example of a millenarian ideal with great potential for practical abuse. He did not admire the absence of clear boundaries between the managerial and the idealistic elements in Chinese political theory. Here he parted company, perhaps more so than his two predecessors, with the political reform legacy of the Chinese literati in the seventeenth century who had revived neo-Confucianism on their own, in the "wilderness," not at court, and from whom, it has been claimed, the Ch'ing emperors subsequently adopted the moral theory and ethical code for their own dynasty.[10] Backwoods Confucian revivalists of the 1600s, such as Lu Shih-i (1611–1672), intended almost salvationist forms of political change to accompany their promotion of Chu Hsi thought. Ch'ien-lung was the major Ch'ing emperor who most depoliticized what he had derived from them.

The Ch'ien-lung emperor's emotional crisis in 1748 is another illustration of his insecurity and his reliance upon pageants, monuments, and the correct external celebration of hierarchical ties, rather than political experimentation, to relieve the insecurity. Distressed by the deaths of both a son and the empress Hsiao-hsien (1712–1748), Ch'ien-lung's rages were barely controllable and his behavior resembled that of a "crazed lion." Modern scholars, examining this episode, calculate that over one hundred senior Manchu and Chinese officials were punished, sometimes severely, for failing to mourn the

[9] *Ta Ch'ing Kao-tsung Ch'un huang-ti shih-lu* (Tokyo, 1937–38; hereafter, *CSL-CL*), 1067, pp. 14b–22.
[10] Lu Pao-ch'ien, *Ch'ing-tai ssu-hsiang shih* (Taipei, 1978), pp. 142–3.

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dead empress properly.[11] For the emperor who ruled the greatest imperial domain in Chinese history, bureaucratic institutions and Confucian tradition functioned only precariously. Ch'ien-lung had almost a tragedian's sense of the eternal human fallibility behind them.

Various interpretations of the Ch'ien-lung reign

Beyond the puzzle of the emperor as a person, historical interpretations of his political achievement have proceeded along at least four different general lines. Very roughly, they are the statist approach, the ethnic particularist approach, the social class approach, and the imperialist approach. None of them is entirely satisfactory.

The statist approach regards Ch'ien-lung, Manchu though he was, as an honorary Chinese state-builder, dedicated to the final perfection of the Ch'in First Emperor's unification program of nearly twenty centuries earlier, and indeed to laying the basis – however unintentionally – for the multiethnic nation-state of China today.[12] In this perspective the Ch'ien-lung reign was remarkable not just for its pacification of Sinkiang, Tibet, and the minorities-filled borderlands of the southwest, but for systematizing and accelerating the development of "nationalities legislation," such as the Sinicizing code of statutes and case law the Ch'ien-lung court imposed on Mongolia.[13] Contemporary Chinese historians based in the most ethnically and geographically insecure parts of China, such as the southwest, are particularly likely to applaud the eighteenth-century imposition of a bureaucratic administration upon the southwest minorities, involving as this did the arrival of appointed officials and written census records, and the denial to local leaders of the right to have their own military forces. Such bureaucratization, when combined with Ch'ien-lung's relaxation of the ban on Chinese-minorities intermarriage in 1764, is said to have foreshadowed a spirit of modern common citizenship. Ch'ien-lung emerges as the faithful disciple of the vision that Mencius had confided to King Hsiang of Liang thousands of years earlier: the uniting of the world under one authority.[14]

The notion that the Ch'ing emperors functioned as purposeful Chinese state-builders allows an escape from the legend of the timelessly abusive Oriental despots found in the pages of Montesquieu, Hegel, and Marx. But the theory is itself imprisoned in models of state-making formulated by other

[11] Kuo Ch'eng-k'ang et al., *Ch'ien-lung huang-ti ch'üan chuan* (Peking, 1994), pp. 110–20.
[12] Chuang Chi-fa, *Ch'ing Kao-tsung shih-ch'üan wu-kung yen-chiu* (Taipei, 1982), p. 497.
[13] Liu Kuang-an, *Ch'ing-tai min-tsu li-fa yen-chiu* (Peking, 1993), pp. 5–6.
[14] Li Shih-yü, "K'ang-Yung-Ch'ien shih-ch'i min-tsu cheng-ts'e yü Hsi-nan min-tsu ti-ch'ü ti k'ai-fa," *Kuei-chou min-tsu yen-chiu*, 1 (1992), pp. 127–34.

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Western thinkers such as Colbert, Bodin, Weber, and Parsons. Such models picture the state as an efficient agency of rule-bound rationalization, within a precisely defined territory, whose sovereignty compels a sort of juristic subjugation of particularistic ethnic and provincial interests. Far from being even implicitly a state-builder of this type, the Ch'ien-lung emperor, like his predecessors, was an accommodationist who had to speak and write in multiple tongues, political and otherwise, some of them quite removed from any recognizable process of Sinicization or modern state formation. Perhaps Ch'ien-lung's most famous self-representation within his own empire was his claim to be a reincarnation of the Mañjuśrī bodhisattva, the personification of the Buddha's intellect. This was the necessary Tibetan strand in the mixed theory of his monarchy. It offended against Chinese elite anticlericalism, but it carried great weight in Mongolia. Any ruler who was a recognized reincarnation of Mañjuśrī would be a cult object among Mongols as well as Tibetans, and could deal far better with politically ambitious monk reincarnations among the Mongol nobility.[15]

Tibetan Buddhism could be said to have threatened traditional Manchu beliefs every bit as much as it threatened Chinese Confucianism, yet the Emperor Ch'ien-lung's use of its symbolism encouraged interpretations of his reign quite different from that of the honorary Chinese state-builder, if no less anachronistic. This approach stresses ethnic particularism and originates in older European prejudices about Asian political systems. It sees Ch'ien-lung as a Manchu despot with little real interest in Chinese civilization, except to subjugate it. In 1793 Lord Macartney, the British envoy, described Ch'ien-lung's government as "the tyranny of a handful of Tartars over more than three hundred millions of Chinese." Macartney went on to argue that Ch'ien-lung's incorrigible Manchuness was one of the major signs of the difference between "the science of government" in the "Eastern" and the "Western" worlds. King George I of Britain, Macartney wrote implausibly, ceased to be a "foreigner" from the moment he held the scepter because a Western ruler's ultimate loyalty was to the "locality" in which he ruled. In Asia, however, rulers determined their loyalties purely on the primitive basis of "blood" and "family," so two centuries of Indian history could not "change the Mogul into a Hindu, nor has a century and a half made Ch'ien-lung a Chinese. He remains at this hour, in all his maxims of policy, as true a Tartar as any of his ancestors."[16]

[15] The essential study of this is David M. Farquhar, "Emperor as bodhisattva in the governance of the Ch'ing empire," *HJAS*, 38, No. 1 (June 1978), pp. 5–34.

[16] J. L. Cranmer-Byng, ed., *An embassy to China: Journal kept by Lord Macartney during his embassy to the emperor Ch'ien-lung 1793–1794* (London, 1962), pp. 236–7.

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The Manchuness of the emperor Ch'ien-lung may have been crucial to the eighteenth-century European belief in an "Eastern" predisposition to tyranny, but the Ch'ing empire in the 1700s could never have survived on such a basis. Ch'ien-lung had a binding and quite personal relationship to Chinese values and culture. He was at least as much a creature of Yang-chou, Soochow, and Hangchow as he was of the Asia beyond the Great Wall, from whose battlefields (unlike his grandfather) he kept his distance. His love of the gardens of south China was so great that he had artists accompany him on his southern tours just to sketch them, so that he could later reproduce such gardens in Peking during his many building enterprises.[17] Politically, Ch'ien-lung used the resplendence of the material prosperity of the Chinese core of his empire as a means of fortifying the loyalty of the poorer central Asians he ruled. He justified the lightships and fireworks displays put on for his pleasure in Yang-chou in 1762 by arguing that they impressed the Kazakh courtiers he had brought with him.[18]

The empire's Chinese core also provided much of the ideology, as well as the vision of superior living standards, by which central Asians were to be kept attached to it. The Ch'ing emperors could not become proper Islamic monarchs on a scale that gave them real leverage without the approval of Mecca, which could not be managed the way Lhasa was managed. There was little in Tibetan Buddhism or Manchu shamanism that could appeal to their millions of Muslim subjects, Chinese and Turkic. Examination system Confucianism, linked to an alleged Muslim love of "glory," became a necessity. The emperor Yung-cheng and his advisors had already constructed an imperial ideology of multiethnic socialization in which such Mencian and Ming Confucian notions as the common human possession of an "original mind" (*pen-hsin*), or original moral consciousness, had been extended to show that Muslims too loved goodness, despite their religious and cultural angularities, and were apt candidates to be "children" of the dynastic state.[19] In Ch'ien-lung's reign, the Manchu frontier general and Grand Secretary Wen-fu, shortly before he perished in a war with Tibetans in west Szechwan, discussed with the emperor Sinkiang's integration into the Ch'ing political system. Writing in 1769, a decade after Sinkiang's acquisition, Wen-fu proposed the immediate construction of charitable schools and Confucian temples for oasis towns like Urumchi, and the creation of Sinkiang student quotas for the empirewide examination system and Sinkiang student travel

[17] Tai I, *Ch'ien-lung ti*, p. 436.

[18] Kao Chin et al., comps., *Nan-hsün sheng-tien* (Peking, 1771; rpt. Shanghai, 1882), 3, pp. 4–4b.

[19] For the basic text, see *Ta Ch'ing Shih-tsung Hsien huang-ti shih-lu* (Tokyo, 1937–38; hereafter, *CSL-YC*), 80, pp. 6b–8b.

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procedures similar to those of Taiwan. In place of more legally elaborate theories of political obligation, such as those court lawyers were inventing in early modern Europe, the lure of advancement through Chinese-based examinations had to be counted upon to work its obedience-generating magic even in the shadows of the Tienshan range of mountains.[20]

There was little chance that Ch'ien-lung's power could rest entirely upon an explicit ethnic foundation, Manchu or otherwise. Yet collective identities such as "Chinese" and "Manchu" certainly existed in eighteenth-century elite politics. They acquired a concrete and dangerous life in such controversial formulas as "Manchus on the inside and Chinese on the outside" (*nei Man wai Han*). This referred to Ch'ien-lung's lopsided appointment of Manchus to the highest positions in his territorial administration (as provincial governors-general) and of Han Chinese to the lowest positions, as prefects and county magistrates. But even here such collective identities were so interwoven with family and geographical loyalties as to be, for much of the century, less than absolute. The classicist Hang Shih-chün (1696–1773) was one of the most serious Chinese challengers of Ch'ien-lung's perceived bias toward Manchus in high provincial appointments. Hang was dismissed from the bureaucracy in 1743 and never readmitted after he called attention to the unjust discrepancy between the smaller size of the Manchu talent pool than the Chinese one, and the Manchus' monopoly of positions as governors-general in the provinces. Yet Hang's complaint also mentioned that Ch'ien-lung was appointing to office too many "border provinces" people, mainly Chinese, at the expense of Chinese literati from his own region, Kiangsu and Chekiang.[21]

The eighteenth-century upward mobility crisis, in which far too many men – ambitious Chinese students and unemployed Manchus alike – chased far too few good jobs in the bureaucracy, may well have been a greater threat to the stability of Ch'ien-lung's monarchy than competing absolute notions of membership in ethnically and linguistically homogeneous groups. The real danger was that this upward mobility crisis might, as a side effect, generate systematic storytelling patterns, inside and outside bureaucratic circles, about instances of ethnic victimization in the distribution of political opportunities. Partly for this reason, Ch'ien-lung (while denying it) appears to have acquiesced in a Chinese elite campaign to keep Manchu job-seekers out of local government positions, although he reacted angrily in 1742 when a Chinese censor told him that Manchus might disgrace themselves by their ignorance if they were "driven" into suddenly serving as prefects and magis-

[20] Wen-fu, "Hsin-chiang she hsüeh shu," in Ho Ch'ang-ling, comp., *Huang-ch'ao ching-shih wen-pien* (1826; rpt. Taipei, 1972; hereafter, *CSWP*), 57, pp. 16–16b.
[21] *CSL-CL*, 184, pp. 7b–9.

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trates.[22] In 1745 only about 3 percent of all magistrates in China were Manchu, and the percentage apparently did not expand much over the next century.[23] Other patterns prevailed in Central Asia. A study of circuit, prefecture, district, and county officials in newly conquered Sinkiang in the Ch'ien-lung era suggests that Manchu appointments outnumbered both Mongol and Han-chün banner ones by roughly two to one.[24]

A third way of understanding the Ch'ien-lung reign, no longer as fashionable as the ethnic confrontation one, is to explain it in terms of class polarization if not class conflict. Ethnic identity was not the paramount principle in eighteenth-century politics not just because the modern theories that emphasize ethnicity were not then available, but perhaps also because both Manchus and Chinese divided so readily into economic haves and have-nots. If nothing else, the Ch'ien-lung reign was one of plutocracy. Its legacy lives on with breath-taking vividness in the world's great museums, where visitors still marvel at the astonishing displays of elite household goods that the Ch'ien-lung era produced. Porcelain hat stands, porcelain decorations for sedan chair interiors, jade, onyx, and crystal snuff bottles, cloisonné tea urns and tea pots, jade writing brush holders, jade and sandalwood folding screens, ivory carvings of nine-storeyed pagodas, ivory lunch boxes, lotus flower lacquer boxes – all these things offer glimpses of the extraordinary skills of eighteenth-century craftsmen. They also reflect the large consumer demand for such products by the wealthy elite who supported the Ch'ing monarchy. Prince Chao-lien (1780–1833), a highly placed Manchu eyewitness to the end of the Ch'ien-lung reign, thought that its unprecedented number of "rich people" was its most significant feature. Chao-lien thought the Ch'ing dynasty's abolition of labor-service taxes was the key to the existence of so many rich households. Chao-lien pointed not just to famous salt merchants and copper merchants, but to rice traders whose wealth and residential space eclipsed those of princes and nobles. Chao-lien recorded the activities of one merchant household of Hopei, famous for aiding the poor, whose members could spend as much as 100,000 taels a day feeding the Ch'ien-lung emperor and his entourage of princes, bondservants, and carriage bearers whenever the emperor came to stay with them, as well as presenting the emperor himself with hundreds of rare gifts.[25]

There was nothing very surprising about Ch'ien-lung's visits to merchants' homes, and his intimacy with them. By some calculations, the taxes the salt

[22] Ibid., 177, pp. 12–15b.
[23] Ch'ü T'ung-tsu, *Local government in China under the Ch'ing* (Cambridge, Mass., 1962), p. 22.
[24] Lo Yün-chih, *Ch'ing Kao-tsung T'ung-chih Hsin-chiang cheng-ts'e ti t'an-t'ao* (Taipei, 1983), pp. 131–47.
[25] Chao-lien, *Hsiao-t'ing tsa-lu*, ed. Ho Ying-fang (Peking, 1880; rpt. Peking, 1980), 2, p. 434.

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merchants alone paid to the Ch'ing court accounted for about 9 percent of its total ascertainable tax collection in the late 1600s, but almost doubled – to about 17 percent of the total collection – by 1753.[26] The extrabudgetary revenues such merchants also supplied are not even part of these statistics. This may not have been a revolution in the fiscal history of the Ch'ing monarchy, but it was hardly an insignificant change. It meant that the monarchy under Ch'ien-lung was dependent to a remarkable degree upon merchants with at least an embryonic similarity to the "crony capitalists" or large-scale commercial "rent seekers," as they have been called, of twentieth-century Asia. Such businesspeople did not compete openly in foreign or domestic markets. Their procedure was, and is, to establish government connections by looking for opportunities to become the recipients of the "rent" the government confers by disposing of its assets or by issuing authorization for certain types of activities that it regulates. In the eighteenth century, this particularly took the form of licenses to sell salt within certain areas. The "rent" was the difference between the market value of what the government authorized and what the recipient paid to the state to receive its authorization.

Under Ch'ien-lung's regime, rent-seeking merchants of this type made fortunes. According to one researcher, the total aggregate annual profits of the "Huai North" and "Huai South" salt merchants, centered at Yang-chou, may have amounted to the gigantic sum of 250 million taels between 1750 and 1800. According to another scholar's "conservative" estimate, the money value of Liang-huai salt shipments rose by over 140 percent between 1726 and 1800, but the value of the taxes paid rose only about 100 percent.[27] Politics lay behind this. Ch'ien-lung was the Chinese salt merchants' emperor at least as plausibly as he was the Buddhist universal king of central Asians. His function was to be the ultimate policeman who protected their privileges and defended them against bureaucrats who denounced their practices. Because of the complexity of the land and water routes in the Liang-huai region, the salt merchants, without armies of their own, were vulnerable to the hosts of small peddlers (many of whom were women) who used carts and wheelbarrows and small boats to steal and smuggle salt. As the court arranged things in 1736, solitary poor people were allowed to sell the salt that they could carry on their shoulders, as a form of indirect poverty relief, but groups

[26] Lin Yung-k'uang and Wang Hsi, "Ch'ing-tai Liang-Huai yen-shang yü huang-shih," *Ku-kung po-wu-yüan yüan-k'an*, 3 (1988), pp. 29–35.

[27] Ping-ti Ho, "The salt merchants of Yang-chou: a study of commercial capitalism in eighteenth-century China," *HJAS*, 17 (1954), p. 149; Thomas A. Metzger, "The organizational capabilities of the Ch'ing state in the field of commerce: The Liang-Huai salt monopoly, 1740–1840," in W. E. Willmott, ed., *Economic organization in Chinese society* (Stanford, 1972), p. 17.

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of more than three people selling salt outside the license system were to be arrested.[28] In addition to defending the big merchants' monopoly against leakage to thousands of poor traders, Ch'ien-lung intervened repeatedly to prevent the imposition of the more rigorous price controls on the salt merchants' transactions that some of his own officials recommended. He declared in 1751 that routine confiscations of excess profits were beyond the scope of government power, that the business costs of the salt merchants had to be respected, and that higher salt prices had to be regarded as inevitable, given population growth and the greater demand it created.[29] Despite the relative obscurity of the Ch'ing imperial house finances, it is clear that in return the salt merchants invested its funds for it and paid substantial interest.

Meanwhile, courtiers and scholars speculated about the rate at which the numbers of jobless poor people were multiplying. Chu Tse-yün (1666–1732), a well-known specialist in Chu Hsi learning, warned early in the century that the ranks of idle people without employment amounted to as much as 60 percent of the population in the most remote counties, and 30 percent of the population in the larger cities. He thought the population had already exceeded the empire's existing employment capacity and could not be saved without an expansion of government-sponsored vocational instruction.[30] The desperation of such poor people soon became more visible. In 1740, in the early phase of a century-long debate about how to deal with vagrancy, Ch'ien-lung was shocked to be told that "starving people" from Shantung were traveling south all the way to Fukien to seek famine relief.[31] By the 1780s, tensions among peasants who remained in their villages were running so high that the court had to consider creating a special statute for the punishment of people who stole water from their neighbors' ponds and irrigation ditches. The old statutes that covered lethal village quarrels were deemed inadequate.[32]

Manchus were divided by the same class tensions. Conspicuous consumption among wealthy Manchus evidently included the use of "Western" types of bridal chairs in banner marriages; the Ch'ien-lung emperor banned this in 1741. Among poor Manchu soldiers stationed in southern Chinese cities, the need for more cash was apparently so extreme that special punishments had to be imposed in 1761 to deter them from pawning their weapons, armor, flags, and other military equipment, presumably to Chinese merchants.[33]

Manchu class polarization and poverty repeatedly tested the allegiances of the big merchants' emperor. At the outset of his reign Ch'ien-lung had to

[28] *CSL-CL*, 21, pp. 19b–20. [29] Ibid., 390, pp. 5–7.
[30] Chu Tse-yün, "Yang min," in *CSWP*, 28, pp. 1–2. [31] *CSL-CL*, 114, pp. 19b–20.
[32] Ibid., 1294, pp. 6–6b. [33] Ibid., 141, pp. 12–12b; 650, pp. 5–5b.

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face down Shu-ho-te (1711–1777), a youthful Manchu banner bureaucrat who was to become one of the great architects of Ch'ing colonialism in central Asia later in the century. Shu-ho-te proposed in 1737 that Ch'ien-lung solve the Manchu livelihood crisis by restoring to bannermen their monopoly of the management of customs taxes and authorizing their operation in every Chinese province. Ch'ien-lung's response was unequivocal. He declared that customs barriers were designed to help merchants, not to create patronage for tax collectors. He further made it clear that the circuit and prefecture officials who dominated customs tax management had to be part of an ethnicity-blind civil service based on virtue and merit. Manchu banner tax collectors could not be allowed to circumvent this principle.[34]

To avoid the consequences of defining politics in his empire in terms of ethnic welfare and competition, Ch'ien-lung was compelled in 1737 to speak in the language of a clear public interest that favored merchants and separated the larger purposes of the state from the narrower ones of ethnic groups and private families. In this respect an embryonic public interest theory hovered in the background at court throughout the 1700s, if only to counter a presumption of ethnic privilege in the Ch'ing system. Shu-ho-te tried to divert customs tax revenues into an ethnic patrimony for Manchu tax farmers in order to reduce Manchu poverty. He had not proposed it in order to strengthen Manchu ethnic hegemony in general. Ch'ien-lung nonetheless rejected the proposal partly because he had no use for any form of Manchu privilege, let alone hegemony, that threatened his dynasty's stability as it expanded.

Ch'ien-lung's concern for his dynasty, not for Manchus in general, makes more persuasive yet another way of looking at his rule. Instead of seeing him as Chinese state-builder, Manchu ethnic chief, or supreme benefactor of the economically and socially powerful, it fosters viewing him as the presiding genius of a colonial empire not unlike the European colonial empires in Asia that were being created at this time. Of all the many identities of the Ch'ien-lung emperor, the critical one may well have been that of the colonizer ruler whose empire-making ambitions largely transcended ethnicity and camouflaged class.[35] Like the European empires in Asia, the Ch'ing empire under Ch'ien-lung constructed its power through the use of miscellaneous local rulers whom it gradually subordinated, or repressed entirely, as in southwest China, a procedure not unlike that of the British in India. Like the European empires, Ch'ien-lung's empire was a chessboard in which soldiers from one

[34] Ibid., 50, pp. 3–4b.

[35] See Nicola DiCosmo, "Qing colonial administration in Inner Asia," *The International History Review*, 20, No. 2 (June 1998), pp. 287–309, for an excellent defense of this viewpoint.

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imperial community were used to check insurrections and troublemakers who belonged to another community. This might happen even within a single province. Muslim troops were successfully deployed against a Buddhist-Taoist millenarian rebellion in Shantung in 1774.[36]

Within this empire there was an important tension between two principles of governance. One was the feudal principle of multiple centers and multiple powers in which the multiethnic, multilinguistic elements of the empire were held together by networks of hierarchical power that the emperor struggled to maintain as personal. The Ch'ing emperor accepted and encouraged the existence of loyal lesser lordships under him, but "segmented" and "zoned" them by means of elaborate procedures and rituals in three different royal capitals.[37] The other principle was the bureaucratic one of centralized written communications. It was affected, and even overwhelmed, by the political and literary magnetism of the tradition of civil service examinations. The examination system culture recognized only one ultimate capital: Peking.

No Western empire in Asia possessed a centuries-old elite recruitment system, created by its colonized people, to which even its imperial conquerors submitted themselves. The Ch'ien-lung emperor demonstrated just where this historical peculiarity might lead with an edict he ordered posted at every examination site in 1779. In the edict Ch'ien-lung complained that he personally had to correct documents written in Mongol before they could be issued. Mongol nobles could not understand the draft texts in Mongol that his government's Peking-based Court of Colonial Affairs had prepared. The same thing was happening to state texts written in Manchu by bureaucratic translators in Peking. Manchus in the field could not comprehend them. Ch'ien-lung blamed this on the circumstance that Manchu and Mongol interpreters, as banner children who had grown up in Peking under the spell of the examination system culture, had allowed their Manchu and Mongolian to become corrupted by the fashionably opaque mannerisms of Chinese eight-legged essay prose. Such mannerisms, the emperor charged, themselves marked a thousand years of the decline of the communicability in Chinese prose style since the T'ang dynasty. The decadent mannerisms were spreading like a virus to the bureaucracy's other written languages.[38]

All multiethnic empires are haunted by the behavior of their translators. But they vary in the ways by which their translators and interpreters are conditioned. The examination system, monocultural in its literary and social

[36] *CSL-CL*, 968, pp. 36–7b.

[37] For a good discussion see James L. Hevia, *Cherishing men from afar: Qing guest ritual and the Macartney embassy of 1793* (Durham, N.C., and London, 1995), pp. 31–2 and passim.

[38] *CSL-CL*, 1088, pp. 3–6.

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habits, undermined the multilingual communications that the Ch'ing upheld in theory and upon which the segmented networks of the empire's lesser lordships depended. British viceroys in India did not worry about the politics of the historical evolution of Sanskrit or the clarity of Bengali poetry. Ch'ien-lung saw a direct connection between his control of Mongolia and the necessity of recovering the high prose standards of Chinese medieval literati like Han Yü (768–824), who had searched for a decay-proof normative written Chinese. For this reason Ch'ien-lung was a strong supporter of Chinese practitioners of a purified ancient prose (*ku-wen*) in his own officialdom. At the outset of his reign he commissioned one of them, Fang Pao (1668–1749), to choose the finest examination system essays of the Ming and Ch'ing periods and to publish them as an official guide for students and their examiners, an imperially authorized manual of Four Books prose.[39]

The result was an empire at its height based not so much upon overt or covert sinicization as upon the reproduction of the classical values created in a historic China but detached from any notion of ethnic proprietorship. Manchus could preach Confucian classicism to un-Confucian Chinese, as did O-erh-t'ai (1680–1745), Grand Secretary and architect of an administrative and cultural revolution in the southwest. Of all the Ch'ing empire-builders of the 1700s, no one was more intelligent or more self-confident. As governor-general of Yunnan and Kweichow (1726–1732), this classically educated Manchu grandee informed Chinese academy students in Kunming that the empire would not consider them to be "adults" if they failed to study even a single one of the Thirteen Classics. O-erh-t'ai said that he himself read the examination books of failed Yunnan students, staying awake at night to do so to look for the "hidden jade" in them as part of his development of a "plan for Yunnan" and the enhancement of "the glory of the country."[40]

The strength of both the Ch'ien-lung emperor and of O-erh-t'ai lay in their psychological doubleness. They could accept classical Chinese culture as something that now belonged to them, too, even while they preserved an awareness that there was another layer of their identity, rooted in a separate culture more traditional to their people's self-conception. There was nothing eccentric or unstable about such doubleness. It could be compared to the later successful double identities of powerful postcolonial Asian elites like the

[39] R. Kent Guy, "Fang Pao and the Ch'in-ting Ssu-shu wen," in Benjamin A. Elman and Alexander Woodside, eds., *Education and society in late imperial China 1600–1900* (Berkeley and London, 1994), pp. 150–82.

[40] Alexander Woodside, "The divorce between the political center and educational creativity in late imperial China," in Elman and Woodside, eds., *Education and society in late imperial China 1600–1900*, pp. 482–4.

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Japanese, who may not regard themselves as fully Western but cannot abandon a Western culture that has now become incorporated into their lives.

The problem of political obedience at the Ch'ien-lung court

The instability of the Ch'ien-lung court, as it appeared to shrewd Chinese officials looking back not long after the emperor Ch'ien-lung's death, had little to do with the ethnic elements in the monarchy's double identity. In 1842, the reformer and Forbidden City insider Wei Yüan (1794–1856) produced a grandiose celebration of the Ch'ien-lung emperor's military campaigns. Parts of his book might also be thought of as a disguised inquest on the spirit of the reign. In this work Wei Yüan observed that Ch'ien-lung's relations with his frontier commanders and agents of Ch'ing expansion had two striking features. The first one was the lavishness of the emperor's rewards for high officers of even modest military attainments. On them he conferred superior titles of nobility and expanded privileges for their descendants, such as his grandfather and father would never have considered. But the second feature was that Ch'ien-lung punished officers who failed him on the battlefield far more severely than his predecessors ever had, with measures ranging from demotions, to forced suicides, to gruesome public executions, as in 1749 when Grand Secretary No-ch'in was beheaded with his own grandfather's sword in front of the army he had recently led to defeat in Szechwan. Wei Yüan's explanation of these idiosyncrasies was essentially that Ch'ien-lung was a glory-seeking militarist who had the misfortune to be surrounded by a peace-loving elite and general population. Rewards and punishments therefore had to be drastically inflated, in order to motivate men who were too accustomed to living in "repose" to fight well for their emperor in his many wars.[41]

A century and a half later, there may still not be a better characterization available than Wei Yüan's for the Ch'ien-lung reign. The imbalance between the emperor's interest in war and that of his subjects existed in an eighteenth-century China whose interest in the principle of political obedience in anything more than a perfunctory manner was already lukewarm. The conquest of southern Sinkiang (Altishahr) by 1759, regarded by patriotic Chinese today as one of Ch'ien-lung's greatest deeds, was unpopular at the time among the Chinese literati. Palace examination candidates in 1760 obliquely but bravely suggested in their essays that the Sinkiang campaign was a cover for the expansion of despotic power, and that the military colonies planned for the region were simply a coercive device to abuse human labor. Significantly,

[41] Wei Yüan, *Sheng-wu chi* (n.p., Ku-wei t'ang, 1842; rpt. Taipei, 1967), 11, pp. 14–15 (905–7).

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Ch'ien-lung assumed that the protesting palace examination students were just the tip of a much larger unseen iceberg of antipathetic public opinion, whose bottom layers, composed of "rude fellows of no knowledge," might be maligning his Sinkiang victory far more broadly. He felt it necessary to defend himself by posing as little more than a humanitarian bystander at the creation of his own Sinkiang domain. Far from being bellicose, the emperor claimed, he had merely intervened in Sinkiang to "revive" the original economic pastimes of the Turkic Muslims he had annexed, and to not get in the way of the flow of unemployed poor people from Kansu who sought new lands to farm, for small returns.[42]

The extravagant rewards and extreme punishments of which Wei Yüan later wrote had caused talk at the time. By the beginning of 1793, Ch'ien-lung himself had become so aware that his rewards were generating public mockery that he gave this as the reason for not conferring the status of "prince" on Fu-k'ang-an, the Manchu Grand Secretary who had won wars for him in Tibet. Fu-k'ang-an was the nephew of Ch'ien-lung's empress, so ignorant people, Ch'ien-lung conceded, would compare such an ennoblement to the misdeeds of the Han and T'ang dynasty emperors who had excessively favored their wives' relatives.[43] (Fu-k'ang-an was made a prince posthumously.) The savage punishments abated slightly later in the reign, but they included the executions of (a) two Grand Secretaries and one Imperial Commissioner at the end of the 1740s; (b) several Mongol princes, a general, two ministerial consultants, a banner chief commander, a Chinese provincial military commander, and a grand minister superintendent of Tsinghai after various central Asian campaigns; and (c) a Grand Secretary and an Imperial Commissioner and several other consultants and commanders who failed the emperor in his ill-advised war with Burma in the 1760s.[44]

Ch'ien-lung's rewards and punishments were symptomatic of a more general problem than just the need to wring a heroic morality out of a society centered more on libraries and teahouses. Ch'ien-lung embodied a quasi-bureaucratized monarchy. Governing hundreds of millions of people, the Ch'ing system was heir to a millennium of decline of aristocratic hereditary privilege in Chinese politics. The Ch'ing bureaucratic ratings system did not attempt to test its officials' loyalty, as contrasted to their talent or their fiscal probity. The seemingly more personal loyalty accorded the ruler by central Asian magnates could not compensate for the fact that Ch'ien-lung did not have a ruling class inside China whose leaders owed him religiously binding feudal oaths of personal allegiance, as still existed in the more aristocratic

[42] *CSL-CL*, 612, pp. 19b–22. [43] *CSL-CL*, 1417, pp. 6–6b.
[44] Wei Yüan, *Sheng-wu chi*, 11, pp. 14–15 (905–7).

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European monarchies. As his empire expanded, Ch'ien-lung had few ways of enhancing the practical expression of loyalty to the throne as a necessary response to the political system's great increase in territory and people governed.

The examination system ensured some elite loyalty. Another way of trying to promote greater symbolic consciousness of the values of loyalty and obedience was to place an increased stress upon the exaltation of hierarchical ethics in general. The imperial cult of Confucius and his relatives, to which K'ang-hsi, Yung-cheng, and Ch'ien-lung dedicated themselves with surprising vigor, amounted to the imaginative refeudalization and mystification of a dead philosopher in order to compensate for the continuing defeudalization and demystification of specific living political ties. The feudalizing celebration of Confucius had begun long before the Ch'ing. Ch'ing emperors kept a record of it. As the Yung-cheng emperor and his ministers complained, memorably, in 1723, the T'ang court had ennobled Confucius, the early Sung court had increased his ennoblement, and had also ennobled his father as "duke" (*kung*) of the state of Ch'i; the Yüan dynasty had upgraded Confucius and his father in nobility once again, and the Ming court had likened them to nobles related to the imperial house. There was consequently no more room in 1723 for any further increase in the imperial ennoblement of Confucius himself, and the only remedy was to ennoble more of his relatives.[45] Ch'ien-lung did better than that. He patronized and visited the Shantung establishment of the patrilineal descent group of Confucius nine times, and actually kowtowed to the tablet of Confucius, as if he were claiming to be his minister. It was as if this seemingly most powerful of all the rulers of China could strengthen the ethical basis of his power only indirectly, through its ever more comprehensive identification and fusion with a codified memory of Confucius.[46]

Ch'ien-lung's prostration before Confucius was neither random self-Sinicization nor a drastic portent of the expansion of despotism in eighteenth-century China, as some scholars in the West and in China have sometimes seen it. It has to be seen as occurring in a world full of haughty academicians, novel-reading shopkeepers, streetwise students, and indifferent peasants who – as described by Ch'ien-lung's most celebrated career county magistrate – did not greatly fear government laws, and respected their own local deities more than the ones receiving sacrifices in official temples.[47] The

[45] *CSL-YC*, 6, pp. 21–2.
[46] Chang Jen-shan, "Lun Ch'ien-lung te teng-chi lun-li kuan chi ch'i wei-hu teng-chi lun-li ti ts'o-shih," *Ku-kung po-wu-yüan yüan-k'an*, 3 (1988), pp. 23–8.
[47] Wang Hui-tsu, *Hsüeh-chih i-shuo* (1793; rpt. Changsha, 1939), II, p. 22.

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living monarch, in the interests of preserving from further depreciation the broad public value of self-disciplined loyalty, undertook the calculated risk of this curious symbolic self-circumscription.

From the outset of his reign Ch'ien-lung was also tireless in trying to manufacture from above, through various expedients, greater quantities of filial piety, and other hierarchical values. One of his measures was the threat that he would cashier any member of the literati, from "aged court scholars" down to provincial students and Imperial College students inside their own households, who married during the three years they should be mourning deceased parents.[48] His micromanaging fundamentalism extended even to the male actors who sang female parts in the Kiangsu popular theater, who threatened him as they had not threatened previous Ch'ing rulers. By growing unusually bulky queues in order to facilitate the wearing of hairpins, they appeared to Ch'ien-lung to be circumventing both the ethic of political submission to the Ch'ing throne and the separation of genders upon which Confucian self-discipline depended. In 1772 Ch'ien-lung declared that such professional female impersonators were to shave their heads and acquire ordinary queues at once, or be placed in punishment cangues.[49]

By this time the problems of loyalty and obedience had been transferred to an important extent from politics to literature. This was part of the provincial literati's imaginative dissociation of political values from a contemporary political process to which so many of them were marginal. The Ch'ien-lung emperor's particular cleverness as a ruler was to be aware of this fact, and to pursue the matter into literature on the heels of his own literati. Modern historians rightly argue that one of the most important political and historical statements of the later Ch'ien-lung reign, and of the emperor himself, who was deeply involved in its preparation, was the *Yü-p'i li-tai t'ung-chien chi-lan* (*Imperially Assessed Edited Readings of the General Mirror of History*). Completed in 1768, it was a multivolume account of the 4,559 years Ch'ien-lung believed to have existed from extreme antiquity to his own dynasty.[50] One of its most noteworthy features was the effort to annex the memory from the previous century of the Ming princes in south China who had fought the Ch'ing even after the Ming dynasty had foundered.

Ch'ien-lung himself saw to it that special chronicles about the Ming loyalists were appended to this work. Their purpose was to reinvent the career of the Ming prince Chu Yu-sung (who ruled for a year in Nanking as Ming "emperor" in 1645) as a "self-strengthening" patriot who now deserved comparison with the twelfth-century first emperor of the Southern Sung dynasty.

[48] *CSL-CL*, 6, pp. 16–17. [49] Ibid., 919, pp. 17–18.
[50] Kao Hsiang, *K'ang-Yung-Ch'ien san-ti t'ung-chih ssu-hsiang yen-chiu* (Peking, 1995), pp. 323ff.

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Equally extravagantly, Ch'ien-lung ordered the appended chronicles to describe two other executed Ming pretender princes of the early Ch'ing dynasty – Chu Yü-chien (1602–1646) and Chu Yu-lang (1623–1662), the second of whom Ch'ing armies had pursued into Burma to his death – as being comparable to the "wandering" last Sung emperor at the end of the thirteenth century. They were now acknowledged to have had perfectly valid claims to be descendants of the Ming dynastic house surname group. Famous loyalist officials who had served them, such as Chin Pao (1614–1680), were also to be rehabilitated. In this new scheme they became men who had gone to their deaths without political double-mindedness. Slipping and sliding through historical time and Ch'ing political theory, they were now shown to be preservers of the ethic of ministerial loyalty in distressed circumstances. As such, Ch'ien-lung could look back in 1768 and "grieve" for them.[51]

All of Ch'ien-lung's massive court-sponsored rewriting of history, and its eager rewarding of loyalty, reflected political stresses at least as acute as those behind the present-day rewriting of north American or Australian school textbooks in order to change their treatment of ethnic minorities. Ch'ien-lung's *Edited Readings* were not prepared in a vacuum. They were explicitly designed to compete with a robust eighteenth-century Chinese literary underground that was spreading "hearsay" about the Ming princes in which the loyalty and obedience ethic might have been redefined in unacceptable ways. They also exposed the plight of a monarchy caught up in an intensifying need to manufacture more symbolic resources of loyalty enhancement as its territory and people increased, and the tendency of that monarchy to look for such resources in the most unexpected places.

The particular need to magnify a specifically Chinese loyalty ethic in the eighteenth century hampered – if it did not completely contradict – the Ch'ing emperors' efforts, most notably those of Yung-cheng, to construct an imperial ideology of multiethnic socialization in which the imperially attached frontier peoples and Han Chinese were equally and impartially "children" of the dynastic state. The remarkable essay the Ch'ien-lung emperor wrote in the aftermath of his failed invasion of Burma, *Su-Yang lun* (*On Su and Yang*), shows what was likely to happen. Ch'ien-lung was so desperate to find paragons of loyalty that he apparently conferred honorary official status upon a lowly army camp follower named Yang, who had spent twenty-one years as a prisoner in Burma without wearing Burmese clothes or acquiring a Burmese family, before he was rescued and returned to China. In his essay, Ch'ien-lung meditated upon the similarities between a Chinese prisoner in Burma like Yang and the life of the famous Chinese general Su Wu of the

[51] *CSL-CL*, 995, pp. 21b–24.

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early Han empire. Su Wu had spent nineteen years "eating snow" and "smelling sheep" among the Hsiung-nu, before returning to the reward of a high official post at the Han court.[52]

Here was a Manchu emperor trying to imagine the emotions and scruples of two different Chinese prisoners of war, centuries apart and belonging to two different social classes, in two quite different forms of non-Chinese captivity. The spectacle shows how self-confident Ch'ien-lung was in inhabiting and interpreting a Chinese mental world. But it also shows the conflicts between the various elements in the eighteenth-century court's ideology. Ch'ien-lung's need to see the rice-planting Burmese as being as unvaryingly barbaric as the Hsiung-nu, in order to provide a stable external reference point for the comparative measurement across dynasties of Chinese political and cultural loyalty, worked against his court's equally significant agenda of demolishing negative Chinese pictures of the frontier peoples the Ch'ing empire was trying to assimilate or control. In the end, the ceaseless struggle to win the obedience of the Chinese themselves, the basis of the empire, won out. It necessitated the survival, even at the top, of static, undifferentiated images of the frontiers as places of martyrdom-inflicting otherness in which the most traditional types of Chinese loyalty could be tested and renewed.

THE POLITICS AND ECONOMICS OF CH'IEN-LUNG'S WARS

In the last decade of his reign, Ch'ien-lung referred to himself in a grandiose way. He adopted the style name of the "Old Man of the Ten Completed Great Campaigns" (*Shih-ch'üan lao-jen*). By this Ch'ien-lung meant to refer to a series of wars over most of his reign, from 1747 to 1792, and in all of which, with varying degrees of validity, he claimed victory. The ten wars comprised three expeditions into central Asia from 1755 to 1759, two against the Dzungars and one against the Turkic Muslims known in modern times as the Uighurs; two wars, in 1747–1749 and again in 1771–1776, to suppress the Tibetan minority of western Szechwan known in Peking in the eighteenth century as the "Golden Stream" (Chin-ch'uan) hill people; a war with the Konbaung dynasty in Burma, from 1765 to 1769; an invasion of Vietnam, in 1788–1789, with the pretext of restoring a collapsing dynasty there; the repression of a rebellion in Taiwan, in 1787–1788; and two wars in Tibet and beyond against the Gurkhas of Nepal (1790–1792) in order to solidify Ch'ing control in Tibet.

[52] P'eng Yüan-jui, comp., *Kao-tsung shih-wen shih-ch'üan chi* (Peking, 1794; rpt. Shanghai, 1936), 42, pp. 529–30.

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Map 7. *Eastern Central Asia in the Eighteenth Century*. John K. Fairbank, ed. *Late Ch'ing, 1800–1911, Part 1*, Vol. 10 of *The Cambridge History of China* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1978), Map 3, p. 55, Map 4, p. 67, Map 5, p. 104.

The "Ten Great Campaigns" was a public formula whose myth-making properties were designed to transcend the historical facts. The ten wars in the formula had little in common. Ch'ien-lung's adversaries ranged from the rulers of Nepal, Burma, and Vietnam, to a far less lofty Hokkien "trouble-maker" on Taiwan who led the first Triad rebellion in Chinese history.[53] The seizure of Sinkiang was an unquestioned and impressive reality. The Ch'ing military expeditions to Burma and Vietnam resulted in humiliating

[53] David Ownby, *Brotherhoods and secret societies in early and mid-Qing China* (Stanford, 1996), pp. 55–71.

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disasters, of a kind that could be disguised only by diplomatic finesse and by specious propaganda. It has been estimated that Ch'ien-lung lent his authorship to about fifteen hundred poems and essays commemorating his major wars, and then saw to it that such writings were engraved on huge stone monuments, scattered from Peking to west China. Themes from the wars and his writings about them were also incorporated into paintings, including those done by European artists at his court, and appeared as well on calligraphic scrolls hung in his palaces.

How well all this trophy-making conjured up a supportive public opinion is another matter. Ch'ien-lung made a special effort to install stone war memorial monuments at Peking's Imperial College (*Kuo-tzu chien*), the center of official higher education. This may have been intended as spine-stiffening morale therapy for the students there who despised soldiering. It also might be thought to counteract the pacificism of famous Chinese literati who most influenced them, like Fang Pao, whose picture of Chinese history contrasted the relatively peaceful two thousand years from the Yellow Emperor to the late Chou with the allegedly slaughter-filled two millennia of disorder that characterized the unified empire.[54] Court memoirists in the Ch'ien-lung reign's immediate aftermath remembered an emperor who stayed awake at night to read military reports from central Asia or Burma, bullying his eunuchs to get him more information and preventing his senior on-duty ministers from so much as eating their meals.[55] The K'ang-hsi emperor, more at home on his own battlefields, had not felt the need to devise so much propaganda.

War and the bureaucratization of Southwest China

Ch'ien-lung's five wars in Sinkiang and Tibet, and the postwar political and social orders in those regions that resulted from them, have been described elsewhere.[56] Of the five remaining and less well known of the ten campaigns, at least three (the two wars with the western Szechwan Tibetans, and the invasion of Burma) and perhaps as many as four (the brief Vietnam war) could be plausibly linked to the eighteenth-century court's promotion of a major shift in the Chinese state's historic territorial strategies for controlling people and resources in the four southwest provinces of Szechwan, Yunnan, Kweichow, and Kwangsi.

[54] Joanna Waley-Cohen, "Commemorating war in eighteenth-century China," *Modern Asian Studies*, 30, No. 4 (October 1996), pp. 869–99. For Fang Pao, see Fang Pao, *Fang Pao chi*, ed. Liu Chi-kao (Shanghai, 1983), I, pp. 73–4.

[55] Chao-lien, *Hsiao-t'ing tsa-lu*, 1, pp. 15.

[56] Joseph Fletcher, "Ch'ing Inner Asia c. 1800," in *Late Ch'ing, 1800–1911*, Vol. 10 of *The Cambridge history of China*, ed. Denis Twitchett and John K. Fairbank (Cambridge, 1978), pp. 35–106.

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The no-nonsense Yung-cheng emperor, in the spring of 1725, had singled out these four provinces for having the most unacceptably confused administrative boundaries in China. The result, as the emperor publicly saw it, was the court's inability to clarify local responsibilities for bandit suppression in the southwest, which had also harbored various anti-Ch'ing forces in the previous reign. Yung-cheng further complained about the southwest's interprovincial and interdistrict struggles over the rights to revenues from mines, salt, and tea production and trade, and the region's evasion of the principles laid down in the *Chou li* and *Mencius* for basing humane government upon firm boundaries.[57] Yung-cheng had ordered land surveys and boundary determinations for the southwest.

The eighteenth-century emperors' attempted shift from imprecise frontiers to more defined boundaries in the southwest led to warfare that was not included in Ch'ien-lung's Ten Great Campaigns formula as well as wars that were. Ch'ien-lung's own ambivalence about some of the warfare explains this. The shift in policies in the southwest involved a decline in tolerance for non-Chinese hereditary lordlings of a sort the Ch'ing court accepted in central Asia. The conversion of ecological disputes into political quarrels was just one of the unforeseen consequences. The imposition of a more impersonal and unified administrative culture from Peking threatened to destabilize fragile power-sharing arrangements along the Burmese and Vietnamese frontiers, where minority chiefs might be loyal by tradition to both the Chinese court and royal courts in Southeast Asia. The Chinese court literati were divided. Those who favored the policy shift argued that the non-Chinese hereditary chiefs in Kweichow, Szechwan, Yunnan, and Kwangsi were the last remaining holdouts against the general trend of imperial history toward the defeudalization of office-holding in China. Their transformation into circulating, nonhereditary bureaucrats, Chinese or minority, therefore could be seen as being the final consummation of that trend.

The tragedy of the southwest in the Yung-cheng and Ch'ien-lung reigns was that it became the laboratory for the combination of two historical trends, not one. Political defeudalization got mixed up with the dispossession of aboriginal peoples. The combination acquired an added meanness from the fact that it coincided with a crisis of downward mobility and immiserization among the eighteenth-century Chinese literati. That limited both their idealism and their acceptance of more humane educational forms of assimilation of southwest minorities.

These minorities included members of the Tibeto-Burman language family (such as the Yi or Lolo of Szechwan), members of the Tai language group

[57] *CSL-YC*, 30, pp. 23–23b.

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(such as the Chuang and the Li), and members of the Miao-Yao language family (such as the Miao/Hmong and Yao/Mien). Their societies and economies can be divided into at least three kinds. There were the quasi-bureaucratic ones close to (and geographically interspersed with) Chinese settlements; there were the more aloof feudal principalities, further subdivided into those with and those without well-defined leadership structures; and there were more primitive communalist systems with little leadership. The variety made it difficult, before the eighteenth century, for any central government to acquire a uniform, practical strategy in interacting with them.[58]

Ch'ien-lung's court broadly designated almost all of the minorities as "Miao people" (*Miao min*), although it was capable of also refining the term "Miao" to refer more specifically to the rebellious aborigines of eastern Kweichow, centered upon Ku-chou. (The broad use of the term can be traced back to the Han dynasty.) The court further distinguished between Miao with some degree of Sinicization, known to it as "cooked Miao" (*shu Miao*) and those who had resisted Sinicization and who were derogated as "raw Miao" (*sheng Miao*).[59] The distinction only hinted at what lay behind it: the existence of luridly hostile Chinese legends about the Miao, featuring blood-chilling accounts of alleged Miao poisonings and ritual murders. Yet Chinese society itself imposed upon the Miao in socially pathological ways. Ch'ien-lung conceded this in 1747, when his court attempted to curb an inter-provincial racket, run by tough Szechwan peddlers, which bought and sold the children of the Kweichow Miao.[60]

From the end of the Sung dynasty, the southwest minorities had been governed by hereditary native officers (*t'u-ssu*), appointed at least nominally by Chinese courts, while a debate raged among the empire's elite over the rules and the rate of the southwest's bureaucratic normalization. Modern scholarship suggests that in the Ch'ing period there were some 1,779 minority *t'u-ssu* families with acknowledged hereditary rights to political power in their communities scattered over about a dozen provinces or protectorates: Tibet, Tsinghai, Kansu, Szechwan, Kweichow, Yunnan, Kwangsi, Kwangtung, Hainan and Taiwan, Hunan, and Hupei. A majority of them (1,078) had also supplied hereditary native officers in the Ming, and the early Ch'ing court had simply continued them in their positions. An even greater majority of them (1,311) held military status titles rather than civil ones, such as the native pacification commissioners (*an-fu shih*) who governed the people who were to become Ch'ien-lung's nemesis, the Chin-ch'uan Tibetans in west Szechwan.[61]

[58] Yang Hsüeh-ch'en, *Ch'ing-tai min-tsu kuan-hsi shih* (Changchun,1991), pp. 241–6.

[59] Norma Diamond, "Defining the Miao: Ming, Qing, and contemporary views," in Stevan Harrell, ed., *Cultural encounters on China's ethnic frontiers* (Seattle and London, 1995), pp. 99–100.

[60] *CSL-CL*, 294, p. 12b.

[61] Kung Yin, *Chung-kuo t'u-ssu chih-tu* (Kunming, 1992), pp. 112–15.

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The three strongest Ch'ing emperors, culminating with Ch'ien-lung, vigorously promoted the development of an empirewide educational system and its extension into the southwest, notably in the form of "charitable schools" (*i-hsüeh*). This worked indirectly to dissolve hereditary political power by encouraging the most talented minority children to try to enter the examination system. The Ch'ing examination system, less ethnically prejudiced than the society in which it functioned, differentiated Miao candidates from Chinese ones merely by calling them "new registered students" (*hsin t'ung*) rather than "Han registered students" (*Han t'ung*). It also reserved special quotas for them. The quota in Kweichow permitted by the court for everyone in the regional examinations almost doubled between the Ming and the Ch'ien-lung reign.[62] This increase could not keep pace with the flood of Chinese settlers into the southwest. Its general population may have quadrupled between 1700 and 1850 after not quite doubling between 1250 and 1600.[63] A regional administrative crisis, divisions among court factions in Peking over how to react, and even more general questions about the imperial political system's mission as it involved the southwest, all confronted Ch'ien-lung when he took the throne.

In 1726 the Ch'ing court, inspired by O-erh-t'ai, launched a large-scale campaign to end the special administrative treatment of the southwest by ending hereditary political power among the minorities there. In the aftermath of land surveys and boundary clarifications, native officers were to be converted into circulating bureaucrats who would not be hereditary, might not be from the minorities, and could not raise personal armies. The formula for the conversion was *kai-t'u kuei-liu* ("changing the local back into the circulating"). O-erh-t'ai, who was serving as the political overlord of Yunnan and Kweichow at the time, argued that the elimination of "barbarian officials" (*i-kuan*) was necessary because such officials were using their positions as devices for violence and self-aggrandizement. Chinese settlers would not occupy the good untitled land in the southwest and rents and taxes from it could not be increased until incidents of Miao violence ended.[64] Oerh-t'ai had a more ambitious agenda than just ending turmoil. He planned to inflict a cultural revolution upon the various Miao peoples. They were to be taught by the state to accept private property rights based upon written contracts; they were to be given patrilineal surnames if they did not have them, and then incorporated into the empire's population registers

[62] Ou To-heng, "Ch'ien-hsi Ch'ing-tai Kuei-chou chiao-yü fa-chan ti yüan-yin," *Kuei-chou she-hui k'o-hsüeh*, 2 (1985), pp. 102–6.

[63] James Lee, "Food supply and population growth in southwest China, 1250–1850," *JAS*, 41, No. 4 (August 1982), p. 712.

[64] O-erh-t'ai, "Kai-t'u kuei-liu shu," in *CSWP*, 86, pp. 5b–6.

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and neighborhood mutual surveillance groups; and they were to be disarmed, and allowed to wear no more than small knives of a prescribed length.[65]

O-erh-t'ai's ambitions for the forced defeudalization and Sinicization of the Miao had been so overweening that they aroused opposition among other Ch'ing officials, who accused him of causing devastation and misery among the aborigines.[66] The Ch'ien-lung emperor could hardly avoid the controversy about the southwest that he had inherited. It became one of the major policy issues in the struggle between the two factions of officials who dominated his court from 1736 until O-erh-t'ai's death in 1745. The first faction was the O-erh-t'ai faction; it was largely Manchu in composition, and included O-erh-t'ai's five sons (four of them high officials), and his nephew, but it also included a famous Chinese champion of Miao suppression, Chang Kuang-ssu, whom Ch'ien-lung was to execute in 1749. The other faction was largely Chinese and was clustered around another veteran bureaucratic grandee of earlier reigns, Chang T'ing-yü (1672–1755), Grand Secretary from 1726 to 1749. It generally stood against the ambitions of O-erh-t'ai and his followers to uproot Miao native officers at any cost.[67]

Ch'ien-lung signaled that he favored defeudalization in the southwest, but his enthusiasm was not overwhelming, and his court's factionalism, which captured the attention even of Korean diplomats, oppressed him enough to compel him to make clear that he was not in O-erh-t'ai's pocket on such an issue. Unlike the court factionalism of the early Yung-cheng reign, the factional division between O-erh-t'ai and Chang T'ing-yü did not directly threaten the emperor's power. It was driven on both sides by networks of relatives and teacher-disciple ties. Its most sinister effect was its renewal and elaboration of Chinese-Manchu tensions in the highest governing circles of the empire. As late as 1755, O-erh-t'ai's nephew, O-ch'ang, while serving as governor of Kansu, exchanged poems with a Chinese member of the O-erh-t'ai faction whose poetry obliquely mocked the Manchus and traduced Chang T'ing-yü. The emperor forced O-ch'ang's suicide and took the occasion to say that if O-erh-t'ai were still alive he would be severely punished for creating a faction.[68] Partly because of Ch'ien-lung's heightened anxiety about factions, not one of the famous ministers of the Ch'ien-lung reign ever acquired the sort of practical power over the central government that famous ministers of previous dynasties exercised, notably the Ming dynasty's Chang Chü-cheng

[65] *CSL-YC*, 54, pp. 30–1b.

[66] John E. Herman, "Empire in the southwest: Early Qing reforms to the native chieftain system," *JAS*, 56, No. 1 (February 1997), p. 47.

[67] Tai I, *Ch'ien-lung ti chi ch'i shih-tai*, pp. 129–30.

[68] Kao Hsiang, *K'ang-Yung-Ch'ien san-ti*, pp. 292–4.

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(1525–1582), whom Ch'ien-lung went out of his way to criticize for having been rude and treacherous.[69]

Ch'ien-lung failed to moderate the policies of his father and O-erh-t'ai in the southwest. Slaughter of aborigines occurred more in service to the ideal of bureaucratic integration than because of a desire for religious conversion or economic plunder. In the Ch'ien-lung reign, "countless" more Kweichow Miao died.[70] In 1740, Ch'ien-lung was confronted by a Miao rebellion involving Hmong and Yao/Mien peoples in the borderlands of eastern Kweichow and western Hunan. The rebellion's propaganda featured millenarian themes with a White Lotus sectarian flavor as well as the characteristic prophecies of shaman-sorcerers that a Miao king had arrived who would reclaim land from the Chinese and discover hidden treasure. Modern scholarship suggests that such Miao millenarian fantasies were reversed images of the aboriginal people's conception of their actual powerlessness in the conflict between state-possessing and stateless societies; they were dreaming of power in Chinese terms.[71]

After the 1740 rebellion was suppressed, the Miao loss of power accelerated. The Miao became the victims of an invading wave of Chinese moneylenders who made crop loans at high rates of interest to native communities unaccustomed to money transactions. By using manifold techniques of usury such as incorporating the unpaid interest on the ramifying Miao debts into the debts themselves, and calculating new interest rates every three months on the basis of such amalgamations, they gained control of large tracts of Miao land. In February 1795, at the end of Ch'ien-lung's reign, the emperor not surprisingly faced an even greater Miao rebellion in Hunan and Kweichow. Its leaders pledged to "expel the guest people and recover the old lands." Some of them even talked of driving the Chinese people all the way back to the Yellow River. Of the five major leaders of the 1795 rebellion, two claimed the title of Miao king and the millennial hopes with which it was invested. The last three claimed the title of King Wu, provocatively associating themselves with a political tradition that poor Chinese peasants of the southwest could share: that of Wu San-kuei, the Chinese general who had tried to construct his own dynasty in the southwestern provinces a century earlier.[72] As the Ch'ien-lung reign ended, the Ch'ing government was trying to bribe what remained of the Miao rebels into good behavior by offering

[69] Ibid., p. 328.
[70] Yang Hsüeh-ch'en, *Ch'ing-tai min-tsu kuan-hsi shih*, p. 246.
[71] Siu-Woo Cheung, "Millenarianism, Christian movements, and ethnic change among the Miao in southwest China," in Harrell, *Cultural encounters on China's ethnic frontiers*, p. 223.
[72] *CSL-CL*, 1473, pp. 12–14; Cheung, "Millenarianism," p. 225; Ma Shao-ch'iao, *Ch'ing-tai Miao-min ch'i-i* (Wuhan, 1956), pp. 28–44.

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them salt, food, cash, and even the pledge of some returned lands. More than two hundred Ch'ing military and civil officials were killed in this uprising.

The Miao appear to have baffled Ch'ien-lung. At least they did not enrage him the way the "Golden Stream" rebels of Szechwan did. As his reign lengthened, he showed more and more discomfort with the policies he had inherited in the southwest. The emperor was eager to promote the compilation of "Miao albums," the texts that began to appear in the 1700s with pictures and commentaries describing the exotic faces, costumes, recreational habits, and economic activities of eighty-two different "Miao" groups in Kweichow and Yunnan.[73] In 1751, Ch'ien-lung ordered his Grand Council to take the exciting drawings of aborigines and issue them as models to high provincial officials, with the orders that they have their staffs imitate them to depict the appearances, clothes, and ornaments of all "Miao, Yao, Li, Chuang" and "outer barbarians" in their jurisdictions. The new drawings were then to be sent to Peking to be preserved at the Grand Council for his examination, in what was suggested was a pictorial version of the tradition of the ancient Chou kings who convened face-to-face meetings with their outer feudal lords.[74] This was hardly a vote of confidence in the more radical defeudalization policy.

Ch'ien-lung also took a sufficiently benign view of "cooked" or assimilated aborigines to entertain ethnic gerrymandering policies as part of Taiwan's post-rebellion pacification in 1787, in which they would be featured. Sinicized aborigines who had not joined the Triad society rebellion there would be given confiscated rebel lands and used as buffers to keep separate Taiwan's real troublemakers, its warring Cantonese and Hokkien communities.[75] In 1776, Ch'ien-lung deferred to the suspicious sensitivities of the "Miao nature" by halting all census-taking by Ch'ing officials in the "Miao-Yao-Li-Chuang" areas of the provinces of Kweichow, Yunnan, Kwangsi, Kwangtung, Hunan, and Hupei, with respect to ethnic minorities, as well as imperial census-taking among both "raw" and "cooked" aborigines in Fukien and among non-Chinese minorities in Shensi and Szechwan.[76] The emperor implied that the minorities were not to be regarded as members of the registered population of the "inside land" (*nei-ti*, China proper, a term from the early Chinese empire). This was a substantial retreat from his father's view that the minorities, as the ruler's "children" and subjects, should be quickly incorporated into the regular administrative framework of the Ch'ing empire.

[73] Diamond, "Defining the Miao," pp. 101–4. [74] *CSL-CL*, 390, pp. 8b–9.
[75] Ibid., 1291, pp. 8–10b. [76] Ibid., 1011, pp. 19b–20b.

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Advocates of more liberal colonization policies in the southwest, as contrasted with the near-genocidal ones associated with Chang Kuang-ssu, were not far from Ch'ien-lung's side. Ch'en Hung-mou (1696–1771), the most dynamic and farsighted of Ch'ien-lung's Chinese Grand Secretaries, was one of the most important ones. Ch'en had been born in the southwest. In addition, he preached the virtues of popular schools in eighteenth-century China, promoting them from the northeast (Tientsin) to Yunnan. Ch'en's critical anthology of educational writings, the *Wu-chung i-kuei* (*Bequeathed guidelines of five kinds*), appearing in stages from 1739, may have been the most influential educational textbook the Ch'ien-lung reign produced, being reprinted several times in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Himself the architect of the creation or revival of 650 charitable schools in Yunnan alone between 1733 and 1737, Ch'en justified charitable schools for the Miao as part of a bigger vision. This was to exploit the egalitarian potentialities of the teachings of Mencius. Quoting the *Mencius*, Ch'en declared that Miao human nature was as innately good as Chinese human nature, and therefore the Miao must be educated. Ch'en assumed that the literate Chinese he recruited as teachers for his Miao schools would be ethnocentric, so he made them prove to him that they were keeping their schools for Miao children open for the entire year.[77] Ch'en praised the "rustic virtue" of the southwest minorities. He bluntly told subordinates who were unenthusiastic about mass education for the Miao that "I will never entertain such excuses as 'savages will always be savages.' "[78]

In the end, both Ch'en Hung-mou's more liberal colonialism and O-erh-t'ai's more coercive cultural revolution lost ground as the Ch'ien-lung reign continued. In a court debate about the forced Sinicization of the Kweichow Miao in 1766, the emperor and his advisors rejected local officials' plans to impose a time limit on the suppression of such objectionable Miao behavior as wearing swords and performing sexually free "moon dances." They also stipulated with a wry realism that Miao social life was to be judged by the standards of the not-very-Confucian popular culture of ordinary Chinese, not by more strict elite ideals.[79] This reflected Ch'ien-lung's greater skepticism, compared to his father, that political life could be perfected through laws and institutional procedures. His suspicion of the attempted state rationalization of minority culture was of a piece with his suspicion of land reform or

[77] Alexander Woodside, "Some mid-Qing theorists of popular schools," *Modern China*, 9, No. 1 (January 1983), pp. 6, 12, 22–3.

[78] William T. Rowe, "Education and empire in southwest China: Ch'en Hung-mou in Yunnan, 1733–1738," in Elman and Woodside, eds., *Education and society in late imperial China 1600–1900*, pp. 422, 429.

[79] *CSL-CL*, 772, pp. 19–20.

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publicly established royal successions. In addition, the realities of Ch'ien-lung's empire worked against ambitious imperial expansion policies of either the Ch'en Hung-mou or the O-erh-t'ai kind. Large sections of Chinese society were unwilling to cooperate with such policies. Surplus Chinese provincial students desperate for official jobs could not tolerate the empire's proposed recruitment of an additional aboriginal student class. Chinese settlers' work habits and prejudices about the Miao prevented them from being effective homesteaders on the multiethnic southwest frontier.

After the Miao rebellion in 1740, the Ch'ien-lung court discovered that the "soldier colonists" being mobilized to till abandoned or confiscated Miao lands were largely vagrants and tramps. They regarded the Miao and the Yao as their "slaves," and preferred to let such "slaves" do their farming to doing it themselves. Their combination of prejudice and parasitism was too remote from Mencius to allow the emergence of the imperial dream of a social order of independent farmers, Chinese and Miao alike.[80] In education, Ch'en Hung-mou was reduced after 1740 to trying to get previously rebellious Yunnan and Kweichow native officers, after they had lost their jobs to the *kai-t'u kuei-liu* process and been deported east and resettled in Kiangsi, into the examination system on an equal basis with the Chinese provincial students of Kiangsi.[81] He and others like him soon learned that a society with declining prospects of upward mobility was poorly placed to solve ethnic tensions by means of equalization of educational opportunity. Chinese students, desperate for access to the examinations, called themselves Miao or Yao and usurped the minority quotas. By 1788, this phenomenon had become so serious in Hunan that Ch'ien-lung sought the help of "Yao headmen" there to purge the student registers of Chinese who claimed to be Yao.[82] Eighteenth-century China's unprecedentedly great economic and demographic superiority over border societies favored the territorial growth of Ch'ien-lung's empire; but there were other factors that did not, and these have to be considered in assessing the emperor's achievement.

The state formation problem as reflected in the Szechwan and Burma wars

The eighteenth-century emperors' determination to impose a more predictable bureaucratic government on western and southwestern territories led not just to aboriginal rebellions, but to those three of the Ch'ien-lung emperor's ten "great" military campaigns that raise the most questions about his political judgment.

80 Ibid., 161, pp. 13b–14b. 81 Ibid., 170, pp. 8–8b. 82 Ibid., 1306, p. 3b.

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Of all Ch'ien-lung's wars, the enterprise that lasted the longest, cost the most, and required mobilization of the greatest number of Ch'ing troops was the struggle to pacify the Tibetan people of the mountainous terrain of west Szechwan. The "Golden Stream" (*Chin-ch'uan*) people, named by the Chinese after a river tributary west of Chengtu where gold had been found, were known to themselves as the Khambas or people of Kham. They may not have amounted to more than 30,000 persons. They nonetheless fought the Ch'ing court in two wars, in 1747–1749 and again in 1771–1776. Ch'ien-lung's rage at losing the first one led to the execution or forced suicide of no less than two Grand Secretaries and one Imperial Commissioner.

The complex Tibetan civilization over which Ch'ien-lung ruled was rooted not just in the Tibet-Tsinghai-Kansu region but also in Szechwan and Yunnan. The Golden Stream people spoke a different form of Tibetan language from that of Tibet itself but regarded the Dalai Lama as their ultimate authority. Straddling the Tibet-Szechwan borderland, their existence and location exposed the instabilities and contradictions in the Ch'ing court's eclectic, shifting vocabulary of frontier inclusion and exclusion in which Mongol notions of clan-based territories and Tibetan notions of dualistic lay-monastic government interacted with Chinese notions of an "inside land" (*nei-ti*, which became known as China proper), including Szechwan, in which Chinese bureaucratic forms should prevail. Szechwan, neither the poorest nor the most ethnically diverse province in the "inside land," may have been the most awkward one for imperial theoreticians, beginning with the emperor.

Ch'ien-lung never really understood the awkwardness. On the one hand, even as late as 1787, after the Golden Stream wars were over, he recognized that a Chinese-based administration in Szechwan would not work without the presence of Mongol officials with experience in the Court of Colonial Affairs (*Li-fan yüan*). Such men were required even in the capital to translate and transliterate Tibetan names and terms.[83] On the other hand, the result of his two wars in west Szechwan was the abolition of the hereditary native officers among the Szechwan Tibetans he had conquered, and their replacement with a provincial administration as part of an attempt at bureaucratic normalization. Whether this accorded with the needs of historical development, as has been argued,[84] the hesitations in implementing the policy reflected the ambivalences in the logic of Ch'ing state formation.

Being a Tibetan community, the Golden Stream people aroused political anxieties in Peking, aside from those associated with the extrabureaucratic violence of southwestern hereditary native officers. Ch'ien-lung was the

[83] Ibid., 1295, pp. 17b–18b. [84] Ch'ien Tsung-fan, *Ch'ien-lung* (Nanning, 1986), pp. 49, 59–60.

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patron of the Yellow Hat sect of Tibetan Buddhism. A Mongol scholar-politician who had studied with the Dalai Lama in Lhasa and remained close to Yellow Hat sect leaders advised him. The Golden Stream community mainly practiced the indigenous Tibetan Bon religion. They also provided a significant following for Tibetan Buddhism's Red Hat sect, the Yellow Hats' major competitor. Yellow Hat sectarians apparently saw the Golden Stream wars as a useful means of extending their influence into Szechwan. Up to a point the emperor was willing to comply, disliking the claims of the Bon monks, who sheltered and accompanied Khamba soldiers, that their battlefield magic could prevail against the forces of the Ch'ing and mystique of its universal monarch.[85] The multiple motives behind the prosecution of the two wars may well explain some of the savagery with which they were fought.

The horrors of the 1740s Golden Stream war, which demoralized the Ch'ing court, were convincingly documented in the diary of a remarkable Chinese Catholic priest, Andreas Ly (1692?–1772), who had been trained in Siam before returning to Szechwan in 1746. From his base in Chengtu, Ly reported a high death toll among Ch'ing soldiers. Some were cut to pieces by the Chin-ch'uan, some were maimed by cold and hunger, some threw themselves off cliffs to escape their enemy, and "a great many officers" hanged themselves in despair. Frostbite destroyed combat readiness. The widows of the soldiers who had been killed demonstrated noisily at the Chengtu prefectural office over the government's failure to pay them stipends. In the gloomy situation, rumors even spread that Ch'ien-lung himself had died.[86] The reputation of Manchu bannermen for both invincibility and efficiency shattered itself against the Khambas' pagoda-like stone fortresses, known as *tiao,* that dotted the cloud-hung northwest Szechwan mountains. The foremost Chin-ch'uan enemy leader, Solobun (*Sha-luo-pen*), became even more mysterious a figure in eighteenth-century Peking than Ho Chi Minh was to be in Washington or Paris two centuries later. The confusion was such that there were at least five ways of transcribing the name Solobun into documentary Chinese; the name then turned out to be a religious title, possessed by the sons of Chin-ch'uan officers who became monks and monastery masters.[87]

Because the first war did not solve the question of who would control western Szechwan, the Ch'ing bureaucracy or the Tibetan aristocracy, a bigger second war erupted in the 1770s. Ch'ien-lung calculated at the end of this

[85] Joanna Waley-Cohen, "Religion, war, and empire-building in eighteenth-century China," *The International History Review*, 20, No. 2 (June 1998), pp. 336–52.

[86] Robert Entenmann, "Andreas Ly on the first Jinchuan war in western Sichuan (1747–1749)," *Sino-Western Cultural Relations Journal*, 19 (1997), pp. 8, 10, 13.

[87] Kuo Ch'eng-k'ang et al., *Ch'ien-lung huang-ti*, pp. 250–1.

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ordeal that his two wars against the Golden Stream people had cost him more than double the court revenues he had had to spend conquering all of Sinkiang.[88] When he won the second war, Ch'ien-lung ordered some Chin-ch'uan monks executed at once, and others were transported to Peking by cage-cart to be exhibited in extravagantly elaborate victory rituals. The severed head of the first Solobun's grandson was presented to a vengeful and relieved Ch'ien-lung at the Meridian Gate.[89]

In eighteenth-century Ch'ing political thought, the function of the Chin-ch'uan wars, like the Miao rebellions, was to confirm for one side in the endless debate the rightness of the state formation process based on defeudalization that had begun in imperial China almost two millennia earlier. The bloody western Szechwan wars also exposed the limits of the enterprise, or at least the diminishing returns of a defeudalization that was not inspired by a more powerfully imagined ideal end. Some writers living near the battlefields wanted to see what was happening in the southwest under the Ch'ing emperors as a sort of laboratory for reliving the transfiguration of the Chinese world at the time of the original empire at the beginning of the decline of the principle of hereditary power. One Kunming writer thus attacked the Ch'ing government propaganda that attributed the reputedly chaotic and licentious behavior of the hereditary native officials to the "foul ethos" of the border minorities, or that stereotyped such leaders as incorrigibly devoid of good moral potential and so deserving of "extermination." He argued that the situation was not ethnically determined. The behavior of the great lords and feudal dignitaries of the Spring and Autumn Period (722–481 B.C.) had been even more murderous. The problem was that state ritual by itself could not restrain politicians with unearned hereditary power. Historians were wrong to criticize the Ch'in dynasty for dismantling the Warring States aristocracy. With the recorded misdeeds of the aristocratic villains of the *Tso-chuan* in their heads, writers like the one in Kunming could watch Ch'ing armies pursue Miao and Chin-ch'uan rebels through the malarial corridors of the southwest and approve the ultimate *kai-t'u kuei-liu* objective of establishing circulating appointed officials. But they warned Ch'ing emperors not to disturb the native officials stationed along Yunnan's borders with Burma. Their displacement might be beyond Peking's effective strength.[90]

The Ch'ien-lung court had to learn this lesson the hard way. Ch'ien-lung's war with Burma in the 1760s actually began in Yunnan border jurisdictions

[88] Tai I and Hua Li, "I-ch'ang te-pu-ch'ang-shih te chan-cheng: lun Ch'ien-lung ch'ao Chin-ch'uan chih i," *Li-shih yen-chiu*, 3 (1993), pp. 30–41.
[89] Waley-Cohen, "Religion, war, and empire-building," p. 348.
[90] Ni Shui, "T'u-kuan shuo," in *CSWP*, 86, pp. lb–2.

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like P'u-erh, a somewhat intractable leftover from the thirteenth-century Mongol empire that had acquired P'u-erh during its own invasion of Burma. P'u-erh and other places like it in Yunnan epitomized Yung-cheng's complaint about weak state power there in 1725. They had never become a regular part of the administrative system. The kings of Burma, for their part, since the sixteenth century formally claimed suzerainty over the Shan territories along the Burma-China frontier. (The Shans, a branch of the Thai people, live in both upper Burma and Yunnan.) But they began only after 1752 to make their authority effective over many Shan *sawbwas* (princes), many of whom doubled as the hereditary native officers of the Ch'ing empire. Burmese kings kept the relatives of Shan princes at the Burmese court at Ava as pupils and hostages. They stationed their own deputies (*sitke*) supported by military levies in the Shan states, and they fostered rivalries among less cooperative Shan princes.[91] Burma's own ancient monarchy, based on Indian cosmology and Theravada Buddhism, helped to mark the fault line in Asia between Sinic and Indic civilizations, and had just been revitalized by the new Konbaung dynasty. The king of Burma regarded himself as a transcendent monarch. Burmese records traced the dynasties of Burma back to the Buddha's own lineage, and Indian Brahmin priests imported from Manipur and Benares advised the eighteenth-century Burmese court about ritual.

Enclosed in the stiff panoply of this self-exalting Indo-Buddhist political style, few strong Burmese kings ever seriously admitted the claims of the Chinese tributary system, whatever Chinese histories suggested. At the same time, the new Konbaung dynasty rulers were suffering from a decline in the numbers of the servicemen (*ahmudan*) population that supported their throne. To supplement their existing servicemen, they conducted military expeditions to obtain war captives or hill peoples, which they could then settle as new service groups. It was in these circumstances that Ch'ien-lung decided to humble the king of Burma in a dispute over the double allegiance of certain northern Shan communities in Yunnan that Ch'ien-lung barely understood. This precipitated the most disastrous of his ten great campaigns.

In 1765–1766 King Hsinbyushin of Burma demanded tribute from a trans-Salween Shan state whose hereditary native officer (*t'u-ssu*) was currently serving Ch'ing, but which had a past history of vassalage to Burma. *T'u-ssu* of this kind in Yunnan had often linked their history, and the chronology of their power-holding, to the Burmese political system, dating their records

[91] Sao Saimong Mangrai, *The Shan states and the British annexation* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1965), pp. 54–8.

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in the eighteenth century from the founding of the Konbaung empire at Shwebo. Fighting broke out in the subsequent struggle to clarify Shan loyalties, and borders. When soldiers of the Yunnan governor-general, Liu Tsao, were defeated, Liu committed suicide. His successor, Yang Ying-chü, permitted an attack in 1767 on the Burmese border town of Bhamo. Ch'ing armies were outflanked, surrounded, and defeated. An enraged Ch'ien-lung executed Yang Ying-chü, who had dissembled his losses. The Manchu aristocrat Ming-jui was sent to lead a major invasion of Burma. In 1768 his army became overextended and was encircled, and Ming-jui lost his life. A-kuei (1717–1797), a veteran of Ch'ing campaigns in Mongolia and Sinkiang, led a third Ch'ing invasion of Burma in 1769. It also bogged down.

Fortunately for Peking, King Hsinbyushin and his great general, Maha Thiha Thura, were preoccupied by warfare in Laos and Siam. (The Burmese had destroyed the Thai capital of Ayudhya in 1767.) Their preoccupation allowed the negotiation of a face-saving truce that the king of Burma never formally accepted. The Ch'ing ambition to rationalize the southwestern frontiers, attempted in the context of a time of expansion of the Burmese kingdom and steadily increasing presence in the region of Chinese migrants, continued to breed confusion and mistrust.

The last quality the emperor Ch'ien-lung was likely to exhibit in the face of such frustrations was magnanimous detachment. Even before Ming-jui's death in Burma, the emperor was aware that his obsession with the war there was generating grumblings at his court about his excessive fondness for war and even his competence as a political executive. In the spring of 1768 Ch'ien-lung characterized the Burma war, in his own self-defense, as a series of mistakes that had put him in a plight with "no alternatives" (*pu-te-i*) and had robbed him of policy choices. As he tried to make his court see it, low-level border tensions with Burma over hereditary native officers were "normal" and not worth a major war. But Governor-general Liu Tsao, being a mere scholar (*shu-sheng*), had overreacted in beginning such a war. Yang Ying-chü had been chosen to succeed him because of his great experience and imperturbability, but had been utterly unable to understand Burmese border politics. Ming-jui had been given the title of governor-general, but not that of general (*chiang-chün*), in order to emphasize the court's "original" peaceful intent. Having repositioned himself politically as the victim of incompetent and ill-informed border officials, Ch'ien-lung then conceded his own single personal error. He had "despised" the king of Burma so much that he had not sent large enough armies to the southwest. Court doves were apparently arguing that the war should be stopped because the Burmese were not capable of being incorporated into any Ch'ing imperial sphere. Ch'ien-lung, in 1768 fresh from his successes in Sinkiang, replied defiantly that if he could make the

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Dzungars and the Uighurs his servants there was little to bar him from doing the same to the "Burmese bandits."[92]

Later Ch'ien-lung was to concede that Manchu cavalry were less suited to fighting in Burma than in Sinkiang. He ordered more lenient treatment of Ch'ing soldiers who reported a high death toll for their horses in pastureless, monsoon-soaked Burma.[93] The emperor's acceptance of ecological limits to Ch'ing power was, nonetheless, grudging. That was the central issue in the 1768 Peking debate about the Burma war. What were the geographical and social limits of the Ch'ing empire and what levels of violence at the frontiers were tolerable? The answers to both questions were unclear and negotiable, and we should be careful to appreciate their indeterminacy and the variety of positions in the minds of the imperial elite.

A debate the Burma war might have provoked, but did not, is almost as important as the one it did generate. The history of Ch'ien-lung's reign is really a tale of two empires. There was the political-military one, based on the maps of soldiers and Jesuit geographers, and with a growing bureaucratic need for fixed frontiers. There was also the commercial empire, based on merchants' travels, in which frontiers were necessarily soft or nonexistent, and ambiguities such as Shan "native officers" in Yunnan with dual allegiances was helpful rather than threatening. The empire of Manchu cavalrymen was to prove, in the long run, less durable than the empire of the Chinese merchants. The signs of this were already visible at the time of the Burma war. Here the laws of motion of Chinese commerce began to escape the archaic political controls of imperial politicians, Ch'ing and Burmese alike.

If Ch'ien-lung's ten campaigns are examined from the vantage point of how much each one reinforced or undermined the unacknowledged liaison between North Asian statecraft and Chinese commerce upon which the emperor's power implicitly relied, it seems clear that in central Asia Manchu cavalry and Chinese trading networks were not in conflict. The newly organized Sinkiang military colonies needed Chinese commodities. Ch'ien-lung encouraged the Chinese tea trade with central Asia, and in 1793 relaxed a ban prohibiting Chinese merchants from selling metals like copper and iron in Sinkiang.[94] After 1760, Chinese merchants developed two established routes by which to migrate to Sinkiang. Merchants from Chihli and Shansi dominated the "north route," across the Mongolian plains to Barkul, Urumchi, and Ili. Merchants from southeast China and Szechwan favored the "west (of the Yellow River) route," through Kansu to Hami and beyond.[95]

[92] *CSL-CL*, 804, pp. 19b–23b. [93] Ibid., 859, pp. 16b–17b.

[94] Kuo Yün-ching, *Ch'ing-tai shang-yeh shih* (Shenyang, 1994), pp. 207–8.

[95] Ma Ju-heng and Ma Ta-cheng, *Ch'ing-tai pien-chiang k'ai-fa yen-chiu* (Peking, 1990), pp. 289–90.

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In contrast, Ch'ien-lung's invasions of Burma, and of Vietnam in 1788, violated the commercial interests of south China. This raises questions about the extent to which this merchant-loving emperor was constrained by Confucian prejudices about merchant culture, and how well he understood the dualism of his own system of rule, combining both great military-administrative skills and great commercial ones. Chinese historians are right to rebuke suggestions in American cold war scholarship that Ch'ien-lung went to war with Burma to protect Chinese merchants there: he actually had little interest in them.[96]

At the time of the Ch'ing dynasty's founding, Chinese merchants had just begun their informal modern penetration of Southeast Asian economic life. They were the largest group of foreign traders in Vietnam and the Philippines; they became so in Burma in the eighteenth century. Rangoon, the new port that the Konbaung kings built in the 1750s, immediately attracted immigrants from Kwangtung (known to the Burmese as the "short jackets," because most of them were artisans wearing short-sleeved clothes), and immigrants from Fukien (known to the Burmese as the "long jackets," because they were traders who wore long-sleeved robes).[97] Thousands of Chinese miners dug for silver in the Shan states, contributing to their instability. The ancestors of some of the Chinese mining contractors who organized them had been Ming refugees in Burma. Further commercial ties were created by a Sino-Burmese border trade in precious gems. Most important of all, the Ch'ing southwest in the Ch'ien-lung reign depended heavily upon imports of Burmese raw cotton. Chinese merchants bought the cotton from its cultivators, transported it up the Irrawaddy River to Bhamo in flat-bottomed boats, and then transferred it in bales to the backs of "mules, ponies, and bullocks," which carried the cotton into Yunnan.[98]

To punish the king of Burma, Ch'ien-lung placed an embargo upon all Ch'ing trade with Burma. This pointed to possibilities of conflict between court and merchants similar to the sort famous in European history. But the empire's sheer size allowed the evasion of such conflict. Relying upon the court's ignorance, Chinese merchants simply circumvented the embargo. Foreign ships carried the embargoed cotton by sea to Canton, where it was not recognized as Burmese contraband goods until a high official, Li Shih-yao, with administrative experience both in Canton and in "Burmese border

[96] Chuang Chi-fa, *Ch'ing Kao-tsung shih-ch'üan*, p. 284.

[97] Chen Yi-sein, "The Chinese in Rangoon during, the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries," in Ba Shin, J. Boisselier, and A. B. Griswold, eds., *Essays offered to G. A. Luce by his colleagues and friends in honour of his seventy-fifth birthday* (Ascona, 1964).

[98] Henry Yule, *A narrative of the mission sent by the governor-general of India to the court of Ava in 1855* (London, 1858), pp. 144–5.

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matters," finally put two and two together years later, in 1777. Li further informed Ch'ien-lung that trade in Burmese gems continued in both Yunnan and Kwangtung, and that all his trade embargo had done was to make the Ch'ing southwestern frontier areas unfriendly to Peking. The "native people" whom Ch'ing had hired to spy on Burmese soldiers were instead leaking information about Ch'ing to Burma.[99]

Forced into a re-assessment of whether his main interests were political or economic, Ch'ien-lung beat a retreat. He used the face-saving excuse that Burmese cotton was a "necessity" for the population of Yunnan. As late as 1789, he was still trying to block the activities of private Chinese peddler networks that linked the Burmese economy to Ch'ing provinces as far east as Kiangsi.[100] The emperor's limited enforcement of his ban on the Burma trade, and the fact that what enforcement did occur was far from Peking or the big southeastern merchant cities, meant that the tensions between Ch'ien-lung's military and commercial worlds had relatively little effect on formal Ch'ing political theory. All the same, the tensions were as prophetic of the future as Ch'ien-lung's better studied successes in attaching Sinkiang and Tibet to a largely Chinese polity.

Ch'ien-lung's imperial project: Controversies over finance and policy

At least since Machiavelli, a commonplace in Western thought has been that the demands of warfare, and changes in the organization of war, are major influences, perhaps the major ones, in shaping and reshaping political systems. The impact of Ch'ien-lung's wars on the structure and bureaucratic efficiency of the Ch'ing state administration is not easily assessed. It is not even certain how many soldiers Ch'ien-lung mobilized, or how many soldiers he deployed on battlefields, despite the misleading assurance with which Wei Yüan presented statistics for such things in 1842.[101] Wishing to overawe its subjects, the court had little impetus to provide clear public pictures of the size of the banner armies. The concerns expressed throughout the Ch'ien-lung reign on the urgency of investigating the numbers of bannermen needed to be kept on salary and the numbers the government could not afford and therefore needed to resettle as farmers intimate that it lacked a wholly reliable picture even for its own purposes.

Modern research suggests that there were slightly more than 200,000 banner soldiers in the Ch'ien-lung period. About half of them were stationed in the Peking area, and of these slightly more than half (59,000) were

[99] *CSL-CL*, 1031, pp. 11b–17b. [100] Ibid., 1325, pp. 10–11b.
[101] Wei Yüan, *Sheng-wu chi*, 11, pp. 4–4b (885–6).

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Manchus.[102] Throughout the eighteenth century, there was recurrent elite anxiety about the costs of maintaining the Banners and about the costs of the much larger Green Standard army, largely away from the capital. The court ordered an increase of the Green Standard army from 580,000 men to 696,000 men between 1723 and 1740 in order to fight the Sinkiang war and to repress Miao rebellions. It later tried to reduce the financial burden of this expansion by converting horse soldiers into less expensive foot soldiers and stationary garrison personnel whenever it could.[103] The costs of military mobilization for even relatively small campaigns involved much of the empire. Ch'ien-lung told his court in 1787 that the defeat of the Triad rebellion in Taiwan in that year required the use of 60,000 Manchu and Chinese soldiers, of whom roughly 20,000 were drawn from Fukien, 14,000 from Kwangtung, 15,000 more from Szechwan, Chekiang, Hukwang, Kweichow, and Kwangsi, and more than 10,000 from Taiwan itself.[104]

When Ch'ien-lung's successor emperor reviewed the military history of the Ch'ien-lung reign in 1802, during the stresses of the White Lotus rebellion, his edict singled out the expenses of suppressing the Lin Shuang-wen rebellion on Taiwan in 1787–1788 as the tragic turning point in its fortunes. In the Sinkiang conquest and the Chin-ch'uan wars, Ch'ien-lung had used Banner armies and Green Standard troops exclusively, and achieved effective results. From 1787 on, the emperor Chia-ch'ing lamented, his father had to resort to the expedient of arming ordinary Chinese peasants as "local braves" to supplement his professional armies, but he failed to develop policies for the safe demobilization of these peasants after the war was over.[105]

His son's lament about improvisations without a proper policy framework implies that Ch'ien-lung's interest in warfare outstripped any interest in creating a reformed state structure, or a deepened administrative productivity, as such far-flung wars probably required. In what may have been a lost opportunity in Chinese history, the conduct of these wars was dissociated from any serious effort at the top of the government (although not elsewhere) to re-imagine the way the Ch'ing state worked. Partly for this reason, later Chinese patriots linked Ch'ien-lung's wars to the emperor's supposed profligacy in wasting government revenues and contributing to the later decay of the Ch'ing political system.

The problem of Ch'ien-lung's "extravagance" has to be grounded in an awareness that he himself made denunciations of his age's extravagance one of the recurrent rhetorical themes of his emperorship. Ch'ien-lung issued far

[102] Ch'en Feng, *Ch'ing-tai chün-fei yen-chiu* (Wuhan, 1992), pp. 21–3.
[103] *CSL-CL*, 143, pp. 6b–8. [104] Ibid., 1292, pp. 18–19.
[105] *Ta Ch'ing Jen-tsung Jui huang-ti shih-lu* (Tokyo, 1937–1938; hereafter, *CSL-CC*), 99, pp. 24–6b.

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more edicts enjoining frugality than his predecessors had. He characteristically complained to 243 scholars assembled at the Hall of Supreme Harmony in the early summer of 1751 that even the petty people in villages were now luxury-loving spendthrifts.[106] Eighteenth-century Chinese literati, with an acute sense of their own relative economic deprivation as a group, found the emperor's theme useful. They echoed his complaints, and pointed them upward as far as they dared. The fatherless poor boy and brilliant geographer Hung Liang-chi (1746–1809) was perhaps their most memorable spokesman. Hung was fancifully reinvented as the "Chinese Malthus" by Westernized Chinese intellectuals in the 1920s and 1930s because of his anxiety about population growth. He was in fact more of a consumption theorist than a population theorist, as befitting a society in which statuses were more fluid than they were in much of eighteenth-century Europe and were being increasingly denoted by material possessions. Hung was also a more socially compassionate figure than Malthus, and for him population increases had historically relative rather than economically absolute effects. Nonetheless, in his dramatic essay, *Fu-shih lun* (*On clothes and food*), Hung argued that a general and unprecedented inflation in standards of material consumption in the 1700s meant that a single one of his contemporaries was consuming several generations' supplies of clothing and food, portending catastrophe for "our children and grandchildren."[107] For Chinese critics of the Ch'ien-lung emperor in later centuries, it was only a short step from this to seeing Ch'ien-lung's own extravagance, including his wars, as the chief symbol of such robbery of future generations.

Revisionist scholarship has begun to come to the Ch'ien-lung emperor's defense. It shows that his court's "extravagance" has been exaggerated. Revisionist historians divide the Ch'ien-lung reign into three distinct fiscal periods. The first period (1736–1750) was one of fiscal "improvement." The reserves in Peking central treasuries were low. Court income was not adequate to cover both famine relief expenditures and the costs of warfare. Ch'ien-lung was compelled both to be frugal and to work at increasing the fiscal reserves and grain assets of provincial granaries. The second period (1751–1785) was one of fiscal "excellence." The silver reserves controlled by the Peking Ministry of Revenue (*Hu-pu*) may have more than doubled, from 40 million taels in the early 1750s to 80 million taels by the end of the 1770s, despite numerous tax remissions, the emperor's six lavish tours of south China, and the extended second Golden Stream war in western Szechwan. The conquest of Sinkiang in this period was probably a net advantage for the

[106] *CSL-CL*, 388, pp. 11b–12b.
[107] Hung Liang-chi, *Chüan-shih ke wen, chia-chi pu-i* (n.p., 1879 ed.), pp. 11b–13.

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empire's fiscal administration. It reduced the capacity of central Asian elites to create unrest, and it allowed the transfer to the northwest of unemployed poor people from the interior. The Ch'ing colonies in the northwest created in the aftermath of conquest also reduced the high costs of transporting supplies there. The third period (1786–1795) was one of "latent crisis." Central silver reserves may have held steady, but the aged emperor's complacency, and his inability to control corruption close to his throne, threatened his earlier legacy. Nevertheless, some revisionists' calculations suggest that the total consumption of the court and its elite, even in this worst and final period, never went beyond 5 percent of general government expenditures.[108]

Highly placed court insiders at the time did not think this way. A memorable showdown over government finances occurred between the emperor and his Grand Secretary A-kuei in 1781 at the end of the bloodbath of the second Chin-ch'uan war that A-kuei had helped win. What precipitated the confrontation were the emperor's plans to add 20,000 more Chinese and Manchu soldiers to the registers in Shensi, Kansu, and Peking, to convert all his provincial military officers to "nourishment of virtue" (*yang-lien*) salaries, thus paying them by the same salary statutes that were applied to civil bureaucrats, and to bear the added costs that these changes necessitated entirely out of the fixed primary tax revenues. A-kuei became the chief opponent of these new spending proposals. He criticized the emperor to his face for not acknowledging the existence of rule-based budgeting, or the importance of calculating annual state expenditures in a global way.

A-kuei had been a custodian of the bullion vaults at the Ministry of Revenue almost four decades earlier. He thought he had a clear picture of the state's annual income from the land-service tax, customs taxes, salt taxes, and grain tribute. He conceded that Peking's treasury reserves had increased from about 24 million taels at the end of the Yung-cheng reign (and 8 million taels at the end of the K'ang-hsi reign) to more than 70 million taels by 1781. He further conceded that such a remarkable increase had occurred between 1736 and 1781 despite Ch'ien-lung's various wars, three empirewide commutations of the land-service tax, two empirewide commutations of the grain tribute tax, and much expensive famine and disaster relief. But A-kuei argued that those extraordinary costs were not to be compared with "regular budgetary expenditures" that were a permanent annual charge on the state, such as the ones involved in Ch'ien-lung's plans for increased spending in 1781.[109]

[108] Chang Hsiao-t'ang, "Ch'ien-lung nien-chien Ch'ing cheng-fu p'ing-heng ts'ai-cheng chih yen-chiu," in Chung-kuo jen-min ta-hsüeh Ch'ing-shih yen-chiu so, comp., *Ch'ing-shih yen-chiu chi* (Peking, 1990), 7, pp. 26–60.

[109] A-kuei, "Lun tseng ping ch'ou hsiang shu," in *CSWP*, 26, pp. 10b–11.

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The debate between Ch'ien-lung and A-kuei about government finances was a major political event. One previous Manchu Minister of Revenue had gone so far as to argue that the "true numbers" of the financial reserves should never be "clearly stated," even in court documents, because too many "outsiders" would then become familiar with them. Now they were being made available as publicly accessible and discussible data. The most significant aspect of the Ch'ien-lung emperor's response to A-kuei, apart from complacency that his government would still enjoy a budgetary surplus when he retired in 1796 despite the proposed increase in regular expenditures, was his attitude to money. Ch'ien-lung held that money, including the central government's reserves, must be a "circulating commodity" that ought to be spent rather than hoarded.[110] The emperor never resorted to the more rigorous forms of fiscal centralization that were being contemplated at this time in some hard-pressed European governments. Both Ch'ien-lung and A-kuei agreed in 1781 that the Ch'ing government had at least doubled the tax-generated surplus by which it lived within a period of little more than thirty years. Any European state of the period would have envied such an achievement. It implied a revolution in the form of the Ch'ing state administration, yet none occurred. The exuberance of the commercial activity under Ch'ien-lung, and the enhanced consumption standards that so worried the poor literati who were not participating in them, explain how the empire's power could expand territorially without much administrative rationalization. Thinking about administrative reform was diverted by the economic success of eighteenth-century China, not economic failure. A huge increase in salt consumption allowed salt license tax revenues virtually to double between 1734 and 1753. A huge increase in the volume and value of the commercial goods in circulation, as well as minor improvements in the court's surveillance of embezzlement-prone local tax collectors, allowed customs tax revenues virtually to quadruple between 1735 and 1795.[111] Neighboring rulers, especially in Vietnam, were astonished by the expanded scale of Ch'ing's nonagricultural tax collections.[112]

The manifold operations of merchants were the source of much of the wealth behind these increases in tax revenues. In the Ch'ien-lung reign they were as formidable as any such class in history before the invention of limited liability companies. The merchants provided the extrabudgetary revenues that sustained Ch'ien-lung's war machine. The two western Szechwan wars were an accountant's as well as a general's nightmare, but some evidence

[110] *CSL-CL*, 1141, pp. 21b–4b. [111] Chang Hsiao-t'ang, "Ch'ien-lung nien-chien," pp. 37–40.
[112] Alexander Woodside, *Vietnam and the Chinese model* (Cambridge, Mass., 1971), p. 33.

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suggests that at the beginning of 1774, salt merchants' contributions amounted to more than half the working capital with which the Ch'ing government was paying for its military provisions in Szechwan.[113] The salt merchant millionaires of Yang-chou, led by the merchant Chiang Kuang-ta (who had received a loan from the imperial household's treasury only a few years earlier),[114] publicly subscribed four million taels to the Chin-ch'uan war effort. Lesser but important contributions also came from the salt merchants of Tientsin, Shantung, Chekiang, and Canton.[115] The big salt merchants like Chiang and Hung Chen-yüan were indispensable to the Ch'ien-lung court as its investment managers and its cash cows. They also came to the government's rescue in other wars, such as the two campaigns against the Gurkhas of Nepal in Ch'ien-lung's last decade. By one estimate, salt merchants paid for roughly half the total costs (12 million taels) of these two engagements.[116]

The thickening ties between government and merchants alarmed informed opinion within Ch'ing officialdom. Government ties to merchants were not merely a court affair. They extended downward to the provinces, prefectures, and counties. Local officials could expand their administrative funds informally, and often invisibly, by transferring them to merchants who would invest them and pay interest on them. The result was a widening web of transactions between officials and merchants, upon which everything from soldiers' pay to the support of academies and charitable schools depended. This was thought to blur the boundaries between public and private more than they should have been, and more than they had been when the empire was smaller.

Under pressure, Ch'ien-lung conceded in 1759 that this type of colonization of public administration by investor merchants was not part of the historic administrative form (*cheng-t'i*) of the imperial polity. He also made it clear that he could not easily do without such practices in military finance, and that the more trivial sums involved in the lending of public funds to merchants to invest in order to pay for schools, at least, were too small to arouse serious concern.[117]

The Ch'ien-lung emperor based public policy upon a mixture, and attempted synthesis, of martial interests, respect for imperial tradition of administrative form, and postclassical merchant power. The mixture was driven by the emperor's faith in both Heavenly providence and rational calculation, and it called upon its imperial practitioner to be both charismatic and bureaucratic. For example, to not recognize the Ch'ien-lung emperor

113 *CSL-CL*, 946, pp. 14–15. 114 Ho, "The salt merchants of Yangchou," pp. 160–1.
115 *CSL-CL*, 941, pp. 2b–21; 944, p. 15; 948, pp. 27b–28; 943, pp. 31b.
116 Ch'en Feng, *Ch'ing-tai chün-fei yen-chiu*, p. 333. 117 *CSL-CL*, 582, pp. 2b–3b.

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incorporated both sides, and to try to explain the political systems of eighteenth-century China and Burma by claiming that they were simple typological opposites, with Ch'ing being a "bureaucratic empire" whose administrative effectiveness was necessarily stronger than that of the "charismatic individualism" of the Burmese monarchy, makes it impossible to account for the Ch'ing defeats in Burma in the 1760s.[118]

Ch'ien-lung's attempted synthesis in policy-making outlooks faced two difficulties. The first was that many of his most important officials could not accept it. They thought it was dangerous to have a policy of imperial expansion and state security that relied so much upon merchants and claims of Heavenly assistance. They feared the emperor was not concerned enough with the rational analysis aspects. The second difficulty was that the synthesis needed both adequate information and the emperor's shrewd personal political instincts to make it work and keep it flexible. In realms of policy where Ch'ien-lung was not well informed, such as his failed war in Vietnam in 1788, residual rigidities in formulating policy betrayed him.

Literati officials who were actual veterans of Ch'ien-lung's wars tried to recast the synthesis with an eye to the problem of how to pay for the empire. Wang Ch'ang (1725–1806), an evidential research scholar and famous elite obituary writer, was a prominent example. Wang had served at the Grand Secretariat and Grand Council in Peking, and had been a close advisor (and staff memorial writer) to A-kuei during his command of both the Burma invasion and the second Chin-ch'uan war. Like other insider critics, Wang could not associate the commercial growth that had paid for such enterprises with anything historically enduring. As a result, Wang and numerous other eighteenth-century statecraft thinkers urged the merits of the T'ang dynasty's "garrison militia" (*fu-ping*) system. In this system militiamen stationed throughout the empire were rotated in and out of military units in the capital city and on the frontiers, their turns of duty there being calculated on the basis of how distant the frontiers were. Wang used the nightmare image of the disintegration of the Sung dynasty's huge army fleeing south in the twelfth century in order to argue against the centralized military involved in Ch'ien-lung's wars. In his own theory of military power, Wang made T'ang military arrangements the imagined antitheses of the ten great campaigns. Far from desiring the creation of a more specialized or superordinate state to run the new empire, Wang begged his elite audience to worry about how easily centralized military power exhausted itself and others. A decentralized military establishment, with troops involved in farming and soldiers retiring

[118] Edmund Leach, "The frontiers of 'Burma,'" *Comparative studies in society and history*, 3 (1960), pp. 49–67.

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when they reached a certain age, would exalt the ideal of "rest" from ongoing struggle.[119] Wang failed to foresee how durable Ch'ien-lung's conquests would be. He did not share the emperor's vainglorious optimism about the size of the empire, having seen the Burma and Szechwan frontiers at close quarters. His theory of the state and its military development, by positing frontiers as something that required continuous local management and "rest" rather than further centralization of military or bureaucratic authority, was not pacifist, but it had little room for more of Ch'ien-lung's great campaigns, although Wang had served on two of them.[120] Contrapuntal elite opinion of this sort was part of the politics of the Ch'ien-lung reign.

Critical debates about the military capacity of the state could not be divorced from other eighteenth-century debates, such as the one about the capacity of the frontier minorities. Chao I (1727–1814) was another critical high-ranking official who was, like Wang Ch'ang, close to the throne and its wars. As a secretary at the Grand Council in the 1750s, Chao had helped draft the documents that related to the conquest of Sinkiang. As a prefect in Kwangsi, on the Vietnamese border, in the 1760s, he had served as a staff advisor to the Ch'ing invasion of Burma. His resemblance to Wang Ch'ang is reinforced by his participation in the Taiwan campaign in 1787, which also gave him a taste of two of the great campaigns. The *Reading notes about the twenty-two histories* (*Nien-erh shih cha-chi)* that was compiled under Chao I's name between the 1760s and the 1790s were an exercise in world-ordering thought, designed to follow the luminous example of Ku Yen-wu (1613–1682) in using empirically based historical analysis to explore the costs of political order and disorder. Chao I claimed to have personally visited all of the hereditary native officer fiefs of southern Yunnan. He even wrote an essay on the mutual intelligibility of southern Yunnan local dialects.

Chao I used an essay on the military history of the Ming empire's frontiers to warn that long frontiers required large armies. If such armies were mobilized by the central government, the state would bankrupt itself. The only sane alternative was peasant militias and loyal ethnic minority soldiers. Yet from the time of Wang Yang-ming and the terrible Miao wars in the early sixteenth century, the central government's capacity to achieve the cooperation of its frontier ethnic minorities in this way had declined. To reverse this trend, Chao I argued, the Ch'ing court should show extra favor to the hereditary native officers.[121] Given the efforts of Yung-cheng and O-erh-t'ai to

[119] Alexander Woodside, "The statecraft thinkers of late imperial China in world history," in Yen-p'ing Hao and Hsiu-mei Wu, ed., *Tradition and metamorphosis in modern Chinese history: Essays in honor of Professor Kwang-ching Liu's seventy-fifth birthday* (Taipei, 1998), Vol. 2, pp. 700–2.

[120] Wang Ch'ang, "T'ang-Sung ping-chih te-shih lun," in *CSWP*, 70, pp. 3b–4.

[121] Chao I, "Ming pien-sheng kung-chiao ping-shu tsui to," in *CSWP*, 71, pp. 7b–8.

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uproot such officers, the political implication was obvious. To Chao, the defeudalization and educational Sinicization of the *kai-t'u kuei-liu* policy threatened the end of the diffusionist model of a low-cost empire whose military labor market, in part, was external to the formal government structure. Chao's argument for the use of an external labor market for less bureaucratic, decentralized armies was an effort to keep military mobilization controlled from the imperial center as low as possible, and thus the war-making autonomy of the monarch as limited as possible. The debate about the frontiers to which eminent officials like Wang Ch'ang and Chao I contributed implied more general concerns about state power. Ch'ien-lung's conquests energized their expression rather than quelling it.

Stories about the Ch'ing invasion of Burma in the 1760s confirmed elite fears about the vulnerability of a centralized empire whose bureaucratizing ambitions on its frontiers deprived it of the local knowledge routinely held by hereditary native officers. A Kwangsi subprefect who had served in the Burma invasion produced a particularly vivid account of the experience. He described how Manchu cavalrymen in Burma had to sleep on horseback because there was no place for them to dismount in the steaming forests; how the Ch'ing army had few interpreters, and had to translate Burmese palm leaf documents by having them converted first into whatever southwestern minority script seemed serviceable, and then into Chinese; and how Ch'ing soldiers, ill-prepared for crossing the Burmese dietary frontier, had to subsist on Burmese glutinous rice that tended to make them sick.[122]

The range of elite opinion, only briefly illustrated here, partly explains why the imperial ideal never became solidified or stationary under Ch'ien-lung. The effect on the emperor emerged in 1788 during another imperial information-deficit crisis involving the frontier. In this year Ch'ien-lung, in another one of the great campaigns, invaded Vietnam. (In the eighteenth century the Vietnamese called their kingdom Dai Viet; Ch'ien-lung's court significantly clung to the obsolete Chinese term Annam, or An-nan, the "pacified south"; the modern name Vietnam was invented in the early 1800s.) The result of this misadventure was Ch'ien-lung's acknowledgment that his power had physical and political limits. Court pictures celebrating his empire, which fluctuated through his reign, returned to a more modest, more intensely central Asian focus.

Like Burma, Vietnam was the recipient of the same sorts of Chinese migrants (miners, traders, jobless vagrants, bandits) that Szechwan, Yunnan, Kweichow, and Kwangsi were receiving in greater numbers. Ch'ien-lung's

[122] Chou Yü, "Ts'ung cheng Mien-tien jih-chi," in Ch'en Huang, comp., *Tse-ku ch'ung-ch'ao* (n.p., 1823), 7, pp. 1–9.

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government was virtually powerless to control the huge waves of people on the move. There was probably little difference between Chinese migration to western China and that to Vietnam, except in scale. The new migrants had a tumultuous impact upon a frontier that, like the Sino-Burmese one, already contained a welter of ethnic minority groups whose lands and loyalties were claimed by both the Ch'ing and Vietnamese courts. The northern Vietnamese government at Hanoi (Thang-long), nominally that of the Le dynasty (1427–1788) emperors, made an ineffectual effort to expel Chinese miners in 1767 after thousands of Cantonese from the two Kwangtung prefectures of Ch'ao-chou and Shao-chou had begun to fight pitched battles with each other, threatening the Vietnamese court with an administrative collapse. The Ch'ing court executed the ringleaders of the fights when they returned to China, and settled the others as military serfs or farmers in Sinkiang.

Three men known as the Tay-son brothers, from the name of their village in south-central Vietnam, profited from the instability and in 1786 led a peasant revolt against the northern dynasty that occupied Thang-long. The Le emperor died. His grandson and successor, accompanied by members of the Le royal house, fled to Kwangsi. There he pleaded for Ch'ing intervention to restore him. The preeminent Tay-son brother, Nguyen Hue, declared himself emperor of Vietnam, and planned to build a new capital city for himself south of Hanoi and farther from China. Sun Shih-i (1720–1796), the governor-general of Kwangtung and Kwangsi, had a thirst for military glory and probably dreamed of permanently reconquering Vietnam.[123] On his recommendation, Ch'ien-lung authorized an invasion.

To break the power of Nguyen Hue, Sun proposed to Ch'ien-lung that Vietnam be dismembered. Central Vietnam would be awarded to Siam, in return for Thai aid against the Tay-son brothers. It was clear to Sun and his master that the Le prince whom they were supporting was incompetent, even as a figurehead. At first Ch'ien-lung thought a military alliance with the Thai regime "seemed like something that could be done." He subsequently rejected the idea, not because it was politically immoral, but because it would shower disproportionate favor upon the Thai king and, even worse, damage the reputation he had earned in his Sinkiang triumphs of using only his own armies and not accepting the assistance of an "outer region military power."

In what became an increasingly unreal debate in Peking about Vietnam's future, Ch'ien-lung in November 1788 proposed a different plan. That was the revival, under Ch'ing auspices, in the central Vietnamese region from

[123] Truong Buu Lam, "Intervention versus tribute in Sino-Vietnamese relations, 1788–1790," in John King Fairbank, ed., *The Chinese world order: Traditional China's foreign relations* (Cambridge, Mass., 1968), pp. 165–79.

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which the Tay-son brothers had so rudely emerged, of the old Indianized kingdom of Champa.[124] Champa had ceased to be a power in Southeast Asia in the fifteenth century. The Cham provinces of Amaravati, Vijaya, Kauthara, and Panduranga had since become the Vietnamese provinces of Quang Nam, Binh Dinh, Nha Trang, and Phan Rang as the Vietnamese people had moved south, eclipsing the Chams and most of their culture.[125] In effect, Ch'ien-lung was fantasizing about the sudden restoration of a disappeared Indochina polity with which China had not had diplomatic relations for two and a half centuries, since 1543. At the very moment that Chinese peasants were eroding the boundaries between China and Southeast Asia, their emperor was struggling to recreate obsolete ones. Moreover, Ch'ien-lung was making most of his Vietnam policy on the basis of the idle tales of the Vietnamese royal exiles. He had little reliable information.[126]

A month after Sun Shih-i's soldiers crossed the frontier and entered the Vietnamese capital, Nguyen Hue counterattacked. He routed the Ch'ing army in a surprise assault at the end of January 1789, while Ch'ing forces were complacently celebrating the lunar new year. Sun himself survived, but was replaced as governor-general at Canton by Fu-k'ang-an, who advocated a renewed invasion of Vietnam. By now Ch'ien-lung had learned something from his Burmese misfortunes twenty years earlier. Sensing the limits of empire near the end of his reign, he cited the obnoxious similarity of the Vietnamese environment to that of Burma, and also the ease with which Nguyen Hue could lure Ch'ing armies deeper into Vietnam, Siam, or Laos. Consequently, he accepted Nguyen Hue's peace overtures in the spring of 1789.[127] In a remarkable edict to his Vietnamese enemy, Ch'ien-lung conceded his officials' ignorance of Vietnamese politics. He accused Sun Shih-i of not obeying his instructions to withdraw from the Vietnamese capital promptly enough, and invited Nguyen Hue to come to Peking in 1790 to celebrate Ch'ien-lung's eightieth birthday.[128] The Vietnamese who had fled with the Le dynasty heir to China switched to Ch'ing hair and clothing styles and were settled in various southern provinces as ordinary farmers. The Le dynasty heir himself was allowed to live in Peking.[129]

Throughout his life Ch'ien-lung showed many faces. His ambivalence about the peoples and procedures of his own imperial project cannot be reduced to the different roles he felt the ruler had to play, or to mere caprice. What makes Ch'ien-lung almost impossible to pin down as an historic

[124] *CSL-CL*, 1314, pp. 34b–38.
[125] Dohamide and Dorohiem, *Dan toc Cham luoc su* (Saigon, 1965), pp. 98–100.
[126] Suzuki Chūsei, "Rei-chō kōki no Shin to no kankei," in Yamamoto Tatsurō, comp., *Betonamu-Chūgoku kankei shi* (Tokyo, 1975), p. 441.
[127] *CSL-CL*, 1324, pp. 28b–30. [128] Ibid., 1328, pp. 4b–8. [129] Ibid., 1346, pp. 19b–21.

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figure is that his improvisations suggest a genuine conflict of values within himself.

As a missionary of empire, he took pleasure in applying the world-ordering language of rational analysis to his frontiers when he thought of new maps, new crops, and new irrigation plans. He romanticized a common coinage as the instrument of imperial connectedness by which he could dissolve "stoppages" and "obstructions" among Ch'ing peoples. At the end of 1791, he ordered the expulsion of all "Gurkha" merchants from Tibet and the suppression of the use of Nepalese money there. He also authorized "inside land" (*nei-ti*) government mints to be established in Tibet to lower the cost of having to transport Ch'ing coinage to central Asia. Writing his own propaganda in Peking as an octogenarian, Ch'ien-lung explained to Ch'ing proconsuls in Lhasa how they were to address the Dalai Lama on the matter of the empire's money. They were to say that "the great emperor" (*ta huang-ti*) knew that the timid Tibetans were being victimized by Gurkha money changers. He would "love and protect" them and introduce one uniform coinage in order to provide peace and security for Tibetan monks; should they be unintelligent enough to spurn it, he might withdraw Ch'ing forces.[130]

At other times the language of benevolent colonialism and rational analysis evaporated. On his Ili victory stone tablet inscription of 1758, Ch'ien-lung described the Dzungars as flesh-eating demons with human blood on their teeth whose defeat he had secured with "Heavenly assistance."[131] His ambivalence about the human possibilities of his newly conquered lands is further shown in his conversion of Sinkiang into a punishment site. About 10 percent of the men who served as governors-general between 1758 and 1820 were banished to Sinkiang, for corruption or other misdeeds, usually for three-year sentences. The largest single group of Ch'ing officials whom Ch'ien-lung punished with banishment to Sinkiang were county magistrates, who were largely ethnic Chinese; most of the provincial governors and governors-general similarly punished were Manchu, implying that the exile policy was not intended merely to play on Chinese fears about the frontiers.[132] Ch'ien-lung had other visions for central Asia, such as the conversion in 1765 of Ili into a Manchu speech zone in which high officials were forbidden to speak Chinese.[133] Ch'ien-lung's view of Sinkiang as an appropriate place for isolating and banishing misbehaving officials suggests that, for all his official images of himself as non-Chinese warrior and hunter, he could never completely resist the geographical prejudices of Chinese literati.

[130] Ibid., 1387, pp. 26b–9. [131] P'eng, *Kao-tsung shih-wen shih-ch'üan chi*, 11, pp. 117.

[132] Joanna Waley-Cohen, *Exile in mid-Qing China: Banishment to Xinjiang, 1758–1820* (New Haven and London, 1991), pp. 89–90, 192.

[133] *CSL-CL*, 727, pp. 3b–4.

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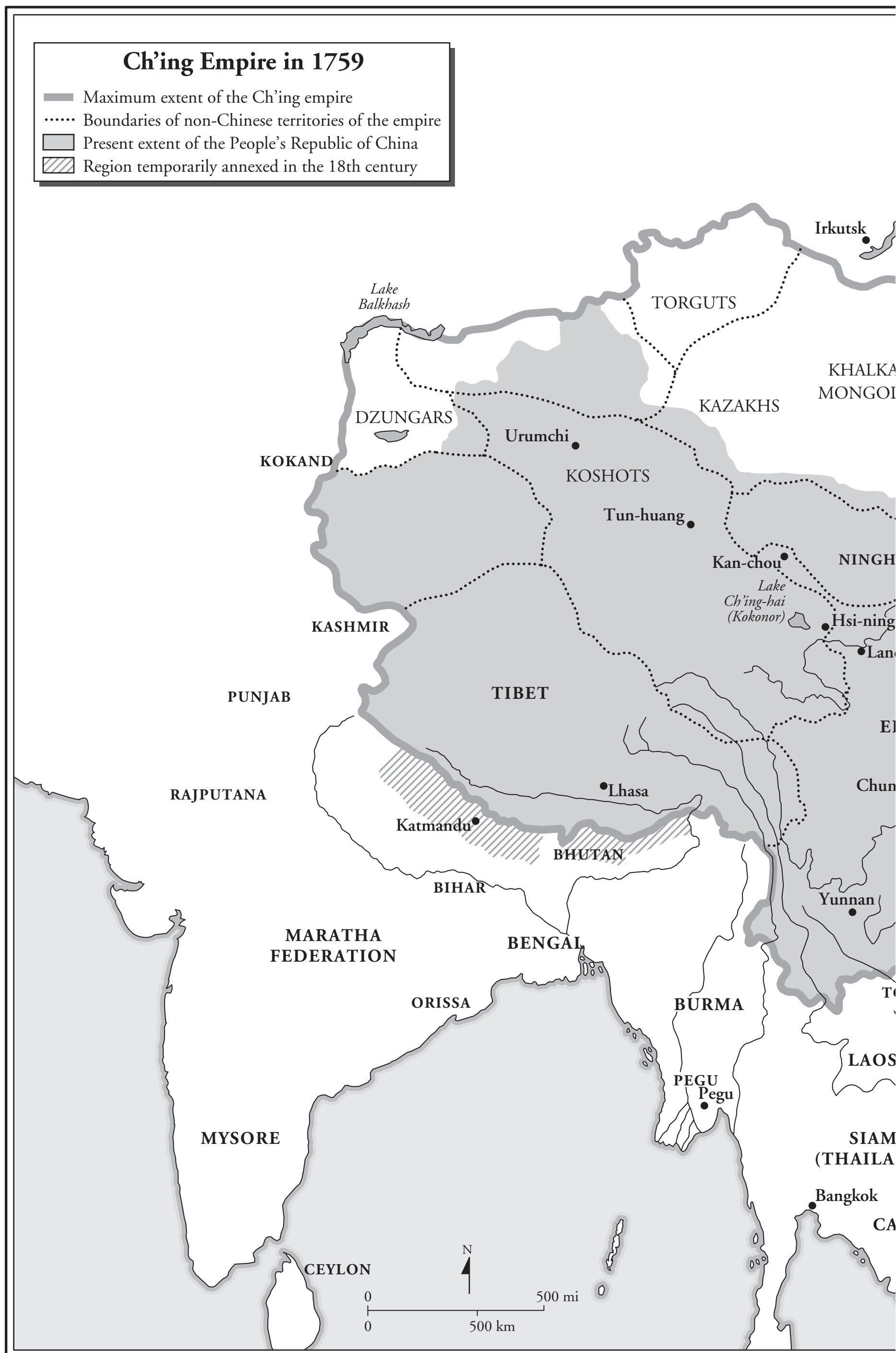

Map 8. Ch'ing empire in 1759. Jacques Gernet. *A History of Chinese Civilization* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), Map 24, p. 476.

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Map 8. (*continued*)

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Ch'ing Empire in 1759

- Maximum extent of the Ch'ing empire
- Boundaries of non-Chinese territories of the empire
- Present extent of the People's Republic of China
- Region temporarily annexed in the 18th century

Map 8. Ch'ing empire in 1759. Jacques Gernet. *A History of Chinese Civilization* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), Map 24, p. 476.

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THE CH'IEN-LUNG EMPEROR AND THE SCHOLAR ELITE

The Ch'ien-lung emperor saw himself as engaged in an explicit historical competition with previous emperors of China, especially the six, ranging from Han Wu-ti to Ming T'ai-tsu, whom he identified as having been remarkable for their political prominence and personal longevity. He was well aware that in the eyes of the Chinese literati, he had to prove his historical exceptionalism in cultural terms, not military ones.[134] Those of his literati-officials who wrote positively about his military empire, such as Hung Liang-chi or Chi Yün, did so largely because they had been exiled to central Asia as punishment; there were few Manchu or Chinese counterparts of John Buchan or Snouck Hurgronje or the numerous other intellectual foot soldiers of the European empires in Asia. Coming to terms with this, Ch'ien-lung suggested that he wished his reign to be seen as having begun with war and as having ended with cultural achievement. Chinese bureaucrats accounted for a greater proportion of his court ministers after 1760, after the conquest of Sinkiang. The minority of provincial governors-general who were degree-holding Chinese officials increased at least slightly, and in symbolic terms it was important that at least two of Ch'ien-lung's post-Sinkiang Grand Secretaries, Yü Min-chung (1714–1780) and Liang Kuo-chih (1723–1787), had won first place in the palace examinations.[135]

Unlike the annexation of Sinkiang, Ch'ien-lung's dream of establishing his cultural superiority over all past emperors required the cooperation of Chinese intellectuals out of office as well as in it. The intellectuals, for their part, had their own agendas; they wished to share the emperor's power in order to accomplish them. If the emperor wanted his reign to mark the culmination of all past Chinese cultural history, the intellectuals had the less boundaried, more open-ended ambition to transcend that history and use their critical consciousness to show how its imperfections could be resisted. The stage was set for a form of elite political contention disguised as a literary public works project.

The four treasuries encyclopedia and the fear of utopianism

The greatest cultural enterprise of the Ch'ien-lung reign, although far from the only one, was a work entitled the *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu* (*The Complete Library of the Four Treasuries*, or, more simply and conventionally, *The Four Treasuries Encyclopedia*). The *Encyclopedia* was a massive literary anthology of whole texts,

[134] Wu Che-fu, *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu tsuan-hsiu chih yen-chiu* (Taipei, 1990), pp. 10–12.
[135] Kao Hsiang, *K'ang-Yung-Ch'ien san-ti*, pp. 312–14.

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collected from all over the empire, and divided into four general categories that had been established by the time of the T'ang dynasty: classics, history, miscellaneous philosophy, and belles-lettres. Within these four categories, there were many subcategories, each of them defined at the outset in a terse and magisterial manner. The administrative apparatus in Peking that oversaw the anthology-encyclopedia project was created in March 1773. The encyclopedia itself was completed in various stages between 1781 and 1784. Some 11,000 or so works were examined by the encyclopedia's compilers during the selection process; roughly 3,500 of them, or perhaps one-third, were actually included in the anthology.[136] Ch'ien-lung had supposed in 1776 that only 10 percent of the titles examined would eventually be printed, with the remainder being stored in imperial libraries. Thus, the work was bigger than he intended.[137] Senior scholars relished the considerable opportunities they were given to appoint junior scholars to the project as readers or copyists. The imperial prince whom Ch'ien-lung had made the nominal head of the *Four Treasuries* project calculated in 1773 that its examining staff would have to read more than 400,000 words a day.[138]

Of the works that were collected, almost one-third came from private collectors, ranging from high officials to salt merchants. By this time the salt merchants' bibliomania had become sophisticated and expert, and everyone was aware of it. The Ch'ien-lung emperor personally read the inventory of the library of the Yangchow salt merchant Ma Yü in 1773. When he discovered that the bulk of its books were modern, rather than ancient, he ordered salt administration officials to investigate the library further, significantly assuming that this salt merchant's literary tastes were far too good to allow his library to be what its inventory rather timorously claimed.[139]

Patterns of regional participation in the encyclopedia's creation are equally interesting. The southeastern provinces provided an overwhelming majority of the texts the project's staff collected. Kwangsi and Kweichow were found to be barren of eligible texts, and book searches may not even have been conducted in Szechwan or Kansu.[140] Seven sets of the completed *Encyclopedia* were stored in Peking, the Summer Palace outside it, Jehol, Shen-yang, Yangchow, Chen-chiang, and Hangchow. The distribution pattern only confirmed the literati's (and perhaps the emperor's) mental map of the empire as one in which the west meant warfare, not learning. (Ironically, three of these seven

[136] R. Kent Guy, *The Emperor's Four Treasuries: Scholars and the state in the late Ch'ien-lung era* (Cambridge, Mass., 1987), pp. 107–9.

[137] *CSL-CL*, 1010, pp. 1–4. [138] Wu, *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu*, p. 85. [139] *CSL-CL*, 981, pp. 19b–21.

[140] Huang Ai-p'ing, *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu tsuan-hsiu yen-chiu* (Peking, 1989), p. 39; Guy, *The emperor's Four Treasuries*, p. 90.

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sets were to be destroyed by the very different warfare of the 1800s.) At the end of the twentieth century, Hong Kong and Shanghai publishers embarked upon a plan to create an electronic edition of the encyclopedia, using optical character recognition (OCR) technology developed by Qinghua (Tsing-hua) University to computerize the original written text. The *Four Treasuries Encyclopedia* is now accessible in ways that the eighteenth-century court could never have imagined or perhaps wanted. In the 1780s, the seven distributed sets had more the nature of localized textual showcases of empire.

As a textual showcase of empire, the *Four Treasuries Encyclopedia* did not reach its final form without a struggle. Complex currents of thought and dialogue, at the highest elite levels, shaped the compilation. Emperors who commissioned book searches and published classical anthologies were a commonplace in Chinese history. So, too, were literati who worried about the loss of printed texts. The chaos of seventeenth-century China only heightened early Ch'ing intellectuals' anxiety about the material destruction of learning. Lu Shih-i exemplified this concern when he proposed the creation of a politically invulnerable library to be built in Shantung, the birthplace of Confucius. Huang Tsung-hsi (1610–1695), as part of his grand scheme to make schools the central source of moral authority in Chinese politics, demanded that local schools find, print, and store all the past written works in their localities and send copies to the imperial capital. The cultural authoritarianism of the scholar class was such that its members were willing to burn books at the same time that they collected them: Huang Tsung-hsi had also stipulated that schools destroy the woodblocks for printing novels and popular music.[141] Ch'ien-lung therefore did not have to invent the combination of anthology creation and literary inquisition, even if his motives were largely his own. During his reign, the popularity of Han Learning, or "evidential research" (*k'ao-cheng*) scholarship, with its passionate interest in a purifying philology more closely acquainted with original texts, scripts, and speech patterns, raised the stakes for would-be imperial book collectors even higher.

Chu Yün (1729–1781), the Anhwei educational commissioner who suggested the great text hunt that would lead to the *Four Treasuries* project in 1773, was entirely representative of the scholars' hopes for the construction of an imperial treasury of Confucian learning. He was an important scholar in his own right. He also had a large clientele of other scholars (including such major figures as Hung Liang-chi and Chang Hsüeh-ch'eng) and close personal ties to Ch'ien-lung.[142] Attending to the precedent of Ku Yen-wu,

[141] William Theodore de Bary, trans., *Waiting for the dawn, a plan for the prince: Huang Tsung-hsi's Ming-i tai-fang lu* (New York, 1993), p. 109.

[142] Guy, *The emperor's Four Treasuries*, pp. 51–2, 71.

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Chu Yün wanted the court in 1773 to mount a huge "evidential research" text-searching campaign in which government officials in every province would be required to venture into remote areas – "the barren solitudes of the mountains and forests" – to copy down for publication bronze and stone engravings, bronze bell inscriptions, and other such specimens. He also asked the Ch'ien-lung emperor to retrieve from their inaccessible obscurity, and incorporate into his own anthology, many of the 11,095 manuscript volumes of the early fifteenth-century *Yung-lo ta-tien* (*Yung-lo Encyclopedia*). A celebrated eleventh-century catalogue of the Sung dynasty's imperial library, compiled by Wang Yao-ch'en (1001–1056), was to serve as a model for manuscript review and classification.[143]

Chu wanted more than Ch'ien-lung was willing to give. The emperor and the Grand Council approved Chu's vision but reduced it. Ch'ien-lung shuddered at the stability-threatening consequences of sending his officials to look for stone inscriptions in every corner of the empire. Ch'ien-lung also inspired a court discussion of the vices of the *Yung-lo Encyclopedia* in which it was attacked for having an improper literary form and arrangement; for using a rhyme-based classification system derived from fifteenth-century speech practices rather than from more authentically ancient ones; and for including texts full of unacceptable Taoist prayer language.[144] Ch'ien-lung's complaints about the Yung-lo encyclopedia were no more than good politics. They were a coded assurance to his own officials that he would be different from the usurper, the Yung-lo emperor (1403–1424). To an important extent the legitimacy of Ch'ing dynasty rule was built upon a certain officially sanctioned picture of Ming dynasty decadence. In that picture the crimes and slaughters of the Yung-lo emperor were analyzed – by everyone from Peking courtiers to provincial academicians – rather the way the atrocities of the Soviet gulag system might be analyzed by Russians now. The *Four Treasuries* compilers responded to Ch'ien-lung's cue, deliberately excluding from their encyclopedia's philosophy section a text the Yung-lo emperor had compiled in 1409 about "sagely learning" because it had been profaned by bloodshed. In their comment they wrote that this Ming ruler had been a shameless usurper and homicidal bully who could not be allowed to use Confucianism to legitimize his own illegitimate political career.[145]

When Ch'ien-lung said that he wanted his *Four Treasuries* anthology to make real the eternal unchanging laws,[146] he was expressing a need that

[143] *CSL-CL*, 926, pp. 15b–18. [144] Ibid., 926, pp. 24b–7; 997, pp. 2b–4b.
[145] Chi Yün et al., *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu tsung-mu t'i-yao* (Peking, 1782; rpt. Shanghai, 1931; rpt. Taipei, 1965), 18, pp. 92–93.
[146] *CSL-CL*, 926, pp. 24b–27.

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eighteenth-century scholars felt at least as strongly as he. To them, the social laws and norms that underwrote their own self-understanding as an elite were suffering a painful erosion in China's increasingly plutocratic world, which threatened their sense of a classically sanctioned metaphorical general interest. Ch'ien-lung sought to marginalize some literati by denigrating them as "poor Confucians" (*ch'iung ju*) for demanding that the emperor close the urban teahouses and wine shops that they contended were the sites of order-upsetting, extravagant consumption. Such literati begged the court to attack the visible symbols of disorder by suppressing rich commoners' licentious use of officials' embroidered snake-design robes. Ch'ien-lung shrugged his shoulders and remarked, characteristically, that the attempted enforcement of status-based clothing rules would merely drive up the commercial value of elite robes and intensify the illicit competition to make and wear them.[147] Many literati reacted by transposing the problem of class-based public order from society to literature. Against the perceived decline of a social structure with properly ascribed performance and consumption expectations, the desire to authenticate and strengthen the meanings and rules of "classical" culture, became all the more pressing.

From these and other motives, the *Four Treasuries* compilers wrote that their purpose was to expunge all selfish interests or subjectivism (*ssu-hsin*, "private mind-hearts") from Chinese elite thought, and so make apparent as never before the principles of public spiritedness (*kung li*). To do this they presented themselves as morally autonomous and politically self-possessed intellectuals whose great enemy was nonetheless within, not outside, them. They historicized the two thousand years of philosophical history since the Han dynasty by dividing it into six historical periods of unfulfilled moral innocence. As they saw it, each period had been dominated by a different subjectivist vice.

The first period, the Han, had been one of obstinate formalism. Clusters of teachers had transmitted their scholarship to reverential disciples, but no one had dared to reconcile the differences among the different groups. The second period had been one of promiscuous individualism, with a rogues' gallery that included people like the neo-Taoist Wang Pi (226–249); again, there had been little effort to manage divergent philosophical claims. The third period, that of Sung Learning, was characterized by overbearing "fierceness"; its leaders, in their concern to discriminate between the ethically right and the ethically wrong, had condemned too many of the discourses of past masters of the Classics. The fourth period, from the end of the Sung into early Ming, had been the heyday of "factionalism"; factions had proliferated like

[147] Ibid., 1143, pp. 29–31b.

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climbing plants, determined to crowd out those who were different from themselves. Then had come a fifth period of "recklessness" and "cleverness" in the sixteenth century, in which the baser followers of Wang Yang-ming had used Zen Buddhist methods to explicate the classics. That period had been succeeded by a sixth one, that of trivialization. Evidential research scholars had picked too many quarrels and had spent too much time merely classifying types of words.[148] The *Four Treasuries* project was intended to herald a new period, that of a scholarly culture of "public principles," in which literati would finally be able to shed their manifold subjectivisms.

In this respect the great *Four Treasuries* project was hardly a complacent tribute to successful "orthodoxy" in China. Nor was it a work of hide-bound conservatism, as has been suggested to contrast it with its Western contemporary counterpart, the *Encyclopédie* of eighteenth-century French Enlightenment thinkers, supposedly a creative assault on feudal traditionalism.[149] Rather, the compilers' picture of two millennia of philosophical warfare, in which little progress had been made, merely the substitution of one particular bias by another, was emperor-free history whose main theme was the literati's quest for self-mastery, not their submission to an unchanging monarchical empire. Various Sons of Heaven had apparently not helped to control subjectivism among the elite; the reform of intellectual sociability itself was the key. The *Four Treasuries* compilers were insider critics, unlike the outsider *Encyclopedists* of eighteenth-century France. But in presenting themselves as an historically universal class, existing in all periods and standing for the discovery of ultimate and so far unachieved global principles, they were inevitably implying the existence of standards the actual Ch'ing political system could not satisfy. Their leaders, most importantly Chi Yün (1724–1805), clearly believed that there were great, unrealized potentialities in classical scholarship. Ch'ien-lung, on the other hand, wanted a more closed classical consciousness, and a demonstration that its potentialities had been fulfilled under his rule.

The *Four Treasuries* compilers feared the costs of intellectual escapism, which they saw in many places. The common ground they shared with the Ch'ien-lung emperor was that both they and he wished the encyclopedia to tame the utopian energies that they saw recurring in Chinese thought. The General Rules at the outset of the *Four Treasuries* encyclopedia even made an inventory of the worst recent kinds of utopianism from which they thought intellectuals had suffered. Predictably, these included the thought of the literati who wanted to revive the ancient government forms found in the *Chou*

[148] Chi Yün, *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu tsung-mu t'i-yao*, 1, pp. 1–2.
[149] Huang, *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu tsuan-hsiu*, pp. 407–8.

