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MANCHU WOMEN IN TRANSITION: GENDER, ETHNICITY, AND ACCULTURATION IN THE 17TH—18TH CENTURY CHINA

By

Shuo Wang

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ABSTRACT

MANCHU WOMEN IN TRANSITION: GENDER, ETHNICITY, AND ACCULTURATION IN THE 17TH—18TH CENTURY CHINA

By

Shuo Wang

This dissertation is about gender and ethnicity in Qing dynasty—the last dynasty in Chinese history, established by the Manchus, a non-Chinese ethnic group in northeast China. Over the years, scholars of Chinese history dispute against each other about whether the Manchus became Chinese after they entered China Proper. This study supports the arguments that the Manchus maintained their ethnic identities until the end of the dynasty. The Manchu culture was not assimilated by Chinese although it differed from the traditional culture of Manchuria as the result of acculturation.

This study departs from the existing scholarships by examining the acculturation from a new perspective—the interaction of gender and ethnicity. It discusses the roles the Manchu women played in the construction of Manchu ethnicity and the way in which their participation was different from that of men in the process of acculturation. The conclusion is that women changed more slowly and more superficially than men. When Manchu men gradually accepted many Chinese Confucian values, women still lived in an old Manchu way and thus helped many traditions to pass on.

This dissertation is heavily based on Qing archival materials, housed in the First Historical Archive Museum in Beijing and in the Academia Sinica in Taipei. These primary sources provide previously unknown information about Manchu women's lives

and experience after the conquest. Some primary sources from literature and interviews are also used as supplementary materials in the dissertation.

This study has five chapters, plus an introduction part and a conclusion. The topic it discusses including Manchu women's roles and positions in family, widowhood and remarriage; intermarriage between the Manchus and Chinese; and gender relations and sexuality. It also discusses some problems with the definition of the Manchu ethnicity, and the ethnicity issue in China in general.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Since I came to the United States in 1994, Department chairs Gordon Stewart, Lewis Siegelbaum, and graduate director Leslie Moch have constantly encouraged me and enabled me to find financial support over the years. Many thanks also go to Professors David Bailey and Sayuri Shimizu who were on my committee for the comprehensive examination. I have learned not only the knowledge of American history

and international relations from them, but also how to study history from a broader perspective.

This dissertation is mainly based on the primary sources found in the Qing archives, housed in the First Archives Museum in Beijing and Fu Si-nian Library in Academia Sinica in Taipei. In the year of 2000, I was granted the SCRAM (Special College Research Abroad Money) by the College of Arts and Letters. The grant made it possible to consult archives in Beijing and Taiwan, which was crucial to this dissertation project. Therefore, I want to thank the College of Arts and Letters of MSU for sponsoring my trip.

In the years of research, I have greatly benefited by knowing Professor Mark Elliott, one of the pioneers on Manchu study in the United States. He gave valuable suggestions on the proposal and outline of this dissertation. In Beijing and in Taipei, I met Professors Ding Yizhuang, of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, and Lai Huimin, of the History Institute of Academia Sinica in Taiwan. I will never forget their unselfish and generous sharing of primary sources with me, including archival materials and unpublished interviews.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES viii

LIST OF MAPS ix

LIST OF FIGURES x

INTRODUCTION 1

CHAPTER 1
HISTORICAL SETTING AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF MANCHU ETHNICITY. 19
Rise of the Manchus and Their Social Organizations 19
The Issue of the Manchu Ethnicity 31
Conclusion 42

CHAPTER 2
MANCHU WOMEN'S ROLES AND POSITIONS IN THE FAMILY 45
Unmarried Girls.. 47
Young Wives 56
Elderly Women--Mothers/Mother-in-laws 64
Conclusion: What Did It Matter to Manchu Ethnicity 73

CHAPTER 3
REMARRIAGE AND "GUARDING CHASTITY 77
Changing Tradition on Remarriage 78
Policies on Banner Widows 84
Remaining as Widow—a Rational Choice 95
Conclusion: Ethnicity, Gender, Location, Class 110

CHAPTER 4
INTERMARRIAGE BETWEEN THE MANCHUS AND CHINESE 114
Review of Qing Policies on Intermarriage 117
Review and Analysis of Some Intermarriage Cases 129
Interpreting the Pattern of Manchu-Chinese Intermarriage 139
Conclusion 148

CHAPTER 5
GENDER RELATIONS AND SEXUALITY 151
Manchu Traditions on Gender Relations and Sexuality 153
Changing Traditions after the Conquest 162
Gendered Format on the Changing Traditions 174
Conclusion 185

CONCLUSION
MANCHU WOMEN'S PLACE IN MANCHU AND CHINESE ACCULTURATION189

APPENDICES (Maps and Figures) 199

BIBLIOGRAPHY 205

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 Canonization of Chaste Widows in the Eight Banners (1653-1795) 83

Table 2 Regulation of Pensions to Banner Widows (1735-1783) 96

Table 3 Intermarriage between bannermen and Chinese Women in the Qianlong Reign (1736-1795) 130

Table 4 Intermarriage between Chinese men and Banner women in the Qianlong Reign (1736-1795) 135

LIST OF MAPS

Map 1 Manchuria in the early seventeenth century 199

Map 2 Qing Beijing under Manchu occupation 200

Map 3 The Eight Banner distribution in Manchu city of Qing Beijing 201

Map 4 Jingzhou garrison 202

Map 5 Hangzhou garrison 202

Map 6 Guangzhou garrison.....203

Map 7 Xi'an garrison 203

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 Comparison of the bound feet and natural feet 204

Introduction

The Manchus are one of China's principal ethnic groups, living in China's northeast. They conquered China in 1644 and established the Qing dynasty (1644-1912)—the last conquest dynasty in Chinese history. After the conquest of China, most of the Manchus moved into China proper and became an "occupational caste" to rule the Chinese who outnumbered them approximately forty-nine to one.[1]

During the 268 years of rule, the Manchus co-existed with the Chinese in one polity. In order to successfully control the Chinese land and people, the Manchu rulers instituted a dyarchical system in the central government and established local military control.[2] The Manchus incorporated many Chinese scholars into offices in the central government, such as the Six Departments, the Grand Secretariat, and the Hanlin Academy, who served beside or in addition to the Manchu officials. Manchu soldiers and their families were stationed in each garrison in local areas. In addition, the Green Standard Army (*luying bing* 绿营兵), made up of Han Chinese soldiers and commanded by a mixed staff of the Manchus and Chinese, was a second Qing armed force, which was scattered throughout the provinces. Ruling China through the use of dyarchy was a strategy of the Manchus—on the one hand, they used Chinese to rule Chinese and made

[1] The term "occupational caste", meaning those foreigners who occupied China, is from Edward Rhoads, *Manchus and Han: Ethnic Relations and Political Power in Late Qing and Early Republic China, 1861-1921*, pp. 289-290. The ratio of Chinese and Manchus is cited by Evelyn Rawski, "Ch'ing Imperial Marriage and Problems of Rulership." p. 171, in Waston and Ebrey ed. *Marriage and Inequality in Chinese Society*. pp. 170-203.

[2] The term of "dyarchy" means to divide governmental functions between two political powers. In India, the dual form of government established in 1919, which divided governmental functions between the British governor and the provincial governor. See "dyarchy" in *Webster's Universal Unabridged Dictionary*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1983. 2nd edition. In Chinese history, dyarchical government divided powers between two ethnic groups. It is called *liangtou zhengzhi* (两头政治, two-head polity), giving a more explicit and colorful expression to the dual form of government.

the Qing a legitimate Chinese dynasty; on the other hand, the Manchus held positions in every top office, both in the central government and in local control, in order to maintain an ethnic balance and secure the Manchu ruling position as an occupational caste. Later in this dissertation, I will show the way in which the dyarchy was embodied in social policies. As the Manchu-Chinese cooperation in Qing civil bureaucracy created a multi-ethnic leadership, dyarchical policies in social lives brought about a hybrid culture, in which both Manchu and Chinese each maintained their ethnic identities, even as these identities changed over time.

This dissertation studies Manchu-Chinese acculturation from the perspective of gender distinction. By examining Manchu women's lives in China proper during the first 150 years after the conquest, a period of transition, I will explore the interaction of gender and ethnicity and the ways in which men and women played different roles in maintaining and constructing Manchu ethnicity. As Mark Elliott argues, in the Qing period, ethnicity was quite unmistakably a gendered formation.[3] This formation was not only represented in the changing behaviors of Manchu widows—the topic Elliott discussed—but also in other aspects of women's lives. The different places and functions of Manchu men and women in Chinese society determined the pattern of the acculturation between Manchus and Chinese, in which women served as reservoirs of cultural identity and generally changed more slowly than men. Manchu women's role in construction of ethnic identity was not only in childbearing—reproducing Manchu people, but also in the aspects of reproducing and maintaining Manchu culture.

[3] Elliott, "Manchu Widows and Ethnicity in Qing China." p. 37.

When studying women in history, we should understand and view women as a diverse category and as a historical product. Women's identities and behaviors were different according to the diversities of class, ethnicity, politics, religions, etc. and changed over time along with the changing social conditions in which they lived. When Joan Scott stresses the significance of recognizing the differentiation among females, she gives an expressive interpretation, saying that "except for the fact of the similarity of their sexual organs, it is hard to find a common identity between aristocratic *salonieres* in the seventeenth century and nineteenth-century middle-class housewives, or between those religious women of the Middle Ages who sought transcendence of their bodies in the service of Christ and twentieth-century sex workers whose bodies serve as a source of income."[4] This approach is very helpful to the study of women in Chinese history, especially the women during the Qing period. In the following chapters, one will see that Manchu women and Chinese women had many differences according to their traditions, including, but not limited to their respective ideologies, behaviors, and relations with men. Manchu women's identities and behaviors changed over time, a fact that is clearly seen from their lives after the conquest, when Manchus moved into a new political, social, and cultural environment. Moreover, even within the category of the Manchus and during a given period, for example, 150 years after the conquest, Manchu women were still different from each other individually due to the diversities of their class and economic status.

Study of Manchu women not only introduces new subject matter to Qing history, but also forces a critical re-examination of all the assumptions and conclusions historians

[4] Joan Wallach Scott, *Feminism & History*, p. 5.

made before they integrated women into their scholarly works. Men and women affect the world differently and reciprocally but not respectively, so they could not be examined separately. A comprehensive understanding of Qing history must be based on a perspective that views men and women as two opposite and complementary elements, which together influenced the Qing society. After the Manchu gained the control of China proper, Manchu men gradually accepted the Confucian concept of family. They began to have a different expectation of Manchu women. Behaviors of women such as maintaining virginity prior to marriage, being a submissive wife, and not remarrying after being widowed became more important to Manchu men. This change of expectation affected Manchu women's lives. On the other hand, certain Manchu women's behaviors also influenced the life of Manchu men. One of the reasons that Manchu men married Chinese women was that some Manchu women decided to marry late or to remain spinsters. The intermarriage families helped to speed up the acculturation process. Therefore, to study Manchu women in the transition period may deepen our understanding of Manchu-Chinese acculturation and also shed light on Qing history and alien regimes in Chinese history in general.

This study consists of five chapters. The first chapter, "Historical Settings and the Construction of Manchu Ethnicity," provides necessary context about the Manchus, including the ethnic origins of the Manchu people, their social organization, and cultural characteristics. Some distinctive features of Manchu ethnicity, and of Chinese ethnicity in general, are also discussed in Chapter One, which will provide a context for the significance of ethnic identity in defining one's culture in the historical context of the Qing dynasty.

Chapter two focuses on Manchu women's roles and positions in the family. Unlike Chinese women whose status in the family was always subordinate to men (father, husband, brothers, and sons), Manchu women could dominate their male family members. Manchu women's higher positions in the family were especially notable among unmarried girls, the "spoiled princesses" in their natal home, or elderly women who became the head of household, creating a female-centered household. This tradition of women's position in family and the patterns of household, as a significant integral part of Manchu ethnicity, remained unchanged even after the end of Qing dynasty. Manchu women's unique roles and positions in the family helped to pass Manchu traditions from one generation to another.

Chapter Three analyzes the changing behavior of Manchu widows after the conquest. According to Manchu tradition, widows usually remarried—mainly through levirate marriage. However, after the conquest, more and more Manchu widows chose not to remarry. Many of them were rewarded by government as "chaste widows." Some scholars explain this change as the result of sinicization/Confucianization. In the chapter, I argue that women's changing behaviors did not necessarily mean that they appreciated and accepted the Confucian ideal of chaste widowhood. Remaining as a widow to most Manchu women was, however, a rational choice for the purpose of inheritance, income, and other pragmatic interests. They might not be concerned about loyalty to their deceased husbands, which was the key point of "guarding chastity" in the Chinese concept of chaste widowhood.

Chapter Four examines Qing policies regarding Manchu-Chinese intermarriage in principle and the practice. While Manchu men were allowed to marry Chinese women,

intermarriage between Manchu women and Chinese men was strictly prohibited. This bifurcated policy reflected the court's attitude of keeping vigilance over women's nuptiality and fertility as the way to secure ethnic boundaries.[5] The records of intermarriage in the archives coincide with the policy of bifurcation. I argue that, in addition to the government policy, the different level of acculturation between Manchu men and women was also responsible for the imbalanced pattern of intermarriage—while men felt Chinese women, including their bound feet, acceptable, Manchu women were reluctant to marry Chinese "strangers." This pattern, in turn, determined acculturation as a gendered formation—to Manchu men, a family with a Chinese wife was a place where two cultures mingled, while to Manchu women, the family was a bastion, in which old traditions and habits could easily be maintained.

The last chapter concerns the changes of Manchu women's lives in the aspects of gender relations and sexuality during the transition period. At first glance, it seems that, in many ways, Manchu women accepted Confucian rules on sexuality and were becoming Chinese. But when examining the cases of sexual transgression recorded in archives, I found that what first appears to be new values in sexuality and gender relations for women actually reflected the expectations of men, who gradually accepted Confucian norms of virtuous female behavior and projected these values on to women, expecting women to follow them as well. Conflicts between husband and wife, (most notably cases of murder of a wife by a husband) in the archives is actually the evidence that men and women changed at a different rate of acculturation and, therefore, gave different definitions to sexual transgression.

[5] Children from marriage of Chinese men and Manchu women were considered Chinese, while children of Manchu men and Chinese women were considered Manchu.

This study is based on various primary sources. In addition to the officially-compiled historical books, such as *Qingshi gao* (The draft of Qing history), *Da Qing lichao shilu* (The veritable records of Qing), *Da Qing huidian shili* (The collected institutes and precedents of the Qing dynasty), *Baqi zeli* (Precedents and regulations of Eight Banners), and *Baqi tongzhi* (Comprehensive history of the Eight Banners), three categories of primary sources are used in the dissertation:

1. Archives. This research is heavily based on Qing archival materials, housed in the First Historical Archive Museum in Beijing and at Academia Sinica in Taipei. Included are court records, records of the imperial genealogy, and legal deeds and contracts, which contain information on marriage, family structure, property inheritance, and cases of sexual transgression. These primary sources provide previously unknown information about Manchu women. For example, the confessions of men and women who committed sexual transgressions or/and murders allow us to hear women's voices, and through these voices, to explicate what the men and women expected one another 300 years ago. These inscribed conversations help us understand that the conflicts between men and women within the family stemmed largely from their different understandings of gender roles in a changing social context. Many cases in archives reveal that Manchu men expected their wives or daughters to observe the standard of Confucian virtues, while Manchu women still stuck to the old traditions and lived by the conventions of the pre-dynastic Manchus. Therefore, the disharmony within family actually reflected the conflict between two cultures and the different levels on which men and women accepted new Chinese Confucian values. Of course, there are certain limitations to relying on court cases in

the archives, since these materials reflect only the situations where the family conflicts were intense enough to warrant lawsuits. Such situations do not give a complete picture of the family life for Manchu-Chinese society as a whole. However, these records do provide us with a window into which we can study the Manchu society and culture after the "conquest."

2. Literature. I have used information embedded in such primary sources as novels, poems, folk songs, travel notes, reminiscence memoirs, and miscellaneous notes. These literary works reflect aspects of common people's daily lives, including the relations between different genders and different generations within the family, the financial situation and status of banner widows, the relationships among neighbors, and the daily language Manchu women used. The novels, poems, and folk songs also provide information on Manchu aesthetic views. The most valuable literary work is the novel, *Honglou meng* (Dream of the Red Chamber), by Cao Xueqin (1724?-1764). Although this novel has often been considered by literary scholars to reflect Han Chinese family life,[6] when one examines the life and family background of the author, one finds that his family, on which the novel in based, was much more closely associated with Manchu society than with that of the Han Chinese.[7] Cao family was not a typical Chinese family, but rather from Han ancestors who had lived in Liaodong (Manchuria) and joined the Manchu Plain White Banner as bondservants to the imperial Qing emperors in the early 1620s. Cao's family retained a unique

[6] See Louise Edwards, "Women in *Honglou meng:* Prescriptions of Purity in the Femininity of Qing Dynasty China." *Modern China*, 16.4 (October 1990), pp. 407-429; "Representations of Women and Social Power in Eighteenth Century China: the Case of Wang Xifeng." *Late Imperial China*, 14.1 (June 1993), pp. 34-59.

[7] The novel is universally considered as an autobiography because the parallels between certain incidents in the novel and known facts in Cao's own family background are too many and too striking for any doubt on this point. (also see Spence, *Ts'ao Yin and the K'ang-hsi Emperor, Bondservant and Master*, page xi).

relationship to the imperial family. Cao Xueqin's great-grandmother was the wet-nurse to the Kangxi emperor. His two aunts were chosen as imperial concubines. For generations Cao family had held a very important position in the South and was trusted by successive emperors from Shunzhi to Qianlong. In the novel, the ethnic identity of Jia (Cao) family is never made explicit. However, their station in society is so elevated that even elite Chinese families could not hope to duplicate it or enjoy such close connections with the throne. Their clothing, cuisine, and mannerism are typical Manchu.[8] For this reason, I have interpreted gender relations in the novel as a reflection of Manchu customs rather than those of the Han Chinese. While court records provided information about the transgressors as exceptions, literary works tell stories of the broad masses of people. However, I am fully aware that some literary sources are biased due to the author's status of class, ethnicity, and gender, while others might be written in the late Qing period, or not clearly defined as to the time period. Therefore, I use these sources with caution, usually as supplementary materials.

3. Interviews. I also use some interviews as supplementary materials for my dissertation, including Ding Yizhuang's pioneering book, *The Last Memories*—a collection of 16 elderly Manchu women's memories, and the tapes and notes based on the interviews she conducted in the year of 2000. The women she interviewed were mostly born in 1910s and had detailed memories about their grandmothers who were living in mid-19th century. The stories they told provided a broad scope of information about Manchu women's childhood, Manchu customs in their daily lives,

[8] For more information about Cao's family background, see page 38-39 in this dissertation. Also, Jonathan Spence, *Ts'ao Yin and the K'ang-hsi Emperor, Bondservant and Master.*

relations between husband and wife, relations between the wife and her in-laws, and the rights and status of unmarried Manchu girls, and the way in which Manchu women imitated Chinese food-binding in the last years of the dynasty. Using oral historical materials is a blessing to my project because Qing dynasty was not in a remote past, like other dynasties in the study of pre-modern Chinese history, so I can obtain some historical materials from the people I study—the Manchu women. Even though the memories of those elderly Manchu women only go back as far as the mid-nineteenth century at the earliest, there are still many similarities between their lives and the lives of those who lived in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The cultural consistency suggests that changing old traditions, customs, and values was a slow process. It also demonstrates how changes occurred more slowly in women's lives as compared with those of men.

Besides the primary sources, this study is also based on the understanding of some secondary sources. The most important ones include, but not limited to, Pamela Crossley, *The Manchus* and *A Translucent Mirror*; Evelyn Rawski, *The Last Emperors*; Mark Elliott, *The Manchu Way*; Ding Yizhuang, *Manzu de funu shenghuo yu hunyin zhidu yanjiu* (Research on life and marriage patterns of Manchu women); and Lai Huimin, *Tianhuang guizhou: Qing huangzu de jieceng jiegou yu jingji shenghuo* (The Qing imperial lineage: its hierarchical structure and economic life).

Manchu and Chinese acculturation during the Qing dynasty is one of the most contentious issues in the field of Chinese studies. The main arguments focus on the extent to which the Manchus were influenced by Chinese culture and whether or not the Manchus adopted Chinese culture to such an extent that the Qing became just another

Chinese dynasty after the Ming (1638-1644). Scholars are divided into two schools—"sinicization school" and "Altaic school"—based on their different understandings of the Manchu-Chinese acculturation.[9] Scholars in sinicization school believe that the Chinese have always assimilated their Inner Asian conquerors. The representative of works by American scholars include: *The Last Stand of Chinese Conservatism: the T'ung-chih Restoration, 1862-1874* by Mary Wright, who believe that the Manchus were assimilated by Chinese by the middle of the 19th century at the latest; the two articles in *The Journal of Asian Studies*, "The Significance of the Ch'ing Period in Chinese History," and "In Defense of Sinicization: A Rebuttal of Evelyn Rawski's 'Re-envisioning the Qing'," by Ping-Ti Ho, who argue that the systematic sinicization was the key to Qing's success in China.[10] Most scholars of Qing history in China fall in the side of the sinicization school. Based on the belief of that "though the empire can be conquered on horseback, it cannot be ruled from horseback" (天下虽可马上得之,不可马上治之), Chinese scholars attribute the Manchu success in China to their thorough sinicization.[11] In her recent study of Manchu women, Ding Yizhuang uses the term "completely accepted Confucian values" (dui ruxue chedi jieshou 对儒学彻底接受) to describe the Manchu experience in China in the late 18th century. Although the term of "Confucianization" (ruhua 儒化) is a little more

[9] The terms of "sinicization school" and "Altaic school" are created by Mark Elliott. See Mark Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, pp. 27-28.
[10] See *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 26.2, 1967, pp. 189-195; and 57.1, 1998, pp. 123-155.
[11] Meng Sen, *Qingdai shi* (Qing history), p.7; Dai Yi. *Jianming Qingshi* (Brief history of Qing), pp. 247-295, Chapter Five; Li Jingping, "Luelun Manzu hanhua jiqi dui Qingchu de yingxiang" (Discussion on Manchu sinicization and its impact on early Qing), *Shixue yuekan* (History monthly), April 1986, pp. 35-39; Liu Xiaomeng, *Baqi zidi* (Junior bannermen), p. 207; 57. 1, Feb. 1998. pp. 123-155.

cautious than "sinicization" (hanhua 汉化) or "assimilation" (tonghua 同化), it still emphasizes that Manchus were becoming Chinese culturally.[12]

The theory of complete sinicization or assimilation has been criticized and refuted by anthropologists, sociologists, and historians in the West during the past 50 years.[13] Other terms are used when describing the cultural interface between two or more cultures, such as "cultural amalgamation" or "acculturation", with emphasis on cultural borrowing, rather than dominating. In the case of the Manchu experience in China, scholars in "Altaic school", representing by Pamela Crossley, Evelyn Rawski, and Mark Elliott, emphasize that the Manchu ethnicity was maintained over the whole course of the dynasty and expressed in varying degrees in different aspects of life. This approach postulates that the Manchu culture was not assimilated by Chinese, although it differed from the traditional cultures of Manchuria.[14]

Pamela Crossley, in her book *The Manchus*, argues that Chinese scholars are mistaken in either considering the Manchus as an "alien" rule or considering the Qing as another Chinese dynasty. Although the Manchu rulers sponsored many programs to

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[12] See, Ding, Manzu de funu shenghuo yu hunyin zhidu yanjiu (Research on life and marriage patterns of Manchu women). p. 104, 136.

[13] See, Owen Lattimore, *Inner Asia Frontiers of China*; Franz Michael, *The Origin of Manchu Rule in China: Frontier and Bureaucracy as Interacting Forces in the Chinese Empire*. Karl Wittfogel and Fêng Chia-shêng, *History of Chinese Society: Liao, 907-1125;* Wolfram Eberhard, *Conquerors and rulers: social forces in medieval China*; and *China's Minorities: Yesterday and Today*; Robert Oxnam, *Ruling from Horseback: Manchu Politics in the Oboi Regency, 1661-1669.*

[14] The Manchus was one of the ethnic groups of Altaic-speaking people who originally lived in North Asia. "Altaic School" refers to those who emphasize the continuity of Manchu ethnicity and the maintenance of "Manchuness" as an important characteristic of Qing when the Manchus established the dynasty in China. For the discussions of how the Manchus maintained their ethnic identities after they encountered Chinese culture, see Pamela Crossley, "Thinking about Ethnicity in Early Modern China." *Late Imperial China*, 11.1 (June 1990), pp. 1-34; *The Manchus* (1997); and *A Translucent Mirror: History and Identity in Qing Imperial Ideology* (1999); Evelyn Rawski, "Presidential Address: Re-envisioning the Qing: The Significance of the Qing Period in Chinese History." *Journal of Asian Studies*, 55.4, Nov. 1996, pp. 829-850; and *The Last Emperors: A Social History of Qing Imperial Institutions* (1998); Mark Elliott, *The Manchu Way: the Eight Banners and Ethnic Identity in Late Imperial China* (2001).

introduce Chinese culture and encourage the Manchus to appreciate Chinese culture, they were very concerned about the maintenance of their ethnic identity, for example, the Qianlong emperor (r. 1736-1795) always stressed the significance of riding and shooting in bannermen's lives. He established schools for bannermen and emphasized that "every single man has a responsibility to study written Manchu."[15]

In *A Translucent Mirror*, Crossley emphasizes the significance of Qing imperial ideology. She does not consider the monolithic identities of "Manchu," "Mongol," and "Chinese" as fundamentals, sources, or building blocks of the emergent order during the first 150 years of the Qing conquest. Rather, she views these as identities that were constructed as ideological productions of the process of imperial centralization. She believes that the Manchus did not define themselves as an ethnic group in the early years of the dynasty although they became one after the state felt that it was necessary to stress Manchu ethnic identities. Manchu ethnicity changed over time, depending on the official ideology that determined a series of policies, but never vanished.

In *The Last Emperors*, Evelyn Rawski explores the issue of ethnicity and historical interpretation within Qing history by studying the Manchu rulers. She points out that the Manchus accepted Chinese culture very selectively, as a strategy for ruling. They adopted Chinese culture when it was politically expedient for them to do so and rejected it when it did not help them achieve their political goals. Until the end of Qing dynasty, the Manchus still maintained many cultural and ethnic traditions while being influenced by Confucian culture only in selected venues and adjusting their lives accordingly. She concludes that the Qing was neither a replica of the Chinese dynasties

[15] Pamela Crossley, *The Manchus*, pp. 128- 129.

nor a simple duplicate of its non-Han predecessors—the conquest dynasties in Chinese history, such as Liao (辽,907-1125), Xi Xia (西夏,990-1227), Jin (金,1115-1234), and Yuan (元,1234/1260-1368). Rather than citing sinicization as the primary cause of Qing success, as Ping-ti Ho argues,[16] Rawski believes that the key to Qing achievement lay in its ability to implement flexible culturally specific policies aimed at the major non-Han peoples inhabiting the Inner Asian peripheries in the empires.[17]

Mark Elliott's book, *The Manchu Way*, provides a comprehensive discussion of the issue of Manchu-Chinese acculturation. By tracing the development of the Eight Banners, the Manchu's trademark system of social and military organization, he believes that the Qing success in China depended not only on the Manchu ability to adapt to Chinese political traditions and cultural values, but also on their ability to maintain the lines of differentiation between the Han Chinese and the Manchu conquest group. The Eight Banner system was a significant social and military institution that drew the lines between Chinese and Manchus and thus maintained the ethnic boundaries. Elliott use the term of "ethnic sovereignty" to emphasize the Manchu domination over China proper and argues that the Manchus were never as a group assimilated into Chinese society in the Qing, although they were highly acculturated. Although the content of Manchu identity varied over time, it never disappeared.

These books provide a less "sino-centric" and less predetermined perspective from which to examine the process and result of the encounter between Manchu and Chinese cultures during the seventeen-and eighteenth centuries. Each of the books rejects

[16] See page 11 of this dissertation for more detail about Ho's arguments.
[17] Evelyn Rawski, *The Last Emperors*, p. 7.

the assumption that Manchus were gradually assimilated by Chinese; each emphasizes the cultural consistence and coherence of the Manchus.

Compared with the books on Manchu and Chinese acculturation, publications on Manchu women, and on their roles in acculturation in particular, are very few. The reason why fewer scholars have the study Manchu women is perhaps due to the paucity of primary sources. Studies of Manchu women started in mid-1990s, but have not yet become popular, either in China or in the Western societies.[18]

The most comprehensive study of Manchu women to date is *Manzu de funu shenghuo yu hunyin zhidu yanjiu* (Study on Manchu women's lives and marriage system) by Ding Yizhuang, a research fellow of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in China. Based on a great quantity of Manchu archives, her book explores the changes that took place in Manchu women's lives after the conquest in 1644, modifications in traditional marriage system, and how these changes related to Manchu-Chinese acculturation. She argues that during the first 150 years after the conquest, Manchu culture experienced a process of fusion with Chinese culture. Since the acculturation has always had a direction in which the periphery culture (referring to Manchu culture) goes toward the center culture (Chinese culture), she argues that Manchus kept up with the Chinese by all the means at their disposal and became even more Confucian than Chinese. Ding believes that in the process of acculturation, Manchu women's lives were greatly influenced by

[18] According to Elliott, the only specialized studies of Manchu women's history are those by Lai Huimin and Ding Yizhuang. See, Elliott, "Manchu Widows and Ethnicity in Qing China." *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 41.1 (January 1999). p. 37, note 16.

Confucian culture and the overall Confucianization in women's lives was a significant integral part of the development of Manchu ethnicity during the Qing dynasty.[19]

Lai Huimin, a research fellow of Academia Sinica of Taiwan, is a specialist in Manchu women's status in the family and their property rights. In an article focusing on Qing imperial women, Lai argues that after the conquest, the Manchus accepted the Chinese ritual system and built up a patriarchic hierarchical society within the family, in which women were in a lower position than men. Under the patriarchic hierarchical structure, women constituted in a class among themselves. For example, a wife's position was higher than a concubine's, but she was still not as powerful as the male family members; a widow's situation deteriorated after her husband's death; unmarried girls had more freedom and rights than their brothers' wives—this was a unique Manchu tradition that remained distinctive even after the Qing conquest.[20] Regarding Manchu women's property and inheritance rights, Lai shows that Manchu women generally enjoyed more property rights than their Chinese peers. For example, Manchu widows were allowed to inherit their deceased husbands' property, such as houses and land, and could lease, pawn, or sell them as they wished. A widow also had the right to represent her deceased husband to take his share in family property division. Moreover, according to Qing laws, a daughter could inherit the property of her natal family if there was no male heir upon her parents' death. In the case that an heir had been adopted, she still had the right to

[19] Ding Yizhuang, *Manzu de funu shenghuo yu hunyin zhidu yanjiu* (Research on life and marriage patterns of Manchu women). p. 104.
[20] Lai Huimin, "Qingdai huangjia funu de jiating diwei" (Qing imperial women's status in family), *Jindai Zhongguo funushi yanjiu* (Studies on modern Chinese women's history), 2 (June 1994), pp.3-25.

share the property with her adopted brother.[21]

In an article, "Manchu Widows and Ethnicity in Qing China," Mark Elliott uses Manchu widows' behavior as a lens to examine the role of gender in the construction of ethnicity during the Qing period. He argues that Manchu rulers practice a bifurcated ethnic strategy, which means they vigorously encouraged Manchu women to accept some Chinese values (for example, the virtuous widow cult) while they enthusiastically championed a specific ethnic ideal for Manchu men.[22] This policy assumed that the acculturation of women did not pose a threat to Manchu legitimacy in the same way that male acculturation might. However, Manchu rulers had never slackened their effort to control women's nuptiality and fertility as a way to secure ethnic boundaries because female exogamy, the marriage between Manchu women and Chinese men, threatened Manchu ethnic identity. Therefore, throughout the whole course of Qing dynasty, intermarriage between Manchu women and Chinese men was very rare.

Other than these three specialized works, there are several articles by Chinese historians about Manchu women. However, the discourses are primarily descriptive and sino-centric, believing that sinicization was the only choice for the Manchus and the inevitable result when the Manchus encountered Chinese.[23] Therefore, the changes in

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[21] Lai Huimin, and Xu Siling, "Qingdai qiren funu caichanquan qianxi" (A brief analysis of banner women's property rights in the Qing). *Jindai Zhongguo funushi yanjiu* (Studies on modern Chinese women's history), 4 (August 1996), pp.3-33. Also see her book, *Tianhuang guizhou: Qing huangzu de jieceng jiegou yu jingji shenghuo* (The Qing imperial lineage: its hierarchical structure and economic life). Chapter Five, pp.252-261.

[22] Mark Elliott, "Manchu Widows and Ethnicity in Qing China." *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 41.1 (January 1999). pp. 33-71.

[23] Zhang Wei. "Qingdai Manzu funu de shenghuo" (Manchu women's lives in Qing dynasty), *Zhongguo gudai funu zhuanji* (Special issue of Chinese women in pre-modern times), issue 3. pp. 76-80; Wang Dongfang, "Manzu funu chuantong xingge zhi wo jian" (Opinions on Manchu women's traditional personalities), *Manzu yanjiu* (Manchu Studies), 1993. 3, pp. 43-45.

Manchu women's lives could only be used as evidence to support the *clichés* that the "military conquerors were conquered culturally."

My dissertation departs from the existing scholarship by utilizing new sources, including archives, literature, and interviews. I also examined the pattern of acculturation from a new perspective—the interaction of gender and ethnicity; I, therefore, draw a new conclusion that women changed more slowly than men in the process of acculturation. This study refutes the traditional understanding on Manchu sinicization or Confucianization, while supporting the findings of Rawski, Elliott, Crossley, and Lai Huimin, and at the same time, broadens their focuses from the Manchu ruling house, the court's policies, and institutions to common banner people's life (especially banner women). I hope this dissertation project will contribute to the study of Manchu women and Manchu-Chinese acculturation, and therefore, to the study of Qing history in general.

Chapter One: Historical Setting and the Construction of Manchu Ethnicity

Before examining Manchu women's roles in the process of acculturation in the 17th and 18th centuries, some questions should be addressed: who were the Manchus? How did their social organization and cultural traditions differ from those of Chinese before and after the conquest? To what extent could the Manchus be seen as an ethnic group? How flexible was the ethnic boundary between the Manchus and Chinese, and how should this distinction be considered in the historical context of Manchu-Han acculturation?

This chapter opens by sketching the historical background of the Manchus, including their ethnic origins, the Eight Banner system, and their distinctive social customs. The second part of the chapter discusses some problems with the Manchu ethnicity, and ethnicity issues in China in general.

1. Rise of the Manchus and their social organizations

The Manchu was one of the ethnic groups living in the North of Changbai Mountains, along the rivers of Sungari, Ussuri, and Shira Muren River basin in the present Chinese provinces of Jilin and Liaoning (see Map 1). According to historical records and modern Chinese historians, the origin of Manchus could be traced as early as 1100 B.C. Predecessors of the Manchus were called by different names, beginning with Su-shen (肅慎) in pre-Qin period (ca. 1100 B.C.E.), Yi-lou (挹婁) in Han (ca. 200 A. D.), Mo-he (in Sui and Tang (ca. 700 A. D.), and Jurchen after the 10th century.[1] Whether

[1] Dai Yi, *Jianming Qingshi* (Brief history of Qing), vol. 1, pp. 14-20; Li Yanguang and Guan Jie, *Manzu tongshi* (A general history of the Manchus), pp.1-5; Guan Jixin, ed. *Zhongguo Manzu* (China's Manchus). Pei Huang, "New Light on the Origins of the Manchus," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies,* 50.1, 1990.

these tribes were ethnically related is unknown, although officially compiled histories recorded them as one people with different names over time. This account may be questioned because traditional Chinese historiography had a habit of stereotyping all the non-Chinese ethnic groups into one category of "barbarians" and tended to ignore their internal cultural distinctions. Therefore, I rather assume that these tribes were marginal groups who had inhabited Manchuria area successively in certain historical periods and then moved to another place, otherwise, it can not be explained why the people in this region did not change culturally even a thousand years of contact with China.

However, historians are on a more solid ground when examining the last one thousand years. The Manchus were descendants of the Jurchen who established the Jin dynasty in China in the twelfth century. In the fifteenth century during the Ming dynasty, the Jurchens developed into three main tribes, located in the Manchuria areas: the Jianzhou in the southeast (Changbai Mountains area), the Haixi in the northwest (Sungari River basin), and the Yeren in the far east (Ussuri River). In 1583, Nurhaci of the Jianzhou Jurchen started a campaign of annexing other Jurchen tribes and, by the early 17th century, he had unified the whole Jurchen tribes, incorporated other peoples (the Mongols, Chinese, Korean, Sibo, and others) who lived in Manchuria area, and brought all the peoples under one polity—the Latter Jin dynasty (1616-1635).[2] In 1635, Nurhaci's son Huangtaiji replaced the name of "Jurchen" with "Manchu" to represent his people. This was the birth of the Manchu.

[2] Zhao Zhan. *Manzu wenhua yu zongjiao yanjiu* (Studies on Manchu culture and religions), pp. 14-15.

From the ethnic perspective, renaming of the Jurchen was significant because the new name was used as a universal label for all the peoples under Huangtaiji's rule, regardless of their ethnic origins. It suggested that from very beginning the Manchu was actually not a single people, but an ethnic community, composed mainly of the Jurchen people but including of many other ethnic groups as well. This structure determined the pattern of acculturation when the Jurchen/Manchu encountered other societies, either before or after they conquered China.

On the one hand, the Jurchen/Manchus were good at borrowing useful concepts from other cultures. For example, in the process of acculturation before the Manchus took form, the Jurchen people—the main body of the Manchus—borrowed many things from Mongols, including their political system and the form of their written language. They also learned certain advanced agricultural techniques from Chinese that allowed them to further expand the cultivated land and shift their lives from hunting and fishing to farming. After the conquest in 1644, the Manchus accepted so many Chinese traditions that some scholars have argued that the Manchus were already thoroughly sinicized and becoming Chinese.[3]

On the other hand, when the Jurchen/Manchus encountered other cultures, they were extremely concerned about their ethnic identity and always tried to maintain certain basic traditions that differentiated them from the other peoples. For example, the Manchu

[3] Ping-Ti Ho, "The Significance of the Ch'ing Period in Chinese History." *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 26.2, 1967, pp. 189-195; and "In Defense of Sinicization: A Rebuttal of Evelyn Rawski's 'Re-envisioning the Qing'." *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 57.1. Feb. 1998. pp. 123-155; Ding Yizhuang. *Manzu de funu shenghuo yu hunyin zhidu yanjiu* (Research on life and marriage patterns of Manchu women), p.136; Li Jingping, "Luelun Manzu hanhua jiqi dui Qingchu de yingxiang" (Discussion on Manchu sinicization and its impact on early Qing), *Shixue yuekan* (History monthly), April 1986, pp.35-39; Guan Donggui, "Manzu de ruguan yu hanhua." (The Manchu conquest and sinicization), *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan* (Journal of the Institute of History and Linguistics in Academia Sinica), 43. 2 (1971), pp.445-488.

written language was created by two Jurchen linguists in 1599. It was based on the Mongol writing system. However, these two languages resembled each other only in form—the Manchus borrowed Mongol scripts to express Jurchen pronounciation.[4] In 1632, Huangtaiji asked the Manchu linguist Da-hai to reform the Manchu written system. After that, the Manchu scripts appeared quite different from Mongol.[5] Many other examples demonstrating the ways in which the Manchus maintained their own ethnic identities can be found after the conquest of China. Although many Manchus gradually lost their mother tongue as they used Chinese in general conversation, by the end of the 18th century, most of government documents were written in duplicate—one in Chinese and one in Manchu—until the end of the dynasty. Generals commanding the armies of the north and west and Manchu officials receiving edicts written in Manchu were obliged to write their memorials to the throne in Manchu. Throughout the dynasty, Manchu language was used as a "security language" for the rulers. According to Evelyn Rawski, Manchu officials were required to communicate in Manchu and documents relating to the imperial lineage, banner affairs, and Inner Asian military matters were often written only in Manchu.[6] In many other aspects, the Manchus had successfully maintained old traditions and customs passed on, which will be discussed in detail in the following chapters, more notably the Manchu women's roles and positions in maintaining the Manchu ethnic identity.

The Eight Banner system had the most profound historical significance of all the

[4] Dai Yi, *Jianming Qingshi* (Brief history of Qing), vol. 1, p. 50.
[5] Ibid., p. 85.
[6] Evelyn Rawski, *The Last* Emperors, pp. 36-37; Also see, Pamela Crossley and Evelyn Rawski, "A Profile of the Manchu Language in Ch'ing History." *Harvard Journal of Asiatic* Studies, 53. 1 (June 1993), pp. 70-73; and Mark Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, p. 291.

Manchu institutions. It served as a political, military, and social organization that included all Khan's peoples—Manchu, Mongol, and acculturated Chinese men, women, and their servants—and kept them separated from Chinese population.[7] The banner system was a protected reservoir where the Manchu culture could be maintained and reproduced. This function was especially notable when examining the Manchu women's roles in the process of acculturation, on which this dissertation focuses.

According to *Qing Veritable Records*, the banner system was derived from "*niru*", the basic unit in which Jurchen hunters were grouped. "*Niru*" was a Manchu word for "arrow". When the Jurchen went hunting, they were grouped into ten-person units. Each person contributed one arrow. Each *niru* had one captain whom was called "*niru ejen*" (means "company captain"). Based on the *niru* organization, Nurhaci transformed these hunting units into a military organization in 1601. This was the birth of banner system. Under the banner system, every 300 people were grouped into one *niru*, five *niru* were grouped into one *gala*, five *gala* formed one *gusa* (banner). Thus, there were approximately 7500 people in a banner. There were four banners. Each had its assigned color, yellow, white, red, and blue. In 1615, as the banner population increased, Nurhaci added four more banners to the original ones with a red border added to the flags (the red flag was bordered in white). Between 1634 and 1642, the Eight Banner system was expanded to 24 banners by adding eight Mongol banners and eight Chinese banners. By the eve of the conquest, Manchu banner forces comprised 319 Manchu *niru*, 129 Mongol *niru*, and 167 Chinese *niru*. All together were 615 *niru* and about 184,500 banner soldiers.[8]

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[7] The term of "Khan" refers to the rulers of Tartar, Mongol, or Turkic societies in Asia.
[8] Jin Qizong, *Manzu lishi yu wenhua jianbian* (Brief introduction of Manchu history and culture), p. 38.

The banner system was the most famous of all Manchu institutions. It played a crucial military role in the battles of the Manchu conquest. After the Manchus moved to China proper, the banner system was a unique social organization, combining military, political, and civilian functions together.

After the conquest, the majority of bannermen and their families moved from Manchuria to Beijing and other Chinese cities. In order to accommodate them and to reduce the possibility of ethnic conflicts between the Manchus and Chinese, many "Manchu cities" (the Western missionaries called these "Tartar cities") were built within Chinese cities wherever the Manchus set garrison stations.

