



# The Qing Invention of Nature: Environment and Identity in Northeast China and Mongolia, 1750-1850

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Mongolia, 1750-1850

Abstract

This dissertation studies the nexus of empire, environment, and market that defined Qing China in 1750-1850, when unprecedented commercial expansion and a rush for natural resources – including furs, pharmaceuticals, and precious minerals – transformed the ecology of China and its borderlands. That boom, no less than today’s, had profound institutional, ideological, and environmental causes and consequences. Nature itself was redefined. In this thesis, I show that it was the activism, not the atavism, of early modern empire that produced “nature.” Wilderness as such was not a state of nature: it reflected the nature of the state.

Imperial efforts to elaborate and preserve “pure” ethnic homelands during the boom were at the center of this process. Using archival materials from Northeast China and Mongolia as case studies, the dissertation reassesses the view that homesteaders transformed China’s frontiers from wilderness to breadbasket after 1850. I argue instead that, like the Russian East and American West, the Qing empire’s North was never a “primitive wilderness” – it only seemed so to late 19<sup>th</sup> century observers. Manchuria and Mongolia, in fact, had served local and global markets. The boom years of the 1700s in particular witnessed a surge in poaching, commercial licensing, and violent “purification” campaigns to restore the environment, stem migration, and promote “traditional” land-use patterns. Results were mixed; conservation succeeded in some territories, while others suffered dramatic environmental change: emptied of fur-bearing animals, stripped of wild pharmaceuticals, left bare around abandoned worker camps. Beginning with changes in

material culture in the metropole, the dissertation follows the commodity chain to production sites in the frontier, providing a fresh look at the politics of resource production and nature protection in the Qing empire.



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## Introduction

In 1886, H. Evan James discovered pristine nature in Manchuria. As he breathlessly reported to the Royal Geographic Society, “the scenery...is marvelously beautiful – woods and flowers and grassy glades – and to the lover of nature it is simply a paradise.” A glimpse of this world was a glimpse before the Fall: “it was like being transported into the Garden of Eden.” Climbing Changbaishan, he recalled,

We came upon rich, open meadows, bright with flowers of every imaginable colour, where sheets of blue iris, great scarlet tiger-lilies, sweet-scented yellow day-lilies, huge orange buttercups, or purple monkshood delighted the eye. And beyond were bits of park-like country, with groups of spruce and fir beautifully dotted about, the soil covered with short mossy grass, and spangled with great masses of deep blue gentian, columbines of every shade of mauve or buff, orchids white and red, and many other flowers.<sup>1</sup>

Other European travellers marveled that the land had been “hardly touched by man”; indeed it was virtually “uninhabited,” having long been “evacuated.”<sup>2</sup> Uncorrupted, the land was a cornucopia of nature. A contemporary Russian explorer “encountered such an abundance of fish as he had never before seen in his life. Salmon, trout, carp, sturgeon, husos,<sup>3</sup> shad, sprang out of the water and made a deafening noise; the [Amur] river was like an artificial fish-pond.”<sup>4</sup> In the skies, when the salmon and shad made spawning runs, “the swan, the stork, the goose, the duck, [and] the teal” followed them “in

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<sup>1</sup> H.E.M James, “A Journey in Manchuria,” *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society and Monthly Record of Geography* 9, no. 9 (1887), 539, 542-3.

<sup>2</sup> A. R. Agassiz, “Our Commercial Relations with Chinese Manchuria,” *The Geographical Journal* 4, no. 6 (1894), 538.

<sup>3</sup> “Husos” are type of sturgeon.

<sup>4</sup> M.M. Peschurof, MM, et al., “Notes on the River Amur and the Adjacent Districts,” *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London* 28 (1858), 387.



numberless flocks.”<sup>5</sup> Forests were so thick and untamed one needed a hatchet to cut through them. Gustav Radde, having chopped his way through the Hinggan Mountains, declared with pride and admiration that “nature in her full virgin strength has produced such a luxuriant vegetation” that it was “penetrated...with the greatest trouble.”<sup>6</sup> The forests teemed with wild animals: tigers and bears, elk and boar, foxes and sable. As A. R. Agassiz later advertised, “now that game is rapidly disappearing from most places, except where it is rigidly preserved, few countries offer the sportsman the attractions offered by Manchuria.”<sup>7</sup> The only order in Manchuria was Nature itself.

Two centuries prior, in his 1743 *Ode to Mukden*, the Qianlong emperor (r. 1735-1795) celebrated Manchuria’s bounty using similar language. Like James, Qianlong was taken by the diversity of native life: “tigers, leopards, bears, black bears, wild horses, wild asses, [four kinds of] deer, wolves, wild camels, foxes, [and] badgers.” He celebrated the lushness of plant life (reeds, thatch, water scallion, safflower, knotweed, etc.) and the multitudes of birds (pheasant, grouse, geese, ducks, herons, storks, cranes, pelicans, swallows, and woodpeckers).<sup>8</sup> Yet to Qianlong, Manchuria’s generative power did not end with flora and fauna. As he extolled: “Established on a grand scale, it promulgates the rule of great kings...Such a propitious location will last forever, generation after generation. It surpasses and humbles all [other] places and has united

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<sup>5</sup> M. de la Brunière, “Manchuria, on the River Usuri, April 5<sup>th</sup> 1846,” in *The Russians on the Amur*, ed. Ernest George Ravenstein (London: Trübner and Co., 1861), 96.

<sup>6</sup> M.M. Peschurof, MM, et al., “Notes on the River Amur and the Adjacent Districts” (1858), 419, 427.

<sup>7</sup> A. R. Agassiz, “Our Commercial Relations with Chinese Manchuria,” 540.

<sup>8</sup> Quoted and translated in Mark C. Elliott, “The Limits of Tartary: Manchuria in Imperial and National Geographies,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 59, no. 3 (2000), 615.

[lands] within and [lands] without.”<sup>9</sup> Being himself a “great king” from Manchuria, Qianlong thus shared something in common with its tigers, leopards, and bears. Perhaps not surprisingly, then, he surrounded himself with a suite of products from Manchuria: sables, pearls, pheasant, foxes, and so on.

Both Qianlong and James were struck by the natural vitality of the land: it had a power unto itself, apparently free of human intervention. Both men published their writings because the nature of Manchuria seemed so unique: its environment stood out in their respective worlds. Yet where James and his contemporaries saw a land before time, and a landscape divorced from human agency, Qianlong saw Manchuria as a timeless source of sustenance and secular power. For James, Manchuria was the frontier: it had yet to be touched by civilization. For Qianlong, it was home: it nurtured civilization like the emperor himself. The Jamesian vision of the modern frontier is relatively familiar: we recognize in it similar accounts from Asian, African, and American wildernesses. What, though, do we make of Qianlong’s vision? Did Manchuria produce kings, or did kings produce Manchuria? What constituted pristine nature in the Qing empire, and how did such spaces change over time?

This dissertation studies the nexus of empire, environment, and market that defined Qing China in 1750-1850, when unprecedented commercial expansion and a rush for natural resources – including furs, pharmaceuticals, and precious minerals – transformed the ecology of China and its borderlands. That boom, no less than today’s, had profound institutional, ideological, and environmental causes and consequences. Nature itself was redefined. In this thesis, I aim to show that it was the activism, not the

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 616.

atavism, of early modern empire that produced “nature.” That is to say, wilderness as such was not a state of nature: it reflected the nature of the state.

Imperial efforts to elaborate and preserve “pure” ethnic homelands during the boom were at the center of this process. Using archival materials from Northeast China and Mongolia as case studies, the dissertation reassesses the view that homesteaders transformed China’s frontiers from wilderness to breadbasket after 1850. I argue instead that, like the Russian East and American West, the Qing empire’s North was never a “primitive wilderness” – it only seemed so to late 19<sup>th</sup> century observers. Manchuria and Mongolia, in fact, had served local and global markets already for two centuries by the time that Englishmen like James appeared on the horizon. The boom years of the 1700s in particular witnessed a surge in poaching, commercial licensing, and violent “purification” campaigns to restore the environment, stem migration, and promote “traditional” land-use patterns. Results were mixed. Conservation succeeded in some places, while others suffered dramatic change as they were emptied of fur-bearing animals, stripped of wild pharmaceuticals, and left bare around abandoned worker camps. If James found modern wilderness, it was because the Qianlong court and its successors had quite consciously created imperial “purity.”

### **Environmental History: From Empire to Nation**

Like all Qing frontiers, historians have tended to study Manchuria with an eye towards to the twentieth century: today, Manchuria is not a bastion of nature, but of industry; its forests were cleared long ago for farmland. The very word “Manchuria” is

no longer even used: the region has become, more simply, “Northeast China.”<sup>10</sup> The question then becomes: when did Manchuria become Chinese? For many, the answer lies in the extent of China’s sovereign domains and the historical legitimacy of modern borders: the question of who controlled what, and when. In studies of the Qing empire’s northern borderlands in particular, conflicting claims to territory have left the field fragmented into competing Russian, Mongol, and Chinese and schools.<sup>11</sup> In terms of China-centered scholarship, two types of claims are made. The first is statist: the Qing state *was* China, and thus its boundaries provide a basis for modern claims. The second is nationalist: modern claims derive not from the presence of the state, but of people. According to this view, the Manchu Qing court worked to preserve Manchuria and Mongolia as imperial enclaves. Such segregation policies (Ch: 封禁政策), however, ultimately prove unworkable, as China’s demographic and commercial expansion overwhelms the imperial infrastructure. In the end, the court was obliged to accept a *fait accompli*: the frontier is already Chinese, and thus must be governed so. Empire collapses; a nation is born.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> For a critical discussion of the region’s historical nomenclature, see Mark C. Elliott, “The Limits of Tartary: Manchuria in Imperial and National Geographies,” 603-646. On the centrality of Manchuria in modern Chinese nationalism, and the resonance of the claim that it is Northeast China, see Rana Mitter, *The Manchurian Myth: Nationalism, Resistance and Collaboration in Modern China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

<sup>11</sup> Uyama Tomohiko, “Research Trends in the Former Soviet Central Asian Countries” in *Research Trends in Modern Central Eurasian Studies (18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> Centuries)*, eds. Stéphane A. Dudoignon and Komatsu Hisao (Tokyo: Toyo Bunko, 2003), 51. Uyama argues that “the dominant research trend here should be called not only nationalist but also explicitly statist.” On Russian and Chinese scholarship, Mark Gamsa caustically asserts the maximalist position: “So intensely are Russian and Chinese historiographies preoccupied with conveying a self-flattering image of the nation, and so complete is each side’s isolation from the opposing historical narrative, that they omit every fact that does not suit their purpose, and rearrange the rest to their advantage.” See Mark Gamsa, “The Epidemic of Pneumonic Plague in Manchuria 1910-1911,” *Past and Present* 190 (2006), 170.

<sup>12</sup> For works operating in this paradigm, see Lin Shixuan, *Qingji dongbei yimin shibian zhengce zhi yanjiu* (Taipei: Guoli zhenzhi daxue lishi xuexi, 2001); Xu Shuming, “Qingmo Heilongjiang yimin yu nongye

For most, the nineteenth century marked the watershed moment when the Chinese nation began to outgrow the bounds of empire. What made the nineteenth century so transformational? The question has defined the field of Manchurian history and Qing history alike. While initially focused on the Opium Wars and the impact of the West, the field moved to a more “China-centered” approach from the 1970s. Historians turned to crises internal to the Qing order: local militarization, the phenomenon of *guanggun* (“bare sticks,” i.e., young single males), disruptions to the economy, colonization of the uplands and frontiers. As Philip Kuhn wrote in his paradigm-setting book, these changes contributed not only to the collapse of the Qing dynasty, but of the imperial system itself.<sup>13</sup>

Some of the most productive work on China’s environmental history has operated within this paradigm.<sup>14</sup> In terms of the Qing period, the predominant narrative is that

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kaifa,” *Qingshi yanjiu* 2 (1991); Yang Yulian, *Qingdai dongbeishi* (Shenyang: Liaoning jiaoyu chubanshe, 1991); Zhao Zhongfu, *Jinshi dongsansheng yanjiu lunwenji* (Taipei: Chengwen chubanshe youxian gongsi, 1999); Guan Jie, *Dongbei shaoshu minzu lishi yu wenhua yanjiu* (Shenyang: Liaoning minzu chubanshe, 2007); Wei Ying, *Qingdai jingqi huitun wenti yanjiu* (Harbin: Heilongjiang daxue chubanshe, 2009); Liu Jiaxu, *Qian-Guoerluosi jianshi* (Shenyang: Liaoning minzu chubanshe, 2005). For examples of works operating in the statist paradigm, see Wang Jianzhong, *Dongbei diqu shi shenghuo shi* (Harbin: Heilongjiang renmin chubanshe, 2004); Yang Yang, *Mingdai dongbei jiangyu yanjiu* (Changchun: Jilin renmin chubanshe, 2008); Christopher Isett, *State, Peasant, and Merchant in Qing Manchuria, 1644-1862* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006); James Reardon-Anderson’s *Reluctant Pioneers* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005); Thomas Gottschang and Diana Lary’s *Swallows and Settlers: the Great Migration from North China to Manchuria* (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 2000); and Robert Lee’s *The Manchurian Frontier in Ch’ing History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970). Chinese scholars have more disagreement on the timing of the rise of agriculture in the “Northeast,” with many emphasizing that agriculture has existed in the region since prehistory, and thus was always Chinese.

<sup>13</sup> Philip Kuhn, *Rebellion and Its Enemies in Late Imperial China: Militarization and Social Structure, 1796-1864*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970. On the *guanggun*, see Matthew Sommer, *Sex, Law, and Society in Late Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000).

<sup>14</sup> The field of Chinese environmental history has grown quickly over the past two decades. The most up-to-date overview of the field can be found in Wang Lihua, *Zhongguo lishishang de huangjiang yu shuhui* (Beijing: SDX Joint Publishing Co, 2007) and Chao Xiaohong, *Shengtai huangjing yu Ming-Qing shehui jingji* (Heifei shi: Huangshan shushe, 2004), 1-54. For recent environmental histories of northern frontiers see, Zhao Zhen, *Qingdai xibei shengtai bianqian yanjiu* (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 2005), and Zhu Sa, *18-20 shijichu dongbu Neimenggu nongcun luohua yanjiu* (Hohhot: Neimenggu renmin chubanshe, 2009),

imperial Chinese society reached its natural limits in the nineteenth century.<sup>15</sup> Even prior to the Opium Wars (and ensuing crises in the period 1850-1950), China was pushing ecological limits. During the eighteenth century in particular, the combination of peace, prosperity, and potatoes allowed for unprecedented commercial and demographic expansion: in the years 1700-1850 the population of Qing empire almost tripled while the acreage of cultivated land doubled.<sup>16</sup> The dynamism and demands of the Chinese heartland increasingly drove settlers into the hills and onto the steppe, and new agricultural frontiers were established. Pursuing this line of argument, the question has become: to what degree did the Qing state align itself with frontier expansion? The answer requires a thesis about the Qing state itself: did it support pioneering settlers and attempt to integrate the polity through a “civilizing mission,” or did it back the natives and defend internal pluralism? Was the empire “developmentalist” or not?<sup>17</sup>

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and Han Maoli. *Caoyuan yu tianyuan: Liaojin shiqi xiliaohe liuyu nongmuye yu huanjing* (Beijing: SDX Joint Publishing Company, 2006). For English language scholarship, see See Mark Elvin and Liu Ts’ui-jung, *Sediments of Time* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), Mark Elvin, *The Retreat of the Elephants* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), Robert Marks, *Tigers, Rice, Silt, and Silk* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997) and Peter Perdue, *Exhausting the Earth: State and Peasant in Hunan, 1500-1850* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987).

<sup>15</sup> While China-centered, much of this scholarship is at least implicitly comparative in outlook. What, we have asked, were the essential “Chinese” dimensions to the human balance with nature? Has China followed a unique path, or is its environmental history similar to other societies (whether they be East Asian, Asiatic, Eurasian, global, or otherwise)? The comparative approach serves as a useful tonic in a subfield long dominated by European- and American-centered narratives. As Kenneth Pomeranz and Peter Perdue have argued, putting China at the center challenges environmental histories that over-emphasize the standalone importance of the Enlightenment, the British economy, or European-style “capitalism” in the making of the global environment.<sup>15</sup> no footnotes within footnotes! Even prior to the Opium Wars (and ensuing crises in the period 1850-1950), China was pushing ecological limits, just as Europe was. See Edmund Burke III and Kenneth Pomeranz, *The Environment and World History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009).

<sup>16</sup> Ho Ping-ti, *Studies on the Population of China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959). Ho Ping-ti estimates that the population of China rose from roughly 150 million in 1700 to 430 million in 1850. Ho, *Studies on the Population of China*, 279. For estimated acreage, see Yeh-chien Wang, *Land Taxation in Imperial China, 1750-1911* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), table 1.1, p. 7.

<sup>17</sup> The “developmentalist” framework is laid out in Burke and Pomeranz, *The Environment and World History*, 3-32. Pomeranz, “Empire and ‘Civilizing’ Missions, Past and Present” *Daedalus* 134, no. 2 (2005),

The discussion of frontiers in environmental history thus dovetails with parallel debates over nation building in political peripheries. The phenomenon of states sponsoring settlement on their political frontiers was common to California, Australia, the Russian Far East, and the Qing North alike.<sup>18</sup> Even to those at the time, Manchuria seemed to be another “California.”<sup>19</sup> To the settlers, the landscapes were in essence rendered “empty and wild so that anyone can come to use and claim them.”<sup>20</sup> The land was the wilderness peculiar to settler colonialism: “wilderness in its ideal form... free of people.”<sup>21</sup> Manchus, Mongols, and other local peoples became invisible and their land a

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34-45; and Kären Wigen, “Culture, Power, and Place: The New Landscapes of East Asian Regionalism,” *The American Historical Review* 104, no. 4 (1999), 1183-1201.

<sup>18</sup> See Adam M. McKeown, *Melancholy Order: Asian Migration and the Globalization of Borders* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008); Erika Lee, *At America's Gates: Chinese Immigration during the Exclusion Era, 1882-1943* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003) and Mae M Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004). In Medline Yuan-yin Hsu's review in the 2009 AHR notes that Chinese, Japanese, and Indian governments sympathized with the concern, but argued that “merchants, diplomats, intellectuals, and other elites...posed fewer threats.” On “settler colonialism” as a concept, see Jack P. Greene, “Colonial History and National History: Reflections on a Continuing Problem,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 64, no. 2 (2000), 235-250. Note also that J.H. Elliott makes a similar distinction between settling and conquering when it comes to the British versus Spanish empires in the Americas. See J.H. Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 3-28. Discourse over land in “settler” colonies tends towards the extremes of discounting any claims – or even the presence – of others; the land becomes *terra nullius*.

<sup>19</sup> Mark Gamsa, “California on the Amur, or the 'Zheltuga Republic' in Manchuria (1883-86),” *The Slavonic and East European Review* 81, no. 2 (2003), 236-266. See also Zhou Yan, “Qingchao de ‘yimin shibian’ yu Meiguo xijin yundong,” *Lishi dang'an* 192, no. 11 (2000), 33-34.

<sup>20</sup> Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, “Natural Resources and Capitalist Frontiers,” *Economic and Political Weekly* 38, no. 48 (2003), 5101.

<sup>21</sup> Carolyn Merchant, “Shades of Darkness: Race and Environmental History,” *Environmental History* 8, no. 3 (2003), 381. For critiques of the frontier paradigm in the historiography of the American West, see William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1992); William Cronon, et al., *Under an Open Sky: Rethinking America's Western Past* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1992); Donald Worster, *An Unsettled Country Changing Landscapes of the American West* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1994); Richard White, *"It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own": A History of the American West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991); and Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

“vacuum;” they were as atavistic as the virgin land they had failed to capitalize upon.<sup>22</sup>

The frontier, in this sense, was “an edge of space and time: a zone of not yet – not yet mapped, not yet regulated.”<sup>23</sup>

Embedded in the national argument are key assumptions that wed national identity to natural environment. The basic narrative is simple: Chinese farmers claimed the land for the nation through homesteading. Farms serve as shorthand for Sinicization and wild forests and steppes as outposts of native Tungusic or Mongol life. The land begins as brimming with the potential of virgin forests, fertile soil, and disparate communities of indigenous peoples, and ends with Han Chinese peasants realizing the land’s potential through agriculture. A frontier is born: the ethnic minorities and wilderness alike become anachronistic, a reflection of an earlier stage of development. Wilderness, in this sense, represents the natural border of nation-states: the point where economic dynamism in the core no longer supports the extension of political control.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> The language of the “vacuum” comes from John King Fairbank: “In spite of the inevitable overflow of Chinese migrants into the Three Eastern Provinces, Manchuria in effect remained a vacuum down the late nineteenth century.” John King Fairbank, *Trade and Diplomacy on the China Coast: the Opening of the Treaty Ports, 1842-1854* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964), 41.

<sup>23</sup> Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, “Natural Resources and Capitalist Frontiers,” 5100. Even today, the national security project of building up the frontier and claiming it for the nation continues in much the same spirit, from the dispatching of soldier-colonists (*bingtuan*) to Xinjiang in the 1950s, to the population transfers to Heilongjiang and Inner Mongolia during the Cultural Revolution, to contemporary debates with Russian and Korean scholars over historical borders; a perception of its “not yet-ness” has endured. Rose Maria Li, “Migration to China’s Northern Frontier, 1953-82,” *Population and Development Review* 15, no. 3 (1989), 503-538. Hundreds of thousands of Chinese and Soviet troops guarded the Manchurian border during the Cold War, with territorial disputes flaring up in the 1960s. In July 1964, Mao challenged the Soviet union’s claim to 1.5 million square km of former Qing lands; in March 1969 fighting broke out over an island in the Ussuri; and in August 1969 the Chinese government protested hundreds of Soviet incursions across the border. Rose Maria Li, “Migration to China’s Northern Frontier, 1953-82,” 509.

<sup>24</sup> The idea of natural borders was first formalized by Friedrich Ratzel in his influential work, *Politische Geographie* (1897). Friedrich Ratzel, *Politische Geographie*, (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1897). For contemporaries in agreement, see also Jean Brunhes and Camille Vallaux. *La géographie de l’histoire: géographie de la paix et de la guerre sur terre et sur mer* (Paris: F. Alcan, 1921), 329-364, and George Nathaniel Curzon, *Frontiers: Delivered in the Sheldonian Theatre, Oxford, November 2, 1907* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1976). As August Lösch described the project: “Impressed by the accidental way in



A competing, but consonant narrative is found in Mongol national scholarship and in more recent ethnic minority studies. The alignment of ethnic and environmental identities remain the same (Mongols with the steppe, Tungusic people with the forest, Chinese with the farm), but their moral values are inverted: the Chinese are transient, cosmopolitan, minorities; Mongols are the majority, grounded in the land and its values. Their archetypal roles are reversed: Mongol and Chinese become primary producer and “service nomad,” Apollo and Mercury.<sup>25</sup> Embracing the stereotypes, a new wave of scholarship is repackaging the Mongol and Tungusic folk traditions as a type of historical environmental awareness; the aim is to mine the Mongol and Tungusic traditions for resources to combat the modern environmental crises in ways congruent with the romanticism of American environmentalism since the 1960s, with its idealization of the American Indian’s relationship with nature, or the German environmental movement a half-century prior.<sup>26</sup> National identity continues to share an alignment with environmental identity, but this time as a critique of modern development.

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which states are created and smashed, we are looking out for a more natural and lasting spatial order of things... It is independent economic regions that we here discuss, regions not derived from but equivalent to those political, cultural, geographical units.” August Lösch, “The Nature of Economic Regions,” in *Regional Development and Planning: A Reader*, ed. John Friedmann (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1964), 107. For a critical survey of the idea of “natural borders,” see Juliet J. Fall, “Artificial States? On the Enduring Geographical Myth of Natural Borders.” *Political Geography* 29 (2010) 140-147.

<sup>25</sup> Yuri Slezkine, *The Jewish Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004) 4-39.

<sup>26</sup> See Boldbaatar, Z. “Mongolchuudyn Baigal’ Orchnoo Hamgallah Zan Zanwhil, Huul’ Togtoomhilin Höghliin Tuuhēn Toim,” *Tuuh: Erdem Shinzhilgeenii Bichig* 188, no. 14 (2002), 80–98; Gagengaowa and Wuyunbatu, *Menggu minzu de shengtai wenhua* (Hohhot: Neimenggu jiaoyu chubanshe, 2003); Ge Zhiyi, *Zhidu shiyuxia de caoyuan shengtai huanjing baohu* (Shenyang: Liaoning minzu chubanshe, 2008); He Qun, *Huanjing yu xiaominzu shengcun – Elunchun wenhua de bianqian* (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2006); Wu Feng and Bao Qingde, *Mengguzu shengtai zhihuilun: Neimenggu caoyuan shengtai huifu yu chongjian yanjiu* (Shenyang: Liaoning minzu chubanshe, 2009). For a parallel project on Chinese heritage, see Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Berthrong, *Confucianism and Ecology: the Interrelation of Heaven, Earth, and Humans* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998). On the German precedent, see Thomas Lekan, *Imagining the Nation in Nature: Landscape Preservation and German Identity, 1885-1945* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004). On nature and national myth-making, see Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1995).

## **From Nation Back to Empire: The New Qing History**

The developmentalist narrative of Qing environmental history, while useful in some contexts, poses critical problems. “Native officials” (Ch: 土司) in the southwest, for example, had a relatively limited stature and significance at court, and the court at times pursued civilizing missions amongst their natives.<sup>27</sup> The context was radically different in Mongolia and Manchuria: Mongol and Manchu bannermen did not need civilization; they defended civilization. Sitting at the apex of the imperial order, their classical ways of life (pastoralism and hunting) were instead promoted and protected, and assimilation was discouraged. Not all frontiers were equal.<sup>28</sup>

At the same time, a “China-centered” approach is problematic for areas in which most source material is not written in Chinese. Migration and land reclamation are important stories, but they are not the only story: each frontier was also a homeland, and each homeland had its own, dynamic history. Farmers did not expand into a vacuum, and nowhere was the land unclaimed. Yet despite an abundance of source materials, relatively little is known about the histories of Qing frontiers prior to the arrival of Chinese settlers, in part because most sources were not written in Chinese, but in Manchu, Mongol, Tibetan, and other languages. Indeed, these languages were working

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<sup>27</sup> On the southwest, see Charles Patterson Giersch, *Asian Borderlands: The Transformation of Qing China's Yunnan Frontier* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), and John E. Herman, *Amid the Clouds and Mist: China's Colonization of Guizhou, 1200-1700* (Cambridge, Harvard University Asia Center, 2007). For Ming antecedents, see Leo Kwok-yueh Shin, *The Making of the Chinese State: Ethnicity and Expansion on the Ming Borderlands* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

<sup>28</sup> On the spectrum of state building and identity formation patterns in Qing frontiers, see Pamela Crossley, et al., *Empire at the Margins: Culture, Ethnicity and Frontier in Early Modern China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 1-24.

languages of the Qing state, right up to the twentieth century. How then should we conceive of the relationship between frontier and metropole in the Qing empire?

Recognizing the plurality of Qing rule, and taking the Qing empire seriously as an empire, have been at the heart of the so-called “New Qing History.” Historians have uncovered how efforts to define, delimit, and maintain ethnic groups – such Manchus, Chinese, and Mongols – were woven into the ideological and institutional fabric of the empire.<sup>29</sup> Indeed, as Manchus, the emperors, considered the maintenance of ethnic and regional difference to be central to the imperial project, both to preserve their position as conquest elite and to consolidate expansion. These studies build off a foundation of critical studies of race and ethnicity that put power dynamics and state institutions at the center of analysis. Questions of identity are inseparable from the institutionalization of imperial hierarchy: the more privilege lost its distinctive marks, the more it was upheld by the court. The Qing empire, in this sense, was like other empires: territorially large states engaged in “self-consciously maintaining the diversity of people they conquered and incorporated.”<sup>30</sup>

Manchuria and Mongolia held a special place within this order. Their special stature was in part strategic. They had value, first, as military buffers between

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<sup>29</sup> Major works include Mark Elliott, *The Manchu Way: The Eight Banners and Ethnic Identity in Late Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001); Pamela K. Crossley, *The Translucent Mirror: History and Identity in Qing Imperial Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); Peter Perdue, *China Marches West: The Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005), and Evelyn Rawski, *The Last Emperors: A Social History of Qing Imperial Institutions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998). For review essays, see Guy, R. Kent, “Who Were the Manchus? A Review Essay,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 61, no. 1 (2002), 151-164. For the work which branded and christened this scholarship, see Joanna Waley-Cohen, “The New Qing History,” *Radical History Review* 88 (2003), 193-206. For recent scholarship from the PRC, see Liu Fengyun, *Qingdai zhengzhi yu guojia renting* (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2012), v. 1.

<sup>30</sup> Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, *Empires in World History: Power the Politics of Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

neighboring states, such as Russia and Korea, while also providing the ideal space for soldiers to train and hone their skills as warriors and men. For this reason, emperors had cause to maintain the northern “wilderness” (*Ma bigan*): the denser the forest, the stronger the defensive deterrent.<sup>31</sup> Manchuria and Mongolia also had unique stature as homelands of the Manchus, who ruled at court, and the Mongols, who had unique historical and personal ties with the ruling house.<sup>32</sup> The emperors associated themselves and their ethnicity with the flora and fauna of their Manchu homeland, from magpies and birch trees to the so-called “three treasures:” *ula* grass, sable, and ginseng.<sup>33</sup> This close connection of the Manchus to their ancestral homeland was featured in all manner of literature, from popular folktales to high-minded literature, and figured prominently in material culture, including fur clothing, birch-bark crafts, and distinctly boreal foods and medicines, such as elk tail and wild ginseng.