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li (*Rituals of Chou*), including the well-field system and feudal aristocracy. But fear of the ease with which the linguistic symbols of authority could mutate in a writing-based empire particularly occupied their attention. The compilers identified other enemies of the peace as "Huang Chien types" (*Huang Chien chih liu*), named after the fifteenth-century Ming academician who had wanted to correct false written words by relating them back to the ancient forms of seal characters; his disciples allegedly wanted to convert the empire's written documents into pre-imperial scripts. Then there were the "Ku Yen-wu types" (*Ku Yen-wu chih liu*), who allegedly threatened the empire's stability by dreaming of reforming its spoken language on the basis of ancient phonology.[150]

The compilers tried to separate the good managerial themes from the bad millenarian whimsies in the works of the major seventeenth-century thinkers. They praised Lu Shih-i for wanting Chinese schools to teach astronomy and geography and warfare, but rebuked him for his interest in well-field economics.[151] If the eighteenth-century French encyclopedists were trying to exorcise the ghost of Thomas Aquinas, their Ch'ing counterparts were trying to exorcise the ghost (among others) of Wang An-shih (1021–1086). But if "Ku Yen-wu types" were a danger, Ku Yen-wu himself had been a scholar they embraced; fifteen of his works were included.[152] In attacking Wang An-shih, Chi Yün and company still defended the *Four Treasuries*' general premise that texts could enshrine an objectivity that was detached from the schisms, factions, and utopia peddling of the political actors who were ephemerally engaged with them. Their assumption of a kind of scholastic immaculate conception, even for Wang An-shih, enabled them to claim a moral autonomy for textual exegesis as a process in itself. That meant freedom of a sort for scholars.

What had survived of Wang An-shih's interpretation of the *Chou li*, the *Chou-kuan hsin-i* (*New exegesis of the rituals of Chou*), was therefore included in the *Four Treasuries Encyclopedia*. The *Four Treasuries* leaders had to ransack the much criticized Yung-lo encyclopedia in order to recover it; the Ch'ing Grand Secretariat library did not have a copy. The compilers explained that Wang An-shih had used his classical exegeses "to gag the mouths of Confucian literati" who had disliked his "doctrine of wealth and power." But they nonetheless asserted that Wang's "illuminating" text was a separate matter from his inexcusable political crimes of building a clique and wanting excessive power. The thoughtful classical scholar inside the dishonest Sung politician could still be salvaged. What the *Four Treasuries* compilers were

[150] Chi Yün, *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu tsung-mu t'i-yao*, 1, Fan-li, p. 5.
[151] Ibid., 18, pp. 71–2. [152] Guy, *The emperor's Four Treasuries*, p. 117.

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determined to reject and not salvage were lowbrow commercial booksellers' illustrated versions of the *Chou li*, such as the undated *Chou li wen-wu ta-ch'üan* (*Complete overview of the social and cultural forms of the rituals of Chou*). Such texts resembled "rural school chapbooks" and garbled the order of the gates in Chou royal palaces. The classical tradition was not to be allowed to escape elite control as it moved downward. Vernacular debasements of texts like the *Chou li* threatened their capacity to perform the tasks the elite wanted them to perform, for example the preservation of elite notions of feudal hierarchy. Past elite writers' adventures in communist prophecy, such as a twelfth-century illustrated treatise on the *Chou li* well-field system, whose drawings and maps made it look as if economic equality could be implemented almost at once, were also sharply rejected by the *Four Treasuries* compilers. The fact that they had been included in the Yung-lo encyclopedia suggests that the elite's felt need for cultural and political police work with texts like the *Chou li* had intensified since the fifteenth century.[153]

The Ch'ien-lung emperor's successes and failures as a literary censor

The *Four Treasuries* compilers' effort to create a definitive, antimillenarian library of classical culture coincided with, and was allied to, an empirewide movement to conduct house-to-house searches for evil books, tracts, poetry, and plays. The movement was directed and led by Ch'ien-lung himself; the evil texts that were discovered were to be sent to Peking and burned. Wave upon wave of "writing prosecutions," known conventionally in English as literary inquisitions, swept away both books and living authors for about two decades, from 1772 to 1793. Because of the repetitions among the various lists of condemned books, and the gaps in the court archives that concern the Ch'ien-lung court's suppression of undesirable literature, it may never be possible to make a reliable estimate of the size of this literary holocaust. Nor is it always possible to capture the precise reasons for the destruction of various books. On the basis of more than a century of Chinese scholars' painstaking research, beginning with Yao Chin-yüan in 1883, it might be concluded that slightly more than 3,000 titles, or separate works, were burned in Peking in these two decades. Not all of them necessarily vanished without trace from private libraries the book searchers missed.[154]

Ch'ien-lung himself had clear ideas both about what literary dissent was and where it was located. In the fall of 1774 he reminded his bureaucracy

[153] Chi Yün, *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu tsung-mu t'i-yao*, 4, pp. 76–7; 5, pp. 40, 50–1.
[154] Huang, *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu tsuan-hsiu*, p. 76; Wu Che-fu, *Ch'ing-tai chin-hui shu-mu yen-chiu* (Taipei, 1969), pp. 98–9, 109.

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that "for the most part" the Ming loyalists who had written anti-Ch'ing "unofficial histories" of the Manchu conquest in the seventeenth century had lived in Kiangsu or Chekiang, with the remainder living in Kiangsi, Fukien, Kwangtung, Hunan, and Hupei.[155] He ordered an especially intense search for prohibited books in those provinces. By one estimate, the literary inquisition's two big book-collecting agencies in Kiangsu supplied at least 63,000 of the 151,725 volumes (*pu*) the inquisition destroyed. Kwangtung, however, apparently supplied very few (289), fewer even than Yunnan or Szechwan or Kwangsi.[156]

A broad mixture of new and old motives drove the government's book burners of the 1770s and 1780s. Books were condemned if they were hostile or disrespectful to Ch'ing emperors after 1644. Books were condemned if they insulted previous non-Chinese dynasties that might be considered related to the Ch'ing. Books were condemned if they presented inflammatory chronicles of the Ch'ing conquest of China. They were condemned if they lauded the heroic behavior of past political factions whose strength had compromised the ruler's own theoretical monopoly of power. They were also condemned if they contained geographical information related to the frontiers or the coast which might assist rebels. As an afterthought (beginning at the end of 1780) the scripts of popular plays could also be censored or destroyed for vulgar language as well as for anti-Manchu references. Books could be condemned for being nothing more than the products of prominent opponents of the dynasty, such as Lü Liu-liang (1629–1683). And, reflecting a very old motive in Chinese history for book censorship or suppression, they could be condemned if they indecently questioned established interpretations of the Confucian classics.[157]

The protection of Confucian teachings was probably the least important of the inquisition's themes. Nor did any Ch'ing emperor ever mutilate a Confucian classic itself the way the first Ming emperor had tried to shorten the text of *Mencius*. Attacks upon anti-Confucian books made by the inquisition may even have been devices designed to capture the sympathies of the more philistine members of the literati and weaken their resentment at the other aspects of Ch'ien-lung's literary terror.[158]

The administration of the inquisition was dispersed and complex, and a nightmare for historians to try to reconstruct. Creating its own front-line operating manuals as it went along, the inquisition was intended to be a

[155] *CSL-CL*, 964, pp. 10b–11b. [156] Huang, *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu tsuan-hsiu*, p. 78.
[157] Luther Carrington Goodrich, *The literary inquisition of Ch'ien-lung* (Baltimore, 1935), pp. 44–53.
[158] Wu, *Ch'ing-tai chin-hui shu-mu*, p. 63.

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forcing-house of local explorations into the nature of cultural and political sedition, for which no single definition could ever have existed. Peking did not provide an empirewide imperial index or general list of the criteria by which seditious literature was to be detected before 1782. Provincial governments had to devise their own indices of offensive books. They then supplied them to all subordinate prefecture and district offices, as well as to the educational officials of government schools, who bore the burden of much of the actual book searching.

One of the shrewdest moves the higher directors of the inquisition made was to ban the participation of sub-bureaucrats and yamen runners. They offered the dirty work of the house-to-house searches particularly to expectant educational officials, with the promise that major discoveries of seditious texts would improve their appointment prospects.[159] To the degree that the inquisition managed to keep its coherence, rather than degenerating into irrelevant local rackets, it did so by exploiting the swelling numbers of unemployed, or underemployed, educated careerists.

The inquisition, like political purges in modern China, facilitated the expression of local ambitions and rivalries that had little to do with the ruler's own political interests. Property disputes could cause antagonistic lineages, or antagonistic branches within the same lineage, to accuse each other falsely of harboring subversive thoughts or books. The number of times this happened has not been comprehensively studied, but it could not have been negligible. The inquisition generated interclass, as well as intraclass, warfare; commoners could lay charges against scholars. In one of the inquisition's most famous persecutions, a local troublemaker seeking revenge in 1777 accused Wang Hsi-hou, a *chü-jen* degree-holder, of having compiled a dictionary that criticized an earlier dictionary associated with Ch'ien-lung's grandfather, and of having also failed to observe the formulas of literary respect for the names of this and other Ch'ing emperors. The accuser's revenge was spectacular. Wang Hsi-hou was executed, and his sons and grandsons were sentenced to slave labor.[160]

Censorship was routine in much of the eighteenth-century world, in Europe as well as in the Ch'ing empire. European communities as diverse as Oxford and Rome and Geneva burned writings as multifarious as those of Hobbes, Milton, Voltaire, and Rousseau between the 1680s and the 1760s. In France until 1789, imprudent sellers of treatises on the first chapter of Genesis or the life of Spinoza could be imprisoned in the Bastille. Nevertheless, Ch'ien-lung was a formidable censor by any standards. He had a scholar's

[159] Goodrich, *The literary inquisition*, p. 39.
[160] Ibid., pp. 161–6; Guy, *The emperor's Four Treasuries*, pp. 174–7.

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acute sense of how written texts of all kinds, no matter how ancient, could threaten the historical orthodoxy he was trying to impose on China. Ch'ien-lung even ordered thorough investigations of the stone shrine tablets of the generals of past dynasties, especially along the nomad-sensitive northern frontier from Chihli to Shansi. He made it clear that any offensively inscribed and ethnocentric stone text with a potential for anti-Ch'ing purposes was not to be eliminated through mere burial in the ground, because it could be excavated later. Instead, the old texts were to be effaced and more appropriate new messages carved over them. In Feng-t'ien alone, some 166 stone texts at graves, at spirit shrines, and on village gates were scheduled for effacement and rewriting by 1779.[161]

In this period the Ch'ien-lung emperor used censorship not merely to repress dissent but to shape politics in slightly more benign ways. When he read his court historians' draft history of the Chin-ch'uan military campaigns in 1779, he ordered senior Grand Council ministers to delete from it all prejudicial language indicating that the Ch'ing court had had to defend itself against Szechwan's Tibetan native officers (*t'u-ssu*). His grounds were that Chinese-speaking native officers (*t'u-ssu*) might read the uncensored history and become angry. He also ordered Szechwan provincial officials to purge all such language about Chin-ch'uan native officers from government documents stored in their offices.[162] The literary inquisition also succeeded in starving the educated elite of accurate political information without the government's being able to gain control over commercial booksellers or print technology. Grand Secretaries like the far-sighted Ch'en Hung-mou were pointing out that the lack of access by provincial schoolmen to even such official news as that provided in the Peking court gazette, or commercial digests of it, was a major reason for their marginality and low esteem in public opinion.[163] In that respect the emperor got the worst of both worlds. The 1774 arrest of self-professed "sellers of news" (*mai hsin-wen jen*) in southeast China who printed and sold government proclamations and fabricated court edicts only touched the tip of this particular iceberg.[164]

In the end the inquisition's victims within the educated elite were more likely to be "bureaucrats accused of laxity than scholars charged with treason," and in this the literary inquisition resembled revolutionary political campaigns in Mao Tse-tung's China; with a disturbing intensity it was aimed against officials whose levels of compliance were judged to be not high

[161] *CSL-CL*, 1062, pp. 24–25; 1079, pp. 15b–16. [162] Ibid., 1077, pp. 4b–6.
[163] Woodside, "The divorce between the political center and educational creativity," p. 475.
[164] *CSL-CL*, 973, pp. 29–30.

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enough.[165] But it also differed from dictators' purges. The Ch'ien-lung emperor could not afford to be anything other than ambivalent about anti-Ch'ing Ming political literature. Total suppression of the memories of the heroic late Ming officials who had tried to save the Ming house from its downfall would have meant the suppression of records of role models of selfless loyalism (*chung*) among bureaucrats, of which his own court had great need. For this reason Ch'ien-lung republished the written works of many of the famous Ming loyalists, after carefully pruning their language. He could not destroy them because he had no new political symbol system or political theory of his own to substitute for theirs, no imagined new political selves into which the Confucian political selves of his officials could be made to submerge.

Nothing demonstrated the Ch'ien-lung emperor's political doubleness or calculated hybridity more than his parasitic attempt to develop a historically denatured version of the great Ming martyrs' creed of loyalty to the throne, from which the Ming martyrs of no use to him, and the Ming house itself, had been subtracted. His literary inquisition could no more stamp out Ming loyalism than his two empirewide efforts to repress Christian communities, in 1746 and 1784, could stamp out Christianity. Ch'ien-lung's failure to propose any new theories of political obligation, instead of recycling the old, meant that the memories of the Ming dynasty he had most tried to repress could reemerge a century later, endowed with the added value his inquisition had given them.

POLITICAL THEORY STRUGGLES AND THE CORRUPTION AND POVERTY PROBLEMS

Political theorists of the Ch'ien-lung reign and its aftermath were concerned by the breakdown of communications between rulers and ruled in the empire. Reformers at the end of the nineteenth century inherited this anxiety and applied it to the comparative analysis of Chinese and Western political systems. The anxiety itself predated serious political contact with the West. It even had a rough similarity with eighteenth-century Europe's own perceived tension between visible power (thought to characterize ancient democracies of the Athenian kind) and invisible power (thought to characterize the secretive monarchical despotisms of early modern Europe). Ch'ing thinkers liked to contrast idealized pictures of the Han empire, in which they pretended that government was simple and close to the people and there were few official secrets, with disorderly later and larger polities in which

[165] Timothy Brook, "Censorship in eighteenth-century China: A view from the book trade," *Canadian Journal of History*, 22 (August 1988), p. 194.

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government was full of secretive processes and was increasingly remote from the villages.

For obvious reasons the Ch'ien-lung emperor did not want such contrasts, or the authors who drew them, to have much room for play. The myth of one continuous polity was important to him, and he was prepared to go to considerable lengths to develop it. His *Four Treasuries* project did not merely collect old texts; it actively manufactured new ones. In the fall of 1780 the emperor demanded that Chi Yün and his *Four Treasuries* associates compile a striking work of disguised political propaganda known as the *Li-tai chih-kuan piao* (*General Chart of the Office Holders of Successive Dynasties*).

In the edict that introduced this work, which was to be copied into the *Four Treasuries* collection as soon as it was completed, Ch'ien-lung explained that he wanted it to be a total genealogy of government administration from the sage emperors of antiquity to himself, which could be understood quickly and efficiently. It was to make clear, through evidential research, that his own Ch'ing empire was no different in substance from all past "Central Plains" political systems and their institutions. The same historical "single body" combined and comprehended the presences of the feudal hierarchs of the sage emperors Yao and Shun with such Ch'ing institutions (specified by Ch'ien-lung) as the Imperial Household Department (*Nei-wu fu*) and the chief commanders of the Eight Banners.[166] In the multitemporal grids of Ch'ien-lung's great Chart, the Court of Colonial Affairs (*Li-fan yüan*), specifically invented by Manchus in the seventeenth century to rule Mongols, Tibetans, and Turks outside a Chinese-style administration, was supplied with a genealogy that linked it to the Chou dynasty aristocrat officials who had arranged for the visits of feudal lords to the Chou royal court.

This static and essentialist digest of the administrative history of China, remarkably similar to Western Orientalist conceptions – then and now – of the history of Chinese state institutions, was designed to normalize Ch'ien-lung's trans-Asian empire in Chinese terms. Another of its purposes was to heal, or at least rationalize into painlessness, the wound inflicted upon this ideology of imperial political continuity four centuries earlier by the first Ming emperor's abolition of the position of first minister or "Counsellor-in-chief" (*ch'eng-hsiang*). Ch'ien-lung used the preparation of his Chart to argue that the Ming founder had not really changed relations between rulers and their dependent officials; that the first minister had never amounted to anyone more than he who received orders directly from his emperor; and that the famous principle that the empire's security was bound up with the fate of its paramount minister was specious and false. Ch'ien-lung had good reason to

[166] Yung-jung et al., *Li-tai chih-kuan piao* (Peking, 1783; rpt. Shanghai, 1936), Introductory edict.

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know that a "first minister" remained part of his own officials' private conceptions of what a "Central Plains" political system should be like. Six years earlier he had had to reject a censor's "laughable" proposal for the restoration of a Han-style "assistant chancellor" (*fu-hsiang*) at the Censorate, with its implications of the need for further political restoration work later.[167]

Very few of Ch'ien-lung's court officials, living in a century with an extraordinarily high level of historical consciousness, could have believed in the idea of an unchanging "Central Plains" political system. For most of them, the Ch'ing emperors were worth supporting because of one very critical discontinuity with the recent imperial past: the absence of politically oppressive court eunuchs. The palace history that Ch'ien-lung authorized his future Grand Secretary, Yü Min-chung, to compile in the 1760s exposed the eunuch evil as the great unresolved problem of court politics. The history celebrated the special measures that Ch'ien-lung had taken in 1742 to control eunuchs. These included the rule that eunuchs could never rise beyond the fourth grade in the civil service, and further rules that not only froze eunuchs' salaries, but also the money that was to be distributed to them at the end of the year at the Ch'ung-wen gate. The eunuch disasters of the Ming were given as the grounds for these rules, along with the K'ang-hsi emperor's stern pronouncement that eunuchs were different in nature and feelings from "ordinary people."[168]

Appreciation of this particular discontinuity between the Ch'ing court and its predecessors took eighteenth-century political theory in contradictory directions. The eighteenth-century emperors developed one new major inner court institution, the *Chün-chi ch'u*, sometimes called the "Grand Council" by Western historians. Modern Chinese scholarship has tended to see it as representing an intensification of despotism in Peking, or the triumph of informal interests over formal administration, which in turn inhibited the growth of rational administrative autonomy and precipitated decay. Western scholarship has depicted the Grand Council as the nucleus of a privy council that reduced the scope of routine decision making by emperors, including Ch'ien-lung, with a similarity even to the functions of "presidential clerkship" in modern Washington.[169] Important Chinese officials who served on Ch'ien-lung's Grand Council, such as Chao I, had their own views. They took the existence of the Grand Council as a conclusive affirmation of the failure

[167] *CSL-CL*, 963, pp. 14–15b.

[168] Yü Min-chung et al., comps., *Kuo-ch'ao kung-shih* (Peking, 1770; rpt. Taipei, 1966), 1, pp. 2–2b; 2, pp. 7–7b; 20, pp. 2b–4.

[169] Beatrice S. Bartlett, *Monarchs and ministers: The Grand Council in mid-Ch'ing China, 1723–1820* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1991), pp. 276–8.

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of the first Ming emperor's spitefully antibureaucratic efforts to center state business in the imperial apartments, and the subsequent rise of eunuch executives. The existence of the Council reestablished the principle that it "was impossible not to establish bureaucrats" to run the empire.[170] After two troubled imperial millennia, the necessity of bureaucracy was the key – and contested – point.

The post-Ming reconstruction of bureaucratic authority revived a perennial question: what kind of bureaucrats, tame administrators or insider critics? Fang Pao, who was close to the Ch'ien-lung emperor at the time, began his remarkable 1737 attack on the condition of his master's government by referring to the brave late Ming censors who were "flogged with the heavy bamboo" in the mornings and then delivered more rebukes to their emperor in the evenings. Fang went to great lengths to show that seventeenth-century Ming officials' refusal to be broken by the eunuch Wei Chung-hsien's tortures was not just an "emotional" response, but "the real mind" (or true heart) of loyalty at work. Fang coupled his emphasis on the moral nobility of principled alienation among court bureaucrats with an elaborate picture of the decline of debate as well as of documentary criticism and assessment inside all governments since the Sung dynasty. Behind Ch'ing institutions like the Grand Council, Fang saw not despotism but a debate-suppressing oligarchical colonization of the monarchy. He contrasted this with the "tens of thousands of words" of questioning and answering that had allegedly gone on almost thirty centuries earlier between the first Chou king and his ministers.[171]

The competition to interpret Ming politics was so important that Ch'ien-lung could hardly resist entering it. He ordered a special compilation of Ming dynasty court memorials made in 1781, with himself as the putative author. In it he passed his own judgment on whether extensive public political discussion was redemptive or pathological. The eunuch evil, the emperor wrote, had been provoked by discordant official factionalism. The Sung dynasty had gone bad because of too much philosophical debate and not enough political achievement. The Ming dynasty had been destroyed by excessive political discussion, of which reliance on eunuchs had been a symptom.[172] With this he deflected the theory of Fang Pao and others of a centuries-long shrinkage of institutionalized criticism inside the central government, and their proposed antidotes, such as Fang Pao's idea of the expansion of information-based activism on the part of the Six Ministries in Peking.

170 Chao I, "Chün-chi ch'u shu," in *CSWP*, 14, pp. 7–9.
171 Fang Pao, *Fang Pao chi*, II, pp. 557–64.
172 Ch'ing Kao-tsung, comp., *Yü-hsüan Ming-ch'en tsou-i* (Peking, 1781; rpt. Shanghai, 1935), preface.

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Because of these fundamental disagreements about government, the fable of imperial administrative continuity presented in Ch'ien-lung's great *Chart* of office-holders could not have mystified many. It had little potential to moderate the conflicts about power processes, or the acute feelings of guilt, fear, and utopian aspiration that the Ming experience generated. (Its genealogy of imperial household institutions down through the ages contained an eloquent blank space for the eunuch-ridden Ming court.)[173] Models of local government were even more a matter of unresolved theoretical and practical conflicts. In the classic work on county (*hsien*) government written by Wang Hui-tsu (1731–1807) in 1793, at the end of the Ch'ien-lung reign, county magistrates occupied a metaphorical wonderland. Wang compared them, variously, to medicine men, or to wooden puppets, or even to fragile glass screens. Their changing metaphorical identities in his text reflected the uncertainties about their role in a post-feudal administration. Wang's claim in his preface that his book would conduct an aggressive empirical investigation of what was routine in local administration in China implied that the routine itself still needed explication in 1793.[174]

The Ch'ien-lung emperor had to face the issue of how his empire could expand in scale without significantly changing the nature of its local government. Ch'ien-lung was not a political reformer. Horizontal extension rather than vertical reform was the basis of his rule. At the outset of his reign the emperor publicly stated that the most important function of his governors-general and governors, given the size of the provincial units they administered, was to impeach abusive prefects and magistrates, and to hunt down and arrest trouble-making provincial students and "local bullies." This bleak view of local administration as an endlessly defensive political surveillance process accompanied the anxiety that provincial society as a whole was filled with potential wrong-doers.

High provincial officials, as the emperor saw it in 1736, were inevitably outmatched by the large number of prefects, magistrates, lower degree holders (*sheng-yüan*), and bullies who could wreck the polity from below. In response high officials could trust as their "eyes and ears" not more than a few sympathetic circuit intendants, friends, relatives, and family servants they had known "for many years." In addition, the subjectivity of local political knowledge could become so entrenched, with slander and flattery adopting the form of "public-spirited criticism" (*kung-p'ing*) so well, that no one at the top could penetrate its verbal camouflage. Ch'ien-lung's pessimistic awareness of the richness of the powers of dissimulation among lesser provin-

[173] Yung-jung et al., *Li-tai chih-kuan piao*, 37, p. 983. [174] Wang Hui-tsu, *Hsüeh-chih i-shuo*, 1, p. 1.

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cial officials, preventing him even from deciphering conflicting local interests, contrasts strikingly with the similar texts of contemporary or near-contemporary European kings – for example, Louis XIV's *mémoires* for the instruction of the French dauphin – that still assume that kings can detect the most hidden interests of their courtiers. European polities were smaller. Unable to imagine any remedy within the bureaucracy for the systematic subjectivity and informational stalemate that he saw in provincial politics, Ch'ien-lung came to the back-handed conclusion that "mass opinion" must be used by governors-general to "verify" their investigations of good and bad subordinate officials.[175] But in the remainder of his reign he failed to develop this implication of a more populistic authoritarianism. As his 1778 declaration of his abdication plans shows, Ch'ien-lung was ambivalent about the political utility of public opinion.

Chinese reformers, both inside and outside his government, presented the emperor with a significant range of policy alternatives. Because the post-aristocratic empire had never created an effective post-feudal theory of political obligation, Ch'ing expansion in the eighteenth century raised again the possibility of a strategic, limited reversal of administrative defeudalization. In the previous century famous exponents of limited refeudalization, such as Ku Yen-wu, had argued that effective statecraft frankly recognized private selfishness in the world, and rather than trying to suppress it, used it to compose the sum of a more general public-spiritedness. Seventeenth-century thinkers like Ku Yen-wu had further hypothesized that if magistrates, after a long trial period, were allowed lifetime appointments, and the right to recommend their sons as their successors, political loyalty in the transcontinental empire could acquire a more self-interested emotional foundation. Lifetime magistrates would govern their counties (*hsien*) far better because they would protect them like their own estates. These ideas continued to circulate in the eighteenth century. Their critics, such as Chiao Hsün (1763–1820), denied that the empire's bureaucratic culture was arbitrarily divisible in this way, or that postfeudal meritocracy could be preserved at some administrative levels and abolished at others. But the growth of territory and population under Ch'ien-lung compelled his court to rethink once again the shifting balance between hereditary power and bureaucratic administration in provincial and local politics.

Parts of south China in the eighteenth century saw the rise of mega-lineages, capable of mobilizing as many as several thousand adult males for legal or illegal ends. Their privately selected lineage heads conducted armed

[175] *CSL-CL*, 21, pp. 24b–26b. For Louis XIV, see Nannerl O. Keohane, *Philosophy and the state in France: The Renaissance to the Enlightenment* (Princeton, 1980), pp. 244–51.

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combat with other lineages, harbored criminals, and generally challenged local officials. The Ch'ien-lung emperor had previously stipulated in a 1764 discussion of politically influential same-surname associations in Kiangsi province that he regarded the prefecture as the bureaucratic state's ultimate line of defense against erosion of its power by local interests. He could not accept formal lineage constellations that spanned a whole prefecture and thus reduced genuine kinship to a political fiction.[176] By 1789 he faced a crisis in theory and practice. In that year one of his officials, fearing that Fukien was becoming ungovernable, proposed that Fukien lineage heads who could keep their lineages crime-free for three years and deliver up trouble-makers to the local government when demanded, be rewarded with bureaucratic status. Ch'ien-lung rejected state incorporation of Fukien lineage heads. The emperor argued that state incorporation would make them south China's equivalent of the hereditary native officers (*t'u ssu*) of southwest China, whom his court had been eliminating or circumscribing. Tellingly, he compared the lawless Fukien lineage heads to Islamic religious leaders in Kansu as evidence of the proliferating corporatisms in his empire that seemed beyond the influence of the Confucian state ideology. Above all, Ch'ien-lung asserted that the bureaucratization of local power-holders not created by the state itself would imply that the state-trained local officials were useless.[177]

All this suggests that Ch'ien-lung's government was a work in progress, not a finished system. The politics of the empire never even had the illusion of having achieved a final shape, despite the claims of Ch'ien-lung's *Chart* or of Western Orientalism. From the court to the provinces, there was an acute awareness of the continuing historical hazards of state formation, and of the continuing inconclusiveness of the political theory that had to cover relations between the state and local interests.

Far from conceding the limits of meritocracy in the empire's local politics, some officials close to Ch'ien-lung wanted reforms that would expand it. Ch'en Hung-mou, the great Mencian conscience among Ch'ien-lung's Grand Secretaries, saw the empire's growing political cancer as being its contemptuous marginalization of the thousands of secretaries and clerks and other bureaucratically unranked subofficial functionaries upon whom its local government depended. In the fifth of his classic educational treatises, Ch'en stressed that subofficial functionaries had been regarded as "teachers" during the Ch'in dynasty's destruction of books, in contrast to the deformed, historyless vision of them as being beyond the bounds of educability that was current in the Ch'ien-lung reign.

[176] *CSL-CL*, 709, pp. 2b–3b. [177] Ibid., 1335, pp. 23b–6b.

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Ch'en attacked the T'ang and post-T'ang examination system for having incorporated the spirit of the "pure" and "impure" rank classifications of the class-ridden period of North-South division that had preceded it. As a result, the recruitment of sub-bureaucrats on a meritocratic basis was disregarded. In Ch'en's eyes the unfinished business of the empire's universalism required that literate sub-bureaucrats be included in literati-officials' system of promotions and allowed the hope of "glorious advancement" to official status.[178] Otherwise their corrupt practices were inevitable, according to Ch'en. Although threatening the empire's stability was hardly Ch'en's intention, the most eloquent academy-based philosophers writing metaphysical dissertations on the innate goodness of all human beings did not threaten the Ch'ing political status quo nearly as much as a future Grand Secretary demanding recognition for "rats and foxes," as sub-bureaucrats were sometimes labeled.

The Ch'ien-lung emperor could hardly have heeded Ch'en Hung-mou's advice to expand meritocracy and opportunities for upward mobility. His existing elite was already haunted by the specter of downward mobility. There was a contradiction dominating his reign between the relatively small and almost static size of the formal bureaucracy and the continuing expansion in numbers of educated degree-holders who wanted positions in that bureaucracy. It was not just that literate sub-bureaucrats could not be rehabilitated as Ch'en suggested and allowed access to the overcrowded promotions ladder. There was also a crisis in morale among the thousands of candidates for regional *chü-jen* degrees who thronged the huge examination sites of Kiangnan, Shantung, and elsewhere. Once these crowds realized that success in such examinations did not necessarily make them stars in heaven – as a character in Wu Ching-tzu's great eighteenth-century satirical novel about scholars hyperbolically suggested it did – then the whole promise of upward mobility upon which the empire's political structure depended tended to be jeopardized.

Small wonder that Ch'ien-lung publicly admitted in 1765 that he thought about this problem in "the middle of the night." He knew the relevant statistics even better than he knew Sinkiang battlefield casualty reports. As Ch'ien-lung calculated it in 1765, each set of the triennial provincial examinations produced 1,290 new *chü-jen* degree-holders. When "special favor examinations" were counted, too, this meant the production of more than 5,000 new *chü-jen* each decade. There were only 1,285 magistrates' positions in 1765. Most *chü-jen* therefore had to wait for "more than thirty years," according to the emperor's projections, before they could receive appointment to this coveted bureaucratic position, and only about half of all the *chü-jen*

[178] Ch'en Hung-mou, *Tsai kuan fa-chieh lu* (1743; rpt. Shanghai, 1936), pp. 1–2b.

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degree-holders officially believed to exist could expect such appointments even after three decades.[179]

Ch'ien-lung was well aware that the emperor was the manager of a political elite labor market, even if there were no glorious official paintings of him in this capacity to place alongside those of the emperor as hunter, literatus, or Buddhist saint. He announced with fanfare that he would "dredge" the obstructions in the path of appointment for the thousands of career-hungry *chü-jen*. But his dredging operation amounted to little more than tinkering. Provincial governors-general and governors were to certify ageing and incompetent *chü-jen* as mediocre. These men were to be diverted ruthlessly into provincial educational posts, their dreams of being magistrates essentially taken from them. High provincial officials who resisted discriminating against weak *chü-jen* in this way and enforcing the new labor market turnover time were accused by the court of showing them a false "love."[180] That the emperor and provincial officials could argue about the nature of superiors' patriarchalist "love" for inferiors in the bureaucracy shows how population pressure was endangering elite agreement about political agency. The most elderly *chü-jen* were to be removed from magistrate appointments lists entirely and rewarded with harmless titles in minor Peking court agencies. The emergence of more rigorously multitiered appointment criteria for successful *chü-jen* degree-holders after 1765 clearly meant a political deflation of the general value of the *chü-jen* title itself.

Discontented *chü-jen* degree-holders were only a small part of the trouble to come. They, but also the 500,000 or so civil *sheng-yüan* below them in the provinces who wished to become provincial degree-holders, were deeply offended by the Ch'ien-lung court's sale of degrees and offices to rich commoners, partly in order to raise cash and provisions for the emperor's wars. *Chü-jen* degrees were not sold until the early 1800s.[181] Provincial students nonetheless viewed the Ch'ing court's expansion of the sale of examination system degrees, compared to the Ming dynasty's, with a contempt far stronger than that which Alexis de Tocqueville bestowed upon the sale of municipal offices by eighteenth-century French kings. The literary inquisition was used to crush eruptions of outrage. One of its victims, a Hunanese provincial student who earned a precarious living drawing up legal complaints for other people, was executed for writing a small tract that expressed his deep hatred of officials who had bought their posts. In his view they obstructed the "legitimate" path to government service of real scholars.[182]

[179] *CSL-CL*, 745, pp. 17b–19b; 747, pp. 8–11b. [180] Ibid., 745, pp. 17b–19b.
[181] Woodside, "The divorce between the political center and educational creativity," pp. 473–5.
[182] Hsü Ta-ling, *Ch'ing-tai ch'üan-na chih-tu* (Peking, 1950; rpt. Hong Kong, 1968), pp. 140–2.

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The Ch'ien-lung reign's imbalance between elite learners and government positions, and the intrabureaucratic debate it provoked about how much higher power-holders should "love" and patronize their subordinates, was normally almost invisible to the public. The problem became an open spectacle only occasionally, as in 1738 when Ch'ien-lung ordered provincial officials to keep lists of the names of "poor" students and provide them with money, rice, and soup from public funds. Ch'ien-lung correctly linked provincial students' riots to a crisis in literati "self-esteem." In 1739, for example, provincial students rioted in the streets of Changsha, attacked sedan chairs with officials in them, and hurled bricks from the top of the city wall at houses below; in Fukien, student tax resisters blackened the door of their district's Confucian temple.[183] Official corruption was a more visible sign of the decay of the empire's political morale. Partly this was because corruption came to have a single identifiable name and face: Ho-shen (1750–1799).

Ch'ien-lung met this young Manchu bannerman and palace guard in 1775, at one of his palace's gates. Ho-shen quickly became an imperial favorite, and much more. Ch'ien-lung capriciously elevated him to a position of almost supreme influence at his court, as "second emperor," during the last quarter-century of his reign. Between 1775 and 1780 alone, Ch'ien-lung made this obscure young climber a minister at the Grand Council, commandant of the Peking police, a Minister of Revenue, lieutenant general of a Manchu Banner, and high official at the Four Treasuries office. By 1786, Ho-shen had become Grand Secretary. From these positions Ho-shen was able to appoint his own relatives and friends to other posts all over the empire, from which he then received payoffs. His younger brother, Ho-lin, for example, became Minister of Works, imperial proconsul in Tibet, and governor-general of Szechwan, before dying during the Miao wars in 1796.[184]

Ho-shen became hated, not least by his more qualified rivals for power, like Grand Secretary A-kuei, more than thirty years his senior. Literati then and later, particularly the great historian Chang Hsüeh-ch'eng (1738–1801), accused him of vast venality.[185] A popular Chinese explanation of Ho-shen's rise to power – that Ch'ien-lung thought of him as the male reincarnation of an ill-starred concubine whom he had loved in his youth – at least hints at the existence of an imperial emotional life that is difficult to reconstruct now, and implies remarkable skepticism about the emperor's moral self-discipline in the last decades of his life.[186]

[183] *CSL-CL*, 67, pp. 13–14; 95, pp. 9b–11b.

[184] Feng Tso-che, *T'an-wu chih wang: Ho-shen mi-shih* (Ch'ang-ch'un, 1989), pp. 72–4.

[185] David S. Nivison, "Ho-shen and his accusers: Ideology and political behavior in the eighteenth century," in David S. Nivison and Arthur F. Wright, eds., *Confucianism in action* (Stanford, 1959), pp. 209–43.

[186] Kahn, *Monarchy in the emperor's eyes*, pp. 55–7.

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The record of Ho-shen's European contemporaries who mixed great personal corruption with astute political behavior – Talleyrand, for example – suggests that Ho-shen's acquisition of a personal fortune, by itself, may have had little to do with the question of his culpability for the decline of the later Ch'ien-lung government. Modern scholars, faced with all the legends, rhetoric, and inflated statistics about Ho-shen generated by his accusers, find it difficult enough to establish even the simplest facts about his corruption.[187] Nor is it necessarily easy to show that even the general level of corruption in the Ch'ing administration in the 1780s and 1790s was significantly higher than that earlier in the century, despite eyewitness assertions to this effect. It is worth remembering that at the time Ch'ien-lung came to the throne, in the 1730s, major provinces like Shantung were owing the central government unpaid tax revenues going back to 1719 of more than three million taels, in part because of the embezzlement by clerks and other local agents.[188]

The landmark corruption case of the Ch'ien-lung reign, the scandal in 1781 in Kansu over sales of examination degrees, suggests that corruption was beginning to become the work of bureaucratic groups rather than of individual administrators late in the Ch'ien-lung reign. In Kansu an entire ring of officials, sponsored by the great minister Yü Min-chung (who died in 1780 before the scandal broke), was found to have embezzled funds designated for military supplies and famine relief from the sale of imperial college student degrees between 1774 and 1781. In what would have been an unusual event at any time in imperial history, Ch'ien-lung executed fifty-six provincial officials in the climax to this one scandal. There was a high frequency of major investigations and punishments of high provincial officials for corruption during the Ch'ien-lung reign, at least thirty overall. On average, every two years one eminent official was convicted of corruption and executed, or exiled to Sinkiang, or cashiered. Thirty of the 139 men who served as governors-general or governors in the Ch'ien-lung reign were prosecuted for corruption.[189]

The causes of the corruption may have included the emperor Ch'ien-lung himself. During his brief reign the Yung-cheng emperor had devised supplementary "nourishment of virtue" (*yang-lien*) salaries as a means of ameliorating the difficult economic positions of many officials. Ch'ien-lung began the disastrous expedient of confiscating these crucial supplementary salaries, either as fines for alleged misdeeds his officials had committed in office, or merely as compulsory donations to military campaigns and imperial

[187] Bartlett, *Monarchs and ministers*, pp. 232–7. [188] *CSL-CL*, 17, pp. 1–3b.

[189] Kuo Ch'eng-k'ang, "18 shih-chi hou-ch'i Chung-kuo t'an-wu wen-t'i yen-chiu," *Ch'ing-shih yen-chiu*, 1 (1995), pp. 13–26; Nancy E. Park, "Corruption in eighteenth-century China," *JAS*, 56, 4 (November 1997), p. 999.

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birthday expenses. In a famous memorial at the outset of the 1790s, one brave official demonstrated the impact such confiscations had upon the whole bureaucratic culture. He pointed out that even honest provincial officials had to ask for financial help from their underlings in order to pay such fines and donations. When they later discovered that the underlings who had helped them were embezzling funds, they had little choice but to shelter them.[190]

The full pathos of the problem of corruption in the Ch'ien-lung reign cannot be appreciated without reference to what even Ch'ien-lung acknowledged was the crisis of self-esteem among the office-holding elite and the literati from whom they were recruited. The elite were bleakly aware that they were not hereditary aristocrats, might at any moment fall into poverty, and could not be assured of the upward mobility of which they thought they were worthy. No wonder they were taunted by Ho-shen's too easy success. Only a few of them could express their frustrations in scholarship. One who did so, the brilliant, ashamed, and impoverished Kiangsu lower-degree holder Shen T'ung (1668–1752), spent his last decade – the inflation-ridden 1740s – writing an erudite and influential analysis of the system of salary lands described in the *Chou li* (*Chou-kuan lu-t'ien k'ao*). Using the text that haunted the eighteenth century, Shen resorted to elaborate statistical calculations to defend the thesis that the Chou feudal order had comfortably provided a secure livelihood to large numbers of office-holders. This was a message his contemporary literati very much wanted to hear. However, it is grossly unhistorical to attribute the corruption merely to the dominance in Chinese life of particularistic human relationships based upon kinship or school or geographical ties, even if some modern scholarship now treats such ties as the supposed master-principle of Chinese politics. On the contrary, factionalism and such particularistic ties may have been more the key to whatever repression of corruption occurred in the eighteenth century.[191]

Ch'ien-lung's own clear, and self-interested, pattern of behavior was to punish severely corrupt provincial officials, but to show far less zeal in purging corrupt officials in his central government. This also reflected the emperor's political outlook. He assumed that evil and dishonesty were most pervasive among prefects, magistrates, provincial students, and local "bullies" far away from the capital. Unlike Ch'en Hung-mou, from whom he could have learned more than he did, Ch'ien-lung took a punitive approach to provincial politics, not a creative one. This was possibly his single greatest weakness as a ruler.

[190] *CSL-CL*, 1367, pp. 3b–6. [191] Park, "Corruption in eighteenth-century China," pp. 997–8.

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There was a more positive side to Ch'ien-lung's interaction with provincial society. Against his limited view of local officials as being readily corruptible was his remarkably enlightened view of peasants as rational economic actors who were best able to calculate their own economic good. Nowhere was this assumption of the rational value of peasant economic autonomy more visible than in his court's debate about the great ongoing migration of peasants to Szechwan. The Ch'ing court had itself encouraged this migration for about a century. By the 1760s, however, the emperor was pressed by many of his officials to halt it. They reasoned that Szechwan had been successfully repopulated after the devastation in the previous century; that its cheap surplus farming lands were all gone; and that a continuation of the migration would only generate banditry and rebellion. In his response in 1767, Ch'ien-lung rejected the concept of an empire based upon internal travel permits and passports and "violently differentiated" provincial boundaries. He declared that peasant migrants with "self-determined plans to seek a livelihood" were intelligent enough to "stop themselves" from going to Szechwan once they discovered that its economic frontiers had closed. For Ch'ien-lung, acceptance of his peasants' own capacities for rational self-regulation allowed the postponement of local government reform, but also coincided with a patrimonialism in which the importance of place and province was diminished.[192]

The emperor's belief that peasants were rational actors who responded to political and economic incentives and disincentives, rather than embodying uncontrolled passions or limited mental flexibility, affected his reign's debate about another defining issue, poverty. In the Ch'ing the poor were not regarded as a natural, let alone a necessary, condition for social order, as they were still in an eighteenth-century Europe in which a French moralist could call them the indispensable "shadows in a painting," or a British specialist on the Poor Laws could praise hunger as the most natural motive for work.[193] But two factors peculiar to the Ch'ing empire in the eighteenth century ensured that there would be a high political interest in the causes and administrative treatment of poverty.

The first factor was the unexpected spread of poverty among the Manchu people. It had something of the same effect on Ch'ing thinking about poverty as a newly discovered virus might have on modern medical research. Ch'ien-lung could hardly avoid the topic. It was right under his nose. By 1755, about one-fifth of the Manchu men in the main line of the imperial house itself

[192] *CSL-CL*, 784, pp. 19–20; Robert Entenmann, "Migration and settlement in Sichuan, 1644–1796" (diss., Harvard University, 1982), pp. 215–18.

[193] Bronislaw Geremek, *Poverty: A history*, trans. Agnieszka Kolakowska (Oxford, 1997), p. 232.

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were desperately poor, without any regular source of livelihood or property.[194] By the outset of Ch'ien-lung's reign, perhaps half the banner lands around Peking had been sold surreptitiously to Chinese landowners through unredeemed mortgages. In this period, the economic basis of Ch'ing dynastic power itself was shifting away from the feudal forms of territorialization, which the seventeenth-century banner lands represented, toward greater reliance upon Chinese merchant class support, even if this change was not yet completely incorporated into the monarchy's own self-understanding. There was nonetheless great pressure on the emperor to use what resources he commanded to buy back banner lands.

Ch'ien-lung attempted four large-scale campaigns between 1744 and 1773 to redeem banner lands in the capital region. They achieved relatively little. It is remarkable how readily Ch'ien-lung turned to high Chinese officials like the far-sighted northerner Sun Chia-kan (1683–1753) to advise him about resolving Manchu poverty, and how easily Sun, the governor-general of Chihli, persuaded the emperor that the cultivation rights of the Chinese tenants on the banner lands must not be disturbed at any cost. Sun proposed the resettlement of poor Manchus outside the Great Wall, thus in effect evacuating them from the major political center and conceding their irrelevance to it. He warned that state power could not protect an economically inefficient social or ethnic group or block the inevitable increased concentration of wealth in the hands of rich households. As Ch'ien-lung acknowledged in 1739, class polarization among the Manchus themselves prevented the recreation of earlier forms of supposed Manchu solidarity. The net result of state-sponsored commercial redemptions of banner lands was to transfer them from Chinese landlords to rich Manchus, few of whom were willing to increase their charity to their poorer relatives.[195]

The second factor that forced the Ch'ien-lung court to examine the nature of poverty was a steady increase in rice prices, which in turn provoked mob attacks on rice shops and other forms of mass violence. The K'ang-hsi and Yung-cheng reigns appear to have had relatively stable rice prices. Increases in the empire's rice production, although important, failed to keep up with population growth. The era of price stability ended and rice prices may have as much as quadrupled in some parts of the empire between 1700 and 1800. In 1748 Ch'ien-lung announced publicly that he did not understand the reasons for the price inflation. He ordered all his provincial governors-general

[194] Kuo Sung-i, "Ch'ing tsung-shih te teng-chi chieh-kou chi ching-chi ti-wei," in Li Chung-ch'ing and Kuo Sung-i, comps., *Ch'ing-tai huang-tsu jen-k'ou hsing-wei ho she-hui huan-ching* (Peking, 1994), pp. 116–33.

[195] *CSL-CL*, 104, pp. 2–3.

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and governors to investigate it and submit their own hypotheses. The result was an extraordinary empirewide debate, which continued in different forms for the rest of his reign, about whether the Ch'ing empire suffered from scarcities or from unbalanced commodity distribution patterns that created the appearance of scarcities when these did not in fact exist. A poverty-relief policy that was scarcity-focused implied a different kind of state from a poverty-relief policy that was distribution-focused, so the debate was not merely economic.

Of all the memorials about the crisis that Ch'ien-lung received in 1748, perhaps the most influential one came from the governor of Hunan, Yang Hsi-fu (d. 1768). Yang argued that the chief cause of the rice-price inflation was a steady increase of poverty and thus of buyers of rice who were poor. Of the four reasons he gave for the growth of poverty, three were obvious ones: population growth, concentration of land ownership in the hands of "rich households," and excessive interventions by local granaries in the rice markets. They were embedded in a discussion that had remarkably little to say about money itself or about monetary policy. But Yang's fourth reason for the expansion of poverty was that changes in popular notions of appropriate levels of consumption, now favoring "extravagance," had created a new type of debt-ridden poor.[196] Here was the very modern implication, by Western standards, that poverty could not be measured by absolute standards or by stable symbolic classifications, but only by changing and elastic criteria of subjectively determined social wants and needs.

Ch'ien-lung's interest in poverty and famine relief was one of the main themes of his reign. As early as 1739, the young emperor demanded that all the prefectural and county relief agencies for widowers, widows, and orphans extend their charity more generally to the old and sick. He stated that local officials would be judged by how well they respected his imperial predisposition to sympathize with "the friendless and childless."[197] There were no eighteenth-century European parallels to the Ch'ien-lung empire's capacity to provide quantities of famine relief several times in excess of the taxes collected in a normal harvest year; no European parallels to the scale of the charitable granary networks that important officials of the Ch'ien-lung reign planned for the provinces they governed; and no European parallels to the flexibility of the poverty relief policies the Ch'ien-lung emperor and his advisors implemented.[198]

[196] Yang Hsi-fu, "Ch'en ming mi kuei chih yu shu," in *CSWP*, 39, pp. 7b–9b.

[197] *CSL-CL*, 92, pp. 1–1b.

[198] R. Bin Wong and Peter C. Perdue, "Famine's foes in Ch'ing China," *HJAS*, 43, No. 1 (1983), pp. 291–332; Pierre-Etienne Will and R. Bin Wong, *Nourish the people: The state civilian granary system in China, 1650–1850* (Ann Arbor, 1991), pp. 25–74.

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Ch'ien-lung combined generous poverty relief measures with a keen curiosity about who the traveling poor – the distressed wanderers (*liu-min*, a term from the early empire) – actually were. From the time in 1704 when starving peasants from Shantung stormed into Peking looking for food, Ch'ing emperors built emergency soup kitchens almost in the shadow of the Forbidden City itself. By 1792, more than 20,000 hungry peasants were being routinely fed at Ch'ien-lung's soup kitchens in the capital. Ch'ien-lung declared in 1792 that there were no archetypally "good" classical solutions to apply to such crowds of poor. The growing belief, reflected earlier in Yang Hsi-fu's advice, that mutable social wants and needs helped to determine poverty, led him in the direction of proto-sociological investigations. He announced his reliance on a survey, done for him by Jehol officials, which showed that soup kitchens were not the only source of sustenance for the unemployed poor. The kitchens were merely a sort of living wage supplement for peasants who used them no more than "two or three times" while migrating to other places to work as itinerant laborers.

This survey evidently confirmed Ch'ien-lung's faith in peasant rationality. Warning local officials who blocked peasant migrations or offered peasants infantilizing forms of pity and dependency, the emperor ordered such officials to instruct hungry peasants to go to the good harvest areas in Mongolia and south Manchuria, where they could regain their self-sufficiency and avoid the epidemic diseases that urban soup kitchen mobs spawned.[199] The peasant mobility that Ch'ien-lung accepted, against the wishes of many bureaucrats, contrasted sharply with the ideas of Chinese provincial rulers early in his reign – such as Li Wei (1687–1738), a favorite official of his father's – that peasants should not have to move more than twenty *li* to seek relief.[200] Ch'ien-lung's acceptance of such peasant mobility decompartmentalized his empire and its collective identity.

In the last analysis the language of the politics of Ch'ien-lung's empire, at its highest levels, was not standardized or ideologically consistent. It was both Confucian and full of latent mistrust of the exclusive ideological consolations of Confucianism. The emperor's picture of peasants as individual rational economic actors, and his toleration of a *liu-min* migratory culture that was relatively independent of provincial or county or dialect identities, undermined the hierarchies of family and gender that Ch'ien-lung at other times strove to support. The political theory of Ch'ien-lung's government was not lacking in imperfectly concealed normative ambivalences.

Behind these ambivalences remained the astonishingly complex personality of the emperor himself. There are limits to its simplification at the hands

[199] *CSL-CL*, 1408, pp. 5–7. [200] Ibid., 62, pp. 19–20.

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of modern scholarship. At his eightieth birthday, Ch'ien-lung enveloped himself in an atmosphere of self-conscious triumphalism, announcing that emperors such as he were rare indeed in the pages of the history books, and that his rule had achieved a condition of "small tranquillity" (*hsiao-k'ang*), the classical final stage before the arrival of the complete golden age.[201] At the end of 1793, Ch'ien-lung also took note of the circumstance that the empire's population had increased from the 23.3 million people his grandfather's court records had reported for 1710 (in a severe underestimate reflecting the unreliability of earlier population registers), to the 307.4 million people his own provincial population audits reported. He warned that short of a moral and cultural revolution in favor of frugality, his empire, for which he had bought time with his military expansion, was facing catastrophe.[202]

Small tranquillity and approaching catastrophe were both rhetorical self-indulgences of a highly characteristic kind. Right to the very end, the public Ch'ien-lung remained an impressive mixture of vast self-assurance and profound, if politically calculated, anxiety.

[201] Ibid., 1346, pp. 1b–6. [202] Ibid., 1441, pp. 14–15b.

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CHAPTER 6

THE CONQUEST ELITE OF THE CH'ING EMPIRE

Pamela Kyle Crossley

The conquest elite of the earlier Ch'ing underwent marked changes as expansion transformed the geographical contours, cultural content, and political dynamics of the empire. Prior to the Ch'ing invasion of north China a Ch'ing elite already existed, but its qualities and its proportional components were deeply altered between 1644 and the end of the century. From the time of the conquest of north China to the completion of Ch'ing control of south China, the conquest forces were contained in or under the control of the Eight Banners, the Ch'ing sociomilitary organization.[1] Within the Eight Banners, "Manchu" (itself a complex matter of definition)[2] combatants composed only a modest percentage of the conquest force, in absolute numbers somewhere between 110,000 and 140,000. It also included a large number – perhaps as

[1] Many histories of the Manchus are functionally histories of the Eight Banners (and the reverse is also true). The foundation modern study is Meng Sen, "Pa-ch'i chih-tu k'ao-shih," *Kuo-li Chung-yang yen-chiu yüan, Li-shih yü-yen yen-chiu suo chi-k'an*, 6, No. 3 (1936), pp. 343–412, and there has been important research on individual banner or garrison histories by Ch'en Wen-shih, Okada Hidehiro, Liu Chia-chü, and others. For more general studies see Sudō Yoshiyuki, "Shinchō ni okeru Manshūchūbō no toku shusei ni kanseru ichi kōsatsu," *Tōhoku gakuhō*, 11, No. 1 (March 1940), pp. 176–203; Wu Wei-ping, "The development and decline of the Eight Banners" (diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1969); Kaye Soon Im, "The rise and decline of the Eight-Banner garrisons in the Ch'ing Period (1644–1911)" (diss., University of Illinois, 1981); Wang Chung-han, ed., *Man-tsu shih yen-chiu chi* (Peking, 1988); T'eng Shao-chen, *Ch'ing-tai pa-ch'i tzu-ti* (Peking, 1989); Pamela K. Crossley, *Orphan warriors: Three Manchu generations and the end of the Qing World* (Princeton, 1990); *The Manchus* (Oxford, 1997); *A translucent mirror: History and identity in Qing imperial ideology* (Berkeley, 1999); and Mark C. Elliott, *The Manchu way: The Eight Banners and ethnic identity in late imperial China* (Stanford, 2001).

[2] The origin of the name "Manchu" cannot be proven on the basis of documentation known at this time, but the complexities I refer to here have to do with who is indicated by the term "Manchu." The once conventional assumption that "Manchus" without exception were the people formerly called "Jurchens," and that the name was changed to throw off unflattering connotations in the Ming records, is not persuasive in itself, and does not accord with the facts. Many people whose ancestors had been known as Jurchen were called Manchu after 1635, but there is no absolute transference of the "Jurchen" denomination to Manchus. The reasons for the change of name are far more likely to have been related to the creation of the Ch'ing empire in 1636 than to avoiding an old name that, if widely known, could not be dispensed with in such a manner and, if not widely known, cannot explain this event. See also Crossley, *Orphan warriors*, pp. 16–17; Evelyn S. Rawski, *The last emperors: A social history of Qing imperial institutions* (Berkeley, 1998), p. 36; and Crossley, *A translucent mirror*, pp. 193–4. Adding to the complexity, the terms "Manchu" (*manju*, *man-chou*, *man-chu*, *man-chou-jen*) and "bannerman" (*gūsai niyalma*, *ch'i-jen*) have an uneven relationship to each other, sometimes being used interchangeably and sometimes used distinctively. See Crossley, *Orphan warriors*, pp. 16–20; Crossley, "Manchu Education," p. 369, n. 1; Crossley, *The Manchus*, pp. 7–8; and Rawski, *The last emperors*, p. 62.

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many as 340,000 at the time of the conquest of Peking in 1644 – of sinophone, agriculturally or commercially employed residents of Liao-tung and Chi-lin who were referred to, with greater or lesser precision, as *Han-chün* bannermen.[3] Others in the conquest elite were members of the populations of eastern Mongolia, northern Liao-tung, and western Chi-lin who became the foundation of the Mongol Eight Banners[4] and certain former Ming officials who joined the Ch'ing. As the venues, methods, and pace of Ch'ing conquest shifted again in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, the effects were soon seen in the function and fortunes of the Ch'ing conquest elite. The nineteenth century saw the massive displacement of a major portion of the remnant conquest elite, with comparatively few aristocratic survivors.

The components of the conquest elite consolidated slowly, and in stages. Earliest of these stages was the formation of a governing group under Nurhaci between 1582 and 1626. Next came the era of imperial formation under Hung Taiji between 1627 and 1643, in which segments of the elite were institutionalized, brought under the regulation of the central government, and ranked in general relation to their role in the expansionist policies of the new empire. This was followed by the dramatic and best-known passage in the early empire, the conquest of China and eastern Mongolia during the latter half of the seventeenth century. That conquest partly overlapped with a second-order expansion into western Mongolia, Turkestan, Tibet, and attempted conquests in parts of Southeast Asia, which came to a gradual halt during the latter half of the eighteenth century. During these phases, the various segments of the conquest elite not only continuously altered their positions relative to each other, but also experienced some degree of change in composition, denomination, and political function.

[3] This term needs to be distinguished from the English term "Chinese" and at the same time, it recalls the superficially "Chinese" connotations the term carries in Manchu and in Chinese. Elsewhere I have offered the literal translation "Chinese-martial"; see Crossley, "The Tong in two worlds," "The Qianlong retrospect on the Chinese-martial (*Han-chün*) banners," *Orphan warriors*, *The Manchus*, and especially *A translucent mirror*, pp. 44–6, and 97–8, where both the translation of the term and the importance of having it are argued. But see also Mark C. Elliott's use of the terminology "Han-martial" in his "Bannerman and townsman: Ethnic tension in nineteenth-century Jiangnan," *Late Imperial China*, 11, No. 1 (June 1990), pp. 36–74, his "Ethnicity in the Qing Eight Banners," in *Empire at the margins*, ed. Pamela Kyle Crossley, Helen Siu, and Donald Sutton (forthcoming), and his *Manchu Way*. In this volume, the term *Han-chün* will be used in the romanized form and refers to a functional group.

[4] As will become clear, the history of the Eight Banner Mongols is very different from that of other "Mongols" and Mongolian speakers in the Ch'ing empire. For background on Mongols of all sorts during the Ch'ing, see Charles R. Bawden, *The modern history of Mongolia* (New York, 1968); Joseph F. Fletcher, "Ch'ing Inner Asia, c. 1800," *Late Ch'ing, 1800–1911, Part 1*, ed. John K. Fairbank, Vol. 10 of *The Cambridge history of China*, ed. Denis Twitchett and John K. Fairbank (Cambridge, 1978), pp. 35–106; Chao Yün-t'ien, *Ch'ing-tai Meng-ku cheng-chih chih-tu* (Peking, 1989); Chia Ning, "The Li-fan Yüan in the Early Ch'ing Dynasty" (diss., Johns Hopkins University, 1991); Pamela K. Crossley, "Making Mongols," *Empire at the margins*, ed. Pamela Kyle Crossley, Helen Siu, and Donald Sutton (forthcoming).

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By the end of the eighteenth century, then, the conquest elite stood as a functional group with a more central population (the imperial lineage, Manchu and Mongol titled families, eminent lineages of the *Han-chün*, command ranks of the Eight Banners and the garrisons throughout the empire, certain high-ranking Chinese civil officials) and a more marginal one (common families of the Eight Banners, virtually all members of the Hunting and Fishing Banners, and those Chinese civil officials instrumental in the incorporation of new territories but who had not firmly secured the confidence of the emperors). Whether more central or more marginal, components of the conquest elite were subject to mechanisms of attrition that helped keep their numbers in check and in some instances forced a more accelerated diminution than attrition itself would have effected. In the earlier period of expansion in China, for instance, Manchu and *Han-chün* bannermen who were natives of Liao-tung or Chi-lin could request to return there, which in practice meant discharge as lifelong soldiers. The court encouraged bannermen to pursue forms of civil education that would enable them to become self-supporting outside the banners.[5] Members of the Aisin Gioro (Ai-hsin Chüeh-lo) imperial lineage, or collateral Gioro affines, were subject to dismissal from the rolls if found guilty of crimes, or if their degree of relationship to the direct imperial line became too distant. By these and other methods, the Ch'ing court of the seventeenth century attempted first of all to avoid being crushed by the burden of financial support of this elite, and in the eighteenth century to accelerate the transition from a conquest posture to one of governance and defense. Neither of these goals was attained, and in the event the conquest elite fell victim to the more desultory forces of impoverishment, political displacement, and social marginality.

The evanescence of privilege in no way diminished the historical importance of the conquest elite. This was not merely because the relative power, cultural cast, or financial independence of the elite were barometers of elemental changes in the empire, but also because even extraordinarily dominant rulers such as the K'ang-hsi, Yung-cheng, and Ch'ien-lung emperors – all famous for their augmentation of imperial power against the ostensible aristocrats among the Manchus – were in many ways subject to both the strengths and deficiencies of the elite. When elite groups were rich and powerful they had to be guarded against; when they were poor and powerless they had to be supported and encouraged. When the elite were competent the conquest progressed, when they were incompetent it lagged. The court, in short, never saw itself free to demolish the conquest elite or cast it aside, even if individual members were to be totally deprived of their belongings or

[5] Crossley, *Orphan warriors*, p. 23.

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executed by slicing. This was partly a matter of political culture, but much more a product of the interplay of status, stability, and legitimacy. When the conquest elite faded beyond recognition, the conquest was well and truly over.

FUNCTION AND IDENTITY IN FORMATION OF THE EMPIRE

Distributions of affiliation and status in the early decades of the Ch'ing conquest were based on the previous decades of state and imperial formation. From early in the years of Nurhaci's rule, identities had been strongly associated with the functions that individuals fulfilled. The early regime was in need not only of military commanders and soldiers, but also of skilled workers, farm laborers, and men who could represent Nurhaci to the officials of the Ming empire or the Yi court in Korea. Among the latter were many who had themselves come, or whose near ancestors had come, from Chinese- or Korean-speaking territories. By the early seventeenth century Nurhaci also increasingly needed literate men, most urgently those who could write at least something in Chinese or Mongolian. There was frequently a correspondence between a man's origins and his abilities; many of Nurhaci's interlocutors with Ming or Yi officials were from eastern Liao-tung or northern Korea, respectively. But many individuals, such as Erdeni (see below), were competent in diverse fields and had cultural backgrounds that were characteristic of the complex and, to modern eyes, ambiguous facets of Liao-tung and Chi-lin at this time.

The most profound change in the conquest elite was a metamorphosis from a set of agents of invasion and occupation to a genealogically encoded, vigorously historicized and markedly diminished social group. This change – actually the sum of several parallel changes – occurred largely in the period between about 1680 and 1820. That is, it appears firmly rooted in the era described in this chapter as the "second wave" of Ch'ing conquest, and extends into the early nineteenth century. This was a period in which the original functions of the conquest elite either were obviated or were assumed by newly emerging groups. One result was a tendency to rely upon racial conceits to define remnant categories of the conquest elite, in inverse relation to loss of functions which they had performed in the creation of the empire and during its earlier period of expansion. In retrospect, the essential identities imposed upon these groups by the rhetoric and policies of the Ch'ing court – particularly in the Ch'ien-lung era – have at best an incidental relationship to their reconstructable histories in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It was, nevertheless, the imperial agenda that controlled many aspects of the administrative laws that influenced where, how, and how well a large number of people lived.

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Among the Ch'ing founders, members of Nurhaci's family were uniquely elite, which is to say that their status and prerogatives were distinct from those of any other members of the conquest elite. Whether members of the lineages descended from Nurhaci's ancestors constituted an "aristocracy" is moot, since no true counterpart of the European aristocracy existed in the Ch'ing empire. What is important is that the imperial lineage (after 1612 officially known as the Aisin Gioro) was a class unto itself. It was, moreover, a well-regulated class, with its most peripheral appendages systematically stripped away. In its earliest form, the imperial lineage had included the sons of Nurhaci and his brother Surhaci, and from them were drawn the earliest governors of the empire – the *hošoi beile*, or cardinal princes,[6] and owners of the Eight Banners. It is probable that Nurhaci originally intended this group of men to provide him with co-rulers and civil administrators as he prosecuted his military campaigns. In these hopes he was continually disappointed, and perhaps as a result of his disillusionment he slowly switched his system of rewards from direct land grants to prizes, awards, stipends, and material grants-in-trust. After Hung Taiji formally became the second khan of the Chin in 1627, he dismantled the relatively level status of the cardinal princes, and finally proclaimed the Ch'ing empire with himself as emperor in 1635–1636.

The descendants of the original cardinal princes retained high titles and for a time considerable wealth.[7] The land-grant system was never completely abrogated, and to the end of the Ch'ing empire some lineages continued to retain direct land revenues in the Northeast. Each new generation of imperial princes tended to displace further the older cardinal princes in residual political influence. Contention among the imperial princes could be perilous for an emperor, as illustrated by the well-known succession dramas of the late K'ang-hsi years and early Yung-cheng years. From roughly 1630 to 1730, successive Ch'ing rulers pruned the remaining rights of political participation, discretion over distribution of wealth, and military command that the

[6] On the place of the *hošoi beile* in the Ch'ing rank system, see Rawski, *The last emperors*, p. 76, and cf. *hošoi cin wang*, p. 304. "Cardinal" here refers to the points of the compass (Rawski's "regions"), which were eight in the traditional shamanic compass and four in the Chinese system (as the *hošoi beile* were eight in Nurhaci's time and four after the conquest of China).

[7] Land holdings by the imperial lineage and by the descendants of the cardinal princes can be estimated, for the very early conquest period, at about 220,000 acres – about one-tenth of the amount seized for support of the entire population of the Eight Banner garrisons. Yang Hsüeh-ch'en noted that this is the figure given with rough consistency by the formal Ch'ing documents; see "Ch'ing-tai te pa-ch'i wang kung kuei-tsu chuang-yüan," in Wang Chung-han, ed., *Man-tsu shih yen-chiu*, pp. 153–9. Yang notes that land holdings for all titled Eight Banner Manchus must have been a much larger figure, which cannot be doubted, but the lands held by the imperial lineage and cardinal princes are nevertheless carefully noted for this period. Outside Peking and the Northeast, these holdings dwindled rapidly, and by the end of the Ch'ing period only the estates in the Northeast remained in any substantial form.

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cardinal princes and imperial princes had once enjoyed. Princes of the Aisin Gioro in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries usually had ceremonial roles only; exceptions to this pattern were rare and important. In the last decades of the empire, however, as the emperorship itself lost political gravity, certain Aisin Gioro princes emerged again as co-rulers.

Below the Aisin Gioro and collateral Gioro elites were the titled families of the Manchu Eight Banners. The ancestors of the titled Manchu families were to be found primarily in the Jurchen lands of Chi-lin in the late sixteenth century, and in most cases they had been beneficiaries of the generous rewards with which Nurhaci plied prominent enemies who surrendered to him. The earliest were military commanders and prominent support staff, many of whom had joined Nurhaci at the time of their fathers' or grandfathers' capitulation in the 1580s or 1590s. This was the background, for instance, of Fiongdon, Eidu, Hōhōri, and others who were later lauded as heroes of the founding period of the empire. They were frequently co-commanders in battle with members of Nurhaci's lineage, and just as frequently married women of Nurhaci's extended family. From the late 1580s on, they exclusively supplied the Judges (*jargōci*) who acted as the foundation of Nurhaci's evolving government. After the creation of Nurhaci's khanate in 1616 these very prominent men were given new titles that, barring a political or legal disaster, remained with their lineages to the end of the empire. Though never given command over any of the Eight Banners (in contrast to the lineages of the cardinal princes), members of the titled Manchu families were given hereditary command over companies within the banners, with sometimes as many as two dozen assigned to descendants of a prominent hero. This made their general fortunes dependent upon the court's support for the Eight Banners. In the early decades after the conquest of north China, descendants of the Judges could be found interacting with the imperial family in intense ways, as when Oboi (a descendant of Fiongdon) formed the regency for the young K'ang-hsi emperor in the 1660s.

The way in which the Judges were connected to the family of Nurhaci, suggesting the primordium of a Manchu "aristocracy," was mirrored in the way the Mongol leaders were also attached to Nurhaci's regime. Women were the glue of the khanate, and were later the glue of the great allegiances that controlled the empire. How distinctive this was could be debated.[8] Marriage alliances are frequently encountered in the stabilization of ruling classes in

[8] On Nurhaci's marriages, see Rawski, *The last emperors*, p. 64; Crossley, *A translucent mirror*, pp. 137–8, 153–6. Rawski, *The last emperors*, p. 64, considers the relatively greater influence of high-ranking women characteristic of "non-Han regimes." On women of all ranks and functions in the imperial line, see *The last emperors*, pp. 127–59.

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many contexts, but it should be noted that in the case of the predecessors and founders of the Ch'ing, women supplied not only cohesion across the elite and stability for individuals within it, but also the legitimating element in many political developments. Nurhaci justified the campaigns against Ula on the basis of alleged mistreatment of the daughter he had sent as wife to Bujantai. The elevation of Hung Taiji over the other *hošoi beile* was justified by him on the basis of the alleged special feelings of Nurhaci for Hung Taiji's mother. Another example is Hsiao-chuang Wen, the mother of the Shun-chih emperor and a descendant of Chinggis Khaghan (and the originator of the "behind the screen" political advising that Tz'u-hsi t'ai-hou later made infamous). She was an important link in the attempts by the Ch'ing emperors to cast themselves as the proper rulers over all Mongols. Both the K'ang-hsi and Ch'ien-lung emperors were at pains to depict their public celebration of their mothers as evidence of their good Confucian instincts.[9] The high incidence of influential women at the Ch'ing court appears to outpace what can be observed in earlier empires, but whether that is connected to the peculiar role of Ch'ing women in bolstering the legitimacy of the regime is unclear.

Rigidly separated from the titled Manchu Eight Banner families were the commoners of the Manchu Eight Banners. The origins of these families lay overwhelmingly with the Jurchen populations of sixteenth-century Chi-lin. But it has been demonstrated that there was a considerable addition from some nominally Mongol families who were registered in the Manchu banners in 1635 for convenience. There was also an absorption of Chinese-speaking settlers who were attested in Korean documents as members of Nurhaci's entourage in the 1590s, and probably had been settled in western Chi-lin for some decades. Under Nurhaci any of these groups could be called "Jurchen" (*jušen*, Chinese *nü-chen*, *ju-chen*) in the context of military participation, farming, hunting, or trading. Yet there is no evidence that before 1618 Nurhaci or his governing class were at any special pains to define who was legally a Jurchen (the word meant "freeman" but in practice did not indicate a political freedom of any sort comparable to the implications of the English word). From the Chin invasion of Liao-tung in 1618 on, Nurhaci had to deal with dramatically increasing numbers of Chinese speakers (many forcibly abducted, others coming into his control as he occupied larger portions of the Ming province). They were functionally different from Jurchens, who between 1618 and 1635 were subjected to more precise and formalized organization in the Banners, more documentation of lineage affiliation, land rights and command eligibility within the Banners. In 1635 Hung Taiji instituted

[9] Crossley, *A translucent mirror*, pp. 153–4, 173–6, 208–9.

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the name "Manchu" (*manju*) to renominalize the diverse Jurchen groups, who would afterward enjoy uniformity of status, legal obligation and privilege, and of imposed history. Beyond this obvious motivation for a change of name, little about the name "Manchu" itself can be definitively stated on the basis of contemporary records. The origin and meaning of the name are not specified in extant documents (they may have been common knowledge at the time), and though scholars from the eighteenth century on have proposed several plausible derivations, this is possibly an unresolvable issue.

The new name marked a social transformation that was well under way by 1635–1636. Previously, Nurhaci had worked with military units based on village and lineage organizations, with the headmen incorporated as officers who retained rights of hereditary leadership over the unit. Gradually the formalization and integration of these units composed the Manchu Eight Banners. By that time, the conquests in the Northeast and Mongolia were advanced, and war against Ming China in western Liao-tung was entering its final stages. In the ensuing century of Ch'ing conquest and occupation of territories in China and Mongolia, the social organizations upon which the banners had been founded were changed nearly beyond recognition. The hereditary claims to captaincies were now administered and adjudicated by departments within the imperial government, and stipends (once granted only during periods of military mobilization) were made regular and graduated according to rank. Most profound, the Manchus were no longer agricultural producers, hunters, fishers, or traders as their Jurchen forerunners had been, but became salaried policemen, foot soldiers, scribes, teachers, porters, and accountants in the segregated urban garrison communities of the empire.

In the period between about 1610 and 1660, the Chin and then Ch'ing regimes prosecuted a series of invasions and occupations against the hunting and gathering peoples of the general region of the Amur River. These campaigns originated in Nurhaci's struggle against his eastern enemy, Ula. But they later intensified as the Ch'ing competed with the Romanov empire for the right to control and tax the populations of the Amur basin, and Hung Taiji determined to quash resistance from the Evenks under Bombogor, who was executed at Mukden in 1640. The result was the partial absorption of local populations into the Eight Banners, a process that is sometimes referred to as their "Manchufication" or "Manchuization."[10] A small portion of the Amur peoples, largely concentrated in the Evenk and Dagur groups who had

[10] For secondary works on acculturation of the Northeastern peoples, see Gyorgi Melikhov, *Man'chzhury na Severo-Vostoke, XVII v.* (Moscow, 1974), pp. 16–52; Meng Hui-ying, "Man – T'ung-ku-ssu teng tsu min-tsu shen-hua," *Man-tsu yen-chiu*, 3 (1996), pp. 56–61.

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earliest and most frequent contact with the early empire and some segments of the Sibos, were enrolled in the Manchu Eight Banners. A greater portion were registered in the Hunting and Fishing (*butha*) Banners, created in order to allow them to remain in their localities and in their occupations while being officially incorporated into the Ch'ing realm, with small segments of their populations sent to other parts of the empire for battle or for support of the imperial hunt. In the late seventeenth century these groups tended to be identified in official documents as "New Manchus" (*ice manju*), a term that had little staying power outside the administrative lexicon. Still other Amur peoples were never joined formally to the Eight Banners, and by the eighteenth century were regarded as tributary barbarians, all colorfully depicted in the court-commissioned catalog of such exotics, the *Huang Ch'ing chih-kung t'u*.[11] These latter groups were clearly not part of the Ch'ing elite, and though the New Manchus were formally a part of the conquest elite, they were marginal and never heavily represented in the command ranks.

Titled families of the Mongol Eight Banners were on a par with the titled families of the Manchu Eight Banners. The roots of many of these families lay not in what would now be considered Mongolia, but in northern Liao-tung and Chi-lin. This spectrum had been long occupied by groups who were probably of Jurchen origin, but in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries had become involved with the growth of the Mongol empires under Chinggis and his successors in ways that stamped them with an enduring association with the languages and cultures of eastern Mongolia. An example is the name, Uriangkha. Many distinguished Mongols of the Chinggisid period bore Uriangkha or a variant as a lineage name, and several federations from widely dispersed areas of Mongolia used the name in some form. It was, however, far more common as a federation and a lineage name in northern Liao-tung and Chi-lin. The three great Jurchen federations at Ilantumen in the late fourteenth century all on occasion referred to themselves as Uriangkha. What is important to note here is that the ambiguities of the Uriangkha were characteristic of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Liao-tung and Chi-lin. Both Nurhaci and Hung Taiji exploited these ambiguities, and only well after the conquest did the Ch'ing court seek to construct a history of both Manchuria and Mongolia that would establish certain peoples as unalterably "Mongol."

In the earlier part of Nurhaci's career as a unifier, the peoples of the Hūlun federations of this northern region, primarily Jurchen in descent and speech

[11] This collection, produced in the middle Ch'ien-lung period, was reprinted several times with both line and color illustrations. It is most easily available in the edition recently transliterated and translated by Chuang Chi-fa, ed. and annot., *Hsieh-shui chih-kung-t'u, Man-wen t'u-shuo chiao-chu* (Taipei, 1989).

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but with a culture affected by centuries of close contact with the populations of eastern Mongolia and Mongol immigrants to Liaodong, were called "Mongols" by Nurhaci's southerly Jurchens.[12] Possibly this identification was buttressed by the fact that the four federations of Hūlun – the Hada, Yehe, Hoifa, and Ula – were for a time effectively blocking Nurhaci's efforts to carry his wars of Jurchen unification north and west. By 1599, however, Nurhaci had eliminated Hada and Hoifa as political entities and was in a dominating position with respect to Yehe and Ula. He made a conscious decision to renominalize the Hūluns as "Jurchens," and ordered the invention of a Jurchen script that would standardize the disparate dialects that had previously been distinguished as "Mongol" (Hūlun) and Jurchen speech.[13] In the same spirit, when the Manchu banners were later formed, they normally absorbed descendants of Hūlun leaders who capitulated to Nurhaci in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. The early populations of the Mongol Eight Banners, by contrast, were drawn partly from groups who in Nurhaci's time had been referred to as "Tatars" (*ta-tzu*, *ta-chi*). Many Mongol speakers were resident throughout Liao-tung as soldiers in the Ming armies and in Chi-lin as semi-nomadic herders (who occasionally grew grains). Nurhaci employed them as guards over his own herds and agricultural villages. Their descendants were later joined in the early Mongol banners by members of federations from eastern Mongolia who frequently visited Liao-tung for grazing or trade.

In the first decade of the seventeenth century, Nurhaci consolidated his relationship with portions of the Khorchin and Kharachin populations of eastern Mongolia. They recognized Nurhaci as khan, and in return leading lineages of those groups were titled by Nurhaci and married with his extended family, just the same as the contemporary titled families of the Jurchens. The lineage of the Khorchin leader and Borjigid descendant, Enggeder, was not only married with Nurhaci's family and given high title in this period, but was later registered in the Manchu banners in recognition of Enggeder's critical contribution to the establishment of Nurhaci's rule. The institution of the "five princes" (*tabun ong*) who married directly into Nurhaci's family was the early definition of a "Mongol" elite within the Nurhaci state. Soon communications and amicable overtures came to Nurhaci from other groups of eastern Mongolia – particularly the Khalkhas, who were suffering under the fierce recentralizing of the Chakhar ruler, Ligdan

[12] For an overview of this see Crossley, *A translucent mirror*, pp. 205–15.

[13] On development of the Manchu script, before, during, and after Nurhaci's pronouncement, see J. R. P. King, "The Korean Elements in the Manchu Script Reform of 1632," *Central Asiatic Journal*, 31, No. 3–4, (1987), pp. 252–86; and the introduction to Gertraude Roth Li's *Manchu: A textbook for reading documents* (Honolulu, 1999).

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Khaghan.[14] After Nurhaci's death in 1626, Hung Taiji continued the war against Lighdan. He defeated Lighdan decisively in 1634, then convinced Lighdan's son Erke Khongkhor Ejen (Eje-khoghor) to surrender and become a prince of the first degree by marrying one of his daughters. This began the remarkable process that between 1634 and 1636 ended both the Chakhar and the Later Chin khanates, amalgamating them as the Ch'ing empire.

Hung Taiji's design for a rapid expansion of the Ch'ing bureaucracy was from the first predicated upon offices for communications with his "Mongol" components and management of their economic and cultural affairs. The most important of these institutions was the Court of Colonial Affairs (Ma. *tulergi golo be dasara jurgan*; Chin. *li-fan yüan*), which began life in 1636 as the "Mongol Department" (Ma. *monggo yamun*; Chin. *Meng-ku ya-men*).[15] One of its chief duties was to track the titles awarded to Khorchin, Kharachin, and Khalkha nobles who declared allegiance to the Ch'ing. In the case of the leaders of the three large divisions of the Khalkhas – the Tusiyetu khan, Joriktu khan, and Jasaktu khan – the "Mongol Department" had not only to record their domains and the details of their estates, but also to record their entitlement by Hung Taiji as first-degree princes.

From Nurhaci's time on, it was common for the Ch'ing rulers to comment on the prowess of Mongols with the bow and the horse,[16] and to use the conceit of Mongols as model warriors to both flatter the Mongol bannermen and attempt to inflame the competitiveness of the Manchus. The incorporation of "Mongols" as a component of the conquest elite also furthered an important political idea. Nurhaci's original title of "khan" (*han*), Hung Taiji's claim that the Ch'ing were the heirs of the Mongol Great Khans, and the developing pretension to Buddhist rulership by the earlier Ch'ing emperors were all dependent upon the demonstrated subordination of the Mongols to the Ch'ing rulers. In more immediate terms, this core population of the Mongol Eight Banners played a distinctive role in Ch'ing expansion into western Mongolia, Turkestan (Sinkiang), and Tibet.

The third founding group of Eight Banner elites were the *Han-chün* (often referred to as "Chinese") bannermen. We are following here a convention of

[14] The origins of the Chakhars are somewhat obscure. They were mentioned in connection with Chinggis Khaghan only during the conquest of the "Chakhar" region around Kalgan in the campaigns of Mkhali against the Chin in 1211–1212. This remains the territory most consistently associated with the Chakhars. The meaning of the name is unclear, but may be associated with the Turkic word (which also occurs in federation names) meaning "four." In Ligdan's time, the political traditions of the Chakhar khanate were regarded as continuous from the Khublaid "Northern Yüan" khans of the later fourteenth century.

[15] See also Chia Ning, "The Li-fan Yüan"; and Crossley, *A translucent mirror*, pp. 313–33.

[16] For an early instance see Kanda Nobuo et al., trans., *Mambun rōtō* (Tokyo, 1955–63), T'ien-ming (Abkai fulingga), 10 [1626]: 1:26.

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Ch'ing historical narrative in referring to the *Han-chün* as "third" in the elite after the Mongols, but it is not well founded in the facts. The sinophone antecedents of the *Han-chün* in the military realm were in fact of much earlier high standing in Nurhaci's regime than any of the Mongol contingents.[17] The formulae of Ch'ing historical expression after 1636 placed the *Han-chün* at the bottom of the tripartite Banner complement, an indication of how the modeling and remodeling of status within the conquest elite reflected critical developments within the imperial order.

The Ch'ing court insisted in the mid-eighteenth century that the Eight Banner *Han-chün* populations were Han Chinese who had joined the Ch'ing cause and remained loyal to it. As a categorical statement this is false, since many *Han-chün* lineages can be demonstrated to have had Jurchen or Korean origins, and in a large number of cases the facts are too sparse to be able to determine the precise provenance of the male ancestor from whom the lineage was conventionally traced. For understanding the position of the *Han-chün*, it helps to remember that before the late eighteenth century the Ch'ing court customarily recognized divisions within the *Han-chün* that roughly accorded with their geographical origins. That is to say, sinophone populations (referred to in Jurchen as *nikan*) captured after the beginning of the war between Nurhaci and the Ming in Liao-tung in 1618 were not regarded as identical to Chinese speakers who had gone eastward earlier (years, decades, or centuries earlier) into the Jurchen territories of Chi-lin. Similarly, the groups captured from Fu-shun and other cities in the early part of the war were not regarded as identical with those who were captured or capitulated later, between 1629 and 1643, in western Liao-tung.[18] The great consolidation of the Liao-tung *Han-chün* was stimulated by the conquest of northern China, when new, more dramatic divisions were observed between those resident in northern or central China, and those whose affiliation with the Ch'ing empire had begun in Liao-tung or even farther east.

The rapid evolution of the social and legal definitions of Nikan groups after 1616 marked a watershed both for the non-Jurchen Northeastern natives living under Jurchen control and for the new state. Establishment of the Nurhaci khanate in 1616 fostered a more institutionalized status for the Nikan population and for the military service sector that would emerge from

[17] The well-known narrative of Shin Chung'il, a Yi ambassador to Nurhaci who described Nurhaci's compound, movements, and environment in the winter of 1595–1596, makes very clear that Liao-tungese followers and attendants were numerous at Hetu Ala, and that the organizations that would later be called the "banners" were essentially in place. See Shin, *Konju jichŏng dorok* (1957; photo. rpt. Taipei, 1971); Giovanni Stary, "Die Struktur der ersten Residenz des Mandschukans Nurhaci," *Central Asiatic Journal*, 25 (1985), pp. 103–9; and Crossley, *A translucent mirror*, pp. 92–6.

[18] Crossley, "The Qianlong Retrospect," pp. 70–86.

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it. From the beginnings of Nikan involvement with the Jurchen regime, there was an important distinction between those assuming military roles and those going into labor servitude. A considerable and identifiable portion of the male Nikan population functioned as Nurhaci's bodyguards and as his personal troops in time of battle. Sometime after the founding of the khanate in 1616 Nikan soldiers, still flying their black flags, appear to have been referred to as "cherished soldiers" (*ujen cooha*).[19] In 1637 the *ujen cooha* unit, still represented under a black banner, was split into two; in 1639 the two became four; and in 1642 the eight *Han-chün* Banners, flying the colors of the previously commissioned Manchu and Mongol Banners, were created.

Following the conquest of Liao-tung, all Nikan capitulators were put under the khan's personal jurisdiction. As had been the case with the Hūlun, the peoples of eastern Mongolia, and the peoples of the Amur region, strategically important Nikans were treated in a manner suitable to their function in the developing relationship between the monarchy and the traditional, regional elite. They were granted estates composed of the forcibly extracted property of Jurchen nobles. Nurhaci's law was that there should be no sartorial distinctions between natives and newcomers (including the masses of kidnapped and displaced Liao-tung natives). The Nikans were required to show their submission to Nurhaci by shaving their heads in the Jurchen style, adopting Jurchen dress, and performing the curtsy, all of which were extensions of Nurhaci's insistance that invidious distinctions among the khan's population should be avoided. The ostensible homogeneity of political culture in Nurhaci's social code was also a strong advantage in his competition against Ming authorities for the loyalty, or at least the neutrality, of the Liao-tung population. It was designed both to win the affection of those who were not rich, and also to undermine the power of old Jurchen elites. The latter development, which became more strongly apparent in the Hung Taiji period, is a reminder of the role played by Nikans, the extension of that role

[19] The exact date of the introduction of this term and its precise meaning are unresolved. An early proposal was that the term might mean that the soldiers in question were armored and sent ahead of the invading Jurchens/Manchus as cannon fodder. It hardly seems that armor would be lavished on those treated this way. *Ujen* might mean "heavy" in the sense of laboring under a burden, like a pack animal or like a team of men attempting to drag, position, and operate a cannon – and the Jurchens first acquired their cannons at Fushun. Many scholars have therefore been inclined to associate *ujen cooha* with the role of the Nikan soldiers in the introduction, maintenance, and use of cannon. I think there is a simpler explanation, one so strongly connected with the meaning of the word *ujen* and related words in Jurchen/Manchu that it might have needed no explanation at the time. Jurchen *udzə*, like Manchu *ujen*, meant both "heavy" and "important, emphasized, serious, valuable, respected," and was directly related to well-known verbs in Jurchen meaning "to respect" that have intact Manchu derivatives. The root of these words is also related to a Jurchen verb meaning "to nourish, cherish, raise," reflected in Manchu *ujimbi*, which has the same meaning. This puts these words in extreme intimacy with Nurhaci's usual description of himself as "raising, nourishing, cherishing" (*ujire*, *ujikini*, etc.) the "various nations" (*geren gurun*). See also Crossley, *The Manchus*, pp. 203–5 and *A translucent mirror*, p. 96.

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in the early Ch'ing state, and their ultimate definition as a distinct population during the centralization of power, minimally under Nurhaci and intensely under Hung Taiji. Many Nikans contributed to the ability of the emerging state to create new capacities for documentation and control of matters that had previously been discretionary to the Jurchen lineages. The elevation of the Nikan classes was strongly connected to the enhancement of monarchical power.

The legal distinction between Nikans and Jurchens was slow in coming, and was originally made along lines of culture and function. The story of Erdeni is significant in this regard. As recounted in the Manchu annals, his case captures the dynamic interactions among state-building, institutional function, and identity in this early period. Though Erdeni is best remembered as one of the putative inventors of Jurchen/Manchu script, he was also prominent in the Nurhaci state as a judge, a diplomat, and a military commander. Like many of the leaders of the Nurhaci period, Erdeni's origins are difficult to characterize. He had a Mongol name and certainly could write Mongolian; he may have been a native of a Mongolian-speaking region. The early Manchu records suggest that he was also expert in Chinese, and the detailed account of Erdeni's trial for hoarding ill-gotten wealth in 1623 gives every evidence that he functioned as a Nikan civil official, that he was represented by Nikans exclusively when trying to appeal to Nurhaci, and that his Nikan staff was punished for his crimes. The resolution of Erdeni as a "Manchu" does not come until 1654, as the history of the Manchu language and script, and the early state, was being adjusted and clarified. In life, Erdeni lived the culturally complex life that was characteristic of the Nikans.[20] Many lesser-known men of Nikan or Korean origin with the same cultural traits as Erdeni appear in the Manchu records contemporaneous with him – important among them Adun and Dagai. Their descendants were eventually registered in the Manchu Banners, though their origins in these cases are not different from those of many who were later registered as *Han-chün*.

During the campaigns for western Liao-tung in particular, the definition and manipulation of the status of Nikan servitors, whether of old families or newly submitted groups, was a cornerstone of strengthening monarchical rule. This was consistent with policies to force the Jurchen elite to redistribute a large portion of its wealth to Nikan capitulators. The unique association of the Nikans with the extension of imperial privilege in the early decades of the Ch'ing empire was preserved in the institution of the "bond-

[20] On the Erdeni case, see Kanda, *Mambun rōtō*, T'ien-ming (Abkai fulingga), 7 [1623]: 1 passim, and Crossley, *A translucent mirror*, pp. 185–9.

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servant" (*boo-i aha*) companies within the Eight Banners.[21] Bondservants, who were a superficially anomalous group within the conquest elite, included a majority of apparent Nikan provenance and a minority of Jurchen.[22] Bondservants were organized into companies and registered with the *Han-chün* banners during the Hung Taiji years, and nomenclature preserved their distinctness from the regular *Han-chün* bannermen. The description of the bondservant companies was rooted in the function of Chinese speakers at Nurhaci's setlements in the late sixteenth century, when they oversaw the provisioning of the household, the behavior of servants attached to the household, and the management of certain of Nurhaci's properties, possibly including his agricultural villages (*tokso*).[23] The attachment of the bondservants to the Imperial Household Department (*nei-wu fu*) represented their peculiar relationship to the imperial lineage. The Imperial Household Department was the bureaucratic representative of the imperial patrimony – the lands, herds, industries, and vending monopolies that were the private property of the imperial lineage. Not surprisingly, bondservants displaced eunuchs from many functions the latter had filled in the Ming period. High-ranking bondservants were the trusted and generously rewarded managers of the imperial properties, and, as in the cases of Li Hsü and Ts'ao Yin, could amass wealth and influence.

The state further increased the facility with which it could isolate and objectify Nikan status with the creation of the Civil Departments (*wen-kuan*)

[21] For an overview of the organization and function of the bondservant banners, see Preston M. Torbert, *The Ch'ing Imperial Household Department: A study of its organization and principal functions, 1662–1796* (Cambridge, Mass., 1977), pp. 60–4, and Rawski, *The last emperors*, pp. 166–8.

[22] This term tended to be translated into Chinese official documents as *boo-i*, or *pao-i.* That is, what was an adjective became a noun, meaning something like "housies" (as contrasted to "fieldies" or "barnies"). This is possibly more than just a mangling of words as they crossed the boundaries of unintelligibility. Though in Nurhaci's times and earlier, *boo-i aha* (many of whom were translators) had been of rather menial station, they nevertheless had to be greatly trusted by the ruler (see Crossley, *A translucent mirror*, pp. 100–3) and may have risen rapidly in status, losing the "servant" (*aha*) part of their classification not entirely by accident. Particularly after 1800, it was uncommon to make gratuitous reference to the bondservant status of extremely prominent men, though common bannermen of all categories continued to sign themselves "slave" (*aha*, *nucai*) when addressing the court. Preston Torbert noted, for instance, that a revised Liang-huai gazetteer of 1806 enumerated many bondservants in the local salt administration, but conspicuously omitted this same status in reference to Ts'ao Yin and Li Hsü. See Torbert, *The Imperial Household Department*, p. 104. For a general discussion of bondservants as contrasted to slaves, see Jonathan D. Spence, *Ts'ao Yin and the K'ang-hsi Emperor: Bondservant and master* (New Haven, 1966), pp. 16–17; and Rawski, *The last emperors*, pp. 166–71.

[23] The apparently complimentary Ch'ing phrase, "those who made a contribution in earlier times" (*chiu yu kung hsün*) that was sometimes applied to the old Nikan families of Liao-tung, originally may have been a way of referring to the Nikan bondservants of Nurhaci's time and their descendants. If so, the phrase may be an allusion to the Mongolian phrase *ütegü boghol*, which occurs in the "Secret History" of the Mongols in reference to domestic slaves of the imperial lineage. See also Crossley, *A translucent mirror*, p. 105. On early Chinese or Korean managers of *tokso*, see *A translucent mirror* for descriptions primarily drawn from material in the first third of Shin Chung'il's report on his visit to Nurhaci in 1595/6.

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in the process of Hung Taiji's reformation of the state in 1629 and with their elaboration in 1635–1636. A civil professional role was expanded for the Nikans, and new state faculties for the documentation and routinization of status were established. In the case of the military Nikans, the changes after Hung Taiji's reforms were swift. After 1636, the rapidity of changes in the Nikans' classification and legal status was related to acceleration of the westward conquest. The consecutive Ch'ing incorporations of the central and southwestern Liao-tung populations defined to a great extent the character and the internal hierarchies of the preconquest *Han-chün*.

In the late seventeenth century, court histories divided the *Han-chün* of pre-conquest times into two separate groups. The first was the *t'ai ni-k'an* (of whom the Fu-shun Nikan were a subgroup), or the old Nikan population of eastern and central Liao-tung, most of whom were incorporated between 1618 and 1629. They were organized as a distinct category within the Chin population, and those men who served as foot soldiers, cannoneers, military scribes, and officers were distinct from the civil population. Military units drawn from this population were under Nikan commanders, many of whom, including T'ung Yang-chen, T'ung Yang-hsing, and Li Yung-fang, established enduring political dynasties of their own within the Ch'ing elite. During the later seventeenth century the first group was distinguished from *fu hsi pai-t'ang-a* (*fu-hsi baitangga*), "functionaries of the Western conquest." These were men of western Liao-tung, northern Chihli, Shantung, and Shansi provinces who joined forces with Hung Taiji after the initiation of his assaults in northern China in 1629, and who came to prominence during the westward campaigns but before the fall of Chin-chou in 1643. Those surrendering after 1629 in Chihli were frequently registered in the banners instead of as "cherished soldiers." This suggests that the state under Hung Taiji was at first reluctant to mix the earlier and later Nikan populations. A comprehensive *Han-chün* identity uniting all Liao-tung and northern Chihli populations and reintegrating those of bondservant status was not firmly established until 1642, when the eight *Han-chün* banners were commissioned. Even in the records of the Shun-chih or K'ang-hsi era, the idea is not firmly established that this amalgamation meant the disappearance of the distinct historical properties of the Liao-tung elites under the Chin or Ch'ing banners.

The ability to attach identities to individuals and to encase those identities in formalized codes of obligation and privilege cannot be demonstrated to have been limited to any identity group at any time. As it proceeded among the Nikans, so it proceeded apace among the Jurchens, Mongols, and other inchoate identity groups within the regime. The basic dynamics of conflation and distillation, and their clear connections to the strategic moment for the rulers themselves, were well understood and extensively employed

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before the Ch'ing approached either central Mongolia or northern China. The court would find, particularly in the K'ang-hsi period, that distinctions among the conquest elite were of great use in maintaining stability and inhibiting a lurch of power into the hands of one group or another. In the eighteenth century, the strategic value of distinctions persisted, and was supplemented by new and less tangible interests.

THE FIRST WAVE OF CONQUEST, 1630–1700

A policy of Nurhaci's had been that those serving him would be level in identity (figuratively, as slaves), but not in status. Within this identity there was hierarchy. Military commanders were distinct from scribes, interlocutors, or accountants, who were all distinct from farm laborers, household servants, and traders. It was suggested earlier that equality of identity was severely strained by the conquest of Liao-tung. The response of the Hung Taiji years was to institutionalize some new distinctions among the conquering, conquered, and transitional populations, while putting greater emphasis on the ability of the emperorship to articulate them all. This articulation was not itself done in a monolithic, universalist, or even generalized way. Rather, distinct forms of appeal and authority were devised for the emerging sectors of the empire. The process was long in being refined, as long, perhaps by necessity, as the century and a half of conquest in which the Ch'ing empire engaged.

The Ch'ing found on entering China that the numbers of their forces swelled rapidly. Major resistance to the conquest was markedly though not exclusively a characteristic of the struggle for the Yangtze delta. The decades of kidnapping populations or paying handsomely for the willing submission of Liao-tung elites had perhaps left Ch'ing rulers ill prepared for the challenges of incorporating and organizing waves of relatively willing new adherents. In the earliest years of the occupation of Ming China, the court relied heavily upon the *Han-chün* to govern the newly acquired territories. The policy was considered undesirable for several reasons. One was that it concentrated unusual power in the hands of a group that, as of 1650, was largely of very recent adherence. It was, moreover, a group that outnumbered the Manchus heavily and the Mongols overwhelmingly. The K'ang-hsi court in particular preferred that power be distributed among elites of various categories – in civil government, among literati from disparate provincial backgrounds; in the banners, among groups of various registrations. Indeed, one might suppose that had the K'ang-hsi emperor not found regional or "ethnic" differences to divide his conquest elite, he might have been disposed to invent them.

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The decade of the 1680s was a critical one in stabilizing the empire. With respect to the conquest elite the Ch'ing court had already designed a plan for a professional class that would be, in the words of the court at the time of the plan's promulgation in 1687, balanced between *wen* (civilian) and *wu* (military). The court required garrison officers to ascertain that candidates (whether Manchu, Mongol, or Chinese) were in some degree proficient in horsemanship and archery before being admitted to the entry-level examinations. The plan was evidently to educate a banner elite which would be prepared to act in any and all capacities in the service of the empire. They were to be educated in the Chinese classics, and to know the histories of the Liao, Chin, and Yüan empires. They were to know mathematics and astronomy, and the established literature on medicine. They were also to be expert horsemen, archers, and fighters with the sword and spear. By reading classics on the art of war as well as the novel *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (in either Chinese or Manchu), they were to be educated in the strategic arts (including meteorology). And they were to accomplish these studies in at least two of the three imperial languages of Manchu, Mongolian, and Chinese. The sources of recruits for this banner elite were limited to hereditary ranks of the Manchu, Mongol, and *Han-chün* banners. In later decades some negligible number of Albazinian (sometimes referred to as "Russian," though better described as Cossack) and Muslim officers was also included. The basic plan was to give a select group a broad function. That function was to perform any task necessary to further the ends of conquest and occupation, which meant mastery of not only martial skills but the technology of occupation and eventually of governance.[24]

This plan did not succeed, primarily because the court never found a way of matching finances, incentives, and rewards that would fuel it. The Ch'ing habitually engaged in what would now be called "unfunded mandates," levying upon the localities of the empire and upon the Eight Banners themselves responsibilities for education, defense, and in many cases simple stipendiary support. This disposition was no doubt reinforced by the strain on the imperial coffers from the immense costs of the conquest in the late seventeenth century. The thought in the early decades of the Ch'ing period may have been that as opportunities to demonstrate combat merit and gain its

[24] For a more detailed account, see Crossley, "Manchu education"; Chang Chung-ju et al., *Ch'ing-tai k'ao-shih chih-tu tz'u-liao* (n.p., 1934); Adam Lui, "Syllabus of the Provincial Examination (*hsiang-shih*) under the Early Ch'ing (1644–1795)," *Modern Asian Studies*, 8, No. 3 (1974), pp. 391–6; his "The Imperial College (*Kuo-tzu-chien*) in the Early Ch'ing (1644–1795)," *Papers on Far Eastern History*, 10 (1974), pp. 147–66; his "The Education of the Manchus: China's Ruling Race (1644–1911)," *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 6, No. 2 (1971), pp. 125–33; and Benjamin A. Elman, *A cultural history of civil examinations in late imperial China* (Berkeley, 2000), ch. 3.

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rewards diminished, opportunities to ascend a professional ladder of examinations, regular tenure of service, and bureaucratic review might become attractive means of advancement. The plan also would have provided channels for moving some portion of the banner population into the ranks of the civil professions, taking them off the banner stipendiary roles. But there was a shortfall not only in material incentives for participants and support for the necessary institutions, but also in the literary base necessary for the educational programs. While the courts of Hung Taiji and the Shun-chih emperor clearly appreciated the importance of expanding the amount and quality of literature in Manchu, their efforts were insufficient to supply what they hoped would be a growing and increasingly effective governing class well grounded in Manchu reading and writing.

Translations from Chinese into Manchu had proceeded apace with the development of a bilingual bureaucracy under Hung Taiji. The first Ministry of Appointments (*li-pu*) was headed by [Suwan Gūwalgiya] Garin (Kang-lin), who was granted a "provincial" (*chü-jen*) degree by imperial decree in 1634. Together with two other Manchus and three Oirats (Oyirods),[25] he continued to draw up the plans for elaboration of the civil government. For the state to grow, examinations would have to be established, and it appears that the first examination of Manchus, Mongols, and Nikans was held at Mukden in 1638. The content of subsequent examinations, in both Manchu and Chinese, was established by Cabuhai and Giyanghedei in 1639. Hung Taiji also commissioned a group of "Confucian officials" (*ju-ch'en*) – who should not be imagined as "Chinese," since they included Garin, Cabuhai, and others registered as Manchus – to translate selected works into Manchu "in order to instruct the national population (i.e., bannermen)." The basis for any individual bannerman's participation in these examinations was ascribed identity, since the syllabus options and the standards were determined by one's classification as

[25] The name Oirat (Oyirod) is unstable both in original citations and in transliteration. It apparently derives from a medieval Mongolian word (in plural form) meaning "a congregation, people who remain near each other" and became the dialect word for a federation. Oirats (Oyirods) of the time of Chinggis Khaghan were residents of the wooded lands west of Lake Balkhash, apparently Mongolian-speaking, but not incorporated into the Chinggisid empires. In post-Yüan times, the "Four Oyirods" (*dörbön oyirod*) apparently included the Oirats (Oyirods) proper, the Torghuuds, the Khoshuuds, and the Dzunghars (that is, *jegünghar*, or "left wing"). By the eighteenth century the Oirats (Oyirods) included other federations, among them the Khoyids and Chörös. Transliteration of the name can be a proprietary issue among specialists. There are several attested variants of the name in "Mongolian" records, including those in Oyirod dialect. Including the Oyirod texts, one finds at a minimum the name written as Oyirad, Oyirod, and Oyirid. This would permit any of these as transliterations, as well as the frequently found "Oirat." It ought not permit Olot or Ölöt, which seem to be ersatz back-constructions from Chinese *elete*, but such re-borrowings occur in Manchu records of the nineteenth century. See also Crossley, *A translucent mirror*, pp. 314–17.

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Manchu, Mongol, or Chinese. Elaboration of the examination system, which was fundamental to development of the bureaucracy, thus proceeded along with other developments to produce new distinctions among the conquest elite.

It appears that few bannermen believed that examinations afforded real opportunity. Even if they had great interest in preparing for the examinations, the failure of the government to provide schools outside of Peking, and the inadequate facilities for the education of commoners even there, would have prevented bannermen from being able to afford an education. The arduous course of study was not guaranteed to pay off. Officer appointments in the garrisons were diminishing in number in the late seventeenth century, and in the eighteenth century were sharply curtailed. "Expectant" officers who had qualified in the examinations had to await employment, and in general marginally solvent bannermen in the provinces could hardly have seen the rewards of the examinations as worth the trouble. By the end of the century, not even the court was actively promoting the education plan of 1687. It instead attempted to deal with various economic crises in the garrisons, and to use differential policies to accelerate comparative advantages and disadvantages among the bannermen. This was partly related to economic pressures on the state budget, but was also affected by dramatic political events of the 1680s that deeply divided the *Han-chün* commoners, in particular, from other parts of the conquest elite.

Though Nurhaci had hoped his close kinsmen would provide him with talented and energetic co-rulers, Hung Taiji had ended substantial roles for imperial kinsmen (other than regents) in normal governing. The imperial lineage was a bureaucratized institution by the middle 1650s. The court maintained its own offices for birth and death records, legal affairs, economic affairs, and military outfitting of members of the Aisin Gioro lineage. As a group, they managed to insulate themselves slightly from the smallpox epidemic of the 1650s/1660s (though the Shun-chih emperor probably died of the disease), and they grew dramatically in number. By the turn of the century they numbered over ten thousand individuals, and the number was triple that by the middle of the nineteenth century. These numbers should be considered in light of the measures taken by the court to limit growth of the Aisin Gioro lineage.[26] Distance from the imperial line, refusal of military duty, poor

[26] The origins of the Aisin Gioro (the "Golden" Gioro) have been discussed in Chu Hsi-tsu, *Hou Chin kuo han hsing-shih k'ao* (n.p., 1932); Crossley, *Orphan warriors*; Rawski, *The last emperors*; and Crossley, *A translucent mirror*. The economic foundations of the imperial lineage were laid out in Torbert, *The Ch'ing Imperial Household Department*, pp. 81–130, and Chang Te-ch'ang, "The economic role of the Imperial Household (*Nei-wu fu*) in the Ch'ing Dynasty," *JAS*, 31, No. 2 (February 1972), pp. 243–73. A seminal

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performance in academic or military studies, or confirmed criminal activity were all common reasons for expulsion from the lineage. The large number of remaining members all enjoyed a stipend from the court (a very modest one for the lower rungs), and were entitled to distinctive robes, belts, and headgear that set them apart from other denizens of the capital. The court's modest success in limiting the total number of Aisin Gioro and Gioro was probably the single most important factor in the relatively small number of hereditary rank holding among the imperial lineage, for though Aisin Gioro rank holders as a percentage of the percentage of Manchu bannermen among all bannermen was high (see Figures 6.1 and 6.2), rank holders among all Aisin Gioro averaged only about 10 percent.[27] Emperors tolerated the large Aisin Gioro population as symbolic of the success of their ancestors, and possibly as a pool for the selection of able property managers. Many of the members of the lineage who lived at leisure in walled compounds in Peking played a role in consolidating relations not only with the titled Manchu families and Mongol princes who composed their primary social groups, but also with Chinese painters, poets, and scholars whom they patronized.[28] Nevertheless, the emperors remained wary of the competition among the Aisin Gioro for wealth, prestige, and influence, and considered an overlarge and underemployed Aisin Gioro population to be fertile ground for factionalism, corruption, and potential coups d'état.

The titled Manchu families were frequently to be found in high court positions into the nineteenth century, and just as frequently as the companions of the Aisin Gioro leisured class at Peking. Though a majority were not actively engaged in the progress or consolidation of the conquests in southern China, Mongolia, and the Northeast of the middle and later seventeenth century, distinguished soldiers and most garrison officers came from these social ranks. The K'ang-hsi emperor, impressed by the difficulties he had undergone in wrenching power from Oboi and Ebilun, was ever alert to attempts by these families, who as a whole tended to be more closely involved

monograph is Yang Hsüeh-ch'eng and Chou Yüan-lien's *Ch'ing-tai pa-ch'i wang kung kuei-tsu hsing-shuai shih* (Shenyang, 1986). For the most important recent study, see Lai Hui-min, *T'ien-huang kuei-chou* (Taipei, 1997). The birth and death records of the imperial lineage have provided an unusual demographic source. See also the important collection of essays edited by Li Chung-ch'ing (James Lee) and Kuo Sung-i, *Ch'ing-tai huang-tsu jen-k'ou hsing-wei ho she-hui huan-ching* (Peking, 1994); the premier essays are based on this data that allow a sense of Aisin Gioro survival of smallpox epidemics; life expectancy by gender, generation, and rank; age at marriage and pregnancies; survival rates of boys, girls, twins; rates of birth defects and so on. Also see Rawski, *The last emperors*, esp. 127–59.

[27] Li Chung-ch'ing and Kuo Sung-i, *Ch'ing-tai huang-tsu*, pp. 144–5, 149.

[28] Many examples could be cited, but these are well known: Mingju, 1635–1708, see *ECCP*, pp. 577–8, and Yen Ch'ung-nien, *Yen pu chi* (Peking, 1989), pp. 153–69; his son Singde, 1655–1685, *ECCP*, pp. 662–3, and Crossley, *Orphan warriors*, pp. 63–4; and Yigeng, see Crossley, *Orphan warriors*, pp. 97–8.

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in the Eight Banners than were the Aisin Gioro, to exploit distractions or weaknesses in imperial affairs to shift power to themselves. They were heavily pressed for contributions of their time and wealth to undergird new campaigns of expansion, and in return they retained their rights to residence in some of Peking's choicest spots, close attendance at imperial ceremonies, and in suitable cases roles at the top of the military hierarchy.

The ranks of garrison officers, drawn heavily from the more remote lines of the Aisin Gioro and the various degrees of lineage in the titled Manchu families, were the functionaries of conquest and occupation. A substantial minority had completed some portion of the ambitious educational plan, and many relied their entire lives on family income to support themselves. On the surface a garrison commander's pay was substantial. It compared in most cases with that of a county magistrate, and was ten to twenty times that of a common soldier in the Eight Banner garrisons. But, like a magistrate, a garrison commander was expected to support a large staff, household, personal guardians, second household (if his family had not accompanied him), and all his animals from this salary. Without "contributions" (of the sort magistrates were also likely to seek), a garrison commander could barely survive his tenure, let alone grow wealthy in service. Moreover, within two decades of the 1644 invasion, support from the central government for many garrisons had become undependable. The garrison officers were often required to make up the shortfalls from their own resources, to solicit local Chinese literati for the means to improve or repair garrison walls or buildings, to manipulate their bookkeeping by diverting funds from armaments to grain, and to effect private reciprocities with local civil officials to mollify or suppress errant bannermen. Other than in the Yangtze delta, a commander's life in the late seventeenth century was usually harried. Few commanders served as long as two years in a post, and even in the middle officer ranks five or six years was considered a marathon tenure.

During the shift of Ch'ing conquest away from the Northeast toward Ming China, stresses caused in part by the unstable balance between members of the elite and commoners within their own banners contributed to the generation of new policies by the court that were designed to ameliorate a top-heaviness in some registration categories. The Manchu ranks were severely afflicted by this imbalance. While many policies distinguished between Aisin Gioro and Manchus (for instance, education, criminal law, sumptuary law, and some marriage regulations), stipends often supported Aisin Gioro and Manchu rank holders in one category. Figure 6.1 in comparison to Figure 6.2 represents the ways in which Aisin Gioro and Manchus among the titled ranks of the early Ch'ing far outweighed the proportion of Manchus in the Eight Banners. At the time of the conquest of Peking, Aisin Gioro repre-

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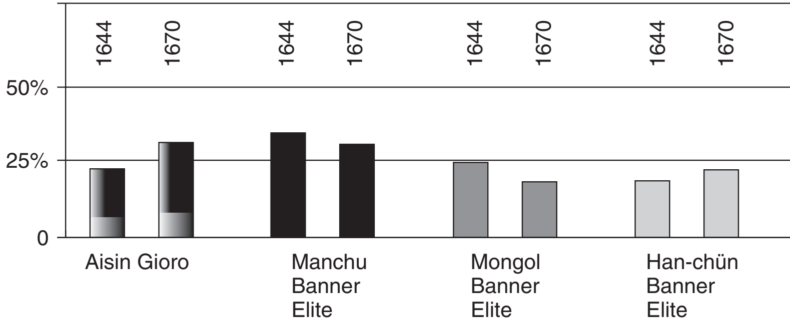

Figure 6.1 Rank holders by category, as percentages of all rank holders, c. 1644 and c. 1670 (totals of four groups = 100%).

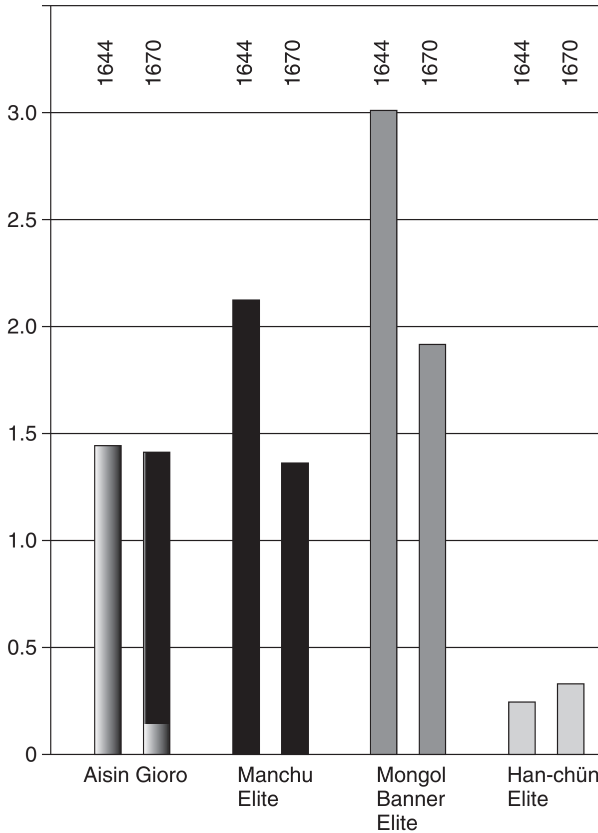

Figure 6.2 Ratio of each category of rank holders (in Figure 6.1) in comparison with that category's percentage among all bannermen (in Figure 6.3). For example, the ratio of the nearly 25% of the rank holders in 1644 who were Mongols is more than three (3.0) times the nearly 8% of all bannermen in 1644 who were Mongols.

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sented about 23 percent of all rank holders. Manchus represented about 16 percent of all Banner registrants (Figure 6.3). That put the rate of Aisin Gioro rank holding 43 percent higher than Manchu representation in the Banners generally, and Manchu rank holders as a proportion of all rank holders more than 100 percent higher. Together, Aisin Gioro and Manchu rank holders among all rank holders were more than three times the proportion of Manchu bannermen among all bannermen. By about 1670, after the conquest of north China, these differentials declined slightly, due to the relatively small increase of the proportion of Manchus among all bannermen.[29]

Status hierarchies among the Manchu bannermen were as rigid as class distinctions in the Northeast had been for their Jurchen predecessors. In contrast to the officer stratum, the majority of bannermen in the garrisons of China settled permanently in their new localities. A handful of garrisons in northern China continued to supply men for the westward conquests into Mongolia, Turkestan, and eventually Tibet, but in most provinces of China the garrisons had remarkably stable populations. Southern and southwestern China remained in need of policing. Equally important, moving Eight Banner troops from central or southern China to the ever more distant frontiers in the west became prohibitively expensive. The Ch'ing government continued to insist through the eighteenth century that all bannermen were legally residents of the Peking environs (Shun-t'ien/Imiyangga prefecture), although bannermen had adapted to local speech, customs, and commerce in their garrison communities. Bannermen were not entirely assimilated before the eighteenth century, but it was also true that they no longer lived as their ancestors in the Northeast had lived. Instead, they developed a distinctive culture, freely using Manchu-Chinese dialects, though this was despised by the emperors. Breaking the many laws that prohibited them from mixing with, enjoying entertainments with, or marrying with the local civilians, garrison bannermen lost an immediate sense of being, as a group, actively enrolled in the military.

The economic situation of the garrisons partly explains this. There was wide diversity in the conditions that pertained in any particular locality, but in general there were few garrisons that enjoyed adequate land, housing, food supplies, and money.[30] Bannermen in China received stipends irregularly, par-

[29] The data relating to rank holding among the imperial lineage from the perspective of the genealogical records is presented in Lai Hui-min, "Ch'ing-tai huang-tsu ti feng-chüeh yü jen kuan yen-chiu" in Lee and Kuo, *Ch'ing-tai huang-tsu jen-k'ou hsing-wei*, pp. 134–52, with some details on the role of marriage and maternal connections, on the average age of enfeoffment, and on the regulations altering access to titles among the imperial lineage after the Shun-chih period.

[30] Permanent seizure of land to support the garrisons was intense from 1669 to the end of the seventeenth century, and at its height probably encompassed well over 2 million acres. The vast majority was in

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ticularly in times of intense military expansion at the frontiers, where there was a higher priority on keeping active bannermen armed, fed, and sheltered. Though regulations provided for monthly stipends in rice and silver, the latter was often in short supply, and bannermen were used to being paid in copper cash. Moreover, officials at both the central and provincial levels were able to convert one medium to the other for paying stipends. The result was that bannermen tended to get rice when the price of copper or silver was high, and copper cash when the price of rice was high. Banner officers often sold garrison lands to meet payroll shortfalls, or to line their own pockets, so that an increasingly larger percentage of the food for the garrisons had to be purchased. By the end of the seventeenth century a substantial number of garrisons had no hope of purchasing expensive items such as weapons, ammunition, or good horses (which, in any event, would have had no grazing land). In a few cases adequate housing had never been constructed; in others it was deteriorating and not being repaired. When driven to the edge, bannermen did not take privation calmly. Records of the 1660s through the 1680s suggest frequent protests, strikes, and riots by bannermen impatient with the incompetence and, in many cases, corruption of their superiors.

The crisis caused by inconstancy in the delivery of supplies is highlighted by the fact that at any given time only a small portion of the garrison population was even entitled to receive support. By regulation there was an absolute maximum of paid positions that could be listed in the Eight Banners. The number was about 80,000 at the beginning of the K'ang-hsi era. Those who were actively serving in these positions were, technically, the "bannermen." Each bannerman's stipend was supposed to be adequate to support a household of four or five, but in fact the population ratio of paid to unpaid within the garrisons ran much higher. Women were never eligible. Old men who had never served were not eligible for regular payments. The few youth stipends established at the end of the seventeenth century were highly coveted.[31] Nevertheless, banner regulations identified young men without paid positions, or who had been promised positions but not yet received them, as "sons and younger brothers" (*tzu-ti*) of the Eight Banners.

the hands of garrison officers, and in the wealthiest areas of the country the land was rapidly alienated to remedy debt or to enrich officers who illegally sold the land. Both the K'ang-hsi and the Yung-cheng emperors attempted to repurchase the lands, but these policies did not stabilize garrison holdings, which in most areas dwindled very rapidly over the course of the nineteenth century. See also Crossley, *Orphan warriors*, pp. 47–8, 54–8.

[31] On these and additional requirements, including height, for bannerman status see Crossley, *Orphan warriors*, p. 17.

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In educational policies and social strictures they were subject to the same regulations as the paid bannermen. The result was that a large portion of the male garrison population was legally obliged to observe the discipline and restrictions of the bannermen, but not to receive any of the putative rewards of being a bannerman. The court's reasoning was that a massive military campaign might require expanded participation by the garrison populations, and alternatively that the educational plan, if successful, could move some of the unemployed into paid positions in the garrisons, in the civil government, or even into official commerce as grain suppliers, horse traders, and so on. In the eyes of their Chinese neighbors and the court, all garrison dwellers were "bannermen." In later times many Manchu descendants would look back with some romanticism on this collective identity, but in the late seventeenth century it was part of the pressure destabilizing the garrison environments.

The K'ang-hsi court responded effectively to these dissatisfactions with persuasive promises and often with reforms. Shrewdly, the emperor appreciated the importance of putting in a personal appearance at some garrisons, which must have deeply impressed those particular populations and reinforced bonds that were at some risk of erosion by distance and difficulty. He increased the number of stipends available from about 80,000 to 120,000. The court also attempted to erase the mass indebtedness of bannermen by assuming their loans with Chinese merchants, and in some cases redeeming their lands. Such measures were no solution to the long-term problem known to imperial officials as the "Eight Banner livelihood" (*pa-ch'i sheng-chi*) problem.[32] The officials reinforced the entropic tendencies in the system by lowering the amount of the stipends as the number of bannermen increased, and abolishing officer positions in order to create more places for common bannermen. The result was more, deeply impoverished men led by fewer and fewer officers. Nevertheless, a short-term solution had been found at a time when further disruptions for the empire could have been fatal.

In the same period of the earlier conquest, the problem of Mongol livelihood was qualitatively similar but different in magnitude. As Hung Taiji assumed rulership over the Chakhars after 1634, he had also assumed the problems of their former ruler, Ligdan. This included resistance or rebellion

[32] Common bannermen began the conquest period with only adequate economic and material support, and for complex reasons this diminished rapidly, so that those who remained in the garrisons endured grinding poverty for generations. Garrison commanders began the conquest period well salaried, but were impoverished by the demands of supporting their staffs, providing adequate ceremonial diversion for visiting dignitaries, and providing for the poverty-stricken and restless among their own soldiers. Those who did not violate garrison regulations against additional employment, abrogation of budgetary guidelines, and graft were soon broken. For details see Crossley, *Orphan warriors*, pp. 19, 47–58.

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from groups who did not wish to join their neighbors in submission to the centralization and reorganization of the nascent Ch'ing empire any more than they had wanted to submit to similar impositions by Ligdan. The problems persisted for the regime after the death of Hung Taiji in 1643. In the Hung Taiji and Shun-chih years the functions of the Court of Colonial Affairs were extended. It continued to manage matters associated with Mongol livelihoods, but increasingly oversaw the affairs of other regions as well. After the conquest of northern China in the 1640s, the Court of Colonial Affairs was brought under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Rites, the umbrella for foreign relations. It now assumed responsibility for governing other absorbed societies and managing the interface between their semi-autonomous leaders and the Ch'ing court. By the mid-eighteenth century these included the local headmen (*t'u-ssu*) of the populations of Szechuan, Yunnan, Kweichow, and parts of Burma, and the *khōjas* of Turkestan.[33] These regions were governed through the Court of Colonial Affairs as military regions outside the civil, bureaucratic government, a model based upon the early Ch'ing rule over the "Mongols," particularly the Khalkha khans of eastern Mongolia. From the Shun-chih period, the Court of Colonial Affairs also became the locus for early communication with Tibet. After the Ch'ing conquest of Peking in 1644, the court entered into direct communications with the Dalai Lama. From the time of his visit to Peking in 1651, the Court of Colonial Affairs became the Dalai Lama's bureaucratic arm as judge and arbitrator among the populations of eastern Mongolia and, after 1698, Tsinghai. As the Dalai Lama was given delegated authority for the mediation of Mongol life, however, the Dalai Lama himself was brought increasingly under the observation and regulation of the Ch'ing court, so that by the end of the Shun-chih era in 1661 the Court of Colonial Affairs was attempting to become influential in the selection of the Dalai Lama. It was one of many expressions of the complex intermingling of culture and politics of Mongolia and Tibet, which worked sometimes to Ch'ing advantage, and sometimes not.

The three khans of Khalkha, who had established close ties with the Ch'ing in the Hung Taiji reign, were willing in the early decades after the conquest of north China to have their territories incorporated into the empire. The young K'ang-hsi emperor was eager to achieve this annexation, since control of Mongolia was an important part of his attempt to contain the Romanov empire. But the Oyirods to the west of Khalkha, and their leader Galdan, were opposed to Ch'ing acquisition of the Mongol heartland, where the

[33] On the numbers of Ch'ing military personnel, including bannermen, in Turkestan in the mid-eighteenth century, see James A. Millward, *Beyond the pass: Commerce, ethnicity, & empire in Qing central Asia, 1759–1864* (Stanford, 1998), pp. 77–9.

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Oyirods themselves sometimes took their herds when grazing lands were sparse. In the late 1670s and early 1680s, when the Khalkha khans pressed for a resolution of the issue, the Ch'ing court was distracted by the Three Feudatories War. After resolution of that conflict in 1683, the K'ang-hsi emperor turned his attentions to the Mongolia problem. Diplomatic negotiations with the Romanovs, a tenuous partnership with the Dalai Lama, and handsome rewards to the Khalkha khans resulted in a pact that would have brought submission of Mongolia to the Ch'ing government. But Galdan intervened, attacking the Khalkha lands before they could complete the act. The K'ang-hsi emperor personally led Eight Banner contingents with heavy guns into the field against Galdan's Oyirod forces. In 1691 the Khalkha khans were received into the conquest elite, and by 1697 Galdan had been defeated and destroyed.

The wars against Galdan served to bring Khalkha lands and population under Ch'ing control, and the three khans of the Khalkha were formally inducted into the inner circles of the Ch'ing aristocracy in 1694. As a group the Khalkhas were not brought into the Mongol Eight Banners, but were organized into khanates (a fourth was added in 1706), "leagues" (*aimakh*), "banners" (*khōshun*), and "companies" (*sumun*). As had been the practice in the days of Nurhaci and Hung Taiji, the Khalkha nobles were given a high niche in the elite, and like others of their station took to living in Peking. By 1698, as many as 10,000 Mongols, mostly noblemen and their entourages, had established themselves in the city. Matters of land ownership and the legal problems resulting from it, market and currency management, the welfare of the herds, and the opening of Urga to commerce were brought under the jurisdiction of the Court of Colonial Affairs. The khans of Khalkha were permitted by the Ch'ing court to control regulations relating to the growing trade at Urga, and the attendant effects of economic development on the littoral. By all appearances the khans declined to exercise the powers that remained to them. Repeated appeals by Khalkha commoners for protection from incomers, primarily civilian Han Chinese, who restricted land access, accumulated mining rights, and created financial combines that extracted crushing interest on debts from herders and traders drew little response.

Acknowledged noblemen of the Mongol Eight Banners and of the Khalkha khanates lived much as Manchus of the Aisin Gioro or the titled families. The relative size of the Manchu and Aisin Gioro rank holders in relation to Mongol Eight Banner commoners was even more remarkable (compare Figures 6.1 and 6.2). At the time of the conquest of Peking, registrants in the Mongol Eight Banners as a proportion of all bannermen were a meager 8 percent. But Mongol Eight Banner rank holders as a percentage of all rank

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holders were 25 percent, more than three times the proportion of Mongol bannermen among all bannermen. The disparity between commoners and rank holders for the Eight Banner Mongols was roughly equal to the disparity between Manchus and Aisin Gioro combined rank holders. Like the pronounced difference in these proportions among the Manchus, these mismatched proportions among the Mongol Eight Banners were partly due to the relatively small numbers of Mongol Eight Bannermen in total. But they also reflect two pervasive issues of the early Ch'ing expansion. First, these figures relate to a period less than ten years after the creation of the Ch'ing empire through the melding of the Chin khanate and the Chakhar khanate, and Chakhar nobles incorporated into the Eight Banners were still being lavished with titles, stipends, and other imperial favors. Second, they reflect the critical role the leaders of the Mongol Eight Banners played in policing Chakhar territories and initiating campaigns against the Khalkha.

For Mongol commoners outside the Eight Banners, and particularly in the Khalkha territories (now the greater part of Inner Mongolia), the political reorganization of the khanates displaced a portion of the traditional leadership and bureaucratized political processes that had previously been socially negotiated, developments that Jurchens had experienced under Nurhaci and Hung Taiji. The policies contributed to the economic transformation and gradual impoverishment of pastoral Mongols in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In contrast, commoners of the Mongol Eight Banners, that is, genealogically identified Mongols who did not live as nomads, were perhaps the most privileged group within the garrisons. The court constantly pointed to them as examples of military prowess for Manchus and *Han-chün* to emulate.

Though the Mongol bannermen as a group were never distinguished for success in the examinations, the blandishments heaped on them by the court for participation were at least equal to those given Manchus. Moreover, because those of Mongol registration within the Eight Banners were by far the smallest category, the quotas for Mongols passing the examinations were markedly more generous than for Manchus, and overwhelmingly more generous than for *Han-chün*. This was possibly a contributing factor in the overrepresentation of Eight Banner Mongols in the officer ranks of garrisons throughout the empire. But the distinction of Mongols in these capacities was also related to the many cases of vivid transition from conquered to conqueror, as state-denominated Mongols were deployed to conquer and absorb newly targeted "Mongols." Thus, the rebellions among the Chakhars under Tsetsen Khan in 1648 had been suppressed by the Khorchin leader Minggadari, and descendants of other Khorchin and Kharachin elite families

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were prominent in the campaigns of the late seventeenth century in Mongolia and Tibet.

From the failed cohabitation schemes of the early 1620s to the late seventeenth century, the *Han-chün* were undergoing a process of continuous redefinition and rehistoricization. Between about 1640 and 1680, the court tended to emphasize the integration and equality of the *Han-chün* companies within the Eight Banners. In the "inner" (*dorgi*) and "outer" (*tulergi*) dichotomies of which the court was fond, the *Han-chün* were "inner," consonant with the empire's forceful program for creating conquerors from the conquered. But political dynamics of the conquest, and more acutely the danger – represented indirectly by the war of the Three Feudatories – of the *Han-chün* gaining independent power within the conquest establishment caused the court in the K'ang-hsi period to curtail *Han-chün* influence. This entailed the construction of a legal mechanism for making genealogy the primary criterion for membership in the Eight Banners and categorization within them.

But by 1650 the *Han-chün* bannermen from the old families of eastern Liao-tung and even older sinophone families of Chi-lin had been overshadowed within the Eight Banners by a new population, primarily from north China, that had none of the longstanding ties with the Ch'ing rulers that men from Liao-tung had forged. In total the *Han-chün* bannermen were far more numerous than the Manchu or Mongol categories. It is possible that they represented as much as 40 percent of the conquest force in 1644. The bulk of these companies had been created after 1642. In the 1640s the number of *Han-chün* companies continued to surge while growth in the number of Manchu and Mongol companies was negligible. Figures for 1649 show that all categories of *Han-chün* (including the "bondservant" companies of the Imperial Household Department) accounted for over 75 percent of the banner force. Ten years later, *Han-chün* may have outnumbered the Manchu and Mongol bannermen by as many as four or five to one, though still representing only a small proportion of the total of Ming deserters brought under Ch'ing command. Incorporation of new adherents was curtailed in the late 1640s. By 1667, the *Han-chün* percentage of the banner forces had fallen to under 70 percent, and continued to decline under the pressure of state policies thereafter (see Figure 6.3).

The numerical dominance of the *Han-chün* in the Eight Banner forces is represented in the proportion of titled *Han-chün* compared to the proportion of *Han-chün* bannermen among all bannermen (compare Figures 6.1 and 6.2). In comparison to the marked high ratio of Aisin Gioro, Manchu, and Mongol Eight Banner elites, the *Han-chün* constituted a proportion of the elite (about 18 percent at the time of the conquest of Peking) that was barely 25 percent

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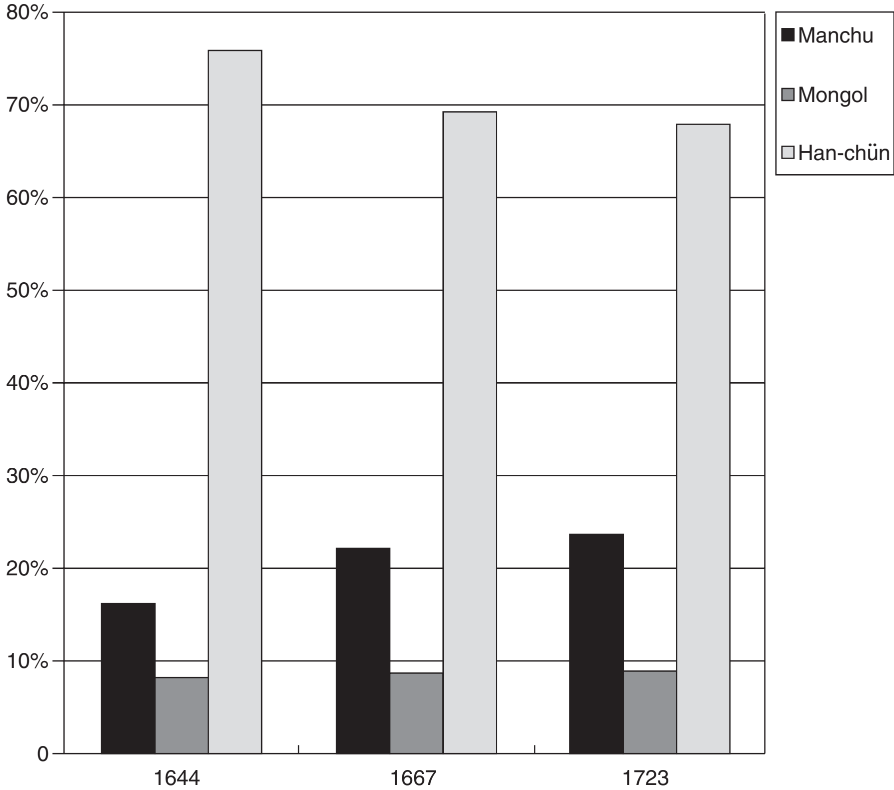

Figure 6.3 Trends in relative percentages of each category in all banner registration, 1644, 1667, and 1723 (totals of three groups of bannermen for each year = 100%).

of the proportion of *Han-chün* bannermen among all bannermen. The reasons are both obvious and subtle. The historian would expect the overwhelming proportion of *Han-chün* bannermen among all bannermen to dwarf the proportion of *Han-chün* rank holders among all rank holders, and it does. A *Han-chün* elite that was proportionate to the representation of *Han-chün* bannermen among all bannermen would have been a formidable political force. But it was also the case that *Han-chün* who held titles in this period tended to be transmuted into Manchu elites, either through their connections with the imperial lineage or because of political exigency. This mechanism fundamentally qualifies descriptions of *Han-chün* as "never" intermarrying with the imperial lineage or "never" participating in certain imperial rituals. *Han-chün* who did these things were re-registered and subsequently historicized as "Manchus," so the degree to which *Han-chün* may have participated in exclu-

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sive activities in the early Ch'ing period is permanently obscured in the record.[34] In view of these two factors, what is interesting is a slight stickiness in the tendency of members of the *Han-chün* elite to remain elite even while *Han-chün* commoners had to struggle to remain bannermen. By 1670, for instance, the differential between Aisin Gioro, Manchu, and Eight Banner Mongol rank holders relative to their banner categories decreased significantly from 1644, but for the *Han-chün* the opposite was true. The ratio of *Han-chün* rank holders as a proportion of all rank holders, against the proportion of *Han-chün* bannermen as a proportion of all bannermen, increased (see Figures 6.1 and 6.2). This can be explained partly by court policies directed to significant diminution in the total enrollment of *Han-chün* bannermen, but it is also due to the lingering court reliance upon members of the *Han-chün* elite in the governance of recently conquered territories in this period.