These cities became the exclusive home of banner officers and soldiers, their families, and servants, segregated from Chinese population. Regarding the Manchu cities as "ethnic ghetto," Elliott emphasizes that study of the "environment" is essential to understanding the people and their lives in Qing.[9] Study of Manchu cities, the symbol of Manchu apartheid,[10] is especially important if we wish to know how the Manchu culture was reproduced and why banner women played a different role from men in the process of Manchu-Han acculturation.

The largest Manchu city was in Beijing. In 1645 and 1648, the Shunzhi emperor issued two decrees respectively regarding residential segregation in Beijing. In the edict issued in 1648, all Chinese living within the city wall of Beijing were asked to move to the southern suburbs no later than the end of 1649. The only exceptions were Han Chinese who served as guards at government offices, Buddhist and Daoist monks, or

[9] Mark Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, p. 90.
[10] The term of "Manchu apartheid" is from Frederic Wakeman, *The Great Enterprise*, p. 467.

peddlers. The following is the description of Beijing by Matteo Ripa, an Italian Jesuit who lived in the city during the Kangxi period:

> Peking is composed of two district cities, one being called the Tartar city, the other the Chinese. The Tartar city is so named because it is inhabited by Tartars, and by those who, though not Tartars, are enrolled in the Eight Banners, or eight bands which constitute the Tartar troops. The Chinese city is inhabited by Chinese alone. . .The Tartar city is square, and encircled by a yellow wall.[11]

When the Chinese were removed to the southern city, about 100,000 banner soldiers and their families moved into Beijing, living in the northern city (see map 2). The banners were assigned to live in different quarters within the city, surrounding the imperial city, according to their colors and the divisions of Manchu, Mongol, and Chinese. The Manchu banners were situated closer to the imperial city, the Mongol banners were in the middle, and the Chinese banners were at the periphery of the Manchu city. This deliberate arrangement reflected the idea of dyarchy in military distribution in the capital where Manchu bannermen served as "bodyguards" of the central government for the security concerns, while Chinese bannermen might serve as "mediators" between the banner population and the Chinese outside the city walls (see map 3).[12] In Beijing suburb, there were garrison stations of *huoqi ying* (火器营 firearm station), *jianrui ying* (健锐营 valiant fighter station), and a garrison at Yuanming yuan. Like bannermen in other parts of the city, these bannermen, together with their families, lived within the walled enclaves, separated from Chinese.

The Chinese city was the commercial center of the capital. The busiest shopping streets were in the northern part of the city, at a place where the Manchu and Chinese

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[11] Matteo Ripa, *Memoirs of Father Ripa*, trans. Fortunato Prandi, pp.51-52.
[12] Ortai (Qing). ed. *Baqi tongzhi chuji*, (Comprehensive history of the Eight Banners, first collection), vol.

cities met. The Chinese city was also the entertainment center for bannermen where teahouses, theaters, and brothels were built. Chinese would be permitted in the city during the day only, and were officially forbidden to stay overnight in the Manchu city.[13] Movement between and within each quarter was controlled through an extensive system of barricades, called *zhalan* (柵栏), which were closed at night. During his stay in Beijing in 1793, Lord Macartney, the British emissary to the Qianlong court, was strongly impressed by the constant state of alert:

> The police is singularly strict. It is indeed stretched to an extent unknown I believe in any other cities, and strongly marks the jealousy of the Government, and their unceasing apprehension of danger. At night all the streets are shut up by barricades at each end and a guard is constantly patrolling between them so that no person can pass after a certain hour without assigning satisfactory reasons. . . A number of watchmen are also stationed at short distances who carry a rattle and every two or three minutes proclaim their vigilance by the exercise of their instrument. One or two of these guardians of the peace had their stands so near to my house that I could not sleep a wink for the first three or four nights, but by degrees I became used to the noise and grew to mind it as little as the ringing of a church bell."[14]

Manchu cities in other places of China had similar distributions and policies as the Manchu city in capital (see the maps of the layout of Manchu cities in Hangzhou, Jingzhou, Xi'an, Guangzhou garrisons). For example, the Manchu city at Hangzhou was located near the West Lake, surrounded by 35 foot-high walls. In the eighth year of Shunzhi (1651), 3,500 bannermen and their dependents moved into the Manchu city there. Within the city, was the garrison general's *yamen*, the residences of Manchu officials and soldiers, granaries, schools, temples, parks, and so on. The city provided banner people with complete facilities for their daily life, which meant that they could

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[13] *Da Qing Shizu shilu* (The veritable records of Shunzhi), August in the 5th year of Shunzhi (1648), 40: 9b.
[14] J. L. Cranmer-Byng, *An Embassy to China: Being the Journal kept by Lord Macartney During His Embassy to the Emperor Ch'ien-lung, 1793-94*, p. 158.

survive in this closed world.[15] Actually both bannermen and women were required to stay within the Manchu city. If the officials or soldiers had to leave the city for business trip, they should bring special pass with them, otherwise, they would be considered as deserters and receive punishment.[16]

The initial purpose of the distribution and regulation in Manchu cities was to provide bannermen and women a quarter in which to live, separated from the people they ruled, in order to avoid ethnic strife between the two ethnic groups. More significant benefits resulted from this separation, as Manchu cities became the strongholds spread over the Chinese land, where the Manchu style of life was maintained and the culture was reproduced. The segregation is especially important in an examination of the Manchu-Han acculturation from a gendered perspective. Although the Manchu cities confined both bannermen and women to a relatively closed community, men still had many opportunities to become acquainted with the outside world and contact Chinese people. For example, as the ruling class, some of them took positions in government, working together with Chinese officials. They also had to deal with Chinese tenants who cultivated their lands. Banner idlers (*xiansan* 闲散)[17] came out of Manchu city to find amusement in Chinese city. Even within the Manchu city, bannermen still had opportunity to learn Chinese culture through formal education at schools, which were only open to male banner students. Banner women, on the contrary, did not have to go outside of the Manchu city as did men due to their different functions and roles in

[15] *Qinding zhongshu zhengkao* (Investigation on the administration of central government), vol. 13.
[16] *Qinding hubu zeli* (Regulations of the Personnel Department), vol. 2.
[17] "Idlers" referred to those who registered in banners but did not officially take the post as soldiers so that they could not get monthly payment from government.

society. Many of them spent their whole lives within this relatively closed community. Obviously, in the Manchu cities, this "Manchu apartheid" policy was more effective for women in terms of isolating them from Chinese people and society. As the result, women within the city walls were able to preserve more old traditions while men accepted more Chinese values. In the following chapters, I will discuss how this gendered format could be seen in the process of Manchu-Han acculturation.

The supposition that women changed more slowly than men applied to Chinese society as well. By the end of the 17th century, most of Chinese men shaved their foreheads and braided their hair into a queue that hung down their backs, much like bannermen. Many, especially those who worked in a *yamen* as Qing officials, also accepted the style of Manchu clothing. Mastery of Manchu was a plus for Chinese government officials collaborating with the Manchus. Therefore, at first sight, it was almost impossible to distinguish a Han Chinese from a Manchu unless his ethnic background was announced.

However, Chinese women made little effort to compromise with Manchu customs. As the result, the differences between Manchu women[18] and Chinese women maintained many aspects until the end of Qing dynasty. A famous Chinese historian stated "men surrendered, women resisted" (*nan xiang nu bu xiang* 男降女不降), in describing the situation of Chinese men and women after the Manchu conquest, which meant that women could keep their old traditions while encountering the other culture but men had to change.[19] Among other differences between Chinese women and Manchu

[18] I use the term of "Manchu women" here and thereafter by its broader meaning, referred to all the women in banner, regardless of their original ethnic background.
[19] Zheng Tianting, *Qingshi tanwei* (Inquiry and investigation on some issues in Qing history), p. 56.

women, the most remarkable one was their feet—Chinese women had bound feet while Manchu women had natural feet (see Figure 1). As early as in 1636 when Huangtaiji changed his dynastic name from "Latter Jin" to "Qing", he issued a decree to Han people under his control, "all Han people—be they official or commoner, male or female—their clothes and adornments will have to conform to Manchu styles. Male are not allowed to fashion wide collars and sleeves; females are not allowed to comb up their hair [shutou] nor bind their feet."[20] In 1664, the Kangxi emperor issued a prohibition on foot binding. Young girls born after 1662 were not allowed to bind their feet. Parents who still bound their daughters' feet would be punished.[21] However, Chinese women ignored the imperial edicts and continued the old tradition. As the result, the emperor gave up his effort in 1668 after four years because he did not have resources to check the feet of every Chinese woman hidden in the inner quarters.[22] There were many other outward differences between Manchu women and Chinese women. For example, Manchu women's dress was featured by its narrower sleeves, as was the tradition before the conquest. The narrower sleeves made horseback riding and other chores easier. Another difference could be found in the number of earrings—Manchu women wore three earrings on each ear while Chinese women wore only one each ear. All these differences persisted until the early 20th century.

The Manchu views of female beauty differed from those of the Chinese. According to Chinese standard, a beautiful woman should be pale and willowy with a

[20] *Qing Taizong shilu gaoben*, cited in Dorothy Ko, "The Body as Attire: the Shifting Meanings of Footbinding in Seventeenth-century China." p. 16, *Journal of Women's History*, Winter 1997.
[21] Zhao Yi, *Gaiyu congkao* (Mourning period miscellaneous notes), vol. 31, p. 656.
[22] Ibid. Susan Mann argues that the insistence of the tradition of foot-binding came from women themselves, "who refused to comply with [the Manchus]; moreover, since women who had bound feet were usually cloistered and women who did the binding did it in private, enforcing the proscription was impossible." See, *Precious Records: Women in China's Long Eighteenth Century*, p. 27.

pair of tiny feet so that a man would feel pity and be induced to take care of her. However, Manchu folksongs, poems, and literature reveal that attractive Manchu women were praised for health, vigor, and strength.[23] The Manchus appreciated women who had strong personalities, such as bold, straightforward, brave, aggressive, and talented, while according to the Chinese standard, a good woman must be pliable, quiet, timid, and weak-willed. These divergent opinions reflected the different cultural backgrounds of Manchu and Chinese. The following chapters will discuss how the cultural conflicts existed within households when Manchu men accepted certain Chinese values regarding female beauty and behavior while Manchu women still maintained the old traditions.

In addition to the differences in appearance and personalities, certain distinctive features set Manchu women apart from Chinese women. For example, in Manchu tradition, it was not uncommon for women to join military, political, economic, and other social activities.[24] After the conquest, although Manchu women gradually retired from those activities in order to adjust to a new cultural environment, they still had more opportunity to join outdoor activities than did their Chinese sisters.

Compared with Han women, Manchu women generally enjoyed more legal rights, for example, inheritance of property. They also enjoyed superior social standing and educational opportunities. In the aspects of marriage system, many differences could be seen between Manchu and Han, including the tradition of directed-marriage, *xiunu* (秀女, elegant female) selection, and widow remarriage. Manchu women differed from Chinese women in many ways before the conquest and certain of these traditions were maintained

[23] See, Ji Yonghai and Zhao Zhizhong, "Pao baima (Ride the white horse)", in *Manzu minjian wenxue gailun* (An introduction of Manchu folk literature), p. 97; Singde, "Tune of huan xi sha".
[24] For detail, see Wang Dongfang, "Zaoqi Manzu funu lisu de bianqian" (Changes in etiquette and custom of Manchu women in early time), *Manzu wenhua* (Manchu culture), 1994, 5. pp. 74-81.

until the end of the dynasty. In the following chapters, I will examine Manchu women's lives in these aspects after the conquest to see how these traditions were passed on as well as how Manchu women adjusted to the new cultural environment.

2. The issue of the Manchu ethnicity

In the recent issue of The Journal of Asian Studies, Kent Guy discusses four books on the Manchus in China--Pamela Crossley, A Translucent Mirror: History and Identity in Qing Imperial Ideology (1999); Mark Elliott, The Manchu Way: The Eight Banners and Ethnic Identity in Late Imperial China (2001); Evelyn Rawski, The Last Emperors: A social History of the Qing Imperial Institutions (1998); and Edward Rhoads, Manchus and Han: ethnic Relations and Political Power in Late Qing and Early Republic China, 1861-1928 (2000).[25] Guy raises the question, "Who or 'What' were the Manchus," which is also one of the main concerns of the four authors discussed in their books.

The term of "Manchu" was first used by Huangtaiji, the second ruler of Latter Jin polity, in a decree of 1635:

> "Our *gurun* originally had the names Manju, Hada, Ula, Yehe, and Hofa. Formerly, ignorant persons have frequently called [us] *jusen*. The term *jusen* refers to the Sibo and Chaomergan barbarians, and has nothing to do with our *gurun*. Our *gurun* establishes the name Manju. Its rule is long and has been transmitted over many generations. Henceforth, people should call our *gurun* Manju, and not use the previous demeaning name."[26]

Each of the four authors Guy discusses cites this passage in his/her book, but each author

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[25] Kent Guy, "Who Were the Manchus?" *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 61.1 (February 2002), 151-164. The four books under review are Pamela Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror: History and Identity in Qing Imperial Ideology* (1999); Mark Elliott, *The Manchu Way: The Eight Banners and Ethnic Identity in Late Imperial China* (2001); Evelyn Rawski, *The Last Emperors: A social History of the Qing Imperial Institutions* (1998); and Edward Rhoads, *Manchus and Han: ethnic Relations and Political Power in Late Qing and Early Republic China, 1861-1928* (2000).

[26] *Da Qing Taizong shilu* (Qing veritable records of Taizong), October 13 in the 9th year of Tiancong (1635), 25:29b. Cited the translation from Rawski *The last Emperors*, p. 36.

presents a different understanding of what was being created in the year of 1635. The problem comes from the term of "*gurun*" (*guo* 国 in Chinese), which in Manchu can be translated as "state", "tribe", "people", or even "court".[27] Rawski suggests that what Huangtaiji created was "a new identity that could superscribe the identities of the Jurchen and other northeastern tribes, many of whom had been subjugated by force."[28] Rhoads offers the suggestion that the Manchus were an "occupational caste."[29] The other two authors argue against each other about whether the Manchu was created as a "state" (Crossley) or as a "people" (Elliott).[30] All the definitions can coincide, if ethnic identity is understood as a process rather than a fixed object and if the term of "ethnicity" is discussed in a Chinese historical context. Even the definitions proposed by Crossley and Elliott can be reconciled if we see Chinese history as a process in which "people" and "state" are sequential stages in the development of identity.

In Chinese conception, "state" (*guo*, 国) and "people" (*min*, 民) sometimes carry the same meaning. The concept of "state" in the West refers to a country considered as a political organization. But in China, *guo* always represents a culture that unifies all the people under single polity. The concept of "people" in the West may refer to one's culture or ethnicity. In China, however, "people" is usually given political meaning, referred to the populations attached to certain polity, without too much concern about ethnic distinctions. Therefore, when Huangtaiji proclaimed the birth of Manchu in 1635,

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[27] Kent Guy, "Who Were the Manchus?" *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 61.1 (February 2002), p. 153.
[28] Evelyn Rawski, *The Last Emperors: A Social History of the Qing Imperial Institutions*, p. 36.
[29] Edward Rhoads, *Manchus and Han: Ethnic Relations and Political Power in Late Qing and Early Republic China, 1861-1928*, pp. 289-90. Cited in Guy, p. 153.
[30] Pamela Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror: History and Identity in Qing Imperial Ideology*, p. 194; Mark Elliott, *The Manchu Way: The Eight Banners and Ethnic Identity in Last Imperial China*, p. 71.

what was created could be both a state (from a political perspective) and a people (from a cultural perspective).

According to Emily Honig, ethnicity is a concept that does not exist in China.[31] It is often translated as *minzu* (民族) or *shaoshuminzu* (少数民族), two terms that literally means "nationalities" or "minorities" respectively, referred only to non-Han people. However, being a non-Han people does not necessarily mean such as person show any distinctive physical differences from Han people. Most of ethic groups in China share the same physical appearance of Han Chinese and differ from Han only by their social perceptions and culture, which form the basis for their ethnic identities. Since the ethnic identity in Chinese society can be irrelevant to one's physical features, it has a very flexible, bridgeable boundary and is rather a subjective thing—using Jenner's phrase, it is "who you think you are and who you think that other people are."[32] The Manchus, as one of ethnic groups of China, is a good example.[33] In the following pages, I will discuss in more details how the Manchus defined their ethnic boundary and how this boundary was sometimes obscure and frequently malleable.

In *Creating Chinese Ethnicity*, Emily Honig provides four observations about the meaning of ethnicity in China. First, ethnicity is not an objective thing, such as blood ties, but rather a process. It involves the creation and manipulation of notions of cultural

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[31] See, Emily Honig, *Creating Chinese Ethnicity: Subei People in Shanghai, 1850-1980*, p. 10.
[32] Jenner, W. J. F. "Race and History in China." p. 57, in *New Life Review*, II, Sept/Oct. 2001.
[33] There is a debate in China about whether the Manchus have any physical traits that differ from those of Chinese. Some people insist that the Manchus have flat heads. However, I believe that this feature was not from biological difference but comes from a cultural tradition—the Manchus usually lay their infant on a hanging cradle, rest his/her head on a very hard pillow, which, they believed, is good for the baby's health. As the result, the baby grows up with a head that is flat at the back.

distinctiveness to establish self/other dichotomies among people in a shared political and economic system. Physical appearance, language, or geographical origins help to define the ethnic boundaries, but in a very flexible way. Second, no group of peoples is inherently or immutably ethnic. Ethnicity depends upon context, which means that a group of people is not a people in their hometown; they only become ethnic group when they migrate to a foreign place. Third, ethnic identity is articulated by people seeking to identify as a "collective solidarity group" to demand political and economic rights, as well as to assert pride in a group's heritage. Fourth, ethnicity concerns its relationship to class.[34] Although her book focuses on the *Subei* people in Shanghai, Honig's observations about ethnicity can help to clarify the experience of the Manchus in China.

The term of "Manchu" had different meanings in different periods of time, depending on the social, political, and cultural situations present. When Huangtaiji proclaimed that "our *gurun* establishes the name Manju . . . people should call our *gurun* Manju, and not use the previous demeaning name" in October 1635, he created a political force that included people from various ethnic backgrounds, including, but not limited to, Jurchen, Mongol, Chinese, Korean, and Sibo.[35] Since these peoples were under the same political power, lived in the same region, and were enrolled in the same military organization as banner soldiers, they gradually reduced their cultural differences and eventually became one people. In a sense, we can compare the creation of Manchus with the founding of the People's Republic of China. When Mao Zedong proclaimed the birth of PRC on October 1, 1949, he created both a state and a people—Chinese (*zhonghua*

[34] See, Emily Honig, *Creating Chinese Ethnicity*, p. 9.
[35] Sibo is an ethnic group distributed over Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region and Liaoning Province.

minzu 中华民族), including Han people as the majority and other 55 politically recognized minority nationalities (*shaoshu minzu* 少数民族). Under this polity, one can be a "Chinese" without being a "Han", just as under Huangtaiji's Latter Jin, one could be a Manchu without being Jurchen—the people who made up the main body of Manchus.[36]

According to Russian anthropologist Yu. V. Bromley, ethnic groups can be defined as "a firm aggregate people, historically established on a given territory, possessing in common relatively stable particularities of language and culture, and also recognizing their unity and difference from other similar formations (self awareness) and expressing this in a self-appointed name (ethnonym)."[37] Before the Manchu conquest in 1644, the Manchus were an ethnic group only in a sense of having common territory, name, language, and culture. But they might not have had a strong ethnic consciousness, which was usually developed only when one people migrated to a foreign place and was surrounded by other peoples of the society—using Honig's words, "the Irish were obviously not ethnic in Ireland but only became so when they migrated to the United States."[38]

After the conquest in 1644, the greater part of Manchu population moved into China proper. From the beginning of Qing dynasty, the Manchu emperors were very concerned about their ethnic identities and emphasized the significance of maintaining

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[36] A new thought about the multi-cultural and multi-ethnic feature of present China suggests that China is only superficially a poly-ethnic country. It is actually inhabited by a single ethnic group. In other words, all the nationalities are, beneath their apparent diversity, one. See, W. J. F. Jenner, "Race and History in China." p. 57. *New Life Review*, no. 2, Sept/Oct. 2001.

[37] T. Dragadze, "The Place of 'Ethnos' Theory in Soviet Anthropology," in Yu. V. Bromley *et al.* (eds), *Contemporary Ethnic Processes in the USSR,* Moscow, 1975 (in Russian). Cited translation in Ernest Gellner, ed., *Soviet and Western Anthropology,* p.162. Also see Pamela Crossley, "Thinking about Ethnicity in Early Modern China." p. 17, note 30, *Late Imperial China*, 11: 1, (June 1990).

[38] Emily Honig, *Creating Chinese Ethnicity*, p. 9.

their Manchu traditions. The Qianlong emperor (r. 1736-1795) was especially concerned with the maintenance of Manchu ethnicity when he realized that, after one hundred years of occupation, the Manchus, especially bannermen, were in danger of losing their ethnic distinctiveness, of softening, and of becoming Chinese. In order to preserve Manchu ethnicity Manchu cities were built in Beijing and in other major cities, as given territories, to separate Manchus from Chinese. Manchu language was taught in Manchu schools and spoken in Manchu households.[39] Manchu people, as an occupational caste, enjoyed political, economic, and social privileges from government.[40] From the date of the conquest to the end of the dynasty, Manchu people, from emperors down to common bannermen and women, had strong self-conscious sense of belonging to a distinct ethnic community.

However, throughout the Qing period, the Manchu ethnic boundary was very flexible and sometimes unclear. This lack of clarity was first reflected in the ambiguity of the terms of "banner people" (*qiren* 旗人) and "Manchus" (*manzu* 滿族).

Technically, "banner people" referred to those registered in Eight Banners, including the soldiers, their families, and servants. However, in all Qing documents and conversation of people's daily life, the term of "banner people" was frequently conflated as "Manchus." By the twentieth century, *qiren* formally became an equivalent term for "Manchus." For the sake of convenience, in the following chapters of this dissertation, "Manchu people" or "Manchus" refers to all the people in banners, regardless their

[39] "The 'Eating Crabs' Youth Book" recorded that Manchu people spoke Manchu at home. See, Mark Elliott trans. "The 'Eating Crabs' Youth Book." p. 272. Susan Mann and Yu-yin Cheng, ed. *Under Confucian Eyes: Writings on Gender in Chinese History.*

[40] For detail regarding Manchu bannermen's political, economic, and social privileges, See, Mark Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, Chapter Four "The Iron Rice Bowl of Banner Privilege." pp. 175-209.

originally ethnic identity. In other words, Manchu people include not only those who enrolled in the Manchu Eight Banners, but also those who enrolled in Mongol and Han (Chinese) banners. In the Qing period, people were not divided by ethnic descent, but classified into two groups—bannermen and commoners (*minren* 民人), depending on their social identities.[41] Among the commoners, the overwhelming majority was Han Chinese while the banner people included those with various ethnic backgrounds.

As noted earlier, the banner system was founded in about 1601, starting with four Manchu banners. By the eve of the Manchu conquest in 1644, the banner system had expanded to twenty-four banners, including three ethnic divisions—eight Manchu banner, eight Mongol banners (mainly from Chakhar, Kharachin, and other eastern Mongol groups), and eight Chinese banners (made up of Han Chinese in Liaodong areas). Although there were some slight differences between these ethnic divisions, all the people in banners were considered to be part of the Manchu population, or in other words, both Mongols and Chinese were Manchurized and joined the Qing in opposing the Chinese Ming dynasty. Evidence of Manchurization was that, when the term of "the Manchu conquest" is used today, people barely think about the ethnic variety within Manchus but consider Manchus as a single ethnic group.

In fact, the Manchus had never been a single people, and even the Manchu banners included various ethnic groups, for example, the original banners included the Chinese in Liaodong frontier, who joined the banners before 1630s when Chinese

[41] Ding Yizhuang. *Manzu de funu shenghuo yu hunyin zhidu yanjiu* (Research on life and marriage patterns of Manchu women), p. 331; Also see, Jin Qizong, *Beijing jiaoqu de Manzu* (The Manchus in Beijing Suburb), pp. 40-41.

banners had not been set up. These Manchurized Chinese had Manchu surnames, spoke Manchu, and could not be distinguished from other Manchus. After the Mongol and Chinese banners were founded in 1630s, these "Chinese" were still in Manchu banners.

In China, ethnic identity is primarily determined by one's culture, not by blood ties. People in banners shared the same culture, no matter which ethnic groups they originally came from. For example, all the banner women—including Han women in Chinese banners—did not bind their feet; they wore three rings on each ear; rode horseback; and were allowed to participate outdoor activities like men. They also enjoyed higher social positions and more educational opportunities than Chinese women. A comparison between a Chinese woman in banners and the ones outside reveals the broad distinctions between them while there was little difference between women in different division of banners, in other words, Chinese banner woman shared a common cultural heritage with the Manchus, rather than with Chinese commoners, although they might have blood ties with the latter.

The case of Cao Yin (1658-1712) furnished an example of the way in which originally Han people became part of the Manchu identity. Cao Yin's ancestors were originally Chinese living in Liaodong. His great-grandfather Cao Hsi-yuan was captured in the time of Nurhaci (1559-1626) and became as a *booi* (bondservant)[42] in the Plain White Banner.[43] Cao Yin's father served in the Imperial Household under the Shunzhi

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[42] "*Booi*" in Manchu means "of the house," usually translate as "bondservant". The first bondservants were slaves in private households. Most of them were captives in battles with hostile tribes, Mongols, Chinese, and Korean. When the number of *booi* increased along with the Manchus conquered more land, they were formed into *niru* on the model of the Manchu eight Banner organization, belonging to the emperor, called the Upper Three Banners, or Manchu princes, which were called the Lower Three Banners. See, Jonathan Spence, *Ts'ao Yin and the K'ang-hsi Emperor, Bondservant and Master*, pp. 7-9.

[43] Before the Mongol and Chinese banners were set up during 1630s to 1640s, there were banners composed by various peoples. These banners were given a prefix as "Manchu banners" when Mongol and Chinese banner were formed so that people could distinguish them from the Mongol and Chinese banners.

emperor and, during the Kangxi period, he became the textile commissioner of Nanjing, the post that was inherited by Cao Yin. The position as *booi* in the Plain White Banner was hereditary. Thus, for generations, Cao's family is listed in the genealogy of the Manchu clans as being a bondservant in the Plain White Banner. The life that Cao family lived did not differ from that of a Manchu family. The Manchu identity of the Cao family will become important when the novel *Honglou meng* (Dream of the red chamber) is used as primary sources frequently in the following chapters of the dissertation.

Chinese in banners were treated as Manchu, not as Han. The most remarkable evidence was in the policies of marriage.[44] Qing had a policy that prohibited intermarriage between Manchu and Chinese. However, the archives show that intermarriage between Manchu and Chinese within banners was not uncommon, because the Chinese in banners were not considered as Han but as Manchu. Throughout the Qing period, Manchu emperors were very concerned about the nuptiality and "ethnic purity" of Manchu elite. In order to guarantee marriage partners for imperial clan and elite, *xiunu* selection took place every three years when all the young girls between the ages of thirteen and sixteen in banners (Manchu, Mongol, and Chinese) were required to present themselves as the candidates for wives or concubines of Manchu elite.[45] Even until as late as the 27th year of Guangxu (1901) when the court lifted the ban of Manchu-Han intermarriage, the court still emphasized, "as for *xiunu*, [they] should be still selected from the banners, not from Han people."[46] From this edict, we see that in the eyes of Manchu rulers, all the people in banners belonged to the Manchu ethnicity (no matter

[44] See Chapter Four of this dissertation for full discussion about the policies of intermarriage.
[45] *Da Qing huidian shili* (The collected institutes and precedents of the Qing dynasty), vol. 1114, p. 12.
[46] *Da Qing Dezong shilu* (Qing veritable records of Dezong), December in the 27th year of Guangxu (1901), 492: 9b.

they were originally Mongol or Chinese) and, therefore, were qualified to be candidates for *xiunu* for the sake of ethnic purity. Obviously, this "purity" had nothing to do with ties of blood, but focused on cultural identity. This identity of Chinese in banners explains how Cao Xueqin could depict Yuanchun, the granddaughter of Madam Jia, as an imperial concubine.[47]

Mark Elliott examines the question of the extent to which we understand the banners as an affiliation that determined people's ethnic identity in the Qing dynasty. He argues that not everyone registered within the banners was Manchu. Many people in the banners were Mongols or frontier-dwelling in Chinese.[48]

It was true that different treatments existed within the banner populations according to their ethnic divisions. But "discrimination" among banner people could not be compared with that between bannermen and commoners, most notably between Chinese bannermen and Chinese commoners. To a great extent, the Manchu rulers learned from Yuan Mongols in terms of dividing their people into four categories. Under the Yuan rule, people were divided into Mongols, *Semu* people (various peoples from Eurasia), Han (Chinese who acculturated to Yuan), and Southerners (Chinese in the South), in which the first three categories were superior to and in effect ruled the Southerners. Under Manchu rule, three divisions within the banner system were in the ruling positions while the Chinese outside the banners were the subjects.

In the following chapters of this dissertation, I will use the term of "Manchus" for all banner populations except where specifically indicated. In addition to the fact that all

[47] Cao Xueqin had two aunts who were selected as imperial concubines. See *Hongluomeng* [Chinese version], p. 2.
[48] Mark Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, pp. 13-14.

the banner people were treated as Manchus, I conflated "Manchus" with "banner people" also because "[people] in banners" (*zaiqi* 在旗) was the only objective criterion by which to define the Manchu—an ethnic group with a flexible, obscure, and subjective boundaries, which I think was one of the unique features of Manchu ethnicity. Historian and ethnologist Wang Zhonghan has examined the Manchu mutable identities and lists all the channels by which one might change one's ethnic identity.[49] Chinese commoners usually joined banners through sale to Manchus, or by investment (brought lands to banners), for rewards, or through adoption and marriage; bannermen changed their identities to that of "*min*" (commoners) by running away from banners or voluntarily leaving the banner, as a result of punishment, or by marrying a Han Chinese (this case applies only to women). According to Wang, when people registered in banners, they were Manchus. Once they were not registered in banners for any reason, they became Han.[50] It was not uncommon for a person change to his ethnic identity more than once during his/her lifetime. For example, when a Han woman married a bannerman, she became a Manchu; if she remarried a Chinese commoner after her Manchu husband died, she then would slip back into the category of Chinese. In the early years of the Qing conquest, many Chinese joined the banners and became Manchu. However, after the mid-eighteenth century when banner population expanded to the degree that the government could not afford to support them all financially, some Chinese bannermen left banners and became Chinese again. Generally speaking, Manchu ethnicity passed on from one

[49] Wang Zhonghan, "Qingdai Baqi zhong de Man Han minzu chengfen wenti" (The question of Manchu and Han ethnic identities in Qing Eight Banners), in *Qingshi xukao* (The sequel of Qing history), pp. 43-79; Mark Elliott discusses this issue as well in his book, *The Manchu Way*, pp. 329-344.

[50] Wang Zhonghan, "Qingdai Baqi zhong de Man Han minzu chengfen wenti" (The question of Manchu and Han ethnic identities in Qing Eight Banners), in *Qingshi xukao* (The sequel collection of Qing history), p. 43.

generation to another through lineage, but blood heritage was unnecessary. The key point of being a Manchu was to register in banners. To some extent, ethnicity in Qing China was more like citizenship—mutable, subjective, and only representing one's legal and social identity.[51]

Conclusion

This chapter briefly discussed the ethnic origins of the Manchus and their unique social organization—the Eight Banner system, which was the most important institution of the Qing in terms of defining and maintaining Manchu ethnicity. The chapter also examined the problems of ethnic identities among Chinese people, and among the Manchus in particular, which demonstrated that cultural characteristics were the principal criteria by which one's ethnic identity was defined.

This chapter concludes, first, the Manchus as an ethnic group in the northeast of China were composed mainly of Jurchen but also included many other peoples with various ethnic backgrounds. The multi-ethnic formation of the concept of "Manchu" determined its ambivalence in the process of acculturation when it encountered other

[51] The feature of subjectivity in defining one's ethnic identity is especially notable in present day China. People have options to choose to be members of one particular "minority nationality." Virtually none of the anthropological criteria is required by the government for recognition of minority status. The only evidence the applicant needs to submit is the register record that his/her parents (one parent or both) filed in 1949 when the Communists established the system of household register—the applicant is only allowed to apply for the minority group for which his/her parent(s) registered. Being a member of a minority, one can enjoy many privileges, for example, in 1970s and 1980s as a Muslim (*huizu*), one will enjoy the privilege of being rationed with three *jin* beef or mutton monthly per household while Han family can only eat two *jin* pork per month; for some minority groups, the government allows the members to have two children per couple while a Han couple is only allowed one child; all the descendants of minority nationalities enjoyed the privilege of being given 10 credit points on the entrance examination of colleges. Many Han changed their ethnic identities after 1980s for these benefits. For example, the census of 1978 showed that there were 2,650,000 Manchu in China. Surprisedly, four years later in 1982, the number went up to 4,290,000, increased more than one third, and reached about 7,000,000 in 1987. (cited in Wang Zhonghan's "Qingdai Baqi zhong de Man Han minzu chengfen wenti," p. 44). These newly registered Manchu people do not have any differences from Han Chinese, either blood descent or culture. I would like to say that some ethnic groups in China today are more like "clubs".

peoples and cultures. The Manchus were good at borrowing cultural heritages from other peoples while always vigilantly guarding their own ethnic identity by keeping the old traditions alive. During the last few decades, many scholars, especially Chinese scholars, have emphasized only one side of the coin—that the Manchus learned from Chinese, and eventually became Chinese.[52] Studies on the Manchu accomplishment of maintaining ethnic identity began in the 1990s in the United States. My dissertation will continue the study and make a contribution by examining women's roles in maintaining Manchu ethnicity. Second, the Eight Banner system in Qing dynasty played a crucial role in defining and maintaining Manchu ethnicity. In addition to that the banner organization itself was unique cultural heritage of the Manchus, the way it controlled its people, especially after moving into China proper, minimized the Chinese cultural influence on them and therefore helped to maintain Manchu ethnic identity until the end of the dynasty.

Tartar cities in Beijing and in garrisons in other major provinces were built as a strategy to confine banner people within a Manchu cultural environment, geographically distanced from the Chinese population, in which Manchu language was spoken and taught, Manchu etiquette and customs were practiced, people found marriage partners within the city, and could obtain almost every service or facilities for their daily needs. The arrangement of this "ethnic ghetto" was especially responsible for the fact that Manchu women changed more slowly than men in the process of Manchu-Han acculturation because the separation of residence affected women more than men due to their different social positions and functions. Third, "ethnicity" is a concept that actually

[52] The terms scholars used vary, including "*hanhua*" (汉化, sinicization), "*tonghua*" (同化, assimilation), "*ruhua*" (儒化, Confucianization).

does not exist in China, either in history or in present. I borrow the term for convenience in the study of the Manchu, a group of people who had different cultural traditions from Chinese, to see how they adjusted to a new political and cultural environment after they conquered China, trying to avoid the perils of being assimilated by Chinese who outnumbered them nearly fifty to one. Ethnicity in the context of Manchu rule in China was determined by people's social identity, for example, whether they registered in banners or not, which in turn determined the kind of life they would live and what cultural traditions they should follow. Therefore, ethnicity in the Qing period was defined primarily by cultural distinctions. We should keep in mind that the term of ethnicity in Chinese social context might carry a different meaning from the same term of in Western societies. To understand this distinctive feature will help us to explain many unsolved puzzles of Qing history, and of Chinese history in general.

Chapter Two: Manchu Women's Roles and Positions in the Family

The discussion in this chapter focuses on the Manchu women's roles and position in family life. Compared with other Manchu customs that had changed after the conquest, family life and the relations of family members in Manchu society were consistently maintained as tradition. Until the end of the dynasty, the Manchu women's roles and position in family were still greatly distinct from those of Chinese women. In Chinese society, a woman was expected to be constantly subordinate to the male family members throughout her lifetime, which meant that she should obey her father when she was young and obey her husband after she married, when her husband died, she should obey her son (s).[1] However, this unconditional life-long obedience was not the case of the Manchu women whose status in the family varied according to their ages, marital status, and the structure of the households into which they married. Generally speaking, an unmarried girl would enjoy superior standing in family and treatment at least equal to (if not better than) that of her male siblings. In most well-to-do families, unmarried girls usually received the same opportunity for education as their brothers, including reading, writing, and riding. Once a woman entered into another household through marriage, her status would deteriorate dramatically. She was usually dominated (sometimes abused) by her parents-in-law (especially mother-in-law) and her husband's siblings (especially sisters). She worked as a maid of the family and had no rights over the property or any family decisions. However, a Manchu wife would finally "stand up" in the family after her mother-in-law died and/or her sisters-in-law married out. Then she would become the

[1] In Chinese, it was written as "*zaijia cong fu; chujia cong fu; fusi cong zi*" (在家从父,出嫁从夫,夫死从子).This was "Three obedience" among many other Confucian codes for women.

dominant figure of the household. Those who became mothers-in-law would often enslave their daughters-in-law. Thus, an elderly married Manchu woman, including widows, was usually the most powerful figure of the family and enjoyed as much power as the head of the household.

Very few pioneer works about Manchu women's family life can be found as reference. The only specialized study on this topic of which I am aware is Lai Huimin's article, "*Qingdai huangzu funu de jiating diwei* (Qing imperial women's position in family)".[2] Based on the archives of the imperial lineage, Lai examines the various roles the imperial women played within the family during their lifetimes. She emphasizes the different status of an imperial woman before and after marriage. She also analyzes the unequal treatment between imperial wives and concubines, and the widows' situation. Since the materials she uses for the article are mainly from the archives of imperial lineage (*zongrenfu dangan* 宗人府档案) between the late 18th and the 20th centuries, her research is within the limits of the women in the imperial families of late Qing dynasty. Besides Lai Huimin's study, Elliott's article "Manchu Widows and Ethnicity in Qing China", briefly mentions the Manchu women's distinctive position in society and in family, saying that "in Manchu society, [un]married women enjoyed higher status and greater freedom than women in Chinese society."[3] However, he did not investigate this subject further since it was not the main focus of that article.

[2] Lai Huimin's article is in *Jindai Zhongguo funushi yanjiu* (Studies on modern Chinese women's history), 2 (June 1994), pp. 3-25.

[3] See Mark Elliott's "Manchu Widows and Chastity in Qing China." *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 41.1 (January 1999). p. 66. The editor seems to have missed the word of "unmarried" because the quotations Elliott uses to support this argument are about both unmarried and married women. See, p. 66, note 120.

The relatively few scholars who have made effort to examine Manchu women's roles and positions in the family does not mean that it is not a worthwhile issue, but it is a difficult one to work on. The main difficulties come from the sources. Materials from officially published books are usually uninformative because government was not concerned about the common people's daily lives. Women's roles and voices were especially ignored. Therefore, records of women and women's issues could only be found fragmentarily among various sources.

By using Qing archives, mostly court records, the notes of Qing scholars (*Qingren weiji* 清人文集), the materials from literary works, including novels, poetry, and folk songs, and some interviews of elderly Manchu women, this chapter focuses on Manchu women's roles and positions in the family at different periods of their lives, according to their ages, marital status, and the family structure. I will also try to explain why this distinctive Manchu tradition could be maintained and how this tradition related to the construction of Manchu ethnicity in terms of affecting marriage patterns and reproducing banner peoples and culture.

1. Unmarried Girls

Unmarried Manchu women enjoyed superior standing and greater freedom than their counterparts in Chinese society. Unlike most Chinese women who suffered from foot-binding, Manchus women did not bind their feet so that they could walk as freely as men. According to Chinese tradition, at age of four or five, mothers would start to bind their daughters feet; the girls of ten years above were to be confined in the inner quarters and were not allowed contact with male strangers, including sometimes even male family

members.[4] The Manchu girls, however, enjoyed much more freedom. They could go outside for sports and social activities, such as riding, shooting, and hunting, attending a fair, or going to the theater for operas.[5] The Spanish Dominican Friar Domingo Navarrete visited Beijing in 1665. He wrote in his travel notes, "The Tartar women wear boots and ride astride like men, and make a notable figure either afoot or a-horseback."[6] Li Minhuan, a Korean traveler who had a close contact with the Manchus before they conquered China proper, pointed out that women could ride horses as well as men, and they even took part in hunting.[7] The Manchu poet Singde (1655-85) commented in a poem on a winsome young girl riding her horse down the street, who "though shy, still turned her head back to look" at him.[8] A folk song described how after the Manchu conquest, the appearance of young girls in public space became a common sight in Beijing—the city where more than half of banner populations resided. The song says, "roosters do not crow and dogs do not bark [when] the girls of 18 years old run on the street."[9] Princess Hexiao, the youngest daughter of the Qianlong emperor, "was skilled in archery. She often dressed up like a boy and went hunting with the emperor."[10] Unmarried Manchu girls had a habit of imitating boys' behaviors. In addition to dressing up as boys (possibly for the convenience of sports), girls sometimes learned from men to

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[4] Sima Guang, *Jia fan* (Demistic regulations), 1: 464-468; 6: 591.
[5] Xu Ke, *Qing bai lei chao* (Collection of Qing miscellanies), p. 2212.
[6] See *The Travel and Controversies of Friar Domingo Navarrete, 1618-1686*, ed. J. S. Cummins, 2: 217.
[7] Li Minhuan, *Jianzhou wenjian lu* (Sightseeing in Jianzhou). p. 56.
[8] See Singde, *Tune of Huan Sha Xi*. The whole poem read like this:
A pavilion bathed in the setting sun,
Vermilion curtain half open with a golden hook,
Leaning on a railing, I am anxious.
Galloping down below,
A young girl was riding a horse,
Light make-up highlights her beauty,
Timid and shy, she yet turns around to gaze.
[9] See Xu Ke, *Qing bai lei chao* (Collection of Qing miscellanies), p. 2212.
[10] Zhao Lian, *Xiaoting xu lu* (Miscellanies in Xiaoting), vol. 2, p. 1120.

become sworn female "brothers" (*baibazi* 拜把子) and addressed each other by male titles, such as the elder brother (*da ge* 大哥), the second brother (*er ge* 二哥), the third brother (*san ge* 三哥), etc.[11] In the novel of *Dream of the Red Chamber*, by Cao Xueqin, River Mist (Shi Xiangyun) always dressed up like a boy and Phoenix (Wang Xifeng) was raised pretending to be a boy (*zi you jiachong naner jiaoyang* 自幼假充男儿教养).[12]

Manchu girls had superior standing in the family. According to Qing scholar Xu Ke, Manchu people traditionally valued and thought highly of unmarried girls in their households. In a Manchu family, unmarried daughters were inferior to no one except their parents. Their parents, brothers, and sisters-in-law all addressed them as *gu-nai-nai* (姑奶奶 an honorable title for unmarried daughters, literary translated as "grand auntie") instead of their own names. They also preferred to be addressed in male titles by the younger generations in the family. For example, rather than being called as "auntie" (*gu-gu* 姑姑) by their brother's children, they were addressed as "female-uncle" (*gu die* 姑爹), or "female-granduncle" (*gu yeye* 姑爷爷) by their brother's grandchildren. At the dinnertime, parents were seated in the northern side of the dinning table and the daughters were seated in both sides of the table, while wives stood by the table and provided service.[13] In Cao's novel, in family banquet scenes, the Matriarch Madam Jia was seated in the honorable seat and all the unmarried girls (including the daughters of Jia family and the relatives) were seated in both sides of the table. The wives, such as

[11] See Jin Qizong, *Beijing jiaoqu de Manzu* (The Manchus in Beijing suburb), p. 49 and Lai Huimin, "Qingdai huangzu funu de jiating diwei (Qing imperial women's position in family)." *Jindai Zhongguo funushi yanjiu* (Studies on modern Chinese women's history), 2 (June 1994), p. 6.
[12] Cao Xueqing, *Honglou meng* (Dream of the red chamber), p. 25.
[13] Xu Ke, *Qing bai lei chao* (Collection of Qing miscellanies), p. 2212.