Specific institutions were called upon to reinforce the distinctive position of Mongols and Manchus in particular, including segregation, sumptuary laws, language instruction, and military schooling. Citing these strategic and cultural imperatives, the court took steps to militarize, monopolize, and conserve the natural frontier in its image. Movement into, or even through, Manchuria or Mongolia was strictly monitored and regulated. Both frontiers were governed through military institutions: the Eight Banner system in Manchuria, and the Mongol banner system in Mongolia. Reflecting the multi-

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<sup>31</sup> Nineteenth-century thinkers held the opposite view: strength lay in mass militias, so densely populated frontiers were ideal.

<sup>32</sup> David M. Farquhar, “The Origins of the Manchus’ Mongolian Policy,” in *the Chinese World Order*, ed. John K. Fairbank (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), 198-205; Nicola Di Cosmo and Dalizhabu Bao, *Manchu-Mongol Relations on the Eve of the Qing Conquest: A Documentary History* (Leiden: Boston, 2003).

<sup>33</sup> Mark Elliott, “The Limits of Tartary: Manchuria in Imperial and National Geographies.”

ethnic character of the state, there was no one governing language. Both Manchu and Chinese were used at court, while other recognized languages were used locally, including, Manchu in Manchuria, Mongolian in Mongolia, and Tibetan in Tibet.

To study identity and ideology, the field is increasingly turning to sources that are not just in Chinese, but also materials written in the court language, Manchu, as well in regional languages such as Mongolian. In Mongolia and Manchuria in particular, the extreme minority of archival documents were ever written or translated into Chinese until the second half of the nineteenth century. In the case of Outer Mongolia, only trade registers and permits, produced under the aegis of the Trade Supervisor's office used Chinese: the arrow, banner, and league offices all used Mongolian, while the offices of the Military Governor in Uliasutai and Imperial Representative in Khüree (modern Ulan Bator) used Manchu, which was further used to communicate with the emperor in Beijing.

The research for this dissertation pursues this same direction and relies heavily upon the largely unexplored Manchu- and Mongolian-language materials held at the Mongolian National Central Archive (MNCA) in Ulaanbaatar and the First Historical Archive (FHA) in Beijing. The foundation of my research there was fond M1D1, the records of the office of the Imperial Representative in Khüree (the office of the “ambans”).<sup>34</sup> Further use was made of the records of the Military-General at Uliasutai in fond M2D1. In Beijing, two Manchu-language sources were used primarily: the

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<sup>34</sup> For a brief overview of the archives and M1D1, see Miyawaki Junko, “Mongoru kokuritsu chuō monjokan shozō no Manjugo, Mongorugo shiryō – toku ni Ifu-furē-Manju daijin no yakusho (Korin ichiji daijin gamon) bunsho ni tsuite,” *Shi shiryō habu chiiki bunka kenkyū* 2 (2009), 135-141, and Miyawaki Junko, “Report on the Manchu Documents Stored at the Mongolian National Central Archives of History,” *Saksaha* 4 (1999), 6-13.

Accounts of the Imperial Household Department (Ch: 內務府奏銷檔) and the Copies of Manchu Palace Memorials of the Grand Council (Ch: 軍機處滿文錄副奏摺).<sup>35</sup> Taken as a whole, the archival documents present both a fuller, more detailed, and more complex picture of the frontiers that is altogether lacking from conventional accounts. It is not too much to say that without these documents it would be completely impossible to reconstruct the story that is told in these pages.

While since the 1980s scholars in the PRC have been publishing significant works using the Manchu and Mongol sources,<sup>36</sup> most studies of Qing frontiers continue to rely on published Chinese-language materials, such as the *Veritable Records*, gazetteers, and accounts by exiles. In both Manchuria and Mongolia, the vast majority of archival materials are in Manchu and Mongol. At court, moreover, whole genres of state documents on the frontiers, such as confidential military communications, were never translated into Chinese.<sup>37</sup> The intimacy of Manchu-language memorials could be lost in translation. Still more problematic, Qing-period writers and translators often elided or transformed the meanings of Manchu words in Chinese, as both material objects and

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<sup>35</sup> For a critical description of Manchu language archives in FHA, see Mark C. Elliott, “The Manchu-Language Archives of the Qing Dynasty and the Origins of the Palace Memorial System,” *Late Imperial China* 22, no. 1 (2000), 1-70.

<sup>36</sup> For recent publications using Manchu sources to write the history of Manchuria, see Tong Yonggong, *Manyuwen yu manwen dang'an yanjiu* (Shenyang: Liaoning minzu chubanshe, 2009); Wang Peihuan, *Yige dengshang longting de minzu: manzu shuihui yu gongting* (Shenyang: Liaoning minzu chubanshe, 2006); and Ding Yizhuang, Guo Songyi, Kang Wenlin [Cameron Campbell] and Li Zhongqing [James Lee], *Liaodong yiminzhong de qiren shehui* (Shanghai: Shanghai shehui kexue yuanchu banshe, 2004). For scholars using Mongol and Manchu to study Inner Mongolia, see Liang Lixia, *Alashan Menggu yanjiu* (Beijing: Minzu Chubanshe, 2005); Wurenqiqige, *18-20 shijichu guihuacheng Tumete caizheng yanjiu* (Beijing: Minzu chubanshe, 2008); and Wuyunbilige, *Shiqi shiji menggushi lunkao* (Hohhot: Neimenggu renmin chubanshe, 2009).

<sup>37</sup> Beatrice Bartlett, “Books of Revelations: The Importance of the Manchu Language Archival Record Books for Research on Ch'ing History,” *Late Imperial China* 6, no. 2 (1985), 33. Pamela Crossley and Evelyn S. Rawski, “A Profile of the Manchu Language in Ch'ing History,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 53, no.1 (1993), 63-102.

abstract ideas sometimes lacked easy analogues or assumed new meanings altogether. Translation, that is, was a fundamental interface through which the Qing empire was integrated; the unity of its disparate realms was structured around such choices of translation.<sup>38</sup> It is only through the study of the extensive non-Chinese materials, however, that the peculiar lens of the Chinese sources is revealed as historical reflections of empire.<sup>39</sup>

From the vantage of archival documents, and with the insights of New Qing History, does the history of Qing frontiers appear different? We have discussed two productive fields of inquiry: environmental history and New Qing history. The first delves into the commercial expansion in the Chinese interior and the problem of resource depletion; the second investigates how the empire institutionalized ethnic and territorial distinctions. Both processes were simultaneous. How, then, were they related? How do we make sense of the complex relationship between economic, environmental, and political geographies of the Qing empire?

### **Environment and Economy: the Materiality of Qing Frontiers**

Translation was but one mechanism for integrating frontier and metropole; maintaining the Qing empire required various “repertoires of power.”<sup>40</sup> Military garrisons, tribute and tax payments, the palace-memorial system, population transfers,

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<sup>38</sup> Miyazaki Ichisada, “Shinchō ni okeru kokugo mondai no ichimen,” *Tōhōshi ronsō* 1 (1947): 1-56. Matthew W. Mosca, “Empire and the Circulation of Frontier Intelligence: Qing Conceptions of the Ottomans,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 70, no. 1 (2010), 147-207; Christopher Atwood, “‘Worshipping Grace’: the Language of Loyalty in Qing Mongolia,” *Late Imperial China* 21, no. 2 (2000), 86-139.

<sup>39</sup> Mark C. Elliott, “Manwen dang’an yu xin Qingshi,” *National Palace Museum Quarterly* 24.2 (2006), 1-18.

<sup>40</sup> I borrow the concept of imperial “repertoires of power” from Burbank and Cooper, *Empires in World History: Power the Politics of Difference*, 7, 16.

imperial cults, encyclopedic publishing projects, and the issuance of passports for cross-regional trade all served as other important integrative mechanisms. The Qing empire was built upon a range of technologies, epistemological, bureaucratic, and infrastructural; its success hinged both on its unprecedented productive capacity and its ability to mobilize these resources.<sup>41</sup>

The sheer distance of the Inner Asian frontiers also helped define its material identity. The diversity of these repertoires deployed for each region was in part a function of the Qing empire's immense scale and its limited position at the local level. In the Chinese interior, where the vast majority of imperial subjects lived, administration was small relative to population size. This trend grew ever more pronounced as population boomed, but the size of government remained constant. In Inner Asia, on the other hand, government was small relative to the land area. In the Chinese interior, magistrates appointed from Beijing were rotated between 1,549 counties, with further court-delegate officials nested at the prefectural, provincial, and regional levels.<sup>42</sup> In contrast, Qing Inner Asia – a land area encompassing 7.3 million square kilometers, or nearly two-thirds of all Qing territory<sup>43</sup> – was governed by only a handful of imperial

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<sup>41</sup> Peter Perdue, *China Marches West*; Peter Perdue, "Military Mobilization in Seventeenth and Eighteenth-Century China, Russia, and Mongolia," *Modern Asian Studies* 30, no. 4 (1996), 757-793. Empires are premised upon technologies and a concentration of resources that allow the projection of sovereign but limited power across space. Different epochs provided different technological opportunities, such as the chariot or gunpowder, as well as different access to resources; from the last quarter of the 16<sup>th</sup> century on, early modern commercial and demographic expansion facilitated an unprecedented and simultaneous growth of state power across Eurasia. Marshall G.S. Hodgson, "The Interrelations of Societies in History," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 5, no. 2 (1963), 240, 248.

<sup>42</sup> The figure of 1,549 is taken from Zhou Zhenhe, *Zhongguo difang xingzheng zhidushi* (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2005), 204.

<sup>43</sup> The vast majority of these officials were based out of Manchuria – the imperial enclave *par excellence*. The estimates were calculated for the period 1757-1858, when the empire was at its territorial apex. A estimated total land area of 11,331,957 km<sup>2</sup> for the Qing empire was arrived at by taking the sum of the modern-day land areas of China (9,565,961 km<sup>2</sup>), Mongolia (1,564,116 km<sup>2</sup>), and Primorsky *krai* (165,900



representatives and military governors, scattered in disparate outposts across Tibet, Xinjiang, Mongolia, and Manchuria. In all of Outer Mongolia – a land area encompassing 1.5 million square kilometers – court-appointed officials were located in only four towns (Khüree, Khiakhta, Uliasutai, and Khobdo).

A common feature to frontier commodity trades was the enormous distances involved. Such great distances necessitated high degrees of capitalization to overcome transportation costs. In Mongolia, the solution was provided by merchants and the caravan system, by which the great merchant houses assumed the risks of trade and supplied the necessary start-up funds. In Manchuria, the Qing state itself provided the funds and assumed the risks, importing commodities through the tribute system. Crossing between frontier and metropole likewise required moving between jurisdictions, and thus also required mechanisms for passing in and out of the Chinese interior and across differing banners. The trade itself required supra-jurisdictional coordination, which in the case of the Qing, was provided under the umbrella of empire.<sup>44</sup>

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km<sup>2</sup>) in Russia. The estimate for Inner Asian lands was arrived at by summing the land area of modern Tibet (1,178,577 km<sup>2</sup>), Qinghai (720,459 km<sup>2</sup>), Xinjiang (1,743,441 km<sup>2</sup>), Inner Mongolia (1,181,104 km<sup>2</sup>), Heilongjiang (431,767 km<sup>2</sup>), Jilin (191,038 km<sup>2</sup>), Liaoning (147,451 km<sup>2</sup>), modern Mongolia, and Primorsky *krai*, yielding a figure of 4,451,632 km<sup>2</sup>, or 64.6% of total land area. Clearly, the estimates are crude – the reader should be wary of using these modern state and provincial boundaries as a basis for such a calculation. Provincial boundaries, for one, have changed considerably since 1860. Provincial level administration in the Qing period, moreover, did not entail a single type of local administration, whether “Inner Asian” or otherwise: thus parts of Qinghai were governed through the *junxian* system, while certain parts of Sichuan and Yunnan were governed as Tibetan. If the figures should thus be taken with a large grain of salt, being no more than rough estimates, they still illustrate the sheer vastness of territories commonly thought of as mere “frontiers.” Sources: The World Factbook, “Geography: China,” *China*, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ch.html> (accessed April 24, 2012); Statoids, “Provinces of China,” <http://www.statoids.com/ucn.html> (accessed April 24, 2012); and RIN.ru, “Primorsky Krai,” *Map of Russia*, [http://map.rin.ru/cgi-bin/main\\_e.pl?Region=primorsk](http://map.rin.ru/cgi-bin/main_e.pl?Region=primorsk) (accessed April 24, 2012).

<sup>44</sup> Pomeranz, *The World that Trade Created*; Trade Diasporas, globalization, etc.

Indeed, despite their immense distances from the metropolitan core, the frontiers were long commercially integrated with the center: they were not only defensive bufferzones, or ethnic homelands, but productive spaces. Since Owen Lattimore, Inner Asianists have long emphasized these economic and environmental dimensions to the Great Wall boundary: the steppes of Mongolia and forests of Manchuria were never autarkic. As Emanuel Marx recently argued against the idea of nomadic autarky, “pastoralists are so deeply involved in the market economy that they should be seen as specialized segments of a complex city-based economy.”<sup>45</sup> Prominent Inner Asianists since Owen Lattimore, including Anatoly Khazanov, Thomas Barfield, and Nicola Di Cosmo have similarly argued for an economic understanding of both nomadism and the Inner-Asia China frontier.<sup>46</sup>

Provocatively, in *Nature's Metropolis*, William Cronon likewise used the insights of economic geography to reconceptualize the American frontier as a spatialized form of market specialization.<sup>47</sup> Cronon called for a return to classical center-place theory, which posits that “land will progressively be given up to products cheap to transport in relation to their value.”<sup>48</sup> The model predicts concentric rings of land use, determined by transportation costs, which surround a city in free market conditions: first a belt of high-

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<sup>45</sup> Emanuel Marx, “Nomads and Cities: The Development of a Conception,” in *Shifts and Drifts in Nomad-Sedentary Relations*, eds. Stefan Leder and Bernhard Streck (Wiesbaden: L. Reichert, 2005), 6.

<sup>46</sup> Owen Lattimore, *Inner Asian Frontiers of China* (New York: American Geographical Society, 1940); Khazanov (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994); Thomas Barfield, *The Perilous Frontier: Nomadic Empires and China, 221BC to AD 1757* (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1989); and Nicola Di Cosmo *Ancient China and Its Enemies: the Rise of Nomadic Power in East Asian History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

<sup>47</sup> See William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis*.

<sup>48</sup> Quoted in Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis*, 48.

value agriculture, which gives way to lower-value agriculture, then pastoralism, and finally hunting and trapping.<sup>49</sup> As Cronon argued, Frederick Jackson Turner's famous theory of the frontier – which imagined a progressive development from trapping, to herding, to farming, to city life – works less as a teleology than a description of synchronous, spatialized responses to urbanization.

In his classic study of the tribute system, John King Fairbank likewise represented the “Chinese world order” as a system of concentric circles radiating out from the capital, with each encircling ring representing ever increasing degrees of cultural marginality and political independence.<sup>50</sup> As one's distance from the center (i.e. the emperor) increased, so too did the type of material wealth demanded by the court. These relations took ritual form through the tribute system. Thus grain and silver were extracted from the “Middle Kingdom,” horses from the Inner Asian steppes, and fur from the taiga. Fairbank's tribute system was in part an idealization and formalization of economic space as seen from the capital: the farther one moved from the capital city, the greater the effort required to transport one's product, and the greater the value of the commodity offered as tribute.

But whereas center-place theory predicts the spatialization of economic relations, the tribute system assumes both a permanence of relations and an identity of not only place and product, but of people and polity as well. The Oroncon were hunters organized into a fixed administrative-spatial unit in the Manchurian taiga; Kazaks were nomads living on the steppes west of Xinjiang, and so on. While Fairbank's model has been

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<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>50</sup> John King Fairbank, “A Preliminary Framework,” in *The Chinese World Order*, ed. John King Fairbank (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), 1-20.

justly critiqued for failing to recognize the plurality of Qing rule and approaches to foreign policy, the basic insight that people were imagined in relation to the land they lived and the products they produced did, in fact, characterize Qing ideology. The nexus of people, product, and place was fundamental both at court and in the marketplace: the narratives implied in this nexus were central to the Qing imperial order, as a multiethnic empire; they also created value in the market place: wilderness and the frontier were marketable brands.<sup>51</sup>

For this reason, the study of resource production and commodities offer an important vantage on both the political and economic dimensions of frontier and metropole in the Qing empire: changes in production and exchange altered the balance between place, product, and people. Recent scholarship on Qing frontiers has emphasized how, beneath the umbrella of empire, commercial exchanges helped bring the various homelands into contact with one another, and some of the most exciting scholarship in the field has centered on commodities. Natural resources in particular were often at the center of frontier-metropole relations, from the lumber industry of the southwest, to the pharmaceutical and mineral industries of Xinjiang and Mongolia, to the ginseng trade in Manchuria.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> On the relationship between desire and the existential longevity, see Michael Pollan, *The Botany of Desire: A Plant's Eye View of the World* (New York: Random House, 2001). In this view, plants have agency because they stimulate the desire to plant them. Humans are not masters but hosts, safeguarding the survival of everything from wheat and rice to sugarcane and cotton to cocoa and coffee.

<sup>52</sup> For the Qing court in general see Lai Huimin, *Tianhuang guizhou: Qing huangzuo de jieceng jiegou yu jingji shenghuo* (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan jindaishi yanjiusuo, 1997). For sable, fur, and deer horn, see Cong Peiyuan, *Dongbei sanbao jingji jianshi* (Beijing: Zhongguo huanjing kexue chubanshe 1990); On fur, see Lai Huimin, "Qianlongchao Neifuyuan pihuo maimai yu jingcheng shishang," *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan jindaishi yanjiusuo jikan* 21, no. 1 (2003), 101-134, and Yoshihiro Kawachi, "Mindai tōhoku Ajia chōhi bōeki" *Tōyoshi kenkyō* 30.1 (1971): 62-120. On ginseng, see Chiang Chushan, *Qingdai renshen de lishi: yige shangpin de yanjiu* (Ph.D. Thesis, National Tsing Hua University, 2006). On gold, see Mette High and Jonathan Schlesinger, "Rulers and Rascals: The Politics of Gold in Mongolian Qing History," *Central Asian Survey* 29, no. 3 (2010), 289-304; for jade, see James Millward, *Beyond the Pass: Economy,*

Depending on the institutional relationship with the court, different jurisdictions had different official mechanisms to facilitate cross-regional trade. Depending on the resource and the jurisdiction, different regimes were in place: one could submit the commodity as tribute, register with the state before trading it, or participate in the blackmarket. The Inner Asian resource economy can thus be imagined as a matrix of political jurisdictions and economic institutions. In its most simplified form, however, one can imagine four broad types of administrative space in the northern frontiers: 1) Eight Banner territory in Manchuria, 2) Mongol banner territory in Mongolia, 3) Urianghai and Hunting banner territory near the Russian borderlands, and 4) restricted areas, which included imperial hunting grounds, holy mountains, and the Russian borderlands themselves. Before the resource boom, in 1750, we can represent the exploitation of the most valuable commodities as such (see Figure 1):

Figure 1: Schema of Resource Production and Exchange Mechanisms in Mongolia and Manchuria, 1750

	<b>Eight Banners (Manchuria)</b>	<b>Mongol Banners (Mongolia)</b>	<b>Hunting Banners (Russian Borderlands)</b>
<b>Tribute</b>	Pearls, Ginseng	Camels, Horses, Wild Boar	Fur
<b>Licensed Trade</b>	Ginseng		Fur (Manchuria only)
<b>Prohibited / Blackmarket</b>	Deer Horn	Farms, Wood, Deer Horn,	

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*Ethnicity, and Empire in Qing Central Asia, 1795-1864* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998); on lumber, see Ueda Makoto, “Fūkin, kaisei, chikin: Shindai chūki Kōsei ni okeru sanchi kaihatsu.” *Toyoshi Kenkyu* 61.4 (2003), 115-145; Aihara Yoshiyuki, “Keidai chūki, Kishu tōnanbu shimizu ryūiki niokeru mokuzaï no ryūtsū kōzō,” *Kyōkai keizai shigaku* 72.5 (2007): 25-44; Zhang Yingqiang. *Mucai zhi liudong: Qingdai qingshuijiang xiayou diqu de shichang, quanli yu shehui* Beijing: Shenghuo dushu xinzhì sanlian shudian, 2006.

		Mushrooms	
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Environmental, market, and political pressure drove a reconfiguration of this matrix by 1850: some forms of exchange were prohibited altogether (Manchurian pearls); others were newly licensed and monitored by the state (pharmaceutical deer horn); and still others have become tributary items (fur) (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Schema of Resource Production and Exchange Mechanisms in Mongolia and Manchuria, 1850

	<b>Eight Banners (Manchuria)</b>	<b>Mongol Banners (Mongolia)</b>	<b>Hunting Banners (Russian Borderlands)</b>
<b>Tribute</b>	Ginseng	Camels, Horses, Wild Boar	Fur
<b>Licensed Trade</b>	Ginseng, Deer Horn	Farms, Wood, Deer Horn,	
<b>Prohibited / Blackmarket</b>	Pearls	Mushrooms	

While we can identify three mechanisms by which frontier products entered the Chinese interior, the situation in practice was far more complex. While the state made attempted to intervene in all these types of trade, the resource boom intensified the black market for all resources, even when there were legal mechanisms for obtaining the product. Further, there were always shades of grey between the ideal types: licensed merchants collected tribute, tribute collectors became black marketers, poachers dealt with licensed merchants. A key aim of this dissertation is to unravel tangled webs as they change over time. Understanding the history of the frontier is impossible without doing so.

There were significant differences between jurisdictional types (centralized oversight in the Eight banner system, local noble rule in the Mongol banners), as well as within the jurisdictional types themselves (Inner Mongol banners were built around arrows, Outer Mongol banners were not; the place in the administrative and ideological hierarchy of the Urianghai and the various Manchurian hunting banners differed greatly). Yet common to all administrative units was an overarching concern with the integrity of the territorial and ethnic order. The borders between banners mattered, and movement between banners was highly regulated.

### **Rethinking the Nature of Frontiers: the Purity of Place, People, and Production**

Using Manchuria and Mongolia as case studies, this dissertation argues that resource depletion did not undermine the Qing imperial order. Rather, it helped define it: China's economic expansion and Qing empire building were mutually reinforcing, not conflicting, processes. Prior to Chinese homesteading, growing consumption of natural resources in the metropole led to resource depletion and a sense of environmental crisis in the frontiers. In the years 1750-1850, ginseng, than pearls, than fur-bearing animals disappeared from the wild in Manchuria, while furs disappeared from the northern Mongol borderlands at the same time, as certain Mongol banners became intensive production sites for products such as wild mushroom. Through the first half of the nineteenth century, the state mobilized itself to establish a conservation order to rest the land, confront the environmental crisis, and return Mongols and Manchus to their proper way of life. These efforts involved creating new territorial controls on the one hand, and, to use the language of Qing documents, making the land itself "pure" on the other, and so protect the constellation of people, flora, fauna, and other material objects which gave the

land its identity. Environmental concerns were not tangential to the greater imperial project of defining, delimiting, and segregating ethnic groups; it was central to it.

Central to this concept of purity was the idea that a certain way of life bound people to both their homeland and the material objects it produced. The “purity” project in Qing frontiers, however, was not simply a matter of strategic stability in the face of commercial change. Significantly, the market did not work in a single direction: consumer demand inspired both depletion or conservation, depending on context. When consumers demanded authentic forms and locations of production, for example, it provided grounds for sustainability. Indeed, the reproduction of Manchurian and Mongolian landscapes was impossible without the nature of this peculiar demand and the desire of consumers, including the Qing court itself. Both the political and commercial orders demanded, for example, that the forests of Manchuria be inhabited by seasoned Manchu hunters and jet-black sables: empire, because seasoned Manchus were the state’s military basis; markets, because consumers thought the black sables from Manchuria to be best. These two demands, moreover, were not unrelated: discourses of consumption and production were intimately connected.

Environmental history revolves around the relationship between humans and nature: either humans change the environment, or the environment changes us. In the classical formation, nature imposes limits on unchecked commercial and demographic growth: in a world of excess, people grow sick, rivers run dry, the climate becomes a furnace. Nature in this sense has a creative agency outside humankind: one set of laws and objects belongs to humans, another to nature.<sup>53</sup> In the European tradition, that is,

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<sup>53</sup> Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 1-48



nature implies a narrative about creation: to know whether something is natural requires understanding and authenticating its point of origin and subsequent history. How was it created? Where did it come from? Has someone modified it, or is it free from outside intervention? One must make distinctions and draw lines.<sup>54</sup>

It is impossible to map the European vision of “nature,” with all its semantic implications, neatly onto the Chinese context. In the Qing period, for one, environmental crises were perceived as political failures, not simply uncontrollable, “natural” disasters. As Peter Perdue and R. Bin Wong argued, “it is virtually impossible” to “distinguish unambiguously ‘natural’ and ‘human’ causes of crises.”<sup>55</sup> Amidst the crises of the nineteenth century, that is, natural and human problems alike reflected a failure of statecraft. In the official viewpoint, that is, there were only cases of maladministration, not of natural intervention.<sup>56</sup>

Yet, at the same time, narratives about origins mattered tremendously in the Qing, serving as a crucial arbiter of moral and commercial value. The discourse of origins informed the bounds of ethnicity, territory, law, and political legitimacy. Similar questions were asked of objects, places, and people as one would ask of “nature”: How was it created? Where did it come from? Has it ever been altered, or is it free from

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<sup>54</sup> Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*; William Cronon, *Changes in the Land* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983); Ramachandra Guha, *Environmentalism: A Global History* (New York: Longman, 2000). The story of nature as we know it is inseparable from the Scientific Revolution, the rise of early modern economy, and the Age of Empires: only then did the European idea of wilderness and naturalness come sharply into focus. The break reflected a new and institutionalized relationship to natural world, and a new sense of empowerment over natives and nature alike.

<sup>55</sup> R. Bin Wong and Peter C. Perdue, “Review: Famine’s Foes in Ch’ing China,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 43, no. 1 (1983), 295. See also Lillian M. Li, *Fighting Famine in North China: State, Market, and Environmental Decline, 1690s-1990s* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007).

<sup>56</sup> Peter Perdue, “Official Goals and Local Interests: Water Control in the Dongting Lake Region during the Ming and Qing Periods,” 757-758.

foreign intervention? Common origins implied shared identities. The Qing state legitimated itself and constantly worked to keep people in touch with their roots: Manchus with Manchuria, Mongols with Mongolia, Han Chinese with China. The most debased people were those divorced from their natural homes: the “rootless rascals.” While origins were not necessarily conceived of as “natural” vs. “cultural,” similar historical narratives were nonetheless constructed for all things produced: some people and products were remained untouched by foreign intervention, others did not, and still others remained untouched but their production sites – their homelands – were the objects transformed.

In Qing documents, the state of being untouched by foreign intervention was described as being “clean” or “pure” (Ma: *bolgo*; Mo: *ariyun*; Ch: 清). In practice, the concept of “purification” meant putting a place in order: returning the land to its original state, with its original people, and producing its original products. Here Qing “purity” was similar in spirit to how Mary Douglas conceived it, as a process of making borders and clarifying social roles:

Ideas about separating, purifying, demarcating and punishing transgressions have as their main function to impose system on an inherently untidy experience. It is only by exaggerating the difference between within and without, above and below, male and female, with and against, that a semblance of order is created.<sup>57</sup>

Just as when one we clean a house, “we are separating, placing boundaries, making visible statements about the home that we are intending to create out of the material house,”<sup>58</sup> so too was the Qing empire making visible statements about empire

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<sup>57</sup> Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1966), 4.

<sup>58</sup> Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, 68.

out of material landforms and their products. Where the land was holiest, or the potential danger of transgressions was greatest, the Qing state pursued its purity project with the greatest vigor. The borderlands with Russia and Korea, sacred mountains, imperial hunting grounds, and tribute collecting sites in Manchuria long held this stature; as the pages below show, the ethnic homeland of Mongolia came to as well. Studying environmental history requires studying borders.

In this sense, this dissertation also speaks to scholarship on modern territoriality. A premium placed by states on territoriality helped define the modern period, from roughly 1860-1975.<sup>59</sup> In the case of the Qing, we have long known that borders mattered as well, particularly on the northern, Inner Asian borders.<sup>60</sup> Indeed, to a certain degree, the construction of these borders, and the Qing institutions established to separate space and segregate people were robust and prominent enough in 1860 to serve as analogues and precedents for China's encounter with modern Europe after the Opium Wars.<sup>61</sup> Showing, first, that borders mattered in the Qing world, the dissertation moves on to ask: what were the sources of territorialization in the Qing?

The drive to delineate and maintain boundaries was common to both Manchuria and Mongolia, though not always for the same reason. As in the interior, resource management in Qing frontiers required a complex negotiation between local, regional,

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<sup>59</sup> Charles Maier, "Consigning the Twentieth Century to History: Alternative Narratives for the Modern Era," *The American Historical Review* 105.3 (2000), 807-831.

<sup>60</sup> Peter Perdue, *China Marches West*, 409-461. See also Mark Mancall, *Russia and China: Their Diplomatic Relations to 1728* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971).