Because of the skills of *Han-chün* bannermen in the Chinese language, the court was disposed to use them in bureaucratic appointments in the early conquest period. Many *Han-chün* were indispensable in the establishment of the occupation governments in the provinces. During the Shun-chih reign, appointments were shuffled so that surrendering Ming civil officials who had been temporarily re-appointed to posts were supplanted by *Han-chün*. In this way, natives of the preconquest Ch'ing order in Liao-tung were given control over consolidating the conquest in China. The court preferred that the occupation was not in the hands of those considered Ming deserters, and the political effects of using men who spoke Chinese in these posts was considerable. There was some unhappiness in the leadership of the Manchu banners over this policy. But before administrative politics seriously discredited *Han-chün* leadership in the provinces, the apostasy of the three southern military governors, all from Liao-tung lineages of *Han-chün* banners, occurred as the revolt of the Three Feudatories.

The predominance of *Han-chün* in bureaucratic appointments during the early postconquest period, which historians have noted for some time, reflects not only the political utility of the *Han-chün* but also the bloated numbers of their banners.[35] Though the court was dependent on the *Han-chün* for the first decades after the conquest, the treatment of *Han-chün* bannermen was different from that of Manchus. This, too, is possibly a function of the numbers of *Han-chün* bannermen, and is not clear evidence of discrimination

[34] See, for instance, Rawski's notation on T'ung Kuo-wei, who in 1684–5 participated in the Grand Sacrifice (*ta-chi*) as a *Han-chün*, and in 1694–5 as a Manchu. *The last emperors*, p. 216. On the question of Nikan marriage with the Nurhaci lineage, see Crossley, *A translucent mirror*, pp. 156–7.

[35] Figures for this were established in Lawrence Kessler, "Ethnic composition of the provincial leadership during the Ch'ing Dynasty," *JAS*, 28, No. 2 (May 1969), pp. 179–200.

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in these decades. The quotas, for instance, for banner studentships and garrison appointments, which in this period tended to maintain a 1:1 ratio between Manchus and *Han-chün*, were not generous in a situation where the Manchu to *Han-chün* ratio was possibly as low as 1:4. The quotas nevertheless were a defensible expression of "parity," that is, the intention to produce parity between "Manchus" and "Chinese." *Han-chün* commoners sent out to the provincial garrisons often found that in cramped urban situations no living space had been provided for them within the walls of the garrisons. Where agricultural land was sparse, they were given no pastures for their horses, and minimal burial grounds. In many cases *Han-chün* companies were introduced into garrisons only years after the garrisons had been established, when local hierarchies as well as land and housing allocations had already been fixed. Where there was the chance, commoner *Han-chün* might enjoy their ostensible quotas, which at best would be "equal" to the Manchu quotas. Where there was dearth, *Han-chün* often found the military commissioner tightening their provisions. Whatever tensions might have been created by provincial-level discriminations against commoner *Han-chün* bannermen, they remained bound to the Eight Banners by privileges, financial dependence, and common symbols of identity.

By the late seventeenth century the *Han-chün* began to acquire the hallmarks of second-rate status within the banners, along with their graduated official submergence in the subject Chinese population. The court received complaints from Manchu banner officials who felt that *Han-chün* were given unjust preference in the appointment process.[36] Within some garrisons, continued enrollment of *Han-chün* households became an issue, since those who had been marginalized in the original settlement process were most likely to violate garrison regulations. More significantly, in the decades after the conquest there was a rapid differentiation of cultural development within the *Han-chün* as a group, though this differentiation as a pattern can hardly be distinguished from that seen among the Manchus in the same period. Many fell away from military training and spoke local Chinese as their primary language. Some *Han-chün* families intermarried exclusively with Manchus. Others married only within *Han-chün* groups. Some did as many Manchus had and illegally intermarried with the civilian population. Some petitioned to be educated in Manchu and pursued military careers. Others had been educated in Chinese and tried the civil examinations. Some used Manchu names, without surnames; others used Chinese names. Among many *Han-chün* lineages, it was not unusual to alternate naming styles from generation to

[36] O-erh-t'ai et al., eds., *Ch'in-ting Pa-ch'i t'ung-chih* (1745; 1985 ed. Liaoning, 1985), 5, p. 13a. See also Crossley, *Orphan warriors*, p. 28.

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generation, or even for a single generation of a single family to display different patterns.[37]

The underlying tensions relating to imperial attempts to limit *Han-chün* numbers, lessen their privileges, and discourage notions of great intimacy with the court came to crisis with the outbreak of the war of the Three Feudatories (1673–1681). The war was a struggle by some of the elite *Han-chün* to wrest powers of independent decision making and revenue collection from the Ch'ing court. This was the sort of challenge that Nurhaci and Hung Taiji had faced from local Jurchen groups, from Amur peoples, and from eastern Mongols. In later decades Ch'ing rulers dealt with similar problems among the federated Mongol groups. Manchu princes could also prove unsteady in loyalty, and major issues in Aisin Gioro rivalries as well as leadership challenges in western Mongolia were unresolved at the end of the seventeenth century. The Three Feudatories War was in many ways a similar phenomenon, but on a scale that threatened the continued existence of the empire.

As with other groups who had been incorporated into the Ch'ing conquest elite and understood the opportunities, the leading lineages of the Three Feudatories – the Wu, Keng, and Shang families – attempted to exploit Ch'ing dependence upon their good will in order to carve out a domain for themselves. Wu San-kuei, in particular, appealed to Chinese resisters of the Ch'ing invasion in the south to join his cause. His call was rejected, most vocally by Wang Fu-chih, who decried Wu as a fixture of the conquest elite with no real sympathies for Chinese civilians. Wu had better luck with the Dalai Lama, who temporized long enough in deciding whether to associate himself with the rebels that the Ch'ing had some difficulty mobilizing Mongol contingents to suppress Wu's uprising. Members of the Aisin Gioro and some titled Manchu families had nominal command in the Three Feudatories War, but it was primarily *Han-chün* governors and garrison commanders stationed in neighboring provinces of central and southern China who contained and suppressed the rebellion. Nevertheless, the Three Feudatories War became an additional propellant in the fundamental alteration of Ch'ing attitudes toward the *Han-chün*. The identity between the *Han-chün* and civilian Chinese, which Wu San-kuei had failed to make credible, was eventually achieved by the slow but steady effect of changing Ch'ing policy and rhetoric that moved the *Han-chün* out of the category of conquerors and fully integrated members of the Ch'ing elite, into the category of "Chinese" (and Chinese of dubious character, at that).

The new severity toward the *Han-chün* was demonstrated in the education plan of 1687. The plan stipulated that *Han-chün* examination candidates

[37] For examples and further discussion see Crossley, *A translucent mirror*, pp. 121–2.

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would be excluded from the banner quota system for grading. A separate category was created for them. *Han-chün* also found that over time the quotas allotted them were dramatically lowered, primarily by being exchanged for the Mongol quotas. Prior to about 1680, the Manchu and *Han-chün* quotas were generally set equal to each other, and the Mongol quotas set at half of either of them. After about 1680 the Manchu and Mongol quotas tended to be equal, and the *Han-chün* set at half of either. The circumstances relating to stipends for students preparing for the examinations were similar. *Han-chün* stipends had been awarded at a ratio of half the number awarded to Manchus or Mongols in any given year, grossly out of relationship to the proportion they constituted of the banner population.

The emperor also had to resolve his own familial involvement with *Han-chün* lineages, particularly the T'ung lineage of Fu-shun, whose members included the mother of the K'ang-hsi emperor. The emperor's uncles, T'ung Kuo-kang and T'ung Kuo-wei, were at the center of the conquest elite. They were the third generation of the family to be distinguished for service in the most critical campaigns. T'ung Kuo-wei later became a martyr to the conquest when he was killed during the Mongol campaigns of 1690. They enjoyed the highest titles available outside the Aisin Gioro lineage. They participated at the front during the annual Grand Sacrifice ritual. The reinvention of the T'ung of Fu-shun as Manchus between 1688 and 1741 also marked the aggressive intentions of the court to newly codify official religion and to mark it exclusively as the property of the court and its intimates, which now, pointedly, did not include the *Han-chün*.[38] The T'ung were not the only lineage to represent the history and status of the old Liao-tung *Han-chün* population, but they were the best known. After 1683 their relation to the emperor made them the most problematic. This was a time when disputes over status, titles, privileges, and registration were rife in all ranks of the conquest elite, and the government departments with responsibility for resolving them tended to rely upon genealogical documents – which sometimes had to be manufactured – to resolve disputes. In the case of *Han-chün* bannermen generally, the new emphasis on genealogical criteria weakened their claims to banner resources. New positions or payments frequently were designated as being for "Manchus." *Han-chün* bannermen with documentation could dispute their affiliation, though the government declined to make reregistrations which would distort the budget further or to invite mass appeals for reregistration.

[38] The most comprehensive treatment of Ch'ing ritual in all its dialects is Rawski, *The last emperors*, especially pp. 197–294. On the annual Grand Sacrifice, see Angela R. Zito, *Of body and brush: Grand sacrifice as text/performance* (Chicago, 1997); and on guest ritual, see James Hevia, *Cherishing men from afar: Qing guest ritual and the Macartney embassy of 1793* (Durham, N.C., 1995).

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In the case of families connected with the imperial line, reregistrations were ordered from above, and usually for transparent reasons. Emperors from Hung Taiji forward routinely altered the genealogical and life-history records of their mothers in order to construct more glamorous or legitimate profiles for them, and often to fix obscure origins, as in the case of families hailing from the Hūlun, that some might later construe as un-Manchu. Additionally, in the 1680s the court became aware of the lineage ritual debates that were intensifying in some of the provinces where the K'ang-hsi emperor was eager to charm the literati, and some regularities were imposed upon public lineage rituals of the Aisin Gioro to accord with these fashions. The K'ang-hsi emperor might by fiat have quietly reregistered his mother's family as "Manchu" had he been so motivated, but he chose a much more public forum. In 1688, the emperor's uncles joined with another scion of a prominent *Han-chün* lineage, Hūwašan (Hua-shan) of the Shih lineage of Kuang-ning, to petition for a change of registration from *Han-chün* to Manchu. They accompanied their petition with elaborate genealogical documentation, a great deal of which was patently false. The emperor granted these petitions, though he commented that because of logistical constraints only the immediate lineages of the petitions would be reregistered.

The effect of this event on the progressive detachment of the *Han-chün* from the core of the conquest elite was profound. The court was signaling that it had no tolerance for the ambiguities of *Han-chün* descent, even though they were authentic remnants of the complex cultural landscape from which the early Ch'ing state had emerged. As the conquest slowed, status was to be preserved in part by recognized genealogical affinities. The *Han-chün* would have to prove themselves "Manchu" (which could only be done by guessing or lying) or they would be "Chinese." The leading lineages of the *Han-chün*, who by their intimacy with the emperors and their continued military achievements represented the inherent importance of the *Han-chün* within the conquest elite, were now transforming themselves into Manchus, and in a peculiarly public way that could not fail to convey its implications for those who remained as *Han-chün*.

THE SECOND WAVE OF CONQUEST, 1700–1800

In the eighteenth century, the conquest elite became more specialized. This specialization was both functional and regional. Civil government was by design what John K. Fairbank termed "synarchy."[39] Regulations required

[39] John K. Fairbank, "Synarchy under the treaties," in *Chinese thought and institutions*, ed. John K. Fairbank (Chicago, 1957), pp. 204–31. Fairbank proposed "synarchy" in lieu of the term "dyarchy," used to refer to government in British India.

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that many ministries and projects be overseen by boards equally divided between bannermen (not necessarily Manchus) and civil officials. These positions were normally titular, and the work was done by a staff that was usually dominated by civilians, though hereditary members of the conquest elite could and did pursue civilian careers, sometimes brilliantly. Campaigns tended after 1690 to be focused in Turkestan, Tibet, southwestern China, and the borderlands with Vietnam, Thailand, and Burma. Active military officers were transferred to those areas, but remained closely connected with colleagues in the central government in Peking through banner affiliations and through the increasingly elaborate factional relations that thrived despite repeated efforts by emperors to frustrate them. Members of the hereditary elite who continued to function in the role of conquerors tended to be found in Peking or at the scenes of current action. Also in Peking were the accumulating social elites of the Manchu and Mongol banners, with a low level of professional involvement and a high level of indebtedness, but still strongly enough associated with the princely lineages to be influential in the cultural life of the capital.

The hereditary conquest elite was under constant pressure from the rising civilian, governing elite. By the end of the eighteenth century, they were also being displaced by bannermen of lowly origin. The constant warfare of the eighteenth century helped promote resourceful and intelligent bannermen into command ranks. Many campaigns under the leadership of men from the prominent lineages stalled, due to inability to deal with unfamiliar terrain, logistical incompetence, or corruption. By the 1770s the Ch'ien-lung emperor became impatient with such failures, and he prosecuted the culprits when he could identify them, which was not always possible as they were shielded by political networks. At the same time the emperor was eager to find Manchus, in particular, from the Northeast to promote into the command ranks. His cultural ideologies, to be discussed below, led him to believe that men from the Manchu homelands would in some way preserve the original martial spirit of the past century, and would be immune to corruption by the diversions and pretensions of Peking. In some of these choices he was fortunate, as with Hailancha, Fude, and Eldemboo. In others, he was unlucky. Ho-shen, who dominated court business in the last two decades of the emperor's life and oversaw a massive network of corruption, could count his rugged origins among his many charms.

The conquest elite, such as they were in the eighteenth century, were much affected by various forms of nostalgia. Much of this was connected to the ways in which the leadership adapted itself to the postconquest period by turning intense efforts to the shaping of its history, the characterization of its mission, and the establishment of criteria by which hereditary elites might retain their

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status. Many educated members of the conquest elite became in effect historians, translating the deeds of their predecessors and in many cases of themselves into chapters in the imperial narrative. The scope of such activities increased sharply after initiation of the Ch'ien-lung emperor's "Four Treasuries" projects, in which a great deal of new writing was ordered to fill gaps relating to the history of the Manchus, the Mongols, and some federated regions.[40] In the same period, Manchus and Mongols were subjected not only to historical attention but cultural prescriptions in the present. The Ch'ien-lung emperor adamantly demanded that cultural behavior should conform to genealogical identity, and educational reforms were attempted in order to achieve this. The nostalgia did not come exclusively from the state. Prominent lineages of the Manchu and Mongol Eight Banners commissioned new genealogies, partly in response to imperial pressures tying genealogy to status in unprecedented ways, requested permission to construct new monuments to honor distinguished members of their lines, and helped underwrite the costs of banner, garrison, and in some cases county histories that would speak approvingly of their ancestors' achievements. The most striking expression of nostalgia of the period by a descendant of the conquest elite is China's best-known novel, *Dream of the Red Chamber* (*Hung lou meng*). The author, Ts'ao Chan (Hsüeh-ch'in), was a *Han-chün* bannerman. He was a grandson of Ts'ao Yin, who had been born into the bondservant companies under the K'ang-hsi emperor and distinguished himself as a commissioner in the imperial factories. Ts'ao Chan captured simultaneously the world of the conquest elite who were comfortably ensconced at the margins of the court in the past century, and the insularity, alienation, and despair of the same group in his own time.[41]

By the early eighteenth century, the economic condition of many garrisons was critical. In some cases local conditions could be alleviated by transferring redundant men to new frontiers of conquest, in Turkestan particularly, but long-distance removals of troops from southern or central China were too expensive. Bannermen on the payroll often languished while locals near the scene of battle were recruited for the frequently irregular conquest forces. As in the seventeenth century, the court periodically created additional paid positions, but usually at the cost of lowering the amounts for the new salaries and discontinuing some command positions. This further decreased the ability to organize and even police the garrison communities. Land and debt

[40] On the relationship of imperial literary curatorship – including inquisition – to the historicization of the Manchus, see Crossley, "The formalization of the Manchu heritage," and *A translucent mirror*, pp. 25, 27, 298–305.

[41] On the Ts'ao lineage, its relation to the court, and its status within the Banners, see Spence, *Ts'ao Yin and the K'ang-hsi emperor*.

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redemptions were also used, particularly in the earlier eighteenth century. In an innovative plan, bannermen were invited to return to the Northeast and work on the state farms there. Few Manchus volunteered for this program, and an overwhelming majority of those who went fled within a year. In a more practical policy, bannermen in a growing number of garrisons were being granted permission to live outside the military compounds, and implied in this was permission to pursue civil livelihoods. A number of garrison scribes and officers, who sometimes had a little capital, took advantage of this plan in the mid-eighteenth century to acquire land or to begin small businesses as horse or textile brokers, printers, and teachers. They laid the foundation for the small but distinct Manchu middle class that was prominent and often politically progressive at the end of the nineteenth century.

Through the eighteenth century the empire remained in need of competent soldiers for its ongoing campaigns, and despite repeated failures in remedying the financial difficulties of the garrisons, the Ch'ien-lung emperor still hoped to effect a reinvigoration of the common bannermen. He felt that the way to do this was to insist upon education in the Manchu language, with special attention to speech, serious training and daily practice in riding and shooting, and deep immersion in the glories of Manchu history. The latter was available thanks to the efforts of the K'ang-hsi emperor to create a historical geography for the Northeast, and particularly the region about Mt. Ch'ang-pai, the putative place of Manchu origins. The K'ang-hsi court, like its immediate predecessors, had been keen to establish an ancestral link with this eastern boundary of the empire as part of a struggle to resist its annexation by the Romanov empire. Thanks to Ch'ing acquisition of the Amur lands as far as the Pacific coast under the Treaty of Nerchinsk (1689), threat of annexation was no longer an issue. The Ch'ien-lung emperor built upon the literary efforts of the previous century mostly for the purpose of consolidating the prestige of the Aisin Gioro and the Manchus as a newly conflated historical identity. The foundation myth of the Aisin Gioro ancestor Bukuri Yongšon (actually a god-hero appropriated from the Evenks of the Amur region) legitimated the claim that the Ch'ing imperial lineage had for many centuries ruled the peoples of the Northeast, including the Amur.[42] This

[42] The development of the Ch'ing foundation myth and its mythicized patron gods is, in fact, the story of the subjugation and acculturation of the Amur peoples by the early Ch'ing conquest state. See Crossley, "An introduction to the Qing foundation myth," *Late Imperial China*, 6, No. 1 (December 1985), pp. 3–24; Caroline Humphrey, "Shamanic practices and the state: Views from the center and periphery," in *Shamanism, history and the state*, ed. Nicholas Thomas and Caroline Humphrey (Ann Arbor, 1996), pp. 191–229; Rawski, *The last emperors*, pp. 242–4; Crossley, *A translucent mirror*, 192–205, 296–306.

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myth was incorporated into new histories of the dynasty, and joined a collection of fresh works in the "Four Treasuries" based on Manchu language, origins, genealogies, putative history, and religion. Most were commissioned in the 1730s and 1740s, and published after various intervals of compilation, editing, and censorship. As a rule, they were written first in Manchu and then translated into Chinese for a wider audience. By being entered into the "Four Treasuries" they were put on an equal footing with the Chinese works also catalogued there, and copies were deposited in the Northeast, northern China, and the Yangtze delta for the edification of Manchus.

As these works were being produced, the last vestiges of the comprehensive education programs were scrapped. At the Aisin Gioro and banner schools at Peking new programs were put in place to focus on riding, shooting, Manchu language, and history above all else.[43] The Ch'ien-lung emperor took every opportunity to display his dissatisfaction with the pretensions and failures of liberal banner education, often waxing satirical about bannermen who when quizzed on archery demurred, describing themselves as scholars, and when quizzed on literature demurred again, describing themselves as soldiers. They were, he said, "useless people" who incited his "great disgust."[44] The emperor made it clear that he was personally involved in the programs to preserve and revitalize the "Old Way" (*Fe Doro*) of the Manchus. In his opinion, this was the only Way that was consonant with the reason the Manchus were in China at all. He underscored the difference between his outlook and that of his grandfather, the K'ang-hsi emperor, by informing the banner officers that he had no interest in whether or not they were conversant with Chinese classical literature. Officers whose business brought them to court could expect an interview in Manchu with the emperor, and to be dealt with harshly if they did not measure up. Administrative documents in Manchu were submitted to the emperor for review, and he pounced upon errors caused by faulty knowledge of the language or the use of dialect.

Special pressure was put on the banner elite to respond to the court's new educational imperatives. The Aisin Gioro Academy (*tsung-hsüeh*), whose enrollments declined rather dramatically in the late eighteenth century, despite a steady population increase for the Aisin Gioro lineage, had its stipends and the number of instructors increased in 1795. The conditions under which Aisin Gioro students participated in the examinations were also changed. The traditional options to be examined on arts and poetry were eliminated, and performance in translation became an additional require-

[43] On the education of imperial sons, see Rawski, *The last emperors*, pp. 117–20.
[44] Chang Chung-ju, *Ch'ing-tai k'ao-shih chih-tu tz'u-liao* 4.78b-79a. See also Crossley, *Orphan warriors*, pp. 25–8; Crossley, "Manchu Education," pp. 354, 360–1.

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ment. The greatest change was in the provincial garrisons, where for the first time officer candidate schools under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Appointments (*li-pu*) were established and all bannermen became eligible to compete for admission. The curriculum, which was not intended to be distinguished for innovation, was based on the program of the Imperial College and the Eight Banners Officers' Schools in Peking. It required Manchu, Chinese, astronomy, and mathematics (*suan-hsüeh*), with frequent and rigorous testing in riding and shooting. In 1791, the emperor outlined his plan for establishment of standard banner officer schools in all garrisons. However, it was not until 1796, after his abdication of the emperorship but during a time in which his entourage still controlled fundamental state affairs, that the court implemented plans for a centralized, standardized educational system for the garrisons. For the ensuing twenty years, additions to the basic program augmented reforms of bannermen's education throughout the empire.

For the first time, it was acknowledged that educational reform must begin with younger students. The perceived cultural and social condition of the garrison populations is revealed in the edict of 1800 (after the Ch'ien-lung emperor's death), demanding that garrison officers identify talented boys, on the order of about one out of every five or six, to receive intensive instruction from their company corporals in Manchu, riding and shooting, and a small number of administrative arts. At the same time, the state affirmed its intentions never to return to the unfocused, comprehensive education policies of earlier times. Such policies, the emperor suggested, created too many distractions from military pursuits, and obviated the very reason for the existence of the Eight Banner garrisons. The abandonment of the Shun-chih-K'ang-hsi ideal of bannermen as universal functionaries, as well adapted to the Han-lin Academy as to the command of an elite cavalry corps, in favor of a rigid regime of cultural purification, physical reinvigoration, and spiritual reintegration, had implications far beyond what the Ch'ien-lung and Chia-ch'ing courts foresaw. Later the court advocated a vocational, even professional, course of study for the bannermen, in which expertise in Manchu – as the language of the military sector – was fundamental, and in which the more liberal, more obviously civil educational elements had little or no place. The significance of this did not emerge until the military and educational reforms after the Opium War. Courses on armaments, both Ch'ing and foreign, were added to the garrison officers' schools, and this led to limited exposure to technical studies by mid-century.

To the Ch'ien-lung court, the elite members of the Mongol Eight Banners were as essential to the empire as were those of the Manchu Eight Banners. As Hung Taiji had appreciated, they were the means of claiming the mantle

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of the Great Khans, and were cultivated largely for that reason. Mongol noblemen of the Eight Banner lineages were present for even the most carefully guarded shamanic rituals of the Aisin Gioro. They were represented on all military councils, campaigns, and history projects. Aisin Gioro princes learned Mongolian as well as Manchu, the better to maintain intimate connection with the Mongol nobility. At the same time, the court actively patronized education programs for the Mongols themselves. The Chakhars and Khalkhas had extensive literary traditions, and since the sixteenth century had used Tibetan as their common written medium. Imperial printing houses produced both religious literature and poetry in Tibetan and Mongolian for them. In 1716 the K'ang-hsi court printed part of the Geser epic (a Tibetan folk cycle becoming more familiar in Mongolia at the time) for the Khalkhas. The Ch'ien-lung court continued such publishing, but it overtly desired to establish written Mongolian as the emblematic language of the Mongols, and so plied Eight Banner Mongols in particular with educational and didactic texts that paralleled the cultural indoctrination program for the Manchus. These included language primers, narratives of historical origin (most based on "Secret History of the Mongols," which the Ch'ing government first printed in 1662),[45] translations of the dynastic histories of China, and religious liturgies and manuals.[46] By the middle of the eighteenth century, however, the Ch'ien-lung emperor was complaining that his written and spoken Mongolian was better than that of most Eight Banner Mongols with whom he had occasion to speak or correspond.[47]

The Mongol military elite was critical to the Ch'ien-lung court not only because of the historical claims with which they were associated, but also because of the role the emperor expected them to play in furthering the Ch'ing conquest in western Mongolia, Turkestan, and Tibet.[48] This role was critical in the struggle for the territory of the portion of the Oyirods known by the end of the seventeenth century as "Dzunghars."[49] Because of their loca-

[45] The history of the publication of the *Erdeni-yin tobči* is treated in Fletcher's introduction to the much later work, *Erdeni-yin erike*. See Joseph F. Fletcher, Jr., "The *Erdeni-yin erike* as a source for the reconciliation of the Khalkha, 1681–1688" (diss., Harvard, 1965), pp. iii–viii.

[46] E.g., *Meng-ku hua-pen* (1761), the *Meng-ku wen-chien* (redacted from the *Ch'ing-wen-chien* of 1708). Man-Kam Leung, "Mongolian language education and examinations in Peking and other metropolitan areas during the Manchu dynasty in China (1644–1911)," *Canada Mongolia Review* (*Revue Canada-Mongolie*) 1, No. 1 (1975), pp. 29–32; Crossley, *A translucent mirror*, pp. 264–5, 322–3.

[47] A portion of this passage has been translated in Crossley, *Orphan warriors*, p. 27, and a different portion has been translated in Leung, "Mongolian language education," p. 40, from a reprinted text in Hsi Yü-fu, *Huang-ch'ao cheng-tien lei-ts'üan* (Taipei, 1969).

[48] As an introduction to the history of Ch'ing occupation of Turkestan, see Fletcher, "China and Central Asia," *The Chinese world order*, ed. John King Fairbank (Cambridge, Mass., 1968), pp. 219–24; Joanna Waley-Cohen, *Exile in mid-Qing China: Banishment to Xinjiang, 1758–1820* (New Haven, 1991), pp. 12–32.

[49] A valuable narrative in English based on Russian sources is Fred W. Bergholz's *The partition of the steppe:*

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tion the Dzunghars maintained strong connections with a variety of religious establishments in Tibet, including not only Buddhist but also openly shamanist sects. Through their religious and trade connections, Dzunghar leaders functioned over an extremely wide geographical range, including all Mongolia and Tibet, large parts of Central Asia, and the western portion of the Northeast. But the Dzunghars were also thrown increasingly into contact and rivalry with the Muslim rulers of the oasis towns of Turkestan. On those occasions when peace could be concluded between Oyirod and Muslim potentates, the result was sometimes a marital alliance, with or without conversion by one or another of the parties. Oyirods moving eastward had been helpful in specific ways to the Nurhaci and Hung Taiji regimes. They may have helped impress upon Nurhaci the usefulness of Buddhist imagery in political presentation, and there had been a small number of Oyirods among the first bureaucrats and examiners of Hung Taiji's bureaucracy at Mukden. It was most likely their influence that caused the Court of Colonial Affairs to classify Oyirod (who from about 1600 had a script slightly different from classical Mongolian) as a separate language. By the eighteenth century, the influence of the early Oyirod advisors on Hung Taiji had been forgotten, and there was no delicacy at the Court of Colonial Affairs regarding whether the Dzunghars were or were not Mongols. They were *mo-hsi O-lo-t'e Meng-ku*, "the Oyirod Mongols west of the Gobi."

The Ch'ing treatment of the Dzunghars and their leaders in the eighteenth century is the benchmark of the limits of Ch'ing expansion. Galdan's nephew Tsevan Rabdan, who had played a large role in Galdan's undoing, was himself ambitious. He defeated the Kyrgyz and dominated them as far as Lake Balkash. He defeated and absorbed the Torghuuds (once a branch of the Oyirods who had had a miserable sojourn in the vicinity of the Volga before returning to Mongolia to become victims of Tsevan Rabdan's expanding regime). In the early eighteenth century, he was successful in controlling part of Tibetan territory and deposing the last secular king of the country. His expansion stalled in Tibet, where the Ch'ing fought ferociously to establish a military outpost after 1718, and where Tsevan Rabdan was opposed by some Tibetan factions. He died in 1727 with the Tibetan situation unresolved, but

The struggle of the Russians, Manchus, and the Zunghar Mongols for empire in central Asia, 1619–1758 (New York and Bern, 1993). On the history of the Dzunghar (Zunghar) khanate, see pp. 31–68, 243–390. It is especially useful for those who have no access to Il'ia IAkovlevich Zlatkin's *Istoryia dzhungarskogo khanstva, 1635–1758* (Moscow, 1964; 2d ed. 1983), the most distinguished work on the Dzunghar regime. Mark Mancall, *Russia and China: Their diplomatic relations to 1728* (Cambridge, Mass., 1971), is based on Russian sources and concentrates on diplomatic exchanges involving the Romanov and Ch'ing empires with the khanates of Central and Inner Asia. For an informative note on the sources for and modern historiography of Ch'ing conflicts with the Dzunghar khanates, see Millward, *Beyond the pass*, pp. 26–7, 266–7.

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his son Galdan Tseren and other members of his family held out so tenaciously against further Ch'ing expansion that the Ch'ien-lung emperor, still new to the throne in 1738, agreed to a truce, drawing a line at the Altai mountains between the Ch'ing empire and the territories of "Dzungharia."

This line held until Galdan Tseren's death in 1745 sparked a dispute over the succession. The Ch'ing moved immediately to exploit dissension among the Dzunghars, who though not subjugated outright suffered severe privations from the renewed warfare. A minor Dzunghar prince, Amursana, defected to the Ch'ing in 1755, and in the characteristic Mongol-against-Mongol practice of the Ch'ing was dispatched by the Ch'ien-lung court back to Dzungharia to finish off the last resistance. His forces easily took Ili, in Turkestan. Amursana then decided to rebel. He had learned of and spread the news that the Ch'ing empire desired to break the Dzunghars into four small, weak khanates. He considered that a better outcome would be a single, strong khanate, with himself as khan. Amursana's rebellion ignited support from nobles in various parts of Mongolia and Turkestan, including the Ch'ing stronghold of Khalkha. The outcry on his behalf, however, was slightly greater than the ability of his supporters to gather and move troops. The Ch'ing cornered him in Turkestan, and as the Turkic-speaking, Islamic (mostly Kazakh) communities there were captured by or sheltered him, they too were set upon by the Ch'ing forces. In 1757 Amursana was killed, but turmoil in Turkestan continued. Rebellions by the loosely organized Muslim leaders of the oasis towns were serially suppressed, and by the later eighteenth century virtually all of Turkestan was under Ch'ing military occupation.

The Ch'ien-lung emperor was convinced that military suppression of the Dzunghars, who since Galdan had instigated a century of military strife (which meant glory for them, whether winning or losing), was insufficient. Their name had to be literally destroyed, their peoples dispersed, and any possibility of a new leader finding legitimacy for himself obliterated. The current name (but not the historical reference) "Dzunghar" was banned; only "Oirat" or "Oyirod Mongol" was permitted. Some former Dzunghars fled to Siberia, some to the Khalkha territories, and others were deported to the mines of Hei-lung-chiang. Those who remained in Turkestan came under the harsh rule of the Ch'ing occupier, Joohoi (Chao-hui, 1708–1764), who also oversaw continued suppression of Muslim revolts. The latent enthusiasm in other parts of Mongolia for Amursana's rebellion was not forgotten. For good measure, the discovery of lamas among the populations of Mongolia was banned; reincarnations would in future have to limit their appearances to Tibet, which Tsevan Rabdan had fought to dominate but which the Ch'ing government now controlled through their installation at Lhasa. All "Mongols," the court asserted, would be happy to see the Ch'ing patronizing

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the reformed Yellow Hat sect from there. The overwriting of Dzunghar identity with a Mongol label was enacted literally in the ensuing history of Turkestan, where Amursana had made his last stand. Ch'ing pacification of Turkestan was in one aspect not different from the quelling of Chakhar rebellions against the early empire. Eight Banner Mongols, now denominated as Tsereng, Bandi, Changling, and others, were sent to suppress resisting "Mongols" of the frontier. For the remainder of the empire, Mongol aristocrats, all still nominally loyal to Chinggis Khaghan in his new incarnation as the Ch'ing emperor, were in the forefront of the military occupation of Turkestan, which became the Ch'ing province of Sinkiang in 1880.

The treatment of the Dzunghars is a demonstration of the importance of understanding the composition and decomposition of the conquest elite in the Ch'ing expansion. With the defeat of the Dzunghars and incorporation of Dzungharia into the Ch'ing empire, the expansion was reaching its westward limits. Only a portion of Turkestan would be absorbed, and the installation of the garrisons there was as complete as it was going to be by about 1755. Dzungharia/Turkestan was to remain the western frontier of the Ch'ing, and the symptoms of its exoticization as a cultural twilight were already fixed by the eighteenth century. The "Fragrant Concubine," who inspired a host of erotic rumors that later became historical myths, was a powerful symbol of the region's permanent alterization as a land of sensuality, brutality, and inhospitality to civilization, the obverse of the savage spirit that made its horses so highly prized.[50] The peoples of the region were relegated to the "border barbarian" descriptions of the imperial tribute catalog. No Dzunghars after Amursana were invited into the conquest elite. It is true that Dzunghar leaders of the eighteenth century were often an advantageous buffer for the Ch'ing against possible Romanov encroachment in Mongolia or Turkestan, but these leaders were bargained with and rewarded as other border chieftains were. Their cooperation was paid for, but they as individuals were never given conventional hereditary status in the conquest elite. The Dzunghars were never converted from conquered to conquerors. That process of conversion ended at Dzungharia/Turkestan because the general mechanisms that had powered Ch'ing westward expansion were desynchronizing. The social process that had created the conquest elite had been a function of that expansion. The expansion ended with the occupation of

[50] See also Jonathan N. Lipman, *Familiar strangers: A history of Muslims in northwest China* (Seattle, 1997), pp. 58–102, particularly on Ch'ien-lung characterizations of Muslim violence and its interaction with law and frontier policy. On Hsiang Fei as person and as symbol see James A. Millward, "A Uyghur Muslim at the Qing Court: The meanings of the fragrant concubine," *JAS*, 53, No. 2 (May 1994), pp. 147–58, and on the exoticization of Turkestan in the eighteenth century, see Millward, *Beyond the pass*, pp. 194–295.

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Dzungharia/Turkestan, and so did the process of elaboration of the conquest elite.

The vanguard role that the Ch'ing assigned to Eight Banner Mongols and Khalkha Mongols who enlisted in the conquest was ultimately manifested in the numerical relationship of the Eight Banner Mongol populations to the nomadic populations of Mongolia and Dzungharia. The Ch'ing records of the eighteenth-century campaigns in Mongolia and Turkestan report about a million dead on the Dzunghar side, and only tens of thousands of survivors. Not surprisingly, the approximately four million Mongolian speakers alive in about 1800 were overwhelmingly associated with the Mongol Eight Banners, either through direct enrollment or family connection.[51] The decimation of Mongolian-speaking nomadic populations in the Ch'ing expansion of the eighteenth century, followed by the economic assaults on the nomadic economy in the nineteenth century, left the Mongol Eight Banners, by default, as the primary reservoir of increasing, accessible, and governable "Mongol" populations in the middle Ch'ing era.

Though the eighteenth-century court worked systematically to construct and represent a "Mongol" population under its rule, its policies not only acknowledged the historical, economic, and cultural diversity within these populations, but exploited it. Beginning in the seventeenth century but cresting in the eighteenth century, successive Ch'ing emperors consolidated a "Mongol" history and culture as a bulwark for their authority and legitimacy, but imposed increasingly intrusive governing policies that replaced the traditional elites of Mongolia, Tsinghai, and Turkestan with bureaucratically appointed functionaries. As a consequence, the administrative divisions and political distinctions among the populations of these regions multiplied dramatically in the Ch'ing period.

Reactions among local leaders in Mongolia and Turkestan were, not surprisingly, mixed. Leaders of the eastern populations who were incorporated earliest and rewarded most impressively tended to champion the notion of the Ch'ing emperors as successors of the Mongol Great Khans in reuniting all "Mongols." Leaders of the more westerly populations who were connected less intimately with the Aisin Gioro and the Manchu elite were often suspicious of this ideological amalgamation, and sometimes opposed it violently. Such resistance did not stop either the ideological consolidation or the political fragmentation. Before the final suppression of the Dzunghars, the Court of Colonial Affairs listed eighty-six Mongol "banners" (*khōshun*) in four

[51] The current population of Mongolia is about 2.5 million. See also Fletcher, "Ch'ing Inner Asia," p. 38; Dorothy Borei, "Economic implications of empire building: The case of Xinjiang," *Central and Inner Asian Studies*, 5 (1991), pp. 28, 36; and Crossley, *A translucent mirror*, p. 326.

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khanates (*pu*) of Khalkha. The addition of Ning-hsia, Kansu, and Tsinghai increased this by twenty-nine banners in five khanates. After suppression of the Dzunghars, the regions of Hami, Turfan, and the rest of Ch'ing-occupied Turkestan were described as having thirty-four banners in ten khanates. Thus, by about the middle of the eighteenth century, the centrally imposed political decentralization of Mongolia, Turkestan, and Tsinghai was built on a total of 149 banners, under 19 khans. The trend continued to the end of the imperial period, when parts of Mongolia and Sinkiang were administered under thirty-eight khanates (*fan-pu*).

As the Manchus and Mongols underwent a process of historical invention and ideological representation in the eighteenth century, the *Han-chün* were subjected to the opposite: disinvention, and sublimation into the civilian Chinese population. Genealogical criteria had become fundamental to status throughout the empire by the later Ch'ien-lung era among both bannermen and civilians. As a legal and political matter, not as an historical issue, genealogy ran like a buzz-saw through the *Han-chün* populations, lopping off a majority of the branches of the conquest elite and casting them into the civilian, conquered population. At the time of the founding of the Eight Banners Officers' Schools in Peking in 1728, rules stipulated that 60 percent of all matriculants be Manchu (who by this time may have represented at most 40 percent of all bannermen), 20 percent Mongol (who may have represented 10 percent of all bannermen), and 20 percent *Han-chün* (who at the time may have represented as much as 50 percent or more of all bannermen). In subsequent years Chinese civilians and *Han-chün* bannermen were admitted to the academies in equal portion. *Han-chün* continued to be enrolled in the Eight Banners to the end of the empire, but their numbers were small and their representation in the command ranks weak. Within the banners, higher ranks were with increasing frequency designated as being "for Manchus" (which could also mean Mongols). Many *Han-chün* took the hint and requested dismissal from the banners before they were excluded.

As in the period of the consolidation of the conquest elite, a complex of forces distilled the banners into their "Manchu," "Mongol," and "*Han-chün*" categories, with the result that *Han-chün* became a marginal and distasteful presence. By the end of the seventeenth century, the financial burden of the garrisons required some means of limiting eligibility for stipends. The crisis of the Three Feudatories War had discredited *Han-chün* sufficiently to make them targets for exclusion. An additional motive for the court to convert the *Han-chün* a second time – first from conquered to conquerors, now from conquerors to conquered – emerged as the empire recalibrated itself to perform less as a war machine and more as a government. Though it is not true that the Ch'ing government made itself Confucian, as some have described it, in

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order to gain the acquiescence of civil elites to the conquest, it is certainly true that the K'ang-hsi court became attentive to a careful representation of itself in intercourse with civil elites that would be consonant with basic Confucian rhetoric.

The Ch'ien-lung emperor not only continued the policies of expression and representation established under his grandfather, but elaborated on them. The writing and rewriting of history was massively accomplished during his reign. In the narrative he favored, the *Han-chün* were a problem. Since they were part of the conquest elite before the Ch'ing incursion inside the Great Wall in 1644, their loyalty to the Ch'ing court was not very instructive. It was no different in motivation or practice from that of the Manchus or Mongols. The Ch'ien-lung view, put simply, was that there should be a difference. *Han-chün* should be represented as Chinese who willingly joined the Ch'ing cause because they appreciated the righteousness of the Aisin Gioro and they understood the mission of the Ch'ing to save civilization from chaos. The means by which this characterization was achieved were various, and were all within the grasp of the Ch'ien-lung literary enterprises. First, the prominent lineages of the old Nikan families of Liao-tung who still remained in the *Han-chün* banners were transferred to the Manchu banners. Second, an extensive biographical review of the "twice-serving" officials who had changed loyalties from the Ming to the Ch'ing (in 1644 and 1645 primarily) made a strong distinction between the Liao-tung *Han-chün* and those who had been incorporated into the *Han-chün* banners during the conquest of north China. The latter were frankly condemned as traitors to the Ming who could not possibly have had real understanding of Ch'ing virtues and were serving not civilization, but their own petty interests.[52] Third, those *Han-chün* who loyally had given their lives to suppress the Three Feudatories, underlining again the distinction between loyalty and opportunism, were lionized in newly commissioned historical and literary works. Most pervasively, the Ch'ien-lung emperor declared that the *Han-chün* had no origins other than Chinese, and that those who had joined the Ch'ing in Liao-tung were simply Chinese who recognized the legitimacy of the Ch'ing fight against the Ming. Flat assertions of this idea were inserted into the prefaces of new historical works, taken up and repeated in parallel publications, and by the nineteenth century were accepted as the irrefutable facts of *Han-chün* provenance. By excluding the *Han-chün* from historical intimacy with the conquest elite and casting them instead as dedicated

[52] The biographies of those who served the Ming and then the Ch'ing have been an important source on the history of the *Han-chün* and on the process of Ch'ien-lung historicization of the *Han-chün*. See Frederic E. Wakeman, Jr., *The great enterprise: The Manchu reconstruction of imperial order in seventeenth-century China*, 2 Vols. (Berkeley, 1985), pp. 1129–39; and Crossley, "The Qianlong Retrospect on the Chinese-martial (*hanjun*) Banners," passim, and *A translucent mirror*, pp. 291–6.

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Confucian acolytes and defenders of their Ch'ing superiors, the Ch'ien-lung emperor gained a powerful symbol of Ch'ing legitimacy as a permanent, civilly oriented empire, whose rectitude had been energetically supported by Chinese from its earliest days.

FADING FUNCTIONS AND THE CASTE OF IDENTITY

There is little evidence that Nurhaci put much priority upon abstract and historically developed status or cultural characterization of his prominent servitors. This was consonant with his evident paramount goal, the enhancement of the fortune his family had accrued through domination of trade with Ming China and Yi Korea. The environment out of which Nurhaci's regime emerged was one of subtly shaded cultural differences, most of which had little impact on an individual's political loyalties. As a corollary these differences presented minimal obstruction to the rearrangement of loyalties and authority that Nurhaci intended to accomplish. The ambiguities of Liao-tung and western Chi-lin cultural life being as advantageous to him as they were, Nurhaci had every reason to allow them to remain ambiguous. This meant not only that hierarchies tended to be plastic, but that the rhetoric relating the strata to a legitimation of the regime, or prognostications on its mandate, was modest.

The period of Hung Taiji's reign, in which the empire was created, had more extensive ideological needs. By 1636 the extent of the Ch'ing territory and its population multiplied, became better delineated in terms of spatial boundaries, and encompassed a number of previously recognized political entities. Organizational requirements alone demanded that the elite be better defined, more elaborately stratified, and that admission and accreditation be made more systematic. Equally important, the establishment of Ch'ing suzerainty over diverse and historically well-defined areas meant that the imperial lineage, and Hung Taiji himself, had to devise a rhetoric of legitimacy that would be adaptable to future as well as past conquests. That is, it had to transcend particulars of regional identity, entrenched patterns of social and political authority, or standards of privilege in the areas it controlled or aspired to control. The strategy for representing this transcendence was not altogether unlike that seen in other contemporary empires. The Ch'ing empire, through both its political and its historical authority, imposed a set of archetypal historical identities upon its populations, while institutionalizing a narrative of those identities submitting to and being represented by a universal emperorship.

The ideological implications of the graduated alienation of the *Han-chün* from the Eight Banners and the relationship of these developments to the

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end stages of the conquest is evident. The dismantling of provisional conquest governments in the provinces and the establishment of civil governments demanded greater specialization in the roles of provincial military commanders (who were, increasingly, registered as Manchus) and of civil provincial governors (who were, increasingly, civilian Chinese). Abandonment of the liberal plan for development of a consolidated imperial elite meant the development, in the later eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, of more specialized programs for the cultural and professional preparation of the new segments of the elite and also for identification of common populations.[53] The pressure to eliminate *Han-chün* bannermen from the active rolls was effective over the long term, so effective that Europeans and Americans who observed the bannermen for the first time in the nineteenth century saw the "Chinese" bannermen remaining there as a small, odd, difficult-to-place group, an image that has persisted in modern scholarship on the Eight Banners.

As putative "Chinese" in this system were transformed to civil servants primarily, with suitable education in the political arts, so "Manchus" were subjected to the process of military professionalization, and what had once been institutions for the liberal preparation of a conquest elite became specialized schools for the training of bannermen in riding, shooting, and speaking and writing Manchu. Concepts of status and identity were integral to the transition from a conquest empire to a largely civil government, and in general the same concepts can be seen to have been increasingly stabilized as the functions of the conquest elite diminished or disappeared. Though it would be anachronistic to call the resulting concepts of status and identity at the end of the eighteenth century "racial," it is still fair to say that they were antecedents to the more rigid and volatile concepts of race and loyalty that more prominently came to light in the domestic and international struggles that wracked China in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

[53] On the effects of this on the later experience of the bannermen, see Crossley, *Orphan warriors*, pp. 143–50.

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CHAPTER 7

THE SOCIAL ROLES OF LITERATI IN EARLY TO MID-CH'ING

Benjamin A. Elman

In an imperial government in which power had been balanced since the early empire between an emperor and his officials, the interests of the Ch'ing dynasty were never uniformly decided in favor of either the ruler or his officials. No essentially "Manchu state" ever materialized that merely served the whims of the emperor and his court without resistance from the bureaucracy and the Han Chinese literati officials who served in it. Given the asymmetrical overlap between imperial interests and literati values, the dynasty functioned in terms of a partnership between the ruler and his literati officials in the bureaucracy. This dynamic partnership made Chinese political culture, especially under non-Han emperors, vital and adaptive. Despite misgivings on both sides, Ch'ing rulers made the classical values and ideas of their Han elites the sacred doctrines of Ch'ing civil governance because, in part, that is what their elites themselves believed.

Imperially sanctioned doctrines did not represent a monolithic and unrelenting system of dynastic hegemony, and the consequences of the Ch'ing dynasty's educational regime are analytically distinct from its intended political function. For example, important intellectual trends were unrelated to the empirewide civil examinations. In the first, second, and fourth sections below, an institutional and social analysis of the transformation of literati roles from 1650 to 1800 is presented in light of the empowerment of classical literacy by way of the civil examinations. The third section describes the interactions between the examination marketplace and elite cultural practice. The amount of criticism and resistance directed against the machinery of the civil examination regime is not detailed, but the rise of "Han Learning" and new interest in "natural studies" discussed below will show the importance of literati intellectual life in and outside the precincts of the Ch'ing state.[1] Nevertheless, the sociocultural roles of literati are better understood in the context of the civil examination process and its institutional evolution before 1800. The social habits, political interests, and moral values inherited by

[1] See Benjamin A. Elman, *A cultural history of civil examinations in late imperial China* (Berkeley, 2000), ch. 4 and 10.

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Ch'ing officials from the Ming dynasty were officially reproduced (with much unofficial and official dissent) through a system of schools and examinations that achieved their mature form after 1550 and lasted until 1905.

LITERATI EDUCATION, ELITE SOCIETY, AND CIVIL EXAMINATIONS EMPIREWIDE

In contrast to Chinese dynasties before the Sung, in which social position and political power had been based largely on kinship credentials, the Ch'ing government, except for its military banners and court families, was a meritocracy in which social prestige and political appointment depended for the most part on written examinations to legitimize public credentials. After the Ch'ing conquest in the middle of the seventeenth century, the formation of Han Chinese literati as a nonaristocratic elite status group with political status and social prerogatives was corroborated through trial by examination, and literati social and intellectual identities endured into the twentieth century. Deftly appropriating the civil values of classical learning to legitimate the institution of fair bureaucratic channels to select officials, Ch'ing emperors maintained a civil service system that occupied a central political and educational position in government and society until 1905, when civil examinations were abolished. A classical education based on nontechnical classical moral and political theory was as suitable for selection of premodern elites to serve the Ch'ing imperial bureaucracy as humanism and a Latin classical education served elites in early-modern Europe. Moreover, Ch'ing examinations still included policy questions dealing with the statecraft issues of fiscal policy, military organization, or political institutions of the day.[2]

Social aspects

Educational success required substantial investments of time, effort, and training to master classical learning. For families, clans, and lineages, the dynasty's mechanisms for political selection translated into educational targets for local strategists. Because the official schooling system was limited to candidates already literate in classical Chinese, initial stages in preparing a son for the civil service became the private responsibility of families seeking to attain or maintain elite status. Those who could afford the financial and labor sacrifices needed to prepare young men for the examinations did so. For those who succeeded, careerism usually won out over idealism among

[2] Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine, *From humanism to the humanities: Education and the liberal arts in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Europe* (Cambridge, Mass., 1986).

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talented young men when forced to choose between their social obligations to their parents and relatives and their personal aspirations. Failures, however, could choose teaching, pettifoggery, popular literature, and medicine as alternate careers that utilized their literacy.[3]

Social distinctions between literati, peasants, artisans, and merchants influenced how widely a classical education would be available. Because social advantages easily transmuted into academic advantages, one of the defining characteristics of literati status was examination success. Legally permitted to compete since the early Ming, merchant families also saw in the civil service the path to greater wealth and social success. Merchants in Ch'ing times such as the Yangchow salt controllers became cultured patrons of scholarship and publishing, almost indistinguishable from the literati elite. Classical scholarship flourished due to merchant patronage, and books were printed and collected in larger numbers than ever before. The result was a merging of literati and merchant social strategies and interests.[4]

Landed affluence and commercial wealth during the Ming dynasty were intertwined with high educational status. In the contest for examination success under the constraints of local quotas, artisans, peasants, and clerks in Ch'ing times were poorly equipped educationally to take advantage of the theoretical openness of the civil service. It was no accident that during the late empire only 1.6 to 1.9 percent of the total population achieved literati status by obtaining examination-based degrees. Although theoretically open to all, the classical content of the civil service competition excluded over 90 percent of the population from even the first step on the ladder to high success. Unequal social distribution of cultural resources meant that those from families with limited traditions of literacy were less likely to compete successfully in the degree market with those whose family traditions included classical literacy.[5]

As in early modern Europe, clear boundaries were erected in elite families to demarcate male education from female upbringing. Women in China were barred from the examination compounds (except in entertaining novels and stories where they cleverly posed as men), even though this practice was only

[3] See Fuma Susumu, "Sōshi hihon no sekai," in Ono Kazuko, ed., *Mimmatsu Shinsho no shakai to bunka* (Kyoto, 1996), pp. 189–238.

[4] Ping-ti Ho, "The salt merchants of Yang-chou: A study of commercial capitalism in eighteenth-century China," *HJAS*, 17 (1954), pp. 130–68.

[5] David Johnson, "Communication, class, and consciousness in late imperial China," in Johnson, Andrew Nathan, and Evelyn Rawski, eds., *Popular culture in late imperial China* (Berkeley, 1985), p. 59, estimates that there were at least 5 million classically educated male commoners in Ch'ing times, or roughly 5 percent of the adult male population in 1800, and 10 percent in 1700. Such rates were likely lower during Ming times, when the existence of private schools was less prevalent. See Ōkubo Eiko, *Min-Shin jidai shoin no kenkyū* (Tokyo, 1976), pp. 78–85, and Frederic Wakeman, Jr., *The fall of imperial China* (New York, 1975), pp. 22; and 36, n. 7.

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culturally enforced and never legally questioned. This gender split in family literacy remained intact until the seventeenth century, when education of women in elite families became more widespread, and when many elite sons received their early classical lessons from their mothers. Education for men and women thus meant different things, although the differences were dependent on a diffuse gender ideology granting boys competitive access via civil examinations to political, social, and economic leadership in society, while at the same time defining women in subordinate roles as wives, mothers, and matriarchs. Talented women often lived as courtesans or concubines.[6]

Classical learning thus mattered for millions of elite families until the early twentieth century. Artisans and other commoners, however, typically lacked access to the proper training and educational facilities for mastering literati political and moral discourse. Long-term lineage prestige required success on the imperial examinations. Subsequent office-holding conferred power and prestige on those most closely related to the degree-holder and official. The flow of local prestige went further afield, following diverse agnatic routes within the lineage and among affines, as when someone married into a lineage that had traditionally dominated local examination quotas.[7]

In the popular imagination, "fate" was typically evoked to confuse the inherent social inequalities at the heart of the selection process. The educational mortality of the lower classes was attributed by elites to their lack of mental gifts. When compared with the fatalistic ideologies common among Buddhist or Hindu peasants in South and Southeast Asia, for example, the Chinese ideology of teaching and learning did contribute to beliefs in the usefulness of education and created a climate of rising expectations.[8]

Well-organized kinship groups within literati society translated social and economic strength into educational achievement, which in turn re-enforced their control of local cultural resources. Higher-order lineages, built around corporate estates that united local lineages, required classically literate and highly placed leaders who moved easily in elite circles and could mediate on behalf of the kin group with county, provincial, and capital leaders. Economic surpluses produced by wealthy lineages, particularly in the prosperous Yangtze delta and southeastern provinces, enabled members of rich segments of such lineages to have better access to a classical education and success on

[6] Patricia Ebrey, *The inner quarters: Marriage and the lives of Chinese women in the Sung period* (Berkeley, 1993), pp. 21–44. See also Ellen Widmer and Kang-i Sun Chang, eds., *Writing women in late imperial China* (Stanford, 1997), passim.

[7] See Elman, *A cultural history*, pp. 242–47.

[8] See Benjamin A. Elman, "Social, political, and cultural reproduction via civil service examinations in late imperial China," *JAS*, 51, No. 1 (Feb. 1991), pp. 7–28.

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civil examinations, which in turn led to sources of political and economic power outside the lineage. Such elites, whether as officials, local elites, popular writers, or literati doctors, were also the source of most published works during the Ch'ing dynasty.[9]

Local charitable schools within lineages represented the intermingling of charitable institutions, a classical education, and local philanthropy. Lineage-endowed schooling provided more opportunity for the advancement of lesser families in the lineage than would have been possible where lineages were not prominent. The social mobility of lineages, taken as a corporate whole, was thus distinct from that of individual families. Dominant lineages and nouveau riche families re-enforced their local status through lineage schools, medical traditions, and merchant-funded academies.

Classical literacy was a vital element for kinship strategies. Coming from a family with a strong tradition of classical scholarship provided boys, and indirectly girls, with local advantages for future social and political advancement. Within a broader society of illiterates and those only literate in vernacular Chinese, control over the written word in classical texts had political and social advantages. Compilation of genealogies, preparation of deeds, medical expertise, settlements for adoption contracts and mortgages, and a classical education for children required expertise and contacts that only the well educated within a descent group could provide. Examinations represented the focal point through which imperial interests, family strategies, and individual hopes and aspirations were directed. In the absence of alternative careers of comparable social status and political prestige, the goal of becoming an official took priority.

Cultural aspects

In addition to its social functions, the civil service competition created an empirewide curriculum which consolidated literati families all over the empire into culturally defined status groups. Once reset in place, the Ch'ing recruitment system achieved for education a degree of standardization and local importance unequaled in the rest of the world before 1800. Preparation for the civil service entailed long-term internalization of standards of thought, perception, appreciation, and action. For the court and the bureaucracy, tests in classical composition ensured shared discourses in officialdom.

[9] For discussion, see Benjamin A. Elman, *Classicism, politics, and kinship: The Ch'ang-chou school of new text Confucianism in late imperial China* (Berkeley, 1990), p. xix. See also Joseph McDermott, "Land, labor, and Lineage in Southeast China," paper presented at the Song-Yüan-Ming Transitions Conference, Lake Arrowhead, Calif., June 5–11, 1997.

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For the literatus, however, to write was to engage in a form of literate culture that reached back to the ancients and reenunciated the truths of scholarly predecessors. For local society, the literatus's unique ability to write also gave him access as a producer of texts to a private publishing world the government could influence but not control. Classical literacy yielded both "literati culture" and the literatus as a unique "man of culture" outside the government. Proficiency in the literary arts was required to enter the social and political elite.

Civil examinations were functionally tied to a county school system. In their origins, these schools were intended to prepare candidates for written tests devised by imperially appointed examiners, and the imperial state committed itself financially to support an empirewide school network. In Ming and Ch'ing, formal training at imperial institutions of higher education was eclipsed because classical literacy was required to enter the schools. Government-sponsored "schools" instead functioned as waystations on the ladder of success during the Ming and Ch'ing dynasties. Actual teaching was better done in lineage schools and private academies.

Training in vernacular and classical literacy was left to the private domain, because imperially sponsored schools were never mandated to provide mass education. Schools were designed to recruit talent into the political elite. Ch'ing rulers recognized elite education based on the Classics as an essential task of government. Civil officials perceived classical education as the correct measure of their moral and social worth. Both sides believed that ancient wisdom, properly generalized and inculcated, tempered men as leaders and prepared them for sharing in political power.

The autonomy of education from political and social control rarely became an issue of contention before 1800. Rulers and elites equated social and political order with moral and political indoctrination through education. What became a bone of contention was the differing views literati had of the kind of education best suited for the fulfillment of their social and political roles. During the seventeenth century, for example, private academies in the South briefly became centers for dissenting political views.[10] High-minded officials often appealed for the relative autonomy of education in private academies as an antidote to the warping of classical educational goals by the cut-throat examination competition.

In its most strident form, literati dissent never challenged the dynasty's prerogative to take the lead in educational policies. Occupational prohibitions, which extended from so-called "mean peoples" (traveling acting troupes, yamen clerks, tanners, gravediggers, etc.) to all Taoist and Buddhist

[10] John Meskill, *Academies in Ming China: A historical essay* (Tucson, 1982).

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clergy, kept many out of the civil service competition. Due to intense commercialization of the economy and slow but steady demographic growth, the Ch'ing civil service was on the one hand a story of the expansion and intensification of the examination machinery from the capital down to all 1,200–1,500 counties. The great mark of the Ming-Ch'ing system was its extraordinary elaboration of earlier imperial civil examination models. On the other hand, the secular upsurge in numbers of candidates, which climaxed under the Ch'ing dynasty, was marked by the increasing dominance of a small number of *chin-shih* (literati presented to the emperor for official appointment) degree-holders over increasing numbers of local and provincial degree-holders.[11]

Political aspects

The Ch'ing bureaucracy reproduced itself through a selection and appointment system that had four major components: (1) schools; (2) examinations; (3) recommendations; and (4) appointments. Those who held office by virtue of their degrees were part of a larger administrative process involving the Ministry of Rites for education and the Ministry of Personnel for appointment and evaluation. The degree curriculum became the basis for the imperial school system that extended down from the Imperial College (*Kuo-tzu-chien*) in the capital to the prefectural and county levels. Consequently, examinations were part of the larger administrative process of educating, selecting, evaluating, promoting, and punishing officialdom.

By 1500, the official school system was overshadowed by the examinations for which the schools were designed to prepare students. Enrollment in the official schools counted for little if the student then failed to pass the provincial or metropolitan civil examinations. Doomed to lives as minor functionaries, students who remained in official schools too long had little chance for success in late imperial politics. By Ch'ing times appointment to respectable government positions was difficult for candidates who only got as far as the provincial *chü-jen* (lit., raised candidate) degree. By 1800, only the *chin-shih* degree promised high political position and elite social esteem.

The curriculum in official and private schools stressed moral philosophy, classical studies, and history. Mastery of moral philosophy was measured by examination questions based on the Four Books (*Analects* of Confucius, *Mencius*, *Great Learning*, and *Doctrine of the Mean*) that required several essay answers. An essay elucidating the "meaning" of a passage from one of the Five Classics was the standard for classical studies. History questions stressed

[11] See Elman, *A cultural history*, pp. 150–63.

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Table 7.1. *The Format of Provincial and Metropolitan Civil Service Examinations, 1646–1756*

Session One	Session Two	Session Three
1. Four Books (*ssu-shu*) three quotations	1. Discourse (*lun*) one essay	1. Five policy presentations (*ching-shih shih-wu ts'e*)
2. Five Classics (*wu-ching*) four quotations each, with the candidate choosing one Classic	2. Imperial Mandates, Admonitions, Memorials (*chao*, *kao*, *piao*)	
	3. Judicial terms (*p'an-yü*)	

early dynastic histories such as the *Han-shu* (*History of the Former Han Dynasty*) and the *Shih-chi* (*Records of the Grand Historian*), as well as Confucius's *Ch'un-ch'iu* (*Spring and Autumn Annals*), one of the Five Classics but essentially an historical chronicle. Of note in this formalization of the provincial and metropolitan examinations into three discrete sessions was the priority given to the Four Books over the Five Classics in session one, the role of legal and documentary requirements for session two, and the required policy questions in session three. Until 1787, students were required to answer three questions drawn from the Four Books, but they could specialize in one of the Five Classics (see Table 7.1).

All candidates were expected to prepare answers written in eight-legged essay forms, which were derived from mid-Ming standardized essays that were selected as models of emulation. The essays that dealt with quotations from the Four Books were read with care, and frequently the remaining questions during sessions two and three of the examination were read as confirming the initial standings. The result was that students frequently went through the motions in preparing answers for later sessions, realizing that their standing had been determined based on earlier sessions.

Sung dynasty (960–1279) interpretations of the Four Books and Five Classics were chosen by early Ch'ing emperors and their successors as the established curriculum. On the Four Books, candidates were especially expected to have mastered the relevant materials in Chu Hsi's (1130–1200) *Collected Notes*. For the Five Classics, Chu Hsi's views were also favored. On the *I-Ching* (*Change Classic*), Ch'eng I's (1032–85) commentary and Chu Hsi's "Original Meanings" were required. Ts'ai Shen's (1167–1230) commentary to the *Documents Classic*, which Chu Hsi had directed Ts'ai to compile, was emphasized. Similarly for the *Poetry Classic*, Chu's "Collected Commentaries" were requirements. For the *Spring and Autumn Annals* and the *Record of Rites*, for which Chu Hsi had not prepared commentaries, the views of other Sung

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literati were used as standards. In addition to the ancient "three commentaries," that is, the *Tso*, *Kung-yang*, and *Ku-liang* commentaries for the *Annals*, Hu An-kuo's (1074–1138) commentary was also chosen. For the *Record of Rites*, Han and T'ang commentaries were at first required, although, later in the Ming, Ch'en Hao's (1261–1341) "Collected Sayings" was singled out for attention.[12]

In the early Ch'ing, the emperors' championing of the "Learning of the Way" (*tao-hsüeh*, sometimes called Sung Neo-Confucianism) drew attention away from the Ch'ing military conquest. When the K'ang-hsi emperor (r. 1662–1722) had his court scholars prepare the compendium entitled the *Hsing-li ching-i* (*Essentials of works on human nature and principle*, issued in 1715), and the encyclopedic *Ku-chin t'u-shu chi-ch'eng* (*Synthesis of books and illustrations past and present*), revised and printed in 1728, he and his government were emulating the early Ming in seeking to present the ruler as a sage-ruler working in partnership with his elite officials in promoting the Learning of the Way. This was reenacted by the Ch'ien-lung emperor and his officials in 1773, when he ordered them to compile the greatest bibliographic project in imperial history, the *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu* (*Complete collection of the four treasuries*), which was designed in part to ferret out anti-Manchu writings and thereby control, like its Ming predecessor, the *Yung-lo ta-tien* (*Yung-lo Encyclopedia, 1402–25*), the imperially sanctioned version of acceptable knowledge.[13]

Already, the 1673 imperial preface for reissuing the Ming imperially sponsored *Hsing-li ta-ch'üan* (*Great collection of works on human nature and principle*), a Learning of the Way compendium for the examination curriculum (from which the aforementioned *Hsing-li ching-i* was drawn), linked early Ch'ing political legitimacy (*chih-t'ung*, lit., legitimate transmission of governance) to the cultural policies of Ming emperors. The preface based that legitimacy on the "method of the mind" (*hsin-fa*) transferred from the early sage-kings to their Ming and Ch'ing successors, who had reappropriated the Way as receivers of the *tao-t'ung* (legitimate succession of the Way). Ch'ing emperors, like their Ming predecessors, were presented as enlightened sage-rulers.[14] Ch'ing rulers claimed, moreover, that the moral principles of antiquity had been transmitted, mind to mind, from the sages of antiquity to the present

[12] Chang Hsia's (1161–1237) commentary for the *Annals* was dropped in Ming times. Like Ts'ai Shen, Chang had studied under Chu Hsi.

[13] Benjamin Elman, "Where is King Ch'eng? Civil examinations and Confucian ideology during the early Ming, 1368–1415," *T'oung Pao*, 79 (1993), pp. 23–68. See R. Kent Guy, *The Emperor's four treasuries: Scholars and the state in the late Ch'ien-lung era* (Cambridge, Mass., 1987).

[14] See the "Imperial Preface," in *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu* (Peking, 1773–1782; rpt. Taipei, 1983–1986), 710, pp. 1–2; and for discussion, see Huang Chin-shing, *Philosophy, philology, and politics in eighteenth-century China* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 157–68.

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emperor via Ch'eng-Chu teachings, that is, by way of the concepts of the Ch'eng I (1033–1107) and Chu Hsi "school of principle" (*li-hsüeh*). Thereafter, emperors, officials, and advocates of the Learning of the Way shared affinities suitable to each. They worked together to fashion the ideological mortar of the late empire.

EMPOWERING CLASSICAL LITERACY BEFORE 1800

Imperial power in the Ch'ing period was clothed in classical concepts and rhetoric that served to justify those who brandished such language. Political rhetoric drawn from the Classics represented the ideological voice of the late imperial government, the cumulative effort by rulers, statesmen, military leaders, and local literati to explain their monopoly over the institutions by which public order was maintained. Classical studies, institutionalized as political discourse, became a system of ideological exclusion and inclusion, which delineated the public mystique of dynastic prerogative.[15]

Classical studies in Ch'ing China

Classical and historical studies provided frameworks in Ch'ing China for the habits, interests, and values that constituted the inherited ways of thinking and behavioral routines of literati scholar-officials. Each classical text accumulated a history of its effects and interpretations, which became a constituent part of the *raison d'être* of the dynasty. Learning of the Way as imperial ideology during the late empire represented the institutionalization of "truth" by state authorities, who selected and interpreted commentaries on the Classics and Dynastic Histories to present acceptable views of man, society, and the world that would contribute to the consolidation of dynastic authority. Because of the priority of the Classics as guidelines for political authority and dissent against that authority, Ming and Ch'ing literati were accepted as interpreters and transmitters of the classical legacy.

The mastery of classical studies for political discourse in imperial China was a prerequisite for the rise of elite intellectual trends in every dynasty. After the formation of imperially sanctioned New Text Confucianism during the Former Han dynasty (206 B.C.–A.D. 8), politics in succeeding dynasties usually was expressed through the language of the Classics or Dynastic Histories. Idealistic scholar-statesmen, cynical political opportunists, and even autocratic rulers channeled their political views through the controlled medium of ritual protocol, classical sanctions, and historical precedents. The

[15] Cf. Philip Rieff, *The feeling intellect: Selected writings* (Chicago, 1990).

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millennial connection between the Classics of antiquity and premodern Chinese political discourse, whether reactionary, moderate, or radical, suggests the power these texts had over political behavior and expression in imperial China. Political reformism and classical iconoclasm often went hand in hand. Classical philology was necessary as a form of literati expertise both to endorse imperial policy or to gainsay it by charging that certain classical texts were misinterpreted or forgeries.

Control of classical interpretation correlated with dynastic power. Literati scholars and officials were indispensable partners of the dynasty. Setting a precedent that lasted from 1313 until 1905, Mongol rulers during the Yüan dynasty (1280–1368) were prevailed upon by their literati advisors to install the interpretations of the great Sung philosophers Ch'eng I and Chu Hsi as the orthodox "Ch'eng-Chu" guidelines for the imperial examination system. Ming and Ch'ing emperors followed suit, similarly persuaded that the Ch'eng-Chu school provided the most acceptable justification for their rule. Sung dynasty "Learning of the Way" became the vision of the highest values in the late empire.

The Ch'eng-Chu orthodoxy was increasingly challenged beginning in the sixteenth century, however. Criticism accelerated during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. A tug of war developed among literati in and outside of government over how the Classics and Four Books should be evaluated. The Classics were read and interpreted with new eyes and new strategies. Due in part to the Jesuit impact, literati in the seventeenth century reevaluated the classical canon in light of ancient natural philosophy and Western astronomy (see below).

The classical curriculum for a "writing elite"

The number of literati with regular civil or military degrees numbered almost 750,000 in the mid-Ch'ing. This pool of degree-holders included local, classically literate teachers and scholars, as well as officials whose interests would be affected by any changes in the curriculum or the selection process. Moreover, the much larger pool of candidates for the biennial qualifying examinations, which probably reached over two million by 1800 (assuming an average of 1,500 local candidates for each of the 1,500 counties), when added to the 750,000 local, provincial, and palace degree-holders, means that by 1800 almost three million men were part of the classical constituency that the imperial examinations mobilized.[16]

[16] See Chung-li Chang, *The Chinese gentry: Studies of their role in nineteenth-century Chinese society* (Seattle, 1955), pp. 71–164.

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Because civil service examinations tested classical learning based on ancient texts drawn from classical antiquity, they were essentially tests administered in a written language that was partially divorced from spoken Mandarin and regional vernaculars. To acquire training necessary for the civil service, students preparing for the examinations in effect mastered a second language whose linguistic terseness, thousands of unusual characters, and archaic grammatical forms required memorization and constant attention from childhood to manhood. Rites of passage from childhood to young adult in wealthy literati families during Ch'ing times were measured by the number of ancient classical texts mastered at a particular age. The "capping" of a young boy between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one, for example, implied that he had gained mastery of the Four Books and of one of the Five Classics, the minimum requirement from 1370 to 1787 to compete in local civil examinations.[17]

The official school system was limited to candidates already conversant in Mandarin and literate in classical writing. Presuming the ability to read and write, official schools were directed mainly at examination preparation and not elementary tasks of reading and writing. Classical literacy was formed through a three-stage learning process: (1) memorization of Chinese graphs; (2) reading the Four Books, one of the Five Classics (until 1787, when all the Classics were required to be memorized), and Dynastic Histories; and (3) composition. An authorized classical language may have served functionally as a linguistic instrument of social and political policy, but more importantly that language also served as the lingua franca of classically educated elites.

The ability to write elegant examination essays was the crowning achievement for educated men. (For women it was poetry.) The learning process began with rote memorization during childhood, continued with youthful reading, and concluded with mature writing. As a graded sequence of learning, its foundation was long hours of memorization spent by children aged three to eight. The Ming loyalist turned early Ch'ing educator, Lu Shih-i (1611–72), believed that the capacity for memorizing (*chi-hsing*) was strongest at an early age, while the capacity for understanding (*wu-hsing*) was a gradual achievement that derived from mastering the literary language and its moral and historical content.[18]

[17] Charles Ridley, "Educational theory and practice in late imperial China" (diss., Stanford University, 1973), pp. 150–52, and John Dardess, "The management of children and youth in upper-class households in late imperial China," paper presented at the meetings of the Pacific Coast Branch of the American Historical Association held in Pasadena, Calif., at Occidental College (Summer 1987).

[18] See Lu Shih-i's essays distinguishing elementary (*hsiao-hsüeh*) from advanced (*ta-hsüeh*) education, in Li Kuo-chün, ed., *Ch'ing-tai ch'ien-ch'i chiao-yü lun-chu hsüan* (Peking, 1990), Vol. 1, pp. 129–44.

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First children learned written graphs. Usually before they entered clan, lineage, or temple schools at age eight, students had already memorized the *Thousand Character Text* (*Ch'ien-tzu wen*) and *Hundred Surnames* (*Pai-chia hsing*) primers, which dated from the Sung. In addition, they mastered the *Three Character Classic* (*San-tzu ching*), a tract attributed to Wang Ying-lin (1223–96) in the early Yüan.[19] Altogether the total of 2,636 graphs in these three famous primers contained about 1,500 different written characters. Preschool sessions at home, often under the guidance of their mothers, enabled students to memorize the important sequences and combinations of written graphs that were peculiar to the classical written language.[20]

Memorization was reinforced by calligraphy practice. Educators in Ch'ing emphasized tracing all the characters in primers as the best way to improve calligraphy.[21] In his discussion of methods for teaching youths, Wang Yün (1784–1854) noted that the knowledge of characters (*shih-tzu*) was the primary constituent of literacy. Reading and writing could begin only after about two thousand different graphs had been committed to memory.[22]

Next came the memorization of the Four Books and reading the Five Classics. If minimal classical literacy required mastery of two thousand different characters, students generally increased that total steadily to the over 10,000 characters required for fully empowering classical literacy.[23] The paleographical dictionary *Shuo-wen chieh-tzu* (*Analysis of characters as an explanation of writing*), compiled by Hsü Shen (58–147) during the Later Han dynasty, for example, contained 9,373 different characters arranged according to 530 radicals (*pu-shou*), the basic framework in most premodern classical dictionaries.[24] Lu Fa-yen's (fl. c. A.D. 601) *Ch'ieh-yün* (*Rhymes by syllabic transcription*) contained about 12,000 different characters. Subsequently, Ch'en P'eng-nien (961–1017) enlarged the *Ch'ieh-yün* to include 26,194

[19] The attribution of the *San-tzu ching* to Wang Ying-lin began in 1666 by the commentator Wang Hsiang, although recent scholarship challenges the assumption that a polymath such as Wang Ying-lin would have produced such an ideologically biased classical primer. See Michael Fish, "Bibliographical notes on the *San Tzu Ching* and related texts" (M.A. thesis, Indiana University, 1968), pp. 26–34.

[20] See Angela Ki Che Leung, "Elementary education in the lower Yangtze region in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries," in Elman and Alexander Woodside, eds., *Education and society in late imperial China, 1600–1900* (Berkeley, 1994), pp. 393–6, and Evelyn Rawski, *Education and popular literacy in Ch'ing China* (Ann Arbor, 1979), pp. 136–9.

[21] On Sung dynasty primers, see Thomas H. C. Lee, "Sung schools and education before Chu Hsi," in Wm. Theodore de Bary and John Chaffee, eds., *Neo-Confucian education: The formative period* (Berkeley, 1989), pp. 130–1.

[22] See Wang Yün, "Chiao t'ung-tzu fa," in *Ch'ing-tai ch'ien-ch'i chiao-yü lun-chu hsüan*, Vol. 3, pp. 484–92.

[23] On literacy and empowerment, see Harvey Graff, *The legacies of literacy: Continuities and contradictions in Western culture and society* (Bloomington, 1987), pp. 10–11.

[24] See Benjamin A. Elman, *From philosophy to philology: Social and intellectual aspects of change in late imperial China* (Cambridge, Mass., 1984), pp. 213–15.

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graphs, which he and his compilers entitled the *Kuang-yün* (*Expansion of rhymes*). It was then further enlarged as the *Chi-yün* (*Collected rhymes*) to include over 50,000 graphs.[25] The Southern Sung polymath, Cheng Ch'iao (1104–62), analyzed over 24,000 characters in his *T'ung-chih* (*Comprehensive encyclopedia*). During the Ch'ing dynasty, the *K'ang-hsi tzu-tien* (*K'ang-hsi dictionary*), completed in 1716, grouped 47,030 different characters under 214 radicals. Altogether there were about 48,000 different characters in late imperial times, but many of them were simply variant forms.[26]

Estimates of the total number of graphs in each Classic may be disputed, but literati educators scheduled the memorization process according to the number of graphs. Wang Ch'ang (1725–1806), a private academy teacher in the heyday of Han Learning when all of the Five Classics were required for the civil examinations, told incoming students in 1789 at his academy in Nan-ch'ang, Kiangsi, that the total number of words (including many repeated graphs) in the Classics were 40,848 in the *Poetry Classic*, 27,134 in the *Documents*, 24,437 in the *Change*, 98,994 in the *Record of Rites* (which included the *Great Learning* and the *Doctrine of the Mean*), and 15,984 in the *Spring and Autumn Annals*. Wang enthusiastically claimed that it would take students only 690 days, if they were diligent, to recite from memory the more than 200,000 words in these five texts.[27] (That is, they would memorize new passages of about 300 words each day, while retaining, of course, what they had memorized on all of the previous days.)

Repetition as a habit of learning based on reciting and copying was the key to developing the memory as a pedagogic tool. The child's ability to memorize was thus highly prized among literati and in popular culture. Legends of men who as youths had committed prodigious amounts of information to memory were often recounted.[28] When it became known that the Jesuit missionary Matteo Ricci (1552–1610), for example, had a prodigious memory, which was based on the European art of remembering the order of things (what Jonathan Spence calls the "memory palace"), Ricci was asked to present his mnemonic methods to the literati world. Ricci used his memory skills to enhance literati interest in Christianity.[29]

[25] Thomas H. C. Lee, "Sung schools and education before Chu Hsi," pp. 131–2.

[26] For discussion, see T. H. Tsien, *Written on bamboo and silk* (Chicago, 1962), p. 24; S. Robert Ramsey, *The languages of China* (Princeton, 1987), pp. 116–24; and John DeFrancis, *The Chinese language: Fact and fantasy* (Honolulu, 1984), pp. 82–5.

[27] Wang Ch'ang, *Ch'un-jung-t'ang chi* (1807 ed.), 68, pp. 9a–b. The total number of words in the Five Classics was 207,397, according to Wang. See also Miyazaki Ichisada, *Kakyoshi* (1946, rev. ed., Tokyo, 1987), pp. 294–7. Cf. the shortened list in Miyazaki Ichisada, *China's examination hell: The civil service examination of imperial China*, trans. Conrad Schirokauer (New York and Tokyo, 1976), p. 16.

[28] These stories are recounted in Ch'en Meng-lei and Chiang T'ing-hsi, eds., *Ku-chin t'u-shu chi-ch'eng* (1728 ed.), Vol. 606, 112, pp. 32a–4a. Cf. Tsien, *Written on bamboo and silk*, pp. 73–6.

[29] Jonathan D. Spence, *The memory palace of Matteo Ricci* (New York, 1985), pp. 3–4, 140–1, 160–1.

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Instruction in mnemonic skills was part of the teaching repertoire where oral recitation was aided by rhyming characters, four-character jingles, and the technique of writing by matching balanced, antithetical pairs of characters known as *shu-tui*. Most educators made the memorization of such two-character phrases a major building block of a classical memory. After the poetry question was added in 1756, which required candidates to compose regulated verse, the requirements of balance, symmetry, and antithetical lines became even more pronounced.[30] Seeing the usefulness of memory techniques and printed primers to convey both vocabulary and doctrine, Jesuits constructed their own classical primer, entitled *T'ien-chu sheng-chiao ssu-tzu ching* (*The Catholic four-character classic*), as a means to create a popular catechism in classical languages to spread the foreign faith.[31]

To facilitate composition of classical-style essays, the K'ang-hsi emperor in 1704 ordered compilation of the *P'ei-wen yün-fu* (*Thesaurus arranged by rhymes*), which was completed and printed in 1711 and reprinted in 1720. This sophisticated reference work classified phrases and allusions according to the rhyme of over ten thousand different characters that appeared as the last character in a passage. Under each entry, the editors illustrated the word's literary uses. One of the key aspects of the *Thesaurus* for examination candidates was that it presented pairs of parallel phrases, which could be easily memorized.[32]

In typical cases of a late imperial examination life, boys began in their fourth year (three years old by Western count) to learn the *Thousand Character Text* at home. By the age of sixteen they were usually ready to take the county licensing examination requiring classical essays and regulated verse.[33] The content of childhood education is listed here by the age in *sui* at which a boy studied a particular text:

Age	4–5	*Thousand Character Text*
	5–11	*Three Character Classic*
		Hundred Surnames
		Works on poetry (required on civil examinations after 1756)
		Filial Piety Classic
		Great Learning, *Doctrine of the Mean*, *Analects*, and *Mencius* (These are the Four Books)

[30] Wang Yün, "Chiao t'ung-tzu fa," p. 486.

[31] See Eugenio Menegon, "The Catholic four-character classic (*Tianzhu Shengjiao Sizijing*): A Confucian pattern to spread a foreign faith in late Ming China," University of California, Berkeley, seminar paper (Fall 1992).

[32] For discussion, see James J. Y. Liu, *The art of Chinese poetry* (Chicago, 1962), pp. 146–50.

[33] For Fang I-chih (1611–71) as a late Ming example of examination life, see Willard J. Peterson, *Bitter gourd: Fang I-chih and the impetus for intellectual change* (New Haven, 1979), pp. 44–63.

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	Poetry Classic
	Classical writing primers
12	Recite the Four Books from memory
13	Review Four Books and Five Classics
	Erh-ya (*Progress toward elegance*) dictionary
	Poetry exercises
14	*Record of Rites*
	Spring and Autumn Annals
	Tso Commentary
	Composition exercises
15	*Rites of Chou*
	Decorum Ritual
17	Historical collections such as *Tzu-chih t'ung-chien kang-mu* (*Condensation of the Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government*), attributed to Chu Hsi[34]

The sequence of readings represented a classical hierarchy starting with elementary texts before mastering the more difficult Four Books and Five Classics. Composition, defined as the dual ability to write well about the Four Books and Five Classics using classical forms and also to compose poetry in regulated verse, culminated the transition from childhood to young student. Historical readings were needed to handle policy questions given in provincial, metropolitan, and palace examinations.[35]

Apart from the obvious differences in the social status and political power of the audiences, one of the key cultural differences between the audience for works requiring full classical literacy in late imperial China and those for whom more popular works using vernacular literacy were intended was that among the former, the ability to write took precedence. The regimen for civil examination candidates was not intended to make them members of a "reading public," although an elite readership was a by-product of their training. They were in training, via memorization and calligraphy practice, to become members of a "writing elite" whose essays would mark them as classically trained literati able to write their way to fame, fortune, and power via essays, poetry, memorials, and other documentary forms.[36]

[34] Ridley, "Educational theory and practice in late imperial China," pp. 153–6, 346–50, 376–9, which presents the childhood training of Chang Chien (Chi-chih, b. 1853), the 1894 palace examination *optimus*.

[35] Ridley, "Educational theory and practice in late imperial China," p. 155.

[36] See Liang, Ch'i-ch'ao, *Intellectual trends in the Ch'ing period*, trans. Immanuel Hsü (Cambridge, Mass., 1959), p. 28; and Theodore Huters, "From writing to literature: The development of late Qing theories of prose," *HJAS*, 47, No. 1 (June 1987), pp. 51–96. Cf. Grafton and Jardine, *From humanism to the humanities*, pp. 161–220.

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Composition, then, was the final stage of a classical education. The stiff requirements of writing for the civil examinations kept out commoners who were only primer-literate or barely able to read vernacular novels or plays. To write classical prose well was to perform a literary art whose cultural expectations were limited to and appreciated by an elite audience that not only could read the product but could also understand and reproduce the prosodic rules that underlay the score. This high art of writing was maintained during the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century publishing boom which produced a plethora of popular literature, religious tracts, practical manuals, and private essays produced by local literati and commoners.[37] To write with technical proficiency and aesthetic sensibility was the *sine qua non* of the literatus. In the view of the court and the bureaucracy, classical composition was a means to ensure common linguistic traits and classical memories in officialdom. From the perspective of the literatus, to write was to engage in a form of literate culture (*wen*) that allowed him to reach back to the ancients and reenunciate the truths of his scholarly predecessors. Both the bureaucratic needs of the Ch'ing state and the cultural sensibilities of highly educated men were met in the examination regime.

To write about the Four Books and Five Classics required a literatus "to speak in the words of the sages." A child could memorize characters, sing out poetry lines, and master balanced, antithetical phrases, but achieving a full classical education required a level of understanding and thinking that only a young adult could attain and project in an essay. For example, Chang Hsüeh-ch'eng (1738–1801), who spent much of his career teaching classical writing at academies while waiting for an official appointment, described the transition from child to adult among elites in terms of writing.[38] Chang and other educators contended that as youths enhanced their writing skills they were able to write longer and more complicated essays. For Chang, the whole essay mattered more than its separate parts because a child could readily mimic each of the parts. Many other teachers saw the parts as the means to prepare the boy for the whole essay. They trained children to write the separate parts of the eight-legged essay before they attempted to link the parts together into a coherent essay. Both sides were agreed, however, that young children were incapable of writing meaningful essays. Numerous writing primers were devised to try to facilitate the transition from reading to writing.[39]

[37] Cynthia Brokaw, "Commercial publishing in late imperial China: The Zou and Ma family businesses of Sibao, Fujian," *Late imperial China*, 17, No. 1 (June 1996), pp. 49–92.

[38] See Chang Hsüeh-ch'eng, "Lun k'o-meng hsüeh wen-fa," in his *Chang-shih i-shu* (1885 ed.; rpt. Shanghai, 1936), Pu-i, p. 3a.

[39] For the different views of training writing, see Ridley, "Educational theory and practice in late imperial China," pp. 447–9. For an overview of Ch'ing classical writing primers, see pp. 64–83.

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Wang Yün thought a student was ready to write essays at the age of sixteen *sui*. Like Chang Hsüeh-ch'eng, he used a metaphor of physical growth and maturation to describe how a child progressed from early memorization to the adult ability to compose essays. Prosodic rules could be learned mechanically, but the aesthetic sensibility needed to appreciate style and moral content took time and ultimately depended on the student himself. Because of the demands of the civil examinations, even those like Chang Hsüeh-ch'eng who expressed doubts about the usefulness of the eight-legged essay form used the examination essay form to teach writing. Chang thought the eight-legged essay was too difficult for most beginning students and condoned starting with smaller sections.[40]

Prose composition remained caught between the ideals of classical educators such as Chang Hsüeh-ch'eng and the monotonous rigidity of the eight-legged essay grid and regulated poetry in Chang's time required for success. Few students could remove the classical essay as a literary form from its careerist political and social context. In the eighteenth century, even the many who railed against it, particularly those who had repeatedly failed, made a virtue out of necessity by inscribing the eight-legged essay with a degree of literary seriousness, and granted it respectability outside examinations compounds as an emblem of classical literacy and ancient-style prose.

Examinations and the "Ladder of Success"

Under the Ming and Ch'ing dynasties, bureaucratic channels of selection by examination penetrated beyond the imperial and provincial capitals down to all counties and prefectures in the search for classically literate men to enter officialdom.[41] As the flow chart (Table 7.2) of civil examinations under the Ch'ing shows, biennial *sui-k'ao* (licensing tests, lit., "yearly tests") and triennial *k'o-k'ao* (qualifying tests) were regularly held in county, department, and prefectural *yamens* to choose eligible candidates for the triennial provincial examinations (called *hsiang-shih*).[42] In theory, two local examinations were held every three years by the magistrate, prefect, or provincial education commissioner.[43]

[40] Wang Yün, "Chiao t'ung-tzu fa," pp. 485–6, 491–2, and Chang Hsüeh-ch'eng, "Lun k'o-meng hsüeh wen-fa," Pu-i, pp. 1b–2a.

[41] Chang T'ing-yü et al., eds., *Ming-shih* (Taipei, 1982), 3, pp. 1724–5. See also William Rowe, "Success stories: Lineage and elite status in Hanyang county, Hupei, c. 1368–1949," in Joseph Esherick and Mary Rankin, eds., *Chinese local elites and patterns of dominance* (Berkeley, 1990), pp. 51–81.

[42] The number one finisher in provincial examinations was still called the *chieh-yüan* (dispatched *optimus*), following the name for the Sung prefectural, *chieh-shih*, forwarding examinations.

[43] Shang Yen-liu, *Ch'ing-tai k'o-chü k'ao-shih shu-lueh* (Peking, 1958), pp. 1–21, summarizes the Ch'ing organization of local examinations, which derived from the Ming. See also Etienne Zi, *Pratique des examens litteraires en Chine* (Shanghai, 1894), pp. 35–80.

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Provincial examinations in the autumn were followed the next spring by metropolitan (*hui-shih*) and palace (*tien-shih*) examinations, as the final stage of the process. The palace examination for all metropolitan graduates was administered by the emperor as an opportunity to ensure political loyalty and fair and impartial final rankings. Systematic quotas were established at the local and provincial levels, while northern, central, and southern quotas were established for the capital *chin-shih* degree. In general, this three-tiered arrangement remained in force until 1905, although the type of questions for each level frequently changed during the eighteenth century (see below).

Unlike the longer and more bureaucratic format of provincial and metropolitan examinations in which candidates prepared anonymous papers and participated in all three sessions, biennial local examinations were a series of single-day tests to select new candidates as recognized students in officially sponsored schools. The biennial examinations conveniently doubled as the tests known as *sui-shih* or *sui-k'ao*, used to renew the status of certified students, or "licentiates" (*sheng-yüan*), that is, those candidates eligible to participate in the provincial-level examinations who had not become *chü-jen*. New candidates were first qualified by magistrates and prefects in preliminary county (*hsien-k'ao*), department (*chou-k'ao*), and prefectural (*fu-k'ao*) tests. All new candidates and renewal students for the *sheng-yüan* degree were in their turn asked to write two essays, one based on a passage from the *Four Books* and another one from the *Five Classics*. In addition, policy questions were given, and after 1756 a poetry question was required. During the Ch'ing, the local authorities also designated "apprentice candidates" or "preparatory students" (*t'ung-sheng*), who were not yet selected to be students in officially sponsored schools.[44]

In early Ming, local candidates were expected to master the first emperor's *Great Announcement* (*Ta-kao*), a tract of moral and legal admonishments. Later the *Ta-kao* was replaced by memorization of the first emperor, T'ai-tsu's (r. 1368–98), *Sheng-yü liu-yen* (*Sacred Edict in six maxims*), which succeeding Ming emperors thought necessary to reduce the literary emphasis and enhance the moral aspect of the civil examinations.[45] These became the precedent in

[44] See Sheang [Shang] Yen-liu, "Memories of the Chinese imperial civil service examination system," trans. Ellen Klempner, in *American Asian Review* 3, No. 1 (Spring 1985), pp. 54–6. Etienne Zi's *Pratique des examens litteraires en Chine*, pp. 35–69, records the curriculum of the nineteenth century, taking no note of the changes in curriculum before 1860. Cf. Victor Purcell, *Problems of Chinese education* (London, 1936), pp. 27–8, which describes classical and poetry questions in local examinations during the late Ch'ing.

[45] See Omura Kōdō, "Shinchō kyōiku shisōshi ni okeru Seigo kōkun ni tsuite," in Hayashi Tomoharu, ed., *Kinsei Chūgoku kyōikushi kenkyū* (Tokyo, 1958), pp. 233–46.

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Table 7.2. *Chart of Civil Examinations and Degrees during the Ming and Ch'ing*

T'ung-sheng Qualifying Tests
(apprentice students educated at home)
↓
County, Department, and Prefectural Licensing Examinations (*T'ung-shih*)
(*Hsien-k'ao*, *Chou-k'ao*, *Fu-k'ao*, and *Yüan-k'ao*)
↓
Sheng-yüan (*Hsiu-ts'ai*)
(Licentiate = county/prefecture/town student in officially sponsored school)
(Includes biennial local exams for renewal of status, *Sui-shih*, or *Sui-k'ao*)
↓
Triennial Qualifying examination, *K'o-shih*, or *K'o-k'ao*
↓

Kung-sheng (*Tribute Student*): →	↓	← *Chien-sheng* (*State Student*):
Sui-kung →	↓	← *Li-chien*
(Annual tribute student)		(State student by purchase)
Pa-kung →	↓	← *Tseng-chien*
(Special exam student)		(2nd class purchase)
En-kung →	↓	← *Fu-chien*
(Grace student)		(3rd class purchase)
Yu-kung →	↓	← *Yu-chien*
(Senior tribute student)		(Senior licentiate)
Fu-kung →	↓	← *Yin-chien*
(2nd class *Chü-jen* list)		(Student by inheritance)
Fu-sheng & *lin-sheng* →	↓	← *En-chien*
(Supplementary students)	↓	(Grace student)
	↓	← *Pa-kung sheng* (Special test)

↓
Triennial Provincial examinations in fall, *Chih-sheng hsiang-shih*
↓
Chü-jen (Raised candidate degree; also called *Kung-shih* in Ming)
(No. 1 in each province = *Chieh-yüan*)
↓
Triennial Metropolitan examination in spring, *Hui-shih*
(No. 1 = *Hui-yüan*)
↓
Kung-shih (Tribute literatus status; Ch'ing term for "all but palace examination")
↓
Palace examination
↓
Chin-shih (literatus presented to emperor for appointment)
↓
Chuang-yüan (*Optimus*)

T'an-hua →	↓	← *Pang-yen*
(*Tertius*)	↓	(*Secundus*)

↓
Court Placement Examination for Han-lin Academy (after 1723)
↓
Palace, capital, provincial, or local appointment by rank

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Ch'ing for using first the K'ang-hsi emperor's *Sacred Edict* (*Sheng-yü*) of 1670 and then the Yung-cheng emperor's *Amplified Instructions* (*Sheng-yü kuang-hsün*) of 1724 in Ch'ing local examinations and in moral lectures by local officials (*hsiang-yüeh*).[46]

After screening by magistrates and prefects, the successful candidates gathered in prefectural capitals for a final licensing examination (*yüan-k'ao*), which sometimes conveniently doubled as a triennial qualifying examination (*k'o-k'ao*) for past licentiates (*sheng-yüan*) who sought to enter for the provincial examination. The provincial education commissioner, as he traveled on his regular testing schedule through the province, determined who would become the new licentiates (*sheng-yüan*) and enter the officially sponsored schools. If appropriate that year, the commissioner also chose the select few, group by group, from among new and old *sheng-yüan* who could go on to compete in the provincial examination. For both the licensing and qualifying examinations, the education commissioner repeated the same testing format and curriculum used in preliminary county, department, and prefectural tests.

Those who failed the provincial examinations had to compete again in the next renewal and qualifying examination cycles. Because few licentiates (*sheng-yüan*) ever became *chü-jen*, they were required to keep taking local renewal examinations to maintain their degree status. Thus, the local renewal test usually also doubled as a county, department, or prefectural licensing test, which was required of both youthful candidates (usually under twenty) hoping to become new licentiates and of those licentiates who could be as old as sixty who were seeking to keep their status.[47] Similarly, there was an overlap of new and old *sheng-yüan* when the qualifying examination was held simultaneously with the final licensing examination.[48]

[46] See Ch'en Wu-t'ung, *Chu Yüan-chang yen-chiu* (T'ien-chin, 1993), pp. 156–70. The *Ch'in-ting Ta-Ch'ing hui-tien shih-li* (Taipei, 1968), 386, p. 2b, notes that, in the reexamination of *t'ung-sheng* for the *sui-k'ao*, they must write a question on a section of the *Sheng-yü kuang-hsün*. On the *Sacred edict* and its successor, see Victor Mair, "Language and ideology in the written popularizations of the *Sacred edict*," in David Johnson, Andrew Nathan, and Evelyn Rawski, eds., *Popular culture in late imperial China*, pp. 325–59. Until about 1670, local Ch'ing examinations continued to require the Ming imperial maxims. See also Kamo Naoki, *Shinchō no seido to bungaku* (Tokyo, 1984), pp. 380–3; and Justus Doolittle, *Social life of the Chinese* (New York, 1865), pp. 392–3.

[47] Etienne Zi gives a too literal, step-by-step description of local examinations, in *Pratique des examens litteraires en Chine*, pp. 35–99. Indeed, if there had been no doubling up of local civil and military examinations, magistrates and prefects would have had to hold and supervise tests continuously. In many cases, candidates for civil and military *sheng-yüan* degrees were convened together by local officials, rather than tested separately.

[48] See Wang Yüan-chung, comp., *Kuo-ch'ao Yü-yang k'o-ming- lu* (1850 ed.), 4, pp. 1a–33b, which contains early Ch'ing *sui-k'ao* and *k'o-k'ao* records for Ch'ang-shu county. See also Kamo, *Shinchō no seido to bungaku*, p. 378.

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Quotas and the civil examination market

The Ch'ing rulers saw control of access to the civil service as an institutional means to confine and regulate its elites. Quotas were established based on the ratio between successful and failed candidates. Government intervention in elite composition was most keenly felt at the initial stages of the examination competition: licensing at the county levels for the privilege to enter the examination selection process.[49]

The number of new licentiates (*sheng-yüan*), usually aged between seventeen and thirty-seven in Ch'ing times,[50] was based on established annual quotas for each county, department, and prefecture. Each *sheng-yüan* was given a stipend paid in rice, and his family was granted tax service exemptions.[51] When compared to the tax system, which was designed to extract material wealth and labor from local society, the system for mobilizing elite intellectual resources for political service was more enduring and effective. Despite early Ch'ing efforts to curtail tax evasion in South China, the late imperial government never gained full control of its material resources.[52] In contrast, political recruitment of elites through the local selection process and the hierarchical civil appointment process remained relatively effective until massive peasant rebellions, unprecedented demographic growth, and widespread sale of degrees to raise funds in the mid-nineteenth century seriously compromised the efficiency and integrity of the civil service.[53]

In the early Ch'ing, a 40:60 Manchu:Han quota was in effect for the palace examination, a ratio that had been borrowed from the northern versus southern quotas of Ming times. Two separate groups of candidates (Manchu-Mongol and Han-chün bannermen) had been channeled via these quotas toward *chin-shih* degrees until 1655, which was the last examination to maintain the division of candidates according to the 40:60 ratio. In 1652 and 1655, for instance, completely separate metropolitan and palace examinations were held for Han Chinese and all bannermen, but they were recombined in 1658. Furthermore, a ten-point quota of 4:2:4 (Manchu, Mongol, and Chinese) was set for bannermen seeking the *chin-shih* degree in 1652 and

[49] Thomas Lee, "The social significance of the quota system in Sung civil service examinations," *Journal of the Institute of Chinese Studies*, 13 (1982), pp. 287–318.

[50] See Ridley, "Educational theory and practice in late imperial China," pp. 150–3.

[51] For discussion, see Makino Tatsumi, "Kū Enbu no seiin ron," in Hayashi Tomoharu, ed., *Kinsei Chūgoku kyōikushi kenkyū*, pp. 221–9.

[52] Ray Huang, *Taxation and governmental finance in sixteenth-century Ming China* (Cambridge, 1974), pp. 313–23; and Huang Ch'ing-lien, "The *Li-chia* system in Ming times and its operation in Ying-t'ien prefecture," *BIHP*, 54 (1983), pp. 103–55.

[53] Liu Chin-tsao, comp., *Ch'ing-ch'ao hsü wen-hsien t'ung-kao* (Shanghai, 1936), pp. 8452–3. See *Yang-ch'eng T'ien T'ai-shih ch'üan-kao* (1722 ed.), 1, p. 32a, in which T'ien Ts'ung-tien (1649–1726) explicitly compares the government's extraction of wealth to its selection of talent.

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1655. After 1655, no Manchu ever finished among the coveted top three *chin-shih* places in the palace examination until 1883. Han examination officials such as Hung Ch'eng-ch'ou (1593–1665), who in 1649 was one of the first Ming officials from the south (Fukien) to serve the Ch'ing as a metropolitan and palace examination chief supervisor (*tsung-tsai*), were blamed (or praised) for not allowing Manchus the rank of *optimus* in the civil examinations.[54]

Provincial quotas were somewhat more generous early in the Shun-chih reign. In 1660, however, provincial quotas were drastically cut to about sixty for the large provinces. Although gradually increased during the K'ang-hsi reign, the numbers remained far below late Ming quotas even though by 1700 the population in the empire reached over 200 million.[55] As late as 1765, the Anhwei provincial education commissioner memorialized the throne requesting an increase in provincial quotas for the Yangtze delta provinces of Chekiang, Kiangsu, and Anhwei. He justified the request by indicating that local civil and military quotas for such a prosperous region were still too low.[56]

More stringent policies in education to gain control of human resources coincided with Ch'ing efforts in the 1660s to crack down on tax evasion by official and degree-holding families in the Yangtze delta. In addition, because of the large number of Manchu and Han-chün bannermen in the central bureaucracy, fewer positions were available for civilian Han Chinese, although Manchu appointments were less conspicuous in provincial and local administration. The total number of *chin-shih* degrees awarded triennially declined from a high of 399 in 1645 to 155 in 1667, and then declined another 30 percent to 109 in 1676, after briefly rising to 299 in 1670.[57]

As in Ming, no absolute limits were set on the number of metropolitan graduates permitted, although regional quotas were still in effect. In 1646, when 399 *chin-shih* were selected, 58 percent came from the south, 38 percent were from the north, and 4 percent of the graduates came from central regions of the empire. These figures roughly corresponded to the 55 : 35 : 10 regional ratio used during the Ming dynasty after 1425. Eventually, a ratio of 60 : 40, south to north, was worked out, with the quota for the central portions

[54] *Tan-mo lu*, in Li T'iao-yüan, ed., *Han-hai* (1881), 1, pp. 10b–13a. See also Hans Bielenstein, "The regional provenance of *Chin-shih* during Ch'ing," *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities*, 64 (1992), pp. 6, 28. Thus, during the Ch'ing there were 114 *chuang-yüan* (one Han and one Manchu in 1652 and 1655), but only 112 metropolitan and palace examinations. Cf. Hsü K'o, *Ch'ing-pai lei-ch'ao* (Shanghai, 1920), 21, pp. 9, and 127.

[55] Chao Erh-hsün et al., comps., *Ch'ing-shih kao* (Peking, 1928, rpt. Peking, 1977), 11, pp. 3157–8.

[56] See "An-hui hsüeh-cheng t'i-pen," 1765, 7th month, 26th day, in the Ming-Ch'ing Archives, Academia Sinica, Taiwan.

[57] Lawrence Kessler, *K'ang-hsi and the consolidation of Ch'ing rule* (Chicago, 1976), pp. 30–9. See also Robert Oxnam, *Ruling from horseback: Manchu politics in the Oboi regency* (Chicago, 1975), pp. 87–8, 101–8.

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divided up between them. Quotas were established for southwestern provinces of Yunnan, Szechwan, Kweichow, and Kwangsi (two for Yunnan and Szechwan, one for Kweichow and Kwangsi), which was doubled by the emperor in 1700 for the 1701 metropolitan examination.[58]

The number of metropolitan and palace examination graduates tended to be around 300 *chin-shih* for the triennial examinations, with a range of 110 for a low in 1789, to 406 for a high, in 1730. Ping-ti Ho calculated that, for the Ch'ing period as a whole, there was an average of 239 graduates per examination (down 50 from the Ming) or approximately 100 per anum (up 10 from the Ming). The number of per anum graduates was actually higher during the Ch'ing because of the frequent use of special examinations such as the *po-hsüeh hung-tz'u* (broad learning and extensive words) special examinations of 1679 and 1736.[59] In addition, the throne frequently deviated from the regular triennial schedule of examinations by scheduling special "grace examinations" to commemorate the longevity of reigns or to celebrate imperial birthdays.[60]

After initially higher *chü-jen* and *chin-shih* rolls in the 1640s and 1650s, early Ch'ing rulers deliberately set lower quotas for Han Chinese in 1660 for local and provincial examinations, which lasted into the eighteenth century, because they blamed high quotas in late Ming for the government's loss of control over literati, merchant, and military families in local society. The total number of triennial *chü-jen* degrees was nearly cut in half, from over 1400 in 1645 to 799 in 1660, rising to only about 1000 in 1700. The second-class *chü-jen* list (*fu-pang*) which had existed since Ming times and padded local *chü-jen* lists by up to 10 percent, was abolished in 1662. After the *fu-pang* status was restored in the eighteenth century, however, it was seen as an unacceptable route to the *chin-shih* degree. Moreover, local quotas for new *sheng-yüan* were decreased to twenty in a large prefecture, fifteen in a large county, and only five in a small county.[61]

By 1700, there were perhaps 500,000 licentiates (*sheng-yüan*) in a total population of perhaps 200 million, or a ratio of 1 licentiate (*sheng-yüan*) per 400 persons. Although the ratio of licentiates (*sheng-yüan*) to population was less competitive than in Ming times, the odds against a licentiate (*sheng-yüan*) passing the higher examinations entitling him to an official civil appointment became more formidable. In late Ming and Ch'ing, licentiate (*sheng-*

[58] See *Tan-mo lu*, 3, pp. 19b–20a.
[59] See also Ping-ti Ho, *The ladder of success in imperial China* (New York, 1962), p. 189.
[60] Of the 112 metropolitan/palace examinations given during the Ch'ing, 75 percent were "regular examinations." See Iona Man-cheong, "The class of 1761: The politics of a metropolitan examination" (diss., Yale University, 1991), pp. 329–31.
[61] *Ch'in-ting Ta-Ch'ing hui-tien shih-li*, 348, pp. 1a-b, 5a-b; 350, p. 2b; 370, pp. 1a-b. Cf. Ho, *The ladder of success*, pp. 179–81.

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yüan) status was much less special, and became a social necessity to remain a member of the elite.[62] Each stage of the civil service selection process eliminated the vast majority of candidates, and the odds for success in all stages of the selection process were perhaps only slightly better than the 1 in 6,000 during the Ch'ing.

Ming and Ch'ing dynasty ratios of local degree-holders to higher degree-holders are a key to understanding the social dynamics of the elite. During Ming, there were about 24,450 *chin-shih*, 73,150 *chü-jen*, and 220,050 dynastic school students.[63] Wada Masahiro concludes that by the late Ming the ratio from highest to lowest degree-holders to the others was 1:3:9. From other information, we know that while few licentiates (*sheng-yüan*) passed the provincial civil examinations and became *chü-jen*, far fewer ever achieved *chin-shih* status under the Ming. The odds became even more forbidding in the early Ch'ing.[64]

As population increased during the late empire, the increasing pool of potential candidates for a much more slowly expanding number of metropolitan, provincial, and local official positions (20,400 civil positions c. 1500; 24,680 c. 1625)[65] meant that the vast majority of *sheng-yüan* who were never appointed to a position could pose a local order problem, both in terms of unfulfilled expectations leading to rebellion or manipulation of fiscal tax exemptions from the required labor service. Officials also feared that an overproduction of *sheng-yüan* would lead to a loss of local discipline, deviant views of literati learning, and weakening of local paternalism. There were good reasons that provincial and metropolitan examination compounds looked more like prisons than schools.

Chü-jen *and* Chin-shih *as education officials*

Full bureaucratization of education and examination officials did not occur until the Ming and Ch'ing.[66] The office of education intendant evolved during

[62] Wang Ao (1450–1524), *Chen-tse ch'ang-yü* (Taipei, 1965), A, p. 20, gives 35,820 *sheng-yüan* since the early Cheng-te reign (1506–21). Cf. Ho, *The ladder of success*, pp. 173–83, and Mi Chu Wiens, "Lord and peasant. The sixteenth to the eighteenth century," *Modern China*, 6, No. 1 (1980), pp. 9–12.

[63] William S. Atwell, "From education to politics: The Fu She," in Wm. Theodore de Bary, ed., *The unfolding of neo-Confucianism* (New York, 1975), p. 338, estimates there were about 600,000 *sheng-yüan* in the late Ming.

[64] Wada Masahiro, "Mindai kyojinzō no keisei katei ni kan suru ichi kōsatsu," *Shigaku zasshi*, 87, No. 3 (March 1978), p. 37. Until the nineteenth century, these ratios were comparable during the Ch'ing dynasty, when there were 25,779 *chin-shih*. See also Elman, *A cultural history*, pp. 660–5.

[65] Wang Ao, *Chen-tse ch'ang-yü*, A, p. 20. Susan Naquin and Evelyn Rawski, *Chinese society in the eighteenth century* (New Haven, 1987), pp. 106–14, 123–7, 224–5, suggest that historians have underestimated the expanding size of imperial Chinese administration.

[66] See Tilemann Grimm, "Ming education intendants," in Charles Hucker, ed., *Chinese government in Ming times: Seven studies* (New York, 1969), pp. 130–9.

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Ming from regional supervisor of officially sponsored schools to being responsible for local and provincial education and examinations. As education commissioners, their jurisdiction and influence straddled the middle ground between prefects and magistrates and provincial governors.[67]

Under the provincial education commissioners, three categories of Ming-Ch'ing local education officials (*hsüeh-kuan*, or *chiao-kuan*) were placed in charge of the schools. In prefectural schools, the supervising faculty consisted of a low-ranking or unranked instructor (*chiao-shou*, which in the twentieth century became the term for professor) and four assistant instructors (*hsün-tao*). In county schools the instructor was classified as a *chiao-yü*, and he was complemented by two assistants. At the department school, the instructor was called a *hsüeh-cheng* (not to be confused with the education commissioner of Ch'ing times), and he also had three assistant instructors under him. If we use mid-seventeenth century figures (140 prefectures, 193 departments, and 1138 counties), then empirewide in the early Ch'ing there were at least 1,471 instructors and 3,415 assistant instructors at the local level, supervised by education commissioners in thirteen provinces and the two capital regions in Nanking and Peking.[68]

In Ming times, provincial *chü-jen* degree-holders often served as local education officials. This entitled them to act as provincial examiners; that is, they chose their peers. By the late Ming, however, local education officials had already been significantly downclassed, and *chin-shih* dominated most prestigious appointments. They also took over most appointments as education commissioners. Following such precedents, early Ch'ing emperors sent out Han-lin academicians from the capital to serve as chief examiners in provincial examinations, signaling that the court wished to exert more direct control in the provinces.[69] Previously, Han-lin members had been assigned chiefly to metropolitan and palace civil examinations and generally to the provincial-level examinations only in the two capital prefectures.[70]

Consequently, three simultaneous and related processes operated politically and socially during the Ming-Ch'ing transition: (1) *chin-shih* were replacing *chü-jen* as chief and associate examiners for provincial examinations; (2) outside prefects and magistrates as *chin-shih* degree-holders were replacing outside official school instructors as key provincial examiners; (3) competi-

[67] See Tilemann Grimm, *Erziehung und politik im künfuzianischen China der Ming-Zeit* (Hamburg, 1960), pp. 85–8.

[68] See Wu Chih-ho, *Ming-tai te ju-hsüeh chiao-kuan* (Taipei, 1991), pp. 19–20, 267–9. Figures for the Ming in Chang Chien-jen, *Ming-tai chiao-yü kuan-li chih-tu yen-chiu* (Taipei, 1991) are roughly comparable: 159 prefectures; 234 departments; 1,171 counties; 1,564 dynastic schools.

[69] *Wu-li t'ung-kao*, Ch'in Hui-t'ien, comp. (1761 ed.), 175, pp. 20a–b, 23b.

[70] *Huang-Ming kung-chü k'ao*, Chang Ch'ao-jui, comp. (Ming Wan-li ed.), 1, p. 41a.

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tion levels for *chü-jen* degrees were becoming so intense that only 2–3 percent of the candidates could expect to pass the provincial examinations.

As *chin-shih* degree-holders, because of their increasing numbers, took over most higher-level positions in the bureaucracy, they left in their political wake provincial *chü-jen* and local education officials. *Chin-shih* also took control of the selection of *chü-jen* candidates. After 1585, *chü-jen* degree-holders serving as education officials and examiners no longer selected their peers, a social downclassing that carried over into the Ch'ing dynasty.[71]

Downclassing of *chü-jen* degree-holders and education officials represented a major change in the social conditions of political recruitment that lasted from 1600 to 1900. The precipitous increase in civil examination candidates, based in part on commercial development and population growth, produced a decided devaluation of all degrees but the *chin-shih* for high-level appointments. A by-product of this downclassing was an increasing disparity between individual and family expectations for lower degree-holders and their realistic political opportunities. Already in the seventeenth century, of the 25,000 positions in the late Ming and early Ch'ing bureaucracy, the top ones as ministers, governors, education commissioners, prefects, and magistrates were taken primarily by *chin-shih* degree-holders.

After 1660, even fewer *chü-jen* achieved political success, which meant that they lowered their expectations and took advantage of the surviving benefits of their lowered status by taking lower-level jobs as local functionaries. For many, a *chü-jen* degree became a social end in itself, a required waystation on the road toward the coveted *chin-shih* that few ever got. These developments disrupted the youthful dreams of millions of candidates presuming on success for more than a very few. The social and legal benefits given to *sheng-yüan* and *chü-jen* sufficiently compensated candidates for their efforts despite their increasing exclusion from higher offices. The pressures of failure, however, came at a great psychological cost. Personal and family anxieties frequently were sublimated into dreams and nightmares that elites interpreted with curiosity and dread, and novelists reveled in.[72]

An overabundance of *chin-shih* in the examination market also affected negatively the pool of *chin-shih* degree-holders who passed in the second or third tier of graduates. Initially, those who finished in the first or at the top of the second tier entered the Han-lin Academy and served as the emperor's secretaries. By late Ming, Han-lin academicians usually comprised 80 percent or more of both the positions as chief and associate metropolitan examiners. The

[71] See Elman, *A cultural history*, pp. 147–53.

[72] Ibid., pp. 295–370, and Judith Zeitlin, *Historian of the strange: Pu Songling and the Chinese classical tale* (Stanford, 1993), passim.

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"Han-lin club" was, by early Ch'ing, firmly in control of the key examiner positions in the metropolitan and palace examinations. Their appointments as chief examiners in provincial examinations were conspicuous as well. During Ch'ing, Han-lin academicians were also appointed as associate examiners for provincial civil examinations, thus taking complete charge of *chü-jen* and *chin-shih* selection in the name of the imperial court and Ministry of Rites.

The trend for the political center in Peking, the emperor and his inner circle of ministers, to control directly the middle and top levels of the empirewide examinations accelerated in the early K'ang-hsi era, when the responsibilities of Han-lin academicians increased vis-à-vis the civil service and provincial education. Members of the Han-lin Academy were sent out as educational commissioners in the Chihli capital region in 1680, and in Chekiang and Kiangsu provinces in 1681. Han-lin academicians were also routinely assigned to monitor special "repeat" (*fu-shih*) examinations in the capital for *chü-jen* in 1699, before such graduates, typically from southern provinces such as Kiangsu, were allowed into the compound for the metropolitan examinations. In addition, the tradition of assigning the palace *chuang-yüan* to provincial examinations began in 1669. Before then, the *optimus* usually was assigned to serve as an associate examiner on the metropolitan examination.[73]

The Han-lin Academy and the court

When the Ming dynasty came to power in 1368, the Han-lin Academy was a fully developed government institution.[74] Han-lin duties included supervision of palace, metropolitan, and provincial civil examinations; publication of literary works; work on special cultural projects such as the *Yung-lo ta-tien*; participation in classical and historical lectures and discussions with the emperor; and performance of temporary assignments as imperial envoys. When compared to their predecessors, the role of Ming and Ch'ing Han-lin academicians in policy making declined. Instead, they served as Grand

[73] See *Tan-mo lu*, 3, pp. 18b–19b. Cf. *Ch'ing-pai lei-ch'ao*, 21, p. 13. In the Chia-ch'ing era (1796–1820), the *chuang-yüan* could also be appointed as Kiangsu provincial education commissioner. See Li T'iao-yüan, *Chih-i k'o-so chi*, in *Ts'ung-shu chi-ch'eng ch'u-pien* (Shanghai, 1936), 4, p. 137.

[74] The origins of the Han-lin Academy can be traced back to the T'ang dynasty, when emperors granted personal favorites an honored place as special advisors within the court. Not yet regarded as full members of the bureaucracy, Han-lin academicians initially served as personal advisors to T'ang and Sung emperors, who chose them as much for their moral reputations as for their academic or political qualifications. In time, Han-lin scholars also drafted imperial documents for Sung emperors. As the latter's private secretaries, Han-lin members successfully garnered political power from the bureaucracy, and members of the academy assumed substantive posts.

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Secretaries to the emperor. But their cultural and educational influence increased.[75]

Increasingly, the Han-lin Academy became an important stepping stone to political influence in the court and bureaucracy through concurrent appointments in the Ministry of Rites.[76] An *optimus*, *secundus*, or *tertius* on the palace examination, for example, followed a career pattern that involved close links between the Han-lin Academy, Ministry of Rites, and the Grand Secretariat (*Nei-ko*). The Ch'ing compilers of the official *Ming History* noted: "Only *chin-shih* could enter the Han-lin. Only Han-lin [members] could enter the Grand Secretariat. Only Han-lin could serve as the minister or vice-minister of Rites in the north and south, or as minister of the right of Personnel." After 1646, all top finishers on the metropolitan and provincial examinations, once they became *chin-shih*, could also enter the Han-lin Academy.[77]

Without the prime ministerial position after 1380, the Ming emperor and his immediate staff had to function as the key coordinators of educational affairs and examination matters. In effect, the Ministry of Rites monitored the imperial education system and the examination competition. In early Ch'ing, Han-lin Academy members supervised the upper levels of the civil selection process. The Ministry of Rites was not the only ministry that had members in the Grand Secretariat who were at the same time active in the metropolitan bureaucracy, but it could effect its policies through the education and examination bureaucracy down to all county levels outside Peking. In the early eighteenth century, however, the Ch'ing inner court insulated itself from both the Han-lin Academy and the Ministry of Rites by creating the Grand Council (*Chün-chi-ch'u*), with a majority of the participants being Manchu.[78]

In Ming and Ch'ing political life, a highly ranked *chin-shih* graduate was first appointed to the Han-lin Academy, where he served the court as a compiler, editor, provincial examiner, or personal secretary to the emperor. From there he served in a variety of positions, but eventually became a regular appointee in the Ministry of Rites, often as a metropolitan or palace examination official. The Ministry of Rites then served as a springboard for promotion to the Grand Secretariat.[79] Those Han-lin bachelors who did well in

[75] See also Peter Ditmanson, "Intellectual lineages and the early Ming court," *Papers on Chinese History*, 5 (1996), pp. 1–17.

[76] On the cultural activities of the Han-lin academicians and bachelors, see *Kuo-ch'ao li-k'o Han-lin kuan k'o* (1603 ed.), passim.

[77] See Chang T'ing-yü, *Ming-shih*, 3, p. 1702, for the comment. See also *Chih-i k'o-so chi*, 4, pp. 131–2.

[78] Yün-yi Ho, *The ministry of rites and suburban sacrifices in early Ming* (Taipei, 1980), pp. 60–75. On the Grand Council, see Beatrice S. Bartlett, *Monarchs and ministers: The grand council in mid-Ch'ing China, 1723–1820* (Berkeley, 1991), pp. 2–7, 17–64.

[79] Ho, *The ministry of rites*, pp. 16–19. See also Adam Lui, *The Hanlin Academy: Training ground for the ambitious, 1644–1850* (Hamden, Conn., 1981), pp. 29–44.

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the academy's Office of Advanced Studies (*Shu-ch'ang-kuan*) then took a special literary examination. If the bachelors did well, they were retained in the Academy (*liu-kuan*) as compilers. If not, they were "released into officialdom" (*san-kuan*) to take up appointments in the central bureaucracy or as officials in the province.[80] Members of this special community of scholars functioned as an exclusive club from which candidates for the dynasty's most important positions were drawn.[81]

Manchu-Han relations in early Ch'ing examinations

Despite continuities with the Ming, important changes, especially in the schooling system for the enlarged empire, were made after the Ch'ing conquest. In addition to the officially sponsored school system, special schools were also established for the military banner organizations (composed of Manchu, Mongol, and Han-chün families) as well as a special school for members of the imperial family (*tsung-hsüeh*).[82] The Ch'ing court had initiated examinations for Manchus, Mongols, and Han-chün bannermen in their native languages in Manchuria as early as 1634, after establishing a Ming-style bureaucracy in 1627.[83]

The touchy issue of Manchu-Han relations was raised in 1646 by the regent, Dorgon (1612–50), and other advisors of the eight-year-old Shun-chih emperor (r. 1644–62), in the very first Ch'ing dynasty palace examination. In the question, passed by the 373 metropolitan graduates, the regent asked for information on how the government could bring Manchu and Han officials and people together for a common purpose. The dynasty's first *optimus*, Fu I-chien (1609–65) from Shantung, replied that Manchus and Han Chinese could surely work together to improve the new dynasty, but the cultural content of that initiative had to be set by a sage ruler who understood that "the order of the Two Emperors and Three Kings was based on the Way, and their Way was based on the mind," a Ch'eng-Chu moral and political formula that Ming literati had successfully promoted.[84]

In the 1649 palace examination, the emperor inquired about how best to deal with Manchu and Han Chinese quotas on civil examinations. He asked the metropolitan graduates to describe "how Manchus and Han Chinese could

[80] For examples of *san-kuan* examinations testing Han-lin bachelors, see the Ch'ing dynasty examination papers of O-min (1730 *chin-shih*), and Han Yen-tseng (1730 *chin-shih*) in the Rare Books Collection of Fudan University in Shanghai, Nos. 3852 and 3853.

[81] For discussion, see Chang Chung-ju, *Ch'ing-tai k'ao-shih chih-tu* (Shanghai, 1931), pp. 41–2.

[82] *Ch'ing-shih kao*, 11, pp. 3099–100.

[83] *Tan-mo lu*, 1, pp. 3a–6a, 15b–16a, and *Ch'ing-pai lei-ch'ao*, 21, p. 8.

[84] *Chuang-yüan ts'e* (1733 ed.), 8, pp. 1a–5b.

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be unified so that their hearts were the same and they worked together without division." The preferred answer, by the second *chuang-yüan* under the Ch'ing, Liu Tzu-chuang, argued for cultural unity instead of special palace quotas for Manchus and Han candidates. Again, cultural unity was defined in light of the ideals of moral cultivation transmitted in the Ming and Ch'ing by the Sung dynasty's Learning of the Way. Liu applied the established distinction drawn in *Analects* 6.16, and much later related to northern and southern literati, to the differences between Manchus and Chinese: "I would say that Manchus stress substance (*chih*), so we should use culture (*wen*) to complement this trait [as K'ung-tzu urges]. Han people emphasize culture, so we should use substance to complement this trait." The depiction of the pragmatic northerner contrasting with the southern *litterateur* of Sung and Ming times was now reformulated to cast Manchus as the equivalent of substantial northerners and Han Chinese as refined southerners.[85]

As during the Yüan era, the Ch'ing conquest elite initially presumed that northern Chinese were more reliable subjects than southerners. In Shantung province, nineteen of eighty-five (22 percent) *chü-jen* graduates in 1639 and thirty-one of ninety (34 percent) *chü-jen* in 1642, the last two Ming examinations in the province, went on to take their *chin-shih* degrees in Ch'ing civil examinations starting with the 1646 metropolitan and palace examination. The Ch'ing regime was clearly anxious to accommodate such changes of loyalty. In the 1646 metropolitan examinations, for example, 53 percent of the Shantung *chü-jen* from the previous year's ninety-five graduates on the first Ch'ing provincial examination in Shantung passed and received *chin-shih* degrees. The Ch'ing policy of relying on northern collaborators, so successful in military and political terms after 1644, was also a major feature of early Ch'ing civil examinations.[86]

To this end, the court also appointed civil examiners with great care. Manchu and Han-chün bannermen were appointed chief examiners in metropolitan examinations ahead of Han Chinese. Until 1658, most of the Ming *chin-shih* degree-holders who were appointed as chief or associate examiners in metropolitan examinations were northerners (eighteen out of twenty associate examiners in 1649). In 1649, two southern examiners were appointed for the first time as metropolitan examiners. In 1658, all twenty-two chief and associate examiners were Han Chinese. Thirteen of the twenty 1658 associate examiners were 1655 *chin-shih*, and many of them were southerners.[87]

[85] Ibid., 8, pp. 1a–10a. See also *Tan-mo lu*, 1, p. 16a.
[86] Cf. Frederic Wakeman, Jr., *The great enterprise: The Manchu reconstruction of imperial order in seventeenth-century China* (Berkeley, 1985), pp. 1129–35, on twice-serving ministers.
[87] See *Kuo-ch'ao Yü-yang k'o-ming lu*, 1, pp. 2a–2b, for the 1649 metropolitan examination. See also *Hui-shih lu*, 1658, pp. 1a–2b.

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After 1658, enough loyal *chin-shih* graduates had been produced under the Ch'ing dynasty to fill the available positions in the examination bureaucracy.

Similarly, the percentage of northerners serving as provincial examiners was high (over 70 percent) in the initial 1645, 1646, and 1648 provincial examinations. From 1651 to 1660, however, the percentage of southern examiners slowly increased from 47 percent in 1651 to 69 percent in 1657. The gradual revival of late Ming southern literati networks, after initial northern dominance, also occurred among the 1646–58 palace examination graduates. After the initial prevalence of northerners in 1646, southern preeminence in the *chin-shih* rolls from 1647 to 1658 again paralleled Ming geographical distributions for metropolitan and palace examination graduates.[88]

Special examinations for Manchu bannermen were also established in 1651, which were separate from those for Han-chün bannermen. Manchus who did not know classical Chinese were permitted to take the tests in their own language (*Ch'ing-wen*). During the K'ang-hsi reign, these special examinations were formalized into "translation examinations" (*fan-i hsiang-shih*) at the provincial level, whereby Manchus could choose to take examinations in their language. Such privileges were extended to Mongols in 1735. In 1697, Manchus related to the imperial family were encouraged to take the civil examinations with other Manchus. Cheating was common among bannermen taking military examinations.[89]

Initially, Manchu and Mongol translation examinations were administered in a single session with one question based on documentary style and another on an essay topic on a quotation from either the Four Books or Five Classics. Later, during the Ch'ien-lung reign (1736–95), requirements tightened, and Manchus and Mongols were encouraged to take examinations in classical Chinese in an effort to unite civilian and military training. Questions in Chinese based on Sung dynasty classicism and philology (*hsiao-hsüeh*) were introduced, but most Manchus still did not compete with the Han Chinese in provincial and metropolitan examinations. Additionally, translation examinations were required in the specialized translation bureaus, which dated back to the early Ming and were placed under the jurisdiction of the Hanlin Academy. These bureaus were responsible for ritual communications in

[88] Wakeman, *The great enterprise*, pp. 886–90.

[89] These banner examinations and their quotas are spelled out in detail in *Tan-mo lu*, 1, pp. 1a–3a, and 14a–15b. Eventually by 1660, the Han-chün banner examinations were the same as ordinary Han examinations, that is, much more difficult than those for Manchus and Mongols. See also the discussion in *Chih-i ts'ung-hua*, (1859 ed. rpt. Taipei, 1976), 1, p. 5b, of Mongolian examination questions and their stress on Chu Hsi's interpretations for Four Books and Five Classics. Cf. *Ch'ing-pai lei-ch'ao*, 21, p. 7, Man-kam Leung, "Mongolian language and examinations in Peking and other metropolitan areas during the Manchu Dynasty in China (1644–1911)," *The Canada-Mongolia Review*, 1 (1975), pp. 29–44.

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foreign affairs with Siam, with Islamic peoples, and later, during early Ch'ing, with Russia.[90]

In addition, Chinese who passed the palace and court (after 1723) examinations with highest honors and entered the Han-lin Academy, where they served as imperial secretaries, were required to learn Manchu, a practice that began in 1647.[91] In 1688, a Chinese candidate from Hangchow, Ling Shaowen, answered the policy question on the palace examination in both classical Chinese and Manchu and was appointed as a compiler to the Han-lin Academy based on his bilingual ability, even though Ling finished at the bottom of the second category of *chin-shih* graduates.[92] Special essay tests in Manchu language and translation questions from classical Chinese to Manchu were administered to Han-lin academicians in the palace to ensure that documents and memorials were accurately recorded in both official languages.[93] In 1748, the Ch'ien-lung emperor reproached the *optimus* and *secundus* on the 1745 palace examination for their poor performances in learning Manchu after they entered the Han-lin Academy.[94]

The Ch'ing dynasty was also concerned that other minorities in the enlarged empire should receive appropriate attention in local educational affairs. To this end, P'eng (shed, or tent) people in Kiangsi province were incorporated as a minority group by the education commissioner there in 1762 when he created a *sheng-yüan* quota for the P'eng, which allowed them one place for each fifty candidates. In 1763, the Kiangsi provincial governor, T'ang P'in, who was concurrently the education commissioner, argued for establishing local *sheng-yüan* quotas for the P'eng people in order to encourage them to settle down and discard their nomadic pattern of life, a policy for which he sought support in a 1731 precedent.[95]

Minority quotas became the targets of opportunity for Han people seeking local status in the southwest. In 1767, a memorial from the Kwangsi provincial education commissioner, Mei Li-pen (d. 1767), noted that in five

[90] For examples, see *Fan-i hui-shih lu*, 1739, 1809, 1811, which are in the Ming-Ch'ing Archives, Academia Sinica, Taiwan. Cf. Pamela Crossley, "Structure and symbol in the role of the Ming-Ch'ing foreign translation bureaus (*Siyiguan*)," *Central and Inner Asian Studies*, 5 (1991), pp. 38–70.

[91] See *Tan-mo lu*, 1, pp. 9b–10a.

[92] Ibid., 6, p. 10b.

[93] *Ch'ing-shih kao*, 11, p. 3169. Manchu-language examinations for Han-lin members are in the Han Yü-shan Collection of the UCLA Young Research Library, Department of Special Collections. Cf. Cheryl M. Boettcher, "'To make them ready for official employment': Literacy in Manchu and the Han-lin cohort of 1655," UCLA History Department Writing Seminar Paper (Winter-Spring, 1993).

[94] See *ECCP*, p. 158.

[95] See Chou Huang (d. 1785), "Chiang-hsi hsüeh-cheng tsou," in *I-hui ch'ao-chien*, 1762, 8th month, 19th day in the Ming-Ch'ing Archives, Academia Sinica, Taiwan. See also the *Li-pu i-hui*, 1763, 4th month, also in the Ming-Ch'ing Archives, which asked to set up *t'ung-sheng* quotas for the P'eng people in Kiangsi province.

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prefectures Han Chinese were using the easier native quotas instead of their own more competitive quotas in local examinations to become licentiates (*sheng-yüan*). Mei added that it was hard to verify authentic native people (*t'u-chi*).[96] Similarly, a 1785 memorial from the governor-general of Shensi and Kansu provinces in the northwest, Fu-k'ang-an (d. 1796), a member of the Yellow Banner, discussed the need to establish schools for standard literati studies among Muslims there. Fu-k'ang-an, an experienced military leader who had helped successfully lead Ch'ing forces in Kansu against Muslim separatists in 1784, perceived the civil examinations as a way to incorporate the Muslims (*Hui-min*) into the empire's mainstream. He recommended that the official quotas for Muslims be increased to four places on both local civil and military *sui-shih* examinations.[97]

Other memorials and edicts dealt with the special requirements of the minorities in southwest China, which had been described since the 1730s by the education reformer Ch'en Hung-mou (1696–1771), when he served in Yunnan province.[98] In an 1807 memorial, the provincial education commissioner in Hunan province, Li Tsung-han (1769–1831), requested that Miao candidates taking provincial examinations be granted quotas of their own so that they would not have to compete for places with better-prepared Han Chinese. Li was quick to add, however, that local officials would have to be wary of those, notably Han Chinese, who would falsely claim Miao heritage to fill the latter's more easily attained quotas. Again, the goal was to assimilate the Miao via local quotas for the examinations into the literati mainstream.[99]

THE CHANGING INTELLECTUAL AND SOCIAL CONTEXT IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY CHINA

During the seventeenth century, a unified academic field of empirically based classical knowledge emerged among literati scholars in the Yangtze delta provinces of Kiangsu, Chekiang, and Anhwei and eventually informed the examination curriculum authorized from Peking. This philological grid for classical learning represented a fundamental shift in the common codes of elite knowledge about the past. The textual vocabulary of classical scholars during the eighteenth century in turn reinforced a shift from Sung-Ming

[96] See the "Kuang-hsi hsüeh-cheng tsou," in *I-hui ch'ao-chien*, 1767, 7th month, which includes the memorial dated 7th month, 28th day.
[97] See the memorials in *Li-pu i-hui nei-ko*, 1785, 1st month, 26th day.
[98] See William Rowe, "Education and empire in southwest China," in Elman and Woodside, eds., *Education and society in late imperial China*, pp. 421–33.
[99] *Huang-ch'ao hsü wen-hsien t'ung-k'ao*, p. 8438.

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rationalism (*li-hsüeh*), typified by the moral philosophy of Chu Hsi, to a more skeptical and secular classical empiricism. By making precise scholarship, rather than reason, the source of acceptable knowledge, Ch'ing classicists contended that the legitimate reach of ancient ideals should be reevaluated through comparative delineation of the textual sources from which all such knowledge derived.

This turn to empirically based classical inquiry meant that abstract ideas and a priori rational argumentation gave way as the primary objects of elite discussion to concrete facts, verifiable institutions, ancient natural studies, and historical events. In general, Ch'ing classicists took Sung and Ming discourses on the Learning of the Way to be an obstacle to verifiable truth because it seemed to discourage further inquiry along empirical lines. The empirical approach to knowledge they advocated, namely "to search for truth from facts" (*shih-shih ch'iu-shih*), placed proof and verification at the heart of organization and analysis of the classical tradition. During this time, scholars and critics also began to apply historical analysis to the official Classics. Classical commentary yielded to textual criticism and a search for evidence (*k'ao-cheng*) to refortify the ancient canon.[100]

A scholarly position stressing that valid knowledge should be corroborated by external facts and impartial observations in turn added impetus to study of the natural world among eighteenth-century literati. A full-blown scientific revolution as in Europe did not ensue,[101] but evidential (*k'ao-cheng*) scholars made the study of topics related to astronomy, mathematics, and geography high priorities in their research programs. Animated by a concern to restore native traditions in the precise sciences to their proper place of eminence, after less overt attention during the Ming dynasty until the coming of the Jesuits at the end of the sixteenth century,[102] evidential scholars such as Tai Chen (1724–77), Ch'ien Ta-hsin (1728–1804), and Juan Yüan (1764–1849) successfully incorporated technical aspects of Western astronomy and mathematics into the literati framework for classical learning. Ch'ien, in particular, acknowledged this broadening of literati traditions, which he thought reversed centuries of focus on moral and philosophic problems: "In ancient times, no one could be a scholar (*Ju*) who did not know

[100] For discussion, see John Henderson, *Scripture, canon, and commentary: A comparison of Confucian and Western exegesis* (Princeton, 1991), passim.