Madam Xing and Madam Wang (daughters-in-law of the Matriarch), Li Wan and Phoenix (daughters-in-law of Madam Xing and Wang) were in serving positions for the dinner.[14] At the eve of Chinese New Year, the younger ones in the family and wives were required to perform three kowtows and nine *bai* (拜)[15] to the elders in order to express their respect and gratitude. But unmarried girls were excused.[16]

The superior position and the environment of appeasement in the natal family made some Manchu girls arrogant and willful as seen in a case from the archives:

> San-ge-ge was the third daughter of Zhong-bao. One day in the 13th year of Qianlong (1748), she went to Ba-yan-tai's home to take some money. When she got there, someone told her that Ba-yan-tai was at her uncle Shen-bao-zhu's home. She went to her uncle's home then. Shen-bao-zhu's servant met her at the door saying that Ba-yan-tai was not there either. When Shen-bao-zhu heard that San-ge-ge and the servant were arguing outside, he asked the servant to bring her in. But she said to the servant, "Why do I need to go in. Can't he hear of me from where he is? He must be a deaf then!" The servant passed the words to Shen-bao-zhu. The uncle thought it was impolite of her to say words like that, therefore, he sent the servant to her as his representative and asked her, "Do you forget who your father is and who She-bao-zhu is?" San-ge-ge said to the servant, "Why are you asking me? You should go to ask your master!"[17]

The wanton and unbridled personality of the Manchu girl was clearly seen from the case. San-ge-ge did not think she, as a person in younger generation, should respect someone senior.

More work might need to be done before we can explain with certainty why Manchu girls had such a superior position in family and could behave so arrogantly. I believe, however, it closely related to the *xiunu* (秀女 elegant females) selection—a

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[14] Cao, *Honglou meng*, p. 29.
[15] A Chinese way to pay respect—to make a bow with hands folded in front.
[16] Ding Yizhuang, *Zuihou de jiyi: shiliu wei qiren funu de koushu lishi* (The last memories: the oral history of 16 Manchu women). p. 79, 113.
[17] *Zongrenfu shuotang gao* (Archives of the imperial lineage), #2251, September in the 13th year of Qianlong (1648).

system that guaranteed the best marriage partners for the imperial clan and other nobles. According to Qing statutes, all the girls in 24 banners (including 8 Manchu banners, 8 Mongol banners, and 8 Chinese banners) between 13 and 16 years old were required to present themselves for the triennial *xiunu* selection in Palace in Beijing. Those selected would stay in the palace as candidates for imperial positions or as palace maids. A few from them were selected either as wives or as imperial concubines, in which case they would remain in the palace forever.[18] Only after they went through this process and were not selected, could their marriages be arranged by their parents and the head of the banner to which they belonged.

Once a girl entered the palace through *xiunu* selection, she could bring great benefit to her natal family, no matter whether she was finally chosen as a wife or concubine of the imperial lineage. As a *xiunu*, she could contribute to her family financially during her stay in the palace, which was up to five years. According to Qing statutes, "all the *xiunu*'s daily expense will be covered by the court. They will also be paid one tael of silver each month until their status has been changed, either they are promoted as imperial wives/concubines or they are released to their natal family. When they return, they will receive one time reward of 20 taels of silver."[19] In other words, a *xiunu* could receive in total 80 taels of silver for the five years service in palace. Was it a considerable sum of money? According to Mark Elliott, the average annual wages of a laboring Han Chinese male was about 12.4 taels of silver.[20] Therefore, a *xiunu* on service

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[18] *Da Qing huidian shili* (The collected institutes and precedents of the Qing dynasty), 1114: 11b-12b and 16b.

[19] *Da Qing huidian shili* (The collected institutes and precedents of the Qing dynasty), 1114:12.

[20] See Mark Elliott, "Manchu Widows and Chastity in Qing China," p. 57. The original text reads like this, "the wife of an ordinary mounted soldier stood to receive the not-inconsiderable sum of 186 ounces of silver upon his death—roughly fifteen times the average annual wages of a laboring Han Chinese male."

could contribute to her family at least as much as a Chinese male laborer did to his. According the archives, a female servant received 2.5 taels of silver for her annual service.[21] To buy a married couple as servants only cost 20 to 30 taels of silver in the Qianlong period.[22] To what extent could a girl help her family financially? What proportions her income could be in the total income of the household? Under the banner system, in general, only one from every four male adult bannermen would be recruited as *tiaojia* (挑甲 soldier in duty) and paid three to four taels of silver monthly. By the mid-eighteenth century, the ratio became one to seven or eight. Those who failed to be chosen were called *xiansan* (闲散 idlers). Since all the bannermen were prohibited from earning money through other jobs, these *xiansan* must rely financially on the one in their household who was recruited and brought in income. It was not uncommon that a Manchu household with seven or eight, or even a dozen of people, had only one employed male to rely on.[23] Obviously, a girl's monthly stipend was not an inconsiderable income to a family and sometimes a family might have two or three girls serving in the palace.

During their stay in palace, some *xiunu* were chosen to marry the sons of imperial lineage. In this case, the selected girl could make a greater contribution to her family, not

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[21] *Neige Hanwen huangce* (The yellow book in Chinese from Grand Secretariat), microfilm, # C-5575. March 28 in the 4th year of Qianlong (1739).
[22] See, *Xingke tiben* (Memorials from Justice Department), February 28 in the first year of Qianlong (1736); September 23 in the 2nd year of Qianlong (1737); and *Neige Hanwen huangce* (The yellow book in Chinese from Grand Secretariat), microfilm, # C-4046. April 27 in the 3rd year of Qianlong (1738). There was an extremely example that one bought four servants at the price of 12 taels of silver. See, *Neiwufu laiwen* (Archives of Imperial Household Department), #2125, July 23 in the 23 year of Qianlong (1758).
[23] Ding, *Manzu de funu shenghuo yu hunyin zhidu yanjiu* (Research on life and marriage patterns of Manchu women), p. 143.

only in terms of the regular monthly income but also receive many political, economic, and social privileges through the marital relationship because the members of her natal family would become relatives of the imperial family.[24] If the girl married a prince who eventually succeeded to the throne, she would become the empress or imperial concubine. The example of Dowager Ci Xi demonstrates the ultimate level to which a *xiunu* might rise. Dowager Ci Xi was the most powerful woman in China in the nineteenth century. She was a daughter of a lower-ranking bannerman from Ye-he clan and was selected as a *xiunu* in 1851. Then she was promoted to the fifth rank of imperial consort of the Xianfeng emperor (r. 1851-1861). She became very powerful when her seven-year-old son succeeded to the throne. After her son died, she made her sister's son the emperor (the Guangxu emperor, r. 1875-1908) and continued to rule the country from "behind the screen" until she died in 1908.

The potential of serving in the palace or becoming wives/concubines of imperial lineage granted Manchu girls a superior position in family. Since every girl in the banners could possibly be chosen as a *xiunu*, they were respected by others in the family, not only by their brothers and sisters-in-law but also by their parents. For those who were dismissed in the final selection and returned to home, their status was usually still very high because of the financial contribution they made to the family during their stay in the palace.

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[24] See the example of Cardinal Spring, the imperial concubine in Cao's novel of *Honglou meng*. Cardinal Spring asked eunuchs to send her natal family as many as 120 taels of silver to celebrate the Spring Festival. p. 291. Even her grandmother, the Matriarch Madam Jia, paid great respect to her and said "you brought our family a great deal of benefits." p. 940. At the time of the Matriarch's death, Jia family received 1,000 taels of silver from the Department of Ritual because the Matriarch was the grandmother of the imperial consort. p. 1218. The author himself had two aunts who married Qing princes, sons of the Kangxi emperor (r. 1662-1722) when Cao family was at the peak of its prominence. Cao, *Honglou meng*, [Chinese version], p. 2.

In theory, the *xiunu* who were dismissed in the final selection were eligible to marry someone else when they returned home. In fact, however, many of them preferred to stay with their natal families forever, and chose not to marry. Two factors might responsible for their choice. Some of them were too old to find good matches after a five-year stint of being a *xiunu*; or, after having been spoiled at the palace and knowing how a woman's privileges could deteriorate after marriage, many women preferred to postpone marriage. Although a five-year commitment would not have much affect on those who entered the palace at the age of 13 and retired from the service by 18, it did affect on those older ones who were selected at 16 years old and returned home when they were 21.[25] The deterioration of women's position in family after marriage was a more decisive factor on discouraging some women from leaving their natal families. Many preferred to prolong their happiness as unmarried daughters with their own parents. This was true not only for the women who retired from *xiunu* service but also for all the banner women in general.

This tradition of marrying at a relatively late in age or staying unmarried directly affected the reproduction of Manchu people. Women who married in their late twenties, or even late thirties,[26] might have already passed their peak fertility and would produce fewer children compared to those who started to bear children in their late teens, not to say those who decided to stay with their natal family unmarried.

[25] According to James Lee's research, the average age Manchu women married was 15.6 before 1700, 18 in 1710s, and 21 in 1850s. See Wang Feng and James Lee, "Liangzhong butong de jiezhixing xianzhi jizhi: huangzu renkou dui hunnei shengyulu de kongzhi (Nuptiality and fertility among the Qing nobility: implications for two types of preventive checks)," p. 19. In James Lee and Guo Songyi, *Qingdai huangzu renkou xingwei he shehui huanjing* (Qing imperial population behavior and social environment), pp. 18-37.
[26] *Da Qing huidian shili* (The collected institutes and precedents of the Qing dynasty), 1218:7a.

In Manchu society, many households kept unmarried adult daughters at home until they found an ideal match. Some might not marry at all and lived as "old maids" in their natal families. Unlike many Chinese families, that typically married out their daughters as early as possible, the Manchus could financially afford these "old maids" at home because of the economic privilege they enjoyed as banner people.[27] These unmarried adult daughters had at least the same rights and power as their brothers in the family affairs. For example, as long as they lived in the family, their parents (or their brothers' family in the case that their parents had died) had the responsibility for their daily expenses. As the elder sister-in-law (*daguzi* 大姑子), they expected respect from their younger brothers' wives and could act in the role of a mother-in-law to require a daughter-in-law's attentions. These "old maids" were often involved in the issue of adopting a male heir (*lisi* 立嗣) for their parents or brothers and their recommendations usually carried a lot of weight in the final decision.[28] Even when a male heir was adopted, the daughters could still have the rights of inheritance and would equally divide the property with the male heir.[29] The rights Manchu girls enjoyed over property were very

[27] From interviews of elderly Manchu women in Beijing, we know that because many Manchu parents spoiled their daughters too much, they usually preferred to wait for an ideal match for their daughters rather than marrying them out rashly. This practice caused many Manchu women to be married at a relatively older age or they might never have a chance to marry. Another reason for the delay was that most Manchu families could afford their adult daughters at home. See Ding Yizhuang, *Zuihou de jiyi: shiliu wei qiren funu de koushu lishi* (The last memories: the oral history of 16 Manchu women). p. 76, 131.

[28] According to archives, Yifan's daughter made the final decision for her brother Zainiu to adopt her nephew Pulu as an heir. See *Zongrenfu tanggao laiwen* (Archives of imperial lineage), #442, November in the 19th year of Guangxu (1893); another example can be seen from *Zongrenfu tanggao laiwen* (Archives of imperial lineage), # 546, December in the 32nd year of Guangxu (1906), in which Zaiyong's daughter chose a male heir for her sonless father in order to share the family properties with her two uncles. Actually, Zaiong's daughter was in charge of her father's share since the heir was very young.

[29] According to archives, Yujie had three daughters but no son. He adopted Guibao as an heir. However, after Yujie died, his wife Wang *shi* divided his property into five shares, each child got one share as well as Wang *shi* as Yujie's widow. See, *Zongrenfu tanggao laiwen* (Archives of imperial lineage), #536, May in the 8th year of Guangxu (1882).

different from the situation in Chinese families whose daughters inherited property only when the family did not have any male heir. This Manchu tradition, which was maintained until the end of the Qing dynasty, reflected the superior position of unmarried women in their natal families and in the Manchu society.

2. Young Wives

Like women in other societies, most Manchu women would marry at least once during their lifetimes, even though marriage might actually mean deterioration of her status in the family, especially if she lived in an extended family and would thus became a subordinate daughter-in-law.

Materials from archival sources, novels, and interviews reveal that most Manchu households were headed by the eldest female figure in the family, who had power to manage family matters and control other family members, including the male members—her husband, sons, and grandsons. Consequently, the power of husbands within the household was greatly discounted. If a wife disagreed with her in-laws, the husband would usually not stand by his wife but do whatever his mother asked of him because he considered himself a member of the extended family rather than a member of the nuclear family,[30] the son of his mother rather than the husband of his wife. The wife, as an outsider, was in an absolutely isolated and powerless position in the power structure of the household, especially before she had her own children.

[30] According to the definition of Cameron Campbell and James Lee, "nuclear families" refer only to childless married couples or married couples with children, and widows or widowers living with children. See, Campbell and Lee, "Causes and Consequences of Household Division in Northeast China, 1789-1909," p. 6, in Zhongqing Lee, Guo Songyi, and Ding Yizhuang ed. *Hunyin, jiating yu renkou xingwei* (Marriage, family, and population behaviors).

As a wife, she must get up before sunrise to prepare breakfast for the whole family and, as soon as her parents-in-law awoke, she needed to go to their room to say "good morning" (*qing an* 请安) and help them to dress. Then she would do the routine housework, such as cleaning, shopping, cooking, getting water from wells, and taking care of babies (her own children or those of her husband's brothers). At the dinnertime, she had to stand beside the dinner table serving all the family members and would not be allowed to eat until everybody had finished.[31] In the autobiographical novel *Beneath the Red Banner*, Lao She, a Manchu bannerman born in Beijing in 1899, described how hard his sister had to work for her mother-in-law:

> My eldest sister's mother-in-law was so overbearing and persnickety that she made very strict demands on her maidservants...When her son Duofu married my sister, she fired all her maidservants and gave her young daughter-in-law the task of doing the work of ten of them . . . My sister had to be up before sunrise in order to go out and buy the twisted fritters and sesame cakes that her mother-in-law liked for breakfast. All the cooking, sewing, serving of tea and cleaning were in my sister's hands... She did not reveal her frustration to her husband, fearing to provoke a quarrel. [32]

A widespread Manchu folk song described the slave-like daily life a young wife suffered and how she missed the days with her own parents before she married:

> Trees of bitter dates, leaves are falling,
> Mama has me as the only daughter.
> Bathed in a golden washbowl,
> Slept in a silver basin,
> When grown up, I was married off.
>
> Married where?
> To Nan Sha He,
> Parents-in-law and sisters-in-law,
> All watch me closely.
>
> Getting up early to pick up vegetables,

[31] Zhen-jun, *Tianchi ouwen* (Random notes on the capital), vol. 10.
[32] Lao She, *Beneath the Red Banner*, p. 22.

Coming down mountains to feed pigs.
Fetching sweet water to make cups of tea,
Fetching bitter water to feed ducks and geese.

High is the well step, thin is the rope,
Cutting deep into my tiny hands.
Who could pass a word to my Mom,
Asking her to send thicker ropes.

Cold is the weather, yet I have no cotton-padded clothes,
All the time I shake without an end.
Who could pass a word to my Mom,
Asking her to send more cotton wading.

Tears in eyes, I look in the direction of Yingfang (barracks?),
How sad my life is.
Who could pass a word to my Mama,
Asking her to send more paper.[33]

To a young wife in an extended family, her unmarried sisters-in-law were the most awesome figures among other family members because they were spoiled and respected by their brothers and parents. In other words, a wife might fear her sisters-in-law even more than she feared her mother-in-law. Besides serving the parents-in-law, a wife's duty also included serving all the unmarried brothers/sisters-in-law in the family. It was not uncommon that wives were beaten by their sisters-in-law with the bowl of the tobacco pipes, due to unsatisfied services. [34] A very popular folk song, titled "Sister-in-law Getting Rid of a Thorn in her Flesh", tells how happy the wife felt when her sister-in-law finally married out. The song says,

Gunny pillow, gunny quilt,
Gunny handkerchief for wiping off tears.
Heartbroken, Dad cries, Mama cries,

[33] Ding yizhuang, *Zuihou de jiyi*, pp. 83-84.
[34] Jin Qizong, *Beijing jiaoqu de Manzu* (The Manchus in Beijing suburb), p. 49. Manchu girls had a habit of smoking tobacco, using a kind of long-stemmed pipe. The pipe was usually 20 inches long, some could be as long as 25-30 inches long. There was a copper bowl in one end of the pipe, which was the part they usually used to tap the head of their brothers' wives.

Only the sister-in-law gloats.
The daughter wipes out her tears,
Early tomorrow morning she needs to get up
For a journey to her mother-in-law's.
Dad is sad, Mom is sad,
Only the sister-in-law gets rid of a thorn in her flesh.[35]

There was an old saying in Chinese society—*jia chuqu de nu, po chuqu de shui* 嫁出去的女，泼出去的水 (the daughters that had been married out are like the water that had been thrown away)—which means that once the daughters married out, they no longer had have connections with the natal family. However, in Manchu society, daughters usually had a close life-long tie with their natal families. In many banner families, married daughters (sometimes with their children together) often came back to their natal families for extended visits, especially when the husband was too poor to make the wife happy. Bannerman De-chang complained that his wife visited her natal family too often and "the last time, [she] stayed [with her brother's family] for a whole month". His wife answered back sarcastically, "You are in such poor condition. What did I do wrong to stay with my brother?"[36] In another case, *booi* (bondservant) De-ke-deng-e confessed, "my wife lived in her natal family permanently because I am too poor to support her."[37] Bannerman Ma-ha-da claimed that his parents-in-law "took my wife with them for four years. I went to their home to ask. They cursed me. I then killed my father-

[35] Cite from Ji Yonghai and Zhao Zhizhong, *Manzu minjian wenxue gailu* (An introduction of Manchu folk literature), p. 122. The song was written in the tone of another daughter in the family when she saw what had happened when her elder sister was about to be married out. Therefore, the "sister-in-law" in the song referred to the wife while the daughter who cried referred to the singer's sister who was going to be someone else's wife.
[36] *Neiwufu laiwen* (Archives of Imperial Household Department), # 2127, August in the 34th year of Qianlong (1769).
[37] *Neiwufu laiwen* (Archives of Imperial Household Department), # 2129, July 4 in the 37th year of Qianlong (1772).

in-law."[38] In some banner families, the married daughters would permanently move back to their natal family when widowed and, unlike the situation in Chinese households when widowed daughters moved back to their parents, who would feel guilty to "live under other's roof" (*ji ren li xia* 寄人篱下), Manchu widows felt the natal family to be their own home as if they had never been married out. The novel *Beneath the Red Banner* described the situation of the "mother" when her widowed sister-in-law moved back to the household. "[S]ince my aunt moved in with us, even though she paid her own way, she did presume upon her status as my father's sister to mobilize my mother to perform all manner of tasks for her, such as serving tea, drawing water, cleaning the tables and sweeping the floor . . . You must remember that, in those days, a woman who didn't boss around her brother's wife was hardly considered respectable."[39]

A young wife had no rights over her husband's family property, unless she chose not to remarry after her husband died and stay with her children in her deceased husband family, as a virtuous widow. In extreme instances, she even had no right to her own dowry, which was considered to be part of the property of her husband family. In the 4th year of Kangxi (1695), bannerman A-la-shan beat his wife to death because she pawned her own clothes for 3,000 cash without his permission.[40] However, a husband could pawn his wife's dowry at will. Yong Fu who was a *sula* (low ranking bannerman whose duty was watching over graves) under the Plain White Banner. He married 20-year-old Liu *shi* in the 35th year of Qianlong (1770). On December 29, 1771, without Liu's permission,

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[38] *Neige Hanwen huangce* (The Yellow book in Chinese from Grand Secretariat), microfilm, # C-4012, the 12th year of Kang Xi (1673).
[39] Lao She, *Beneath the Red Banner*, p. 6.
[40] *Neige Hanwen huangce* (The Yellow book in Chinese from Grand Secretariat), microfilm, # C-2418, the 4th year of Kang Xi (1665).

Yong Fu secretly pawned a cupboard (Liu's dowry) for 3,500 cash. Liu became angry when she learned of this and committed suicide by hanging herself the next night.[41] Bannerman Fu-ge mentioned in his book, that a wife even had no right to accept the gifts from her natal family. He said, "Whenever her parents or brothers sent her some gifts during the festivals, she had to dedicate them to her parents-in-law. Only after the parents-in-law granted the gifts to her, could she dare to accept them. As she finally got the gifts, she was required to share them with other family members rather than keeping them for herself."[42]

To go from a spoiled daughter to a slave-like wife was a painful transition for most Manchu women. Some extreme cases from the archives showed that the family quarrels and disharmony could lead to murder, usually the death of the wife.

In the 12th year of Shunzhi (1655), a *booi* of the Plain White Banner, named "Carpenter" Luo, was sentenced to death for murder. The tragedy started when Luo asked his wife to smoke out the mosquitoes and flies that were bothering him at that night. His wife refused to do so and shouted at Luo. Luo was enraged and strangled his wife to death.[43]

The similar tragedy happened to Ke-suo-li's wife in September of the 38th year of Kangxi (1699). In a sleepless night, Ke-suo-li wanted to smoke but his pipe was empty of tobacco. So he woke up his wife and asked her to get the tobacco pipe ready for him. However, his wife ignored him and did not get up. Then insults were hurled back and

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[41] *Neiwufu laiwen* (Archives of Imperial Household Department), # 2129, February in the 37th year of Qianlong (1772).
[42] Fu-ge, *Tingyu congtan* (Talks collected while listening to the rain), vol. 11, p. 209.
[43] *Neige xingke tiben* (Grand Secretariat memorials on criminal matters), September 24 in the 12th year of Shunzhi (1655).

forth. After that he gave her a poke. She then poured out a stream of abuse on his parents. According to Ke-luo-li, "I could not control myself any more and killed her with a knife. I was drunk when I killed her."[44]

Hu-shi-na was in the vanguard (*qianfeng* 前锋) of the Bordered Yellow Banner. On September 8, the 49th year of Kangxi (1710), when Hu-shi-na came back from a military maneuver, he felt very hungry. He asked his wife to cook for him, but she ignored him. He was angry and cursed his wife. That night, he did not eat anything, but drank many cups of alcohol. When he was about to sleep, his wife stirred up the quarrel and said many bad words about his parents. Hu-shi-na, at that time half-drunk, was enraged and sliced his wife's neck with a knife. She died immediately.[45]

Qi-er-de (under the Plain White Banner) asked for one-year leave due to illness in April 1736. The next year when he was ready to return to the post, he found that he needed a pair of new boots since according to Qing regulations, the soldiers were responsible for their uniforms, boots, armors, arrows, and other equipments. Therefore, he asked his wife to make several pairs of boots for him. However, his wife was not interested in making boots, instead, she enjoyed strolling around the neighborhoods and gossiping. Without the boots, Qi-er-de could not rejoin his unit on time. Therefore, he received a notice on May 19 saying that he had been removed from the post. Qi-er-de thought it was all his wife's fault and blamed her. She then cursed his parents and said, "I just do not like to make boots for you. What do you dare to do with me?" Qi-er-de got mad and took a whip to beat her. She ran out of the room and threw a brick at her

[44] *Neige Hanwen huangce* (The yellow book in Chinese from Grand Secretariat), microfilm, # C-2462, September in the 38th year of Kangxi (1699).
[45] *Neige Hanwen huangce* (The yellow book in Chinese from Grand Secretariat), microfilm # C-2436, September 8 in the 49th year of Kangxi (1710).

husband. Qi-er-de rushed to her and killed her with a knife. He was sentenced to death in 1737 for murder.[46]

Zhao Qi was a 43-year-old soldier under the Bordered Red Banner. He murdered his wife and was sentenced to death in 1737. The following was Zhao's confession:

> The dead person was my wife Zong *shi*. We have two daughters. Over the years, we had often quarreled due to the children's mischief. On the 6th day of June in the second year of Qianlong (1737), I took a nap on the bed after I drank some alcohol. Shortly after I fell in asleep, my younger daughter cried and woke me up. I asked my wife why she cried. My wife said the flies were bothering her. I blamed my wife for not driving the flies away when we were sleeping. On hearing this, my wife lost her temper and yelled at me. Then I took up a rolling pin to beat her and bit her arm. She was OK the next morning, but the day after, she could not walk. Five days later, she died...did not want to kill her. It was just an accident.[47]

There was similar case: in the 9th year of Qianlong (1744), a Bordered Yellow Banner soldier He-jin killed his wife Wen *shi* with rocks. He-jin described what happened that night:

> I woke up at midnight with cold and realized that the heating fire died out. I saw my son was huddled up with cold, too. I tried very hard to wake up my wife and asked her to light the fire. Finally she unwillingly and slowly got up while swearing at me. I gave her several slaps. She swore even worse. I tried to beat her, but she rushed out of the room. I chased her outside while she continued saying bad words to me. I tried to drag her in. She fought with me. Being enraged, I picked up a rock and hit her. Because I hit her in dark, I did not realize that I hurt her head and caused her death.[48]

The cases cited above revealed that such tragedies began as quarrels over family trifles. Trouble started when the husband asked his wife to do some standard household duty. However, the wife was not willing to do these chores and, when disputes arose, could not endure the complaints of her husband but often cursed him or his parents. The

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[46] *Neige xingke tiben* (Grand Secretariat memorials on criminal matters), September 11 in the 2nd year of Qianlong (1764).
[47] Ibid., September 23 in the 2nd year of Qianlong (1764).
[48] Ibid., November 4 in the 9th year Qianlong (1744).

husband in turn became violent and the wife became the victim of the violence. Obviously, men and women had different understandings regarding the roles the husband and wife should play in the family.

One of the reasons that these Manchu women could not easily accept a subordinate role and obey their husbands unconditionally was that they had traditionally enjoyed a relatively high position in their natal family, compared with Han Chinese women. In other words, the transition from a princess-like daughter to a slave-like wife was a painful and uneasy process. It is precisely for the purpose to conquer their wives, to show off their masculinity, and to establish their dominant position in the family, the Manchu men turned to physical abuse. Abusive husbands became a common phenomenon among Manchu families throughout the Qing period. Such wanton abuse added additional pain to Manchu women as they adapted to the Chinese style marriage.[49]

3. Elderly Women--Mothers/Mother-in-laws

Generally speaking, a woman's inferiority and powerlessness in her husband's family would not last as a permanent situation. Her position in family would be changed when her mother-in-law died and her sisters-in-law married out, changing the structure of household from that of an extended family to one of a nuclear family.

In Manchu society, the household was considered to be women's realm and was controlled only by women. Unlike Confucian norm of "men outside, women inside" (*nan*

[49] The archives tell us that it was a common for wives to be cursed and beaten, which reflected their slave-like status in the family In his book of *Beijing jiaoqu de Manzu* (The Manchus in Beijing suburb), Jin Qizong argues that, "to beat a wife (*da laopo*)" was a kind of established practice in Manchu society. Almost every banner soldier must have had experience to abuse his wife with violence. Jin believes that it did not necessarily mean the husband was brutal, but the Manchu tradition. A man would be sneered by neighbors or the older generation as a "henpecked husband" if he had never beaten his wife, especially during the first years of his marriage. See the book, p. 50.

zhu wai, nu zhu nei 男主外，女主内), an arrangement that protected female sexual chastity, this Manchu tradition could be traced back to the time when men went hunting or fought in battle fields, leaning all the domestic affairs for their women to handle. After the Manchus settled down in China proper, this tradition was passed on and persisted throughout the Qing dynasty, although life patterns changed greatly according to the new geographical and social conditions. Traditionally, as a cultural and historical heritage, elderly Manchu women had strong voices in family matters and the ability to manage household affairs, whereas Manchu men were usually excluded from domestic affairs. Thus, a wife in an extended family was most likely dominated by her mother-in-law rather than by her father-in-law or her husband since men were not strong figures in the household.[50] Archives revealed that many conflicts between husband and wife were exacerbated by the mother-in-law, the husband would always obey his mother rather than taking the side of his wife.[51] Lao She's novel and interviews with elderly Manchu women by Ding Yizhuang remarked that sometimes the husband beat his wife unwillingly, only acceding to his mother's wishes.[52] Therefore, the death of the matriarch might bring a significant change in the wife's position in the family—making her the mistress of the household—while it had little impact on the men (both the husband and the father-in-law)

[50] In Cao's novel of *Honglou meng,* most of the male family members of Yungkuofu and Ningkuofu appeared to be incapable, weak, and dependent figures. They were often controlled by women. For the relations between mother and son, see the example of Jia Zheng and his mother, "the Matriarch" on p. 341.
[51] *Neiwufu laiwen* (Archives of Imperial Household Department), # 2136, November in the 43th year of Qianlong (1778); *Neige xingke tiben* (Grand Secretariat memorials on criminal matters), November 10 in the 2nd year Qianlong (1737).
[52] In his novel of *Beneath the Red Banner*, Lao She described the situation and the motivation of an incident in which the husband abused the wife, "the quarrelling that inevitably resulted became a form of family entertainment. Nine times out of ten, after arguing themselves into a corner, the other members of her family would join forces to heap all the blame on her. Though my brother-in-law was not bad to her [my sister] as a rule, in this hurly-burly he had to berate her, too." p. 9. The examples of the husband abusing his wife under the command of his mothers could be found in Ding, *Zuihou de jiyi*, p. 94, 192.

in the family. The males remained in a subordinate position no matter whether the older women (the mother) or the younger woman (the wife) was in charge of the household.

Officially compiled historical works have little information regarding the relations among family members or the powerful mothers/mother-in-laws. However, literature and court records offer much more illuminating materials. All these sources support the conception that many Manchu households were actually female-centered.

Many Manchu folk stories tell that after the mother-in-law died, the father-in-law usually passed the authority as the "household manager" (*dang jiaren* 当家人) to his most capable daughter-in-law rather than to any of his sons.[53] In the novel, *Dream of the Red Chamber*, the household of Yungkuofu was continually run by women—the Matriarch, then Madam Wang, and after that, the Phoenix. Here is how capable the Phoenix was of managing such a huge household:

> [Chou Jui's wife said to Liu Lao-lao], "but I must tell you that things are different here from what they were five or six years ago. Then Tai-tai (referring to Madam Wang) was in active charge, but now it is Lien Er Nai-nai. And who do you think this Lien Er Nai-nai is? Well, she is no other than Tai-tai's own niece, whose child name . . . is Phoenix." "Is that so?" Liu Lao-lao said, "I hope I shall get a chance to see her." "Of course," Chou Jui's wife said. "She is the one who entertains all the visitors . . . She is indeed a remarkable person. She handles things much more capably than anyone else in the house. And clever. When it comes to making a point, ten eloquent men cannot match her."[54]

To certain extent, the Phoenix's case could be seen as an exception because she took over the authority to master the domestic affairs from the women in the senior generation (Madam Wang, her maternal aunt). This situation often happened in prosperous families like Yungkuofu or Ningkuofu in the novel. Since there were still

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[53] See the stories of "Jin maju de gushi (Story of the golden colt)," "Kao xifu (Testing daughter-in-law)," and others from *Manzu minjian gushi xuan* (Collection of Manchu folk stories), pp. 434-437; 440-442.
[54] Cao, *Hongluo meng*, p. 62. Translation cited from *Dream of the Red Chamber*, translated by Chi-chen Wang, pp.52-53.

several senior women alive, including the Matriarch, Madam Wang, and Madam Hsing (her mother-in-law), Phoenix's power was more or less limited in that she needed to ask the elderly women's (not male family members) advice whenever some important decisions had to be made. However, the novel reveals that in a Manchu household, women might have more power and ability than men in domestic affairs.

In theory, a husband was the head of household. The Qing government registered every household under the name of its eldest male member.[55] However, it was not uncommon that women actually acted the head of the household. First of all, in some households, it was the wife who managed family financial affairs:

In the 37th year of Kangxi (1698), Bannerman E-shi-tu was sentenced to death for murder. The following is E-shi-tu's confession:

> "I borrowed one tael of silver from our *booi* Ma Jin-xiao. On the 11th of this month (October), Ma's wife Li *shi* came to my house and asked me to pay her back. I told her that I would repay her when I have money. She didn't believe me and asked me to pay her right away. [At the time when we argued, I was actually drunk], so I took advantage of drunkenness and stabbed her with a knife. She died that night."[56]

In this case, it was the wife, not the husband, who played the role of loan collector.

In another court record: Chang-shou was a *booi* (bondservant) of bannerman Zhang A-li. he was sentenced to death in the 40th year of Kangxi (1701) due to the murder of his wife Fu-jie. In his confession, Chang-shou said:

> "I asked my wife to give me some silver from what she collected. My wife refused to give me any and said that she has spent all the silver and nothing is left. I slapped her. She then scratched my neck. I was so mad that I picked up a rock to hit her down. Then I strangled her with a rope."[57]

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[55] Exception was made to the households who were charged by virtuous widows. See Chapter Three.
[56] *Neige Hanwen huangce* (The yellow book in Chinese from Grand Secretariat), microfilm, #C-2462, October 22 in the 37th year of Kangxi (1698).
[57] Ibid., microfilm, # C-2472, August in the 42nd year of Kangxi (1703).

In this case, the wife was not only responsible for collecting the money from tenants but also had power to spend the money. She even could refuse her husband's request for money although her bossy behavior made her the victim of the murder.

In the novel, *Dream of the Red Chamber*, Phoenix was the one who controlled the money of Yungkuofu. She was responsible for collecting rents from tenants' loans, balancing income and expenses, making decisions on new investments, issuing allowances to other family members and paying servants/maids.[58] The novel gives an example of how capable Phoenix was in money investments. It also reveals that her financial indiscretions increased her own personal wealth through usury at illegally high interest rates. Patience, Phoenix's trusted senior maid, described the situation when another maid queried the non-payment of the month's allowances, "[Phoenix] has already put the money for this month's allowances out at interest. She was waiting for the interest on some of her other loans to pay your allowances with." Later in the conversation Patience reveals the extent of Phoenix's financial interest, saying, "Just in the few years since she started doing this, amount she has got out on loan must have grown to several hundred times the original premium . . . Why, just her profits alone after she's deducted the allowances from the interest must be in the region of a thousand taels a year."[59]

Women also had power to make decisions about their children's marriage. Archives recorded that the first Qing emperor Huangtaiji's brother Duo-luo-rao-yu was sentenced to death in 1636 because he "was controlled by his wife. When the Khan[60] asked him twice to marry out his daughter, he refused to do so because his wife did not

[58] Examples can be found in the novel on p.115, 227, 368-369, 470, 472 and more.
[59] Cao, *Dream of the Red Chamber*, [English] 1979, p. 263.
[60] The "Khan" refer to Huangtaiji. Before he announced the establishment of the Qing dynasty in 1636, he was addressed as "Khan" rather than "emperor."

want to marry their daughter to the man whom the Khan arranged."[61] In the novel of *Dream of the Red Chamber*, the main male character Baoyu was unable to marry the girl he really loved. His fate was in the hands of powerful women in the household. In the novel, every discussion about Baoyu's marriage was among female family members. It was these women—his grandmother, mother, aunts, and sisters-in-law—who decided whom he should marry or take as his concubine. We do not hear the voices of male family members.[62] When the Matriarch chose Precious Virtue as Baoyu's bride and arranged the wedding in a very unusual way, Baoyu's father Jia Zheng was unhappy with the decision and "the irregularity of the procedure outlined by the Matriarch, but he kept his feelings to himself. He said, 'Doubtless Lao Tai-tai (the Matriarch)'s judgment is right. But we must be sure to keep the matter secret so as to avoid criticism.' . . . Owing to his impending departure, he had no time to see the things himself; the arrangement must be left to the Matriarch, Madame Wang, and Phoenix."[63] In the last pages of the novel, when Phoenix fell seriously ill and her husband (Jia Lian), whom she had in the past held under her thumb, seemed to be useless. She knew that before she died, she should have her daughter Qiao-jie's fate arranged. As a joke, Liu Lao-lao promised Phoenix that she would be happy to find a good man among the peasant households. Surprisingly, Phoenix said, "Oh, go ahead. I'll marry her to a farmer if you find a good one." Liu said, "I am just kidding. How could a daughter in such a prosperous family like yours marry a farmer? Even if you would have approved this arrangement, the other Tai-

[61] *Neiguoshiyuan dang*, cited from Ding Yizhuang, *Manzu de funu shenghuo yu hunyin zhidu yanjiu* (Research on life and marriage patterns of Manchu women), p. 189.
[62] Cao, *Honglou meng*, [Chinese] p. 371; 876; 952.
[63] Ibid., p. 1076.

tai [senior women in the family] would definitely not approve it."[64] Still, over the matter of Qiao-jie's marriage, it seemed that Liu Lao-lao only needed to consider whether other Tai-tai would be happy with the arrangement, while the male family members seemed to be so insignificant that their opinions were totally neglected.

Some examples from interviews of elderly Manchu women confirm the power of Manchu mothers over their children's marriages.[65] Hu Fuzhen was born in 1917. She did not marry until she was already 26 years old since her mother refused to marry her to a non-Manchu man.[66] Zhao Yi recalled that her uncle married a girl he did not love. But at that time, he could do nothing other than accept his mother's choice.[67] Both women in the interview did not mention the fathers' authority or concern over their children's marriage.

Another distinctive feature of the Manchu household was *zhong nei qin* (重内亲), literally translated as "attach importance on the maternal relatives," which closely related to women's power in the family. As noted earlier, in Manchu society, married daughter always kept close ties with her natal family. In some cases, the wife might do something that benefited her natal family at the price of sacrificing her husband's interests. Here is a court record from archives:

In the 11th year of Qianlong (1746), Bannerman Pu-de claimed that he killed his wife. The following is his confession:

> "I am 35 years old. In the 9th year of Qianlong, I married the daughter of *hujun* (护军 Colonel) Wu-jin-tai under the Plain Yellow Banner. After we married, my

[64] Ibid. p.1252.
[65] Most of these Manchu women were born between 1910's and 1920's. The most remote memories they could trace back were about their grandparents in mid-19th century, one century later than the time period my study focuses on. But I think I can still use the information they provided because the purpose of my study is to emphasize the continuity of Manchu traditions. I believe women who lived in the 17th and 18th centuries should keep more Manchu traditions than what these interviewed women could recall.
[66] Ding Yizhuang, *Zuihou de jiyi*, pp. 68-69.
[67] Ibid., p. 95

> wife often stole things, such as my clothing and other stuff, and sent them to her father. I have warned her. She did not listen to me but told her father that I cursed him. Then her father, with her brothers and sisters together, came to my home and beat me. When they finally left, I brought my wife to account. Not only did she refuse to apologize to me but she also cursed me. I strangled her in a moment of anger."[68]

From this case, we see that the wife still considered her natal family, not the family she married into, as her own family. She was on more intimate terms with her parents and siblings than with her husband.

Since the husband was not a strong figure in terms of intervening in domestic affairs, the household would be usually run by the wife. One of the privileges of a powerful matriarch was to develop the relations with her natal family through frequent contacts and, at the same time, to cut off ties with paternal relatives. As a result, the majority of the family's relatives were from maternal side. In the novel of *Dream of the Red Chamber*, although the household was organized along patrilineal lines, many significant figures were the relatives from maternal side, some of them became the members of Jia family through marriage. For example, Black Jade (*Lin Daiyu*), the heroine of the novel, was the daughter of the Matriarch's daughter; River Mist (*Shi Xiangyun*) was the daughter of the Matriarch's nephew. Phoenix (*Wang Xifeng*), the most powerful woman under the Matriarch in the novel, was the daughter of Madam Wang's brother. Another main female figure in the novel was Precious Virtue (*Xue Baochai*). She was the daughter of Madam Wang's sister who moved in the Yungkuofu, living together with Jia family. The other two examples were You Er-jie and You San-jie who were sisters of Jia Chen's wife; Qin Zhong, Baoyu's best male friend, was the brother of Jia

[68] *Neige xingke tiben* (Grand Secretariat memorials on criminal matters), November 8 in the 11th year of Qianlong (1746).

Zhen's daughter-in-law. We may find more examples of this kind from the novel. In the real life, Manchu people were not only closely related to their maternal relatives, they sometimes lived together under the same roof, as an extended household:

Zhao Xiuying, a Manchu Banner woman, born in 1916, said, "Right after my mother-in-law died, I became the manager of our household. I took my mother over [to my house]. My husband worked and gave me all the money he made. I used the money to feed my family and my mother. She died at the age of 88."[69]

In Beijing, an 82-year-old Manchu Banner woman told her story:

> "I married him when I was already 24 years old. Because he was the youngest in his family, I never met my mother-in-law. I mastered the household since I entered the door of the house. I firstly took my mother over and then had two of my sisters moved into the same compound (*yuanzi* 院子) with us. I used my husband's money to support my mother and one of my sisters . . .my kids and my sisters' kids were very close. They do not know many relatives from their father's side."[70]

Manchu ethnologist Jin Qizong was born in 1918 in the Manchu city within Beijing. He grew up in his mother's natal family, located in the suburb of Beijing. In his book of *Beijing jiaoqu de Manzu* (The Manchus in Beijing suburb), he emphasizes that at the end of Qing dynasty when the Manchus within the city had lost much of their ethnic identity, the Manchus living in the barracks in the Beijing suburb still kept many Manchu traditions since they were pretty much isolated from the Chinese commoners.[71] According to his account, women in his mother's natal family were more dominant than men. At the dinner party, it was usually the men who had responsibility to fill the bowl with rice and fill the cup with wine for guests, while women just sat there talking (this

[69] Ding Yizhuang, *Zuihou de jiyi*, p. 170.
[70] Interview notes by Ding Yizhuang on July 25, 2000.
[71] Jin Qizong, *Beijing jiaoqu de Manzu* (The Manchus in Beijing suburb), p. 1.

household might not have had a daughter-in-law). The majority of relatives were from the mother's side, such as *yi* (姨, mother's sisters), *jiu jiu* and *jiu mu* (舅舅, 舅母, mother's brother and his wife), and their children. When Chinese addressed maternal aunt's husband as *yi fu* (姨夫), the Manchus called him as *yi de* (姨的), literally translated as "the aunt's," which indicated that the man was the dependent of the woman.[72] Jin Qizong believes that the tradition of *zhong nei qin* could be traced back to the time of matriarchal society before the Manchus emerged as an ethnic group.[73]

In short, elderly women were usually powerful figures in Manchu households. They were responsible for housework, such as cooking, shopping, making clothing, and keeping the household running according to their desires (they might direct their daughters-in-law to do it, or do it themselves if they did not have daughters-in-law). They also had the power to manage the family budget and make decisions over other important domestic matters, including children's marriage and associating with relatives. Men would usually not intervene deeply in family affairs. Therefore, they might always live in a female-centered household.