<sup>61</sup> For a full discussion, see Pär Cassel, "Excavating Extraterritoriality: the 'Judicial Sub-Prefect' as Prototype for the Mixed Court in Shanghai," *Late Imperial China* 24.2 (2003), 156-182. See also Joseph Fletcher, "The Heyday of the Ch'ing Order in Mongolia, Sinkiang and Tibet," in *Cambirdge History of China: Late Ch'ing, 1800-1911, Part I*, ed. Denis C. Twitchett and John K. Fairbank (Cambridge: Cambirdge University Press, 1978), vol. 10, 377; and R. Kent Guy, "Who Were the Manchus?" *Journal of Asian Studies* 61.1 (2002): 151-64.

and imperial interests.<sup>62</sup> In both regions, I argue, one common reason to establish boundaries and enhance territorial controls was resource depletion. As jurisdictional conflicts over access and the costs of policing increased, the state produced more maps, markers on the ground, border patrols, and negotiations to establish jurisdictional authority. In Mongolia, the process was largely bottom up: local noblemen cannot resolve a jurisdictional dispute, and regional authorities, as representatives of the Qing court, come in to mediate and establish a border. In Manchuria, in contrast, the process was often top down: the imperial government mobilizes bannermen to cordon off the area. In practice, that is, the administrative processes that defined, delimited, and segregated ethnic groups were often pushed by new forms of natural resource exploitation and environmental transformation in the frontiers, particularly during the years 1750-1850.

Qing ideology, in this sense, was similar to frontier narratives: it relied on simple ethnic binaries and failed to capture the ambiguities, complexity, and multiplicity of perspectives in Qing frontiers. Through the early nineteenth century, moreover, there was anxiety that not only were borders being crossed, but that local people themselves were changing. Indeed, while the court institutionalized different administrative statuses of Mongols and Chinese, in practice people did not neatly fit into the basic binary. People were often more cosmopolitan than insular: intermarriage was common; Chinese

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<sup>62</sup> On the complex political dynamics created by the shifting ecological balance, see Peter Perdue, *Exhausting the Earth*; Peter Perdue, "Official Goals and Local Interests: Water Control in the Dongting Lake Region during the Ming and Qing Periods," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 41, no. 4 (1982), 747-765; and William Rowe "Water Control and the Qing Political Process: The Fankou Dam Controversy, 1876-1883" *Modern China* 14, no. 4 (1988), 353-387.

and Mongols were often bilingual or trilingual; Chinese took Mongol names; Mongols farmed and participated in trade caravans.

In the years 1750-1850, in short, the impetus for drawing boundaries in Mongolia and Manchuria came from the burgeoning resource economy, whether to clarify who could profit from what land, or (just as often) to clarify who paid the costs for policing. Ultimately, territorialization and purification were flip sides of the same coin: both emerged as a response to the sense that the land, people, and ways of life of the frontier were getting dangerously “mixed up.”

### **Chapter Summary**

The dissertation is composed of five chapters. Chapter 1 opens with consumers in Beijing. It argues that the eighteenth century saw a surge in consumption of furs and other frontier product as the frontier itself was appropriated as part of Qing identity. Where furs once represented something barbarian or specifically Manchu, they became an emblem of a more cosmopolitan, elite, and imperial culture of the high Qing. Both the nature and intensity of consumer demand shaped the material history of the frontiers, both driving depletion and providing an impetus towards conservation. Ultimately, the discourse of fur pelts and fur-bearing animals, game meat and game parks were intertwined.

Chapters 2 and 3 follow the commodity chain to the production and movement of commodities in the frontiers. Chapter 2 opens the discussion with a description of the “tribute” system in Manchuria with case studies of the fur, ginseng, and pearl trades. All of the three of these natural resources were depleted in the wild between 1750 and 1850:

the pearl beds were stripped bare, ginseng was increasingly domesticated, and fur-bearing animals disappeared. Chapter 3 shifts focus to the creation and maintenance of the licensing system in Outer Mongolia. In Mongolia, the court and the banners pursued the convergent strategies of licensing some types of resource exploitation, including wood-cutting and the harvesting of medicinal deer horn, but banned others, such as mushroom-picking.

Chapters 4 and 5 then turn to perceptions of environmental crisis surrounding the illegal exploitation of resources, such as mushrooms, and the ensuing drive for “purity.” Chapter 4 uses a case study of the mushroom picking business to show how all of Mongolia’s pastureland was “purified,” in essence being protected like landscapes of holy mountains or imperial hunting grounds. In both scenarios, the court and its imperial representatives worked with local officials to uphold the Mongol “way of life,” the institutions supporting segregation and the integrity of the banners. In the case of mushroom picking, where the environmental and social effects were perceived as too destabilizing, the state pursued a campaign of “purification.”

Chapter 5 explores how amidst the depletion of fur-bearing animals, the taiga of the borderlands with Russia was “purified,” creating a “natural” border with Russia. Even prior to the early nineteenth century, “purity” was the watchword in restricted areas, such as holy mountains, imperial game parks, and the borderlands with Russia. In all of these spaces, *any* form of human intrusion was prohibited; not only could one not hunt there, one could not even spook the animals. Yet all of these spaces, like the rest of the frontier, were defined in practice against the poaching, corruption, and black market activity of the boom years.

The story of these dramatic material and discursive turns begins at court and with consumers in Beijing. It is that story that we turn in Chapter 1.

## **Chapter 1: Marketing the Frontier**

### **Introduction**

“Ah, it is lamentable! It has been over a hundred years since China fell but, remarkably, the mode of dress is still the same as before the downfall. It has come down through actors in the theater.”<sup>1</sup> So mused Pak Chiwŏn (1737-1805), the Korean polymath and satirist, who visited China in 1780 and realized, to his horror, that there were but two types of men in China that dressed civilized: Koreans and period actors. Everyone else dressed rudely, like barbarians, in furs. For Pak Chiwŏn, silk was civilized; fur was not. Yet for the Qing emperor Qianlong (r. 1735-1795), for whom he had come to pay tribute, fur was the epitome of elite fashion. Indeed, it was central to his identity as both a Manchu and ruler of a universal empire. As a token of his generosity, he sent Pak Chiwŏn’s party home to Seoul with a parting gift: top-grade sable pelts.

One could not separate the fur from the man: in the Qing empire, clothing and material culture were inseparable from personal identity.<sup>2</sup> Clothing represented one’s self as much as the pockmarks on one’s face or the color of one’s skin; “name-age-appearance” (Ma: *gebu se arbun*) bulletins for escaped slaves, lost wives, and military deserters mixed physical and sartorial descriptions, as if one never changed outfits.<sup>3</sup> By law, fugitives were “captured and investigated according to their physical appearance and

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<sup>1</sup> Pak Chi-wŏn, *The Jehol Diary* (Folkestone: Global Oriental, 2010), 189.

<sup>2</sup> Antonia Finnane, *Changing Clothes in China: Fashion, History, Nation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).

<sup>3</sup> M1D1-3833.35 (DG6.9.29).



clothing” (Ma: *banin muru, etuhe etuku de acabume baicame jafabuki*).<sup>4</sup> It was illegal to knock off someone’s hat (or tug on their tassels) during a fight.<sup>5</sup> When a foreign man died in Qing Mongolia, his body and clothing alike were to be removed to his home jurisdiction.<sup>6</sup>

It was because clothing represented identity, and because furs represented the frontier and Manchu identity in particular, that it aroused so such strong reactions. Even today, wearing furs is a loaded practice: is it civilized or brutal? Today the debate is argued in terms of Enlightened liberalism: the value of fur hinges on questions of rights and abuse. In imperial China, fur commanded a similar position as a civilizational flashpoint; like the Romans, Byzantines, and Umayyads, furs in China could represent the culture of barbarians,<sup>7</sup> with the politics of fur refracted through relations on the frontier. When the frontier epitomized war and exile, furs represented the style of China’s Inner Asian enemies and a life of hardship, loneliness, and brutality; to wear furs was akin to wearing primitive “skins” in English. It is reminder that there is nothing inherently precious about furs or any other material object: value is not determined by functionality; furs are prized not simply for their warmth in winter or their resilience in rain, but for the prestige they confer upon the wearer.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> MID1-3833.33 (DG6.10.1).

<sup>5</sup> TGKH 55: 12a.

<sup>6</sup> MID1-3697.34a (JQ25.3.1).

<sup>7</sup> James Howard-Johnston argues that prior to the Abbasid revolution, with its roots in Khorasan, the classical Mediterranean empires associated furs less with legitimate power than with Goths, Huns, Franks and Vikings. James Howard-Johnston, “Trading in Fur, from Classical Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages,” in *Leather and Fur: Aspects of Early Medieval Trade and Technology*, ed. Esther Cameron et al (London: Archetype Publications Ltd, 1998), 70-74.

<sup>8</sup> Arjun Appadurai, “Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value,” in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai et al (London: Cambridge University Press,

This chapter explores the shifting values assigned to fur and other frontier objects in the Qing empire as well as the common principles used to make appraisals.

Throughout the Qing period, I argue, narratives of production were used to assign value: the significance of a pearl rosary or a fur hat lay in where it came from, who produced it, and how it was produced. In the case of frontier objects from Manchuria, this narrative of production centered around a hunter's tale. The Qing emperors prized furs because it took a special person to successfully trap a sable: one had to be cunning, fearless, and manly – a master of the “Manchu way.”<sup>9</sup> In this sense, furs belonged to a larger suite of Manchu products, including game meats and Manchurian pearls, all of which were obtained through hunting in the wild.

In both Chinese and Manchu material cultures, fashion was neither static nor homogenous: depending on the social context and historical moment, Manchus wore silks and Chinese wore furs. Yet through the early eighteenth century, Chinese and Manchus alike closely associated furs with the frontier in general and the Qing court in particular. Throughout this initial period, emperors gifted fur to those whose achievements bespoke the Manchu way, sumptuary laws compelled all officials to use Manchurian pearls and furs at court, and consumers in Beijing lacked basic information – and sometimes even translations – for the most exotic animal pelts arriving from the frontiers.

Through the course of the eighteenth century, however, a momentous change occurred in China: fur became popular. In this new order, sumptuary laws were used to

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1986), 3-63. For a broader critical entry point into material culture studies, see Daniel Miller, “Materiality: an Introduction,” in *Materiality*, ed. Daniel Miller (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 1-50. For a critique of “luxury items” as a concept, see Arjun Appadurai, “Introduction,” 38. In Appadurai's words, “I propose that we regard luxury goods not so much in contrast to necessities (a contrast filled with problems), but as goods whose principal use is *rhetorical* and *social*, goods that are simply *incarnated signs*.”

<sup>9</sup> Mark Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, 183-187.

discourage consumption, not promote it; the emperors gifted to furs to bannermen and Chinese literati alike; and urban consumers had unprecedented access, familiarity and knowledge of precious furs. Significantly, furs continued to be associated with frontier places, peoples, and ways of life, but were now valued as such in poetry, histories, and pawnshop appraisals. In the confident world of the high Qing, however, they became emblematic of a greater imperial order: a world where frontier and metropole were linked, and Han Chinese and Manchu alike participated as, and dressed the part of, imperial elites.

### **The Manchu Suite & Gift-Giving at Court**

In 1804, the Jiaqing emperor (r. 1795-1820) received a special tribute from the military governor of Jilin: two exceptionally large, adult tigers. He was overjoyed. As the emperor wrote to Siolin, the military governor of Jilin, the bannermen of Jilin must truly be “well endowed with manly virtue” (Ma: *daci hahai erdemu sain*). “I know well that hunting is difficult,” he enthused. “Yet now you did not only capture tiger and bear cubs, you even took two adult tigers alive – how fierce and manly! (Ma: *gemu haha sain fafuri*).” The emperor needed more details. Rewards were in order. Who were the hunters, and how had they accomplished the feat?<sup>10</sup> For the emperor, the value of tigers was inseparable from the hunter’s tale: the men who did the work, the forest where they set the trap, the skill and brawn behind such a striking success.

Siolin responded with narrative flare. Jilin had a terrific amount of snowfall that winter. One day, hunters had passed cub prints in the snow and began tracking. They

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<sup>10</sup> MWLF 3667.47.171.2651 (JQ9.4.8).

knew that “if there was a fully grown tiger, it could not be caught with brute force,” so the hunters relied on “cunning” (Ma: *eiterešeme*) instead. When the time was right, they built wooden cages, dropped piglets inside, and raised a trap door. When the tigers walked in to find food for their cubs, they sprung the trap and had their prize. It had taken “fierce and manly” character as well as knowledge unique of the forest.<sup>11</sup>

Such gifts were not unusual at Jiaqing’s court. Three years later, in 1807, Siolin sent another gift of live tigers and bears, and again the emperor pressed for more information. Siolin admitted the hunters’ names “had not been clearly recorded,” but an investigation was underway.<sup>12</sup> Two months later when the names arrived, the emperor finally bestowed his gifts: five men received a large roll of silken gauze (Ch: 大卷紗), nine received small rolls (Ch: 小卷紗).<sup>13</sup> A month later, the Grand Council’s Manchu Affairs Office (Ma: *coohai nashūn ba i manju baita icihiyara ba*) was notified that yet another tiger cub was on the road to Beijing. A patrolman in Jilin’s imperial ginseng fields, Sicimboo, was making rounds through the “restricted mountains” (Ma: *fafulaha alin*) when he spotted tiny tracks.<sup>14</sup> Again, the Jiaqing emperor was overjoyed: the tiger embodied the spirit the Manchu homeland, the unique skill and fortitude of Manchu bannermen. Both, ultimately, were the basis of Qing rule and the Manchu court.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> MWLF 3667.47.171.2651 (JQ9.4.8). The documents fail to discuss what happens to these tigers in Beijing. Further research will be necessary into lives of wild animals presented as tribute.

<sup>12</sup> MWLF 3724.25.176.2118 (JQ12.5.20).

<sup>13</sup> MWLF 3724.32.176.2160 (JQ12.7).

<sup>14</sup> MWLF 3727.28.176.2985 (JQ12.8.17).

<sup>15</sup> On Manchuria in the imperial imagination, see Mark Elliott, “The Limits of Tartary: Manchuria in Imperial and National Geographies,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 59.3 (August 2000).

Tigers were only one of a suite of animals associated with Manchuria: other objects embodied the hunter's tale as well. The most prominent Manchurian products were furs, ginseng, and pearls. As early as 1621, Nurhaci contended that Manchuria was uniquely "endowed by heaven" (Ma: *abkai salgabufi*) with three types of sable (Ma: *seke*), black, white, and red foxes, lynx, panther, sea otter (Ma: *lekerhi*), tiger, otter, squirrel, kolinsky, and raccoon-dog; the land (Ma: *na*) also provided buckskin and deer hide, as well as cotton (*kubun* and *yohan*), cloth (*boso*), grass linen, salt, gold, silver, and iron.<sup>16</sup> The Qianlong-era compilation, *Qingchao wenxian tongkao*, recorded the importance of pearls, ginseng, sable, black fox, and lynx in particular as the region's basis of prosperity.<sup>17</sup> Later texts echoed the idea: Chen Kangqi (b. 1840) recorded in the *Langqian jiwèn* that "Taizu's court conquered all surrounding countries, and the eastern pearls, ginseng, jet-black sable, black fox (Ch: 黑狐), lynx and other exotic treasures produced within the borders was enough to clothe all."<sup>18</sup> In the 1910s, Xu Ke picked up the phrase almost exactly: "the Manchu homeland produced eastern pearls, ginseng, jet-black sable, black fox (Ch: 玄狐), lynx and other exotic treasures. All was open to trade, and generally there were no prohibitions."<sup>19</sup> When Hong Taiji offered peace with the Ming, he did so with an (outrageously unfair) exchange of pearls, sable, and ginseng for silver, silk, and cotton: the Jin would send ten *tana* pearls, one thousand sable pelts, and a thousand catties of ginseng to the Ming; the Ming would return ten thousand taels of

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<sup>16</sup> MBRT 1.15.227.

<sup>17</sup> *Qingchao wenxian tongkao*, 5075-2.

<sup>18</sup> Chen Kangqi, *Langqian jiwèn*, 2: 15.598.

<sup>19</sup> Xu Ke, *Qingbai leichao*, 2352.

gold, one million taels of silver, a million bolts of silk, and ten million bolts of fine blue cotton linen.<sup>20</sup>

Beyond furs, ginseng, and pearls was a wider array of products associated with Manchus and the Manchu way. The early palaces were decorated with tiger and bear skins, and the first throne was made of stag antlers.<sup>21</sup> The emperor consumed delicacies from every region of the empire: a taste for wild honey from Manchuria was matched with an urbane sophistication for Chinese cuisine, Mongol liquors, and Hami melons from the far west. Yet a special place on the menu was reserved for game meats, the fruits of the hunt. Plates of venison (Ma: *aliku buhū yali*) and fatty deer tail were circulated to empresses, concubines, and officials in the field.<sup>22</sup> The most precious cuts came from deer shot by the emperor himself. Whenever the emperor killed a deer, the Imperial Household Department prepared six traditional cuts: tail, breast meat (Ma: *kersen*; Ch: 克爾森), croup (Ma: *kargama*; Ch: 喀爾哈瑪), ribs, strips (鹿肉條), and scraps (Ma: *farsi*; Ch: 發爾什), with separate cuts made for spotted deer (Ch: 麇肉). It then dispersed them to selected princes, Grand Secretaries (大學士), presidents of the Six

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<sup>20</sup> MBRT 2.1.5. Other exchanges were proposed: the Ming could supply 50,000 taels of gold, 500,000 taels of silver, 500,000 bolts of silk, and 5,000,000 bolts of blue cotton linen, the Qing would return ten *tana* pearls, two black foxes, ten brown foxes, 200 sable pelts, and 1000 catties of ginseng. Or the Ming could provide 10,000 taels of gold, 100,000 taels of silver, 100,000 bolts of silk, 300,000 bolts of cotton linen for 10 *tana* pearls, 500 sable pelts, and 1000 catties of ginseng. MBRT 2.2.27.

<sup>21</sup> Mark Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, 186.

<sup>22</sup> On venison trays to members of the Imperial Household Department, see NWFZXD 132.461.76 (JQ18.9.5); on gifts to empresses and concubines, see 132.461.7 (JQ18.9.9). On the prestige surrounding imperial gifts of deer tail, see Bartlett, *Monarchs and Ministers: the Grand Council in Mid-Ch'ing China, 1723-1820* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1991), 58, 220. See also Spence, *Emperor of China: Self Portrait of K'ang Hsi* (New York: Vintage Books, 1988), 98. As Kangxi lectured his son, “The people of the North are strong; they must not copy the fancy diets of the southerners, who are physically frail, live in a different environment, and have different stomachs and bowels. So when I first saw how ill Wang Zhi seemed to be looking—thin and white-haired—I recommended to him the simple foods that I take regularly—among them unrefined milk, pickled deer tongues and tails, dried apples, and cream cheese cakes.” great quotation

Boards (尚書), or the heads of the Imperial Household department. Though both Manchu and Chinese high officials were recipients, three cuts – breast, croup, and scraps – lacked Chinese translations altogether, and were described only in transliteration: *ke-er-sen*, *ka-er-ha-ma*, and *fa-er-shi*.<sup>23</sup> Game meat was served in Manchu.

Game birds claimed a similarly esteemed place on the imperial menu; they, too, embodied the Manchu way. Pheasants caught by sparrow-hawk (Ma: *silmen*) in Miyun county (near Beijing) awaited the emperor each year on his procession north to the Summer Palace, his welcome return to country living.<sup>24</sup> The Imperial Household Department ordered that tribute birds come with memorials specifying how they were caught, as the most prized pheasants were those caught by falconry (Ma: *giyahūn butara*). Indeed, venison and pheasant were often bundled together as gifts; roe deer and pheasant trapped alive were forwarded to the Summer Palace for future enjoyment.<sup>25</sup> Court women received a single annual allotment of each: two cattles of pheasant, venison, and fish as a special award from the emperor.<sup>26</sup>

The same narratives that made venison and pheasant so prized extended to furs: they embodied the Manchu inflection of the Qing court. Elite Manchu fashion was composite, a bricolage of silks and fur. It was the fur, however, which gave the clothing

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<sup>23</sup> NWFZXD 134.471.57 (JQ20.8.23).

<sup>24</sup> NWFZXD 132.460.177 (JQ18.7.19); NWFZXD 134.471.133 (JQ20.7.22). In 1813 and again in 1815, Miyun county falconers presented to the court three pheasants and sixteen sparrow hawks. For their efforts, eight total hunters were awarded one silver tael and two silver ingots (Ma: *šoge*) each.

<sup>25</sup> NWFZXD 132.461.79 (JQ18.9.5). One roe deer and twelve pheasant were captured alive during the hunt of 1813.

<sup>26</sup> NWFZXD 133.462.236 (JQ18.12.15).

its Manchu character. The drive to blend high-fashions was epitomized by the dragon robes the later Jurchen court sowed sable into.<sup>27</sup>

Furs remained ubiquitous in the material culture of the Qing court. On trips to the Summer Palace at Rehe, the emperor's party included a baggage train of one-hundred gold-colored sable pelts.<sup>28</sup> The Manchu character of the furs, moreover, was celebrated in formal dances, where groups of attendants dressed as first-rank officials in leopard-skin robes and sable-fur hats, and sang about the founding of the Qing.<sup>29</sup> The spectacle was witnessed by Tan Qian (1593-1657), who described the "Manchu dance" in detail: twenty to thirty people dressed in leopard-skin costumes and holding multi-colored fans, and another four dancing with poles in sable.<sup>30</sup>

Manchurian pearls (Ma: *tana*; Ch: 東珠) were likewise an important element in Manchu material culture. At Nurhaci's court, they belonged to a broader category of "things hunted" (Ma: *butaha jaka*), which included fur-bearing animals.<sup>31</sup> Indeed, they were often discussed together with sable and ginseng in particular. The *Qingchao wenxian tongkao*, for example, discussed them in the same group as ginseng and sable as the "the outstanding [product] of the rivers and drainages" (Ch: 川瀆之精英) of Mukden.<sup>32</sup> They also carried a strong association with the emperor himself. In one early examples, Nurhaci, upon forcing the walled towns of Jang and Gidangga to submit,

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<sup>27</sup> Schuyler Cammann, *China's Dragon Robes* (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1952), 21.

<sup>28</sup> NWFZXD 134.470.26 (JQ20.6.28); 135.476.20 (JQ21.+6.29).

<sup>29</sup> Zhao Lian, *Xiaoting zazhi*, 1: 392.

<sup>30</sup> Tan Qian, *Beiyoulu*, 349.

<sup>31</sup> MBRT 1.45.653.

<sup>32</sup> *Qingchao wenxian tongkao*, 5211-2.



personally awarded the town’s leaders “hats with frontispieces studded with three *tana* pearls that the khan himself had worn.”<sup>33</sup>

Such a gift was strategically tailored for the moment and the recipient: the place of the gifts’ recipients at court, and the nature of their relationship to the emperor, were reflected in the types of gifts exchanged. Even prior to the conquest of Beijing, as rulers of Manchuria, the court leveraged the productive diversity of its domains to command a diverse and sophisticated array of products. Silks, precious metals, tobacco, tea, and furs, both finished and unfinished, became tools of imperial consolidation. On one occasion in 1636, for example, Hong Taiji gave eighty-three Aru Kalka Mongols ninety-one different types of gifts, each tailored to the rank and service of the recipient. Of the ninety-one gifts, only eight types involved fur (See Figure 3); more in demand were silks, silver, cotton, or tobacco comprised the overwhelming majority of gift-types.<sup>34</sup>

Figure 3: Furs Given by Hong Taiji to the Aru Kalka Mongols, 1636

<b>Object</b>	<b>Number of recipients</b>	<b>Number given</b>
Sea otter <i>lekerhi</i>	10	13
Tiger pelt <i>tasha sukū</i>	3	3
Fox-fur robe <i>dobihī dahū</i>	1	1
Dyed otter <i>icehe hailun</i>	1	1
Green Japanese satin coat with squirrel	1	1

<sup>33</sup> MBRT 1.3.36.

<sup>34</sup> MBRT 3.36.1450 (CD1.11.26). In the Gregorian calendar, the day was December 22, 1636, the day after the winter solstice. 1636 was the last year in which a lunar eclipse occurred during the winter solstice. See <http://www.thewintersolstice.co.uk/history-of-the-solstice/> (retrieved February 22, 2012).

lining and sable trimming <i>niowanggiyan cekemu de sekei hayaha ulhu i doko i jibca</i>		
Sable <i>seke</i>	1	10
Dyed sable-fur hat <i>icehe sekei mahala</i>	1	4
A pair of satin reddish-brown, dragon- patterned satin robes with sable interior <i>sekei doko haksan de ifiha teleri (juru)</i>	1	1

While most Mongols received other gifts, it is no accident that some received fur: not only was fur a unique product of Manchuria, it was used to underline the court's ethnic and regional heritage.

Through the early eighteenth century, furs were given primarily to those with the closest connection to Manchu rulership: members of the inner court, banner elites, Mongol allies, and prominent military men. Gifts of Manchurian pearls, sable, and horses fitted with engraved saddles were long handed down from the emperor to members of the Manchu nobility and imperial family, with the value of the gift scaled to rank.<sup>35</sup> Furs were likewise the betrothal gifts from the court to girls marrying into the imperial family. Among other gifts, the brides of imperial grandchildren received set amounts of sable fur (fit for making either clothing or hats), fox fur (for sitting mats), and sea-otter fur (for trimming court clothing) (See Figure 4). In each case, the father of the bride also received one fox-fur court outfit, one black sable-fur hat, a robe made of fox-

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<sup>35</sup> See, for example, MBRT 3.32.1360-1361.

underbelly fur, and a six sea-otter fur pelts for trimming court clothing (Ch: 緣朝服海龍皮).<sup>36</sup>

Figure 4: Fur as Imperial Wedding Betrothal Gifts

	Emperor's grandson (皇孫)	Emperor's great- grandson (皇曾孫)	Emperor's great- great- grandson (皇元孫)
Sable pelts for clothing (製衣貂皮)	140	140	120
Sable pelts for hats (製帽貂皮)	3	3	3
Fox pelts for sitting mats (製衾褥狐皮)	250	250	220
Sea otter pelts for trimming court clothing (緣朝服海龍皮)	7	7	6

Such furs represented a form of intimacy characteristic of Manchu rule. When in 1665 two girls, including the Kangxi emperor's wet-nurse, accompanied the emperor on a hunt, he put in a special request to make "Jurcen-style sable jackets" (Ma: *jušen seke dahū*)<sup>37</sup> for the occasion, as wearing such jackets was fitting "if going out to the wilderness" (Ma: *bigan de tucici*). The generous gesture was refused by the empress dowager (*taihuang taihou*), who noted that "it was not yet the season for wearing sable jackets" (*sekei dahū eture erin jaci unde*). Instead, the slave girl received a wool-lined silk gown (*honci dokoi yacin pengduwan i sijigiyān*) and sable-lined, black-satin coat (*sekei girdan i dokoi isui kurume*) and the wet-nurse a sable neck-warmer (*sekei monggon*

<sup>36</sup> *Daqing huidian shili*, 4: 835a-b.

<sup>37</sup> The Manchu word *jušen* is usually translated as "slave," not "Jurchen." "Jurchen" may serve as a better translation in this case. In 1665, the Kangxi emperor presented a sable gown, described as a *jušen seke dokoi undurakū sijigiyān*, to a Mongol nobleman (*Kalkai dargan cin wang*) on the occasion of a New Year's banquet. The man received a range of other precious gifts, including a dyed sable fur hat and gold. In this context, it seems unlikely *jušen* means "slave." My understanding is that "Jurchen" here implies the association with the Manchuria's ethnic and political past. See NWFZXD 3.17.233 (KX3.12.27).

*hūsikū*), a gown of wool (*sajigiyan arara honci*), and “a coat of extra quality sable” (*kurume arara yebken seke i girdan*). Two other girls on the party were additionally awarded sable hats and coats.<sup>38</sup>

As Inner Asians, Mongol elites likewise received such special gifts of fur. The founder of the imperial family, Nurhaci pushed for alliances between Jurchens and Mongols on grounds of their common dress: “only the speech of our two nations (Ma: *gurun*), Mongol and Jurchen, is different; in the clothes we wear and our way of life, we are alike.”<sup>39</sup> Chinese and Koreans, on the other hand, shared a different set of common clothing and ways of life. A full century later, while building alliances during the Dzungar Wars, the estranged Torgut leader, Ayuki Han, put forth strikingly similar language in his diplomacy with the Tulišen mission: “Though I am a person from a foreign country, the shape of our hat and the color of my clothes is not different from that of the Middle Kingdom (Ma: *dulimbai gurun*; Ch: 中國)”<sup>40</sup> It was thus better to align with the Qing than with Russia.

In this spirit, gifts of fur from the Qing court to Mongol elites were usually bundled with other products associated with the northern frontiers. Mongol noblemen, for example, were treated to annual feasts of “wild animals” (Ma: *gurgu*), such as during the Lantern Festival (the fifteenth of the first month), when a banquet was held for visiting Mongol dignitaries, and where game meat was served with bread (Ma: *efen*) and

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<sup>38</sup> NWFZXD 3.17.183 (KX3.10.3).

<sup>39</sup> MBRT 1.10.160. Cited and translated in Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, 68.

<sup>40</sup> Tulišen, *Lakcaha jecen de takūraha babe ejehe bithe* (Taipei: Wenshizhe chubanshe, 1983), 148.

fermented mare's milk, or *kumiss*.<sup>41</sup> As part of the ceremonies, the visiting Mongol noblemen received sable coats and coarse woolens.<sup>42</sup> In 1651, it was mandated that all wives of Outer Mongol (Ch: 外藩) *beile* and *taiji* that personally escorted their noble husbands on a court visit to Beijing receive either a sable coat (Ch: 貂掛) or lynx coat (Ch: 猞猯掛), depending on the season.<sup>43</sup> The full suite of Manchu products could be deployed, and alliances solidified with gifts of deer tail, “Mukden fish” (Ma: *Mukden i nimaha*), and calabash.<sup>44</sup> In 1665, the Kangxi emperor honored a Khalkha Mongol prince (Ma: *kalkai dargan cin wang*) in this spirit with one “Jurchen-style, sable-lined satin dragon robe” (Ma: *jušen seke dokoi undurakū sijigiyan*), one dyed sable hat (Ma: *icehe seke mahala*).