[101] See Nathan Sivin, "Why the scientific revolution did not take place in China – or didn't it?" *Chinese Science*, 5 (1982), pp. 45–66; rpt. in Sivin, *Science in ancient China: Researches and reflections* (Aldershot, 1995), Part VII, pp. 45–66.

[102] But see Willard J. Peterson, "Calendar reform prior to the arrival of Missionaries at the Ming court," *Ming Studies*, 21 (Spring 1986), pp. 45–61, and Roger Hart, "Proof, propaganda, and patronage: A cultural history of the dissemination of Western Studies in Seventeenth-Century China" (diss., UCLA, 1997), ch. 1.

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mathematics. . . . Chinese methods [now] lag behind Europe's because scholars (*Ju*) do not know mathematics."[103]

During early Ch'ing, when Ch'eng-Chu learning revived, scholars such as Yen Jo-chü (1636–1704) dramatically demonstrated that the Old Text chapters of the *Documents Classic* were a later forgery. Although Yen's discovery was passed around in manuscript form and not printed until 1745, it helped to gainsay certain Learning of the Way doctrines that had been based on Old Text chapters.[104] Without great fanfare, Hu Wei (1633–1714), Yen's colleague, exposed the relatively late origins of Sung cosmograms known as the "Lo Writing" (*Lo-shu*) and "Ho Diagram" (*Ho-t'u*). Their findings later were corroborated in the mid-eighteenth century by the Soochow scholar Hui Tung (1697–1758), whose followers revived ancient "Han Learning" and criticized Ch'eng-Chu learning more forcefully than had Yen Jo-chü or Hu Wei.

Language became a special object of investigation in the Ch'ien-lung (1736–95) and Chia-ch'ing (1796–1820) reigns. Tai Chen, from Anhwei, described such investigation as follows: "The Classics provide the route to the Way. What illuminates the Way are the words [of the Classics]. How words are formed can be grasped only through [a knowledge of] philology and paleography. From [the study of] primary and derived characters we can master the language. Through language we can penetrate the mind and will of the ancient sages and accomplished men." The distinguished classicist and historian Wang Ming-sheng (1722–98), from Chia-ting, echoed Tai's words: "The Classics are used to understand the Way. But those who seek the Way should not cling vacuously to meanings and principles in order to find it. If only they correct primary and derived characters, discern their pronunciation, read the explanations and glosses, and master the commentaries and notes, the meanings and principles will appear on their own, and the Way within them."[105]

Their research program was taken literally by thousands of literati trained in evidential (*k'ao-cheng*) methods during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In this way, students of evidential research were determined to pierce what they considered the thick veil of Sung and Ming metaphysical and cosmological systems of thought. They hoped to recapture the pristine meaning formulated by the sage-kings of antiquity in the ancient Classics. By revisit-

[103] Ch'ien Ta-hsin, *Ch'ien-yen-tang wen-chi* (Taipei, 1968), 3, pp. 94–5.

[104] See Benjamin A. Elman, "Philosophy (*I-li*) versus Philology (*K'ao-cheng*): The (*Jen-hsin Tao-hsin*) Debate," *T'oung Pao*, 59, Nos. 4–5 (1983), pp. 175–222. On early Ch'ing revival of Ch'eng-Chu learning, see Kai-wing Chow, *The rise of Confucian ritualism in late imperial China* (Stanford, 1994), pp. 44–60.

[105] Tai Chen, *Tai Chen wen-chi* (Hong Kong, 1974), p. 146, and Wang Ming-sheng, *Shih-ch'i-shih shang-ch'ueh* (1787 ed.; rpt. Taipei, 1960), "Hsü," p. 2a.

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ing antiquity Ch'ing classicists in effect called into question the dominant classical tradition which Ch'ing rulers enshrined as the norm in imperial examinations and official ideology.

Toward the end of the eighteenth century, the prestige of the Classics, though politically unchanged, had diminished vis-à-vis historical studies.[106] Using the phrase "the Six Classics are all histories," Chang Hsüeh-ch'eng placed the timeless Classics within the framework of the endless flux of history, but even in the eighteenth century Chang's appraisal was not unique. Nor were philosophic concepts immune to empirical analysis. Though most evidential (*k'ao-cheng*) scholars preferred an empirical program for research, a few led by Tai Chen saw in linguistic analysis, historical phonology, and glossing of terms a new and more precise textual approach to traditional philosophic questions. Important classical concepts and ideals, as a result of Tai's influence, were subjected to philological study. A methodology that had proven fruitful in textual criticism, it was hoped, would prove equally productive in moral philosophy.[107]

Private academies under the Ch'ing

One factor that distinguished Ch'ing scholars from their Ming predecessors was the prominence of academies in forming a relatively autonomous intellectual community committed to evidential research. Before this time, literati scholars were usually also officials whose roles precluded their earning their living solely through scholarship.[108] Since the Sung dynasty, a tension had existed between academies devoted to moral and philosophic learning and government schools oriented toward the "official studies" (*kuan-hsüeh*) necessary to rise in the examination hierarchy. Private academies that flourished as centers of learning during the Sung and Ming periods, with exceptions, were chiefly concerned with preparing students to become effective political and moral leaders and scholars. This goal presupposed an education that stressed moral cultivation and the study of the Four Books, the Five Classics, and the Dynastic Histories. The Tung-lin Academy in Wu-hsi, for example,

[106] See Benjamin A. Elman, "The changing role of historical knowledge in southern provincial civil examinations during the Ming and Ch'ing," *Journal of Social Sciences and Philosophy*, 5, No. 1 (Nov. 1992), pp. 265- 319.

[107] Benjamin A. Elman, "Criticism as philosophy: Conceptual change in Ch'ing Dynasty evidential research," *Tsing Hua Journal of Chinese Studies*, n.s., 17 (1985), pp. 165–98.

[108] Frederic Wakeman, Jr., "The price of autonomy: Intellectuals in Ming and Ch'ing politics," *Daedalus*, 101, No. 2 (Spring 1972), pp. 35–70. For a discussion of Sung academies, see Linda Walton-Vargö, "Education, social change, and neo-Confucianism in Sung-Yüan China: Academies and the local elite in Ming prefecture (Ningpo)" (diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1978), pp. 58–128, 186–237.

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represented a late Ming literati center where Ch'eng-Chu learning and political aspirations intertwined.[109]

It is difficult to document the numbers of private academies (*shu-yüan*) operating during the Sung and Ming dynasties. Based on the estimates of Sung historians, there were about 56 to 73 such academies during the Northern Sung, and about 260 to 317 of them during the Southern Sung, with another 108 to 125 Sung academies whose origins are unclear. The total of 424 to 515 Sung academies, however, is far fewer than during Ming, when, depending on the source consulted, some 926 to 1,962 were founded and maintained. The range of the per year index for academies during the Southern Sung was 1.64–2.07. The overall Sung index of between 1.33 and 1.61 was at least doubled in the Yüan, when 320 to 406 academies probably were in existence, and perhaps even quintupled in Ming, particularly during the sixteenth century.[110]

By late Ming, the growth of academies was phenomenal. They became centers for classical discourse on the one hand and dissent and political protest on the other. The appearance of the Tung-lin Academy and later the Fu She (Restoration Society) at the apex of a loose association of literary groups and poetry clubs during the seventeenth century brought out into the open the politicized orientation of late Ming academy education. Dedicated to supporting its members in the factional struggles that dominated late Ming politics, the Restoration Society (Fu She), in William Atwell's words, "formed probably the largest and most sophisticated political organization in the history of traditional China."[111]

Seventeenth-century literati societies and the Ming-Ch'ing transition

Another side to the political groups, clubs, and associations that flourished during the transition from the Ming to Ch'ing dynasty were literary societies (*she*) that served as forums for the revival of ancient learning. This stress on antiquity also carried with it a diffuse commitment to evidential and empirical scholarship. Ming-Ch'ing literati such as Ku Yen-wu (1613–82), Huang Tsung-hsi (1610–95), and Wan Ssu-t'ung (1638–1702) recognized the need

[109] See Ping-ti Ho, *The ladder of success*, pp. 197–203; Meskill, *Academies in Ming China*, passim; and Benjamin A. Elman, "Imperial politics and Confucian societies in late imperial China: The Hanlin and Donglin academies," *Modern China*, 15, No. 4 (1989), pp. 379–418.

[110] See John Chaffee, "Chu Hsi and the revival of the White Deer Grotto Academy, 1179–81," *T'oung Pao*, 71 (1985), pp. 46–7; and Walton-Vargö, "Education, social change, and neo-Confucianism," pp. 244–5. On the difficulties in obtaining figures for Sung academies, see Pai Hsin-liang, *Chung-kuo ku-tai shu-yüan fa-chan shih* (T'ien-chin, 1995), pp. 271–3.

[111] John Meskill, "Academies and politics in the Ming Dynasty," in Hucker, *Chinese government in Ming times: Seven studies* (New York: 1969), pp. 149–74. See also Atwell, "The Fu She," pp. 333–67, and Charles Hucker, "The Tung-lin movement of the late Ming period," in John K. Fairbank, ed., *Chinese thought and institutions* (Chicago, 1957), pp. 132–62.

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for scholarly and educational reform. A few members of the associations or literary societies turned toward precise, evidential methods of research to reconstruct classical texts. Stressing Han dynasty sources, these men showed glimmerings of the Han Learning wave to come, which, in the eighteenth century, would result in their being looked on retrospectively as "founders."

The "return to antiquity" (*fu-ku*) movement nourished a reappraisal of recent scholarship and encouraged a return to the Classics and the Histories. Seventeenth-century groups such as the Tu-shu She (Society of Book-Readers) in Hangchow took "broad learning" (*po-hsüeh*) as their goal. Huang Tsung-hsi, a participant in the activities of the Tu-shu She, praised the leader of the group, Chang Ch'i-jan (1600–64), for the philological and geographical expertise he applied in classical scholarship.[112]

In the tense years after the Ch'ing conquest of the south, some of the societies (*she*) and other such groups survived. Most, however, shut down. Legally prevented from overt political dissent, members of these groups favored informal discussions under more private auspices. At the same time that government policies toward literati hardened to prevent the recurrence of late Ming factions, *she* became strictly scholarly associations and poetry societies. Ch'ing policies included the 1652 ban on the founding of private academies, a ban on the gathering of literati for political purposes, and bans on student demonstrations. In 1660–61, more stringent measures were taken through the prosecution of Kiangnan literati for back taxes due the government.[113]

Numerous groups of scholars and Ming loyalists in the Yangtze delta continued to meet under the guise of poetry societies that sprang up in the early Ch'ing. Ku Yen-wu and his close friend Kuei Chuang (1613–73) participated in the Ching-yin shih-she (Ching-yin poetry society), which was one of the largest such groups in the early years of Ch'ing rule. Founded in 1650, the Ching-yin Society met regularly until one of its members was executed for his involvement in compiling a banned work on the fallen Ming dynasty. Ku Yen-wu and others narrowly escaped being implicated. Particularly during the Shun-chih reign (1644–61), Han Chinese scholars had to be careful of their association with anything having to do with delicate aspects of the fallen Ming dynasty and resistance movements that ensued.[114]

Most representative of literati learning during the early years of Ch'ing rule was a group of scholars who, led by Huang Tsung-hsi, Wan Ssu-ta

[112] See Ono Kazuko, *Minki dōsha kō* (Kyoto, 1996), passim, and Atwell, "The Fu She," p. 349.

[113] See Ono Kazuko, "Shinsho no shisō tōsei o megutte," *Tōyōshi kenkyū*, 18, No. 3 (December 1959), pp. 99–123.

[114] Ono Kazuko, " 'Shinsho no shisō tōsei," p. 347. See also Hsieh Kuo-chen, *Ming-Ch'ing chih chi tang-she yün-tung k'ao* (Shanghai, 1934), pp. 209–13; and Lynn Struve, *The southern Ming, 1644–1662* (New Haven, 1984), passim.

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(1633–83), and Wan Ssu-t'ung, called themselves the Chiang-ching hui (Society for Discourses on the Classics). The Society met in the eastern Chekiang county that included Ningpo city. Established in 1658, the Chiang-ching hui affirmed the need for careful textual research methods to reconstruct the classical tradition.[115] This turn toward precise philology in Chekiang classical studies may be traced back in part to sixteenth-century debates surrounding the Old Text version of the *Great Learning* (*Ta-hsüeh ku-pen*). Wang Yang-ming (1472–1527), a native of eastern Chekiang, had restored the Old Text version to gainsay Chu Hsi's "externalist" views of the term "investigation of things" (*ko-wu*) in the Four Books. Wang's claim caused a brouhaha among literati scholars. Some scholars have linked this controversy to the emergence of evidential research in the late Ming.[116] Until 1679, more than twenty scholars regularly gathered as the Society for Discourses on the Classics with Huang as the chief lecturer. Huang and his friends took Wang's side in the debates. Of particular interest to the scholars there was research on social rites (*1i*). In addition to mastering the accumulated scholarship on the *Li-chi* (*Record of rites*), *I-li* (*Decorum ritual*), and the *Chou-1i* (*Rites of Chou*), they carefully studied the texts character by character, comparing them with earlier glosses, to determine the correct readings and the proper exegesis.

Agreement on the centrality of rituals became the cardinal point that united Han Learning scholars throughout the Ch'ing dynasty. Their emphasis on decorum and institutions was a direct reaction against what they considered the Ch'eng-Chu misuse of Principle (*li*) for abstract and speculative studies.[117] Members of the Society for Discourses on the Classics, still champions of Wang Yang-ming, attacked Ch'eng-Chu learning as empty and futile speculation. The Society for Discussion of the Classics scholars represented an important transition from Ming intuitional studies to Ch'ing evidential scholarship.

The development of official academies in the Ch'ing

Estimates for the number of Ch'ing dynasty private or semi-official academies are usually two to three per county. There were approximately 3,000 in mid-Ch'ing and more than 4,000 academies in late-Ch'ing, or two to four

[115] Ono Kazuko, "Shinsho no Kōkeikai ni tsuite," *Tōhōgaku hō*, 36 (1964), pp. 633–61.

[116] See Ying-shih Yü, "Some preliminary observations on the rise of Ch'ing Confucian intellectualism," *Tsing Hua Journal of Chinese Studies*, 11 (1975), p. 125. On late Ming debates concerning the authenticity of new versions of the *Great learning*, see Lin Ch'ing-chang, *Ch'ing-ch'u te ch'ün-ching pien-wei hsüeh* (Taipei, 1990), pp. 369–86.

[117] Huang Tsung-hsi, *Huang Li-chou wen-chi* (Peking, 1959), p. 199. See also Ono Kazuko, "Kōkeikai," pp. 639–58; and Chow, *The rise of Confucian ritualism*, passim.

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times that of the Ming and eight to ten times that of Sung.[118] Official control had been an important government aim since the attempts at imperial suppression of private academies in the late sixteenth century. Ch'ing policy toward private academies was at first strict. After 1652, no new private, independent academies were established. Government schools oriented to the examination system, on the other hand, opened as early as 1645, under the control of local education officials and examination supervisors.

To avoid the divisive factionalism thought to be represented in Ming private academies, the K'ang-hsi emperor issued proclamations in 1713 and 1715 sanctioning the establishment of community schools (*she-hsüeh*) and charity schools (*i-hsüeh*) by local communities to complement existing prefectural and county schools in each province. Official control of charitable schools, when compared to imperially sponsored community schools, should not be overestimated, however, because of the mediating role played by local elites in the formation of community schools (*she-hsüeh*). Nevertheless, the remarkable growth in numbers of charity schools during the eighteenth century signaled an attempt by local leaders to make them into feeder schools in local areas. Merchants and degree-holders responded favorably to the proclamations because of the need for education facilities for growing numbers of students.[119]

Court recognition that new academies were also indispensable to provide classical educations for a burgeoning pool of aspiring officials began late in the K'ang-hsi emperor's reign. Local initiative was needed to alleviate the shortage of schools, and there was a ready pool of private financing, particularly in the south, for such enterprises. To prevent private academies from reasserting their earlier dominance as prestigious centers of literati learning, however, the Yung-cheng emperor in 1733, after a hiatus that had lasted approximately ninety years, initiated a new policy for establishing officially controlled academies in the provinces. They were modeled after the officially controlled, but locally sponsored, charity schools that had proven successful.[120] Through a combination of local support and official supervision, Ch'ing authorities successfully prevented the recurrence of the activist academies that

[118] See Chung-li Chang, *The income of the Chinese gentry* (Seattle, 1962), pp. 105–6. Before the nineteenth century there were likely only two academies per county. Pai Hsin-liang in his *Chung-kuo ku-tai shu-yüan fa-chan shih*, pp. 271–3, gives 4,365 for the total number of Ch'ing academies, but many were formed in the nineteenth century.

[119] See Leung, "Elementary education in the lower Yangtze Region," pp. 384–8.

[120] Ono Kazuko, "Shinsho no shisō tōsei o megutte," p. 340. For the impact on schools in Kiangnan, see Kessler, *Kang-hsi and the consolidation of Ch'ing rule, 1661–1684*, pp. 37–8. See also Ogawa Yoshiko, "Shindai ni okeru gigaku setsuritsu no kiban," in Hayashi Tomoharu, ed., *Kinsei Chūgoku kyōiku kenkyū* (Tokyo, 1958), pp. 275–308; and Sheng Lang-hsi, *Chung-kuo shu-yüan chih-tu* (Ching-mei, Taiwan, 1977), pp. 132–3.

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had troubled late Ming governments. Provincial officials were held responsible for what occurred in the areas where they served. The imperial court could expect quick news via secret memorials of any local disturbances that were related to local schools and academies.[121] Public funds were set aside both for helping to construct new academies and for stipends for scholars and students in residence. Initially, only twenty-one such academies were established in eighteen provinces, but this policy touched off an increase in the number of academies throughout the eighteenth century.

Although distinctions between private, public, and official schools were not clearly demarcated, three distinctive types of academies emerged after 1733. First, there remained a small number of private academies that had survived since the fall of the Ming and were primarily devoted to transmitting Ch'eng-Chu teachings. These schools were not controlled by official sources. These traditional academies were soon surpassed in number by newly established government schools in county, prefectural, and provincial capitals. This second type of academy was more official than private and was, from the start, devoted mainly to instruction that would serve students preparing for the civil examinations. Official academies drew students from community schools, charity schools, and county and prefectural schools. Although little actual instruction occurred, students mastered the technique of writing acceptable eight-legged essays there. As in the case of Ming academies oriented toward the examination system, however, students at government schools were encouraged to read and memorize collections of eight-legged essays issued by bookstores. Some feared that a system of plagiarism, which Ku Yen-wu had earlier described for the late Ming, had again become entrenched.[122] Many felt that students no longer read the Classics or the Histories. Instead they learned to adapt model essays into what they hoped would become passing examination papers.[123]

In response to this felt crisis in education, a third, hybrid type of academy emerged after 1750, one devoted to the reading and exegesis of the Classics and the Histories rather than just preparation for the examinations. At such semi-official schools, founded by provincial officials committed to an education that stressed content over mimicry, evidential (*k'ao-cheng*) scholarship penetrated the local educational system. These schools were semi-private and

[121] Bartlett, *Monarchs and ministers*, pp. 46–64.

[122] Lung-chang Young, "Ku Yen-wu's views on the Ming examination system," *Ming Studies*, 23 (1987), pp. 48–63.

[123] Hayashi Tomoharu, "Shinchō no shoin kyōiku," *Gakushūin daigaku bungakubu kenkyū nempō*, 6 (1959), pp. 181–91. See also Sheng Lang-hsi, *Chung-kuo shu-yüan chih-tu*, pp. 154–7; and Grimm, "Academies and urban systems in Kwangtung," pp. 488–90. For an account of the outcry against the academies oriented to the examination system, see Wolfgang Franke, *The reform and abolition of the traditional Chinese examination system* (Cambridge Mass., 1960), pp. 19–27.

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independent, but officially patronized. The fashion for Han Learning, which began in mid-eighteenth-century Soochow, soon swept through the academies there and often replaced Sung Learning as the mode of instruction in many schools.[124] Strictly speaking, "Han Learning" denoted a mode of scholarship that came into fashion in Soochow with Hui Tung in the mid-eighteenth century. Because Hui and his followers actively opposed the "Sung Learning" of Ch'eng I and Chu Hsi, they turned to reconstruction and study of later Han classical commentaries, especially those of Cheng Hsüan (127–200), who had successfully synthesized earlier New and Old Text doctrines. The debate between those who favored later Han classical studies and those who were advocates of Ch'eng-Chu teachings represented more than antiquarian issues. The Han Learning proponents were casting doubt on teachings endorsed by Ch'ing emperors as legitimating the dynasty.

Official academies and evidential scholarship in the eighteenth century

Yangtze delta academies during the Ch'ing dynasty served large communities of scholars, many of whom engaged in intellectual pursuits and not merely preparation for imperial examinations. Academic debates articulated within such academies transmitted to students the key issues of classical scholarship. In this manner, academies helped to promote the research environment that made possible the advancement in classical learning during the eighteenth century. Teacher-pupil relationships traditionally required knowledge transmitted by the teacher only to be accepted dutifully, not improved upon. Evidential (*k'ao-cheng*) scholars overturned this passive absorption of knowledge, which demanded humble attentiveness, in favor of independent inquiry.

Many scholars in Kiangnan, for example, recognized the cumulative nature of scholarship and emphasized preparing students to make contributions to the accumulating literature. The Yangchow scholars associated with Tai Chen went beyond the traditional confines of the master-disciple relationship. They emphasized making new discoveries, in addition to the restoration, preservation, and transmission of knowledge.[125] The low academic prestige of official schools and the growing criticism of Sung-Ming Learning of the Way, which included in many cases the public rejection of Ch'eng-Chu teachings, enabled "independent," officially controlled academies to become centers of evidential (*k'ao-cheng*) scholarship. They provided the institutional context in which empirical methods were learned and transmitted.

[124] See Ch'en Tung-yüan, "Ch'ing-tai shu-yüan feng-ch'i chih pien-ch'ien," *Hsüeh-feng*, 3, No. 5 (June 1933), pp. 17–18.
[125] See Nishi Junzō, "Tai Shin no hōhō shiron," *Tōkyō Shinagaku hō*, 1 (June 1955), p. 131.

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Teaching and classical research became attractive alternatives to an official career in the eighteenth century. The institutionalization of evidential scholarship was possible because academies in Kiangnan became the centers for continuity and consensus in evidential (*k'ao-cheng*) scholarship. Academy appointments in Yangtze delta cities were marks of prestige and high scholarly position. Scholars such as Ch'ien Ta-hsin and Sun Hsing-yen were honored by being named head of the academies where they had once been students. Tuition support, prizes, and recognition served to reinforce the prestige of education in the official academies and to reward academic promise and achievement.[126]

For instance, the Tzu-yang Academy (named after Chu Hsi's home area and academy), which stood at the pinnacle of the hierarchy of schools in Soochow, had been established early in the eighteenth century by an adherent of Ch'eng-Chu doctrines. This focus changed with the appointment of Shen Te-ch'ien (1673–1769) as head in 1751. Although more famous for his poetry and literary criticism than his textual scholarship, Shen during his stay at Tzu-yang brought together students who became three of the most influential Han Learning scholars of the eighteenth century: Ch'ien Ta-hsin, Wang Ming-sheng, and Wang Ch'ang (1725–1806).

All three were strongly influenced by the Han Learning movement that Hui Tung and his followers popularized in Soochow. In addition, one of their teachers at Tzu-yang impressed on them the importance of historical studies in classical research. This was Wang Chün (1694–1751), who previously had taught at the An-ting Academy in Yangchow. Wang stressed ancient learning (*ku-hsüeh*) in his role as a teacher at both An-ting and Tzu-yang. Ch'ien Ta-hsin subsequently admitted that his own interests in historical studies developed as a result of Wang Chün's influence. Ch'ien Ta-hsin was appointed director of his alma mater in 1789, teaching there for the final sixteen years of his life. During his tenure at Tzu-yang, over two thousand students matriculated there. They mastered "ancient learning," and graduates of Tzu-yang went on to distinguish themselves as specialists in mathematics, geography, paleography, technical statecraft, and historical studies.[127]

The An-ting and Mei-hua academies were Yangchow's premier academies. Ping-ti Ho has noted that An-ting and Mei-hua were established during the Ch'ing dynasty exclusively for children of salt merchants, demonstrating that salt merchant families "probably received the best schooling in the empire." A number of scholars associated with Han Learning and evidential research

[126] See Liu I-cheng, "Chiang-su shu-yüan chih ch'u-kao," *Kuo-hsüeh t'u-shu-kuan nien-k'an*, 4 (1931), pp. 61–3. See also Hayashi Tomoharu, "Shinchō no shoin kyōiku," p. 189.

[127] Liu I-cheng, pp. 56–8, 63–70. On Wang Chün, see Ch'ien Ta-hsin, *Ch'ien-yen T'ang wen-chi*, 3, p. 353 (ch. 24), and 6, pp. 671–2.

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taught at both academies. These included Tai Chen's protégé, Tuan Yü-ts'ai (1735–1815), as well as Wang Nien-sun (1744–1832), Sun Hsing-yen (1753–1818), and Hung Liang-chi (1746–1809). The more formative influences in Yangchow, however, were Hui Tung and Tai Chen. Although from Anhwei, Tai Chen lived and taught in Yangchow from 1756 to 1762, initially at the home of Wang An-kuo (1694–1757), father of Wang Nien-sun. The latter acquired his training in phonology and etymology from Tai, which he then transmitted to his son, Wang Yin-chih (1766–1834).

Describing the academic environment in Yangchow, Wang Chung (1744–94) wrote: "At this time, ancient learning [*ku-hsüeh*] was popular. Hui Tung of Yüan-ho [in Soochow] and Tai Chen of Hsiu-ning [in Anhwei] were admired by everyone in the area north of the Yangtze River [that is, Yangchow]. . . . We worked hard together to realize our potential, and each of us formed his own [specialty of] learning." Likewise, Chiao Hsün (1763–1820), a relative of Juan Yüan, studied at the An-ting Academy in 1779, and the evidential (*k'ao-cheng*) historian Chao I (1727–1814) was director there from 1784 to 1786. Both An-ting and Mei-hua remained centers of learning in the nineteenth century.[128]

A notable school in Hangchow that was oriented toward evidential scholarship was the Ch'ung-wen Academy. From 1795 to 1798, Juan Yüan (then Chekiang director of education) employed students from Ch'ung-wen on a Han Learning project to compile the *Ching-chi tsuan-ku* (*Collected glosses on the Classics*) dictionary. Evidential research remained dominant at Ch'ung-wen in the nineteenth century. When Juan Yüan became Chekiang governor in 1801, he established, with the help of local salt merchants, the *Ku-ching ching-she* (Refined Study for Explication of the Classics) in Hangchow. Juan noted that he had founded the academy to honor Later Han classicists.[129]

By linking a classical education to concrete studies (*shih-hsüeh*), Juan, who was also a patron of natural studies (*ko-chih-hsüeh*), saw to it that students at the Refined Study for the Explication of the Classics would be examined in astronomy, mathematics, and geography, in addition to their literary and textual studies. Juan Yüan and other leading provincial officials became aware of the need for educational and bureaucratic reform due to their concern for problems in Ch'ing administration. Juan Yüan invited two outstanding evidential scholars, Sun Hsing-yen and Wang Ch'ang, to co-direct the Refined

[128] Liu I-cheng, pp. 51–3. See also Ho, *The ladder of success*, p. 202, and "The salt merchants of Yang-chou," p. 165n. For the quotation, see Wang Chung, *Shu-hsüeh* (*wai-p'ien*) (Taipei, 1970), 1, p. 9b.

[129] *ECCP*, pp. 129, 141, 550, 677, 807. See Ch'en Tung-yüan, "Ch'ing-tai chih k'e-chü," p. 51, and Man-kam Leung, "Mongolian language and examinations," pp. 54–5. For Lu Wen-ch'ao's account of Tzu-yang and Ch'ung-wen in Hangchow, see *Pao-ching Tang wen-chi*, 4, pp. 342–4 (ch. 25).

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Study for the Explication of the Classics. Han Learning and Sung Learning topics filled the pages of the *Ku-ching ching-she wen-chi* (*Prose collection of the Refined study for the explication of the Classics*), which included essays by teachers and students. Also included were essays on astronomy and calendrical studies. Sun employed textual scholars to reconstruct and collate important works that held a pivotal position in the growing criticism of Old Text versions of the Classics (see below).[130]

Later, the *Hsüeh-hai t'ang* (Sea of Learning Hall) was established by then Governor-General Juan Yüan in Canton in 1820 on the model of the Refined Study for the Explication of the Classics and other Kiangnan academies. To counteract the popularity of Sung-Ming Learning of the Way in Canton, Juan stipulated that classical and historical topics taught at the Sea of Learning Hall should be supplemented by concrete studies. With the Refined Study for the Explication of the Classics and the Sea of Learning Hall as precedents, academies devoted to classical and practical education began to spring up elsewhere during the nineteenth century.[131]

Breaking with the usual organization of academies, Juan Yüan established eight directors for the Sea of Learning Hall, instead of the accepted practice of a single principal. For vacancies, all directors were to be appointed by the governor-general after nomination by the rest of the directors. This policy was initiated because in Juan's words "this academy is devoted intensively to the mastery of concrete studies. It is necessary to have eight directors, each employing his own strengths, all working together to enlighten and guide, so that we can expect men of talent to arise daily."[132]

Students were selected from all over Kwangtung, but they were drawn predominantly from other academies in Canton. Students were expected to have attained tribute student (*kung-sheng*) status before beginning their studies at the Sea of Learning Hall as regular or adjunct students. Preparatory students (*t'ung-sheng*) were not accepted. This procedure meant that the Sea of Learning Hall would only accept students who had mastered the eight-legged essay or attained degree-holding status through purchase of a tribute student (*kung-sheng*) degree. Students were expected to continue their careers by preparing on their own for civil examinations.

[130] Juan Yüan, *Yen-ching-shih chi* (Taipei, 1964), Vol. 2, p. 505. See Sun Hsing-yen et al., "Ku-ching ching-she t'i-ming-pei-chi," in *Ku-ching ching-she wen-chi* (Taipei, 1966), p. 2 and Chang Yin, "Ku-ching ching-she ch'u-kao," *Wen-lan hsüeh-pao*, 2, No. 1 (March 1936), pp. 39–41.

[131] See Barry Keenan, *Imperial China's last classical academies: Social change in the lower Yangzi, 1864–1911* (Berkeley, 1994), passim.

[132] For an account of the Sea of Learning Hall (*Hsüeh-hai t'ang*) and its role in Cantonese academics, see Benjamin A. Elman, "The Hsüeh-hai t'ang and the rise of new text scholarship," *Ch'ing-shih wen-t'i*, 4, No. 2 (Dec. 1979), pp. 51–82. Juan Yüan's remarks are cited in the *Hsüeh-hai t'ang chih* (Hong Kong, 1964), p. 7b.

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Financed by a combination of official subsidies arranged by Juan Yüan, investments from officially authorized (*hang*) merchants, and rent from a generous endowment of land, students at the Sea of Learning Hall were given monthly stipends in addition to prizes for superlative studies. Outstanding examination essays were printed in the *Hsüeh-hai t'ang chi* (*Collected writings from Sea of Learning Hall*), along with prose and poems by the directors. In addition, students kept diaries concerning their readings, and once a month students and teachers dined together and discussed their progress.[133] Four sessions of classes were scheduled each year with two of the directors in charge of each session on a rotating basis. The two directors presented lectures twice a month and set topics for examinations and essays. They were responsible for grading and evaluating students. Examinations were held at the end of each session. Library books were donated by Juan Yüan, other high officials in the province, and teachers in the academy. In addition, the Sea of Learning Hall did its own publishing and rented out its woodblocks to other publishing companies.[134]

As major steps forward in literati education in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the Refined Study for the Explication of the Classics (*Ku-ching ching-she*) in Hangchow and the Sea of Learning Hall (*Hsüeh-hai t'ang*) in Canton were outgrowths of the rigorous Han Learning educations received in academies founded in the Yangtze delta during the eighteenth century.

The revival of poetry and the Five Classics in the late eighteenth century

Along with the rise of Han Learning, the late Ch'ien-lung era also witnessed, in the revival of the Five Classics and T'ang poetry among literati, one of the great reversals of the classical regime of the Learning of the Way stressing the Four Books and the eight-legged essay. Revival of ancient learning, particularly pre-Sung forms of prose writing and scholia, brought in its wake an increased awareness by Ch'ing literati of the role of poetry and *belles lettres* in T'ang and Sung civil examinations and intellectual life. The epochal shift toward the examination essay, which began in the Sung, continued in the Yüan, and climaxed in the early Ming, when poetry was finally eliminated from civil examinations, began to reverse in the mid-eighteenth century.

[133] Liu Po-chi, *Kuang-tung shu-yüan chih-tu* (Hong Kong, 1958), pp. 310–11, 329; and Ting Wen-chiang, *Liang Jen-kung hsien-sheng nien-p'u ch'ang-pien ch'u-kao* (Taipei, 1972), Vol. 1, p. 13.

[134] See Jung Chao-tsu, "Hsüeh-hai t'ang k'ao," *Ling-nan hsüeh-pao*, 3, No. 4 (June 1934), p. 20. A classical examination given in December 1868 at the Sea of Learning Hall (*Hsüeh-hai t'ang*) is reproduced on the page opposite p. 1.

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Despite some misgivings, in the 1750s the Ch'ien-lung emperor called for the increased use of poetry in the examinations, and in 1760 he commanded that rhymed poetry should become part of the dynastic school curriculum and tested monthly.[135] Slowly but surely, the Ch'ing court rolled back key elements in the Yüan-Ming examination curriculum.[136] First the discourse, documentary, and legal judgments questions were challenged by reform-minded officials in the K'ang-hsi, Yung-cheng, and early Ch'ien-lung courts. Then poetry was reconsidered as a proper measure of literati talent for officialdom. Many Ch'ing traditionalists who favored Ch'eng-Chu teachings over Han Learning, such as Chang Hsüeh-ch'eng, looked back to the 1756–57 reforms favoring poetry as the beginning of a forty-year process that turned the civil examinations into a trendy contest of literary taste where the most recent fads in classical prose and poetry held sway. The earlier stress on solid learning (*shih-hsüeh*) in the civil examinations, according to Chang, had been displaced.[137]

Poetry had been the key to the T'ang selection process for *chin-shih*, which privileged it as a genre among literati. After T'ang, both ancient-style poetry (*ku-shih*) and regulated verse (*lü-shih*) lost their privileged positions in civil examinations and literati life. For Ch'ing literati, however, it was precisely its loss of privilege in the Yüan-Ming age of Ch'eng-Chu Learning of the Way that, in Pauline Yu's words, guaranteed its "aesthetic incorruptibility" from an era that was closer to antiquity and unaffected by the Buddhist infiltration of literati thought in Sung times.[138]

Although the Yüan and Ming governments had removed poetry from the examinations, T'ang and Sung poetic forms still thrived among Ming and Ch'ing literati. Their passion for poetry was not merely private, for as long as the *Poetry Classic* remained the most popular Classic among examination candidates, its styles of language and canonical phrases were memorized by over 30 percent of all provincial and metropolitan examination candidates. With the revival of ancient studies in late Ming, ancient-style prose writers such as Li P'an-lung (1514–70), proclaimed: "Prose must be of Ch'in and Han; poetry must be of high T'ang."[139]

[135] *Ch'in-ting Ta-Ch'ing hui-tien shih-li* (Taipei, 1968), 382, p. 6b.

[136] See Elman, *A cultural history*, pp. 25–46.

[137] See Chang Hsüeh-ch'eng, *Chang-shih i-shu*, 29, p. 54a.

[138] See Kondo Mitsuo, *Shinshi sen* (Tokyo, 1967), pp. 9–35; and Wang Chen-yüan, *Ch'ing-shih hsüan* (Taipei, 1991). Cf. Pauline Yu, "Canon formation in late imperial China," in Theodore Huters et al., eds., *Culture and state in Chinese history: Conventions, accommodations, and critiques* (Stanford, 1997), pp. 83–104.

[139] On the early Ch'ing revival of the lyric (*tz'u*), see David McCraw, *Chinese lyricists of the seventeenth century* (Honolulu, 1990), pp. 1–9. For discussion, see also Richard Lynn, "Orthodoxy and enlightenment: Wang Shih-chen's theory of poetry and its antecedents," in Wm. Theodore de Bary et al., *The unfolding of neo-Confucianism* (New York, 1975), pp. 217–19, 232–41.

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Poetry questions were not used on local, provincial, metropolitan, and palace examinations during Ming and early Ch'ing, but they were used in other examinations. Written examinations for Han-lin academicians in Ming and early Ch'ing, for instance, included *fu* (rhyme-prose).[140] Special examinations, such as the *po-hsüeh hung-tz'u*, also tested poetry and rhyme-prose. In the 1679 special examination, the K'ang-hsi emperor chose as the topic a rhyme-prose (*fu*) on the *hsüan-chi* and *yü-heng*, instruments that were then thought to be part of the astronomical system used by the ancient sage-kings to chart the skies.[141] In the 1658 repeat examination for the provincial examination in Nanking, which earlier had been troubled by corruption, the Ch'ing court changed the usual format and instead used a poetry question (*ku-wen shih-fu*) to retest all the candidates.[142] Poetry in regulated verse, along with policy questions, were also used on translation examinations (*fan-i*) for Manchu bannermen.[143] In 1723 the new *ch'ao-k'ao* (court examination), which tested the top ranked *chin-shih* from the palace examination and ranked them for the Han-lin Academy, included a poem composed in eight-rhyme five-word meters. By 1749 a poetry question in regulated verse, ancient-style, or lyric form (*lü-shih*, *ku-wen*, or *tz'u*) was used on *pa-kung* (recommended scholar) special local recruitment examinations for the first time.[144]

In 1756, regulated verse in five words (= syllables, i.e., "pentasyllabic") and eight rhymes (*wu-yen pa-yün*) was formally reintroduced as a required literary form. The requirement took effect in the 1757 metropolitan examination and was then extended to the 1759 provincial examinations.[145] Initially, the poetry question was added to the second session of examinations, fittingly replacing the documentary and legal judgments questions that had four centuries earlier replaced poetry during the high tide of the Learning of the Way (see Table 7.3). Classical specialization as an examination requirement remained intact after 1756, even though the four quotations from each

[140] See *Tan-mo lu*, 3, pp. 18a–b, for Han-lin chosen by poetry, and *Ch'ing-pai lei-ch'ao*, 21, p. 142, for 1694 Han-lin poetry tests.

[141] Copies of the famous rhyme-prose question on astronomical instruments asked in 1679 survive in the Ming-Ch'ing Archives, Academia Sinica, Taiwan. On the controversy concerning the *hsüan-chi* as an astronomical instrument, see Christopher Cullen and Anne Farrer, "On the term *hsüan chi* and the flanged trilobate discs," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 46, No. 1 (1983), pp. 52–76, which argues that originally the term *hsüan-chi* had nothing to do with astronomical observation until Han dynasty glosses of a passage in the *Documents Classic*, which claimed that the term referred to an astronomical instrument akin to a circumpolar constellation template and the *yü-heng* as either a sighting tube or a constellation.

[142] *Chih-i k'o-so-chi*, 4, p. 123.

[143] See the translation examination paper by Shih Piao-ku in the Ming-Ch'ing Archives, Academia Sinica, Taiwan.

[144] Outstanding young scholar (*pa-kung*) examinations were given once every six years up to 1742 and once every twelve years thereafter.

[145] *Tan-mo lu*, 14, pp. 11b–12b. See also Liu, *The art of Chinese poetry*, pp. 26–9.

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Table 7.3. *Reformed Format of Provincial and Metropolitan Civil Service Examinations, 1757–1787*

Session No.	Content	No. of Questions
One		
	1. Four Books	3 quotations
	2. Discourse	1 quotation
Two		
	1. *Change*	4 quotations
	2. *Documents*	4 quotations
	3. *Poetry*	4 quotations
	4. *Annals*	4 quotations
	5. *Rites*	4 quotations
	6. Poetry question	1 poetic model
Three		
	1. Policy questions	5 essays

classic were given eminence of place in session two, instead of their previously subordinate position to the Four Books in the first session. In 1758, the requirement that literati be examined in regulated verse was extended to local qualifying examinations, and then to the renewal and licensing examinations in 1760.

To facilitate the transition to the new emphasis on form and the rules of prosody, books of rhymes increasingly were printed and distributed. In 1762, for example, a sample of poetic models entitled *Ying-shih p'ai-lü ching-hsüan* (*Selection of outstanding models of regulated verse for taking examinations*) was compiled by Chou Ta-chü, which included T'ang, Sung, Yüan, Ming, and Ch'ing poems deemed to be appropriate for students to emulate.[146] Young boys (and girls) learned how to balance five- or seven-word lines in regulated verse by referring to several poetry primers such as the *Sheng-lü ch'i-meng* (*Primer for sound rules*), which consisted of lessons for matching characters and phrases of varying lengths. Such developments were a clear marker of revival of interest in T'ang-Sung poetry as a testable measure of cultural attainment. Within ten years, publication and republication of T'ang and Sung poetry anthologies flourished.[147]

Other anthologies of "poetry discussions" (*shih-hua*) from the Ming were reprinted, and Ch'ing scholars such as Weng Fang-kang (1733–1818) and

[146] See *Ying-shih p'ai-lü ching-hsüan* (1762 manuscript) in the Rare Books Room of the National Central Library, Taiwan.

[147] Ridley, "Educational theory," pp. 400–1, 437, n. 73.

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Yüan Mei (1716–95) compiled several new ones. Kuo Shao-yü estimates that altogether Ch'ing literati produced three to four hundred such poetry discussions.[148] Weng Fang-kang described how, in 1765–68, when serving as provincial examiner and education commissioner, he frequently discussed the addition of poetry to the curriculum with all county yamen staffs. As one of the chief examiners on several provincial examinations, Weng Fang-kang's influence on *chü-jen* candidates was considerable.[149]

Shen Te-ch'ien, celebrated for his poetry and literary writings, had great influence in Soochow in the 1750s when he was head of the prestigious Tzu-yang Academy. Famous from childhood as a poetic genius, Shen received his *chin-shih* degree in 1739, after failing the provincial examination seventeen times, and entered the Han-lin Academy, where he became an imperial favorite. When poetry became required on civil examinations, Shen's influence spread empirewide. The Ch'ien-lung emperor honored Shen's collected works of prose and poetry with a 1752 preface, and Shen produced several collections of T'ang and pre-T'ang poetry for students.[150]

By 1800, ancient poetry was a common feature at official schools and private academies. Juan Yüan, for example, required examinations in Sung-style essays and regulated verse at the Refined Study for the Explication of the Classics (*Ku-ching ching-she*) Academy in Hangchow. In nineteenth-century local examinations, officials and candidates usually referred to the essay and poetry questions as *ching-ku* (classical essay and ancient-style poetry), *t'ung-ku* (ancient-style poem for school candidates), or *sheng-ku* (ancient-style poem for *sheng-yüan*).[151] The early anthology *Ch'ien-chia shih* (*Poems by a thousand authors*), later annotated by Li Hsün (1785–1863), became one of the key collections students and candidates used to learn regulated verse.[152]

Examiners clearly welcomed another grid, this one poetic, to their repertoire for testing and ranking the classical ability of candidates for office to write well and think fast under pressure. By replacing the long-since perfunctory documentary and legal judgments questions, the new poetry question enhanced the degree of difficulty in local, provincial, and metropolitan

[148] See *Ch'ing shih-hua* (Peking, 1963), which includes Weng Fang-kang's "Wu-yen-shih p'ing-tse chü-yü," pp. 261–8, among several poetic works by Wang Shih-chen (1634–1711) and other Ch'ing poets. See also Kuo Shao-yü's preface to his *Ch'ing shih-hua hsü-pien* (Shanghai, 1983), p. 1. Cf. Arthur Waley, *Yüan Mei: Eighteenth-century Chinese poet* (London, 1956), pp. 166–204.

[149] See Huang Ch'ung-lan, comp., *Kuo-ch'ao kung-chü k'ao-lueh* (1834 ed.), 1, p. 9a.

[150] See *ECCP*, pp. 645–6, for Shen's poetry anthologies, and Waley, *Yüan Mei*, pp. 168–71.

[151] *Ch'ing-pai lei-ch'ao*, 21, p. 43. See also *Ssu-ch'uan sheng tang-an-kuan Pa-hsien tang-an, Wen-wei*, Kuang-hsü microfilm reel 56, document No. 6231 (1901), for local examinations before the late Ch'ing reforms.

[152] The authorship of the *Ch'ien-chia shih* itself is disputed.

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examinations at a time when the numbers of candidates were increasing precipitously. Those not fully classically literate were at a further disadvantage once the poetry canon was added to the curriculum.

Subsequently, examination reformers began to square off between those who favored upgrading the new poetry question, which had vanquished the documentary and legal judgments questions on session two, and those who favored continuing the emphasis on the discourse question, which had been moved to session one after 1756. In this struggle, the discourse question became a Sung Learning cause. Han Learning scholars favored highlighting T'ang regulated prose because of its pre-Sung ties to ancient learning, and they sought first to diminish and ultimately to eliminate the discourse question entirely.

Fueling the popularity of the revival of poetry was the close tie between the rules for rhyming in regulated verse and the field of historical phonology, which became the queen of philology in evidential research during the eighteenth century. The role of phonology in evidential research studies was paying dividends by improving literati knowledge of classical sounds and rhymes. Ch'ing dynasty evidential scholars framed a systematic research agenda that built on paleography and phonology to reconstruct the "original" meaning of Chinese words. One by-product of these philological trends was the full realization of how important poetry, particularly regulated verse, was for the reconstruction of antiquity via phonology, paleography, and etymology.[153]

Abrogating classical specializations on examinations

Despite the addition of a poetry question after 1756, Ch'ing classical scholars remained unhappy that examination candidates still mastered mainly the *Poetry* and *Change* classics, leaving the others, particularly the *Annals* and *Rites*, understudied. In 1765, for example, the Manchu governor-general in Szechwan described in a memorial the distribution of specialization for the sixty successful candidates on the Classics in the Szechwan provincial examination: fourteen (23 percent) on the *Change*; thirteen (22 percent) on the *Documents*; twenty-one (35 percent) on the *Poetry*; nine (15 percent) on the *Rites* and *Annals*; three (5 percent) on the Five Classics as a whole. The memorial and attached materials indicated that the problem of encouraging

[153] For example, Liang Chang-chü (1775–1849) compiled a collection in which he outlined the study of poetry and the rules of regulated verse. See Liang's "T'ui-an sui-pi," in *Ch'ing shih-hua* (Shanghai, 1963), pp. 1949–97. Liang also compiled a work entitled *Shih-lü ts'ung-hua* to complement his *Chih-i ts'ung-hua*.

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students to specialize in the less popular classics remained, despite the 1756 reforms, which had moved the Five Classics to session two.[154]

To resolve such difficulties, the specialization requirement initially was altered to allow the examiners, not the candidates, to choose which Classics they would require for the triennial local qualifying, provincial, and metropolitan examinations. Degree candidates were expected to master all of the Five Classics, but the provincial and metropolitan examiners themselves would now preselect on a revolving basis a different Classic as the source of quotations for students to write essays. In 1788, the *Poetry Classic* was announced as the source of quotations on the second session of all seventeen provincial examinations; in the 1789 metropolitan examination it was the *Documents*; in the 1790 grace (*en-k'o*) provincial examinations, the *Change* was chosen; for the 1790 metropolitan examination, the *Record of Rites* (*Li-chi*) was required on session two. In the 1792 Chekiang provincial examination, all candidates had to write essays on the four quotations selected from the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, the most formidable in length of all the Five Classics because of its long commentaries.[155]

The final step in changing the specialization requirement began in 1792, after the last of the Five Classics, the *Annals*, had been tested on a revolving basis between 1787 and 1792. This dramatic increase in classical requirements paralleled the increase in competition on Ch'ing examinations. The empire's demographic realities, to which the reform of examination requirements was in part addressed, meant that as the civil examinations became more difficult, the odds against passing them because of the increasing number of competing candidates became prohibitive. Not until after the Taiping Rebellion did the court consider increasing civil quotas. The late Ch'ing curriculum is outlined in Table 7.4.[156]

Beginning in 1793, for both the provincial and metropolitan examinations, examiners chose a single quotation from each of the Five Classics for all candidates to answer on the second session. They accepted the Han Learning slant of a new stress on the Five Classics and documented how Later Han scholars had mastered all the Classics and not simply specialized in one of them. By 1787, sentiments favoring Sung Learning in civil examinations were often controverted.[157]

[154] See *Li-pu t'i-pen* (Ming-Ch'ing Archives, Academia Sinica, Taiwan), 1765, 9th month, 5th day, for this Szechwan case. The 1765 Szechwan figures were roughly the same as those for the distribution of the classical specialization before 1750. See Elman, *A cultural history*, pp. 280–5.

[155] *Che-chiang hsiang-shih lu*, 1792, p. 6a. See also *Kuo-ch'ao liang-Che k'o-ming lu* (Peking, 1857 ed.), p. 139a.

[156] See Li T'iao-yüan, *Tan-mo lu*, 16, pp. 10a–12a.

[157] *Kuang-tung hsiang-shih lu*, 1794, pp. 9a–10b, 36a–39b.

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Table 7.4. *Reformed Format of Provincial and Metropolitan Civil Service Examinations, 1793–1898*

Session No.	Content	No. of Questions
One		
	1. Four Books	3 quotations
	2. Poetry question	1 poetic model
Two		
	1. *Change*	1 quotation
	2. *Documents*	1 quotation
	3. *Poetry*	1 quotation
	4. *Annals*	1 quotation
	5. *Rites*	1 quotation
Three		
	1. Policy questions	5 essays

Han Learning advocates were still not completely satisfied. Ch'ien Ta-hsin recommended in his private writings that the Four Books – not the Five Classics – should be moved back to session two, giving the Five Classics priority in session one. After four centuries of use, Ch'ien contended, there were model essays on every possible quotation in the Four Books an examiner might choose.[158] Consequently, candidates could read such essays, which were widely circulated by printers, and avoid reading the Four Books themselves. The Five Classics were too extensive and difficult for the same thing to happen to them, Ch'ien maintained. Similarly, in a memorial to the emperor, Sun Hsing-yen called for a revival of Han classical commentaries and T'ang subcommentaries in the Ch'ing examination curriculum to supplement the Sung commentaries included in the early Ming trilogy of established scholia. Neither Ch'ien's nor Sun's request was acted upon, however.[159]

In one area, the Han Learning group in Peking was able to change the examination curriculum with surprising ease. In 1792, Chi Yün (1724–1805), then a Minister of Rites, requested abandoning Hu An-kuo's Sung Learning commentary to the *Spring and Autumn Annals* in the examination curriculum. This Sung commentary had enunciated from the Learning of the Way themes that Han Learning scholars such as Chi Yün thought were anachronistic. Chi contended that Hu An-kuo had used the *Annals* as a foil to express his own opinions about the fall of the Northern Sung and

[158] Ch'ien Ta-hsin, *Shih-chia-chai yang-hsin lu* (1804 ed.; rpt. Taipei, 1968), 18, pp. 15b–16a.
[159] See Sun Hsing-yen, "Ni k'o-ch'ang shih-shih ch'ing chien-yung chu-shu che," in *Ch'ing-tai ch'ien-ch'i chiao-yü lun-chu hsüan*, 3, pp. 278–9.

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the move of the imperial court to the south. Chi preferred the three Han commentaries to the *Annals* which had duly informed the K'ang-hsi era *Ch'in-ting Ch'un-ch'iu chuan-shuo hui-tsuan* (*Imperially prescribed commentaries and explications of the Annals*), and had, on many points, refuted the Hu version. The Ch'ien-lung emperor responded by immediately ordering that, beginning in 1793, the Hu commentary would no longer be used in the civil examinations.[160]

Chi Yün's victory was incomplete, however. The Han Learning challenge to the Four Books had been successful in authorizing the Five Classics for all candidates, but the monopoly of the Four Books was maintained in determining the highest ranks in the local, provincial, and metropolitan civil examinations. The examiners' tendency to grade the candidate's five essays on the Classics collectively undermined each essay's significance individually in determining the rankings. (Examination essays on the Four Books also were evaluated as a group.) The court's penchant for compromise had enabled the Ch'ien-lung reforms to take hold successfully within the bureaucracy and to alleviate its Han Learning tensions.

New Text versus Old Text classical scholarship

The philological and philosophic rebellions spawned by evidential (*k'ao-cheng*) studies as an impartial "search for evidence" also set the stage for the social and political conclusions that New Text scholars drew from their research and scholarship. Alternative expressions of legitimate classical learning challenged the established Ch'eng-Chu interpretations. By 1800, more radical philologists hoped to establish as normative their new and iconoclastic views of the classics. The stakes were high, and in the course of these intellectual changes, the content and form of political discourse legitimating state power in late imperial China also evolved in new directions.

Rediscovery of the Old Text versus New Text debate in the late eighteenth century led some scholars to a new perspective on the classical tradition. Scholars from the Chuang and Liu lineages in Ch'ang-chou prefecture were the first Ch'ing literati to stress the New Text school of the Former Han Dynasty. Deep and irreconcilable differences among competing interpretations had emerged in the Han Learning agenda for classical studies. By returning to what they considered a purer form of Han Learning, New Text scholars in Ch'ang-chou touched off, from within its ranks, the breakup of

[160] See *Ch'ing-ch'ao hsü wen-hsien t'ung-k'ao*, in *Shih-t'ung* (Shanghai, 1936), 84, pp. 8429–30.

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Han Learning itself. New Text scholars began to argue that much of what had once been considered standard by Sung and Ming Ch'eng-Chu followers and even early Ch'ing evidential (*k'ao-cheng*) scholars was in fact based on Old Text sources allegedly fabricated by imperially sponsored scholars during the reign of the so-called "Han usurper," Wang Mang (r. 9–23).

The Chuang and Liu lineages' association with new trends in Han Learning illustrates how the family, lineage, and scholarly groups outlined at the outset of this chapter played important roles in the evolution of evidential research in the eighteenth century. The complex machinery of lineages was clearly at work among the Chuang and Liu families in the construction of a literati "school of learning" such as the New Text movement. New Text advocates turned to the *Kung-yang Commentary* (*Kung-yang chuan*) for Confucius's *Spring and Autumn Annals*, one of the Five Classics, because the latter was the only New Text commentary to the Classics that had survived intact from the Former Han dynasty. Recorded in "contemporary-style script," hence called New Text (*chin-wen*; i.e., the forms of small seal calligraphy that evolved into clerical script), the *Kung-yang Commentary* provided textual support for the Former Han New Text school's portrayal of Confucius as a visionary of institutional change, an "uncrowned king."[161]

Among the texts in the Former Han dynasty archives, however, there was another commentary to the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, which later became known as the *Tso Commentary* (*Tso chuan*). It provided textual support for the Later Han Old Text (*ku-wen*; lit., "ancient-style script," i.e., "large seal" forms of calligraphy) school's portrayal of Confucius as a respected teacher and transmitter of classical learning, rather than the charismatic visionary the New Text scholars had earlier painted. After the demise of the Later Han dynasty in A.D. 220, however, the classical canon was not reconstituted officially until the seventh century under the T'ang. Thereafter, the *Tso Commentary* remained the established commentary to the *Annals* until the middle of the eighteenth century, when Ch'ang-chou Han Learning scholars called it into question.

Classical texts and their interpretation had been the basis for political loyalties in a "schools system" (*chia-fa*) for Han classical studies. When they reopened the New Text versus Old Text controversy, eighteenth-century Ch'ang-chou scholars reconstructed the fortunes of an academic and, by implication, a political school of exegesis that had been replaced under Wang Mang's usurpation. Han Learning and New Text studies played an important

[161] See Benjamin A. Elman, "Ch'ing schools of scholarship" *Ch'ing-shih wen-t'i*, 4, No. 6 (December 1979), pp. 1–44.

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role in the steady drift of literati officials toward new forms of political discourse to replace what they considered outmoded Sung political values, which, since the Yüan-Ming transition, had legitimated authoritarian government.

Standing for new forms of belief in a time of political, social, and economic turmoil, New Text studies and Han Learning championed pragmatism and the imperative of change. The recasting of the tradition by New Text scholars in Ch'ang-chou also marked an initial step in emancipation from the encumbrance of accumulated imperial norms and ideals handed down since the Later Han dynasty. Like their late Ming predecessors, evidential research scholars opposed the Ch'eng-Chu "voice" of the state. Like their Sung and Ming predecessors, evidential scholars drew on ancient sources to express their political aspirations, an enduring classical tendency that would climax in the 1898 reform movement.[162]

Classical philology and natural studies

The impact of evidential research also made itself felt in the increased attention evidential (*k'ao-cheng*) scholars gave to the Western sciences of mathematics and astronomy first introduced by Jesuits in the seventeenth century. Such interest grew out of the early and mid-Ch'ing findings of Mei Wen-ting (1633–1721) and others. Mei had contended that the study of physical nature gave scholars access to the principles (*li*) undergirding nature. In essence, Mei saw Jesuit learning as a way to enhance the mathematizing of the Learning of the Way notion of moral and metaphysical principle.[163] At the same time, however, Mei Wen-ting believed in the native Chinese origins of Western natural studies. Such origins made it imperative, Mei and his highly placed patron in the early Ch'ing court, Li Kuang-ti (1642–1718), thought, to rehabilitate native traditions in the mathematical sciences to their former glory. Under imperial patronage late in the K'ang-hsi reign, mathematical studies, including mathematical harmonics, were upgraded from an insignificant skill to an important domain of knowledge for literati that complemented classical studies.[164]

[162] See T'ang Chih-chün and Benjamin A. Elman, "The 1898 reforms revisited," *Late imperial China*, 8, No. 1 (June 1987), pp. 205–13.

[163] See John Henderson, "Ch'ing scholars views of Western astronomy," *HJAS*, 46, No. 1 (1986), pp. 121–48.

[164] See Limin Bai, "Mathematical study and intellectual transition in the early and mid-Qing," *Late Imperial China*, 16, No. 2 (December 1995), pp. 23–61; and Catherine Jami, "Learning mathematical sciences during the early and mid-Ch'ing," in Elman and Woodside, eds., *Education and society in late imperial China, 1600–1900* (Berkeley, 1994), pp. 223–56.

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For example, Ch'en Yüan-lung's (1652–1736) *Ko-chih ching-yüan* (*Mirror origins of investigating and extending knowledge*) was published in 1735 and in the 1780s was included in the Four Categories Library. A repository of practical information culled from a variety of sources, the *Mirror origins* represented a post-Jesuit collection of practical knowledge that narrowed the focus of Hu Wen-huan's (fl. c. 1596) late-Ming *Ko-chih ts'ung-shu* (*Collectanea of investigating and extending knowledge*) to cover almost exclusively the arts and natural studies. Hu had compiled the *Collectanea* as a late-Ming repository of classical, historical, institutional, and technical works from antiquity to the present that included all areas of knowledge important to a literati audience in the seventeenth century. In Ch'en's collection, special attention was given to the origins and evolution of printing and stone rubbings, in addition to topics dealing with geography, anatomy, flora and fauna, tools, vehicles, weapons, and tools for writing, as well as clothing and architecture.[165]

Overall, Juan Yüan's compilation of the *Ch'ou-jen chuan* (*Biographies of astronomers and mathematicians*) while serving as governor of Chekiang province in Hangchow, reprinted in 1849 and later enlarged, marked the crucial period in the celebration of natural studies by Yangtze delta literati in the eighteenth century. Containing biographies and summaries of the works of 280 astronomers and mathematicians (*ch'ou-jen*), including thirty-seven Europeans, this work was followed by four supplements in the nineteenth century. Limin Bai has noted how the mathematical sciences had begun to grow in importance among literati beyond the reach of the imperial court in the late eighteenth century. They were now linked to classical studies via evidential research. Because Juan Yüan was a well-placed literati patron of natural studies in the provincial and court bureaucracies, his influential *Biographies* (*Ch'ou-jen chuan*) represented the integration of the mathematical sciences with evidential studies. Mathematical study was no longer independent of classical studies.[166] Literati scholars incorporated mathematical study into evidential research and made natural studies a part of classical studies, thus explaining the fate of natural studies and technology in late imperial China since the Jesuits first made their presence felt in the seventeenth century.

Philology and natural studies were wedded when Ch'ing literati scholars such as Mei Wen-ting and his grandson Mei Chueh-ch'eng (d. 1763) evaluated early modern European findings in astronomy and searched through the classical canon for evidence that this new knowledge was based on ancient

[165] See Ch'en, *Ko-chih ching-yüan*, in *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu*, Vols. 1031–2. Cf. Hu, *Ko-chih ts'ung-shu* (Ming Wan-li ed.; microfilm, Taipei, National Central Library, Rare Books Collection).

[166] *ECCP*, p. 402. See also Bai, "Mathematical study and intellectual transition," pp. 23–30.

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Chinese knowledge, which, they argued had been transmitted to the Western regions in antiquity. Mei Chueh-ch'eng contended that the Sung-Yüan *T'ien-yüan* (heavenly origins) method for representing algebraic equations was the equivalent of the algebraic techniques later introduced by Jesuits. This "Chinese origins" (*Chung-yüan*) argument legitimated renewed Ch'ing literati interest in the sciences.[167]

The mathematics associated with evidential research in the eighteenth century had been algorithmic, that is, focusing on getting the right results, and thus was less concerned to justify methods and formulas. Wang Lai and Chiao Hsün, for example, each tried to build on earlier Chinese methods of manipulating algebra-like equations, known as *T'ien-yüan*, rather than just accepting the Indic-Arabic forms of algebraic expression that Jesuits and later Protestants taught when they came to China. Wang in particular derived more than one positive root for a *T'ien-yüan* equation, which contributed something new to the traditional focus on a single, positive solution for any algebraic equation by following Western views of positive and negative roots.[168]

Wang Lai, who was appointed to the imperial observatory in Peking, employed Western methods accepted in the calendrical office since the K'ang-hsi reign in his calculations of equations (*T'ien-yüan*). As a result of his professional ties to the Jesuit "new studies" practiced in the observatory, Wang was criticized by more conservative evidential (*k'ao-cheng*) scholars interested in traditional mathematics for going too far in his emulation of Western methods. Because he was a literatus outside the court tied to the Yangtze delta academic community, Li Jui (1765–1814), who devised a theory of traditional Chinese equations (*T'ien-yüan*) strictly in terms of Sung mathematics, received more support from literati, many of whom still revered Yang Kuang-hsien (1597–1669) for his prosecutions of the Jesuits in the K'ang-hsi court in the 1660s. Before 1850, then, classical learning still took precedence over Western learning, and the antiquarian interests of evidential scholars stimulated them to study the textual history of native mathematics rather than build on the findings of Western mathematics, as Wang Lai had.[169]

[167] Henderson, "Ch'ing scholars' views of Western astronomy," pp. 121–48.

[168] Horng Wann-sheng, "Chinese mathematics at the turn of the 19th century," in Lin Cheng-hung and Fu Daiwie, eds., *Philosophy and conceptual history of science in Taiwan* (Dordrecht, 1993), pp. 167–208. See also C. Cullen, "How can we do the comparative history of mathematics," in *Philosophy and the History of Science*, 4, No. 1 (1995), pp. 59–94.

[169] Huang I-nung, "Ch'ing-ch'u t'ien-chu-chiao yü hui-chiao t'ien-wen-chia te cheng-tou," *Chiu-chou hsüeh-k'an*, 5, No. 3 (1993), pp. 47–69.

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The "Chinese origins" argument legitimated literati interest in the sciences, and philology became one of the key tools later evidential research scholars such as Hsü Shou (1818–82) and Li Shan-lan (1810–82) employed in the nineteenth century to build conceptual bridges between Western learning and the traditional Chinese sciences. In the process, modern Western science was initially introduced in the nineteenth century as compatible with classical learning.

A failure to recognize the specialized academic roles of Ch'ing literati scholars has prevented an accurate appraisal of the ties between precise, classical scholarship and research institutions in late imperial China. Some, such as Joseph Ben-David, have prematurely dismissed the imperial literati tradition because of what they consider its "moral-social" emphasis, which did not provide the appropriate institutional support for the emergence of the scientific role in China. The account here should demonstrate that in the eighteenth century academic institutions in China already existed and functioned as research sites that incorporated many elements of precise scholarship. These were adapted in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to the needs of modern science with less effort than some have supposed.[170] The organizational mechanisms required for the future growth and development of science in China were readily available.[171]

THE TRANSFORMATION OF LITERATI ROLES BY 1800

Through civil examination success and access to officialdom empirewide, the Lower Yangtze academic world overall undergirded the formation of literati schools of thought based on Han Learning and Sung Learning. Because the lives of evidential research scholars were embedded in larger social structures, elite cultural resources were focused on the formation and maintenance of lineages for family success in the academic and political worlds. The delta's academic community, for example, was structured by regional ties among the

[170] Joseph Ben-David, *The scientist's role in society: A comparative study* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1971), pp. 21–74, esp. 28ff., 50. One should also note the contribution of the traditional academy system to the reform of the school system in the late nineteenth century. See Hayashi Tomoharu, "Shinchō no shoin kyōiku," pp. 191–6.

[171] Cf. Harcourt Brown, *Scientific organizations in seventeenth-century France, 1620–1680* (Baltimore, 1934), passim; R. Fox, "Scientific enterprise and the patronage of research in France, 1800–1870," *Minerva*, 11 (1973), pp. 442–73; Francis Johnson, "Gresham college: Precursor of the royal society," in Philip Wiener and Aaron Noland, eds., *Roots of scientific thought: A cultural perspective* (New York, 1958), pp. 328–53; and Martha Ornstein, *The role of scientific societies in the seventeenth century* (Chicago, 1928), passim.

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leading scholars produced during the eighteenth century. Small in numbers, they represented the leading scholarly trends of their time. Their views penetrated the civil examinations in the eighteenth century and thereby influenced tens of thousands of candidates for office throughout the nineteenth century.

The classical community that emerged represented a complicated network of personal and institutional relations that mediated between individual textual scholars and the larger social milieu, and thereby supported the evidential research movement. In the late eighteenth century, scholars had become members of a relatively secular learned community that encouraged and rewarded with livelihoods original and rigorous critical scholarship. An almost autonomous subsystem of Ch'ing society with its own marks of status evolved in the Yangtze delta. Although this academic community perished during the Taiping Rebellion (1850–64), its intellectual legacy lasted into the twentieth century.

Because of restricted regional quotas designed to control the phenomenal success of southern literati on the examinations, it became considerably more competitive in the early Ch'ing for scholars in the Lower Yangtze to obtain higher degrees. Quotas for officials did not keep pace as the population expanded. Substantial increases in the total number of *sheng-yüan* occurred only after the Taiping Rebellion, when the government began to enhance quotas in return for financial contributions to state coffers. Moreover, a substantial number of official positions were taken by Manchus and descendants of Han-chün bannermen who had served the Ch'ing before 1644. An official career thus was effectively ruled out for most of those who succeeded in the examinations because not enough new positions in the bureaucracy were created to take care of the surplus of qualified candidates.[172]

Literati who passed the lower examinations were forced into a host of new occupations. Poorer scholars sought employment as secretaries to officials, tutors in wealthy families, and academy teachers. Local degree-holders also moved into other fields that included mediation of legal disputes, supervision of waterworks, recruiting and training local militia, and collecting and remitting local taxes.[173] In addition, many literati were attracted to scholarly careers. Evidential (*k'ao-cheng*) scholarship reflected the social institutions upon which it was based, but Ch'ing social institutions were also

[172] Ping-ti Ho, *The ladder of success*, pp. 168–221. See also Chang, *The Chinese gentry*, pp. 99–100; and Kessler, *K'ang-hsi and the consolidation of Ch'ing rule*, pp. 117–24.
[173] Wakeman, *The fall of imperial China*, pp. 30–1.

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changed to bring them into line with the newly emerging norms of classical discourse.

Teaching as a career

The emergence of a specialized intellectual community in Kiangnan can be discerned first in the numerous examples of scholars who, during the eighteenth century, spent major portions of their lives, some despite high degree status, teaching in academies and lower-level schools. Ch'ien Ta-hsin was typical of the great scholars of his age. Although he held official appointments, he retired to private life in 1776. For most of his career he served as a teacher in prestigious Kiangnan academies. This occupation complemented his research on epigraphy, history, phonetics, calendrical science, and geography. Like Ch'ien, the distinguished textual scholar, Lu Wen-ch'ao (1717–95) spent much of his career in education, serving at one time or another at many of the most acclaimed academies in the Yangtze delta. Chang Hsüeh-ch'eng, after beginning his teaching career in 1777 at an academy in Chihli, went on to hold five academic posts by the time he was forty-nine in 1787.[174]

Many during these years awaited official appointment by combining teaching with research and writing. Some, like Chang Hsüeh-ch'eng, became interested in the theory and practice of teaching and prepared the textbook containing literary selections depicting good style and solid learning. When Chang was finally on the verge of receiving an official appointment in 1787, he turned it down, realizing that his talents were academic and not administrative. Hang Shih-chün (1697–1772) and Ch'üan Tsu-wang (1705–55) both accepted teaching posts at academies in Kwangtung in 1752. Hang remained there until 1755, when he returned to his home in Hangchow. Hang finished his academic career teaching at the An-ting Academy in Yangchow until 1770. Ch'üan Tsu-wang taught at an academy in Shao-hsing, the heartland of the eastern Chekiang scholarly traditions founded by Huang Tsung-hsi, before moving to Kwangtung. Many scholars spent a major portion of their careers teaching in academies and writing on the Classics and Histories.[175]

[174] David Nivison, *The life and thought of Chang Hsüeh-ch'eng (1738–1801)* (Stanford, 1966), pp. 8, 52, 82–9, 96.

[175] Jack Gray, "Historical writing in twentieth-century China: Notes on its background and development," in W. G. Beasley and E. G. Pulleyblank, eds., *Historians of China and Japan* (Oxford, 1961), pp. 196–7; and *ECCP*, pp. 152–4.

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Teaching was not only a source of income during the eighteenth century but also a source of prestige and a basis for research and writing. In contrast to Sung-Ming literati, evidential (*k'ao-cheng*) scholars used academies to further their own research and in the process transmitted their methods and conclusions to their colleagues and students. Literati with degrees higher than *sheng-yüan* or purchased degrees monopolized teaching positions in official and private academies. Through most of the nineteenth century, according to Chang Chung-li, "a sizable proportion of gentry (i.e., degree-holders) were deriving an income from their work in the teaching profession." About one-third of those Chang studied were teachers.[176]

Given the hierarchical organization of the Ch'ing education system, with academies at the apex and family schools at the most local level, the prestige and competitiveness of appointments to academies were significant factors in the Kiangnan educational milieu of the eighteenth century. After 1733, teachers in these academies were formally appointed to their positions by the joint decision of the governor-general, governor, and provincial director of education. The literati who achieved the highest income and enjoyed the highest prestige and influence in their teaching careers were the lecturers in urban academies in Kiangnan.[177]

Private research and secretarial staffs

Professional scholars who rarely held official positions were closely linked to academies established after 1733. This phenomenon had begun in the seventeenth century with the careers of men such as Yen Jo-chü and Hu Wei, who were primarily research scholars employed on secretarial staffs. The mathematician, Mei Wen-ting, and the scholar-bibliophile, Yao Chi-heng (1647–1715?), are other examples of seventeenth-century literati who devoted their careers to research and writing. Devoting himself exclusively to scientific research and writing after his father's death in 1662, Mei never held office, although he was actively patronized in Peking, and drafted the astronomical section of the *Ming history* project. Disinclined toward an official career, Yao Chi-heng also retired to private

[176] See Chang, *The income of the Chinese gentry*, pp. 7–42, 94, 111, 113–14; and T'ung-tsu Ch'ü, *Local government in China under the Ch'ing* (Stanford, 1973), pp. 22–32. Chang's sources are somewhat biased, but his count gives an indication of the changing activities of "upper gentry" (i.e., upper degree-holders).

[177] See *ECCP*, pp. 97–8, 152–4, 203–4, 276, 457, 900; and *Ch'ing-shih lieh-chuan* (Taipei, 1962), 68, pp. 47a–47b. See also Chung-li Chang, *The Chinese gentry*, p. 217, and Chang, *The income of the Chinese gentry*, pp. 92–3.

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life, spending his most productive years in philological research and book collecting.[178]

In the eighteenth century, many participants in the Han Learning movement devoted major portions of their careers to research and writing. Hui Tung, whose work anticipated Han Learning, remained a private scholar throughout his life, working in his studio, which was famous for its library. Tai Chen taught for a time in Yangchow in a private residence before entering Ch'ien Ta-hsin's circle of scholars in Peking. In his only official appointment, Tai worked as a compiler in the *Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu* (Four Treasuries Library) project. Often, followers of Han Learning did not hold official positions, some preferring to and others needing to rely instead on the patronage of officials and influential scholars in order to carry on classical research. Many scholars abandoned the examination life after repeated failures and began work privately on critical studies of the Classics and Dynastic Histories. Likewise other scholars, after turning away from the examination system, secured employment as secretaries on the staffs of various officials.[179]

Early retirement from an official position in order to carry out research and teaching occurred frequently. Tai Chen's disciple Tuan Yü-ts'ai retired from official life in 1780, pleading poor health at the age of forty-five. For the rest of his life (he died in 1815) he wrote extensively. His chief contributions to classical philology were his analysis of the characters in the *Shuo-wen chieh-tzu* and a study of the *Documents Classic*, each the fruit of years of research.[180] In addition to positions on secretarial staffs, many Ch'ing scholars who were not independently wealthy were employed on local history projects, such as compiling county, prefectural, and provincial gazetteers financed by local leaders. Chang Hsüeh-ch'eng and Tai Chen were among the busiest compilers of local gazetteers during the eighteenth century.

Pi Yüan (1730–97) recognized the informational value of local gazetteers. While he was governor of Shensi, Pi ordered the compilation of some thirty-three local histories. He was also quick to make use of Chang Hsüeh-ch'eng's experience with this form of historical writing when Chang sought patronage in 1787. Sun Hsing-yen also participated in the compilation of several Shensi local histories when he served on Pi Yüan's staff in Sian from 1781 to

[178] Hashimoto Keizō, "Bai Buntei no rekisangaku," *Tōhōgakuhō*, 41 (1970), pp. 497–514; and Wang P'ing, "Ch'ing-ch'u li-suan-chia Mei Wen-ting," *Chin-tai shih yen-chiu-so chi-kan* (Taipei, 1971), p. 314. On Yao Chi-heng, see Liang Ch'i-ch'ao, *Ku-shu chen-wei chi ch'i nien-tai* (Taipei, 1973), pp. 36–37. See also *ECCP*, pp. 137–8, 140, 144, 357, 505, 814.

[179] R. Kent Guy, *The Emperor's Four Treasuries: Scholar and the state in the late Ch'ien-lung era* (Cambridge Mass., 1987), passim.

[180] See *ECCP*, pp. 324, 783, 811.

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1785. Local officials continued to compile or revise local gazetteers for their assigned areas of responsibility into the nineteenth century.[181]

Nonbureaucratic sources of income

Except for scholar-literati whose families were independently wealthy, teaching and secretarial services were important sources of income for Ch'ing literati. Chang Chung-li estimates that some 350 taels of silver (486 silver dollars) represented an average annual income from teaching in the nineteenth century. For a typical bureaucratic career, a civil servant of the first rank in the nineteenth century received a salary (actually the smallest part of his income) of 189 taels (250 silver dollars) plus 90 piculs of rice (12,000 pounds). An ordinary county magistrate, as a civil official of the seventh rank, received an annual salary of 45 taels (62.5 silver dollars) and 22.5 piculs (3,000 pounds). These salaries were supplemented by a "nourish incorruptibility allowance" (*yang-lien*) that started at 600 taels (833 silver dollars) annually for magistrates and advanced by the nineteenth century to 20,000 taels (27,778 silver dollars) a year for a governor-general in more backward areas such as Yunnan or Kansu. Provincial education officials received lower overall incomes than other provincial civil servants. Chang estimates their salary to be roughly 1,500 taels (2,083 silver dollars) annually, which includes income from customary contributions and gifts for educational services. Some provincial directors of education received as much as 4,000 taels (5,555 silver dollars) of incorruptibility allowance (*yang-lien*).

Clan and merchant backing for local schools and academies also helped defray teacher salaries and student stipends and prizes. Such finances took four basic forms: school-land endowment, capital investment, urban real estate, and regular government payments. Part of the funding for the Sea of Learning Hall (*Hsüeh-hai t'ang*) in Canton, for example, came from local merchants, including a sizable investment of over 1,607 taels of silver (2,232 silver dollars) at fixed rates of interest by the senior officially authorized (*hang*) merchant (howqua) Wu Ping-chien (1769–1843). In addition, Juan Yüan saw to it that funds and land were donated.[182]

[181] *ECCP*, pp. 243–4, 676, 696; and Nivison, *Chang Hsüeh-ch'eng*, pp. 30, 79, 216.

[182] Chung-li Chang, *The income of the Chinese gentry*, pp. 7–42, 94, 111, 113–14; and T'ung-tsu Ch'ü, *Local government in China under the Ch'ing*, pp. 22–32. See also Susan Jones, "Finance in Ningpo: The 'Ch'ien Chuang,' 1750–1880," in W. E. Willmot, ed., *Economic organization in Chinese society* (Stanford, 1972), p. 49n; and William Atwell, "Notes on silver, foreign trade, and the late Ming economy," *Ch'ing shih wen-t'i*, 3, No. 8 (Dec. 1977), pp. 1–33. On clan and merchant support for schools, see Rawski, *Education and popular literacy*, pp. 54–80; Ōkubo Eiko, *Min-Shin jidai shoin no kenkyū*, pp. 221–361; Ping-ti Ho, "The salt merchants of Yang-chou," p. 165; and Ho, *The ladder of success*, pp. 194–203.

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During the eighteenth century, regional officials in such key positions as governor and director of education usually enlisted the help of secretarial assistants. Secretarial positions were at times monopolized by close-knit groups of scholars from Ch'ang-chou and Shao-hsing, particularly in the cases of overlapping staffs.[183] Appointed for their literary expertise, such assistants were not burdened with the administrative duties of the officials they served. It was important for the reputations of officials as scholars to have literary men on their staffs by sponsoring scholarship and research.

Provided with shelter, food, and often with concomitant appointment at a nearby academy, literati who served on such staffs had a yearly income averaging roughly 560 taels of silver (778 silver dollars) in the nineteenth century. Secretarial assistants of high provincial officials received much more. Governors-general and governors could channel official funds directly to their staffs. Provincial education officials, on the other hand, had to dig into their own salaries or seek financial contributions from local merchants and landowners. The imperial government's support for literary projects and schools in the Yangtze delta before 1800 promoted a sophisticated institutional network for scholarship.

To encourage government students, the Ch'ing government in 1733 set up a quota of stipends to be distributed to students in each county. Stipends were granted by the provincial director of education on the basis of academic merit. This support was separate from the travel subsidies supplied to participants in higher examinations. In addition, the Ch'ien-lung emperor presented sets of the Classics and Histories to several academies in 1751, as did his successors. He was adhering to a 1685 precedent initiated by his grandfather, the K'ang-hsi emperor. The cumulative result was the promotion of scholarly careers that existed independent of the bureaucratic world of examination status and of official position.[184]

One of the conditions for the relative autonomy of academic inquiry promoted by academies, literary projects, and literary secretarial staffs was that precise scholarship be apolitical. Ch'ing policy aimed at creating an apolitical orientation on the part of the Han Chinese, especially the Kiangnan literati, through overt educational pressure and the limiting of political discussion. Only New Text studies in the late eighteenth century threatened to become a political threat to the throne. The Ch'ing dynasty's lenient policy toward Han Learning created the necessary institutional preconditions for the emergence of evidential research as an independent field of inquiry and dis-

[183] James Cole, *Shaohsing: Competition and cooperation in nineteenth-century China* (Tucson, 1986).
[184] Ping-ti Ho describes Wang Hui-tsu's (1731–1807) career as a legal secretary in *The ladder of success*, pp. 292–4. See also Chung-li Chang, *The income of the Chinese gentry*, pp. 75, 81–7.

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course. Provided by powerful patrons with a degree of economic security and a modicum of social insulation from the sort of political reprisals that late Ming literati faced, *evidential research* scholars during the eighteenth century competed for the fame and priority in discovery that exact scholarship could bring.

EPILOGUE

By 1800, more than three hundred million people lived in the Ch'ing empire. Social and economic pressures, coupled with population growth, cumulatively placed demands on late Ch'ing rulers and officials that were unprecedented. Many literati realized that the institutions enshrined in the imperial system were not inviolate. Unprecedented conditions required unprecedented solutions. To "accord with the times" became the slogan of a generation of statecraft scholars who, during the early nineteenth century, sought pragmatic solutions to the myriad of organizational and logistical breakdowns that seemed to come all at once. Literati faith in the past as a guide for the present remained intact. Increasingly, however, the past represented conflicting ideals of moral and political commitment. Institutions of the past, whether defended in Sung or Han Learning terms, were undergoing a crisis of confidence from which the imperial system would never recover. The erosion of confidence due to the scrutiny of evidential research in the eighteenth century extended from the institutions of the imperial system to the nature of the intellectual values literati had promoted since the Ming.

Hindsight indicates that in 1800 the Ch'ing dynasty was on the eve of a confrontation with Western imperialism and a rising Japan that would unleash revolutionary forces at all levels of late imperial state and society. Many literati by 1800 already understood that if the Ch'ing government hoped to cope successfully with its problems, fundamental changes were required. Appeals to alternative forms of Confucianism in order to revamp the imperial system never succeeded. The reemergence of New Text Confucianism, which climaxed in the 1890s, coincided with the end of imperial China. Reformism, however, survived the failure of the 1898 Reform Movement.[185]

Although evidential scholars proposed changes in the classical agenda, they reaffirmed the role of reformed classical ideals in the present. Neither Sung nor Han Learning was revolutionary. For both, classical learning was the starting point and unquestioned constituent for new beliefs and patterns of political behavior. New Text Confucians appealed to a radical reconstruction of the

[185] See Elman, *Classicism, politics, and kinship*, ch. 6.

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past to authorize the present and prepare for the future. They had not yet reached a concept of political revolution or demonstrated a full understanding of social progress, but evidential styles of empirical research and New Text notions of historical change and practical adjustment of institutions to changing times were important stepping stones to a twentieth-century vision of political and cultural transformation. We should not think of China's "New History" of the 1920s and 1930s in a modernist vacuum. Many of its building blocks came from Ch'ing evidential research, and with them scholars during the May 4th era created the modern fields of sinology and unraveled classical myths posing as truths in imperial history.

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CHAPTER 8

WOMEN, FAMILIES, AND GENDER RELATIONS

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This chapter traces the rising visibility of commoner households and the growth of extrafamilial networks of homosociability in early Ch'ing to 1800. Both were intimately related to the population growth and patterns of mobility during this period. The expansion of arable land and a commercial revolution in farming, proto-industry, and trade; the growth of guilds and native place associations; intense competition for upward mobility; and the movement of male sojourners and migrants all make this a crucial period in the history of the Chinese family.[1]

An elite model of family relationships, complete with surnames, ancestors, and rituals, was widely embraced in commoner households during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Historians have generally treated this "traditional" Chinese family as the culmination of a long-term and continuous civilizing process.[2] In this chapter, by contrast, the commoner household is analyzed as a contingent historical phenomenon, the result of conditions unique to the seventeenth century: late Ming tax reforms,[3] the breakdown of hereditary occupational barriers from the late Ming onward,[4] the increased popular interest in rituals and lineage formation that followed the Ch'ing

[1] All of the following works analyze and discuss the unique features of the Ch'ing period, though none considers the implications of these features for the history of women, gender relations, and the family: Ho Ping-ti, "The significance of the Ch'ing period in Chinese history," *JAS*, 26, No. 2 (May 1967), pp. 189–95; Frederic Wakeman, Jr., "High Ch'ing, 1683–1839," *Modern East Asia: Essays in interpretation*, ed. James B. Crowley (New York, 1970), pp. 1–28; Albert Feuerwerker, *State and society in eighteenth-century China: The Ch'ing empire in its glory* (Ann Arbor, 1976); Susan Naquin and Evelyn S. Rawski, *Chinese society in the eighteenth century* (New Haven, 1987); Evelyn S. Rawski, "Presidential address: Reenvisioning the Qing: The significance of the Qing period in Chinese history," *JAS*, 55, No. 4 (November 1996), pp. 829–50.

[2] The best historical summary of the development of the Chinese family system is Patricia Buckley Ebrey, "Women, marriage, and the family in Chinese history," *Heritage of China: Contemporary perspectives on Chinese civilization*, ed. Paul S. Ropp (Berkeley, 1990), pp. 197–223.

[3] The late Ming "single whip reforms" began the process of commutation and consolidation of service and other levies that aimed at, among other things, a "set of uniform rates so low that the wealthy households would find it hardly worthwhile to evade them, and the really poor would not be greatly harmed by them." See Ray Huang, *Taxation and governmental finance in sixteenth-century Ming China* (Cambridge, 1974), p. 131. For Huang's definition of the reform itself, see p. 118.

[4] See the discussion and literature cited in Susan Mann, *Precious records: Women in China's long eighteenth century* (Stanford, 1997), pp. 31–44.

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conquest,[5] and so on. The commoners registered in "households" (*hu*), the "families" to which this chapter refers, are the explicit subject of early Ch'ing tax records,[6] statecraft writings, legal cases, fiction, and drama.[7] Their prominence in the early Ch'ing period is coupled with a parallel development: the growth of sojourning networks that enabled households to strategize to improve their prospects both economically and socially by deploying male labor abroad while keeping female labor at home. These two parallel phenomena – the increasing visibility of commoner households, and the growth of male sojourning networks – require that any discussion of gender relations in the early Ch'ing period extend beyond the conventional contours of the so-called traditional Chinese family to encompass other networks of sociability and cohabitation.

Accordingly, this chapter is divided into three parts. The first examines the impact of the Ch'ing conquest on women and gender relations, and stresses the ruptures that separate the late Ming and early Ch'ing periods. Part two, by contrast, emphasizes overarching continuities – especially those based on economic development – that span the late Ming and early Ch'ing periods to shape gender relations. The final section turns to women and

[5] See Kai-wing Chow, *The rise of Confucian ritualism in late imperial China: Ethics, classics, and lineage discourse* (Stanford, 1994). Chow's discussion focuses on literati leadership but other scholars have stressed the importance of commoner identification with the "ritualism" of this era. See Hu Hsien-chin, *The common descent group in China and its functions* (New York, 1948); and Hui-chen Wang Liu, "An analysis of Chinese clan rules: Confucian theories in action," *Confucianism in action*, ed. David S. Nivison and Arthur F. Wright (Stanford, 1959), pp. 63–96. Hu identifies as a turning point the Ming campaigns to promote the adoption of Chinese surnames, especially among the Mongol population or among Chinese who had taken Mongol names during the previous Yüan dynasty (pp. 46–7). Liu observes that: "The full development of genealogies took place during the Ming period, owing to a number of factors: the state's interest in stabilizing the social order; the emphasis of the law upon the privileges and responsibilities of clans; the interest of scholar-officials in clan matters; the spread of learning among the common people; and the growing financial strength of the clans." She notes as well the importance of the development of printing and the "widening and deepening influence of Neo-Confucianism with its emphasis on family discipline and individual self-cultivation." See Liu, "An analysis of Chinese clan rules," p. 65.

[6] The household registration system, begun by the founder of the Ming dynasty to ensure the equitable assessment of labor services, recorded the age, sex, and occupation of every tax-paying household in the realm and in that sense bore "a certain resemblance to modern census returns." See Ping-ti Ho, *Studies on the population of China, 1368–1953* (Cambridge, Mass., 1959), p. 3. Philip Kuhn has traced the emergence of individual tax-paying household units in the late Ming-early Ch'ing period, stressing that by the late Ch'ing period, the land tax system administered by the central government was designed to reach directly down to individual households in a process that was "surprisingly atomized" and disaggregated. See Philip A. Kuhn, "Local taxation and finance in Republican China," *Political leadership and social change at the local level in China from 1850 to the present*. Select papers from the Center for Far Eastern Studies. The University of Chicago, 3, ed. Susan Mann Jones (Chicago, 1978–79), pp. 100–36.

[7] See Wang Chih-ming, "Ming Ch'ing chia-tsu she-hui jen-t'ung chun-tse" (Emblems of social identity in the Ming and Ch'ing family), *Hua-tung shih-fan ta-hsüeh hsüeh-pao*, 6 (1992), pp. 37–42. Wang identifies three features defining commoner families in this period: blood ties based on common descent from a male ancestor coupled with a shared residence or locality; hierarchical structures of age, sex, and generation; and social purity, the latter expressed especially through proscriptions on widow remarriage and the celebration of female fidelity and chastity.

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the family itself and to broad patterns of gender relations extending beyond families and individual household units through the eighteenth century.

THE UNIQUE CONDITIONS OF CH'ING RULE

Moments of political crisis always seem to change gender relations, and women are always implicated in political struggles.[8] Scholarship analyzing gender relations in times of political crises has followed two lines of argument. One proposes that political upheavals create new spaces or arenas where women suddenly emerge to maneuver and negotiate their claims, or where conventional gender boundaries are crossed or blurred.[9] The other line of argument shows that when old regimes collapse, the cause is often identified with the "decadence, decay, immorality" stemming from women's promiscuous behavior, and so the new order promises to restore "traditional" moral standards and propriety.[10] Scholarship on China has leaned toward the latter argument, stressing that invasions sparked fears of violation and pollution, to which the rhetorical response was invariably a call for protecting female purity and chastity. In the rhetoric that accompanied the uncertainty and instability of political change, it is argued, female fidelity became the metaphor for political loyalty and steadfast courage, while female promiscuity stood for treason and cowardice.[11]

Assuming that political change brings changes in gender relations, theory nevertheless points in contradictory directions. On the one hand, moments of political upheaval may be liberating, freeing women from conventional

[8] As in France, in eighteenth-century China political power was viewed as the domain of men, but it implicated women's bodies, which, in the words of Lynn Hunt, "could stand for nurturance or corruption, for the power of desire or the need for domination, for the promise of a new order or the decay of an old one." See Lynn Hunt, "Introduction," *Eroticism and the body politic*, ed. Lynn Hunt (Baltimore, 1991), p. 2.

[9] This is especially evident in studies of nationalism and revolution, both past and present. See, for example, Sharon L. Sievers, *Flowers in salt: The beginnings of feminist consciousness in modern Japan* (Stanford, 1983); Francesca Miller, *Latin American women and the search for social justice* (Hanover, 1991); Sonia E. Alvarez, *Engendering democracy in Brazil: Women's movements in transition politics* (Princeton, 1990); Rozina Visram, *Women in India and Pakistan: The struggle for independence from British rule* (Cambridge, 1992).

[10] See Olwen H. Hufton, *Women and the limits of citizenship in the French Revolution: The Donald G. Creighton Lectures, 1989* (Toronto, 1992); also Sievers, *Flowers in salt*.

[11] Mark Elvin, "Female virtue and the state in China," *Past and Present*, 104 (August 1984), pp. 111–52; Susan Mann, "Widows in the kinship, class, and community structures of Qing dynasty China," *JAS*, 46, No. 1 (February 1987), pp. 37–56; Kang-i Sun Chang, *The late-Ming poet Ch'en Tzu-lung: Crises of love and loyalism* (New Haven, 1991). See also David Der-wei Wang, *Fin-de-siècle splendor: Repressed modernities of late Qing fiction, 1849–1911* (Stanford, 1997), pp. 101–16, 168, where Wang describes the celebrated prostitute who became a national heroine by sleeping with the enemy. Such inversions on the theme of sexuality and politics can also be found in the writings of mid-Ch'ing intellectuals, including at least one of Chang Hsüeh-ch'eng's biographies of exemplary women. See David S. Nivison, *The life and thought of Chang Hsüeh-ch'eng (1738–1801)* (Stanford, 1966), p. 266n.

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restraints and offering a transcendent rationale for public actions that under ordinary circumstances would be condemned. On the other hand, the violence and rape that accompany invasion, and the critiques of decadence that foreshadow failing regimes, evoke a backlash against women's visible actions in the public sphere by pushing women sharply back into the *status quo ante*, and even inventing new discourses celebrating it, once a new regime is in place.

All of this makes the fall of the Ming and the conquest of China by the Ch'ing regime a crucial period for scholars studying gender relations. The Manchus' distinctive consciousness as a ruling house – displayed in their near-obsessive concern with preserving Manchu language, fashion, and sport, despite their successful acculturation in China[12] – had a demonstrable impact on women, families, and gender relations during the early Ch'ing period. Although we still have only a rudimentary idea of what the changes were and how they were displayed, expressed, and understood at the time, existing evidence fits the contradictory yet predictable patterns identified in other societies during periods of political crisis.

Women crossing boundaries and creating new spaces

Most studies of women's increased visibility during moments of political change, such as the voluminous research on women in the French Revolution, or on the organized feminist political action groups of postcolonial Latin American nation-states or India, or on the suffragettes of Meiji Japan or on late Ch'ing China, discuss polities in transition to some modern form. In the Ming-Ch'ing transition, by contrast, the founding of a new dynasty appeared as a confirmation of old, not the creation of new, political forms. Even though we should not expect the kinds of radical new female political activities that are so readily observed in polities undergoing the transition to nationhood, some of the evidence is telling nonetheless.

Kang-i Sun Chang's analysis of what she calls love and loyalism shows how women in the late Ming transgressed the conventional boundaries that

[12] Scholars have convincingly shown that Sinicization as a paradigm may obscure more than it illuminates about the ruling style of the Manchu (Ch'ing) court. Most influential have been pioneering studies by Joseph Fletcher and Pamela Crossley. See also the pioneering research of Beatrice Bartlett and later studies by Evelyn Rawski and Mark Elliott. See Joseph Fletcher, "Ch'ing inner Asia c. 1800," in *Late Ch'ing, 1800–1911, Part 1*, Vol. 10, of *The Cambridge history of China*, ed. Denis Twitchett and John K. Fairbank (Cambridge, 1978), pp. 35–106; Beatrice S. Bartlett, *Monarchs and ministers: The Grand Council in mid-Ch'ing China, 1723–1820* (Berkeley, 1991); Pamela Kyle Crossley, *Orphan warriors: Three Manchu generations and the end of the Qing world* (Princeton, 1990); Pamela Kyle Crossley, *The Manchus* (Oxford, 1997); Evelyn S. Rawski, *The last emperors: A social history of Qing imperial institutions* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1998); Mark Elliott, *The Manchu Way: The Eight Banners and ethnic identity in late imperial China* (Stanford, 2001).

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separated the sexes. It shows up in the ideologies of male-female equality expressed in the writings of dramatists like Hsü Wei (1522–1594), author of *Nü chuang-yüan* (in which a woman, disguised as a man, places first in the examinations), and other writers who consorted with courtesans and admired the cult of *ch'ing* (love, sex).[13] The records of the Restoration Society (Fu-she) feature prominent courtesans participating in the reform movement and the loyalist resistance. Many of the most prominent women associated with Ming loyalism were arguably not crossing boundaries. For example, Ku Yen-wu's foster mother, who starved herself to death protesting the Ch'ing invasions and whose injunctions to her son formed the backbone of his own refusal to serve the Ch'ing government,[14] was following a convention of female protest with long and respectable Confucian roots. She was not, though, following the conventions of female suicide as protest against insults to her own integrity or purity; she committed suicide as a public act of political protest. The most extreme examples of women crossing boundaries in the Ming-Ch'ing transition are the women warriors whom we can glimpse occasionally in the documents, such as K'ung Ssu-chen, who led the armies of her slain husband south in a last-ditch effort to sustain his rebellion against Ch'ing domination.[15] Further research will doubtless yield other examples of women warriors in the Ming-Ch'ing transition, but even without such evidence, the entry of women into the discourse of politics and the language of political loyalism is a distinguishing feature of the Ming-Ch'ing transition that cannot be ignored.

Late Ming decadence

The prominence of courtesans in the language of late Ming loyalism made decadence a rallying point for critics of late Ming society, especially those who supported the Ch'ing. Critiques of decadence in the late Ming focus on overindulgence, above all in sex.[16] Seductive women and sexy men fill the pages of color-illustrated pornographic books and the guides to famed courtesan districts in Nanking and Yangchow, and the most famous novel of the age – *Chin p'ing mei* – derives its power from a detailed recounting of the

[13] See Kang-i Sun Chang, *The late Ming poet Ch'en Tzu-lung*, esp. 14–18.

[14] Willard J. Peterson, "The life of Ku Yen-wu (1613–1682)," Part 1, *HJAS*, 28 (1968), pp. 144–5.

[15] See Frederic Wakeman, Jr., *The great enterprise: The Manchu reconstruction of imperial order in seventeenth-century China*, Vol. 2 (Berkeley, 1985), pp. 1117–18, n. 96. K'ung's husband, Sun Yen-ling, was one of the generals who led the so-called "Rebellion of the Three Feudatories" from the south and southwest during the 1670s.

[16] But also in the "superfluous things" collected and admired by connoisseurs of fine art, furniture, and ceramics, of rare books and obscure antiques. See Craig Clunas, *Superfluous things: Material culture and social status in early modern China* (Cambridge, 1991).

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hero's sexual obsessions and excesses.[17] Sexual indulgence was conflated with other forms of conspicuous consumption, as connoisseurs displayed their tastes not only in women, but in comestibles and costume. In what the Changs call "the new eating culture" of the late Ming, multicourse banquets served up gold and silver platters full of exotic fruits and seafood, complemented by fine teas poured from fancy pots fired in I-hsing.[18] Critics of the time complained about the decadence of clothing and styles of dress, both men's and women's: they were too bright, too modish, too vulgar, too unisex. Overindulgence in everything – food, drink, objects, and sex – was blamed on money: too many markets, too much commercialism, and too much wealth, most of it ill-spent. Critics of decadence likened women to money: "alluring but inconsistent and fickle, pregnant with destructive power."[19] Chao Nan-hsing, a Tung-lin partisan whose political activism focused mainly on tax reform and attacks on corruption at the court, attributed the economic crises of his day to conspicuous consumption.[20] Both Hsieh Chao-che and Li Tung recorded similar criticisms in their notes on everyday life in the late Ming, focusing especially on homosexuality and on clothing styles they judged effeminate.[21]

In other words, decadence and decay in the late Ming spelled gender trouble.[22] The Changs note, for instance, that one of the most upsetting signs of immorality was cross-dressing of the sort celebrated in Hsü Wei's play – officials and literati sporting women's jewelry and wearing servants' garb, women dressed in men's clothing.[23] Debilitating and corrupting infatuations with women lace the story of the Ming collapse, most dramatically in the tale of rebel Li Tzu-ch'eng and his seizure of Wu San-kuei's favorite

[17] The first volume of David Tod Roy's magnificent erudite translation makes this novel, devoid for the first time of prudish Latin passages and Victorian leers, accessible to English speakers. The Roy translation also renders transparent the judgments readers were called upon to make concerning the excesses of the leading characters. See Hsiao-hsiao-sheng, *The gathering*, Vol. 1 of *The plum in the golden vase, or, Chin p'ing mei*, trans. David Tod Roy (Princeton, 1993).

[18] Chun-shu Chang and Shelley Hsüeh-lun Chang, *Crisis and transformation in seventeenth-century China: Society, culture, and modernity in Li Yü's world* (Ann Arbor, 1992), pp. 152–7, discussion of the "new eating culture" on pp. 153–4.

[19] See Richard von Glahn, "The enchantment of wealth: The god *Wutong* in the social history of Kiangnan," *HJAS*, 51, No. 2 (1991), p. 694. See Dorothy Ko, *Teachers of the inner chambers: Women and culture in seventeenth-century China* (Stanford, 1994), p. 56, where, in citing this passage, she points out that in a culture of transient fortune and fleeting sensual pleasure, constancy and fidelity in women were doubly valued.

[20] See *Chao Chung-i kung wen-chi*, 264, p. 5b, cited in Wakeman, *The great enterprise*, Vol. 1, p. 95, n. 24.

[21] Wakeman, *The great enterprise*, Vol. 1, pp. 94–6, citing Hsieh Chao-che, *Wu tsa tsu*, 8, pp. 4a–5b; Li Tung, *Chien wen tsa-chi*, 10.

[22] The phrase follows work by theorist and critic Judith Butler from her book by the same title, *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity* (New York, 1990).

[23] See Chang, *Crisis and transformation in seventeenth-century China*, p. 155; also p. 186, n. 68, which provides extensive documentation for these concerns.

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concubine, which allegedly provoked the loyal Ming general to turn coat and ally himself with the Ch'ing leaders.[24]

It is probably the Dutch sinologist R. H. van Gulik who most closely linked the Ming collapse and subsequent Ch'ing conquest to a shift in attitudes toward sexuality and gender relations. His extreme views on this subject are worth quoting in full:

> Faced for the second time [the "first" was the Mongol invasion of the thirteenth century] with a protracted period of foreign occupation, the Chinese re-applied the Confucianist principles on the separation of the sexes in their utmost severity. Determined to keep at least their private life free from Manchu interference, everything pertaining to sexual relations and the affairs of the women's quarters became strictly taboo. Chinese officials exhorted their Manchu masters – originally burdened with few sexual inhibitions – to place erotica of the Ming and preceding periods on the Index [of proscribed works], and in course of time the Manchu rulers became even more punctilious in this respect than the Chinese themselves. In this manner developed the Chinese phobia regarding the divulging of sexual matters, a phobia that has characterized the Chinese attitude to sex throughout the last four centuries.[25]

This rhetoric can be read as nothing more than the boilerplate, delivered up at the end of every dynasty, which raised the specter of the state-toppling woman.[26] Thanks to Charlotte Furth, scholars are ready to place R. H. van Gulik in his own cultural context in which he voiced both liberated sexology and post-Freudian anxiety as he discovered an androcentric idyll of healthful sexual liberation in the Ming historical record.[27] Even so, there is no denying the truth of van Gulik's observation that after the Ch'ing conquest female chastity was valorized as never before, and that along with the renewed interest in ritual propriety fostered by the Ch'ing emperors came a renewed commitment to the strict separation of the sexes.[28] Plots in plays and novels reveal readers' changing sensibilities. During the eighteenth century, popular tastes in fiction turned to feel-good romances featuring a handsome scholar and a talented beauty – chastely clothed and erotically subdued.[29]

[24] For one account, see R. H. van Gulik, *Sexual life in ancient China* (Leiden, 1961), p. 334; also Wakeman, *The great enterprise*, p. 292.

[25] Van Gulik, *Sexual life*, p. 335. See pp. 333–4 for an even stronger statement about the end of the "robust pleasures of . . . full-blooded men and women" after the Ch'ing conquest.

[26] Wakeman notes, for instance, that decadent clothing was taken as a sign of the decay of legitimate political authority as early as the time of Hsün-tzu, *The great enterprise*, p. 95, n. 24.

[27] Charlotte Furth, "Rethinking van Gulik: Sexuality and reproduction in traditional Chinese medicine," *Engendering China: Women, culture, and the state*, ed. Christina K. Gilmartin, Gail Hershatter, Lisa Rofel, and Tyrene White (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 125–46.

[28] See Chow, *The rise of Confucian ritualism*, especially pp. 204–14. Chow associates the Ch'ing concern with chastity with philological scholarship and the revival of classical studies, as well as with lineage interests served by the female chastity cult.

[29] Keith McMahon, "The classic 'beauty-scholar' romance and the superiority of the talented woman," *Body, subject and power in China*, ed. Angela Zito and Tani E. Barlow (Chicago, 1994), pp. 227–52; also

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Ch'ing ritual, imperial edicts, and law all supported the rising tide of moralism by raising the incentives for families to protect the chastity of their women, and sharpening the penalties for even a momentary lapse. The Ch'ing state developed an elaborate system of rewarding virtue, especially in its honors for chaste widows.[30] A "greatly expanded . . . range of qualifications"[31] made it possible for widows who did not remarry to win imperial recognition in the form of awards of silver to their families (to finance the construction of memorial arches), certificates of merit written in the emperor's own hand, and lasting commemoration in the annals of the local gazetteer or even a provincial history. At the same time, as Matthew Sommer has demonstrated, the Ch'ing code defined specific and detailed criteria for legitimate widow claims in courts of law, in particular claims on property: "A widow who could claim chastity enjoyed legal rights unique among women; but if she remarried or committed adultery, her status in her husband's household and the rights contingent on that status would be forfeit."[32] The law did not require the strict standard of "no sexual penetration" for defining widow chastity that applied to imperial canonization: A widow who was judged to have been raped or coerced into remarriage could still lay claim to her legal rights. Even so, strict standards for proving rape (e.g., eyewitness testimony) made widows vulnerable to loss of their property rights, especially given the competition from scheming kinsmen.

In his study of cases involving widow property rights, Sommer cautions that reading legal cases provides an unbalanced picture of levels of violence and coercion and of the obsession with chastity that was conflated with material interests. Legal cases and imperial edicts and honors alike nonetheless dramatize the pervasive awareness of the standards for female purity set by both ritual and law in the Ch'ing period, and of the high stakes attached to female chastity. Vivien Ng and Bret Hinsch, among others, argue that male homosexuality, which continued to be an accepted social practice in the Kiangnan upper classes of the mid-Ch'ing period, was also subject to new

Keith McMahon, *Misers, shrews, and polygamists: Sexuality and male-female relations in eighteenth-century Chinese fiction* (Durham, 1995), pp. 99–125.

[30] Elvin, "Female virtue and the state"; Susan Mann, "Historical change in female biography from Song to Qing times: The case of early Qing Jiangnan," *Transactions of the International Conference of Orientalists in Japan*, No. 30 (1985), pp. 65–77; Susan Mann, "Suicide and survival: Exemplary widows in the late empire," in *Chūgoku no dentō shakai to kazoku: Yanagida Setsuko sensei koki kinen ronshu* (Family and society in traditional China: Essays in honor of Professor Yanagida Setsuko) (Tokyo, 1993). All demonstrate the remarkable upsurge in chaste widow certificates of merit, especially beginning in the reign of the Yung-cheng emperor and continuing through the Ch'ien-lung period.

[31] The most detailed study of chaste widows and their qualifications is presently Matthew H. Sommer, "The uses of chastity: Sex, law, and the property of widows in Qing China," *Late Imperial China*, 17, No. 2 (1996), pp. 77–130.

[32] Ibid., p. 83.

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constraints after the Ch'ing conquest, especially as a result of new laws punishing homosexual rape.[33]

Concerns about rape and violation evoke the imagery of the conquest itself, preserved in the writings of survivors of Kiangnan resistance movements crushed by Ch'ing armies.[34] By celebrating loyalty and chastity, the Ch'ing imperium at once distanced itself from the violence of the conquest and invoked specters of the decadence that caused the Ming collapse – a doubly charged message to Han subjects.

Van Gulik's telling comments on the psychological resistance to the Ch'ing invasion point to the ways in which gender roles and bodily adornment were implicated in the resistance from the very beginning of the Manchus' rise to power. Recent translations of early Manchu edicts show that the Manchus targeted male and female dress and fashion as powerful signs of political identity. For example, an edict issued by Hung Taiji's government in 1638 was evidently addressed to bannermen and their families. It warned that anyone "adopting alien dress, bound-up hair [for men], or bound feet [for women]" was someone "whose person might belong to the Great Ch'ing but whose heart was with the alien regime [i.e., the Ming]." The decree continues, "From this time forward, any man who binds up his hair will be scalped and put to death, and any woman who binds her feet will have her feet cut off and be killed."[35] Clearly this edict was directed at creating an identity for the

[33] See Bret Hinsch, *Passions of the cut sleeve: The male homosexual tradition in China* (Berkeley, 1990), pp. 139–46; Vivien W. Ng, "Ideology and sexuality: Rape laws in Qing China," *JAS*, 46, No. 1 (1987), pp. 67–9. Ng's article shows how new laws governing the prosecution of heterosexual rape placed an increased burden on the victim and in that way encouraged more female seclusion. On the Ch'ing government's assimilation of homosexual rape into its broader definition of rape in the legal code, see Matthew H. Sommer, "The penetrated male in late imperial China: Judicial constructions and social stigma," *Modern China*, 23, No. 2 (1997), pp. 140–80, esp. pp. 154–9.

[34] See the graphic accounts of rape in the conquest of Yangchow, in Lynn A. Struve, ed. and trans., *Voices from the Ming-Qing cataclysm: China in tigers' jaws* (New Haven, 1993), esp. pp. 46–7. Frederic Wakeman observes that Kung Ting-tzu's suspected treachery in the Ming resistance was associated in part with his flamboyant sexual conduct, including his liaison with the courtesan Ku Mei and his affairs with male actors; Wakeman, *The great enterprise*, p. 871, n. 61.

[35] Chung-kuo ti-i li-shih tang-an kuan, comp., *Ch'ing-ch'u nei-kuo-shih-yüan Man-wen tang-an pien-i* (Peking, 1986), Vol. 1, p. 332. Notably, the official record of this same decree in Chao Erh-hsün et al., comps., *Ch'ing-shih kao* (Peking, 1928; rpt. Peking, 1977; rpt. as *Ch'ing shih*, ed. Chang Ch'i-yün et al., 1961, 1963) says only that "those who adopt the dress, hairstyle, or bound feet of another country shall meet with heavy punishment," without commenting on the sedition implicit in bodily display and without reference to the horrific punishment specified in the original edict. See "T'ai-tsung pen-chi" (Ch'ung-te 3 [1638] 7th month, *jen-hsü*), in *Ch'ing-shih kao chiao-chu*, ed. Kuo-shih kuan (Taipei, 1986), Vol. 1, ch. 3, p. 64. The original Manchu text reveals the first Ch'ing emperor's ire and his extreme emotional response to bodily signs of Sinicization as marks of treason among the Banner population. The materials translated into Chinese from the so-called "Old Manchu Archives" show that the Ch'ing emperor's early edicts were laced with consciousness about gender issues. For instance, to punish Manchu banner leaders who looted conquered populations or were caught engaging in bribery or embezzlement, the emperor forced them to don female clothing and incarcerated them in a public place where they could be ridiculed for their "feminine" avarice. He also criticized Manchu women for indulging in fine clothes and luxury while their men were dying in battle. This is over and beyond the

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conquest elite participating in establishing a Ch'ing polity. The policy after 1644 was considerably more moderate than this, although all Han Chinese men were forced to shave their foreheads and wear a queue in compliance with Manchu custom.

Similar campaigns targeted female footbinding as a Han Chinese practice that had to be eliminated. But the similarities end there, for women, sequestered inside the courtyards and inner apartments of literati households, defied repeated edicts. Mothers continued to bind their daughters' feet, with the tacit support of husband and parents-in-law, until the government gave up. Soon after the conquest, the Ch'ing rulers abandoned their campaign to end footbinding in Han Chinese households.[36] Although they successfully prevented the practice in Manchu banner households, Manchu women blithely "imitated" the style anyway, sporting the infamous platform shoes that gave the illusion of tiny feet. This made the bound foot an ironic sign of the enduring strength of female bodies in their resistance to foreign invasion; the "inner" reassurance to their outwardly compliant menfolk that capitulation was never complete.

Ch'ing policies on men's and women's fashion, with their very different outcomes, had subtle but far-reaching effects, the psychological and political implications of which are still being debated. For one thing, the contemporary slogan "Men submit but women do not" (*nan hsiang nü pu-hsiang*)[37] was an acknowledgment that men had bowed to the new government by embracing new styles of fashion and dress, whereas women's fashion preserved Ming styles. This might simply mean that men were seen to be selling out while women steadfastly preserved their loyalty to the Ming. On the other hand, we might interpret the same phrase as implying that the male queue was merely a sign of token submission that concealed or deflected attention from the enduring resistance to the Ch'ing conquest embodied in women's bound feet. In other words, the phrase might suggest outward, public acceptance and inner, secret rejection of Ch'ing rule – the pragmatic response to the realities of imperial power.

obsessive conflation of "submission" with head-shaving, which runs throughout the discussion of Ch'ing military victories. See Chung-kuo ti-i li-shih tang-an-kuan and Chung-kuo she-hui k'e-hsüeh-yüan li-shih yen-chiu-so, trans. and ed., *Man-wen lao-tang*, 2 Vols. (Peking, 1990).

[36] S. T. Leong cites arguments by the late-eighteenth-century writer Hsü Hsü-tseng that the Hakka peoples responded to the Manchu edicts that lowland Chinese ignored, and thus dates the prevalence of "natural" feet among both elite and commoner Hakkas to this period. See Sow-Theng Leong, *Migration and ethnicity in Chinese history: Hakkas, Pengmin, and their neighbors*, ed. Tim Wright (Stanford, 1997), pp. 36, 78–9.

[37] See the brief reference in Shen Ts'ung-wen, *Chung-kuo ku-tai fu-shih yen-chiu* (Hong Kong, 1981), p. 440. The parallel phrase "the living submit, but the dead do not" (*sheng hsiang, ssu pu-hsiang*) referred to the fact that mourning garments and the clothing of the dead preserved styles current in the Ming. Unfortunately, Shen provides no documentation for these details.

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The fact that women sustained the practice of footbinding through the Ming-Ch'ing transition, in defiance of Ch'ing decrees, perhaps increased men's humiliation when forced to adopt the queue. Since at least the T'ang dynasty, the topknot hairstyle fashionable in late Ming elite circles had been considered the mark of male Han Chinese gentility. Giving it up represented a manifest capitulation to barbarians.[38] Many historians have written empathically about the traumatic headshaving that signaled embrace of the queue hairstyle, and some Western scholars (themselves male) have even suggested that something more was involved – a threat to the very essence of their manhood. Frederic Wakeman, for example, describes headshaving as "tonsorial castration," a "symbolic mutilation of one's integrity," the horror of which was compounded by the belief that only an unfilial son would defile the body given him by his parents.[39] Whatever its personal meaning to individual men, there can be no doubt that imposition of the queue inflamed passions on all sides. Some of the Chinese in southern cities who were the first to follow the tonsure order, hoping to ingratiate themselves with the conquerors, were killed on the spot by their enraged compatriots.[40]

Although the Ch'ing government eventually gave up on footbinding bans for women, it was initially ruthless and later determinedly thorough in imposing the queue on men. On one level this was merely political common sense. Since women could not become officials, had no formal voice in government, and rarely appeared in public unless they were poor or marginalized, their dress and fashion could arguably be left to taste and preference. By contrast, Han Chinese men serving in office had to follow Ch'ing dress codes. At the court, Han Chinese dress and grooming became a blatant affront to the ruling emperor; in the provinces, where officials embodied imperial authority, their ritual, juridical, and fiscal responsibilities all required that they display Ch'ing standards. Han Chinese women's political invisibility

[38] On the queue as a symbol of subjugation to barbarians, see Wakeman, *The great enterprise*, Vol. 1, p. 60, n. 93. Wakeman documents the shaving of the head as a manifest sign of ultimate surrender in case after case. The edict of Dorgon, the Prince-Regent, inaugurating Ch'ing rule says, "Let it be proclaimed . . . that all should shave their heads and return to their peaceful employments"; p. 414. He observes, too, that former Ming officials who were persuaded to stay on in Peking to serve the Ch'ing would have fled south if they had been required to shave their heads. An exception was made for them, to the chagrin of others who had already succumbed, and the general policy was even temporarily rescinded in June 1644; pp. 420–2.

[39] Wakeman, *The great enterprise*, pp. 648–9, quotation on p. 649. In an earlier study, Wakeman showed how the head-shaving order united resistance against the Ch'ing at Chiang-yin, by uniting the sub-bureaucracy, the urban literati, and the local peasant population in emotional opposition to the conquest and to the magistrate who was attempting to implement orders from the capital and spare a blood bath. See Frederic Wakeman, Jr., "Localism and loyalism during the Ch'ing conquest of Kiangnan: The tragedy of Chiang-yin," *Conflict and control in late imperial China*, ed. Frederic Wakeman, Jr., and Carolyn Grant (Berkeley, 1975), pp. 55–60.

[40] Wakeman, *The great enterprise*, pp. 651–6, 659.

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protected them from draconian pressures to change their dress and grooming in conformity with Ch'ing practice. The so-called queue-cutting scare in the 1760s demonstrates the continuing anxiety over male hairstyles that persisted at the court, even at the height of Ch'ing power in the Ch'ien-lung reign.[41]

If Ch'ing policies toward women's fashion represented nothing more than benign neglect, they nonetheless had unintended consequences. For one thing, the Ch'ing court's failure to dictate standards for Chinese women's dress gave an incentive for confining women to the home and circumscribing women's roles. This may help explain the fervent Ch'ing support for the chaste widow cult and for the domestic virtues of wifely and filial duty, which placed women firmly inside the home and silenced their political voices – voices we can hear loudly during the Ming-Ch'ing transition. Note too that the Ch'ing emperors took particular offense at female suicide and martyrdom, the female language of late Ming loyalism.

A second, ironic, unintended consequence of the government's policy of benign neglect of women's dress and grooming returned to haunt it during the Yung-cheng and Ch'ien-lung reigns, when the fashion and deportment of Han Chinese women, particularly those of the Kiangnan region, became the standard of taste and refinement for women at court. The emperors themselves, free to indulge their own refined tastes, showed a distinct preference for the Kiangnan style in the women they chose to surround them, as court painters' portraits and decorative scrolls show.[42]

Self-conscious awareness of ethnic differences, grounded in dress and custom, continued to separate Manchus from Han Chinese throughout the early Ch'ing period. Reinforced by the segregated residential patterns of the imperial capital, where Manchus occupied the "inner city" while Han officials and literati resided with the rest of the Han population outside Peking's three major gates, the gulf separating Manchu from Han was maintained by other proscriptions as well. For example, imperial bans on public drama and opera performances in the Manchu-dominated inner city made the capital's Han Chinese quarter center stage for Peking opera, not to mention for the courtesan entertainments that had been banned from the palace precincts at the beginning of the dynasty. These same proscriptions fostered the development of distinctively Manchu forms of public entertainment, notably the "drum songs" (*tzu-ti shu*) created for audiences in the inner city, which later made their way into Han popular culture. Meanwhile, Peking's literary scene

[41] Philip A. Kuhn, *Soulstealers: The Chinese sorcery scare of 1768* (Cambridge, Mass., 1990).
[42] James Cahill, "The three Changs, Yangzhou beauties, and the Manchu court," *Orientations* (Oct. 1996), pp. 59–68.

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remained dominated by Han Chinese, especially those living in the area south of the Hsüan-wu Gate, home of what came to be known as the Hsüan-nan literary style, cultivated in the bookstores of the Liu-li-ch'ang and in the famous wine shops that invited conversation. The relatively quiet and subdued atmosphere of Peking's staid inner quarter contrasted markedly with the boisterous and lively "club" atmosphere of the outer city, where guild halls and native place associations drew merchants and scholars far from home to seek company, collect news, and gossip about scholarly careers and business deals.[43]

LATE MING AND EARLY CH'ING CONTINUITIES

Despite the ruptures that separate the society of the early Ch'ing from its counterpart in the late Ming, much evidence points to continuities that override the traumas of the dynastic transition. Understanding the family and gender relations in the Ch'ing period therefore requires that the trauma of conquest be balanced against the late Ming legacy. The most important legacy was the growth of a commercial economy fueled by production and consumption in commoner households. In Kiangnan, commercialization led to the near-complete disappearance of hereditary artisanal groups established by law in the early years of Ming rule. Hereditary occupations originally had a dual rationale: to secure the supply of luxury goods, mainly to the court and the establishments of the princely elites, produced by the labor of skilled artisans registered with the state; and to sustain the farm economy and anchor the rural peasant population by banning entry into town and city trades except by government registration or birth. By late Ming, however, under pressure from the market, hereditary occupations had all but disappeared. As the luxury goods of early Ming – especially fabrics and ceramics, but also books, paper, tea, and other commodities – became essential to the good life enjoyed by affluent commoners, patterns of mobility, both social and physical, shattered occupational barriers.[44] Even the hereditary "mean peoples" who lived in castelike ghettos in many parts of the Kiangnan area and in the Canton delta (where they were mainly concentrated as boat people) found ways to shed their pariah identity and pass into the ranks of ordinary commoners.[45] Competition for access to land and to education sharpened, and wit

[43] Li Ch'iao, "Ch'ing-tai Pei-ching nei-wai-ch'eng she-hui sheng-huo hsi-su chih i" (Differences in the customs of social life in the inner and outer cities in Peking during the Ch'ing dynasty), *Li-shih yen-chiu t'ung-hsün*, 3 (1987), pp. 25–7.

[44] Timothy Brook, *The confusions of pleasure: Commerce and culture in Ming China* (Berkeley, 1998).

[45] The best study of the problem of the "mean peoples" in the Ming-early Ch'ing transition remains Terada Takanobu, "Yoseitei no semmin kaihorei ni tsuite" (Concerning the emancipation of the chien-min in the Yung-cheng reign), *Tōyōshi kenkyū*, 18, No. 3 (1959), pp. 124–41. See also Anders Hansson, *Chinese outcasts: Discrimination and emancipation in late imperial China* (Leiden, 1996).

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and creativity with hands or abacus as well as mind became a means to success.

In Kiangnan, these processes of economic and social change continued virtually unscathed through the conquest period, even though in other areas, such as the North China plain and the Szechwan basin, economic recovery occurred more slowly.[46] Wherever it spread, the commercial economy linked commoner households with markets and networks of communication spanning the realm. These marketing networks defined core regions where towns and cities acted as markets for labor and commodities from the countryside. In early Ch'ing times, these included the proto-industrial products of spindle and loom produced by women.[47] Access to markets and communication networks seems clearly associated with the rising expectations reflected in reproductive decisions by peasant householders, whose children became part of the population explosion and entered the history of the family that concerns us here.

Confucian values

The Ch'ing enforcement of Confucian values inherited from the Ming – another source of continuity spanning the dynastic transition – was welcomed by the same families who benefited from the economic recovery. One measure is the response to rewards for chaste widows offered by the early Ch'ing rulers, who stepped up Ming campaigns promoting Confucian values in the countryside.[48] Continuity is visible in the civil service examination system, where both the Ming and the Ch'ing governments enforced a common set of expectations and a common curriculum on all highly educated men who sought the prestige of degrees and official appointments.[49] In this respect, as in others, the early Ch'ing emperors proved far more successful as Confucian paradigms than their late Ming counterparts. Both K'ang-hsi and Ch'ien-

[46] G. William Skinner, "Presidential address: The structure of Chinese history," *JAS*, 44, No. 2 (Feb. 1985), pp. 278–81.

[47] G. William Skinner, "Cities and the hierarchy of local systems," *The city in late imperial China*, ed. G. W. Skinner (Stanford, 1977), pp. 275–352. For a detailed investigation of the spread of commercial markets in one local economy starting in the mid-Ming period, see Yoshinobu Shiba, "Ningpo and its hinterland," in Skinner, *The city in late imperial China*, esp. pp. 399–403. On female labor and proto-industrial production, see Mann, *Precious records*, pp. 143–77. For a different perspective, emphasizing the growing importance of male weavers in commercial textile production during the Ch'ing period, see Francesca Bray, *Technology and gender: Fabrics of power in late imperial China* (Berkeley, 1997), pp. 242–69.

[48] On the significance of the chastity cult in the Ming period, see Katherine Carlitz, "Shrines, governing-class identity, and the cult of widow fidelity in mid-Ming Jiangnan," *JAS*, 56, No. 3 (1997), pp. 612–40. Data on widow chastity in the first century of Ch'ing rule show that in the Kiangnan region, numbers far surpassed those reported in the Ming period. See Mann, "Suicide and survival," pp. 23–39.

[49] Benjamin A. Elman, *A cultural history of civil examinations in late imperial China* (Berkeley, 2000).

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lung, using a combination of patronage and proscription, guided the tastes and writings of the educated classes.[50] Their efforts helped to keep the aspirations of respectable families centered on success in the examination system, a fact that shaped the child training and schooling of millions of boys during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[51] The Ch'ing efforts to loosen the constraints of the eight-legged essay form were roundly criticized by those who had prepared for writing them, even while cynical debates questioning how much "talent" the civil service system actually fostered or how useful ancient models of sagehood were in the contemporary world continued unabated.[52] As in Ming times, wives and mothers remained some of the most outspoken critics of the stress inflicted on their loved ones by examinations and by office-holding.[53] Perhaps they sensed what Ping-ti Ho later proved, that the chances of success in the Ch'ing examination system declined markedly by comparison with the Ming.[54] Elite women in the early Ch'ing period who were sharply critical of the strains of examination competition and office-holding, and of their toll on the quality of family life, were generally silent on politics, by comparison to their counterparts in late Ming.

Medicine and maternal health

The science of women's medicine (*fu-k'e*), begun in Sung times, had become a highly specialized and well-funded enterprise by the late Ming period.[55] As Charlotte Furth has emphasized, the development of women's medicine helped to create a new medical discourse on sexual intercourse and reproduction. In late Ming times this new discourse displaced and marginalized

[50] See R. Kent Guy, *The Emperor's Four Treasuries: Scholars and the state in the late Ch'ien-lung era* (Cambridge, Mass., 1987), esp. 159–82. Guy stresses that the so-called "inquisition" conducted by the Ch'ien-lung emperor during the compilation of his Four Treasuries collection was carried out not by a repressive government alone, but by a constituency of literati, bureaucrats, and court officials whose interests overlapped.

[51] Hsiung Ping-chen, "Hao ti k'ai-shih: Chin-shih shih-jen tzu-ti ti yu-nien chiao-yü," *Family process and political process in modern Chinese history*, ed. Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica (Taipei, 1992), Vol. 1, pp. 201–38.

[52] On changes in the examinations and on the range of approaches to even the conventional themes required, see the discussion in R. Kent Guy, "Fang Pao and the *Ch'in-ting Ssu-shu-wen*," *Education and society in late imperial China, 1600–1900*, ed. Benjamin A. Elman and Alexander Woodside (Berkeley, 1994), pp. 150–82. On changes in the eight-legged essay form, and shifting emphases on sections within the examinations, see Benjamin A. Elman, "Changes in Confucian civil service examinations from the Ming to the Ch'ing dynasty," in *Education and society in late imperial China*, ed. Elman and Woodside, pp. 111–49. Elman stresses, nonetheless, the basic continuity of the "ideology" of examinations from Yüan through Ch'ing; p. 132.

[53] For a Ming example, see Luo Rufang, "Eulogy for my mother, the Honorable Lady Ning," trans. Yu-yin Cheng, *Under Confucian eyes: Writings on gender in Chinese history*, ed. Susan Mann and Yu-yin Cheng (Berkeley, 2001). For Ch'ing examples, see Mann, *Precious records*, pp. 102–5.

[54] Ping-ti Ho, *The ladder of success in imperial China: Aspects of social mobility, 1368–1911* (New York, 1962).

[55] Charlotte Furth, *A flourishing yin: Gender in China's medical history, 960–1665* (Berkeley, 1999).

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the "bedchamber arts" of Taoist alchemy, once central to all understandings of the body and its health. Late Ming physicians consigned the "bedchamber arts" to alchemical manuals prescribing drugs for attaining longevity and immortality, and turned their own practical attention to the matter of producing healthy children, especially sons, and especially lots of them. From this enlightened physician's perspective, the pursuits of sexual excess associated with bedchamber erotica appeared at best distracting and at worst damaging to the patriarch bent on nourishing his life. As Furth puts it, in this new medical discourse, "the Taoist immortality seeker's reach toward eternity is chastened and redirected toward the transmission of life to the next generation."[56] Medical manuals focused on the concerns of men with "multiplying descendants" provided detailed prescriptions for women's maternal health, including everything from controlling menstrual irregularities to tonics for combatting anemia and regimens ensuring successful pregnancy and postpartum recovery.[57]

Beyond the specialized field of women's health care, medical texts were revised, reprinted, and copied in cheaper and more accessible versions from the late Ming onward. These texts were dominated by a paradigm of systematic correspondences between specific phenomena (symptoms, disease states) and general principles. The general principles comprised the forces of yin and yang and what were called the "Five Elements" (*wu hsing*) in which each of the five elements (metal, wood, water, fire, and soil) overcame and succeeded one another in an endless flux of change. Whereas drug therapies developed by Sung physicians depended upon elaborate classification systems in which drug properties corresponded to these broad principles, their classification systems never achieved a satisfactory level of practical use.[58] In the late Ming-early Ch'ing era, by contrast, doctors began to write about the practical application of drug therapies for treating symptoms. Preoccupied with Han learning and relying strictly upon pre-Sung texts for guidance, physicians and literati medical scholars of the late Ming experimented with diverse theoretical and practical approaches to healing, encouraged by the eclectic intellectual climate influenced by Wang Yang-ming and his followers. Scholars versed in medical terminology also embraced its possibilities for broader social uses. The late Ming scholar Lü K'un and others extended medical rhetoric into political discourse, likening magistrates and other local officials to doctors, healers of society who could cure moral and

[56] See Furth, "Rethinking van Gulik," quotation on p. 143.
[57] Ibid., p. 144. This focus on healthy bodies and reproductive sex foreshadows shifts in representations of sexuality and gender relations in fiction.
[58] See Paul U. Unschuld, *Medicine in China: A history of ideas* (Berkeley, 1985), pp. 154–88, esp. pp. 187–8.

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social ills.[59] Local leaders invested in private medical charities that enhanced their own status in the community.[60]

The growing numbers of professional physicians maintained close ties with the literati class from which most of them came, and research on medical texts was pursued by some of the leading literati, including Yen Yüan and Sun Hsing-yen.[61] Authors of the many pharmaceutical and dietary texts that came into print during the late Ming and early Ch'ing periods were also inspired by the "Han learning" movement to return to the earliest original medical texts, especially the Han classic *Shen-nung pen-ts'ao ching*, which was reconstructed in the first decades of the seventeenth century by Lu Fu. The publication of Lu's work in 1624 initiated a series of similar publications in 1625, 1647, 1715, 1767, and in the 1780s and 1790s.[62] All this publishing activity points not only to the spread of medical knowledge, but also to the dissemination of that knowledge among commoners eager to protect the health of their offspring.

Early Ch'ing medical scholars produced a corpus of diverse and complex new knowledge that in turn absorbed folk or popular medicine into the elite canon.[63] The best-known example of this appears in the middle of the eighteenth century in a collection of more than a thousand prescriptions titled *A Series of Outstanding Guidelines* (*Ch'uan ya*), written in 1759 by Chao Hsüeh-min (c. 1730–1805). This work (according to Paul Unschuld) is innocent of yin-yang and other correspondence theories that dominated elite medicine. It is based on accounts of treatments described to the author by travelers, returning officials, and relatives, and also on the author's own research, including the personal notes of an itinerant country doctor. In addition to drug therapies, the *Ch'uan ya* includes incantatory pictograms and recommends exorcistic techniques, acupuncture, moxibution, smoke and steam treatments, plasters, hot compresses, and breathing techniques. Though the work was not formally published until 1851, probably reflecting the author's reluctance to go public with such plebian fare, it provides rich evidence for a popular medical culture of health and healing,[64] in which household encyclopedias and almanacs, as well as popular medical texts, transmitted medical knowledge in various forms to less educated people.[65] Ellen Widmer has suggested that the economic, political, and social climate that followed the

[59] See Joanna F. Handlin, *Action in late Ming thought: The reorientation of Lü K'un and other scholar-officials* (Berkeley, 1983), pp. 140–1.

[60] Angela Ki Che Leung, "Organized medicine in Ming-Qing China: State and private medical institutions in the Lower Yangzi Region," *Late Imperial China*, 8, No. 1 (1987), 134–66.

[61] See Paul U. Unschuld, *Medicine in China: A history of pharmaceutics* (Berkeley, 1986), pp. 196–7.

[62] Ibid., pp. 183–97.

[63] See Unschuld, *History of ideas*, esp. pp. 194–212.

[64] Ibid., pp. 210–12.

[65] Bray, *Technology and gender*, p. 311.