Conclusion: What Did It Matter to Manchu Ethnicity?

During a Manchu woman's lifetime, her position in the family might experience several ups and downs according to her age, marital status, and the structure of her husband's family. Her position was determined by the roles she played in the family as a given identity. Unmarried girls usually enjoyed higher standing in family and had greater freedom in society than their Chinese peers. Once a woman entered into another family

[72] Ibid., p. 6, 52.
[73] Ibid., p. 52.

through marriage, her status would be greatly changed—from a spoiled "princess" in natal family to a "maid" in husband's family. However, a wife's situation would be improved after her mother-in-law died and sisters-in-law married out. She might by then have her own sons and, quite possibly, she herself became a mother-in-law who would play the dominant role in the household and boss her sons' wives around.

The subtlest and the most distinctive relations in a Manchu household were those between the husband and wife. The lower position of a married woman in her husband's family actually did not necessarily mean that she was dominated by her husband, but by her in-laws. Therefore, a wife's position in family mostly depended on whether her parents-in-law (especially mother-in-law) and other in-laws lived together with the couple. It seemed that even a Manchu husband ALONE was not a strong figure in the family. From the archives and literature, we learn that it was not uncommon for a wife in a nuclear family to give advice to her husband and to make final decisions on family matters. On certain occasions, the husbands were in a subordinate position in family and, as a result, some Manchu households were female-centered (usually dominated by elderly women).[74] In this aspect, Manchu tradition was very different from the Chinese and this tradition was maintained unchanged after the end of Qing.

How were the Manchu women's roles and positions in family relevant to larger issues such as the construction of Manchu ethnicity? In the process of acculturation, how did women play a different role than did men in maintaining the old traditions?

Two tentative conclusions can be made: (1) The superior standing of unmarried girls in a family and the dramatic deterioration in status they experienced when married

[74] See Jin Qizong, *Beijing jiaoqu de Manzu* (The Manchus in Beijing suburb), pp. 49-50.

had a significant effect on the marriage patterns. (2) The structure of the female-centered household made families the vehicles for transmitting Manchu traditions and customs from generation to generation and, therefore, made a great contribution to the maintenance of Manchu culture.

As noted earlier, many unmarried girls preferred to stay at their parents' home until they found an ideal marriage partner. Some chose not to marry and stayed with their natal families. The shortage of available women caused bannermen to broaden their range of marriage partners from banner women (including women in Manchu, Mongol and Chinese banners) to all women, regardless of their ethnic, social, and cultural backgrounds. Many Chinese became Manchus through marriage and made the ethnic boundary even more blurred.[75] These women brought Chinese traditions and values into Manchu household and made the family a common ground for cultural exchange. Manchu men could be influenced from within the household, and engaged additional opportunities for contact with Chinese in other occasions. I believe that men's exogamy was responsible for the gendered pattern of Manchu and Chinese acculturation, in which women changed more slowly than men.[76]

The structure of the female-centered household itself was a unique aspect of Manchu ethnicity. A household, dominated by the mother (instead of the father), was (is) considered as abnormal by Chinese,[77] while in Manchu society it was a very common thing. This different understanding of gender roles in family also affected people's views

[75] Here I use the term of "Chinese" for those who were not registered in banner, while the term of "Manchu" refers to all banner people (*qiren*), regardless his/her original ethnic background. Regarding the definition for "Manchu" and "Chinese," and ethnicity in China in general, see Chapter One for more information.

[76] Manchu-Chinese intermarriage is covered in the next chapter.

[77] A term for this abnormal structure is "pinji sichen" (牝鸡司晨), meaning that the hens do a roosters' job.

on public affairs. According to Ji Qizong, Manchu people did not feel uncomfortable when Dowager Ci Xi usurped power from the Tongzhi emperor (1862-1874) and the Guangxu emperor (r. 1875-1908), holding court behind the screen. In matter of fact, most Manchus appreciated Ci Xi's rulership because of her capability and intelligence.[78] However, Ci Xi (and other female rulers in history) has been given a very bad reputation in the eyes of Chinese. One accusation among others must point to her gender.

The structure of the female-centered household helped to maintain many Manchu traditions. Compared with the males, who might have more opportunities for acculturation, Manchu women lived in a world relatively isolated from the Chinese commoners[79] and could live their daily life by the Manchu way. Food was made in Manchu styles; children were dressed up in Manchu clothing; younger people were taught Manchu etiquette; family members addressed each other in a Manchu way; Manchu gods were worshiped in the west room (the given location for worship) and illness was cured by a Manchu Shaman/Shamaness; mothers spoke Manchu to children (most Manchu words that are still used in Beijing today are those related to daily life); girls learned strong personalities from their mother and made themselves ready for heading another household in the future; boys learned the *laissez-faire* attitude toward domestic affairs from their father; and so on. Much more Manchu legacy than these was passed on from generation to generation within the female-centered household. From this perspective, we may say that, in the process of acculturation, women played a more important role than did men in maintaining Manchu ethnicity.

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[78] Jin Qizong, *Beijing jiaoqu de Manzu* (The Manchus in Beijing suburb), p. 53.
[79] For more information about the policies on segregation of Manchu-Chinese populations, see Chapter One.

Chapter Three: Remarriage and "Guarding Chastity"

Many women in China, like women in other parts of the world, survived their husbands and became widows. However, in Chinese history, especially after the Song, Chinese widows usually did not to remarry after their husbands died. The idea of "guarding chastity" came from neo-Confucian doctrines, in which the most important norm for women was the ideal of "*cong yi er zhong*" (从一而终), translated as absolute sexual loyalty to one's husband, even after his death.

The tradition of "guarding chastity" was developed to an extreme during the Ming and Qing dynasties. It was also gradually accepted by the Manchu society who, before the conquest, women usually remarried after their husbands died. This chapter starts with a review of the Manchu tradition on widowhood and remarriage, and then examines how this tradition changed after the conquest. In the second part of the chapter, the discussion focuses on the court's policies regarding Manchu widows, primarily from the Shunzhi to Qianlong periods (1644-1795), to see how the government promoted Confucian norms among all the people and how a dual policy was implemented based on distinction of the ethnicity and gender with the consideration of geographic locations. The third part of the chapter examines the changing tradition from the perspective of women to see what factors determined women's choices and how Manchu widows' changing behaviors could be used as a lens to explore the way they accepted new values in the process of acculturation.

1. Changing tradition on remarriage

The concept of "guarding chastity" for a deceased husband was essentially foreign to the Manchus before the conquest. According to Manchu tradition, women in banners normally remarried after their husband died; remaining as a widow was considered to be an exception. Remarriage was a common practice, not only among the ordinary banner people, but also among imperial members and social elite. It was said that Nurhaci had one younger sister, eight daughters, and two adopted daughters, among whom five who had married twice or more.[1] The Jurchen/Manchus were noted for their tradition of levirate marriage, in which men were encouraged to marry their brothers' widows, sons to marry their father's widows (but never their birth mothers), and nephews to marry the widows of their paternal uncles. It was clear that remarriage was encouraged in the early Manchu society. The key point in levirate marriage was that younger men could marry older women (or women in a senior generation) but not the other way round. Although the first Manchu emperor Huangtaiji issued several edicts in 1630s to prohibit levirate marriage, female exogamy remarriage was still approved.[2] The emperor himself had once married a widow.[3] His fifth daughter, A-tu, remarried Se-bu-teng after her first husband died. Obviously, in Manchu tradition, widows did not have a concept of remaining faithful to the memory of a deceased husband.

The tradition of widow remarriage was closely related to the need for reproduction among the Manchu population. The adverse natural environment in which

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[1] *Qingshi gao* (The draft of Qing history), vol. 166; Tang Bangzhi, *Qing huangshi sipu* (Qing imperial genealogy), vol. 4.
[2] *Qing Taizong shilu gaoben* (The draft of Qing Taizong veritable records), 14: 6.
[3] *Nei guoshiyuan dang* (Archives of Inner Historiography Department), August 30th in the 9th year of Tiancong (1635).

the pre-conquest Manchus lived, unstable living condition, plagues, and frequent wars exacted a heavy toll on the Manchu population. Therefore, reproduction was considered to be the first priority to the survival of the Manchus as an ethnic group. Encouraging fertile widows to remarry was reasonable and necessary in a demographic sense. Lynn Struve, in *Voices from the Ming-Qing Cataclysm*, describes an incident during the first years of the Manchu conquest between the Manchus and Chinese over the issue of remarriage. An old Manchu lady described the situation, saying, "She (Liu Sanxiu, a Chinese widow) may dislike being a widow [and taking a new mate]. But in our Manchu banners, according to established regulations, when a woman's husband dies, she is remarried in order to keep expanding our male population. What repugnance is there in that?"[4] What the old lady said clearly indicated the significance of Manchu widow remarriage in the sense of ethnic survival.

In early Manchu society, widow remarriage usually took place within the woman's deceased husband's family through levirate marriage. Unlike the Chinese tradition that dowry constituted a heavy obligation on a woman's family in arranging marriages, the Manchus paid bride price to the woman's natal family. Therefore, once a woman married, she was considered to be property of her husband's family. If her husband died, she would be usually married to another male family member, normally one of her husband's younger brothers or nephews, or on some occasions, the son of her husband with another woman. If she chose to marry an "outsider," she would be not

[4] Lynn Struve, *Voices from the Ming-Qing Cataclysm*, p. 107.

allowed to take any personal property or her children into the second marriage.[5] The risk of losing property and children significantly influenced the practice of "remaining as widow" later on after Huangtaiji prohibited levirate marriage. I will say more about it in the following pages.

The tradition on remarriage changed after the Manchu conquest in 1644. Manchu women gradually avoid remarriage and, followed the example of Chinese widows, choosing to remain as widows. Here are some examples:

Dongjia *shi*, the daughter of E-er-duo in the Plain White Banner who was the minister of the Department of Personnel. She married Xingchang, a man from the imperial clan in the Plain Blue Banner. Xingchang died of illness in the 48th year of Kangxi (1709). Dongjia *shi* was only 24 years old then. However, when she heard that she would be sent back to her natal family (for remarriage), Dongjia *shi* picked up a knife and tried to cut her own throat. Her family members stopped her. One moment later, she tried to kill herself again but was saved again. When she regained consciousness, she said to those around her, "even though I do not have a child of my own, I want to take care of the younger brother of my husband and bring him up. I would also like to spend my days with my deceased husband by guarding his grave." Her words were sent to *zongrenfu* (a department that charged affairs of imperial clans). After examining her words and deeds, the court finally approved her request to remain as a widow, staying at the home of her deceased husband.[6]

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[5] *Da Jinguo zhi* (History of great Jin), 39:2a-b; Gu Jigang, "You 'zheng', 'bao' deng hunyin fangshi kan shehui zhidu de bianqian" (From levirate marriage see the changes on social system), *Wenshi* (Literature and history), vol. 14, p. 13, 29. For full discussion about levirate tradition in Jurchen and early Manchu society, see Ding Yizhuang, *Manzu de funu shenghuo yu hunyin zhidu yanjiu* (Research on life and marriage patterns of Manchu women), Chapter One.

[6] *Baqi tongzhi chuji* (Comprehensive history of the Eight Banners, the first edition), 239: 5371.

The archives of Bordered Red Banner record that on March 30 in the 11th year of Yongzheng (1733), Lieutenant (*hujun* 护军) Ji-shan died, survived by his 27-year-old wife, a son who was only one-year old, and a daughter, three-years old. The widow chose to continue serving her mother-in-law, raising the children, and taking care of her husband's grave.[7]

Another famous chaste widow was Xi-guang, a female Manchu poet during the Qianlong period. Xi-guang was registered in the Plain White Banner. Her father was Governor-General Ai-bi-da. She married Yi-song-a whose father was the minister of the Department of Personnel and one of the Grand Secretaries. Yi-song-a died in the 35th year of Qianlong (1770). Since she needed to take care of her young daughter, she chose to live as a widow. Ten years later when the daughter married out, Xi-guang hanged herself.[8]

There are some extreme examples of unmarried maidens who preserved their chastity for a deceased fiancé. Ao-leng-e, a *lingcui* (Corporal) in the Bordered Red Banner, died in the 26th year of Qianlong (1761). Learning the news, his 24-year-old fiancée rushed to his home. She vowed to preserve chastity for him and voluntarily take care of his widowed mother. She kept her promised and never remarried. [9]

The prince Hongdun (the son of the emperor's brother) died in the 6th year of Yongzheng (1728). His fiancée Fucha *shi* cut her hair (a pledge of remaining as a widow)

[7] Guan Jialu, trans. *Yong Qian liangchao xianghongqi dang* (Bordered Red Banner archives, Yongzheng and Qianlong reigns), pp. 35-37.
[8] Zhen-jun. *Tianchi ouwen* (Random notes on the capital), p. 97.
[9] *Yong Qian liangchao xianghongqi dang* (Bordered Red Banner archives, Yongzheng and Qianlong reigns), p. 200

and rushed to Hongdun's residence. She kneeled down in front of Hongdun's parents and requested to be accepted as their daughter-in-law. She never remarried.[10]

From 1650, the Qing court started to canonize "righteous men" (*yifu* 义夫) and "chaste widows" (*jiefu* 节妇)—the practice carried from Ming, in order to "demonstrate to their Han Chinese subjects their [Manchu] benignity and refinement"[11] and "to underscore their commitment to Confucian virtues and shore up their legitimacy as master of the Chinese empire."[12] In 1653, the court for the first time canonized their own widows.[13] After that, Qing government canonized chaste widows throughout the country every year, granting silver to the local authority from which the chaste widows were reported, to build memorial archways for the virtuous widows. This was not only a high honor to the chaste widow's own family but also to the entire community in which she lived. Since the late 1600s, more and more chaste widows had come up from banner populations. By the time of the Qianlong emperor (1736-1795), the cult of Confucian chaste widowhood seemed to have taken root in the whole society, both among the Chinese population and among the Manchus as well. Base on the sources of *Da Qing shilu* (Qing veritable records), the following table shows increasing number of chaste widows in banners from 1653 to 1795.[14]

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[10] *Qing shigao* (The draft of Qing history), vol. 509, p. 14092.
[11] Tien Ju-k'ang, *Male Anxiety and Female Chastity*, p. 126.
[12] Mark Elliott, "Manchu Widows and Chastity in Qing China." pp. 38-39
[13] *Da Qing Shizu shilu*, (Qing veritable records of Shizu), February in the 10th year of Shunzhi (1653), 72: 20b-21b.
[14] To create this table, I have checked *Da Qing shilu* from the 10th year of Shunzhi (1653) to the 60th year of Qianlong (1795). The numbers I provide are only those who were canonized by Qing government. Obviously, it could not represent the exact number of chaste widows in banners. However, we still can see the outline of the changing tradition on remarriage in Manchu society during the first 150 years after the conquest.

Table 1. Canonization of Chaste Widows in the Eight Banners (1653-1795)

Reign	Years	Number of chaste widows	Average number of chaste widows per year	Sources (*Qing Shilu*)
Shunzhi (1644-1661)	1653-1661*	149	16.5	vol.72-5
Subtotal	8	149	16.5	
Kangxi (1662-1722)	1662-1671	258	25.8	vol.7-39
	1672-1681	251	25.1	vol.40-112
	1682-1691	438	43.8	vol.113-153
	1692-1701	536	53.6	vol.157-209
	1702-1711	663	66.3	vol.210-248
	1712-1722	1147	114.7	vol.252-2
Subtotal	61	3283	53.9	
Yongzheng (1723-2735)	1723-1735	2306	177.4	vol.14-9
Subtotal	13	2306	177.4	
Qianlong (1736-1795)	1736-1745	3420	342	vol.33-280
	1746-1755	2714	271.4	vol.281-528
	1756-1765	2392	239.2	vol.528-774
	1766-1775	2394	239.4	vol.775-1022

Reign	Years	Number of chaste widows	Average number of chaste widows per year	Sources (*Qing Shilu*)
	1776-1785	2488	248.8	vol.1023-1270
	1786-1795	3260	326	vol.1271-1493
Subtotal	60	16668	277.8	

* Canonization of chaste widows began in 1653, so calculations for the Shunzhi reign are made for the nine years, from 1653 to 1661.

The table shows a steady increase in the number of banner widows refusing to remarry during the first 150 years of the Qing dynasty. According to the table, the number of chaste widows in banners increased more than fifteen times during the 150 years. The chaste widow ideal, once unknown among the Manchus, became popular in banner society by the end of the 18th century. What they did and claimed seemed to be very similar to the deeds of Chinese virtuous women.

However, when exploring the reasons *behind* the Manchu women borrowing the Chinese norms of chaste widow and examine this changing tradition in the historical context of the 17th and 18th centuries, the similarities between Chinese women and Manchu women show only in form not in nature. It is this issue that I will examine more in detail later in this chapter.

2. Policies on banner widows

During the first 150 years of the conquest, the emperors made certain adjustments in official policies toward banner widows. In his pioneering work on Manchu widows, Elliott believes that the court attitudes experienced a major shift between Yongzheng (1723-1735) and Qianlong period (1736-1795). Elliott maintains that the court attitude

shifted from an ambivalent position on widow remarriage in the Yongzheng reign to a position opposing remarriage in the Qianlong reign, as reflected in the emperor's enthusiastic promotion of the virtuous widow cult among the banner populations.[15] He also believed the new policies on widows' pensions were the answer to the puzzle of "chaste widow boom." Since, from the records I have examined in the *Qing shilu*, I find no chaste widow boom at all but only a smooth, steady increase over the period from Shunzhi to Qianlong.[16] I do not wish to overestimate the significance of the new policies to a widow's choice and do not find a marked change of the court attitude toward Manchu widows remarriage. In point of fact, the court's attitude toward Manchu widows was consistently ambiguous and controversial throughout the first half of the dynasty.

The Manchus first adopted the Chinese tradition of canonizing chaste widows in 1648, just four years after the Shunzhi emperor ascended the throne in Beijing.[17] Two years later, the court started to grant chaste widows silver for building archways. In 1660, the Shunzhi emperor relaxed the requirement on the fixed number of years for being a candidate for chaste widow—those who had remained chaste for twenty years or more and had reached forty of age were all eligible for canonization.[18] It is clear that from very beginning, the court consciously continued the Chinese tradition of commending virtuous

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[15] Elliott, "Manchu Widows and Ethnicity in Qing China." p. 42, 61-62.

[16] The number and the pattern (see Table 1 on pp. 82-83) that chaste widows increased between the Shunzhi and Qianlong reigns are very different with those Ding Yizhuang and Mark Elliott used in their works (see Table 6 in Ding's book, p.136, and Table 1.1 in Mark's article, p.35). Ding and Elliott's statistics are based on the "Bibliographies of Exemplary Women (*Lienu zhuan*)" in *Baqi Tongzhi*, while mine is based on *Da Qing shilu*. I believe that "*Lienu zhuan*" of *Baqi tongzhi* only recorded some extreme and selected examples, not all the banner widows canonized by the government. Moreover, *Baqi tongzhi's* records ended by the 50th year of Qianlong reign (1790). *Da Qing shilu* provided a more reliable and accurate numbers of canonized banner widows than those of in *Baqi tongzhi*.

[17] *Da Qing Shizu shilu* (Qing veritable records of Shizu), November in the 5th year of Shunzhi (1648), 41:13b.

[18] Ibid., June in the 17th year of Shunzhi (1660), 137: 21a-b.

women. However, all the decrees were implicitly aimed at Chinese widows. The Manchus' attitude toward their own widows has never been entirely clear.

Some archival sources reveal that the court attitude toward the widows in the Eight Banners seemed to be frequently contradictory, which meant that, on the one hand, the court encouraged (or at least tolerated) widow remarriage but, at the same time, they vigorously canonized the widows who never remarried. This ambiguity was especially remarkable during the Yongzheng period (1723-1735).

Widow remarriage had been a Manchu tradition before the conquest and was not an uncommon practice throughout the dynasty. In theory, the government policy gave widows free choice whether they remarried or not. In 1724, Yi Zhaoxiong, the general of Fuzhou garrison, submitted a memorial to the Yongzheng emperor regarding whether the widows of banner officers and soldiers in provincial garrisons should be allowed to remain in the garrisons and remarry there. He suggested:

> To those widows who do not have brothers, sons, or nephews to rely on and wish to remarry someone in the local (garrison), the court should allow them to do so. In that way, the court would save money and labor on escorting the widows back to the capital. The widows would be also benefited by not having to suffer the long, arduous journey.[19]

His memorial was sent to the court officials. After a discussion, it was written on the law:

> Henceforth the widows of all [banner] officers and soldiers who wish to remarry shall be free to do so. Those who wish to come back to the capital shall be allowed to return to the banner.[20]

Three years later in 1727, the Yongzheng emperor set a new policy regarding financial

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[19] *Yongzheng chao Hanwen zhupi zouzhe huibian* (Collection of palace memorials in Chinese from the Yongzheng reign), vol. 2, p. 286. According to Manchu repatriation policy, the widows of banner soldiers and officials who died in provincial garrisons should be sent back to the capital (Beijing) with their husbands' remains. The banners were responsible to cover a widow's relocation costs, including the transport of her husband's remains for burial in Beijing. For more information about the repatriation policy, see Mark Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, "Return to the banner" policy, pp. 256-268.

[20] *Da Qing huidian* (Collected institutes of the Qing), 1732 ed., 114:28a.

assistance for banner widows that encouraged childless young widows to remarry. Under the original rules of compensation, when a soldier or an officer died, the widow would receive half of her husband's salary for one year, no matter how young she was or whether she had children. But after 1727, the pension was only granted to the widows who had sons or had reached forty in age and who also had some relatives to rely on. The edict stated:

> It would seem an unkind thing to force young, childless widows in the banners with no kin to rely on to observe the chastity rule. When [banner] officials and soldiers pass away, their wives are all to receive salary [pensions], regardless of age. Those who are younger who wish to remarry, however, find themselves caught between two difficult [choices] and would regret in the rest of their lives [because of not having remarried]. It would greatly affect the honor of the Manchus. It stands to reason that only those above a certain age should be allowed to guard their chastity. If some [younger women] insist [on remaining faithful widows], let people from their clan and company jointly and publicly guarantee it.[21]

The case of Ji-shan's widow (see page 80-81) provides an example of the kind of over-elaborate procedure a young widow would go through and how many people would be involved as her guarantors if she insisted on remaining a widow. In that case, since the widow was only 27 years old, she found more than 20 people, including the heads of her/her husband's clans, the captain and other officers of the company, and some male relatives from both her natal family and her husband's family, to jointly guarantee that she would live in her husband's home as a chaste widow. Her case was submitted to the *Canling* (Lieutenant Colonel) and *Dutong* (Banner Commander) through the banner system, and then to the emperor for the final approval.[22] After going through all the tedious procedures, the widow was finally permitted not to remarry and received half of

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[21] *Baqi tongzhi*, chuji (Comprehensive history of the Eight Banners, first collection), 69:1338.
[22] Guan, Jialu trans. *Yong Qian liangchao xianghongqi dang* (Bordered Red Banner archives, Yongzheng and Qianlong reigns), pp. 35-37.

her deceased husband's salary for one year as a pension. This case revealed it was not easy for young banner women to choose to remain as widows after their husbands' death. It seems that the court did not encourage them to do so.

In the edict, "a certain age" refers the age of forty. It seems, at the first glance, that the Yongzheng emperor virtually forced widows under forty to remarry but encouraged the older widows to guard their chastity. But this principle was in contradiction with the regulations of commending chaste widows. According to the definition of *jiefu* (chaste widow), only those who were widowed before thirty years old and remained chaste until fifty were considered to be "chaste widows" and were eligible for canonization.[23] The dilemma suggested that the court was actually not encouraging most widows to "guard their chastity and refuse remarriage."

In 1729, the Xi'an garrison general and his staff were upbraided by the Yongzheng emperor for placing too much emphasis on the encouragement of womanly virtues. To the general's report of some virtuous Han-martial woman at the garrison, the emperor retorted:

> There are regular procedures for this sort of thing. Why did you have to report on this specially? You can't train the men to be good soldiers, but you are trying to turn all the women of Xi'an into virtuous women and martyred wives. What's the good? If every twenty or thirty years one virtuous woman happens to turn up, but we cannot resist the enemy, this is shameful.[24]

Obviously, from the edicts above, we see that the court is incentive for widow

[23] The regulation on chaste widow's age had been modified in Qing several times. During the Shunzhi period, the widows who reached 40 years old and had already remained chaste for 20 years or more were eligible to be canonized. In the Yongzheng reign, widows who *shoujie* over 15 years but died before 50 were eligible for canonization as well (but they must be older than 40).

[24] *Yongzheng chao Manwen zhupi zouzhe*, packet 819, memorial of Cangseli, YZ7.5.15. Cited from Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, p. 253.

remarriage under the Yongzheng emperor did not actually promote Confucian ideal of chaste widowhood among banner populations. The court's positive attitude toward remarriage among banner widows, especially childless young widows, revealed the emperor's preference for maintaining the Manchu traditions over adopting Chinese practice in the process of acculturation.

However, if the court encouraged young widows to remarry, the result would be a decreased number of chaste widows in the canonization table during the Yongzheng reign. But, in fact the average number of chaste widows commended annually during the Yongzheng reign was 177, showing a continuing steady increase, compared with the average numbers of chaste widows commended annually during the preceding Kangxi period (see Table 1). Apparently, therefore, while the court encouraged widows to remarry, the court also vigorously commended chaste widows through the canonization system.

But why did the emperor, on the one hand, enthusiastically advance the canonization of chaste widows and, on the other hand, encourage widows to remarry, especially those young childless widows? How could we explain the seemingly contradictory attitude toward banner widows?

The answer can be found from the practice of dyarchy in Qing government and extension in Qing society. First of all, the concept of dyarchy was embodied on the base of ethnic distinctions. While the decrees of encouraging widows remain "chaste" affected all the women, the edicts of incentive for widow remarriage were only issued to women in banners. It is clear that the Qing attitude and policies toward widow remarriage were strongly bifurcated by ethnic distinctions. From the perspective of maintaining Manchu

ethnicity, Manchu widow remarriage contributed to the court interests, in terms of balancing the ratio between marriageable men and women in the banners and, in turn, encouraging reproduction. From the discussion of Chapter two, we know that the distinctive position of Manchu unmarried girls in family and the tradition of *xiunu* selection meant that marriageable women were in short supply. Infanticide of baby girls might be another factor responsible to the shortage of women.[25] Although it does not appear that Qing law forbade Manchu men to marry Chinese women, in fact, they usually selected their wives within the banner system.[26] Mark Elliott's research also confirms that there was a shortage of marriageable Manchu females during the Yongzheng and Qianlong periods.[27] Therefore, the court incentive for banner widow remarriage would help bannermen to find partners and raise families. Moreover, the emphasis on young-widow remarriage reflected the court interests on reproduction in order to keep Manchu population in an increasing number.

As for Chinese widows, who did not have the mission of producing people for the Manchu empire, the court's attitude was unequivocal and explicit—encourage all the Chinese widows to follow Confucian chaste widowhood cult. By advocating and supporting Confucian norms on widowhood, Qing court could shore up their legitimacy as master of the Chinese empire.

If widow remarriage were crucial to the Manchus' survival, then the court's devotion to recognition of chaste widows—the widows who never remarry—seemed to

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[25] James Lee, "The Chinese Demographic System: Recent Research and Implications." p. 4, in Lee Zhongqing, Guo Songyi. ed. *Qingdai huangzu renkou xingwei he shehui huanjing* (The population behaviors and social environment of Qing nobility), pp. 1-17.
[26] Ding Yizhuang, "Banner-Commoner Intermarriage in the Qing" (paper presented at the 1997 meeting of the Association of Asian Studies, Chicago).
[27] Elliott, "Manchu Widows and Ethnicity in Qing China," p. 56, note 84.

be unreasonable. However, by connecting the commitment to canonization to the court's political interests after the conquest, we understand that the court incentive for widow remarriage and its initiative in recognizing chaste widows may be seen as the two sides of one coin, reflecting the court's effort on accommodation between the "cosmopolitan" and the "ethnic" modes of rulership. Both policies strengthened the Manchu rule in China.

Ever since the Manchus established Qing dynasty in 1644, pursuing harmony between the Manchus and the Chinese had been the first priority among their other political considerations. The court attempt to maintain the harmony was primarily from two aspects:

First, the court showed a great initiative in promoting Confucian norms among the general population, both the Chinese and the Manchus, in order to avoid being thought as an alien barbarian government. In addition to some institutional adoptions and democratization of elite Confucian virtues among the general population, the commitment to Chinese standards of ritual and propriety among the banners was an integral part of the court strategy. It should be not surprising that, from the Shunzhi to Qianlong, the emperors were so zealous in canonizing chaste Manchus widows in the banners because the existence of banner virtuous women in great numbers effectively demonstrated that the Manchus had attained the same level of civilization as their Chinese subjects. From the archives, we learn that the court spared no effort to search out qualified banner widows for canonization. Unlike many Chinese chaste widows who might be neglected for a long time and were sometimes recognized in their seventies or even eighties, the Manchu widows were usually reported for canonization as soon as they reached 50 years of age. According to archives of *Libu yizhisi jinbiao* (Statistic of

canonization from the Department of Ritual), during the Kangxi and Yongzheng reigns, among 86 chaste widows in the Red Banners, 65 were 50 years in age when they were canonized; one widow was only 49 years old when she was canonized; twelve were in the age between 51 and 59; five were between 60 and 70; three were over 70, and none was over 80. The chaste widows of over 60 years old who had not been reported were considered to be unusual and sometimes a document of explanation would be attached with the report when they were canonized.[28] I believe that the court's effort in reporting as many chaste widows as possible was responsible for the increasing numbers displayed on the canonization list. The great number of chaste widows from the banners could demonstrate how far the Manchus had come from their "barbarian" past and, thus, help to underscore the Qing claim to rule China as a legitimate, civilized government.

Second, under the slogan of "Manchu and Han in one family" (*Man Han yijia* 满汉一家),[29] the court promoted the idea of the Manchu emperor as a universal ruler, unbiased and equitable toward all his subjects. By unifying the standards of propriety for Manchu and Han women, the court could claim it was promoting ethnic harmony. As for recognition of chaste widows, the standards were written on *Da Qing huidian* (collected Institutes of the Qing), which applied to everyone, without regard to ethnic identity. In other words, as soon as a widow had been chaste more than twenty years and had reached fifty of age, she would be eligible for canonization, no matter whether she was a Chinese or a Manchu.[30] As conquerors of China, the Manchus supposedly enjoyed privileges and

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[28] According to the archives of *Libu yizhisi jibiao* (Ritual Department · Canonization), vol. 39.
[29] *Da Qing Shizu shilu*, (Qing veritable records of Shizu), August in the 5th year of Shizu (1648), 40:11a. For more discussion about "ethnic harmony" and the emphasis of "two peoples in one family," see Mark Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, "The Manchu-Han Family." pp. 212-216.
[30] The requirement on the number of years to be eligible for canonization changed over the time during the Qing dynasty. See note 30 on page 91.

priority in any honorable situations. Therefore, it would be strange and unreasonable if the court only rewarded Chinese chaste widows by giving them silver to build memorial arches and making their virtuous deed wells-known, while neglecting Manchu widows who sacrificed equally. At this point, it is better to understand the canonization as a system to affirm a *fait accompli* than a way to encourage banner widows not to remarry. In matter of fact, Manchu rulers understood that whether a woman chose to remarry or remain as a widow was determined by many factors other than the hope of being recognized by the court in some twenty years later. Canonization would not endanger the Manchu's basic interest in rapid reproduction of the banner population, by keeping young widows away from the marriage pool.

The court dyarchy policy on widow was also presented in the aspect of gender. In his article about Manchu widows, Elliott suggests that by the late-seventeenth century when bannermen were "softened" and losing their ethnic identities, banner women were not in imminent danger of losing their Manchuness.[31] The distinctive position of men and women in the process of acculturation helps us to understand the bifurcated court policies with regard to gender considerations, in which promoting Confucian norms among banner women could be simultaneous with emphasizing Manchu ideal among bannermen. The court's enthusiastic promotion of chaste widowhood among banner population was a major project in building up its reputation as a legitimate Chinese dynasty.

In addition to "gendered dyarchy," the court's ambiguous attitude and policies on widow in banners can be understood from the perspective of geographic locations. The

[31] See, Elliott, "Manchu Widows and Ethnicity in Qing China." pp. 64-66.

imperial edicts above revealed whenever the Yongzheng emperor emphasized the significance of encouraging young banner women remarry, he actually referred to the widows who lived in garrisons or on frontier. For example, in 1724 when the general of Fuzhou garrison Yi Zhaoxiong submitted a memo asking the court to allow widows to remarry in the garrison, the emperor readily approved Yi's petition.[32] In the memo of 1729, Yongzheng emperor expressed his discontent with the Xi'an garrison general who promoted female virtue in the garrison.[33] The Qianlong emperor continued this geographic discrimination. In a decree of 1767, canonizing of chaste widows in Shengjing (Manchu homeland) was prohibited.[34] The "geographic dyarchy" also served the court strategy of ruling China—increasing the Manchu population, especially in the garrisons and banner lands, on the one hand and demonstrating that Manchu women had "civilized" Confucian behavior to impress the Han Chinese on the other. Women in and around the capital were encouraged to adopt Chinese traditions and appear more "sinicized" by avoiding remarriage and maintaining chastity. In the banner lands, however, where the issue of increasing the population was crucial, young widows were actively encouraged to remarry and guarding chastity was discouraged for all but those widows already over forty or fifty.

The court's attitude and policies toward banner widows continued to be ambiguous until at least the late 1700s. After examining the Manchu strategy of ruling China and Manchu women's distinctive positions in the construction of Manchu

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[32] *Da Qing huidian* (Collected institutes of the Qing), 1732 ed., 114:28a.
[33] For more detail, see page 88.
[34] *Zongrenfu tanggao laiwen* (Archives of imperial lineage), # 1 in package 454. Cited from Ding Yizhuang, *Manzu de funu fhenghuo yu hunyin zhidu yanjiu* (Research on life and marriage patterns of Manchu women), p.141.

ethnicity, we may understand that the seemingly contradictory policy regarding widow remarriage actually reflected the embodiment of the diarchy in social policies. Both polices served the imperial needs of different aspects and strengthened the Manchu rule in China. Together with the court's encouragement of younger banner widow remarriage, which reflected Qing concern over the nuptiality and fertility that closely related to reproduction of Manchu people, to recognize chaste widows from banners was beneficial to the court's political interests.

3. Remaining as widow—a rational choice

After examining the court's attitude and policies regarding remarriage for Manchu women, we need to look at the issue from another perspective—how women themselves gradually accepted the conception of "*shougua*" (守寡, remaining as a widow) in the changed social conditions and what factors were most responsible for a woman's choice. Throughout history, in many circumstances, the state law said one thing, the people did another. The issue of widow remarriage during the Qing dynasty provided an example. While the court advanced a series of policies, based on the political and ethnic considerations in favor of the Manchu rule in China, individual banner widows' choices were based on their self-interest.

During the Qianlong reign, a series of policies regarding widow pensions was formulated. While these pensions provided short-term financial assistance for emergencies, however, they had no inherent connection with the almost life-long commitment of becoming a chaste widow.

Da Qing Gaozong shilu (Qing veritable records of Gaozong) and *Da Qing huidian shili* (The collected institutes and precedents of the Qing) contain twelve imperial edicts about pensions to banner widows during the Qianlong period as the following:

Table 2. Regulation of Pensions to Banner Widows (1735-1783)

	Year	Content	Source
1	The 13th year of Yongzheng (the first year of Qianlong, 1735)	All the banner widows, regardless of their ages or whether they had children, were granted one-half of their husbands' salaries for one year, if they chose to maintain their chastity.	*Da Qing Gaozong shilu*, 6:12
2	The 3rd year of Qianlong (1738)	The banner widows whose husbands died in the battlefield, or they did not have sons or their sons were young, were given one-half of their husbands' salaries.	*Da Qing Gaozong shilu*, 70:1-2
3	The 3rd year of Qianlong (1738)	The banner widows of retired soldiers, old and handicapped soldiers, and "idlers" (*xiansan*, the candidates for a paying post), who received half-salary of the regular banner soldiers, were given as much as their husbands received for one year.	*Da Qing Gaozong shilu*, 82:13
4	The 6th year of Qianlong (1741)	Regarding to the widows in provincial garrisons, if they returned to the capital, they should be granted one-half of their husbands' salaries; if they stayed in the garrisons, they should be given one-half of the salaries for one year.	*Da Qing Gaozong shilu*,140:6-7

	Year	Content	Source
5	The 7th year of Qianlong (1742)	The widows of *booi* (bondservants) in lower five banners were, in accordance with those of in upper three banners, given one tael silver monthly. For those who were obligated to feed a big family, one *hu** of rice would be granted in addition to the monthly silver. The pension would be stopped when their sons found a paying post in the banners.	*Da Qing Gaozong shilu*, 179:10-11
6	The 19th year of Qianlong (1754)	The banner widows in the other register, *lingce*, (a census book for listing disreputable people) were given one-half of their husbands' salaries for one year.	*Da Qing huidian shili*, 1140:7b
7	The 21st year of Qianlong (1756)	The poor widows, widowers, and idlers in the banners were given 1.5 tael of silver per month until their sons found a paying post.	*Da Qing Gaozong shilu*, 455:7; 506:5
8	The 27th year of Qianlong (1762)	The widows who returned to the capital from garrisons would receive one-half of their husbands' salaries for one year.	*Da Qing huidian shili*, 1140:10b
9	The 35th year of Qianlong (1770)	The widows of idlers (*xiansan*) who chose to stay at the garrisons would receive one-half of their husbands' salaries for one year, in accordance with the rule for the banner widows in the capital.	*Da Qing Gaozong shilu*, 455:7; 869:14

	Year	Content	Source
10	The 41st year of Qianlong (1776)	The banner widows whose father-in-law or brothers-in-law were currently officials of the fifth rank and above (military officers) or the sixth rank and above (civil officials) and those whose parents-in-law, or/and sons and daughters-in-law, or/and grandsons who earned salaries and had real estate would not be given a pension. The widows would receive a pension if their remote relatives were officials though. For the widows whose brothers-in-law had been laid off, or demoted, or in some other similar cases, they would receive a pension until their brothers-in-law were reinstated. The pension was also given to the widows whose sons or grandsons were sent to garrisons, or were expelled for crimes, or were fugitives [since the widows had nobody to rely on].	*Da Qing Gaozong shilu*, 455:7; 1002:43-44.
11	The 44th year of Qianlong (1779)	Widows of banner soldiers who died on the battlefield before their sons came of age, were granted one-half of their husbands' salaries until their sons came of age and were paid half-salary as "idlers".	*Da Qing huidian shili*, 1140:10a
12	The 48th year of Qianlong (1783)	Remarried banner widows whose husbands died in the battlefield should be treated as same as the regular banner widows and given one-half of their husbands' salaries.	*Da Qing huidian shili*, 1140:10b

"*hu*" (斛)was a measure of volume, equivalent to half *dan* (石) or 10 *dou* (斗--about 107 liters)

These edicts indicated that the court's policies regarding banner widows' financial aids limited pensions to only one year for younger widows (see the items of 1, 3, 4, 6, 8, and 9). This was the case for most banner widows. In some cases, however, the duration

of the pension being given was not defined (see the items of 2, 10, and 12).[35] These cases included the widows whose husbands who had fallen on the field, and the widows who had no one to rely on. Finally, the pensions would be granted to the widows until their sons found paying posts, and thus had ability to support them financially (see the items of 5 and 7).

Obviously, the pensions could help the banner widows out financially after their husbands' deaths, but these grants were emergency aids rather than a guaranteed income on which the widows could rely for the rest of their lives. Most widows could receive the pensions for only one year, after which they were supposed to find some other channels to support themselves and their children. The most probable choice was to remarry. Many of the archival records show that many widows remarried within a year of the husband's death.

Here are some examples from archives:

Na *shi*, 45 years old, was the daughter of Na Baozhu who served as a lieutenant under the Mongol Plain Blue banner. When she was 19, she married San-da-se, a lieutenant under the Manchu Plain Blue Banner. They had two sons. San-da-se died of an illness in February in the 40th year of Qianlong (1775). Na *shi* was granted a pension. But "in the 41st year of the Qianlong (1776), she decided not to remain a widow any more because of poverty. Therefore, she declined the pension and moved to her aunt's place" and before too long, she remarried a third rank bannerman Qiu Shuanzhu.[36] Na *shi*'s first husband was a lieutenant, a low rank banner official, who received four taels of silver of

[35] Ding Yizhuang assumes that these widows would receive a life-long pension, see Ding, *Manzu de funu shenghuo yu hunyin zhidu yanjiu* (Research on life and marriage patterns of Manchu women), p. 144.
[36] See *Neiwufu laiwen*, #2145, April 2 in the 48th year of Qianlong (1783).

salary per month while the ordinary banner soldiers received three taels of silver monthly.[37] Na *shi* received a pension of two taels of silver per month after San-da-se died. Despite the fact that her pension was better than that of the widows of common banner soldiers, Na *shi* still lived in poverty and finally chose to remarry. We could imagine how poor the life of an ordinary soldier's widow would be.

Yin *shi* was the widow of Gu-lu-dai, who died in the 48th year of Kangxi (1709). After "preserving her chastity" for one year, Yin *shi* remarried Zhang Mingyang (a commoner) because she had no rice to feed her son and herself.[38]

Guo *shi*, the widow of Hua-se (bannerman in the Bordered Yellow Banner) remarried Duo-luo-ji (a bannerman in the same banner) one year after she became a widow. When she explained the reason of her remarriage, Guo *shi* said, "I was too poor and had no one to rely on. My son was only two years old then. We could not support ourselves."[39]

Wang *shi* remarried twice. Both times were due to poverty. The archive did not provide any information regarding widow pensions.[40]

Another widow Liu *shi* was about 41 years old when her husband, a Manchu bannerman, died. Six month later, she remarried a 73-year-old man because she said she could no longer support herself.[41]

These cases of remarriage reveal that not all widows received financial assistance from government. Even if they received a pension, which might help them to cope with

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[37] *Baqi tongzhi,* chuji (Comprehensive history of the Eight Banners, first collection), 29: 550
[38] *Neiwufu laiwen*, # 2109, April 16 in the 2nd year of Qianlong (1737).
[39] Ibid., #2108, June 3 in the 2nd year of Qianlong (1737).
[40] Ibid., # 2129, September 29 in the 37th year of Qianlong (1772).
[41] Ibid., # 2145, April 2 in the 48th year of Qianlong (1783).

an emergency, it would not provide the widow with long-term security. Thus the policies regarding pension was not really effective in preventing banner widows from choosing remarriage as a better way of life.