With the Mongols, the Inner Asian association of furs was reinforced by being bundled together with other emblematic gifts: knives, golden sash rings, and “rump leather” boots (Ma: *sarin i gūlha*).<sup>45</sup> With “Jurchen style sable-lining” reserved for the highest ranking noblemen, and fox fur for lower emissaries, these gifts became part of the standard portfolio for Mongol aristocrats in the early Kangxi period.<sup>46</sup> It was not uncommon, on the other hand, for Mongol nobility to reciprocate with a tribute of birds

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<sup>41</sup> NWFZXD 134.467.229 (JQ19.12.8); 133.463.279 (JQ19.1.2).

<sup>42</sup> NWFZXD 133.462.110 (JQ18.12.12). Like precious furs, these woolens were kept in the Fur Treasury (Ch: 皮庫). Three types of wool were given: coarse wool (Ch: 大呢), wool sateen (Ma: *inggaha suje*; Ch: 羽緞) and Tibetan wool (Ma: *puru* or *cengme*; Ch: 氊氊).

<sup>43</sup> *Shizu shilu*, 67: 525a-b.

<sup>44</sup> Chuang Chifa, *Qingdai zhungaer shiliao chubian* (Taipei: Wenshizhe chubanshe, 1977), 158-159.

<sup>45</sup> NWFZXD 3.17.233 (KX3.12.27). Another standard gift that came with fur was the *kaiciri*, a toothpick box hung from one's belt.

<sup>46</sup> See for example, the list of items presented to the four sons of Korcin *daraha batur cin wang* in NWFZXD 3.19.71 (KX4.7.3).

of prey (Ma: *silmen, giyahun*).<sup>47</sup> At the same time, the furs carried a strong association with imperial power. There were only a few, notable cases where a Mongol aristocrat presented fine furs to the court. In 1680, after offering horses and camels the previous year, the Dzungar *Bošoktu Han*, Galdan, presented a grey fox-fur pelt, a sign of his growing stature.<sup>48</sup> Just three years later, in 1683, he presented 300 sable, 500 ermine, three lynx, 100 corsac fox, and twenty yellow fox-fur pelts.<sup>49</sup> In 1696, after the Kangxi emperor had turned the war against Galdan, order was restored: when the Oirat leader Norbujaisang (Ch: 諾爾步寨桑) submit to Qing rule, he was rewarded with lynx and sable hats from the emperor.<sup>50</sup>

Throughout the seventeenth century and the greater Ming-Qing transition, sable was also a special reward for virtuous generals. Hong Taiji granted the *beile* Abatai eight black sable pelts along with satin (蟒衣) and horses (it was a brief moment of good standing for Abatai).<sup>51</sup> The gifts, moreover, were not strictly limited to Manchu warriors. Chinese generals who defected from the Ming likewise received special awards of fur. Kong Youde (孔有德, d.1652), Chi Zhongming (耿仲明, 1604-1649), and Shang Kexi (尚可喜, 1604-1676)– the great Chinese “feudatories” of the pre-conquest generation –

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<sup>47</sup> For extensive lists of tribute items for each individual for each year, see *Daicing gürün ü dotuyadu yamun u monyol bicig un ger ün dangse* (Hohhot: Neimenggu renmin chubanshe, 2005). In 1680 (KX19), for example, the Karcin, Onggiyot, Korcin, and Jalait Mongols all presented birds of prey as tribute. *Daicing gürün ü dotuyadu yamun u monyol bicig un ger ün dangse* 2: 209, 218, 243, 245, 278, 383, 386, 473, 475, 477-480.

<sup>48</sup> *Daicing gürün ü dotuyadu yamun u monyol bicig un ger ün dangse*, 2: 176, 473.

<sup>49</sup> *Shengzu shilu*, 111: 134b-135a.

<sup>50</sup> *Shengzu shilu*, 178: 910b-911a.

<sup>51</sup> *Taizong shilu*, 14: 189.

received twenty sable pelts each in 1637 on the occasion of emperor Hong Taiji's birthday, and they received an additional ten pelts each in 1638.<sup>52</sup> Hong Taiji likewise granted Shen Zhixiang (沈志祥) sable, lynx, and fox-fur pelts, and a leopard-skin coat. Four years later, in 1642, all four men were again granted black sable-fur coats and 80 sable pelts.<sup>53</sup> Throughout the Ming-Qing wars, sable continued to be awarded to the generals in high standing, and the rewards only grew more lavish. In 1654, Kong Youde and Geng Jimao received three satin robes lined with sable; four robes lined with fox-belly (狐腋) fur, and eight dyed sable hats.<sup>54</sup> The martial and imperial character of the clothing was emphasized by including it in bundles with weapons, armor, saddles, camels and horses.<sup>55</sup> The military associations of fur were reinforced by the Kangxi emperor, who set a precedent in 1704 of awarding sable pelts and silver to exceptional soldiers inspected during his imperial tours.<sup>56</sup> The Yongzheng and Qianlong emperors continued the practice during their tours of 1728 and 1739.<sup>57</sup>

The martial associations of fur continued on throughout the Qing period. In later military campaigns, the emperors maintained the tradition, sending gifts to generals in the field with wishes that they keep warm in the cold. In 1731, Mongol allies, such as Cebden, received gifts of black fox-fur (元狐) hats and sable-fur riding gowns (貂皮馬褂),

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<sup>52</sup> *Taizong shilu*, 40: 524, 45: 593.

<sup>53</sup> *Taizong shilu*, 62: 850.

<sup>54</sup> *Shizu shilu*, 81: 637.

<sup>55</sup> *Taizong shilu*, 41: 553.

<sup>56</sup> *Shengzu shilu*, 215: 181.

<sup>57</sup> *Shizong shilu*, 76: 1126; *Gaozong shilu*, 104: 563.

or 貂皮短褂) as rewards for service in the Dzungar wars.<sup>58</sup> The Chinese general Yue Zhongqi (岳鍾琪, 1686-1754) received the same.<sup>59</sup> A century later, Changling and the men charged with putting down Jahanggir's Rebellion in Xinjiang likewise received sable-fur riding gowns and "otter-skin war-skirts" (獺皮戰裙).<sup>60</sup> A living incarnation (*hutuktu*) who helped put down Jahanggir's rebellion received a red sable-fur sitting mat (貂皮全紅坐褥).<sup>61</sup> Such gifts, moreover, were not limited to successful generals in distant borderlands. At the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Nayancheng and Eldengboo, on campaign against White Lotus rebels in Hunan, received sable riding gowns.<sup>62</sup>

For its part, the court deployed fur to diplomatic ends with the Ming and Chosŏn courts in the early 1600s. The *Veritable Records* tells that Nurhaci and Hong Taiji presented Korean emissaries with furs forty-nine times in the years 1627-1643 alone, usually bundled together with horses, saddles, and silver.<sup>63</sup> Black sables and foxes were reserved for the Chosŏn king and his sons; lesser sable pelts were offered to their emissaries. The gifts often came in representative bundles: in 1627, for example, Nurhaci distributed fur to the ambassadors along with camels, horses, saddles, gold jewelry and

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<sup>58</sup> *Shizong shilu*, 113: 509. The Khorchin Mongols Sunggunjab and Lobzangcebdeng likewise received these gifts in 1731, as did Jambarjab and the Ujumucin Mongol Pungsukrabdan in 1732. See *Shizong shilu*, 111: 476, 113: 509, 116: 544-545.

<sup>59</sup> *Shizong shilu*, 112: 495-496.

<sup>60</sup> *Xuanzong shilu*, 109: 818, 109: 818, 177: 768.

<sup>61</sup> *Xuanzong shilu*, 132: 019.

<sup>62</sup> *Renzong shilu*, 55: 712, 89: 173-174. Eldengboo's gown was specifically described as "yellow" (黃面貂皮). The gifts were given in the depths of winter to protect them from the cold while out campaigning.

<sup>63</sup> *Taizong shilu*, 3: 45, 51; 8: 110; 18: 233; 23: 300; 25: 331, 28: 370, 33: 432; 36: 459; 37: 485; 38: 498; 39: 507, 510 (see also 41: 540), 517; 40: 530; 41: 542, 548; 43: 574; 45: 592, 593, 49: 652, 50: 661, 51: 674, 677, 683; 52: 702, 708; 53: 714; 54: 725, 728; 56: 750; 59: 798; 61: 837; 63: 8711; and *Shizu shilu*, 2: 34-35.



bejeweled knives, and satin (蟒衣).<sup>64</sup> The Korean king was given black sable, the king's brother a lesser colored sable, and a high minister of rank *sirang* (侍郎) received lynx-fur. One week later, the king again received sable and fox, and his attendants lynx.<sup>65</sup> In 1637, after Hong Taiji's conquest of Korea, the Chosŏn king again was honored with the gift of a fox-fur robe, one hundred sable pelts, and – rarer still – a black fox-fur hat, a restricted symbol of imperial authority.<sup>66</sup> The tradition continued throughout Qing rule. By rule, Korean tribute missions received fur at every lunar New Year's, the emperor's birthday, imperial weddings, and irregularly at other holidays and special events.<sup>67</sup> In 1743, when the Qianlong emperor met with Korean emissaries on his imperial tour of Mukden (Shenyang), he presented them with 100 sables together with bows and arrows and saddled horses.<sup>68</sup> It was a powerful reminder of the martial and Manchu nature of the court.

Through later tributary missions, the court's furs would be distributed throughout East Asia. In 1771, the court offered sable pelts and ginseng (together with fine silks, silver, and other objects) to ambassadors from the Lao court of Lan Xang (Ch: 南掌).<sup>69</sup> Tribute missions from the Ryukyu islands likewise received furs: in 1843 the Qing court

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<sup>64</sup> *Taizong shilu*, 3: 45.

<sup>65</sup> *Taizong shilu*, 3: 51.

<sup>66</sup> *Taizong shilu*, 2: 34-35.

<sup>67</sup> Hae-jong Chun, "Sino-Korean Tributary Relations in the Ch'ing Period," in *The Chinese World Order*, ed. John K. Fairbank (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968): 90-111.

<sup>68</sup> *Gaozong shilu*, 201: 582.

<sup>69</sup> *Daqing huidian shili*, 6: 866a-b.

offered 10 sable pelts to the Ryukyu king.<sup>70</sup> In 1792, after the conclusion of the Vietnam war, the Qing court bestowed a “special gift” to the king of Annam that included fifty sable pelts.<sup>71</sup> In 1869, the Qing court gave the Vietnamese ambassadors a dyed sable-fur hat, sable sleeves, and a silk robe lined with fox-fur (Ch: 絨面狐皮袍).<sup>72</sup> Such gifts were less important for the quantity involved, which was miniscule, than for the work they did: give furs a Qing branding.

The association between Manchus and a wild Manchuria was not lost on European observers. Du Halde described “a vast Quantity of the finest Sort of Skinest,” and talked of how in the court’s treasuries “are kept many Habits lined with various Furrs of Foxes, Ermine, or Zibeline, which the Emperor sometimes bestow on his Servants.”<sup>73</sup> Neither was the story behind these animals lost on travellers: Du Halde also described the Manchus as “lately come from the midst of Woods and Forests.”<sup>74</sup>

### **Classical Traditions: Gaps in Chinese and Manchu Material Culture**

For the Manchus, furs, pearls, and other frontier products were valued for their association with the frontier, the Qing court, and the way of life which brought the court to power. In the classical Chinese tradition, such products were looked down upon as foreign for the same reason: they held a close association with the frontier, frontier

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<sup>70</sup> *Daqing huidian shili*, 6: 897a.

<sup>71</sup> *Daqing huidian shili*, 6: 875b.

<sup>72</sup> *Daqing huidian shili*, 6: 899b.

<sup>73</sup> Jean-Baptiste Du Halde, *The General History of China* (London: J. Watts, 1741), 120.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 116.

peoples, and frontier ways of life. This tradition of fur-as-barbaric extends back to at least the Han Dynasty. Sima Qian (135?-86BCE) associated furs with the Xiongnu, who “dressed in clothes made of skins” and sleeping with “furs as quilts.”<sup>75</sup> In later literature, the image became iconic. The Tang poet Liu Shang captured a visceral sense of disgust with fur in his *Eighteen Songs of a Nomad Flute*, which lamented the tragic fate of Lady Wenji, a Han noblewoman forced into a Xiongnu marriage:

I clean my hair with mutton fat, but it is seldom combed  
The collar of my lambskin robe is buttoned on the left;  
The fox lapels and badger sleeves are rank-smelling  
By day I wear these clothes, by night I sleep in them.<sup>76</sup>

Likewise, the Song-period collectanea *Taiping guangji* (Ch: 太平廣記, first published 963) described the Turkic Doubo (Ch: 都播) state where the people “know nothing of agriculture,” the poor dress in bird feathers, and the wealthy “wear sable and deer pelts.”<sup>77</sup> Still more outrageous was the mythical Kingdom of Women (Ch: 女國): there women take snakes as grooms and “sables are big like wolves, with pure black hair over a foot (*chi*) in length, in which [people] dress to ward off cold.”<sup>78</sup> The *Sanchao beimeng huibian* (Ch: 三朝北盟會編) by Xu Mengxin (Ch: 徐夢莘, 1126-1207, *zi* Shang Lao 商老) paints perhaps the most detailed and marvelous picture of Jin material culture in the early twelfth century:

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<sup>75</sup> Cited in Antonia Finanne, “Barbarian and Chinese: Dress as Difference in Chinese Art,” *Humanities Australia* 1 (2010): 37.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.* Translation by Robert A. Rorex and Wen Fong, *Eighteen Songs of a Nomad Flute: the Story of Lady Wen-chi* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1974).

<sup>77</sup> *Taiping guangji*, 480: 3956.

<sup>78</sup> *Taiping guangji*, 81: 520.

The winters are extremely cold so that [the Jurchen] mostly wear furs. Even if they catch one single mouse they strip off its skin and keep it. They all have thick furs for dress which they never take off unless they enter a house.<sup>79</sup>

Yet it was an elite fashion: “The rich use pearls and jade for ornament and are clad in garments of black fur, fine linen, sable, grey squirrel, fox, and badger. The poor are clad in skins of cows, horses, pigs, sheep, cats, snakes, dogs and fish.”<sup>80</sup>

The larger suite of Manchu products figures in Song-period descriptions of the Jurchen world. The Southern Song compilation *Qidan guozhi* describes early Jurchen frontier markets flooded with “northern pearls, ginseng, gold ore, pine nuts, and white aconitum.”<sup>81</sup> These were only some of the most famous domestic products of Jurchen territory: “the land produces ginseng, honey, northern pearls, gold ore, fine cloth, pine nuts, white aconitum, birds such as the falcon (Ch: 鷹), hawk (Ch: 鷂), and sea eagle (Ch: 海東青), and beasts such as the ox, horse, elk, deer, wild dog, white hogs, squirrels (Ch: 青鼠), and sables (Ch: 貂鼠).<sup>82</sup> The text associated both “raw” and “cooked” Jurchen alike with tributary gifts of “northern pearls, unworked gold, sable skins (貂革), ginseng, and pine seed.”<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Translated in Franke, “Chinese Texts on the Jurchen: A Translation of the Jurchen Monograph in the San-ch’ao pei-meng hui-pien,” *Zentralasiatische Studien* 9 (1975): 127.

<sup>80</sup> Franke, “Chinese Texts on the Jurchen,” 131. For more on the dress of Jurchen elites, see *Jinshi*, 4:15a-b and 43:16a. Franke argues that Jurchen outfits were based in part on Khitan fashions.

<sup>81</sup> *Qidan guozhi*, 10: 102.

<sup>82</sup> *Qidan guozhi*, 26: 246. The same list of natural products was offered in the Song-Yuan period *Dajin guozhi* (Ch: 大金國志). See *Dajin guozhi jiaozheng*, 39: 551.

<sup>83</sup> *Dajin guozhi jiaozheng*, 1: 11. The description circulated again, quoted verbatim, in the Ming period *Jinxiaoshi* (Ch: 金小史). See *Jinxiaoshi*, 1: 14a.

Pearls, like fur, were associated with the strangeness and foreignness of the frontier they originated from. Unlike “true pearls” (Ch: 真珠), “northern pearls” (北珠) were surrounded with an air of exoticness.<sup>84</sup> Cited in later texts, such as the *Dajin guozhi* and Song-period *biji* such as the *Qingbo zazhi* 清波雜誌, the description from the *Sanchao beimeng huibian* is worth quoting at length:

Not long after Liao Tianzuo began his reign (1101), in the time of China’s Chongning reign (1102-1107), extravagance was unbridled, and the imperial palace vied only for northern pearls. Northern pearls all came from due north, from the frontier-market trade. ...[they] are beautiful. Big ones are like marbles, and small ones are like tung nuts. All come from Liaodong’s rivers and coastline. On the fifteenth of every eight month, there is a bright full moon, and thus a great ripening [則必大熟], and so in the tenth month one can collect the pearl oysters [珠蚌]. However the north is freezing cold, and by the ninth or tenth month the ice is already a *chi* (approx. ¼ meter) thick. [So] they bore a hole through the ice, descend into the water, and hunt them, which causes the [pearlers] to become sick. There are also swans that can eat the oysters, and they suck down the treasure, as well as great birds of prey [俊鷗] called ‘*haidongqing*’ [海東青] that can attack swans. People thus use the birds of prey to catch swans, and so [catch] the pearls sucked up inside them.<sup>85</sup>

Like “northern pearls,” scholars put similar emphasis on the frontier origins of fur bearing animals. In the *Shuowen jiezi* (Ch: 說文解字), the first dictionary based on radical analysis, Xu Shen (Ch: 許慎, 58-174CE) classified sable under rodents (Ch: 鼠屬), and described them as “big and either gold or black in color, and they come from “northern countries” (Ch: 丁零國).”<sup>86</sup> The entry on “sable” in the Tang encyclopedia *Yiwen leiju* (Ch: 藝文類聚), citing the *Guangzhi* (Ch: 廣志), places the animal amongst

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<sup>84</sup> *Songshi*, 145: 3407. The distinction is echoed in the *Song huiyao jigao, yufu*: 123.

<sup>85</sup> *Sanchao beimeng huibian Dajin guozhi jiaozheng, fulu*: 3, 613.

<sup>86</sup> Li Shizhen, *Bencao gangmu*, 51: 2910.

the Fuyu (Ch: 扶餘) and Yilou (Ch: 挹婁), foreign polities that controlled Manchuria after the collapse of the Han. The *Weishu* (魏書) likewise associated sable and *hun* (Ch: 羆) with the Xianbei, whose “fur’s softness and lightness made it world famous.”<sup>87</sup>

Yet, as the passage implies, fur was not universally reviled: just as Manchus dressed in silks and furs, but were defined by the fur elements, Chinese elites used fur but were defined by their silk. In the Han, Song, and Ming courts, sable and Manchurian pearls were at times appreciated for their physical qualities, their exoticness, or their association with military traditions. Two headpieces in particular incorporated elements of sable fur and were worn by imperial Chinese officials, the *diaochan* (Ch: 貂蟬, lit. “sable-cicada”) and *erdiao* (Ch: 珥貂). Encyclopedists traced the *diaochan* hat back to Warring State period and King Wuling of Zhao (Ch: 趙武靈王, r.325-299BCE); when he ushered in the “dress as a barbarian, fight as a cavalryman” (Ch: 胡服騎射) military reforms, sable-tails were first affixed to ear pieces.<sup>88</sup> In the *Hanguanyi*, Ying Shao explained that the *diaochan* hat was worn by Han court attendants (Ch: 侍中), and featured a cicada piece on the left and a black sable tail on the right; the sable in turn was understood as a the tributary gift from the Yilou.<sup>89</sup> Fur rugs (Ch: 褥) and coats (Ch: 裘) also had their place at court; the *Taiping guangji*, for example, references *hundiao* rugs (Ch: 羆貂之褥) at the court of Liang.<sup>90</sup> References to black sable-fur coats extend back

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<sup>87</sup> *Yiwen leiju*, 95: 1655.

<sup>88</sup> *Yiwen leiju*, 67: 1184.

<sup>89</sup> *Yiwen leiju*, 67: 1185.

<sup>90</sup> *Taiping guangji*, 226: 1816.

to the Warring States period.<sup>91</sup> The court of Huizong may very well have been decadent when it came to Manchurian pearls: the twelfth-century statesman Cai Tao 蔡條 described a palace treasury contains “two to three million” cash worth of northern pearls.<sup>92</sup>

At the marketplace, their association with the frontier lent furs an exotic cachet. The Xiongnu sold horses and furs to Han merchants, who sold them in the markets of Chang’an.<sup>93</sup> The Han historian Ying Shao (Ch: 應劭, 140-206), described the virtue of sable as having a “durable interior even when the exterior is wet.”<sup>94</sup> To a limited degree, consumers also took to fur in the Song.<sup>95</sup> The Ming appreciation for sable was noted in the Chosŏn dynasty’s *Veritable Records* in 1430: “The people of China (中國) treasure above all leopard (土豹) and sable furs.”<sup>96</sup> Next to elements of classicism and novelty in Ming fashion, however, were Mongol influences, including the “barbarian hat” (Ch: *humao*), the *bijia* (a type of long vest) and *zhisun* (a type of single-colored military robe; cf. Mo: *jisu(n)*?).<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> *Yiwen leiju*, 67: 1190-1191.

<sup>92</sup> Cai Tao, *Tieweishan congtao*, 1: 6b.

<sup>93</sup> Xinru Liu, *Ancient India and Ancient China: Trade and Religious Exchanges, ADI-600* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 14, 16.

<sup>94</sup> Sun Xingyan, *Hanguan liuzhong*, *Hanguanyi* 2: 136-137.

<sup>95</sup> Zeng Weizhi, *Songdai maopi maoyi*. MA thesis, Zhongguo wenhua daxue, 2008.

<sup>96</sup> *Sejong sillok*, 50. In a debate three years earlier, in 1427, on the appropriate role of sable at the Chosŏn court, it was noted that “previous courts valued sable fur most.” *Sejong sillok*, 38. This matched the cash values set by the court in 1425 for purchasing pelts: 25 cash (楮貨) for sable; 12 for fox (狐) or raccoon-dog (狸); 5 for mountain otter (山獺). *Sejong sillok*, 28.

<sup>97</sup> Finnane, *Changing Clothes in China*, 46; Finnane cites Chen Baoliang, *Mingdai shehui shenghuo shi* (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2004), 206-207.

In fact, through tribute from Mongols and Jurchens, significant volumes of furs reached the court and consumer, and furs became somewhat prominent and fashionable.<sup>98</sup> It continued to hold strong associations with the northeasterners. As Li Shizen discussed sable in the *Bencao gangmu* (Ch: 本草綱目):

Today, there are sables in Liaodong and Koryo, and amongst the Jurchen, Tartars (韃靼) and other northern barbarians (胡). This [type of] rat is big like an otter but with a longer tail. Its fur is up to an inch (寸) thick. It is jet-black, having color but lacking luster. The fur is used for coats (裘), hats, and neck-warmers during the winter months. One can stay warm in the wind and dry when it is wet. If there is snow, it will dissolve it like a flame brushing across ones face.<sup>99</sup>

Its association with barbarians did not mean that fur did not have value; beyond using it for warmth, he also recommends if dust gets lodged in one's eye, to use the sleeve of a sable-fur coat to brush it out.<sup>100</sup> Other fur-bearing animals from the north are discussed as well, such as sea-otter (Ch: 海獺): “today sea otter fur is used for neck-warmers, but it is second-rate compared to sable.”<sup>101</sup>

It was not just the fact of the element of fur, but how one used it and wore it that defined one's identity – even if wearing of furs could serve as shorthand for the barbarian. Yet the popularity of barbarian styles (alongside classical and novelty looks) was not simply emulation. Antonia Finnane argues persuasively that Ming “barbarian” styles for elite men can be fruitfully compared to courtesan styles for elite women: they

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<sup>98</sup> Ch'iu Chung-lin, “Baonuan, huiyao yu quanshi: mingdai zhengui maopi de wenhuashi,” *Zhongyang yanjiuyan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan* 80.4 (2009): 555-631.

<sup>99</sup> Li Shizhen, *Bencao gangmu*, 51: 2910. Li Shizhen also quotes the Song dynasty scholar Luo Yuan (羅願, 1136-1184) to characterize sable: “This rat-type (Ch: 鼠) likes to eat millet and pine bark. Barbarians (Ch: 夷人) [thus] call it the millet rat or pine dog.”

<sup>100</sup> Li Shizhen, *Bencao gangmu*, 51: 2910.

<sup>101</sup> Li Shizhen, *Bencao gangmu*, 51: 2896.



appropriated outside forms for “provocative charm.”<sup>102</sup> What was treasured as exotic and provocative in the Ming became an indispensable marker of status in the Qing: outer and inner forms were no longer so distinct. Yet while fur commanded a certain degree of popularity and visibility in Ming material culture – and this has rightfully been pointed to as a sign of early modern Ming consumerism and contributing to the financial security in the nascent Qing (Jurchen) state – Ming fur consumption would be dwarfed by its ubiquity in Qing life after the rise of the Manchus.

### **Sumptuary Laws and the Material Culture of Early Qing Court**

When the Qing conquered China, the gap in material culture was transformed into a problem of political integration and multiethnic empire. Sumptuary laws, which belonged to a broader set of policies aimed at transforming the appearance of Chinese adult males, were a key component in the fashioning of the new order.<sup>103</sup> The early Qing state used targeted largesse and sumptuary laws to delineate a community of subjects on the one hand, and make manifest internal hierarchy on the other.

Prior to 1644, furs were an important marker of status and Manchu rule, with color, species, and cut all used to identify the place of the wearer within the state hierarchy. The earliest travellers to Manchuria took note of fur fashions as well. Takeuchi Tōuemon, a Japanese sailor shipwrecked off the Pacific coast of Manchuria in 1644, described in his *Dattan hyōryūki* (韃靼漂流記) the ubiquity of fur hats amongst the

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<sup>102</sup> Antonia Finnane, “Fashions in Late Imperial China,” in *The Fashion History Reader: Global Perspectives*, eds. Giorgio Riello and Peter McNeill (New York: Routledge, 2010), 368-369.

<sup>103</sup> Most prominent was the mandate to wear the queue: all men, whether Manchu or Chinese demonstrated loyalty to the Qing state by wearing their hair in the Manchu fashion.

Manchus. Commoners wore wool, he reported, but noblemen dressed in fine furs unavailable in Japan.<sup>104</sup> At Nurhaci’s court, distinctions were maintained between Manchurian pearls, sable, and lynx, which were particularly valuable, and other natural resources, such as squirrel (Ma: *ulhu*) and weasel (Ma: *solohi*), where were of a lesser class.<sup>105</sup> A sense for the relative values of precious furs at the early court can be gathered from differing gifts Nurhaci gave to Cahar Mongol noblemen in 1622 (see Figure 5). Plaited sable jackets (Ma: *jibca*) and black sable robes (Ma: *dahū*) “Chinese” raccoon-dog robes (Ma: *nikan elbihe dahū*), and lynx robes were assigned to the highest ranking noblemen. Men of the second rank received plain raccoon-dog robes and coats lined with sable and inlaid with brocade, and men of the third rank received dragon robes lined with sable in the “Jurchen” style.<sup>106</sup>

Figure 5: Fur Gifts from Nurhaci to Cahar Mongol Noblemen by Rank, 1622

<b>Gift</b>	<b>Cahar Beise</b>	<b>Second Degree</b>	<b>Third Degree</b>
Plaited sable jacket ( <i>hūha seke-i jibca</i> )	1		
Black sable robe ( <i>sahaliyan seke-i dahū</i> )	1		
Chinese-style raccoon dog robe ( <i>nikan elbihe dahū</i> )	1		
Lynx robe ( <i>silun dahū</i> )	1	1	
Raccoon-dog robe ( <i>elbihe dahū</i> )			1
Sable-line brocade coat ( <i>seke haryaha gecuheri</i> )		1	

<sup>104</sup> Sonoda Kazuki, *Datta hyōryūki* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1991), 21, 27.

<sup>105</sup> MBRT 1.45.653.

<sup>106</sup> MBRT 1.40.592.

<i>burihe jibca</i> )			
Fox-fur robe ( <i>dobihī dahū</i> )			1
Jurchen style dragon robe lined with sable ( <i>jušen seke hayaha puse noho suje buriha jibca</i> )			1

Sumptuary laws mandating the use of Manchurian *tana* pearls at court had a similar double function of delineating the outer counters and internal hierarchy of the Qing community. Both the size and quantity of pearls worn demarcated status in the pre-conquest period. The court awarded some noblemen pearls between three and eight *fen* (approximately between one and three grams), and other groups pearls weighing between two and six *fen*.<sup>107</sup> Sumptuary laws for pearls were first elaborated in the summer of 1637 (see Figure 6). In the same edict in which five-clawed dragons, phoenixes, and the color yellow were forbidden from all clothing and riding gear, Hong Taiji’s court established special regulations for clothing, furs, and pearl ornaments on headgear. According to the new rules, men’s hats at court would be composed of four standard elements: finial (Ma: *jingse*), crown (Ma: *julergi šerin*), back “flower” (Ma: *amargi ilha*), and band (Ma: *umiyesun*). Noble ranks, in turn, were marked by the components in each element (See Figure 6):<sup>108</sup>

Figure 6: Sumptuary Laws for Manchurian Pearls in Male Headgear, 1637

	<b>Finial Tiers</b>	<b>Finial Pearls</b>	<b>Crown pearls</b>	<b>Back Flower pearls</b>	<b>Sash gems</b>	<b>Total Pearls</b>
<b>Noble Rank</b>						

<sup>107</sup> MBRT 1.47.698.