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Ch'ing conquest encouraged publishers to favor medical works. Writing and publishing medical texts had a huge market, engaged in safe topics, and yet fulfilled a sense of obligation to society felt keenly by many scholarly writers, especially those who had lived through the conquest.[66]

Did the doubling of China's population, one aspect of the economic growth that sustained Ming-Ch'ing continuities, owe anything to incremental improvements in health care, especially in the care of mothers and infants?[67] Certainly publishers had a mass market in mind when they printed books on women's health care, as Widmer shows in her study of the seventeenth-century Kiangnan publishing house Huan-tu-chai.[68] Current research on the history of Chinese medicine all points to the crucial importance of the field of maternal and child health in medical literature, and historians compare favorably the effects of this medical knowledge on reproduction and health when contrasted with European cases in comparable periods. The most important effect of increased access to medical texts in the early Ch'ing period was arguably the dissemination of knowledge about the healthful benefits of proper breast feeding for children. Standard Ming sources on breast feeding, such as K'ou P'ing's *Ch'üan-yu hsin-chien*, which were widely consulted by early Ch'ing readers, insisted that the mother was the best source of milk for her baby and that mothers who were unable to breastfeed their own infants should select a wetnurse with scrupulous care. A hired wetnurse was brought into the home of her employer, where nursing schedules, personal hygiene and habits, and health and nutrition could be closely monitored by the mother herself. The optimal duration of breast feeding prescribed in Ming textbooks was two full years, a period demographers judge ideal for the

[66] At least this was the case for the Huan-tu-chai publisher Wang Ang (1615–c. 1699), whose concern for benefiting humankind through his work drew him to medical writing and publishing. See Ellen Widmer, "The Huanduzhai of Hangzhou and Suzhou: A study in seventeenth-century publishing," *HJAS*, 56, No. 1 (1996), pp. 77–122. Wang, whom Widmer describes as "a leading popularizer of medical knowledge" during the Ch'ing (p. 78), printed, among other things, a revised edition of the *Complete Essentials of Pharmacology* (*Pen-ts'ao pei-yao*) in 1683.

[67] Published studies stress not preventive health care but improving living standards as the main determinants of successful reproductive behavior in the Ch'ing period. See James Lee and Cameron Campbell, *Fate and fortune in rural China: Social organization and population behavior in Liaoning, 1774–1873* (Cambridge, 1996). Angela Leung notes that whereas premodern public health measures did little to curb infectious disease, improved hygiene has been shown to limit mortality in premodern populations: Leung, "Organized medicine in Ming-Qing China," pp. 134–66, esp. p. 155. Hsiung Ping-chen presents convincing evidence that access to preventive health care for newborns and mothers improved dramatically from the middle of the sixteenth century to the mid-eighteenth century. See Hsiung Ping-chen, *Yu-yu: Ch'uan-t'ung Chung-kuo ti ch'iang-pao chih tao* (Taipei, 1995), pp. 53–101.

[68] The annotated *Outline of gynecology* (*Chi-yin kang-mu*), published in 1665, proclaimed on its cover to be "The number one best book of female medicine," and advertised: "The world's doctors need to study it thoroughly; ordinary people, too, must keep a copy at their fingertips and display it as a great treasure of an orderly home." See Widmer, "The Huanduzhai of Hangzhou and Suzhou," pp. 93ff., quotation on p. 100.

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long-term health and survival of both mother and infant.[69] The accessibility of medical books of all kinds, including books written in simple rhymes for less well educated consumers, may also have made a difference to survival and well-being.[70] Even accidents of epidemiological history may be a key to the steady population growth that resumed following the Ch'ing pacification campaigns:[71] For example, bubonic plague did not become endemic in China until late in the eighteenth century, when plague first devastated parts of Yunnan.[72] Smallpox variolation certainly lowered mortality in the eighteenth century.

Female readers and writers

The expanding field of knowledge about women's physical and reproductive health was coupled with an expanding body of other kinds of texts for women, concerning everything from moral instruction and practical skills to aesthetic and emotional expression. These new fields of knowledge, and their growing audience, were produced in part – among the elite, at least – by female writers. The outpouring of women's writing from the Ch'ing period was preserved and printed by their male relatives (fathers, brothers, husbands, sons), whose own knowledge now included a deep appreciation for the female as writer and exponent of high culture (*wen*).

A "new female audience" that attracted comment in the late Ming period[73] grew in the Ch'ing to produce a body of women's writing the sheer volume of which suggests a significant shift, most marked in the Kiangnan region.[74] The late Ming saw the earliest independent compilations of writings by women, the first begun by Wang Tuan-shu in 1639. Her anthology of women's poetry, *Ming-yüan shih-wei*, completed in 1664, contains work by

[69] Hsiung Ping-chen has shown that guides to successful breast feeding, including the proper selection of a wetnurse, were commonly available from the Sung period onward. Knowledge about breast feeding reduced infant mortality by improving immunity to disease, and lowered maternal mortality by facilitating the spacing of births: Hsiung, *Yu-yu*, pp. 103–35.

[70] See the data presented in Bray, *Technology and gender*, pp. 309–11. Bray suggests that access to physicians may also have improved, citing one record in Soochow that shows the number of physicians rose from 88 in the Ming to 219 in the Ch'ing; but dates are too vague here to be meaningful. See also Leung, "Organized medicine in Ming-Qing China."

[71] Leung, "Organized Medicine in Ming-Qing China," pp. 154–6, notes that European government-enforced quarantines and other measures had little effect in minimizing the death toll from plague. She concludes that "no premodern public health measures did much to curb serious infectious disease, whether in China or in Europe," p. 155.

[72] See Carol Benedict, *Bubonic plague in nineteenth-century China* (Stanford, 1996), pp. 24–35.

[73] See Joanna Handlin, "Lü K'un's new audience: The influence of women's literacy on sixteenth-century thought," *Women in Chinese society*, ed. Margery Wolf and Roxane Witke (Stanford, 1975); also Chang and Chang, *Crisis and transformation*, pp. 68–70.

[74] Hu Wen-k'ai's survey of women's writings lists 239 women writers for the Ming period, 3,556 for the Ch'ing. See Hu Wen-k'ai, comp., *Li-tai fu-nü chu-tso k'ao* (Shanghai, 1985).

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about a thousand women poets, most from the Ming and early Ch'ing periods. Wang's anthology was followed by others, especially the influential *Kuo-ch'ao kuei-hsiu cheng-shih chi*, published in 1831, compiled by another female poet, Wan-yen Yün Chu. A striking example of the poetry anthologies compiled by women in the Ch'ing period is Wang Tuan's *Ming san-shih chia shih-hsüan*, a collection of poems by male poets of the Ming judged by many to be "the finest anthology of Ming poetry" ever printed.[75] Together, these anthologies have helped scholars to see the writing culture of the late Ming and early Ch'ing periods as one that was not only increasingly accessible to women, but also increasingly influenced by women's tastes and sensibilities.

This female reading and writing audience grew continuously throughout the Ming-Ch'ing transition, with one major difference separating Ch'ing female writers from their Ming predecessors. The most famous woman writer of the late Ming was a courtesan, Liu Ju-shih, and courtesans' writings form a major part of the corpus of surviving women's writing from the Ming period. Moreover, many of the leading women writers from literati families of the late Ming consorted with courtesans and wrote admiringly of their talent.[76] What Dorothy Ko has called the "continuum" of friendship and love linking courtesans and their female counterparts from literati households disappeared after the Ch'ing conquest. The writings of Ch'ing women convey an almost unanimous disdain for courtesans' arts and culture.[77] The leading anthologies of women's writing edited by Ch'ing women conspicuously delete or omit courtesans' writings from their collections.[78] The lovelorn poems of lonely ladies, the steady diet of the female poet throughout Chinese history, are joined in Ch'ing times by a growing number of poems exploring other domains of female sensibility: education and the acquisition of learning, spiritual development and the rewards of old age, female friendship and its intimacies, parental heartache and its intermittent release in joy and pride. In elite literati families, women's writings opened new paths to intimacy, revealing wives, daughters, and sisters as masters of high culture who were newly intelligible as human beings to their erudite husbands, fathers, and brothers. Poems record relationships, not only among female "poet friends" (*shih yu*), but also between men and women – usually within the same family, more rarely extending across family boundaries – that deepened and flourished as

[75] On this and the other anthologies of women's poetry just discussed, see Kang-i Sun Chang, "Ming and Qing anthologies of women's poetry and their selection strategies," *Writing women in late imperial China*, ed. Ellen Widmer and Kang-i Sun Chang (Stanford, 1997), pp. 147–70, quotation on p. 168.

[76] Ko, *Teachers of the inner chambers*, esp. pp. 266–78.

[77] Paul S. Ropp, "Ambiguous images of courtesan culture in late imperial China," *Writing women in late imperial China*, ed. Widmer and Chang, pp. 19–20.

[78] Kang-I Sun Chang, "A guide to Ming-Ch'ing anthologies of female poetry and their selection strategies," *The Gest Library Journal* (special issue) 5, No. 2 (1992), pp. 119–74.

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a direct consequence of women's writing. The published work of female writers, edited and printed by kinsmen, was pridefully displayed as an elegant emblem of "family learning" preserved and transmitted by women as well as by men.[79]

FAMILIES AND GENDER RELATIONS BEYOND THE FAMILY

We confront this Ch'ing world dominated by materialistic and skeptical thought, where upward mobility made money the currency of status, and where female literacy and writing were creating new consciousness about gender relations when we try to understand gender relations in the century after 1644. Law courts, tax registers, marketplaces, temples, novels, plays, schools, rituals, government tracts, and paintings, all display as never before the everyday comings and goings of people in commoner families. The growing visibility of the commoner household is in part a testimony to the success of the Ch'ing government's programs to spread Confucian family ideals among the commoner population – an explicit goal of the government's aggressive policies promoting the moral transformation of the people with uncivilized "local customs."[80] But the visibility of commoner households is above all a demographic phenomenon, inseparable from the population growth in early Ch'ing.

Commoner households and family formation

The foremost goal of any married couple in the Chinese family system of this period was to rear a male heir who would carry on the descent line by marrying, in his turn, and rearing an heir of his own. Daughters, who married out of their natal families and into another patriline, necessarily became a secondary consideration for families with limited resources. The bias toward son preference in reproductive decision making frames virtually every other aspect of China's demographic history during the early Ch'ing period.

Perpetuating the male descent line was essential if a family was to sustain the rituals that bound its members to male ancestors. Since land and other property that supported ancestral rites were transmitted through male inheritance, which was in turn protected by statute and by local custom, a male

[79] On poet friends, see Ko, *Teachers of the inner chambers*, esp. pp. 234–7; on women in the transmission of family learning, see Mann, *Precious records*, pp. 101–8, passim. The poet Yüan Mei's circle of so-called "female disciples" is the best-known example of networks extending beyond the family. See Robyn Hamilton, "The pursuit of fame: Luo Qilan (1775–1813?) and the debates about women and talent in eighteenth-century Jiangnan," *Late Imperial China*, 18, No. 1 (June 1997), pp. 39–71.

[80] Matthew Sommer investigates the relationship between ordinary family lives and Confucian ideals in his study of the Ch'ing legal system in his *Sex, law, and society in late imperial China* (Stanford, 2000).

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heir was essential. "Getting an heir" was the goal shaping the reproductive behavior of all married couples, who readily turned to adoption when reproductive strategies failed them.[81] The poorest married couples counted themselves lucky to see one son into marriage and fatherhood. In poor families, accordingly, where fertility was low and mortality high, female infanticide became a practical commonplace. Even the wealthiest couples practiced fertility control as they strove to achieve their parental goals. Too many sons, after all, could fragment even the largest estate in a society where partible inheritance was the norm, and daughters were a luxury the well-to-do could easily afford. With these and other considerations in mind, well-off parents strategized to enhance the prospects of their descendants by shaping the configuration and the composition of their offspring sets.[82] Historical demographers have identified a range of checks on overall fertility, from proscriptions on widow remarriage to prolonged breast feeding, and including sex-selective infanticide, or negligence, all practiced in elite as well as commoner households. The result of these reproductive strategies was that overall levels of fertility in late imperial China were "not very different" from those in Europe before the demographic transition.[83]

Sons reared to adulthood, and their parents, confronted a "marriage crunch"[84] caused by the fact that marriage for women, which was virtually universal, drew a steady stream of females up the social ladder as wives and concubines, leaving behind an immense pool of poor, never-married males. The high cost of a bride, exacerbated by the skewed sex ratios, meant that millions of impoverished men died without marrying. The plight of these never-married males, along with other aspects of reproductive behavior and marriage strategies among the poor, responded readily to improved economic conditions, however, as the rising population growth rate in the early Ch'ing period attests. With more resources, couples reared more sons and were able to add daughters to balance their offspring sets. They could marry more children off, and at a younger age. Larger offspring sets brought more females into the marriage market. At the same time, rising incomes drove up the cost of marriage and increased the demand for brides, concubines, and maids, so that the effects of improved economic conditions were circular,

[81] The varieties of adoption practiced by commoners in late imperial times are surveyed in Ann Waltner, *Getting an heir: Adoption and the construction of kinship in late imperial China* (Honolulu, 1990).

[82] G. William Skinner, "Family systems and demographic processes," *Anthropological demography: Toward a new synthesis*, ed. David I. Kertzer and Tom Fricke (Chicago, 1997).

[83] See William Lavely and R. Bin Wong, "Revising the Malthusian narrative: The comparative study of population dynamics in late imperial China," *JAS*, 57, No. 3 (Aug. 1998), pp. 714–48.

[84] Ted Telford, "Family and state in Qing China: Marriage in the Tongcheng lineages, 1650–1880," in *Family process and political process in modern Chinese history*, ed. Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica (Taipei, 1992).

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compounding pressures on the expanding marriage market. From the perspective of poor families, the rising value of a daughter as a maid or a concubine – or as a prospective female entertainer, if she was beautiful – curbed recourse to female infanticide. For bride-giving families, regardless of their means, providing for a daughter's dowry was a substantial cost, sometimes cited as a cause for female infanticide,[85] and a good reason to shake the money tree of a daughter's labor before arranging for her marriage.

Since economic opportunities varied by region and locality, demographic behavior during the early Ch'ing also varied sharply. During the early Ch'ing period, the distinctive patterns of regional and local variation in marriage forms so evident by the nineteenth century took shape. Although the history of these local marriage patterns has yet to be written, retrospective views based on twentieth-century data point to three forms of marriage associated with particular economic and social circumstances. The normative "major" marriage form, in which the bride entered her husband's family and moved into his parents' household following the wedding ceremony, was widespread throughout the North China plain as far back as data permit us to go. Elsewhere, however, even in the hills surrounding the plain, variation was the norm. In areas as disparate as the commercialized heartland of Kiangnan and the western frontiers of Szechwan, uxorilocal marriage was common. In Fukien, Kwangsi, Kwangtung, and parts of Kiangnan as well, so-called "minor" marriage forms were common, with young girls or even female infants "adopted" into the families of prospective husbands, where they were reared as daughters and then married as daughters-in-law when they came of age.[86] In the Canton delta region, a marriage custom dubbed "delayed transfer" was preferred, with brides postponing entry into a husband's home for many years after the wedding and, sometimes, indefinitely.[87]

Historical demographers are certain that regional and local variations in marriage forms arose in response to particular demographic and economic conditions that shaped life expectancy and the sex ratio, and in turn influenced the availability of brides and the need for labor. For example, delayed transfer marriage has been linked to the rising income of women in silk reeling, and to their increased value to their natal families, who strategized to keep daughters at home longer. But in the absence of quantitative historical data by region, only the most general postulates can be offered to place

[85] Ann Waltner, "Infanticide and dowry in Ming and early Qing China," *Chinese views of childhood*, ed. Anne Behnke Kinney (Honolulu, 1995), pp. 193–218.

[86] See Arthur P. Wolf and Chieh-shan Huang, *Marriage and adoption in China, 1845–1945* (Stanford, 1980), esp. pp. 326–39.

[87] See Janice E. Stockard, *Daughters of the Canton delta: Marriage patterns and economic strategies in south China, 1860–1930* (Stanford, 1989).

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demographic changes in historical context. For example, infanticide appears to have been the primary check on fertility during the early Ch'ing period. Consequently, rapid population growth is thought to signal, above all else, a relaxation of female infanticide, associated with the prospect of improving economic conditions. By the same token, the subsequent decline in population growth during the nineteenth century owed much to a rise in female infanticide, itself a direct response to declining economic opportunity.[88] At the most general level, in times and places where the economy was growing, we assume that infanticide rates fell, more girls survived to reproductive age, and more single men were able to find brides and father children. With respect to regional variation, other hypotheses are possible. For example, in frontier zones or border regions where male migration skewed sex ratios, competition for scarce brides may have created conditions favoring minor marriage.[89] And in wealthy regions, where shortages of land induced parents to limit fertility lest too many sons fragment the patrimony, a daughter might be kept at home by bringing in a son-in-law through a uxorilocal marriage.[90] The same marriage strategy in a different environment – the western frontier, where uxorilocal marriage was also common – was doubtless a response to different conditions, such as intermarriage with non-Han peoples who favored matrilocal residence. In any case, the adaptability of marriage strategies in this formative period must be counted as one key to the rapid growth of the early Ch'ing population.

Patterns of migration and sojourning, shaped by native place ties and facilitated by commercialization, affected norms governing gender relations as well as reproductive behavior. For example, the practice of delayed-transfer marriage in the Canton delta region was grounded in what Janice Stockard calls an "anti-marital bias" in the culture of the delayed-transfer marriage area. High rates of female suicide in the area – especially group suicides among young girls of marriageable age – are one aspect of a distinctive cultural milieu that included the institution of "girls' houses" where young women spent the years prior to marriage, as well as a lively market for

[88] Demographers suggest that female infanticide operated as a preventive check on population growth, equivalent in its impact to its cultural counterpart in northwest Europe, perpetual spinsterhood. See Lavely and Wong, "Revising the Malthusian narrative," pp. 714–48; also Lee and Campbell, *Fate and fortune in rural China*; and James Lee, Wang Feng, and Cameron Campbell, "Infant and child mortality among the Qing nobility: Implications for two types of positive check," *Population Studies*, 48, No. 3, pp. 395–411.

[89] Wolf and Huang, *Marriage and adoption*.

[90] For a model of this reproductive strategy, see Skinner, "Family systems and demographic processes," esp. pp. 71–2. For a study of uxorilocal marriage in Kiangnan literati families during the early Ch'ing period, see Weijing Lu, "Uxorilocai marriage among Qing literati," *Late Imperial China*, 19, No. 2 (Dec. 1998), pp. 64–110.

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concubines and for "little maids" who were sold into servitude.[91] It has also been suggested that the local culture of this same area owes something to the influence of non-Han peoples on the Han settlers who migrated there to invest in development of reclaimed wetlands.[92]

Local cultures elsewhere produced their own distinctive norms governing gender relations. For example, certain areas known for exporting male talent in the early Ch'ing period – Shao-hsing prefecture, for example, home of the notorious *mu-yu* or professional secretaries;[93] or She county in Anhwei province, place of origin of the famous Yangchow salt merchants – were also areas where norms stressing wifely fidelity were unusually strict. The same may be said of the Chang-Ch'üan area on the Fukien coast, the native place of sojourning Hokkien merchants who emigrated to Taiwan and Southeast Asia during this period.[94] Conversely, in areas populated by the families of Hakka male traders and artisans who labored in the towns, wives and daughters flouted Confucian norms confining respectable women to their homes, left their feet unbound, and took over the farmwork.[95] Similar patterns prevailed in other parts of China with low productivity of the land where peasant men took work where they could find it and left farm labor to their womenfolk, a fact that scandalized local officials who observed it.[96] In Soochow, the center of courtesan entertainments in the early Ch'ing and a city renowned for its beautiful women, even the poorest parents of a comely daughter could count on "shaking the money tree" because of the demand for Soochow beauties in Kiangnan's brothels. Markets for female entertainers in lesser spots like Ningpo and Canton, whose traders roamed the empire, also encouraged poor families to rear daughters for the entertainment and sex market, since sojourning men from those regions reserved their patronage for women from the same native place.[97]

[91] Stockard, *Daughters of the Canton delta*; also Maria Jaschok, *Concubines and bondservants: The social history of a Chinese custom* (London, 1988); Rubie Watson, "Wives, concubines, and maids: Servitude and kinship in the Hong Kong region, 1900–1940," *Marriage and inequality in Chinese society*, ed. Rubie S. Watson and Patricia Buckley Ebrey (Berkeley, 1991).

[92] Helen F. Siu, "Where were the women? Rethinking marriage resistance and regional culture in South China," *Late Imperial China*, 11, No. 2 (Dec. 1990), pp. 32–62.

[93] James H. Cole, *Shaohsing: Competition and cooperation in nineteenth-century China* (Tucson, 1986), esp. pp. 111–29, where Cole traces the rise of clerks from Shao-hsing from the late Ming onward.

[94] T'ien Ju-k'ang, *Male anxiety and female chastity: A comparative study of Chinese ethical values in Ming-Ch'ing times* (Leiden, 1988).

[95] S. T. Leong, *Migration and ethnicity in Chinese history: Hakkas, Pengmin, and their neighbors*, ed. Tim Wright (Stanford, 1997).

[96] G. William Skinner, "Mobility strategies in late imperial China: A regional systems analysis," in *Economic systems*, Vol. 1 of *Regional analysis*, ed. Carol A. Smith (New York, 1976), pp. 352–3. Comments of one official distressed by the sight of women working in the fields are translated in Mann, *Precious records*, pp. 163–4.

[97] Gail Hershatter, *Dangerous pleasures: Prostitution and modernity in twentieth-century Shanghai* (Berkeley, 1997), pp. 53–6.

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Some evidence points to local customs that enabled individuals or groups to escape family life entirely, such as the "cradle of monks" in northern Kiangsu where parents prepared their sons for celibate life in the monasteries, or the counties of North China where lower-class parents castrated little boys and presented them for service as eunuchs at the court.[98] Although marriage for women was virtually universal, in at least one part of the Canton delta a woman could decline marriage by dressing her own hair as if she were a married woman, in a formal ritual that was recognized in the community, and by seeking employment away from home and sending remittances to her natal family.[99] Homosexual bonds between men, celebrated in fiction and drama, were an accepted part of elite life in many circles, especially in Kiangnan, despite new laws introduced in the early Ch'ing period to penalize homosexual rape and to stigmatize persons charged in court with homosexual acts.[100]

The imperial state touted a family ideal for all commoner households, propounded through the Sacred Edict and through statecraft programs to transform the local customs of the countryside and bring them into line with Confucian norms.[101] These programs included an elaborate system of temples and memorial arches, constructed with endowments from the government, honoring men recognized for their filial piety (*hsiao*) and women for moral purity (*chieh*). In its extreme form, female purity required suicide on the part of women threatened with rape, or lifelong celibacy for a wife whose husband predeceased her.[102] The ideal joint family envisioned in these imperial programs was patrilineal and patrilocal, comprising at least three generations: a married couple, their married son(s) and the sons' wives, and their grandchildren, including all grandsons (with wives and offspring, if married). Unmarried daughters and unmarried granddaughters were part of this family only until they reached marriageable age. The normative joint family had no place for spinsters. Rituals honoring the ancestors, together with mourning rites, continually redefined the hierarchical relationships of generation, age, and sex that shifted as the joint family expanded and contracted through the domestic cycle. In its ideal form, a family thus imagined could expand to

[98] Skinner, "Mobility strategies in late imperial China," pp. 352–3.

[99] Stockard, *Daughters of the Canton delta*, pp. 70–89. Stockard, who calls such women "sworn spinsters," discounts the suggestion in some other sources that sworn spinsters lived as lesbians. See, for example, Andrea Sankar, "Sisters and brothers, lovers and enemies: Marriage resistance in Southern Kwangtung," *Journal of Homosexuality*, 11, Nos. 3–4 (1985), pp. 69–85.

[100] Hinsch, *Passions of the cut sleeve*, pp. 139–61, and literature cited therein.

[101] Victor Mair, "Language and ideology in the written popularizations of the *Sacred Edict*," in *Popular culture in late imperial China*, ed. David Johnson, Andrew J. Nathan, and Evelyn S. Rawski (Berkeley, 1985), pp. 325–59.

[102] Elvin, "Female virtue and the state."

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encompass four or even the much-touted "five generations under one roof (*wu shih i t'ang*).[103]

In elite families, marriage was early – the mean age at marriage for women who became first wives in the eighteenth century being just under eighteen at the beginning of the century, and falling nearly to seventeen by 1800.[104] For women, for whom marriage was universal, nuptiality coincided with what medical experts judged to be the optimal time for childbearing: i.e., within ten years following puberty. Age at marriage for men varied much more widely, with family circumstance, and included the prospect of permanent bachelorhood for the poor.[105] Young married couples generally lived with the groom's parents as dependents. Because parents arranged their children's marriages, and because strict customs secluded respectable young women of marriageable age, a go-between was engaged to obtain and convey information to and from families attempting to negotiate a marriage. The notoriety of unscrupulous go-betweens accounts for the common practice in elite families of betrothing a young child – even an infant – to the child of a friend, then waiting years to perform the actual marriage rituals. These two basic features of early Ch'ing family life – arranged marriage and patrilocal residence – supplied plots in fiction and drama, tropes in women's poetry, and polemics in elite writings on the family, which focus by turns on the suffering of lonely brides or the humiliation of hen-pecked husbands.

Compounding the stress of marital arrangements for both husbands and wives was the question of concubinage. In elite families, a wife's failure to produce a male heir was generally the occasion for the acquisition of a

[103] On family cycles, see Maurice Freedman, "The Chinese domestic family: Models," in *The study of Chinese society: Essays by Maurice Freedman*, ed. G. William Skinner (Stanford, 1979), pp. 235–9. Freedman argued that whereas the ideal joint family shaped the behavior of people of all classes, the configuration of real families was more or less class-linked, with expanded forms associated with the households of the rich, and contracted forms dominating the households of the poor. Freedman's observations about the family cycle underscore the difficulty of drawing conclusions about household composition or family size based on numerical data from a single moment in time. For an example of the difficulties, see Hsü T'an, "Ch'ing-tai Shan-tung ti chia-t'ing kuei-mo yü chieh-kou" (Pattern and structure in Shantung households during the Ch'ing dynasty), *Ch'ing shih yen-chiu t'ung-hsün*, 4 (1987), pp. 7–13. Hsü identifies a decline in average household size in Shantung province from the mid-Ming to the early Ch'ing period, from an average of eight to as few as five members. This he attributes to increased rates of family division or partition of former joint households. The same data could represent an increased rate of household formation among the upwardly mobile.

[104] Telford, "Family and state in Qing China," p. 926. In Ch'ing times, the legitimate age for marriage was 16 *sui* for boys, 14 for girls. Most of the early Ch'ing emperors married at an especially young age: Shun-chih at 14, K'ang-hsi at 12, Yung-cheng at 13; the exception, Ch'ien-lung, married relatively late (for an emperor) at 17. See Feng Erh-k'ang, "Ch'ing-tai ti hun-yin chih-tu yü fu-nü ti shehui ti-wei shu-lun," in *Ch'ing-shih yen-chiu chi*, ed. Chung-kuo jen-min ta-hsüeh Ch'ing-shih yen-chiu-so (Peking, 1986), p. 308.

[105] Charlotte Furth, "From birth to birth: the growing body in Chinese medicine," in *Chinese views of childhood*, ed. Anne Behnke Kinney (Honolulu, 1995), pp. 181–2.

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concubine, sometimes selected by the wife herself. Since a concubine's ritual and social status was markedly lower than that of a wife, conflicts between wives and concubines – usually blamed on the wife's "jealousy" – were expected.[106] Fiction of the eighteenth century offered a striking resolution of these conflicts in escapist novels called "scholar-beauty romances" where a handsome scholarly hero meets his match in the person of a beautiful and talented young woman who is never jealous.[107] Female jealousy, usually focused on concubines, is a sufficiently prominent theme in Ming and Ch'ing fiction to obscure the fact that only a small proportion of Chinese families could afford to support a concubine.[108] In elite families a biography, memoir, or epitaph for an exemplary wife would always stress her magnanimity and kindness toward her husband's concubine. Although such records are understandably difficult to evaluate, the fact that a wife enjoyed a formal ritual status and high social rank (marriages being arranged based on "matching doors" of families with comparable social status), as compared to a concubine, left power within the family securely in the hands of the wife – the plots of popular novels notwithstanding. The upper-class wife's power over the household budget, and her legal status as mother to all of her husband's children, made it difficult, if not impossible, for a concubine to rival her influence.[109]

The commoner families portrayed in late Ming and early Ch'ing fiction – petty urbanites employed in trade, service, or artisanal jobs – appear to share with their social betters the common values and practices shaped by the joint family system. Thus, for example, a son's obligation to his parents and a daughter-in-law's obligations to her husband's parents together constituted the bases of filial piety (*hsiao*), a theme running through fictional and nonfictional portrayals of family life. Similarly, the rituals required for weddings, burials, and ancestor worship display a marked uniformity across lines of status and region.[110]

[106] Watson, "Wives, concubines, and maids," esp. p. 238.

[107] Wu Chien-kuo, "Ts'ung Ming Ch'ing hsiao-shuo k'an wen-jen ti chia-t'ing sheng-huo yü jen-ko wei-chi," *Hua-tung shih-fan ta-hsüeh hsüeh-pao*, 2 (1992), pp. 68–76; Yenna Wu, *The Chinese virago: A literary theme* (Cambridge, Mass., 1995); McMahon, *Misers, shrews, and polygamists*.

[108] There are no reliable quantitative data on the incidence of concubinage in the early Ch'ing period. Rubie Watson's review of inconclusive and incomplete data on the incidence of concubinage cites figures ranging from 11 percent (of the families of high school and college students surveyed in the 1930s) to about 5 percent of farming families owning over 100 mou in the 1920s. See Watson, "Wives, concubines, and maids," pp. 237–8. Such figures underscore the fact that concubines were a luxury few families could afford.

[109] Wifely prerogatives in the Chinese family system, which was not a polygymous system (concubines did not enjoy wifely status, and no man could legitimately have more than one wife at a time), are discussed in Bray, *Technology and gender*, pp. 352–4.

[110] Ebrey, "Women, marriage, and the family in Chinese history," pp. 197–223.

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Homosociability and male sojourning

Alongside these increasingly visible commoner households emerged other structures for gender relations. These structures were grounded not in kin relations nor, often, in residential units. Instead, they developed as patterns of sociability that separated and segregated men and women, drawing them increasingly into same-sex interactions and giving rise to new networks and bonds that were gender-based rather than kin-based. These patterns emerged most clearly in the commercial heartland of the realm, the Kiangnan region, and in core areas elsewhere, especially in the Canton delta. They result directly from the rise in male sojourning during this period.[111]

No one studying the centuries from 1600 to 1800 can fail to be struck by the visibility of new structures of homosociability. The most visible are male-centered guilds and native place associations; *mu-fu* (professional or scholarly circles of advisors or consultants attached to or employed by an official patron); and secret societies or brotherhoods. Together these structures facilitated the physical mobility of men from many different classes. In general, these new organizations were symptoms or outcomes of other economic changes. In the case of guilds and native place associations, these changes involved the growth of domestic trade and the resulting need for interregional brokerage and credit networks. The growth of the *mu-fu* system is often attributed to bottlenecks in the employment structure, especially to the declining opportunities for official appointment and the rising number of qualified candidates seeking office through the civil examination system. Finally, the expansion of secret societies and brotherhoods was associated with transport networks and mining operations relying on conscripted or hired unskilled labor, with forced or voluntary migration into borderlands and mountainous recesses, and with the growth of an urban underclass of migratory workers.

The commercial economy of the late Ming period, stimulated by foreign, coastal, and interregional trade, supported a massive labor force of skilled artisans and traders in continual search of work and profit. The great numbers of these primarily male sojourners are well documented in late Ming records, which describe, for example, the thousands of porcelain artisans residing in

[111] The relationship between sojourning and gender systems in Hakka populations is discussed in Leong, *Migration and ethnicity in Chinese history*; see the introduction by G. William Skinner, pp. 9–12. Overseas sojourning in the Southeast Coast and Lingnan regions was associated with distinctive gender systems that included the traffic in female maids, or *mui jai*. In some of these areas, high rates of female infanticide and of female suicide were also reported. See Jaschok, *Concubines and bondservants*; Bernice J. Lee, "Female infanticide in China," *Women in China: Current directions in historical scholarship*, ed. Richard W. Guisso and Stanley Johannesen (Youngstown, N.Y., 1981), pp. 163–78; and T'ien, *Male anxiety and female chastity*.

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Ching-te-chen, most of whom came from Tu-chiang, and the itinerant craftsmen of Soochow lined up along the various bridges over the Grand Canal, seeking jobs as silk weavers.[112] Land-poor areas in Shansi, Anhwei, Kiangsu, and Fukien became famous for exporting human capital, especially traders.[113]

Probably the best studied example of this phenomenon and its impact on family life is the merchant population of Hui-chou prefecture, Anhwei province, home of the great salt merchant families of the early Ch'ing period.[114] Hui-chou was known for its immense joint families spanning the proverbial five generations, and known as well for the corporate lineages that managed land and other investments, including a vast labor force of bondservants, while their merchant kinsmen sojourned abroad. In that sense, Hui-chou merchants fostered ideologies and practices common to all centers where sojourning was prevalent in the early Ch'ing period. That is, they supported honor for chaste widows and faithful wives at home, even as they patronized the lavish courtesan quarters of Yangchow, Nanking, and elsewhere on their travels.[115] Hui-chou merchants were known to leave home for up to thirty years – so long that one man returning for a grandson's wedding was not recognized by his own son. A memoir recalls that a new bride whose husband left home on business three months after their wedding was forced to sell her embroidery to support herself. With her savings, she purchased a pearl for each year of his absence. By the time of his return, she had been dead for three years and the pearls in her personal chest numbered more than twenty.[116] Such stories point not only to the distaff side of the sojourner's life, but to its uncertainties as well. Failure, pride, and debt kept many young men on the road so long they despaired of returning, while wives waited vainly for news or remittances, falling back on their own industry to support themselves and, often, dependent in-laws and children. Of course, at the other end of the social spectrum, in some Hui-chou families wives acted as managers of bondservant labor on agricultural estates.[117] Marriage within the

[112] See Albert Chan, *The glory and fall of the Ming dynasty* (Norman, 1982), pp. 82–3.

[113] Skinner, "Mobility strategies in late imperial China," pp. 327–64.

[114] Ping-ti Ho, "The salt merchants of Yang-chou: A study of commercial capitalism in eighteenth-century China," *HJAS*, 17, Nos. 1–2 (June 1954), pp. 130–68. On Hui-chou's local history, see Harriet T. Zurndorfer, *Change and continuity in Chinese local history: The development of Hui-chou prefecture, 800 to 1800* (Leiden, 1989), and literature cited therein. See also Yeh Hsien-en, *Ming-Ch'ing Hui-chou nung-ts'un she-hui yü tien-p'u chih* (Hofei, 1983).

[115] T'ang Li-hsing, "Ming-Ch'ing Hui-chou ti chia-t'ing yü tsung-tsu chieh-kou," *Li-shih yen-chiu*, 1 (1991), p. 158.

[116] Ibid., p. 154. T'ang points to other features of Hui-chou family life affected by trade and sojourning. He argues, for instance, that early household division in Hui-chou forestalled conflict between brothers while enabling the same brothers to establish themselves successfully as business partners: p. 156.

[117] Oyama Masaaki, "Large landownership in the Kiangnan delta region during the late Ming-early Qing period," *State and society in China: Japanese perspectives on Ming-Qing social and economic history*, ed. and trans. Linda Grove and Christian Daniels (Tokyo, 1984), pp. 107–8.

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bondservant population was the charge of the master and his wife, who provided their own serving girls as brides for male bondservants, together with housing and land to support a family.[118]

Pioneering entrepreneurs from Hui-chou and elsewhere wrote the earliest route books to guide their fellow traders through strange provinces and unfamiliar landscapes. Route books published beginning with the *I-t'ung lu-ch'eng t'u-chih* (*The comprehensive illustrated route book*), first printed in 1570,[119] reveal the extensive wanderings of working and trading people who left the farm for the towns or cities where jobs and opportunity beckoned.[120] The overwhelming majority of these sojourners were men, although the route books of the seventeenth century regularly direct readers to entertainment quarters where women offered music, dance, and sexual services. This is because the norms governing family life, and embraced by household heads as they aspired to establish themselves according to Confucian models, required that respectable daughters – marriageable girls – be sequestered or at least kept at home to work.[121] Novels and short stories feature seductive courtesans and wayward wives as cautionary examples of violated moral boundaries.[122]

On one level, commoner merchants, ordinary tradesmen, and unskilled laborers were joining the ranks of elite sojourners whose wanderings had long been an established part of life among highly educated families. In the Ming and Ch'ing periods, upper-class men expected to travel abroad to obtain an education and to sit for the civil service examinations. The examination system itself, and the subsequent deployment of successful examinees who went on to hold office, propelled would-be officials through the hierarchy of administrative central places, from the county to the prefectural seat, and thence to the provincial capital and ultimately the imperial city, Peking. From there, degree and official appointment in hand, civil servants moved back out of the capital and down through the administrative hierarchy. A man assigned to a county post, the lowest level of such appointments, was likely to land far away from his own native place and from close relatives on

[118] Ibid., p. 123.

[119] Timothy Brook, *Geographical sources of Ming-Qing history*, Michigan Monographs in Chinese Studies, 58 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, Center for Chinese Studies, 1988), p. 38, notes that this is the earliest authoritative route book. It listed 158 routes and was reprinted several times. A 1635 edition added lists of local products by county to the information in the original guide. Brook links the expanded coverage and audience of route books inaugurated by this publication to the expansion of woodblock printing and commercial publishing in the same period: pp. 5–8.

[120] Chan, *The glory and fall of the Ming dynasty*, pp. 84–5; see also Brook, *Geographical sources of Ming-Qing history*, pp. 15–16.

[121] G. William Skinner, "Family systems and demographic processes," in David I. Kertzer and Tom Fricke, eds., *Anthropological demography: Toward a new synthesis* (Chicago, 1997), pp. 78–82.

[122] See Roy, trans., *Chin p'ing mei*.

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whom he might call for support.[123] Literati embarking on official careers tried to treat these forced sojournings as travel opportunities, making the most of their time on the road to savor the famous sites and ancient ruins that had already been mapped by centuries of travel writers, and taking off on long excursions during periods when official business was not pressing or, more commonly, when they were unemployed.[124]

For the petty merchants, laborers, and artisans who flocked to the road in the late Ming and early Ch'ing period, of course, sojourning represented something less pleasurable and more threatening. Although the guidebooks published to help them portrayed their labors as excursions in self-cultivation, the cautionary tone of most travelers' guides shows that sojourning, especially to make money, was a lonely, dangerous, and wearing experience. Inns offering room and board were run by unscrupulous con artists, roads were clogged with hangers-on and tricksters eager to prey on unsuspecting salesmen, and highwaymen and bandits made a career out of raiding full purses.[125]

Route books with detailed information on preferred land and water routes began to appear in great numbers with the late Ming commercial revolution, part of what Timothy Brook has described as the "gradual process of improving the technical conditions for commodity circulation from the sixteenth century forward."[126] By the end of the seventeenth century, cotton and silk fabrics for ordinary consumers were pouring out of markets that served the production centers of Sungkiang, Soochow, and Hangchow. Widespread use

[123] See Ch'ü T'ung-tsu, *Local government in China under the Ch'ing* (Cambridge, Mass., 1962), pp. 21–2. According to the principles of "avoidance" (*hui-pi*), no local official was allowed to hold office in his native province or in a neighboring province within 500 *li* of his hometown. There was also a law of avoidance prohibiting members of the same descent group, or even their maternal relatives, from serving in the same province. Thus, for example, "a magistrate could not hold office in the same province as his grandfather, grandson, father, son, father's brother, or brothers; nor could he serve in the same province as his paternal first cousin or any maternal relative who was included in the category 'to be avoided,'" p. 22. On sojourner mobility strategies and spatial integration, see Skinner, "Mobility strategies," esp. p. 361. Skinner stresses that it was precisely this situation that enabled local parapolitical leaders to forge effective links with the imperial bureaucracy.

[124] See Richard E. Strassberg, trans., annot., and introduction, *Inscribed landscapes: Travel writing from imperial China* (Berkeley, 1994). Strassberg notes on p. 56 that by the end of the Sung period (the late thirteenth century), the primary genres for travel writing had been well defined. Travelers wrote to express their individuality, their appreciation of nature, their alienation from society, their quest for fulfillment or self-cultivation, their awareness and connection to the past and its great writers – connected by a common experience of place. "Travel ten thousand *li*" was the complement to "read ten thousand books" – the mark of true learning. See also the wonderful discussion of the view, or "prospect" in Brook, *Geographical sources of Ming-Qing history*, pp. 59–60.

[125] See Richard John Lufrano, *Honorable merchants: Commerce and self-cultivation in late imperial China* (Honolulu, 1997). Brook, *Geographical sources of Ming-Qing history*, pp. 55–9, elaborates on the meanings of travel as self-cultivation for aesthetes, intellectuals, and scholars.

[126] Brook, *Geographical sources of Ming-Qing history*, lists and describes 57 of these books; he notes that they became increasingly specialized in the Ch'ing period: p. 12.

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of bills of exchange (*hui-p'iao*) backed by the credit of Huichou merchants guaranteed transactions between Kiangnan wholesalers and buyers in the immense consumer market of Peking.[127] Much of this commodity production took place in households where female and child labor could be put to efficient use. Local periodic markets, which proliferated in the hinterlands of commercial cities, enabled ordinary peasant families to procure raw materials and sell finished goods directly, either through brokers who came to their homes – a significant advantage for women with bound feet – or at market towns within a day's walking distance. This was especially true in Kiangnan, where commercial agriculture and proto-industrial production were most developed. Markets in Kiangnan's Soochow-Sungkiang area sold everything for cotton textile production, from brand name looms and spinning wheels to spindles, while those near Hangchow, Chia-ting, and Hu-chou specialized in sericulture supplies, from silkworms and cocoons to mulberry saplings and leaves.[128]

This rural commercial economy absorbed unskilled male laborers, who readily found long-term jobs on farms and in shops. The demand for farm labor drove up wages and may also have created improved working conditions, according to contracts specifying the quality and quantity of meals and lodging as well as pay rates for long-term workers. Though similarly detailed evidence for female labor is lacking, it seems likely that the rising demand for male farmhands was linked to the gradual withdrawal of women from field labor in favor of higher-paying work in sericulture and cotton cloth and thread production. As the editors of the mammoth encyclopedia *Ku-chin t'u-shu chi-ch'eng* remarked, "Farmers in Wu [Soochow] are experts in agriculture: 'the men plough and their wives bring them food.' When they cannot meet their labor needs, they hire hands to work for them on a yearly or a monthly basis."[129] Records from legal cases show that these farmhands, along with long-term laborers in other sectors of the economy – servants, cooks, store clerks, water carriers, sedan chair bearers – were all beneficiaries of early Ch'ing laws that removed the stigma of servile status from long-term contract

[127] See Huang Chien-hui, "Ch'ing-ch'u shang yung hui-p'iao yü shang-p'in ching-chi ti fa-chan" (Merchant bills of exchange and the development of a commodity economy in the early Ch'ing period), *Wen hsien*, 1 (1987), pp. 3–16.

[128] Fang Hsing, "Ch'ing-tai ch'ien-ch'i nung-ts'un shih-ch'ang ti fa-chan," *Li-shih yen-chiu*, 6 (1987), pp. 78–93. See also Shiba, "Ningpo and its hinterland."

[129] Fang Hsing, "Ch'ing-tai ch'ien-ch'i nung-ts'un," pp. 90–1, citation on p. 90. The phrase in quotation marks is an allusion to a poem in the classic Book of Odes, the title poem in the odes from the state of Pin. See Mao Ode 154, translated in James Legge, *The She king*, Vol. 4 of his *The Chinese classics: With a translation, critical and exegetical notes, prolegomena, and copious indexes*, 5 Vols. (Oxford, 1893–95; rpt. Taipei, 1991), pp. 226–7. The point of the allusion is that a respectable wife would never be seen working in the fields; she appears there only to serve her husband his meals. Fang notes also that long-term laborers were hired to assist in sericulture.

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workers, a change which also points to the increasing respectability and pervasiveness of these sojourning patterns.[130] Less clear are the working conditions of other long-term laborers, especially miners, soldiers, and the coolies who hauled loads or pulled boats on the Grand Canal. Most such workers belonged to the great mass of never-married single men whose harsh and often brief lives were cushioned only by membership in sworn brotherhoods, gangs, and secret societies where bosses gave protection in exchange for abject loyalty.[131]

Male sojourners of all classes supplied the customers for the pleasure quarters famed in late Ming times, especially Nanking's Pan-ch'iao district. By the mid-Ch'ing period, a "courtesan culture" flourished in the cities of Yangchow, Nanking, Soochow, and Hangchow, where brothels, fancy boats, and secluded villas offered female entertainment to suit the purse of every sojourner. Female entertainment and sex work, and domestic service as maids, drew women out of the home to work in significant numbers, though virtually all were eventually absorbed into the marriage market. At the same time, women from upwardly mobile families were finding plenty of ways to make money while staying at home. Domestic markets for cotton homespun yarn and woven cloth, together with aggressive government campaigns promoting models of Confucian womanhood that valorized women's proto-industrial labor, invited commoner parents to strategize on two fronts at once: keeping a daughter respectably chaste for a better marriage, while "shaking the money tree" as long as she remained unwed. A daughter working at spindle and loom, moreover, could achieve optimal productivity while keeping her feet tightly bound, a significant advantage on the marriage market. Although evidence is lacking, historians suspect that the spread of proto-industrial spinning and weaving in the countryside was accompanied by the spread of footbinding beyond the elite and residents of towns and cities, into peasant families in rural areas.[132]

Respectable women, bound feet or no, managed to get out and about for periodic outings to pilgrimage sites, a fact best known to historians because

[130] After 1788, as a result of statutes and rulings in 1727 and 1742, persons identified as long-term contract workers were treated as respectable commoners under the law. Prior to that time, their status was often confused with that of slaves or other servile persons, who by law were ranked as pariahs and were accordingly subject to harsher penalties than were ordinary commoners. See Huang Mien-t'ang, "Ch'ing-tai 'ku-kung jen' wen-t'i k'ao-shih," *She-hui k'o-hsüeh chan-hsien*, 1 (1988), pp. 136–43.

[131] Ted A. Telford, "Covariates of men's age at first marriage: The historical demography of Chinese lineages," *Population Studies*, 46 (1992), pp. 19–35, explains the demographics of the mass of unmarried young males at the bottom of the late imperial Chinese population. In some cases, these organizations acquired a life of their own as predatory bands or subversive groups seeking the overthrow of the government. David Ownby examines the regional and economic context of the rise of secret societies from the middle of the eighteenth century, in *Brotherhoods and secret societies in early and mid-Qing China: The formation of a tradition* (Stanford, 1996). See also David E. Kelley, "Temples and tribute fleets: The Luo sect and boatmen's associations in the eighteenth century," *Modern China*, 8, No. 3 (1982), pp. 361–91.

[132] Mann, *Precious records*, pp. 167–8.

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these pious excursions provoked loud complaints from officials and scholars.[133] In Kiangnan, female pilgrims journeyed to the shrines of the Bodhisattva Kuan-yin; in North China, temple fairs drew women to the cults of local female deities. Prayers and incense offerings were vital parts of these religious excursions, but commerce and its attendant distractions – especially opera and other entertainments – clearly figured in the lure of pilgrimage. The truly devout might have confined their spending to satchels, incense sticks, prayer blocks, and perhaps water for the journey, but North China's temple fairs (*miao-hui*) were dominated by commercial vendors unabashedly selling "things women always need." As the editors of one Ch'ien-lung gazetteer complained, "Taking advantage of the opera performances, men and women [at these fairs] intermingle as if they were mad."[134] Even though commerce appears to have been less important to female pilgrimage in Kiangnan, where temple fairs were no longer a major site for trade, other objectionable practices there worried local officials, especially self-immolation by pilgrims who set fire to parts of the body in ecstatic ritual displays of devotion.[135] The Bodhisattva Kuan-yin, who was often the inspiration for these rites, had been incorporated into Confucian normative discourse as a pure and all-merciful mother, and for that reason did not threaten the order of the family system. By contrast, the most prominent female deity in North China's temple fairs was Pi-hsia Yüan-chün, whose primary incarnation as a beautiful and potentially disruptive daughter-in-law made her presence at temple fairs more problematic.[136] In either case, pilgrimage offered women in the commercialized economy opportunities to travel, to indulge in the sensory pleasures of the marketplace, and even to display their own critiques of desire and authority while maintaining their respectable formal status as homebound wives and daughters.

The impact of male sojourning on domestic life and family relations

Male sojourning patterns are just one aspect of a complex of closely linked changes in the home and in family life in the empire's leading economic centers. These changes include not only the attention paid to the fine arts of

[133] Ibid., pp. 194–205.

[134] Chao Shih-yü, "Ming Ch'ing shih-ch'i hua-pei miao-hui yen-chiu" (Temple fairs in North China during the Ming and Ch'ing period), *Li-shih yen-chiu*, 5 (1992), pp. 118–30, quotations on p. 125 and p. 124.

[135] James A. Benn, "Where text meets flesh: Burning the body as an apocryphal practice in Chinese Buddhism," *History of Religions*, 37, No. 4 (May 1998), pp. 295–318.

[136] Kenneth Pomeranz, "Power, gender, and pluralism in the cult of the Goddess of Taishan," *Culture and state in Chinese history: Conventions, accommodations, and critiques*, ed. Theodore Huters, R. Bin Wong, and Pauline Yu (Stanford, 1997), pp. 182–204.

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male friendship,[137] but also the increasing importance attached to wifely morality, the spread of a commoner family ideal, the commercialization of household proto-industry, the prominence of managerial skills in celebrations of "wise mothers and good wives," and the discourses on desire and material things. All of these can be pieced together to analyze shifts in gender relations during the early Ch'ing period.

Wifely morality and the spread of the commoner family ideal

New opportunities for women's employment in the home raised ordinary peasant couples' awareness of the potential uses of the productive and reproductive powers of their daughters. One of the best measures we have for this is Lü K'un's (1536–1618) enthusiastic effort to meet the demands of a reading public eager to find out how to raise a proper young woman. Lü's works for this "new audience" included: *Kuei chieh* (*Precepts for women*), in thirty-seven easy-to-memorize verses; *Kuei-fan t'u-shuo* (*Illustrated regulations for the women's quarters*), a simplified and lavishly illustrated version of the early classic *Lieh-nü chuan*; and two songbooks for young girls.[138] Parts of this corpus were devoted to criticism of decadence, especially the profligate spending habits of wealthy women, whom Lü compared to prostitutes in their fancy jewelry.[139] And some of it was kept simple not necessarily for a female reading audience, but for the blind female beggars who entertained inside the cloistered apartments of the rich and who alone might be able to transmit (he thought) his moral messages.[140]

Lü K'un's didactic works for women were reprinted during his own lifetime, and they enjoyed another round of popularity in the first half of the Ch'ing period, when books on female behavior and morality became all the rage in educated households. The most widely used of these didactic books for women were various editions of the *Lieh-nü chuan*; a special collection called the *Nü ssu shu* (*Four Books for Women*) compiled and annotated in late Ming by Wang Hsiang and published early in the Ch'ing period;[141] and the instructions for women printed in Ch'en Hung-mou's *Wu-chung i-kuei* (*Five*

[137] This subject has yet to receive detailed scholarly attention. Exceptions are Norman A. Kutcher, "The fifth relationship: Dangerous friendships in the Confucian context," *American Historical Review*, 105, No. 5 (Dec. 2000), pp. 1615–29; also Joseph P. McDermott, "Friendship and its friends in the late Ming," *Family process and political process in modern Chinese history* (Taipei, 1992), Vol. 1, pp. 67–96; and the discussion of personal networks in the analysis of the Spring Purification circle in James M. Polachek's *The inner Opium War* (Cambridge, Mass., 1992), pp. 66–73.

[138] See Handlin, *Action in late Ming thought*, pp. 143–5; also Handlin, "New audience."

[139] Handlin, *Action in late Ming thought*, p. 148.

[140] Ibid., p. 149.

[141] This comprised Pan Chao's *Nü chieh*, along with the *Nü lun-yü* (Analects for women), the *Nei hsün* (Precepts for the inner quarters), and the *Nü-fan chieh-lu* (Concise account of basic regulations for women).

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Sets of Bequeathed Guidelines) titled "Chiao-nü i-kuei" ("Bequeathed guidelines for women's education").[142]

The wide availability and evident popularity of these books supply few clues about their impact on the behavior or consciousness of readers, but women's writings and the records of their deeds offer suggestive evidence. Even granting the heavy hand of implicit censorship and family pride that sifted what went into print from what should be silenced and forgotten, there are many signs that women took these moral messages so seriously that they became a kind of pathology, inciting young women to kill themselves at the height of their youth, and provoking male commentators to despair over the folly of excessive moralism.[143]

The discourse on wifely morality had its positive sides as well. This was partly due to the fact that wifely status and reproduction in families of means had been decoupled. That is to say, a woman married into another man's line as a wife was ensured of being "mother" to his children, whether or not she bore them herself. That Confucian imperative, combined with the ready availability of abortifacients and concubines for breeding, meant that a wife whose husband could acquire one or more concubines did not necessarily have to perform reproductive labor in order to gain the privileges and powers of wifely status, including the ability to manage the labor power and income produced by the other females in the household.[144] The immense power of the senior woman in a large, joint family compound might be enhanced, in other words, by freedom from reproductive labor.[145]

The commercialization of household production and wifely managerial skills

Two combined trends – the expansion of textile markets drawing on female household labor, and the growth of trade and occupational guilds in major cities – placed resources accumulating at the household level directly into the hands of senior women. That such women must be "omni-competent" (*tsui neng-kan*) went without saying. That every mother should rear her daughter

[142] A complete list of all such works from the earliest *Lieh-nü chuan* through the *Nü-jen ching*, printed in 1904, appears in Yamazaki Jun'ichi, *Kyōiku kara mita Chūgoku joseishi shiryō no kenkyū* (Tokyo, 1986), pp. 24–45. He lists a total of 146 works, of which 49 were published during the Ming and 52 during the Ch'ing (including many reprints and new editions of the classic *Lieh-nü chuan*). The assessment of the "most widely circulated" items is Yamazaki's; see p. 46.

[143] Wang Chung and Yü Cheng-hsieh were two of the most outspoken male critics of this anguished female moralism, attested in wrenching poems written by young women at the time. See Mann, *Precious records*, pp. 84–6, 115–16; also Yuasa Yukihiko, "Shindai ni okeru fujin kaihōron – reikyō to ningenteki shizen (Ch'ing discussion of the emancipation of women: Human nature and the teachings of the rites)," *Nihon Chūgoku gakkaihō*, 4 (March 1953), pp. 111–25; Paul S. Ropp, "The seeds of change: Reflections on the condition of women in the early and mid Ch'ing," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 2, No. 1 (1976), pp. 5–23.

[144] On wives as the mothers of concubines' children, see Bray, *Technology and gender*, pp. 351–68.

[145] Bray, *Technology and Gender*, pp. 326–34, describes the various methods used to regulate the menses. These, she notes, served equally well to induce abortion.

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for a future as a managed daughter-in-law and a managerial mother-in-law seems to have fed part of the craze for skill that preoccupied women of the Ch'ing period.[146]

Daughters of ordinary commoners discovered that learning to spin and weave, and even to embroider, opened up sources of income that flowed into the household regardless of the seasons. Moreover, girls who worked at home could escape the drudgery and backbreaking pain of farm labor, while their parents could point with pride to the fact that their unsullied daughters no longer labored side by side with men in the fields. The Ch'ing government was solidly behind these developments. Famous local officials wrote essays touting the virtues of "women's work" in the home, specifically spinning and weaving work, connecting female virtue to economic growth and rising peasant household income, not to mention tax revenues.[147]

As female labor productivity grew, the women who managed the family purse acquired more power in households where prosperity put a roof over three generations. The senior wife in a joint household found herself in the position of assigning a division of labor among her daughters and daughters-in-law, then collecting and redistributing the profits from that labor.[148] In the wealthiest households, the opportunity to expand the female labor force by hiring rafts of domestic servants gave senior women further power over the productive and reproductive labor of others, as the example of Wang Hsi-feng in *Dream of the Red Chamber* attests.[149]

Wives of shopkeepers and artisans employing male laborers and apprentices, by contrast, found themselves saddled with additional burdens, cooking for and sometimes supervising a large workforce made up mainly of males from outside the family. And wives left at home in the poorest areas were forced to replace their menfolk in family fields, the sole support of the young and old who remained behind.[150]

[146] On "begging for skill" at the Double Seven Festival, see Mann, *Precious records*, pp. 170–3.

[147] Ibid., pp. 143–77. Tax revenues would rise, it was argued, not from taxing looms or cloth, but from the security afforded farm households who could count on income in the slack off-season.

[148] In a fascinating analysis of peasant women's work in Honan province, Chao Ch'un showed that the mother-in-law in peasant families customarily allocated to each daughter-in-law several catties of cotton, from which she was free to produce as much as she could, for consumption and for productive capital, in the time she had free after performing her tasks for the larger household. Each daughter-in-law was responsible for clothing herself, her husband, and her children, after which she was free to accumulate surpluses at her own discretion. As Chao points out, this arrangement gave well-dowered brides an advantage, since they were usually freed from making any of their own clothing for some years. It also transformed the mother-in-law into a kind of capitalist manager. See Chao Ch'un, "Honan nung-ts'un fu-nü ti ching-chi sheng-huo" (The economic life of peasant women in Honan), *Tung-fang tsa-chih*, 33, No. 10 (1936), pp. 101–3.

[149] Ts'ao Hsüeh-ch'in and Kao O, *Hung lou meng*, 3 vols. (Peking, 1988); David Hawkes and John Minford, trans., *The story of the stone*, 5 vols. (New York, 1973–86).

[150] To what extent this occurred outside Hakka areas, where women retained their natural feet, is unclear from evidence I have seen thus far. On Hakka patterns of male sojourning, see G. William Skinner, "Introduction," in Leong, *Migration and ethnicity in Chinese history*, p. 9.

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For women at the bottom of a female hierarchy – whether maids or concubines or daughters-in-law – oppression derived not from interaction with men, but from domination by senior women. The legendary suffering of the new bride entering a strange family was compounded by the increasingly sex-segregated lifestyle that emerged in wealthy households located in highly commercialized areas linked to these trade and transport networks. In a household where a daughter-in-law's worth was calculated not simply on the basis of her reproductive success (bearing sons) but also on her productive skills (sewing, spinning, or weaving marketable goods), pressures to succeed were intense. A single daughter-in-law was saddled with the burden of caring for an entire household, including special attention to her exacting mother-in-law; a daughter-in-law who joined the wives of her husband's brothers found herself assigned the most demanding and distasteful household chores. A smart mother-in-law could take good advantage of the competition inherent in the relationship between her sons' wives, pitting one against the other to ensure that everyone worked as hard as possible. Anecdotal evidence shows how a mother-in-law would test the skill of a new daughter-in-law and humiliate her if she was found wanting. She might also intervene to control the relationship between her sojourning son and his wife, screening the gifts he might give her, for instance, or managing the frequency of conjugal visits.[151]

These kinds of patterns were visible in literati families as early as the Sung period, when patterns of male sojourning were already emerging.[152] What makes the early Ch'ing period unique is the degree of institutionalization of guilds and trade associations, spread of transportation and organizational networks that facilitated male sojourning on a long-term basis, and pervasive reach of commercialization into the households of ordinary commoners.

Expensive tastes and the good life: Discourses on desire

Although Craig Clunas suggests that the Ming obsession with "superfluous things" died down after the Ch'ing conquest,[153] it would be more accurate

[151] Evidence from the twentieth century (both published and collected in interviews) is the basis for this observation. See Susan Mann, "Women's work in the Ningbo area, 1900–1936," *Chinese history in economic perspective*, ed. Thomas G. Rawski and Lillian M. Li (Berkeley, 1992), pp. 243–70; Mann, "The women's work ethic in Chinese society before the modem era," paper presented at the International Academic Conference on Women's Studies and Development in the 21st Century, Peking University, June 20–23, 1998.

[152] Joseph P. McDermott, "The Chinese domestic bursar," *Ajia bunka kenkyū* (Nov. 1990), pp. 15–32; McDermott, "Family financial plans of the Southern Sung,"*Asia Major*, 3d ser., 4, No. 2 (1991), pp. 15–52.

[153] "Consumption went out of fashion [after 1644]; not that it ceased to exist, but it ceased to be a legitimate topic of concern for the elite, an object of discourse able to act as a site of power": Clunas, *Superfluous things*, p. 173. Perhaps Clunas alludes here strictly to the genre of writing about things. Certainly the connoisseurship and consumption of things attracted plenty of critical attention in the late eighteenth century.

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to say that if it died down, it promptly revived. Fine books, objects d'art, clothing, food, jewelry, and other kinds of material goods were – according to social critics, at least – indulged by consumers as never before during the eighteenth century. As Hung Liang-chi complained in an essay written in 1796, reflecting on a century of rising prosperity, "Among people these days, as appetites increase, bodies become more delicate; as cleverness becomes more evident, moral character is degenerating."[154] Concern with fine things shifted out of the hands of the elite and became the fashion among ordinary commoners, who displayed their wealth in a manner that the elite found most offensive. Ch'en Hung-mou's complaints about dowry processions and the detailed specification for "brand name" items in the dowry lists of self-conscious bride-giving families all point in this direction, as do drawings of elaborately furnished merchant homes from the turn of the century.[155] These impressions are reconfirmed by the rich descriptions of food, clothing, and furnishings in the novel *Dream of the Red Chamber*.[156] Paintings of "beauties" (*mei-jen*) originally associated with southern courtesan culture were enthusiastically welcomed at the Ch'ing court, where portraits of ladies seductively attired in Kiangnan dress graced the chambers of the mid-Ch'ing emperors, displaying for palace women and men alike the southern fashions celebrated in the novel.[157] Future research will undoubtedly show how the theater, especially costume and mask roles in opera, figured in the creative imagination and the formulations of these discourses on desire.[158]

[154] See Hung Liang-chi's essay "Body and character" (*hsing-chih*), in his *I-yen* ("Opinions"), no. 20.

[155] Ch'en's remarks are quoted in Susan Mann, "Grooming a daughter for marriage," *Marriage and inequality in Chinese society*, ed. Rubie S. Watson and Patricia B. Ebrey (Berkeley, 1991), p. 205. The dowry lists I refer to are early twentieth-century records from Ningpo, but "brand names" of commodities associated with a particular place or a particular artisanal enterprise can be dated from the late Ming to the middle of the Ch'ing period. See, for example, in Hangchow alone, *Chang Hsiao-ch'üan* (scissors); *T'ien-chu* (bamboo chopsticks); paper fans decorated with "persimmon paint" (this industry dates from the Sung period); "wooden fish" gongs for Buddhist devotionals. See *China industrial handbooks: Chekiang* (Shanghai, 1935), pp. 760–72. Elaborately furnished home interiors belonging to prosperous merchants are reproduced from Nakagawa Tadahide's *Shinzoku kibun* (Customs of the Ch'ing), dated 1799, in Bray, *Technology and gender*.

[156] See Teng Yün-hsiang, *Hung lou meng su t'an* (Peking, 1987). With respect to clothing in the Ming-Ch'ing transition, Teng notes that leather goods became much prized under the influence of Manchu tastes, pp. 166–9. At the same time, he stresses the acute awareness of "southern styles and tastes" (*nan-feng*) that fed the fashion frenzies at the Ch'ing court. See Cahill, "The three Changs."

[157] Wu Hung, "Beyond stereotypes: The Twelve Beauties in Qing court art and the *Dream of the Red Chamber*," *Writing women in late imperial China*, ed. Ellen Widmer and Kang-i Sun Chang (Stanford, 1997), pp. 306–65, esp. 329–47. See also Cahill, "The three Changs." Teng appears to use the phrase *nan feng* to describe the styles of custom and dress associated with the Chiangnan area by northerners at the court; he ignores its colloquial allusion to homoeroticism. See Teng, *Hung lou meng su*, pp. 461–73.

[158] See Sophie Volpp's study of Li Yu's "Silent Operas," which analyzes expressions of homosexual desire, in *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique*, 2, No. 1 (1994), pp. 113–32; see also Ann Waltner, "On not becoming a heroine: Lin Dai-yu and Cui Ying-ying," *Signs*, 15, No. 1 (1989), pp. 61–78.

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Longing – for love, companionship, comfort, beauty – laces the stories from real life as well as theater and fiction in the late imperial period. Nowhere is this more true than in the casebooks of local magistrates and the proceedings of county tribunals, recently unearthed and now analyzed by scholars of Chinese law. These court records dramatize, as nothing else can, the pressures and opportunities that emerged for women and men in the sojourning society of the Ch'ing period. Demographers have suggested that prospects for finding a wife improved, however slightly, for single males at the bottom of the class structure during the final quarter of the eighteenth century.[159] Beyond this statistical evidence is the anecdotal – stories, vignettes, and gossip – showing that wives left alone too long ran away with, or moved in with, lovers. Still fancier arrangements, including trumped-up "sale" of a destitute wife as a concubine,[160] show women scheming to advance their material and emotional interests with a cold pragmatism and the help of male friends. All of this was made possible by the relentless demand for eligible women in a hypergynous marriage market.

In this same marriage market, courtesans were a demographic luxury. Their inflated price, as young and often virgin females accessible only to those who could pay, transformed them into commodities – "superfluous things" – fancied by connoisseurs, who wrote detailed descriptions of their clothing, scent, makeup, room furnishings, and talents.[161] Ironically, these young girls, whose sexuality was policed by the patrons, matrons, or kinfolk who managed their finances, enjoyed less autonomy in the pursuit of desire than the lonely wives and widows described in local court records. As Paola Paderni emphasizes, magistrates passing judgment on the behavior of a woman whose husband had not provided for her support showed remarkable magnanimity in adjusting the letter of the law to suit the "human situation" of ordinary commoners.[162]

Ethnicity and cosmopolitanism: The civilizing process

Shared aspirations for the "good life" as defined by eighteenth-century consumer culture helped to shape common perceptions of "The Other" – people living in societies without resourceful mothers-in-law and dutiful daughters-

[159] Telford, "Covariates of men's age at marriage."

[160] See Paola Paderni, "Between formal and informal justice: A case of wife selling in eighteenth-century China," *Ming Qing yanjiu* (1996), pp. 139–56. Jonathan Spence's Woman Wang is probably the best known of the lonely wives who ran off with a lover, only to meet with death at the hands of her bitter husband. See Jonathan D. Spence, *The death of woman Wang* (New York, 1978), pp. 99–132.

[161] Mann, *Precious records*, pp. 121–42. See also Clunas, *Superfluous things*, p. 118.

[162] Paderni, "Between formal and informal justice."

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in-law, deprived of the moral and material benefits of Chinese civilization. One of the distinctive features of life under Ch'ing rule was a growing consciousness of ethnic and subethnic difference. This consciousness is hard to gauge directly, and its nature and extent are debated among scholars who have questioned ethnic identity.[163] For instance, although the Ch'ing Banner system formally distinguished Manchu from Mongol from Han-chün, as late as the mid-nineteenth century the Ch'ing government was transferring "meritorious" personnel from the latter two categories into the "Manchu" registers.[164] Yung-cheng policies aimed at "recovering tribal lands and transforming them into regular bureaucratic units" (*kai-t'u kuei-liu*) in the borderlands, together with other aggressive civilizing missions that extended the hegemony of the imperial center into the periphery, suggest a self-consciousness of ethnic categories with politically strategic implications.[165]

Court paintings of the Ch'ing period to 1800 show strong evidence of regional and what we might consider subethnic differences. They also reveal an openness to outside influence. Court painters experimented with European techniques under the tutelage of the Italian painter Giuseppe Castiglione (1688–1768), who painted and taught at the court during the reign of three emperors (K'ang-hsi, Yung-cheng, and Ch'ien-lung) under the Chinese name Lang Shih-ning.[166] For example, in the 1760s the Ch'ien-lung emperor commissioned one hundred portraits of his bodyguards, inscribing half of these with his own calligraphy, and displaying them prominently in the palace hall where he hosted state banquets and visiting foreign dignitaries. These portraits, bristling with arrows and swords and incorporating Western techniques such as shaded modeling, sent a dramatic statement about the Manchus' warrior heritage as well as the cosmopolitanism of the court taste.[167] Other court paintings of "beautiful women" (*mei-jen*), a genre particularly favored by the Manchus,[168] display similar Western influences (efforts to utilize vanishing-point perspective, for instance), while giving us clues about

[163] Rawski, "Presidential address," p. 840.

[164] Ibid., citing Pamela K. Crossley, "*Manzhou yuanliu kao* and the Formalization of the Manchu Heritage," *JAS*, 46, No. 4 (Nov. 1987), p. 779.

[165] Rawski, "Presidential address"; Fletcher, "Ch'ing Inner Asia c. 1800"; and various studies in Stevan Harrell, ed., *Cultural encounters on China's ethnic frontiers* (Seattle, 1995), esp. Norma Diamond, "Defining the Miao: Ming, Qing, and Contemporary Views," pp. 99–106.

[166] Richard Vinograd, remarking on Castiglione's influence, notes "a certain fascination with exotic costumes and styles" in the painting of the Ch'ien-lung court, *Boundaries of the self: Chinese portraits, 1600–1900* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 71.

[167] See Alice R. M. Hyland, *Deities, emperors, ladies and literati: Figure painting of the Ming and Ch'ing dynasties* (Birmingham, Ala., 1987), pp. 69–75. See p. 74 for a reproduction of one example, "Portrait of Hu Er Cha A, Imperial Bodyguard of the First Rank," datable to 1760, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Dillon Fund Gift (1986.206).

[168] See Wu Hung, "Beyond stereotypes," p. 330.

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the tastes and sensibilities of the men and women at the court itself, including a passion for the fashion of the Han Chinese women of the south.[169]

By contrast with the ideals of womanhood offered at the core of the polity, the borderlands provided evidence of bizarre, sometimes titillating, but definitely non-Han sexual practices and kin relations. These practices, which were made known to upper-class readers through the chronicles of Chinese travelers and officials like Yen Ju-i,[170] and through earlier ethnographic accounts published during the Yüan and Ming periods, created a new consciousness among upper-class Chinese women, who saw themselves as embodiments of a "civilized" society, displaying Confucian morality along with literary accomplishment. A story of a filial girl, anthologized in Wan-yen Yün Chu's *Precious Record of the Women's Chambers*, dramatizes the relationship between Confucian civilizing influence and proper gender roles:

The Story of the Wife of Ts'ui Huan, née Ou

The wife of Ts'ui Huan, née Ou, came from the family of the tribal chieftains of Ssu-en [Kwangsi province]. In her tribe it was the custom that when a son or a daughter reached one year of age, he or she was given a silver necklace to wear. The necklace was called a "fate necklace" (*ming chüan*), and if it ever broke, this meant the wearer would soon die. When her mother-in-law became ill, Ou took a vow before the gods, broke her necklace, and sold it to obtain medicine for her mother. When someone tried to stop her, she said "If my mother-in-law dies, how can I go on living?" Her mother-in-law recovered, and she suffered no ill effect.[171]

This story, which draws a pointed contrast between the tribal superstition and the humane Confucian ethic, offers a kind of salvation to the object of the civilizing process – a benighted victim becomes a dutiful daughter-in-law dispensing the healing arts of literati medicine.

In the case of Yün Chu, it would not be difficult to argue that her own socialization as an upper-class Manchu wife was responsible for her Han chauvinist missionizing. The bloody and costly Miao rebellion at the end of the eighteenth century could only have impressed on her and others like her the importance of civilizing minority peoples as quickly as possible. In any case, what must be stressed here is the broad impact of larger patterns of sociability and mobility in the Ch'ing period – patterns that broadened people's awareness of the diversity and difference within the realm, while building a growing self-conscious solidarity based on networks of homosociability and on shared investments in the market economy.

[169] Cahill, "The three Changs."
[170] Daniel McMahon, "Restoring the Garden of Delight: Yan Ruyu and the civilizing of China's internal frontiers, 1795–1805" (diss., University of California, Davis, 1999).
[171] Wanyen Yün Chu, comp., *Lan-kuei pao-lu* (n.p., 1831), 1, p. 30a.

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Local officials like Ch'en Hung-mou, who wrung his hands over the decadent materialism of Kiangnan, saw hope in the spread of basic Confucian values promoting women's household spinning and weaving in the southwest borderlands of Yunnan. In other words, the "raw" peoples who inhabited the borderlands were a new frontier that beckoned to officials bearing the Confucian message, conveyed on their way by visions of economic development and moral rejuvenation.

CONCLUSION

The conventional focus of most studies of late imperial China that take gender as a category of analysis is the enduring hegemony of the patriarchal family system. Historical evidence from the Ch'ing period to 1800 suggests a rather different perspective, stressing historical processes located in time and space. These processes include not only the emergence of the commoner family – in all of its variant forms – as the basic unit of production and reproduction in the countryside, but also the broad patterns of homosociability that constructed the consciousness and the daily practice of millions of men and women in China's core regions during the late Ming-early Ch'ing period. Regional differences were important. Localities that exported male labor were also localities where the virtues of female chastity were most likely to be touted. Shao-hsing, Hui-chou, Ch'üan-chou, and T'ung-ch'eng – localities known for exporting talented traders, scholars, and quasi-professionals – were noted for conservative customs governing women's behavior.[172] By contrast, the nodes of manufacturing and trade, such as Ch'ang-chou, Hangchow, and Soochow, which attracted sojourners and lured talent, were areas known in Ch'ing times for their "liberated" views of female writers and entertainers.[173] Family forms display a similar range of variation, the product of an age of mobility and social change.

In sum, both men and women in late Ming and Ch'ing China were being drawn into family relations and sojourning networks structured by economic relations, territorial expansion, and patterns of mobility that drew males and females apart. The spread of footbinding, the strict confinement of women to the home, the widow chastity cult, the touting of female labor for household-based spinning and weaving – all are hallmarks of what have been

[172] See, for example, T'ien, *Male anxiety and female chastity*. T'ien's analysis associates high female suicide rates and frenzied chastity cults in certain areas with the anxiety and frustration provoked by male competition for the examinations. But all the areas he analyzes are localities with high levels of commercialization and male out-migration. I would argue that we should look to the latter, not the former, in a search for causal explanation.

[173] See Mann, *Precious records*, Map 2, p. 6; also Appendix, pp. 229–32.

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considered the patriarchal domination of women by men in late imperial China. Viewed in a larger context, however, they become patterns that are closely associated with the disciplining of male labor through migration and sojourning, and with the growing consciousness of the Other (non-Han, uncivilized) tribal peoples whose lifestyles marked them as inferior, uncultured beings. These patterns are the legacies of the Ch'ing period to 1800 that framed China's encounter with the West in the late nineteenth century. Ironically, the focus on women's oppression that dominates the historiography of the late Ch'ing has masked the importance of same-sex relations, of sojourning patterns, and of other historical changes described in this chapter, all of which are crucial to an understanding of women, families, and gender relations in Ch'ing times.

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CHAPTER 9

SOCIAL STABILITY AND SOCIAL CHANGE

William T. Rowe

The orientalist trope of Chinese "stagnation" in the centuries prior to the Opium Wars, seen in contradistinction to the vigorously "progressive" society and culture of the West, has a long pedigree in Euro-American thought.[1] It was an assumption held in common by those two otherwise diverse Victorian ideologues, John Stuart Mill and Karl Marx, that received academic legitimacy in the work of such mid-twentieth-century sinologists as Karl August Wittfogel, and that has forcefully resurfaced most recently in such pop-sinology formulations as Alain Peyrefitte's "*l'empire immobile*."[2] It even has its counterpart among self-orientalizing Chinese writers such as Chin Kuan-t'ao, author of the 1987 maverick bestseller *Hsing-sheng yü wei-chi* (Prosperity and crisis), with its pseudoscientific postulation of imperial China's "super-stable" (*ch'ao wen-ting*) society.[3]

But, as most serious students of the first half of the Ch'ing dynasty would nowadays agree, this complacent characterization of stagnation is simply wrong. The Chinese empire in the era which, in Western history, is often designated "early modern," underwent sudden and wrenching population growth, dramatic territorial expansion, the transition to a new kind of multi-ethnic society, a seemingly unprecedented degree of geographical and social mobility (featuring, among other things, pioneering settlement of many new regions and a significant elimination of unfree and debased personal status), rapid commercialization and monetization of the economy (and, with it, new kinds of social displacement and dislocation), and an apparently novel development of both the urban hierarchy and urban culture. The best recent scholarship in China, cognizant of these patterns of change, has sought to

[1] The author wishes to thank Thomas Buoye, Philip Kuhn, James Lee, Susan Mann, Ramon Myers, Susan Naquin, Mary Backus Rankin, Shiba Yoshinobu, Di Wang, and Ernest Young for discussions helpful in the preparation of this chapter.

[2] John Stuart Mill, "On liberty" (1859; rpt. in Max Lerner, ed., *Essential works of John Stuart Mill*, New York, 1965), pp. 318–22; Karl Marx, "Revolution in China and in Europe" (1853; rpt. in Dona Torr, ed., *Marx on China, 1853–1860*, London, 1951), pp. 1–10; Karl August Wittfogel, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft Chinas* (Leipzig, 1931), and his *Oriental despotism* (New Haven, 1957); Alain Peyrefitte, *L'empire immobile, ou le choc des mondes* (Paris, 1989).

[3] Chin Kuan-t'ao and Liu Ch'ing-feng, *Hsing-sheng yü wei-chi* (Ch'ang-sha, 1984; rpt. Taipei, 1987).

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reconcile them with older views of the shock of Western-induced modernity. Thus, Tai I, President of the Chinese Historical Association, articulates an establishment view depicting the early and mid-Ch'ing as an era of "summing up" (*tsung-chieh*) the trends of preceding centuries, bringing them to their logical conclusion while at the same time perpetuating the "feudal" (*feng-chien*) society of the past and forestalling any real structural change until the enforced opening to Western influence in the nineteenth century.[4]

Tai is right, of course, that one of the awkwardnesses of assessing change in the early and mid-Ch'ing is that these years were sandwiched between two other eras, that of the late-Ming "almost cultural revolution" (Charlotte Furth's phrase) and of the late-Ch'ing "response to the West," when social change was so evident and pronounced. But if our period of study here was by comparison "stable," it was by no means devoid of transformations of pivotal long-term significance. Our task in this chapter, then, is to assess not only the general trajectory of change, but also how much changed overall, what in particular changed and what did not, and how much of the overall pattern of change of the late imperial era can be specifically assigned to this period. Our temporal parameters are the establishment of the Ch'ing regime in China proper, around 1644, and the coincidental retirement of the Ch'ien-lung emperor and outbreak of the White Lotus rebellion in 1795–96.[5]

POPULATION AND PROSPERITY

The single dominating fact of early and mid-Ch'ing social history is population growth. On the wrenchingly rapid nature of this growth most demographers agree, but, since Ch'ing official figures are suspect and their units of calculation differed over time, few scholars reach precisely the same reconstructions. The most widely accepted estimates remain those made in 1959 by Ping-ti Ho.[6] Presuming a greater degree of undercounting in Ch'ing

[4] Tai I, "Shih-pa shih-chi Chung-kuo ti ch'eng-chiu, chü-hsien, yü shih-tai t'e-cheng," *Ch'ing-shih yen-chiu*, 1 (1993), pp. 1–6. The entire issue of this important Chinese journal is devoted to the general assessment of this period.

[5] Social change in the decades effectively beginning 1796 is expertly treated in the chapter by Susan Mann Jones and Philip A. Kuhn, "Dynastic decline and the roots of rebellion," in *Late Ch'ing, 1800–1911, Part 1*, ed. John K. Fairbank, Vol. 10 of *The Cambridge history of China*, ed. Denis Twitchett and John K. Fairbank (Cambridge, 1978), pp. 107–62. There was, of course, very significant regional divergence in the patterns of social change in our period, and this serves as an organizing device of the best existing survey of the subject in English, Susan Naquin and Evelyn S. Rawski's *Chinese society in the eighteenth century* (New Haven, 1987). Except when the subject demands it, we will, in this chapter, take spatial variation as a presumption rather than an explicit point of emphasis.

[6] Ping-ti Ho, *Studies on the population of China, 1368–1953* (Cambridge, Mass., 1959), pp. 277–8. For a detailed presentation of the Ch'ing official figures, see Liang Fang-chung, *Chung-kuo li-tai jen-k'ou, t'ien-ti, t'ien-fu t'ung-chi* (Shanghai, 1980), pp. 391–3 and 400. For more recent Chinese reconstructions based

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official figures (especially in the dynasty's first century) than do those of other writers, Ho's reconstructions show both higher populations throughout the period and a more modest rate of increase. Nevertheless, even Ho depicts very rapid growth. He estimates that China's population was roughly the same in 1700 as it had been in 1600 (150 million), though, given a late Ming demographic collapse which Ho declines to quantify but concedes to be enormous, growth in the latter half of the seventeenth century was very great.[7] The population considerably more than doubled again (other scholars have it *tripling*) in the eighteenth century, reaching 313 million in 1794.

As Suzuki Chūsei was perhaps first to observe, this was the era in which contemporary China's "population problem" genuinely began.[8] Over the first seventeen centuries of the Christian era, China's population had little more than doubled overall. Much of this doubling, it is true, had occured in the Ming, since the population was much the same in 1400 as it had been in the second century under the Han dynasty. Yet the rate of growth sustained in the early and mid-Ch'ing, by one estimate averaging as much as 1.3 percent per year, was nevertheless wholly unprecedented. Though remaining rapid, it slowed appreciably in the nineteenth century (studying one especially well-documented local population, James Lee and Cameron Campbell found an annual male population growth rate of 1.2 percent over 1774–1804, slowing dramatically to 0.2 percent over 1805–73), before resuming its rapid acceleration in the twentieth.[9]

Within our period the rate of growth was uniform over neither time nor space. As one would suspect, the accelerated growth began following the Ch'ing's final achievement of domestic peace in the early 1680s, but even thereafter there were pronounced rhythms and spurts. Based on Ho's data, Lin Man-houng identifies two dramatic spurts of growth in the eighteenth century, one in the first decades of the Ch'ien-lung reign (the population grew an astounding 45 percent in the 1740s alone) and another (a better than 25 percent growth) in the 1780s.[10] Short-term crises of subsistence and social

on these figures, see, for example, Kao Wang-ling, *Shih-pa shih-chi Chung-kuo jen-k'ou ti tseng-ch'ang ho Ch'ing cheng-fu ti nung-yeh ching-chi tui-ts'e* (Peking, 1982); Yang Ch'i-ch'ang, "Ch'ing-tai jen-k'ou wen-t'i chi ch'i li-shih chiao-hsün," *Yün-nan chiao-yü yüan hsüeh-pao*, 1 (1987); and Chao Wen-lin and Hsieh Shu-chün, *Chung-kuo jen-k'ou shih* (Peking, 1988), pp. 377–82.

[7] Yang Ch'i-ch'ang has the population more than doubling (from 53 to 110 million) in the four decades 1644–85.

[8] Suzuki Chūsei, *Shinchō chūkishi kenkyū* (Toyohashi, 1952), pp. 27–37.

[9] James Lee and Cameron Campbell, *Fate and fortune in rural China: Social organization and population behavior in Liaoning, 1774–1873* (Cambridge, 1997), ch. 3. The 1.3 percent per year estimate is from Kao Wang-ling, *Chung-kuo jen-k'ou*. The comparisons to earlier population levels generally follow Ping-ti Ho.

[10] Lin Man-houng, "From sweet potato to silver: The new world and 18th-century China as reflected in Wang Hui-tsu's passage about grain prices," in Hans Pohl, ed., *The European discovery of the world and its economic effects on pre-industrial society, 1500–1800* (Stuttgart, 1990), p. 308.

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disorder, as we shall see, were the unsurprising result. Though all regions of the empire grew both in absolute numbers and in population density, there was tremendous variation. Consistently throughout the period the most populous and most densely populated area of the empire was Kiangnan. Li Po-chung, however, argues that between 1680 and 1850 Kiangnan's population grew less than half as quickly as that of the empire as a whole, and indeed more slowly than it had in the Ming. Others such as Philip Huang and James Shih disagree, but their figures, too, show Kiangnan's growth to have been relatively modest.[11] A region such as Szechwan, severely decimated in the dynastic transition, grew very rapidly, its share of the empire's total population growing in the process from 1 percent to nearly 6 percent. Provinces such as Shensi and Fukien, by contrast, which were more "filled up" from the start, significantly declined in their population share, and Fukien's relative population density also dropped sharply, from third among provinces to ninth.[12]

How and why did this population growth occur? Unlike Europe, which observed a transition to "modern" (that is, accelerated) population growth at about the same time, the Ch'ing experience was not attributable in great measure to higher fertility.[13] Moderate fertility, along with nearly universal female nuptiality and a modest degree of male polygamy, remained constant features of the Chinese demographic system. In China, as in Europe, natural mortality declined, both of infants (due in part to more widespread practice of breast feeding and the systematic dissemination of published child-care manuals)[14] and in the population overall (due to the introduction and diffusion of New World famine crops such as maize and sweet potato[15] and more effective smallpox inoculation). Far more important in the Chinese case, however, was the relaxation of *controlled* mortality, that is, infanticide.

[11] Li Po-chung, "K'ung-chih tseng-ch'ang i pao fu-yü: Ch'ing-tai ch'ien-ch'i Chiang-nan ti jen-k'ou hsing-wei," *Hsin shih-hsüeh*, 5, No. 3 (1994), pp. 25–71; Philip C. C. Huang, *The peasant family and rural development in the Yangzi delta* (Stanford, 1990); James C. Shih, *Chinese rural society in transition: A case study of the Lake Tai area, 1368–1800* (Berkeley, 1992). As Shih, pp. 128–9, shows, even within regions there could be pronounced variation: one of slow-growing Kiangnan's fastest-growing counties, Wu-hsi, virtually tripled in population in the first century of Ch'ing rule.

[12] Chao Wen-lin and Hsieh Shu-chün, *Chung-kuo jen-k'ou shih*, pp. 452–4 and 472–5. In all of these regions, as we shall see below, population movement played as much or greater a role than did natural increase.

[13] The most concentrated work on this question has been done by James Lee, alone and with several collaborators, and my discussion here largely reflects Lee's conclusions. See Lee and Cambell, *Fate and fortune in rural China*; Li Chung-ch'ing (James Lee) and Kuo Sung-i, *Ch'ing-tai huang-tsu jen-k'ou hsing-wei ho she-hui huan-ching* (Peking, 1979), esp. pp. 1–17; James Z. Lee and Wang Feng, *One quarter of humanity: Malthusian mythology and Chinese realities* (Cambridge, Mass., 1999).

[14] See Hsiung Ping-chen, *Yu-yu: ch'uan-t'ung Chung-kuo ti ch'iang-pao chih tao* (Taipei, 1995).

[15] Ping-ti Ho, "The introduction of American food plants to China," *American Anthropologist*, 57, No. 2 (1955), pp. 191–201.

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Infanticide among the Ch'ing population was not simply a crisis response, although there was sensitivity of infanticide rates to food prices and other living costs. Rather, it was a routine practice of family planning, at all economic levels of the population. It targeted primarily, though not exclusively, female infants; in one sample local population, Lee and Campbell found it to account for 20–25 percent of all female births.

In the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, then, what essentially happened was the relaxed exercise of this controlled mortality in response to perceptions that the environment would allow or even invite this. Lee and Wang Feng find support for this thesis in the pattern of just where within the empire the greatest population growth took place. Unlike Europe, where early modern population increase was absorbed primarily in diversified nonagrarian occupations in urban settings, in Ch'ing the opportunities, and hence the greatest population growth, came in rural areas, and especially in peripheral regions of pioneering settlement (we will look below both at early Ch'ing urbanization and peripheral land development). Conversely, when population growth slowed at the end of the eighteenth century, it did so in response to a number of conscious strategies: a decline in male polygamy; a rise in female age at marriage; a decline in fertility, reflected in the lower age at birth of the last child; and, most importantly, a more rigorous exercise of the "preventive check" of infanticide.[16]

This scenario would seem to imply something of a comfort level in standards of living in the first century and a half of the Ch'ing period, and indeed Chinese scholars have become fond of viewing this era as, at least in relative terms, a "prosperous age" (*sheng-shih*). Some recent research on consumption patterns seems to back this up. Fang Hsing, for instance, has found the quality, quantity, and frequency of food allowances of agricultural laborers in Kiangnan to have risen noticeably in the period, along with a marked dietary improvement for the average farm household – the percentage of the food budget expended on nongrain items such as soy sauce, meat and fish, vegetables, and wine rose from one-fifth to one-third. Kenneth Pomeranz has argued – perhaps a bit optimistically – that by such indices as life expectancies, daily caloric intake, clothing, and home furnishings, eighteenth-century Chinese enjoyed a standard of living comparable to that of contemporary Europeans, while by others (consumption of tea and silk, unsurprisingly, but also of sugar) they seem to have done even better than the Western Europeans. Government and reformist elite complaints about luxurious

[16] As Li Po-chung argues, this deliberate response had been practiced in the most populous regions of the empire (i.e., Kiangnan) even as less densely populated regions were experiencing their most rapid growth.

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lifestyles and unbridled consumerism rose dramatically over the eighteenth century, directed not merely against the wealthy but increasingly against commoners of all stations.[17]

There remain, however, reasons for caution in our appreciation of the mid-Ch'ing as an era of plenty. Lee and Wang themselves, while arguing that rising nutritional levels support their thesis that prosperity bred relaxed population controls, admit that the demonstrably shorter stature of Ch'ing subjects than early modern Europeans suggests a lower living standard in China. And when did this "prosperous age" peak? Kishimoto Mio shows that for most people the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries were perceived as a period of considerable economic distress; commodities were being produced in growing quantity, but no one could afford to buy.[18] Even after this K'ang-hsi "depression" ended, certain periods (like the 1740s) seem to be marked by dramatic immiseration. One current school of thought sees the reputed eighteenth-century "prosperity" kicking in only in the century's third quarter, and even then as a rather fleeting phenomenon.[19] As Kao Wang-ling reminds us, the Ch'ing government itself, even in its greatest flush of self-congratulation, saw significant hardship among its alarmingly growing population, responding with ever more routinized tax cuts and often frenetic policies to ensure subsistence and create new employment.[20]

By far the most compelling problem created by population growth was food supply. Ch'ing cultivated acreage figures being no more reliable than population data, it is notoriously difficult to calculate trends in per capita acreage, but it may be that this remained relatively constant empirewide during the K'ang-hsi reign (though it varied by region – per capita holdings in the North China plain had already begun to decline), then began to shrink with increasing rapidity over the reigns of his two successors.[21] Whereas Ping-ti Ho's adjusted figures show the empire's population more than doubling over the eighteenth century, registered cultivated acreage rose only 44 percent over the 150-year period 1661–1812, with the great majority of this

[17] Fang Hsing, "Ch'ing-tai Chiang-nan nung-min ti hsiao-fei," *Chung-kuo ching-chi shih yen-chiu*, 3 (1996), pp. 91–8; Kenneth Pomeranz, "Economy and ecology in mid-Qing China: A comparative approach," unpublished paper; William Lavely and R. Bin Wong, "Revising the Malthusian narrative: The comparative study of population dynamics in late imperial China," *JAS*, 57, No. 3 (Aug. 1998), esp. pp. 729–32. On complaints against extravagance see Suzuki, *Shinchō chūki shi*, pp. 37–46.

[18] Mio Kishimoto-Nakayama, "The Kangxi Depression and Early Qing Local Markets," *Modern China*, 10, No. 2 (April 1984), pp. 227–56, and, for a fuller and more recent analysis, see Mio Kishimoto-Nakayama, *Shindai Chūgoku no buka to keizi hendō* (Tokyo, 1997).

[19] Lin, "From sweet potato to silver"; Philip A. Kuhn, *Soulstealers: The Chinese sorcery scare of 1768* (Cambridge, Mass., 1990), ch. 2.

[20] Kao Wang-ling, "Kuan-yü K'ang-Ch'ien sheng-shih ti chi ko wen-t'i," *Ch'ing-shih yen-chiu t'ung-hsün*, 4 (1990), pp. 21–6, and Kao Wang-ling, *Shih-pa shih-chi Chung-kuo ti ching-chi fa-chan ho cheng-fu cheng-ts'e* (Peking, 1995).

[21] Suggested by data in Liang Fang-chung, *Jen-k'ou, t'ien-ti, t'ien-fu*, pp. 391–3 and 400.

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increase in arable taking place before mid-century.[22] Certainly, as Dwight Perkins long ago demonstrated, much of this increasingly adverse man/land ratio was offset by higher yields per acre, accomplished through more intensive cultivation (what some scholars, following the work of Hayami Akira on Tokugawa Japan and Jan de Vries on early modern Europe, now term China's "industrious revolution"), but there was still much cause for alarm.[23] The government had taken concerned notice of this problem since at least the 1710s, and from that point on gave strenuous attention to crafting a multifaceted set of activist policies to manage food supply. These included a variety of programs to encourage agricultural production (*ch'üan-nung*), a dynamic system of price-regulating "ever-normal granaries" (*ch'ang-p'ing ts'ang*) and quasi-governmental "community granaries" (*she-ts'ang*) making seed loans to farmers, and a sophisticated range of techniques to alleviate short-term regionalized dearth.[24]

Notwithstanding the administration's considerable success in these programs, a far more potent instrument of meeting the population's food needs was the rapidly expanding commercial market. One scholar estimates that by the mid-eighteenth century the market mobilized nearly four times the volume of grain commanded by all government instruments combined – the land tax, grain tribute administration, and granary systems.[25] Routinized trade of enormous volume mediated between chronic grain-deficit regions such as the Lower Yangtze and increasingly specialized grain-export regions such as Hukwang and Szechwan. In the single year 1734 more than ten million *shih* of rice was reported handled by brokers at Hankow, the central entrepot in this downriver trade.[26] Smaller but still impressive amounts flowed from Kwangsi to Kwangtung, from Taiwan (and elsewhere) to Fukien, from Hunan to Kweichow and Yunnan, and from Hupeh to Shensi.[27] This in

[22] Comparing data in Ho, *Population*, pp. 277–8, and Liang Fang-chung, *Jen-k'ou, t'ien-ti, t'ien-fu*, p. 380.

[23] Dwight Perkins, *Agricultural development in China, 1368–1968* (Chicago, 1969).

[24] On Ch'ing food policy overall, see Wu Hui and Ko Hsien-hui, "Ch'ing ch'ien-ch'i ti liang-shih t'iao-chi," *Li-shih yen-chiu*, 4 (1988), pp. 122–35. For policy in a particular region of active government involvement, see Peter C. Perdue, "The Qing State and the Gansu Grain Market, 1739–1864," in Thomas Rawski and Lillian Li, eds., *Chinese history in economic perspective* (Berkeley, 1992), pp. 100–25. On granary policy see Iemura Shiseo, "Shindai shasō seido kenkyū josetsu," *Mindaishi kenkyū*, 11 (1983), pp. 7–23; Kuroda Akinobu, "Shindai bichiku ko," *Shirin*, 71, No. 6 (1988), pp. 1–28; Yamamoto Susumu, "Shindai zenki no heichō seisaku," *Shirin*, 71, No. 5 (1988), pp. 38–70; and Pierre-Étienne Will and R. Bin Wong, *Nourish the people: The state civilian granary system in China, 1650–1850* (Ann Arbor, 1991). On famine relief policies, see Pierre-Étienne Will, *Bureaucracy and famine in eighteenth-century China* (Stanford, 1990).

[25] Wu Chien-yung, "Ch'ing ch'ien-ch'i ti shang-p'in liang cheng-ts'e," *Li-shih tang-an*, 3 (1986), p. 87.

[26] Ch'üan Han-sheng, "Ch'ing-ch'ao chung-yeh Su-chou ti mi-liang mao-i," *BIHP*, 39 (Oct. 1969), p. 77.

[27] On the Yangtze River rice trade, see Nakamura Jihei, "Shindai Kokō kome ryūtsū no ichimen," *Shakai keizai shigaku*, 18, No. 3 (1952), pp. 53–65; Abe Takeo, "Beikaku jukyū no kenkyū: Yosei shi no isshō to shite mita," in his *Shindaishi no kenkyū* (Tokyo, 1971), pp. 411–522; and Han-sheng Ch'uan and

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turn made the issue of grain prices to consumers a growing social and political concern. Market arbitrage and the deft manipulation of government granary holdings in general served to smooth out the most glaring regional and annual-cyclical price fluctuations but, after around 1710, unremitting inflation of grain prices (even relative to land and other commodities) was the norm. In the first half of the Ch'ien-lung reign this inflation was especially pronounced, and in some years (such as 1748) it was so dramatic as to spawn waves of collective violence in producer and consumer localities alike.[28]

MOVEMENT

Early and mid-Ch'ing society was remarkably on the move. Hazardous as are broad comparisons with earlier eras, most evidence seems to suggest that the empire's rapidly expanding population was geographically mobile on a scale which, in terms of its volume and its protracted and routinized nature, was unprecedented in Chinese history. Venerable statutes and customary laws tying cultivators to the land had been losing effect for many centuries, and, as we shall see below, were specifically abrogated in the 1720s. Early Ming efforts to enforce hereditary occupational statuses, with their implications of bondage to the home locality, had gone by the boards as early as the fifteenth century, and the Ch'ing made no serious attempt to revive them. None of the administration's many schemes for home district (*hu-chi*) and decimal group (*pao-chia*) registration were practical deterrents to geographic movement, nor for the most part were they even intended as such.[29] Indeed, the Ch'ing government did far more actively to encourage mobility than to discourage it.

We might divide this geographic mobility into two varieties: permanent migration for resettlement, and relocation conceived by the party (in theory at least) as a temporary sojourn. Parties to the latter would include the empire's increasingly large and mobile manual workforce, engaged in such activities as transport and seasonal agricultural labor, as well as its densely

Richard A. Kraus, *Mid-Ch'ing rice markets and trade: An essay in price history* (Cambridge, Mass., 1975). On more regionalized grain flows, see Yeh-chien Wang, "Food supply in eighteenth-century Fukien," *Late Imperial China*, 7, No. 2 (December 1986), pp. 80–117; and Robert B. Marks, "Rice prices, food supply, and market structure in eighteenth-century south China," *Late Imperial China*, 12, No. 2 (Dec. 1991), pp. 64–116.

[28] Kishimoto, *Buka*, 126; Mio Nakayama (Kishimoto), "On the fluctuation of the price of rice in the Chiang-nan region during the first half of the Ch'ing period (1644–1795)," *Memoirs of the Research Department of the Tōyō Bunko*, 37 (1979), pp. 55–90; Ch'üan Han-sheng, "Ch'ien-lung shih-san nien ti mi-kuei wen-t'i," in Ch'üan, *Chung-kuo ching-chi shih lun-ts'ung* (Hong Kong, 1972), pp. 547–66.

[29] Liu Min, "Shih-lun Ming-Ch'ing shih-ch'i hu-chi chih-tu ti pien-hua," *Chung-kuo ku-tai shih lun-ts'ung*, 2 (Sept. 1981), pp. 218–36.

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overlapping internal diaspora of local-origin-based merchant groups. (We will return to each of these below.) It would also include the patterned movement of Ch'ing subjects overseas, largely to Southeast Asia, in search of trade and other economic opportunities. This emigration had been under way in incipient form since the T'ang, but accelerated notably in the eighteenth century. One of the many reasons for this was the growing domestic demand for Southeast Asian rice. Like its Ming predecessor, the Ch'ing government initially took a hostile attitude toward direct participation of its subjects in this overseas trade, but over the first half of the Ch'ien-lung reign the court, by progressively softening its policies regarding repatriation of Chinese who had sojourned abroad for several years, gave its implicit approval. This in turn further stimulated movement of Han people within the larger maritime orbit of "Nan-yang."[30]

Internal migration, for its part, also took several distinct forms. First was a dramatically accelerated continuation of the general westward migration which had been occurring since the eleventh and twelfth centuries, when the prosperous areas of the lower Yangtze valley and (somewhat later) the southeast coast had begun to experience population densities that encouraged some residents to emigrate to less crowded regions. Thus, throughout the Yüan and Ming, Anhwei and Hukwang had experienced waves of immigration from provinces farther downstream, and Szechwan in turn considerable immigration from Hukwang.[31] This process entered a qualitatively different phase, however, with the catastrophic depopulation experienced by Szechwan during the Ming-Ch'ing transition. Beginning in the 1630s, the combination of flight, deaths due to warfare, famine, and disease, and the deliberate genocide practiced by Chang Hsien-chung reduced Szechwan's population by as much as 75 percent, leaving the huge province with perhaps fewer than a million inhabitants, most clustered in peripheral areas. The depopulation of Szechwan's fertile "red basin" created a vacuum effect by which, in Wei

[30] See variously Chuang Kuo-t'u, *Chung-kuo feng-chien cheng-fu ti Hua-ch'iao cheng-tse* (Hsia-men, 1989); Wang Gungwu, *The Nanhai trade: A study of the early history of Chinese trade in the South China Sea* (Kuala Lumpur, 1959); Chin-keong Ng, *Trade and society: The Amoy network on the China coast, 1683–1785* (Singapore, 1983); Sarasin Viraphol, *Tribute and profit: Sino-Siamese trade, 1652–1853* (Cambridge, Mass., 1977); and Leonard Blussé, *Strange company: Chinese settlers, Mestizo women, and the Dutch in VOC Batavia* (Dordrecht, 1988). For another aspect of the Qing population's maritime diaspora, see Dian Murray, *Pirates of the south China coast, 1790–1810* (Stanford, 1987).

[31] Hilary Beattie, *Land and lineage in China: A study of T'ung-ch'eng county, Anhwei, in the Ming and Ch'ing dynasties* (Cambridge, 1979); Peter C. Perdue, "Insiders and outsiders: The Xiangtan riot of 1819 and collective action in Hunan," *Modern China*, 12, No. 2 (April 1986), pp. 170–3; William T. Rowe, "Success stories: Lineage and elite status in Hanyang county, Hupei, 1368–1949," in Joseph W. Esherick and Mary Backus Rankin, eds., *Chinese local elites and patterns of dominance* (Berkeley, 1990); Robert Eric Entenmann, "Migration and settlement in Sichuan, 1644–1796" (diss., Harvard University, 1982), ch. 5.

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Yüan's famous phrase, "Hukwang filled up Szechwan, and Kiangsi in turn filled up Hukwang."[32]

In fact, the situation was more complex than this.[33] Szechwan's population has been estimated as 70–80 percent nonnatives by the 1720s, growing to as many as 85 percent by the early nineteenth century. Among these early Ch'ing immigrants, natives of Fukien, Kwangtung, and Kiangsi were nearly as numerous as those from Hunan and Hupeh, and many other provincial origins were represented as well. They came as officials (staying on as important landholders), soldiers, merchants, and artisans, but most came to farm – initially for subsistence, and then, as Szechwan's commercial economy rapidly developed over the early Ch'ing, as cultivators of cash crops such as tobacco, tea, sugar cane, indigo, and above all, export rice. The Ch'ing administration played a major role in encouraging this resettlement. Beginning in the Shun-chih reign and with more direction after around 1690, local, provincial, and central government officials devised programs to grant land title, loans of seed and oxen, and tax holidays of three years or more to new arrivals. It used the lure of more favorable quotas in the civil service examinations to attract what it envisioned as the core of Szechwan's local elite. As time went on, the goals of these government programs shifted from securing the province militarily to restoring its economic productivity to simply ensuring the accountability of the throngs of people who were pouring into the province on their own accord.

Ch'ing Szechwan gradually developed a distinctively cosmopolitan society. Immigrant groups distributed themselves fairly evenly over the landscape, so that it was not unusual to find in a single county local-origin clubs (*hui-kuan*) representing as many as forty or fifty different native places. Great linguistic and cultural diversity within localities was the norm. The nature of the immigration yielded an unusually skewed sex ratio, and male competition for scarce females proved a routine social irritant. The immigration also produced smaller household sizes (three to five persons the norm), and a relatively low degree of kinship-group power. Instead of the stability and control that powerful landed lineages might afford, Szechwan witnessed an unusual degree of nonkin organization building. Fraternal societies like the Ku-lu hui and

[32] One scholar has estimated that, as a result of this ongoing westerly migration in the early and mid-Ch'ing, Hunan itself may have been comprised of as many as 90 percent households of nonnative origin by around 1800; Lin Tseng-p'ing, "Chin-tai Hu-Hsiang wen-hua shih-t'an," *Li-shih yen-chiu*, 4 (1988), pp. 3–17.

[33] The following paragraphs are based on Suzuki, ch. 2; Entenmann, "Migration and settlement"; Hu Chao-hsi, *Chang Hsien-chung t'u Shu k'ao-pien* (Chengtu, 1980), ch. 3; Wang Ti, "Ch'ing-tai Ssu-ch'uan jen-k'ou, keng-ti, chi liang-shih wen-t'i," *Ssu-ch'uan ta-hsüeh hsüeh-pao*, 3 (1989), pp. 90–105, and 4 (1989), pp. 73–87; and Liu Yüan, " 'Hu-kuang t'ien Ssu-ch'uan' yü Ssu-ch'uan liu-min wen-t'i," *Ch'ing-shih yen-chiu*, 1 (1994), pp. 39–44.

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Ko-lao hui took strong hold, as we shall see below. So too did messianic religious congregations, both those of the White Lotus sectarian Buddhists and those of the Roman Catholics. There were hundreds of thousands of Catholics in Szechwan, though they were far fewer than sectarian Buddhists. The spiritual and communal appeal of both groups to their converts was probably roughly similar; they certainly looked analogous to suspicious Ch'ing authorities.[34]

Szechwan's population grew rapidly. It was only in the Yung-cheng reign that population densities were sufficient for the court to consider imposing county-level administrations in the province, akin to those in the rest of provincial China. By 1800 the population was approaching 20 million, and its growth continued to accelerate, whereas newly cultivated land increased at a more constant rate. Even earlier, Szechwan authorities had complained that new arrivals staked claims to land and farmed it during the few years of tax exemption, then abandoned it when the tax holiday expired. Over the eighteenth century the problem of the floating population (*liu-min*) became more acute, and was aggravated by the province's role as military staging area for the various Chin-ch'uan border campaigns of the 1740s and 1750s. Also on the rise was the incidence of conflict over property rights, and of inter-ethnic violence. The Yung-cheng court took notice, and sought to slow the immigration by such means as systematically returning flood and famine refugees to Szechwan to their native provinces (*tzu-sung*). During the first half of his reign the Ch'ien-lung emperor resisted Szechwanese provincial officials' pleas to clamp down on immigration, reasoning that, even granting its problems, Szechwan could accommodate these persons more comfortably than the provinces from which they came. But over the 1760s and 1770s the emperor gradually changed his mind. New arrivals were now more regularly apprehended and repatriated, *pao-chia* regimentation was imposed in order to ferret out illegal immigrants, and many extraprovincial *hui-kuan* were forcibly closed down. Though these measures provoked no shortage of popular resistance, their success in stemming provincial population growth was not great. As Suzuki Chūsei argued, mounting social tensions caused by Szechwan's demographic growth contributed in no small way to the eruption of the White Lotus Rebellion along the province's northeastern borders at the century's end.

Particularly as the return to cultivation of former arable land lost at the time of the dynastic transition was completed, attention turned to the "opening" (*k'ai-k'en*) of previously unfarmed land throughout the empire.

[34] Robert E. Entenmann, "Catholics and society in eighteenth-century Sichuan," in Daniel Bays, ed., *Christianity in China: From the eighteenth century to the present* (Stanford, 1996), pp. 8–23.

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These lands included those along the frontiers (especially Taiwan), "sand fields" (*sha-t'ien*) along the southeast maritime coast, riverbanks and lakeshores (notably that of Hunan's Tung-t'ing Lake, whose area was dramatically constricted in this era), and small parcels (*ling-hsing*) lying fallow between existing plots, but most remarkably of all, highlands. It might be said that it was in the early and mid-Ch'ing period that China's population, for centuries concentrated in plains and fertile river valleys, effectively moved uphill. Pushed by lowland population pressure, and facilitated in part by the dissemination of New World crops such as the sweet potato,[35] this massive upland migration was actively promoted by the government, which offered incentives such as tax holidays on newly reclaimed land, and loans of tools, oxen, and seed grain. Mountain areas which had in some cases been declared off-limits for security reasons since the Ming, such as Huang-kang-tung in Kiangsi, were gradually opened to settlement over the eighteenth century.

Government-aided land opening (*k'ai-k'en*) activity had begun under K'ang-hsi, but became much more frenetic during the Yung-cheng reign. Motivated both by his empire's manifestly expanding food needs and by the desire to finance his ambitious state-building projects from an expanded tax base, Yung-cheng drove his officials to bring under cultivation over one million acres (69,690 *ch'ing*) of reported new land, in addition to a likewise substantial amount of reclaimed but unreported "secret land" (*yin-t'ien*). There was considerable fallout – social conflicts over shifting tax burdens, false reporting by overly eager officials in the field, land which was productive initially upon clearance but turned out to be unsuitable for sustained cultivation – prompting a dramatic pullback on the part of Yung-cheng's successor in the late 1730s. But expansion of Ch'ing agriculture's extensive margin went on, more modestly, through the end of the eighteenth century.[36]

One particular cultural type which emerged in this process of internal colonization of the highlands was the *p'eng-min* (shed or shack people), so named because of the straw-mat lean-tos which they carried with them and erected as their shelters in areas they farmed. Drawn from diverse areas of southeast China and moving throughout upland areas of the Yangtze and its tributaries, *p'eng-min* typically engaged in transhumance agriculture and a variety of nonagrarian occupations such as mining, timbering, and charcoal-burning.

[35] Ho Ping-ti, "The introduction of American food plants to China."

[36] The standard work on this overall process is P'eng Yü-hsin, *Ch'ing-tai t'u-ti k'ai-k'en shih* (Peking, 1990). See also Kuo Sung-yi, "Ch'ing-ch'u feng-chien kuo-chia k'en-huang cheng-ts'e fen-hsi," *Ch'ing-shih lun-ts'ung*, 2 (1980), pp. 111–38; and Luo Wei-lien (William T. Rowe), "Cheng-fu yü t'u-ti: 1723–1737 nien Kuang-hsi k'ai-k'en yen-chiu," *Ch'ing-shih yen-chiu*, 94, No. 1 (Spring 1994), pp. 79–86.

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Their peripatetic nature as well as their allegedly disruptive impact on local society and ecology routinely brought them into conflict with lowland populations, and they gradually coalesced in both popular consciousness and Ch'ing law into a stigmatized status group with overtones of ethnic distinctiveness.[37] It is to these enormously complex questions of status and ethnicity that we now turn.

STRATIFICATION AND SOCIAL MOBILITY

According to statute, Ch'ing society was divided into relatively closed corporate estates, of which in most general terms there were five: the comparatively miniscule aristocracy (*kuei-tsu*),[38] officials (*kuan-li*), the degree-holding literati (*shen-shih*), free commoners (*liang-min*), and mean or debased persons (*chien-min*). Dynastic law specified systematically distinct legal treatment for persons of these different estates, established in some cases rank-based sumptuary legislation, and established codes of mutual deference and personal address to govern interestate social relations. Ch'ing emperors, and especially Ch'ien-lung, whose views on status essentialism seem to have been especially strong, interpreted the Confucian notion of *lun-li* (the ordered universe and society) as a mandate for strict hierarchical distinction, and he sought to implement it in a variety of ways. With all of this, however, a number of factors worked to erode and complicate this prescribed rank system, not merely in actual social practice but also in both elite and popular perception.[39]

For one thing, landed property under the Ch'ing tended to be freely alienable and actively marketed, and both in statute and in practice land ownership was usually open to the lowest classes, as well as to the literati and free commoners. In this decidedly non-"feudal" feature, Ch'ing law differed markedly from that of the predecessor dynasty. Another change from the Ming was that in Ch'ing law as well as social practice, precedences based on

[37] On *p'eng-min* see P'eng Yü-hsin, *K'ai-k'en*, pp. 138–50, and also Steven Averill, "The shed people and the opening of the Yangzi highlands," *Modern China*, 9, No. 1 (Jan. 1983), pp. 84–126; Anne Osborne, "The local politics of land reclamation in the lower Yangzi highlands," *Late Imperial China*, 15, No. 1 (June 1994), pp. 1–46; and Sow-Theng Leong, *Migration and ethnicity in Chinese history: Hakka, Pengmin, and their neighbors* (Stanford, 1997), ch. 5–9.

[38] We will not treat the structure and social life of the nobility in this chapter. For a concise English-language discussion, see Ping-ti Ho, *The ladder of success in imperial China: Aspects of social mobility, 1368–1911* (New York, 1962), pp. 21–4. On the imperial clan itself, see Lai Hui-min, *T'ien-huang kuei-chou: Ch'ing huang-tsu ti chieh-tseng chieh-kou yü ching-chi sheng-huo* (Taipei, 1997); and Evelyn S. Rawski, *The last emperors: A social history of Qing imperial institutions*, Berkeley, 1998.

[39] Jing Junjian (Ching Chün-chien), "Hierarchy in the Qing dynasty," *Social Sciences in China*, 1 (1982), pp. 156–92; Chang Jen-shan, "Lun Ch'ien-lung ti teng-chi lun-li kuan chi ch'i wei-hu teng-chi lun-li ti ts'o-shih," *Ku-kung po-wu-yüan yüan-k'an*, 3 (1988), pp. 23–8 and 69.

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familial seniority were far more compelling than those based on corporate estate.[40] Even the Ch'ien-lung emperor's own efforts to rigidify the social hierarchy turned out, in the effect, to reinforce the filial authority of parents, husbands, and lineage heads far more than they did the charisma of any status group. As Philip Kuhn has concluded, status based on family role far outweighed in general that accruing to any corporate estate; status distinctions of the latter variety, to the extent that they had any social reality, were widely understood to be matters of administrative decision rather than "natural" qualities such as gentility or impurity. The divide between rulers and ruled was rigidly upheld, but the very act of so doing worked in practice to level other distinctions.[41]

Other sociocultural changes worked in practice to erode the residual power of status-group distinction. Analyzing the social taxonomy revealed in an eighteenth-century encyclopedia (*lei-shu*) in relation to a dozen predecessors of earlier eras, Liang Ch'i-tzu finds that material wealth in Ch'ing society was understood by contemporaries to be a more important determinant of social position than ascribed group status, and, partly in consequence, that virtually all social classification seemed to contemporaries more fuzzy and subject to negotiation than had been true in the past.[42] A new appreciation of the role of spending by the rich as an engine of economic development led many among the elite to develop a discourse of the "preservation of private wealth" (*pao-fu lun*) for the benefit of the society as a whole.[43] Understood in popular wisdom to be dangerously cyclical over the generations, household wealth was especially volatile in this era of expanding and rapidly shifting economic opportunity. And yet, by the eighteenth century, evidence from religious behavior – the re-imagining of the God of Wealth (*ts'ai-shen*) as a relatively benign figure and the widespread use of capital-accounting techniques to tabulate meritorious deeds – suggests that Ch'ing subjects were becoming increasingly comfortable with notions of getting rich as a social ideal and of wealth as a measure of personal worthiness.[44]

[40] Jing, "Hierarchy," pp. 171–85.

[41] Philip A. Kuhn, "Chinese views of social classification," in James L. Watson, ed., *Class and social stratification in post-revolution China* (Cambridge, 1984), pp. 16–28.

[42] Liang Ch'i-tzu, "'P'in-ch'iung' yü 'ch'iung-jen' kuan-nien tsai Chung-kuo su-shih she-hui chung ti li-shih yen-pien," in Huang Ying-kui, ed., *Jen-kuan, i-i, yü she-hui* (Taipei, 1993), pp. 129–62. The encyclopedia in question is Ch'en Meng-lei and Chiang T'ing-hsi, eds., *Ku-chin t'u-shu chi-ch'eng* (1728).

[43] Akinobu, "Shindai bichiku ko," p. 6. A strident advocate of this widely held position was the celebrated scholar-merchant T'ang Chen (1630–1704); for a sample of T'ang's *pao-fu* rhetoric, see Helen Dunstan, *Conflicting counsels to confuse the age* (Ann Arbor, 1996), pp. 106–8.

[44] Richard von Glahn, "The enchantment of wealth: The God *Wutong* in the social history of Jiangnan," *HJAS*, 51, No. 2 (1991), pp. 651–714; Cynthia Brokaw, *The ledgers of merit and demerit: Social change and moral order in late imperial China* (Princeton, 1991).

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The dramatic expansion of popular literacy under way since the late Ming continued and accelerated during the Ch'ing, undermining the literati's claim to elite status by virtue of monopoly access to the written word.[45] Through a variety of government and private institutional media, childhood literary education was a booming enterprise.[46] So, too, was the publishing industry, which cranked out mass-circulation how-to books on farming, letter-writing, filing a plaint, medical care, sexual gratification, wedding and funerary ritual (graded according to the means and ambitions of the celebrant households), and practice for merchants of even humble scale; middle- and low-brow fiction (heroic, fantastic, romantic, and pornographic); sutras, sectarian scriptures (*pao-chüan*), and morality books (often produced by the same publishers who dabbled in pornography); almanacs, travelogues, and travelers' guides. Through the increasing popularity of published picture books (such as the famous "Miao albums," depicting the "savages" of the southwest in manners varying from scathing caricature to pastoral-nostalgic to titilating),[47] this burgeoning print culture merged with an older visual culture, and through such media as professional scribes, teahouse storytellers, village opera performances, and the sometimes highly animated recitations of the Sacred Edict, it interfaced with the oral culture as well.[48] Perhaps nothing testifies to the growing importance of literate communication at the grassroots level of Ch'ing society more than the ubiquitous production of written contracts for renting, mortgaging, and selling land, hiring labor, arranging marriages, and other basic transactions within village society.[49] As David Johnson in particular has argued, this newly complicated hierarchy of literacy competed with more familiar hierarchies both of status *and* of wealth, yielding a "class structure" in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries which was fluid, if not bewildering.[50]

[45] On the late Ming see Oki Yashushi, "Readership and audience in the late Ming dynasty," paper presented to the Association of Asian Studies Annual Meeting, Washington, D.C., March 1994; and Oki Yashushi, *Min-matsu no maguru chishikijin* (Tokyo, 1995). On the Ch'ing see Evelyn S. Rawski, *Education and popular literacy in Ch'ing China* (Ann Arbor, 1979). Literacy rates varied not only over time, but by area, by gender, by urban or rural residence, and most importantly by degree – classical versus functional literacy being a continuum of infinitely variable gradation. All of this makes meaningful quantification virtually impossible; nevertheless, all who have studied this issue in recent decades agree that Ch'ing literacy was higher than once imagined, and was rapidly on the rise.

[46] See the various essays in Benjamin Elman and Alexander Woodside, ed., *Education and society in late imperial China* (Berkeley, 1994).

[47] For a republished example, see *Miao-luan t'u-ts'e* (Taipei, 1973).

[48] See the various articles in David Johnson, Andrew J. Nathan, and Evelyn S. Rawski, eds., *Popular culture in late imperial China* (Berkeley, 1985), especially those by James Hayes, Issei Tanaka, and Victor Mair.

[49] See Fu-mei Chang Chen and Ramon Myers, "Customary law and the economic growth of China during the Ch'ing period," *Ch'ing-shih wen-t'i*, 3, No. 5 (Nov. 1976), pp. 1–32, and 3, No. 10 (Dec. 1978), pp. 4–27. For many examples of surviving documents, see "Min-nan ch'i-yüeh wen-shu tsung-lu," special issue of *Chung-kuo she-hui ching-chi shih yen-chiu* (1990).

[50] David Johnson, "Communication, class, and consciousness in late imperial China," in Johnson et al., eds., *Popular culture*, pp. 34–72.

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Although scholars today are more likely to focus their attention on a more amorphous category of the "local elite" than on the narrower one of the degree-holding literati, and to argue that achievement of elite status in local society was possible with little recourse at all to civil service degees,[51] there is no question that degrees mattered to socially ambitious Ch'ing subjects. The shifting dynamics of examination success was to them a critical and troubling issue. The higher-degree holding literati (*shen-shih*) of Ch'ing China comprised holders of metropolitan-level (*chin-shih*) and provincial-level (*chü-jen*) degrees, who were eligible for selection to bureaucratic office and are sometimes known in the literature as the "upper gentry." There also were a far larger number of literati (sometimes called "lower gentry") who had only passed the prefectural-level examination (*sheng-yüan*) or acquired by purchase the status of government student (*chien-sheng*). The chances of advancement from the lower to the upper ranks of the degree-holder were never good. Perhaps one in a hundred candidates passed at each provincial examination, and one in thirty *chü-jen* sitting for the metropolitan examination successfully achieved the *chin-shih* rank.[52] According to the painstaking quantitative reconstructions of Chang Chung-li, the body of degree-holders altogether at the close of the eighteenth century probably totaled slightly over a million adult males (about one-tenth of which belonged to the so-called "upper gentry"), or one literatus in every three to four hundred of overall population.[53] Although the central stated reason for the existence of the civil service examination was as an instrument of bureaucratic recruitment, very few degree-holders ever served in government office. The total number of regular official posts in the empire in 1800 was around 20,000, or fewer than one post for every 50 higher degree-holders. A small but increasing number of literati served in adjunct government positions as education officers, and as members of appointed officials' private staffs (*mu-yu*). A larger number served as tutors and schoolteachers, usually in fairly humble circumstances. But the vast majority – the group who appear in late imperial sources as "local degree-holders" (*hsiang-shen*) – stayed at home, managing their landholdings and taking on a range of functions as, on the one hand, informal agents of the state and, on the other, representatives brokering the interests of local community, local elite, and, not least, themselves. The tension implicit in this

[51] See, for example, Esherick and Rankin, eds, *Chinese local elites*, especially the editors' introduction and the articles by Brook and Rowe.

[52] Ichisada Miyazaki, *China's examination hell: The civil service examinations of imperial China* (New Haven, 1976), pp. 38 and 121–2, and the chapter by Benjamin Elman.

[53] The density of literati within the population varied by region, however, and because of more favorable quotas was ironically greater in more peripheral areas. The density in southwestern Yunnan and Kweichow was three to four times that in the empire's wealthiest province, Kiangsu. Chung-li Chang, *The Chinese gentry: Studies on their role in nineteenth-century Chinese society* (Seattle, 1955), part 2.

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arrangement was typified by their activities in proxy tax remittance (*pao-lan*), a practice which was formally illegal yet – after the collapse of the Ming commoner-staffed fiscal canton sytem (*li-chia*) – was relied upon by most county magistrates as a cost-effective method of fiscal collection, and which could offer the literati a means alternatively to shield their local community from the worst predations of the state or to viciously exploit their less well-positioned neighbors.[54]

In a famous polemical article, the Japanese Marxist historian Shigeta Atsushi argued that the abandonment of *li-chia* in the Ming effectively inaugurated the era of "gentry rule" in China, whereby the imperial state in practice ceded to degree-holding large landlords control over their commoner neighbors once and for all. In a manner reminiscent of R. H. Tawney's analysis of the rise of the gentry in England, Shigeta saw the emergence of this *hsiang-shen* class as a direct function of the commercialization of the agrarian society, from which the large landowners derived the greatest profit, and portrayed the *hsiang-shen* as something akin to a rural bourgeosie. But changing status privileges also played a role in the consolidation of degree-holders' influence. In the Sung, lower degree-holders were entitled to only one chance to pass a higher examination; if they failed they were reduced once again to commoner rank. The Ming government bequeathed to the Ch'ing a system of perfunctory requalifying which in effect enabled lower degree-holders to hold privileged status for life.[55]

Whatever the merits of Shigeta's bold thesis, the actual privileges accruing to degree-holders were subject to much negotiation in the early and mid-Ch'ing. Vigorous efforts to collect back taxes and in the process break the autonomy of the Kiangnan elite under the Oboi regency were only temporary. The remainder of the long K'ang-hsi reign was marked by an increasingly cozy "throne-gentry alliance" between the emperor and selected officials recruited through the examination system.[56] But this in turn came under fire in the Yung-cheng reign, with the new emperor's stated policy of enforcing "equal obligations for literati and commoners" (*shih-min i-t'i tang-ch'ai*). In

[54] On the degree-holders' ambivalent role in local administration, see T'ung-tsu Ch'ü, *Local government in China under the Ch'ing*, ch. 10. For the collapse of *li-chia* and the search for alternatives, see Leif Littrup, *Sub-bureaucratic governance in China in Ming times* (Oslo, 1981), ch. 6.

[55] Shigeta Atsushi, "The origins and structure of gentry rule," in Linda Grove and Christian Daniels, eds., *State and society in China: Japanese perspectives on Ming-Qing social and economic history* (Tokyo, 1984), pp. 335–85. Shigeta's original Japanese article appeared in *Jimbun kenkyū*, 22, No. 4 (1971). More recently, James Shih has provided evidence that largely supports Shigeta's argument, at least for Kiangnan, but also shows that factors leading to the Ming "rise of the literati" were largely erased in Ch'ing times; see *Chinese rural society in transition*, pp. 39–44, and further discussion below.

[56] Jerry Dennerline, "Fiscal reform and local control: The gentry-bureaucratic alliance survives the conquest," in Frederic Wakeman, Jr., and Caroline Grant, eds., *Conflict and control in late imperial China* (Berkeley, 1975), pp. 86–120.

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1724, Yung-cheng abolished the privileged fiscal categories of "Confucian scholar-household" (*ju-hu*) and "official household" (*huan-hu*), and disallowed the practice of these notables serving as *pao-lan* tax proxies for their kinsmen. Two years later he ordered that the corvée exemptions afforded degree-holders be strictly limited to them as individuals, rather than extended to all other adult males in their household. When this encountered local official and literati resistance, the emperor sent central agents to the localities to enforce its implementation. Beyond the fiscal realm, Yung-cheng moved to bring about equal justice for tenants in disputes with their landlords, and to enforce stricter requirements in requalifying examinations for *sheng-yüan*.[57] Many (though not all) of these leveling initiatives of the Yung-cheng reign were undone by his successor. Viewing local degree-holders as allies more than as competitors in the assertion of central control, and anxious to show himself as a patron of education, the Ch'ien-lung emperor immediately upon his accession restored the privileged categories of *ju-hu* and *huan-hu* and called off ongoing campaigns against literati and official households for tax arrears. He emphatically reiterated the K'ang-hsi principle that *sheng-yüan* accused of crimes be exempted from criminal prosecution; they were to be turned over instead to the local educational commissioner for counseling.[58]

To the extent that the examination system was designed to provide an avenue for upward mobility into the elite for the ambitious and talented, most scholars have concluded that it succeeded reasonably well. There was of course an economic floor, below which no individual regardless of intellectual gifts would have had the leisure to undertake the immense task of classical studies necessary to give him even a remote chance of passing. But, within the ranks of the comfortably well-off, there seems to have been considerable mobility into the ranks of the status elite. Ping-ti Ho's laborious calculations based on family histories of thousands of successful examination candidates reveal that more than half of early and mid-Ch'ing *sheng-yüan* "came from obscure commoner families without previous elementary degree holders,"[59] at least not on the paternal side of their ancestry. Where did these *arriviste* literati come from? Despite the persistence of what Ho terms late imperial China's "Horatio Alger myth," there is little evidence that they came from the ranks of successful, hard-working cultiva-

[57] Feng Erh-k'ang, *Yung-cheng chuan*, pp. 164–72.

[58] Pai Hsin-liang, *Ch'ien-lung chuan* (Shenyang, 1990), pp. 26–8.

[59] Ping-ti Ho, *Ladder of success*, p. 124. See also the important qualifications suggested for Ho's calculations in Odoric Wou, "The extended kin unit and the family origins of Ch'ing local officials," in Joshua A. Fogel and William T. Rowe, eds., *Perspectives on a changing China* (Boulder, 1979), pp. 69–88. Even given Wou's more conservative estimates, the degree of upward mobility in Ch'ing society was hardly negligible.

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tors. As Johanna Meskill has beautifully depicted, it was possible for certain entrepreneurs of violence, the local "strongmen" (*t'u-hao*) who established themselves along the Ch'ing's various frontier pales, to bully themselves over the course of several generations into the ranks of civil, as well as military, examination degree-holders.[60] A more common path was through success in trade. More than a few genealogies of lineages rich in officials and degree-holders contain, upon close inspection, a sheepish admission that the lineage got its start as a prosperous merchant family.[61] The archetypal case in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was the merchants of Huichou, most of whom diligently and ostentatiously combined classical scholarship with commercial enterprise. They did this not merely for show, but out of a conscious strategy that saw merchant offspring take one or two stabs at the examinations and, if they did not succeed (as some did), shift to pursue a vocation in trade.[62]

The ironic result of this legal and actual accessibility of literati status was that, given the fact that the quotas for passing higher examinations remained relatively constant over the first two hundred years of Ch'ing while the population tripled, *downward* mobility for existing degree-holding households was an even more prevalent phenomenon than was upward mobility. The constriction of opportunity at all levels of the degree hierarchy was a significant source of frustration, both to households seeking initial entry into literati status and those seeking to reproduce that status among their offspring.[63] A variety of competitive strategies emerged in response, which in turn helped shape the composition of the examination elite. Households and lineages diversified geographically so as to capitalize on more favorable quotas in regions with generally lower educational levels (the southwest, unsurprisingly, was a favorite target area). Schools of scholarship (*hsüeh-p'ai*) sought to influence the content of the examinations, or at least patterns of grading, so as to favor systematically their own adherents. As Kent Guy has argued, the growing demand in the examinations for broad expertise in comparative philology (*k'ao-cheng*) represented, at least in part, a move on the part of literati from areas graced by huge private library collections (notably Kiangnan) to give a greater competitive advantage to their fellow regionals.[64] Most significant of all, in a society marked by rising literacy rates and the rapid

[60] Johanna Meskill, *A Chinese pioneer family: The Lins of Wu-feng, Taiwan, 1729–1895* (Princeton, 1979).
[61] See, for example, Rowe, "Success stories."
[62] Chang Hai-p'eng and T'ang Li-hsing, "Lun Hui-shang 'Ku erh hao ju' ti t'e-se," *Chung-kuo shih yen-chiu*, 4 (1984), pp. 57–70.
[63] Chang, *The Chinese gentry*, pp. 97–100; Ho, *Ladder of success*, pp. 147–8, 219–20, and 262.
[64] R. Kent Guy, "Fang Pao and the *Ch'in-ting ssu-shu-wen*," in Elman and Woodside, eds., *Education and society*, pp. 150–82.

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development of commercial publishing, was the proliferation of cribbooks of model examination essays. This had a variety of consequences. Somewhat "democratizing" the examination process gave rise to complaints about glib repetition of stock phrases and essays by those who saw their own erudition as more genuine. It ironically also spawned greater ingenuity in interpreting the classics by cribbook authors and publishers who sought to win for themselves a larger market share.[65]

Set alongside this constriction of examination success, and probably offsetting its severity to some extent, was the practice known as *chüan-chien*, selling the lower degree of *chien-sheng* in exchange for a contribution to government coffers. The venality of degrees was a well-established practice and was held by many to be a crucial component of "benevolent governance" (*jen-cheng*). The proceeds were used not merely to finance military campaigns and famine relief, but more importantly in the eighteenth century they were a routine means of stocking and restocking government granaries. It was praised by many among the official elite, such as long-serving provincial governors Yang Hsi-fu and Ch'en Hung-mou, not merely as a useful method of government finance but also explicitly as an outlet for upward mobility of the ambitious and public-minded. By mid-century one could purchase a degree either in cash or in grain, at Peking or in one's home province. Government enthusiasm and a certain level of competition among dispensing jurisdictions served to lower the price over time even as grain prices were climbing overall. A significant number of the purchasers were merchants.

There was literati hostility to the perceived cheapening of their hard-earned credentials, and the court occasionally took heed. The *chüan-chien* program began in the early years of K'ang-hsi's majority rule, and flourished under Yung-cheng, but Ch'ien-lung periodically put on the brakes. Only toward the end of his reign did military concerns prompt him to embrace it more enthusiastically.[66] The number of holders of purchased degrees throughout the society nevertheless rose steadily over the course of the early and mid-Ch'ing. By around 1800 there probably were more than 350,000.[67] There was no better example than this of what Ping-ti Ho termed "the fluidity of the Ch'ing status system."

[65] Kai-wing Chow, "Writing for success: Printing, examinations, and intellectual change in late Ming China," *Late Imperial China*, 17, No. 1 (June 1996), pp. 120–57.

[66] See variously Will, *Bureaucracy and famine*, pp. 190–1; Will and Wong, *Nourish the people*, pp. 27–30 and 50–2; Wu Hui and Ko Hsien-hui, "Ch'ing ch'ien-ch'i ti liang-shih t'iao-chi," pp. 125–26; Tai I, *Ch'ien-lung ti chi ch'i shih-tai* (Peking, 1992), p. 109. Sales of degrees actually slowed in the first half of the nineteenth century, before rapidly accelerating in the financially desperate decades of the Taiping Rebellion and its aftermath. See Hsü Ta-ling, *Ch'ing-tai chüan-na chih-tu* (Peking, 1950).

[67] Chang, *The Chinese gentry*, pp. 102–11.

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DEBASEMENT AND SERVITUDE

The commoner population of the Ch'ing empire might either be "free" (*liang*, literally "good"), a classification which brought with it full membership in "the people" or commoners (*min*), or else suffer the marginalization attendant on debasement (*chien*). The terms for the categories "*liang*" and "*chien*" were ancient ones. They survived into the Ch'ing as items of both legal and popular discourse, although, as Liang Ch'i-tzu has argued, they were now far less hard and fast than they had been in the past, and less clearly equated with economic standing – paupers (*ch'iung-jen*), for example, were no longer necessarily debased (*chien*).[68] From the legal point of view, the chief debility of debased status was ineligibility to sit for the examinations or to purchase a civil service degree; other stigmatizations were a function of local social practice. The relative minority of Ch'ing commoners which had forfeited their free (*liang*) status and suffered debasement did so under a variety of criteria: criminal, sexual, occupational, servile, and ethnic.