If the court policies regarding widow pensions were not a decisive factor responsible for widows' choice, how would the increasing number of chaste widows be explained? From the examples of chaste widows cited earlier in this chapter,[42] we may see that both those women's behaviors and their words were very similar with those of virtuous Chinese women. This observation might easily lead to the conclusion—as Ding Yizhuang stated, that by the end of the Qianlong period, the banner women became no different from the Chinese both in the way of thinking and in terms of conduct. They had already completely accepted the Confucian doctrines.[43] That more widows chose to preserve chastity in their deceased husbands' home rather than remarrying might be considered as a symbol of the popularization of Neo-Confucian chaste-widow norms and therefore, might represent real acculturation among Manchu women.[44]

However, for a banner woman, to "remain as a widow" was a custom borrowed directly from the Chinese. To what extent was this change related to acculturation? Did Manchu women accept the Neo-Confucian chaste-widow norms in which "sexual loyalty to one's deceased husband" was the essential principle? By examining the factors that were responsible for the changing tradition, a conclusion may be made that the Manchu women accepted Confucian norms only in form, not in substance. For Chinese women to

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[42] See the examples of chaste widows on page 82-84, including Dongjia *shi*, Cai's wife, Ji-shan's wife, Xi-guang, Ao-leng-e and Hongdun's fiancées.
[43] Ding Yizhuang, *Manzu de funu fhenghuo yu hunyin zhidu yanjiu* (Research on life and marriage patterns of Manchu women), p. 136.
[44] Elliott, "Manchu Widows and Ethnicity in Qing China," p. 38

chose not to remarry continued a well-established tradition within the Confucian order, in which sexual loyalty imposed a duty on a wife even after her husband died. However, for Manchu women, adjustment of marriage behaviors might be related less to Confucian practice than to the considerations of self-interest, especially property inheritance and the guardianship of children.

Marriage and property laws underwent significant change during the Yuan dynasty when the Mongols ruled China, distinguished by the shift of a woman's rights on property, children, and her own body from her natal family to her husband's family after she married. Because inheritance was exclusively in the male line, a woman had no right to her husband's property. At best as a widow, she might be allowed to manage the property of her late husband as trustee for his heirs. Widows who remarried were not permitted to take any property with them into the second marriage. The new regulation on marriage and property in Yuan and Ming times, so different with those of Song and previous dynasties, was actually a Chinese-Mongol hybrid. The new law created a strong disincentive for a widow to remarry. Therefore, the consequent rise in widow chastity, long assumed to be simply the result of imposing neo-Confucian norms, in fact was tied directly to what Bettine Birge has described as the "confusing encounter between Chinese and Mongol culture."[45]

The Manchus, like the Mongols and other ethnic groups in the northern steppe, had a tradition of depriving a widow of any right to the property of her deceased

[45] Bettine Birge, "Levirate Marriage and the Revival of Widow Chastity in Yuan China," *Asia Major*, 8.2 (Fall 1995), pp. 107-46. Also see Jennifer Holmgren, "Observations on the Marriage and Inheritances Practices in early Mongol and Yuan Society, with Particular Reference to the Levirate," *Journal of Asian History*, 20 (1986) and "The Economic Foundations of Virtue: Widow-Remarriage in Early and Modern China," *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, 13.

husband's family if she remarried. As we have seen, the status of a married woman in her husband's family was very poor, especially when she lived with her mother-in-law and her husband's sisters.[46] Once a woman married, she herself became a property of her husband's family/clan and, therefore, if her husband died, she had no right to take any property (including her children) from this family into a new marriage. However, if she remarried someone within her late husband's family/clan through levirate marriage, then she retained the rights to property and children. Levirate marriage was not against the property law because she would not take any property away from the first husband's family into another family.

In 1631 and 1636 Huangtaiji publicly banned the custom of levirate as part of the Manchu adoption of Chinese culture.[47] The prohibition against levirate marriage left a widow two choices: remaining as a widow at her deceased husband's home or remarrying someone *outside* the family. Since the traditional property laws, in which the widows would lose their rights if they remarried an outsider, had been carried on by the Qing, remarriage for a widow meant lose of her own property (for example, the dowry), her share of her husband's property, the right to her children, and other benefits she might have if remaining in the family as a widow. The benefits a chaste widow could receive and the loss she might suffer by remarriage were clearly defined in *Da Qing huidian* (The collected institutes of Qing):

> If a wife without sons maintains her chastity after her husband dies, then she should receive her husband's share of property, and lineage elders should select an appropriate male from the correct family branch and generation to be

[46] See Chapter Two for more information about women's role and position within family.
[47] The edict of 1631 can be found in Chen Yuan, "Tang Ruowang yu Mu Chenmin" (Tang Ruowang and Mu Chenmin), *Chen Yuan xueshu lunwen ji* (Collection of Chen Yuan's academic papers), vol. 1, p. 493; the edict of 1635 was in *Qing Taizong shilu gaoben* (The notes of veritable records of Qing Taizong), vol. 14, pp. 6-7.

> appointed as successor and heir [to her husband]. If she remarries, then her first husband's family shall determine the disposition of both his household property and her original dowry. [48]

A chaste widow had the right to independently control of her husband's share of his father's household property; if they had no sons, then an heir should be appointed to carry on her husband's family line and to care for her in old age. These mandated rights made a widow uniquely independent among women, so long as her husband had left enough property to secure her living.[49] But if she remarried, she left her husband's lineage and lost all claims to property, including any dowry she had brought into the marriage.

Cases in archives recorded the disputes between the widows and their in-laws over property. Some suggest the real reasons behind widows' high-sounding excuses for refusing to remarry. According to Chinese tradition, household property would be equally divided among male descendants. Since the equal shares brothers received in household division might be small indeed, they simply wished (sometimes forced) the widow to remarry and begin a new life elsewhere so that their brother's assets could divided among them and thus improve their own standard of living.[50] For the same reason of property, the widow would struggle to remain as a widow in the family in order to receive the share of her husband's property and other benefits.

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[48] *Da Qing huidian shili* (The collected institutes and precedents of the Qing dynasty), 753: 2a. Most of items in *Da Qing huidian* regarding widow property laws were very similar with those in *Ming huidian* (The collected institutes of the Ming dynasty). But I prefer to see the similarity as a coincidence rather than an adoption because the Qing institutes on widows' inheritance most likely came from the Manchu tradition before the conquest. If the term of cultural borrowing had to be used, we had better say that the Ming institutes about widows' inheritance were partly borrowing from the Mongols.

[49] See Chapter Two for more information.

[50] Regarding the tension between the widows and their in-laws, see Ann Waltner, "Widows and Remarriage in Ming and early Qing China," in Richard Guisso and Stanley Johannesen, ed., *Women in China: Current Directions in Historical Scholarship*, pp.129-146; Fuma Susuma, "Chugoku minshin jidai ni okeru kafu no chii to kyosei saikon no fushi" (Widows' status and the custom of forced remarriage during the Ming and Qing dynasties), in Maekawa Kazuya, ed. *Kazoku, setai, kamon: kogyoka izen no sekai kara* (*Clan, property, family: the world before industrialization*), Tokyo, 1993, pp. 249-287. For the records from archives, see *Junjichu lufu zouzhe*, microfilm 097, # 1987, the 45th year of Qianlong (1780).

According to a document from the Imperial Household Department (*neiwufu*), a man in the Plain Red Banner died in the 21st year of Qianlong (1756). His wife, Nala *shi* decided to "guard her chastity and take care of his widowed mother and two sons, Guanning and Guanliang, from his first wife." In order to commend the widow's virtue, the department awarded her 80 *mu* (about 13 acres) land. She hired people to working on the land and received rent of approximate three taels of silver per month. However, the widow later left Guanning and Guanliang at their cousin's place and did not take them back with her with the excuse of that "they were not obedience enough". Someone in the banner said that Nala *shi* "was only interested in the land, not the children. Since her motivation for remaining as a widow did not fit the standards of commendation, the 80 *mu* of land should be taken back.[51]

This case suggests that some women used the discourse of chastity in their own self-interest. When a widow's interests were threatened, her best defense was that her in-laws were simply trying to usurp her husband's property—a defense taken seriously by magistrates.[52] In this case, the widow's actions brought the law into line with Confucian ideals of widow chastity.

Widowhood also could be a state of some independence. Most cases in the archives show that the husband had already divided his parents' property with his brothers and established his own household. Upon his death, his widow became the head of this independent household. According to the census record of Liaoyang in the 18th and early 19th century, a large percentage (about 70%) of the widows registered as the

[51] *Neiwufu laiwen* (archives of Imperial Household Department), # 2115, August in the 21st year of Qianlong (1756).
[52] Matthew Sommer, *Sex, Law, and Society in Late Imperial China*, p. 209.

head of household.[53] They were not only in charge of the routine work within the household but also affairs outside, such as collecting the land rents or supervising the workers on the fields. Here are two examples from archives:

The first one is a law case—a widow sued her tenant who was behind with the rent. Zhao *shi* was the widow of Pu-lu, a member of imperial clan in the Bordered White Banner. After Pu-lu died, she took over his property of seven *qing* (about 47 hectares) of land and entrusted her brother-in-law Yu-ding (Pu-lu's younger brother) to rent it out. In the 60th year of Qianlong (1795), she asked *booi* (bondservant) Bao-er to bring a case to court to sue the tenant Shao San. Bao-er claimed, "the mistress has seven *qing* of land in Tongzhou (in Beijing suburb today). She rent out the land to Shao San and expected to receive 200 taels of silver annually. In September of the 57th year of Qianlong (1792), Shao San paid 100 taels of silver to the mistress as half of the rent he should pay for the year. In June of the following year, he paid another 100 taels. But all he had paid was just the rent for the year 57. He paid nothing for 58 and 59."[54] In the Qing dynasty, a county magistrate's annual salary was only 45 taels of silver. By renting the land her deceased husband left behind, Zhao *shi* could enjoy a rich and independent life. It seemed that she had no reason to remarry at the risk of losing all the property she owned upon her husband's death. Remaining as Pu-lu's widow was the only rational choice.

In the second case, a common bannerman's widow sold the land that her husband left without consulting with her brother-in-law. According to the claim of the brother-in-

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[53] In 1749, there were five widows in the extended family of Su Dengke. Three of them were the head of household. Su Qing's family: 10 out of 12 in 1781, 7 out of 8 in 1792, and 13 out of 17 widows in 1806 were the head of household. Su Lin's family: among 13 widows in 1827, 10 registered as the head of household. See *Liaoyang Guangning jienei Suzhuangtou hukou qingce* (The census record of overseer Su in Guangning, Liaoyang), 1748, 1751, 1781, 1792, 1806, and 1872.

[54] *Zongrenfu tanggao laiwen* (Archives of the imperial lineage department), #521, February in the 60th of Qianlong (1795).

law Fu-shu, his father had four *qing* and 38 *mu* of land (about 29 hectares). When his father died, his elder brother took over the land; his brother died soon after and his sister-in-law became the head of household. His sister-in-law died in the 32nd year of Qianlong (1767). When he tried to collect land rent from tenants, however, the tenants declined and told him that his sister-in-law had already sold the land.[55]

Widows' independence and power could also be seen in the novel of *The Dream of Red Chamber*. In the novel, the most powerful figure was a widow, the Matriarch Madam Jia, who was at the apex of the pyramid of the household and had full power over everyone in the family. Mistress Xue (mother of Precious Virtue) and Li Wan (Bao Yu's sister-in-law) were widows, too. They both had never remarried and enjoyed a great extent of independence. Precious Virtue became a *de facto* widow after Bao Yu ran away to a Buddhist temple. She did not remarry but stayed at Jia family and later on became the head of household, in charge of all the family affairs and, therefore, became very powerful. For these widows, I am not sure to what extent their choice of remaining as widows were motivated by the Confucian ideal of conjugal fidelity. It would be more convincing to observe that they, and the widows of well-to-do families in general, enjoyed the independence, the power, and the security. The price they had to pay for these privileges was not to remarry.

Many of these "independent" widows were quite young. Statistic shows that most

[55] *Neiwufu laiwen* (archives of imperial household department), # 2125, December in the 32nd year of Qianlong (1767).

widows were in their twenties or early thirties when their husbands died.[56] Not a few had small children and land their husbands left for them. Such women needed help working their land, so they would hire a laborer, often some poor relative of the deceased husband. Usually this man would move in with the widow and her children, especially during the busy seasons, trading his labor for food, clothes, and accommodation. The widow would cook for him, wash and mend his clothes. By examining some legal cases in Qing archives, Matthew Sommer found that it was not uncommon for such widows to become sexually involved with their laborers and in many cases, it was the widow who initiated sexual relations.[57] Although the cases of adultery Sommer cited most likely concerned the Chinese widows, Manchu widows might become involve the same situation unless—admittedly unlikely—Manchu women were much more "virtuous" than their Chinese peers. The sexual transgressions of a widow reflected, in a sense, the freedom and right over her own body although in unconventional form.

"Remaining as a widow" (*shougua*) refers to a woman's marital status while "guarding one's chastity" (*shoujie*) emphasizes a woman's virtue. In Chinese language, *shougua* and *shoujie* in most occasions are overlapped—a chaste woman usually refers to a widow who guarded sexual loyalty to her late husband. But these two terms are not always interchangeable. Here is a case from archives: Xicun was a 28 years old "idler" (*xiansan*) in the Bordered Yellow Banner. His parents died when he was very young, so

[56] See Table. 13 in Liu Sufen, "Qingdai huangzu hunyin yu zongfa zhidu" (Nuptiality and lineage among the Qing imperial nobility), p. 109, in James Lee and Guo Songyi, *Qingdai huangzu renkou xingwei he shehui huanjing* (*Qing imperial population behavior and social environment*), pp. 90-115. Although the statistics recorded the widows' ages in Beijing area and limited to imperial nobility, we still can use it as reference. I assume that common bannermen might die in earlier of age than those of imperial nobility due to poorer living conditions.

[57] Matthew Sommer, *Sex, Law, and Society in Late Imperial China*, p. 192.

he lived with his uncle in Xiong County (in today's Shangdong Province). His cousin Wang Rongxian (the uncle's son) died in the 41st year of Qianlong (1776) and left a widow whose name was Zhang. Xicun shared a room with his uncle that was located on the southern side of the yard while Zhang's room was on the north. As the years went by, Xicun and Zhang, his widowed sister-in-law, became lovers. Several years later when Wang family's financial situation started to deteriorate, Zhang decided to remarry. Xicun was unhappy because he would lose his lover Zhang if she remarried. Therefore, Xicun promised Zhang that he would ask his friend who was in Beijing to find him a paying post and, at the same time, to apply for a widow pension for Zhang. Zhang agreed to wait and claimed that if Xicun's friend could not get a position for him or a pension for her, she would ask for the pension herself from the Qianlong emperor directly when the emperor passed by Xiong County later the year. The case ended with punishment on Xicun and Zhang—both received 100 blows—when their adultery was exposed.[58]

This is an interesting case. After her husband died, like many other widows, Zhang chose to remain as a widow, living with her in-laws. But the prerequisite for her "guarding chastity" was financial security, such as a widow pension or a paying post for her lover Xicun. In that case, she would play around with her lover and have no desire to remarry. Zhang's case must not be seen as an exception in Qing. Many widows might have affairs while retaining widowhood, or in other words, while waiting for the court recognition. In Zhang's case, financial security was the main motivation for remaining as a widow with her in-laws. For many other widows, they might have other reasons as well, but little room for the moral consideration when they made their choice of refusing to

[58] *Neiwufu laiwen* (archives of imperial household department), # 2147, January June in the 49th year of Qianlong (1784).

remarry.

Mark Elliott argues that when Manchu widows committed suicide upon their husbands' death (*congsi*, following-in-death), it represented a continuation of an older Inner Asian custom, unrelated to Confucian practice of becoming martyr for one's husband.[59] By the same logic, that many banner widows chose not to remarry does not necessarily mean that they were dissuaded by the ideal of Confucian chaste widowhood, in which the essence was the loyalty to the dead husband or *cong yi er zhong*. Remaining as a widow was a rational choice in a changed social circumstance, which happened to coincide with the ideal of Confucian chaste widowhood, in other words, they only resembled each other in form, but were different in nature.

Conclusion: Ethnicity, Gender, Location, Class

During the first 150 years of Manchu conquest of China, the Manchus gradually appreciated and accepted the Chinese concept of chaste widowhood. The increasing number of chaste widows on the government commendatory list and the records of their virtuous deeds in historical books seem to tell that by the end of the 18th century "Remaining as a life-long widow", once a foreign term to the Manchus, had taken root in Manchu society.

Utilizing Elliot's theory of "gendered bifurcation", I extend the Qing political principles of dyarchy to a broader dimension. [60] The court policy of bifurcation was not only reflected in the distinction of gender, but also concerned with ethnicity and

[59] Elliott, "Manchu Widows and Ethnicity in Qing China," p. 49.

[60] Elliot, "Manchu Widows and Ethnicity in Qing China," p. 62.

geographical locations. Therefore the pattern of acculturation was determined by the distinction of gender, location, and class.

First of all, the court's attitude and policies on banner widow remarriage was based on an understanding that men and women had different functions in the society and changed at different levels in the process of acculturation. From the standpoint of the Manchu rulers, while a close watch was kept on the acculturation of bannermen, promoting the Confucian chaste widow cult among banner women would not threaten Manchu ethnicity but would serve to reduce the Manchu's ethnic insecurity.

Men and women accepted the new values in different ways. Bannermen, especially the Manchu elite and officials who had more contact with Chinese, were afraid of being thought of as "barbarians" who did not honor female chastity and usually married their own widows. Therefore, they consciously made their women more like Chinese and pushed them to keep up with Confucian norms. The vigorous reporting of virtuous women to local authorities for canonization and keeping records of chaste widows in gazetteers reflected men's enthusiasm for publicizing Confucian ideal of widowhood. On the other hand, most banner women who chose not to remarry were seldom concerned about the loyalty to a deceased husband or the "face" and "ethnic insecurity". These women, since they lived in a relatively closed community and did not have as much opportunity as men to contact Chinese people and culture, changed more slowly and accepted Chinese value in a partial and superficial way. Therefore, to women, remaining as a widow was a rational choice of property inheritance in the guise of Confucian "guarding chastity".

The pattern of acculturation was also distinguished by location and class. The court on the one hand enthusiastically supported the canonization of chaste widows in capital and nearby areas, but on the other hand, was reluctant to see the banner women in garrisons or banner lands refuse to remarry, especially those who were young and had no children. According to the records, most of the widows honored for preserving chastity were from the capital area.[61] This was because such women were, by virtue of location, in contact with Han Chinese and more susceptible to adopting Han customs. Moreover, canonizing chaste widows in banners in the capital was more visible to Han Chinese (especially Han officials), and therefore, better served the court's political interest.

Class or economic status played an important role in acculturation. More widows of middle-and upper classes chose to "guard chastity" while poorer widows usually chose to remarry. Economic status was unquestionably the most decisive factor affecting a widow's choice. Remaining a widow was financially possible only to the widows from well-to-do families while remarriage seemed to be the only realistic way for poorer widows to survive. From the perspective of widows' self-interests, remaining as a widow was beneficial only to those who had property. Women of middle-and upper classes usually could read Chinese, so they learned Chinese traditional values from literary works and might appreciate Chinese culture. Moreover, just as foot-binding could be a symbol distinguishing the rich from the poor, widow chastity served as a status symbol for the elite, while remarriage prevailed among the very poor. As elite or well-to-do bannermen, they were concerned about their "face" because only poor bannermen's

[61] See the cases of chaste widows in page 80-81.

families married their widows out since they could not financially afford them to "guard their chastity".

Among all the evidence of Manchu acculturation, the changing attitude toward remarriage is the favorite example cited by those who see the wholesale sinicization or Confucianization among Manchu women. For example, in her book, Ding Yizhuang uses the theory of Confucianization to explain the changing tradition among banner women. She believes that by the Qianlong period, one hundred years after the conquest, the Manchus gradually caught up with the Chinese in aspects of the mode of production, class relations, social values, and ethics. The symbol of Manchu sinicization was the thorough acceptance of Confucian doctrines. Regarding the issue of women's "chastity," the Manchus were quickly adopted Chinese standards. On the one hand, the Manchu rulers enthusiastically promoted the chaste widowhood cult in the banner population; on the other hand, the banner widows adopted metal attitudes and aspects of behaviors from their Chinese peers, and became no different from the Chinese.[62]

Based on the analysis in previous pages of this chapter, I believe that the Manchu widows' changing tradition was a far more complicated process than simply the adoption of Confucianism. By examining the context of this change more closely, it is clear that Manchu women accepted Chinese culture only on a superficial level. Manchu women's new practices and Chinese traditions resembled each other only in form, not in essence.

[62] Ding, *Manzu de funu shenghuo yu hunyin zhidu yanjiu* (Research on life and marriage patterns of Manchu women), p. 136.

Chapter Four: Intermarriage between the Manchus and Chinese

Intermarriage usually refers to interethnic marriages. In human history, intermarriage has been the most effective way of eliminating the distinctions between different ethnic groups. Intermarriage is the result of cultural amalgamation when different peoples have lived together, and, in turn, promotes the process of acculturation. In the case when one of the cohabited ethnic groups is overwhelmingly larger than the other(s) in the population, the smaller group(s) would usually prohibit intermarriage with the larger group if they wish to maintain their ethnic identities and power.

After the Manchus moved into China proper, they faced the same situation as the colonial powers experienced in Asia in the 19th and early 20th centuries—being outnumbered by local population.[1] Like those Europeans in colonial Asia, the Qing government carried out the policies of prohibiting intermarriage during most time of the dynasty in order to maintain the ethnic boundary between Manchus and Chinese, in which Manchu men were allowed to marry Chinese women, either taking them as wives or concubines, while Manchu women were who married Chinese were removed from banner membership (*qiji* 旗籍) and became Chinese.[2]

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[1] According to Rawski's estimation, the ratio of Chinese and Manchu was about 49:1 in the early years of Qing dynasty. See, "Ch'ing Imperial Marriage and Problems of Rulership," p. 171, in Waston and Ebrey, ed. *Marriage and Inequality in Chinese Society.*

[2] The exact year when the Qing government started to prohibit intermarriage of Manchu and Chinese is unknown because no imperial edicts could be found at this point. Some scholars assume that the Qing government might have issued a decree to prohibit Manchu-Chinese intermarriage between 1648 and 1665. See, Ding Yizhuang, *Manzu de funu shenghuo yu hunyin zhidu yanjiu* (Research on life and marriage patterns of Manchu women), pp. 323-331; Guo Songyi, *Lunli yu shenghuo: Qingdai de hunyin guanxi* (Ethics and life: marital relations in Qing), p. 39. Since then, the government practiced the "partial prohibition policy" until 1901, in which the intermarriage between Manchu men and Chinese women was allowed. Regarding European experience in colonial Asia and their policies of prohibiting intermarriage, see Ann L. Stoler, "Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Gender, Race, and Morality in Colonial Asia," in Joan Wallach Scott (ed.), *Feminism and History*, pp. 209-266.

Intermarriage in Qing society had certain distinctive features compared with the European experience in colonial Asia.

First, in the Qing dynasty, intermarriage did not necessarily refer to the conjugal relations of the people from different ethnic backgrounds. Instead, it meant the marriage between banner people (*qiren* 旗人) and commoners (*minren* 民人), or in other words, Qing intermarriage referred to those marriages between different social and administrative groups that were irrelevant to people's ethnic background in terms of biological inheritance.[3] The complexity of Manchu ethnicity was determined by the unique formations of Manchu people before and after the conquest. More than half of the banner population was genealogically of Chinese descent. Because Han persons registered in banners—the military and social organization that was originally mainly composed by Jurchen/Manchu people—and joined Qing in the battles against Ming, they became part of the Manchu population. Therefore, the marriage between different divisions of banner, for example, between people in Chinese banners and people in Manchu banners or Mongol banners was not considered as intermarriage, whereas the marriage between banner people and Chinese commoners was called as "intermarriage," even if the people were originally of the same ethnic decent. Since the expressions of "bannermen" and "Manchu" often overlapped, I use the term of "Manchu" in this chapter as shorthand for all banner populations, regardless the ethnic divisions within the banners.

[3] See Chapter One for the question of ethnicity in China and the discussion on the issue of the Manchus (*manzu*) and banner people (*qiren*). In Chinese tradition ethnicity is determined only by culture and is irrelevant to one's biological inheritance.

Second, the children of mixed European-Asian unions were considered neither European nor Asian and caused social and legal problems due to confusion over their ethnicity. Asian women were not allowed to officially marry European men and, therefore, changing ethnic identities through intermarriage was out of question.[4] But in the case of Manchu-Chinese intermarriage, women could easily change their ethnic identities through marriage. A woman's ethnicity was primarily determined by that of her husband. For example, in most cases, if a Manchu woman married a Chinese man, she would become Chinese; a Chinese woman who married a Manchu would become Manchu. Children of bannermen and Chinese women were considered unambiguously Manchu, whereas the children from a union of banner woman and Chinese man were Chinese. Obviously, only female exogamy would matter to Manchu ethnicity in terms of reducing the Manchu population. In other words, intermarriage in the Qing society affected men and women differently—it would change only women's ethnic identities, not men's—this was why the dyarchical policies on intermarriage applied, in which intermarriage between Manchu men and Chinese women was tolerated but Manchu women marrying Chinese men was prohibited.

This chapter has three parts. The first part analyzes the policies on intermarriage between Manchus and Chinese during the Qing dynasty to see how the policies were adjusted over time in order to address Manchu rulers' political needs and how the Manchu rulers set a double standard on gender distinction in the matters of intermarriage. The second part examines some cases of intermarriage, primarily based on sources from

[4] Regarding European experience in colonial Asia and their policies of prohibiting intermarriage, see Ann L. Stoler, "Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Gender, Race, and Morality in Colonial Asia," in Joan Wallach Scott (ed.), *Feminism and History*, pp. 209-266.

archives. The court's double-standard policies on intermarriage could be seen in reality—bannermen marrying Chinese women was more common than banner women marrying Chinese men. The last part of the chapter discusses how gender related to ethnicity in Qing historical settings, what role Manchu women played in maintaining the ethnic boundaries and in construction Manchu ethnicity, and, to what extent, the gendered pattern in acculturation can be seen from the practice of intermarriage between Manchus and Chinese.

1. Review of Qing policies on intermarriage

Intermarriage between the Manchus and Chinese began to be seen at the beginning of the seventeenth century, before the Qing dynasty was established. Like other policies that changed during the course of Qing period in order to accommodate the Manchus to the new social environment after the conquest, the policies on intermarriage were also adjusted as well according to the political and ethnic needs of the Manchus.

Before the conquest of 1644, intermarriage between the Manchus and Chinese was more likely a political maneuver than a natural course based on cultural amalgamation. Marriage between Manchu and Chinese was manipulated by Manchu rulers for political purposes, for example, to buy support of the surrendered Ming generals and officials, or to reward Manchu soldiers by giving them female captives.

According to archival records, it was a common practice among Jurchen/Manchu[5]

[5] The Manchu people were originally Jurchen tribes who lived in Manchuria area. The name "Manchu" was a Huangtaiji's invention and was officially adopted in 1635 as the name for all the people under his control, including but not limited to Jurchen people. For more information about Jurchen and Manchu, see Chapter One.

rulers to send imperial women to Chinese generals in order to win their cooperation on the battlefield. Nurhaci, the great chief of Jurchen tribes and the Ming Commander in Liaodong formally broke with the Ming in 1616 and established the Latter Jin reign (r. 1616-1626). Before he attacked Fushun city (in today's Liaoning Province) in 1618, Nurhaci promised Li Yongfang, the Ming general defending the city, a Manchu women from the imperial clan in marriage if he surrendered. When Li Yongfang surrendered later as expected, Nurhaci sent a granddaughter to him.[6] In 1619, Nurhaci took over Kaiyuan city (in today's Liaoning Province). He "gave Manchu women to Chinese generals according to their ranks."[7] Tong Yangxing was a Chinese local elite in Liaodong. In order to placate the ethnic conflicts in Liaodong area, Nurhaci selected a Manchu woman from imperial clan for Tong Yangxing as his wife. Thus, Tong became the son-in-law of Manchu imperial family.[8]

When Huangtaiji acceded to the throne in 1627, Tong Yangxing was appointed as the general manager of Liaodong, in charge of all the Chinese affairs there.[9] In 1632, Huangtaiji took over Dalinghe. In order to buy the popular support of the Chinese, Huangtaiji accepted Prince Yuetuo's suggestion and assigned "one thousand Manchu women to the surrendered Chinese officials and generals [to marry]." He also classified these Chinese into groups according to their ranks and "the first-rank officials would be

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[6] *Manwen laodang* (Manchu old archives), p. 57; *Qingshi gao* (Draft of Qing history), vol. 231, p. 9323.
[7] *Manwen laodang* (Manchu old archives), p. 102.
[8] *Qingshi gao* (Draft of Qing history), vol. 231, p. 9327.
[9] *Qingshi gao* (Draft of Qing history), vol. 214, p. 8908. Tong's family was the most prominent Chinese family in early Qing court. Tong Yanxing's grandniece was the empress of the Shunzhi emperor and the biological mother of Kangxi Emperor. Because of the marriage tie with imperial family, Tong clan was elevated from Chinese banner to Manchu banner, granted a Manchu surname, and thus became out and out Manchus, except their Chinese blood—the most insignificant factor in defining one's ethnic identities in that specific circumstance. It supported Crossley's argument (and other's, as well) that the Eight Banner system ignored considerations of descent and was purely cultural and political in scope. See, *Orphan Warrior: Three Manchu Generations and the End of the Qing World,* "Introduction".

given Manchu princes' daughters as wives; the second-rank officials would be given Manchu ministers' daughters as wives; the soldiers would be given common banner women or widows to marry."[10] Huangtaiji believed that only through intermarriage between Chinese and Manchus, would he be able to placate the ethnic conflicts in the areas he conquered and "since the Chinese generals and Manchu women lived together and ate together, it would help these surrendered generals to forget their motherland."[11]

The cases of intermarriage above show an obvious bias on gender and class. Only Manchu women were married out to Chinese men. These women, primarily from the Manchu imperial clans or the families of Manchu officials, were granted as rewards to those Chinese officials and generals who had made contributions to Manchu conquest of China. They might be also married, as a diplomatic tool, to those who were potentially important to Manchu conquest, in order to win them over to the Manchu side. Rather than changing their ethnicity from Manchus to Chinese after marrying Chinese, these women were not only maintained as member of Manchu banners, but also drew their husbands over to the banners, and so that the Chinese males became ethnically Manchu through marriage.

Another form of intermarriage before 1644 existed between bannermen and female captives. Archives recorded that in 1621, Nurhaci gave 400 female captives as rewards to 400 Chinese bannermen that were fighting in the battlefields.[12] During the period of Chongde (1636-1643), the Manchu troops attacked the Beijing suburbs and the Shandong area. The captured Chinese women, cattle, or camels were granted to banner

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[10] *Da Qing Taizong shilu* (Qing vertical records of Taizong), February in the 6th year of Tiancong (1632), 11:5b-6a.
[11] *Baqi wenjing* (Collected works of Eight Banners), 25:3.
[12] *Manwen laodang* (Manchu old archives), p. 229.

leaders as gifts.[13] In the decree of 1637, Huangtaiji said, "you *gusai ejen* (Manchu, banner commanders) and *niru janggin* (Manchu, company captains) should investigate marital conditions of your soldiers. To those who were too poor to marry, you should give them female captives as wives."[14] In the following year (1638), Huangtaiji issued another decree emphasizing that "in our country, among all the new and old Manchus, the old Mongols, and the new and old Han-Chinese, those who are too poor to take wives . . . should let one's *niru janggin* know. The *niru janggin* should report to his *gusai ejen*, and finally inform the relevant princes (*Beile*). The principle of our policy is—giving [captured] women to those who were too poor to take wives."[15] In 1643, Huangtaiji allotted 67 captured women to the soldiers in eight Manchu banners who did not have wives.[16]

Obviously, women in this form of intermarriage were of a very low social status. They were not treated as human beings, but part of war booty to be distributed among soldiers. The Manchu rulers granted female captives to bannermen to encourage them to fight bravely in battlefields. Moreover, to help bannermen to find wives and establish households was traditionally considered as the responsibility of Jurchen/Manchu rulers to their people. In the particular circumstances of the early seventeenth century, helping banner soldiers establish families was not only helpful to stabilize the society, but also important to maintain the Manchu population. Women in this form of intermarriage came

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[13] *Shengjing Manwen Qingjun zhanbao* (Battlefield report of Shengjing), vol. 97, cited from *Qingdai dangan shiliao congbian* (Collections of Qing archives), vol. 14, p. 7.
[14] *Da Qing Taizong shilu* (Qing vertical records of Taizong), September in the 2nd year of Chongde (1637). 38:16b.
[15] *Nei guoshiyuan dang* (Archives of Inner historiography department), July 16 in the 3rd year of Chongde (1638).
[16] *Qingdai dangan shiliao congbian* (Collections of Qing archives), vol. 14, p. 108.

from various ethnic backgrounds. As soon as they married bannermen, these women were automatically registered in banners and became ethnically Manchu.

Two comments can be made on intermarriage before Manchu conquest of China: first, women were tightly controlled by Manchu rulers and were used for their political or ethnic needs through intermarriage. Second, compared with consideration of ethnicity, class seemed to be a principal concern in the pre-conquest intermarriage. When women were granted to either Chinese officials or the common banner soldiers, their social identities (class) were more important than their ethnic identities, which, in fact, were virtually ignored. Manchu rulers did not have much ethnic consciousness until they moved to Chinese cultural environment after 1644.

In 1644, Manchu troops entered Beijing through Shanhai Pass and established the Qing dynasty. Five years later in 1648, the Shunzhi emperor issued a decree encouraging intermarriage between the Manchus and Han Chinese:

> Our nation has brought order to the Central Plain and people under the Heaven are as one family. Manchu and Han officials and commoners are all my children. To promote a harmonious relation between these two peoples, there is no better way than encouraging them to marry each other. From now on, those Manchu and Han officials and commoners who want to join together by marriage, we should let them go.[17]

Several days later, the emperor issued another decree on Manchu-Han intermarriage, focused on the administrative formalities that intermarriage would go through:

> I want to see a harmonious co-inhabitance of Manchu and Han so that I issued a decree earlier to encourage intermarriage between these two people. Those Manchu officials' daughters who want to marry Han people should inform the Personnel Department (*hubu*) . . . Among those common bannermen's daughters who want to marry Han people, if they have registered in Personnel Department, they need to be approve by the Personnel Department; if they have not registered in Personnel Department, the captain of the company (*niru janggin*) they belong to individually has the right to marry them out. As for Han officials' daughters

[17] *Da Qing Shizu shilu* (Qing vertical records of Shizu), August in the 5th year of Shunzhi (1648), 40:11a.

> who want to marry Manchus, they should inform the Personnel Department. [In the case of] commoners' daughters who want to marry Manchus, [it is] unnecessary to make the report. The Manchu officials and common bannermen were allowed to marry Han Chinese women only when these women were taken as first wives [not concubines].[18]

The main reason that the Shunzhi emperor was so concerned over the issue of intermarriage during the first years of Manchu conquest was related to the tension between the Manchus and Han Chinese in the wake of the conquest. As the emperor said in his decrees, he believed that the intermarriage would eliminate the conflicts and help to establish a harmonious relation between the Manchus and Chinese. Based on this belief, on the one hand, the emperor continued to grant imperial daughters to Chinese high officials, including the sons of Wu Sangui, Geng Jimao, and Shang Kexi—the Ming defectors who were rewarded with large and almost autonomous fiefs in the south, known as Three Feudatories.[19] Shunzhi himself took a Chinese woman as concubine.[20] On the other hand, the emperor promoted intermarriage among the whole populations and encouraged common banner women to marry Chinese commoners. The emperor also allowed bannermen to marry Chinese women, but only on the case of serious marriage (taking as wives, not concubines) in order to avoid arousing Chinese indignation.[21]

Obviously, all of these deeds reflected that the Shunzhi emperor regarded the issue of Manchu-Han relations very seriously after the conquest. The emperor's decrees

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[18] *Da Qing Shizu shilu* (Qing vertical records of Shizu), August in the 5th year of Shunzhi (1648), 40:14 a-b.

[19] *Daxueshi* (大学士, grand secretariat) Feng Quan was granted Manchu general E-mao-tu-ba-tu-lu's daughter Na-lan as wife. See, Deng Zhicheng, *Qing shi jishi chubian* (Miscellanies from reading Qing poems); Wu Sangui's son married Huangtaiji's the 14th daughter; Geng Jimao's two sons married Prince Su-bu-tu's daughter and Prince Yue-le's daughter; Shang Kexi's son married Prince Shuo-sai's daughter. See *Qingshi gao* (Draft of Qing history).

[20] *Qingshi gao* (Draft of Qing history), vol. 214, p. 8910.

[21] *Da Qing Shizu shilu* (Qing vertical records of Shizu), August in the 5th year of Shunzhi (1648), 40:14b.

in 1648 and the practice of encouraging intermarriage in the following years were influenced by two factors and beliefs:

(1) In the first years after the conquest, Manchu rulers did not perceive the danger of losing their ethnic identities or being sinicized. Even as late as the Kangxi period (r. 1662-1722), the emperors, and common banner people in general, actually did not have a very strong consciousness of being Manchu in terms of ethnicity. In other words, they saw the boundary of Manchu ethnicity as a flexible and negotiable one—a conception that sprang the origins of the Manchus and their experiences in Liaodong where many Chinese and other peoples were incorporated into Manchu banners, and thus, became Manchus. Based on this understanding, the control over nuptiality and fertility of the Manchus with Chinese seemed to be insignificant because descent alone would not determine one's ethnicity.

(2) Manchu rulers believed that to promote Manchu-Han intermarriage was the most effective way of relaxing the tensions between these two peoples. Before they entered China proper, the Manchus discriminated against Han Chinese in Liaodong and did not allow Han people to marry the Manchus on an equal footing.[22] After the conquest in 1644, the Manchu rulers claimed that "there are no distinctions between Manchus and Han"[23] and pursued an ethnic-equality policy, in which Manchu-Han intermarriage played an important part. Facing the self-evident ethnic discord in the wake of the

[22] Most Chinese co-resided with Manchus in Liaodong were captives or refugees from Ming. They worked for the Manchus as domestic slaves or agricultural laborers and were not allowed to marry their Manchu masters by their own will, although sometimes Chinese women were sold or given to Manchu soldiers as wives, concubines, or maids.

[23] See Wakeman, *The Great Enterprise*, p. 873.

conquest, Manchu rulers hoped that new intermarriage policies would bring social tranquility and multi-ethnic cooperation.

Surprisingly, the policy of intermarriage did not ease the tension between the Manchus and Chinese, as the Shunzhi emperor expected. On the contrary, it brought new social unrest. While the Manchus might not have had a highly developed ethnic consciousness, the Chinese had distinguished themselves from "barbarians" for more than two thousand years. The new tension mainly came from the Chinese. In the same year as the emperor issued his decree about Manchu-Han intermarriage, a rumor developed in Jiangnan (the south area of the lower reaches of the Yangzi River) saying that "it is heard that the court will send Manchu women from *Guanwai* (关外, beyond the Pass) to the South and marry them to our Chinese men. All humans under Heaven are in one family; civilized Chinese and savage barbarians are kin."[24] In the spring of 1653, rumor spread all over the Jiangnan area, "[The Manchu court] will drive Manchu women out to marry Chinese men; Chinese women will be assigned to Manchu men. It is called 'Manchu-Han intermarriage.' The parents who have daughters are so worried that they hastily marry out their daughters to whoever is Chinese [in order to avoid marrying Manchus]. They do not care even about the man's financial status. This is something that has never happened since remote ancient times."[25] These records indicated how the common people in the South understood the policy of Manchu-Han intermarriage and how they reacted to it.

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[24] Yao Tinglin, *Linian ji* (Chronological records), in *Qingdai riji huichao* (Collections of dairies in Qing Dynasty), p. 66.
[25] Yao Tinglin, *Linian ji* (Chronological records), in *Qingdai riji huichao* (Collections of dairies in Qing Dynasty), p. 70.

Ironically, the outcome of the intermarriage policy was just the opposite of what the Shunzhi emperor and other Manchu elite had wished. The failure came from misconceptions. It was true that the Manchus had experiences of several decades at dealing with the Chinese in Liaodong, the home region of Manchus. But they had not been in contact with the people in China proper in a deeper level before the conquest. Therefore, they were not fully aware how the Chinese in the Central Plain (*zhongyuan* 中原), and in the Jiangnan area in particular, would differ from those they knew in Liaodong, where Manchu-Chinese acculturation had already existed before the conquest. Since Chinese in Liaodong had close economic and cultural contacts with the Manchus while living together with them, they had been more or less Manchurized. At least, they did not have a deep prejudice against the Manchus. When the Manchus, as the ruling group, married their daughters to Liaodong Chinese, the latter would happily accept it as an honor. However, to the Chinese in the Central Plain and the South, being a son-in-law of "barbarian" was taken as an insult rather than as an honor because Chinese traditionally considered all the non-Chinese as savages and exclusively looked down on them.

Did the Shunzhi emperor rescind the policy after he saw the unexpected outcome? It is unknown since no any records could be found. However, based on an imperial decree in 1665, some scholars assumed that the policy of encouraging Manchu-Chinese intermarriage was rescinded sometime before 1665 in order to relax the social unrest in

the wake of the opposition to the policy of intermarriage,[26] or/and to avoid losing their ethnic identities through intermarriage.[27] In this year (1665), the Kangxi emperor replied a memo from the Department of Justice regarding intermarriage in Ningguta area, saying that "those Chinese refugees in Ningguta who want to marry their daughters to bannermen, should be allowed to do so."[28] Ding and Guo believe that the Kangxi's approval of commoner women marrying bannermen in Ningguta indicated that a ban on the intermarriage must have existed there before 1665, otherwise, it would have been unnecessary to make a special report to the emperor for approval. I am not sure whether this assumption is tenable, considering that it is derived from the only decree issued to Ningguta, a bleak and desolate place in the Northeast where criminals were sent, where the Shunzhi decree might never have reached. Whether or not the Qing government rescinded the decree is not a very significant issue. During the first years of the conquest when the war between Manchus and Chinese was still going on and the society was in turbulence, intermarriage was almost impossible even if the government encouraged people to do so.

What IS significant is that the decree of 1665 revealed one principle that was carried on in later imperial decrees regarding Manchu-Han intermarriage—only Chinese women were allowed to marry bannermen, banner women could not marry Chinese men.

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[26] Ding Yizhuang, *Manzu de funu shenghuo yu hunyin zhidu yanjiu (*Research on life and marriage patterns of Manchu women), p. 331. She believes that Qing government repealed the decree of 1648 sometime soon after it had been issued. But, instead of making a public declaration, Qing government repealed the decree quietly. Ding also points out the annulment was not in connection with the fear of being sinicized by intermarriage, but with the social unrest in the wake of the policy of intermarriage.

[27] Guo Songyi, *Lunli yu shenghuo: Qingdai de hunyin guanxi* (Ethics and life: marital relations in Qing), p. 39. He assumes that Shunzhi's decree was repealed between 1662 and 1665. He believes that, in addition to the purpose of relaxing social unrest, the annulment was also for the purpose of avoiding being sinicized as some Manchu elite felt the threat.