<sup>108</sup> MBRT 3.12.1056-1057.

Prince of the first rank	3	8	4	3	<i>tana</i> pearls (4)	19
Prince of the second degree	3	7	3	2	turquoise (4)	12
Prince of the third degree	3	6	2	1	<i>booši</i> stones (4)	9
Prince of the fourth degree	2	5	1	1	blue <i>fiyahan</i> stones (4)	7

Women's headgear was divided into three elements: knob (Ma: *jingse*), large hairpin (Ma: *amba sifikū*), crown (Ma: *šerin*), and neckband (Ma: *monggolikū*). The new sumptuary laws also regulated the total number of pearls allowed for noblemen's wives, divided into senior wife (Ma: *da fujin*) and junior wives (Ma: *asihan fujisa*). The rules made distinctions solely by the number of *tana* pearls allowed on the head (See Figure 7).<sup>109</sup> Almost without exception, women wore more pearls than men.

Figure 7: Sumptuary Laws for Manchurian Pearls in Women's Headgear

Noble Rank	Marital Rank	Pearls per Element	Total Pearls
Prince of the first rank	Senior wife	8	32
Prince of the first rank	Junior wife	7	28
Prince of the second degree	Senior wife	7	28
Prince of the second degree	Junior wife	6	24
Prince of the third degree	Senior wife	6	24
Prince of the third degree	Junior wife	5	20
Prince of the fourth degree	Senior wife	5	20
Prince of the fourth degree	Junior wife	4	16

<sup>109</sup> MBRT 3.12.1057.

Sumptuary laws were also promulgated for hats. The first rules were passed in 1636, a month after the inauguration of Qing rule, when the nascent Qing state was still confined northeast of the Great Wall. That year, all officials of rank were ordered to wear a standardized golden finials on their hats, and *gūsai ejen* and ministers (Ch: 各部承政) were ordered to wear golden finials studded with jewels. Three years later, in 1640, sumptuary rules were further elaborated: princes of the first rank (Ch: 親王) were ordered to wear three-tiered finials on their hats, the top tier studded with rubies, the middle tier studded with eight Manchurian pearls; in the summer these included four pearls on the front embedded in the crown (Ma: *šerin*; Ch: 舍林) and four on the back. In 1644 (SZ1), all princes of the rank *wang* (Ch: 王) were ordered to wear ten Manchurian pearls on their hat, with a graded scale commensurate with their noble rank (see Figure 8).<sup>110</sup>

Figure 8: Sumptuary Laws for Manchurian Pearls in Headgear, 1644

Rank	Tiers on Filial	Number of Pearls
Prince of the second degree	3	8
Prince of the third degree	3	7
Prince of the fourth degree	3	6
Prince of the fifth degree	2	5
Prince of the sixth degree	2	4
鎮國將軍	1	3
民公侯伯	1	1

After the Qing conquest, the court modified Ming sumptuary laws and mandated the use of fur for all robes and hats at court. In the summer of 1651, in one case, sumptuary laws were applied to the sitting-cushions allowed in the palace (Ma: *sektefun*;

<sup>110</sup> Fuge, *Tingyu congfan*, 2: 47. Imperial *efu* also wore a single eastern pearl on their finial. Xu Ke, *Qingbai leichao*, 6132.

Ch: 褥). While silk mats would continue to be used during summer, fur was mandated for winter. Princes of the first rank (Ma: *hošoi cin wang*; Ch: 和碩親王) henceforth would use mats of sable fur, princes of the second degree (Ma: *doroi giyūn wang*; Ch: 多羅郡王) lynx fur trimmed with sable, and princes of the third degree (Ma: *doroi beile*; Ch: 多羅貝勒) plain lynx fur; the lowest ranks would use deer skin. (see Figure 9).<sup>111</sup> In 1765, the Qianlong emperor revised the rules governing sitting mats at court: princes of the first rank were ordered to use mats with lynx-fur cores and sable trimming, and princes of the second degree (Ch: 世子郡王) mats with sable cores and lynx trimming.<sup>112</sup>

Figure 9: Sumptuary Laws for Fur Mats at Court (Winter), 1651

Rank (Chinese)	Rank (English)	Type of Fur Mat
和碩親王	prince of the first rank	Sable
多羅郡王	prince of the second degree	Lynx with sable trim
多羅貝勒	prince of the third degree	Lynx
固山貝子	prince of the fourth degree	Snow leopard (白豹)
鎮國公	prince of the fifth degree	Red leopard (紅豹)
(奉恩) 輔國公	prince of the sixth degree	Leopard (minus head and tail)
三等公及和碩額駙, 伯, 侯		Tiger (minus head and tail)
一品	First Rank (bureaucratic)	Wolf

<sup>111</sup> *Shizu shilu*, 57: 451.

<sup>112</sup> *Gaozong shilu*, 746: 211b.

二品	Second Rank	Badger
三品	Third Rank	Raccoon-dog
四品	Fourth Rank	Goat
五品一下	Fifth Rank and Below	Deer

Fur became a primary marker of social status. The highest quality Manchurian objects were displayed on the emperor's person. In winter he wore a hat made of black sable (薰貂) most weeks, but a hat made of black fox (黑狐) from the eleventh month to New Year's. The three-tiered finials of his hat were studded with Manchurian pearls. His winter jacket (Ma: *dahū*; Ch: 端罩) matched the hat: black sable each month except the last two before New Year's, the months for black fox. His winter dragon robes were trimmed with sea otter fur. Other aspects of the wardrobe were perennial, including the Manchurian pearls embedded in his summer hat or strung along his 108-bead rosary.<sup>113</sup> The imperial princes (皇子) similarly dressed with the same elements: black sable and fox fur, sea otter trimming, and eastern pearl finials on their hats.<sup>114</sup> Princes of the first degree (親王) were limited to dark fox (青狐) fur. In 1670, the court ordered that all people of noble rank *gong* (Ch: 民公) and below be forbidden from wearing, among

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<sup>113</sup> Xu Ke, *Qingbai leichao*, 6126. See the case of the Yongzheng emperor's 108-bead rosary made of eastern pearls, which in 2010 sold for 8.7 million HKD at a Sotheby's auction in Hong Kong. See "A Very Important and Magnificent Imperial Pearl Court Necklace (Chao Zhu) Qing Dynasty, 18th Century," Sotheby's Fine Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art, 2010, Sotheby's, March 12, 2012, <http://www.sothebys.com/en/catalogues/ecatalogue.html/2010/fine-chinese-ceramics-works-of-art-hk0323#/r=/en/ecat.fhtml.HK0323.html+r.m=/en/ecat.lot.HK0323.html/1813/>.

<sup>114</sup> Xu Ke, *Qingbai leichao*, 6129.

other elements (such as the color yellow), black fox-fur, while commoner military-men and civilians (軍民) were forbidden from wearing sable, lynx, and white leopard fur.<sup>115</sup>

Chinese literati of the early Qing took note of the shift and duly recorded the changes in sumptuary laws. Scholars and historians connected to the court, including Wang Shizhen (1634-1711), publicized the new order in their widely circulated writings: “This dynasty values most black fox (玄狐), then sable, and then lynx,” Wang explained. “From the start, only those of princely rank *wang* or *gong* could wear black fox. In 1672 (KX11), sumptuary laws were newly established. [Men of] the third bureaucratic rank and above could now wear sable and lynx.”<sup>116</sup>

Korean travellers were also struck by the differences between Ming and Qing court fashions. The Chosŏn court had continued to abide by Ming sumptuary laws; the only difference was that they dressed two ranks more modestly than their Ming peers out of respect.<sup>117</sup> After sneaking into the New Years ceremony at court, the Chosŏn emissary Kim Ch’angŏp (金昌業, 1658-1721), was immediately struck by the small carpets officials used to bow and kneel: “The rug for the highest rank was a tiger skin with the head and claws on it. The next rank down had a tiger skin without head and claws, the next had a wolf skin, the next a badger skin, the next a raccoon-dog skin, the next a wild sheepskin, then a dog skin and lowest of all a mat of white felt.”<sup>118</sup> Kim had disguised

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<sup>115</sup> *Shengzu shilu*, 32: 433a-b.

<sup>116</sup> Wang Shizhen, *Chibei outan* 池北偶談, QDSKQS 870-62.

<sup>117</sup> Gari Ledyard, “Hong Taeyong and His Peking Memoir,” *Korean Studies* 6 (1982), 72.

<sup>118</sup> Richard Rutt, “James Gale’s Translation of the Yonhaeng-nok: An Account of the Korean Embassy to Peking, 1712-1713,” *Transactions of the Royal Asiatic Society, Korea Branch* 49 (1974), 102. Kim Ch’angŏp went on the solstitial embassy to Beijing in 1712-1713 and kept a record of the trip in his *Kajae*



himself as a servant, but the plan backfired: he had misguidedly wore “a leopard fur which attracted the attention of some of the barbarians,” and, as he later wrote in his diary, “I had to take it off in the end to get rid of them.”<sup>119</sup>

For many, there remained a distinction between what was acceptable as a garment for everyday use and what was acceptable at or for ritual purposes. From the point of view of Han Chinese and Koreans, furs at court were at worst barbaric, at best decadent. Writing a decade after the conquest of Beijing in his *Record of Travels North* (Ch: 北游錄), Tan Qian (Ch: 談遷, 1593-1657) found himself trying to reorient to the new order. In a journal entry from March 15, 1654 – the Shunzhi emperor’s birthday – he recorded that officials at the Board of Rites honored the occasion by spending a week dressed in either sable- or fox-fur coats. To Tan Qian, it was enough to drive a poor bureaucrat to ruin. “I heard the emperor dressed in a black fox-fur robe (玄狐裘), valued upwards of 3000 *jin* (金), and that all the various ministers wore black robes worth no less than a 1000 *jin*.”<sup>120</sup> Yet they had no other choice: fur was the new order.

Early travellers to Qing China often emphasized the contentiousness surrounding Manchu fashions. The Jesuit Father Pierre Joseph D’Orleans (1641-1698), noted the indignity of Chinese having “to cut off their hair and adopt the Tartar dress” after the Qing conquest.<sup>121</sup> Kim Ch’angŏp likewise looked for, and found, how frontier styles were

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*yŏnhaengnok* (稼齋燕行錄); his older brother Kim Ch’angjip (金昌集), was the ambassador. See Gari Ledyard, “Hong Tae-yong and his Peking Memoir,” *Korean Studies* 6 (1982), 85.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>120</sup> Tan Qian, *Beiyoulu*, 383.

<sup>121</sup> Pierre Joseph D’Orleans, *History of the Two Tartar Conquerors of China, Including the Two Journeys into Tartary of Father Ferdinand Verbiest, in the Suite of the Emperor Kang-Hi* (New York: Burt Franklin, [1854] 1964), 24.

a flashpoint for ethnic tension. One official at the Board of Rites, Pan Deyu, complained to him at length about the Kangxi emperor's favoritism towards "Tartars," using a character, *ta* (Ch:獭), which literally meant "otter." Accusing the emperor of being frugal in word but not in deed, he derided the court for wasting money on Mongol "Otters" who lived "somewhere beyond Ningguta," and receiving nothing but fur and ginseng in return.<sup>122</sup>

Kim Ch'angöŏp later joked with other Chinese companions, who ridiculed the Manchu love of fur:

The Korean interpreter asked who was the General Deng in whose shrine the Emperor prayed at the beginning of each year. The Chinese explained that Deng *jiangjun* did not mean "General Deng," but was the name of a cap that had belonged to Nurhaci's father, the ancestor of the Manchu Emperors. It was kept in this shrine and the Emperor went to burn incense to it at the beginning of every year. The Koreans thought it must be precious, but the Chinese said that on the contrary it was nothing but a moth-eaten piece of otter-skin. And they all laughed about it.<sup>123</sup>

Later Chosŏn emissaries would similarly look for any sign of difference Manchus and Chinese. In his descriptions of various ethnic groups and foreigners living in Beijing, Hong Taeyong, too, usually began with a description of color, cut, and fabric of gowns and hats. Ambassadors from the Ryukyu islands, for example, pleased his eye with their long, flowing satin robes.<sup>124</sup> When Hong Taeyong invited himself as guest into a

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<sup>122</sup> Translated in Rutt, "James Gale's Translation of the Yonhaeng-nok," 111-112.

<sup>123</sup> Rutt, "James Gale's Translation of the Yonhaeng-nok," 143. Note the double meaning of otter as meaning either "otter" or "Tartar" here. The same source also claimed that the Empress Dowager was not, in fact, the Kangxi's emperor's real mother. His real mother was "the wife of a Ming general, a very beautiful woman whose surname was Tong." After meeting her at a banquet, he forced her to become his consort; her husband committed suicide, the Shunzhi emperor took her as a new consort, and the Kangxi emperor was born. Rutt, 143.

<sup>124</sup> Hong Taeyong (洪大容), *Tamhŏn yŏngi* (湛軒燕記) in *Yŏnhaengnok chŏnjip*, 49: 93.

Mongol nobleman's *ger*, Hong described the tent as “laid out everywhere with wool and various furs.”<sup>125</sup> In contrast with Ryukyu emissaries and his own party, Beijing's Mongols wore clothing and hats that were “no different from Manchus.”<sup>126</sup> All the Mongols who participated in New Year's ceremonies, Hong explained, wore “dyed-yellow fur-skin hats” (染黃皮毛為帽), which only added to their “terribly fierce appearance” (狀貌類多獐悍).<sup>127</sup>

This gap between Chinese and Manchu material cultures extended even to the very language used to describe the creatures and products of the northern frontiers. Neologisms had to be invented, such as *shelisun* (Ch: 猓猓獐) for lynx (Ma: *silun*; Mo: *silügüsü(n)*). The Chinese term for “Manchurian pearl” (Ch: 東珠), literary “eastern pearl,” was itself coined in the Qing. Thus while Ming *Veritable Records* associate pearls with the material culture of Nurhaci's growing state, as it does sable and horses,<sup>128</sup> and in 1614 notes that Nurhaci “used the profits from sable, ginseng, and sea-pearls (Ch: 海珠)” to build up his reserves of wealth, the term “eastern pearl” – or the knowledge of their freshwater origins – is absent.<sup>129</sup> Precedents were found for the Qing period

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<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 49: 95. Given the extremely limited abilities of Hong's interpreter, Hong was only able gather the minimum amount of information on this Mongol, such as that he came from “3,000 *li* from Beijing.” The encounter was limited to mutual toasts, drinking, and smoking. The general rudeness of the host (he laughed when Hong offered him two coveted Korean energy-pills) confirmed to Hong that he was “not far from being a wild beast” (禽獸不遠).

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 49: 94. The word Hong chooses for “Manchu” here is “滿洲.”

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>128</sup> See *Ming Shenzong shilu*, 284: 7223.

<sup>129</sup> *Ming Shenzong shilu*, 519: 9775.

“eastern pearl” (Ch: 東珠; Ma: *tana*) in the Song dynasty’s “northern pearl” (Ch: 北珠), produced by the Jin.<sup>130</sup>

Through the early eighteenth century, bilingual Manchu-Chinese texts reveal far greater elaboration in the Manchu descriptions of frontier flora and fauna. Perhaps the most striking manifestation of the phenomenon can be found in the *Daqing quanshu*, the first Manchu-Chinese dictionary. Published in 1683, thirty-nine years after the conquest of Beijing, bilingual dictionaries were in high demand. With the ruling elite speaking one language (Manchu) and most subjects speaking another (Chinese), administrators and go-betweens needed a functional interface. As its compiler, Shen Hongzhao, failed on one account: the text is littered with about 300 Manchu words left without any Chinese translation.

Pointedly, many of the words left blank included flora and fauna common to the far north, including corsac fox (Ma: *kirsa*), stone marten (Ma: *harsa*), and saltbush (Ma: *ule*; also known as orache or atriplex in English). Chinese translations were similarly missing for Manchu words related to the anatomy or behavior of animals, as with the words for “the hair on a sable’s chin” (Ma: *baltaha*) or for “deer brushing against trees during the mating season” (Ma: *gūyambi*). Other problematic terms encompassed material objects unique to the Manchurian homeland, including willow-reed baskets for

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<sup>130</sup> Even into the twentieth-century, references to *tana* in the *Secret History of the Mongols* and *Yuanshi* were continuing points of disagreement. Modern annotated editions of the *Secret History* explain that the Mongol *tan-a* is none other than the eastern pearl. *Zhaqisiqin, Menggu mishi xinyi bing zhuyi* (Taipei: Lianjing chuban shiye gongsi, 1979), 121. Fu Leshu also suggests that *tana* could be the “Tana” referenced in Marco Polo’s account of India, suggesting that the pearls were of Bengali origin. Fu Leshu, *Yuangong cibai zhangjian zhu* (Beijing: Shumu wenxian chubanshe, 1995), 59.

holding sewing materials (Ma: *kaipi*), millstones (Ma: *niyeleku*), and sleighs (Ma: *huncu*).<sup>131</sup>

In contrast, a contemporary Manchu-Mongol dictionary, the *Han-i araha Manju Monggo gisuni buleku bithe* (Mo: *Qayan-u bicigsen Manju Mongyol ügen-ü toil bicig*) (1708), includes sentence- or paragraph-length definitions of these missing terms.<sup>132</sup> It describes the corsac fox (Ma: *kirsa*; Mo: *kirsa*) as “similar to the fox, [but] with whitish hue.” It provides even more detail for the stone marten (Ma: *harsa*; Mo: *suusar*): “Its length is like the sable. It has a foul odor and a thick black tail, and it catches and eats honey by dipping its tail in it.” Other animals, such as the moose (Ma: *kandahan*; Mo: *qandayai*), which lack Manchu and Chinese entries alike in the *Daqing quanshu*, also get extensive treatment. Moose, for example, are described at length: they “belong to the deer family (Ma: *buhū i duwali*). The body is big with a hump on the back. There is a skin under its throat like a bridle decoration (Ma: *kandaraha*), the neck is short, and the antlers flat and wide. The females are called *eniyen*.” The text also includes entries for the moose’s young (Ma: *niyarhoca*; Mo: *qotol*), abnormally large moose (Ma: *anami*; Mo: *manji*), and standard adult moose (Ma: *toho*; Mo: *toqi*), none of which are described. The pattern made the two texts distinct: Manchu words for the female, male, and child variants of animals are given in the Mongol dictionary, but not in the Chinese (See Figure 10).

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<sup>131</sup> *Daqing quanshu*, 3.7a, 3.8a, 3.41a, 3.43a, 4.4a, 4.28b, 5.7b, 5.8a, 5.32b, 6.7a, 6.38a, 6.43b, 11.48a, 11.59b, 13.8a, 13.22a, 13.38b.

<sup>132</sup> The following discussion is based on the *Han-i araha Manju Monggo gisun-i buleku bithe / Qayan-u bicigsen manju mongyol ügen-ü toil bicig* (1708), 1: *gurgu i hacin* 2-4. For a description of the text, see M.P. Volkova, *Opisanie Man'chzhurskikh khisolografov Insituta vostokovedeniia AN SSSR* (Moskow: Nauka, 1988), 103.

Figure 10: Lost in Translation? Animals in the Manchu-Mongol *Han-i araha manju monggo gisuni bileku bithe* and not the Manchu-Chinese *Daqing quanshu*

WORD (English)	WORD (Manchu)	WORD (Mongol)	Dictionary Definition
Manchurian moose			Deer family (Ma: <i>buhū i duwali</i> ). The body is big with a hump on the back. There is a skin under its throat like a bridle decoration (Ma: <i>kandaraha</i> ). The neck is short, and the antlers flat and wide. Females are called <i>eniyen</i> .
	<i>kandahan</i>	<i>qandayai</i>	
	<i>niyarhoca</i>	<i>qotol</i>	The moose's young
	<i>anami</i>	<i>manji</i>	A moose with a big body and antlers
	<i>toho</i>	<i>toqi</i>	A normal adult moose
Type of roe deer	<i>bulduri</i>	<i>iraol [sp?]</i>	Roe-deer ( <i>gio</i> ) that come from the Northeast coast
Corsac fox	<i>kirsa</i>	<i>kirsa</i>	Similar to the fox, whitish hue
Lynx young	<i>luka</i>	<i>noyool</i>	Lynx young
A spotted wildcat	<i>murung</i>	<i>borong</i>	Smaller than a lynx, but bigger than a <i>malahi</i> cat.
	<i>lunggu</i>	<i>erkin</i>	A male sable
	<i>aihū</i>	<i>ebsikin</i>	A female sable
Yellow-throated marten	<i>harsa</i>	<i>suusar</i>	Its length is like the sable. It has a foul odor and a thick black tail. It catches and eats honey by dipping its tail in it.
A type of weasel	<i>jelken</i>	<i>solongy-a</i>	Similar to the weasel ( <i>kurune</i> ). It is thin and small. Big <i>jelken</i> are yellow with white <i>alaha</i> . Normal <i>jelken</i> are yellow
	<i>imseke</i>	<i>bor</i>	Otter's young
	<i>algin</i>	<i>buir</i>	male otter
	<i>uki</i>	<i>ebi</i>	female otter
	<i>yandaci</i>	<i>yanisu</i>	The young of the badger
	<i>ahadan</i>	<i>burki</i>	A large and old badger
Seal	<i>huwethi</i>	<i>usun u irbin</i>	Name for an animal. They live in the sea, with sparse, lightish green fur. Similar to the stripped panther.
Flying squirrel	<i>deyere dobi</i>	<i>niskū ünege</i>	Lives in dense woods outside the [Great Wall] frontier. Their long tails are two <i>chi</i> in length. From the <i>mudan</i> of the front feet to the sides of the backfeet are skin wings. It skips and flies from tree to tree. [lit. “flying fox”]

Flying squirrel	<i>akjambulu</i>	<i>olbo</i>	Similar to a mouse, but the body is slightly bigger. It has wings, and jumps about trees.
Flying squirrel	<i>omkiya</i>	<i>niskü qoloyan-a</i>	Similar to the <i>jumara</i> , but with skin wings. Like the flying fox, it lives in thick, dense forests.
Flying squirrel; bat	<i>fereke singgeri</i>	<i>banbayai</i>	Similar to the mouse, but the color is black and has wings. They fly at night.

Bilingual texts of the Kangxi period likewise glossed over in Chinese animals listed in Manchu. In the most glaring cases, Manchu words received patently incorrect translations, such as a “marmot” (Ma: *tarbahi*) being translated as an “otter” (Ch: 獭) in a description of the early Dzungar Wars.<sup>133</sup> Similarly, in Tulišen’s *Record of a Mission to the Remote Frontier* (Ma: *Lakcaha jecen de takūraha babe ejehe bithe*; Ch: 異域錄), some species are left in Chinese transliteration, others are given different translations in each passage, and still others are left without any translation at all. While travelling through far northern Manchuria, for example, Tulišen noted in the Manchu text eight different types of fish found in the rivers: salmon trout (*jelu*), salmon (*niomošon*), golden carp (*onggošon*), “yellow fish” (*mušurhu*, SEE NORMAN), tench (*takū*), dragon liver fish (*can nimaha*), and sturgeon (*kirfu nimaha*). The Chinese edition, however, lists only five types of fish: *lu* fish,<sup>134</sup> carp (鯉), crucian carp (鯽), eel (鱈), and (Yangzi) sturgeon (鮠).<sup>135</sup> In a later passage, Tulišen distinguishes between two types of sturgeon in both texts (Ma: *ajin* and *kirfu*; Ch: 鱈魚 and 鮠魚), translates salmon trout (*jelu*) as *qilu*

<sup>133</sup> Chuang Chifa, *Qingdai zhungaer shiliao chubian*, 60-61.

<sup>134</sup> The character used is not listed in the *Hanyu dacidian*. It is composed of a fish radical on the left, and the character *lu* (Ch: 魯) on the right.

<sup>135</sup> Tulišen, *Lakcaha jecen de takūraha babe ejehe bithe*, 23.

fish,<sup>136</sup> and transliterates the dragon liver fish, pronounced “*čan*” in manchu – into *chan* fish (Ch: 鱻魚) in Chinese. Other animals, such as reindeer (Ma: *oron buhū*; Ch: 俄倫, *e-lun*)<sup>137</sup> and moose (Ma: *kandahan*, Ch: 堪達罕 *kan-da-han*),<sup>138</sup> are similarly only transliterated.<sup>139</sup> Translating flora species was also a problem: Japanese larch (Ma: *isi*) became a type of fir (Ch: 杉松, lit. a type of pine).<sup>140</sup>

By the mid-eighteenth century, however, scholars were filling in the gaps. In the case of the stone marten, whose pelts were imported from the Urianghai lands of northern Mongolia, Qing documents only standardized the Manchu translation after the first decade of the conquest; through 1777, Manchu-language tribute reports described the animal first using the Mongol “*saosar*” and “*soosar*.” Only after did the documents begin to use the Manchu “*harsa*” or “*ayan harsa*,” while the Chinese term – again missing altogether from the Kangxi period *Daqing quanshu* – was standardized as “*saoxue*” (Ch: 掃雪, perhaps a transliteration of the Mongol).<sup>141</sup> A similar stabilization of translation occurred for corsac fox, which also came in as an annual tribute from Urianghai lands. When the polyglot *Qing wenjian* dictionaries were published in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> c., the words

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<sup>136</sup> The three characters for *qilu* fish are *qi* (Ch: 鱠), *lu* (see note 134 above), and *yu* (Ch: 魚).

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, 54, 61. Chuang Chi-fa notes the discrepancy for *isi* and *shansong*, pointing to *luoye song* (落葉松) as a more accurate translation of the Manchu. See Tulišen, 54, n. 53.

<sup>141</sup> MWLF 2441.14.94.209 (QL36.5.29), 2456.24.95.488 (QL37.5.17), 2521.24.99.468 (QL38.4.20), 2854.26.103.11 (QL39.5.19), 2635.14.106.769 (QL40.5.24), 2717.7.111.2133 (QL42.5.22).



missing from the *Daqing quanshu*, including stone marten and corsac fox, all had standard Chinese translations (see Figure 11).<sup>142</sup>

Figure 11: Comparing Animals in the *Daqing quanshu* and *Qing wenjian*

<i>Daqing quanshu</i> Word	English Definition (Norman)	<i>Qing wenjian</i> (Chinese)	<i>Qing wenjian</i> (Mongol)
<i>hirho</i>	corsac; cf. <i>kirsa</i>	沙狐	<i>kirsa</i>
<i>zorho singgeri</i>	mole	田鼠	<i>kereljegen-e</i>
<i>ule</i>	orache, atriplex (a plant)	灰條菜	<i>luuli</i>
<i>baltaha sehe</i>	baltaha=the hair under the chin of a sable	貂鼠下頰	<i>kömei</i>
<i>harsa</i>	yellow-throated marten ( <i>Martes flavigula</i> )	蜜鼠	<i>suusar</i>
<i>gūyambi</i>	1. To brush against trees during the mating season (of deer); 2. To roar (of dragons)	獸劍樹	<i>orumui</i>
<i>gūyandumbi</i>	to mate, to jump about (of mating deer)	n/a	n/a
<i>giyahalacame</i>	to move agily (of horses)	動作伶俐	<i>adamnamui</i>
<i>uman</i>	1. gums 2. the inner side of a hoof	1. 牙床 2. 蹄心	1. <i>ayurqai</i> 2. <i>kederm-e</i>
<i>borbo</i>	achilles tendon	攬筋	<i>borbi</i>
<i>semecen</i>	cf. <i>semejen</i> , the fat covering the intestines and inner organs	1. 鞞肚油 2. 賺貼油	<i>semeji</i>
<i>huncu</i>	sleigh, sled	拖床	<i>cirgeül</i>
<i>julhū</i>	reins	扯手	<i>jiluyu</i>
<i>kaipi</i>	a covered basket made of willow branches used to hold sewing materials	針線菠籬	<i>baybur</i>
<i>niyeleku</i>	1. A stone roller, upper millstone 2) a stick for washing (see also nieylek i alikū wehe & niyeleku wehe	碾子	<i>ing</i>

<sup>142</sup> *Daqing quanshu* 3.7a, 3.8a, 3.41a, 3.43a, 4.4a, 4.28b, 5.7b, 5.8a, 5.32b, 6.7a, 6.38a, 6.43b, 11.48a, 11.59b, 13.8a, 13.22a, 13.38b; *Yuzhi manzhu menggu hanzi sanhe qieqin qingwenjian* 30.13b, 30.19a, 26.26a, 23.34a, 30.16a, 30.25a, 30.62b, 10.62a, 30.52a, 10.71b, 30.51b, 10.78a, 26.8b, 25.76b, 9.65a, 24.23b, 20.50b.

This new familiarity with the Manchu lexicon of the frontier was accompanied by broader domestication of frontier objects in the metropole. As the next section discusses, not only were frontier objects discussed with more elaboration and detail, but they were consumed to an unprecedented degree. Consumption and familiarity were intertwined processes.

### **The New Imperial Cosmopolitanism: From Manchu to Qing Fashions**

A sea change occurred in the Chinese consumption of frontier products in the early eighteenth century. The court began to gift furs to Chinese civilians and bundle them together with other gifts befitting the literati elite. At the same time, it also reissued sumptuary laws, but now not to compel literati to dress as Qing elites, but to prohibit regular people from dressing the part. Chinese elites, moreover, no longer wore furs only at court; they wore it in the privacy of their homes. Markets sprang up across Beijing to catering to the new demand in frontier products. Indeed, it was these markets, and the wild objects they sold, which often left the most vivid impression upon visitors to the Qing capital from the mid-eighteenth century on. It is to each of these phenomenon that we now turn.