The first of these criteria was clear-cut. Convicted criminals, even those not incarcerated, were tattooed and returned to their home area in a status of effectively permanent debasement, which, as Fu-mei Chang Chen points out, usually made social rehabilitation out of the question. Convicts sentenced to exile in the northwest (Kansu and Sinkiang), though on occasion themselves literati and former officials, were similarly stigmatized.[69]

Related to this group were those adjudged by law and custom to be sexual deviants. Adulterous females, for example, were no longer free (*liang*), and the magistrate's court viewed violation of them sexually as a qualitatively different matter than sexual offenses against a woman of virtue.[70] A more complex issue was male deviance. The combination of population growth and female infanticide led to a growing gender imbalance in Ch'ing society, and with it a classic "marriage squeeze." Based on a painstaking study of published genealogies from T'ung-ch'eng county, Anhwei, Ted Telford has found the recorded incidence of males who survived to age twenty but never married to have been 6.5 percent for those born in the second half of the seventeenth century, a lower percentage than that for the Ming period overall. This rose steadily thereafter, however, to 8.2 percent for males born in the first quarter of the eighteenth century, and 16.1 percent for those born in that century's third

[68] Liang Ch'i-tzu, "'P'in-ch'iung' yü' 'ch'iung-jen'," pp. 144–51.

[69] Fu-mei Chang Chen, "Local control of convicted thieves in eighteenth-century China," in Wakeman and Grant, eds., *Conflict and Control*, pp. 121–42; Joanna Waley-Cohen, *Exile in Mid-Qing China: Banishment to Xinjiang, 1758–1820* (New Haven, 1991).

[70] Matthew H. Sommer, "The uses of chastity: sex, law, and the property of widows in Qing China," *Late Imperial China*, 17, No. 2 (Dec. 1996), pp. 77–130.

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quarter. (It reached 16.7 percent by the later nineteenth century.) As Telford notes, given the cultural proclivity for universal male marriage when economically feasible, this seems a reliable index of growing immiseration.[71] It also, however, represented a growing social problem. The ever larger percentage of unmarried males in the society – rootless (*wu-lai*), masterless (*wu-chu*), and without concerns of family impelling them to seek social opprobrium – was a source of all manner of disorderly conduct, real and imagined, as we shall see. One particular feature of this growing bachelor subculture was an apparent rise in male homosexuality. Homosexuality, of course, continued as in the past to be practiced by some at all levels of the socioeconomic scale, and indeed spawned such efforts at elite self-legitimation as the cult of the Rabbit God, Hu T'ien-pao.[72] What was particularly on the rise in the mid-Ch'ing, however, were unions of convenience (both sexual and economic, short term and long term) between lower-class males who had been squeezed out of both steady employment and the marriage market. As Matthew Sommer has demonstrated, Ch'ing legal and popular culture was relatively tolerant of men who assumed the male/dominant role in such relationships, but assigned demeaned status to their partners who allowed themselves to be penetrated, thus unfilially defiling the masculinity bequeathed them by their parents.[73]

As we have already noted, since the fifteenth century occupational mobility had been increasingly unfettered and diverse forms of livelihood had come to gain relatively equivalent cultural status. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the discursive trope of "*ssu-min*" (the four categories of the people) achieved general currency among the literati elite, the implication being precisely that various professional, industrial, and mercantile occupations ought rightly to be accorded equal respect with the traditionally venerated agriculture for their equal contributions to a productive economy, and their practictioners folded indiscriminately into the encompassing rubric of free or good people (*liang-min*).[74] Nevertheless, there remained a few occupations the pursuit of which brought debased status, at least in specific local areas. One such group comprised certain categories of yamen functionaries: runners, jailers, gatekeepers, coroners, and some types of police.[75] Others

[71] Ted A. Telford, "Family and state in Ch'ing China: Marriage in the T'ung-ch'eng lineage, 1650–1880," in *Family process and political process in modern Chinese history*, ed. Institute of Modern History (Taipei, 1992), pp. 921–42; see esp. table 13 on p. 936.

[72] Michael Szonyi, "The cult of Hu Tianbao and the eighteenth-century discourse of homosexuality," *Late Imperial China*, 19, No. 1 (June 1998), pp. 1–25.

[73] Matthew Sommer, "The penetrated male: Judicial constructions and social stigma," *Modern China*, 23, No. 2 (April 1977), pp. 140–80.

[74] Yü Ying-shih, *Chung-kuo chin-shih tsung-chiao lun-li yü shang-jen Ching-shen* (Taipei, 1987), pp. 104–21.

[75] Ching Chün-chien, *Ch'ing-tai she-hui ti chien-min teng-chi* (Hangchow, 1993), ch. 4; Chung-li Chang, *The Chinese gentry*, p. 183.

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included the musicians (*yüeh-hu*) of Shansi, the beggars (*kai-hu*) of Soochow, and certain fishermen (*chiu-hsing yü-min*) of Shaohsing. These were effectively closed castes, hereditarily denied occupational mobility and (by custom rather than law) intermarriage with the surrounding population. In the first several years of his reign, the Yung-cheng emperor made a persistent effort to elevate these persons to full *liang-min* status, part of a broader program of social leveling to which we shall return.[76]

The status of personal servility in the Ch'ing overlay significantly but highly imperfectly the category of debasement. Although the overwhelming majority of the Ch'ing population enjoyed relatively full personal freedom, and the trend, as we shall see, was toward ever more universal emancipation, a percentage of the population lived in a legally stipulated condition of personal servitude or dependence. In probably no case was this abject chattel slavery; as Preston Torbert notes, persons in all varieties of Ch'ing servitude were held to be "*pan-jen pan-wu*" (half human being and half material possession), the "human" half implying that they were fully responsible individual personalities under the law.[77] Unfree persons could be bought and sold, but only under certain highly (and increasingly) restricted conditions of state authorization.[78] It is also worth emphasizing that servitude operated at all socioeconomic levels. The banner system, for example, which replicated within itself the economic spectrum of the society as a whole, was founded and structured on the institution of personal dependence (see the chapter by Pamela Crossley in this volume). In addition there were "bondservants" (*pao-i*), like the banners a pre-conquest Ch'ing institution with no Ming Chinese precedent. The staffs of certain especially sensitive government agencies, such as the Imperial Household Department (Nei-wu fu) and the Court of Colonial Affairs (Li-fan yüan), were drawn top to bottom largely from persons of this category. Some, like the director of the Imperial Silk Factories in Kiangnan, Ts'ao Yin, might be enormously wealthy and cultivated. For many of these bondservants of official rank, there was in their life situation no observable hint of debasement.[79]

Not so for the far more significant number of unfree commoners. Some of these were domestic slaves (*chia-nei nü-p'u*). Many more worked in

[76] The classic study of the Yung-cheng emancipations is Terada Takanobu, "Yōseitei no semmin kaikōrei ni tsuite," *Tōyōshi kenkyū*, 18, No. 3 (1959), pp. 124–41. See also Feng Erh-k'ang, *Yung-cheng chuan* (Peking, 1985), pp. 377–86; Pei Huang, *Autocracy at work: A study of the Yung-cheng period, 1723–1735* (Bloomington, 1974), ch. 9.

[77] Preston M. Torbert, *The Ch'ing Imperial Household Department: A study of its organization and principal functions, 1662–1796* (Cambridge, Mass., 1977), pp. 53–6.

[78] Ching Chün-chien, *Chien-min teng-chi*, pp. 138–57.

[79] Torbert, *The Ch'ing Imperial Household Department*; Ning Chia, "The Li-fan yüan in the Early Ch'ing Dynasty" (diss., Johns Hopkins University, 1991); Jonathan D. Spence, *Ts'ao Yin and the K'ang-hsi Emperor: Bondservant and master* (New Haven, 1966).

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agriculture or, occasionally, in other kinds of production. Although these persons fell into a wide range of specific statuses, we can identify three major types. First were tenant-serfs (*tien-p'u*), remnants of the manorial (*chuang-yüan*) economy that had flourished in the Sung and Ming. In many parts of the empire, servile tenancy of this sort had been swept away in the cataclysm of dynastic change, but in early Ch'ing it survived in concentrated pockets from Honan to Kwangtung, and most notably in several Yangtze valley areas such as Anhwei's Hui-chou prefecture and parts of Kiangnan. As late as the beginning of the nineteenth century, some 200,000 persons fell into this category in Hui-chou alone, a considerable percentage of the prefecture's overall tenant population.[80] In many but not all instances *tien-p'u* status was hereditary (*shih-p'u*), but the ranks of servile tenants were constantly replenished in a variety of ways. Some individuals were condemned to this by the state, as a form of criminal punishment, and some came to it by release from domestic slavery, but most entered servility quasi-voluntarily, in response to economic exigencies. Ordinary tenants who rented land from a lineage's ancestral estate (*ssu-t'ang*, on which more below) sometimes for this reason were compelled to accept servility. Those who had no option but to accept lodging in the master's house, or to bury their parents in the master's family gravesite, were likewise treated as personal dependents. A male who married a female member of a *tien-p'u* household became a *tien-p'u* himself. Most frequently of all, tenants "sold themselves" (*mai-shen*), signing a written contract of indenture (such contracts have been discovered in Hui-chou with dates ranging from 1609 to 1929!). In Kiangnan, at least, the most common reason for so doing was to escape the onerous burdens of the head tax (*ting*), consigning one's land and labor to a local magnate who could afford to hire a stand-in for corvée service to the state.[81] Although under the Ch'ing it was illegal, markets and even brokers existed to mediate the process of selling oneself and one's descendents into servility.

[80] Yeh Hsien-en, *Ming-Ch'ing Hui-chou nung-ts'un she-hui yü tien-p'u chih* (Hofei, 1983), pp. 239–40. On the pre-Ch'ing manorial institution, see Sudō Yoshiyuki, *Chūgoku tochi seidoshi kenkyū* (Tokyo, 1954); Mark Elvin, *The pattern of the Chinese past* (Stanford, 1973), ch. 6. On the collapse of the system in the Ming-Ch'ing transition, see Mori Masao, "Jūroku-juhachi seiki ni okeru kōsei to jinushi denko kankei," *Tōyōshi kenkyū*, 27, No. 4 (1969), pp. 69–111; Fu I-ling, "Ming-mo nan-fang ti 'tien-pien' 'nü pien'," *Li-shih yen-chiu*, 5 (1975), pp. 61–7; Li Wen-chih, *Wan-Ming min-pien* (Shanghai, 1989); Elvin, *Pattern*, ch. 15; and Mi Chu Wiens, "Lord and peasant: The sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries," *Modern China*, 6, No. 1 (Jan. 1980), pp. 3–39. The best single source on the Ch'ing servile-tenant system is Yeh Hsien-en's *Ming-Ch'ing Hui-chou*, ch. 6. See also Wei Ch'ing-yüan, Wu Ch'i-yen, and Lu Su, *Ch'ing-tai nu-pi chih-tu* (Peking, 1982); Li Wen-chih, Wei Chin-yü, and Ching Chün-chien, *Ming-Ch'ing shih-tai ti nung-yeh tzu-pen-chu-i meng-ya wen-t'i* (Peking, 1983), introduction; and Ching Chün-chien, *Chien-min teng-chi*, pp. 236–51.

[81] Shih, *Chinese rural society in transition*, pp. 133–5.

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Yet *tien-p'u* status was a formal legal category – servile tenants by statute received different treatment in legal cases than did free *liang-min* – and its contracts enforceable in court. Throughout the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, the Ch'ing administration made serious efforts to apprehend and return those who sought to abscond from its obligations. The personal status (*shen-fen ti-wei*) of the *tien-p'u* varied greatly, according to a wide range of specified obligations of service, but in all cases deferential forms of personal address (*ming-fen*) were demanded when facing the master or members of his household. Economically, as well, life conditions of servile tenants varied. Virtually by definition all were landless, but some gradually came into possession of proprietary rights over the field's surface or "skin" (*t'ien-p'i*), which gave them security in their leasehold. Some became designated bondservant-managers (*chi-kang p'u*), overseeing fairly large estates for absentee or corporate (usually lineage) landlords. Others, though, were truly immiserated.

Although vestiges of the servile-tenant system could be found well into the twentieth century, economic forces over the first half of the Ch'ing apparently worked against its survival. Commercialization and the rising incidence of absentee landlordism made personal dependency of tenants a less attractive option for the elite. In one famous case, as early as 1660 the famous official and wealthy Kiangnan landlord Chang Li-hsiang manumitted his *tien-p'u* and converted them to free tenants. Such factors as increasing opportunities for nonfarm livelihood and the state's reduction of its corvée demands made commendation a less compelling option for the poor, drying up the influx of new households upon which the system depended. Indeed, the theme of much of the scholarly literature on this institution is the triumph of marketization and the transition from status to contract as a mode of labor recruitment. Suspiciously clichéd as this may sound, the evidence seems to support it.

The second form of agricultural servitude might work in practice much like the *tien-p'u* system, but had very different, non-Chinese roots. As of 1628, the leaders of the Jurchen people who were to become the Ch'ing rulers already possessed more that two million bondservants (*nü-pi*), and the number grew after they entered the pass. The new administration drew up quotas of the number of *nü-p'i* allotted to each noble and official: more than 10,000 for the emperor himself, 950 for each imperial prince (*ch'in-wang*), 270 for lesser imperial kinsmen (*chün-wang*), and proportionately fewer for ministers of state, imperial merchants (*huang-shang*), and so on. Numbers continued to be adjusted over the course of the eighteenth century.[82] The vast majority of

[82] Wei Ch'ing-yüan et al., *Ch'ing-tai nu-pi chih-tu*, ch. 1.

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these (around 400,000 adult males and their families) were agricultural laborers, assigned to the imperial, banner, and official estates (*chuang*) which the Ch'ing inherited from the Ming, commandeered or reclaimed. (Philip Huang estimates that between one-quarter and one-third of all cultivated land in the metropolitan province of Chihli had been left fallow by the devastations of the dynastic transition.) Both before and after 1644, freeholding farmers were forced to "commend" (*t'ou-ch'ung*) both themselves and their land to the conquerers, accepting the status of estate serf (*chuang-ting*) and paying rent instead of tax. Certain Han farmers (*po-min*) were forcibly removed beyond the pass to the Shenyang area, whereas others (*i-min*) followed voluntarily and accepted servile status in return for a leasehold. These Liaoning serfs, though bound to the land, managed their own farms, but those in north China generally worked as laborers on one of roughly a thousand concentrated estates of modest size, under an estate manager (*chuang-t'ou*) who himself was of servile status. Huang estimates that an average estate under a single *chuang-t'ou* would have comprised around 720 *mou* of land, six to eight oxen, and perhaps ten *chuang-ting* households.[83]

How significant was the aggregate scale of early Ch'ing agricultural estates is a matter of perspective. Huang suggests that the 20 million *mou* of estate land in Chihli amounted to 29 percent of all the province's arable, but Preston Torbert doubts that the entire bundle of imperial *chuang* (in both north China and Manchuria) ever amounted to more that one-half of 1 percent of the empire's total arable. On paper, at least, the amount grew over time, well into the early nineteenth century. But this nominal growth was greatly offset by the loss of effective control over estate land and labor by the state and its pensioners. In the eighteenth century banner land was legally marketable, and impoverished bannermen regularly sold it, often to their *chuang-t'ou* or even *chuang-ting* households. Already in the Yung-cheng reign state control over *chuang-t'ou* was highly uncertain, the latter routinely lending or investing estate funds, selling coal-mining rights on estate land, or developing the mines themselves with the use of *chuang-ting* labor.

Bondservants on imperial and banner lands were originally held to be "dependents" (*chia-jen*) of their landowner's household. Over the early eighteenth century they gradually were allowed to "*k'ai-hu*," that is, to legally reconstitute themselves as independently registered, albeit indentured, households in their own right. As early as the 1680s, the K'ang-hsi emperor

[83] Philip C. C. Huang, *The peasant economy and social change in north China* (Stanford, 1985), ch. 5. See also Ching Chün-chien, *Chien-min teng-chi*, pp. 93–111; Lee and Campbell, *Fate and fortune*, ch. 1; Torbert, *Imperial Household Department*, pp. 84–9; and Frederic Wakeman, Jr., *The great enterprise: The Manchu reconstruction of imperial order in seventeenth-century China* (Berkeley, 1985), pp. 469–76.

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authorized the more economically successful estate serfs to buy back their free commoner status (*kou-shen wei min*). In the 1730s and 1740s, the throne launched an incremental program of freeing them gratuitously (*fang-ch'u wei min*), first on the imperial estates, and then on the more extensive banner lands.[84] Rents paid by both serfs and free tenants on Ch'ing estates were commuted from grain to silver in the 1720s and 1730s as a means to improve collectability, but default and resistence to payment continued to mount nonetheless. By century's end the early Ch'ing effort to reverse the trend toward de facto small proprietor agriculture in north China had run its course. Marketized wage and rent systems prevailed, and the *chuang* had become in effect villages of free subsistence farmers (with the hereditary *chuang-t'ou* often the village headman). Philip Huang concludes the rural landscape looked very much like that of the early twentieth century.[85]

The third and final form of agrarian servitude involved hired labor.[86] "Hireling" (*ku-yung-jen*) existed as a legal category throughout the early and mid-Ch'ing. Those in this status warranted different legal treatment from either household slaves (*nü-p'i*) or free "ordinary persons" (*fan-jen*) who happened to be employed for pay. Contracts often (but not always) existed for all types of laborers, with those for *fan-jen* usually clearly specifying the term of employment and those for *ku-yung-jen* not so doing; in effect, the latter implied service for life, inheritance of this service by one's descendents, a clear status inequality with the master, and the master's right to demand certain personal services such as waiting at table. A late Ming law of 1588, remaining in force throughout the early Ch'ing, further added that if the term specified in a contract be "short" (a period left undefined) the worker would be presumed under law to be a free laborer; if "long," at least for the term of the contract, he or she was a dependent *ku-yung-jen*. As socioeconomic conditions and cultural attitudes changed, the law did not, contributing to growing tension in agrarian labor relations.

Beginning around the mid-eighteenth century, however, magistrates' courts tended in practice to treat laborers as status-equals with their employers in all instances where it was not contractually specified to the contrary, and to acknowledge workers' rights to leave upon the expiration of contracted term, to refuse to perform noncontractual personal services, and to quit their

[84] Wei Ch'ing-yüan et al., *Ch'ing tai nu-pi chih-tu*, pp. 169–88.

[85] Huang, *Peasant economy*, p. 85. For a concise overview of the process of land privatization, see Li Wen-chih, "Ts'ung ti-ch'üan hsing-chih ti pien-hua k'an Ming-Ch'ing shih-tai ti-chu ching-chi ti fa-chan," *Chung-kuo she-hui ching-chi shih yen-chiu*, 1 (1991), pp. 12–15.

[86] The following paragraphs are based on Li Wen-chih et al., *Nung-yeh tzu-pen-chu-i meng-ya*, pp. 245–7 and 265–89 (sections written by Ching Chün-chien); and Liu Yung-ch'eng, "Lun Ch'ing-tai ch'ien-ch'i nung-yeh ku-yung lao-tung ti hsing-chih," *Ch'ing-shih yen-chiu chi*, 1 (1980), pp. 91–112.

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employment if the demands of their work were altered without their consent. In 1759 a Shansi provincial judge named Yung-t'ai proposed to help resolve the growing legal ambiguity by instituting a simple temporal criterion: Regardless of whether or not a contract existed, a worker in place for less than five years ought to be seen as a *fan-jen*, one employed between five and ten years a *ku-yung-jen*, and one in service for more than a decade a *nü-p'i*. The court waffled. When final resolution came, in the revised Ch'ing code of 1786, the criterion was not the time of employment but rather its nature: If the laborer lived within the master's house and routinely performed household chores, he or she was a dependent servant, but anyone who lived apart and worked outside the house was a free hired laborer. Thereafter, this provision seems to have been rigorously enforced by local courts. In other words, the Ch'ing had moved to further strengthen the power of the head of the household (*chia-chang*) over those whose relation to him was pseudofamilial, while at the same time endorsing and extending the trend in agriculture toward a fully marketized relationship between landlord and free hired labor.

This general approach was most famously encapsulated in the reforms undertaken by the dynasty's third emperor during the first eight years of his reign (1723–30), reforms sometimes referred to as the "Yung-cheng emancipations." As described by most scholars, Yung-cheng sought to bolster the autocracy or absolutist rule of the throne by a process of social leveling, liberating his population from demeaned status and personal dependency ties to others, so as to create a broad, relatively undifferentiated class of free subjects of the throne.[87] But while there probably was indeed something of this in Yung-cheng's project, what he was actually doing was a bit more complex. Far from denying the propriety of personal servitude, Yung-cheng explicitly identified it as an expression of "differentiation between superior and subordinate" (*pien shang-hsia*), and naturalized it as a reflection of the cosmic order (*t'ien-ching ti-i*). Noting that breaches of ritual deference (*li*) between bondservant and master had been a major contributor to the collapse of his own dynasty's predecessor, he at the same time sought to inject into his overly lax Han subjects a dose of the more rigid ideas of deference of the preconquest Jurchens. Such servitude should be lifelong (*chung-sheng*) and hereditary (*shih-shih tzu-hou*). The key, however, was to differentiate those individuals who truly belonged in this servile relationship from the many more who did not. More vigorously than had previous Ch'ing rulers, but consistent with earlier policy, Yung-cheng sought to differentiate market-determined economic arrangements from the special legal category of bondservice, with the implication that local wealthy interests sometimes sought to conflate them. Thus,

[87] Terada, "Yōseitei;" Pei Huang, *Autocracy at work*.

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in 1727 he launched a major campaign to investigate just which persons throughout the realm had indeed entered a contractually determined legal servitude, tightening the controls over these, and which did not, these to be freed from servile obligations.[88]

Chief among those individuals who, Yung-cheng determined, did *not* belong in a servile relationship were tenants. The Ch'ing had consistently held to the position that, except in special cases such as bondservants on their own imperial estates, the landlord-tenant relationship was not equivalent to the master-servant one. As early as 1660 and 1681, for instance, the Shun-chih and K'ang-hsi emperors in turn had decreed that tenants did not necessarily accompany the field when the land was sold, but rather enjoyed the right to renegotiate their lease with the new landowner, or quit it altogether. The climax of this Ch'ing campaign for status equality of landlord and tenant came in early 1727, when, in response to a memorial from Honan's populist governor-general T'ien Wen-ching, Yung-cheng ordered a crackdown on such landlord presumptions as subjecting their tenants to corporal punishment and demanding sexual services of their women. The emperor also specifically targeted the hereditary serf-tenants (*shih-p'u*) of Hui-chou for manumission to *liang-min* status, though the fact that Anhuei province felt obliged to conduct a second emancipation of these households some eighty years later suggests that his efforts were not fully successful.[89]

In general, then, at the lower boundaries of the "commoner" stratum as well as at its upper one (that with the degree-holding elite), early and mid-Ch'ing society was experiencing mounting tensions between a status-driven and market-driven system of social hierarchy, and trying to clarify the appropriate boundaries between the two. The market-driven system was clearly ascendant, and with it a radically heightened incidence of vertical mobility. Contemporaries were aware of this, viscerally if not consciously. It clearly caused anxiety, and pushed them to seek new icons of constancy (the booming cult of widow chastity [*chieh-hsiao*], for example, has been read in this light)[90] and new means of guaranteeing social order, a preeminent value in a society which had so recently undergone prolonged social disintegration and warfare. On balance, however, most Ch'ing subjects seemed pleased that, in their age,

[88] Wei Ch'ing-yüan et al., *Ch'ing-tai nu-pi chih-tu*, pp. 108–9. See also Ching Chün-chien, *Chien-min teng-chi*, pp. 236–71; Torbert, *Imperial Household Department*, pp. 56–8. Follow-up edicts on this subject were issued by Yung-cheng in 1733 and by his successors in 1769 and 1809.

[89] Shih, *Chinese rural society in transition*, p. 138; Jing, "Hierarchy," pp. 173–8; Yeh Hsien-en, *Hui-chou*, pp. 239–40.

[90] See the controversial work by T'ien Ju-k'ang, *Male anxiety and female chastity* (Leiden, 1988). A more cautious linkage between anxiety over the evident breakdown of status distinction and efforts to rigidify gender ideology is drawn by Susan Mann, for example, in her *Precious records: Women in China's long eighteenth century* (Stanford, 1997), pp. 31–44.

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upward-mobility aspirations could be rewarded. As one beneficiary of this process, the long-serving provincial governor Ch'en Hung-mou (1696–1771), congratulated himself: "The inherited status hierarchy (*liu-p'in*) has never since antiquity been sufficient to constrain the truly superior man, but today more than ever those with drive and ambition enjoy opportunities for advancement, with no fear of impropriety."[91]

ETHNICITY

If population growth was one salient feature of the Ch'ing's first century and a half, territorial expansion was another. The geographic scale of the empire by 1800 had more then doubled over what it had been at the height of the Ming. But this comparison itself is suspect, since, as Pamela Crossley has reminded us, the Great Ch'ing empire (Ma. *Daicing*; Chin. *Ta Ch'ing*) was far more than simply the last in a long series of Chinese imperial dynasties, be they native or not. It was a self-consciously multiethnic universal empire in which those who conceived of themselves as "Han" people were but one among many groups of subjects, albeit a critically important one. Both spatially and ethnically it was the early and mid-Ch'ing which bequeathed to later eras the cumbersome (and sometimes divisive) entity known as "China." Just as we have seen in our preceding discussion of the status hierarchy, issues of "race" and "ethnicity" in this era were marked far less by essentialist ascription than by a striking mutability of labels swirling around the residual central category of "*min*," or free Han civilian commoner.[92]

The bulk of Ch'ing spatial expansion came in the northeast, the northwest, and the west, that is, into the old "Manchu" homeland itself, Mongolia, and Tibet. A major chunk of territory – nearly the size of the interior provinces altogether – was added with the 1759 incorporation of the "New Dominions," or Sinkiang. As James Millward has shown, the demands of political legitimation (including the Ch'ing emperor's claim to the Mongol title of Great Khan and other simultaneous Inner Asian mandates of rule) combined

[91] William T. Rowe, *Saving the world: Chen Hongmou and elite consciousness in eighteenth-century China* (Stanford, 2001).

[92] This ethnic fluidity which would characterize the Ch'ing was signaled even before the conquest, in the area outside the pass comprising today's Liaoning province. There, the coalescing "Manchu" conquest organization allowed race or ethnicity to be determined by a continuing dynamic of administrative convenience and strategic household choice, in the process of forming the Manchu, Mongol, and Han-chün banners. See Pamela Crossley, "The Tong in two worlds: Cultural identities in Liaodong and Nurgan during the 13th–17th centuries," *Ch'ing-shih wen-t'i*, 4, No. 9 (June 1983), pp. 21–46. On bannermen more generally, see Mark Elliott, "Resident aliens: The Manchu experience in China, 1644–1760" (diss., University of California at Berkeley, 1993), and the chapter by Crossley in this volume.

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with needs of *lebensraum* for the exploding Han population to override concerns of cost and to justify annexing this vast, predominantly Muslim region. Commercial integration proceeded rapidly, with administered ports-of-trade (*hu-shih*) increasingly bypassed by both Han and Inner Asian merchants. Between political exiles, Green Standard military colonies (*ping-t'un*), and civilian collectives (*min-t'un*), some 200,000 Han immigrants had converted large areas of northern Sinkiang's Ili valley to Han-style agriculture by around 1800.[93] At the other end of empire, in Taiwan, a stricter cost-benefit analysis impelled the regime to restrict agricultural colonization (projected land tax yields falling short of the expense of maintaining peace between Han and non-Han populations), until land hunger and the lure of profits from rice exports to mainland Fukien made the policy unenforceable.[94]

Expansive as these new territorial additions were, a notably more intensive process of cultural confrontation took place within the confines of the *nei-ti* ("China proper"), as lands in the southeast and southwest claimed for millennia as part of the empire but only sparsely peopled by groups self-conscious of being "Chinese," and highland peripheries throughout the interior provinces, became unprecedentedly attractive to agricultural pioneers. In Yunnan, Kweichow, and Kwangsi, and in parts of Szechwan, western Hunan, and southern Kwangtung (notably Hainan island), Han settlers undertook continuous processes of land reclamation and expropriation of non-Han lands, a process that accelerated dramatically with Yung-cheng's stepped-up *k'ai-k'en* campaigns of the early 1730s. Administered border markets (*hu-shih*) were set up to broker the trade in frontier products (such as timber and sugar) for which demand in the interior rapidly grew, but these were bypassed by private traders and rendered irrelevant almost as quickly as they were established. The mining boom of the second quarter of the eighteenth century, facilitated by Yung-cheng and Ch'ien-lung's progressive relaxation of bans on opening private mines and spearheaded by the mushrooming demand for Yün-Kwei copper as a monetary metal, brought still larger numbers of immigrants into these areas. In James Lee's analysis, the restoration of peace following the Three Feudatories Rebellion marked the transition from the centuries-old "first southwestern immigration" to the qualitatively larger and more socially disruptive "second immigration," which, among other things, significantly urbanized the region for the first time.[95]

[93] James Millward, *Beyond the pass: Commerce, ethnicity, and empire in Qing Central Asia, 1759–1864* (Stanford, 1998). See also Waley-Cohen, *Exile in mid-Qing China*; Chia, "Li-fan-yüan"; and P'eng Yü-hsin, *K'ai-k'en*, pp. 201–33.

[94] John Robert Shepherd, *Statecraft and political economy on the Taiwan frontier, 1600–1800* (Stanford, 1993).

[95] James Lee, "The legacy of immigration in Southwest China, 1250–1850," *Annales de demographie historique* (1982), pp. 279–304.

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The Ch'ing government responded with a concerted set of actions intended to bring these border regions to "enter the map" (*ju-t'u*): building roads, founding cities, registering households, bringing farmland (new and existing) onto the tax rolls, and inviting or coercing local populations (both indigenous and immigrant) to utilize the state's mechanisms of civil justice in preference to vendetta or other forms of conflict resolution. The most dramatic and often most provocative of these measures was "*kai-t'u kuei-liu*," replacing the venerable system of indirect rule through semiautonomous "native chieftains" (*t'u-ssu*) by a grid of county administrations, headed by professional bureaucrats sent out in rotation by Peking and, in theory at least, accountable solely to it. Here, too, reconstruction following the Three Feudatories Rebellion, in which a disturbing number of *t'u-ssu* had chosen the anti-Ch'ing side, provided both the impetus and a window of opportunity. Most of Hunan and Kwangsi underwent *kai-t'u kuei-liu* in the late K'ang-hsi reign, and, after spirited debate at court, the Yung-cheng emperor in 1726–28 committed himself to the project in earnest throughout the remainder of the aboriginal pale.

There was ongoing and often very bloody non-Han resistance, beginning in many areas in the course of Ch'ing consolidation during the Shun-chih reign. The She people of the Kwangtung-Kiangsi borderlands, in continual rebellion since Wang Yang-ming fought them in the 1550s, fought their last campaign of resistence a century later. Kwangsi and western Hunan were temporarily pacified around 1711, but Yunnan and (especially) Kweichow witnessed ethnic warfare throughout the 1720s and early 1730s, culminating in Chang Kuang-ssu's near-genocidal suppression of the "Ku-chou Rebellion" in western Kweichow in 1735–36. The Li people of Hainan launched a campaign to "expel guests" from their island in 1766, and the area remained in a state of simmering warfare through the end of our period. After an escalating series of localized disturbances in western Hunan and Kweichow throughout the later eighteenth century, the area once again exploded into full-scale rebellion in 1795, from the Ch'ing perspective coinciding ominously with the outbreak of the White Lotus Rebellion in the northwest and, in Donald Sutton's assessment, marking the final unsatisfactory denouement of a century of fitful and often muddle-headed policy experiments in the region.[96]

[96] On Ch'ing administrative incorporation and local resistance, see variously: Ma Shao-ch'iao, *Ch'ing-tai Miao-min ch'i-i* (Wuhan, 1956); Kent C. Smith, "Ch'ing policy and the development of southwest China: Aspects of Ortai's governor-generalship, 1726–1731" (diss., Yale University, 1970); Pei Huang, *Autocracy at work*, pp. 274–98; Feng Erh-k'ang, *Yung-cheng chuan*, pp. 230–45; John E. Herman, "Empire in the southwest: Early Qing reforms to the native chieftain system," *JAS*, 56, No. 1 (Feb. 1997), pp. 47–74; Donald S. Sutton, "Ethnicity and the Miao frontier in the eighteenth century," and

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It was in these areas, far more than on the external frontiers, that Han immigrants and representations of their "Manchu" rulers came to face a profound challenge of alterity. Who or what were these "savage" (*k'uang-yeh*) indigenous populations? How did their continued existence comment on the universalist pretensions of Confucian cultural models? What did this suggest about who "we" are? And – not least – where was the line between "them" and "us" to be drawn? Since the late Ming a cottage industry had grown up portraying in printed words and pictures the exotic character of these people for a fascinated public back home; one such work, the *Ch'i-ya* (Wonders of the south) by K'uang Lu (1604–50), who had lived among the Yao and described their environment, culture, and folktales with a distinct emphasis on the bizarre, went through several reprintings in the early and mid-Ch'ing. A process of "orientalization" not unlike that undertaken by the expansionist West toward exotic cultural groups rendered southern non-Han peoples quaint, picturesque, and doomed to be overrun by a superior "civilization." The rich diversity of these frontier peoples was reported, appreciated, and even savored, but still they were gradually conceptually reduced to a single, undifferentiated other – the "Miao" or "Miao-man" – by both expansionist officials and the public at large. Reporters puzzled at their orgins: were they a separate, quasi-human species, or simply lower on the evolutionary scale than Han Chinese and sinicized Inner Asians?[97] Few were inclined to accept the threatening views of the sixteenth-century political exile Yang Shen (1488–1559), one of the earliest influential ethnographers of the southwest, that the world in fact might hold a multiplicity of "*min*," co-equal in their human essence if not in cultural sophistication and material power. ("The Han are just one of the ethnic groups in the empire," Yang had written, "and we include many different types of *min*.")[98]

Diverse understandings of the nature and capacities of the "Miao" (in the sense here of a generic category, not of a particular ethnicity), as much as differences in policy goals, underlay the vigorous debates in the eighteenth century as to how ethnic interaction on the frontiers ought to be managed. Those who doubted the capacities of frontier peoples to readily absorb the virtues of Han culture argued in essence for a policy of quarantine, staking off, in some cases by a line of fortifications, an "aboriginal pale" (*pien-chiang*

Anne Csete, "Ethnicity, conflict, and the state in the early to mid-Qing: The Hainan highlands, 1644–1800," both in Pamela Crossley, Helen Siu, and Donald Sutton, eds., *Empire at the margins: Culture, ethnicity and frontier in early modern China* (forthcoming).

[97] This literature is sensitively surveyed in Claudine Lombard-Salmon, *Un Example d'Acculturation Chinoise: La Province du Guizhou au XVIIIe Siècle* (Paris, 1972).

[98] Yang Shen, "On 'the people'" (*Lun min*), cited in Lee, "Legacy of immigration," p. 292. See also Lombard-Salmon, *Un Example d'Acculturation Chinoise*, pp. 57–9.

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or *Miao-chiang*), within which non-Han populations were to be left as much as feasible undisturbed in their "savage" state. In western Hunan, a specific set of "Miao sub-statutes" (*Miao-li*) was developed in the 1730s, under the provisions of which – in eerie anticipation of the terms of extraterritoriality in post-Opium War sino-Western relations – non-Han people were to be largely exempted from Ch'ing law and disciplined only under local customary sanctions. Chinese immigration into these regions was discouraged, and soldiers, settlers, or merchants who insinuated themeselves too cozily into frontier society ran the risk of being designated "*Han-chien*," renegades or traitors to their race.[99]

Adamantly opposed to this line of thinking were assimilationists, who argued for the fundamental human capacity for enlightenment of frontier populations, and the corresponding "civilizing mission" of the Han. A fairly recognizable cohort of frontier-affairs specialists pursued this line wherever they were posted, epitomized by the fiery local official Lan Ting-yüan (1680–1733), who propagandized conversion of the natives successively in the southwest, in Hainan, and in Taiwan. In the hands of such men the political goals of securing borderlands and improving economic productivity on the margins of empire dovetailed with an aggressive Confucian elite project of civilizing (*chiao-hua*) commoner populations not only on the frontiers, but also at home. In Lan's heyday, under the radically activist Yung-cheng emperor, the civilizing mission dominated imperial policy toward non-Han populations. Under Yung-cheng's successor, though moments of activism still could be found, a more conservative isolationist approach largely prevailed.

One major focus of the debate was schooling. In the late K'ang-hsi reign, Chinese language elementary schools had begun to be set up in non-Han areas of the southwest, and a provision introduced that successors to native chieftainships must be graduates of these institutions. The unsurprising result was a heightened incidence of conflict and resistance on the part of claimants who found themselves thus deprived of their succession. Under Yung-cheng the government response was not to back down, but rather to aggressively accelerate the founding of schools throughout the region, culminating in Yunnan provincial treasurer Ch'en Hung-mou's phenomenal drive in the mid-1730s to blanket that province's landscape with over six hundred "charity schools" (*i-hsüeh*), offering a rigidly Confucian curriculum of literacy, ritual propriety, and agronomy.[100] As early as the Shun-chih reign, special affirmative action

[99] Sutton, "Ethnicity and the Miao frontier." For the contours of the debate in the Yung-cheng reign, see Feng Erh-k'ang, *Yung-cheng chuan*, pp. 230–45.

[100] Smith, "Ch'ing policy and the development of southwest China," pp. 147–49; Herman, "Empire in the southwest"; William T. Rowe, "Education and empire in southwest China: Ch'en Hung-mou in Yunnan, 1733–1738," in Elman and Woodside, eds., *Education and society*, pp. 417–57.

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quotas had begun to be set up in specified local areas for "Miao" and "Yao" (as opposed to "*min*") to pass the civil service examination, and this program continued to be expanded into new areas throughout the first half of the eighteenth century. (Ironically, of course, this provided administrative reification for these populations' non-"*min*" status, even as it sought to offer individual Miao a means to bridge that divide.)[101] Beginning at mid-century, however, the Ch'ien-lung emperor began to register his dismay at the failure of such mechanisms to produce an indigenous non-Han elite of reliable political loyalty. In 1751 he ordered the closing of most frontier schools in Kweichow, and in 1759, in response to a Hunan official's assimilationist argument to extend education in non-Han areas of that province, he railed "The Miao barbarians should be kept illiterate!"[102]

The Ch'ing administration was relatively consistent over the period to 1800. (With the exception of Sinkiang after 1759, the significant Han immigration into these areas went on without major government support.) The policy was not the wholesale Han colonization of these frontier areas but instead was to make good imperial subjects out of populations that were already there – what might be called the process of "*min*-ification." There were a complex set of markers of *min*-ification, adopted or resisted by frontier individuals as part of a prolonged dynamic throughout this era and beyond. Acceptance of Confucian schooling, with its implications of use of the Chinese spoken and written language, was but one. Another was acceptance of Han techniques of sedentary agriculture (themselves of course undergoing innovation during this era of widespread introduction of New World crops, especially at agriculture's extensive margin) and, with this, Han notions of property. A key signal here was household registration (*hu-chi*) and enrollment in land tax registers; the administration pushed this in non-Han areas less for fiscal reasons than out of the view that it was a "meaningful ritual" of both political allegiance and ethnic transformation.[103] Changes in costume and personal grooming – adoption of Han commoner dress and the Manchu queue – were visual symbols of "civilization" urged on non-Han peoples more or less gradually by frontier officials. Even more central were acceptance of the Han patrilineal-patrilocal family system and funerary ritual. Some officials promoted the cult of widow chastity (*chieh-hsiao*) as a synec-

[101] Chung-li Chang, *The Chinese gentry*, pp. 80–1. According to James Lee, "Legacy of immigration," p. 304, the program had notable success in the southwest, producing over 70 non-Han *chin-shih* in the century 1750–1850, roughly three times the number in the previous four centuries altogether.

[102] Chang P'eng-yüan, "Yün-Kuei ti-ch'u shao-shu min-tsu ti she-hui pien-i chi ch'i hsien-chih," in Institute of Modern History, ed., *Chung-kuo hsien-tai-hua lun-wen chi* (Taipei, 1991), p. 260; Sutton, "Ethnicity and the Miao frontier."

[103] Csete, "Ethnicity, conflict, and the state."

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doche for the broader corpus of Han domestic practice, and burial of the dead in permanent gravesites neatly encapsulated Han cultural ideals of sedentary residence, land proprietorship, patrilineality, and generational deference.

Intermarriage was perhaps the ultimate marker of an individual's sense of identity, just as attitudes toward intermarriage epitomized the stance of elite individuals toward what ethnicity meant as a whole. Here, too, there was ongoing debate. In 1707, Hunan governor Kuo Shih-lung made Han-Miao miscegenation a criminal act in his province, assuming the outcome of such unions to be devolution of the Han spouse more often than civilization of the "savage" one. Two decades later the Yung-cheng court extended this policy to the entire aboriginal pale. But almost immediately the ban was rescinded on a locality-specific basis. Finally in 1764 another Hunan governor, this time Ch'en Hung-mou, convinced the Ch'ien-lung court to declare the general legality of intermarriage, providing it was Han nuptial ritual which was employed. Assimilationist attitudes triumphed, but so too did recognition of the practical reality of ethnic mutability.[104] Review of the recent scholarly literature makes clear above all else the fruitlessness of any essentialist understanding of ethnic identity on the early and mid-Ch'ing frontiers. Han and non-Han were routinely at war with each other, but in specific localities military allegiances were often surprisingly situational, with Han and non-Han groups standing together against common enemies (often the state). The boundaries between the groups themselves were porous, and constituted by a complex range of factors. "Min" and "Miao" were administrative categories, to be sure, but both in law and in local cultural practice an individual's or household's identity was subject to continual negotiation.

Consideration of categories such as "Tan" and "Hakka," population groups whose inclusion in the normative categories of "*min*" and "Han" was oftentimes arbitrary, reveals even more clearly the processes of ethnic negotiability. The conventional narrative of Tan origins stresses Han migration from north China to the Pearl River delta in the middle imperial period, their displacing non-Han aborigines from the favored lowlands and driving groups such as She to highland areas and the Tan to dwelling offshore on boats. More recent scholarship, however, observing that there is virtually no physiological or linguistic difference between Tan and Han, posits instead that they emerged from the same population as a function of the reclamation of coastal land (*sha-t'ien*) after the seventeenth century. The winners in this contest – those who were able to secure farmstead – became "*min*," and those who lost out became Tan. There remained the possibility for Tan to "*min*-icize" them-

[104] Lombard-Salmon, *Un Example d'Acculturation Chinoise*, pp. 224–5; Rowe, "Education and empire," p. 420; Sutton, "Ethnicity and the Miao frontier."

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selves, and in the socially dynamic early and mid-Ch'ing many did just that. Those who succeeded in "getting landed" via success in fishing and commerce, further reclamation of shoreline, or even piracy, would take surnames, begin to reckon their descent genealogically, and establish ancestral halls and gravesites. Again, one of the principal reasons for anti-Tan prejudice was precisely that, as offshore dwellers, they did not bury their dead and were thus ritually polluted. If one owned land, paid land tax, and registered one's household with the authorities, renegotiation of one's ethnic identity was apparently not very difficult.[105]

A secondary, but in practice often key, determinant of ethnic status was ability to sit for the examinations. Imperial law had at no time identified the Tan as a category other than "*min*" and accordingly had not excluded them from eligibility. It was local custom in the delta which had done so, and it was these customary practices that the Yung-cheng emperor attacked in 1729, explicitly declaring Tan and other stigmatized groups to be "ordinary commoners" (*fan-min*), with all the rights and privileges thereof. In the decades that followed, some Tan did take the examinations with success. Here again, however, there was predictable social resistance on the part of populations who saw their own chances of examination success mathematically diminished, and here again the Ch'ien-lung emperor, bowing to elite pressure, backtracked. In response to a 1771 memorial concerning the musician households (*yüeh-hu*) of the north, he broadened the memorialist's intent, decreeing that no one whose forebears had been in any of the social categories declared "*fan-min*" by his father a half-century earlier was eligible to sit for the examinations until four generations had elapsed since their acquistion of land and household registration with the local authorities. It was such regressive steps which effectively guaranteed that ethnic labels such as "Tan" in Kwangtung and "T'uo-min" (fallen people) in Chekiang would continue to confer pariah status on certain Chinese households well into the twentieth century.[106]

As with the Tan, recent scholarship on the Hakka (*k'o-chia* or "guest households") no longer posits a genealogical origin for the group discrete from that of other Chinese populations of south China. Part of the broader southern migration of the middle imperial era, this group's distinctiveness was not originally biological, but rather the product of their settlement into a

[105] Helen Siu and Liu Zhiwei, "Lineage, market, pirate, and Dan: Ethnicity in the Pearl River delta of south China," in Crossley, Siu, and Sutton, eds., *Empire and ethnicity in late imperial China*.

[106] Ching Chün-chien, *Chien-min teng-chi*, pp. 233–6; Chung-li Chang, *The Chinese gentry*, p. 183. On the *t'uo-min*, a free but debased caste of nonfarming barbers, peddlers, and wedding and funeral attendants in Ningpo and Shaohsing, see Ching Chün-chien, *Chien-min teng-chi*, pp. 203–4, and James Cole, *Shaohsing: Competition and cooperation in nineteenth-century China* (Tuscon, 1986), pp. 65–72.

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distinctive ecological niche: highlands in reach of cost-effective marketing of mountain products to major concentrations of lowland population. To this habitat they adapted themselves technologically and culturally, most strikingly by evolving a more gender-blind division of labor and a more nucleated kinship system than other agrarian populations. The fact that they initially settled into a relatively compact and isolated stretch of territory, the Mei River valley in northeastern Kwangtung, meant that their speech also evolved in distinctive ways. Generations of endogamy probably reinforced a certain physiological distinctiveness as well.

The economic boom of the early and mid-Ch'ing offered unprecedented opportunities for the sorts of technologies the Hakka had developed in their highland habitat – mining, timbering and harvesting of forest products, cultivation of upland commercial crops such as ramie, indigo, tea, and tobacco – and they consequently fanned out into peripheral areas of Kwangtung, Fukien, Kiangsi, and beyond. Here they were readily distinguished from the existing lowland populations, who profited (as landlords, merchants, and consumers) from the Hakka's unique skills, but ostracized them socially. As with the Tan and the T'uo-min, the Hakka's characteristic landless mobility stigmatized them for their improper and un-"Han" disposition of ancestral remains. It was probably only in the eighteenth century that the term "Hakka" itself entered legal and popular discourse. Though they had long shared a common dialect and certain customary practices, it was only around 1800 that a translocal ethnic identity came to unite the Hakka people, the product of a newly emergent, degree-holding Hakka intellectual elite.[107]

As a comment on mid-Ch'ing views of ethnicity, one of the most intriguing aspects of the Hakka experience was their partial conflation in popular consciousness with the "*p'eng-min*," the broader group of semitransient highland dwellers whom we have already encountered. *P'eng-min*, who appeared in increasing numbers throughout the Ch'ing in upland peripheries surrounding the valleys of the Yangtze and its major tributaries, included many Hakka and shared with them their ecological and occupational niche, but were much more diverse in language and local origin. It was the attitudes of their lowland neighbors and, eventually, the administration which gradually constructed them as a discrete social category. There was never serious question but that *p'eng-min* were "Han," nor that they were both free and nonservile, but were they nevertheless "*min*"? The administration sought in most cases to register them as households in their adoptive regions, and where pos-

[107] Leong, *Migration and ethnicity*, pp. 75–81.

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sible to settle them on permanent farmsteads, a policy that many *p'eng-min* themselves actively resisted,[108] but the conflict with host populations over the scarce resource of examination quotas made such efforts doubly difficult. In the wake of a *p'eng-min* uprising in parts of Kiangsi in 1723, the Yung-cheng court declared them sufficiently "*min*" to sit for the local examinations provided they owned land and had ancestral gravesites in the district, but only under a special supplementary quota which, again, granted administrative reality to their existence as in effect a separate caste. The Ch'ien-lung regime some forty years later abolished this affirmative action measure as well, and without adverse social consequence, until the economic downturn in the early nineteenth century once again raised tensions throughout areas of *p'eng-min* concentration.[109]

To sum up, questions of race, ethnicity, and "subethnicity" were enormously complicated in the early and mid-Ch'ing, and they were in notable flux. Virtually every area, even the empire's heartland, had groups of their own linguistic and cultural distinctiveness, and in certain instances these peculiarities might combine with economic factors to impose on their bearers a castelike tinge of ethnic inferiority.[110] Sensitivity to issues of race or ethnicity seems to have been greatly heightened in this era by the existence of a regime which identified itself (at times more strongly than others) as other than "Han," by the much more intense confrontation with indigenous populations on both external and internal cultural frontiers, and by the Ch'ing regime's vigorous although inconsistent efforts to define just who within their realm the "*min*" were and were not. Older views of a broad social "emancipation" under the Yung-cheng emperor have been considerably problematized by more recent scholarship, and we now understand the course of sociocultural change to be less linear than we once imagined. Nevertheless, the dynamic of ethnic constituency in this period shifted, on balance, to one allowing far greater subjective agency in negotiating one's identity than had earlier been the case.

[108] Liu Min points out that *p'eng-min* aversion to acquiring land title, and with it the need to register their household with the authorities, led in many areas of *p'eng-min* concentration to annual rents on land exceeding its sale price on the local market. Liu Min, "Lun Ch'ing-tai p'eng-min ti hu-chi wen-t'i," *Chung-kuo she-hui ching-chi shih yen-chiu*, 1 (1983), p. 28.

[109] Leong, *Migration and ethnicity*, pp. 103–8, 132–5, and chs. 5–9 passim; Chung-li Chang, *The Chinese gentry*, pp. 80–1. See also P'eng Yü-hsin, *K'ai-k'en*, pp. 138–50; Averill, "The shed people"; Osborne, "Local politics of land reclamation."

[110] A striking example of this process (from the nineteenth century, but with parallels in the seventeenth and eighteenth) is the creation of the "Su-pei jen" ethnic underclass in Shanghai. See Emily Honig, *Creating Chinese ethnicity: Subei people in Shanghai, 1850–1980* (New Haven, 1992). For other relevant discussions of the concepts of race and ethnicity in the late imperial context, see Pamela Kyle Crossley, "Thinking about ethnicity in early modern China," *Late Imperial China*, 11, No. 1 (June 1990), pp. 1–34; and Frank Dikötter, *The discourse of race in modern China* (Stanford, 1992).

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AGRARIAN RELATIONS

Rural social relations saw dramatic changes in the early and mid-Ch'ing. These were largely the result of two sets of factors. The first were the demographic shifts already described: the growth from a condition of considerable depopulation at the outset of the dynasty to unprecedented population densities by 1800, a phenomenon that radically altered relative supplies of land and agrarian labor, and pioneering settlement of both external and internal frontiers. The second set of factors involved what might be called the "marketization" of rural social relations. These latter processes relate to economic trends discussed in detail elsewhere in this volume,[111] but which we may briefly summarize here.

The most obvious evidence of the penetration of the market into rural life was the increasing importance of commercialized agriculture. According to the painstaking reconstructions of Wu Ch'eng-ming, although farming at the end of the eighteenth century still remained significantly oriented to subsistence production, a large and growing percentage of cultivation was directed toward market exchange. On the eve of the Opium War, more than a tenth of the empire's output of rice, a quarter of the raw cotton, half of the raw silk, and virtually all tea was distributed by the commercial market. A substantial percentage of this was marketed interregionally. Analyzing nearly nine hundred rural criminal cases for all of China during the Ch'ien-lung reign, Wu Liang-k'ai found nearly a third to involve households cultivating commercial crops. The Ch'ing administration actively encouraged commercialization, both by gradually shifting the land tax more completely from grain to cash, and by a variety of policies aimed at actively encouraging commercial circulation (*liu-t'ung*) of agricultural produce. In Shensi, for example, one of the empire's least commercialized regions, Kao Wang-ling has described a persistent eighteenth-century program by provincial authorities to break the hold of subsistence monoculture and encourage greater market-oriented diversification of production.[112]

Some parts of the empire commercialized more pervasively than others, with cost-effective riverine access to markets a major determinant, but few were left untouched. Fukien, a major tea and sugar producer, and Kiangnan, which produced cotton and silk, had shifted to commercial agriculture during the Ming, and remained the most intensely commercialized areas through the

[111] See the chapter by Ramon Myers and Yeh-chien Wang on economic developments in this volume.

[112] Wu Ch'eng-ming, "Lun Ch'ing-tai ch'ien-ch'i wo-kuo kuo-nei shih-ch'ang," *Li-shih yen-chiu*, 1 (1983), pp. 96–106; Wu Liang-k'ai, "Ch'ing-tai Ch'ien-lung shih-ch'i nung-yeh ching-chi kuan-hsi ti yen-pien ho fa-chan," *Ch'ing-shih lun-ts'ung*, 1 (1979), pp. 5–36; Kao Wang-ling, *Shih-pa shih-chi Chung-kuo ti ching-chi fa-chan ho cheng-fu cheng-ts'e*, pp. 38–45 (on Shensi) and passim.

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Ch'ien-lung reign. The Liang-Kiang governor-general in 1775 estimated that that only 20–30 percent of Kiangnan farm households grew their own grain.[113] The story in the first half of the Ch'ing dynasty was essentially the rapid geographic spread of the commercialization which Kiangnan had spear-headed, and indeed helped induce elsewhere. As cotton textile production in the Yangtze delta outran the region's own production of raw cotton, areas within cost-efficient reach of it (especially those north on the Grand Canal, where boatmen carrying tribute grain northward would take southbound freights at very low rates in preference to returning empty) began to shift to cotton. A mid-eighteenth-century Hopeh governor estimated that in portions of his province, 80–90 percent of households were cotton farmers, and the total numbers in Honan and Shantung (Kiangnan's principal suppliers) were even greater.[114] Kiangsi's Kan River valley in Ming had become a commercial rice supplier to Kiangnan, and in early Ch'ing the province's peripheral highlands added commercial production of indigo, tung oil, and tea. Hupeh's Yangtze valley prefectures also turned to cotton cultivation, initially in service of Kiangnan but eventually for export-oriented textile production locally. The province's southern portion developed a major tea industry, and the Han River valley began to export tobacco, pears, nuts, cabbages, and melons.[115] Szechwan's repopulation was spurred in large part by the Red Basin's boom in production of export rice for Kiangnan and elsewhere down-river.[116] In Lingnan, farm households of Kwangtung turned during the K'ang-hsi reign to commercial cultivation of mulberry, sugar cane, and semi-tropical fruit, while those in Kwangsi grew rice for export to their increasingly grain-deficient neighbor.[117]

Perhaps no province underwent as rapid commercialization in the first half of the Ch'ing as did Hunan. Hunanese rice exports to the lower Yangtze had

[113] Mi Chü Wiens, "Cotton textile production and rural social transformation in early modern China," *Journal of the Institute of Chinese Studies* (Chinese University of Hong Kong), 7, No. 2 (Dec. 1974), p. 521. On Kiangnan, see also Philip Huang, *The peasant family*, esp. ch. 3, and Li Po-chung, "'Sang cheng tao-t'ien' yü Ming-Ch'ing Chiang-nan nung-yeh sheng-ch'an chi-yüeh ch'eng-tu ti t'i-kao," *Chung-kuo nung-shih*, 1 (1985), pp. 1–12. On Fukien see Evelyn S. Rawski, *Agricultural change and the peasant economy of south China* (Cambridge, Mass., 1972), ch. 4; Zhuang Guotu, *Tea, silver, opium, and war: The international tea trade and Western commercial expansion into China in 1740–1840* (Hsia-men, 1994), esp. ch. 2; and Robert Gardella, *Harvesting mountains: Fujian and the China tea trade, 1757–1937* (Berkeley, 1994), ch. 1. Northwest Fukien (Min-pei) produced the great majority of early tea exports to Europe, which began their rapid expansion in the 1720s.

[114] Wiens, "Cotton textile production," p. 519.

[115] Li Hua, "Ch'ing-tai Hu-pei nung-ts'un ching-chi tso-wu ti chung-chih ho ti-fang shang-jen ti huo-yao," *Chung-kuo she-hui ching-chi shih yen-chiu*, 2 (1987), pp. 50–60; Liu Ts'ui-jung, *Trade on the Han river and its impact on economic development, c. 1800–1911* (Nankang, 1980).

[116] Wang Ti, *Kua-ch'u feng-pi ti shih-chieh: Ch'ang-chiang shang-liu ch'u-yü she-hui yen-chiu (1644–1911)* (Peking, 1993), pp. 139–47 and 203–11.

[117] Li Hua, "Ming-Ch'ing shih-tai Kuang-tung nung-ts'un ching-chi tso-wu ti fa-chan," *Ch'ing-shih yen-chiu chi*, 3 (1984), pp. 135–49; Inada Seiichi, "Seibei tōun ko," *Tōhōgaku*, 71 (Jan. 1986), pp. 90–105.

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been significant in the late Ming, but were reduced to near zero during the dynastic transition. Recovery in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries was swift and dramatic, aided by extensive riverine and lakeshore land reclamation and by achievement of much higher yields on existing land, due to expansion of irrigation networks and the use of more and better fertilizer. By the Yung-cheng reign, the province sent between one and two million *shih* of rice per year downriver to Nanking; in around 1800 a single county, Ch'i-yang, sent over 100,000 *shih*. The majority of Hunan's interregional rice exports came from the province's eastern half – the areas of the Tung-t'ing Lake and the Hsiang River valley – but portions of the Yüan River valley in western Hunan also developed a significant *intra*provincial export rice trade, in part to feed areas like An-hua, I-yang, and Hsin-hua, where tea cultivation (exported in this era primarily to the northwest and Mongolia) attracted ever larger populations of commercial cultivators. As Shigeta Atsushi, Evelyn Rawski, and others have shown, Hunan's early Ch'ing commercial boom led to far more pronounced social stratification, but tremendous payoffs for the most fortunate, reflected in a greatly increased incidence of examination success.[118]

A related aspect of marketization was the monetization of the rural economy. Commercialization of agriculture, and especially the growing number of rural nonfood producers, created a mushrooming popular demand for copper coins and silver. So too did the government's shift to land tax collections in cash (part of the "single-whip" tax reforms begun in late Ming, but extended progressively to broader areas of the empire under Ch'ing), and the resulting demand for cash rents on the part of tax-paying landlords. As imports of monetary metal from Japan dried up after about 1700, and New World imports proved erratic, the Ch'ing sought to meet the demand for coin through liberalized domestic mining policies, but, for most of the eighteenth century, the demand for money still increased more rapidly than supply.[119]

[118] The literature on early and mid-Ch'ing Hunanese commercialization is enormous. See for example Nakamura Jihei, "Shindai Kokō kome ryūtsū no ichimen," pp. 53–65; Kitamura Hironao, "Shindai no shōpin shichō ni tsuite," *Keizaigaku zasshi*, 28, No. 3 (1952), pp. 1–19; Shigeta Atsushi, "Shinsho ni okeru Konan beishichō no ikkōsatsu," *Tōyō bunka kenkyūjo kiyo*, 10 (1956), pp. 427–98, and "Shinmo ni okeru Konan cha no shin zankai," in his *Shindai shakai keizai shi kenkyū* (Tokyo, 1975), pp. 207–38; Rawski, *Agricultural change*, ch. 5; Peter C. Perdue, *Exhausting the earth: State and peasant in Hunan, 1500–1850* (Cambridge, Mass., 1987); and Chung Yung-ning, "Shih-lun shih-pa shih-chi Hsiang mi lun-ch'u ti k'o-hsing-hsing wen-t'i," *Chung-kuo she-hui ching-chi shih yen-chiu*, 3 (1990), pp. 65–71.

[119] Within a large literature, see Liang Fang-chung, *The single whip method of taxation in China* (Cambridge, Mass., 1956); Ch'üan Han-sheng, "Mei-chou pai-yin yü shih-pa shih-chi Chung-kuo wu-chia ko-ming ti kuan-hsi," in his *Chung-kuo ching-chi shih lun-ts'ung* (Hong Kong, 1972); Ch'en Chao-nan, *Yung-cheng Ch'ien-lung nien-chien ti yin-ch'ien pi-chia pien-tung* (Taipei, 1966); and Hans Ulrich Vogel, "Chinese central monetary policy, 1644–1800," *Late Imperial China*, 8, No. 2 (Dec. 1987), pp. 1–52.

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Yet a third aspect was the ever-fuller commodification of landed property. We have spoken already of the privatization over the eighteenth century of the manorial-style official and banner estates in north China. Along with this went the more subtle yet more socially wrenching removal of various encumbrances on patrimonial land in the private sector, including the gradual decline of the institution of conditional sale (*hsiao-mai*) in favor of outright and nonredeemable alienation, and the gradual loss of customary rights of kin to make claims on land sold on the market by an individual owner. One response to the latter phenomenon, as we shall see, was the more extensive use of ancestral trusts (*t'ang*) and charitable estates (*i-chuang*) by lineage leaders to prevent dissipation of lineage property. Thomas Buoye has convincingly demonstrated the increasing incidence of interpersonal violence spawned by conflicts between individuals cherishing older versus newer notions of real property rights. Although the Ch'ing government was less proactive than many Western states in establishing the principle of free alienability of land, it did sporadically move to dictate and enforce contractual terms of sale based on the notion of fee-simple, relatively absolute property rights, once the market itself had come to encourage these. It did so in part out of the view that this was beneficial to economic development. Lan Ting-yüan in Taiwan, for example, argued that the state ought to do whatever it could to put land rights in the hands of those who would put that land to most productive economic use.[120] Even more, it seems, the government sought to help keep the peace.[121] Whatever success the regime might have had in eliminating "feudal encumbrances" on land markets was confounded, however, by the emergence of new and elaborate forms of contract tenancy.

A final aspect of market penetration was the diversification of labor allocation on the farm, particularly the much increased reliance on domestic handicrafts as an income supplement among rural households. The clearest (and most studied) example of this was spinning and weaving of cotton in the Yangtze delta region. Cotton cultivation had been introduced into Sungkiang prefecture in the late thirteenth century, and gradually during Ming cotton textiles from this area gained an expanding market, displacing hempcloth and other homespun fabrics as the favored material of commoner

[120] Shepherd, *Statecraft and political economy on the Taiwan frontier*, p. 17.

[121] Thomas Buoye, "From patrimony to commodity: Changing concepts of land and social conflict in Guangdong province during the Qianlong reign (1736–1795)," *Late Imperial China*, 14, No. 2 (Dec. 1993), pp. 33–59; Melissa Macauley, "Civil and uncivil disputes in late imperial Fujian, 1723–1820," in Kathryn Bernhardt and Philip C. C. Huang, eds., *Civil law in Qing and republican China* (Stanford, 1994), pp. 85–121. On the more general question of the Ch'ing state's attitude toward property rights, see Philip C. C. Huang, *Civil justice in China: Representation and practice in the Qing* (Stanford, 1996).

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clothing empirewide. The early and mid-Ch'ing saw a rapid further increase in this handicraft industry, with cotton production spreading beyond Sungkiang and (unlike silk weaving, which remained a male, urban, specialist occupation) dramatically dispersing beyond city and suburb into the broader countryside. The more effective use of labor during the agricultural slack season, and more efficient household division of labor (cotton weaving was largely, and cotton spinning nearly exclusively, a female task), played an ever increasing role in allowing subsistence and reproduction of the small farm household under conditions of growing per capita land shortage. At the same time, the dependence of textile-producing tenant households on their landlords was displaced considerably by dependence on the commercial cloth shops (*pu-hang*) which provided rural producers with raw cotton and bought, finished, and marketed their product.[122]

These combined factors of demography and commercialization had major impacts on land tenure relations in all parts of the empire. The pervasiveness of landlordism and the degree of land concentration in a given region tended to be a function of the region's level of commercialization. Large-scale landlordism was the rule, for example, in Kiangnan, in areas such as Anhwei's Huichou and T'ung-ch'eng, in the commercial rice-planting lowlands of Kiangsi, Hukwang, and Szechwan, and in the developing Pearl River delta. In many of these areas corporate landlords – lineage trusts and temples – owned a significant percentage of the arable. As we shall see, in its own distinctive way large-scale landlordism also prevailed in commercially connected areas of pioneering settlement in Taiwan and various interior highlands. By contrast, in areas where the land did not provide a marketable surplus sufficient to support much more than the farm household itself, areas including most of the north and northwest, occasional small-scale landlords struggled to survive amidst a general landscape of owner-cultivator farms. Even the areas of Hopei, Shantung, and Liaoning that, at the start of the Ch'ing, had been expropriated as aristocratic and government estates, largely reverted in the eighteenth-century to yeoman-style, small proprietor farming. Relative to central and south China, rates of tenancy in these areas were very low.

The Ch'ing authorities were on balance solicitous of propertied interests. Although in the process of dynastic transition some private holdings in the Peking area were expropriated to create banner and other stipendiaries, probably more typical was the case of peninsular Shantung, where local landlords in ongoing armed conflict with lower-class sectarians quickly threw in their

[122] Wiens, "Cotton textile production"; Fang Hsing, "Lun Ch'ing-tai ch'ien-ch'i mien-fang-chih ti she-hui fen-kung," *Chung-kuo ching-chi shih yen-chiu*, 1 (1987), pp. 79–94; Huang, *The peasant family*, pp. 53–4 and 84–8; Shih, *Chinese rural society in transition*, pp. 111–30.

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lot with the conquest regime and were rewarded with strong Ch'ing support.[123] Whereas the Ch'ing sought to delimit the permissible scope of servile dependency in land tenure arrangements, it also strongly upheld the master's perquisites where these were deemed legitimate, and consistently supported landlords' property rights and claims to rent.[124]

The one region where a pattern of state-landlord antagonism prevailed was in Kiangnan, home not only to the empire's greatest accumulations of private wealth, but also to a tradition of cultural, and intermittently political, resistence to imperial rule. The 1660s, as noted earlier, saw a focused Ch'ing attack on Kiangnan's great landlords, including restriction of their literati status privileges (notably exemption from corvée assessments), scrutiny of the legality of their bondservant systems, and sudden demands for payment of back taxes. After a period of reconciliation in the later K'ang-hsi reign, Yung-cheng in the 1720s once again threatened the landed elite with his program of folding corvée assessments into the land tax (*t'an-ting ju-ti*). This obvious shift of the fiscal burden to property holders prompted market strikes (*pa-shih*) and other orchestrated resistence on the part of wealthy Kiangnan households, but to little avail.[125] The result has been variously described as the "levelling" of Kiangnan society, a displacement of office-holding landlords (*kuan-shen ti-chu*) by those of commoner status (*su-min ti-chu*), and the transition from a highly stratified rural society with servile social relations to communities of co-equal, relatively small-scale, semi-autonomous cultivators.[126]

Market forces, even more than the state, played a role in the shifting positions and strategies of early and mid-Ch'ing landlords. The reduced population of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries kept rents low and wages high, inclining some landlords to reduce the size of their holdings or abandon rentier landholding altogether. Many began to shift the balance of their investments to usury. (Literati-controlled pawnbroking began the dramatic expansion it continued into the early twentieth century.)[127] Others

[123] I Songgyu, "Shantung in the Shun-chih reign: The establishment of local control and the gentry response," trans. Joshua Fogel, *Ch'ing-shih wen-t'i*, 4, No. 4 (Dec. 1980), pp. 1–34, and 4, No. 5 (June 1981), pp. 1–31; Wakeman, *The great enterprise*, pp. 424–36.

[124] For example see Shigeta, "Konan beishichō," and Zelin, "Rights of tenants in mid-Qing Sichuan."

[125] Kuo Sung-i, "Lun 'T'an-ting ju-ti'," *Ch'ing-shih lun-ts'ung*, 3 (1982), pp. 1–62.

[126] Wakeman, *The great enterprise*, pp. 1050–73; Li Wen-chih, "Tsung ti-kuan hsing-shih ti pien-hua k'an Ming-Ch'ing shih-tai ti-chu ching-chi ti fa-chan," pp. 15–18; Shih, *Chinese rural society in transition*, pp. 176–81. For the political history of the Yung-cheng tax initiatives, see Madeleine Zelin, *The magistrate's tael: Rationalizing fiscal reform in eighteenth-century China* (Berkeley, 1984).

[127] The number of pawnshops in the empire doubled, to nearly twenty thousand, in the second quarter of the eighteenth century. Abe Takeo, "Shindai ni okeru tentōgyō no susei," in *Haneda hakushi shōju kinen tōyōshi ronsō* (Kyoto, 1950), pp. 1–36; Elvin, *Pattern of the Chinese past*, pp. 248–50; T. H. Whelan, *The pawnshop in China* (Ann Arbor, 1979), pp. 9–10. Nakamura Jihei has shown how pawnbroking in eighteenth-century north China routinely financed that bastion of elite status and sociability, the local academy (*shu-yüan*); "Shindai Santō no shoen to tentō," *Tōhōgaku*, 11 (1955), pp. 100–9.

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turned to managing their holdings themselves directly, in the process investigating new labor-saving technologies (soy-cake fertilizer vs. home-made liquid manure) and crops (mulberry and fruit trees).[128] Gradually over the early eighteenth century, the combination of higher yields, commercialization, and especially after around 1740 escalating grain prices made land a more attractive investment. Rents rose steadily. They remained far higher than in England, for example, where they fell dramatically over the early modern era, but they rose less rapidly than did land prices, diminishing the rate of return on rentier landlordism and apparently inclining large numbers of landowners, albeit a minority, to direct management of their own properties.[129]

There has been vigorous debate among historians in China over the extent of such proto-capitalist "managerial landlords" (*ching-ying ti-chu*) in Ch'ing. The pioneering 1959 work on the subject by Jing Su and Luo Lun[130] found the emergence of this social type in western Shantung only in the second half of the eighteenth century, but other evidence suggests an earlier appearance elsewhere. In parts of the lower Yangtze, for example, a tradition existed already in the late Ming of urban literati families managing suburban estates which combined fruit orchards, vegetable market gardens, fish hatcheries, and other interrelated enterprises.[131] Other managerial landlords, including several in western Shantung, were of merchant origin. Rentierism probably remained the predominant form of landlordism at most times and places. But rentierism itself could take many forms, varying from the export-rice planters of Hunan and Szechwan, who farmed through tenants but lived in the countryside and vigorously oversaw the collection and marketing of their lands' output, to the urban absentees of Soochow who, at some point in the Ch'ing, began to disconnect themselves completely from their holdings by relying on professional agencies (*tsu-chan*) to collect rents and even recruit their tenants.[132]

It was only in the 1780s that the impact of population pressure began to tip the balance of economic leverage decisively in favor of landowners versus renters and wage laborers. For most of the earlier period, the real winners in

[128] Shih, *Chinese rural society in transition*, pp. 142–7.

[129] Li Wen-chih, "Ti-chu ching-chi chih yü Chung-kuo feng-chien she-hui ch'ang-ch'i yen-hsü wen-t'i lun-kang," *Chung-kuo shih yen-chiu*, 1 (1983), pp. 37–50, and "Lun Ch'ing-tai Ya-p'ien chan ch'ien ti-chia ho kou-mai-nien," *Chung-kuo she-hui ching-chi shih yen-chiu*, 2 (1989), pp. 1–12.

[130] Translated by Endymion Wilkinson as *Landlord and labor in late imperial China: Case studies from Shandong* (Cambridge, Mass.: Council on East Asian Studies, 1978). See also Huang, *Peasant economy and social change*, ch. 6, which also argues for the emergence of managerial landlords (of smaller scale than those identified by Ching and Su) in north China in the later eighteenth century.

[131] Fu I-ling, *Ming-tai Chiang-nan shih-min ching-chi shih-t'an* (Shanghai: Shang-hai jen-min, 1963), pp. 63–65; Wakeman, *The great enterprise*, pp. 605–9.

[132] Muramatsu Yuji, "A documentary study of Chinese landlordism in late Ch'ing and early republican Kiangnan," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 29, No. 3 (1966), pp. 1–43.

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the countryside likely were the more successful market-oriented tenant farmers. The trend toward greater personal freedom for tenants, discussed earlier, was matched for many by a greater degree of economic autonomy. The increasingly recognized right of disposition of one's crop was important, as was the type of rent. Analyzing nearly nine hundred cases from the Yung-cheng and Ch'ien-lung eras, Liu Yung-ch'eng finds that by this era labor rents had all but disappeared, and sharecropping too had declined. It was present in just over 10 percent of his sample cases. The majority of tenants paid fixed rents, either in kind (59.8 percent) or in cash (27.3 percent).[133] This, in a context of increasing yields, rapid commercialization, and rising farm prices, allowed some – by no means all – leaseholders to achieve enhanced levels of comfort and prosperity.

The complex family strategies employed by successful leaseholders is illustrated by the case of one Liu Wei, a tenant farmer in Mien-chou, Szechwan, during the Ch'ien-lung era. Liu fathered six sons, which, depite his relative prosperity, proved too large a family to feed adequately off his leasehold alone. So he divided his farm among his four eldest sons, requiring that they each support themselves and their wives on their share, and took his younger sons and left. He worked for a period as a hired weaver, and when his younger sons reached sufficient age he hired them out as agricultural laborers. Accumulating their pooled wages over several years, he used this to purchase an inventory and establish himself as a petty cloth merchant, traversing a circuit of local markets over three counties for a ten-year period. With his profits he was able to procure leaseholds for his two younger sons, and see to their marriages. He had thus spawned six successful farm families, while never owning any farmland whatsoever.[134]

A variety of novel tenure and rent arrangements grew up in this context of shifting interests.[135] One was rent deposit (*ya-tsu*), the practice of land-

[133] Liu's figures show considerable consistency from one region to another. Sharecropping remained most prominent (27.9 percent) in north China, but so too were fixed cash rents (46.5 percent). Liu Yung-ch'eng, "Ch'ing-tai ch'ien-ch'i ti nung-yeh tzu-tien kuan-hsi," *Ch'ing-shih lun-ts'ung*, 2 (1980), pp. 56–88. As James Shih points out, another increasingly common form of leasehold favorable to tenant interests was an elastic rent with a fixed maximum.

[134] Fang Hsing, "Lun Ch'ing-tai ch'ien-ch'i ti-chu chih ching-chi ti fa-chan," *Chung-kuo shih yen-chiu*, 2 (1983), p. 96.

[135] The classic study is Niida Noboru, "Shina kinsei no ichiden ryōshu kankō to sono seiritsu," *Hōgaku kyōkai zasshi*, 64, Nos. 3 and 4 (1946). I draw here primarily upon Feng Erh-k'ang, "Ch'ing-tai ya-tzu-chih yü tsu-tien kuan-hsi ti chü-pu pien-hua," *Nan-k'ai hsüeh-pao*, 1 (1980), pp. 61–7; Han Heng-yü, "Shih-lun Ch'ing-tai ch'ien-ch'i tien-nung yung-tien ch'üan ti yu-lai chi ch'i hsing-chih," *Ch'ing-shih lun-ts'ung*, 1 (1979), pp. 37–53; Lin Hsiang-jui, "Fu-chien yung-tien ch'üan ch'eng-yin ti ch'u-pu k'ao-ch'a," *Chung-kuo shih yen-chiu*, 4 (1982), pp. 62–74; and Liu Yung-ch'eng, "Ch'ing-tai ch'ien-ch'i ti nung-yeh tzu-tien kuan-hsi," pp. 67 and 78–80. See also Buoye, "From patrimony to commodity," pp. 130–1; Shih, *Chinese local society in transition*, pp. 162–71; and Zelin, "Rights of tenants."

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lords demanding substantial up-front payments from prospective tenants, sometimes refundable at expiration of the lease and sometimes not, but usually claimed in return for offering a below-market annual rent. Rent deposits had been found in isolated pockets of Kiangnan and the southeast coast during the Ming, but their rapid spread throughout the Yangtze valley and the south was a phenomenon of the early and mid-Ch'ing. Liu Yung-ch'eng found their existence in nearly a quarter of his Ch'ien-lung era survey cases. Initially, rent deposits became institutionalized as a function of landlord weakness, as an attempt to ensure tenant reliability under conditions of relaxed servility compulsions, high geographic mobility, and labor shortage. But they also proved useful as a means of capital generation, aiding landlords in undertaking further land reclamation and, as in rapidly commercializing Szechwan, market investment. As the century wore on and the relative position of landholders vs. labor improved, demands for rent deposits increased rather than declined.

A corollary development was referred to by Ch'ing contemporaries as "two lords to a field" (*i-t'ien liang-chu*) or "surface" vs. "subsurface" landownership, and is known by scholars today as "permanent tenancy rights" (*yung-tien-ch'üan*). As a matter of contract, Liu Yung-ch'eng found these in only about 8 percent of his sample, nearly all from coastal areas, but we know that they existed informally in early Ch'ing rental arrangements more broadly. This stipulation, essentially a guarantee against eviction barring rent default, might be granted a prospective tenant under a variety of circumstances: as an enticement under conditions of extreme labor shortage, in return for payment of rent deposit or for performing the labor of land clearance, or in exchange for signing over title to a landlord by an owner-cultivator unable to make it on his own. Permanent tenancy (or "surface" landownership) rights could also be purchased in a growing secondary market, which confounded official attempts to simplify and absolutize notions of real property ownership. To the growing class of "rich tenants" in the eighteenth century, permanent tenancy rights were a tremendous asset. They allowed not only security of tenure but also the incentive to make capital improvements to one's leasehold by introducing new irrigation systems, for example, or planting fruit trees or other crops with long maturation periods. The rights also could be alienated for a profit via sale or sublease.

As the position of property versus labor improved over the course of the Ch'ien-lung reign, however, and the market value and annual yields of their property increased, landlords sought with growing success to abrogate any such agreements, what in contemporary terminology was called "raising the rent and replacing the tenant" (*tseng-tsu chuan-tien*). Violent resistence, occasionally collective, was often the result. Tenants in Kiangsu's Lake T'ai area

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who had made capital improvements to their land or otherwise saw its productivity enhanced were successful in the mid-eighteenth century in demanding compensatory "transfer fees" (*ting-shou ch'ien*) from tenants brought in to displace them, but gradually landlords wrested the power to claim these too for themselves, transforming them into simply another form of rent deposit. By the end of the century, in most regions, the heyday of rich tenants was over, but the process of marketization and the principles of land alienability and labor mobility had triumphed.

The elaboration of leasehold arrangements was seen in its most baroque form at the extensive margins of mid-Ch'ing agriculture. On the island frontiers of Taiwan and Hainan, and in highland areas of pioneering settlement throughout central China, reclamation of new arable involved multiple layers of proprietorship. An aboriginal headman "mountain lord" (*shan-chu*), or a well-connected elite land developer (*k'en-shou*), would be granted by the government formal title to an extensive stretch of property, which he would subdivide among other entrepreneurs who would in turn bring in tenants to undertake clearance and preparation for cultivation. The end product could be claims to "large rent" (*ta-tsu*) or "small rent" (*hsiao-tsu*) on a given field by any number of parties through which title or leasehold had at some stage passed. All the claims could themselves be marketed.[136] This, plus the fact that the reclamation had usually been done with an eye firmly on the new land's potential for commercial cropping, prompted the eminent historian Fu I-ling to remark that, ironically, "capitalism" in Chinese agriculture emerged first not in the older and most productive lowland areas, but rather "in some economically backward, mountainous, and rural feudal locales."[137]

Perhaps the most significant change in agrarian society during the period was the widespread emergence of freely hired farm labor.[138] In all parts of the empire use of such labor was on the rise. Within Wu Liang-k'ai's large sample of homicide cases, the number involving hired laborers in rapidly commercializing Kwangtung and Szechwan tripled between the mid-1750s and 1770s, while those in more subsistence-oriented Shansi nearly doubled.[139] Reasons for this probably included the pervasive monetization of the rural

[136] Comparable land tenure arrangements are discussed in passing in Rawski, "Han River highlands"; Averill, "The shed people"; and Meskill, *A Chinese pioneer family*, pp. 45–9. A more detailed discussion of this system as it emerged in Taiwan is Ch'en Ch'iu-k'un, "Private property rights and family process: A study of the Ta-tsu-hu (primary rent-holders) in frontier Taiwan, 1700–1850," in Institute of Modern History, eds., *Family process and political process*, pp. 745–78.

[137] Fu Yiling (Fu I-ling), "Capitalism in Chinese agriculture: On the laws governing its development," *Modern China*, 6, No. 3 (July 1980), p. 314.

[138] Liu Yung-ch'eng, "Nung-yeh ku-yung lao-tung"; Wu Liang-k'ai, "Nung-yeh ching-chi kuan-hsi."

[139] These numbers may of course reveal the greater degree of contentiousness in rural labor relations as much as a simple rise in the incidence of hired labor, but they do seem to suggest the latter as well.

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economy, the shift to more labor-intensive commercial crops, and, at least in some instances, the emergence of larger-scale "managerial" farms. Government policies such as the attack on servility in agrarian relations, the introduction of "hired labor laws" (*ku-yung-fa*), and the shift from corvée to hired labor for state maintenance projects (a shift associated with the *t'an-ting ju-ti* tax reforms) also played a role. By the end of the eighteenth century, labor use in agriculture typically involved hiring by contract specifying the term of employment and computing wages based on locally pertaining market rates and the individual worker's skill level.

A portion of this growing workforce represented the kind of "partial proletarianization" depicted by Philip Huang in Hopeh and Shantung. There, downwardly mobile families responded to increasingly adverse man-land ratios by selling ever larger amounts of family labor to their more successful neighbors, yet chose for reasons of culture and standing within the village (effectively, "*liang-min*" status) to retain at least a semblance of a family farm, even in the face of declining per capita returns.[140] Elsewhere, however, a more unambiguous form of rural proletarianization was clearly at work. The Ch'ing relaxation of inhibitions on geographic movement along with the new hired-labor laws permitted the rise of a migrant workforce, sometimes traversing seasonal routes, sometimes even more fully footloose. In localities throughout the empire "labor markets" (*jen-shih*) emerged, consensually agreed-upon sites where workers, often from distant and diverse regions, would advertise themselves for hire on a daily, weekly, or task basis to local farm managers. Liu Yung-ch'eng has found eleven such labor markets operating in the Ch'ien-lung era in one Honan county alone.[141] The mobility, fluidity, and structural change of mid-Ch'ing society was here evident for all to see.

WORK

Although Confucian ideology continued to accord primacy to the twin endeavors of agriculture and scholarship – "ploughing and reading" (*keng-tu*) – early and mid-Ch'ing witnessed an active process of occupational diversification and specialization.[142] In a milieu of growing economic and cultural complexity, new avenues of livelihood were opened and older ones attracted

[140] Huang, *Peasant economy and social change in north China*, ch. 6; compare also Wu Liang-k'ai, "Ch'ing-tai Ch'ien-lung shih-ch'i nung-yeh ching-chi kuan-hsi ti yen-pien ho fa-chan," pp. 11–13. Huang sees the process of "partial proletarianization" as especially pronounced in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but notes also its beginnings in the second half of the eighteenth.

[141] Liu, "Nung-yeh ku-yung lao-tung," pp. 102–3. The county was Lin-hsien.

[142] This section omits discussion of work undertaken specifically by women (*nü-kung*). For analysis of that significantly growing component of the Ch'ing labor force, see the chapter by Mann in this volume.

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new practitioners. With rising literacy rates and the *per capita* constriction of opportunities for official service, for example, literati and literate commoners (what might be seen as the Ch'ing's growing "white collar" workforce) actively staked out a variety of new professionalized careers. Some of these emerged at the fringes of government itself – a government which kept its number of formal official personnel relatively constant while its informal sector inevitably grew along with the population it sought to administer. In the late seventeenth century, literate men from Chekiang's Shaohsing prefecture employed sophisticated networking strategies to deploy themselves and their compatriates into clerkships in the Six Ministries at Peking, and from there into county clerkships in Peking and their provincial capital of Hangchow, into various "miscellaneous" (*tso-tsa*) bureaucratic posts throughout the empire (ranging from magistrates' assistants to local jail wardens), and, most notably, into positions as private secretaries (*mu-yu*) in the service of local and provincial officials everywhere. This diaspora of classically educated Shaohsing secretaries represented a self-conscious professonal cadre of individuals who had undergone extensive, organized training in their job skills.[143] The clerks (*hsü-li*) who staffed the Ch'ing's prefectural and county administrations, a group whose numbers grew to the hundreds of thousands empirewide, were not so refined as the private secretaries. But recent local archival research from Szechwan demonstrates that these indispensible functionaries, so villified by officials and populace alike, might also develop a dignified professional ethic and sophisticated mechanisms of internal group discipline.[144]

At the fringes of the government apparatus was the new class of "degree-holding directors" (*shen-tung* or *tung-shih*). With the collapse of the Ming's *li-chia* system of subcounty administration, operation and maintenance of local infrastructural projects such as water conservancy installations and granaries fell increasingly to local private landowners of modest means but significant literate education and local repute. Heading up local maintenance "bureaux" (*chü*) and responsive to community deliberations (*kung-i*) as to what projects needed to be accomplished and how to allocate costs, these managers, at least in the lower Yangtze region, often became significantly professionalized, possessing specialized competence in accounting and hydraulic engineering, and living off the salaries they received for their work.[145]

[143] Cole, *Shaohsing*.

[144] Bradly W. Reed, "Money and justice: Clerks, runners, and the magistrate's court in late imperial Sichuan," *Modern China*, 21, No. 3 (July 1995), pp. 345–82.

[145] Chung-li Chang, *The income of the Chinese gentry* (Seattle, 1962), ch. 2; Mark Elvin, "Market towns and waterways: The county of Shanghai from 1480 to 1910," in G. William Skinner, ed., *The city in late imperial China* (Stanford, 1977), pp. 441–74; Elvin, *Pattern of the Chinese past*, pp. 260–7; Shih, *Chinese local society*, pp. 176–81.

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Literati who had failed to gain entrance into officialdom had long turned to teaching as a means of livelihood, but the literacy aspirations of early Ch'ing society and the rapid proliferation of community and lineage schools created many more opportunities for careers, modest and unglamorous but reliably remunerative, in this sector.[146] The tremendous growth of the reading public, consuming the many varieties of how-to books and other middlebrow literature we have earlier catalogued, also brought with it new careers as professional authors, editors, and printers. The publishing industry, often sophisticatedly organized along lines of family and locality, offered an attractive combination of commercial gain and just enough literati prestige to allow some of its more successful members to hobnob with the examination elite.[147] Other literati, possessing esoteric training in the growing corpus of published medical texts, staked out for themselves respectable careers as medical practitioners. Especially in the first half of the Ch'ien-lung era, these new physicians undertook a collective effort to refine and standardize the corpus of diagnostic, pharmacological, and therapeutic lore which comprised the foundation of their emerging discipline.[148]

If medical professionals found acceptance into elite circles somewhat difficult, it proved nearly impossible for the burgeoning numbers of legal professionals, charitably referred to by some contemporaries as "litigation masters" (*sung-shih*) but more piquantly by others as "litigation thugs" (*sung-kun*). Often itinerant scholars who mixed pettifoggery with teaching or other hack literati activities, this group emerged in response both to the late empire's overproduction of educated men relative to regular channels for their employment, and to the Ch'ing state's remarkable receptivity to hearing civil litigation. Blamed by officials on the one hand for raising the incidence of this litigation to unmanageable levels, and on the other for driving their clients into penury by unduly protracting legal cases, their activities were explicitly criminalized in 1725. In popular lore the litigation master was frequently celebrated for his cleverness, and for providing the downtrodden a channel to official justice which sidestepped the power hierarchies of local society.[149]

[146] Allan Barr, "Four schoolmasters: Educational issues in Li Hai-kuan's *Lamp at the crossroads*," and Angela Ki Che Leung, "Elementary education in the lower Yangtze region in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries," both in Elman and Woodside, eds., *Education and society*, pp. 50–75 and 381–416 respectively.

[147] Cynthia J. Brokaw, "Commercial publishing in late imperial China: The Zou and Ma family businesses," *Late Imperial China*, 17, No. 1 (June 1996), pp. 49–92; Ellen Widmer, "The Huanduzhai of Hangzhou and Suzhou: A study in seventeenth-century publishing," *HJAS*, 56, No. 1 (1996), pp. 77–122.

[148] Angela Ki Che Leung, "Organized medicine in Ming-Qing China: State and private medical institutions in the lower Yangzi region," *Late Imperial China*, 8, No. 1 (June 1987), pp. 134–66; Lü Ying-fan, "Ch'ing-tai i-hsüeh shih chien-shu," *Ch'ing-shih yen-chiu chi*, 7 (1990), pp. 82–107.

[149] Melissa Macauley, *Social power and legal culture: Litigation masters in late imperial China* (Stanford, 1998).

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In the empire's rapidly expanding long-distance commerce, the occupational structure reflected an elaborate division into strategic niches. At the top were the brokers (*ya-hang*), government-licensed middlemen who made the market in a given commodity in a major port of trade, specifying units of account and standards of purity, and serving as guarantor (and often interpreter) for buying and selling parties who were usually strangers to one another. The brokers collected commercial taxes for the government, and often doubled as warehouse and stable proprietor, hosteller, and restaurateur. A special type of *ya-hang* was the Cantonese "Cohong," who performed similar mediational and guarantor services in the Ch'ing's expanding overseas trade with the West.[150] Also among the commercial elite were the new professional bankers. One type of these were the remittance bankers (*p'iao-chuang*), who allowed traveling merchants the convenience of redeeming purchased bank notes in every major port of call. A profession monopolized by natives of Shansi, remittance banking had existed in that province since the T'ang; in the mid-seventeenth century, however, Shansi merchants parlayed the favor gained by years of preconquest dealings with Inner Asian elites into the right to establish their banking networks throughout the fledgling Ch'ing empire. A century later, they began to be joined by a diaspora of merchants from Ningpo, in Chekiang, who evolved out of boatbuilders and coastal shippers and had devised a new kind of money shop (*ch'ien-chuang*) featuring an overdraft checking form of commercial lending and investment.[151]

Below these in the commercial hierarchy were countless varieties of factors, shippers, dealers, commercial agents, and so on, who worked out new forms of credit, partnership, guild organization, and apprentice and clerk training.[152] The petty merchants who served as the rank and file of this growing apparatus might be either itinerant or sedentary. As revealed in the booming genre of commercially published "merchant guides" and "route books," these small-scale entrepreneurs collectively hammered out a new business ethic that borrowed language and values from the elite's (*li-hsüeh)* Confucian teachings

[150] Uchida Naosaku, "Chūgoku ni okeru shōgyō chitsujo no kiso – gakō seido no saikentō," *Hitosubashi ronsō*, 22, No. 2 (Aug. 1949), pp. 49–73.

[151] Ch'en Ch'i-t'ien, *Shan-hsi p'iao-chuang k'ao-lüeh* (Taipei, 1978); Saeki Tomi, "Shindai ni okeru Sansei shōnin," *Shirin*, 60, No. 1 (Jan. 1977), pp. 1–14; Susan Mann Jones, "Finance in Ningpo: The *Ch'ien-chuang*, 1750–1880," in W. E. Willmott, ed., *Economic organization in Chinese society* (Stanford, 1972), pp. 47–77.

[152] Among many studies of these early Ch'ing innovations in commmercial organization, see Imahori Seiji, "Shindai ni okeru goka no kindaika no hasu," *Tōyōshi kenkyū*, 17, No. 1 (1956), pp. 1–49, and Teng T'o, "Ts'ung Wan-li tao Ch'ien-lung," in Teng, *Lun Chung-kuo li-shih chi-ko wen-t'i*, 2d ed. (Peking, 1979), pp. 189–239.

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and merged the pursuit of personal virtue with a vigorous apologia for commercial profit-making – doing well by doing good.[153]

Certainly one of the most striking features of the social history of this era was the movement of large numbers of commoners out of agriculture. These laborers took up traditional occupations such as shophand, warehouseman, cook, domestic servant, soldier, diviner, and professional beggar, but a growing number also found employment as artisans and handicraft workers. As documented by P'eng Tse-i and others, the first half of the Ch'ing period – to at least the 1780s – was an age of quantitative explosion of handicraft output. This owed to a number of factors, many of which we have already noted: the rise of a free, mobile labor force (abetted by government encouragement), the state's commutation of handicraft taxes in kind and relaxation of controls on large-scale private entrepreneurship, the shift to cultivation of nonsubsistence cash crops in agriculture, the sophisticated development of marketing organization and networks of transportation, and, at least in part, the investment of merchant capital in direct artisanal production. Industrial commodities such as silk and cotton textiles, ceramics, paper, metals and metalware, and refined foodstuffs such as salt, tea, and sugar all reached unprecedented levels of market production, and countless local specialty products found wider regional and interregional markets.[154]

The majority of this production, even excluding that dispersed as sideline enterprise by rural cultivators, was undertaken by small-scale artisan households. Chinese scholars interested in the late imperial "sprouts of capitalism" (*tzu-pen-chu-i meng-ya*), however, have been most attentive to the several clear instances of the emergence of larger-scale handicraft "workshops" (*tso-fang*), operated under more proletarian-style labor relations. They have pointed for example to the 33 papermaking workshops and more than 450 dyeshops in mid-eighteenth-century Soochow, each of which averaged upwards of two dozen laborers under a single entrepreneur.[155] There was probably no more evident arena of "capitalist" labor relations than mining, where, as Ch'ing authorities gradually allowed the opening of larger areas of the empire to mineral development, the throne's prescription that the workers involved be

[153] Richard John Lufrano, *Honorable merchants: Commerce and self-cultivation in late imperial China* (Honolulu, 1997). See also Timothy Brook, "Guides for vexed travellers: Route books in the Ming and Qing," *Ch'ing-shih wen-t'i*, 4, No. 5 (June 1981); Brokaw, *The ledgers of merit and demerit*; von Glahn, "The enchantment of wealth."

[154] P'eng Tse-i, "Ch'ing-tai ch'ien-ch'i shou-kung-yeh ti fa-chan," *Chung-kuo shih yen-chiu*, 1 (1981), pp. 43–60.

[155] Liu Yung-ch'eng, "Shih-lun Ch'ing-tai Su-chou shou-kung-yeh hang-hui," *Li-shih yen-chiu*, 11 (1959), pp. 21–46, also trans. in *Chinese Studies in History*, 15, Nos. 1–2 (Fall-Winter 1981–82), pp. 113–67. For a representative sampling of other studies on this topic, see *Chung-kuo tzu-pen-chu-i meng-ya wen-t'i lun-wen chi* (Shanghai, 1983).

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drawn from local people – preferably from farm households during the slack season – was routinely breached in practice. Thousands of professional miners and smelters without families traversed the empire in search of work, responding to recruitment appeals from entrepreneurs in areas of mining boom. Most eighteenth-century miners in Kwangtung were of Kiangsi origin, while those in Yunnan hailed from Hunan, Kiangsi, and Szechwan. Many others from interior provinces flocked to Sinkiang as mineral resources there were systematically developed after the 1760s.[156]

Facilitating the growth of handicraft production (though arguably impeding the process of "transition to capitalism") was the prolific and sophisticated development in this era of artisanal guild structures. Modeled on scattered earlier antecedents, and going by a variety of institutional names (*pang* and *hang* being most common), handicraft guilds in the early and mid-Ch'ing systematically formalized their activities. They built guildhalls and promulgated regulatory codes to govern in detail such matters as production processes, apprentice training, allowable size and location of member shops, weights and measures, prices, and various issues of quality control.[157] Over time, guilds segmented not only by product and locality, but also by status of the participants within the trade. Guilds specific to journeymen (*chiang-ting* or *yu*) as opposed to master artisans (*chiang-pan* or *shih*) have been found, for example, among ironworkers of Wenchow, textile workers of Kwangtung and Peking, and papermakers and tanners of Inner Mongolian commercial towns.[158] Even those in the least esteemed jobs in the hierarchy of handicraft production – most famously the roughneck, stone-wielding cloth calendrers of Soochow – organized themselves into less formalized gangs (*pang*) under a labor boss (*pao-t'ou*) to pursue their occupational interests and, as was said of the calendrers, to more generally terrorize other members of the community.[159]

Of all sectors of off-farm employment, seemingly the largest and fastest growing was transport. Workers in overland transport – longshoremen, porters, carters, animal drivers – operated both inter- and intralocally, almost

[156] Some mid-Ch'ing subjects also found mining work outside the borders of formal empire, in Burma and Vietnam. E-tu Zen Sun, "Mining labor in the Ch'ing period," in Albert Feuerwerker, Rhoads Murphey, and Mary C. Wright, eds., *Approaches to modern Chinese history* (Berkeley, 1967), pp. 45–67.

[157] There is an extraordinarily large literature on this subject in Chinese and Japanese. In English, see Liu Yung-ch'eng, "Handicraft guilds in Soochow"; Peter Golas, "Early Ch'ing guilds," in Skinner, ed., *The city in late imperial China*, pp. 555–80; and William T. Rowe, "Ming-Qing guilds," *Ming Qing Yanjiu* (Rome, 1992), pp. 47–60. A rich documentary record of early Ch'ing handicraft guilds is available in such published compilations as Niida Noboru, ed., *Pekin kōshō girudo shiryō shū* (Tokyo, 1976); *Ming-Ch'ing Su-chou kung-shang-yeh pei-k'e chi* (Soochow, 1981); *Ming-Ch'ing Fo-shan pei-k'e wen-hsien ching-chi tzu-liao* (Canton, 1987); and *Ch'ing-tai Ch'ien-Chia-Tao Pa-hsien tang-an hsüan-pien* (Chengtu, 1989).

[158] Imahori Seiji, "Jyaaniiman girudo," in his *Tōyō shakai keizai shi josetsu* (Kyoto, 1963), pp. 122–90.

[159] Yokoyama Suguru, *Chūgoku kindaika no keizai kōzō* (Tokyo, 1972), pp. 101–43.

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always providing connections to or from some means of waterborne transport. In line with the more general early and mid-Ch'ing trend of occupational differentiation, they increasingly sought to specialize themselves according to means of carriage (the type of pole or cart they used, for example) and transport niche (such as warehouse to pier), and to assert monopolistic claims over "turf." Porters (*chiao-fu*) tended to be tightly group-oriented, often united into "*pang*" by locality of origin, and conflicts between groups of differing origin were routine. Groups of porters operating in highland passes throughout Chekiang, Kiangsi, Hunan, and Fukien were typically organized into a three-tier hierarchy: (1) transport brokers (*fu-hang*) who contracted with the merchant shipping the goods, (2) labor bosses (*fu-t'ou*) who provided the laborers and went surety for them, and (3) the carriers (*fu-jen*) themselves, who often resided in the *fu-t'ou*'s dormitory and were highly dependent upon him. Local officials were skeptical of such men and sought to regulate them by demanding that the broker and often the porters themselves be licensed, and by breaking up what they perceived as monopolistic restraint of trade (*pa-ch'ih*). Administrators were ambivalent about the virtues of organization among porters. Some, like the Kiangsu governor in 1685, sought to prohibit it altogether, while others actively tried to herd them into *pao-chia* style collective responsibility groups. Porters were among the poorest elements in society, and were usually family-less bachelors (*kuang-kun*), making them by definition objects of suspicion and fear. They could engage in collective violence, sometimes simply for recreation, and might be hired out as groups not only for transport service but for protection or intimidation of one's enemies. Thus, despite their own internal efforts at professionalization, over the course of the early Ch'ing they merged in popular consciousness with more general lumpenproletarian categories such as "*wu-lai*" (rootless ruffians) and "*ta-hang*" (local thugs).[160]

Boatmen were another growing and disturbing presence on the early Ch'ing scene. A "floating" population figuratively as well as literally, they too usually found work through the agency of contract brokers (*ch'uan-hang*). Some boatmen were proprietors of their own vessel, which often allowed them to marry, reproduce, and dwell as quasirespectable "boat households" (*ch'uan-hu*). Far larger numbers, however, were simply hired sailors (*ch'uan-fu*, *shui-shou*) – highly mobile bachelors who congregated at piers or brokers' offices along riverine trade routes awaiting short-term employment. They were famously violent.[161] To make matters worse (from the official point of view),

[160] Ibid., pp. 172–211; Ueda Makoto, "Minmatsu Shinsho Konan no toshi no 'burai' o meguru shakai kansei," *Shigaku zasshi*, 90, No. 11 (1979), pp. 1619–53.

[161] Hoshi Ayao, "Shindai no suishu ni tsuite," *Tōhōgaku*, 12 (June 1956), pp. 89–99; Yokoyama, *Chūgoku kindaika*, pp. 147–71. See also work in progress on boatmen in northern Fukien by Grant A. Alger.

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family-less boatmen involved in the grain tribute in the mid- and lower Yangtze and on the Grand Canal in the early eighteenth century collectively built a series of temples which served as hostels along their route as well as homes for retirees. Though at bottom a mutual aid scheme, with no deliberate aura of secrecy nor seditious intent, the boatmen's organization also absorbed a sectarian eschatology derived from the teachings of a late-Ming Buddhist named Lo Ch'ing. This "heterodox" ideology, plus the possibilities of large-scale group solidarity it offered the boatmen, alarmed the authorities. After repeated attempts to secularize the hostels after the 1720s, Ch'ing officials had the buildings razed in 1768. They did not succeed, however, in breaking up the organization, which ultimately transmuted itself into the Mafia-like "Green gang" (Ch'ing-pang) in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[162]

What we see in all of this, then, is the aggregate emergence in the early and mid-Ch'ing of a very large (though as yet uncounted) pre-industrial, nonagrarian labor force. It was from this body of personnel – perhaps especially from the most footloose of the lot, the transport workers – that the pool of labor for the late-Ch'ing industrialization along imported and mechanized lines was available to be drawn.

KINSHIP

Another area reflecting social change was family and kinship. As Susan Mann emphasizes in her chapter in this volume – and as evidence presented above of the privatization of North China official estates, the emancipation of southern servile tenants, and the government's homesteading policies in the resettlement of Szechwan and other areas supports – the early and mid-Ch'ing was perhaps *the* age of triumph of the freestanding commoner household (*hu*) as the basic feature of the Chinese landscape. Establishment and maintenance of such units, seen both as the optimal unit of efficient economic production and the proper locus of ritually correct sociocultural reproduction, was probably the single unifying theme of the era's discourse on statecraft (*ching-shih*), and was the practical goal sought and largely attained by the era's large cohort of activist field officials.[163] The salience of this basic social trend should not

A special type of mid-Ch'ing boatmen were the pirates who plied the Kwangtung coastline in the late eighteenth century, a group whose numbers Dian Murray places at nearly 70,000 by century's end; Murray, *Pirates of the south China coast*.

162 Morita Akira, "Shindai suishu kessha no seikaku ni tsuite," *Tōyōshi kenkyū*, 13, No. 5 (Jan. 1955), pp. 364–76; David E. Kelley, "Temples and tribute fleets: The Luo sect and boatmen's associations in the eighteenth century," *Modern China*, 8, No. 3 (July 1982), pp. 361–91.

163 There was probably no more emblematic piece of literati propaganda proselytizing this ideal than the widely circulated and lavishly illustrated 1741 agricultural handbook by the Shensi Confucian scholar

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obscure, however, the concurrent drive toward forging more effective and multifunctional kinship organizations on a suprahousehold basis.

Lineages (*tsu* or *tsung*, depending upon their scale and upon local usage) had been a central feature of the Chinese social landscape throughout imperial times. Collectivities of agnate households regularly, when circumstances suggested, would do such things as identify a common "first ancestor" (*shih-tsu*), construct an ancestral hall (*ssu-t'ang*) to host annual sacrifices in his honor, divide the first ancestor's acknowledged descendents into branches and segments, begin to assign generationally specific given names (*tzu-p'ai*), compile a written genealogy (*tsu-p'u*) to provide boundaries and internal structure to the group, and set aside a fund of income-generating "sacrificial land" (*chi-t'ien*) for the purpose of, at minimum, financing these activities. As historical and anthropological scholarship has increasingly come to recognize, the process of kin-group formation was hardly an accident of biological descent, but instead a deliberate strategy devised in response to a range of environmental factors. The resulting lineage was a carefully crafted "cultural invention."[164] In the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, both new structures of opportunity and heightened levels of social competition fostered an era of increased appeal of kinship organization and considerable innovation in the repertoire of its techniques.

Part of this intensified interest reflected cultural and intellectual change. Beginning in late Ming, but much more pervasively in early and mid-Ch'ing, elite culture became infused with a sort of fundamentalist Confucianism. For example, funerary practice among all social strata had in previous eras been as likely to be Buddhist-inspired as Confucian. By mid-Ch'ing the elite moved toward an ostentatious embrace of Chu Hsi's four family rituals (*ssu-li*). This was partly out of a sense that the individual-salvationist orientation of Buddhism and of Buddhist-tinged Confucianism had contributed to the social anomie of late Ming, and partly out of a kind of resurgent cultural chauvinism under Ch'ing rule. Among the *ssu-li*, funerals and ancestral sacrifices proved especially useful in the project of lineage construction, including such mundane questions as who was invited and who stood where. The

Yang Shen, *Pin-feng kuang-i* (rpt. Peking, 1962). This work and the broader cultural and economic implications of the free commoner household ideal are discussed in my *Chen Hongmou*, passim. I owe some of the ideas expressed here to conversations on the subject with Susan Mann.

[164] Tso Yün-p'eng, "Ssu-t'ang tsu-chang tsu-ch'üan ti hsing-ch'eng chi ch'i tso-yung shih-shuo," *Li-shih yen-chiu*, 5, and 6 (1964), pp. 97–116; Patricia Buckley Ebrey, "The early stages in the development of descent group organization," in Ebrey and James L. Watson, eds., *Kinship organization in late imperial China, 1000–1940* (Berkeley, 1986), pp. 16–61; David Faure, "The lineage as a cultural invention: The case of the Pearl River delta," *Modern China*, 15, No. 1 (Jan. 1989), pp. 4–36. For an anthropologist's expression of this newer understanding of lineages, see P. Steven Sangren, "Traditional Chinese corporations: Beyond kinship," *JAS*, 43, No. 3 (May 1984), pp. 391–415.

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competitive display of rigorous and costly fidelity to archaic and "pure" Confucian models became an emblem of sociocultural superiority within local society. The quest for ever-greater purity led scholars involved in the eighteenth-century vogue of classical philology to try to reconstruct the ritual practice of the ancient golden age, to heatedly debate the precise content of the mystified "*tsung-fa*" (core-line principle) of antiquity, and to construct or reconstruct their own kinship organizations according to these imagined ideals. As Kai-wing Chow has argued, underlying this concern was an elite belief that enforced ritual conformity in itself would prove a useful, if minimal, instrument for keeping the disorderly masses in line.[165]

What did *not* occur in the era of dynastic transition and consolidation was a significant empirewide turnover in the roster of dominant lineages. There were of course some new entries as a result of political patronage by the new regime, windfall profits in the booming interregional commerce and new consumer product markets, and the expanding pale of agriculture, but dominant lineages in early and mid-Ch'ing were those who had established themselves in early Ming, if not earlier. The preeminent functional appeal of kinship organization was precisely as a long-term collective insurance scheme for the reproduction of elite status in the face of late imperial China's powerful forces for downward mobility: population growth, partible inheritance, an examination system built to reward individual achievement rather than birthright, and, in the seventeenth century, wrenching political change. Formalized, functioning lineage structures facilitated expanding the kinship group's pool of candidates for examination success through such mechanisms as lineage schools and travel funds for examination candidates, spreading and institutionalizing the benefits of one member's unusual examination or financial, usually commercial, success, consolidating collective assets, often in land, and moving into new areas of collective opportunity. Organization allowed carefully orchestrated diversification: occupational (agriculture, learning, and trade), residential (rural and urban), and geographical. Lineage members, for example, routinely farmed out their most promising offspring to relatives in parts of the empire where the examination quotas were more favorable than at home, sent rural lads off to apprentice with uncles and cousins in the city, and established business dealings with kinsmen in distant ports.[166] The sprawling merchant diasporas that managed eighteenth-century interregional trade usually were built upon kinship ties. The huge shipments of rice to the

[165] Timothy Brook, "Funerary ritual and the building of lineages in late imperial China," *HJAS*, 49, No. 2 (Dec. 1989), pp. 465–99; Kai-wing Chow, *The rise of Confucian ritualism in late imperial China: Ethics, classics, and lineage organization* (Stanford, 1994).

[166] See especially Beattie, *Land and lineage*, and Rowe, "Success stories."

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lower Yangtze from Hunan's Hsiang River valley, for example, were overseen by groups of Kiangsi merchants organized internally by lineage.[167]

Shaping lineage boundaries required a careful calculus of economies and diseconomies of scale. A large group permitted greater diversification and mobilization of labor and capital, but too large a group risked spreading assets too thin, entailed unwelcome liability for members' subsistence, fiscal obligations, and criminal misconduct, and invited the hostility of the state. Lineages periodically restructured themselves so as to include or exclude certain households and branches, and selectively recorded new births and emigrés from the native area based on their utility to the group. After the final collapse of the early imperial aristocratic clans in the Sung, Chinese lineages typically adopted a "localist strategy," burrowing ever more deeply into local society through a pattern of patronage of local welfare and developmental projects and intermarriage not with other national-level official families, but rather with other families of local prominence.[168] Employment of this time-honored strategy intensified in the early and mid-Ch'ing. Lineages in wealthy localities such as Wu-hsi (Kiangsu) and T'ung-ch'eng (Anhwei) systematically set about forging "communities of affines" within their native place, and setting aside land into charitable trusts (*i-chuang*) for the benefit not only of kin but also, in certain cases, of the wider community, if only by getting this land off the tax rolls and shielding it from the predations of state functionaries.[169] An extreme case of the localist strategy appeared on the Taiwan frontier, where two or even three separate descent groups within the same locality, linked by patterns of intermarriage, regularly in the eighteenth century set up "multi-surname ancestral halls" (*i-hsing ssu-t'ang*).[170] Such cases strikingly remind us just how instrumental and "invented" a phenomenon kinship in late imperial China might be.

This period seems also to have witnessed a deliberate process of expansion of the scale of localized lineages, settling in most notably at the level of the *hsiang* or "township," a large subcounty unit encompassing scores of villages and centered on a significant market town. Compiling evidence from Kiangsi,

[167] Hsü Hua-an, "Shih-hsi Ch'ing-tai Chiang-hsi tsung-tsu ti chieh-kou yü kung-neng t'e-tien," *Chung-kuo she-hui ching-chi yen-chiu*, 1 (1993), pp. 47–55.

[168] Robert Hymes, *Statesmen and gentlemen: The elite of Fu-chou, Chiang-hsi, in northern and southern Sung* (Cambridge, 1986). For the further elaboration of this strategy in later eras, see Keith Hazleton, "Patrilines and the development of localized lineages: The Wu of Hsiu-ning City, Hui-chou, to 1528," in Ebrey and Watson, eds., *Kinship organization*, pp. 137–69, and John Dardess, *A Ming society: T'ai-ho County, Kiangsi, fourteenth to seventeenth centuries* (Berkeley, 1996).

[169] Jerry Dennerline, "Marriage, adoption, and charity in the development of lineages in Wu-hsi from Sung to Ch'ing," in Ebrey and Watson, eds., *Kinship organization*, pp. 170–209; Beattie, *Land and lineage*.

[170] Ron Guey Chu, "Ancestral hall and Confucian rites in pre-modern Taiwan," paper presented to the Conference on Ritual and Community Life in East Asia, Montreal, October 1996.

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Anhwei, Fukien, and other southeastern provinces, Fu I-ling discovered a pattern whereby township-level lineages (*hsiang-tsu*) sought to assert broad-ranging control over the society and economy of their turfs: controlling markets and fairs, dictating locally specific weights and measures, and restricting immigration, commodity-export, alienation of land rights, and commercial and mineral development by outsiders.[171] In Kiangsi, at least, *hsiang*-level lineages fell back upon the hoary institution of the township-level community compact (*hsiang-yüeh*) to attempt to resolve their own inter-lineage differences, legislate local morality, and maintain collective control. Yet more alarmingly from the state's perspective, individual *hsiang*-level lineages also sought by the mid-eighteenth century to expand the scale of their power by federating with groups of the same surname on a county, prefectural, and even provincial level.[172]

Lineage organization was seen by both elites and the state as a powerful tool of social control. In many areas which had undergone bondservant rebellions and other forms of class-based disorder in the dynastic transition era, kinship organization was seen as a deterrent to recurrence. Local leaders expanded them and strengthened their compulsions in the later seventeenth century.[173] The early and mid-Ch'ing saw a virtual frenzy of promulgating lineage regulatory codes (*chia-hsün*, *tsu-kuei*), paying particular attention to rigidified controls over females and, in some but not all cases, efforts to cut off the kin-group from kinds of market participation seen as challenging to patrilineal hierarchies.[174] Increasingly, these efforts were matched by parallel efforts by the state to shore up lineage disciplinary power. As gradually worked out in both letter and implementation, for example, the Ch'ing Code minutely differentiated crimes and punishments according to relative degrees of kinship seniority between the offending and injured parties. Under Yung-cheng and Ch'ien-lung, parental mourning regulations were tightened, as was the principle of responsibility of the parent and lineage head (*tsu-chang*) for the "education and training" (*chiao-hsün*) of dependents, a notion increasingly interpreted as implicating them in criminal culpability for lineage members'

[171] Fu I-ling, "Lun hsiang-tsu shih-li tui-yü Chung-kuo feng-chien ching-chi ti kan-she," in his *Ming-Ch'ing ching-chi shih lun-wen chi* (Peking, 1982), pp. 78–102; Mori Masao, "Kyōzoku o megutte," *Tōyōshi kenkyū*, 44, No. 1 (1985), pp. 137–53. Evidence from the Middle Yangtze region shows a similar settling in of lineages at the *hsiang* level, but not accompanied by the "moral economy"-tinged antidevelopmentalism found by Fu in the southeast; see Rowe, "Success stories," p. 79.

[172] Hsü Hua-an, "Chiang-hsi tsung-tsu"; William T. Rowe, "Ancestral rites and political authority in late imperial China," *Modern China*, 24, No. 4 (Oct. 1998), pp. 378–407.

[173] Beattie, *Land and lineage in China*; Shih, *Chinese rural society in transition*.

[174] Hui-chen Wang Liu, "An analysis of Chinese clan rules: Confucian theories in action," in David S. Nivison and Arthur F. Wright, eds., *Confucianism in action* (Stanford, 1959), pp. 63–96; Charlotte Furth, "The patriarch's legacy: Household instructions and the transmission of orthodox values," in Liu, ed., *Orthodoxy in late imperial China*, pp. 187–211; Chow, *Rise of Confucian ritualism*, chs. 3 and 8.

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misdeeds.[175] Beginning with an initiative of the Yung-cheng emperor in 1726, central and provincial officials sought to implant within the lineage a direct state-appointed public security functionary, known as the *tsu-cheng*. This functionary was apparently sometimes the lineage head himself, and sometimes a secondary kinsman who existed in an ambiguous relationship to him. Between them, the *tsu-chang* and *tsu-cheng* were granted the powers of trial and punishment of lineage members for violations of dynastic as well as lineage law in conjuction with the conduct of the annual ancestral rites. This system, attempted most boldly in Kiangsi in the 1740s, proved in that case unworkable from the state's point of view, but continued to inspire more modest experiments elsewhere throughout the Ch'ien-lung reign.[176]

The expansion of the pale of Chinese agriculture that characterized the period also contributed in a number of ways to the appeal of lineage building, ways which were sometimes viewed with favor by the government and sometimes not. Pioneering settlers moving into new areas in Taiwan, in the southeast and southwest, and in various interior highlands typically recruited new arrivals from the home area via kinship ties, then constructed new kin-groups on the frontier for purposes of land clearance and developing an irrigation infrastructure.[177] Along interior rivercourses and lakeshores as well, lineages mobilized labor and capital for constructing polders within which to plant rice and other commercial export crops. The disruptive potential of such activity was clearly revealed at Ching-chou in western Hupeh in 1788, when riverbank reclamation undertaken by the locally dominant Hsiao lineage precipitated a disastrous rupture of the Yangtze dikes. The goverment cleaned up the mess by seizing Hsiao family land and effects valued at nearly 125,000 silver taels.[178]

In reclaimed areas such as the Pearl River delta, such lineages became landlords on a massive scale, forcing large numbers of tenant households into hereditary submission. These dependent households in turn organized themselves into lineages to better protect their interests vis-à-vis their dominant neighbors. In areas of intensive contact with frontier peoples, lineage organization, genealogical registration, and the ritual practices that went along

[175] Chang Jen-shan, pp. 24–5; Chü Huan-wu, "Ch'ing-tai hsing-lü ti ch'ü-fa i shen-ch'ing," in *Family process and political process*, pp. 847–900.

[176] Chu Yung, *Ch'ing-tai tsung-tsu fa yen-chiu* (Changsha, 1987), pp. 157–70; Rowe, "Ancestral rites and political authority," pp. 378–407. See also Feng Erh-k'ang, *Yung-cheng chuan*, pp. 362–3; Hsü Hua-an, "Chiang-hsi tsung-tsu," p. 54; Tso Yün-p'eng, "Ssu-t'ang tsu-chang tsu-ch'üan ti hsing-ch'eng chi ch'i tso-yung shih-shuo," p. 107; and Shih, *Chinese rural society in transition*, pp. 181–4.

[177] Chuang Chi-fa, "Ch'ing-tai she-hui ching-chi fa-pein yü pi-mi she-tang ti fa-chan: T'ai-wan, Kuang-hsi, Yün-kuei ti-ch'u ti pi-chiao yen-chiu," in Institute of Modern History, ed., *Ch'ing-tai Chung-kuo ch'u-yü shih yen-t'ao-hui lun-wen chi* (Nankang, 1986), pp. 335–86; Averill, "The shed people," pp. 104–8.

[178] Ts'ui-jung Liu, "Dike construction in Ching-chou," *Papers on China*, 23 (1970), pp. 1–28.

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with them were appealing as a means to assert or establish Han identity. They were also useful as instruments of public security and mass coercion in the various areas where immigration had proceeded more quickly than the establishment of an effective state presence. In extreme cases, such as large areas of Fukien, Kwangtung, and Taiwan, an endemic culture of violence prevailed, marked by routinized though often bloody lineage feuding (*hsieh-tou*) orchestrated by semiprofessional entrepreneurs akin to the itinerant gunmen of the American West.[179]

The Pearl River delta also was the site of the ancestral trust (*t'ang*) as holding company.[180] In some instances, such trusts functioned in a manner similar to the use of entail in Europe. A wealthy individual, fearing the dissipation of his estate by partible inheritance over several generations, would tie it up in an indivisible legal entity controlled by a single estate manager, with subsequent revenue-shares in lieu of the physical property itself divided among his heirs. But over time *t'ang* came to be used far more creatively as proactive investment vehicles, as in effect land development corporations financing and overseeing the reclamation of coastal land (*sha-t'ien*) and the construction of irrigation networks to serve this land. These types of "ancestral trusts" were established quite purposively, long after the purported honoree was deceased. In 1709, for example, members of five localized lineages surnamed Teng collectively established the Tu-ch'ing t'ang, based on their claim of common descent from a single twelfth-century ancestor. In 1749, some forty-eight members of a single generation of yet another Teng lineage in a nearby area set up the Yü-kung t'ang by a process of joint subscription.

Several features of this kind of arrangement provide evidence of just how pragmatic a financial vehicle the ancestral trust had become. For one thing, despite the appropriation of the culturally valorized nomenclature of "*t'ang*" (ancestral hall) and "*tsu*" (patriline), membership in the trust was *not* coterminous with membership in the lineage as a whole. The trust was, as in the case of the Yü-kung t'ang, the result of a single act of voluntary investment,

[179] See various studies by James L. Watson, including "Hereditary tenancy and corporate landlordism in traditional China: A case study," *Modern Asian Studies*, 11, No. 2 (1977), pp. 161–82, and by Harry J. Lamley, including "Lineage and surname feuds in southern Fukien and eastern Kwangtung under the Ch'ing," in Liu, *Orthodoxy*, pp. 255–80.

[180] The following paragraphs derive primarily from Rubie S. Watson, "The creation of a Chinese lineage: The Teng of Ha Tsuen, 1669–1751," *Modern Asian Studies*, 16, No. 1 (1982), pp. 69–100, and "Corporate property and local leadership in the Pearl River delta, 1898–1941," in Esherick and Rankin, eds., *Chinese local elites*, pp. 239–60; James L. Watson, "Hereditary tenancy and corporate landlordism;" and Michael J. E. Palmer, "The surface-subsoil form of divided ownership in late imperial China: Some examples from the New Territories of Hong Kong," *Modern Asian Studies*, 21, No. 1 (1987), pp. 1–119.

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and revenue shares thereafter fell not to all lineage members, but only to those directly descended from the initial investors. For another, the lineages involved in the establishment of these land-corporations were usually not themselves new arrivals; the Teng of the Yü-kung t'ang, for instance, were descendents of immigrés of the mid-Ming. Rather, the estabishment of the trust was a calculated reponse to two phenomena of the mid-Ch'ing. First, following the local rescinding in 1669 of the Ch'ing scorched-earth coastal evacuation policy (*hai-chin*) was the resulting boom in commercial wet-rice cultivation and sericulture in the delta region, which lasted through most of the eighteenth century. Second was the arrival of a wave of *new* immigrants to the area, many of them Hakka specifically recruited by the goverment for resettlement purposes, with whom established descent groups found themselves in competition for the new economic resources.

They won this competition. By the nineteenth century, these trusts and those which were subsequently set up controlled perhaps 50 percent of the cultivated acreage in Kwangtung's Hsin-an county. There were numerous such trusts, of varying scales, the largest owning upwards of a thousand *mou*. Their beneficiaries and even their managers increasingly became absentees, residing in the provincial capital of Canton. After the elapse of several generations, a single individual might find him- or herself receiving income from as many as a dozen separate *t'ang* estates.

The government viewed such institutions, ideologically shielded as they were by their veneer of filial devotion, with growing alarm. As early as 1739, Kwangtung authorities, worried about monopolization of riceland by lineage corporations, decreed that for each 1,000 *mou* claimed in a given area by a corporate owner an additional 500 *mou* of adjacent "child fields" (*tzu-t'ien*) be held aside for reclamation by nonaffiliated small proprietors.[181] Administrators fretted as well about the aggressively proprietary practices of ancestral trusts beyond agriculture per se, particularly their development and monopolization of local markets, piers, shipping agencies, and fish and poultry farms. As they were elsewhere, lineage trusts in the delta tended to be highly belligerent corporate litigants. The government dutifully entertained their plaints, but with increasing concern. Officials were probably resigned to the wisdom of hearing lineage lawsuits because many lineage trusts were armed.

All of this leads one to wonder to what extent, in this age of rapid commercialization, lineages were transforming themselves into something comparable to Western business firms. Based on intensive study of the wider delta region, David Faure sounds a note of caution. Fully committed to the view

[181] Buoye, "From patrimony to commodity," p. 63.

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of early Ch'ing lineages as a functionalist "cultural invention," and aware of their entrepreneurial role in the development of new farmland and the marketing of its products, he nevertheless finds ancestral trusts less willing to undertake direct proprietorial roles in industrial or other commercial ventures, such as the ironsmithing and other handicraft workshops concentrated in the delta's major commercial town of Foshan. Outside of agriculture, lineage estates preferred to act as bankers, serving as sources of capital for members who owned and managed such firms as household rather than lineage enterprises. This was likely related, Faure suggests, to the absence of corporate law offering limited liability protections in these more uncertain nonagrarian forms of investment, and the lineages' consequent desire to diffuse financial risk to smaller ownership units.[182] Nevertheless, evidence from elsewhere indicates that this reasonable inhibition could be overcome when circumstances suggested. In the development of salt wells in late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century Szechwan, for example, the sheer magnitude of the requisite initial capitalization prompted large generational cohorts within a descent group to set up *t'ang* for the ownership and management of saltyards, corporate structures that they subsequently diversified into proprietorship of money shops and dealerships in other export commodities such as rice, soy, and vegetable oil.[183] One does not have to deny the genuine emotional appeal of kinship ties and ancestral piety, or to deride the "parochialism" of late imperial Chinese business practice, to appreciate the contribution of lineage structures to the flexible organizational repertoire employed by Ch'ing subjects in this dynamic age of enterprise and opportunity.

TOWNS AND CITIES

One of the vital arenas of social change in this era was in the empire's thousands of cities and towns. In the eighteenth century, roughly 5 percent of the population lived in urban settlements of over 2,000 persons, a level of urbanization approximately the same as that of contemporaneous England. The most urbanized regions were those along the southeast coast: Kiangnan, Fukien, Kwangtung. Although overall urbanization had been rising steadily

[182] David Faure, "The lineage as a cultural invention," and "The lineage as business company: Patronage vs. law in the development of Chinese business," in Yung-san Lee and Ts'ui-jung Liu, eds., *China's market economy in transition* (Nankang, 1990), pp. 105–34.

[183] Madeleine Zelin, "Capital accumulation and investment strategies in early modern China: The case of the Furong salt yard," *Late Imperial China*, 9, No. 1 (1988), pp. 79–122, and "The rise and fall of the Fu-Rong salt-yard elite: Merchant dominance in late-Qing China," in Esherick and Rankin, eds., *Chinese local elites*, pp. 82–112.

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since late Ming, it may still have been lower than in Sung. According to G. William Skinner, the urbanization rate of the Lower Yangtze region was 7.4 percent in 1843, as compared to perhaps 10 percent in 1200. This in large part resulted from the solicitous support of both the Ming and Ch'ing regimes toward the agricultural sector, which allowed the rural population to grow at least as fast as the urban. Rapid agricultural commercialization, also aided by government policy, had another impact on the urban hierarchy in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The largest Ch'ing cities around 1800 (Peking, Soochow, Canton, Nanking, the Wuhan conurbation) were almost certainly smaller than the great metropolises of the Sung (Kaifeng and Hangchow). They were no longer urban islands in a vast rural sea. The rank-size curve of urban places had smoothed dramatically.[184]

A range of detailed empirical studies have shown the most dramatic growth of the urban population in early and mid-Ch'ing occurred at the lower end of the urban hierarchy, in small cities and nonadministrative market towns. The explanation for this was straightforward: the great cities of the Sung, Yüan, and Ming had been fed largely through commandist extraction (rents and taxes) from the countryside; in the Ch'ing provisioning was accomplished by commercial means, which demanded a graded network of urban marketplaces to manage this systematic rural-urban exchange. The increased volume of long-distance intra- and interregional trade, a growing percentage of which was ultimately rural-rural, likewise necessitated urban and semi-urban chains of collection and distribution.

As Skinner has argued, accelerated commercialization over the late imperial era restructured the urban hieraracy from the bottom up, as rural and suburban periodic markets proliferated and intensified their schedules, gradually turning into permanent and increasingly complex market towns.[185] In mid-Ch'ing, for example, a highly commercialized Chekiang prefecture such as Ningpo might host close to a hundred periodic markets, nearly triple the number it had supported in the sixteenth century. In Hunan's rice-exporting Hsiang River valley, the number of recorded markets rose from 16 in 1591 to 117 in 1747; in one county alone (Hsiang-t'an), the number grew from three in 1685 to over a hundred by 1818. Similar increases have been documented in other highly commercialized regions such as the Upper

[184] G. William Skinner, "Introduction: Urban development in imperial China" and "Regional urbanization in nineteenth-century China," in Skinner, ed., *The city in late imperial China*, pp. 3–31 and 211–49. See also Mark Elvin, "Chinese cities since the Sung dynasty," in Philip Abrams and E. A. Wrigley, eds., *Towns in societies: Essays in economic history and historical sociology* (Cambridge, 1978), pp. 79–89; Lee and Wang, *One quarter of humanity*, ch. 7.

[185] G. William Skinner, "Marketing and social structure in rural China," Part 2, *JAS*, 24, No. 2 (1965), pp. 195–228.

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Yangtze and Lingnan, and much more modest but still unmistakeable increases in more subsistence-dominated regions like the North China plain.[186] Permanent market towns, known variously as *chen*, *shih*, or *chi*, depending on the region, grew in number, again most dramatically in Kiangnan. In Shanghai county the number went from twelve in 1600 to thirty in 1750, and in Wu-chiang from four in 1368 to seventeen in 1795. A similar growth occurred in the Middle Yangtze and other regions of the empire.[187] Nor was this development of market towns achieved at the expense of smaller administrative cities; many walled county seats, too, grew notably in size and in socioeconomic complexity over the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[188]

In the hyper-commercialized "six prefectures" of the Yangtze delta the proliferation of market towns was so pronounced that the entire area might be thought of as an incipient "urban region."[189] Scores of important *chen* were distributed in a dendritic hierarchy at key points along natural and man-made waterways integrating the delta. By the end of the eighteenth century probably no delta household was more than a half-day's travel from one of them. In mid-Ming most towns comprised no more than a single line of shops along the canal or riverbank; by mid-Ch'ing the larger *chen* had evolved more complex street plans, subdivided into specialized neighborhoods, and had populations in the tens of thousands. They became home to brokers and

[186] On Ningpo, see Yoshinobu Shiba, "Ningpo and its hinterland," in Skinner, ed., *The city in late imperial China*, pp. 402–4; on the Hsiang valley, see Rawski, *Agricultural change*, p. 112; on the Upper Yangtze, see Kao Wang-ling, "Ch'ien-Chia shih-ch'i Ssu-ch'uan ti ch'ang-shih, ch'ang-shih kang, chi ch'i kung-neng," *Ch'ing-shih yen-chiu chi*, 4 (1984), pp. 74–92, and Wang Ti, *Kua-ch'u feng-pi ti shih-chieh*, pp. 211–47; and on the north China plain, see Yamane Yukio, "Min-Shin jidai Kahoku ni okeru teiki ichi," *Shiron*, 8 (1960), pp. 493–504.

[187] On Kiangnan, see Elvin, "Market towns and waterways," pp. 470–1, and Shih, *Chinese rural society in transition*, pp. 74–85; and on the middle Yangtze, see Li Hua, "Ch'ing-tai Hu-pei nung-ts'un ching-chi tso-wu," pp. 50–60. On the early Ch'ing rise of what was probably the empire's largest *chen*, the middle Yangtze's Han-k'ou, see Rowe, *Hankow: Commerce and society in a Chinese city, 1796–1889* (Stanford, 1984), ch. 1.

[188] Kawakatsu Mamoru, "Chūgoku kindai toshi no shakai kōzō: Minmatsu Shinsho Konan toshi ni tsuite," *Shichō*, New Series 6 (1979), esp. pp. 78–9.

[189] In part because of the subject's excellent documentary record and in part because of its perceived contemporary relevance, the scholarly literature in Chinese on the history of lower Yangtze nonadministrative towns has grown to enormous proportions. Among the better studies are Wang Chia-fan, "Ming-Ch'ing Chiang-nan shih-chen chieh-kou chi li-shih chia-chih ch'u-t'iao," *Hua-tung shih-fan ta-hsüeh hsüeh-pao*, 1 (1984), pp. 74–83; Ch'en Hsüeh-wen, "Ming-Ch'ing shih-ch'i Chiang-nan ti i-ke ch'uan-yeh shih-chen," *Chung-kuo she-hui ching-chi shih yen-chiu*, 1 (1985), pp. 54–61; Liu Shih-chi, *Ming-Ch'ing shih-tai Chiang-nan shih-chen yen-chiu* (Peking, 1987); and Fan Shu-chih, *Ming-Ch'ing Chiang-nan shih-chen t'an-wei* (Shanghai, 1990), which features individual biographies of some 41 market towns. Fei Hsiao-t'ung, ed., *Hsiao shih-chen, ta wen-t'i* (Soochow, 1984), contains both historical and contemporary studies, and argues for the connections between past and present. Liu Shih-chi has also produced a useful English-language summary article, "Some reflections on urbanization and the historical development of market towns in the lower Yangtze region, ca. 1500–1900," *Asian-American Review*, 2, No. 1 (Spring 1984), pp. 1–27.

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buyers for the interregional trade in silk and cotton, and to dealers in finished textiles. They were centers for collecting the products of cottage industry, as well as sites for handicraft workshops. The role of the town in the life of the countryside had been radically transformed. From simply a market for trading rural surplus for a few necessities like salt and vegetable oil, the town was a source of raw materials, occasional employment, and, for many households, staple foodstuffs as well.

Home to absentee landlords and an occasional subcounty bureaucrat, these new towns were dominated by merchants to an extent few central places had been in earlier eras. Some of the more prosperous might develop remarkable traditions of academic success – Chekiang's Nan-hsün *chen*, a center of the silk industry, produced no fewer than fifteen *chin-shih*, forty-three *chü-jen*, and sixty-nine *kung-sheng* between 1644 and 1858.[190] But unlike older administrative centers, the culture of most towns was less that of the literati than that of the teahouse and the folk tradition of romance and martial arts, a culture shared by the merchant elite and the towns' majority population of artisans, shopclerks, warehousemen, boatmen, and porters.