[28] *Da Qing Shengzu shilu* (Qing vertical records of Shengzu), August in the 4th year of Kangxi (1665), 16:10b.

This principle had profound and lasting significance. It was written in the decrees of Qianlong and several imperial regulations on intermarriage during Jiaqing period (1796-1820).

The decree of the seventh year of Qianlong (1742) read:

> All the commoner merchants in Heilongjiang must be controlled by Eight-banners respectively. . . From now on, these commoner merchants are not allowed to marry banner women or daughters of *booi* (bondservant). They are also not allowed to buy or accept houses as pawns from banner people, or cultivate and lease lands without permission.[29]

Another decree provided a more definitive statement:

> Banner women are not allowed to marry commoner men. It has been practiced for a long time. But we were not so serious about prohibiting the daughters of *booi* marrying commoner men. . . From now on, regardless of classes and social status, all banner women are prohibited from marrying commoner men. Those who violate this regulation will be heavily punished.[30]

The prohibition was written in *Da Qing huidian shili* (The collected institutes and precedents of the Qing dynasty) as law. According to the regulation:

> "Banner women were not allowed to marry commoner men (*minren* 民人). If a banner girl is engaged to a commoner male before going through the *xiunu* selection, the matchmaker would be convicted and receive heavy punishment; if the girl has already gone through the *xiunu* selection but not been chosen, the matchmaker would be convicted and get light punishment. The commoner man would be treated as the matchmaker. The girl would be expelled from the banner register, although this marriage would be approved (*wanhun* 完婚). However, bannermen could marry commoner women (*minnu* 民女). They were not only to be allowed to marry *minnu* but also could get subsidies for wedding expenses, as the same as if they marry Manchus or Mongols."[31]

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[29] *Da Qing Gaozong shilu* (Qing vertical records of Gaozong), March in the 7th year of Qianlong, 162:17a.
[30] *Qingdai sanxing fudutong yamen Man Han wen dangan xuanbian* (Selected collections on Manchu and Han archives of three banner Vice-commanders in Qing), p. 127.
[31] *Da Qing huidian shili* (The collected institutes and precedents of the Qing dynasty), 756:23a-b. Beginning in 1724, bannermen were eligible to receive about ten taels stipends for "red affairs" (*hongshi* 红事) and twenty taels for "white affairs" (*baishi* 白事), i.e. weddings and funerals. See Mark Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, p. 195.

Interviews of elderly Manchu women also confirm that the so-called prohibition of Manchu-Chinese intermarriage actually only referred to the marriages between banner women and commoner men. According to Hu Fuzhen, a Manchu woman born in 1917, the Manchus were still reluctant to marry Chinese until the 1930s, but "it only means that we never gave our girls [Manchu women] to Han, but men could take women from outside [of banners]."[32] Zhao Xiuying was born in 1916. She recalled, "in my time, Manchu women did not want to marry Han. Even if you are willing to [marry Han], Han did not dare to marry you. But it was not uncommon for Han woman to marry our Manchus."[33]

In sum, after the Shunzhi emperor issued that famous decree claiming that "Man-Han are in one family," the Qing government still pursued a policy prohibiting Manchu-Chinese intermarriage. But it was not a "full-scale" prohibition, in terms of prohibiting everyone in banners, regardless of gender, from marrying non-banner people (commoners). Instead, it was a policy of partial prohibition on intermarriage based on gender considerations. I believe that the "partial prohibition policy" reflected that the Manchu rulers after Kangxi had started to be aware of the danger of losing their ethnic ethnicity. Setting up rules on intermarriage between the Manchus and Chinese, or more precisely, between banner women and commoner men, was a necessary measure to provide bannermen more opportunities to find wives within banners, and it also kept the absolute number of banner people from decreasing.

[32] Ding Yizhuang, *Zuihou de jiyi*. p.75.
[33] Ibid., p. 184.

This "partial prohibition policy" remained in force until 1901 when Empress Dowager Ci Xi (speaking through the Guangxu emperor) removed the ban on the intermarriage between Manchu and Chinese:

> I issue this decree on behalf of Dowager: under our great Qing, Manchus and Chinese are equal. The court has never had racial discrimination. However, during the first years of the Conquest, these two peoples differed so greatly in customs and languages that they could not communicate and understand each other. Therefore, Manchu and Han intermarriage was prohibited since then. Today, [Manchu and Han] have had same values and shared common practice for more than two hundred years. We should follow the direction of human sensibilities and remove the ban on intermarriage . . . The only exception is that *xiunu* must be selected from banners as the tradition. Han people should not be involved. [34]

2. Review and analysis of some intermarriage cases

After having discussed Qing policies about intermarriage between the Manchus and Chinese, I will examine some specific cases to illustrate how these policies affected people's marital behaviors and how the intermarriage in reality reflected the double standards Qing government based on the consideration of gender. The sources are collected from about 4,500 cases in the Qianlong period (1736-1795) archives, including archives of the Imperial Household Department (*Neiwufu laiwen*), archives of the Department of Justice (*Xingke tiben*), and archives of Grand Council (*Junjichu fulu zouzhe*).[35]

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[34] *Da Qing Dezong shilu* (Qing vertical records of Dezong), December in the 27th year of Guangxu (1901), 492: 9b.

[35] I read the archives of Imperial Household Department and archives of Grand Council in Beijing First Archives Museum, and the archives of Justice Department and the archives of the Cabinet in Academia Sinica, Taipei. I chose Qianlong reign as the focus because most of the policies about intermarriage that reflected the double standard came forth during that period as the Manchus realized the danger of losing their ethnic identities.

Forty-six cases of intermarriage have been found.[36] Among these cases, 38 cases involved bannermen who married commoner women. See the following table:

Table 3. Intermarriage between bannermen and Chinese women in the Qianlong Reign (1736-1795)

	Year	Identity of the wife	Identity of the husband	Source	Remark
1	QL 8	Wang *shi*, Wang Da's daughter, a commoner in Beijing.	Huang Tianyou, a Han bannerman under the Plain White Banner.	Neiwufu laiwen, # 2111	Han bannerman married *minnu* (Chinese girl)
2	QL 34	Chen *shi*, sister of Chen Si, a commoner.	Gao Xuan, a Han bannerman under the Bordered Blue Banner.	*Neiwufu laiwen,* # 2127	Han bannerman married *minnu*
3	QL 57	Xiu Zhao *shi*, daughter of Zhao Shuhe, a commoner in Wanping County, Shuntian Prefecture.	Xiu Xitai, a Han bannerman under the Plain Yellow Banner.	*Neiwufu laiwen,* # 2166	Han bannerman married *minnu*
4	QL 1	Wang *shi*, Wang Da's daughter, a commoner in Beijing.	Bai-er-kou, a Manchu bannerman.	Neiwufu laiwen, # 2111	Manchu bannerman married *minnu*
5	QL 23	Liu *shi*, a commoner in Wanping County, Shuntian Prefecture.	Qi-shi-liu, a Manchu bannerman under the Plain Yellow Banner.	*Neiwufu laiwen,* # 2145	Manchu bannerman married *minnu*
6	QL 26	Lian-er, a commoner in Beijing, maid of Zhang Zongtai.	Chuan-zhai, a Manchu bannerman under the Plain Red Banner.	Neiwufu laiwen, # 2129	Manchu bannerman married *minnu* (concubine)

[36] The actual number of cases of intermarriage might be much more than what I report here because most of my sources are collected from the "criminal and punishment sections (*xing fa lei*)" of *Neiwufu laiwen*—the court reports, which only reflected those who somehow violated the law. Therefore, I assume that the intermarriage during the Qianlong period (especially the intermarriage between bannermen and commoner women) was more popular than the table described.

	Year	Identity of the wife	Identity of the husband	Source	Remark
7	QL 37	Liu Da Niu, daughter of Liu Bin, a commoner in Wanping County, Shuntian Prefecture.	Guang-de, a Manchu bannerman under the Bordered Blue Banner.	*Junjichu fulu zouzhe*, 097-0856 (microfilm)	Manchu bannerman married *minnu*
8	QL 39	Wang *shi*, sister of Wang Cheng—a commoner in Wanping County, Shuntian Prefecture.	De-xing, a Manchu bannerman under the Bordered Yellow Banner.	*Neiwufu laiwen*, # 2131	Manchu bannerman married *minnu*
9	QL ?	Wu *shi*, daughter of Wu Qiu—a local official.	Guan-yin-bao, a descendant of E-yi-du.	*Kaiguo zuoyun gongchen Hong yigong jiapu*, "*tangxiong fang*"	A member of imperial clan married *minnu*
10	QL ?	Li *shi*, daughter of Li Shou—a government official	Shu-chang, a member of imperial clan.	*Ji Xiaolan wenji*, vol. 1, p. 43	A member of imperial clan married *minnu*
11	QL 1	Hou *shi*, daughter of Hou Yiming, a commoner.	?, the second son of Chen Zheng—a bannerman under the Bordered Yellow Banner *Booi*.	Neiwufu laiwen, # 2108	*Booi* bannerman's son married *minnu*
12	QL 19	He *shi*, daughter of He Jikong, a commoner in Wen'an County.	Chang-fu, a warehouseman under the Bordered Yellow Banner *Booi*.	Neiwufu laiwen, # 2114	*Booi* bannerman married *minnu*
13	QL 26	Sun *shi*, daughter of Sun Qing, a commoner in Shunyi County.	Bai Fushou, a bannerman under the Plain White Banner *Booi*.	Neiwufu laiwen, # 2120	*Booi* bannerman married *minnu*

	Year	Identity of the wife	Identity of the husband	Source	Remark
14	QL 28	Ma *shi*, sister of Ma Er, a commoner in Daxing County.	Liu-shi-san, a lieutenant under the Bordered Yellow Banner *Booi*.	Neiwufu laiwen, # 2121	*Booi* bannerman married *minnu*
15	QL 34	Cui Wang *shi*, a commoner in Daxing County.	Cui Changde, Han bannerman under the Plain Yellow Banner *Booi*.	*Neiwufu laiwen*, # 2127	*Booi* bannerman married *minnu*
16	QL 34	?, a commoner in Tianjin County.	De-lu, a bannerman under the Plain Yellow Banner *Booi*.	Neiwufu laiwen, # 2127	*Booi* bannerman married *minnu*
17	QL 35	Chen *shi*, daughter of Chen Da, a commoner in Wanping County, Shuntian Prefecture.	San-li, a bannerman under the Plain Yellow Banner *Booi*.	Neiwufu laiwen, # 2128	*Booi* bannerman married *minnu*
18	QL 35	?, granddaughter of Huang Da, a commoner.	San-yin-bu, a bannerman under the Plain White Banner *Booi*.	Neiwufu laiwen, # 2128	*Booi* bannerman married *minnu*
19	QL 37	Yao *shi*, daughter of Yao Cheng, a commoner in Yuanhe County, Suzhou Prefecture.	A-shi-ge, a lieutenant under the Plain White Banner *Booi*.	Neiwufu laiwen, # 2130	*Booi* bannerman married *minnu*
20	QL 37	Meng Sanjie, daughter of Meng Lao-er, a commoner in Jing Prefeture.	Ming-tai, son of Ma-sheng—a bannerman under the Plain Yellow Banner *Booi*.	Neiwufu laiwen, # 2129	*Booi* bannerman's son married *minnu*
21	QL 38	Ma *shi*, daughter of Ma Chenglin, a commoner in Daxing County.	Li San-er, a coppersmith under the Plain White Banner *Booi*.	Neiwufu laiwen, # 2130	*Booi* bannerman married *minnu*
22	QL 38	Wang *shi*, a commoner in Daxing County.	Zhuan-tou, a grave-guard under the Bordered Yellow Banner *Booi*.	Neiwufu laiwen, # 2130	*Booi* bannerman married *minnu*

	Year	Identity of the wife	Identity of the husband	Source	Remark
23	QL 42	Sun *shi,* a commoner in Daxing County.	Guo Xing-a, a grave-guard under the Bordered Yellow Banner *Booi.*	Neiwufu laiwen, # 2134	*Booi* bannerman married *minnu*
24	QL 42	Li *shi*, daughter of Li Lao-er, a commoner in Daxing County.	Xu Shi-er, a stonemason under the Bordered Yellow Banner *Booi.*	Neiwufu laiwen, # 2134.	*Booi* bannerman married *minnu*
25	QL 43	Shen *shi*, sister of Shen Zhong, a commoner in Zhuo Prefecture.	Fang-ben, a Han "idler" under the Plain White Banner *Booi.*	*Neiwufu laiwen,* # 2137	*Booi* bannerman married *minnu*
26	QL 43	Wang *shi*, sister of Wang Youfu, a commoner in Wanping County, Shuntian Prefecture.	Guan-liang, a bannerman under the Plain Yellow Banner *Booi.*	Neiwufu laiwen, # 2137	*Booi* bannerman married *minnu*
27	QL 43	Wang *shi*, sister of Wang Youfu, a commoner in Wanping County, Shuntian Prefecture.	De-chang, a grave-guard under the Plain White Banner *Booi.*	Neiwufu laiwen, # 2137	*Booi* bannerman married *minnu*
28	QL 43	Zhang *shi*, a commoner in Tong Prefecture.	A-ke-dun, a grave-guard under the Plain Yellow Banner *Booi.*	Neiwufu laiwen, # 2139	*Booi* bannerman married *minnu*
29	QL 43	Li *shi*, daughter of Li Jiu, a commoner in Wanping County, Shuntian Prefecture.	Yong-fu, a grave-guard under the Plain Yellow Banner *Booi*	Neiwufu laiwen, # 2139	*Booi* bannerman married *minnu*
30	QL44	Qin *shi*, a commoner in Wanping County, Shuntian Prefecture.	Fu-xi, a copyist under the Bordered Yellow Banner *Booi.*	Neiwufu laiwen, # 2141	*Booi* bannerman married *minnu*

	Year	Identity of the wife	Identity of the husband	Source	Remark
31	QL 46	Wang *shi*, sister of Wang Fang, a commoner in Wanping County, Shuntian Prefecture.	Tian-de, a corporal under the Plain Yellow Banner *Booi*.	Neiwufu laiwen, # 2145	*Booi* bannerman married *minnu*
32	QL 46	Liu *shi*, a commoner in Wanping County, Shuntian Prefecture.	Qiu Shuanzhu, a bannerman under the Plain White Banner *Booi*.	*Neiwufu laiwen,* # 2145	*Booi* bannerman married *minnu*
33	QL 46	Gao Pan *shi*, sister of Pan Yuxi, a commoner in Wanping County, Shuntian Prefecture.	Gao Deshou, a grave-guard under the Plain Yellow Banner *Booi*.	*Neiwufu laiwen,* # 2147	*Booi* bannerman married *minnu*
34	QL 47	Qi-er's mother, a commoner in Wanping County, Shuntian Prefecture.	Ba-ge, an "idler" under the Bordered Yellow Banner *Booi*.	*Neiwufu laiwen,* # 2148	*Booi* bannerman married *minnu*
35	QL 47	Geng *shi*, a commoner in Daxing County.	San-ge, a craftsman under the Plain White Banner *Booi*.	*Neiwufu laiwen,* # 2148	*Booi* bannerman married *minnu*
36	QL 50	Zhou *shi*, daughter of Zhou Gouzi, a commoner in Wanping County, Shuntian Prefecture.	Ba-shi, a lieutenant under the Plain Yellow Banner *Booi*	*Neiwufu laiwen,* # 2151	*Booi* bannerman married *minnu*
37	QL 53	Liu *shi*, daughter of Liu De, a commoner in Wanping County, Shuntian Prefecture.	Chang-bao, a grave-guard under the Plain White Banner *Booi*.	*Neiwufu laiwen,* # 2164	*Booi* bannerman married *minnu*
38	QL 57	Li *shi*, daughter of Li Ming, a commoner in Daxing County.	Qing-cheng, Han bannerman under the Plain Yellow Banner *Booi*.	*Neiwufu laiwen,* # 2166	*Booi* bannerman married *minnu*

Among those bannermen who married commoner women, some were Manchus (cases #4 to #10), some Han Chinese (cases #1, 2, and 3), and some *Booi* (bondservants, the majority of cases)[37]; from the perspective of class, some were banner officials (# 14, 19, 31, 36), two from the Manchu imperial clan (# 9, 10), and most were common bannermen. Therefore, it would be safe to say that the intermarriage between bannermen and commoner women in the 18th century was not an exception. Moreover, since none of the bannermen from the cases above was punished for marrying commoner women, it is apparent that the intermarriage between bannermen and commoner women was legally permitted.

In contrast with the common practice of bannermen marrying commoner women, the intermarriage between banner women and commoner men was very rare. From the archives and other fragmentary documents, only ten cases of this category of intermarriage have been found as the following:

Table 4. Intermarriage between Chinese men and banner women in the Qianlong reign (1736-1795)

	Year	Identity of the wife	Identity of the husband	Source	Remark
1	QL ?	Han Bao-dian, Han banner women under the Plain Blue Banner.	Weng Guang-lin, a Chinese *Juren* (举人,a degree in examination system) in Renhe.	*Qingdai guige shiren zhenglue*, vol. 4.	Han banner woman married *minren*

[37] It was very hard to define *booi*'s ethnic background. They originally formed by Manchu, Mongol, Korean, and Chinese captives and refugees. They married each other without consciousness of ethnic background within the *booi* group and married with other people outside *booi*, such as the Manchus, Mongols, and Chinese bannermen/women. Many *booi* women were chosen as imperial concubine through *xiunu* selection. For more information about *Booi*, see Qi Meiqin, *Qingdia neiwufu* (The Department of Imperial Household in the Qing dynasty) and Spence, *Ts'ao Yin and the K'ang-hsi Emperor, Bondservant and Master*.

	Year	Identity of the wife	Identity of the husband	Source	Remark
2	QL ?	Li *shi*, daughter of Li Wei-guo—a Han bannerman.	Ji Ming, a commoner in Jingcheng.	*Jingcheng Jishi jiapu*, the 14th generation.	Han bannerman's daughter married *minren*
3	QL ?	Jiang *shi*, daughter of Jiang Wei-xu—a Han bannerman under the Bordered White Banner.	Ji Ru-kuan, a Chinese scholar in Jingcheng.	*Jingcheng Jishi jiapu*, the 15th generation.	Han bannerman's daughter married *minren*
4	KX 48	Yin *shi*, widow of Gu-lu-dai.	Zhang Mingyang, a Chinese commoner.	*Neiwufu laiwen* #2109,	Manchu bannerman's widow married *minren*
5	QL 29	Hu *shi*, niece of Tong Bao-zhu—a Han bannerman under the Plain White Banner.	Yang Ting-dong, a commoner in Shanxi.	*Neiwufu laiwen*, # 2125	Han bannerman's niece married *minren* (as concubine)
6	QL 34	Niu-er, daughter of Gao Xuan-zhi—a corporal (*lingcui*) under the Han Bordered Blue Banner.	Son of Zhao Ba, a commoner in Dong'an County.	*Neiwufu laiwen*, # 2127	Han bannerman's daughter married *minren*
7	QL 2	Ning-zhu, daughter of Chang-chun—a bannerman under the Plain White Banner *booi*.	Wang Chaochen, son of Wang Xunying— a commoner in Yongping Prefecture.	*Neiwufu laiwen*, # 2109	*booi*'s daughter married *minren*
8	QL 31	Xing *shi*, sister of Xing Quan-bao—a bannerman under the Plain White Banner *booi*.	Le Yun-hui, an apprentice in "money store" in Beijing.	*Neiwufu laiwen*, # 2124	*booi*'s sister married *minren*

	Year	Identity of the wife	Identity of the husband	Source	Remark
9	QL 44	Li *shi*, sister of Ming-fu—a bannerman under the Plain White Banner *booi*.	Luo Yongxiang, a commoner.	*Neiwufu laiwen*, # 2143	*booi*'s sister married *minren*
10	QL 50	Da-niu, daughter of Zhang Baisui—a bannerman under the Plain White Banner *booi*	Guo San, a commoner.	*Neiwufu laiwen*, # 2151	*booi*'s daughter married *minren*

In the table, the first three items were collected from various historical documents and genealogies. The other seven cases were the only ones that have been found from the thousands of pieces archives during the Qianlong reign, a sharp contrast with many cases of bannermen marrying commoner women that were frequently seen in those archives. This contrast indicates that the prohibition on banner women marrying commoner men was taken seriously while the intermarriage between bannermen and commoner women was tolerated.

In addition to the archival records, three literary works provided some illuminating sources about Manchu-Han intermarriage. The first one was the song "Eating crabs" in the *Youth Book*, which was popular in Beijing area between the Qianlong and Guangxu period (18th and 19th centuries). The song told of two cases of mixed Manchu-Chinese marriages, both were Chinese women married Manchu

bannermen.[38]

> Once there was a young gentleman—don't know his clan name,
> Don't even know what he was called or what man was he,
> Don't know if he was Manchu, Mongol, or Han martial man,
> Much less what banner or what company,
> He'd live in a village for two years and a half
> When he took a wife from a Chinese family of the village.
> He didn't ask the surname of the bride's side or her pedigree;
> He just up and married her.
> Now this beauty was clever and sharp, and she had a way with words as well,
> And before six months were up she learned to speak Manchu.
> She was a lively women, too, and fond of jokes;
> Soon she became half-Manchu, half-Han "wildwoman."[39]

In the text, it says that the wife learned to speak Manchu once she married, which suggested she married into a Manchu, not a Mongol or Chinese banner household. The song posed question of the mixed Manchu-Chinese marriage, which indicated that it was not uncommon, and certainly not against the law for a bannerman to take a Chinese wife.

In the late 1980s, some Chinese folklorists collected about 200 pieces of Manchu folk songs, in which many touched upon the issue of Manchu-Chinese intermarriage. One of the songs described how a Manchu family changed from rejecting their Chinese daughter-in-law to finally accepting her:

> *Sa-qi-ma, du-ri-bo,*[40] they are all thrown on the floor.
> Gourd ladle is cast away, dinning table is turned over,
> Disturbances arise in our family.
> Father is yelling, mother is complaining,

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[38] The story was written by an anonymous author. See Guan Dedong ed., *Zidishu congchao* (Collections of youth books), "*Pangxie duan-er* (Eating crabs)." p. 772. There are four figures in the story—a-*ge* (a young Manchu bannerman) and *jia-ren* (his Chinese wife); a servant girl, and the Auntie. The "Auntie" was originally a Chinese because she had a pair of bound feet and a typical Chinese name. Later she married a bannerman. In the story, the author described that she dressed up and lived in a Manchu way and behaved as a Manchu. I think it was a very good evidence to see how possibly a Chinese woman was "Manchurized" after she married a Manchu. Her sister—*jia-ren* married a bannerman as well. The story revealed that the intermarriage between Chinese women and bannermen was not uncommon.

[39] I used the translation of Mark Elliott (with a few changes). See Elliott, "The 'Eating Crabs' Youth Books," p. 272, in Susan Mann and Yu-yin Cheng, ed. *Under Confucian Eyes: Writings on Gender in Chinese History*, pp. 263-281.

[40] *Sa-qi-ma, du-ri-bo* are two kinds of most popular Manchu food during the Qing dynasty. *Sa-qi-ma* is still popular in Beijing today while *du-ri-bo* has been lost.

Because my elder brother took a *Nikan*[41] girl as wife.
Her feet are small, her ankle is deformed,
She coils her hair behind the head as a bun.[42]
She doesn't knows how to husk rice, only knows how to grind wheat.
She enjoys spinning and weaving at her leisure.
The spinning wheel is buzzing all the time,
There come out silks and satins.
She makes a shirt for father-in-law and a jacket for mother-in-law.
Wearing it, father-in-law is happy and mother-in-law feels satisfied,
They both praise my sister-in-law for her skills,
They never called her *Nikan* since then.[43]

Another song was about a Manchu girl who reluctantly declined the love of a Chinese young man because of the prohibition of Manchu-Chinese intermarriage:

Yi-er-gen, yi-er-gen,[44] I know your heart by your song.
It is not true that *ge-ge* (refer to herself) doesn't love you[45],
But the rule does not allow me to marry a commoner,
Yi-er-gen, yi-er-gen, you may know how ruthless our clan elder is,
He will strangle me [if I marry you],
His arrow will pierce through your chest [if you marry me].
Yi-er-gen, yi-er-gen, please shut up your mouth and stop singing,
The songs make my heart restless, the songs make my heart restless.[46]

These songs confirm Qing "partial prohibition policy" on intermarriage, in which banner women, the women from Manchu banners in particular, were prohibited from marrying commoners while bannermen taking commoner wives/concubines was tolerated. These songs also confirmed what the elderly Manchu women said in their interviews that the so-called prohibition of Manchu-Chinese intermarriage actually only referred to the marriages between banner women and commoner men.

3. Interpreting the pattern of Manchu-Chinese intermarriage

[41] This was a derogatory term for Chinese by Manchus.
[42] This was a typical hairstyle of married Chinese women. Manchu women usually wrapped their hair in a triangular pattern around a wooden ivory or metal fillet fastened behind the head.
[43] *Manzu minge ji* (Collections of Manchu folk songs), ed. by Bo Dagong, p. 63.
[44] A Manchu term to address commoner men.
[45] *Ge-ge* (格格, pronounces in the raising tune in Chinese) is the term to address Manchu young girls.
[46] Bo Dagong, ed. *Manzu minge ji* (Collections of Manchu folk songs), p. 136.

From the late 17th to the early 20th century, the Qing court pursued a policy of partial prohibition of Manchu-Chinese intermarriage. What can we learn from the court policy and people's marital behavior in their real lives? How should we understand the policy and reality featured by gender distinction? What was the women's role in construction of Manchu ethnicity and how different was it from men's?

First, the pattern of Manchu-Chinese intermarriage reflected the different positions of bannermen and banner women in the society and the different levels at which they accepted Chinese values and culture. As noted in Chapter One, after the Manchu conquest, the Qing court practiced a policy of separation of residency both in Beijing and other garrison cities.[47] The separated residence pattern confined women to the closed banner communities and they could had very little contact with people other than their own. Banner women might have to deal with Chinese peddlers to buy goods for daily use, and some Manchu households might have Chinese servants. However, this kind of contact could only provide banner women with a smattering of knowledge about Chinese people and culture. Moreover, since women were not directly involved in the kind of politics usually needed to deal with Chinese officials, the Qing court did not ask them to learn Chinese or to adjust to the new cultural environment, as the bannermen had to do.

Bannermen, by contrast, had many opportunities for contact with non-banner populations. Under the dyarchical system, as the member of ruling ethnic group, bannermen occupied various political, administrative, and military positions in the Qing government. Although they lived in Manchu cities, they worked together with Chinese

[47] For the ethnic tension, see Mark Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, pp. 98-100; Frederick Wakeman, *Great Enterprise*, p. 477. For more information about the separation of residency, see Chapter One of this dissertation.

officials and scholars, sharing power with Chinese who also served the Manchu court. Moreover, since the Manchus wished to be seen as legitimate rulers who had won the Mandate of Heaven to rule China, they had to compromise with Chinese culture in many ways, adopting Chinese ideas and values that might be conflict with their own traditions. In order to control China and win popular support from the Chinese, the Manchu rulers showed great interests in Confucianism "to publicly demonstrate to their Chinese subjects their benignity and refinement."[48] This cultural climate provided more opportunities for bannermen to learn Chinese culture and accepted Chinese values.

The different level of access to Chinese society determined bannermen and women's attitude to the intermarriage with the Chinese. Being influenced by Confucian ideal of gender relationships, bannermen might feel Chinese women's characters closer to their expectation—subordinate to husband, obedient to parents-in-law, dependent, and not strong-willed. A bannerman might also enjoy the sexual monopoly of his wife during her entire lifetime, either before the marriage, during the marriage, or after his death. At the same time, bannermen accepted Confucian aesthetic view and felt Chinese women were attractive and seductive (or at least acceptable) in outward appearance—they were pale, willowy, and with a pair of tiny feet that made men felt pity and be induced to take care of them. All these characteristics of Chinese women, both physically and mentally, contrasted sharply with those of Manchu women, who featured vigorous, strong, aggressive, unrestrained attitudes, and unbound feet. As city-dwelling bannermen were gradually losing their "manly virtue"[49] and getting "soft," those masculine characters of

[48] Tien Ju-k'ang, *Male Anxiety and Female Chastity*, p. 126.
[49] "Manly virtue" refers to bannermen's skills of riding, shooting with a bow and arrow, living a simple and unpretentious life, like what their forefathers had before the conquest. Philip Kuhn considers the Han decadence as the "theft of their [bannermen] virtue." See, *Soulstealers*, p. 226.

Manchu women would not be much appreciated. In sum, by the Qianlong reign, bannermen were generally quite Confucianized and the cultural distinction between bannermen and commoners was fading fast. Acculturation made intermarriage possible. When bannermen married Chinese women, they did not feel much concern over women's ethnic identity, at least, ethnicity was not the most important factor to be considered.

The ethnic picture looked very different from a banner woman's perspective since banner women were confined in a relatively closed community, where ethnic identities were more easily maintained and passed on.[50] They had little opportunity to know Chinese people and culture on a deeper level, so banner women had always considered Chinese men as "others" or "strangers," and therefore, felt insecure about marrying them. From Ding Yizhuang's interviews of Ms. Hu Fuzhen, an elderly Manchu women in Beijing who had married a Han Chinese, we may see that prejudice against Chinese men still existed even in 1930s. When Ms. Hu's mother heard that someone had introduced a Chinese man to her 26-year-old daughter, she initially wanted to turn down this proposal. She said, "He is an outsider. We don't know anything about his background. Who knows whether he already has a wife—Han people usually do like that. I am afraid that he came here to deceive us." Later, after she took a look at her prospective son-in-law, she complained, "He is not like us. His skin looks very dark." However, Ms. Hu finally married this Chinese man since she was not young anymore and also, as Ms. Hu said herself, "I did not care about his ethnicity at that time because the banner people were all running around here and there away from Japanese troops. It was hard to find a husband

[50] This situation had continued until the mid-20th century when banner people still lived together as neighbors. See, Ding Yizhuang, *Zuihou de jiyi: shiliu wei qiren funu de koushu lishi* (The last memories: the oral history of 16 Manchu women). p. 15.

with too many considerations on his ethnicity."[51] Another interview shows the discomfort that Manchu girls felt when they married into Chinese families. Ms. Zhao Xiuying, who was born in 1916, said that her younger sister married into a Chinese household where she had been often scolded and insulted. (Perhaps because she did not know how to behave like a good daughter-in-law by Chinese standards?) She suffered during all her lifetime and never enjoyed even one single day. Ms. Zhao concluded, "That was because she married a Chinese. I have never been scolded like that because I married a Manchu."[52] Another Manchu woman, Ms. Bai Huimin said, "If you married a Han Chinese, the whole [banner community] will look down on you."[53] Unlike bannermen who might marry without any stress over their wives' ethnic background, women first considered whether a future husband was registered in banner.[54] Most of the women in the interview were born in the early 20th century. Their stories reveal that the misgivings and prejudice against Han Chinese among banner women even continued until 1930s. By extension, we may imagine how banner women perceived Chinese men in the 17th and 18th centuries.

In addition to the different level of acculturation between men and women, there were some pragmatic reasons were also responsible for the gendered imbalance of intermarriage. Only when the intermarriage benefited both parties, or at least did not hurt their interests, could it be accomplished. In the following paragraphs, I will compare and contrast the situation of the marriage between bannermen and Chinese women with that

[51] Ding Yizhuang, *Zuihou de jiyi*, pp. 68-69.
[52] Ibid., p. 183.
[53] Ibid., p. 203.
[54] Ibid., p. 218.

of intermarriage between banner women and Chinese men to see why bannermen likely married Chinese women, while banner women were reluctant to marry Chinese.

The Manchus, like Han Chinese, followed a patrilineal tradition. Once a man married, the wife joined the man's family and changed her last name as well as the banner she had belonged to before she married. If the woman were from a commoner's family, marrying a bannerman meant changing her ethnicity from Chinese to Manchu and then she could enjoy all the privileges banner women were granted. The children from the intermarriage of Manchu men and Chinese women were considered Manchu.[55] Obviously, the intermarriage between bannermen and Chinese women did not change the ethnic identities of the husband and his family. Or in other words, it would not blur the ethnic boundaries, and therefore, would not threaten Manchu ethnic identity. On the contrary, intermarriage helped bannermen to find wives when few marriageable banner women were available and, therefore, to maintain banner population, which was beneficial to Manchu ethnic interests.

Some scholars have already noticed that there were fewer banner women than bannermen. After computerizing the statistic of Qing imperial men and women, James Lee, Wang Feng, and Cameron Campbell came to conclusion that infanticide of girl babies was responsible for the imbalance. Their research reveals that the ratio of male to female infants were 109 to 100 at the birth. But the mortality of infant girls within the first 24 hours of birth was ten times of the mortality of infant boys. Lee and Wang believe

[55] Many examples from interviews of elderly Manchu women demonstrate that it was not uncommon that bannermen married Chinese women and once a woman married into a Manchu family, she became a Manchu. See, Ding Yizhuang, *Zuihou de jiyi*, p. 93, 181, 197, 202; Also the tape records of interview by Ding Yizhuang on July 25, 2000.

that among every ten newborn baby girls at least one was killed.[56] Thus, the infanticide might cause the gender imbalance and the shortage of banner women available in marriage pool.[57] The tradition of that banner women married in a relatively late age or stayed unmarried in their natal families also made difficult for bannermen to find marriageable women.[58] This imbalance pushed bannermen to look for wives beyond the banner communities.

From the perspective of a Chinese woman, marrying a man in banner might be a profitable choice. The main advantages included:

(1) Financial security. In Qing, all the men in banners and their families were privileged people and "ate the emperor's rice" (*chi huang liang* 吃皇粮). The state saw to the material needs of all banner soldiers and their families and dispensed to them a regular allowance of grain/cash and housing. The standard of living in a banner family was well above that in the average Chinese household, at least in the first half of the Qing dynasty.[59] While many Chinese civilians were eager to enter the banners under various excuses, Chinese women joined the banners through marriage. The financial security would continue even after her husband died. A bannerman's widow did not face the same sort of terrible uncertainty faced by the women from a Han

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[56] James Lee, Wang Feng, and Cameron Campbell, "Lianzhong butong de siwang xianzhi jizhi—huangzu renkou zhong de yinger he ertong siwanglu (Infant and child mortality among Qing nobility: implications for two types of positive checks), p. 40, 43; in *Qingdai huangzu renkou xingwei he shehui huanjing* (The population behaviors and social environment of Qing nobility), ed. by James Lee and Guo Songyi, pp. 39-59.

[57] Lee and Wang's research is based on the data of *Yu die* (Imperial genealogy). I am not sure, to what extent, these data reflected the imbalance of the whole banner population, not just limited the imperial family and nobilities.

[58] See Chapter Two of this dissertation for more information about this issue.

[59] For a full description of the material support to banner families, see Mark Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, Chapter Four, "The Iron Rice Bowl of Banner Privilege." pp. 191-197.

families. She could enjoy her husband's pension (one-half his last salary) at least for one year, or until she remarried.[60]

(2) Benefit to children. In addition to considering the financial security for themselves, women were usually concerned for their children. The children from the marriage of Manchu men and Chinese women were considered Manchu. As adults, the children would enjoy various privileges that were only granted to banner people, which included, the legal privileges, educational privileges, and occupational privileges.[61] Making a secure future for children might be one of the most important considerations when a Chinese woman married a bannerman.

(3) Authority in the household. In a Manchu household, it was the wife who usually became the head of the household and controlled the husband.[62] In households where a mother-in-law was not present, the wife had authority in the family from very beginning of the marriage. It was known that most bannermen left household matters to women. In many literary works, the stereotypy of *a-ge* (young bannerman) was generally dull and passive. In "Eating crabs" *Youth Book*, the Chinese wife was described as a "quick-tempered, sharp-tongued, domineering" figure, while her Manchu husband is "meek, hardly speaks, and is slow to react when the trouble with the crabs begins." His only response once his wife has finished cursing him is to sit, "quiet as a mute, without making a sound."[63] The possibility of being a dominant figure in household might draw, at least, some Chinese women to banner families.

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[60] See Chapter three of this dissertation for details.
[61] For more information about bannermen's privileges, see Mark Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, Chapter Four, "The Iron Rice Bowl of Banner Privilege." pp. 197-207.
[62] For more information about banner women's position in family, see Chapter Two of this dissertation.
[63] Mark Elliott, "The 'Eating Crabs' Youth Book," in *Under Confucian Eyes: Writings on Gender in Chinese History*, ed. by Susan Mann and Yu-yin Cheng, p. 268.

By contrast, if a banner woman married a Chinese, she would lose many advantages. She would be expelled from the banner and became a commoner. All the privileges that banner people enjoyed would vanish with the marriage. The children of Chinese men and Manchu women were considered Chinese. They would not enjoy any privileges for their half-Manchu blood. Moreover, since banner women lived in a relatively isolated community, they knew little about Chinese customs and etiquette, making it more difficult for them to marry into a Chinese household. The interviews by Ding Yizhuang reveal that even if the Qing court allowed banner women to marry Chinese men, few women wished to do so, because they did not feel secure in marrying anyone outside the banners.[64] The language barrier might be another negative factor for intermarriage between banner women and Chinese men. According to "Eating crabs" *Youth Book*, in the Qianlong period, the Manchu language was spoken in banner households. Bannermen might speak Chinese when they were at work but speak Manchu at home. Therefore, it was quite possible that most Manchu women could not speak Chinese fluently, at least by the Qianlong period. However, the language barrier did not exist if the intermarriage accomplished between Chinese men and the banner women from Han banners. No doubt language is one factor why intermarriage of banner women and Chinese men was more prevalent among Han banners than that among Manchu or Mongol banners.

Most Chinese men would not marry banner women even if there were no law to forbid it. Chinese men might feel uncomfortable with banner women's flat and big feet; they might dislike banner women's unrestrained personalities; they might also be

[64] See, Ding Yizhuang, *Zuihou de jiyi*, p. 68, 75, 202-203, 218.

concerned with the issue of virginity, because in Manchu society female virginity was not a major issue.[65] Taking a wife from the banners would bring no benefit to the man and his family and might well result in cultural conflicts.

In sum, the pattern of Manchu-Chinese intermarriage not only reflected the Manchu rulers' consideration on ethnic security, which female exogamy would threaten ethnic identity, but also reflected the different levels at which bannermen and women accepted Chinese values. The evidences of how men and women perceived intermarriage, as I mentioned above, indicate that banner women changed more slowly than bannermen in the process of acculturation.

Conclusion

In any multi-ethnic society, intermarriage between different peoples is one of the most effective ways to erase the ethnic boundaries. Some extent of acculturation is the prerequisite for intermarriage. Qing society was not an exception. Manchu-Chinese intermarriage occurred over the time as the evidence of acculturation. However, intermarriage for the most of the Qing dynasty remained uncommon and had not become popular until as late as 1960s, which indicated that acculturation was a long process and banner people's ethnic consciousness could exist continually long after the banner system abolished.

Throughout the Qing dynasty, the Manchu rulers adjusted the policies of intermarriage according to their political and ethnic needs. The control of Manchu males over Manchu women's sexuality and nuptiality was the only way to keep the women (and their children) in banners and therefore maintain the Manchu population at a certain level.

[65] For more information about the issue of virginity and gender relations, see Chapter Five.

Moreover, keeping women in banners guaranteed that most bannermen would be able to find marriage partners with those who shared many cultural similarities and, as a result, helped to slow down bannermen's steps in the process of acculturation and also help to pass Manchu traditions from generation to generation through individual households.

Banner women changed more slowly in the process of acculturation. Therefore, they were more reluctant to marry Chinese. Furthermore, government law prohibited them from doing so until the early 20th century. On the one hand, the position of women in the process of acculturation helped to shape the pattern of Manchu-Chinese intermarriage, in which bannermen marrying Chinese women was more prevalent than that banner women marrying Chinese men. On the other hand, the pattern of intermarriage in turn determined the acculturation as a gendered formation. When a bannerman married a Chinese woman, he would be influenced by the Chinese life style even within the household. To men, the family was a place where two cultures adapted to each other, while to women who did not marry Chinese, family was a much safer place, in which the old tradition and habits could be easily maintained.

After the Guangxu emperor issued the decree lifting the ban in 1901, intermarriage became more common than it had been in the 18th and 19th centuries. This was because, on the one hand, banner people's living condition had deteriorated and their social status declined, beginning in the late nineteenth century. Especially after Qing government was overthrown, banner people had to have a pragmatic attitude toward their daughters' marriages. They reluctantly married them out without being overly concerned about their future son-in-law's ethnic background. On the other hand, the intermarriage became more popular was the result of acculturation between the Manchus and Chinese

over the 268 years when these two peoples co-existed under one regime. However, the ethnic consciousness still influenced people's choices until as late as 1960s.

Chapter Five: Gender Relations and Sexuality

The Manchu traditions of sexuality were very different from those of the Chinese. For example, casual sociality between different sexes was common among the Manchus, while in Chinese society, the rule of "separation of sexes" (男女授受不亲) was even applied among family members.[1] Sexual relations between single men and women was tolerated (though not encouraged) by the Manchus, while women who committed sexual transgressions would be severely punished according to Chinese tradition. Manchu men did not mind marrying a woman who was not a virgin, while female virginity was a significant issue in Chinese society where female premarital sex was considered immoral and men's life-long sexual monopoly over women was emphasized.

After the Manchus conquered China, they gradually accepted the Chinese values regarding sexuality. Men started to be concerned about whether their bride was a virgin, which determined how much bride-price they would pay. Accordingly, parents started to confine their daughters in the inner quarters and did not allow them to have contact with male strangers because the possibility of premarital sex would devalue the girls. Widows became more sensitive to their reputation in terms of contacts with men. Manchu males who were conversant with Chinese customs, wanted to be sure that a woman's sexual loyalty to her husband was not terminated upon his death, as it was the case before the conquest. Instead, the loyalty became a woman's lifelong commitment, which meant that widows had to live chastely and should not consort with any men. Moreover, levirate

[1] Regarding "separation of sexes" among family members, see *Fang Bao ji* (Collection works of Fang Bao), p. 480. Also see Sima Guang, *Jia fan* (Domestic regulations), vol. 1, p. 464. It said, "a father should not enter his daughter's room after she has become engaged, and a brother should not sit next to his married sister on her return visits home." Cited from Patricia B. Ebrey, *The Inner Quarters*, p. 24.

marriage and intimate relations among family members of opposite sexes, once a Manchu tradition, now became illicit and would receive serious punishments.

This chapter first investigates the Manchu tradition on gender relations and sexuality prior to 1644. Then it examines the changing tradition of Manchu women's lives in sexuality after the conquest. Finally, the chapter looks at the changes and conflicts from a gendered perspective to explore the different attitudes of men and women toward Confucian norms in sexuality.