While furs were gifted to members of the inner court, Manchu and Mongol elites, and military men throughout the Qing period, others began to receive fur as well during the reign of the Yongzheng emperor (1722-1735). There were only a few notable cases of Chinese civil officials receiving furs in the seventeenth century. In 1646, in the immediate aftermath of the conquest of Beijing, the court presented eminent Ming scholar-statesmen who had come over to the Qing, such as Hong Chengchou (洪承疇),

with 200 sable pelts for his service.<sup>143</sup> A shift was signaled unmistakably in 1724, when the Yongzheng emperor awarded sable to the living descendants of Confucius. Fittingly, it was no longer bundled with horses or armor. Instead, the gift arrived with fine tea and ink – the objects befitting a scholar.<sup>144</sup> New Year’s celebrations at court similarly began to mix genres. With the highest court officials assembled (內大臣, 滿漢大學士, 尚書, 侍郎, 八旗都統, 內閣學士, 內廷翰林) – a mixed group of Chinese and Manchus – the Yongzheng emperor ordered sable pelts be given to all, together with silk and copies of the Kangxi emperor’s *Tongjian gangmu* (通鑑綱目).<sup>145</sup> In filial spirit, the Qianlong emperor followed the precedent in 1738, when sable, silk and the *Tangjian gangmu* were again handed out at New Year’s to the assembled officials.<sup>146</sup>

The Yongzheng emperor started another precedent: he began to gift sable pelts to elderly women on their birthdays as a sign of filial piety. A Chinese commoner’s wife received four sable pelts, along with two catties of ginseng, when she turned one hundred.<sup>147</sup> The Qianlong emperor took up the practice with gusto. A governor’s elderly mother was awarded four pelts of sable and bolt of silk in 1771.<sup>148</sup> Another administrator’s mother, aged 91, was awarded ten pelts of sable and six bolts of silk as a

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<sup>143</sup> *Shizu shilu*, 8: 85.

<sup>144</sup> *Shizong shilu*, 17: 284.

<sup>145</sup> *Shizong shilu*, 40: 586. From the entry in the *Veritable Records*, it is unclear whether the *Tongjian gangmu* was in Manchu, Chinese, or both languages.

<sup>146</sup> *Gaozong shilu*, 61: 9.

<sup>147</sup> *Shizong shilu*, 71: 1066.

<sup>148</sup> *Gaozong shilu*, 879: 772.

measure of special favor the following year.<sup>149</sup> Qianlong dispersed sable and silk to three officials' mothers on their one-hundredth birthdays in 1780 alone.<sup>150</sup> The practice transcended ethnicity. In 1781, in newly conquered Xinjiang, news of a 108-year-old Muslim woman inspired the Qianlong emperor to send sable and satin to the frontier; seven years later, a 106-year-old Kyrgyz (Burut) woman received the same.<sup>151</sup> And while venerable mothers were the most common beneficiaries, the occasional elderly father also received a package of sable and silk, with the first recorded precedent in the *Veritable Records* dating to 1751.<sup>152</sup> That same year, the Qianlong emperor bestowed sable furs upon the descendants of the Song scholar Fan Zhongyan.<sup>153</sup> Three years later, in 1754 (QL19), the Qianlong emperor further expanded the use of furs at court when he ordered that for two and half months surrounding New Years, from the first of the eleventh month through the sixteenth of the first, all those participating in the court sacrifices wear sable-trimmed court clothing (Ch: 緣貂朝衣).<sup>154</sup>

The court began to dispense furs throughout the empire to civilian and military officials alike. The National Palace Museum in Taiwan holds fifty-six palace memorials (硃批奏摺) from the Yongzheng reign (1723-1735) in which officials in the field thank the emperor for sending sable. The emperor sent only seventeen to officials serving in

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<sup>149</sup> *Gaozong shilu*, 917: 296.

<sup>150</sup> *Gaozong shilu*, 1100: 734, 1102: 752, 1119: 944.

<sup>151</sup> *Gaozong shilu*, 1130: 112-113, 1309: 646.

<sup>152</sup> *Gaozong shilu*, 383: 39. As with women, most elderly fathers who received sable birthday gifts were the parents of notable officials; cases recorded of commoners receiving gifts are few.

<sup>153</sup> *Gaozong shilu*, 385: 540.

<sup>154</sup> *Daqing huidian shili* 4: 462b.

northern China. He sent thirty-nine – 70% of the total – to officials serving in the south, where wearing fur could hardly be regarded as a practical necessity. This included fourteen pelts sent to Yunnan or Guizhou, eight to Guangdong, six to Fujian or Taiwan, and four to Guangxi. Of the fifty-six memorials, twenty-two were sent from officials serving in a military capacity; most of the rest were governors (巡撫) or governors-general (總督).<sup>155</sup> Sable clearly denoted elite status. It was no longer confined to the northern frontiers, the inner court, or the military.

It was also during the Yongzheng reign that sumptuary laws began to target an *over* indulgence in fur. From the outset, sumptuary laws were important because they made the imperial hierarchy visible and, ideally, the order was modest and frugal. In 1664, the Kangxi emperor decreed that new grey fox-fur hats, often awarded to favored officials of the inner court, be given only to officials who needed them: “if [the hat] is a good one, cancel [the order]. If it is worn-out, make a new one in replacement.” In January of 1665, only fifteen officials thus received new hats, and another had his old hat mended.<sup>156</sup> While fox was relatively humble fur, sable was another matter. Too much

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<sup>155</sup> These materials have all been published in the series *Gongzhongdang Yongzhengchao zouzhe* (宮中檔雍正朝奏摺). For originals see National Palace Museum (NPM) 402003433 (YZ13.5.28); 402009004 (YZ5.5.12); 402008079 (YZ2.+4.21); 402017576 (YZ7.1.8); 402001497 (YZ5.8.12); 402001498 (YZ7.1.24); 402003919 (YZ13.6.26); 402008503 (YZ5.5.26); 402013700 (YZ4.12.29); 402001067 (YZ13.2.2); 402005221 (YZ7.9.15); 402012234 (YZ7.6.12); 402001060 (YZ11.2.24); 402012139 (YZ1.12.3); 402018465 (YZ2.2.18); 402001746 (YZ7.7.8); 402002398 (YZ11.1.20); 402003678 (YZ2.8.4); 402008792 (YZ7.4.26); 402002055 (YZ13.2.12); 402003512 (YZ13.+4.21); 402014194 (YZ7.12.2); 402005336 (YZ3.8); 402005278 (YZ13.1.4); 402011892 (YZ6.10.27); 402012074-1 (YZ7.11.16); 402015705 (YZ7.1.17); 402009487 (YZ1.6.3); 402011572 (YZ7.3.3); 402008984 (YZ6.1.26); 402014524 (YZ7.11.12); 402014526 (YZ7.12.24); 402014951 (YZ3.2.16); 402004569 (YZ7.4.11); 402004553 (YZ11.3.7); 402009440 (YZ2.5.18); 402009532 (YZ6.12.25); 402009536 (YZ7.7.22); 402009547 (YZ7.11.26); 402021491-402021492 (YZ7.+7.28); 402001427 (YZ9.1.6); 402001718 (YZ3.2.1); 402001738 (YZ13.3.20); 402016168 (YZ12.1.6); 402016177 (YZ12.10.25); 402004206 (YZ7.9.28); 402002419 (YZ7.7.9); 402020722 (YZ2.1.25); 402002442 (YZ7.9.28); 402001740 (YZ12.3.12); 402009269 (YZ5.1.25); 402010327 (YZ4.7.13); 402002135 (YZ7.7.18); 402006208 (YZ4.12.21); 402012575 (YZ2.11.21); 402012576 (YZ2.12.22).

<sup>156</sup> NWFZXD 3.17.226 (KX3.12.4).

sable suggested decadence, not Manchu virtue. As Kangxi tut-tutted a coterie of lavishly dressed officials after a policy discussion:

Now about your clothing and headgear. Your fondness for expensive things made of sable and silk is a minor detail, but it is a matter of being economical. Don't you know how many fox-fur hats one sable hat could buy? Or how many sheepskin coats one silk garment is worth? Why do you wear such costly items?<sup>157</sup>

Annual gifting of sables to close officials (Ch: 講官) of the court was thus briefly halted because the Three Feudatories Rebellion (1673-1681) was at hand, and sable's decadence "portended trouble from within Yunnan." The gifting of sable returned, however, in 1680 (KX19) when nine such officials were awarded pelts.<sup>158</sup>

Where sumptuary laws in the wake of the Qing conquest mandated elite noblemen to wear furs, the Yongzheng emperor presided over a transformed empire. People did not need to be compelled to wear fur to be elite: now even those without official status were buying them up and dressing the part. Bannermen in particular were ignoring old sumptuary laws. To Yongzheng, it was a sign of profligacy: buying furs was beyond the means of the lower classes and would ruin them. Thus, in 1725, he reissued the sumptuary laws for bannermen: wearing satin, sable and lynx robes were again prohibited. Sensing he was tilting at windmills, ministers at court argued that the policy was failing:

Laws must be enforceable for prohibitions to work. If the laws are clearly known but unable to be successfully applied, then prohibitions cannot work. If former prohibitions have been failures, how can they be reissued?<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, 284.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>159</sup> *Shizong shilu*, 35: 534a-b.

The Yongzheng emperor dismissed these arguments: “high ministers and officials can buy [satins and furs] when the price is low and after their households have earned money and become rich,” he explained. Common soldiers, on the other hand, simply could not afford to be so “profligate.” To protect their livelihood, the emperor argued, he had a moral duty to admonish “those who overstep their bounds” (Ch: 僭越之人), to teach and to guide them, so that they may “come to their senses.” He recognized it may take generations: “naturally, years in the future, they will reform themselves” and become frugal.<sup>160</sup>

Over the course of the next hundred years, sumptuary laws would be reissued or revised. In 1779, for example, the Qianlong emperor ordered that imperial princes (皇子), princes of the first degree (親王) and princes of the second degree (郡王) were specifically forbidden from wearing either proper pearls (正珠) or Manchurian pearls (東珠). When granting noble status to princes, the court thus ended a practice of gifting Manchurian pearls.<sup>161</sup> Likewise, prohibitions on wearing fur would later be extended to lamas. The 1841 *Lifanyuan zeli* (but not the 1826 edition) specified that lamas were to keep to red, reddish-brown (Ma: *haksan*), or yellow cloth, and that only monks who received a degree of abbot in Tibet (Ma: *g’ambu*; Mo: *k’ambu*; Tib: *mkhan po*) could wear sable and otter furs; all lower ranking lamas were prohibited from wearing the pelts.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> *Shizong shilu*, 35: 534a-b.

<sup>161</sup> *Gaozong shilu*, 1079: 503; *Daqing huidian shilu*, 4: 894.2.

<sup>162</sup> *TGKHbe dasara jurgan-i kooli hacin i bithe* (1841), 59: 3a-4a; *Jarliγ-iyar toytoγaγsan γadaγadu mongγol-un törö-yi jasaqu yabudal-un yamun-u qauli juil-un bicig* (1826), 59: 3a-b.

Popular literature reflects the growing popular consumption of furs. The charged symbolism surrounding sable fur made it fit for caricature and absurdity in ways almost difficult to imagine outside the Qing context; in the *Lamp at the Fork in Road* (Ch: 歧路燈), a popularly circulating story in the Qing, the protagonist is nothing less than a walking, talking, adventure-seeking sable pelt.<sup>163</sup> In early novels, furs are strongly associated with the court. The novel *A Romance to Awaken the World* (Ch: *Xingshi yinyuan zhuan*, 醒世姻緣傳), popularly attributed to early Qing writer Pu Songling (1640-1715), opens with a prince dressed in sable fur, hunting.<sup>164</sup> Ambitious officials fret about how they are expected to wear furs,<sup>165</sup> and they were not cheap: Pu Songling gives the outrageous figure of 55 taels to buy a single sable-fur hat.<sup>166</sup>

The relationship to fur in *Honglouloumeng* is much more casual and domestic. Characters slip on fur in public when entertaining guests and in private to ward off cold; they present fur as gifts to friends and relatives; they chat about the quality, warmth, and upkeep of their jackets and robes. Cao Xueqin delighted in the variety and style of fur clothing: he puts Lady Xifeng in a sable overcoat (Ch: 套), squirrel jacket (Ch: 褂), and ermine skirt (Ch 裙).<sup>167</sup> The protagonist Baoyu dresses sometimes in fox-fur-lined archer's vest with dark sable robe (Ch: 青貂裘).<sup>168</sup> The identity-bending possibility of

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<sup>163</sup> Li Lüyuan, *Qiludeng* (Taipei: Xinwenfeng chuban gongsi, 1979), *passim*.

<sup>164</sup> Pu Songling, *Xingshi yinyuan chuan*, 1.

<sup>165</sup> Pu Songling, *Xingshi yinyuan chuan*, 12.

<sup>166</sup> Pu Songling, *Xingshi yinyuan chuan*, 66.

<sup>167</sup> *Honglouloumeng*, 6: 116.

<sup>168</sup> *Honglouloumeng*, 19: 300.



dress was always at play: in one scene, Baoyu pushes Fanguan to experiment with her hair style and try a sable fur hat – then whimsically imagines she is a frontiersman with the barbarian moniker Yelü Xiongnu.<sup>169</sup> When officers arrive at Bao Yu’s home to take inventory of the [Wang] family’s possessions, the policemen read out a list of family valuables, which include gold, silver, jade, ivory and nine strings of Manchurian pearls. More than half the items listed were various furs:

Eighteen black fox pelts, six dark fox belts; thirty-six sable pelts, thirty yellow fox pelts, twelve lynx pelts, three *mave* pelts (麻葉), sixty imported squirrel pelts, forty pelts of squirrel and fox legs, twenty reddish-brown (醬色) sheep pelts, two *huli* (獬豸) pelts, two yellow fox leg-fur pelts, twenty pieces of small arctic fox pelts, thirty pieces of foreign wool (洋呢)...ten mountain weasel tubes (筒子), four pieces of *doushu* (豆鼠) pelts...one piece of *meilu* (梅鹿) fur, two cloud-fox tubes (雲狐筒子), one role of badger cub fur...160 grey squirrel pelts, eight badger pelts, six tiger pelts, three fur seal pelts, sixteen sea otter pelts...ten black fox-fur hats, twelve *wodao* hats, two sable hats, sixteen small fox pelts, two aquatic raccoon dog (江貉) pelts, two otter pelts, [and] thirty-five cat pelts.<sup>170</sup>

The sheer diversity of animals was striking: with enough money, dozens of exotic animals could be at one’s fingertips. Indeed, Beijing in particular was famous for its fur markets. The traveller’s guidebook *Guide to the Capital* (Ch: 都門紀略, first published 1845),<sup>171</sup> helpfully detailed the locations of the city’s fur markets, explaining that “the wealthy of the capital – including those famous for finishing first in the exams – regularly

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<sup>169</sup> *Honglouloumeng*, 63: 988-989. “Yelü” is the family name of the Khitan imperial family in the Liao dynasty.

<sup>170</sup> *Honglouloumeng*, 150: 1601.

<sup>171</sup> The author of the *Dumen jilue* is unknown. On the history of the text, see Xin Deyong, “*Guanyu ‘Dumen jilue’ zaoqi banben de yixie wenti*,” *Zhongguo dianji yu zhongguo wenhua* 4 (2004). Accessible online at <http://w3.pku.edu.cn/academic/zggds/004/004/007.htm>.

wear sable-fur robes and palace pearls.”<sup>172</sup> Indeed, sable had become part of the material culture of the scholar-elite: only second-rate brushes were made of chicken feathers, sheep wool, wolf fur, or mouse whiskers.<sup>173</sup>

By the early nineteenth century, the great fur markets had emerged just outside Qianmen gate, on the south side of the inner city wall (See Figure 12).<sup>174</sup>

Figure 12: Fur Markets in Beijing

Market	Neighborhood	Location	Items Sold
Pearl 珠寶市	Outside Qianmen 前門外	Streets north, south, and west of Qianmen 路西南北街	Pearls, sable, ginseng
Secondhand clothes 估衣市	Outside Qianmen 前門外	East <i>Guazidian</i> Road 瓜子店路東	Embroidered robes, court clothing 蟒袍, 朝衣
Fur 皮衣室		Southern small market 南小市出灘	(Disbanded) (已出散市)

One could buy all three of the most precious products of Manchuria – pearls, sable, and ginseng – at a single location: the Beijing Pearl Market. It was a bustling scene:

Pedestrians crowd and squeeze, people laugh and rub shoulders, and everywhere merchants are calling out to sell something. One cannot help but smile. The Pearl Market occupies three halls, with much of it coming out into the alleyways.<sup>175</sup>

<sup>172</sup> *Dumen jilue*, 594.

<sup>173</sup> Liang Zhangju, *Langji congtan* 9.164. Liang Zhangju (Ch: 梁章鉅, 1775-1849).

<sup>174</sup> *Dumen jilue*, 333.

<sup>175</sup> *Dumen jilue*, 613.

Other notable shops specializing in fur hats and neck warmers were based near Qianmen as well, as were the specialty ginseng shops (See Figure 13).<sup>176</sup>

Figure 13: Specialty Shops for Frontier Objects

Item	Shop	Neighborhood	Location
Winter hats 暖帽	<i>Majuxing</i> 馬聚興	<i>Dongxi pailou</i> 東西牌樓	<i>Gongjian dayuan</i> 弓箭大院
Inside-style winter hats 內式暖帽	<i>Yongzengju</i> 永增局	Outside <i>Qianmen</i> 前門外	<i>Damochang</i> , North <i>Xikou Road</i> 打磨廠西口路北
Neck warmers 領帽	<i>Majuyuan</i> 馬聚源	Outside <i>Qianmen</i> 前門外	South <i>Xianyukou Road</i> 鮮魚口路南
Fur Neck-warmers 皮夾領子	<i>Dongzhaokui</i> 東兆魁	Outside <i>Qianmen</i> 前門外	South <i>Dazhalan Road</i> 大柵欄路南
Deer horn & tiger bone paste 虎骨, 鹿角膠	<i>Leiwanchun tang</i> 雷萬春堂	<i>Liulichang</i> 琉璃廠	North <i>Ximanwai Road</i> 西門外路北
Korean ginseng 高麗參	<i>Kuihe shenju</i> 魁和參局	Outside <i>Qianmen</i> 前門外	North <i>Liulichang Road</i> 琉璃廠路北

Other markets specialized in wild game. As one eleven-year child recorded of Beijing in his Manchu schoolbook,

This year there is lots of stuff coming from Mukden. On the streets are piled up roe deer, four-year-old wild boar, deer, pheasant, hare, geese, and ducks, and other such things. But while there are lots of people looking, few people are buying. I don't value these kinds of things too much. But I am very fond of eating, [especially] sturgeon and crane.<sup>177</sup>

<sup>176</sup> *Dumen jilue*, 285-288, 297.

<sup>177</sup> Leping, *Muwa gisun*, 15b. The Manchu text reads, “*ere aniya mukden i jaka jihengge umesi labdu. sirga gio aidagan buhū ulhūn gūlmahūn niyongniyaha niyehe i jergi jaka giyai de jalu iktakabi. damu tuwara niyalma labdu. udara niyalma komso. ere jergi jaka be bi gemu hihalarakū. damu bi umesi jetere de amurangge. ajin nimaha jai bulehen.*” The text, housed in the Harvard-Yenching Library is undated, though eighteenth century or the first half of the nineteenth century is a reasonable guess. For a description of the text, see Mark C. Elliott and James Bosson, “Highlights of the Manchu-Mongolian Collection,” in *Treasures of the Yenching*, ed. Patrick Hanan (Cambridge: Harvard-Yenching Library, Harvard University, 2003), 85.

Travellers to Beijing were similarly struck by the prominence of frontier products around town. Describing Beijing in the years 1711-1723, the Italian priest Matteo Ripa wrote how in the coldest months the elite city-dwellers he knew “adopt the furs of ermine, sable, and fox, in the same gradation. In the depth of winter, besides having both the ppow-zoo [袍子] and why-ttao [外套] lined with foxes’ skin, they wear an under waistcoat of lambs’ skin, and the loose gown over it wadded; and when it snows they put on a long cloak covered over with seal-skin.”<sup>178</sup> Beyond fur, Ripa marveled at the abundance of wild game in the markets of Beijing:

During the period of frost, that is, from October till March, Northern Tartary sends to the capital an enormous quantity of game, consisting chiefly of stags, hares, wild-boars, pheasants and partridges; whilst Southern Tartary furnishes a great abundance of excellent sturgeon and other fish, all of which being frozen, can easily be kept during the whole winter. At the close of the old year, and the beginning of the new, huge heaps of game and fish are exposed for sale in the streets, and it is surprising to see how cheap they are sold. For seven or eight silver tchens, which are equivalent to four shillings, one may buy a stag; for trifle more a wild-boar; for five half-pence, a pheasant; and so on in the same proportion.<sup>179</sup>

Even as far away as Nagasaki, accounts of domesticated elephants and fur clothing defined the image of Beijing. Nakagawa Tadahide (1753-1830) in his *Record of Qing Customs* (Jp: 清俗紀聞, 1799), a reference book using Chinese junk merchants as sources, depicts a world full of fur-lined winter hats and gowns, complete with pictures of long-sleeve gowns (Ch: *paozi* 袍子), short sleeve gowns (Ch: *waitao* 外套), tops (Ch: *magua* 馬褂), and skirts (Ch: *qunzi* 裙子) for both men and women. The fur-lined hats

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<sup>178</sup> Matteo Ripa, *Memoirs of Father Ripa during Thirteen Years’ Residence at the Court of Peking in the Service of the Emperor of China* (London, J. Murray, 1855), 49.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, 49-50.

worn at court for both civil and military officials are depicted as well, noting that “hat brims have black or grey fur.”<sup>180</sup>

By the nineteenth century, European visitors struggled to find any differences in clothing between Manchu and Chinese men at all. Yet Charles Gutztaff found the people of Tianjin in 1831 to be all dressed in “costly” furs,<sup>181</sup> with even the poor in Jinzhou (Liaodong) “covered in rags and furs.”<sup>182</sup> As explained to his readers, Manchus “differ very little from the Chinese” in appearance.<sup>183</sup> Many wrongly assumed that the Manchus had simply sinified. As John Barrow of the Macartney mission wrote, “The Tartars, by assuming the dress, the manners, and the habits of the Chinese, by being originally descended from the same stock, and by a great resemblance of features, are scarcely distinguishable from them in their external appearance.”<sup>184</sup> Barrow did not realize that, at least in the case of clothing, the process of appropriation went in both directions: fur had become Chinese.

Precedents were found in the past for the Qing experience, with most scholars pointing to the Liao (907-1125), Jin (1115-1234), and Yuan (1271-1368) states. Fur culture was, indeed, a significant aspect of the material culture of these Inner Asian courts. The *Liaoshi* records that Khitan “nobles wore sable furs, those of purplish black

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<sup>180</sup> Nakagawa Tadahide, *Shinzoku kibun* (2006): 223.

<sup>181</sup> Charles Gutztaff, *Journal of Three Voyages along the Coast of China in 1831, 1832, & 1833* (1834): 138. Gutztaff and his Chinese junk-mates all purchased furs before departing for Liaodong. *Ibid.*, 143.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, 147.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*, 144.

<sup>184</sup> John Barrow, *Travels in China: Containing Descriptions, Observations, and Comparisons, Made and Collected in the Course of a Short Residence at the Imperial Palace of Yuen-Min-Yuen, and on a Subsequent Journey through the Country from Peking to Canton* (London: Printed for T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1806), 183.

being most prized, with plain black next. They also had ermine of a very pure white. The lower classes [wore] the furs of the sable, sheep, mole, and corsac.”<sup>185</sup> Reclaiming this past, poetry of the Liao court was republished which celebrated the virtues of wearing fur and hunting,<sup>186</sup> or described luxurious sable-fur yurts handed down by the emperor in winter.<sup>187</sup> The retrospective Yuan poetry compilation, *Yuan shixuan* (Ch: 元詩選), first published in 1798, was particularly rich with references to sable coats under Mongol rule.<sup>188</sup> Of these, while some are described as “golden” (Ch: 黃金), most coats are described as “black” (Ch: 黑, 紫). Yet fur coats remained indelibly linked with the northern frontier; it continued to share an associations with war, the court, horses, and extreme winters. As one republished Yuan poem read:

With a look like jade, he bids farewell to the Golden Palace,  
his sable coat hugging an embroidered saddle.  
The general pauses before battle,  
the frontier’s snow blowing in the cold.<sup>189</sup>

While popularized in the metropole, fur never lost its association with either the frontier or with frontier peoples. Rather, their value continued to be based on the where, who, and how of their production.

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<sup>185</sup> Karl Wittfogel, *History of Chinese Society: Liao, 907-1125* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1949), 237. See *Liaoshi*, 56: 2b.

<sup>186</sup> See, for example, *Liaojinyuan gongci*, 2: 1.51, which places the protagonist in an otter-fur coat and sable-hat.

<sup>187</sup> *Liaojinyuan gongci*, 2: 1.62.

<sup>188</sup> *Yuan shixuan, chuji*: 54, 66, 97, 109, 364, 405, 879, 904, 925, 974, 1079, 1095, 1195, 1238, 1269, 1326, 1336, 1459, 1489, 1525, 1763, 1891, 1896, 2082, 2190, 2218, 2301; *erchu*: 163, 466, 522, 590, 680, 827, 1363; *sanchu*: 328, 447, 578. For sable coats in a Yuan biography, see *Taiping guangji*, 323: 2562.

<sup>189</sup> *Yuan shixuan, erji*: 163.

## Appraising Fur

How did one know where a pelt came from and what type of animal it was? It took a considerable amount of knowledge about animals to make an informed decision in the market place. Those without any market knowledge were likely to be duped. In *A Romance to Awaken the World*, Pu Songling describes a hatter named Luo Jiakai, who made his fortune selling fakes:

He was a sable fur artisan. For years sable was extremely expensive. He would construct hats by taking the most pretty part of the sable's spine, stretching it out as big and wide as possible and piling a great many together. Then, to cobble together the hat, he stitched the insides together with a string of dark ramie. People see only that the fur is plush and the color is black; nobody knows that myriad strips of shoddy pelts compose the interior and fringes. He made twenty to thirty taels silver selling each and so gradually built up the family business.<sup>190</sup>

In this perilous market environment, pawnshop owners were perhaps the most hardnosed buyers with the most rigorous appraisal standards for fur coats, robes, and hats. To make a proper appraisal, they had to know both the standard number of pelts per item and how to evaluate the quality of the individual pelts. Guidebooks were thus published to offer descriptions of the various clothing items and pelt types, stating both size and cost (See Figures 14 and 15).<sup>191</sup>

Figure 14: Number of Pelts Required for Standard Clothing Items, 1843

<b>Animal (English)</b>	<b>Animal (Chinese)</b>	<b>Units per robe 袍</b>	<b>Units per 套</b>	<b>Units per Jacket 馬褂</b>	<b>Units per <i>dahu</i> 褡護</b>	<b>Units per 外套</b>

<sup>190</sup> Pu Songling, *Xingshi yinyuan chuan*, 861.

<sup>191</sup> *Lun piyi cuxi maofa*, in *Zhongguo gudai dangpu landing miji* (Beijing: Quanguo tushuguan wenxian suowei fuzhi zhongxin), 158-161.

Marmot	旱獭		25-26	15		
White elk	白麋子			20		
Fox	狐			300		
	燻黑貌	26	21	12		
Imported squirrel	洋灰鼠	50	40	25		
	骨種楊	30	20	12		
Cold-weather sheep	寒羊	30	24	12		
Short-haired lamb	小毛羔羊	30	22			
<i>Wuyun</i> leopard	烏雲豹	160	120	60		
<i>Jixiang</i> leopard	吉祥豹	160	120	60		
Solon grey squirrel (back)	索倫灰脊	180	140	80		
Grey squirrel (underbelly)	灰鼠代肫	120	90	50		
Fire-fox (underbelly)	火狐代肫	30	24	14		
Fire-fox (leg)	火狐腿	180	140	90		
Steppe fox	草狐	31	25	15		
	西肫皮	80	52	32		
Steppe fox (underbelly)	草狐	80	52	32		
Fox (head)	狐	180	150	85		
Black fox	元狐			6	12	
Flying squirrel	飛鼠	40	30	18		
Import Sable	洋貂	180	140	80		
Western fox	西狼			3	6	
Steppe wolf	草狼			3	6	
<i>Jinqian</i> leopard	金錢豹			2		5
<i>Aiye</i> leopard	艾葉豹		4	2		
Black cat	紫貓	26	21	12		
Black sable	紫貂	130	24	12		
Long-haired lamb	大毛羔羊	20	16	10		



Chaozhou sly sheep	潮州猾羊	30	24	12		
	老樣	70	50	30		

Figure 15: Costs for Fur Clothing, 1843

Animal (English)	Animal (Chinese)	Price per pelt (兩)	Total Price per Robe 袍 (兩)	Total Price per 套(兩)	Total Price per Jacket 馬褂 (兩)
<i>Aiye</i> leopard	艾葉豹	7		28	14
Western wolf	西狼	4			12
Steppe wolf	草狼	2			6
<i>Jinqian</i> leopard	金錢豹	2			4
Imported Squirrel	洋灰鼠	0.5	25	20	12.5
	骨種楊	0.5	15	10	6
<i>Wuyun</i> leopard	烏雲豹	0.5	80	60	30
<i>Jixiang</i> leopard	吉祥豹	0.5	80	60	30
Black cat	紫貓	0.5	13	10.5	6
	燻黑貌	0.4	10.4	8.4	4.8
Cold-weather sheep	寒羊	0.4	12	9.6	4.8
Fire-fox (leg)	火狐腿	0.4	72	56	36
White elk	白糜子	0.3			6
Short-haired lamb	小毛羔羊	0.3	9	6.6	
Marmot	旱獺	0.2		5	3
Solon grey squirrel (back)	索倫灰脊	0.15	27	21	12
Grey squirrel (underbelly)	灰鼠代欣	0.07	8.4	6.3	3.5
Fox	狐	0.05			5

In terms of appraising the animal pelts themselves, physical properties helped determine their value (waterproofness, weight, wear, etc.), but so too were the places the animals had originated from. According to a pawnshop manual published in 1843, for

example, “top grade” furs invariably derived from “east of the [Great Wall] pass,” in Manchuria (關東). The finest sables were from “Solon” lands, while the worst came from Korea (高麗, Koryo). Top grade squirrels also came from Solon lands, as did the most luxurious river otters (水獺) and lynx (猞猁) – though Russian varieties of the latter two species were essentially of equal value. Steppe foxes were best from the beyond the Great Wall (口外). Likewise, black fox (玄狐), black wolf (玄狼), fire fox (火狐), *chuanwo* (穿窩), dark fox (青狐), *saoshu* (騷鼠), badger (獾子), ermine (銀鼠), wolf, river otter (江獺), and marmot (旱獺) were all most valuable when from “East of the Pass,” in Manchuria. In a catalogue of fifty types of animal pelts, only two types were valued highest when from China proper: yellow foxes from Huguang, and flying squirrels from Shaanxi and Gansu.<sup>192</sup>

Like pawnshop owners, consumers described similar valuation principles in their own writings. From the eighteenth century onwards, moreover, these Chinese-language descriptions of furs assume new levels of detail and elaboration. In his *Talks with Guests Over Tea* (*Chayu kehua*), for example, the former President of the Board of Punishments, Ruan Kuisheng 阮葵生 (1727-1789) devoted an entry to “[animal] types such as sable and fox” (*diaohu zhi zhonglei*).<sup>193</sup> As a participant in the Four Treasuries project and a compiler of the official history of the Dzungar campaigns, Ruan was part of a new generation of Chinese officials with an avid interest in frontier affairs that rose to

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<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*, 129-168.