Larger cities in the Ch'ing also experienced a dynamic process of social and cultural diversification. Lying behind this was the emergence as a social phenomenon of the diaspora of individuals sharing a common local origin (*t'ung-hsiang jen*). By the eighteenth century, the empire was cross-cut by far-flung networks of sojourners, notably from Shansi, Kiangsi, and Hunan provinces, from Anhwei's Hui-chou, Fukien's Ch'üan-chou and Amoy, Kiangsu's Sung-chiang, and Chekiang's Shao-hsing and Ningpo prefectures, and from many other talent-exporting localities. There had been earlier precedent for this, of course, especially in sojourning related to the examination system and to the kind of secretarial employment-seeking practiced by Shao-hsing men, but the combination of relaxed mobility controls and opportunities offered by the burgeoning interregional trade elevated the construction of merchant diasporas in the early Ch'ing into a cultural practice of new scale and great sophistication. The high degree of diaspora consciousness within such groups was reflected in the sharing of common religious cults, such as that of Ma-tsu among Fukienese merchants and Kuan-ti among those from Shansi, in the identical naming of their meeting halls, and in the itinerant opera troupes which circulated among places of sojourn presenting styles of performance specific to the native place.[191]

[190] Yang Nien-ch'ün, *Ju-hsüeh ti-yü-hua ti chin-tai hsing-t'ai* (Peking, 1997), p. 162.

[191] Colin Mackerras, *The rise of the Peking opera, 1770–1870* (Oxford, 1972), pp. 18–19. A model of diaspora formation is presented in G. William Skinner, "Mobility strategies in late imperial China: A regional systems analysis," in Carol A. Smith, ed., *Regional analysis* (New York, 1976), Vol. 1, pp. 327–64.

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The most powerful commercial diasporas before the Opium War were those from Shansi and Hui-chou, who were said to dominate the long-distance trade of north and south China, respectively, but who poached regularly on each other's territory. Both were structured internally along kinship ties – the great merchant lineages of K'ang, Hou, Tsao, Ch'iao, and Kuo from Shansi-Shensi, and of Wu, Hung, Chiang, and Ch'eng from Hui-chou – which were linked by routine intermarriage. Ties with the native place were maintained, and the fiduciary integrity of sojourners guaranteed by wives and children left behind at home, but the Hui-chou men often also signified links to their places of sojourn by taking local women as secondary wives and setting up new households there. The Shansi merchants, whose origins lay in the silk route trade of earlier eras, were tied in with the Ch'ing ruling house, whose rise to power it was said they had helped to finance. Their banking and pawnbroking operations prospered in part due to the Ch'ing government's novel practice of investing government funds at interest with private businessmen (*fa-shang sheng-hsi*). The Shansi merchants' activities spread beyond China into the new Ch'ing dominions of Mongolia and Sinkiang, the government-franchised copper trade with Japan, and eventually the Canton monopoly on tea trade with Western countries. The initial rise of the Hui-chou merchants was due to their service to the Ming in transporting grain to troops on the frontiers. They managed to get themselves entrenched in the salt monopoly in both late Ming and Ch'ing (the Shansi merchants used their Manchu ties to muscle in on this to a lesser extent), and branched out from this in the eighteenth century into other major trades such as grain, cotton, and silk textiles, timber, and tea.[192]

As with the institution of the diaspora, the existence of quasi-permanent communities of nonlocal men within major cities had earlier antecedents, but as a widespread and routinized social phenomenon it was a product of the early and mid-Ch'ing. It was facilitated by the legal innovation of "merchant registration" (*shang-chi*), which granted formal local resident status to nonnative sojourning merchants. Designed as a means to accommodate the desire of merchant offspring to sit for the examinations in their host city without jeapordizing the chances of local candidates, *shang-chi* registration

[192] Terada Takanobu, *Sansei shōnin no kenkyū* (Kyoto, 1972); Saeki Tomi, "Shinchō no kyōki to Sansei shōnin," in his *Chūgoku shi kenkyū* (Kyoto, 1969), Vol. 2, pp. 263–321; Saeki Tomi, "Shindai ni okeru Sansei shōnin"; Fujii Hiroshi, "Shin'an shōnin no kenkyū," *Tōyō gakuhō*, 36, 1 (1953), pp. 1–44; 2 (1953), pp. 32–60; 3 (1953), pp. 65–118; and 4 (1953), pp. 115–45; Shigeta Atsushi, "Shindai Kishu shōnin no ichimen," *Jimbun kenkyū*, 19, No. 8 (1968), pp. 587–626. For studies of slightly later-rising groups, see Nishizato Yoshiyuki, "Shinmatsu no Nimbo shōnin ni tsuite," *Tōyōshi kenkyū* 26, No. 1 (1967), pp. 1–29 and No. 2 (1967), pp. 71–89; and Ng, *Amoy network*. The celebrated rise of the Cantonese merchant diaspora was largely a phenomenon of the middle nineteenth century.

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was first allowed to government-franchised salt merchants in late Ming, but was systematically extended to qualifying merchants in all trades under the Ch'ing.[193] Subethnic communities of nonnatives in Ch'ing cities formed as a function of the density of presence. In a city where there were few Amoy men, for example, they might identify and socialize with all other Fukienese, but where the Amoy presence was strong they would associate on the basis of that local-system identity alone. Communities of sojourners usually elected a headman known as "libationer" (*chi-chiu*) to oversee the rites to the patron deity of their native place or trade, and by extension to adjudicate internal conflicts and manage relations with local officials and others within the host community.[194]

A more formal means of organization for sojourning subcommunities within Ch'ing cities was the construction of a proper meeting hall *cum* hostel, generically referred to as a "*hui-kuan*." Our picture of *hui-kuan* proliferation is complicated by a looseness in the naming process, as well as by the fact that, diaspora behavior being so frequently linked with pursuit of a particular occupation or marketing of a local specialty product, it is difficult to sort out the overlap of local-origin associations and common-trade guilds. The best current evidence suggests, however, that the first use of the term came with the establishment of the Wu-hu hui-kuan at Peking in the early fifteenth century, to meet the needs of certain Anhwei natives sojourning there in bureaucratic office or to sit for the metropolitan examinations. At least 181 *hui-kuan* existed in the capital by 1788 (thirty-three of these representing localities in Kiangsi, seventeen each for Shansi and Shensi, and fifteen representing Chekiang).[195] Appropriated for their own use by commercial sojourners, *hui-kuan* began to appear in the empire's major trading cities in the early 1600s, and took hold in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Around 1795, the great Middle Yangtze commercial entrepot of Hankow had at least twenty-two such institutions, nine of them constituted along lines of both common trade and common native place, and thirteen along lines of ethnicity alone. By circa 1820 the commercial-industrial city of Foshan in Kwangtung had nineteen *hui-kuan*, including ones representing merchants of Shansi, Hunan, Hupei, and Kiangsi. The first recorded native-place club at the emerging maritime port of Shanghai was the Shaohsing merchants' 1736 Che-Shao hui-kuan; by century's end this had

[193] Fujii, "Shin'an shōnin no kenkyū," 4 (1953), pp. 119–23. [194] Ibid., 3 (1953), pp. 87–9.

[195] Ping-ti Ho, "The geographic distribution of *Hui-kuan* (*Landsmannschaften*) in central and upper Yangtze provinces," *Tsinghua Journal of Chinese Studies*, New Series, 5, No. 2 (Dec. 1966), pp. 120–52; also Ho, *Chung-kuo hui-kuan shih lun* (Taipei, 1966). For the 1788 figures see Susan Naquin, *Peking: Temples and city life, 1400–1900* (Berkeley, 2000), ch. 14.

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been joined by at least five more, set up by Anhwei, Fukien, Kwangtung, and Ningpo men.[196]

These great commercial cities became in the process cosmopolitan, multiethnic urban societies. In secondary cities, especially those where a single outsider group dominated local commerce, significant hostility could be the result. Such was the case in Hunan's Hsiang-t'an, a center of rice extraction for shipment downriver by merchants from Kiangsi. In 1819 a minor inflation in local grain prices, coinciding with both a performance of a Kiangsi-dialect opera at the outsiders' *hui-kuan* and the running of the annual dragon-boat races (always an occasion for outpourings of Hunanese local sentiment), sparked a serious riot.[197] But in larger cities, with a more even mix of commercial groups, a quieter form of patterned interethnic competition and coordination seems to have been the rule.

Chinese scholars studying the urban history of the early and mid-Ch'ing have highlighted the emergence of a new class of "city people" (*shih-min*), imbued with an unprecedentedly strong and (under favorable circumstances) class-transcendent "urban consciousness" (*shih-min ssu-hsiang*), differentiating themselves from the life of the countryside.[198] The most splendid cities of late Ming – Peking in the north, and Soochow, Hangchow, Yangchow, and Nanking in the lower Yangtze – reconstituted themselves slowly after the trauma of the conquest, but by the 1660s most were once again prosperous and imposing. Over the course of the eighteenth century they witnessed major infrastructural redevelopment of schools, temples, and other public and quasipublic buildings. The opulence of Kiangnan cities and the elites who inhabited them was periodically decried by straitlaced Confucian officials, and even by the court, but in large measure it was the extravagant tastes of the Ch'ien-lung emperor and his favorites such as Ho-shen which fueled the situation. Yangchow's salt merchants, for instance, were said to have spent some 4,670,000 silver taels preening their city to receive Ch'ien-lung's 1768 southern tour, and the emperor was most pleased with what he saw.[199]

[196] Rowe, *Hankow: Commerce and society*, p. 277; Kwangtung Academy of Social Sciences, Institute of History et al., eds., *Ming-Ch'ing Fo-shan pei-k'o wen-hsien ching-chi tzu-liao* (Canton, 1987), pp. 340–1; Tu Li, "Ya-p'ien chan-cheng ch'ien Shang-hai hang-hui hsing-chih chih shan-pien," in *Chung-kuo tzu-pen-chu-i meng-ya wen-t'i lun-wen-chi*, pp. 369–90; Linda Cooke Johnson, *Shanghai: From market town to treaty port, 1074–1858* (Stanford, 1995), ch. 5.

[197] Perdue, "Insiders and outsiders," pp. 166–201.

[198] A celebrated statement of this is Teng T'o, "Lun '*Hung-lou meng*' ti she-hui pei-ching ho li-shih i-i" originally published in the *People's Daily* in 1955 and triumphantly republished in the process of Teng's post-Cultural Revolution rehabilitation in his *Lun Chung-kuo li-shih chi-ko wen-t'i* (Peking, 1979), pp. 167–88. See also Fu I-ling, *Ming-Ch'ing shih-tai shang-jen chi shang-yeh tzu-pen* (Peking, 1956). For a similar argument in English, see Paul S. Ropp, *Dissent in early modern China: "Ju-lin wai-shih" and Ch'ing social criticism* (Ann Arbor, 1981), ch. 1.

[199] Kuhn, *Soulstealers*, pp. 71–2. For a fuller discussion, see Kao Hsiang, *Ch'ien-lung hsia Chiang-nan* (Peking, 1989).

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The elite of the southern cities comprised a mixed coterie of merchants, officials, and self-styled "urban hermits" (*shih-yin*) – literati and officials out of office who survived on their land rents or on sales of their poetry, paintings, and calligraphy, which were highly marketable in the urban consumer culture. Relations between landed literati and *nouveaux riches* merchants were ambivalent. Yangchow's suburban North Lake (Pei-hu) district, for example, was the exclusive preserve of "old money," but in other environs the merchants and scholars overlapped and coexisted rather well. The self-styled "Ming holdovers" (*i-min*), who in the 1660s and 1670s nurtured a nostalgic "poetics of loss" for the imagined refinements of the past, interacted with the newer Ch'ing officials and examination degree-holders. Clusters of literati formed around such men as Yangchow's Wang Shih-chen (1634–1711), the young model-official who with famous integrity adjudicated property cases left over from the conquest and at the same time hosted nationally celebrated poetry gatherings, and Nanking's Yüan Mei (1716–1798), the "statecraft" magistrate turned hedonistic poet whose philosophy of life has been described thus: "Whatever can be sensuously enjoyed is given to us by Heaven for our delight, and . . . we are impiously flouting Heaven if we refuse to take advantage of it to the full."[200]

Elite sociability centered on such new or newly reconstructed features of the urban landscape as academies (often founded by merchants), libraries, gardens, "flower boats" on the canals, and suburban villas. Self-consciously created "sites" such as Yangchow's Red Bridge (Hung-ch'iao) were associated with famous literati of the past and present, and were celebrated in gazetteers and guidebooks. Their pictorial representations, emblazoned on souvenir items such as fans, became widely recognized icons of the new Ch'ing urban culture. Local urban boosters led lower Yangtze cities in a competitive frenzy of mutual imitation in this regard. Entrepreneurs followed, developing increasingly commercialized leisure districts such as Nanking's Ch'in-huai (with its special aura of late-Ming splendor), Hangchow's West Lake, and Soochow's Tiger Hill. A flourishing tourist industry brought throngs of middle-class visitors to these districts' canals, covered markets, teahouses, taverns, and restaurants, especially on festival holidays whose Mardi Gras atmosphere so chagrined the literati whose celebrations of these places had contributed to their allure.

[200] Tobie Meyer Fong, "Site and sentiment: Building culture in seventeenth-century Yangzhou," (diss., Stanford University, 1998); Arthur Waley, *Yüan Mei: Eighteenth-century Chinese poet* (London, 1956), quote above, p. 114. See also Paolo Santangelo, "Urban society in late imperial Suzhou," and Antonia Finane, "Yangzhou: A central place in the Qing empire," both in Linda Cooke Johnson, ed., *Cities of Jiangnan in late imperial China* (Albany, 1993), pp. 81–116 and 117–50; Susan Naquin, *Peking: Temples and city life, 1400–1900*, Part 3.

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The early and mid-Ch'ing also saw a great development of the theater as an urban institution. Successful playwrights such as Li Yü (1611–80), author of romantic-erotic comedies for the sophisticated urban audience, were able to make a professional livelihood from their writing, combining it entrepreneurially, in Li's case, with proprietorship of stationery and bookstores in Yangchow and Hangchow.[201] Yangchow's thirty or so leading salt merchants each had his own opera troupe, whose performances at banquets were a major feature of the social season; court figures and high officials in Peking did the same. Individual actors and entire troupes moved from patron to patron, negotiating better deals for themselves. In such cosmopolitan sojourner cities a wide range of regional styles could be heard, merging in the capital with some Manchu elements as well to form the late eighteenth-century innovation known as "Peking opera" (*ching-hsi*). Opera troupes performed for urban commoners as well, drawing huge crowds at major temples on festival days.[202]

Commoners were frequently immigrants to these large early-Ch'ing cities. They engaged in service trades, such as Yangchow's "three knives" (*san-tao*: chefs, barbers, and pedicurists), and prostitution (male and female, of all grades of status). They were artisans of the cities' famous luxury products, such as jade, lacquerware, and cosmetics. Thousands worked in the major mass-production industries that became central to these urban economies. Liu Yung-ch'eng has counted over seventy handicraft trades represented by artisanal guilds in Soochow, including smelting, metalsmithing, papermaking, printing, tanning, candlemaking, stonemasonry, tailoring, and toolmaking. Many of these production processes were finely subdivided internally. The papermakers' guild regulations of 1756, for example, identified eight separate specialized skills practiced by various of its members.[203] We have already been introduced to the cotton calendrers (*ch'uai-chiang*) and the porters and longshoremen (*chiao-fu*) who made up much of the cities' rowdy laboring classes.

The largest industries of all were those of silk and cotton textiles. In the Ch'ien-lung era, over 30,000 silk-weaving looms were in service in Nanking, another 15,000 in Soochow, and at least 3,000 in Hangchow. The Ch'ing began by abolishing the Ming's system of hereditary registration for weaver households (*chi-hu*), allowing free, market-driven labor mobility into and out of the trade. The government restored and expanded the sprawling network

[201] Patrick Hanan, *The invention of Li Yü* (Cambridge, Mass., 1988), ch. 1; Chun-shu Chang and Shelley Hsüeh-lun Chang, *Crisis and transformation in seventeenth-century China: Society, culture, and modernity in Li Yü's world* (Ann Arbor, 1992), ch. 2.

[202] Mackerras, *Rise of the Peking opera*.

[203] Liu Yung-ch'eng, "Shih-lun Ch'ing-tai Su-chou shou-kung-yeh hang-hui."

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of shops and offices in each city that went under the name of the "imperial silk factories" now free from the eunuch management which had been a source of such grievance in the Ming. In practice, privately marketed silk claimed an ever larger share of the market, and the output of the "factories" itself was increasingly the product of an elaborate system of private contracting and subcontracting. Soochow's fifty-odd silk dealers (*chang-fang*) purchased woven silk from weaver households, each of whom ran two to four looms, or from larger weaving workshops of ten to twelve looms, sometimes but not always supplying the raw materials themselves. They then sent the product out to one of the city's close to 400 dyeshops. They finally either marketed the cloth under their own trade name to interregional merchants in the city, or sold it to the imperial factories for resale under the factories' name. A large number of hired laborers found both short- and long-term employment with these independent parties in the production process. In all, probably more than half of the urban population of Soochow derived a major share of its income from silk. In the Ch'ing, Nanking and Soochow once again established specialized dominance over the empire's silk industry, which had earlier shown signs of proto-industrial deconcentration into areas of North China and the Middle Yangtze.[204]

PHILANTHROPY

One of the most noteworthy social developments was the rise of organized philanthropy, beginning in the major urban centers of Kiangnan and spreading to cities and towns of many other parts of the empire. Part of what Shiba Yoshinobu has identified as the "long-term secular trend from official to private responsibility" in urban social services – fire-fighting, flood prevention, education – from the twelfth to the nineteenth centuries,[205] the early Ch'ing phase of this process was significant on at least three counts. First, it showed clear evidence of turning away from Buddhist influences in late Ming to a more self-conscious Confucian fundamentalism of the sort we have already noted in ritual behavior. Second, it was a vigorous manifestation of the organization-building zeal of early modern Chinese society, analogous to the accelerated formation of corporate lineages, trade guilds, and native-place associations discussed above. Finally, it contributed to the carving out of a growing sphere of communal or "public" (*kung*) proprietorship and manage-

[204] Santangelo, "Urban society in late imperial Soochow," pp. 95–100, and his "The imperial factories of Suzhou: Limits and characteristics of state intervention during the Ming and Qing dynasties," in Stuart Schram, ed., *The scope of state power in China* (London and Hong Kong, 1985), pp. 269–94.
[205] Shiba, "Ningpo and its hinterland," p. 422.

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ment in a stratum between that of the individual household (usually conceived of as "private," *ssu*) and the imperial bureaucracy (*kuan*).

A brief survey of the types of organizations involved, in the approximate order of their appearance, will illustrate the direction of change. There were Sung precedents for many of these institutions, to be sure, but the first to emerge in the late Ming period of philanthropic revival and to continue into the early Ch'ing were associations known as *fang-sheng-hui*, formed to collectively procure and release captive birds and other sentient creatures. These were fully Buddhist-inspired, and designed not to address the needs of society but simply to gain religious merit for their members, referred to as "friends in [shared] moral deeds" (*shan-yu*) or "friends of the association" (*hui-yu*). It was less in their goals than in their collegial structure that they contributed to the development of urban charity by providing the prototype for another sort of late Ming institution, the *t'ung-shan-hui* or "benevolent society." The first recorded benevolent society was in Yü-ch'eng, Honan, in 1590, but their significant emergence came in Kiangnan cities in the early seventeenth century. They still contained some elements of Buddhist charity, but were more strongly Confucian-inspired, drawing upon the traditions of Chu Hsi's "community compact" (*hsiang-yüeh*) and the scholarly academy (*shu-yüan*). Sponsored by activist literati such as Ch'en Tzu-lung (1608–47), Ch'en Lung-cheng (1585–1645), and others, frequently with Tung-lin political connections, they were a deliberate response to the perceived moral degeneration of late Ming politics and society. As self-declared moral communities, they ministered to the personal regeneration of the sponsors, but also to the increasingly evident material needs of the urban poor. As permanent, multipurpose, self-regulating, and rotationally managed formal organizations, they were also a step toward the development of more corporate-style community self-nurturance.[206]

Although some *t'ung-shan-hui* survived into the eighteenth century, the more characteristic charitable institutions of that period were orphanages (*yü-ying t'ang*) and poorhouses (*p'u-chi t'ang*). Orphanages and poorhouses were largely exemplary institutions, designed to demonstrate benevolence more than to relieve in any comprehensive way the ills of society. They were directed toward the goal of social welfare (specifically urban social welfare) and could be of impressive scale, with dozens of employees, both

[206] Fuma Susumu, "Zentō, zenkai no shuppatsu," in Ono Kazuko, ed., *Min-Shin jidai no seiji to shakai* (Kyoto, 1983), pp. 189–232; Joanna Handlin Smith, "Benevolent societies: The reshaping of charity during the late Ming and early Ch'ing," *JAS*, 46, No. 2 (May 1987), pp. 309–37; Liang Ch'i-tzu, "P'in-ch'iung yu ch'iung-jen," pp. 151–4. For masterful surveys of the long-term development of Ming-Ch'ing charitable practice, see Fuma Susumu, *Chūgoku zenkai zentō shi kenkyū* (Kyoto, 1997), and Liang Ch'i-tzu, *Shih-shan yü chiao-hua: Ming-Ch'ing ti tz'u-shan tzu-chih* (Taipei, 1997).

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inpatients and outpatients, and affiliated drug dispensaries. Unlike the late Ming associations, in which there was an element of disdain for, if not resistance to, the imperial administration, the stability and positive aura of Ch'ing governance at its height allowed a significant degree of state-elite cooperation in the delivery of welfare services. The origins of orphanages and poorhouses were in the private sector. The first recorded orphanage was set up by Yangchow salt merchants in 1655, and in the century to follow they were established by a process of mutual imitation in Sung-chiang, Shanghai, and other cities and towns of Kiangnan. Canton had a merchant-founded poorhouse by 1722, Hanyang five years later, and Hui-chou merchants at Hankow established that town's first orphanage in 1734. Both the K'ang-hsi and Yung-cheng emperors were attracted to these new institutions and sought to make them a statutory requirement in each of the empire's administrative cities. With the exception of those at Peking and in a few major provincial capitals, however, the emperors did not authorize direct government support for them, and implementation of the new statutes seems to have been sporadic. Nevertheless, certain activist officials personally contributed to these institutions' endowments and imposed on them a degree of government regulation, as did Ch'en Hung-mou in tours of duty at Yangchow, K'un-ming, and Tientsin in the 1730s. As such, orphanages and poorhouses were early instances of what would become the signature Ch'ing practice of "official oversight and popular management" (*kuan-tu min-pan*).[207]

A variety of other mid-Ch'ing service institutions were more linked to sentiments of urban or otherwise local self-reliance. Among these were "charitable" schools (*i-hsüeh*) and "charitable" granaries (*i-ts'ang*). In the growing Kwangtung industrial town of Foshan, for example, a collegial group of affinially linked local degree-holders, with merchant and local official compliance, over the course of the eighteenth century set up an effective "town hall" (the Ta-k'uei t'ang), imposed local wharf taxes and other fees, and used the proceeds to fund a range of extrabureaucratic institutions to manange "public affairs" (*kung-shih*): schools, temples, orphanages, and granaries, culminating in the grandly scaled municipal granary of 1795. In the view of Mary Backus Rankin, this last act marked a turning point in local attitudes toward the state, a feeling that famine management could no longer be

[207] Angela Ki Che Leung (Liang Ch'i-tzu), "L'accueil des enfants abandonnés dans la Chine du bas-Yangzi aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles," *Études chinoises*, 4, No. 1 (Spring 1985), pp. 15–54; Liang Ch'i-tzu, "Ming-mo Ch'ing-ch'u min-chien tz'u-shan huo-tung ti hsing-ch'i," *Shih-huo yüeh-k'an*, 15, Nos. 7–8 (Jan. 1986), pp. 304–31; Fuma Susumu, "Shindai Shōkō ikueitō no keiei jittai to chiho shakai," *Tōyōshi kenkyū*, 45, No. 3 (Dec. 1986), pp. 55–89; William T. Rowe, *Hankow: Conflict and community in a Chinese city, 1796–1895* (Stanford, 1989), pp. 99–105; Rowe, *Saving the world*, ch. 11.

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entrusted to government administration despite its past successes, but now must be handled autonomously.[208]

Although orphanages, poorhouses, and granaries derived a portion of their inspiration from long-standing Buddhist charitable practices, later institutions such as virtuous widow homes (*ch'ing-chieh t'ang*) and organizations to collect and ritually burn scraps of paper bearing written characters (*hsi-tzu hui*) were exclusively – even militantly – Confucian in their sensibilities. Virtuous widow homes, first appearing in Kiangnan cities in the 1770s and gaining popularity in the century to follow, grew out of complex sets of motives. In part they were designed by males to uphold Confucian principles of widow chastity under conditions of growing gender imbalance which made marriageable young widows highly marketable commodities, and in part they seem to have been understood by elite women, who in large part financed them, as an instrument for assertion of feminist solidarity.[209]

By the mid-nineteenth century, the dominant charitable institution in the empire was the "benevolent hall" (*shan-t'ang*), a fully nongovernmental, broadly multifunctional agency for the delivery of urban welfare services. *Shan-t'ang* were oriented far less to cultivating merit for their donors than to meeting the manifest needs of the more anomic urban society; they were less exemplary than designed to achieve concrete, practical results. The origins of *shan-t'ang* are found in the eighteenth century, but less in any of the types of institutions thus far discussed than in two others: lifeboat and burial societies. Lifeboat societies (*chiu-sheng hui*) were set up at port cities and towns, sometimes by collegial groups of local leaders, but most frequently by groups of sojourning interregional merchants. They of course depended for their personnel on the existence of a mobile labor force of sailors; offering settled employment to them seems to have been a secondary goal of many societies' foundings.

The first recorded lifeboat society was set up in 1676 at the Hupeh Yangtze River port of I-ch'ang. By 1750 there were no fewer than 268 on record, most of them in the Middle and Upper Yangtze, but an appreciable number in Kiangnan as well.[210] The burial society, going under a variety of individual

[208] Mary Backus Rankin, "Managed by the people: Officials, gentry, and the Foshan charitable granary, 1795–1845," *Late Imperial China*, 15, No. 2 (Dec. 1994), pp. 1–52. The prefix "*i*" (charitable) became widely used for a range of institutions in the eighteenth century, in some cases systematically distinguishing the institutions it named from other similar institutions – such as *she-hsüeh* and *she-ts'ang*, "community" schools and granaries – and in some cases applied indiscriminately.

[209] Angela Ki Che Leung, "To chasten society: The development of widow homes in the Qing, 1773–1911," *Late Imperial China*, 14, No. 2 (Dec. 1993), pp. 1–32.

[210] Morita Akira, "Kyūshōbune ni tsuite: Shindai ni okeru shakai jigyō no hitokusari," *Shigaku kenkyū*, 66 (1957), pp. 1–12; Fuma, "Zentō, zenkai no shuppatsu," pp. 206–7.

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names, had a Lower Yangtze origin. There were, for example, four such organizations sharing the load in Soochow in the 1760s. Their initiative was private, both literati and merchant, and their job was to encoffinate and inter unclaimed corpses found on the streets. The initial concern may have been Confucian ritual propriety, but it soon expanded to the practical one of promoting urban public sanitation and hygiene.[211] When lifeboat societies and burial halls began to absorb each others' functions, and to add other operations such as running gruel kitchens (*chou-ch'ang*) to feed the urban poor – some had already done this by the close of the eighteenth century – a new type of social welfare institution was born.

The evolution of elite entrepreneurship in public welfare from late Ming to the beginning of the nineteeth century reflected shifting attitutudes toward the poor (from singling out the "worthy poor" for enlightenment to simply caring for urgent material needs on a mass basis), toward the locality and the state, and toward elite social responsibility in general. Liang Ch'i-tzu has identified two key trends. While individual acts of philanthropy had long characterized Confucian elite behavior, the early Ch'ing saw the gradual emergence of the model of the elite "philanthropist" (*tz'u-shan-jen*) as a cultural ideal. At the same time, probably influenced by contemporary developments in commercial and industrial business organization, charitable activity became both more corporate, culminating in the soliciting of routinized subscriptions by corporate public service entities, and more professionalized, as management by a single long-serving patron or by rotation among a collegial group of donors was replaced by a professional, usually remunerated "manager" (*tung-shih*) on the line of the "degree-holding director" whose emergence we have already observed in the arena of water conservancy.[212] Organized charity was thus emblematic of trends in social change as a whole.

RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION

In the mid-Ch'ing the most spectacular display of religious organization and its power was the millenarian "White Lotus Rebellion" in the Han River valley and beyond in the 1790s, an event often seen as the turning point in Ch'ing dynastic fortunes.[213] Popular religious sectarianism is treated else-

[211] Liang, *Shih-shan yü chiao-hua*, pp. 228–9. [212] Ibid., pp. 80–4 and passim.

[213] On the social history of the rebellion, see Blaine C. Gaustad, "Religious sectarianism and the state in mid-Qing China: Background to the White Lotus uprising of 1796–1804" (diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1994). For attempts to assess its historical significance, see Suzuki Chūsei, *Shinchō chūkishi kenkyū*, and Jones and Kuhn, "Dynastic decline and the roots of rebellion."

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where.[214] Here our focus is on types of religious organization that show the early and mid-Ch'ing zeal for organizing in the arena of religious life was in large part but one further manifestation of the broader trend of association-building which pervaded many aspects of society.

The following are a few representative examples. Shu-lin was a new commercial town (*chen*) which grew up in northern Taiwan as a result of the immigration to the island in the eighteenth century. It was settled by various ethnic and local-origin groups from Fukien – Hakka, Ch'üan-chou, and Chang-chou – each of which brought their patron deities from the mainland. The temples they set up in Shu-lin were each managed by a religious association (*shen-ming hui*), membership in which was largely coterminous with the local-origin group or even the lineage. Each deity left its temple for an annual inspection tour of its parish, essentially an urban-suburban neighborhood formed around the cult. These processions were mutually coordinated on an annual schedule, much like the schedules of periodic markets. At the same time, Shu-lin residents together set up a temple to the town's local tutelary god (*t'u-ti kung*), and another, more complex association (*ch'ih-fu hui*) was established to manage its affairs. The town was divided into sixteen shareholding communities (the influence of business organization is quite evident here), which were responsible in annual rotation for financing the temple's annual feast. These shareholding neighborhood communities were not exactly co-equal, but rather were linked in an order of precedence which reflected the current social standing of their members. Shu-lin had both transcendent, unifying and ethnic, particularist deities, each with its own respective *hui*-organization.[215]

Across the strait in Ch'üan-chou itself, Ming officials had divided the prefectural city into wards (*p'u* and *ching*) for purposes of social control and the imposition of imperial governance. In early and mid-Ch'ing local people appropriated this ward structure to create a highly localistic counter-geography based on neighborhood cult deities that were housed in the ward offices themselves or in adjacent shrines. These deities, like those in Shu-lin, went on boundary-marking tours of their districts (*hsün*), the schedules of which were coordinated into an annual cycle, but which routinely led to raucous behavior and sometimes violent inter-neighborhood feuds. Ch'ing officials were hostile both to the local-autonomy implications of the neighborhood cults and to their role in spawning social disorder, but the compart-

[214] See the chapter by Barend ter Haar on local religions in Volume 9, Part 2, of *The Cambridge history of China* (forthcoming).

[215] Wang Shih-ch'ing, "Religious organization in the history of a Taiwanese town," in Arthur P. Wolf, ed., *Religion and ritual in Chinese society* (Stanford, 1974), pp. 71–92.

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mentalized structure of Ch'üan-chou's *ching*-level cults also lent itself to municipal-level cooperation in projects which the bureaucrats approved and supported.[216]

Early Ch'ing commercial prosperity in Kiangnan and along the southeast coast led to the rapid spread of largely urban plague-god cults, such as that of Marshall Wen, which had existed for centuries in Wenchou, Chekiang. This spread was accomplished largely at the hands of merchant diasporas involved in coastal shipping and in the region's burgeoning silk industry. By the middle of the eighteenth century, this cult was well established in Hangchow, Soochow, Shanghai, Fuchow, and even Taiwan. In such localities, huge, weeklong processions involving many corporate groups within urban society were undertaken each year to thank the god for sparing the city from an epidemic. When epidemic did strike, spectacular expulsions of burning boats were undertaken in Marshall Wen's name with the participation of local officials and their own divine surrogate, the City God (*ch'eng-huang*).[217]

Merchant diasporas also figured prominently in the "Filial and Righteous Society" (Hsiao-i hui), a self-consciously "orthodox" religious cult which united Kiangsi natives wherever in the empire they happened to sojourn. Oriented to a specific mountainside temple in the native province, the Society and its worship practices formed the centerpiece of the guildhalls, invariably known as the "Hall of Longevity" (*Wan-shou kung*), of Kiangsi merchants in each major trading city they frequented.[218]

Such large-scale religious organization was not limited to the southeast, nor to the major cities. In rural north China (our best evidence coming from parts of Shansi), the eighteenth century brought the full flourishing of great ritual-theatrical festivals known as "*sai*," held to propitiate gods of the folk-Confucian tradition, primarily for relief from drought. These were enormous affairs, often lasting a week and involving hundreds of role-playing professional and volunteer performers. Sponsored by individual villages, groups of allied villages, and by district cities, they were financed and managed collectively by headmen of various neighboring ritual-*cum*-residence units known as "*she*." Each sponsoring locality held its *sai* on an annual or triennial basis, but they were performed according to a mutually coordinated schedule and with such density so that there was nearly always a *sai* under

[216] A remarkable example, albeit from beyond our period, came in the 1896 citywide rite of expulsion of hungry ghosts, killed in Manchuria during the Sino-Japanese War, a rite formally presided over by local officials but organized collectively by the *ching* temple associations; Mingming Wang, "Place, administration, and territorial cults in late imperial China: A case study from south Fujian," *Late Imperial China*, 16, No. 1 (June 1995), pp. 33–78.

[217] Paul R. Katz, *Demon hordes and burning boats: The cult of Marshall Wen in late imperial China* (Albany, 1995).

[218] Richard Shek, personal communication.

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way in some nearby locality that villagers could, and did, attend. In a substantial minority of instances local officials themselves presided and served as sponsors.[219]

Finally, a slightly different but related kind of religious organization was the pilgrimage association (*hsiang-hui*). The key activity here was not that of the deity leaving his or her temple for a processional tour, but instead the group of devotees ritually traveling *to* the deity's temple to present incense (*chin-hsiang*). In the outskirts of Peking, for example, many such pilgrimage sites appeared in the later seventeenth century. Early *hsiang-hui* were usually formed for a single act of pilgrimage, but by the 1730s the organization of these societies had become more formalized and permanent, with at first a single headman, and eventually a range of specialized internal posts, for example, a tea manager. They could have between several dozen and many hundreds of members, both male and female. They trekked to their pilgrimage site each year on predictable routes along which grew up commercial establishments to service, and profit from, their passage. Piety and recreation probably played equal roles in the growing popularity of pilgrimage association within the emerging bourgeois society. In the case of a very popular site, such as the Miao-feng Shan temple dedicated to the madonna-like female deity Pi-hsia Yüan-chün, *hsiang-hui* were often sponsored by large Peking business firms or guilds that orchestrated among themselves both their schedules and their responsibilities for maintenance of specific portions of the site and its routes of access.[220]

As all of this suggests, the Ch'ing state had ambivalent attitudes toward popular religious organization. *Hui*-formation of any kind was explicitly prohibited by the Ch'ing code, but it is obvious that the ban was only selectively enforced. Pilgrimages, temple festivals, and performances of ritual opera were routinely condemned by bureaucrats for their disruptive potential, for their wasteful extravagance in the face of pervasive subsistence threats, and for their hazards to sexual morality. In his first year on the throne the Yung-cheng emperor banned theatrical performances dedicated to the spirits associated with popular ritual celebrations. But even Yung-cheng himself, just five years after his initial prohibition, relented a bit, declining to endorse a proposed ban on *sai*-associations and annual propitiary rites more

219 David Johnson, "Local officials and 'Confucian' values in the Great Temple festivals (*Sai*) of southeastern Shansi in late imperial times," paper presented to the Conference on State and Ritual in East Asia, Paris, June–July 1995.

220 Susan Naquin, "The Peking pilgrimage to Miao-feng Shan: Religious organizations and sacred site," in Susan Naquin and Chün-fang Yü, eds., *Pilgrims and sacred sites in China* (Berkeley, 1992), pp. 333–77. For an analysis of religious organizations (*shen-ming-hui*) in the Ch'ing capital generally, emphasizing their increasing formalization in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, see Naquin, *Peking: Temples and city life*, ch. 13.

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generally. Officials, as we have seen, found such activity useful at times, and they, too, emperors included, participated in the broader religious belief system which lay at the heart of this pious organization-building.[221] In one remarkable instance, a suburban Peking temple and convent widely recognized as a fount of White Lotus sectarian theology nevertheless enjoyed prolonged imperial patronage, and was lavishly rebuilt by the K'ang-hsi emperor following its destruction by fire in 1711. The religious messages affixed to certain symbols and sites were evidently capable of being read in very different ways by differing constituencies.[222]

What does this tell us about the relationship of "orthodox" and "heterodox" religious practices in this period? It suggests that sectarian organizations nestled into the overall structure of Ch'ing society more comfortably than we are sometimes led to presume. The basic belief system that we refer to generically as "White Lotus," centering on worship of the Eternal Mother (Wu-sheng lao-mu) and the coming Maitreya Buddha, dated from the sixteenth century, but the specific associational patterns linked with this in later times were seemingly products of the early Ch'ing itself. These associations were highly amorphous, fleeting, and locally specific, linked by the diffusion of key sacred texts (*pao-chüan*) and of networks of teachers. Such networks not infrequently involved direct kinship, for example the Wangs of Chihli's Stone Buddha Village and the Lius of Liu Family Village in Shantung. The teachers did not shun such elite behavior as lineage formation and the pursuit of examination degrees and official posts. The kind of deference accorded by students to teachers in these sects clearly mirrored the conventional forms of filial piety, and even many of their mantras ("Be filial to parents, amicable toward neighbors") echoed mainstream sentiments. The specific kind of congregational sutra-recitation meetings (*hui*) associated by Susan Naquin with some White Lotus groups may have been somewhat foreign to more conventional religious practice, but *hui*-activity in general had become routine in early and mid-Ch'ing religious practice. So too had the prominent involvement of women as worshipers, doctrinal transmitters, and even deities. These sects' pointed neglect or inversion of more conventionally accepted personal hierarchies, as well as their creation of networks of fellow-believers transcending customary bounds of locality, marked them as socially deviant.[223] Most particularly,

[221] Feng Erh-k'ang, *Yung-cheng chuan*, pp. 368–9. See also Naquin, "Pilgrimage," pp. 351–2.

[222] Thomas Shiyu Li and Susan Naquin, "The Baoming temple: Religion and the throne in Ming and Qing China," *HJAS*, 48, No. 1 (1988), pp. 131–88.

[223] Susan Naquin, "Connections between rebellions: Sect family networks in Qing China," *Modern China*, 8, No. 3 (July 1982), pp. 337–60; Susan Naquin, "The transmission of White Lotus sectarianism in late imperial China," in David Johnson, Andrew J. Nathan, and Evelyn S. Rawski, eds., *Popular culture in late imperial China* (Berkeley, 1985), pp. 255–91.

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when local officials moved with unaccustomed zeal to extinguish these systems of comforting salvationist belief, they risked translating the millenarian implications of White Lotus theology into active antidynastic rebellion.[224]

CONFLICT

It is tempting to think of early and mid-Ch'ing as an era of "peace and stability," bracketed on one end by the devastations of dynastic transition and on the other by the *fin-de-siècle* White Lotus Rebellion. Compared to these and other times of intense violence, of course, the era was in fact one in which conflict was relatively well contained. Economic expansion helped, as did a strong and, most of the time, internally disciplined political regime. But late seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Ch'ing society was by no means placid. How could it be so, when the endemic tensions of urban and rural life were severely aggravated by the wrenching changes so far described? Under these circumstances, Ch'ing subjects routinely engaged in processes of aggressive mutual struggle over issues of food, land, water rights, market access, rents, wages, women, gravesites, status, and countless other scarce resources.

It must be conceded that the imperial administration did an extraordinary job of conflict management. The task of resolving civil litigation – disputes patronizingly referred to in legal parlance as "trivial affairs" (*hsi-shih*) – took up the majority of each local official's working hours. Philip Huang has described how magistrates negotiated this staggering judicial workload, in part by an ingenious process of announcing preliminary decisions and asking if the parties might reach more mutually satisfying settlements out of court, before undergoing the arduous and costly process of a formal trial.[225] Ubiquitous complaints attest to the widespread official perception that the number of property-related lawsuits was rapidly growing, and we have no reason to doubt that this was in fact the case, even on a *per capita* basis. The truly remarkable thing is that, given its expressed repugnance for the society's rising litigiousness, the Ch'ing state maintained its commitment to hear each and every case its subjects brought before it. The alternatives, as it knew, were worse.

A principal alternative was interpersonal violence. Property-related murder cases, like civil plaints, increasingly clogged the state's judicial apparatus. The hundreds of thousands of cases which found their way up to Peking's

[224] This is Naquin's principal explanation for the most sustained millenarian uprising in the Ch'ing prior to the White Lotus Rebellion of 1796, that in western Shantung in 1774; Susan Naquin, *Shantung rebellion: The Wang Lun uprising of 1774* (New Haven, 1981).

[225] Huang, *Civil justice in China*, esp. ch. 4.

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Ministry of Punishments reveal Ch'ing subjects killing each other in fights over all the many intricacies of the land tenure regime we observed earlier.[226] Surveys of these materials undertaken independently by Liu Yung-ch'eng and Thomas Buoye suggest a steady and fairly rapid rise in the incidence of property-dispute homicides, peaking in the third quarter of the eighteenth century, though the reasons for their rise (and subsequent apparent decline) remain open to debate.[227]

Individual violence regularly escalated into collective violence along the many built-in lines the society afforded – kinship, ethnicity, locality – for mobilizing comrades-in-arms.[228] In certain instances this group competition, too, could be kept in manageable form through deliberate routinization, as with the celebrated Lukang rock fight. Once each spring, the leading surname groups in this flourishing south Taiwan port would line up on facing sides of the town square, indulge their hostilities by throwing stones at each other for a prescribed period, then all go home until next year.[229] Likewise routinized but less benignly channeled were the violent surname feuds which persisted, often for decades and despite periodic official crackdowns, in the wild-west atmosphere of parts of Kwangtung, Fukien, and Taiwan. The longevity of these vendettas was assured in part by the existence of a class of quasiprofessional entrepreneurs, who trained and led lineage members into episodic "armed affrays" (*hsieh-tou*) against their neighbors.[230]

Despite the largely effectual repressive mechanisms of early and mid-Ch'ing authorities, collective action for protest or resistance purposes was a fact of life. Entrepreneurial groups of land-reclaimers, often organized by lineage, carved out polders for commercialized rice production in Hukwang and elsewhere, often in active defiance of local official prohibitions.[231] Rent resistance, though as we have seen most characteristically expressed through

[226] Ti yi li-shih tang-an kuan, comps., *Ch'ing-tai t'u-ti chan-yu kuan-his yü tien-nung k'ang-tzu tou-cheng*, 2 Vols. (Peking, 1988), contains summaries of 279 such cases from the Ministry's archives.

[227] Liu Yung-ch'eng, "Ch'ing-tai ch'ien-ch'i tien-nung k'ang-tsu tou-cheng ti hsin fa-chan," *Ch'ing-shih lun-ts'ung* 1 (1979), pp. 54–77; Thomas Buoye, *Manslaughter, markets, and moral economy: Violent disputes over property rights during the Qianlong reign* (Cambridge, 2000). Buoye usefully breaks this trend down by region of the empire and attributes the rise and decline of homicides to shifts in local customary law which followed, but lagged behind, the de facto process of commodification of land rights.

[228] On ethnic violence see Perdue, "Insiders and outsiders." This was often particularly endemic in frontier areas, newly settled by persons of disparate local origin; see for example Harry Lamley, "Subethnic rivalries in the Ch'ing period," in Emily Ahern and Hill Gates, eds., *The anthropology of Taiwan society* (Stanford, 1981), pp. 282–318.

[229] Donald DeGlopper, "Social structure in a nineteenth-century Taiwanese port city," in Skinner, ed., *The city in late imperial China*, pp. 633–50.

[230] Among the many studies by Harry J. Lamley of this phenomenon, see his "Lineage and surname feuds in southen Fukien and eastern Kwangtung under the Ch'ing," in Liu, ed., *Orthodoxy*, pp. 255–80.

[231] Ts'ui-jung Liu, "Dike construction in Ching Chou"; Peter C. Perdue, "Official goals and local interests," *JAS*, 41, No. 4 (Aug. 1982), pp. 747–65.

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individual acts of violence, might also take on a collective aspect. Some 312 instances of this, and also 58 cases of tax-resistance (mostly in protest of corvée demands), have been documented for the K'ang-hsi through Ch'ien-lung reigns, spanning all provinces of the empire. In a typical case from 1755, two related tenant farmers in Fukien's Shao-wu county linked up with groups of the local unemployed (*wu-lai*) to resist rent payments and periodically enter the local market town to terrorize their landlords. Their undoing came when they formed an organized "*hui*," the Iron Cudgel Society (T'ieh-ch'ih-hui), by so doing inviting the intervention of previously indifferent local officials.[232]

Food riots – popular collective action to demand sales from government granaries, forcibly prevent grain exports from the locality, or seize and distribute private accumulations – were relatively unknown in the dynasty's early reigns, but became frequent, indeed routine, in the episodic dearths of the Ch'ien-lung era. They took place in grain-producer and consumer localities alike, both urban and rural, but with a predictable geography following routes of heavy grain circulation in central and south China. Ordered to suppress them by their superiors, local officials often took a relatively tolerant approach to what they saw as patterned and entirely reasonable efforts by populations to enforce their collective rights over local food supplies.[233]

Urban collective action also included strikes, sometimes violent, such as that of Soochow calendrers and dyers in 1701, which involved several days of plundering and forceful intimidation of employers. At least seven times in this period the calendrers led major work actions; on several occasions weavers (*chi-hu*) in the major textile centers did likewise. Peking's mintworkers conducted a protracted strike in 1740, ceramic workers at Kiangsi's Ching-te chen struck repeatedly in the Ch'ien-lung era, and by century's end Kwangtung ironworkers and Shensi lumbermen had begun patterns of work stoppage that would last into the 1810s. Boatmen rioted at local official yamen in Ningpo, Foochow, and Ch'ang-sha a dozen times in the years 1786–1800, and merchants repeatedly led market strikes to protest irregular new taxes in cities from Yangchow to Ch'ang-sha to Chungking to Mukden.[234]

[232] Chung-leno jen-min ta-hsüeh Ch'ing shih yen-chiu suo tang-an hsi, comp., *K'ang-Yung-Ch'ien shih-ch'i ch'eng-hsiang jen-min fan-k'ang tou-cheng tzu-liao* (Peking, 1979). The Iron Cudgel Society case is discussed on p. 103. Liu Yung-ch'eng, "Tien-nung k'ang-tzu tou-cheng," offers a systematic interpretation of this data by one of its compilers.

[233] R. Bin Wong, "Food riots in the Qing dynasty," *JAS*, 41, No. 4 (Aug. 1982), pp. 767–88. For capsule descriptions of 55 such incidents, see *K'ang-Yung-Ch'ien shih-ch'i ch'eng-hsiang jen-min fan-k'ang tou-cheng tzu-liao*, pp. 562–94.

[234] Li Hua, "Shih-lun Ch'ing-tai ch'ien-ch'i ti shih-min tou-cheng," *Wen-shih-che*, 10 (1957), pp. 54–62; Liu Yung-ch'eng, "Su-chou shou-kung-yeh hang-hui"; *K'ang-Yung-Ch'ien shih-ch'i ch'eng-hsiang jen-min fan-k'ang tou-cheng tzu-liao*, pp. 519–61.

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Most disturbing to the administration was the linkage of labor activism with the formation of "societies," or *hui*. In 1723, a Soochow calendrer named Luan Chin-kung organized one such *hui* involving several scores of co-workers, plotting unsuccessfully to set fire to the city's silk warehouses and kill local officials. Seven years later Luan's nephew revived the plot. Upon discovery, the plotters killed the labor boss (*pao-t'ou*) and went on a looting rampage throughout the city. It was afterward discovered that the Luans' *hui* had been employed as thugs in a child-prostitution racket led by local *sheng-yüan*, Yao Ping-chung.[235]

Such "*hui*" raise the broader issue of what was once conventionally called the "secret society" and, in turn, the possibility of collective mobilization in direct oposition to the Ch'ing regime itself. The cases of the Iron Cudgel Society and Luan Chin-kung's calendrers' *hui* suggest how seamlessly *hui*-formation fit into the more ordinary patterns of association, grievance, and opportunity endemic in mid-Ch'ing society. The historiography of fraternal organizations earlier stressed their cabalistic character, their links with sectarian eschatologies, their teleological status as "primitive revolutionaries," and above all their protonationalist anti-Manchuism.[236] A broad pattern of localized collective violence, for the most part unconnected with "Southern Ming" pretender regimes, characterized much of China during the first few decades of Ch'ing rule, and we now understand that the silence of Ch'ing textual sources on questions of popular anti-Manchuism did not equate with the absence of racial-ethnic hostility.[237] But most of today's specialists on the emergence of the T'ien-ti hui (Heaven and Earth Society, or Triads) and the Ko-lao hui (Society of Elder Brothers) doubt these societies' internally generated origin myths linking them to seventeenth-century Ming restorationist movements, and stress factors other than racial antagonism in their formation. That formation is instead related to various socioeconomic conditions particular especially to the mid-eighteenth century.[238]

[235] Santangelo, "Urban society in Suzhou," pp. 113–15.

[236] For examples in English of this older scholarship, see Jean Chesneaux, *Popular movements and secret societies in China, 1840–1950* (Stanford, 1972), and Fei-ling Davis, *Primitive revolutionaries of China* (Honolulu, 1977). These works were rooted in a much larger historical literature in Chinese and Japanese with the same set of themes.

[237] For social unrest in the Shun-chih reign, see Wakeman, *The great enterprise*, ch. 9 and passim. For persisting sentiments of anti-Manchuism, see Elliott, "Resident aliens."

[238] This is a consistent theme in current historiography, effectively a collective project of Taiwanese, Chinese, and American scholars. See most notably the following: Chuang Chi-fa, "T'ai-wan, Kuang-hsi, Yün-Kuei"; Chuang Chi-fa, "T'ai-wan, Kuang-hsi, Yün-Kuei"; Chuang Chi-fa, "Ch'ing-tai Min-Yüeh ti-ch'u ti she-hui ching-chi pien-i yü pi-mi hui-tang ti fa-chan," in *Ti erh chieh kuo-chi Han-hsüeh hui-I lun-wen chi: Ming, Ch'ing, yü chin-tai li tsu* (Nankang, 1989), pp. 409–46; Cai Shaoqing, "On the origin of the Gelaohui," *Modern China*, 10, No. 4 (1984), pp. 481–508; Ts'ai Shao-ch'ing, *Chung-kuo chin-tai hui-t'ang shih yen-chiu* (Peking, 1987); Ts'ai Shao-ch'ing, *Chung-kuo pi-mi she-hui* (Hangchow, 1989); Ch'in Pao-ch'i, *Ch'ing ch'ien-ch'i T'ien-ti-hui yen-chiu* (Peking, 1988); Dian H. Murray, *The origins of the Tiandihui: The Chinese Triads in legend and history* (Stanford, 1994); and David Ownby, *Brother-*

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The process of this type of *hui* formation only began in the 1680s, once the Ch'ing had consolidated its regime with the defeat of the Three Feudatories Rebellion and the Cheng Ch'eng-kung forces on Taiwan. It was an outgrowth of population pressure, the growing *per capita* shortage of cultivable land, a tightened marriage market for nonelite males, and the relaxation of controls on geographic mobility, all of which led to a rapidly increasing floating population of "wandering hands" (*yu-shou*), the same population from which emerged the empire's transport laborers, beggars, itinerant peddlers, fortune-tellers, and petty security personnel. The chief areas of activity were those which most heavily received this migratory population flow: Fukien, Kwangtung, Kwangsi, Szechuan, and (to a much lesser extent in this era) Manchuria. Frontier Taiwan, in particular, played a critical role in generating or nurturing the growth of organizations which were then re-exported to the mainland.

The new popularity of sworn-brotherhood forms of organization was also related to two mid-Ch'ing trends we have already described: land reclamation and urbanization. In areas where land development was dominated by powerful kinship groups, groups which routinely engaged in armed feuds (*hsieh-tou*) with their neighbors, fraternal organization could be a mutual defense response on the part of men lacking lineage ties.[239] Displaced farmers moving to cities were frequently able to find work in the largest urban centers, but in the smaller towns and county seats which, as we have seen, saw the greatest population growth in this era, they were more often un- or underemployed, and it was in these lower-level central places that *hui*-formation was most pronounced.[240]

Fraternal association mirrored and imitated other forms of organization-building common to the period: corporate lineages, guilds, native-place associations, and sectarian congregations.[241] It differed structurally from the latter groups (with which it is sometimes lumped together as "secret societies") in a number of systematic ways. Sects were frequently led by literate men, such as yamen clerks, doctors, Taoist priests, and even lower degree-holders, whereas the leadership of sworn brotherhoods were more often nonliterate casual laborers. While sects often drew their membership intact from a

hoods and secret societies in early and mid-Qing China (Stanford, 1996). Murray's book focuses especially on the development of the Ming-restorationist origin-myth, which she, like all of these scholars, considers patently false.

[239] This is a central argument in the articles cited above by Chuang Chi-fa.

[240] See especially Ch'in Pao-ch'i, *Ch'ing ch'ien-ch'i T'ien-ti-hui yen-chiu*, pp. 108–34.

[241] Ownby, *Brotherhoods and secret societies*, pp. 33–8, nicely situates the emergence of sworn-brotherhood "*hui*" in the context of other functional *hui*-associations which operated legitimately in late imperial society, such as those formed for mutual support in burial of relatives (*tsang-ch'in hui*), for cooperation in financing wedding rituals (*hun-chia hui*), for celebrating the birthday of local patron deities (*shen-ming hui*), and for revolving extension of credit (*yin-hui* or *yao-hui*).

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pre-existing form of community – kinship, residential, occupational – members of fraternal associations were usually rootless males of disparate origin. Ideologically, sects were marked by strong belief-systems which ran counter to the hierarchical principles of Confucian society; by contrast, the brotherhoods' organizational principles looked quite "orthodox." They were, in a sense, an attempt to create regular social forms for men whom society had, largely for economic reasons, abandoned.[242] But the brotherhoods were not merely passive mutual-aid societies of the downtrodden; they routinely were oriented toward some variety of criminal entrepreneurship, foreshadowing the large-scale racketeering with which some, like the Triads, would become identified in the twentieth century.[243]

Recent scholarship tends to identify three phases in the growth of fraternal associations, based on their appearance in the reports of provincial officials. In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, small groups of individuals known generically as "*hui*" turn up with ever greater frequency, but these are unnamed brotherhoods with little evident aspiration toward permanency. In the Yung-cheng and early Ch'ien-lung reigns, *named* societies first make their appearance, but these, like the twenty-member "Father and Mother Society" (Fu-mu hui) of Taiwan's Chu-lo county in 1723, are mostly still localized and disconnected. Finally, in the later eighteenth century, considerably larger societies or networks of societies of a routinized permanency begin to dominate the official record.[244]

The most significant such group was the Heaven and Earth Society (T'ien-ti hui), whose founding by one Cheng K'ai (alias T'i Hsi) is now dated precisely to the year 1761, in Chang-p'u county, Chang-chou prefecture, Fukien, an epicenter of lineage feuding and native place of countless emigrants to Taiwan and elsewhere throughout south China. One of the organizations this group encountered in its spread was the Ku-lu hui, a loosely connected group of salt smugglers in peripheral Szechwan which had been formed among *p'eng-min* and other immigrants in the 1740s. The T'ien-ti hui bequeathed to this group its principle of elder brother/younger brother internal organization, yielding the Society of Elder Brothers (Ko-lao hui), familiar from later Ch'ing and Republican-era history.[245] Increasingly bent on exterminating these sworn brotherhoods, the government was instead beset by recurrant *hui*-led uprisings, all manageable, but of increasing frequency and scale as the century

[242] See especially Ts'ai Shao-ch'ing, *Pi-mi she-hui*, pp. 8–11. [243] Murray, *Tiandihui*, pp. 34–5.

[244] Based on painstaking archival research, Ch'in Pao-ch'i identifies 1755 as a key turning point: of the 215 named societies he has turned up, all but sixteen appear after this year. Ch'in Pao-ch'i, *Ch'ing ch'ien-ch'i T'ien-ti-hui yen-chiu*, p. 118.

[245] Cai Shaoqing, "Origin of the Gelaohui," pp. 481–508; Ts'ai Shao-ch'ing, *Hui-t'ang shih*, pp. 203–19. Ts'ai (Cai) notes also the still later absorption of White Lotus religious beliefs by the originally fully secular Ko-lao hui.

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wore on.[246] Social tensions and perhaps also, as Philip Kuhn has suggested, a more loosely felt sense of cultural anxiety, were on the rise through the eighteenth century.[247]

SUMMARY

The early and mid-Ch'ing era was one of extraordinary social dynamism and, indeed, transformation. Population growth led to a broadly felt urgency about more efficient productivity and to heightened competition over scarce resources such as food, land, women, examination degrees, and official posts. Ch'ing rule and more strenuous efforts at incorporation of the southern pale brought the empire a new level of ethnic complexity and, for many subjects, an intensified process of negotiation of identity. New levels of social mobility, the relaxed importance of ascriptive status among both the elite and the debased, and the more general permeability of class boundaries pleased many Ch'ing subjects, but created anxieties for nearly all. Geographic mobility on a massive scale created new frontiers, new modes of highland-lowland relations, and new kinds of cosmopolitan urban communities hosting quasipermanent colonies of sojourners from many distant areas. An emerging bourgeois (*shih-min*) culture and consciousness was accompanied, ironically, by a greater interpenetration of urban and rural, exemplified in the proliferation and growth of market towns. Intensified agrarian commercialization and monetization brought the near-final collapse of rural self-sufficiency, fuller commoditization of land and labor, and a marketization of social relations. Occupational diversification led to the emergence of new professions among the elite and to niche-seeking specialization at all levels. A large, mobile, and rootless (*wu-lai*) body of unmarried adult males was thrown off by the society, creating both a new kind of proto-proletarian labor force and a powerful threat to social norms and institutions. All of these trends led to an urgent and creative wave of nongovernmental organization-building: new kinds of corporate business enterprises (some featuring capitalist-style labor relations), large corporate (and highly mutable) lineage structures, commercial and artisanal guilds, native-place associations within larger, encompassing *t'ung-hsiang* diasporas, and a wide spectrum of religious, fraternal, philanthropic, and local self-protective organizations.

Several basic features of late imperial society, of course, changed little in this period. For one thing, the changes described here all took place in the

[246] Some fifty-eight "peasant rebellions" (*nung-min ch'i-i*) are documented for the period 1711–1813 in *K'ang-Yung-Ch'ien shih-chi ch'eng-hsiang jen-min fan-k'ang tou-cheng tzu-liao*, pp. 599–894. Most occurred after mid-century and most (but not all) involved fraternal organizations.

[247] Kuhn, *Soulstealers*, pp. 228–30.

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absence of any significantly intensified level of cultural exchange with regions outside East Asia. If anything, the early and mid-Ch'ing was a period of zealous adherence to home-grown, even fundamentalist, Confucian cultural values. Adoption of New World crops, modest levels of global trade, and Christian missionary influences continued to have some importance for Ch'ing society, more than in prior centuries, but the era of significant "Western impact" was still on the horizon. Second, both the basic structure and the formal size of the imperial state apparatus remained roughly the same as it had been in the Ming. Third, there was no technological change of a transformative nature. The formidable increases in agricultural productivity and the expansion of cultivation into new highland ecologies, for instance, were accomplished more by dissemination and adaptation of existing technologies than by any fundamental innovation. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, there was no appreciable erosion of the central position of the Chinese-style patrilineal household (*hu*) as the basic unit of the social order, of proprietorship, and of economic production. Indeed, the centrality of this institution was staunchly reaffirmed, both in law and in social practice.

None of this implied "stagnation." Consider but three examples. First, lacking any new technology superseding that of woodblock printing, which had been around for many centuries, the first half of the Ch'ing saw rapid growth of a publishing industry, a broad middle-brow book market, and a popular print culture. Second, the broad-ranging processes of association-building took place in most instances without threatening, but by building creatively on, the structure of the nuclear household. And finally, the significant expansion of the range of social-management functions in this era – conflict resolution, provisioning, building and maintenance of infrastructural works – was accomplished less by expanding the formal state apparatus than by creatively spinning off a wide range of social institutions around its periphery, into an area which some scholars opt to term the "public sphere" and which others, more neutrally, call a "third realm" between state and society.[248]

The dynamic social history of this period was distinctive because of the manner in which major change was experienced while still allowing for, and building upon, continuities. Viewed in the aggregate, the bundle of changes described here was fundamentally transformative. The society that emerged from the mid-Ch'ing period was irreversibly different from what had entered the period. Historically minded literati of the day were quite aware of this fact, and were beginning to draw up new plans for "ordering the world" (*ching-shih*).

[248] For examples of these usages see, respectively, Rankin, "Managed by the people," and Huang, *Civil justice in China*.

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CHAPTER 10

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS, 1644–1800

Ramon H. Myers and Yeh-chien Wang

Ming society's vigorous market economy had expanded in conjunction with the empire's customary and command economies[1] and even begun replacing the command economy during the sixteenth century, when monetary transactions increased. In the customary economy people bartered goods and exchanged labor services within communities throughout the empire. In the command economy, the military and bureaucracy mobilized resources through direct taxation and corvée labor.[2]

Favorable developments, including irrigating more farmland, planting new food crops, improving cropping intensity, and leasing land under multiple land ownership, enabled the economic core areas of the Lingnan in the southeast, the Kiangnan region in northern Chekiang and southern Kiangsu, and the northern part of the Grand Canal to market their products throughout the Ming empire (see Map 11).[3]

On the supply side, owners of labor, land, and credit in the customary and market economies exchanged these resources with private economic organizations (families, partnerships, associations, and guilds) to produce a variety of goods and services. Such factor and product markets, transacting in kind, money, or by credit, made up the economic life of small and large villages, market towns, and administrative cities. Private organizations targeted their production of goods and services to the market economy, making it easier for

The authors acknowledge the assistance of Hoover Institution Research Fellow Linda Chao.

[1] The customary and command modes of economy are "ideal types" described in John Hicks, *A theory of economic history* (Oxford, 1969), ch. 2. In the customary economy, households participated in production and exchange according to convention and institutions (rules, practices, beliefs, and so forth).

[2] The command economy bears some resemblance to the tributary mode of production, a concept used by Hill Gates, *China's motor: A thousand years of petty capitalism* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1996). The command economy includes the extraction of taxes (in money or kind), resources, and typically below market prices.

[3] For a good discussion of these favorable developments see Martin Heijdra, "The socioeconomic development of rural China during the Ming," in *The Ming dynasty 1368–1644, Part 2*, Vol. 8 of *The Cambridge history of China*, ed. Denis Twitchett and Frederick W. Mote (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 516–78. We define the Lingnan region as the Nanling Range and the three physiographic subregions south of those mountains that lie within Kwangtung and Kwangsi provinces except for the prefectures of Ch'ao-chou and Chia-ying.

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merchants and brokers in the economic core areas to interact with markets in the periphery; more counties and provinces became interdependent through trade as well as linked with overseas markets, while they still participated in the customary and command economies.[4]

By the late sixteenth century some irrigation systems had deteriorated, the number of absentee landlords (especially in the north) had increased, and more households had entered into servile relationships with powerful families. Because the Ming state had to defend its northern frontier, the rural tax and corvée burden also increased. Rural leadership, in response to the people's growing resentment and alienation, began to mirror the corruption and ineptness of the empire's political center. Rural rebellions broke out in the second quarter of the seventeenth century, further weakening the Ming state, so that Ch'ing armies in the northeast were able to enter the capital in early 1644.

By the 1680s the Ch'ing had consolidated its control over the empire, and favorable economic developments resumed. Those developments resemble the late Ming market expansion, but the early Ch'ing market had more interregional trade, depended more on overseas markets, and had a larger population. Meanwhile, the relationship between the market and customary and command economies changed.

This chapter attempts to describe these significant economic developments before 1800 and why they occurred. It also elucidates how state and private economic organizations, operating under new institutions or rules, reduced the economy's transformation and transaction costs to produce quality goods and services for a growing population spread over large areas, where living standards approximated those of the recent past. The Ch'ing state and society could not maintain these remarkable achievements into the first half of the nineteenth century, when market failure replaced market success, social grievances worsened, and great rebellions spread.

SIGNIFICANT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

Writing in the early 1690s, T'ang Chen, a retired scholar and failed merchant, described the depressed market economy of the preceding decades:

> More than fifty years have passed since the founding of the Ch'ing dynasty, and the empire grows poorer each day. Farmers are destitute, artisans are destitute, merchants are destitute, and officials too are destitute. Grain is cheap, yet it is hard to eat one's fill. Cloth

[4] The modes of long-distance communications and mercantile activities to integrate the late Ming market economy are well described by Timothy Brook, "Communications and commerce," in Twitchett and Mote, eds., *The Ming dynasty 1368–1644, Part 2*, pp. 579–707.

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is cheap, yet it is hard to cover one's skin. Boatloads of goods travel from one marketplace to another, but the cargoes must be sold at a loss. Officials upon leaving their posts discover they have no wherewithal to support their households. Indeed the four occupations are all impoverished![5]

But even this dismal picture was a great improvement over the 1640s and 1650s, when people died of starvation and disease. T'ang's account, however, tallies with other accounts of his day that allude to widespread poverty, chronic underemployment, depressed prices, stocks of unsold goods, the scarcity of money (particularly silver), and merchants and officials down on their luck.[6] Although T'ang believed that the scarcity of money was the primary cause of this protracted crisis, wars, banditry, epidemics, repression of all maritime activity along the southeast coastal provinces also contributed.

In 1661 the K'ang-hsi government ordered all people residing along the coast from Chekiang to the border with Vietnam to move some seventeen miles (50 *li*) inland. Troops constructed watchtowers and positioned guards on the coast to prevent anyone from living there. Until 1685 few people engaged in coastal and foreign trade, except smuggling, so that the customary and command economies predominated. During these decades, although grain harvests improved, few participated in that market because the economy had contracted and local grain prices hit bottom.

The population declined in mid-century as a result of wars, banditry, and epidemics. Estimates vary, but for Kwangtung province the population fell from 9 million to 7 million; Kwangsi's population declined from 3.4 million to 2.8 million between 1640 and 1661.[7] For the empire as a whole, three estimates agree that population reached around 200 million by 1600, declined sharply in the mid-seventeenth century, and then began to recover by 1700, to reach between 150 million and 200 million.[8] With fewer

[5] Quoted from Richard von Glahn, *Fountain of fortune: Money and monetary policy in China, 1000–1700* (Berkeley, 1996), p. 223.

[6] For economic misery in north China see Jonathan D. Spence, *The death of Woman Wang* (New York, Viking, 1978); for other parts of China see Frederic E. Wakeman, Jr., "China and the seventeenth-century crisis," *Late Imperial China*, 7, No. 1 (June 1986), pp. 1–26.

[7] Robert B. Marks, *Tigers, rice, silk, and silt: Environment and economy in late imperial South China* (Cambridge, 1998), p. 158.

[8] Ping-ti Ho conjectures that population reached 150 million by 1600. See his *Studies on the population of China, 1368–1953* (Cambridge, 1959), p. 264. Perkins, Yim, and Ko estimate the 1600 population to be 200 million, which falls between Heijdra's low and medium estimates of 185 million and 231 million but well below his high of 289 million. Heijdra's reason for a higher estimate is that Ming population in 1380 was 85 million instead of the 60 million usually presumed. He also asserts that Ming population expanded until 1650 in spite of rebellions and hard times between 1625 and 1650, so that his 1650 population estimates are much higher than those of Perkins (100–150 million) and Ko (80–100 million). Given these new Ming population estimates, the baseline population estimate for 1700 is difficult to determine precisely. We opt for a range of 150–200 million, which implies that Ch'ing population had nearly recovered the mid-seventeenth-century level, if we accept the estimates of Perkins and Ko, or population recovery was much slower to reach the 1650 level, as projected by the Heijdra

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able-bodied workers to prepare the soil and harvest crops, the amount of cultivated land declined in mid-century. Wildlife revived, tigers again roamed the hills, and large tracts of land recovered some of their former fertility.[9]

By 1684 K'ang-hsi consolidated the new Ch'ing imperial state's governance. His armies repulsed military challenges to the new order, secured the empire's northern frontier, and established Ch'ing authority on Taiwan. He and his officials had begun to harness both Manchu and Chinese talents for government services, re-open China to Western scientific knowledge, reduce anti-Manchu hostility among the Chinese literati, and restore maritime trade.[10]

The Chinese endured more than a half century of suffering before foreign trade and domestic commerce revived; by the century's end prosperity was slowly returning. Economic recovery was most conspicuous in the old core areas: people reclaimed and farmed the rich lands of the Pearl River delta, the Kiangnan region, and the northern region along the Grand Canal. Meanwhile, migrants poured into Hupei, Hunan, and Szechwan. Southern Kansu, southern Shensi, the northern two-thirds of the western Hupei highlands, and southwestern Honan also attracted migrants.[11] Colonization of Manchuria began, and emigrants from Kwangtung and Fukien provinces went to Taiwan and Southeast Asia, areas delineated as developed, developing, and underdeveloped (see Map 9).

The long coastline's developed areas, comprising some ten provinces extended from the north to the southeast, had the highest population densities and the three economic core areas. In late Ming the splendid cities of these core areas were prosperous, had thriving Confucian academies and creative art and literary centers, and had factor and product markets that specialized in industrial crops, handicraft commodities, and diverse services. The developing areas of Manchuria, Shensi, Kansu, Hupei, Hunan, Kwangsi, Szechwan, Yunnan, Kweichow, and Taiwan absorbed migrants during the eighteenth century and became integrated through a complex market economy. The underdeveloped area encompassed the frontier provinces of Outer and Inner Mongolia, Sinkiang, Tibet, and Tsinghai. (See Map 9 for

estimates (his medium and high figures). Adopting our range of benchmark estimates implies that the annual rate of population growth from 1700 to 1794 rose between 0.47 and 0.80 percent. Estimates by Yim can be found in Shu-yuan Yim, "Famine relief statistics as a guide to the population of sixteenth-century China," *Ch'ing-shih wen-t'i* 3:9 (Nov. 1978), pp. 1–30. For those by Ko Chien-hsiung, see his *Chung-kuo jen-k'ou fa-chan shih* (Fu-chou, 1991), pp. 240–1. For Ming estimates by Heijdra, see the *Cambridge history of China*, Vol. 8, p. 438. For the 1794 official estimate, see Ho, *Studies on the population of China*, p. 270.

[9] Marks, *Tigers, rice, silk and silt*, pp. 327–45.

[10] Lawrence D. Kessler, *K'ang-hsi and the consolidation of Ch'ing rule, 1661–1684* (Chicago, 1976), p. 167.

[11] Ho, *Studies on the population of China*, p. 139. See also the account of migrants settling Szechwan in early Ch'ing by Mori Noriko, "Shindai Shisen no imin keizai," *Tōyōshi kenkyū*, 45, No. 4 (March 1987), pp. 141–68.

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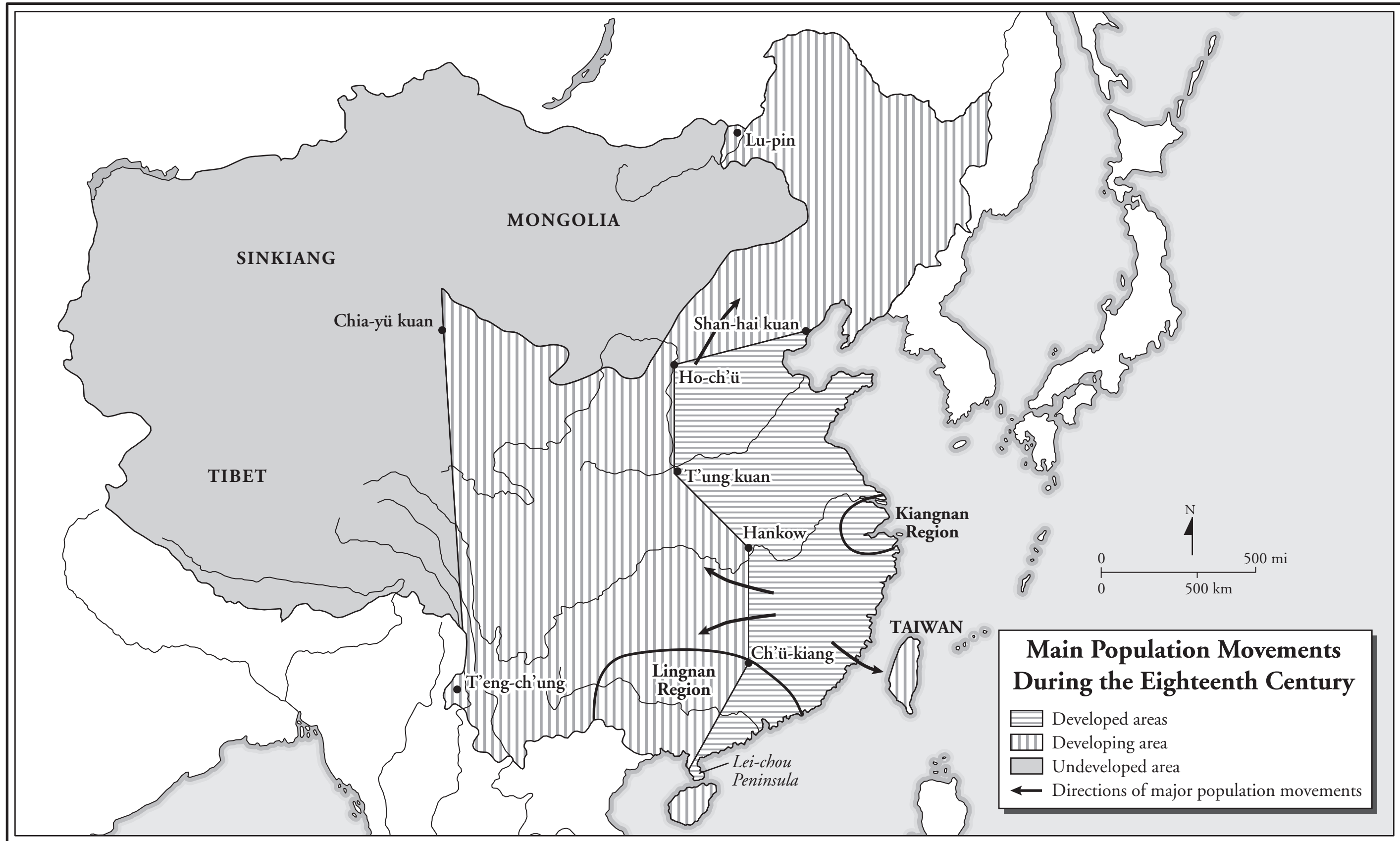

Map 9. *Main Population Movements during the Eighteenth Century*. Wang Yeh-chien, *Land Taxation in Imperial China, 1750–1911* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973), figure 5.1.

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Table 10.1. *Distribution of Population and Population Density by Developmental Areas, 1786*

Area	Population	Percent of total	Cultivated area (sq km)	Percent of total	Population density (persons per sq km)
Surplus grain-producing areas	131,356,000	45	2,118,500	48	62
Insufficient grain-producing areas	135,912,000	47	1,235,500	28	110
Self-sufficient grain-producing areas	23,723,000	8	1,051,950	24	23
Undeveloped areas	112,000	—	575,400	—	0.19
Ch'ing China (including undeveloped areas)	291,103,000	—	4,981,350	—	59
Ch'ing China (excluding undeveloped areas)	290,991,000	100	4,405,950	100	66

Source: Wang Yeh-chien and Huang Kuo-shu, "Shih-pa shih-chi Chung-kuo liang-shih kung-hsü ti k'ao-chi," in Chung-yang yen-chiu-yüan chin-tai-shih yen-chiu-suo, *Chin-tai Chung-kuo nung-ts'un ching-chi shih lun-wen chi* (Taipei: Chung-yang yen-chiu-yüan chin-tai-shih yen-chiu-suo, 1989), p. 278.

population migration within and between provinces from the 1690s to the early nineteenth century.)

Estimates of population and cultivated land are suspect because households underreported to avoid taxation and corvée labor, and because overzealous officials sometimes inflated population growth.[12] The official numbers for the population and cultivated land in the 1780s, at the height of economic and administrative vigor, are probably closer to reality, for then, population density and foodgrain production and distribution had solidified and were not disrupted until the rebellions of the mid-nineteenth century.

The estimates in Table 10.1 not only show the population densities in areas producing surplus grain, areas lacking sufficient grain, and areas self-sufficient in grain, but reveal how population and cultivated land were allocated among the three areas. Nearly half the population, farming only 28 percent of the cultivated land, depended on the grain trade to survive; the areas with insufficient grain supported high population densities, higher than

[12] See G. William Skinner, "Sichuan's population in the nineteenth century: Lessons from disaggregated data," *Late Imperial China*, 7, No. 2 (Dec. 1986), pp. 1–79, which claims that officials inflated population estimates for Szechwan province by some 20–30 percent.

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those for Western Europe, and were the developed provinces of the empire. In other words, long-distance trade was involved in feeding almost half the population. About one-tenth of the population, in areas with a population density roughly equivalent to that of many Western European countries, produced just enough grain for their support but farmed about one-quarter of the empire's cultivated land. Finally, 45 percent of the population produced a foodgrain surplus, which entered the market economy to support the demands of roughly half the empire's population. During the eighteenth century, the developed area of the coastal provinces became increasingly dependent upon the developing region's supply of grain. Annual grain shipments moved through an ever expanding market economy, often supplemented by state grain shipments to alleviate grain shortfalls. As Map 12 attests (see p. 613), grain imports from Southeast Asia and Taiwan were crucial and supplemented the shipments overland and along inland waterways of the Yangtze, Wei, and other rivers. These people farmed roughly half the empire's cultivated lands and resided mainly in the provinces of the developing area.

By the 1780s, population migration and growth had combined to produce high population density levels that exceeded those in Western Europe. Productivity and output also were high (see below). These economic conditions, as Ester Boserup points out, are highly correlated with advanced technologies that become applicable and economical only where "population density exceeds a certain level."[13]

Table 10.2 presents population density groups in imperial China and ten provinces and compares them with population density groups in European countries in the mid-eighteenth century. Note that the combined population density group measure of 7–8 is that of the most densely populated European nations, Italy, and the Low Countries. Ten provinces supported a population of over 200 million and had a population group density measure of 8–9, higher than that of any Western European country. By 1750 Western Europe's total population had reached only 100 million, less than half the total population of the Ch'ing empire's ten most populated provinces, all of which had population group density measures of 8–9.[14]

[13] Ester Boserup, *Population and technological change: A study of long-term trends* (Chicago, 1981), p. 4. Boserup conceptualized a density scale grouping in which countries having 4–8 and 8–16 persons per square km are ranked 4–5, or of sparse density; 16–32 and 32–64 persons per square km are ranked 6–7, or of medium density; countries having 64–128 and 128–256 persons per square km are ranked as 8–9, or dense; and countries with 256–512 as a 10, or very dense. For the areas of China producing insufficient grain, see Wang Yeh-chien and Huang Kuo-shu, "Shih-pa shih-ch'i Chung-kuo liang-shih kung-hsü ti k'ao-ch'a," in Chung-yang yen-chiu chin-tai-shih yen-chiu-so, *Chin-tai Chung-kuo nung-ts'un ching-chi shih lun-wei chi* (Taipei, 1989), pp. 278–80.

[14] David Grigg, *Population growth and agrarian change: An historical perspective* (Cambridge, 1980), p. 60.

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Table 10.2. *Population Density Groups in European Countries (1750) and China (1786)*

Country	1750	1784–1786
Ch'ing China	—	7–8
Hupei		8–9
Chihli		8–9
Anhwei		8–9
Kiangsu		8–9
Hunan		8–9
Fukien		8–9
Shantung		8–9
Honan		8–9
Chekiang		8–9
Kiangsi		8–9
Italy	7–8	
Spain	6	
Germany	7	
France	7	
Low Countries	7–8	
British Isles	6–7	
Scandinavia	3	
Poland	5–6	
Hungary	5–6	
European Russia	3–4	
TOTAL EUROPE	5	

Source: For ranking nations or provinces by density scale group, see Ester Boserup, *Population and technological change: A study of long-term trends* (Chicago, 1981), p. 58. For Hupei, see Kung Sheng-sheng, *Ch'ing-tai Liang-hu nung-yeh ti-li*, p. 50; for other provinces, see Wang Yeh-chien and Huang Kuo-shih, p. 277; for Kwangtung province, see Robert B. Marks, *Tigers, rice, silk, and silt*, p. 280.

The data in Table 10.3 suggest the way in which the population reached such high densities. Although population estimates for 1650 differ, we can agree that human and natural calamities following the Ch'ing conquest greatly reduced population. But how much population decline occurred between 1650 and 1700, and what population estimates for 1700 are reasonable? We adopted 1700 benchmark population estimates ranging between 150 million and 200 million and conjecture that between 1700 and 1786, when the official census population was 291 million, population grew at an annual rate between 0.41 and 0.78 percent, enough to increase China's population by some 50 to 100 percent during that period. The higher estimate might be plausible because between 1779 and 1794, according to official

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Table 10.3. *Trend of Population, Cultivated Land, Silver Stocks, and Rice Prices in China, ca. 1650–1930*

	Population		Cultivated Land		Silver Stocks		Rice Price	
Year	Total (million)	Annual growth (%)	Cultivated land (million *shi mou*)	Annual growth (%)	Total (million silver *yüan*)	Annual growth (%)	Price (tael per *shi*)	Annual change (%)
1600	200		670					
1650	120	−1.03			290–330			
1655							2.11	−3.24
1680					300–350	0.16	0.95	
1685			740	0.12				
1700	150	0.45						
1770			950	0.29				
1820	353	0.72					2.55	0.70
1830					1140–1330	0.89		
1850	380	0.25	1210	0.30	900–1100	−19.03		
1870								
1875	340	−0.44						
1880					1500–1600	1.69	1.91	−0.48
1893			1240	0.06				
1920							7.01	3.30
1930	500	0.70			3200	1.33		
1933			1534	0.53				

Source: Yeh-chien Wang, "Secular trends of rice prices in the Yangzi delta, 1638–1935," in Thomas G. Rawski and Lillian M. Li, eds., *Chinese history in economic perspective* (Berkeley, 1992), p. 57. Wang used 150 million population as the 1700 benchmark, but because of Martin Heijdra's new population estimates for the Ming period (inclusive of 1650), we have opted for benchmark estimates for 1700 of 150–200 million.

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population figures, the annual growth rate was 0.87 percent, suggesting growth acceleration in the last quarter of the century.[15]

Why did population growth accelerate in the eighteenth century? Preliminary findings from a historical demographic study of the Liaoning provincial village of Tao-i reveal that, when families experienced economic difficulties, they practiced female infanticide.[16] When families began to prosper, as was the case in the eighteenth century, they stopped the practice, meaning that more females survived into adulthood and that more marriages occurred at earlier ages than in times of difficulty, such as the seventeenth century. In Tao-i village, between 1774 and 1804 the population grew at a rate of 1.1 percent a year.[17]

Life expectancy for Manchus also improved. In 1687 the K'ang-hsi emperor established a pediatric clinic for the imperial lineage. He ordered smallpox inoculations mandatory for all lineage children after their first birthdays. Moreover, by 1750 most Manchu children were receiving these inoculations, so that some scholars claim that "over one-half the registered population of Beijing were regularly inoculated through state clinics."[18]

The improved life expectancy and population growth probably began as early as the 1680s with the advent of favorable economic developments. (The fall in rice prices between the 1650s and 1680s reflects a severe economic depression caused in part by slow growth of money supply.) Epidemics had run their course and the market economy resumed its growth; the supply of grain stabilized and prices slowly rose. The imperial policies modulating the market economy enabled rice prices to continue their smooth, slow growth during the eighteenth century (see Table 10.3).

Late in the K'ang-hsi era, the emperor began asking provincial officials to report local grain prices, and by the 1730s an empirewide price-reporting system was in place. Every ten days, all county magistrates had to list the market prices of the principal grains and any change in price. They sent their reports to prefectural officials, who passed them on to provincial officials. After reviewing these reports, the provincial officials in turn submitted monthly reports to the throne, where they were reviewed for possible actions, such as instructing officials to inspect poor harvest areas, supervise granary

[15] See *Studies on the population of China, 1368–1953*, p. 270.

[16] James Z. Lee, Cameron D. Campbell, with contributions by Chris J. Myers and Yizhuang Ding, *Fate and fortune in rural China: Social organization and population behavior in Liaoning, 1774–1873* (Cambridge, 1997). See ch. 4 for positive checks to control population and ch. 5 for preventive checks. Other studies of Chinese lineage population change suggest that during prosperity, "mortality went down for both sexes in all ages, age at marriage for males went down, and the proportion of married males went up." Although lineage data are not as reliable as the household registration data used by Lee and Campbell, they confirm the family strategies mapped by them.

[17] Lee and Campbell, *Fate and fortune in rural China*, p. 18.

[18] See James Z. Lee and Wang Feng, *One quarter of humanity: Malthusian mythology and Chinese realities* (Cambridge, Mass., 1999), p. 46.

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distribution, divert grain tribute destined for Peking, or even import grain. This system worked so well that the empire did not suffer any long-term, acute grain shortages. (Such shortages would have been indicated by sudden, high grain prices sustained over several years.) Recent studies reveal only moderate rise in grain prices without severe, high fluctuations, and even declining price differences between markets, which indicated that grain markets were becoming more integrated.[19]

Rice prices for the lower Yangtze delta region were high during the 1640s and 1650s but declined in the 1660s and only began to rise slowly in the early 1700s, peaking in the 1750s and then moderately fluctuating but declining slightly in the last quarter of the eighteenth century.[20] Over this period, other rice price series for the same area reveal similar trends.[21]

In the southeast, 9.0 million people lived in Fukien province in 1750, increasing to between 12 million and 13.3 million people between 1780 and 1790. Roughly 50 percent of Fukien's population lived in Fu-chou, Ch'üan-chou, and Ch'ang-chou prefectures, so that the province had to import 2.1 million *shih* of grain in 1750 and even more when the harvest was poor. Yet grain prices in the 1740s and 1750s were stable, with only a slightly rising trend over that period.[22]

In the north, millet and sorghum prices in Chihli province between 1730 and 1800 rose slowly, even though grain had to be imported.[23] Although price data are limited for the northwest, we know that Kansu province produced enough grain for its expanding population, and that with the local grain markets and granary system, grain prices rose only gradually between 1739 and the 1840s (except in 1759 and 1760, when a border war and a drought produced severe grain shortages and prices were 135 percent higher than average).[24] In central China grain prices in Hunan province

[19] For grain market integration in Kwangtung province, see Ch'en Ch'ün-sheng, "Ch'ing-tai chung-yeh Ling-nan ch'u-yü shih-ch'ang ti cheng-ho: mi-chia tung-t'ai ti shu-li fen-hsi," *Chung-kuo ching-chi shih yen-chiu*, 2 (1993), pp. 99–106. See also Wu Ch'eng-ming, "Li-yung liang-chia pien-tung yen-chiu Ch'ing-tai ti shih-ch'ang cheng-ho," *Chung-kuo ching-chi shih yen-chiu*, 2 (1996), pp. 88–91. Grain price trends in the four southeastern provinces of Kiangsu, Chekiang, Fukien, and Kwangtung showed a moderate increase, a clear pattern of seasonal price variation, four-year cyclical price rise and decline, and a weak price variation between the Yangtze and Canton delta, but high grain price correlation between Ch'uan-chou and Canton cities and between Ch'uan-chou and Hang-chou cities. See Wang Yeh-chien and Huang Ying-chueh, "Ch'ing chung-yeh tung-nan yen-hai ti liang-shih tso-wu fen-pu liang-shih kung-hsu chi liang-chia fen-hsi," *BIHP*, 70, No. 2 (1999), pp. 363–97.

[20] Wang Yeh-chien, "Secular Trends of Rice Prices in the Yangzi Delta, 1638–1935," in *Chinese history in economic perspective*, ed. Thomas G. Rawski and Lillian M. Li (Berkeley, 1992), pp. 40–3.

[21] Kishimoto Mio, *Shindai Chūgoku no bukka to keizai hendō* (Tokyo, 1997), pp. 118–19.

[22] Yeh-chien Wang, "Food supply in eighteenth-century Fukien," *Late Imperial China*, 7, No. 2 (Dec. 1986), p. 100.

[23] Lillian M. Li, "Grain prices in Zhili province, 1736–1911: A preliminary study," in Rawski and Li, eds., *Chinese history in economic perspective*, pp. 76–7.

[24] Peter C. Perdue, "The Qing state and the Gansu grain market, 1739–1864," in Rawski and Li, eds., *Chinese history in economic perspective*, pp. 114–15.

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"remained between 1.1 and 1.3 taels; prices rose only modestly."[25] Grain price studies, therefore, confirm that the empire did not suffer long-term food shortages in the eighteenth century and that grain markets were slowly being integrated.

We do not have systematic studies of eighteenth-century price trends for other commodities to determine whether other commodity price changes correspond with rice price changes. Fragmentary information for white sugar produced in Canton shows an annual growth of around 0.7 percent, similar to that of the annual rice price change (see Table 10.3).[26] Because our historical sources are silent about any significant relative price change in the eighteenth century, it seems safe to affirm that price inflation for goods and services did not occur or was modest in the eighteenth century and the general price trend reflected that of grain and sugar prices.

If population growth accelerated in the eighteenth century and grain prices did not severely fluctuate or rise greatly, did material living standards and wealth creation improve as well? The American economic historian Kenneth Pomeranz has suggested that material living standards in the Kiangnan core area, where roughly 26 million people lived in 1800, approximated those for England around 1800, then the richest part of Europe. In estimating caloric intake, he found for Kiangnan that the adult grain consumption was 3,181 calories a day per adult male as compared to 3,262 calories per adult male rural worker in England as of 1863.[27]

Pomeranz's estimates also suggest that life expectancy in core areas like the Kiangnan was comparable with that of early nineteenth-century Europe. That does not necessarily imply that vast regions of China lived as well as the coastal core areas, because a living standard gap between the developed and

[25] R. Bin Wong and Peter C. Perdue, "Grain markets and food supplies in eighteenth-century Hunan," in Rawski and Li, eds., *Chinese history in economic perspective*, pp. 132–3.

[26] For Canton white sugar prices in the eighteenth century, see Sucheta Mazumdar, *Sugar and society in China: Peasants, technology, and the world market* (Cambridge, Mass., 1998), p. 55.

[27] See the working paper by Kenneth Pomeranz, "Rethinking eighteenth-century China: A high standard of living and its implications," prepared for the meeting of the Economic History Association (Sept. 12–14, 1997), pp. 10–11. Pomeranz also estimates sugar consumption around 1750 to be, on average, around 4.3–5.0 pounds per capita compared to 2.2 and 2.6 pounds per capita for Europe in 1750 and 1800, respectively, and 10.0 and 18.0 pounds per capita respectively for Britain. Consumption in China's southeast provinces could have been as high as 10 pounds per capita. Finally, he estimates that cloth consumption on a per capita basis for the empire around 1750 was between 6.2 and 8.3 pounds compared to 12.9 pounds for the United Kingdom around 1800, 8.4 pounds for France around 1789, and 5.0 pounds for Germany around 1830. See tables 1 and 2 on p. 16. According to one contemporary Chinese economic historian, the expenditures on nongrain foodstuffs such as oils, meat, fish, salt, vegetables, and alcohol expanded from one-fifth to almost one-third of an ordinary farm family's food budget (measured in constant prices) between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. For an update with more extensive material living standard comparisons between China and Europe for the period, see Kenneth Pomeranz, *The great divergence: Europe, China, and the making of the modern world economy* (Princeton, 2000), ch. 3, pp. 36–40.

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developing regions invariably existed, as it still does in the twenty-first century. Pomeranz's contention that eighteenth-century Kiangnan's material standards favorably compared with those of the advanced areas of Western Europe before England's industrialization and progress outstripped China's challenges future historians to affirm his findings or modify them.

Did the empire's tangible wealth such as buildings and stocks of goods also increase? We do not have any accurate measures of such wealth, but local histories record that the numbers of temples, bridges, ferries, roads, harbor piers, and public and private structures rapidly increased in the eighteenth century.[28] Creating tangible wealth implied that community elites were capable of luxury spending and investing in human capital.

The eighteenth-century novel *Ju lin wai shih* (The Scholars), by Wu Ching-tzu, has one of the novel's protagonists justify the lavish spending for local temples: "They produce some genuine scholars who will be able to serve the government well."[29] The numbers of literati, merchants, and landlords, claim Susan Naquin and Evelyn S. Rawski, "no doubt grew in absolute terms and as a percentage of the total population."[30] Their lineage halls and estates proliferated throughout the developed and developing areas. In the mid-nineteenth century, European travelers frequently remarked how the great lineage halls had fallen into disrepair and disuse. Large cities flourished. John Barrows of Lord Macartney's official entourage, who traveled on the Grand Canal in November 1793, described Hangchow as having "extensive shops and warehouses; important of size, and the stock contained within them might be said to vie with the best in London."[31] Another member of the English entourage, Henry Ellis, praised the opulent merchant guild halls in Fukien: "The exchanges or halls for the meetings of the merchants belonging to the principal cities or provinces are large and handsome buildings, in the style of the best Chinese temples. . . . The hall of the Fo-kien merchants was dedicated to the goddess of navigators, who is also the tutelary deity of the province. These buildings are originally built and subsequently maintained by private subscriptions".[32] The vitality of the Ch'ing market, command, and customary economies made these developments possible. How did these three economic spheres interact with each other and change?

[28] For the growth of wealth in Szechwan province, see Ramon H. Myers, "The usefulness of local gazetteers for the study of modern Chinese economic history: Szechuan province during the Ch'ing and Republican periods," *Tsing-hua Journal of Chinese Studies*, N.S., 6, Nos. 1 and 2 (Dec. 1967), pp. 72–102.

[29] Wu Ching-tzu, *The scholars* (New York, 1972), foreword, p. xv.

[30] Susan Naquin and Evelyn S. Rawski, *Chinese society in the eighteenth century* (New Haven, 1987), p. 124.

[31] John Barrow, *Travels in China* (London, 1804), p. 527.

[32] Henry Ellis, *Journal of the proceedings of the late embassy to China* (London, 1818), Vol. 2, pp. 128–9.

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EARLY CH'ING ECONOMY PATH DEPENDENCE

Recent advances in our knowledge about the causes of economic growth help us understand how institutions influence the returns to economic organizations.[33] Which institutions constrained social and economic behavior, and how did they influence the evolution of the Ch'ing economy?

Political power resided with the emperor, his officials, and "imperial clansmen, bondservants, or eunuchs."[34] These power holders reformed the fiscal system by centralizing control of revenues and keeping taxes low. Administering a huge empire, they used informal networks of local power holders to uphold law and order. They borrowed a criminal code from the Ming to adjudicate disputes over private property and tried, through customary law, to govern the transactions by which families contracted and enforced their property rights. Finally, the Ch'ing state deployed resources to cultivate new lands, establish food granaries, and maintain roads, canal transport, and water control projects.

These policies, discussed below, were an effort to realize a Confucian vision of a society whose subjects were morally virtuous. Discarding the Ming *li-chia* social control system and adopting the *pao-chia* in the 1740s, Ch'ing rulers imposed ideological controls to mold moral behavior.[35] Rural elders attended monthly lectures (*hsiang-yüeh*) on the first Ch'ing emperor's dicta for practicing virtue and leading a peaceful life. Regular ceremonies were held to honor the aged, perform sacrificial rites, and stamp out heretical sects. Confucian learning was propagated in rural schools.[36] The Ch'ing, even more fervently than their Ming predecessors, sought to impose Confucian moral values on commoners.[37]

This heavy dose of Confucianism reinvigorated some core Chinese economic beliefs and values. Commoners sought fame and prosperity by building corporate estates and creating multigenerational descent groups, or

[33] Douglass C. North, "Economic developments in historical perspective: The western world," in Ramon H. Myers, ed., *The wealth of nations in the twentieth century: The policies and institutional determinants of economic development* (Stanford, 1996), pp. 39–53; and Douglass C. North, "Epilogue: Economic performance through time," in Lee J. Alston, Thrain Eggertsson, and Douglass C. North, eds., *Empirical studies in institutional change* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 342–55.

[34] For this definition of the political elite in the early Ch'ing period, see Jonathan D. Spence, *Ts'ao Yin and the K'ang-hsi Emperor: Bondservant and master* (New Haven, 1966), p. 45.

[35] Kung-chuan Hsiao, *Rural China: Imperial control in the nineteenth century* (Seattle, 1960) for a rich account of Ch'ing social control by the *pao-chia* and *li-chia* and for ideological controls (chs. 2, 3, and 6).

[36] Evelyn Sakakida Rawski, *Education and popular literacy in Ch'ing China* (Ann Arbor, 1979), pp. 33–52, 92–5.

[37] Kai-wing Chow, *The rise of Confucian ritualism in late imperial China: Ethics, classics, and lineage discourse* (Stanford, 1994), chs. 2–5. See also Francesca Bray, *Technology and gender: Fabrics of power in late imperial China* (Berkeley, 1997). See chs. 1, 4, and 9, which describe the Confucian normative role for women.

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lineages.[38] Family members also valued the sense of "requital" (*pao*) that made individuals willing to invest in social relationships (*jen-ch'ing*) outside the family to advance their family fortunes.[39] The practice of *pao* also meant that ordinary people linked planning and hard work to concrete rewards in this life. A different *pao* concept signified a contractual relationship, such as tax-farming and state-merchant relations. Finally, the *pao* concept of "guaranteeing" characterized another state-and-merchant relationship in which the state bestowed special rights on merchant guilds in Canton to conduct trade with foreign merchants in exchange for collecting and remitting customs revenue to the throne. Whether the Chinese participated in a bureaucracy, a private organization, or a hybrid organization like the salt monopoly, which had mixed property rights, they highly valued the building of social networks and personalized their relationships (*jen-ch'ing kuan-hsi*) even in the command economy, where universalistic rules were supposed to operate. Thus the cultural value of "reciprocity" (*pao*) discouraged Chinese from adopting that ethical universalism that Max Weber and Talcott Parsons identify as an essential underpinning of the Western social order.

Chinese also cultivated self-image and pride by trying to maximize the flow of esteem from another individual or group to enhance their prestige.[40] At the same time, they worried constantly about the evaluation of others, which produced anxiety and tension between anticipated rewards and self-esteem. Mid-level merchants relied on guidebooks advising them on how to become rich and yet live a virtuous Confucian life by emphasizing prudence and avoiding mistakes.[41]

According to the American scholar Yü Ying-shih,[42] some Ming and Ch'ing Confucian thinkers like Wang Yang-ming, Hsü Lu, and Shen Yao developed new principles for people to live virtuous lives, motivating many to become merchants and raising the social prestige of merchants to equivalence with officials. They emphasized the idea that "men should consider making their

[38] The Taiwan scholar Choi Ch'i-cheung (Tsai Chih-hsiang), who lives and teaches in Hong Kong, found that degree-holders and wealthy families in early Ch'ing traced their descent lines to established descent groups in order "to enjoy the prestige and social status that go together with a descent group with a long history." See Choi Ch'i-cheung, "Kanan enkai ni okeru shusshi shudan no tōgō to bunshi ni tsuite" (diss., Tokyo University, 1987), Vol. 2, p. 405.

[39] Yang Lien-sheng, "The concept of *pao* as a basis for social relations in China," in *Chinese thought and institutions*, ed. John K. Fairbank (Chicago, 1957), p. 291. One should not confuse the character *pao* (fourth tone), "recompense" or "requite," with *pao* (third tone), "guarantee" or "protect," or *pao* (first tone) "to manage or contract."

[40] Thomas A. Metzger, "Some ancient roots of modern Chinese thought," *Early China* 11, 12 (1985, 1987), pp. 61–117.

[41] See Richard John Lufrano, *Honorable merchants: Commerce and self-cultivation in late imperial China* (Honolulu, 1997), chs. 1 and 6.

[42] Yü Ying-shih, *Chung-kuo chin-shih tsung-chiao lun-li yü shang-jen ching-shen* (Taipei, 1987), pp. 100–1, 105–6, 110, 122–7, and 140–2.

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living the primary task" (*nan-tzu yao i chih-sheng wei chi*) and popularized the notion that only after achieving satisfactory material living standards could humans practice rites, develop integrity, and earn respect. These same Confucianists also began evaluating merchant behavior in a positive way, thereby elevating their status and declaring that merchants were virtuous, behaved with dignity, and deserved society's highest respect. Meanwhile, more literati were abandoning the examination system and not entering the bureaucracy to take up merchant activity. The ethics associated with the literatus (*shih*) began to be applied to merchants, affirming their positive role in society. Yü Ying-shih argues that to pursue the "calling" of a merchant life had become as worthy a goal as becoming a scholar and sage. This changing ethos in late Ming and Ch'ing times inspired ordinary people to enter the market economy and justified their pursuit of wealth and fame.

Powerfully motivated by inner tensions, strongly concerned about reciprocity in human relationships, capable of working with officials in various relationships, believing that acquiring wealth was just, closely bonded to family (living and dead), and sensitive to group demands, Chinese built their networks to achieve family goals and realize the ideals stressed by Confucian ideology and culture. Moreover, the Chinese cultural beliefs of 'contracting with' (*pao*, first tone), 'to guarantee or keep safe' (*pao*, third tone), and 'to requite or recompense' (*pao*, fourth tone) enabled officials and elite, merchants, and so forth, to collaborate in what Max Weber has conceptualized as liturgical organizations. According to Weber, a liturgical organization combined the individual voluntarism of merchants and local elite for personal gain with their provision of services to the state. The Ch'ing command economy used liturgical organizations everywhere to collect taxes, operate the salt and copper monopolies, collect the custom tax from foreign merchants in Canton, collect brokerage fees and other receipts. Early Ch'ing liturgical organizations generated enough revenue for state officials to manage the customary and market economies. Thus, Ch'ing liturgical organizations and household-family organized behavior, along with their social networks, helped determine the eighteenth-century three economies' path dependence. (The term *path dependence* means the returns generated by organizations over time as constrained by their formal and informal rules, transacting of property rights, and markets, whether political, economic, or social.)

The imperial state made revitalizing agriculture its highest priority. The state encouraged people to migrate to new lands to farm and engage in handicraft and services by building water control projects, expanding irrigation, exempting and lowering taxes, protecting property rights, and establishing markets. Officials also stored grain as a backup.

According to Gilbert Rozman, people preferred living in small towns and rural communities rather than in large and medium-sized cities and towns.

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He found that in 1800 only 6–7 percent of the population, or between 16.2 million and 18.9 million people, resided in cities.[43] Rozman says that the large urban centers did not dominate the empire's macroregions because they were not large or powerful enough to tap into regional resources. G. W. Skinner, however, sees urban population distribution in terms of macroregions where resources of all kinds "were multiplied, deployed with greater effectiveness, and exploited with increased efficiency."[44] Skinner was less interested in the implications of his regional construct for transforming China than Rozman, who argued that China could not be significantly transformed until key central places became large and powerful enough to move goods up the urban hierarchy. To test his argument, Rozman compared the rank-size distribution of the urban populations of Russia, Japan, and China. He found that the Russian and Japanese urban hierarchies had more large populated centers and more efficiently moved resources from the low to the highest urban levels than did China.

Comparing Europe's rank-size distribution of urban population with that of China for 1800, Jan De Vries found that the "number of very large cities (of at least 100,000 inhabitants) was much smaller [in Europe] than in China, while the number of very small ones (under 10,000) was much larger."[45] He concluded that the *aggregate* urban populations of Europe and China of 1800 were similar, but the *distribution* of urban residents differed among cities by size and level, which gave rise to their varied economic development paths. First, Europe's settled land area, no larger than that of China, was supplied by many more small cities, and thus had a smaller rural population, reflecting a higher level of local market organization and commercialization than in China.[46] Second, the European rural population that supported an urban structure of many more towns and that had nearly the same total urban population, was, in 1800, only one-third the size of the Chinese rural population. Europe's market economy included a higher share of rural people and had replaced more of the customary economy than was the case in Ch'ing China.

European agriculture in effect was more productive than Chinese agriculture because fewer rural people fed more urban people. Europe's national markets connected towns and cities to foreign trade. The proportion of domestic trade as a share of national output was large and growing, and urban demand favored nonfood goods and services over food and drink. China

[43] Gilbert Rozman, *Urban networks in Ch'ing China and Tokugawa Japan* (Princeton, 1973), p. 300. We apply Rozman's percentage estimates to 1770 population estimates.

[44] G. William Skinner, "Regional urbanization in nineteenth-century China," in *The city in late imperial China*, ed. G. William Skinner (Stanford, 1977), p. 211.

[45] Jan de Vries, *European urbanization, 1500–1800* (Cambridge, Mass., 1984), p. 262.

[46] Ibid., pp. 263–4.

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lagged behind Europe in these developments; a much higher proportion of its population depended on farming and the rural way of life, and consumption demand tended to favor food and drink as a percentage of total household expenditures. These behavioral patterns reflected China's larger customary economy, which coexisted with its market economy.

Chinese agriculture devoted a high proportion of land to multiple cropping, and a large supply of labor farmed that land. In early Ch'ing, the multiple cropping area increased, and more grain and cash crops were produced per unit of land area, reflecting more diverse crop specialization throughout the empire. This cropping pattern was already similar to that observed by John L. Buck in the 1920s (see Map 10).[47] Family farms and estates were adopting new seed varieties of shorter maturation that were more suitable for diverse soils, irrigating more land, and applying greater quantities of fertilizer. These advances, helped by a climatic warming trend throughout much of the eighteenth century, meant that more labor was needed.[48] Meanwhile, families switched to specializing in crops like the cotton, tea, sugar, and mulberry trees demanded by the handicraft sector. The spread of multiple cropping not only promoted specialization for the market but nurtured the customary economy and the proliferation of lineages, so that both economies grew together. Meanwhile, the expansion of a marketed surplus led to commercialization and a revitalized customary economy, which depended on the improvement of factor and product markets, another characteristic of the early Ch'ing economy's path dependence.

In factor markets, goods and services were exchanged, along with money, by families and lineages, which rented and leased land, hired out and employed labor, borrowed and supplied credit, sold and purchased real estate and other assets, and used their property as collateral to borrow credit or supplied credit in exchange for holding such assets. Although many transactions were oral, a great many involved written contracts enforced by third parties and the county magistrate. These transactions were embedded in both the customary and market economies. Eighteenth-century product markets, on the other hand, belonged to the market economy and were described by Chang Chung-min as having "small-scale production and large-scale circulation of goods and services" (*hsiao sheng-ch'an, ta liu-t'ung*).[49] Family farms,

[47] Map 10 is derived from Wang Yeh-chien, Huang Hsiang-yü, and Hsieh Mei-ngo, "Shih-pa shih-ch'i Chung-kuo liang-shih tsu-wu ti fen-pu" (The distribution of foodgrain crops in eighteenth-century China), in Hao Yen-p'ing and Wei Shui-mei, *Chin-shih Chung-kuo chih ch'uan-t'ung yü shui-pien* (Taipei: Chung-yang yen-chiu yuan chin-tai-shih yen-chiu-so, 1998), p. 307.

[48] Marks, *Tigers, rice, silk, and silt*, pp. 196–7.

[49] Chang Chung-min, "Hsiao sheng-ch'an, ta liu-t'ung," *Chung-kuo ching-chi shih yen-chiu*, 2 (1996), pp. 42–9.

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Map 10. *Geographical Distribution of Major Food Crops in the Eighteenth Century*. Wang Yeh-chien and Huang Kuo-shu, "Shih-pa shih-chi Chung-kuo liang-shih kung-hsü ti k'ao-ch'a," in *Ch'ing-tai Chung-kuo nung ts'un ching-chi shih lu-wen chi* (Nankang: Academia Sinica, 1989) p. 257.

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partnerships, proprietors, and guilds supplied goods and services to market towns (*shih-chen*), which rapidly proliferated after 1700. According to the economic historian Hsü T'an, by 1800 there existed more than twenty thousand market towns, twice the number of mid-Ming urban markets.[50] In the Pearl River delta area, an economic core area, standard markets between 1662 and 1721 numbered 298 and rose to 420 during 1723–1735.[51] But just as these towns and their markets increased in number, so did the number of villages and households around these towns also proliferate, indicating that the customary and market economies grew together.[52]

These market towns, unlike the large walled cities that served as administrative centers, were mostly located in the countryside.[53] The number of residents in these towns ranged between one thousand and perhaps thirty thousand people. Some large market towns had wards or sections, standard-size streets, and many bridges. Countless merchants, brokers, and shopkeepers in the large market towns conducted business and used the large service sector, which consisted of tea and wine shops, money exchanges, tax payment offices, inns and hotels, pawnshops, and other mercantile establishments. As many as two hundred different kinds of commodities circulated in these large towns, usually obtained from distant areas, with many then being transshipped to other market towns. In the Kiangnan region, for example, small towns slightly larger than villages proliferated, just as the number of villages increased in the countryside. These smaller market towns had permanent markets attracting brokers and merchants from other areas who bought products and transshipped them to more distant markets.[54] Whether the Kiangnan pattern of multitudes of small market towns (slightly larger than large villages), medium-sized market towns, and large towns existed in other regions is an issue for future research.

[50] Hsü T'an, "Ming-Ch'ing shih-ch'i nung-ts'un chi-shih ti fa-chan," *Chung-kuo ching-chi shih yen-chiu*, 2 (1997), p. 39. For more evidence of market town proliferation in early Ch'ing, such as specialized markets for raw materials, mules, iron tools, seeds, and fertilizer in Shantung province, see Hsü T'an and Ching Chün-chien, "Ming-Ch'ing shih-ch'i Shan-tung sheng-ch'an tzu-liao shih-ch'ang ch'u-t'an," *Chung-kuo ching-chi shih yen-chiu*, 4 (1988), pp. 44–58; in the Kiangnan region's prefectural areas there were 410 large markets in the second half of the eighteenth century compared to only 226 between 1522 and 1620. See Ch'en Chung-p'ing, "Ming-Ch'ing shih-ch'i: Chiang-nan ti-ch'u shih-ch'ang k'ao-ch'a," *Chung-kuo ching-chi shih yen-chiu*, 2 (1990), pp. 24–40.

[51] Mazumdar, *Sugar and society in China*, p. 314.

[52] We have no studies that identify this growth in number and size of villages, but preliminary research on towns in Kiang-nan by Fan I-chun indicates this pattern occurred in the eighteenth century (see note 54).

[53] These market town attributes have been classifed by Teng I-p'ing, "Ch'ing-tai ch'ien-ch'i ti shih-chen," *Chung-kuo she-hui ching-chi shih yen-chiu*, 3 (1997), pp. 24–38 and 84. Teng's important essay uses a large number of local histories to describe the size of these market towns, their population numbers, their economic functions, and the villages in the surrounding countryside.

[54] According to discussions with Fan I-chun of the Institute of Philology and History, Academia Sinica, Nankang, Taiwan, who is currently constructing a digital map of market towns in the Kiangnan region for the early Ch'ing period, there was a vast expansion of villages and households in this region along with the growth in number of market towns. His preliminary research findings support our claim that the customary economy grew alongside the market economy.

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These urban markets were connected by these transport systems: More than a dozen large port cities along the coast received ships, often of different countries; stations and roads connected all the counties (*hsien*) of each province; the many cities along the Grand Canal served as markets, as did those along the Yellow, Wei, Yangtze, Min, Huai, and Pearl rivers; numerous canal systems linked the market towns of the major delta areas; by 1700 nine main postal routes linked Peking to all provinces of the empire, and numerous military post stations stretched across the empire's border areas.

Along the main transport routes, the Ming and Ch'ing states established custom houses to collect fees from merchants and brokers engaged in long-distance trade. Fan I-chun's study of the revenue collected at these custom houses estimates that the volume of long-distance trade, beginning from a small base, grew 6.6 times between 1480 and 1640, or around 1 percent a year. From 1686 to 1788 that volume of trade expanded fivefold annually (1.6 percent), exceeding the high point of the long-distance trade of the Ming.[55] Fan estimates that in 1788 the value of the long-distance traded goods was about 173 million taels, or roughly half the total marketed products, making the total marketed goods around 387 million taels. According to Fan, these goods were traded over an area marked by a line arcing from Peking in the north through the administrative and market towns of Cheng-ting (Chihli), Cheng-chou (Honan), I-ch'ang (Hupei), Ch'ang-te (Hunan), Heng-yang (Hunan), Ta-yu (Kiangsi), and Shang-hang (Fukien), to Chang-chou (Fukien) in the southeast. We refer to this huge market area, east of the designated line, which included much of the developing and developed provinces, as the Ch'ing empire's integrated market economy (see Map 11). The enormous trade flowing north and south along the coast and moving along the Yangtze resembled a "T" tilted sideways, integrating five of Skinner's twelve macroregions: north China, the middle and lower Yangtze, the Kiangnan, and Lingnan.[56]

The producers marketing goods and services tended to be small-scale and dependent on merchants and brokers, who sold the goods and services in the market economy.[57] These services, or transaction costs, included providing valuable market information, ensuring the quality of goods and services, drawing up and enforcing contracts, and monitoring marketing activity. These producers had to pay these transaction costs to access and use the

[55] Fan I-chun, *Long-distance trade and market integration in the Ming-Ch'ing period, 1400–1850* (Stanford, 1992), p. 126. Fan's estimates are probably underreported because, as Kōsaka Masanori has argued, Ch'ing customs stations typically did not tax and record the aggregate amount of goods flowing from their origin to other cities. See Kōsaka Masanori, "Shindai chūki no kōshu to shōhin ryūtsū: kita shinkei o chūshin to shite," *Tōyōshi kenkyū*, 50, No. 1 (June 1991), pp. 34–57.

[56] G. W. Skinner, "Introduction: Urban development in imperial China," in G. W. Skinner, ed., *The city in late imperial China* (Stanford, 1977), p. 10.

[57] Lien-sheng Yang, "Government control of urban merchants in traditional China," *Tsing-hua Journal of Chinese Studies*, N.S. 8, Nos. 1 and 2 (Aug. 1970), pp. 186–205.

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‘The map which appears here in the printed edition has been removed for ease of use and now appears as an additional resource on the chapter overview page’.

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market economy. Producers need not have directly paid merchants and brokers for their services. They could have expanded the scale and complexity of their operations and supplied those very same services themselves, but that called for a different style of organization unfamiliar to the Chinese, such as the putting-out system organized by merchants, limited liability companies organizing factories or providing commercial, transport, or financial services, and the modern corporation.

Producers chose not to change their small-scale organizational practices because it would be incompatible with the way they owned and managed their family enterprises and partnerships, transacted and enforced contracts, and engaged in special relationships with state officials. They also preferred to cultivate kinship and friendship networks based on *pao* in negotiating with merchants and brokers for selling products to the market economy. The numerous brokers and merchants who competed in the marketplace to sell their services preferred to operate solo rather than hire out to public and private economic organizations. To a large extent, then, Chinese culture and Confucian ideology encouraged producers to rely on merchants and brokers to supply those necessary services for access and use of markets. Similarly, these same institutions that influenced the Ch'ing market economy's organizations and behavior also determined the character of the customary economy based on lineages and rural community life.

Another characteristic of the Ch'ing market economy was that its small-scale economic organizations operated independently of one another. Because of high transaction costs, if these small, cell-like or reticular economic organizations increased their scale and complexity, they lacked the motivation, power, and capability to integrate different market activities. Had they been able to produce their own transaction services, they could have achieved economies of scale and integrated some market activities to become a *plexus* market economy, as former European enterprises, the *Verlag*, and modern firms were capable of doing.[58] Only a few Chinese guilds and silk processing establishments reduced their transaction costs and integrated their market functions.

[58] Reticular and plexus market economies denote two ideal types, the former a nonintegrated market structure and the latter, an integrated market structure; the former operates under highly competitive conditions, whereas the latter is characterized by either imperfect or competitive conditions. For a different view of the pre-1840 market economy of China, see John C. H. Fei, "The Chinese market system in a historical perspective," in Institute of Economics, Academia Sinica, ed., *The second conference on modern Chinese economic history* (Taipei, 1989), Vol. 1, p. 39. Also published in Yung-san Lee and Ts'ui-jung Liu, eds., *China's market economy in transition* (Taipei, 1990), pp. 9–36. For theoretical discussion of the relationship between the transactions and those costs to use the marketplace and the size and complexity of the economic organization or firm, see R. H. Coase, *The firm, the market, and the law* (Chicago, 1988), pp. 33–55.

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Why had the predominantly reticular eighteenth-century economy expanded on a larger scale than in previous centuries? To answer this question we examine the market success of the early Ch'ing economy's path dependence: (1) its success in creating new markets to meet society's demands, (2) its consumers and producers behaving competitively, and (3) its market equilibrium, which rarely experienced severe gluts or shortages.[59]

These three market successes are confirmed by the fact that the number of market towns greatly proliferated throughout China. That proliferation owed much not only to the population migrations and growth, which promoted domestic trade, but to the expansion of foreign trade, in which the exports of port cities like Macao and Canton – silk products, ceramics, sugar, sandals, and so on – were exchanged for products from Southeast Asia. For example, the Portuguese shipped Chinese zinc, porcelains, silk, and more than five hundred metric tons of green and black tea from Macao to Batavia in exchange for silver and pepper.[60] Trade between Canton and Europe grew at the rate of 4 percent a year between 1719 and 1806, meaning that the volume of trade doubled every eighteen years.[61] Such foreign trade helped connect China's interior markets to its coastal city ports, providing additional demand for domestic producers.

To see how this worked, let us first consider Amoy, a port city on the Fukien coast. Only a garrison post in the seventeenth century, Amoy, like many port cities, had been militarized to survive in the early Ch'ing, an era dominated by marauding pirates and strike forces led by Cheng Ch'eng-kung based in southwestern Taiwan. In 1684 Amoy became the seat of a new maritime customs administrative unit (*hai-kuan*), and in 1693 the Ch'ing government lifted its ban on coastal trade.[62] Thereafter, Amoy attracted merchants, shopkeepers, and others seeking to take advantage of its favorable location as a hub of exchange and commerce with Taiwan and other provinces. Shipbuilding boomed, merchant shops multiplied, and ship-owning merchants plied the waters out of Amoy to trade in Southeast Asia, Japan, and

[59] For this definition of market success and failure, see John O. Ledyard, "Market failure," in John Eatwell, Murray Milgate, and Peter Newman, eds., *The new Palgrave: Allocation, information, and markets* (New York, 1987), pp. 185–90. Market equilibrium denotes Pareto optimality, which is defined as that market equilibrium in which resources are allocated in such a way that no reallocation can make anyone better off without making at least one other person worse off.

[60] Between 1700 and 1840, foreign nations exported 6,341.2 tons of silver to China, as cited in Gang Deng, *Chinese maritime activities and socioeconomic development, c. 2100 B.C.–1900 A.D.* (Westport, Conn., 1997), p. 121. For a discussion of Portuguese traders in south China and Southeast Asia, see George B. Souza, "Portuguese trade and society in China and the South China Sea, ca. 1630–1743" (diss., Trinity College, Cambridge University, 1981), p. 291.

[61] This estimate is based on data for tea exports from Canton to Europe in Louis Dermigny, *La Chine et l'occident: Le commerce à Canton au XVIIIe siècle, 1719–1833* (Paris, 1964), Vol. 2, p. 539.

[62] Ng Chin-keong, *Trade and society: The Amoy network on the China coast, 1683–1735* (Singapore, 1983), p. 33. Our account draws heavily on Ng Chin-keong's excellent study.

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the ports of northern China. Personal networks also connected Amoy with other city ports. The Amoy merchant Chin Yung-shun had ties with Wang Yüan-sheng, a local merchant in Kiaochow, Shantung, and their trade prospered. The throne forbade levying a tax on vessels from Taiwan to other coastal ports and frequently reduced fees on imported shipments. Although the throne taxed lightly and encouraged ocean trade, it reminded Amoy's officials that there should be "no excesses and no harshness." In the eighteenth century, however, the throne reimposed the ban on overseas commerce several times, but provincial officials such as Lan Ting-yüan and others wrote essays arguing for lifting the ban and promoting commerce. Amoy merchants thus helped integrate markets between Taiwan, Fukien, Kwangtung, Chekiang, Kiangsu, and Chihli, as well as Southeast Asian markets.

Just as Amoy linked Taiwan and the developing and developed provinces, so did Canton city integrate the Lingnan economic core region with other provinces and Southeast Asia as well as overseas markets like Manila and Nagasaki. Situated inland on the Pearl River and ideally located to receive products from the interior, Canton's artisans, brokers, merchants, laborers, and professionals processed and exchanged goods from abroad as well as from the interior. In particular, this port city received huge foodgrain shipments for its residents and to market throughout Kwangtung province. By the mid-1700s Kwangtung annually required 60 million *shih* of grain to feed its people because its cultivated area could supply only 28 percent of the people's needs.[63] Foreign and domestic trade enabled this province and cities like Canton to flourish. One indicator of Canton's flourishing export trade was the brisk 4.5 percent annual growth of primary and processed commodities recorded by British East India Company ships between 1760–64 and 1795–99, which did not include the growing illegal trade with foreigners.[64]

After 1693, Canton's foreign trade quickly revived. New irrigation systems and farmland improvements in the Pearl River estuary and elsewhere encouraged multiple cropping and the proliferation of standard markets that traded with Canton. This port city soon engaged in a flourishing import and export trade with foreign merchants and their overseas trading centers, and the Court in turn collected maritime customs revenue. At first, Kwangtung's governor-general loaned government funds at high interest rates to merchants exchanging their goods with foreigners for a share of their profit, a portion of which was sent to the throne as maritime customs revenue and allocated to the Ministry of Revenue and the Office of the Imperial Household (Nei-wu-fu).

[63] Marks, *Tigers, rice, silk, and silt*, p. 25. [64] Gang Deng, *Chinese maritime activities*, p. 122.

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In 1704 Emperor K'ang-hsi abolished that arrangement and established the system whereby designated merchants delivered maritime customs revenue to the throne for the right to trade with foreign merchants [*pao-shang chih-tu*].[65] Kwangtung provincial officials granted 16–18 merchant guilds in Canton to have the exclusive right to transact with foreign merchants, especially the English, in exchange for their collecting an annual amount of maritime customs revenue to be forwarded to the throne. Each guild was responsible for collecting customs duty from eighteen or nineteen foreign ships assigned to it. By 1800, the famous Co-hong merchant guild dealt exclusively with the East India Company's ships; another group of guilds managed Chinese merchant-owned and leased ships; and a Fukien merchant guild managed the ships arriving from Amoy and other coastal ports.[66]

The *pao-shang* system in Canton satisfied the throne, Chinese merchants, and foreign merchants until the first quarter of the nineteenth century. By that time, many tea merchants and Co-hong merchants had incurred heavy debt from their tea trade with the East India Company. English supercargoes advanced large sums of silver to the Co-hong and tea merchants, who frequently purchased more tea than the supercargoes later demanded, leaving them with inventories of tea whose price quickly fell. By the time the Co-hong and tea merchants cleared those unintended inventories, revenues failed to cover their original costs. Periodic gluts of tea in Canton's tea markets frequently occurred because the tea merchants had misjudged future tea market trends. High transaction costs to use the market efficiently were the reason for their growing debt.[67] Co-hong merchants earned profits but were subject to high fees to Ch'ing officials, driving many into debt.

Foreign trade encouraged market proliferation and integration in another way: by importing silver. China's silver mines contributed only around one-third of domestic silver stocks, with the rest imported from Japan, from Mexico and Peru via the Philippines, and from English colonies in India. Silver stocks increased at a probable annual rate of around 0.9 percent

[65] See Okamoto Takashi, *Kindai Chūgoku to kaikan* (Nagoya, 1999), pp. 81–89. This *pao-shang chih-tu* arrangement resembled the contractual agreements between state and merchant for copper and salt production and distribution as well as the practice of tax-farming (see the section on the imperial state and the market economy).

[66] Okamoto Takashi, *Kindai Chūgoku to kaikan*, pp. 135–6.

[67] For an explanation of Co-hong and tea merchants' debt, see Kuo-tung Ch'en, "Transaction practices in China's export tea trade, 1760–1833," in *The second conference on modern Chinese economic history*, ed. Institute of Economics, Academia Sinica (Taipei, 1989), Vol. 2, pp. 745–72. Conceptualized in a different way, asymmetrical information between tea merchants and inland tea brokers, merchants, and producers was *the* major factor causing tea merchants to incur debts. As for the Canton guild merchants going bankrupt because of predatory officials extracting high fees, see the examples cited in Kuo-tung Anthony Ch'en, *The insolvency of the Chinese Hong merchants, 1760–1843*, Institute of Economics, Academia Sinica, Monograph series, 45 (Nankang, Taipei, 1990), appendix 1.

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between the 1680s and the 1820s (Table 10.3), sufficient to facilitate the expansion of China's market and command economies. Various estimates place China's imported silver between the 1570s and the 1830s at around 800 million silver *yüan*, of which only 200 million probably arrived before the fall of the Ming. Therefore, the growth of silver stocks throughout the eighteenth century was especially large. The supply of silver, along with copper cash and the paper notes issued by many Chinese banks, constituted the overall money supply, which expanded sufficiently to help markets satisfy the rising demand for goods and services and made it possible for people to transact with each other in the growing market economy.[68]

The claim that markets were competitive rests on the brisk activity in the markets themselves, or those hundreds or thousands of suppliers and buyers who were unable singly or collectively to fix prices, and the absence of severe deflation or inflation during the period. Although powerful lineages often colluded to restrict others from accessing their markets and merchant guild monopolies trading in Canton set initial prices for the domestic market, the huge number of suppliers and buyers (as mentioned in local histories) who frequented rural periodic markets and market towns attests to competitive behavior in markets. Even the market brokers in charge of collecting a fee from suppliers could not limit supply and influence price on any long-term basis. If there had been successful examples of monopolists and monopsonists successfully cornering supply and fixing prices for long periods, local and official records would certainly have mentioned them.[69]

The Chinese economy's path dependency continued in part because of population migration and avoiding acute resource scarcity. Whether in agriculture, handicrafts, or services, Chinese accommodated for scarcities of any vital inputs by using more labor, the final feature of the Chinese economy's expansion during our period. Family-managed organizations allocated their resources by using more labor and applying the best technology and production practices of the day, including conserving land by multiple cropping, interplanting crops, applying more fertilizers, and intensifying plant care. As wood for fuel became scarce, salt producers increasingly turned to solar energy to extract salt from brine, a method that required far more

[68] See Yeh-chien Wang, "Secular trends of rice prices in the Yangzi delta, 1638–1935," pp. 60–1, and Wang Yeh-chien, *Chung-kuo chin-tai huo-pi yü yin-hang ti yen-chiu, 1644–1937* (Taipei, 1981), pp. 22–9.

[69] Sucheta Mazumdar's 1998 study on the production and distribution of sugar in Kwangtung and Taiwan frequently alludes to the prominent role of monopsony in sugar factor and product markets (see ch. 6). She equates monopsony with merchants charging high interest on loans to sugar producers, powerful lineages controlling access of suppliers and buyers to enter markets, and Taiwan sugar producers reluctant to adopt new technology. Monopsony is defined as that market power capable of setting price below the competitive equilibrium price that would normally prevail in factor markets if they were truly competitive. This kind of market power rarely existed in the early Ch'ing market economy. Officials often colluded with merchants to corner supply, create a market shortage, and then sell for a profit. These practices, however, could not be sustained for any long period.

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labor. But forested area declined in the eighteenth century, a trend that became serious in the early nineteenth century.[70]

The distinctive economic path dependence during the eighteenth century, then, was the continuous growth of the customary and market economies, which were interdependent and had these characteristics: a rising population density with the overwhelming number of people living in villages and hamlets and most owning and farming their land; a predominance of agricultural activity dependent to a high degree on multiple cropping and the availability of surplus labor whose productive use varied on a seasonal basis; a large urban population that constituted a small fraction of the total population; the proliferation of market towns containing producers, brokers, and merchants operating in personal networks to contract and exchange with one another their resources, goods, and services; a vibrant long-distance trade made possible by many integrated domestic and foreign markets; and a dynamic short-distance trade between the growing number of villages and their rural periodic markets and market towns across China. China's predominantly cellular or reticular market economy, networks of small-scale producers, brokers, and merchants, expanded its activities and successfully satisfied society's demands while meshing with the huge customary economy that still surpassed the market economy. The cultural values, ideology, and customs of the people provided those institutions, like *pao*, made for very different economic organizations and their path dependency during the eighteenth century. How, then, did the imperial state intervene to influence their path dependence?

THE IMPERIAL STATE AND THE MARKET ECONOMY

Although the early Ch'ing political center projected great power through its military, judiciary, and central and local bureaucracies, its power over its subjects was inhibited by steady population growth and migration, prosperity, and an expanding market economy.[71] Even so, the center continually tried to intervene in the market economy to win the allegiance of the people, prevent local power holders from becoming too wealthy and influential, and ensure social order.

The Ch'ing rulers acted as if their legitimacy to rule depended on eliciting the loyalty of their imperial subjects and encouraging them to become wealthy. Instead of merely extracting taxes for enriching the political center,

[70] Pomeranz estimates the hectares of remaining forested area in Kwangtung and Kwangsi provinces declined from 15.5 million in 1753 to 13.1 million in 1793 and 10.7 million in 1833. See *The great divergence*, p. 310.

[71] The concept of an "inhibited political center" was developed by Thomas A. Metzger in his many writings related to Chinese economic and intellectual history.

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Ch'ing rulers declared that "wealth should be amassed in the hands of the people" (*ts'ang-fu yü-min*), and many literati shared this same view. To that end, the inhibited political center enhanced people's incentives to participate in the market. One such incentive was for the state to avoid regulating prices and instead encouraging market forces to operate freely. Ch'ing economic doctrine never developed a theory of the "invisible hand" for the market economy, but more officials understood that demand could elicit supply if the market was not regulated. On the other hand, they understood the advantage of monopoly power as in Canton, where merchant guilds were authorized to trade with foreigners in exchange for high trading fees.[72]

Second, the center did not want local officials to ally with local elites who relied on the market economy to usurp the central state's power for selfish ends and promote rebellion. Therefore, the state intervened in the fiscal system to centralize control of as much tax revenue as possible.

Finally, the center's legitimacy depended on a stable social order and a lawful climate. To achieve those goals, the imperial state selectively discouraged certain wealthy people from using the market, fearing that the way in which they became rich kept them from living the virtuous, moral life of the Confucian ideal.

Contradictory as the Ch'ing state's means were to achieve its purposes, the early emperors and their officials, motivated by Confucian ideology and fearful of the same developments that had toppled the Ming, intervened in the market economy.

ENHANCING SOCIETY'S WEALTH

The collapse of the Ming convinced Manchu leaders and Chinese literati that "the government should not try to compete with the people to derive greater benefit," a view promoted by the scholar Tai Chen, who argued that "it is far better that individuals manage their own businesses to make profit rather than the government trying to do everything."[73] If activities like "handicrafts and commerce are the basis for wealth," added an early Ch'ing literatus, Huang Tsung-hsi, then "there should not be ill-conceived policies to sup-

[72] For an illuminating account of official understanding of the advantage of the free market and under what circumstances market power was appropriate, see Pierre-Étienne Will, "Discussions about the marketplace and the market principle in eighteenth-century Guangdong," in Committee for Publication, eds., *Chung-kuo hai-yang fa-chan shih lun-wen chi* (Taipei, forthcoming), Vol. 7.

[73] Quoted from Yü Ying-shih, *Hsien-tai ju-hsüeh lun* (River Edge, N.J., 1996), p. 16. We thank Thomas A. Metzger for this source. Metzger was the first non-Chinese scholar to argue that the Ch'ing political center often promoted commerce and did not always oppress the merchant class as conventional wisdom had long argued. See Thomas A. Metzger, "The state and commerce in imperial China," *Asian and African Studies*, 6 (1970), pp. 23–46.

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press these activities."[74] The early Ch'ing state encouraged the people to increase their wealth by helping more people to farm by lowering their tax and corvée burdens and improving agricultural production.