The primary sources I use in this chapter are heavily based on criminal court cases. On the one hand, court records provide the information that could not be found from official-compiled history books, and therefore become very valuable for the research. On the other hand, they may have limitation on the scope they represent and the accuracy and reliability of the records themselves. Although inquisition by torture was not revealing in most of the cases I use in this chapter, compared with the cases in which the criminal tried to deny the murder, the confessions might carry some false or exaggerated information. For example, in most cases, women were the victims of murder. The confessions were usually drawn from the man (the criminal) and recorded by the court officials. Therefore, the criminals might overstate women's disobedient and unrestrained behavior as their excuses for the murder in order to reduce the penalty. However, the confessions still reveal a deep divide between male expectations of women, which had changed through men's contact with Chinese society, and women's behaviors, which remained more conventionally Manchu. Moreover, the way that Qing court convicted crimes and commune sentences according to the criminal claimed in their

confessions reflected that the Manchu rulers were eager to have Confucian morality rooted in the society.

1. The Manchu tradition on gender relations and sexuality

In Manchu society, women commonly appeared in public occasions and mingled with men as they pleased. Within the household, there was no regulation of evasion among family members of different sexes. This tradition could be traced back from the late 16th century before the Manchus were organized as a single ethnic group. According to *Quan Liao zhi*, a gazetteer of Liaodong area, edited by Li Fu in 1566, "[the barbarians] had no ritual to follow. Men and women were mixed at parties where they flirted each other with frivolous words and conducts. They did not even feel shamed."[2] Other valuable records about the Manchu tradition in gender relations can be found from travelers' notes, written by Chinese in late 17th century.[3]

Liubian jilue, a traveler's note by Yang Bin, who followed his father's exile to Liaodong in the early Kangxi period (1662-1722) when he was 13 years old, recorded a number of Manchu customs in Manchuria area. According to the author's observation, Manchu women often appeared at family banquets and played active roles at the party.

> When the Manchus held parties, men and women of the host family must dance for their guests. Women usually kept the guests company and urged them to drink (alcohol). They were so hospitable that they knelt down to hold the wine cups for the guests, urging them to drink one cup after another until the guests became drunk.[4]

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[2] Li Fu, *Quan Liao zhi* (The history of Liaodong area), vol. 4, "Custom."

[3] Although these notes were taken in late 17th century, several decades after the Manchu conquest of China, they still helped us to know the Manchu traditions before the conquest because what the travelers described were the customs in Manchuria area—the Manchu homeland, where the tradition had been little changed even hundreds of years after the conquest.

[4] Yang Bin, *Liubian jilue* (Jotting at willow palisade), p. 76.

Unlike Chinese tradition, in which female family members confined themselves in the inner quarters in order to avoid meeting with the male guests, Manchu wives and concubines received the guests, "there was no dividing line between 'inner' and 'outer'. The guests addressed the master's wife as *saozi* (嫂子) if they were younger than the master, if they were older, they would address the master's wife as *shenzi* (婶子)."[5]

According to another traveler's notes, "All the guests would be invited to sit on the *kang* (炕, bed) located on the south side of the room. Women were not asked to hide themselves from the guests. In occasions when people met after a long separation, they all hugged and kissed each other."[6]

Johann Nieuhof (1618-1672) was secretary to an embassy of officers from the Dutch East India Company. Between 1655-1657, he accompanied the officers traveling north by river from Guangzhou through Jiangxi to Nanjing, and then north via the Grand Canal to Beijing. His notes from the journey were published in 1665 in Amsterdam. His detailed observations of everything that his group encountered are a valuable record of material, social, and political conditions in China in the middle 1650s.

When Nieuhof and his group were at Nanjing on May 4, 1656, they visited the Qing governor.

> "This Governor was by birth a Tartar, a young well-set Man, but understood not the Chinese Language, therefore his Sons were Interpreters. His Wife, a proper and comely Dame, spoke more then [than] her husband, and [was] strangely inquisitive about Holland; she was not dismayed at our strange Arms, but like a

[5] Ibid., p. 79.
[6] Wu Zhenchen, *Ningguta jilue* (Jotting at Ninggu Pagoda), p. 9, 20. The author was born and grew up in Ningguta (today Liaoning Province), the Manchu homeland before they moved to China proper. Wu's father was exiled to Ningguta in the *Dingyou* year of Shunzhi and had stayed there for 23 years. His book provided very rich materials about Manchu customs and traditions although his records were full of ethnic prejudice and bias.

> bold Virago drew out our Swords, and discharged our Pistols, which much delighted her. . ."[7]

Another day they rode out for sightseeing. They saw a Manchu lady who was about 40 years old, sitting by the gate of the Old Imperial Court with her servants. She invited them into her house, although her husband was absent.

> The Lady then made towards him: She was very debonair and free, looked upon our Swards, and much admired their bending without breaking: She took the Embassadour's Hat, and put it on her own Head, and unbuttoned his Doublet almost down to his Waste: Afterwards she led the way into the house and desired him to follow, appointing one of her Attendants to conduct him, who brought us into her apartment, where we found her standing with her Daughter about half her age, waiting our coming, in great state.[8]

Nieuhof's account notes that the Manchu women were obviously different from Chinese women in many ways. They were bold, curious, straightforward, and did not hide themselves from male strangers.

The following folk song depicted a Manchu girl who bumped into someone on the street. Her bold and pungent character appeared vividly between the lines:

> A red sedan-cart is drown by a white horse,
> In the cart sits a beautiful young lady.
> Seeing her neighbor coming from the south,
> She asks, "dear brother, where are you going?"
> "I am going to visit my parents-in-law in Cuihua Street," the man said.
> "Come to my house after your visit."
> "What can I eat at your house?"
> "I don't have anything special for you but milk tea and Manchu steam-bread,
> you must drink the tea and eat the bread,
> or I'll pour the tea down your throat and cram the bread into your mouth,
> so your front teeth might be scalded off." [9]

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[7] Quoted in Lynn Struve, *Voices from the Ming-Qing Cataclysm*, p. 68.
[8] Ibid., pp. 68-69.
[9] Cited in Li Hongyu, "Manzu minge zhong de minzu xinli sushi" (What Manchu folk songs tell us about the Manchu mentality), *Manzu yanjiu* (Manchu studies), issue 2, 1991, p. 74.

The song reveals that a Manchu girl could not only run on the street freely but also talk to young men in a very unrestrained way. Such casual behavior was very different from the Chinese tradition.

Dream of the Red Chamber depicts a love story between Baoyu and Black Jade (Daiyu) in a Manchu household. Although it was written in the Qianlong period (1736-1795), one hundred years after the conquest, some old Manchu traditions still remained in people's daily lives, especially in the aspect of gender relations among family members. The author used many words in the novel to describe the unusually intimate relations between the main character—Baoyu and his female cousins, sisters-in-law, and other female relatives in his same generation or in a younger generation.[10] At one point in the novel, Baoyu's maid (later his concubine) Pervading Fragrance reported to his mother, Madame Wang:

> "I have nothing to tell in particular," Pervading Fragrance said. "I was only thinking that it may be wise to have Er-yeh (refer to Baoyu) move out of the Garden on some pretext."
>
> Madame Wang was astonished. She took the maid by the hand and asked anxiously, "Has Baoyu done anything to make you say that?"
>
> "No," Pervading Fragrance hastily assured her. "But Er-yeh is growing up, as the young mistresses are. Though they are brothers and sisters, yet there is no telling what evil tongues might say. If Er-yeh becomes the subject of evil gossip, we whose duty it is to wait upon him will have to answer to it. That is a small matter, for we should gladly die for our master, but what is more important is Er-yeh's reputation." [11]

This conversation revealed three things: (1) The intimate relations *did* exist between Baoyu (he was about 14 years old then) and his female relatives, who were between 13 and 24 years old; (2) By the mid-18th century—the time when this novel was composed--some old Manchu traditions were being influenced by the Confucian norm of "separation

[10] See, Cao Xueqin, *Honglou meng* (Dream of the red chamber), p. 45, 136, 194, 206.
[11] Cao Xueqin, *Honglou meng* (Dream of the red chamber), p. 350.

of sexes." This is why Madame Wang and Pervading Fragrance felt worried; (3) They worried about Baoyu's reputation, not the reputation of the girls. This is very different from the Chinese who blamed for sexual transgression always on women first.

Based on the information from the traveler's notes, the folk song, and the novel, it is clear that during the early Qing period, Manchu women were considerably more casual and forward in male company than their Han-Chinese counterparts.

Manchu women's casual and forward attitude toward men might lead to sexual relations before marriage. However, in the Manchu tradition, men did not see female virginity as a major issue. The earliest historical records that reflect indifference to female virginity can be traced back to *Jin shu*, an officially compiled history of Jin (晋 265-419), where it is said that the barbarians in the North shared the same tradition, "married women are chaste and virtuous; unmarried women are promiscuous and loose in morals."[12] Thus, single women could enjoy sexual freedom. Since it was a common practice, premarital sexual experiences would not devalue the girls due to the "defilement" of the body. Only when a woman married, she would belong to her husband only (as if she was his personal property) and was expected to be chaste and virtuous. The Manchus and their ancestors, the Jurchen, had the same tradition. Cases in archives regarding sexual transgressions, by unmarried women, show that they were only lightly punished, some escaped punishment altogether. The following three cases illustrate these points:

> [on 26 February, 1621] Nurhaci said in a decree, "the servant of A-dun *a-ge* fornicated with the maid of Yang-gu-li. They plotted to run away together. They

[12] ***Jin shu*** **(History of Jin), vol. 97, "Biography of barbarians." p. 2534.**

ran away from their master's house. But before too long, they came back again. From now on, I permit them to live together."[13]

Neither the man nor the woman who committed fornication were punished at all. Instead, their cohabitation was legitimized when they came back to their master's houses. The tolerance toward fornication implied that pre-marriage sex was not considered as sexual transgression by the early 17th century.

In another case of fornication, Nurhaci had two maids in his household. One called Qin-tai, the other called Na-zha. On the 10th day of March in 1620, a serious quarrel broke out between these two women. Na-zha accused Qin-tai of fornication with Nong-ku. Qin-tai asked in retort, "Where did you see me to have sex with Nong-ku? What did I give him after having sex with him? Actually, I know that you and Da-hai have slept together and you gave him two bolts of blue cloth afterwards." When Nurhaci heard of Qin-tai's charge, he first investigated, and then he sentenced Na-zha and Da-hai to death because they took/received cloth from the inner palace without permission. He did not punished Qin-tai and Nong-ku for their fornication.[14]

In the fifth year of Tianming (1620), Prince Hui-fa's daughter divorced Song-a-li and returned to her natal family. Then she had affairs with her sister's husband Sou-gen and with her cousin Shuo-tuo. However, when Nurhaci learned of this scandal, he did not punish them because he thought that it was "insignificant." Although some of them were

[13] *Manwen laodang* (Old Manchu archives), vol. 18, p. 170, February 26 in the sixth year of Tianming (1621).
[14] *Manwen laodang* (Old Manchu archives), vol. 14, pp. 133-134, March 10 in the 5th year of Tianming (1620). One puzzle in this case is why women paid for the illicit sex they had with men, not the other way around. It was very different from Chinese tradition (I believe it was different from the traditions in other societies as well).

sentenced to death later in the year, they were punished primarily for "plot to flee" rather than committing adultery/fornication.[15]

All the cases cited above confirmed that in the early 17th century, sexual relations out of wedlock were not considered to be criminal and, therefore, would not be severely punished. Those who were punished were not indicted for their sexual transgression but for other illicit deeds that were considered as crimes.

Another feature of Manchu women's lives before the conquest was that they were allowed to have sexual relations with the family members of the households into which they married. The Jurchens/Manchus were notorious for their tradition of levirate marriage.[16] According to Ding Yizhuang, the possibility of the sexual relations between the woman and the family members of her husband existed not only after the husband died, but even while the husband was still alive. The intimate relations between the wife and her husband's younger bothers were not uncommon.[17]

Anthropologist S. M. Shirokogoff pointed out that in early Manchu society, men were allowed to have sexual relations with senior female family members.

> [In Manchu society], it is very strictly prohibited for "me" to speak, to look or to run after the wives of the men who are younger than "myself". On the other hand there is no restriction in "my" relations and behavior towards the wives of the men who are older than "me". More than that, "I" can sleep beside these women and, if they consent, it is permitted to enter into love relations with them especially if "I" am not married.
>
> Thus, *all women of the senior class and all women of " my" own class, who are the wives of the men older than "I", "I" do not call by their personal proper names and "I" have sexual rights with them but "I" call all wives of the men who*

[15] *Manwen laodang*, vol. 16, pp. 155-156, September 8 in the 5th year of Tianming (1620).
[16] Regarding the levirate marriage tradition in early Manchu society, see page 79-80 of this dissertation.
[17] Ding Yizhuang, *Manzu de Funu Shenghuo yu Hunyin Zhidu Yanjiu* (Research on life and marriage patterns of Manchu women), p. 14.

are younger than "me" by their proper personal names and they are strictly prohibited to "me".[18]

Further more, Shirokogoff examined the way in which the Manchus arranged their accommodation to prove the uniqueness of sexual relations among Manchu family members:

> In the accommodation of persons in the house there can be seen the same system: the person between which marriage or sexual relations are prohibited, are always separated from each other by their own children or the person of non-neighboring classes—of two or three degrees. While a relative simplicity of relations and even the possibility of love relations with my older brother's wives (*asa*) permit the younger brother to sleep by the side or even near to these women.[19]

Records in the old Manchu archives confirmed Shirokogoff's assumption:

Ta-yin-cha was Nurhaci's secondary wife. When she found some unusual intimate relations between Nurhaci's primary wife and his eldest son, she made a report to Nurhaci.

> Ta-yin-cha said, "I saw that *dafujin* (primary wife) had once cooked meals herself for Prince Dai-shan (the eldest son of Nurhaci by another woman before *dafujin*) and sent the meals to him twice. He accepted the meals. Moreover, she has visited his house alone in mid-night for as many as three times."
>
> Nurhaci said, "I have ever promised that after I died, my eldest son will be responsible for taking care *dafujin* and the younger children. I think this is why *dafujin* gave her heart to Prince."
>
> Whenever Nurhaci called all his sons for meeting, *dafujin* then would dress herself up with gold and pearls, and tried to ingratiate herself with Prince Dai-shan.[20]

Although Nurhaci knew that his *dafujin* might have an affair with his son and felt uncomfortable about that, he did not punish them. Instead, he divorced the *dafujin* and promoted Ta-yin-cha as his primary wife.

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[18] S. M. Shirokogoroff, *Social Organization of the Manchus: A Study of the Manchu Clan Organization.* pp. 100-101.
[19] Ibid., p. 102.
[20] *Manwen laodang* (Old Manchu archives), vol. 51, p. 485, May 9 in the 8th year of Tianming (1623).

This tradition remained even after 1636 when Huangtaiji issued a law to prohibit sexual relations between family members. Duo-suo-li was a captain under the Plain White Banner. In 1638, he was accused of committing adultery with his paternal aunt and was brought to the court. According to the new law, people who committed adultery with family members should be sentenced to death. However, in this case, both Duo-suo-li and his aunt received leniency from Huangtaiji. They both received only one hundred blows as the punishment for their sexual transgression.[21]

Another similar case was found in 1636. Lang-wei, an official in the Department of Justice, had sexual relations with his elder brother's wife and his father's concubine. After his brother and father died, he married these two women. He also committed adultery with Liu *shi,* the concubine of his elder brother of the same clan. According to Qing law, Lang-wei should receive death penalty. But Huangtaiji absolved him from guilt and just charged him one hundred taels of silver and removed him from his office.[22]

The cases from archives revealed that in the early 17th century, affairs between family members were more broadly tolerated than one hundred years later as the Manchus shifted their views on female sexuality after they settled down in China proper. In short, in the early Manchu society there was no conception of separation of sexes. The concept of female virginity was foreign to the Manchus, so men would not feel shamed if they married widows. There was no law to prohibit sex between single men and women (including widowed and divorced women). Married women, in certain circumstance, could have sexual relations with other men of their husbands' family, if the males were in

[21] See *Shengjing xingbu yuandang* (Original archives from the Department of Justice in Shengjing), No. 182, p. 47, July 21 in the third year of Chongde (1638).
[22] *Manwen laodang* (Old Manchu archives), vol. 18, p. 1516, June 24 in the first year of Chongde (1636).

junior position/generation even before her husband died, which was an extreme form of the tradition of levirate marriage.

Men and women had different places in Chinese society. According to Confucian norm of "separation of sexes", men worked outside while women stayed in the inner quarters. Women should avoid being seen by male strangers and would be not allowed to have intimate relations with any male family members, including their brothers, cousins, brothers-in-law, uncles/nephews, or fathers-in-law. Girls were not allowed to meet their fiancé until the wedding night. These traditions had existed in Chinese society for thousands of years as part of Chinese culture. However, the Manchus gradually accepted the Chinese values regarding sexuality after the conquest. By the end of the 18th century, Confucian norm of "separation of sexes" had spread in Manchu society and male sexual monopoly over women had been established.

2. Changing traditions after the conquest

The Manchu traditions of gender relations and sexuality changed during the period of 150 years or so after they conquered China. Right after the Manchus established Qing dynasty in 1644, the Shunzhi emperor issued a decree declaring the continuation of Ming codes as Qing law.[23] The Manchu rulers put on a pose of learning from Chinese in order to buy political support from the local people and Chinese officials. They accepted Chinese norm regarding the marriage and sex, in which marriage was the prerequisite of sex, at least for women.[24] Sex out of wedlock was no longer tolerated but even considered to be against law. It was called "illicit sex (*jian*, 奸)". According to *Da Qing*

[23] Zhao Er-xun, *Qingshi gao* (Draft of Qing history), vol. 71, "*Xingfa* (Criminal codes)".
[24] This tradition existed until the 1980s in China.

huidian shili (The collected institutes and precedents of the Qing dynasty), the law that was revised by the Qianlong emperor in 1740, "Whoever commits consensual illicit sex (*he jian*, 和奸) shall receive 80 blows of the heavy bamboo; if the woman has a husband, then the offenders shall receive 90 blows of the heavy bamboo; if a man lures a woman to another place in order to have illicit sex, they shall receive 100 blows regardless of whether the woman has a husband."[25] Many cases are easily found in archives, in which people were punished due to their illicit sex and the trouble caused by that.[26]

Like Chinese, the Manchus started to view sex out of wedlock as morally unacceptable. First of all, this assumption reinforced the significance of female virginity because a good woman must be a virgin until her wedding night. Many cases in the archives indicated that, by the end of the 18th century, the Manchus hade become very sensitive to women's chastity and virginity, which was one of the main causes of disputes over marriage. In some extreme cases, women were sold or even murdered for "dishonor".

By the late 18th and early 19th centuries, female virginity became a very significant issue and related to Manchu women's morality, as illustrated in the following cases:

Kui-ming was a bannerman under the Plain Red Banner. He married bannerman's daughter Da-niu, who was 19 years old in October of the 43rd year of Qianlong (1778). However, on the wedding night he did not see blood, therefore, he assumed that Da-niu

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[25] *Da Qing huidian shili* (The collected institutes and precedents of the Qing), 825: 1a.
[26] See, *Neiwufu laiwen* (Archives of Imperial Household), # 2111, October in the 8th year of Qianlong (1743); # 2115, September 8 in the 21st year of Qianlong (1756); # 2119, March 18 in the 24th year of Qianlong (1759); # 2131, October in the 39th year of Qianlong (1774); *Junjichu lufu zouzhe* (Memorials from Grand Council), micro-film # 097-2396, March 29 in the 41st year of Qianlong (1776).

was not a virgin. The next morning he sent his wife back to her natal home and claimed that Da-niu was not chaste. Her brother then sued Kui-ming for damaging his sister's reputation. After an inspection confirmed that Da-niu was a virgin before that night, officials ordered Kui-ming to take Da-niu back home and make an apology to her natal family for his false charge. In his apology, Kui-ming mentioned that "I beg you forgiveness and understanding. The reason I became over-suspicious is because I want to marry a chaste and pure woman, which I consider the most important character of a woman. I was afraid that Da-niu was not a good person when I did not see her hymen broken at the wedding night."[27]

In another case of false charges relating to virginity issue, Guang-fu was a fourth-ranked Manchu bannerman with a title of imperial clan. He had his niece betrothed to Feng-kai's son Chang-huan. Guang-fu received a pairs of bracelets from Feng-kai as betrothal gifts, which the bride was supposed to wear at the wedding. However, Guang-fu pawned the bracelets but never had enough money to redeem them. Therefore, as the wedding day came, he bought his niece another pairs of bracelets whose quality and size were different from the original. Feng-kai scolded Guang-fu. He also claimed that Guang-fu's niece was not a virgin. Guang-fu was enraged and then sued Feng-kai for damaging his niece's reputation.[28]

In another similar case regarding to the question of virginity, in the 11th year of Daoguang (1830), Manchu bannerman Heng-tong's wife E-chen *shi* sued bannerman Du-lun in court. She said,

> "I have a daughter who is 17 years old this year (1830). On February 16 [this year], through a matchmaker, she was betrothed to Du-lun who is an idler

[27] *Neiwufu laiwen* (Archives of Imperial Household), # 2136, Nov. 4 in the 43rd year of Qianlong (1778).
[28] *Zongrenfu laiwen* (Archives of imperial lineage), "crimes and punishments," # 0727.

(*xiansan* 闲散) under the Bordered White Banner. On the third day of this month (April), I sent my daughter to his house to have the marriage officially completed (*wanhun* 完婚). However, the next morning, my son-in-law (Du-lun) came to me complaining that my daughter was not a virgin and asked me to take her back. I did not consent to do so, but he insisted on [this]. I have no other choice than taking my daughter back home and want to make things clear at court."

The defendant Du-lun confirmed E-chen *shi*'s accusation. He said,

> "I married E-chen *shi*'s daughter, but I did not see blood at the wedding night. So I assumed that she was not a virgin. Now I request the court to inspect and verify [this]. If the result showed that her hymen was broken for other reasons, not related to her morality, I would take her back as my wife and would be willing to receive any punishment for my false charge."[29]

These three cases indicated that female virginity, once a foreign concept to the Manchus, became a very important criterion of women's morality and therefore, determined the value of women's body.

Zhang Baisui was a *booi* (bondservant) under the Plain White Banner. He had a daughter Da-niu. Their neighbor Guo San, who was not a bannerman, often dropped in their house whenever he was free. No one knew how and when Guo San and Da-niu started intimate relations until the 47th year of Qianlong when Zhang and his wife found their daughter pregnant. According to Zhang Baisui, "we grudgingly married our daughter to Guo San in order to save our face."[30]

Zhang used the word of "grudgingly" because bannerman's daughter usually married a bannerman rather than a commoner like Guo San (see Chapter Four concerning intermarriage between the Manchus and Chinese). While it was not uncommon for bannermen to take Chinese girls as wives, few Manchu girls would choose to marry Chinese men unless the girls were somehow deficient. Zhang Baisui married out his

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[29] Ibid., # 0729.
[30] *Neiwufu laiwen* (Archives of Imperial Household), # 2151, December 21in the 50th year of Qianlong (1785).

daughter to Guo San because she lost her virginity before marriage and therefore her body was devalued.[31]

As female virginity became a sensitive issue in Manchu society, parents redoubled their vigilance on their daughters' social connections and activities outside the house in order to protect their daughters from sexual seduction.

Chi-ba-er was a bannerman under the Bordered Yellow Banner. He had three daughters. The eldest one had already married out. The second one was 19 years old. The following was Chi-ba-er's confession:

> She was disobedient by nature and would never listen to us. She enjoyed going outside for shopping or just wandering around on the street. On the fifth day of this month, she went out without our permission. She did not come back by midnight. I looked for her but could not find her anywhere. The next morning I bumped into her on the street and drew her back home. My wife and I asked her where she had gone for a whole night. She refused to answer but just cried. My wife and I assumed that she must have stayed somewhere overnight with a man. In ordinary times, we could never subject her to discipline. Now she had even spent a night outside. Who knows how she would dishonor us in future! Thinking like that, we strangled her into death."

What is surprising is that Chi-ba-er and his wife did not receive any punishment for the murder because "although Chi-ba-er could not point out who was the man and where the illicit sex took place, it was true that the girl had sex with someone at that night. It was a natural reaction that, as a father, Chi-ba-er was enraged and might not be able to control himself. It [referring to the murder] should be considered as an accident rather than a deliberate murder."[32]

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[31] The archive also recorded that three years later when Guo San discarded Da-niu, her parents sold her to another Chinese man as a concubine. Her body was devalued again. They only received eight taels of silver from the Chinese man.

[32] *Neiwufu laiwen* (Archives of Imperial Household), # 2131, October 1st in the 39th year of Qianlong (1773).

According Jin Qizong, a similar tragedy also happened in Beijing nearby where he lived. Manchu bannerman Liu-ge had sex with his neighbor's daughter Lian-ge. When the parents found their daughter was pregnant, they pushed her into river since they felt dishonored. The parents did not receive corporal punishment for murdering their daughter.[33]

The sources above confirm that by the end of Qianlong period, the Manchus differed little from the Chinese in their attitude toward female virginity, and had come to consider pre-marital sex as immoral and illegal. In addition to the prohibition on premarital sex, the Manchus, especially Manchu males, accepted Chinese values about chaste widowhood, in other words, a man's sexual monopoly over his wife would continue after his death.

Under the old Manchu traditions, sexual loyalty between husband and wife would be automatically terminated upon the death of either the husband or wife. In other words, a woman would become a "single" again after her husband died or after she divorced him, and she would enjoy the same degree of sexual freedom as an unmarried girl (see the cases on page 160-161.) However, the views on widows' sexual freedom gradually changed after the conquest. Archives show that by the end of the 18th century, widows were expected to keep away from male strangers to maintain the sexual loyalty to their deceased husbands. Even chatting with men was considered improper behavior and caused trouble that sometimes developed to murder.

In the 28th year of Qianlong (1763), Bannerman Ba-jin-er was sentenced to death

[33] Jin Qizong, *Beijing jiaoqu de Manzu* (The Manchus in Beijing suburb), p. 62. The author is an 84 year-old Manchu. He was an ethnologist and professor in Inner-Mongolia University. Retired in 1988 and now lives in Beijing, he is the author of many books and memorials about the Manchus in Beijing area.

on a charge of murder. The following is his confession:

> "I am an idler under the Plain Yellow banner. I am 28 years old. My father died nine years ago. I live with my grandmother. My father married my stepmother Guo *shi* when I was five. She brought me two half brothers and two half sisters. They live in the same compound with us but a separate household. In the evening of the 27th day of December, I saw my younger sister bring a man to my stepmother's room. I became suspicious and came to the outside of her room, standing by the window. I heard that my mother said something like--'do not let Ba-jin-er know. . .' I became even more suspicious. When the man came out, I recognized he was our neighbor Liu Er-ge. We came to fight and he was beaten to death. He was a 72 years old man then."

The court inspected the case and concluded that Liu Er-ge did not do anything improper to Ba-jin-er's stepmother. The tragedy happened because Ba-jin-er was over-sensitive and over-concerned about his "face."[34]

Another similar tragedy happened in the 22nd year of Qianlong (1757). Qiang-du was an "idler" under the Bordered Yellow Banner. His widowed stepmother Liu *shi* lived with his younger brother San-da-se. One day, neighbor Zhang Da-se's wife Yan *shi* made fun of her widowed friend Liu-jie, said, "You are a widow, but you are so fat as if you are pregnant." Their conversation was overheard by Qiang-du who passed by. He thought they must be talking about his stepmother and implied that she had affairs with someone. Qiang-du felt insulted and, thus thereafter, he went to Zhang Da-se's house shouting curses over and over again until violence was provoked. Qiang-du was killed accidentally in the fight.[35] This tragedy started from a joke between two women and finally led to a vicious fight in which someone lost his life. We can therefore confirm that women's chastity (including that of widows) was a major issue for the Manchus by the end of the 18th century. Sexual relations between men and women (even if their marital status was

[34] *Neiwufu laiwen* (Archives of Imperial Household), # 2121, May 6 in the 28th year of Qianlong (1763).
[35] Ibid., # 2116, September 17 in the 22nd year of Qianlong (1757).

single, widowed, or divorced) were considered severe transgression and therefore dishonored the whole family. This was why people in these cases fought for their mother's reputation so fiercely that they even did not consider the potential results.

The most remarkable change can be seen in the aspect of the relations among family members. Before the conquest, sexual relations between women and family members of their husbands' family were not prohibited under the system of levirate marriage, although there was a rule, in which younger men or the men in junior generation always married older women or the women in senior generation. Due to this understanding, people usually tolerated affairs between a wife and the husband's younger brother. However, according to Confucian codes, the sexual relation among family members, including those who did not have the ties of blood, was seen as incest—the first taboo in the Chinese tradition. As early as 1636 when the Manchus prepared to take over China, the emperor Huangtaiji issued a law prohibiting levirate marriage.[36] In order to demonstrate to the Chinese that the Manchus were civilized people who followed the Confucian norms. The perception that Manchus had absorbed such Confucian standards would help his regime to be more easily accepted by the Chinese.

After the conquest, affairs among family members were considered as crimes and would receive more serious punishment than regular adultery or even murder:

In the 32nd year of Qianlong (1767), Liu Cheng-en and his elder brother's wife Yang *shi* were sentenced to death for adultery and running away together. The following was Liu Cheng-en's confession:

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[36] *Qing Taizong shilu gaoben* (The draft of Qing Taizong veritable records), See *Qingchu shiliao congkan disanzhong* (The third volume of historical materials about the early period of Qing), pp.6-7.

> I am 28 this year. I live with my elder brother under the same roof. Last year in May, my brother took Yang Cun-zhu's daughter Yang *shi* as his wife. In the midnight of the 17th in August, I slept in the courtyard. Yang *shi* came over and asked me whether I felt cold. Then she covered me up with some clothes. I held her in my arms and then had sex with her. After that we had sex for many times. My brother did not know. On the 18th of January this year, we were detected by my brother when Yang *shi* came to my bedroom in midnight. We were scared and ran away the next morning.

They both were caught five days later. They were sentenced to death by hanging and were executed immediately.[37]

Another case of adultery was between Xi-cun, who was a 28-year-old unmarried bannerman, and his widowed sister-in-law Zhang *shi*. His parents died when he was young. He lived with his uncle's family. Xi-cun's cousin Wang Rongxian died in the 41st year of Qianlong (1776) and left his widow Zhang *shi* behind. Zhang *shi* lived in the north room while Xi-cun and his uncle lived in the south room. As time passed, Xi-cun and Zhang *shi* started an affair. Later on their illicit relation was exposed. Xi-cun was deprived of his position on the banner register and was beaten 100 blows of the heavy bamboo. Zhang *shi* received 100 blows of the heavy bamboo and was sent to a distant place for three years.[38]

If this case had happened 150 years earlier, it would have been considered perfectly legitimate sex because both parties were in a marriageable status and the unmarried younger brother was a perfectly-well qualified candidate for the widow's remarriage under the system of levirate marriage. However, by the mid-18th century the

[37] *Neiwufu laiwen* (Archives of Imperial Household Department), # 2125, May 17 in the 32nd year of Qianlong (1767)
[38] *Neiwufu laiwen* (Archives of Imperial Household department), # 2147, January-June in the 49th year of Qianlong (1784).

Manchus had accepted the Confucian values on the relations of family members and therefore saw the sexual relations between Xi-cun and the widow of his brother as incest.

The most common cases in the archives are murders, which were due to the husband's suspicion of his wife's affairs with other men. Among these cases, more than seventy percent are affairs that happened among family members, especially between the wife and her husband's younger brother.

In the first year of Qianlong (1736), the Plain Yellow Banner *booi* Zhang Yang-cheng killed his wife and his brother with a kitchen knife. Zhang confessed that one day when he came home from work, he saw his wife and his younger brother sitting at the edge of *kang* (炕, bed). He felt a little uncomfortable. When he found that they made eyes at each other, he was sure that they had an affair. Several days later, when he squabbled with his brother over some trifles, his wife tried to defend his brother. Therefore, his suspicion seemed to be proved. That night, Zhang woke up and saw his wife sitting at the edge of *kang*, smoking. He asked her where she had gone. She said she went outside to pee. Zhang thought she must have gone to his brother's room for sex. He was so enraged that he picked up a kitchen knife and rushed to his brother's room. His wife followed. He killed them both and cut off their heads. Then he surrendered to the police *yamen*. Zhang was condemned to death with the sentence suspended for one year.[39]

Sun Hei-zi was a bannerman under the Bordered Blue Banner. His wife Wan *shi* disliked him because he was poor and ill. They often argued and fought. Hei-zi thus suspected Wan *shi* had affairs with his younger brother. On 27 September 1736, Heizi came home drunk. Wan *shi* insulted him and his parents. Hei-zi was enraged and thought

[39] *Xingke tiben* (Memorials from Justice Department), September in the 1st year of Qianlong (1736).

Wan *shi* must be killed due to her rude attitude to his parents and the affair with his brother. Then he chopped her with a kitchen knife. The court decided to condemn him to death with the sentence suspended for one year.[40]

In the same year in the Nigu Pagoda area, a Plain Yellow bannerman A-er-xi killed his wife because he assumed she had an affair with his nephew. The following is A-er-xi's confession:

> I am 38 years old this year. My wife was 39. We did not have children during the 15 years of marriage. I went to army for service in the 7th year of Yongzheng (1729). When I came back in August in the 13th year of Yongzheng (1735) for my mother's funeral, however, I found my wife pregnant. Rumor said that she had slept with my nephew Cha-na-bu, but she denied when I questioned her. Then I went to Cha-na-bu's house. After I beat him with whip, he admitted [the affair]. I thought that Cha-na-bu had had sex with my wife, how could I not to kill him. So, I killed him with a knife. Then I came back home and killed my wife. This is the fact.

The authority of Ninggu Pagoda investigated the case and confirmed that A-er-xi could not provide any evidence of the affair and that he accused his wife of being pregnant in December of 1735, five months after their reunion. Therefore, the murder was caused by A-er-xi's over-suspiciousness. The court decision was exactly as the same as Zhang Yang-cheng and Sun Hei-zi's cases—A-er-xi was condemned to death with the sentence suspended for one year.[41]

Another wife-killer named Chang-cun, a bannerman under the Bordered Yellow Banner. He had been married to his wife Fu *shi* for several years and had been living in a harmonious life. However, one day when he saw Fu *shi* and her brother-in-law (her sister's husband) Hu Jin sitting at the *kang* in her bedroom chatting, he assumed she must be having an affair with Hu Jin. When he brought his wife to account, Hu Jin was as a

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[40] *Xingke tiben* (Memorials from Justice Department), October in the 1st year of Qianlong (1736).
[41] *Xingke tiben* (Memorials from Justice Department), December in the 1st year of Qianlong (1736).

mediator and tried to make peace between the couple, which made Chang-cun even more suspicious about their relations. The suspicion finally developed into murder. Chang-cun was condemned to death with the sentence suspended for one year for murdering his wife.[42]

These four cases shared one thing in common. All were murders, in which the victims were the wives and/or her assumed lover. In no case was there solid evidence to support the husband's assumption, in other words, the "evidence" was basically from his imagination. The court decisions on these cases were the same as well—to condemn the husband to death but not to execute it immediately, instead he was given at least one year's reprieve (usually he could find ways to waive the death penalty and reduce it to imprisonment for life, or even lighter penalty during this time). When checking the Qing Codes, I noticed that a man would be condemned to death (without a grace period) if he married (or had sex with) the widow of his family members.[43] Surprisingly, Qing law even judged homicide as a lesser crime than committing levirate marriage. After the conquest, the priority of the Manchus was to make themselves appear as legitimate rulers by showing efforts to adjust to Chinese traditions and values, which included, but was not limited to, the prohibition of levirate marriage. The heavier penalty on levirate marriage and the leniency towards the wife-killers were the two sides of a coin, reflecting that the Manchus as conquering outsiders "sought to codify and enforce norms in traditional

[42] *Neige Hanwen huangce* (Yellow books in Chinese from the Cabinet), microfilm, # C-5575. October 26 in the 5th year of Qianlong (1740).
[43] *Da Qing huidian shili* (The collected institutes and precedents of the Qing), 756: 8b-9a.

Chinese culture so that they could claim to represent an indigenous moral and social system."[44]

3. Gendered format on the changing tradition

From the cases discussed above, we can see that the Manchu traditional values in the aspects of gender relations and sexuality had substantially changed by the end of the 18th century. First of all, female virginity and purity became a very important criterion in the male construction of the value of women. According to cases in the archives, brides could be returned back to their natal family by their husbands after the wedding night because of questionable sexual purity. Girls who lost their virginity were devalued and could be sold in marriage only for a low price. These cases indicated that the Manchus became very concerned about female virginity—a conception that was foreign to them before the conquest, and, like Chinese, the Manchus started to associate virginity with the woman's moral characters.

Related to the issue of virginity, women's lifelong sexual loyalty to one single man was emphasized. In other words, a woman should not have intimate relations with any men other than her husband during her entire life span. This commitment existed not only as long as the marriage but also covered the period before she married and after her husband died. The cases of Chi-ba-er, Ba-jin-er, and Qiang-du discussed above (see page 171-173) indicated that, by the end of the 18th century, Manchu males had gradually accepted many new Confucian values regarding to gender relations and sexuality,

[44] Susan Mann, "Widows in the Kinship, Class, and Community Structures of Qing Dynasty China." *Journal of Asian Studies*, 46.1 (February 1987), p. 50.

including men's sexual monopoly over women, the separation of sexes, and the conception of "men outside, women inside".

Another change could be seen in the aspect of intimate relations among family members. The cases in archives revealed that after the conquest the Manchus prohibited levirate marriage and became very sensitive to the intimate relations between younger men (or men in junior generation) and older women (or women in senior generation). The serious penalties given to those who committed sexual transgression within families and the leniency exhibited toward the over-suspicious husbands who murdered their wives indicated that the Manchu rulers made effort to root out their "barbarian" tradition and replace it with Chinese ethic about family life.

It seems that a conclusion can be made based on these changes: by the end of the 18th century, the Manchus had accepted Confucian values on the aspects of gender relations and sexuality, they had been Confucianized or sinicized. However, this conclusion is only partly correct because the cases just cited primarily reflected males' attitudes towards those new values. One cannot extrapolate from those cases what Manchu women thought about the new values. After the conquest, did women fit into the new social and cultural environment in the same way and at a same pace as Manchu men did? By examining the changing tradition from a gendered perspective, we see that men and women had different views on the new morality.

The cases in the archives revealed how seriously the men considered the sexual purity of their brides.[45] However, their actions make it clear that they still lived according to the former traditions, in which virginity was not a significant issue, women

[45] See the confessions of Du-lun and Kui-ming on the pages 163 and 164.

were not separated from men, and intercourse among relatives was tolerated. Hundreds of cases of sexual transgressions from the Qianlong period (1736-1795) are preserved in the First Archives Museum in Beijing. Many of the cases began with a casual chat and visits between unmarried girls and their male neighbors. For example, Guo San was a neighbor of Zhang Baisui. He often dropped in Zhang's house to have chat with Zhang's daughter. Later their friendship developed into sexual relations and as the result, Zhang grudgingly married Da-niu to Guo San in order to save everyone's face because Da-niu was already pregnant.[46] In some cases, girls behaved in accordance with traditional customs and did not realize the significance of virginity and body purity until the tragedies happened. For example, Chi-ba-er's daughter "enjoyed going outside for shopping or just wandering around on the street" and at one night in October of 1774, she even stayed somewhere overnight.[47] It seems that the girls enjoyed casual relationships with men and were not sensitive about the possibility of losing their virginity. A distance can be seen here between the attitudes of men and those of women—whereas men were extremely concerned about female virginity, women took a less rigorous attitude to the new moral issues and continued to socialize with people without gender boundaries.

One may argue that the archival materials might have bias since they were mostly from court records in which women were indicted and viewed as lacking in morality according to Confucian norms, and, therefore, such cases are by definition exceptionable and may not represent the whole body of the Manchu women in the 17th and 18th centuries. However, the entire corpus of officially-compiled sources about Qing women,

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[46] *Neiwufu laiwen* (Archives of Imperial Household Department), # 2151, December 21in the 50th year of Qianlong (1785). For the details of the case, see pp. 163-164 in this chapter.
[47] *Neiwufu laiwen* (Archives of Imperial Household Department), # 2131, October 1st in the 39th year of Qianlong (1774). For the details of the case, see p. 164 in this chapter.

for example, the *Lienu zhuan* (exemplary women) in *Qingshi gao* (The draft of Qing history) and *Baqi tongzhi* (*Comprehensive history of the Eight Banners*), also reflect that Manchu women in general did not consider virginity and purity as a significant matter. According to the tradition of Chinese historiography, *Lienu zhuan* (列女传, Biography of exemplary women) in officially-compiled dynastic history usually had four categories: *xiaonu* (孝女, filial daughters); *lienu* (烈女, unmarried woman who died a martyr for her country or her sexual purity); *jiefu* (节妇, chaste widows); and *liefu* (烈妇, married woman who died a martyr for one's country or to protect one's sexual purity). Among 653 exemplary women recorded in *Qingshi gao*, 635 were Chinese while 18 were Manchus. Among Chinese women, 147 (about 23%) died defending their sexual purity. Not a single Manchu woman died for the same cause. The *Lienu zhuan* in *Baqi tongzhi* was exclusively about the exemplary women in banners. However, there were only two categories there—chaste widows, who refused to remarry after their husbands or fiancées died, and martyr widows who followed their husbands in death. In both books—*Baqi tongzhi* and *Qingshi* gao, no unmarried Manchu girls (*qinu* 旗女) were recorded as exemplary women. I believe that this is because to die a martyr for one's bodily purity was the main criterion for being a *lienu*. But to Manchu girls, bodily purity and integrity did not traditionally carry the same degree of significance as it did for Chinese women. Therefore, Manchu women would not choose to die for defending something they did not consider important.

Thus we can make a conclusion—not only based on what the history books *did*

record but also based on what is *missing* in the books—that by the end of the 18th century Manchu women still felt that the concept of female virginity was foreign. They changed more slowly than men did at this point.

In addition to the issue of virginity, Manchu men and women had different attitudes and reactions to other new values as well, for example, the lifelong sexual commitment to one man, separation of sexes, and the concept of "men outside, women inside".

In Manchu tradition, sexual loyalty only stood as long as the marriage existed. After the conquest, Manchu men accepted Confucian ideal for chaste widows, in which remarriage and consorting with men were considered shameful conduct, but Manchu women changed more slowly. In the case of Ba-jin-er, the widow Guo *shi* did not feel it inappropriate to invite her male friend to her room for a talk. It was her son who thought his mother was doing something wrong. He became so resentful of the man who might ruin her mother's reputation that he committed a murder.[48] In another case, widow Sun *shi* remarried right after her husband died. She did not feel embarrassed since she was free to do so according to tradition. However, her son Hei-da-zi felt differently. He deceived the clan elder into believing that his mother died when actually she had remarried. He did so because he feared "losing face" over his mother's un-Confucian behavior.[49] These two cases reveal that while Manchu men accepted new values, women still held to the old traditions.

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[48] *Neiwufu laiwen* (Archives of Imperial Household Department), # 2121, May 6 in the 28th year of Qianlong (1763). For more detail of the case, see page 165.
[49] *Neiwufu laiwen* (Archives of Imperial Household Department), # 2118, August in the 25th year of Qianlong (1760).