<sup>193</sup> Ruan Kuisheng, *Chayu kehua*, *Biji xiaoshuo daguan*, v. 1.3, p. 9.3-4.

prominence in the late eighteenth century, and was thus uniquely well-qualified to write about fur.<sup>194</sup> He opens his discussion on the origins and virtues of sable pelts:

Russia and Wu-lan-hai (烏蘭海, i.e. Urianghai lands) all produce sable. People have long said that only a sable can stay warm lying naked in the snow – and that because one can kill them with but a soft blow (因撲而殺之), they are ignoble gifts [lit. ‘similar to reckless gifts of Zheng,’ whose men delivered themselves into the hands of the enemy after imprudently driving into a well]. Those who say these things gave others a great pain for no good reason (深痛人無良). They speak broadly, but there is no truth to it.<sup>195</sup>

In a later description of the “marten” (貂鼠) genus,<sup>196</sup> he offers the reader an intimate description of both the animal’s natural habitat and an account of how they are hunted:

They prefer eating pine-seeds and [so are found] in pine forests. One type is called the ‘pine dog’ (松狗), of which there are yellow and black varieties. The jet-black ones [have fur that is] luxuriant but not shiny, and are especially difficult to procure. Its den is either dug into the earth or hollowed from a tree. Trappers rig a net at the entrance to the den, then smoke [the animal] out. It fears the smoke and flees into the net. There are also dogs that hunt martens. The dogs sniff out the location of its tracks, guard [its den] without leaving, [then] wait for [the marten] to come out to catch it in its mouth. Some people also use slings or snares. The gazetteer for Mukden names one marten the ‘cone dog’ (栗狗), as it prefers to eat pinecones and bark. There are many of these throughout the mountains of Ula. Their pelt is light and warm, and can be made into coats or hats. The *Guangzhi* [states that] martens arose from Fuyu.<sup>197</sup>

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<sup>194</sup> On Ruan Kuisheng and his milieu, see Matthew W. Mosca, “Empire and the Circulation of Frontier Intelligence: Qing Conceptions of the Ottomans,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 70.1 (2010): 178-179.

<sup>195</sup> Ruan Kuisheng, *Chayu kehua, Biji xiaoshuo daguan*, vol.1.3, p. 9.3-4. More on Urianghai is found in Chapter 5 below.

<sup>196</sup> To clarify the types of various fur-bearing animals needed clarification, he lists animals in terms of “genus” (種) and “species” (族).

<sup>197</sup> Ruan Kuisheng, *Chayu kehua, Biji xiaoshuo daguan*, vol.1.3, p. 9.3-4.

The text mixes information both from classical and contemporary sources. It references, for example, the *Guangzhi* (廣志), the Jin dynasty (265-420) encyclopedia of Guo Yigong, which first connected sable to Fuyu. He also references the *Shengjing tongzhi*, the seventeenth century gazetteer, produced under the Kangxi court's sponsorship. Yet despite its textuality, Ruan Kuisheng also fills in gaps with more immediate knowledge suggesting first hand impressions from the marketplace.<sup>198</sup> In discussing the stone marten (Ch: 掃雪) – an animal that lacks a Chinese translation in the *Daqing quanshu* – Ruan Kuisheng explained casually, “it is bigger than the sable. Its fur is white and the hairs are long, and its luster is inferior to them. The price is also lower.”

He was equally knowledgeable of a wide range of other animals for sale on the market. Lynx (Ch: 猓猓獾) he divided into large and small varieties, respectively dubbed “horse lynx” (Ch: 馬猓猓) and “sheep lynx” (Ch: 羊猓猓).<sup>199</sup> Their pelts, he informed, “provide more warmth than sable, but are not as light (just as fleece coats are warmer and heavier than lynx ones).” Fox he divided into seven species, of which two were Mongolian and five Russian. The Mongol foxes were divided into “steppe fox” (Ch: 草狐), with long yellow fur, and “desert fox” (Ch: 沙狐) with short, off-yellow fur. Amongst the Russian species, the most exquisite was the black fox (Ch: 元狐) with fine black fur. There was also the *wodao* fox (Ch: 猓刀; cf. 倭刀, 倭道, 窩刀), with yellowish fur and black underbellies, “fire fox” (Ch: 火狐), with yellowish bodies and dark

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<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>199</sup> The very Chinese word for lynx, *shelisin*, appears to be a Qing neologism derived from the Mongol *silügüsü(n)*; I have been unable to identify any use of the word prior to the Qing period. Cf. the Manchu *silun*.

underbellies, as well as arctic and grey foxes. Last, he also notes the mythical demon fox: (Ch: 妖狐), which was also known as the “spirit fox” (Ch: 靈狐); it was “like a cat but black, and old ones can appear like human infants.”<sup>200</sup> Discerning buyers like Ruan Kuisheng knew how to appraise pelts: one had to know about both the species and its place of origin.

Similar emphasis on regional branding applied to ginseng. As the Jiaqing emperor explained, “the area of Shengjing, Jilin, and Ningguta around Mt. Changbai is this dynasty’s felicitous homeland. It produces ginseng, surely an auspicious plant (Ch: *duancao* 端草).<sup>201</sup> Manchurian ginseng, for example, held a notable advantage over North American varieties, a phenomenon deplored by American merchants. As the Boston merchant Sullivan Dorr explained in a letter home in 1802, Chinese buyers “say that one root of Tartar Ginseng possesses more virtue than a Catty of ours.” Moreover, “neither does it lose its value in consequence of the quantities brought from America for they say their own is infinitally [sic] better,” repeating again that “one root possessing more virtue than a catty of ours.”<sup>202</sup> It was a common complaint. The American naturalist J.C. Reinhardt, traveling aboard the US Frigate *Constitution* to China noted in 1845:

The root of the *Panax quinquefolium* has long been used in China in large quantities, being obtained in Tartary, and also brought from the United States. That from Tartary they consider vastly superior to the

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<sup>200</sup> Ruan Kuisheng, *Chayu kehua, Biji xiaoshuo daguan*, vol.1.3, p. 9.3-4.

<sup>201</sup> *Renzong shilu*, 226: 39a-b.

<sup>202</sup> Howard Corning, ed. “Letters of Sullivan Dorr.” *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society* 67 (1942), 324-325, 346. See also James R. Gibson, *Otter Skins, Boston Ships, and China Goods: the Maritime Fur Trade of the Northwest Coast, 1785-1841* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1992), 100-101.

American, and think it altogether distinct, and are greatly surprized [sic] to hear that we think it identical with our own...I was informed by several Chinese, that their ginseng comes from the ‘cold country,’ (Tartary,) and is found but on one island, which is inhabited by tigers, making it very dangerous to visit it, and that the ginseng is without leaves, and therefore cannot be seen in the day-time, but at night a flame issues from it, at which time the island is visited by those who wish to procure it, and shoot arrows at the place, leaving them to mark the spot, until the next day, when the roots are dug up.<sup>203</sup>

Both the Manchurian origins of the plant, and the story of its obtainment, informed the value of ginseng.

The same logic of appraisal extended to Manchurian pearls: the story and setting of its production defined its commercial identity and brand. Xu Ke’s encyclopedia, the *Qingbai leichao* (1916), notes that “pearls are produced in Jilin, Guangdong, and Yunnan,” he explained, “but Manchurian pearls are only in Jilin.”<sup>204</sup> Within Jilin, Xu Ke placed their production site “more than ten *li* northwest of Ningguta, at a location called E-fu-li, and sixty *li* away at Old Town and the Lin River.” There, the pearls weigh two or three *qian* (10-15 grams) and they come in “rouge red, sky blue, or white” varieties. Yet “if they are not for tribute, than one may not collect them.” Still, he relates stories of people getting rich of the trade. In one account, he relates how during the Kangxi reign (1662-1722), “a young boy bathing in the river caught a mussel, cracked it open, and [found] a large pearl almost one *cun* (3.3 cm) big.”<sup>205</sup> In another story, an old man, surnamed Wang, bought a red sandalwood ruler for his grandson at the Longfu Temple market in Beijing. When the grandson took it home to play, a small tray popped

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<sup>203</sup> J.C. Reinhardt, “Report of J.C. Reinhardt, Naturalist,” *Bulletins* (Washington: National Institute for the Promotion of Science, 1846), 554.

<sup>204</sup> Xu Ke, *Qingbai leichao*, 2280.

<sup>205</sup> Xu Ke, *Qingbai leichao*, 5700.

out, with ten Manchurian pearls hidden within. The old man, “crazy with delight,” used the pearls build a fortune for his household. The family thereafter became known as the “Pearl Wangs.”<sup>206</sup>

Whether “northern pearls” of the Song were materially the same as “eastern pearls” was beside the question. Modern attempts to pinpoint the mussel species that produced antique “eastern pearl” jewelry have failed.<sup>207</sup> Both “northern” and “eastern” pearls were Manchurian pearls. They were tied to a shared commercial brand, defined by a common association with a particular place, people, and state.

## Conclusion

How should we understand fur consumption in the Qing? Was indulgence in fur, as the Kangxi emperor dryly noted, a “minor detail” – an accident of fashion and vanity?<sup>208</sup> Was it a simple case of conspicuous consumption or emulation of the elite, in line with Thorstein Veblen or Georg Simmel’s classic theory of fashion?<sup>209</sup> Or was it more similar to the history of the suit, with its roots in a seventeenth-century attempt to balance English and “Eastern,” native and exotic fashions, or a broader early modern moment where elite fashions converged?<sup>210</sup> Clearly, as Lai Huimin has argued, a form of

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<sup>206</sup> Xu Ke, *Qingbai leichao*, 2126.

<sup>207</sup> The best guess for species came from George Frederick Kunz’s *The Book of the Pearl*, which offered *unio mongolicus*, *unio dahuricus*, and *dipsas plicatus*. See “A Very Important and Magnificent Imperial Pearl Court Necklace (Chao Zhu) Qing Dynasty, 18th Century.”

<sup>208</sup> Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, 284.

<sup>209</sup> Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class: an Economic Study of Institutions* (New York: Macmillan, 1912); George Simmel, “The Philosophy of Fashion,” in *Simmel on Culture: Selected Writings*, eds. David Frisby and Mike Featherstone (London: SAGE, 1997). Cited in Finnane, *Changing Clothes in China*, 47.

<sup>210</sup> On the history of the suit, see David Kutcha, *The Three-Piece Suit and Modern Masculinity: England, 1550-1850* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002). Cited by Pomeranz as an example, like

emulation was indeed at work: fashion spread from the apex of the social order down to the humble but hungry below.<sup>211</sup> Yet an imperial dynamic was also at work: not only did empire provide the umbrella under which ethnic differences could persist, it also created, in the metropole, a new type of casual, cosmopolitan familiarity with the other. The success of furs required recognizing and marketing ethnic difference, but in way which revealed a newfound identification, confidence and experience of empire. The ethnic brand in the market place was safe, that is, only in a world of the high Qing. There was no rival state in Inner Asia, as there was in the Han or the Song dynasties; barbarians were not at the gate – they were sitting comfortably in the house, rummaging through the wardrobe, hanging up their own clothes.

The material culture of fur, in this way, was congruent with efforts to assemble the diversity of empire in other arenas. When, in 1836, the Chinese bannerwoman Yun Zhu (惲珠) compiled *Correct Beginnings: Women's Poetry of Our August Dynasty* (Ch: 國朝閩秀正始集), she included a cross-section of ethnic and regional diversity.

Contained within, for example, were the *Poetry Manuscripts from White Mountain* (*Baishan shi chao* 白山詩鈔), an anthology of Manchu women's poetry compiled by the poetess Ruiyun. Yet Zhu Yun's identity as a poet extended beyond her sense of being a Manchu woman. As she explained in the preface to her *Correct Beginnings*: "As time went on, my own collection grew larger, including some writers from Yunnan, Guizhou, Sichuan, and Guangdong, extending to wives of former Mongol officials and a talented

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Chinoiserie, of "reciprocal borrowings of a styles and fashions." Kenneth Pomeranz, "Social History and World History: From Daily Life to Patterns of Change," *Journal of World History* 18, no. 1 (2007): 75-76.

<sup>211</sup> Lai Huimin, "Qianlongchao Neifuyuan pihuo maimai yu jingcheng shishang," *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan jindaishi yanjiusuo jikan* 21.1 (2003), 101-134.



princess from Hami, female scholars from native chieftains' families, a fisherwoman from the seacoast.” The collection even included poetry by Korean women. Significantly, however, Korean poems were relegated to the appendix: “the tribal areas and Hami belong to the registered population.” Korea did not.<sup>212</sup> For Yun Zhu, though the idiom of civilization was Chinese literary culture, the sense of shared community was imperial. It was bound by Qing territory.

The same can be said for fur: it, too, was naturalized as Chinese, just as Chineseness itself was transformed by it. If originally associated with the Inner Asian and the foreign, the eighteenth century saw fur worn by the very epitomes of Chinese civilization – the descendants of the Confucius, or the descendants of the great Song scholar Fan Zhongyan.<sup>213</sup> Fur was similar, in this way, to pearls, ginseng, and other products from Manchuria, whose value was a function of their origins. Other Manchu-inflected fashions took hold in the Qing; Antonia Finnane cites the example of jackets with a *pipa* cut (Ch: 琵琶襟) growing popular amongst women in Yangzhou, a style originally associated with Manchu riding clothes.<sup>214</sup> Yet few changes in style had the material impact of fur.

As we shall see in the coming chapters, both the scale and character of demand mattered in the history of frontier production sites. Surging demand for fur in particular helped trigger a rush to the frontiers, with dramatic ecological and institutional consequences. Likewise, the emphasis on authentic connections to a type of producer

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<sup>212</sup> Quoted and analyzed in Susan Mann, *Precious Records: Women in China's Long Eighteenth Century* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997): 215-216.

<sup>213</sup> *Gaozong shilu*, 385: 540a.

<sup>214</sup> Finnane, “Fashions in Late Imperial China,” 375. For a photograph, see Finnane, 376.

(hunters) and place (the taiga) itself was enormously important. The tribute system, with rules against dying, poaching, and inter-jurisdictional trade was founded upon this premise of authenticity. Following the commodity chain to Manchuria and Mongolia, the following two chapters examine the mechanism by which these commodities were produced and imported from frontier to metropole. The next chapter opens the discussion with a close look at Manchuria in the years 1750-1850, as its stocks of fresh water oysters, ginseng, and furs grew depleted. It is to that story that we now turn.

## **Chapter 2: Tribute and the Conservation Order in Manchuria**

### **Introduction**

In Chapter 1, the discussion opened with a hunter's tale: Manchurian hunters trapped a live tiger, and sent it as tribute to the emperor. In telling the tale, one imagines a wild forest far from Beijing, a place where tigers still roam, and where tough, Manchu hunters can happen across such animals by chance. Other commodities embodied similar tales. Manchuria was special: oyster pearls populated the rivers, wild ginseng grew in the hills, and jet-black sables stalked the forest. Absent in this vision are the myriad state interventions that made the hunter's tale even possible: the making of restricted areas where trespassing was forbidden, the guard-stations around the perimeter, the patrolmen making arrests, confiscating contraband, razing illegal huts, and uprooting ginseng farms. The very infrastructure undergirding the "tribute system" is rendered invisible. This chapter tells the story of how that infrastructure was put into place. In doing so, it asks: How did the production of pearl-beds, ginseng-fields, sable populations change between 1750 and 1850? How did the Qing state control production and conserve the flora and fauna of Manchuria?

In many ways that infrastructure was unique to Manchuria. Militarized under banner rule, resource management in Manchuria was conspicuously top-down. The most precious resources – pearls, ginseng, and furs – were all monopolized by the court through various forms of "tribute" or "things taken" (Ma: *jafara jaka*; Ch: 貢), a flexible term meaning, in essence, a tax in kind. As the chapter will show, however, there was

not one “tribute system” in Manchuria. Rather, tribute requirements and practices differed by commodity and by commodity; further, practices in Manchuria were institutionally distinct from diplomatic forms of “tribute” managed through the Board of Rites. Pearls, for example, were gathered through the Eight Banners, ginseng through licensed Chinese pickers, and sable through autonomous hunter-banners, such as the Dagūr or Oroncon. In each case, the tribute system was regularly changed and reformed: the rules and practice of pearl-diving, ginseng-picking, and sable-trapping changed significantly throughout the course of the Qing.

Yet despite these critical differences, certain commonalities bound these disparate systems together. Most importantly, I argue, were intensifying problems with scarcity: first ginseng, then pearls, then sable became increasingly scarce in the wild in the years 1750-1850. This scarcity drove many of the key reforms to the system: efforts were made to lower quotas, “rest” the mountains, rivers, and forests, and create stronger territorial controls over production: placards marking borders were erected; patrols were dispatched to strategic choke points; and poachers, illegal cultivators, and other black market operators became the object of annual stings. The stakes were high: Manchuria was the homeland of the Manchus, and the demand for its commodities was high, particularly at court.

The chapter begins with a discussion of pearl tribute, the depletion of Manchurian pearl-oysters, and ensuing efforts by the court to better manage production and secure the territory around pearl-beds. It then shifts to a discussion of ginseng tribute, where the court attempted to work with the merchants and Chinese laborers through a “tribute-farming” system. Finally, the chapter turns to a discussion of sable tribute of the far

north, using the Cicigar “gathering” (Ma: *culgan*) as a case study. In each of these cases, the court was a central actor: it used its prestige and resources to ensure there was enough money and men to bring in required hauls each year. In each case, however, the court had only so much control. Money and men had their limits, profits could be made by subverting the system, and the land could only produce so much. Indeed, by 1850, the mountains and rivers of Manchuria had been worked to exhaustion.

### **Pearls**

The Qing state, through the Eight Banner system, controlled pearl production in Manchuria. In 1700 fresh water oysters were plentiful, and the policing infrastructure was minimal. By 1800, the pearl beds were largely emptied, despite wide-ranging efforts to conserve them, but the policing infrastructure surrounding the pearling territories had grown enormously. Three pressures drove this ecological and institutional shift. First was the court’s sustained demand for pearls, which required intensive production of high-quality Manchurian pearls. Second were the high costs of the pearl harvest. Third was the growing problem of resource depletion in scarcity, which defined the pearl harvest after the 1790s, and which was attributed to a rise in illegal poaching and the black market. To deal with these pressures, the Qing court constantly reformed the pearl tribute system. In the earliest period, between 1647 and 1701, banner pearling teams were established, and the state established an incentive structure at fixed government rates. From 1701 to 1799, the number of pearling teams grew dramatically, poaching grew, the policing infrastructure was elaborated and expanded, and long-term conservation schemes put into place. As the scarcity became the dominant issue,

between 1799 and 1812, rewards for successful hauls were lowered and commuted to silver, and state efforts at conservation and policing redoubled. Let us examine these developments in more detail.

### *Working the Rivers: Tribute as Corvée*

As the Song-era accounts cited in the previous chapter attest, Manchuria's pearl beds had been worked since at least the Liao period, but almost certainly even earlier. The region was home to both "Manchurian pearls" (Ma: *tana*<sup>1</sup>; Ch: 東珠, lit. "eastern pearls") and "standard pearls" (Ma: *nicuhe*; Ch: 正珠). Both species were the product of fresh-water mussels (Ma: *tahūra*).<sup>2</sup> The *Shengjing tongzhi* makes a distinction between elongated "mussels" (Ch: 蚌) and rounded "clams" (Ch: 蛤), which live in either the sea or freshwater, and singles out the freshwater varieties from long and narrow mussels from Ula as producing notably lustrous pearls.<sup>3</sup> A later gazetteer, the *Heilongjiang zhigao*, describes Manchurian pearls as a product of Sungari River mussels (蚌), which live at the bottom of deep waters in clusters, with protective shells that make handling them

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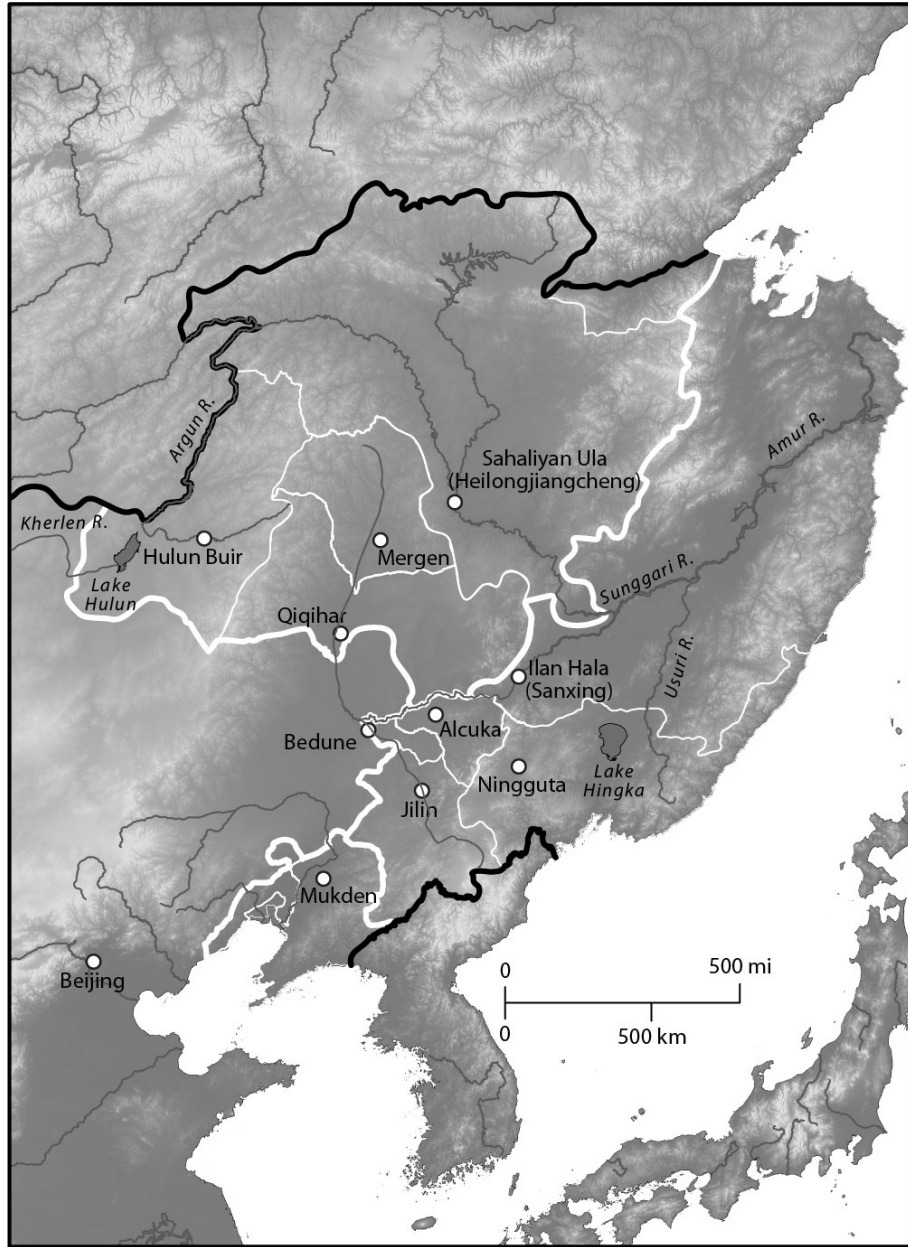
<sup>1</sup> The *Yuzhi Manzhu Menggu Hanzi sanhe qieyin Qingwen jian* (Ch: 御製滿珠蒙古漢字三合切音清文鑒, cf. *Qingwen jian*) gives the Mongol *tan-a* for *tana* and *subud* for *nicuhe*. Note that *subud* is the common translation for the Buddhist "pearl," cf. the "pearl rosary" (Mo: *subud erike*). *Qingwen jian*, 21: 60a. Lessing traces the etymology to the Turkic *tana* and Persian *dāna*. Ferdinand D. Lessing, *Mongolian-English Dictionary* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960), 776.

<sup>2</sup> I have given the customary translations used in bilingual Qing documents. The *Daqing quanshu* translates *tana* as 東珠 or 大珠, *nicuhe* as simply 珠, and *tahūra* as 蚌也 ("mussel, oyster"). *Daqing quanshu*, 8: 1a, 3: 37b, and 8: 2b. The *Qingwen jian* translates *tana* as 東珠, *nicuhe* as 珍珠, and *tahūra* as 蛤蜊 ("clam"). *Qingwen jian*, 21: 60a, 21: 60a, and 31: 44a.

<sup>3</sup> *Shengjing tongzhi*, 27: 36b. *Jilin tongzhi* describes them the same, citing the *Shengjing tongzhi* verbatim. *Jilin tongzhi*, 34: 27b. The *Shengjing tongzhi* says little else about the pearls – only that the mussels (Ch: 蚌蛤) of the Hun and Tong rivers produce them, that they are harvested between the fourth and eighth lunar months, and that they are submitted as tribute in the first month.

dangerous if one is not careful. “The pearls are light blue in color. Big ones are half a *cun* in length (approx. 1.67 cm) and small ones are pea-sized.”<sup>4</sup>

Map 1: Qing Manchuria



<sup>4</sup> *Heilongjiang zhigao*, 15: 32a-b. The text describes the pearl beds of the Little Yijimi River and the Suileng Mountains as famous for their notably large shells and lustrous pearls.

1644, the court maintained control of the resources through the banner system and the Imperial Household Department. At the time of the Qing conquest, all noblemen of princely rank (*wang* or *gong*) were required to supply men to gather pearls and sable pelts in the Ula region.<sup>5</sup> In 1650 (SZ7), members of the imperial lineage were excused from the obligation, and pearling became fully the responsibility of local bannermen.<sup>6</sup> Selected bannermen were pressed each summer into pearling teams and required to submit twenty pearls each. Pearl tribute was operated on the ground through the Eight Banner system, divided into the “three upper banners” (Plain Yellow, Bordered Yellow, and Plain White) and the “five lower banners” (Bordered White, Plain Red, Bordered Red, Plain Blue, Bordered Red), with a disproportionate number of pearling teams belonging to the upper three banners, which were the personal property of the emperor.<sup>7</sup>

Through the Eight Banners, a system of incentives encouraged production of high quality pearls demanded by the court. The bigger and brighter the pearl, the larger the reward: it was not enough that Manchuria produce pearls, it had to produce the large, luminous pearls needed at court. For this reason, records were kept of the quantity and quality of all harvested Manchurian pearls (Ma: *tana*) and regular pearls (Ma: *nicuhe*); *tana* pearl quality was distinguished on a scale ranging from “poor quality” (Ma: *ehe tana*) to “slight brightness” (Ma: *majige elden bisire*), “one-sided” (Ma: *emu dere*), “two-sided” (*juwe dere*), and “high-quality” (Ma: *sain*).<sup>8</sup> As a rule of thumb (and as one might

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<sup>5</sup> *Daqing huidian shili*, 10: 278.1.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

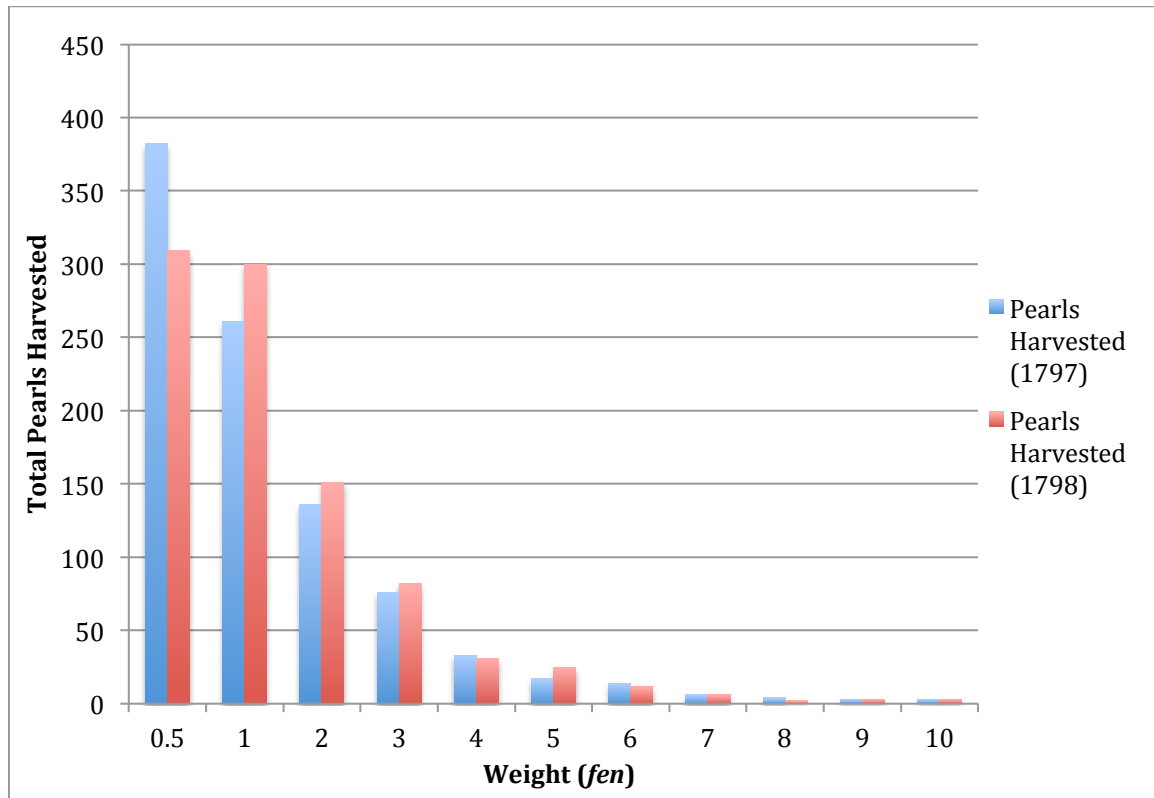
<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* On the upper three banners, see Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, 79.