To avoid paying taxes and performing corvée labor, increasing numbers of families in the last century of Ming rule offered their labor and surrendered their lands (*t'ou-hsien*) to a privileged sector of households. Thomas A. Metzger has referred to this privileged sector as "imperial nobles, the holdings of military officers, and the holdings of gentry (i.e., literati who were higher degree holders) able to use their tax exemptions and other privileges to acquire land."[75] These households that surrendered their lands typically entered into a servile relationship with their patrons, working their fields as tenant-serfs or as bondservants and slaves.[76] This servile stratum of households was particularly conspicuous in the Kiangnan and Lingnan regions.[77]

After the Ming empire collapsed, the Ch'ing military began organizing militias of local people and refugees to restore peace and rebuild walled cities, watchtowers, moats, and the stockades for the new resident officials sent to restore order. The new government also proclaimed edicts and laws to restore order and liberate the servile households. In 1650 the Shun-chih emperor ordered all refugees and local people of any given place to form rural communities or towns based on the *pao-chia* household control system and that they be given title to land.[78] In addition to restoring properties to their original owners, Ch'ing officials posted public notices calling for people who had been cheated of their land, especially those whose families had transferred it to a patron family to avoid labor services, to come forward and take repossession of their lands with a new title. The Ch'ing also decreed that any individual who had cheated people of their land and forced them to work would be flogged one hundred strokes with a bamboo cane and imprisoned for three years.[79] Laws issued in 1660 and 1681 forbade landowners from "selling

[74] Metzger, "The state and commerce," p. 17.

[75] Thomas A. Metzger, "On the historical roots of economic modernization in China: The increasing differentiation of the economy from the polity during late Ming and early Ch'ing times," in Chi-ming Hou and Tzong-shian Yu, eds., *Modern Chinese economic history: Proceedings of the conference on modern Chinese economic history* (Taipei, 1979), pp. 8–9.

[76] Mark Elvin, *The pattern of the Chinese past: A social and economic interpretation* (Stanford, 1973), pp. 235–40; Joseph P. McDermott, "Bondservants in the T'ai-hu basin during the late Ming: A case of mistaken identities," *JAS*, 40, No. 4 (Aug. 1981), p. 677.

[77] Wei Chin-yü, "Ming-Ch'ing shih-tai tien-nung ti nung-nu ti-wei," *Li-shih yen-chiu*, 5 (1963), pp. 109–34, and Oyama Masaaki, "Large landownership in the Kiangnan delta region during the late Ming–early Qing period," in Linda Grove and Christian Daniels, eds., *State and society in China: Japanese perspectives on Ming-Qing social and economic history* (Tokyo, 1984), pp. 79–100.

[78] Li Wen-chih, "Lun Ch'ing-tai ch'ien-ch'i ti t'u-ti chan-yu kuan-hsi," *Li-shih yen-chiu*, 5 (1963), p. 79.

[79] Ibid., p. 80.

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servile laborers, with the land they farmed, to another household."[80] New laws also made it illegal for landowners to physically abuse their bondservants or tenant slaves. Although these new laws liberated a large segment of people, lineages and wealthy households continued to use bound labor into the late eighteenth century.

Meanwhile, the early Ch'ing emperors, in accordance with Confucian precepts, promoted light corvée and modest taxation (*ch'ing-yao pao-fu*). In the late 1640s some officials – aware that the Ming state had never collected the full land tax stipulated in early Ming land registration records – appealed to the throne to undertake a land survey to determine how much tax the provinces could generate.[81] The Ministry of Revenue ordered surveys in several provinces to measure the land being farmed and to record who owned it. Chekiang's financial commissioner, Chu Ch'ang-hsiang, reported that these land surveys were expensive and that too many landowners had tried to bribe officials to underreport their private land.[82] Chu also noted that the 1578 Ming land survey had produced reliable land records that still could be used to collect the land tax. In 1665 the court ordered the land survey halted to ponder its next move.

When doubts arose about the 1578 land survey's reliability, the throne ordered the Ministry of Revenue to initiate land surveys in Kiangsu (1676), Chihli (1677), Shantung (1681), and Hupei (1686).[83] Local elites sabotaged these pilot land surveys, and the throne finally decided that an accurate, empirewide land survey was beyond the state's capability and that, although the true amount of farmland was never likely to be known, the Ming land cadastres of 1578 might be used to raise taxes. As economic recovery was already generating more tax revenues than the provinces were spending, the Ch'ing rulers opted for pragmatism to establish their land tax system.

They adjusted Ming cadastral and land tax records by accounting means. Local officials reported the amount of new cultivated land at year's end to their provincial superiors; they also surveyed coast and river lands every five years for new cultivated lands, and monitored the purchasing or reclaiming of land by individuals.[84] Each district's tax quota was to be based on the amount of registered cultivated land multiplied by the tax rate, which had changed little since the Ming. The amount of tax a household paid was deter-

[80] Wei Chin-yü, "Ming-Ch'ing shih-tai tien-nung ti nung-nu ti-wei," p. 128. See also Ou-yang Fan, "Ming-Ch'ing liang-tai nung-yeh ku-kung fa-liu shang jen-shen li-shu kuan-hsi ti chieh-fang," *Ching-chi yen-chiu*, 6 (1961), pp. 49–63.

[81] Nishimura Genshō, "Shinsho no tochi jōryō ni tsuite: tochi taichō to onden o meguru kokka to kyōshin no tai kō o kijiku to shite," *Tōyōshi kenkyu*, 33, No. 3 (Dec. 1974), p. 103.

[82] Ibid., p. 108. [83] Ibid., pp. 118–19.

[84] Yeh-chien Wang, *Land taxation in imperial China, 1750–1911* (Cambridge, 1973), p. 27.

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mined by the land tax quota assigned for each community multiplied by the annual rate of local collection.

At first, officially registered cultivated lands gradually increased. By 1750 they virtually equaled those in Ming records for 1600. But local officials did not vigorously monitor the registration of new lands. They believed in taxing lightly (*ch'ing-yao pao-fu*). They also basked in the praise they received whenever the political center reduced the tax quotas for their counties, and when tax revenues exceeded official expenditures.

As tax revenues improved, the Ch'ing tried to lighten the corvée labor burden, for officials claimed that the Ming labor conscription system imposed a great burden on households. As the Ch'ing official Ch'en Hung-mou wrote to an official in western Hunan, "the greatest burden the people in your area suffer, and the greatest drag on their economy, is the system of corvée for the purpose of boat-hauling."[85] Yet the Ch'ing had to rely on corvée labor in the seventeenth century and into the eighteenth century to rebuild cities, construct hydraulic systems, and support their military forces.[86] In 1713, however, the K'ang-hsi emperor decreed that the household corvée labor quota would be converted into a head tax based on the number of male adults in each household. The land tax and the head tax (*ti-ting-yin*) now became the direct tax that households paid to the government; the government also promised that this combined tax would never be increased.[87] Gradually, then, the old corvée system was abolished throughout the empire; one by one, provinces carried out this reform, so that by 1750 the new tax system was in place.[88] When officials needed labor for public works projects, they hired workers from the labor market.

After county magistrates set the tax burden for every registered household, their subordinates notified those households of their tax amounts and payment times. Taxpayers either deposited their taxes in chests located at certain sites or handed them to agents sent from the county yamen.[89] In the

[85] Quoted from William T. Rowe, "State and market in mid-Qing economic thought: The case of Chen Hongmou," *Études chinoises*, 12, No. 1 (Spring 1993), p. 18. The early Ch'ing intellectual Yeh Meng-chu from Shanghai County in Sungkiang prefecture said that small corvée imposed a heavier burden on small households than in the late Ming. See Yamamoto Ei'shi, "Tax farming by the gentry: Reorganization of the tax collection system in the early Qing," *Memoirs of the Research Department of the Toyo Bunko*, No. 57 (Tokyo, 1999), p. 63.

[86] For a good example of these developments, see Fujita Keiichi, "Shinsho santō ni okeru fueki ni tsuite," *Tōyōshi kenkyū*, 24, No. 2 (Sept. 1965), pp. 1–25. Fujita shows that the wealthy bore a heavy corvée burden.

[87] Yeh-chien Wang, *Land taxation in imperial China*, p. 27. See also Kitamura Hironao, "Shindai ni okeru sozei keikaku (chitei heichō)," *Shakai keizai shigaku*, 15, Nos. 3–4 (1949), pp. 1–38.

[88] Kitamura Hironao, *Shindai shakai keizai kenkyū* (Kyoto, 1971), pp. 158–9.

[89] County (*hsien*) officials also had an office for collecting land taxes (*li-shu*), and interested readers should consult Saeki Tomi, "Shindai no risho: Shindai zaisei mondai no ichi shaku," *Tōyō gakuhō*, 46, No. 3 (Dec. 1963), pp. 66–77.

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east-central and southeastern provinces, officials often did not have the manpower to collect the tax, so they assigned certain households this task, which opened the way for abuses.[90] This practice of contracting with a third party to pay the land tax for commoners in exchange for a fee was called *pao-lan ch'ien-liang*. This custom gradually became associated with leading local landowners withholding tax revenue from the state.[91]

The new land and head tax system generated enough annual revenue that large treasury surpluses accumulated. Welcoming the elimination of involuntary labor services, people did not resent paying a once-and-for-all head tax along with a fixed land tax quota, which was never adjusted to rising land productivity and value. This "flat tax" enabled the average tax burden to decline. By the 1710s productivity increased, commodity and service prices rose, and unregistered land increased. In Sungkiang prefecture in the Kiangnan region, the tax burden declined by 70 percent between 1652 and 1755; in nearby Soochow prefecture, it declined by 29 percent between 1725 and 1750.[92] Meanwhile, as underreporting of new cultivated land continued, particularly in the developing area, as much as one-third of all cultivated land by 1750 was probably not directly taxed. Provinces such as Fukien, Kwangtung, and Kwangsi produced just enough revenue to cover their outlays; the poorer provinces, Shensi, Kansu, Szechwan, Yunnan, and Kweichow, required transfer payments from the Ministry of Revenue to cover their expenditures; the other provinces netted a surplus for the central government.

The new system was a mixture of Ming land survey records and tax rates, Ch'ing monetized values for household corvée labor, and Ch'ing officials' efforts to record the growth of cultivated land. Not until the mid-nineteenth century when it needed to finance its suppression of regional rebellions did the Ch'ing government impose a tax surcharge on the land and head tax quota (*ti-ting-yin*).

Another way that the Ch'ing rulers intervened was to make more resources and purchasing power available, including assisting the people in reclaiming land for farming; remitting tax proceeds to households to enable them to invest or spend more; assisting farming communities to develop a stable supply of water for farming; repairing and maintaining vital transportation

[90] Nishimura Genshō, "Shinsho no hōran: shichō taisei no kakuritsu, kaiken kara ukeoi fuchō zeisei e," *Tōyōshi kenkyū*, 35, No. 3 (Dec. 1976), pp. 114–74. In this important article, the author argues that in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the Ch'ing tax system became one of the state contracting with elite groups in society to collect the local land tax. See also Yamamoto Ei'shi, "Tax farming by the gentry," p. 63.

[91] See Yamamoto Ei'shi, "Tax farming by the gentry," pp. 73–85.

[92] Chi-ming Hou and Kuo-chi Li, "Local government finance in the late Ch'ing," in Chi-ming Hou and Tzong-hsian Yu, eds., *Modern Chinese economic history* (Taipei, 1979), pp. 520–4, and Ts'ui-jung Liu and John C. H. Fei, "An analysis of the land tax burden in China, 1650–1865," *Journal of Economic History*, 37, No. 2 (June 1977), pp. 359–81.

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to help people access the marketplace; and making information available whereby farmers could improve their crop rotations, increase land productivity, and expand their marketed surplus.

To reclaim and expand cultivated land, officials exempted households from paying any land tax for three to six years if they reclaimed new land for farming. Poor, marginal lands were exempted from the annual land tax, and the throne rewarded officials who could induce people to expand cultivated land. Shortly after 1671, when the governor general of Szechwan, Hupei, and Hunan said that "there is an abundance of cultivated land in Szechwan, but there are not enough people to cultivate it," the throne decreed that "those who were willing to settle in Szechwan were to be tax-exempt for a period of five years and that any local official who could attract three hundred immigrants would be promoted immediately."[93] These activities increased the acreage of reclaimed land in every province during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.[94]

The throne also frequently remitted the land tax and the grain tribute tax (imposed only on the Kiangnan region). Between 1670 and 1800, this transfer payment enhanced community spending power. For Kiangsu province alone, 24.9 million taels of silver, or 28 percent of its total taxes collected over the period, were remitted to provincial officials for this discretionary relief.[95]

If the imperial state did not have enough resources to help every county repair, build, or improve its hydraulic systems directly, it used moral suasion by ordering local officials and elites to mobilize resources to promote such projects for the people's benefit. In 1655, for example, the throne ordered all officials in the southeast provinces to make every effort to prevent flooding during the rainy season and to store sufficient water to alleviate drought.[96]

When provincial officials received an imperial decree to undertake hydraulic projects, they called on local leaders to organize water control and irrigation projects. These same men then mobilized village leaders to raise funds, supply labor, build the projects, and apportion responsibility to designated households to ensure these projects would be built, managed, and maintained. These association leaders, supervised by local elites and county officials, then asked landowners to make cash contributions according to the amount of land they owned (*an-mou ch'u-ch'ien*) and their tenant households

[93] Ho, *Studies on the population of China, 1368–1953*, p. 139.

[94] For new evidence of the amount of land reclamation in early Ch'ing, see P'eng Yu-hsin, comp., *Ch'ing-tai t'u-ti k'ai-t'ien shih tzu-liao hui-pien* (Wuhan, 1992).

[95] Hsü Chien-ch'ing, "Ch'ing-tai K'ang-Ch'ien shih-ch'i Chiang-su sheng ti chüan-mien," *Chung-kuo ching-chi shih yen-chiu*, 4 (1990), p. 89.

[96] Ch'en Chen-han, Hsiung Cheng-wen, Li Shen, and Yin Han-chang, eds., *Ch'ing-shih-lu ching-chi tzu-liao: Shun-chih–Chia-ch'ing-chi, nung-yeh* (Peking, 1989), Vol. 2, p. 298.

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to supply free labor and daily food for dredging canals, repairing sluices, and rebuilding dikes and embankments.[97]

Where the state helped communities build irrigation systems, it often had to temporarily impose additional costs on them. For example, in 1684 the rising Wei River, which passed through Honan province and intersected the Grand Canal, suddenly made barge passage impossible because of extreme flooding. But the Wei River also supplied water to tens of thousands of rural communities, so the state had to preserve those irrigation systems and still find some way to transport urgently needed grain to Peking. The Ministry of Works ordered Honan's governor to mobilize enough local labor and resources to dam the Wei, altering its course only long enough to reduce flooding and enable grain barges to move northward. The communities of northern Honan and southern Chihli provinces suffered temporary water shortages until the Wei River was diverted back to its original course.[98]

As for transportation, in Ming times the Grand Canal had supplied Peking with grain for central government officials, troops, their families, and others who lived in the capital. The canal commenced near Hai-ning in Chekiang province and extended northward to T'ung-chou city just outside the imperial capital. The great wealth of the Kiangnan region made it the target of a special imperial grain tax. Local officials collected, measured, and loaded the grain tribute on grain boats to be shipped to Peking. On arrival, officials unloaded and allocated part of the grain to officials and their families and stored or sold the remainder to the private market.

Under Ming rule, the military managed the Grand Canal, including the grain ships, and state factories built ships exclusively for the Grand Canal. The Ch'ing government reformed the Grand Canal to serve society's needs, eliminating numerous offices and officials, recruiting civilians to operate the grain ships, and purchasing ships from private builders.[99] After streamlining the Grand Canal's management, administrative costs declined and services improved. Most important, officials permitted private merchants to ship their goods on Grand Canal boats to the northern markets, which promoted greater

[97] Morita Akira, *Shindai suirishi kenkyū* (Tokyo, 1995), p. 413. See also Matsuda Yoshirō, "Min-Shin jidai Sekkō Kinken no suiri jigyō," in Chūgoku suirishi kenkyūkai, ed., *Satō hakushi kanreki kinen: Chūgoku suirishi ronshō* (Tokyo, 1981), pp. 268–312. Matsuda's data show that the largest number of constructed waterworks projects in Yin County occurred between 1736 and 1820, or about 34 percent of all construction projects between 1368 and 1937. See p. 274.

[98] Ch'en Chen-han et al., eds., *Ch'ing-shih-lu ching-chi tzu-liao*, Vol. 2, pp. 298–9.

[99] Hoshi Ayao, *Min-Shin jidai kōtsūshi no kenkyū* (Tokyo, 1971), p. 322. Also Unno Kazutaka, "Shindai daiunga sōun no chii teki kōsatsu," *Ōsaka Gakuei daigaku kiyō*, 3 (1955), pp. 124–34. Unno estimates that the Kiangnan grain tribute came to 85–90 percent of ship cargo and that 55 percent of that was rice. Some six thousand ships used the canal, with fleets of thirty to one hundred operating at intervals.

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trade between the south and the north and placed more wealth in the hands of the people.[100]

Finally, the government made available important information about the best farming practices. Out of the 130 texts produced by Ming agricultural experts, one of the best was Hsü Kuang-ch'i's *Nung-cheng ch'üan-shu* (*Complete treatise on agricultural administration*), which included explanations on how to grow nonindigenous crops such as cotton, sweet potatoes, turnips, and maize.[101] The K'ang-hsi emperor also promoted the *Kuang-ch'ün fang-p'u* (*Complete treatise of botany, enlarged*); and the Ch'ien-lung emperor ordered the compilation of the *Shou-shih t'ung-k'ao* (*Compendium of works and days*) in 1742. In the preface he wrote:

> I gave my edict to the court scholars to search wisely to collect information regarding the significance of phenology, the different soil types in the north and south, the timing of tillage, methods of storage and the management of sericulture and animal husbandry. . . . This compilation contains all works written on agriculture and [exhorts that] the peasantry will receive respect, that people will work hard, and that the whole society, the ruling and the ruled, will exert themselves unremittingly.[102]

More than one-sixth of the compendium's contents discussed government policies for improving agriculture and stabilizing the harvest. The work also contained 182 drawings of crops, vegetables, fruit, trees, bamboo, and fibers, and instructions on how to grow and care for these products, including many examples of how to grow rice for early-, middle-, and late-ripening varieties in different parts of the country. This text, like many others, circulated widely among officials, who in turn were expected to make its contents available to local elites and farmers.

The final cluster of state policies to revitalize the marketplace involved stabilizing grain prices and providing food relief when markets failed. The middle Ch'ing emperors' secret memorial system bypassed the normal flow of information from central government intermediaries, giving emperors access to information they otherwise might never have received. Such information, which included monthly reports from prefectural officials about local weather, harvest conditions, and foodgrain prices, enabled an emperor to order provincial officials to remit taxes, transfer funds, or ship grain to stricken areas suffering food shortages. Surviving today are government

[100] See Ch'en Feng, "Chien-lun Sung Ming Ch'ing ts'ao-yün chung ssu-huo fan-yün chi mao-i," *Chung-kuo ching-chi shih yen-chiu*, 1 (1996), pp. 120–7. Ch'en argues that the amount of private goods shipped with grain tribute on the Grand Canal expanded rapidly in the eighteenth century, became a large share of transported goods, and was twice the volume of such goods in Ming times.

[101] The section relies heavily on Gang Deng, *Development versus stagnation: Technological continuity and agricultural progress in premodern China* (Westport, Conn., 1993), p. 85.

[102] Gang Deng, *Development versus stagnation*, pp. 91–7.

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documents stipulating that "Kiangsi, Hukuang, and other rice-producing provinces are to send reports of rice prices in counties accessible to water transport to Fukien and other [rice deficit] provinces. If Fukien needs to buy rice, then it can budget on the basis of these reports."[103] The K'ang-hsi emperor also ordered officials to report the changing conditions in the market economy and requested reports about farmers' livelihood in provinces as far away as Fukien and Kwangtung.[104] Armed with these reports from the field, the imperial state was more capable than previous governments of implementing the appropriate measures which could best stabilize market prices.

Early Ch'ing rulers also established a grain storage and distribution system superior to what they had inherited from the Ming. In 1654 the Shun-chih emperor ordered that granaries (*ch'ang-p'ing-ts'ang*) be established in every province to provide famine relief. Provincial officials began constructing grain storehouses in large towns of every department (*chou*) and county (*hsien*) and instructed local officials to manage them. Those officials purchased enough grain to sell to farmers who were short of seed in the spring or to buyers to lower urban grain prices.

In 1660 the Shun-chih emperor again ordered provincial officials to allow granaries to sell and loan grain and freely distribute grain after bad harvests.[105] In subsequent years the K'ang-hsi emperor pressed officials to build more granaries and increase their reserves.[106] To do so, officials appealed to local elites to contribute money reserves, and provincial governors used their treasury funds to buy grain reserves. The central government also allocated some of its annual grain tribute from Kiangnan to provincial granaries. Finally, officials in densely populated areas permitted granaries to store silver to purchase grain when severe market shortages occurred.

The Ch'ing state also relied on granaries to feed the imperial capital at Peking, whose population in 1781 reached 986,878 persons, located in a most unfavorable agricultural region.[107] State officials arranged for grain tribute from the south, to be shipped by the Grand Canal, and to a lesser extent, grain from surrounding regions outside the capital. The granaries in the capital and at T'ung-chou, some twelve miles away, held as much as 3.25 million *shih* by the mid-eighteenth century. This grain tribute was distributed to the court, government officials, and bannermen in the form of

[103] Quoted in Endymion Porter Wilkinson, "Studies in Chinese price history" (diss., Princeton University, 1970), p. 132.

[104] Ch'en Chen-han et al., eds., *Ch'ing-shih-lu ching-chi shih tzu-liao*, Vol. 2, p. 2.

[105] Kung-chuan Hsiao, *Rural China: Imperial control in the nineteenth century* (Seattle, 1960), p. 145.

[106] The information below is based on Pierre-Etienne Will and R. Bin Wong with James Lee, *Nourish the people: The state civilian granary system in China, 1650–1850* (Ann Arbor, 1991), chs. 2 and 3.

[107] This section is based on Lillian M. Li and Alison Dray-Novey, "Guarding Beijing's food security in the Qing dynasty: State, market, and policy," *JAS* 58:4 (November 1999), pp. 992–1032.

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monthly stipends. The main way tribute grain entered the market was to sell granary stocks at a price below the current market price (*p'ing-t'iao*). These grain sales were intended for commoners. Officials worried about grain shops hoarding grain and driving its price higher, so they constantly monitored and enforced the strict regulations governing how much grain local stores held each month. At times of grain shortage, city officials also arranged to open soup kitchens (their number was more frequent in the nineteenth century) and sell grain below the market price. The capital's gendarmarie, numbering over 33,000 men, regularly inspected the grain shops, especially those located near the city gates, to prevent hoarding. They also helped to monitor grain prices in the more than one thousand grain shops run mainly by Shantung merchants. The capital's grain storage and distribution system represented that distinctive mixture of command and market economies that depended on that familiar institution of the *pao*.

Not until the early 1700s did local communities begin to establish their own granaries (in Chihli province around 1702, followed by other provinces in the next two decades) to supplement the provincially sponsored ones in the cities. By the 1730s the empire had established a comprehensive grain storage system that extended from the largest provincial cities to remote villages. Grain shortages in densely populated areas still persisted and occasionally led to urban riots. In the 1740s riots in a number of provincial cities exploded because of fears that grain prices might rise. These events prompted the Ch'ien-lung emperor to comment as follows:

> In Kiangnan, Hupei, and Hunan there have been many incidents related to granaries. These events have been widespread even in Kiangsi. In one county of Kiangsi there were one hundred of these disturbances. According to some estimates, between ten and twenty persons were involved in as many as one hundred such incidents. These examples even incited people in the neighboring villages to behave in the same way so as to involve as many as one thousand to two thousand persons. The damage caused by these disturbances has been severe.[108]

According to the Japanese Ch'ing specialist Mio Kishimoto, there were four behavioral patterns that characterized these disturbances: people rioted because they believed that wealthy households and merchants hoarded grain; tenants organized and refused to pay higher rents; people violently tried to stop merchants from shipping grain to other areas; and charity groups, responsible for caring for the poor, protested.[109]

Whether many poor harvests or officials' excessively accumulating grain reserves or both caused prices to rise sharply in the winter and spring months

[108] Kishimoto Mio, *Shindai Chūgoku no bukka to keizai hendo* (Tokyo, 1997), p. 292.
[109] Ibid., pp. 292–4.

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of the 1740s is not clear. Some evidence suggests that excessive grain storage might have produced market shortages and abnormally rising prices, thus playing on people's anxieties. We know that in the 1730s granaries everywhere had accumulated large stocks through officials' grain purchases using silver donated by wealthy individuals in exchange for the examination degrees needed to become officials. In 1747 alone, "more than 40 percent of Kwangtung province's three million *shih* reserves came from contributions for degrees."[110]

When officials stockpiled excessive grain, there was considerable grain spoilage. Officials tried to set guidelines to minimize such spoilage, but large grain stocks still rotted. Thus, more granaries tried to resist overstocking, and by the 1780s there were reports that many provincial granaries did not restock their reserves quickly enough and were depleted. Whether overstocking or understocking, the estimated grain reserves in the empire between the 1780s and 1790s ranged between 37 million and 45 million *shih* of unhusked grain,[111] probably amounting to some 5 to 10 percent of total foodgrain production.

When floods or droughts ruined the harvest in one or more areas for one or more years in a row, the state immediately initiated a sequence of policies to alleviate any mounting foodgrain shortage. In Chihli province in 1743–44, drought in sixteen counties of its southeast section devastated an area supporting four million people. Officials first identified the stricken area and, using their *pao-chia* records, determined which households should be given cash subsidies.[112] Officials then estimated how much grain to deliver to the stricken counties and provided cash subsidies or loans for people to buy grain. Finally, officials determined whether grain reserves from neighboring counties, nearby provinces, or the annual grain tribute reserve should be allocated to the stricken area. Thus, in 1743 and 1744 the officials of the northeast, Shantung, and Honan made ten disbursements of grain to their stricken areas, with roughly half of the grain relief coming from imperial grain tribute reserves.[113] The Ch'ing famine relief system in action succeeded, with few lives lost.[114]

How good was the century state's overall disaster relief performance during of the first two hundred years of the Ch'ing period? The data in Table 10.4 reveal how the Ch'ing state intervened in the market economy to provide disaster relief and attest to its growing capability during the eighteenth century to provide the kind of famine relief programs already discussed. The first wave

[110] Will and Wong, *Nourish the people*, p. 49. [111] Ibid., table A.1. [112] Ibid., p. 107.
[113] Ibid., p. 154.
[114] Pierre-Étienne Will, *Bureaucratie et famine en Chine au 18e siècle* (Paris, 1980), pp. 37–40.

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Table 10.4. *Natural Calamities, Tax Exemption, and Disaster Relief in the Ch'ing Period*

Period	Number of Counties Afflicted	Tax Exemptions for Counties		Percent	Disaster Relief for Counties		Percent
		No. of Counties	Yearly Average	Receiving Exemption	No. of Counties	Yearly Average	Receiving Relief
1644–1661	1,719	1,144	63	66	91	5	5
1662–1722	6,161	4,735	77	77	1,298	21	21
1723–1735	1,175	845	65	72	721	55	61
1736–1795	10,634	6,092	101	57	6,732	112	63
1796–1820	4,395	1,096	44	25	1,433	57	32
1821–1850	4,854	1,801	95	37	1,039	54	21
TOTAL	28,938	15,713	80	54	11,314	58	39

Source: Li Hsiang-chün, *Ch'ing-tai huang-cheng yen-chiu* (A Study of disaster relief policies during the Ch'ing period) (Peking: Chung-kuo nung-yeh ch'u-pan-she, 1995), p. 66.

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of natural disasters afflicting the counties occurred immediately after the founding of the Ch'ing, when disruptions persisted in much of the empire. Although more counties were afflicted between 1662 and 1722, the government had greater capability to waive the land tax and provide disaster relief. From 1723 until 1795, China was hit hard by harsh droughts and severe rainfalls, afflicting an even larger number of counties than when the Ch'ing dynasty came to power. For example, in 1742–43, twenty-nine counties of Kiangsu province and twenty-four counties of Anhwei province were flooded; in 1743 drought devastated sixteen counties in Chihli (see above), and floods in 1747–48 hit eighty-three counties in Shantung province; floods again affected twenty-seven counties of Anhwei and northern Kiangsu in 1754, and in 1762–63 Chihli suffered floods in forty-five counties.[115] By the eighteenth century the state had greater capability to exempt counties from paying the land and grain tribute tax and to provide direct relief to stricken counties (Table 10.4 for the years 1662 to 1795).

From 1796 until the late 1840s, natural calamities caused by a cooling climatic trend afflicted more than nine thousand counties, and the state provided tax exemption and direct disaster relief to a smaller percentage of stricken counties, indicating that the state's capacity to provide disaster relief had declined, as had tax revenues.

CENTRALIZING TAX REVENUE COLLECTION

In 1646, short of silver and grain to support his armies and officials, the Shun-chih emperor ordered the Ministry of Revenue to review all sources of taxation. Recognizing that excessively taxing China's depressed and fragmented economy would alienate their new subjects, the Ch'ing government tried to coordinate tax collection under central government control and disburse funds to lower administrations without imposing higher taxes. Therefore, the court ordered the Ministry of Revenue, the Censorate, and other officers in the capital to first control all tax revenue from the provinces (*ch'i-yün*) and then designate an amount to be allocated to the provinces to be dispensed for local needs (*ts'un-liu*).[116]

By 1668 the centralization of tax revenue had reached a ratio (between *ch'i-yün* and *ts'un-liu*) of 86.9 percent versus 13.1 percent (as compared to approximately 50 : 50 percent in the 1650s) and remained at that high level until the nineteenth century. Despite several local revenue shortages, the Ch'ing government resisted imposing new taxes that might have discouraged the people from supplying more goods and services to the market. Even so,

[115] Ibid., pp. 252–3.
[116] Ch'en Feng, "Ch'ing-tai chung-yang tsai-cheng yü ti-fang ts'ai-cheng ti tiao-cheng," *Li-shih yen-chiu*, 5 (1977), pp. 100–3.

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local officials often had little recourse but to impose surcharge taxes or tax quotas to survive in those difficult years. The market economy improved in the 1680s, and local officials were able to obtain more revenue from the political center. As early as 1651, the metropolitan censor Wei Hsiang-shu had advised the throne that the Ministry of Revenue should regularize all financial reports for the provinces related to their annual amounts of paid and unpaid taxes. The throne agreed, and the government initiated a new accounting system (*tsou-hsiao chih-tu*) for every province.[117] By having each province audit its tax revenues and expenditures, a system the Ming had never employed, the Ministry of Revenue reduced official waste and corruption.

By 1685 the central government was obtaining around 80 percent of every province's regular tax revenues, with the other 20 percent being retained within the province. Of the retained revenues, 84 percent went to support government military activities and the imperial post. Local expenses absorbed the rest. Consolidating revenues under the central government left just enough revenue to cover local administrative costs, not contingencies. To cover contingencies, the provinces introduced informal fee payment systems in which county and department officials extracted fees from their subordinates, so that all officials, from the provincial governor down to the county magistrate and below, began extracting fees to cover their expenses. To keep in the good graces of their superiors, all officials participated in this custom, and patron-client relations between officials further legitimated this fee-paying practice.

The court, realizing that this practice was growing everywhere, admonished the officials but failed to change matters. After Emperor Yung-cheng received various proposals through the throne's secret memorial system, including a report by Governor-General Nien Keng-yao of Shensi, he recommended that provincial officials retain a fixed share of the taxes they sent to the central government. This retained share, referred to as a "meltage fee" (*huo-hao*), became the "charge added to regular tax remittances to compensate for the inevitable loss of silver that resulted when taxes were melted down into large ingots for transporting to the central government."[118] The emperor's decision was based on reports of mounting corruption, which he was determined to reverse by using the regularized meltage fee to reward meritorious officials and nurture their moral virtue (*yang-lien*). First tried in Honan province, the arrangement soon spread to the northern provinces and then the empire. Emperor Ch'ien-lung later transferred the meltage fee revenue collected in a single province to other provinces for rewarding officials.[119]

[117] Madeleine Zelin, *The magistrate's tael: Rationalizing fiscal reform in eighteenth-century Ch'ing China* (Berkeley, 1984), p. 13.

[118] Ibid., p. 88. [119] Ibid., p. 283.

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UPHOLDING THE IDEAL CONFUCIAN SOCIETY

Although channeling tax revenues to the central government, the Shun-chih and K'ang-hsi emperors repeatedly tried to abolish the miscellaneous taxes paid by brokers and merchants. By the 1720s commerce, still lightly taxed, flourished; newly reclaimed lands reduced the burden of the land tax; and because of low inflation local government costs rose slowly. While basking in this prosperity, the Yung-cheng emperor and some government officials worried about a new "threat of disorder in (this) stable agrarian economy": suppose local officials were to conspire with merchant cliques, brokers, and clerks to strengthen their power at the expense of the political center?[120] Might these new power groups foment disorder and threaten the throne? Emperor Yung-cheng's concerns, fueled by reports of illegal and immoral behavior, prompted him in 1733 to order local officials to select only upright and law-abiding brokers and merchants to operate in the marketplace. That selection process allowed departments and county magistrates to issue a certain quota of licenses to brokers in exchange for their paying a fee to the state.

> The brokerage taxes collected by each province are a part of the government's tax structure designed to benefit the people. To that end, each province is to establish a quota of brokerage licenses to be issued by the office of the provincial treasurer. The departments (*chou*) and counties (*hsien*) are forbidden to issue licenses beyond the quota, in order to prevent the number of brokers from growing too large and becoming a burden on the merchants.[121]

By regulating which brokers and their merchants could participate in local markets, the throne hoped to discourage alliances between local power holders and officials. When local officials issued licenses for brokers and merchants to operate pawnshops, slaughter animals, and hold markets, they collected fees, which steadily increased during the mid-eighteenth century. A recent estimate places the tax revenues collected in 1737 at 1.9 million silver taels, rising to 5.6 million silver taels in 1754, a 280 percent increment that increased those revenues' share of total tax revenue from 5.4 to 13.1 percent.[122] This new source of revenue helped officials cover their local expenditures, but whether it discouraged corrupt behavior among brokers, merchants, local literati, and officials is problematic.

[120] Susan Mann, *Local merchants and the Chinese bureaucracy, 1750–1950* (Stanford, 1987), p. 44. Susan Mann was the first scholar to use Weber's concept of liturgical organization to describe how local officials collected brokerage taxes from markets.

[121] Mann, *Local merchants*, p. 46.

[122] Hsü T'an and Ching Chün-chien, "Ch'ing-tai ch'ien-ch'i shang-shui wen-t'i hsin-t'an," *Chung-kuo ching-chi shih yen-chiu*, 2 (1990), p. 90.

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To prevent local officials from issuing too many commercial licenses to brokers, in 1758 Emperor Ch'ien-lung introduced a sliding scale of licensing fees, setting higher fees for the advanced commercial centers and lower fees for backward areas and their towns. This system continued throughout the remainder of the century, and in the nineteenth century became a major revenue source for the Ch'ing government, but it never solved the fundamental problem that had so disturbed the Yung-cheng emperor: How to curtail the rise of local power holders who might threaten Ch'ing control? Ch'ing rulers, wanting their subjects to be exemplary Confucian subjects and adhere to the rituals of the ancient Confucian texts, expected them to work hard, behave frugally, perform the prescribed sacrifices, and live virtuous lives. For society to be orderly and harmonious, the rich must not conspire with amoral groups for selfish ends. If the majority of people could confine themselves to farming and avoid urban life and its dangers, so went this logic, they were more likely to live orderly, virtuous lives.

Farming, the emperors felt, should be based chiefly on grain production, wherever possible, and an excessive dependency on nongrain farming activities was opposed by the early Ch'ing emperors. Just as Mao Tse-tung and the Communist Party in the 1960s tried to grow grain everywhere and promote self-reliance and proper moral behavior by making "grain the key link" (*i-liang wei-kang*), so too did Ch'ing officials try to promote the "correct agriculture" and upright, moral behavior by cultivating foodgrains and discouraging industrial and commercial crops. In Jui-chin county, Kiangsi province, some local leaders discussed the harmful consequences of growing tobacco and thus less foodgrain in an area of acute arable land scarcity.[123] They observed that after 1683 Hakka migrants from Fukien had entered Jui-chin and begun to cultivate tobacco. As this trend spread, they argued, grain cultivation declined, foodgrain prices rose, and bad "elements" congregated in the tobacco-growing areas to work the fields and market tobacco. These developments not only damaged Jui-chin agriculture but promoted the use of tobacco, which harmed people's health. They urged that tobacco be prohibited. In 1727 the Yung-cheng emperor instructed the Grand Council that "tobacco is not healthy for the people, and because cultivating tobacco requires using rich land, its cultivation is harmful for growing grain."[124]

[123] Tajiri Tōru, *Shindai nōgyō shōgyōka no kenkyū* (Tokyo, 1999), pp. 313–44.

[124] Ch'en Chen-han, Hsiung Cheng-wen, Li Shen, and Yin, comps., *Ch'ing-shih-lu ching-chi shih tzu-liao* (Peking, 1989), Vol. 2, p. 6. See also the example cited by Helen Dunstan of the scholar Fang Pao (1668–1749) arguing for a ban on distilled liquor in northern China because the practice of wasting grain "by turning it into spirits aggravated the risk of famine. In 1737, Emperor Ch'ien-lung promulgated this ban." See Helen Dunstan, *Conflicting counsels to confuse the age: A documentary study of political economy in Qing China, 1644–1840* (Ann Arbor, 1996), p. 203 and ch. 5.

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In 1775 Kiangnan's governor-general, Kao Chin, expressed his concern to Kiangnan officials that Sungkiang, T'ai-ts'ang, and T'ung-chou counties did not practice "correct agriculture" because their people devoted 70–80 percent of their land to cotton and that its cultivation should be reduced to grow more rice.[125]

The Yung-cheng emperor contemplated introducing agricultural supervisory offices in every province and dispatching officials to instruct and exhort the farmers to practice the "correct agriculture" and work hard. His idea was that, before the planting season commenced, officials were to survey existing farming practices and, after the harvest, to report to the throne. That program was never adopted, but in 1725 he wrote:

> I enjoy eating rice, and I never waste even a kernel. Rice is a gift from Heaven and nourishes the people. Because I love the people, I must respect Heaven and take great pains to save and treasure rice. The more that I do this, the more Heaven will reward me. If I overindulge, however, and waste foodgrain, Heaven will be angry, and our people will suffer calamities. I have heard that people in Kiangsi feed grain to the hogs. This is not appropriate behavior. I say these things so that my subjects will be devoted to and specialize in the basic task of producing grain. Avoid waste and love grain![126]

Thus he encouraged his officials and subjects to plant rice even in the arid northern province of Chihli, a region inhospitable to rice farming. After seventy departments and counties in Chihli were damaged by floods in 1725, the emperor established a special office to supervise the development of irrigation systems there. That office managed to cultivate only 150 *ch'ing* of rice land. In 1727, after the emperor's further prodding, more irrigation facilities were built to cultivate 6,000 *ch'ing* of rice land.[127] This expensive project, however, was abandoned because the northern climate and soils were unsuitable for rice cultivation.

The state also tried to regulate other kinds of economic activity such as mining production to ensure social stability and proper moral behavior. According to E-tu Zen Sun, officials denied wealthy individuals the right to establish a mine if their activities endangered "the established order of people's lives" by damaging residential dwellings and graveyards and attracting workers without their families, who might disrupt social order.[128] In the early eighteenth century Emperor K'ang-hsi offered some mining guidelines.

[125] For a discussion of "correct agriculture," see Pierre-Étienne Will, "Développement quantitatif et développement qualitatif en Chine à la fin de l'epoque imperial," *Annales: Histoire, sciences sociales*, 49, No. 4 (1994), p. 877.

[126] *Ch'ing-shih-lu ching-chi shih tzu-liao*, Vol. 2, p. 6.

[127] Chang Fang, "Ming-Ch'ing chi-fu ti-ch'u shui-tou chung-chih ti fa-chan chi ch'i chih-yüeh yin-su," *Chung-kuo ching-chi shih yen-chiu*, 1 (1996), pp. 84–5.

[128] E-tu Zen Sun, "Ch'ing government and the mineral industries before 1800," *JAS*, 27, No. 4 (1968), p. 837.

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If mines have been in operation for a long time and the poor people, having scraped up enough capital, have tried to gain some profit and earn a living, to suddenly prohibit mining would deprive these people of their benefits. Public unrest is also likely to follow. Therefore, nature's resources should be shared with the people and not be treated as useless material. The important point is that local officials must skillfully manage the situation so that disorders will not arise.[129]

Ch'ing officials usually refused requests by rich merchants to open new mines, fearing an unruly labor force, but they allowed mines to operate in poor areas to provide employment.

PRIVATE AND HYBRID ECONOMIC ORGANIZATIONS

The mobilization of corvée labor had greatly declined by mid-century, and Ch'ing rulers earned considerable praise from their subjects by reducing this odious and ancient practice through their fiscal reforms. So hated was the corvée that in 1670 Magistrate Huang Liu-hung of T'an-ch'eng county in Shantung province wrote that the people obeyed his order to provide corvée labor "albeit grudgingly, but there was disturbance among them; they considered the burden almost unbearable."[130] Yet the customary economy continued to play a major role in economic life, especially in the developing area. Rural communities and towns of fewer than two thousand persons still exchanged their labor for goods and services, so that probably much of what they produced was never marketed locally or for long-distance trade.[131] Thus, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries nonmarket activity remained significant, even as more households were engaging in specialized production for exchange and earned rents, interest, and wages in cash from factor markets. In the developing and developed areas, there was a mismatch between population density and available resource endowments such as land, so that market economic activities became widely practiced and meshed with customary practices of labor, commodity, and service exchanges within the family and lineage as well as in the community.

Foodgrains and their production

The majority of the Ch'ing empire's population resided and worked in villages and small towns of fewer than two thousand persons, and the majority

[129] Ibid., pp. 835–6.

[130] Huang Liu-hung, *A complete book concerning happiness and benevolence: A manual for local magistrates in seventeenth-century China*, trans. and ed. Djang Chu (Tucson, 1984), p. 175.

[131] According to John Lossing Buck's survey of 2,370 farms in 1924–25, roughly 66 percent of all goods and services consumed still were produced on the farm, with 34 percent purchased from the market. See John Lossing Buck, *The Chinese farm economy* (Chicago, 1930), p. 393. It is improbable that the share of marketed surplus from farm production in the eighteenth century exceeded that for the 1920s.

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of resources were allocated to producing foodgrains and other farm products. Wherever possible, however, Chinese engaged in multifunctional roles, making for a high congruence between farming and handicraft production, commerce, transport, and other services. As families looked to peace and prosperity to continue, they produced more children and participated in as many production-related activities as their time, energy, skills, and opportunities allowed.

The eighteenth-century farming system consisted of rural households contracting with one another in informal and formal factor markets. They allocated their resources to specialize and produce a surplus for exchanging with one another or in the market; and used labor-intensive and land-saving techniques in their cropping regimes. Because of diverse resource endowment and the creative means they used to extract more products from the same unit area of land, these cropping regimes coexisted within large areas.

In poor peripheral areas with little arable land, many hills, and large mountains, families could harvest only a single grain crop each year. In southern Shensi, the farmers of San-yüan county of Hsi-an prefecture planted a wheat crop one year and a millet crop the next year, often growing legumes such as clover during the spring months.[132] They consumed much of the foodgrain produced, exchanged some products with other households, and sold any surplus for cash. Families that did not have enough land to feed their numbers sent their members to work in nearby mines, lumber mills, and iron foundries, hauling goods or performing other services.

Throughout the northern provinces, family farms in peripheral and core areas with better resources harvested three crops every two years. This cropping cycle was far more prevalent than the cycle of a single crop a year. The eighteenth-century farmer and writer Ting I-tseng's *Nung-p'u pien-lan* (*Handbook for farmers and gardeners*) describes this cropping regime for Shantung province. In April, "when planting sorghum (*kaoliang*), rice, corn, millet, oats, and buckwheat, one first washes these seeds in ice cold water because they better resist drought and insects."[133] In late July or early August, "harvest the early millet crop, press the millet stubbles into the soil, lightly

[132] The comments in this section about multiple cropping draw heavily on the findings from Chinese sources cited in Fu-mei Chen and Ramon H. Myers, "Rural production and distribution in late imperial China," *Han-hsüeh yen-chiu*, 3, No. 2 (Dec. 1985), pp. 657–708. See also Kawakatsu Mamoru, "Min-Shin nōgyō ron" (A discussion of Ming-Ching agriculture), in Mori Masao, Noguchi Tetsurō, Hamashima Atsutoshi, Kishimoto Mio, and Satake Yasuhiko (compilation committee), *Min-Shin jidaishi no kihon mondai* (Some basic issues in Ming and Ch'ing history) (Tokyo: Kyūko shoin, 1997), pp. 108–110.

[133] Chang Fang, "Ming-Ch'ing chi-fu ti-ch'u shui-tou chung-chih ti fa-chan chi ch'i chih-yüeh yin-su," pp. 671–2. See Adachi Keiji, "Shindai kahoku no nōgyō keiei to shakai kōzō," *Shirin*, 64, No. 4 (July 1981), pp. 66–93.

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plant green beans, and then as soon as the weather is hot, plough these bean shoots into the soil. Then plant wheat because this method is far better than applying fertilizer-compost."[134] After the early fall harvest, farmers planted different soybeans and winter wheat in their place, harvesting these crops in late May, with periodic rotations so that some land would lie fallow.

Special products and industrial crops were introduced into this northern cropping regime in the eighteenth century, expanding family farm product and income and promoting handicrafts and new services in villages and towns. In T'ai-yüan prefecture of nothern Shansi province, for example, the cultivation of cotton enabled "the people everywhere to weave cloth, and their numbers are enormous. . . . They spin, weave, and purchase thousands of catties of pure cotton."[135] Just as growing cotton was integrated with spinning yarn and weaving cloth, so were the cultivation of peanuts, mulberry trees, and other products linked to handicraft production.

In the south, in the provinces of the developed area, farmers produced two crops from the same unit of land annually by planting crops like rice in one season followed by other foodgrains or industrial crops like cotton. Ch'ung-ming county in Kiangsu adopted a cropping regime of cotton and foodgrains.[136] But in the central and southern provinces of the developing area, farmers planted rice, followed by wheat, barley, or millet each year, and marketed rice as a cash crop.[137] An official in Hunan in 1746 urged that two rice crops per year be planted on the same plot of land but was opposed by other officials, who argued that poor soils and other difficulties did not favor a two-rice crop regime. Yet decades later farmers throughout Hunan, Hupei, Anhwei, Kiangsi, and Kwangsi were planting two rice crops per year on the same unit of land.[138]

Farther south, in southern Fukien and in much of Kwangtung province, farmers harvested two rice crops a year plus another crop of wheat or various beans, making for three crops a year from the same unit of land. Thus, four cropping regimes were practiced throughout the Ch'ing empire, with the practice of three crops every two years and two crops a year expanding on a larger scale than in previous centuries. By the eighteenth century the spatial distribution of cropping patterns and specialized planting of key regional crops was similar to the land utilization patterns depicted in the 1920s by

[134] Quoted, modified, from Chen and Myers, "Rural production and distribution in late imperial China," p. 673.

[135] Chen and Myers, "Rural production and distribution," p. 673.

[136] Ibid., pp. 685–91.

[137] Abe Takeo, *Shindaishi no kenkyū* (Tokyo, 1971), pp. 417–18. Abe Takeo was one of the first scholars to draw attention to the grain supply and demand pattern in the 1730s and 1740s between the developed and developing provinces. See pp. 498–515.

[138] See T'an T'ien-hsing, "Ch'ien-lung shih-ch'i Hu-nan kuan-yü t'ui-kuang shuang-chi-tao ti i-ch'ang ta lun-chan," *Chung-kuo nung-shih*, 4 (1986), pp. 33–8.

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John L. Buck (see Map 10). These cropping regimes facilitated the expanding foodgrain market economy, which was integrating the developing and developed regions during the eighteenth century, as seen in Map 12.

Not only had much of the developed area become dependent on grain imported from the developed area and Southeast Asia, but so had specific core areas like the Canton delta, Yangtze delta, Peking-Tientsin, the Wuhan region, and various port-city centers along the southern coastline. By the 1730s an interregional foodgrain market (supplementing the command economy), centering in the Yangtze delta, had integrated a great part of imperial China (see Map 12).[139] Not surprisingly, the value of market foodgrain, estimated by Wu Ch'eng-ming to be 163 million taels before 1840, exceeded that of other marketed goods.[140]

The distribution of property rights largely determined the distribution of income and wealth in Ch'ing society. In the seventeenth century it appears that a great inequality in land distribution prevailed. The inequality declined during the eighteenth century as the market economy expanded, but worsened during the deflation and market failure of the 1830s and 1840s. In the early 1600s Manchu banners seized nearly thirty thousand hectares of Han Chinese-owned land in Feng-t'ien province. In 1621 they confiscated another twenty thousand hectares, occupying Shenyang and Liaoyang cities and moving into the Liaotung peninsula.[141] Between 1645 and 1647, after occupying Peking, they expropriated 745,280 hectares in the outlying counties for their nobles and bondservant families.[142] Where Manchu properties bordered Chinese-owned lands, the central government tried to separate the property rights of the two groups and have each pay a separate land tax and perform corvée labor.[143] By the mid-eighteenth century, however, Manchu landowners had sold or mortgaged much of their land to Chinese, so that land distribution became more equal.

Some Chinese Marxists have argued that the typical land ownership distribution pattern among rural families was very unequal, and the following

[139] Interior provinces like Hunan became major suppliers of rice, so that Hunan's many hundreds of rice markets were integrated into the national foodgrain markets described by Wu Ch'eng-ming and others. For an early study of Hunan's rice markets, see Shigeta Atsushi, *Shindai shakai keizaishi kenkyū* (Tokyo, 1975), pp. 1–65.

[140] According to Wu Ch'eng-ming's estimate, the following values of goods circulated anually in the market economy before 1840: foodgrain, 163 million taels; cotton and cotton cloth, 107 million taels; salt, 58 million taels; tea, 31 million taels. Wu Ch'eng-ming, "Lun Ch'ing-tai ch'ien-ch'i wo-kuo kuo-nei shih-ch'ang," *Li-shih yen-chiu*, 1 (1983), p. 99.

[141] Sudō Yoshiyuki, *Shindai Manshū tochi seisaku no kenkyū* (Tokyo, 1944), p. 139.

[142] Ma Feng-ch'en, "Manchu-Chinese social and economic conflicts in early Ch'ing," in E-tu Zen Sun and John DeFrancis, trans., *Chinese social history* (Washington, D.C. 1956), p. 338.

[143] Ch'en Chen-han, Hsiung Cheng-wen, Li Shen, and Yin Han-cheng, comps., *Ch'ing shih-lu ching-chi chi tzu-liao: Shun-chih-Chia-ch'ing-chi, nung-yeh* (Peking,1989), Vol. 1, pp. 141–2.

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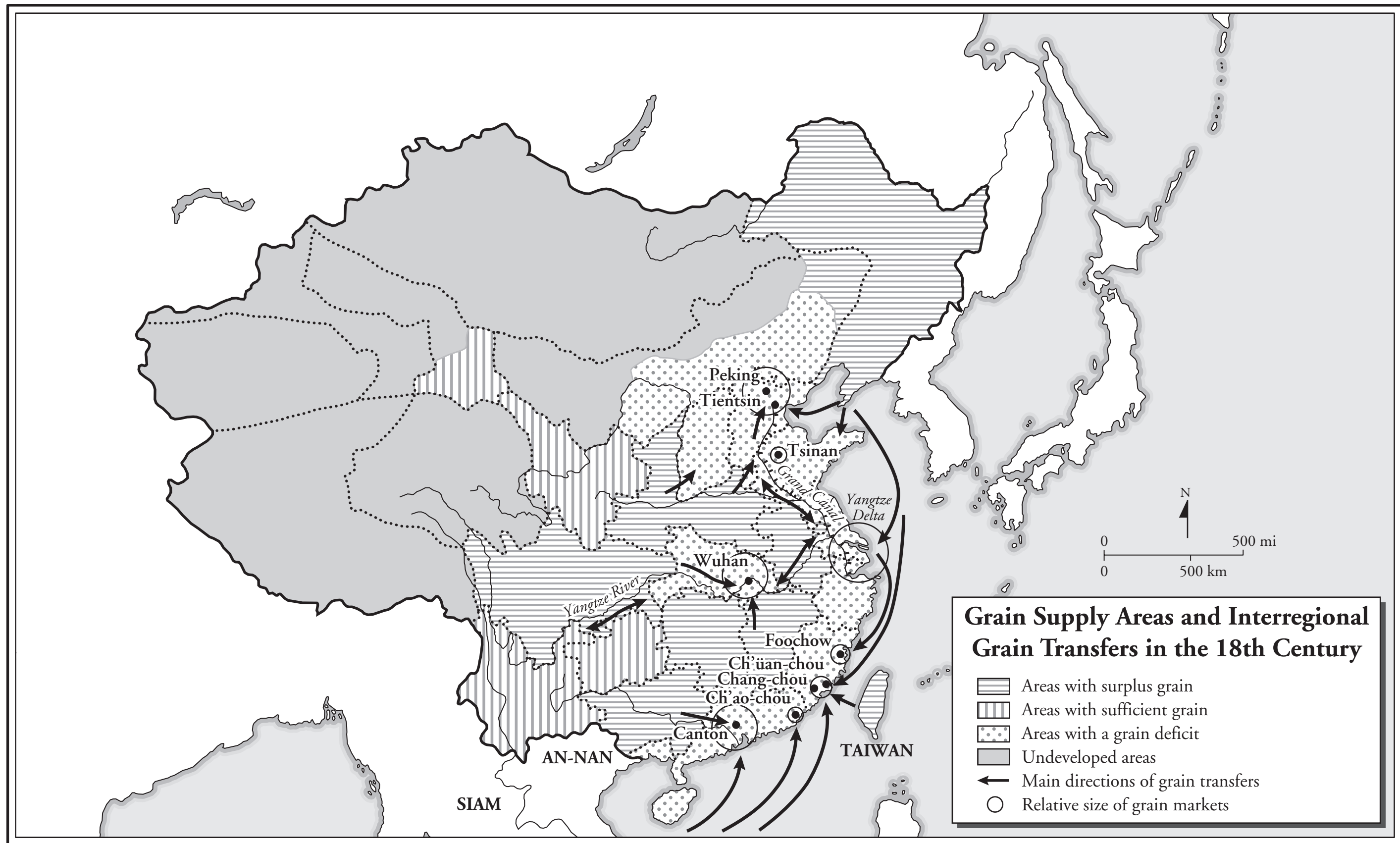

Map 12. *Grain Supply Areas and Interregional Grain Transfers in the Eighteenth century*. Wang Yeh-chien and Huang Kuo-shu, "Shih-pa shih-chi Chung-kuo liang-shih kung-hsü ti k'ao-ch'i (An inquiry of Supply and Demand on Food Grain in Eighteenth Century China)," in *Chin-tai Chung-kuo nung-ts'un ching-chi-shih lun-wen-chi* (*A collection of economic history essays on the modern Chinese rural economy*), (Nankang: Academia Sinica, 1989), p. 257.

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example of a 109-household village in Kiangsu province in 1700 seems to confirm that:[144]

Landownership Amount of land owned	Households	% of land owned	% of households
No land – farming as tenants	86 households	0	78.9
Owning .05–5.5 *mou*	10 households		
Owning 13.7–18.0 *mou*	2 households	3.5	11.9
Owning 43 *mou*	1 household		
Owning 251–3,347 *mou*	10 households	96.5	9.2
TOTAL:	109 households	100%–3250.0 *mou*	100.0

But such claims obfuscate the customary nature of land use and ownership, ignore the special way that the Chinese contracted their rights to land, and misunderstand the Ch'ing command economy's land tax system.

The Ch'ing command economy officials never surveyed and recorded all cultivated land. Only 23 households in this village paid tax for 3,230.5 *mou* and very likely more land had been cleared and farmed by many households in this village. Further, the claim that tax records demonstrate great inequality of landownership in Chinese villages also obfuscates the customary nature of land use and ownership and ignores the special way the Chinese contracted their rights to land.

The great majority of tenants in central, southern, and southeastern China (including Taiwan) negotiated a contract with landowners that gave them the right of quasi-ownership, defined as the "topsoil right." That contract called for the tenant to improve the land (*kung-pen*), pay a fixed annual rent (usually in kind) to the landowner, and retain any surplus. The landowner paid the land tax to the state and claimed ownership of the "bottom soil." Customary law permitted tenants to sell their topsoil rights to other households after receiving permission from the bottom soil landowner.[145] During the eighteenth century a large stratum of bona fide farmer-landowner households that paid no land tax (only an annual rent) formed in the central, east-central, and southeast provinces, including Taiwan. The following contract between a landowner in Taiwan and several tenants depicts this typical contract:

> Village master Kuo owns a parcel of unimproved grassland. . . . Now tenants Huang Kai, Ch'en Yan, and Ch'en Shui intend to lease [rent] the land. They shall build irrigation canals and convert the land into paddy by their own efforts. . . . Before that happens, both

[144] Li Wen-chih, "Lun Ch'ing-tai ch'ien-ch'i ti t'u-to chan-yu kuan-hsi," p. 87.
[145] For a discussion of this contractual relationship, see Kusano Yasushi, "Kyū Chūgoku no tazura kankō: tazura no tenchō to denko no kosakuken," *Tōyōshi kenkyū*, 34, No. 2 (Sept. 1975), pp. 50–76.

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parties will share the crops on the customary 15 percent to the landlord and 85 percent to cultivators, who will divide that share among themselves. Before dividing the crops, the tenants shall not secretly transfer their crops to other villages. If the land has been converted into paddy, then the rent shall be fixed at 8 *shih* of grain per *chia*. The rental crops should be kept clean and dry, and the tenants are responsible for sending these grains to the wharves at Lu-kang. . . . If the tenants do not pay the full rent, or if they become outlaws, engage in gambling, or fail to complete the land improvement within three years, the land shall be returned to village master Kuo. If the tenants decide to return to their native places, they shall accompany their successor to the lord's palace and negotiate a new tenure contract. The tenants are not allowed to transfer the rights of tenancy in secret [dated 1770 and signed by all parties].[146]

Therefore, of those 86 households farming as tenants in the 109-household village mentioned before, many may have been de facto landowners because of their possession of the "topsoil right" under the tenurial contract system. As migrant families reclaimed, developed, and farmed the land of landowners, they often reclaimed or purchased land of their own, so that the number of small- and medium-sized landowners grew. At the same time, large landowning and land tax-paying households divided their land among their male heirs, creating a patchwork of new ownerships of smaller size. These two processes tended to reduce tenancy and helped equalize land ownership.

Chinese land-accumulating processes were a function of the developmental cycle of each household. In principle, nuclear families emerged in great numbers; with each generational change, a few became stem households, with more reverting to nuclear status. When no partition of corporate wealth took place (*fen chia*) between male heirs in the successor generation, two or more families formed multiple households with several generations living together and farming different plots of land. Confucian values motivated families to maximize the combined households' annual stream of income and to expand the family's corporate estate. Some families also spent less than others on rituals and ceremonies, enabling those few to save and accumulate more land. Because of unexpected contingencies or bad choices, not all households were able to enhance their corporate estates, and only a minority of rural households ever achieved great lineage status.

In some areas lineages flourished. A famous case was Hui-chou prefecture of Anhwei province, where lineages seemed to be everywhere, as described by Chao Chi-shih in 1695.

In Hsin-an [a six-county area, Hui-chou], members with the same family name always live as close neighbors; there is not a single family with a different surname living among them. The tradition in this area follows closely that of ancient times. As for the going

146 Quoted from Ch'iu-k'un Ch'en, "Landlordism and the evolution of Chinese agriculture: The case of Taiwan in imperial times, ca. 1680–1900s" (diss., Stanford University, 1987), pp. 49–50.

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and coming, they yield to each other according to rank. Every name has its lineage temple to lead it. Every year in the summer and winter in each village a thousand men gather to perform the sacrifices in honor of Chu Hsi. In a refined way they go through the rituals together.[147]

Because so many Chinese aspired to building lineages in the countryside, city Chinese moved large pools of urban capital into the countryside to purchase land and establish lineage status. Take the example of the Li family, which in the early 1700s operated a wine shop, store, pharmacy, and several other shops in Tsinan city of Shantung province.[148] After the Lis bought land in Tung-fan-liu village of Chang-ch'iu county, about thirty miles east of Tsinan, they leased three hectares to tenants and farmed some twenty-seven hectares by hiring laborers. They planted foodgrains, which earned more income than their urban investments, thereby enabling them to establish their lineage roots. In another case, a wealthy salt merchant named Teng established his lineage in Hsia Ts'un village of Hsin-nan county near the Pearl River estuary of Kwangtung province after founding a market, building canals to that market, and hiring boats to ship goods.[149] The Teng lineage prospered by leasing land to tenants who cultivated foodgrains and special crops.

In other regions of the empire, however, fewer lineages flourished, with their members sacrificing and working hard toward that end. In Lu-lung county of Chihli province, the Wang family, which had barely survived the troubled years of the 1640s, later invested in commerce, arranged intermarriages, and educated their sons to pass the imperial exams to become officials. Through good fortune and skillful management, the Wangs multiplied their branches and by 1750 had even compiled a genealogy, a sure sign of a successful lineage.[150] The Wangs, like so many other families, had pinned their hopes on accumulating land in the way set forth by Chang Ying (1638–1708) of T'ung-ch'eng county in Anhwei province. Chang had served in the high echelons of the Ch'ing bureaucracy. His book, *Heng-chan so-yen* (*Remarks on real estate*) urged readers to buy land and manage it well even if it only yielded a low rate of return, to invest in irrigation, to train heirs to manage the land, and to educate capable sons to enable them to become officials.[151]

147 Harriet T. Zurndorfer, *Change and continuity in Chinese local history* (Leiden, 1989), p. 139.

148 Jing Su and Luo Lun, *Landlord and labor in late imperial China: Case studies from Shandong*, trans. Endymion Wilkinson (Cambridge, Mass., 1978), pp. 106 and 113.

149 Rubie S. Watson, "The creation of a Chinese lineage: The Teng of Ha Tsuen, 1669–1751," *Modern Asian Studies*, 15, No. 4 (1981), pp. 751–81.

150 Susan Wright Naquin, "Two descent groups in north China: The Wangs of Yung-p'ing prefecture, 1500–1800," in Patricia Buckley Ebrey and James L. Watson, eds., *Kinship organization in late imperial China, 1000–1940* (Berkeley, 1986), pp. 210–44.

151 Hillary J. Beattie, *Land and lineage in China: A study of T'ung-ch'eng County, Anhwei, in the Ming and Ch'ing Dynasties* (Cambridge, 1979), pp. 2–5.

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When Chinese families operated as a collectivity, their head negotiated with the heads of other families to exchange physical and human resources to earn income in cash or kind. These oral or written agreements covered a wide range of resource sharing and exchange.[152] Such contracts also permitted families to repurchase an asset sold or mortgaged to another family, for enormous importance was attached to recovering former estate wealth. Using their assets, along with borrowed capital, families established and operated proprietorships, partnerships, and business groups. Individual and family property rights closely melded, so that private property became indistinguishable from household estates. Customary law helped to define, clarify, and protect property rights, but such rights were typically family and lineage property rights, not individual private property rights.

When a family violated its contractual agreement with another party, the ensuing disputes sometimes turned violent. These contractual disputes involved tenants' not paying rent on time, farming land without informing the landowner, illegally using landowners' assets for tenants' benefit, and trying to redeem land previously used as collateral to obtain a loan. Such violations of tenant-landowner contracts often arose because tenants were unable to acquire property rights of their own. In every community were individuals who tried to mediate disputes, but only local officials could resolve the more serious cases by relying on the Ch'ing code.[153]

ECONOMIC CROPS AND HANDICRAFT INDUSTRIES

Cotton yarn and cloth

By the late Ming cotton had "spread through the Empire . . . [and was] used a hundred times more than silk or hemp."[154] In almost every province, family farms not only planted cotton but organized cotton spinning, weaving, calendering, and dyeing for the marketplace. A region's capability to produce cheap, high-quality cotton cloth depended not only on favorable resource endowments but on markets that supplied and demanded cotton yarn and cloth handicraft production.

By 1752 the most advanced cotton production and distribution area of the empire, situated around Shanghai and Soochow cities, employed tens

152 Fu-mei Chang Chen and Ramon H. Myers, "Customary law and the economic growth of China during the Ch'ing period," *Ch'ing-shih wen-t'i*, 3, No. 5 (Nov. 1976), pp. 1–37; also 3, No. 10 (Nov. 1978), pp. 4–27.

153 Jing Junjian, "Legislation related to the civil economy in the Qing Dynasty," in Kathryn Bernhardt and Philip C. C. Huang, eds., *Civil law in Qing and republican China* (Stanford, 1994), pp. 42–84.

154 Quoted in Craig Dietrich, "Cotton culture and manufacture in early Ch'ing China," in W. E. Willmott, ed., *Economic organization in Chinese society* (Stanford, 1972), p. 110.

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of thousands of households linked by factor and product markets. A Kiangnan observer described this industry as follows:

Of the five counties making up Ch'ang-chou prefecture, only Wu-hsi county does not grow cotton. But the benefit from cotton cloth production is particularly visible in my county and far surpasses the other [four] counties. The farmers can consume the rice they have harvested after the winter and then, after paying their rent, they hull the remaining rice and store it in granaries. They will use their rice to reclaim clothing and other articles they pawned earlier for cash. They spin cloth during the spring months to exchange for rice, because now their rice stocks have been depleted. By late spring, the farmers return to their fields to plant rice, but first they must pawn their winter cloth and other items to buy back from the pawnshop the rice that had been stored earlier. As the common saying goes, one plants the field to eat rice. By the autumn months, as soon as the rain falls, one hears nothing but the sound of looms humming throughout the villages. This cloth will be sold to buy rice. In my district, even when the rice harvest is poor, the people do not suffer any great hardship so long as cotton production thrives elsewhere.[155]

Many households in Kiangnan, especially in the towns, purchased raw cotton from the local cotton market, turned it into cloth, and sold it to the cloth market to make a living. Kiangnan's exports of cotton cloth to other provinces enabled the region to prosper.[156]

The villages of southern Kiangsu also specialized in producing socks, shirtings, and footwear. Merchants from other provinces visited southern Kiangsu to buy these products and ship them to their native areas for sale. Many of them hired security guards to escort their shipments and deliver them to their stores in home provinces, a practice called "setting up one's store" (*tso-chuang*). On a smaller scale and in much the same way, households in other areas sold their cotton cloth surplus to merchants, who distributed it to neighboring counties and provinces.

To improve cloth production, handicraft specialists in cities such as Soochow dyed and calendered cloth to produce high-quality nankeen, a finished cloth sold throughout China and Southeast Asia. In 1730 Chekiang's governor-general, Li Wei, and Kiangsu's governor, Ying Chi-shan, described in their reports to the emperor how the Soochow cotton cloth processing market worked:

Soochow is an important metropolis where merchants and peddlers from all over the country congregate. Hundreds of commodities are gathered here. Among them one finds the green-blue cloth of various provinces. After cotton cloth has been acquired and dyed,

[155] Ch'uan Han-sheng, "Ya-p'ien chan-cheng ch'ien Kiang-su ti mien-fang-chih-yeh," in Ch'uan Han-sheng, *Chung-kuo ching-chi shih lun-ts'ung* (Hong Kong, 1972), Vol. 2, p. 629.

[156] Li Po-chung, "Ming-Ch'ing Chiangnan yü wai-ti ching-chi lien-hsi ti chia-chiang chi ch'i tui Chiangnan ching-chi fa-chan ti ying-hsiang," *Chung-kuo ching-chi shih yen-chiu*, 2 (1986), pp. 117–34.

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a large stone must be used to press it bright and glossy. There are certain people called *pao-t'ou* who operate workshops that have large, water-chestnut–shaped stones, wooden rollers, and other tools. They also provide housing to their workers. The *pao-t'ou* advance firewood, rice, and copper cash to their workers to calender the cloth of cloth store merchants. These merchants pay the *pao-t'ou* 1.13 *fen* for calendering each bolt of cloth, who in turn pay wages directly to their workers. Each month the workers must pay the *pao-t'ou* 36 *fen* for their room and board plus the rent for the use of facilities. These workers must be young, able-bodied, strong, and vigorous, or else they cannot handle the job. Most of them come from southern and northern Kiangsu. They develop their own network to recruit new workers for calendering. The majority of them are single, and among them many are riffraff. . . . In former times, such workshops, called *fang*, employed 7,000 to 8,000 workmen. . . . Now in the area outside the Ch'ang gate in Soochow the number of *pao-t'ou* totals 340 or more, and the number of calendering workshops is more than 450. Each *fang* employs several tens of workers. The total number of calendering stones exceeds ten thousand.[157]

The market structure for dyeing and calendering cotton cloth depended on two organizational forms. In the first, brokers or merchants who owned stocks of cloth and had large funds negotiated the price for dyeing and calendering and advanced cloth and funds to the dyeing and calendering establishments' owner-managers. The brokers or merchants then sold the finished product to their buyers in other markets. In the second, dyeing and calendering establishment owners negotiated a price with the merchant or broker, supervised the dyeing and calendering of cloth, and delivered the finished product to the merchant or broker. In Soochow city alone, some 340 calender owner-operators negotiated with as many merchants and brokers to buy their dyed and calendered cloth; we can thus assume that competitive market forces very likely determined the price of the finished nankeen.

Disputes sometimes erupted between the handicraft operators and their brokers or merchant buyers or between dyeing and calendering workers and their *pao-t'ou* owner-managers over wages. Calendering workers were also known to riot when rice prices rose and their wages failed to maintain their living standards.

Cotton cloth products constituted the second important commodity (after foodgrains) to circulate in the Ch'ing market economy. Four market relationships prevailed: (1) Farmers, through brokers, sold their raw cotton in local markets to urban or village spinners and weavers, who, through brokers (2) sold their yarn or cloth in cotton cloth markets to brokers and merchants; (3) handicraft producers of special cotton cloth products, after purchasing the woven cloth, manufactured special products for sale to brokers and merchants; and (4) further processing to produce refined cloth that had been dyed,

[157] Yokoyama Suguru, *Chūgoku kindaika no keizai kōzō* (Tokyo, 1972), p. 65.

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calendered, and sold to brokers and merchants. In these four markets, local officials regulated the supply side of the marketplace by issuing brokerage licenses, but many brokers and merchants operated without these licenses. In the market for dyeing and calendering cloth, officials tried to mediate the price but could not because the large number of suppliers and buyers on both sides of these markets determined price equilibrium. In the villages and small market towns throughout the empire, the first two market structures predominated, whereas in the provincial and market cities the latter two markets existed. In the customary economy, meanwhile, households simply spun and wove cotton products for their immediate use or to exchange for other products locally produced.

Sugarcane and sugar processing

Sugar also circulated in the marketplace. Farmers planted sugarcane in Kiangsi and Fukien, and later in Kwangtung and Taiwan.[158] They placed cane cuttings in the soil during spring and harvested the cane in the fall. In bamboo sheds, farmers and tenants used their own or rented stone presses to crush the cane; they then extracted the juice, boiled it, and filtered the liquid into earthenware jars to solidify, to be refined later into different grades of sugar. Tens of thousands of family farms cultivated and processed cane into sugar this way.

Another mode of sugar production involved a principal contracting with agents to supply sugar.[159] Large landowners built sugar mills and contracted with households to use their land, equipment, and so forth for a fee in kind, namely, sugar. Contracts from the 1750s illustrate wealthy households' leasing oxen and land to households for four or five years in exchange for certain amounts of processed sugar. Agents holding these leases could transfer their lease rights to other parties after obtaining the landowner's agreement. When a lease ran out, the household returned the land and equipment to the property owner. Some of these contracts gave them the right to sell their processed sugar to the market after they had paid their fee. Another sugar contract involved a group of farmers pooling their savings to rent a sugar mill, process their sugarcane, and retain the processed sugar for private sale. A mid-eighteenth century contract describes a group of individuals'

[158] Nicholas K. Menzies, "Forestry," in *Agro-industries and forestry; Agro-industries: Sugarcane technology*, ed. Christian Daniels, part 3 of *Biology and biological technology*, Vol. 6 of *Science and civilisation in China*, ed. Joseph Needham (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 105–23.

[159] Fu-mei Chen and Ramon H. Myers, "Some distinctive features of commodity markets in late imperial China: Three case studies," in Institute of Economics, Academia Sinica, *The second conference on modern Chinese economic history* (Taipei, 1989), Vol. 2, pp. 661–70.

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agreeing to build a sugar mill to process the sugarcane of neighboring farmers.[160]

Private brokers and agents of sugar guilds and private merchants went to the sugarcane counties to buy refined sugar for sale in markets in towns and large cities. Sugar guilds also shipped their sugar to markets in other provinces or to the Pacific-Asian market. Tens of thousands of rural households, leasing to other households and hiring workers, produced sugarcane and sugar and negotiated with thousands of brokers and merchants, whose competitive bidding determined the final price of sugar. County sugar prices varied according to transport costs and profit margins. Factor and product markets for sugar were connected by wealthy households and agents contracting to lease land to households, hire workers, borrow capital, grow sugarcane, and produce and sell refined sugar to brokers and merchants.

Sericulture and silk manufacturing

Over many centuries the Chinese developed and improved the art of sericulture and manufacturing silk cloth, and handbooks popularized the techniques of growing mulberry trees, raising silkworms, and producing silk. The following scene, described by the English traveler Robert Fortune before the Taiping wars (1850–65), illustrates the popular use of silk in Chekiang province's Hangchow city during the eighteenth century. "The people of Hang-chow dress gaily, and are remarkable among the Chinese for their dandyism. All except the lowest laborers and coolies strutted about in dresses composed of silk, satin, and crepe. . . . The native of Hang-chow, both rich and poor, were never contented unless gaily dressed in silks and satins."[161] The absence of sumptuary laws and the prosperity enjoyed by eighteenth-century urban elites and some ordinary people enabled them to adopt the latest silk fashions.

Sericulture and silk handicraft supported a huge workforce in large villages, towns, and cities, and generated a large income flow to household-owned establishments, partnerships, and guilds in every province. The main sericulture centers clustered around Lake T'ai and Hangchow and Soochow cities in Chekiang and Kiangsu, around Chengtu and Chungking cities, in Szechwan, around Shun-te and Canton cities in Kwangtung, and in parts of Shantung.

[160] See Chen and Myers, "Some distinctive features of commodity markets," pp. 665–8 for examples of these contracts. Four similar organizational forms of sugar production in Taiwan are described in Mazumdar, *Sugar and society in China*, pp. 326–9.

[161] Quoted in E-tu Zen Sun, "Sericulture and silk textile production in Ch'ing China," in W. E. Willmott, ed., *Economic organization in Chinese society* (Stanford, 1972), p. 80.

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Producing mulberry leaves, raising silk cocoons and worms, spinning skeins of raw silk, and weaving different silk products were labor-intensive and relied heavily on female labor. The production cycle began with harvesting mulberry leaves and selling them to households that raised silkworms to produce cocoons. Silkworm growers sold their cocoons to spinners, who in turn sold their yarn to weavers of silk cloth products. In Huchou (in Kiangnan) silk farms or estates integrated many of these stages to produce raw silk, which was then shipped by the Grand Canal to markets in the north where silk weavers wove it into cloth.

In the Nan-hsün county of Chekiang, six types of intermediaries integrated the diverse production and marketing functions: (1) local brokers who supplied merchants from Kwangtung and Shanghai with raw silk or silk products; (2) special brokers who visited family farms to buy raw silk or woven cloth; (3) agents who purchased silk fibers and supervised the production of warp-silk yarns; (4) agents who managed small establishments specializing in buying raw silk from farmers, weaving silk cloth, and selling to large firms; (5) merchants who sold the output of farmers on a commission basis; and (6) brokers who purchased silk skeins for the imperial silkworks at Nanking.[162] These same functions were replicated in other silk-producing centers of the empire.

During the eighteenth century, the steady rise of prices for raw silk reflected the strong demand for silk products, now also propelled by foreign demand. Between 1702 and 1799 the price of 50 kilograms of raw silk, based on silk export prices, doubled, growing at an annual rate of 0.7 percent a year.[163] From 1723 to 1792 the quantity of raw silk exported from Canton on English ships increased from 5 metric tons to 163 metric tons, making Canton the main city-port exporting silk. In nearby counties such as Shun-te silk production also flourished because of strong export demand.

Chinese silk fabrics – silk cloth, satin, gauze, thin gauze, damask, and brocade – were produced by two types of silk weavers. The first type, the self-employed weavers, purchased raw silk and wove it into fabrics to sell in the cloth market. The second type was groups of weavers receiving wages and raw materials from merchants on a putting-out basis, who then sold the finished silk fabric to other markets. This plexus market structure flourished in the Lake T'ai region, where agents called *chi-fang* hired workers on a contract basis and supplied different silk products at a price determined by the market or broker. The following account describes how Soochow *chi-fang* contracted with different kinds of weavers to produce diverse silk products:

[162] Ibid., p. 89. [163] Ibid., p. 92.

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> The inhabitants of the eastern section of Soochow city are all textile workers. . . . Each weaver has a special skill, and each has a regular employer who pays him a daily wage. If anything should happen to the regular weaver, the employer will get a worker who is without regular employment to take his place; this is known as "calling a substitute." The weavers without regular employers go to the bridges at dawn each day to await the calls. Satin weavers stand on Flower Bridge, damask weavers on Kuang-hua Temple Bridge, and spinners who make silk yarn at Lin-hsi Ward. They congregate by the score and by the hundred, scanning around expectantly with outstretched necks, resembling groups of famine refugees. They will stay until after the breakfast hour. If work should be curtailed at the silk textile establishments, these workers would be without a living.[164]

Whether these weavers employed by *chi-fang* were organized and funded by silk merchants or by self-employed *chi-fang* with capital of their own is not clear. Likely both cellular and plexus markets coexisted. The scale of this silk handicraft industry was enormous. If harvests failed or demand suddenly collapsed, tens of thousands of persons were at risk of unemployment and income loss.

The government silk factories in Nanking city employed weavers in two ways: special households, having looms registered with state authorities, supplied products by contract; independent weaving establishments supplied silk products for lump-sum payments. The state-managed silk factories typically produced elaborate, high-cost fabrics, whereas the privately owned and managed establishments manufactured silk products for mass consumption. By the 1730s and 1740s these state factories were in decline because their weavers, frustrated by low wages and long work hours, had gone to work in the market economy.[165]

Tea

According to Wu Ch'eng-ming's estimate of the key commodities and their values that constituted the national market, tea ranked fourth. The tea plant grows best in loamy, well-drained, acidic soil where there is abundant rainfall (more than forty inches a year).[166] Tea leaves contain certain chemical compounds that, when fermented, yield the famous red, black, and green teas of China. Family farms cultivated tea in many parts of China, especially the southeast provinces. Favorable tea-planting conditions also obtained in the

[164] Quoted in Sun, "Sericulture and silk textile production in Ch'ing China," p. 96. See also Paolo Santangelo, "Urban society in late imperial Suzhou," in *Cities of Jiangnan in late imperial China*, ed. Linda Cooke Johnson (New York, 1993), pp. 96–8.

[165] Fan Chin-min, "Ch'ing-tai ch'ien-ch'i Chiangnan chih-tsao ti chi-ke wen-t'i," *Chung-kuo ching-chi shih yen-chiu*, 1 (1989), pp. 78–90.

[166] Robert Gardella, *Harvesting mountains: Fujian and the China tea trade, 1757–1937* (Berkeley, 1994), ch. 1.

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Wu-i mountain region of the borders of Kiangsi, Chekiang, and northwestern Fukien province, which became one of the flourishing tea-growing areas in the eighteenth century.

Migrants from different parts of Kwangtung, Fukien, and Chekiang provinces settled in the Wu-i region and, using the slash-and-burn method, carved out small farms to grow foodgrains and tea shrubs. After harvesting and firing their tea leaves, they sold them to merchants and brokers for shipment to distant tea markets. The following commentary, written in 1809, describes how tea produced in Ch'ung-an county had been marketed for many decades.

> Tea is the greatest in amount of local products [sold from the Ch'ung-an county]. . . . The traveling merchants bringing wealth arrive continuously, but people [here] do not get wealthy, as those who labor in the many shops are from elsewhere. Ch'ung-an merely obtains the subsoil rent. . . . Half the source of profits here is from tea. Hsing-chou market is the most prosperous. After early spring the tea baskets are filled in the mountains and carried by poles on the roads. Most of the petty itinerant traders are from T'ing-chou, Hsing-ch'uan, and Kiangsi, and they sell to Soochow, Amoy, and Canton.[167]

After the 1750s trade between the Wu-i region and Canton greatly increased because foreign merchants, eager to buy tea, congregated in Canton.

A few Chinese merchants contracted with temples to plant tea, which the merchants packed and shipped to Canton and other provincial markets. The largest supply of Wu-i tea, however, came from the tens of thousands of farmers and tenants living in the villages and small towns of this large, hilly region. As was the case with foodgrains, raw and finished cotton, and silk products, hundreds of thousand of households specialized in producing tea. As in other tea-growing regions, the Wu-i region tea producers operated in a cellular market that depended on brokers and merchants.[168]

HYBRID ECONOMIC ORGANIZATIONS: SALT PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION

Salt was the third most important marketed commodity. In 1753 the salt monopoly generated 8.8 million taels of tax, accounting for about 12 percent of all imperial tax revenue.[169] Unlike grains and cotton, the state regulated the production and distribution of salt through its salt monopoly. Imperial decrees, however, did not prevent individuals from illegally producing and

[167] Quoted from Gardella, *Harvesting mountains*, p. 40.

[168] For a good discussion of broker and merchant transactions and their costs in the tea export trade, see Kuo-tung Ch'en, "Transaction practices in China's export tea trade, 1760–1833," Vol. 2, pp. 745–70.

[169] Wang, *Land taxation in imperial China*, p. 72.

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selling salt. The Ch'ing state's salt monopoly is a good example of a hybrid organization combining public and private property rights to produce a good.[170]

The Ch'ing state, using the eleven salt-producing regions created by officials in the Ming period, hoped by improving on Ming methods to capture the greatest amount of salt tax and reduce salt smuggling.[171] Salt factories covered huge areas in each region. In the largest, the Liang-huai region, thirty salt-producing factories operated with around 400,000 workers. A factory consisted of a large area of salt ponds and marshes, from which workers collected brine, used solar evaporation to produce salt, and packed and stored it for shipment to markets.

Ch'ing officials sold monopoly rights for salt production and sales to a designated number of merchants in each salt-producing region. To operate their factories, those merchants contracted with agents, called *tsao-hu*, to hire workers to produce, package, and ship salt to merchants in retail markets. Ch'ing officials then assigned each region a salt quota (*kang*) and a salt tax.

The designated salt merchants of each region were registered (*kang-ts'e*), so that officials could monitor their salt production, shipments, and tax payments. Each merchant purchased from the Ministry of Revenue a certificate (*yin*) designating the amount of salt that could be produced, its price (a proxy for the merchant's wholesale price), and the tax. Each certificate, or *ken-wo* (literally, a "rooted nest"), representing their contract, or *pao*, stipulated the merchant's monopoly right to produce and ship salt in exchange for paying the salt tax. When new merchants wanted to enter the salt monopoly, they had to purchase another merchant's *ken-wo*, usually at a higher price because the price and amount of salt per *yin* (salt tax) certificate had steadily increased. From 1652 to 1800 the number of *yin* certificates rose from 3.7 million to 6.5 million, and the salt tax associated with those quotas rose from 2.1 million to 5.6 million taels.[172] Each salt merchant, therefore, had to have sufficient capital to pay the state for his monopoly right. Moreover, he also had to have enough capital to contract with the *tsao-hu* and their workers to

[170] Another hybrid-type organization was the Imperial Household Department, which contracted with private organizations to manage various resources and their incomes for the throne and the imperial family. For a good study of the Imperial Household Department, see Preston M. Torbert, *The Ch'ing imperial household department: A study of its organization and principal functions, 1662–1796* (Cambridge, Mass., 1977).

[171] This section is based on the writings of Thomas A. Metzger, "The organizational capabilities of the Ch'ing state in the field of commerce: The Liang-huai salt monopoly, 1740–1846," in *Economic organization in Chinese society*, ed. W. E. Wilmott (Stanford, 1972), pp. 9–46; Ts'ui-jung Liu, "Features of imperfect competition of the Ming-Ch'ing salt market," in Yung-san Lee and Ts'ui-jung Liu, eds., *China's market economy in transition* (Taipei, 1990), pp. 259–327; Ping-ti Ho, "The salt merchants of Yang-chou: A study of commercial capitalism in eighteenth-century China," *HJAS*, 17 (1954), pp. 130–68.

[172] Ts'ui-jung Liu, "Features of imperfect competition," p. 293.

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manufacture and package the salt. Merchants sold their salt to other merchants and brokers, who in turn sold it in retail markets.

A challenge for the state was preventing the illegal production and sale of salt from expanding and undermining its salt monopoly and tax revenues. Although the punishment for salt smugglers was harsh – execution – it did little to deter salt smuggling. New estimates of official salt as a percentage of the total salt supply range between 34 and 52 percent, which suggests that illegal salt circulating in the market provided more than half of the salt being consumed.[173]

By coopting merchants to operate a monopoly, the state earned a stable, lucrative revenue. Severely regulated to prohibit illegal salt production and smuggling, salt merchants, producers, workers, and brokers enjoyed the benefits of both a monopoly and the market economy. Merchants who prudently managed their salt trade made large fortunes. Ping-ti Ho's description of the Yangchow salt merchants cites many examples of merchants' using their earnings to enjoy a lavish lifestyle, expand their lineage estates, educate their sons for official careers, and support other business activities.[174]

THE MONEY SUPPLY AND FINANCIAL ORGANIZATIONS

From the tenth to the seventeenth century, the growing supply of bronze (or copper) coins and silver specie facilitated the growth of China's market economy. To be sure, state authorities tried to control the money supply, and, as Richard von Glahn has stated, "Classical Chinese monetary analysis regarded money as a creature of the state."[175] By the late sixteenth century, the import of large quantities of silver from abroad, as well as copper, made it impossible for officials to guarantee a constant exchange rate between a weight of silver and copper coins. The expanding market economy required the increased use of money as a convenient means of payment, for transactions, and a store of value.[176]

In the first two hundred years of Ch'ing rule, there was an unprecedented increase and a radical change in the money supply. What began as a bimetal-

[173] Ibid., p. 303.

[174] Ho, "The salt merchants of Yang-chou," pp. 146–68. See also Antonia Finane, "Yangzhou: A central place in the Qing area," in Linda Cooke Johnson. ed., *Cities of Jiangnan in late imperial China* (New York, 1993), pp. 129–31. For an account of the role of Shansi merchants in Yang-chou and in the salt monopoly, see Saeki Tomi, "Shindai ni okeru Sansei shōnin," *Shirin*, 60, No. 1 (Jan. 1977), pp. 1–14.

[175] Von Glahn, *Fountain of fortune*, p. 246.

[176] This section depends heavily on the research and writings of Wang Yeh-chien, *Chung-kuo chin-tai huo-pi yü yin-hang ti yen-chin*, and Yeh-chien Wang, "The evolution of the Chinese monetary system, 1644–1850," in Chi-ming Hou and Tzong-shian Yu, eds., *Modern Chinese economic history* (Taipei, 1979), pp. 425–52.

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lic regime of silver and copper cash gradually became a troika involving a third monetary component – credit or paper money. Moreover, as a result of increased foreign trade, a significant quantity of silver coins, minted mainly in Spanish-ruled Mexico, began circulating in China.

Around 1700 the money supply consisted primarily of silver, circulating as bullion or ingots, and copper cash. The government did not mint silver coins, nor did it control their circulation except in the early 1800s, when the throne tried to prohibit silver exports. In the copper cash sector, the state controlled coinage by assigning annual quotas to the mints in the capital and at provincial administrative centers. The government decreed that in principle one *k'u-p'ing*, or treasury tael of silver, was to be exchanged for one thousand copper cash.

In reality, the exchange rate fluctuated from one period to another and from one place to another because of the quality of the copper coins and because the amount of silver in circulation depended on domestic mining production, the rate and quantity of import and export change, nonmonetary uses for silver, and hoarding. China did not have rich silver mines, so its domestic production was small. The most important factor determining the silver supply was its import and export. Before 1800 China's foreign trade produced a flow of silver into the country (a favorable trade balance). People also used silver for artistic and manufactured products, and stored silver for private reserves. Except for sudden change in the demand and supply for silver (as when brokers and merchants exported silver for opium and other products in the 1820s to 1940s), the share of silver not in circulation tended to be rather stable.

As for the copper cash sector, the state minted copper coins and monitored copper production and use. After 1700, however, people began melting more copper cash and using the metal to produce copper ornaments and utensils.[177] In 1715, when Japan's Tokugawa government prohibited the export of copper, much of which had gone to China, rising demand for copper caused the market exchange rate of copper cash to silver to rise above the official exchange rate. The state tried to alleviate the growing copper cash shortage by instructing government-licensed money exchanges to exchange their copper cash for less silver. Provincial officials possessing large stocks of copper cash, usually from selling grain stores to the public, were urged to spend them as quickly as possible.[178] Officials pressed pawnshops to exchange stocks

[177] See Saeki Tomi, "Shindai Yōseichō ni okeru tsuka mondai," *Tōyōshi kenkyū*, 18, No. 3 (Dec. 1959), pp. 142–211.

[178] Yen Chung-p'ing, *Ch'ing-tai Yün-nan t'ung-cheng k'ao* (Peking, 1957), p. 8; E-tu Zen Sun, "The finance ministry (Hubu) and its relationship to the private economy in Qing times," in Jane Kate Leonard and John R. Watt, eds., *To achieve security and wealth: The Qing imperial state and the economy, 1644–1911* (Ithaca, 1992), pp. 9–20.

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of copper cash for silver. These measures only marginally alleviated the copper cash shortage.

Government officials adopted still another approach to mine more copper. In the 1730s, the Yunnan governor, Chang Yung-sui, began advancing silver to copper mine owners to induce them to hire workers to extract copper and transport it to the provincial mint. He supervised the construction of a canal to ship the copper ore from Tung-ch'ang to the mint in northern Yunnan. The Yung-cheng emperor accepted the Ministry of Revenue's recommendation not to tax copper mines and adopted Governor Chang's method of advancing state funds to mine owners to induce them to supply more copper for the state mints.[179] By the 1750s Yunnan province had about 140 mines, with their copper output distributed as follows: about 10–20 percent paid the state copper tax; another 10 percent sold to the free market; and the final 70–80 percent went to the state to pay for the initial silver advanced to mine owners. For a few decades, this contractual arrangement increased copper output, but soon mine owners found that their silver advances could not cover their costs because mining copper had become more expensive. By the 1780s miners and mine owners were abandoning copper mining.

Another problem plaguing the Ch'ing bimetallic monetary system was that the two forms of money were never standardized. Silver circulated by weight, but its value was determined by its fineness, which required a skilled moneychanger to evaluate. Moreover, no standard weight for the *liang*, or tael weight unit, existed, which meant that hundreds of different silver weight standards and fineness measures were used in markets throughout the empire.

Similar difficulties existed for copper cash. The copper content and weight of government-cast copper, counterfeit copper, and foreign copper all differed greatly. Different kinds of copper cash and silver taels had varying exchange rates, so that any sudden shifts created uncertainty. Moreover, these different metals could not be easily or cheaply shipped over long distances to settle large monetary transactions.

Therefore, the Ch'ing monetary system had serious problems from the beginning, particularly when the K'ang-hsi emperor imposed a ban on trade along the southern provinces' coast that cut off the inflow of silver, depressed prices, and reduced income and employment in those regions. Even after the economy revived and expanded, the monetary system encountered new difficulties accommodating large transactions that had to be settled across regions. Merchants involved in foreign trade imported some 500 million Mexican silver dollars between 1700 and 1830, and the government

[179] See Hans Ulrich Vogel, "Chinese central monetary policy, 1644–1800," *Late Imperial China*, 8, No. 2 (Dec. 1987), pp. 13–14.

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promoted the increased circulation of copper coins, which reached a peak of almost four million strings of copper cash annually in the 1750s and 1760s.[180] These developments helped people conduct their transactions in money, but there was still a strong need to find money substitutes for silver and copper cash.

Substitution was achieved by the expansion of credit instruments. Pawnshops, money shops, and a few native banks that had extended credit in previous centuries became widespread during the late eighteenth century. They were responsible for developing four credit instruments within the Ch'ing market economy: silver or cash notes, native bank orders, drafts, and a transfer account system. Native banks, money shops, and pawnshops began issuing silver notes and copper cash notes to replace silver ingots and copper cash. The native bank order, issued on behalf of their customers to buy goods or services, served as a promissory note, payable by the customer within ten days. Drafts or bills of exchange had appeared centuries before, but not until the eighteenth century, when Shansi banks became active in many provinces, did remittance payments become a thriving business. The most advanced type of credit instrument at that time was the transfer account system developed by Ningpo city banks in which a local bank permitted one customer to transfer money to another customer's account without using checks.[181]

Of these four types of credit instruments, silver and cash notes served as paper currency and offered business people the greatest advantages. At first, banks or shops issued these paper notes as receipts when their customers deposited silver or cash. The customer could withdraw those sums at any time by presenting the receipt. These receipts began circulating in the market because they facilitated business transactions better than the hard metallic currencies of silver or copper cash. Local banks, realizing that they need keep only a fraction of their deposits to meet their customers' withdrawal demands, lent some of their deposits to earn interest. Some local banks even established branches that issued notes to circulate because they realized that all their notes were not likely to be redeemed at the same time. Through trial and error the merchants developed small banks, just as bankers in European cities had been doing since the fifteenth century.

A late Ch'ing scholar recalled how, in the latter half of the eighteenth century, "several silver shops in the commercial centers of both the south and the north issued various kinds of silver notes and cash notes. Those issued in the south were acceptable in the north, and those issued in the north were

[180] Wang Yeh-chien, *Chung-kuo chin-tai huo-pi*, p. 24; also Ulrich Vogel, p. 10.
[181] Wang Yeh-chien, *Chung-kuo chin-tai huo-pi*, pp. 15–16.

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acceptable in the south."[182] In 1821 a local magistrate in Shanghai posted a public notice announcing that large markets for beans, wheat, cotton, and cloth required silver notes as the medium of exchange. In 1853 Fukien's governor-general, Wang I-te, reported that merchants and people had been using notes denominated in silver or copper cash for a long time.

In the final decades of the eighteenth century Spanish dollars gradually replaced silver bullion or ingots and even the tael as a unit of account. Spanish dollars, first introduced into China through trade as early as the sixteenth century, were either melted into silver bullion or circulated by weight, but they also served as a unit of money on their own merit. Standard in form, weight, and fineness, they constituted a simple, convenient currency that could facilitate trade over a large area. First used as money in Canton in the 1690s, Spanish dollars gradually spread into Fukien, Chekiang, and Kiangsu. By the 1850s silver dollars were widely used in the middle Yangtze valley and the upper reaches of the Hsi River. This new monetary form, one Soochow scholar observed, even served as a unit of value for the pricing of a wide range of commodities. In the second half of the eighteenth century and thereafter during the Ch'ing period, Spanish dollars competed with the *k'u-p'ing* tael, and both enhanced the expansion of trade.

TRANSACTION COSTS, TRANSFORMATION COSTS, AND EXTERNALITIES

As more people transacted with one another in the marketplace, public, hybrid, and private economic organizations gradually reduced their transaction and transformation costs and minimized the frequency and severity of harmful externalities, thus sustaining the growth of the eighteenth-century market, command, and customary economies. Our attention here focuses on the costs and externalities as related to the market economy.

Transaction costs cover organizations' expenditures to access and use the market economy. They include costs for acquiring information, transacting and enforcing contracts, monitoring activities of those employed in contractual relationships, and controlling the quality of goods and services produced for the market. If transaction costs can be reduced, organizational productivity and returns to factors rise. Transformation costs, in contrast, are incurred by organizations to transform input resources into higher-value outputs.

Externalities reduce (beneficial) or increase (harmful) the costs for organizations involved in production and exchange.[183] Examples of harmful exter-

[182] Chung-kuo jen-min yin-hang, *Chung-kuo chin-tai huo-pi shih tzu-liao* (Peking, 1964), pp. 128 and 131.
[183] For a definition of externalities, see David W. Pearce, ed., *The dictionary of modern economics*, rev. ed. (Cambridge, Mass., 1984), pp. 148–9.

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nalities are the many forms of environmental pollution; beneficial externalities accrue from improved transportation or communication, a warming climate, the decline of social violence, and so forth.

After the 1680s, the Ch'ing economy was able, by reducing transaction and transformation costs, to support a growing population of high density at living standards that – if they did not improve – at least did not decline significantly compared with the recent past. The Ch'ing state lowered the costs for people to farm land, lowered taxes, abolished the corvée, eliminated the servile status of tenants and bondservants, and ensured a stable foodgrain supply at affordable prices. Ordinary people responded to such official policies by migrating to thinly populated areas and building new communities, and by working in the crowded fertile, alluvial lands of the old core areas of the Ming empire.

When the imperial court introduced its new information-collecting system in the early 1700s, the emperor and high officials were able to acquire detailed information about local agricultural conditions,[184] including foodgrain prices and harvest conditions. Such information enabled officials above the prefectural and county levels to stabilize foodgrain prices and alleviate food shortages, thus saving lives, preventing the spread of riots, and winning the people's confidence.

As in the Ming, Ch'ing merchants formed guilds (*hui-kuan*) in which men of the same economic activity formed a collective body and elected a council of representatives and a leader. State officials registered guilds and issued them market licenses. The Ch'ing guilds were located both near the sources of supply and in densely populated centers to meet market demand. By the beginning of the Yung-cheng reign, "merchant associations tended to bring under their wings all the people in a single trade, regardless of their origins."[185] Guilds reduced transaction costs by providing members with information on how to interact with local people, how to use local weights and measures, and which officials to avoid or cultivate. Guilds also required that their members not adulterate their products so as to win the confidence of their buyers.[186] In this way, guilds made it easier for producers and tradespeople to use the marketplace than if they were to act on their own.

[184] Han-sheng Ch'üan and Richard A. Kraus, *Mid-Ch'ing rice markets and trade: An essay in price history* (Cambridge, Mass., 1975), pp. 3–6.

[185] Peter J. Golas, "Early Ch'ing guilds," in G. William Skinner ed., *The city in late imperial China* (Stanford, 1977), p. 558.

[186] Fu-mei Chen and Ramon H. Myers, "Coping with transaction costs: The case of merchant associations in the Ch"ing period," in Yung-san Lee and Ts'ui-jung Liu, eds., *China's market economy in transition* (Taipei, 1990), pp. 79–104.

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Merchants who traveled relied on guidebooks similar to those used by Ming merchants before them. These sources cited the inns, money exchanges, native banks, and general commercial conditions of markets in cities and towns along the major long-distance trade routes. By informing merchants of how to access and use different markets, these guidebooks and manuals facilitated trade of goods and services by reducing transaction costs.

The Ch'ing bureaucracy also improved its official mediation of disputes related to parties contracting for property rights. More dependable contracts were needed that could be enforced by third parties to minimize violent disputes because commercialization and land scarcity created incentives to alter or redefine claims of property rights, which increased disputes, which in turn led to violence and homicides. Thomas Bouye's study of contracts to sell land and borrow credit in Kwangtung, Shantung, and Szechwan provinces shows that in commercialized areas people often sought to repurchase their land after selling to another party, and partly as a result the number of contract disputes leading to homicides reported to the Ministry of Justice increased during the first half of the eighteenth century.[187] Local officials began paying more attention to adjudicating land transfer contracts, even amending laws to assist county magistrates in distinguishing more clearly between land sales that could be redeemed by the former owner and outright sales that constituted a legal and final transaction.[188] Official intervention to clarify and enforce property rights transactions reduced the number of homicides arising from property rights disagreements in Kwangtung, Shantung, and Szechwan provinces between 1750 and 1800.[189]

The settlement of new lands encouraged more landowners to contract with tenants to use their land, tools, seeds, and so forth in exchange for rent. When these contracts were enforced in this competitive market economy, resource allocation became more efficient and a higher-value output marketed. But how could landowners collect their rents on time, detect when their resources were not being used efficiently, and prevent tenants from cheating them? Similarly, how could tenants encourage landlords to give them sufficient time to invest and improve land productivity? During the eighteenth century, landowners and tenants addressed these issues by introducing rent deposits and developing new forms of contracts.

Throughout central and southern China, landowners began insisting on a money deposit.[190] When the contract ended, the landowner returned the

[187] Thomas Buoye, *Manslaughter, markets, and moral economy: Violent disputes over property rights during the Qianlong reign* (Cambridge, 2000), ch. 1.

[188] Ibid., pp. 147–52 and 162–6. [189] Ibid., ch. 6.

[190] Tenants began paying a substantial deposit in advance to the landowner to obtain permanent rental rights. During the eighteenth century the funds advanced to landowners as tenant deposits increased because more people bid to rent land; meanwhile, lineages and wealthy households increasingly

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deposit to the tenant if the terms of the contract had been fulfilled, thus giving the tenant an incentive to abstain from cheating. Another innovation, the "two lords claiming a single plot of land" (*i-t'ien liang-chu*) contract, called for both parties to negotiate a lease period and fix the rent, usually in kind, from which the leasing party paid the land tax. Under this popular contract, the tenant had an incentive to improve the land and the landowner had some assurance of receiving a rent payment on time.

Not all contracts, however, were standardized, easily enforced, or aimed at improving economic efficiency. The Ch'ing government had initially compiled a new civil code by adopting much of the Ming code but had never tried to standardize customary law across the empire. Had it done so, contracting property rights and allocating resources could have become more efficient and reduced transaction costs. For example, some customary laws diverted land from its most efficient use, with many lineages stipulating that land first must be offered to another lineage member; failing that, only then could private parties be called.[191] Some laws even forbade using lineage land for commercial development and transacting with private parties.[192] Where lineages dominated, their rules limiting land transactions constrained the evolution of a competitive land market.[193]

When the Chinese organized collectivities such as irrigation associations, they reduced the transaction costs of monitoring labor and regulating quality control. For example, when members of the Wu lineage left Fukien province and settled I-lan county in northeast Taiwan in the late eighteenth century, they first reclaimed the open lands owned by land developers (*ta-tsu-hu*) who had claimed the lands by registering ownership rights with I-lan officials and paying the annual land tax. They began farming these lands along streams flowing from the interior mountains as permanent leasehold tenants (*hsiao-tsu-hu*) and paid a fixed annual rent in kind.[194] To obtain a stable supply of

amassed land to lease to tenants, but such land was repeatedly sold and mortgaged. For a useful review of customary law in the Ch'ing period, see Liang Chih-p'ing, *Ch'ing-tai hsi-kuan-fa: she-hui yü kuo-chia* (Peking, 1996). For examples of such contracts, see Chang Ch'uan-hsi, ed., *Chung-kuo li-tai ch'i-yüeh hui-pien k'ao-shih* (Peking, 1995), Vol. 2, pp. 1125–626.

[191] Hui-chen Wang Liu, *The traditional Chinese clan rules* (Locust Valley, N.Y., 1989), pp. 107–15. Lineage restrictions on the kind of land that could be mortgaged for credit clearly limited the supply of land for credit in provinces like Fukien, where lineage land predominated. For that reason, interest rates remained high and did not decline, as they would have had more land, such as that owned by lineages, been offered to the land market in exchange for credit. For the case of Fukien, see P'eng Wen-yu, "Ch'ing-tai Fu-chien t'ien-ch'an tien-tang yen-chiu," *Chung-kuo ching-chi shih yen-chiu*, 3 (1992), pp. 79–91.

[192] Chang Yen, "Ch'ing-tai tsu-t'ien ching-ying ch'u-tan," *Chung-kuo ching-chi shih yen-chiu*, 3 (1987), pp. 49–66. Also Chu Yung, "Lun Ch'ing-tai Chiang-nan tsung ch'u-fa ti ching-chi chih-nung," *Chung-kuo ching-chi shih yen-chiu*, 4 (1987), pp. 89–98.

[193] This same pattern is affirmed in Kwangtung by Mazumdar, *Sugar and society in China*, pp. 388–90.

[194] Our summary is based on the detailed study of the Wu lineage by Kan Hsüeh-p'ing and Hsiao Ting-wei, "Ch'ing-tai I-lan ti p'i-ch'uan hsing-chu ch'i-yüeh: chiao-i ch'eng-pen ti fen-hsi," *Nung-yeh ching-chi pan-nien k'an*, 59 (June 1996), pp. 119–22.

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water, the Wus organized teams to build reservoirs and sluices for storing runoff water during the island's rainy winter and spring seasons. After building the reservoirs, the Wus repaired and maintained the system to ensure appropriate water levels, flows, and supply as well as to collect water fees. They thus became skilled in the art of building irrigation systems and drawing up rules for households to operate such systems. By reducing their transaction costs, the Wu lineage helped its members produce for their basic needs and sell a surplus to the market.

By the late sixteenth century double-cropping had spread throughout Kiangnan, the southeast provinces, and into the developing regions. The adoption of best farming practice continued into the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, an argument advanced by the Japanese scholar Kawakatsu Mamoru, who used local histories to document the use of early-ripening rice seeds in different double-cropping regimes.[195] Rice and other crops greatly depended on maintaining or rebuilding irrigation systems that dated back to the tenth and eleventh centuries and building new systems in less populated areas. Double-cropping followed a settlement pattern in which rural communities, small and large towns, and administrative centers and their populations expanded to supply sufficient labor. The evolution of market towns and rural settlement has been examined by Shiba Yoshinobu, who describes the extensive settlements around Ningpo city during late Ming and early Ch'ing.

In Yin county of Chekiang province, where Ningpo city flourished, local elites organized the dredging and building of embankments and new canals for water systems that irrigated the hinterlands beyond Ningpo city. The first wave of building and repairing occurred in the 1560s, followed by a second in the 1730s and a third in the late nineteenth century. Each wave of irrigation projects encouraged the formation of new market towns and their satellite villages.[196] Irrigation project organizers assessed landowners according to their land holdings to pay workers to dredge old canals and build new ones, as well as drainage ditches, dikes, and ponds. As workers reclaimed more land through improved irrigation, more farmers, landlords, and their tenants planted double-cropping regimes consisting of rice followed by other foodgrains or by cotton, or cotton followed by beans and assorted grains.

Farther south, in Kwangtung province's Pearl River delta area, another big irrigation construction boom in 1735 attracted migrants to villages

[195] Kawakatsu Mamoru, *Min-Shin Konan nōgyō keizaishi kenkyū*, ch. 1–3.

[196] Yoshinobu Shiba, "Ningpo and its hinterland," in Skinner, ed., *The city in late imperial China*, p. 403; see Shiba's three maps showing the spread of market towns during these time intervals.

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and market towns throughout the area.[197] As swamps and other areas were drained and reclaimed, farmers, landlords, and their tenants also cultivated mulberry shrubs to supply the sericulture industry, first constructing embankments to prevent the flooding of their mulberry fields.[198] Villages also organized handicraft industries such as fish processing, mat weaving, cotton spinning, and weaving. As a consequence, between 1662 and 1727 more than one hundred new market towns formed in Kwangtung province.[199]

Developing irrigation systems and applying new multicropping regimes reduced transformation costs by enabling households to supply cheap food-grains, cotton, and handicraft products at market-clearing prices. These products flowed into Ningpo and Canton city markets as well as other coastal cities, from which they were transshipped to city ports along the coast and into the interior via the Yangtze and other rivers. A share of the proceeds from these commercial networks found its way into native banks, which loaned monies to merchants to finance these production and commercial booms. In the 1750s merchants from Hui-chou (Anhwei) and Ch'uan-chou and Chang-chou in Fukien began establishing native banks in Ningpo to finance local and long-distance trade.[200]

Transformation costs also declined in the rain-fed areas of the east-central and northern provinces as crop rotations improved with the introduction of soybean and lucerne. According to Peter Perdue, the "main form of double-cropping in eighteenth-century Hunan was rice followed by another food crop, usually sweet potatoes, wheat, buckwheat, maize, or beans."[201] In Hunan and Hupei, single-cropping existed alongside double-cropping, but multiple crop rotations gradually spread, promoting specialization and trade within and between counties. In central and eastern Hupei, many counties specialized in cotton production and marketed both raw cotton and finished cloth to Szechwan.[202]

[197] Matsuda Yoshirō, "Min-Shin jidai Sekkō Kinken no suiri jigyō," p. 271; "Minmo shinsho kantō Shukō deruta no saden kaihatsu to kyōshin shihai no keisei katei," *Shakai-keizai shigaku*, 46, No. 6 (1981), pp. 57–9.

[198] Morita Akira, *Shindai suirishi kenkyū* (Tokyo, 1995), ch. 4. See also Morita Akira, "Kantōsho Nankaiken sōen i no chisui kikō ni tsuite: sonraku to no kanren o chūshin to shite," *Tōyō gakuhō*, 47, No. 2 (Sept. 1964), pp. 65–88.

[199] Hayashi Kazuo, "Min-Shin jidai – kantō no ko to shi," *Shirin*, 63, No. 1 (Jan. 1980), pp. 69–105.

[200] Susan Mann Jones, "Finance in Ningpo: The 'Ch'ien Chuang,' 1750–1880," in *Economic organization in Chinese society*, ed. W. E. Wilmott (Stanford, 1972), p. 59, for a description of Fang Chieh-t'ang's descendants, who earned profits in the grain trade and then established native banks in Shanghai, Ningpo, and other cities.

[201] Peter C. Perdue, *Exhausting the earth: State and peasant in Hunan, 1500–1850* (Cambridge, Mass., 1989), p. 117.

[202] Yamamoto Susumu, "Shindai Hu-kan no suitōsaku to mengyō," *Shirin*, 70, No. 6 (Nov. 1987), pp. 16–31.

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Although some transaction and transformation costs declined during the eighteenth century, there is insufficient evidence to prove there was an increase in total factor productivity. However, Ch'ing population more than doubled, many regions supported high population densities, and the general living standard of the people, although poor, was similar to that of the recent past. Thus, it is likely that land productivity rose modestly in many areas because of the developments described above, but it is not clear whether labor productivity in any or all economic sectors rose.

To examine rising land productivity in China's most advanced region, Kiangnan, we refer to the Chinese economic historian Li Po-chung, who argues that rice yields increased in the Kiangnan region because of climatic warming, a growing supply of soil nutrients, and improved labor effort to irrigate, select better seeds, and fertilize the soil.[203] The Kiangnan region, referring here to eight prefectures in southern Kiangsu and northern Chekiang provinces – Sungkiang, Soochow, Ch'ang-chou, Chen-chiang, Ying-t'ien, Hangchow, Chia-hsing, and Hu-chou – enjoyed a dense network of waterways – Lake T'ai and the two streams that fed that lake, the Three Rivers, Five Lakes, and numerous creeks, lakes, canals, and reservoirs. Recent evidence about climatic change in China reveals that cold periods had prevailed in the mid-seventeenth and mid-nineteenth centuries, with a warming trend occurring in both the late sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries.

The weather patterns in and around east-central China, including Kiangnan, meant that when the climate warmed, rainfall declined. Thus, during the eighteenth-century warming trend, the aridity index increased over east-central China. Higher aridity in turn reduced the water content in soils, which increased microbial activity and thus the quantity of soil nutrients.

Improved human effort took the form of building irrigation projects, planting *indica* and *japonica* rice seeds in the appropriate soils, applying supplementary fertilizer such as beancake, and transplanting rice seedlings to rice fields. As a consequence of these developments, land productivity for rice production increased, although recent studies differ over how much and some even show decline.[204] According to Li, however, from the early 1600s until

[203] Li Bozhong, "Changes in climate, land, and human efforts: The production of wet-field rice in Jiangnan during the Ming and Qing Dyasties," in Mark Elvin and Liu Ts'ui-jung, eds., *Sediments of time: Environment and society in Chinese history* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 447–86. Our account below draws on this excellent essay.

[204] For one set of estimates showing great variation of change and decline in yields, see Ch'en Hua, *Ch'ing-tai ch'u-i she-hui ching-chi yen-chiu* (Peking, 1996), pp. 386–93. For a study showing that as foodgrain cultivated areas expanded in the eighteenth century, average foodgrain yields declined as compared to the sixteenth century, see Shih Chih-heng, "Ch'ing-tai ch'ien-ch'i ti keng-ti mien-chi chi liang-shih ch'an-liang ku-chi," *Chung-kuo ching-chi shih yen-chiu*, 2 (1989), pp. 47–62.

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1850 the Kiangnan rice yield rose a minimum 41 percent, or from 1.63 to 2.30 *shih* (capacity) per *mou*.[205] Rice yields fell during the troubled years of the seventeenth century, resumed their growth in the 1680s, and then slowly rose throughout the eighteenth century.

As for labor productivity, the evidence suggests that it did not increase during the Ch'ing period and might even have declined. Some wage data for a seventy-six-year period (1744–1820) covering eighteen provinces have been collected by the American economic historian Kang Chao.[206] Chao converted this information, expressed in copper cash, to silver taels and converted that money amount into quantities of rice according to different annual rice prices in taels compiled by Yeh-chien Wang. Those rice quantities, valued at their current money price, were then deflated by Wang's rice price index. Chao converted the annual rural real wages into an unweighted average to produce a real wage index for rural laborers. When plotted graphically over time, the index showed that farmworkers' real wages declined, suggesting that labor productivity also was declining.

Although some defects mar Kang Chao's estimates, they suggest that labor abounded on a seasonal basis. If in many areas households dispatched members to seek work elsewhere, the growing labor supply could have outpaced demand and produced falling real wages. However, because family farms consumed a large share of what they produced, then, in spite of stagnating or declining labor productivity, by household members working harder and longer, living standards, although poor, probably remained roughly constant for much of the eighteenth century. (A small wealthy proportion of members of the elites enjoyed much higher living standards and saved enough to finance most of society's investments.)

After the mid-eighteenth century, provincial officials began confronting new problems arising from internal migrations and extensive economic growth. As the demand for water increased, fewer people paid for the costs of its production or compensated for the negative externalities – the familiar "free rider" problem. Nowhere was this more evident than in the area around Tung-t'ing Lake, just south of the Yangtze River, where excessive irrigation caused serious environmental damage to the lake.[207]

Promoting the production of public goods such as water for farm use had been a high priority of officials ever since the beginning of the Ch'ing dynasty. Collectively sustaining hydrologic projects was difficult because property

[205] Li Bozhong, "Changes in climate, land, and human efforts," p. 481.

[206] Kang Chao, "The trend of real wages of farm workers during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries," in *China's market economy in transition*, ed. Yung-san Lee and Ts'ui-jung Liu (Taipei, 1990), pp. 155–66.

[207] Perdue, *Exhausting the earth*, p. 166.

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owners did not want to bear the full costs; privatizing such maintenance offered little guarantee that these public goods would continually be produced and their negative externalities fully compensated. For example, in the large-scale hydrologic works around Hunan's lakes and along its major rivers, local authorities found it difficult to get households in populated areas to pay to maintain these projects and prevent harmful flooding and the loss of lake water. This became a serious problem around Tung-t'ing Lake, where tens of thousands of households farmed land that had been reclaimed after dikes were built, which reduced the area of the lake's surface. Exacerbating the situation, officials could neither maintain the hydrologic projects along the Yangtze River nor dredge the channels connecting the Yangtze to Lake Tung-t'ing because of rising costs. In 1744 Hunan's officials debated limiting the building of dikes around Lake Tung-t'ing. Hunan's governor, Yang Hsi-fu, opposed building more dikes, arguing that it increased flooding, forced the state to spend more on relief, and reduced Lake Tung-t'ing's size. Others argued that building more dikes cleared fertile land for growing rice, helped to stabilize foodgrain prices, and generated income. In the 1760s officials finally agreed to destroy the illegal dikes and to monitor dike building. They could not sustain their draconian efforts to limit illegal dikes. The several channels that connected Lake Tung-t'ing to the Yangtze River could not drain excess water after the spring rains from the river back into the lake because nearby households had neglected their maintenance work. Moreover, the authorized dikes constructed to prevent the flooding along the Yangtze River's southern reaches were not strengthened to help retain excess water, so floods lower down the Yangtze became more frequent.

By the 1830s and 1840s, great floods were occurring along the Yangtze. Unwilling to deal with the consequences of their "free-rider" actions, more and more local people were engaging in activities that imposed higher costs – flooding, decline in lake water – on other communities.

In Chekiang, Anhwei, and adjacent provinces another problem emerged: How to manage common pools of resources and compensate for the negative externalities produced by the people who used them? Migrants from Wenchow and elsewhere had moved into those areas' highlands and used slash-and-burn methods to clear land and grow maize.[208] After three years of

[208] See Anne Osborne, "The local politics of land reclamation in the lower Yangzi highlands," *Late imperial China*, 15, No. 1 (June 1994), pp. 1–46. See also Ann Osborne, "Economic and ecological interactions in the lower Yangzi region under the Qing," in *Sediments of time: Environment and society in Chinese history*, ed. Mark Elvin and Ts'ui-jung Liu, pp. 203–34. Osborne concludes that, in the short term, the gains from extending farming into the uplands of the lower Yangtze "probably offset the losses at least in the short term"; in the long run, "economic growth based on highland reclamation was clearly unsustainable," pp. 229–30.

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cultivation, these "shed people" (*p'eng-min*), as they were called, moved to farm land elsewhere, leaving the land exhausted, the soils eroded, and the rivers silted, thereby imposing high costs on many communities downstream. The lineages who owned the hill lands had leased them to migrants in exchange for lucrative rents. When others protested these leasing activities, litigation and quarrels became frequent. Some lineages appealed to local officials to prevent the destruction of the commons by raising the transaction costs for using these common resources. Environmental degradation and social tensions in communities continued to worsen.

There is a strong correlation between the above negative externalities and the expanding Chinese population on the fragile environment of the developing region. By the early 1800s, population density in many of the developed areas had reached unprecedentedly high levels. The Japanese scholar Shiba Yoshinobu reports that in 1820 in Shaohsing county in Chekiang province there were 510 persons per square kilometer, "the second highest among the thirty most populous prefectures in the empire, following 838 persons in Soochow prefecture in Kiangsu."[209] But according to the new data of Yeh-chien Wang, in 1820 the population density of Soochow prefecture was 901.83 persons per square kilometer, higher than reported by Shiba.[210] Such density forced many people to migrate to less populated areas, such as the high valleys and upland areas of the interior. But, as already mentioned, extensive irrigation projects had diverted water from Tung-t'ing Lake as well as the Grand Canal and South Lake in Yu-hang county and Upper and Lower South Lake in northwestern Chekiang, making it difficult for people to live in those areas. In fact, farmers used so much water that otherwise would have been flowing into the Grand Canal from nearby lakes and rivers that they severely damaged many sections of that transport system.[211] By 1800 the Ch'ing government, which had long encouraged migrations into the developing and underdeveloped areas of the empire, began to realize that Chinese merchants and farmers, who had moved into Kweichow province and sinicized the Miao territories, and settled Taiwan, Sinkiang, and Mongolia, were displacing aborigines and local people, ruining upland areas, and reducing forest lands.[212]

[209] Shiba Yoshinobu, "The case of the southern Hangzhou bay area from the mid-Tang through the Qing," in Elvin and Liu, ed., *Sediments of time*, p. 161. These densities would yield a group ranking of 10, probably the highest in the world at that time. See Table 10.2 above.

[210] Yeh-chien Wang and Ying-chueh Huang, "Ch'ing chung-yeh tung-nan yen-hao ti liang-shih tso-wu fen-pu, liang-shih kung-hsu chi liang-chia fen-hsi," *BIHP*, 70, No. 2 (1999), pp. 375–6.

[211] See Nakahara Teruo, "Shindai daiunga no shingai genshō ni tsuite: Undō no sokumen yori suru sun kenkyū nōto," *Tōhōgaku*, 29 (Feb. 1965), pp. 58–67.

[212] These comments and those that follow draw heavily on Eduard B. Vermeer, "Population and ecology along the frontier in Qing China," in Elvin and Liu, ed., *Sediments of time*, pp. 235–82.

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Ch'ing officials had long believed that forest areas offered a haven for bandits and rebels and thus felt justified in cutting more timber for the market. They also favored converting forest area to arable land to produce more foodgrain for the empire's expanding population. But some officials argued that trees prevented drought and flooding and provided fuel as well as cash income. At first their voice went unheeded. From 1700 onward, demand increased for timber to supply fuel for industries such as porcelain, iron smelting, papermaking, shipbuilding, salt, and lime. Everywhere, forests began receding. By around 1800, "all potential lowland farmland in the Szechwan basin had been reclaimed, and subsequent expansion had to be in the mountain areas."[213]

From the 1780s onward, in upland areas throughout the empire, soils slowly eroded, damaging the downstream area and raising farming costs. In 1832 the Kiangsu governor, T'ao Chu, recommended that the throne confiscate illegally occupied silt flats along rivers and hand them over to tenants capable of paying rents and farming. Moreover, complained T'ao, rising silt deposits caused floods in the lower Yangtze basin because

> too much land has been opened up, and the jobless migrants fell mountain forests everywhere in order to cultivate miscellaneous grains. With heavy rains, the soil and stones are carried down with the flow, and when they settle, the sediment deposits rise above the water. It is difficult to stop poor people who try to make their living this way, but as the opening up for agriculture increases, landslides and obstructions get worse, and once the sediment has formed islets, it is even harder to remove. Considering that the construction of one canal or one dam already costs tens of thousands of taels, how much more would treatment of the entire Yangtze River cost?[214]

To sum up, before 1800, declining transaction and transformation costs, along with positive externalities (which by the 1760s began to be replaced by negative ones), enabled small-scale economic organizations to form and operate to produce an expanding output of goods and services that sufficed to feed, house, and clothe the doubling population. Although some negative externalities, as described above, imposed rising costs on communities, several more decades would pass before those rising costs, along with new difficulties – market failure, widespread monetary deflation, rising unemployment, a growing tax burden, and a cooling climate – would combine to

[213] Vermeer, "Population and ecology," p. 270. For a good account of environmental degradation in southern Shansi because of farming the upland areas, see T'an Tso-kang, "Ch'ing-tai Shan-nan ti-ch'u ti i-min, nung-yeh k'en-chih yü tzu-jan huan-ching ti e-hua," *Chung-kuo nung-shih*, 4 (1986), pp. 1–10.

[214] Vermeer, "Population and ecology," p. 274.

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cause the great social and religious rebellions that beset the Ch'ing empire in the mid-nineteenth century.[215]

CONCLUSION

Throughout its history, imperial China's long-term economic growth and population expansion were interrupted by internal wars, invasions, and natural disasters. The Ch'ing dynasty experienced more than a century after 1683 of relatively uninterrupted peace. From a base exceeding a hundred million people by 1683, the population doubled. Throughout this period, the Chinese market, command, and customary economies benefited from the following three fortuitous developments.

First, the Ch'ing empire avoided severe monetary shortages because of continuous silver imports from the world market, an increase in the supply of copper coins, and the ability to use paper notes, which became an important new component of the money supply. During the eighteenth century the money supply rose steadily enough to satisfy demand without serious deflation or inflation.

Second, a distinctive warming climatic trend, linked with rising soil nutrients and improved human effort, facilitated the adoption of advanced technology and farming practices that extended multiple cropping throughout new areas of the empire and contributed to rising land productivity and a greater supply of foodgrains and other products.

Finally, the imperial state effectively reduced the people's tax burden, first, because the Ch'ing government never had to mobilize large-scale physical and human resources to suppress domestic rebellions or to resist foreign aggression, and second, because the Ch'ing government was committed to building an ideal Confucian society based on the rural way of life, in which peace, social harmony, and minimal prosperity would reign.

The Ch'ing also improved the basic rules that had governed Ming society. Their institutions, comprising new laws and fiscal procedures, induced people to take up farming and maintain a rural lifestyle. Their fiscal reforms reduced the command economy and expanded both the customary and market economies by enabling public, hybrid, and private organizations to reduce their transaction and transformation costs, enhance positive externalities,

[215] See Suzuki Chūsei, *Shinchō chūki shi kenkyū* (Tokyo, 1952). Suzuki describes the origins of the White Lotus Rebellion (1801–05), which broke out in the border areas of Kansu, Szechuan, Hupei, and Hunan provinces. He attributes the uprising in these areas to the environmental degradation, overcrowding, and social conflicts that made it difficult for the market economy to function properly.

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limit negative ones, and take over some responsibilities of the command economy provided by corvée labor.

Hybrid or liturgical organizations constituted the underpinnings of the Ch'ing command economy. Liturgical organizations operated the salt and copper monopolies, performed tax farming, collected the custom tax paid by foreign merchants in Canton, and gathered broker and merchant fees when those agents used local markets. The liturgical organization perfectly complemented the Ch'ing customary society and economy. Ch'ing officials cooperated with local elite to operate hybrid organizations and generate enough revenue for the command economy while those same elite ensured social harmony and ideological compliance at the community level. Similar hybrid organizations enabled the command economy to stabilize the market economy when harvests failed, when water conservancy and irrigation projects required expansion or repair, and when cities and roads were in need of reconstruction.

The Chinese people responded to the Ch'ing reforms and the incentives and positive externalities that followed by organizing their households, lineages, and communities in ways that promoted growth. Sharing common cultural values, people migrated to new areas and formed villages and market towns, used the market economy to nurture their customary exchanges, and gravitated toward the agrarian life.[216] Family and lineage members moved back and forth between the developed and developing areas to buy foodgrain and find work, as illustrated by Aratake Tatsurō's account of how people from Teng-chou prefecture in Shantung province moved to Feng-t'ien province in the northeast to work as laborers and become farmers.[217] Shantung lineages also permanently migrated to that same area, and by 1800 some lineages had passed through eight or nine generations. In core and even peripheral areas, people initiated investment and economic development booms by building irrigation projects, new farms, handicraft establishments, and a great variety of services. These investments, financed with family and lineage savings and loans from friends, invariably went to develop the land as well as to expand household and lineage corporate estates.

By the mid-1780s some 94 percent of the Ch'ing empire's 290 million persons lived in rural communities, most of which were dominated by lineages. Their activities supported a huge customary economy comprised of farming, handicraft, commerce, and finance, which were dependent on more

[216] For the importance of these new freedoms and their contribution to the special economic developments already cited, see Fang Hsing, "Chung-kuo feng-chien she-hui nung-min ti ching-ying tu-li-hsing," *Chung-kuo ching-chi shih yen-chiu*, 1 (1995), pp. 8–21.

[217] Aratake Tatsurō, "Shindai Kenryū nenkan ni okeru Santōsho Tōshūfu: Tōhoku chihō no hito ido to ketsuen shoshiki," *Shigaku zashi*, 108, No. 2 (Feb. 1999), pp. 34–59.

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than twenty thousand market towns (twice the number that existed in the mid-Ming) and an unknown number of large villages having regular markets.[218] Never had China's market, customary, and command economies supported so many people.

These three spheres of economic activity depended on a high degree of labor specialization. At the Ching-te-chen porcelain kilns in Kiangsi province, for example, one set of workers selected porcelain objects, another set packaged them, another set shipped them, and a fourth sent them throughout the empire and to foreign markets.[219] At the forty-odd iron furnaces in Foshan county near Canton city, a workforce of twenty thousand collected iron ore, smelted it, processed it, and packaged and marketed the products to other provinces. Even hybrid organizations like the salt monopoly and the Yunnan copper mines employed huge labor forces that performed a variety of specialized tasks.

A paucity of historical evidence limits our discussion of how those in the customary economy labored, exchanged products and services, and used little or no money. Household contracts have survived to reveal that families extensively contracted with each other to exchange their human and physical resources to produce goods and services for both the customary and market economies. China's rural population of some 272 million in the mid-1780s consumed perhaps as much as three-quarters or more of what it produced for the customary economy, with the remainder going into the market economy. The typical rural household's surplus may have risen slightly over the period, but the total output of goods and services in the customary economy also increased, exceeding that of the market economy. The customary economy coexisted with, and increasingly depended on, the market economy.

The market economy in turn evolved because of technological change and the high degree of labor and resource specialization that linked villages, towns, and cities. Chinese historians, influenced by Karl Marx's writings, have conceptualized these changes in the market economy during Ming and Ch'ing as budding capitalist sprouts worthy of being defined as a new stage in Chinese economic history having four main characteristics.[220] First, improved

[218] For the expansion of regular markets in villages of north China, see Yamane Yukio, *Min-Shin Kahoku teikiichi no kenkyū* (Tokyo, 1995), pp. 4–21.

[219] Hsü Ti-hsin and Wu Ch'eng-ming, eds., *Chung-kuo tzu-pen chu-i meng-ya* (Peking, 1985), Vol. 1, p. 583; Chiangsi sheng Ch'ing-kung-yeh t'ing t'ao-tz'u yen-chiu-suo, comp., *Ching-te-chen tíao-tz'u shih k'ao* (Peking, 1959), pp. 247–8.

[220] Hsü Ti-hsin and Wu Cheng-ming, *Chung-kuo tzu-pen chu-i meng-ya*, Vol. 1, pp. 4–35. For the translation of this work into English, see Xu Dixin and Wu Chengming, eds., *Chinese capitalism, 1522–1840* (New York, 2000), pp. 1–20 for a discussion of embryonic capitalism in the Ming and Ch'ing periods.

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farming tools, irrigation and drainage structures, intensive cultivation practices represented new forces of production in agriculture. Similarly, technical advances in handicraft production occurred for iron smelting, oil pressing, building of salt wells, and so forth. Second, local, urban, and regional markets improved and proliferated, and interregional commodity markets also expanded in scale. Third, changes in wage labor relationships took place, as illustrated by managerial landlords hiring farm workers, farmers employing laborers, and mining and handicraft establishments hiring wage labor. Finally, except for silk weaving, merchant contractors did not operate handicraft industries on a putting-out basis or by market integration, but they directly employed workers in their handicraft and service establishments.

According to Chinese historians, these forms of embryonic capitalism appeared several centuries later in China than in Europe, but they were weak, and had atrophied by the 1800s. Many Chinese historians now agree that the incipient or embryonic capitalism of the Ming and Ch'ing periods did not constitute a new, decisive stage of capitalism and other developments were making China's market economy different from that of other civilizations.

We have conceptualized this market economy as *cellular* or *reticular*, an ideal type because its small-scale producers and distributors (large-scale mining and metals operations existed only in a few areas) accessed the marketplace through personal networks and brokers and merchants. Moreover, this reticular market was highly competitive, with few instances of individuals and their organizations having sufficient power to determine market price and output for any prolonged period of time. Finally, this reticular market economy meshed with a huge, vibrant customary economy in which similar institutions influenced organizational behavior in both economies.

The contracting and exchange of resources between households as reflected in the customary law behavior of families and lineages not only allocated roughly three-quarters or more of what households in villages and small towns produced and consumed by themselves, but proved to be inimitably suitable for meshing with China's reticular market economy. Both customary and market economy, in other words, expanded together.

By 1800, few private organizations had achieved large-scale size and complexity or been able to integrate different market activities. The market economy had not begun replacing the customary economy, a trend that in Europe began in the sixteenth century when new, private enterprise forms already handled the "great number of steps involved in the manufacturing process and the ensuing specialization call[ing] for control, coordination, and

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management."[221] The Chinese reticular market economy, however, was not hospitable to either Western-style capitalists or capitalism.

If capitalists are defined as owning and managing complex organizations, possessing large pools of capital funds, and demonstrating a capability to organize extensive production processes in near and distant places to earn a profit, then capitalists were rare in Ch'ing China. Further, if capitalism is a sphere of human action that organizes a plexus-type market structure in various branches of production and exchange, produces much of its own services to reduce transaction costs, and promotes new technologies to reduce transformation costs, the Ch'ing market economy was hardly such an embryonic capitalist economy.

What made the huge market economy unique was its ability, without capitalism, to mesh tightly with the liturgical organizations of the command economy to support a huge agrarian-bound workforce and population that constituted the customary economy and that integrated with a nonagrarian, urban sector of minuscule proportion. This triadic economic system favored labor-intensive and land-saving methods for implementing modest technological change. The private, liturgical, and public economic organizations managed to resolve any threatening resource, commodity, and services scarcities by integrating old and new methods to increase supply to accommodate rising demand. In this way, for well over a century the Ch'ing economy avoided the large swings in relative prices for productive factors, commodities, and services that beset society after the 1810s.[222]

[221] Quoted from "A Florentine firm of cloth manufacturers: Management and organization of a sixteenth-century business," in *Business, banking, and economic thought in late medieval and early modern Europe: Selected studies of Raymond de Roover*, ed. Julius Kirshner (Chicago, 1974), p. 102. In the studies so far produced by economic historians of China, we have yet to discover any examples of Chinese businessmen before 1800 who organized their production and distribution like that of the de'Medici partnership in the sixteenth century as described by Raymond de Roover.

[222] For a good account of the manifestations of dynastic decline that owed much to these new economic burdens and scarcities as well as acute and widespread market forces, readers should consult Susan Mann Jones and Philip A. Kuhn, "Dynastic decline and the roots of rebellion," in *Late Ch'ing 1800–1911, Part 1*, Vol. 10 of *The Cambridge history of China*, ed. Denis Twitchett and John K. Fairbank (Cambridge, 1978), pp. 107–62.

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Map 11. *Distribution of Ming and Ch'ing Customs Houses Defining the Ch'ing Empire's Integrated Market Economy (by the eighteenth century)*. Based in part on Map 2-1 in Fan I-chun, "Long-distance trade and Market integration in the Ming-Ch'ing Period 1400–1850." Diss. Stanford University, 1992, Photocopy, Ann Arbor Michigan: UMI Dissertation Services, 1996.

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