In the archives preserved in Beijing and in Taipei, most homicide cases involved in sexual transgression. About half of those were manslaughter due to the husbands' over sensitiveness and overreaction to their wives social activities. The cases of Zhang Yangcheng, Sun Heizi, A-er-xi, and Chang-cun, cited in previous pages, are good examples of the manslaughter of that kind,[50] as are the cases below:

Chou-er was a *booi* under the Plain Yellow Banner. In the 46th year of Kangxi (1707), he killed his wife Xu-jie. The following is his confession:

> Xu-jie was brought into this household by our master last year (1706). He initially intended to marry Xu-jie to another *booi* Ba-er. Since Ba-er was not interested in Xu-jie, the Master then married her to me. After we were married, however, my wife still often played with Ba-er together and had fun with him. On the 17th day in July this year, when I was sharpening a small knife, my wife came to me said, "The Mistress asked you to buy buttons. Why are you still here? What are you sharpening the knife for?" As she said so, the scene of how she and Ba-er amused themselves together came into my mind. I was filled with fury and killed her with the knife.[51]

In another case, *booi* Nan-jing's wife Bao *shi* told him that the Master asked him to feed the horses at stable and not to come back home until called. So Nan-jing went to the stable. A moment later, he suddenly thought that Bao *shi* might be having an affair with someone and was doing something behind his back. So he came back home and killed his wife with axe.[52]

E-min was a Manchu official, who was in charge of minority affairs (*lifan yuan* 理藩院). On July 5, 1735 when he was on his way to work, he realized that he forgot to bring with him some important items. So he went back home. As he arrived at home, he caught sight of a figure sneaking out from the back door of the courtyard. His wife stood

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[50] For more details, see pp. 169-171 in this chapter.
[51] *Neige Hanwen huangce* (Yellow books in Chinese from the cabinet), microfilm, # C-2434. July in the 49th year of Kangxi (1710).
[52] Ibid., microfilm, # C-2451. The 57th year of Kangxi (1717).

by the door waving her hands. E-min said, "When she turned around and saw me, she trembled with fear. I was sure she had done something shameful [refering to having sex] behind my back. . ." He killed her with axe.[53]

De-min was a bannerman under the Plain Yellow Banner, working at *yamen*. On the 5th day in September of 1735, he asked for a day off because of sickness. As he got home, he saw that the servant Zhu Gui behaving very badly. When he tried to discipline the servant, his wife Guan *shi* argued with him in Zhu Gui's favor, which made him suspicious of their relations. The next day in the evening, when he passed by Zhu Gui's room, he heard Zhu Gui saying to Xiang-er (De-min's concubine), "What should we fear of him?" De-min was thus confirmed the belief that both his wife and concubine were having affairs with Zhu Gui. Driven by fury, he strangled his wife.[54]

The murderers in the above cases were condemned to death with one-year grace period, during which the men could find ways to have the penalties commuted. The court decision indicated the government's leniency toward the over-suspicious "wife-killers" and unfairness to the innocent wives, which suggests that, in the aspect of promoting Confucian norms on female sexuality, the Qing court was little different from that of the Ming or other dynasties ruled by Chinese.

Many more similar cases could be found from the archives, indicating that murder due to men's suspicion and over-sensitivity about their wives' sexual purity was a widespread phenomenon in 18th century Manchu society. At first glance, these cases seemed to be puzzling and shocking. It was hard to understand why these Manchu men

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[53] *Neige Hanwen huangce* (Yellow books in Chinese from the Cabinet), microfilm, # C-5582, July 20 in the first year of Qianlong (1736).
[54] *Neige Hanwen huangce* (Yellow books in Chinese from the Cabinet), microfilm, # C-5582, May 15 in the 3rd year of Qianlong (1738).

were so easily irritated by their wives' behavior and why they became so brutal that they killed their wives without mercy. However, if these cases were examined from a gendered perspective, the reasons become clear.

After the Manchus established Qing dynasty in China and adjusted to a new political environment, they also experienced a process of cultural relocation. Since men and women had different functions and positions in society, they accepted new values (for example the Confucian norms in sexuality) on different levels and at a different pace. The conjugal conflicts in the archives reflected cultural discrepancy within the household between husband and wife, who interpreted the Confucian concepts and values according to their own understanding.

Among other Confucian norms regarding gender relations and sexuality, the conception of "separation of sexes" and "men inside, women outside" were the kernel of the doctrine. Manchu men very quickly learned to appreciate Confucian values on gender relations and sexuality, especially these two key concepts, which benefited their interests the most. After the conquest, the Manchus, as an ethnic minority, lived in an ocean of Chinese population—according to Rawski, the ratio of the number of Chinese and Manchu was 49:1 in mid-seventeenth century.[55] Elliott estimates that the Manchus were outnumbered by the Chinese by about 350 to 1.[56] To confine their women in the inner quarters would help Manchu men felt more secure psychologically. When the Manchus were far away from their homelands, family became more significant to them since it carried double meanings—the home both in narrow sense and in broader sense.

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[55] Evelyn Rawski, "Ch'ing Imperial Marriage and Problems of Rulership," p. 171, in Watson & Ebrey, ed. *Marriage and Inequality in Chinese History*).
[56] Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, p. 3.

Moreover, along with the settlement and the growth of social economy, wealth was accumulated within individual families. The issue of women chastity became more important due to increasing emphasis on guaranteed paternity and heirs to inherit property. Therefore, the idea of separation of sexes was especially beneficial to men's interests.

Acculturation of Manchu women presents a different picture. Compared with men who dealt extensively with Chinese outside the Manchu cities, women were confined within the cities, so they had little opportunity to contact Chinese people and culture in a deeper level or in a consistent way, although sometimes they had chance to talk to Chinese peddlers on the street or other casual-laborers elsewhere. Their knowledge about Chinese society and values came primarily from their fathers, husbands, and sons. While they accepted and practiced these new values, they still maintained old Manchu traditions. In other words, they watered down Manchu traditions with Chinese values and understood Confucian conceptions from their own perspective. As the result, Manchu men and women developed different definitions of new conceptions they learned. For example, to men, "separation of sexes" meant that during a woman's entire life span, she should have no kind of intimate contact (sexual or non-sexual) with men, including male family members, other than her husband.[57] However, the "separation of sexes" to Manchu women only meant a boundary of sexual relations beyond marriage, and a boundary of intimate association with strangers. If we keep this assumption in mind and examine the conflicts/tragedies in the archives from a perspective of gender, we realize

[57] This understanding was exactly as same as of the Chinese people (both men and women) about the conception of "separation of sexes."

that the source of conflicts was the disjuncture between men's and women's conceptions of Confucian tradition.

The following case demonstrates this argument:

Kuilin was a bannerman under the Plain Yellow Banner. He married Zhai *shi* and they had a daughter. Kuilin died in the 58th year of Qianlong (1793). Zhai *shi* stayed as a widow, living with Kuilin's mother and his two unmarried brothers. Their house had two rooms. Zhai *shi* lived in the inner room with her daughter and mother-in-law while Kuilin's brothers lived in the outer room. Kuilin's cousin had a son, named An-zi. In the 60th year of Qianlong, when his parents died, An-zi moved in the same courtyard living with Kuilin's family. Tragedy started when Kuilin's younger brother assumed that his widowed sister-in-law had an affair with An-zi because he saw her and An-zi chatting and laughing by the door. So he killed her with a knife. When this case of murder was submitted to the *yamen*, Zhai *shi*'s mother-in-law was called as a witness. She said, "My daughter-in-law was chaste and decent. It was true that she sometimes amused herself by chatting with An-zi, but that was just some small talk. Nothing serious."[58] This case illustrates the different reactions of men and women to the same deed. To Zhai *shi*'s brother-in-law, if a woman talked with a man other than her deceased husband, she had violated the rule of separation of sexes, which could be considered as a sexual transgression. But to Zhai *shi*'s mother-in-law and Zhai herself, talking to a man was morally distinct from having sex with him. Moreover, since Zhai *shi* did not chat with a stranger but with a relative and the conversation was just small talk, she had done nothing wrong and was still considered as a "chaste and decent person." This disagreement on the

[58] *Neiwufu laiwen* (Archives of Imperial Household Department), # 2170, August 12 in the first year of Jiajing (1796).

definition of sexual transgression could also explain the conflicts in other cases of murder cited in previous pages—when the husband saw his wife talking or playing with other men, he would assume they had affairs. However, since women did not think general contact with men, especially with someone in one's own household (relatives or servants), amounted to a sexual transgression by any means, they still kept up casual contact with men, in the way with which they were familiar from Manchu tradition.

Manchu men and women had different understanding and definitions over another Confucian key conception—"men outside, women inside." Like Chinese, the Manchu men tried to confine their women to the house in order to ensure their sexual safety. To men, a woman's space should be limited to her bedroom, or within the wall of the courtyard at the most. The only man who had authority to enter into this "inner quarter" was the husband. Manchu women in the 18th century *did* accept the idea of "women inside" for the sake of safety. But they extended their "inner quarters" from the bedroom/courtyard to the whole neighborhood or even to the Manchu communities— the Tartar city, as the missionaries called it—enclosed within the city wall that separated the Manchus from the Chinese population. It seems that the ethnic security was more of a concern to Manchu women. They usually felt that moving around within the "extended inner quarters" was safe and appropriate. The archives recorded many casual visits between men and women within the neighborhood.[59] It was true that the frequent contacts enhanced the possibility of sexual transgression, but women were generally unaware of the logical connection. They commonly invited male neighbors into their

[59] See the case of Qiu-jie in *Neiwufu laiwen* (Archives of Imperial Household Department), # 2115, September 8 in the 21st year of Qianlong (1756); the case of Lian-er in # 2129; the case of Chi-ba-er in #2131; the case of E-ke-zang in *Xingke tiben* (Memorials from Justice Department), September 11 in the 2nd year of Qianlong (1737); and many more.

courtyards or even their bedrooms—they did not have another boundary between their bedrooms and other spaces within the "extended inner quarters"—while in other times they dropped by the neighbors' house. This was especially common between relatives since women did not consider relatives (for example, the husband's brothers, nephews, or cousins) as "outsiders" (外人,*wairen*) according to their definitions of "inside" and "outside". However, Manchu men maintained sharp vigilance over everyone who intruded into their women's private spaces, especially the bedroom and *kang*. According to the archives, many murders took place in bedrooms when the husband saw another man sitting on the *kang* with his wife.[60]

After examining the cases from a gendered perspective, I believe that the tragedies resulted from cultural conflicts between husband and wife. The cultural conflicts within the family confirm my argument that in the process of acculturation men and women had different attitude and reactions toward new ideas and values. When men accepted new values and adjusted to the new cultural environment, women still maintained many traditions and lived in an old Manchu way.

Conclusion

Manchu women's lives experienced significant changes during the first 150 years after the conquest. One of the most notable changes is seen in the aspects of gender relations and sexuality. In Manchu tradition, there was no conception of "separation of sexes." Women were allowed to have general contact with men. Archives revealed the relatively loose regulation on sexual relations between different genders, especially

[60] See the case of Zhang Yangcheng on page 169 and the case of Xi-cun on page 170 in this chapter.

between single men and women, reflecting that in the early Manchu society female virginity was not a major issue. A woman's moral character did not determine the value of her body, and this common understanding in turn helped to undermine the significance of separation of sexes. The Manchu tradition also included tolerance of sexual transgression among family members and the system of levirate marriage.

By the end of the 18th century, the Confucian norms of female sexual chastity disseminated throughout Manchu society, as well as male life-long sexual monopoly over women was emphasized. Levirate marriage was banned and sexual relations among family members were considered as a crime and, therefore, would be punished more severely. The changes reflected how in the process of acculturation, the Manchus gradually accepted Confucian values in the aspect of sexuality as they relocated in China proper.

Chinese scholars of Qing history have used the sexual changes in Manchu women as evidence of Manchu sinicization (汉化) or Confucianization (儒化). They postulate that after 1644, the Manchus quickly emulated Han Chinese in the aspects of social lives and ideologies. Ethics and practice regarding sexuality in Manchu society showed little difference with those of Chinese society by the end of the Qianlong reign (1736-1795).[61]

This conclusion is only partly right. It is true that after the conquest of China, the Manchus experienced a process of cultural adoption and adaptation into Chinese society,

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[61] Ding Yizhuang, *Manzu de funu shenghuo yu hunyin zhidu yanjiu* (Research on life and marriage patterns of Manchu women), p. 104; p. 159; Liu Zhiyang, "*Cong Manzu chuantong guannian de zhuanbian kan Han wenhua de yingxiang* (From the changes in Manchu traditional value to see Chinese culture's influence on the Manchus)." *Minzu yanjiu* (Ethnicity studies), issue 6, 1992, pp. 83-91; Zhang Wei, "*Qingdai Manzu de funu shenghuo* (Manchu women's lives in Qing dynasty)." *Zhongguo gudai funu zhuanji* (Special issue for ancient Chinese women), pp. 76-80.

including a gradual acceptance of Confucian values on gender relations and sexuality. However, from a gendered perspective, women changed more slowly than men. Cases from archives reveal that men and women had different attitudes toward the new values of sexuality and explained new conceptions differently according to their own understanding.

Men and women experienced differential opportunities for contact with Chinese culture. Bannermen had more contacts with Chinese in the public spheres. As the result, during the first 150 years after the conquest, Manchu men gradually appreciated and accepted a greater part of Confucian doctrine, including the norms of gender relations and sexuality.

However, banner women lived in a relatively closed communities, within the Manchu cities. They were not exposed to Chinese society and, therefore, did not accept the new values as quickly as the men. Actually, they were in a situation of dual confinement, which meant that they, as women, were expected by men to stay in the inner quarters and at the same time, as members of ruling ethnicity, they were enclosed by the city walls. Their situation offered few opportunities to learn from the world outside. Therefore, the changes in Manchu women's lives reflected men's expectation, on the virginity issue, chaste widowhood, and levirate marriage. Since men and women had different positions in society, women needed more time to adjust to the new cultural environment and accept new values and conceptions. Women therefore maintained more traditions and changed more slowly than men in the process of acculturation.

The court records examined in this chapter revealed that this process of change resulted in struggles between old traditions and new values and within individual

households. The cases from the archives reveal how differently Manchu men and women understood and evaluated Confucian values on gender relations and sexuality and how their disagreements could lead to their respective conduct.

Conclusion: Manchu Women's Place in Manchu and Chinese Acculturation

After the 10th century, China was frequently ruled (partly or wholly) by non-Chinese governments, including the Liao (907-1119) of the Khitan, the Xi Xia (1038-1227) of the Tanguts, the Jin (1115-1234) of the Jurchen, the Yuan (1271-1368) of the Mongols. The Qing (1644-1911) was the final conquest dynasty, established by the Manchus. Most of these conquest dynasties were short-lived and limited their powers to the northern part of China. Only the Yuan and the Qing ruled all of China, and only the Qing rule lasted for almost three hundred years.

The key to the Manchus' success in China was that the Manchus kept a balance between adopting Chinese culture and maintaining their own ethnic identity until the end of the dynasty. Focusing on the Qing institutions and policies, the recent works of Crossley, Rawski, and Elliott have examined the ways in which the Manchu rulers made every effort to maintain their Altaic traditions throughout the dynasty and emphasize the significance of martial skills to the Manchu soldiers. [1]

In this dissertation, I have examined the lives of common banner women from the time of the conquest to the high Qing period of the Emperor Qianlong, a period of 150 years. As we have seen from the primary sources of archives, literature, and interviews, women living in the banners enclaves inside China acted as reservoirs to conserve and pass on Manchu culture. They played a different role than did banner males in maintaining Manchu ethnicity and changed more slowly than men did in the process of acculturation.

[1] The Manchus' Altaic traditions included the system of levirate marriage, women's relatively high status within the family, women greatly involved political, economic, and social activities, the appreciation of bold, healthy, and vigorous as female beauty, and so on.

The discussion in preceding chapters demonstrated that while bannermen gradually appreciated the Confucian values and had become "soft" since the late 1600s, banner women continued to maintain the Manchu traditions in many aspects of their lives. For example, the pattern of female-centered households, the relationships among family members, and the rights women could enjoy within the family, were kept almost unchanged as the unique part of Manchu culture until the end of Qing. In turn, many Manchu traditions and identities, including language, food, etiquette, dress and hairstyle, etc. were passed through women within the family from one generation to another.[2]

Manchu women might accept Confucian values in a superficial way. In the case of changing traditions on widow remarriage, at first glance, it seemed that more and more Manchu widows were choosing not to remarry but to remain as virtuous widows, which, if true, would provide a good evidence for women's Confucianization. However, when examined more carefully, Manchu women's "guarding chastity" resembled Confucian ideal of virtuous widowhood only in form, not in function. Behind the chaste-widow screen, Manchu women had other considerations than loyalty to their deceased husbands—the essence of Confucian chaste widowhood cult—they were more concerned about their pragmatic interests, such as the right of inheritance and custody of children.[3]

Women accepted new values much more slowly than did men. In the aspect of intermarriage, while some bannermen married Chinese women, very few banner women married Chinese men. On the one hand, this imbalance was undoubtedly determined by the court's prohibition on female exogamy. But from the cultural perspective, even if there had been no such ban, Manchu women might still have been reluctant to marry

[2] See Chapter Two for details.
[3] See Chapter Three for details.

Chinese men because they saw the Chinese as "outsiders" and "strangers." The different attitudes of banner men and women toward marrying Chinese reflected the fact that women accepted Chinese culture on a different level and at a different pace than did Manchu males.[4]

The most remarkable example demonstrating the different reactions of men and women as they adjusted to the new cultural environment can be found in the judicial cases cited in Chapter Five where gender relations and sexuality are discussed. The disagreements between husbands and wives or concubines within the households actually reflected the cultural conflicts under the same roof. While men had come to appreciate Confucian norms regarding female virtue and judged sexual transgression according to Chinese standards, women still stuck by the old Manchu traditions and defined the new Confucian concepts according to their own understanding.

The different level of acculturation between banner men and women could also be seen from their response to the court's call. In many cases, women's behaviors and choices did not coincide with the court's will. Therefore, a historian's duty is not only to examine the court's policies but also to check these ways in which these policies were executed in social reality.

Until as late as 1990, scholars of Qing social and cultural history primarily focused on analyzing court policies and the lives of social elite, based on the available officially compiled documents. But these sources provide little information about ordinary people's daily lives and barely mention women. The policies of court reflected the rulers' ideology, but the imperial intentions did not necessarily filter down to the

[4] See Chapter Four for details about Manchu-Han intermarriage.

common people. Thanks to the Beijing First Archives Museum that officially opened the Qing archives to public (including Western scholars) in the early 1980s, many archival sources about the lives of common people and women are now available for the study of Qing history and culture. From these archival sources, for example, the confessions of court record, we can hear men and women's voices and learn how the common people lived and thought in 300 years ago.

When examining the primary sources, one may find that, to a great extent, banner women ignored the court's promotion of Confucian values and chose to follow the old Manchu traditions. For example, the Manchu rulers promoted the Confucian ideal of virtuous womanhood among Han and Manchu alike, promoting female obedience, confinement to the home, and separation of the sexes. In reality, however, banner women still lived in a traditional Manchu way. In Chapter Two, we found unrestrained girls, dominating mothers-in-law, and rebellious wives (although they often became victims), who were not, or were not willing to be, obedient. Ignoring the rule of separation of the sexes, young men and women got together within households or on the street. Women kept their bedroom doors open to friends, neighbors, and relatives, even though it caused their husbands to be suspicious, and sometimes women dropped in other households for gossip and fun (though this practice led to many sexual transgressions).[5] Considering the interests of Manchu rule, the Qing court encouraged young banner widows to remarry while promoted Confucian chaste widowhood cult among those who were older than forty. In reality, however, women made their decisions primarily based on the considerations of their own self-interests. As for the matter of intermarriage, in addition

[5] See Chapter Five for details.

to the court's prohibition, cultural incompatibility seemed to be the more decisive force preventing banner women from marrying Chinese men. From literary works and interviews, we find that the most banner women did not want to marry Chinese because of the cultural unfamiliarity and misunderstanding.[6]

In most situations, bannermen appreciated what the court promoted, including the Confucian ideal of virtuous womanhood. In other cases, however, they could not (or did not want to) understand and share the values with the rulers. As noted in Chapter Four, during the most of the dynasty (1665-1901), the Qing government carried out a policy of "partial prohibition of intermarriage." One of the purposes of the policy was, of course, to maintain the population of banner people registered in banners. Once a banner woman married a Chinese, she would be expelled from the banner and become a "commoner" and her children were not considered as Manchu. Another purpose for preventing banner women from marrying Chinese was to ensure sufficient marriage partners for bannermen. But why was it so important? If bannermen could marry Chinese and the children from this union would be considered as Manchu, then what did the court worry about? I believe that the court's real anxiety was not about reproducing Manchu people but about the bannermen's acculturation at home. The Manchu rulers might not want to see too many "banner women"[7] who had tiny feet in the banner since that practice would further blur the boundary between banner people and Chinese commoners. However, not all the bannermen shared such an anxiety with government. Many chose to marry Chinese women and gradually came to appreciate Chinese culture. Having Chinese wives and

[6] See p.147 in this dissertation.
[7] Once a Chinese woman married a bannerman, she changed her ethnicity from Chinese to Manchu and her name would be registered in banner. See Chapter Four.

concubines in turn promoted men's sinicization. Qing government was strong and powerful, but it could not stop the process of acculturation between Manchus and Chinese.

Banner men and women served the Qing national interests differently. From the beginning of the conquest, the Manchus ruled China by the form of dyarchy—a strategy that kept balance between the "cosmopolitan" and the "ethnic" modes of rulership.[8] The policies of dyarchy were not only embodied in the institutional system but also extended to the social sphere and to areas that were closely related to common people's daily lives. Unlike the dyarchical system in Qing administration where the ethnic balance was on public display in the distribution of government personnel, dyarchy in social policies was invisible in terms of physical arrangement, but existed in the Manchu rulers' minds as an ideology and strategy with which to rule both Chinese and Manchus. Throughout Qing period, the emperors sought to win support of Han Chinese elite by adopting Confucian norms and expanding Confucian values to the whole society, while on the other hand, they were very concerned about maintaining the Manchu ethnicity and emphasized their position as a caste of occupation. In the aspects of women's lives, the Qing government promoted Confucian ideals of virtuous womanhood among the Manchus, including the virtue of obedience, the practice of separation of the sexes and "men outside, women inside", the idea of premarital sexual purity, and the cult of chaste widowhood. At the same time, however, the government insisted that Manchu traditions be maintained. For

[8] Mark Elliott, "Manchu Widows and Chastity in Qing China." p. 37. These terms were first used by Philip Kuhn in his book *Soulstealers: the Chinese Sorcery Scare of 1768*, p. 80.

example, Manchu women were not allowed to bind their feet and wear wide sleeves.[9] If earrings were worn, the number of earrings on each ear must be three instead of one as the Han-Chinese style. Throughout the dynasty, the tradition of *xiunu* selection was maintained and the policies on partial prohibition of intermarriage were carried out through 1665 to 1901.

The policies of dyarchy were perceived from the perspective of gender. Once the Qing rulers became aware that the Manchu population was in danger of losing its ethnic identity, they pursued two sets of policies for bannermen and women. For example, during the Qianlong reign, the court urged bannermen to maintain their "manly virtue" by being *wu* (武, martial) and Manchu, whereas, regarding banner women, the emperor encouraged them to appreciate and accept Confucian codes on virtuous womanhood—but not those that might threaten Manchu ethnicity, such as changes in their outward appearance, fertility and nuptiality. Using Elliott's words, "while the emperor (Qianlong) was busy defending the cultural boundaries of male ethnicity, he was simultaneously breaking down . . . the cultural boundaries of female ethnicity."[10] It seems that when the Qing rulers were facing a difficult situation in accommodating both the "cosmopolitan" and the "ethnic" aspects of rulership, they "used" men and women respectively to ensure these different political interests—strengthening male ethnicity to maintain the

[9] Manchu women started to wear wide-sleeve clothing by the mid-19th century. From some pictures of dowager Ci Xi, we may see that she and other imperial ladies wore wide-sleeves. Valery Garrett believes that the changing style of Manchu clothing was due to the influence of Chinese and indicated an assimilation of Chinese culture (Garrett, *Chinese Clothing*, p. 58). Still, the sleeves of Manchu women's clothing were much narrower than those of Chinese.

[10] Mark Elliott, "Manchu Widows and Chastity in Qing China," pp. 62-63. I agree partly with Elliott's arguments. The Manchu court actually gave two different sets of signals to their women. They promoted older widows to maintain their chaste widowhood and be virtuous for the purpose of showing their Confucian refinement, while encouraging younger widows to remarry in order to provide Manchu men more available women for marriage and thus maintain the Manchu population in a certain number.

"Manchuness" of Qing, and appearing to promote female Confucianization to make Qing a legitimate Chinese dynasty.

But, did the Manchu emperor really intend to promote Confucianization or sinicization among Manchu women? The answer to that question appears to be ambiguous. As I have shown in the preceding chapters, even at the end of the eighteenth century, Manchu women still maintained many of the old traditions. They thought as Manchus and lived in traditional Manchu ways. Thus the statements that the emperors promulgated for political purposes had little effect in changing the ideology or the lifestyles of women within the banner enclaves. Sinicization posed equally serious threats to the maintenance of Manchu ethnicity and thus to the martial vitality of the banner troops, whether practiced by men or by women. Allowing Manchu males to marry Chinese women and bring them into the banners did not threaten the Manchu way of life. And while the Qing court publicly honored women who followed the cult of virtuous widowhood, court policies at the same time protected widows financially and encouraged them to remarry and continue to bear children within the banner. Such policies did not pose the risk that Manchu women might leave the banners and become Chinese.

Dyarchy in social practice was a significant strategy for Manchu rule in China. Throughout their 268-year rule in China, the Manchu rulers made a conscious effort to keep the balance between the two national interests—supplying Confucian legitimacy and maintaining Manchu "ethnic sovereignty".[11] They were much more successful in maintaining this double strategy than other conquest dynasties—Liao, Jin, and Yuan—in Chinese history.

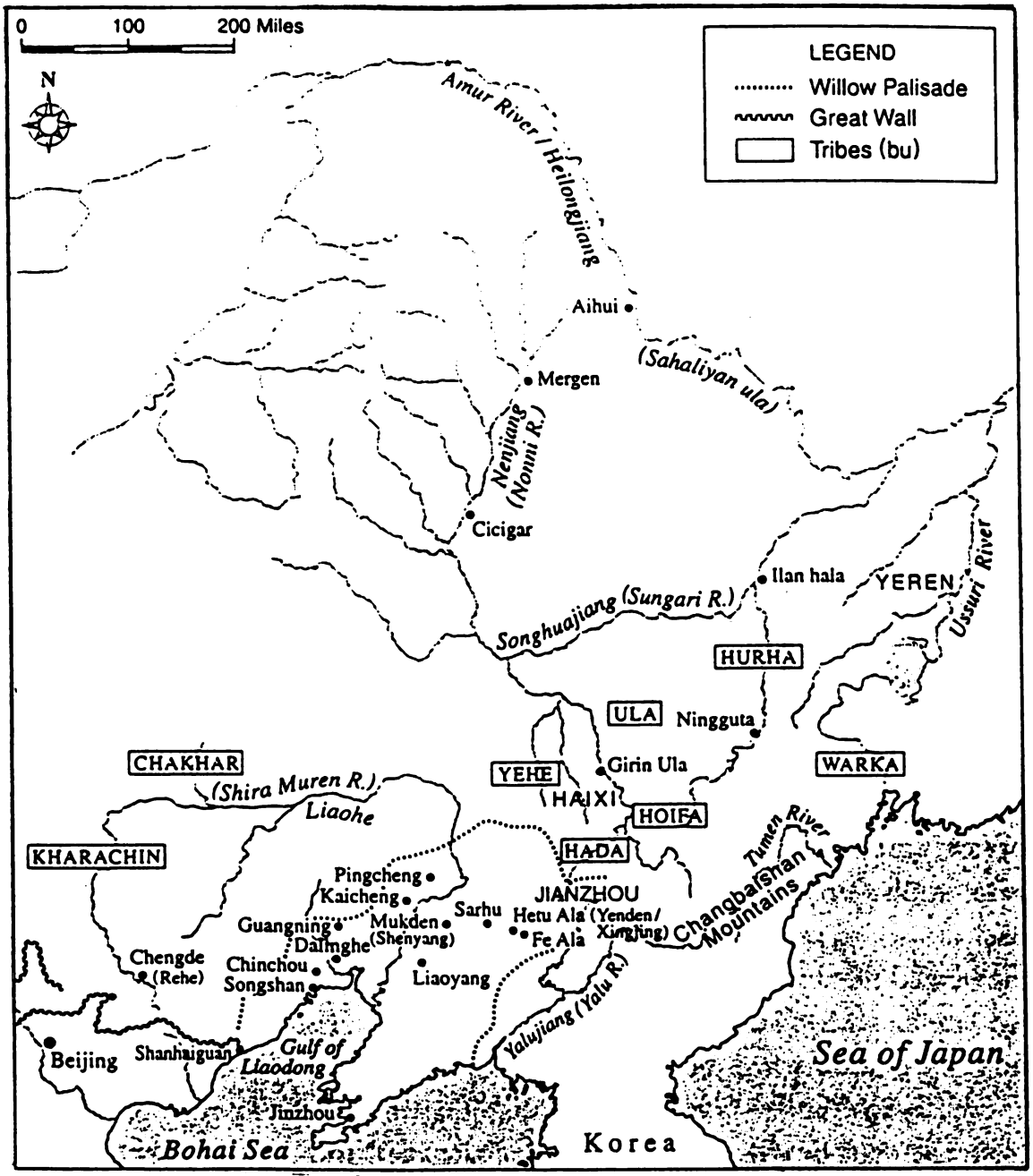
[11] This term is Elliott's. See *The Manchu Way*, p. 4.

Using the approach of viewing women as a diverse category and as a historical product, this research emphasizes the differences between Manchu women and Chinese women, and between different classes within the category of the Manchu women. Women's identities and behaviors changed along with the social conditions. This study shows that Manchu women in the early 17th century were very different from those in the late 18th century, one and half centuries after the Manchus conquered China. However, these changes did not mean that the Manchu women were becoming Chinese.

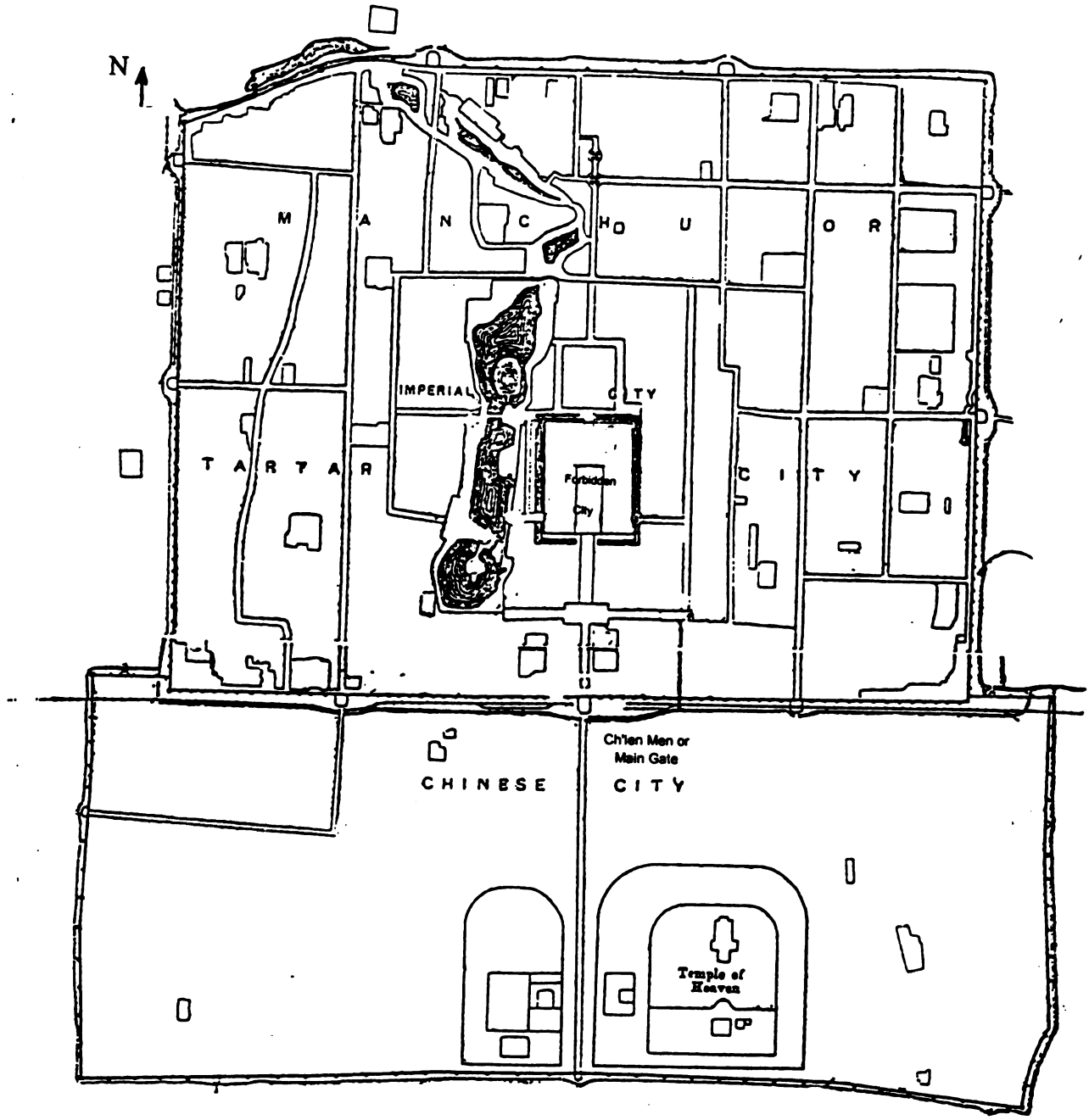
During the recent decade, Crossley, Rawski, and Elliott, based on newly obtained archival sources, have challenged the traditional "sino-centric" view of the Manchu sinicization.[12] This work supports the views that, from the outward appearance (*wai*, 外) to the self-consciousness (*nei*, 内), the Manchus maintained their "Manchuness" until the end of Qing dynasty and beyond. Focusing on Manchu women's lives during the transition period, this study provides more evidence supporting the argument that to a great extent the Manchu ethnic identities had been maintained at least until the end of Qing. This study differs from the existing works on Manchus in the way that examines Manchu ethnicity from the perspective of gender distinction and emphasizes women's role and place in Chinese and Manchu acculturation. Thus this dissertation provides a convincing argument to show that women living in the banners enclaves inside China acted as reservoirs to conserve and pass on Manchu culture. The case of Manchu women's role in preserving cultural traditions was common in other ethnic minorities outside China as well, for example, the well-known Jewish grandmother syndrome.

[12] See Chapter One for details about the debates between the "sinicization school" and the "Altaic school." Also see Crossley, Rawski, and Elliott's works on the Manchus, including *The Manchus* (1997); *A Translucent Mirror* (1999); *The Last Emperors* (1998); and *The Manchu Way* (2001).

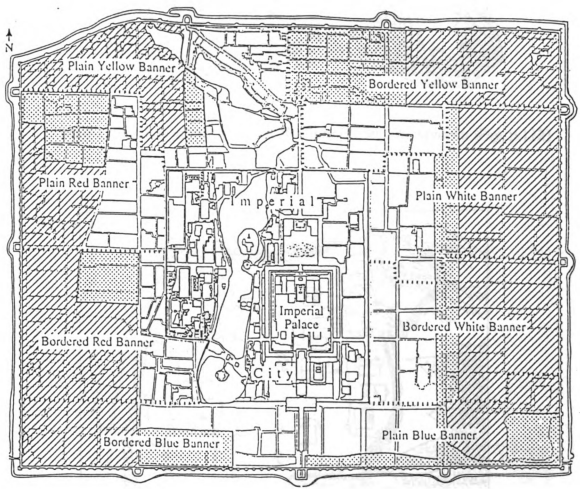
Consequently, this study also contributes to the studies of ethnicity and gender in other periods of Chinese history, for example, Khitan, Jurchen, and Mongol women's experiences in China during Liao, Jin, and Yuan dynasties, and indirectly contributes to ethnicity-gender studies in other parts of the world as well.



Map 1. Manchuria in the early seventeenth century (from Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, p. 49)



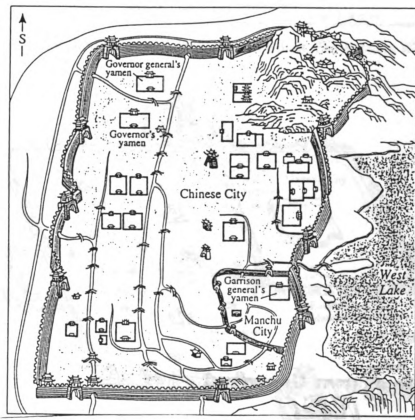
Map 2. Qing Beijing under Manchu occupation (from Bland, *China under the Empress Dowager*, p. xiv-xv). In 1648, the Shunzhi emperor issued an edict asking the Chinese living within the city walls in Beijing to move to the southern suburbs. Since then until the end of the Qing dynasty, Beijing was divided into two parts—the Manchu city (Tartar city) occupied the northern half, surrounding the imperial city, and the Chinese city, occupied southern rectangle.



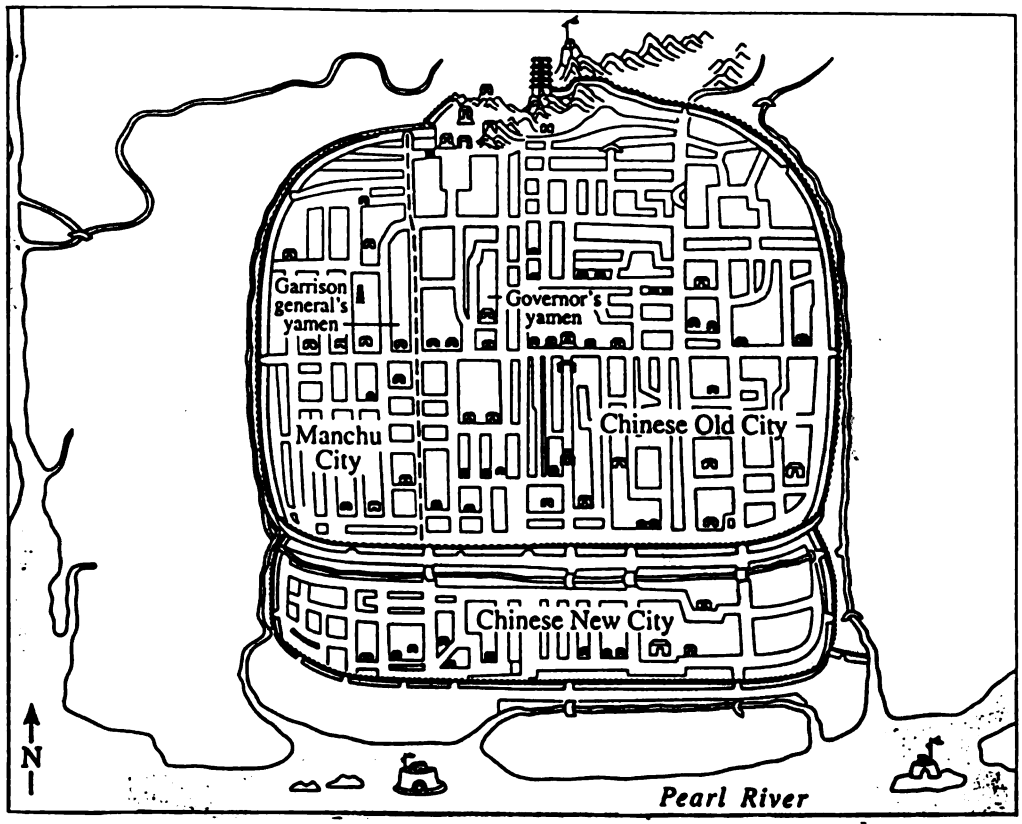
Map 3. The Eight Banner distribution in Manchu city of Qing Beijing (from Elliot, *The Manchu Way*, p. 103). The banner people were assigned to live in different quarters according to the color of their banner. Each quarter was further divided into Manchu, Mongol, and Chinese banner neighborhoods. Unshaded areas were for the Manchu banners, shaded areas were for the Mongol banners; and diagonally barred areas were for the Chinese banners.



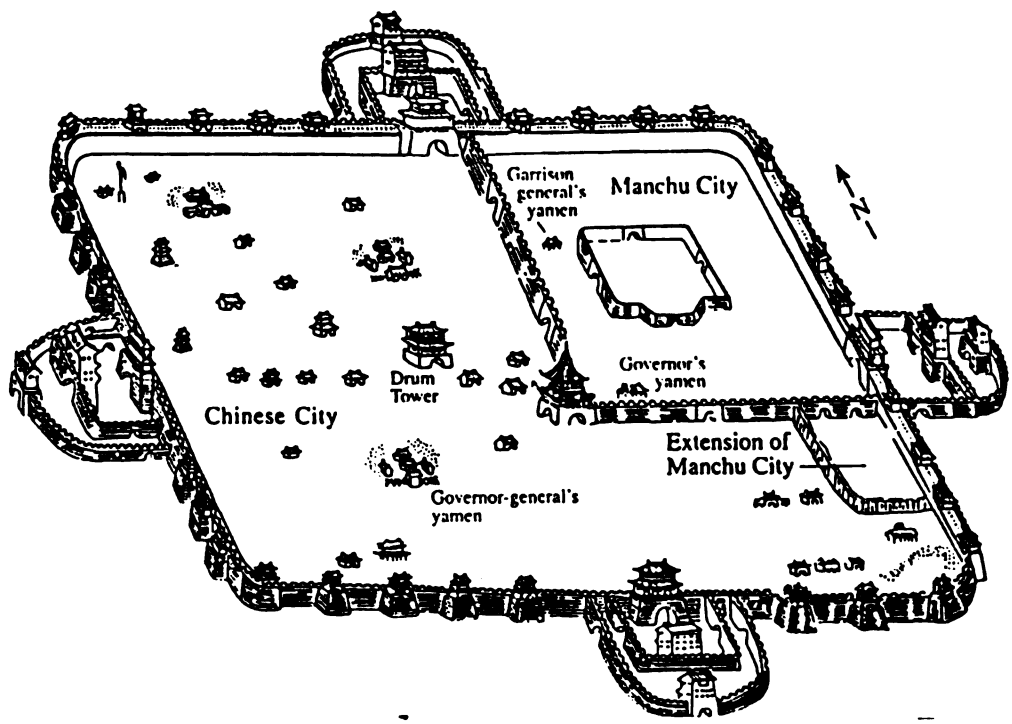
Map 4. Jingzhou garrison 荆州驻防 (from Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, p.112)



Map 5. Hangzhou garrison 杭州驻防 (from Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, p.109)



Map 6.Guangzhou garrison 广州驻防 (from Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, p.114)



Map 7. Xi'an garrison 西安驻防 (from Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, p. 106)



Figure 1. Comparison of the bound feet (right) and natural feet (left). A comparison of the Chinese elite women's bound feet with the normal feet, which Manchu women were supposed to keep unbound. (from Wang, *Aching for Beauty*, p. 42)

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