<sup>8</sup> In the published Hunchun records, only the tally from 1806 distinguishes between the latter four types of *tana* pearl. See *Hunchun fudutong yamen dang'an*, 25: 64 (JQ11.8.10). Records for “poor quality” *tana* pearls are found under tallies for 1786 and 1790. In 1786, sixty-five poor-quality *tana* were harvested at



expect), large pearls were exponentially fewer than smaller pearls; a year's harvest in 1797 took in 3 pearls weighing ten *fen* (.38 kilograms or 1.9 carats) and 261 weighing one *fen* (see Figure 16).<sup>9</sup>

Figure 16: Tribute Pearl Sizes, 1797-1798



In 1647 (SZ4), the value of tributary Manchurian pearls weighing eight *fen* (about 3 kilograms or 40 carats) or more was set at ten sable pelts per *fen*, or the equivalent of eighty pelts for a single pearl. Ounce for ounce, smaller pearls were valued less by the court; thus a pearl weighing .5 *fen* was worth a single sable pelt: it was sixteen times

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Burhatu, sixty-three at Gahari, and seventy-three at Hailan. In 1790, the figures dropped drastically to eleven at Burhatu and ten at Gahari. *Hunchun fudutong yamen dang'an*, 15: 155 (QL51.8.15), 18: 311 (QL55.8.10).

<sup>9</sup> MWLF 3572.24.164.966 (JQ2.9.13), 3587.32.165.1553 (JQ3.9.27).

lighter but eighty times less valuable (See Figure 17).<sup>10</sup> The value of regular pearls (珍珠, as opposed to *tana* pearls, 東珠) harvested in Manchuria was still less: one sable pelt per *fen*. In 1673, the exchange rate was amended to account for luminosity: Manchurian pearls that were only moderately luminescent were set at two-thirds value; pearls that shined on only one face were made half value, and those without any shine made one-third value.<sup>11</sup>

Figure 17: Pearl to Sable Tribute Exchange Rates, 1647

Pearl weight ( <i>fen</i> )	Sable pelts per <i>fen</i> of pearl	Equivalent Sable to Pearl exchange rate
8	10	80
7.5	9	67.5
7	9	63
6.5	8	52
6	8	48
5.5	5	27.5
5	5	25
4.5	5	22.5
4	5	20
3.5	5	17.5
3	5	15
2.5	5	12.5
2	5	10
1.5	5	7.5
1	5	5
0.5	2	1

Throughout the eighteenth century, strong incentives were put in place to encourage production over the minimum tribute quota. In 1701, the system was

<sup>10</sup> *Daqing huidian shili*, 10: 278.2.

<sup>11</sup> *Daqing huidian shili*, 10: 279.1.

significantly reformed. First, quotas were lowered. That year, there were 33 pearling teams in action. Whereas each team previously was responsible for twenty pearls, the requirement thereafter was lowered to sixteen first- or second-class luminescent Manchurian pearls; regular pearls or insufficiently luminescent Manchurian pearls were not accepted. Altogether, the thirty-three teams were thus annually responsible for 528 top-grade pearls.<sup>12</sup> For every pearl over the quota, the team's foreman received two bolts of blue cotton cloth (Ch: 毛青布). For every thirty pearls over quota, the court offered an additional two bolts of blue cloth, and the commanding brigadier (Ch: 總管翼長) received in addition one bolt of satin (彭緞), the lieutenant (Ch: 驍騎校) a bolt of silk (Ch: 潞紬), and corporal (Ch: 領催) were rewarded in accordance with their banner's share. If they presented a thousand pearls over quota, the commanding brigadier received a full promotion. For every pearl under quota, on the other hand, the team foremen were whipped ten times. Likewise, for every ten pearls under quota, the commanding brigadier was docked a month pay, and the corporal whipped ten times; if twenty pearls under quota, the brigadier was docked a year's salary and demoted in rank, and the corporal whipped 100 times.<sup>13</sup>

The system was increasingly streamlined to manage the physical and financial costs per bannerman. More men were drafted into the system, with each given higher compensations and a lower expected output of pearls. In 1733, there were altogether seventy-six pearling units (42 in the top three banners, 34 in the bottom five).<sup>14</sup> By 1799,

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<sup>12</sup> *Daqing huidian shili*, 10: 278.1.

<sup>13</sup> *Daqing huidian shili*, 10: 282.1.

<sup>14</sup> *Daqing huidian shili*, 10: 279.1.

there were ninety-four. Other tributary obligations were eliminated to allow for growth. A team of 300 honey-gathering households in 1750, for instance, were divided into 12 pearling units, required to annually submit 16 pearls each; there had originally been 450 honey-households, of which 150 were to keep collecting honey, and the designated three hundred, which were then assigned to ginseng picking, were to switch to pearling.<sup>15</sup> In 1767, an additional 150 honey gatherers were ordered to switch to pearling, with the men divided into teams of thirty; these included one foreman (Ch: 頭目) and two assistant-foremen (Ch: 副頭目). At the same, the quota per hunters were lowered: in 1754 each hunter was responsible for an average .667 pearls per person; in 1767, the quota per person had dipped to .5 pearls per person.<sup>16</sup> The foremen were paid 1.5 taels per month; the vice-foreman 1 tael per month, and and pearlors .5 taels per month. (By comparison, Eight Banner pearling teams were better off: foreman were paid two taels of silver per month, and pearlors one tael of silver per month; in 1690 the salary for bottom banner and top banner officials on both pearling and sturgeon fishing missions was equalized.<sup>17</sup>). In 1767, they received a raise: from .5 to 1 tael per month, and the foreman raised to 2 taels per month.<sup>18</sup>

Quotas were lowered and rewards for successful hauls grew, in part, because the burden of pearling service could be ruinous for bannermen. The work was difficult, and the distances travelled, over harsh terrain, were immense. The rivers used for pearl-

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<sup>15</sup> *Daqing huidian shili*, 10: 278.1, 279.2.

<sup>16</sup> *Daqing huidian shili*, 10: 278.2, 279.2.

<sup>17</sup> *Daqing huidian shili*, 10.283.2

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

harvesting in Jilin were located between the Sunggari River and Ilan Hala (Sanxing), along the Wengke and Ton rivers. In 1796, Gilu described the pearl harvesting grounds as “vast” (Ma: *onco leli*), with the distances between the harvested rivers “ranging widely between several hundred *li* and two or three thousand *li*.” The enormous distances rendered thorough policing of the waterways impossible. Flooding could similarly make the rivers impassable, disrupting policing and harvesting alike. In some cases, such as when local beds were being rested, it could take months for a team to arrive at their designated harvesting site. In 1796, for example, the teams from Lalin and Alcuka departed on May 16, but did not arrive at the pearl beds at on the Elcuke River until August 7. The harvested pearls through September 4, then set back off for the return journey home.<sup>19</sup>

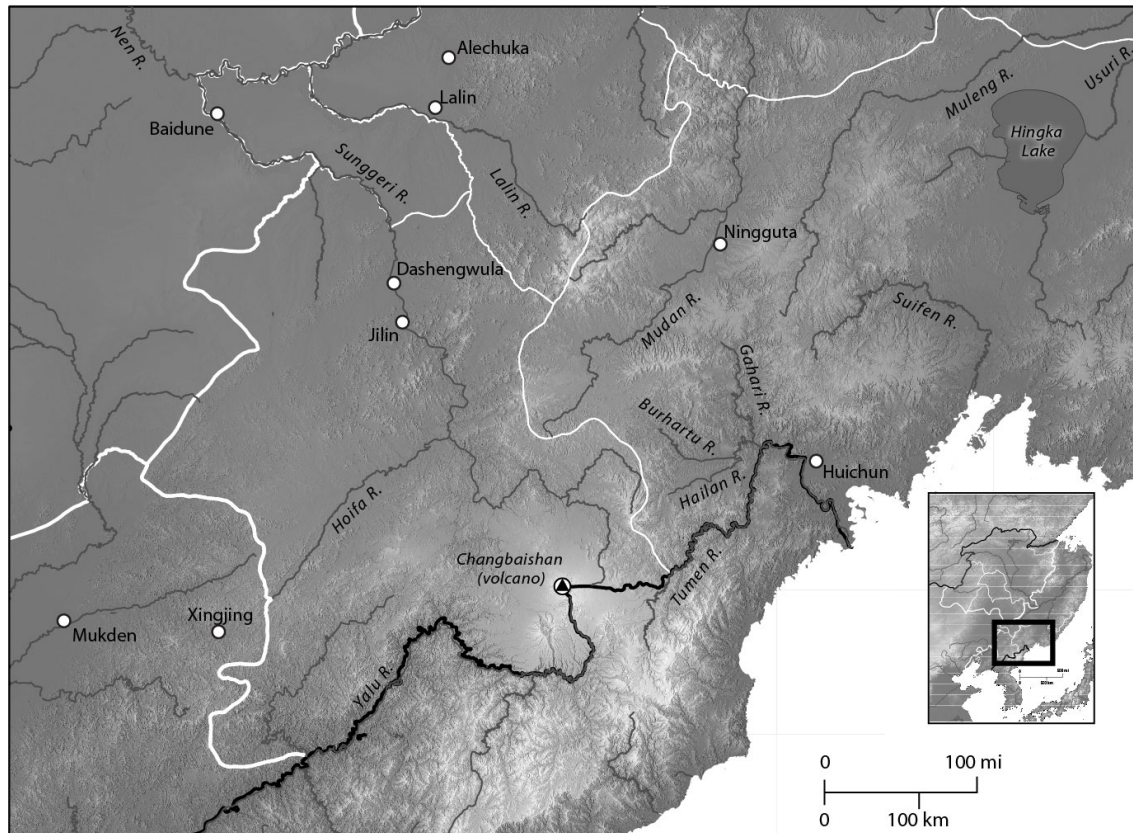
Local archival records from Hunchun, only recently made available, provide a uniquely fine-grained look into the mechanics of the pearl tribute in action. Pearling teams departed from Hunchun each spring in the third lunar month. Each military department in Jilin was responsible for maintaining its own pearling teams. In the late Qianlong period, teams split up along riverine and land routes, forming long trains of either canoes or horses. On average, there was one officer for every twenty regular bannermen, and only the officers rode horses; everyone else marched. Most teams kept relatively close to Hunchun, heading west to the Burhatu, Gahari, and Hailan Rivers, which drained south into Tumen, or heading northeast to the Suifun River (Ru: Razdalnaya) system, which flowed into Amur Bay and the Pacific. One or two teams,

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<sup>19</sup> MWLF 3541.36.162.872 (JQ1.4.9), 3549.30.162.2717 (JQ1.9.13).

totaling up to thirty-five men, sometimes travelled to Ningguta to work the Mudan, Fulgiyaha, and other rivers further northeast of Hunchun.<sup>20</sup>

Map 2: Manchuria's Pearling and Ginseng Picking Zone



The pearling teams (Ma: *tana butara meyen*) were treated as military units, with strict supervision and discipline demanded from start to finish. Before departing from Jilin city, the highest ranking authorities in the district inspected the marching trains; in Jilin's provincial seat, the military governor himself reviewed the assembled bannermen. While in the field, the catch of *tana* and *nihuhe* were wrapped up, with the seal of the Jilin military governor's yamen affixed to the outside, the total catch recorded in a

<sup>20</sup> In the Qianlong period, pearling teams that took the water route to Ningguta went to the Hairan and Šansi rivers (1786), Hairan, Šansi, and Malhūri rivers (1790), and the Little Hairan and Hūlan Geo region of the Hairan's main branch (1795). *Hunchun fudutong yamen dang'an*, 15: 19 (QL51.5.20), 18.311 (QL55.8.10), and 19.375 (QL60.3.14).

register, and a summary report forwarded to Beijing each month. The supervising commandant (Ma: *uheri da*) was responsible for maintaining discipline, and conducted personal tours of the selected sites in the Sunggari and Sahaliyan River regions.<sup>21</sup> The pearling teams themselves doubled as police units, sweeping through and inspecting the villages and strategic chokepoints (*oyonggo kamni bade*) they passed through on their return.<sup>22</sup> Upon their return, troops were dispatched to all key strategic passes and towns in the area, and written messages sent to Sahaliyan Ula, Ningguta, Bedune, Ilan Hala, and Alcuka alerting local officials of their planned movements. Within days of returning, the supervising commandant was required to make a tally of the types and sizes of all pearls collected, send a summary memorial to the throne, then dispatch the box of pearls under guard to Beijing. Tallies from Aihūn and Ningguta were compiled and sent separately.<sup>23</sup>

The financial burden was significant. As they spent the whole summer in the backcountry, each person was allotted .6 *hule* of grain and a pack horse. The train was enlarged further by additional pack horses to carry camp supplies. They also travelled with muskets for guarding the camps, with one catty of gunpowder and one catty of lead balls. Throughout the Jiaqing reign, records were kept of the names and ranks of all commanding officers, the total number of bannermen, horses, grain, and muskets for each

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<sup>21</sup> MWLF 3667.47.171.2659 (JQ9.4.30).

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> MWLF 3549.30.162.2717 (JQ1.9.13). A *funde bošokū* was responsible each year for supervising the transport of the box of pearls to Beijing.

marching train (see Figure 18).<sup>24</sup> Separate tallies were kept for trains to the pearl beds around Ningguta (see Figure 19).<sup>25</sup>

Figure 18: Hunchun Marching Trains to the Suifun and Burhatu Pearl Beds, 1798-1819

Year	Rivers Harvested	People	Pack Horses	Grain (hulu)	Musket sets
1798	Suifun, Burhatu, Gahari, Hailan	112	n/a	67.8	2
1805	Muren, Burhatu, Hailan, Gahari	100	104	60	2
1807	Muren, Burhatu, Hailan, Gahari	66	67	39.6	2
1812	Burhatu, Gahari	66	69	39.6	1
1814	Little Suifun, Burhatu, Hailan	88	92	52.8	2
1815	Little Suifun, Burhatu, Hailan	88	92	52.8	2
1818	Muren, Little Suifun, Burhatu, Hailan	85	89	51	2
1819	Muren, Burhatu, Hailan, Gahari	85	89	51	2

Figure 19: Hunchun Marching Trains to Ningguta Region Pearl Beds, 1798-1819

Year	Location	People	Pack Horses	Grain (hulu)	Musket, powder, and ball
1798	Emhen Sorbi, Dogon, Mudan	13	20		
1807	Mudan, Fulgiyaha	32	34	19.2	1
1812	Mudan, Fulgiyaha	32	34	19.2	1
1814	Emhe, Juru, Dogon, Fulgiyaha	35	37	21	1

Pearling itself was difficult labor. The work began and ended with the long march through difficult terrain to the harvesting site. It then required diving in ice-cold streams, rushing with fresh snowmelt from the Changbai and Sikhote-Alin mountain

<sup>24</sup> *Hunchun fudutong yamen dang'an*, 21: 6 (JQ3.5.1), 23: 167 (JQ10.4.5), 25: 64 (JQ11.8.10), 25: 263 (JQ12.5.1), 26: 117 (JQ17.4.1), 27: 468 (JQ19.8.10), 28: 298 (JQ20.4.24), 29: 271 (JQ23.8.25), 32: 302 (JQ24.8.10).

<sup>25</sup> *Hunchun fudutong yamen dang'an*, 21: 6 (JQ3.5.1), 25: 263 (JQ12.5.1), 26: 117 (JQ17.4.1), 27: 468 (JQ19.8.10), 26: 469 (JQ17.8.15), 27: 468 (JQ19.8.10).



ranges. The difficulty of the work, and the isolation of the sites, pushed others to desert. In 1798, for example, a thirty-six year old pearl-hunter named Ajingga (described as dark-skinned, pockmarked, and wearing blue pants, a felt hat, and sheepskin boots) disappeared just four days into his tour.<sup>26</sup>

The work was also dangerous, and deaths occurred on the job. Given the seriousness of the tribute, the court required all drownings to be reported. In a disaster in 1809, for example, a man was killed and pearls lost when a canoe capsized in the Arcin river basin, in the jurisdiction of Aihūn. That year, corporal (Ma: *funde bošokū*) Bayamboo's team had managed to collect six *tana* pearls between .8 and 2 *fen* (.3 to .76 kilograms, or 1.5 to 3.8 carats) as well as two regular pearls. Having packed the pearls in sacks affixed with official seals, they started up the Jan River, when Bayamboo's canoe crashed into a rock: Bayamboo, three pearlers, and the box containing the tribute – as well as all the remaining food and supplies – plunged into the water. One man drowned and all the supplies, as well as the pearls, were lost. Bayamboo, for failing to avert the accident, was charged with recklessness: “Manchurian pearls are the emperor's tribute....he should have been [extra] cautious, and not causing a man to drown.” The deceased bannerman's family was awarded 12 taels of silver for suffering a death in service.<sup>27</sup>

### ***The Rivers Rest***

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<sup>26</sup> *Hunchun fudutong yamen dang'an*, 21: 69 (JQ3.7.6).

<sup>27</sup> MWLF 3775.28.179.3221 (JQ14.10.13). Per the practice of the FHA, the original rescript was not included in the microfilm, and I was unable to follow up on the case.

The human and material costs of pearl harvest were major concerns of the Qing court. Another major concern was non-state actors trespassing on the pearl beds and destroying them. When moratoriums on pearl harvesting began in the late nineteenth century, both were cited as primary justifications for a new practice. They were, in fact, inseparable problems: the harder it was to find productive pearl beds, the greater the burden on bannermen.

One solution lay in tightening state controls over the pearl-producing territories. As early as 1682 (KX20), the Kangxi emperor ordered that any “Ula man” in Ningguta found guilty of entering restricted rivers to collect mussels (Ch:蛤蜊), honey, river otters, or Manchurian pearls would be punished using the rules used for ginseng poaching: death by strangulation of leaders, two months in the cangue and 100 lashes for followers; two months in the cangue and 100 lashes was also reserved for anyone found guilty of buying or selling government passports allowing entry into the area.<sup>28</sup>

Increasingly, however, the court began to see rogue bannermen, rather than illegal Chinese migrants, as the key threat to the system. In 1724, the Yongzheng emperor attempted to deal with pearl trafficking using the Great Wall, incentivizing guardsmen posted at the Shanhaiguan gate to intercept contraband. If guardsmen captured small amounts of pearls, no extra reward was called for. Yet guardsmen who captured 400 *fen* of pearls or more were rewarded with five times their weight in silver, while their commanding officers received citations or, if they oversaw the capture over 1,600 *fen* of pearls, a full promotion. Since the value of Manchurian pearls depended both on their size and luster, rewards were adjusted accordingly. On the hand, in cases were pearl

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<sup>28</sup> *Daqing huidian shili*, 10: 280.1.

smugglers successfully crossed into China, the commanding officers were demoted three ranks, and the patrolmen caned 80 times, in accordance with punishments for not following the most important laws. If collaboration and corruption were brought to light, the commanding officer was removed from office and the patrolman caned 100 times, with a month in the cangue.<sup>29</sup>

Despite these prohibitions, in 1733 (YZ11), freshwater mussels (Ch:河中蚌蛤) were reported to have become relatively scarce, prompting the first conservation effort. After an investigation, the Yongzheng emperor ordered that an exchange be established for top-grade pearls: 1<sup>st</sup> rank pearls were made equal to five regular pearls; 2<sup>nd</sup> rank equal to four pearls, 3<sup>rd</sup> rank equal to three, and 4<sup>th</sup> equal to two, to make compensation more fair

In the early Qianlong period, poaching grew increasingly serious. In 1741, the assistant military lieutenant-governor of Fengtian, Jakuna, described Jilin as “the Manchu homeland” (Ch: 滿洲根本; lit. “the Manchu root”) and argued that having a floating civilian population (Ch: 流民) was to no benefit (Ch: 裨益), and pushed for a closing off of Bedune to immigration; it was to be maintained as homesteads and pastures of bannermen. In the same memorial, he further proposed redoubling of the patrolling of Jilin’s production sites of ginseng and Manchurian pearls as well as roads and waterways leading to the Changbaishan and Ussuri. With the danger posed by poaching already apparent, the Qianlong emperor agreed.<sup>30</sup> It was a costly option: *karun* were established near the pearl beds in the Muleng and Suifen regions to capture ginseng poachers. Then,

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<sup>29</sup> *Daqing huidian shili*, 10: 280.2.

<sup>30</sup> *Gaozong shilu*, 142: 1045.

in 1755, the practice of staffing the *karun* and the pearl collecting missions separately was abandoned: the Qianlong emperor ordered that the Ula hunters collecting pearls take on the double duty of patrolmen themselves.<sup>31</sup> Finally, in 1781, the Qianlong emperor ordered a five-year moratorium on the pearl harvest.

Yet the pearl beds continued to suffer. Not only was the quantity of pearls decreasing each year, their size and luster was as well. Manchuria's rivers, it seemed, were losing their character. In the summer of 1795, the Qianlong emperor fumed that high quality pearls in Manchuria had become scarce:

During the Shunzhi, Kangxi, and Yongzheng reign periods, the *tana* pearls in storage were each high quality (Ma: *sain*), and the harvest of high-quality *tana* pearls was plentiful. Yet for several years the pearls hunted have not been high-quality at all. It will not do if the pearl beds (Ma: *tana tucire ba*) in the Sunggari River area do not produce pearls anywhere. If we rest [the pearl beds] for several years, we will get high-quality pearls [again]. Yet because the territory is vast and there are many rivers and creeks, it cannot be guarded in its entirety, and it is impossible to quash poaching....[High-quality *tana* pearls] are most certainly sold to the rich merchants in this territory (Ma: *golo*) [i.e. Jilin] and other merchants who buy ginseng, and then they are smuggled into the interior. There must be no allowance for crossing the border and then conducting these sales (Ma: *ainaha seme jecen ci tucimbi teni uncara kooli akū*).<sup>32</sup>

He thus ordered the military governor of Jilin, Siolin, to crackdown on the people from the Chinese interior running the black-market. The edict was passed down to Siolin, and from Siolin to all of the territory's assistant military lieutenant-governors (Ma: *meiren i janggin*).<sup>33</sup> Conservation involved more than just policing for poachers and illegal

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<sup>31</sup> *Gaozong shilu*, 493: 194.

<sup>32</sup> *Hunchun fudutong yamen dang'an*, 19.468 (QL60.6.14).

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

sellers. It also included strategies such as resting the river beds and expanding operations to new sites: production was to remain high.

In 1796, in line with the new imperial orders, Siolin confirmed that his men were “resting the rivers where oysters have grown scarce from previous harvests” (*fe butaha tahūra seri oho bira be teyebufi*) and “strictly investigating illegal pearl-harvesting” (*hūlhame butara be ciralame baicabume*). In the meantime, Jilin bannermen had expanded pearling operations to the Ercuke River, where mussels were “plentiful, of good quality, and large” (*elgiyen sain amba*). That year, fifty-eight teams departed for the hunt.<sup>34</sup> In 1797, fifty-eight teams departed the provincial seat for the Ercuke River in a train of 70 canoes.<sup>35</sup> It was hardly a drop off: the previous summer, eighty canoes had been active.<sup>36</sup> They proved almost as productive. They split up along the Sarin, Ton, Jari and other productive rivers between the Sunggari and Amur and hunted through *chushu* in late August.<sup>37</sup> That year, however, the White Lotus Rebellion in Sichuan erupted. News reached the pearl harvesters on JQ2.7.20 that they would be pressed into service, and that they should begin sending by the postal route horses, carts, and men. As the news arrived at the tail end of the harvest, the pearling teams managed to bring in 742 *tana* and regular pearls combined.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> MWLF 3541.24.162.814 (JQ1.4.10).

<sup>35</sup> MWLF 3562.5.163.2235 (JQ2.4.9), MWLF 3562.10.163.2255 (JQ2.4.9).

<sup>36</sup> MWLF 3541.24.162.814 (JQ1.4.10).

<sup>37</sup> MWLF 3562.5.163.2235 (JQ2.4.9). The date referenced for their return is the fourteenth solar term (Ch: 處暑; Ma: *halhūn bedereke*). Defined as the day the sun reaches an ecliptic longitude of 150°, a month before the autumn equinox, the term falls usually around August 23 in the Gregorian calendar.

<sup>38</sup> MWLF 3571.28.164.742 (JQ2.9.6).

Yet achieving minimum quotas remained a problem. In 1799, the Jiaqing emperor ordered another moratorium on pearl harvesting, this time for three years, starting the summer of 1800. The moratorium was reinforced with the establishment of *karun* and the policing of chokepoints along the waterways. The policy was justified on three grounds: first, it granted a reprieve to the pearl harvesters; second, it allowed the mussels to recuperate; and third, it reflected a life-affirming empathy of the emperor. “I have a tenderness toward life” (Ch: 朕憐惜物命), the emperor explained, “it is not for treasuring my pearls.” (Ch: 並非珍愛其珠也). It was worth emphasizing: the emperor was not driven by greed, but for love of life.<sup>39</sup>

The year 1799, in this regard, marks a major turning point. For the first time incentives were lowered: thereafter, the return rates established in 1701 were diminished by 30%.<sup>40</sup> In 1812, finding that the pearling teams were simply trading away the vast sums of silk they received each year anyway, the court commuted the silk payments to the equivalent market rate in silver.<sup>41</sup>

Yet throughout the first decade of the nineteenth century, oysters continued to be reported “scarce” (Ma: *seri*) on the Hūlan and Neme Rivers in Heilongjiang district, the Suifun and Muren Rivers in Ningguta district, and pearl beds were ordered to be rested for “several years” to allow the mussels to be better “cultivated” (Ma: *fesumbure ujime*).

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<sup>39</sup> *Renzong shilu*, 56: 741.

<sup>40</sup> *Daqing huidian shili*, 10: 283.1.

<sup>41</sup> *Renzong shilu*, 254: 429-430; *Daqing huidian shili*, 10: 283.1.

The problem was growing increasingly severe, as pearl harvests failed to recover. Pearl bed production around Hunchun fell precipitously after 1786 (See Figure 20).<sup>42</sup>

Figure 20: Pearl Harvests from the Burhatu, Gahari, and Hailan Rivers, 1786-1819

Year	Burhatu		Gahari		Hailan		TOTAL	
	<u>tana</u> <u>pearls</u>	<u>regular</u> <u>pearls</u>	<u>tana</u> <u>pearls</u>	<u>regular</u> <u>pearls</u>	<u>tana</u> <u>pearls</u>	<u>regular</u> <u>pearls</u>	<u>tana</u> <u>pearls</u>	<u>regular</u> <u>pearls</u>
1786	87	14	78	21	75	15	240	50
1787	36		25		42		103	
1790	18	8	17	7			35	15
1806	18	16	10	16	16	18	44	50
1812	53	49	20	12			73	61
1814	42	44					42	44
1818	13	0					13	0
1819	16	11			20	11	36	22

The declines in Hunchun were matched by declines from throughout Jilin; after 1795 the pearl yield dropped threefold (See Figure 21).

Figure 21: Pearl Harvest Tallies, 1795-1815<sup>43</sup>

Year	Total Pearls
1795	2890
1796	2753
1797	2042
1798	1975
1801	369
1813	1158
1814	642
1815	895

<sup>42</sup> *Hunchun fudutong yamen dang'an*, 15: 155 (QL51.8.15), 16: 226 (QL52.8.21), 18: 311 (QL55.8.10), 25: 64 (JQ11.8.10), 29: 271 (JQ23.8.25), 15: 19 (QL51.5.20).

<sup>43</sup> NWFZXD 131.560.125 (JQ1.10.26), 131.560.125 (JQ1.10.26), 131.455.45 (JQ6.9.28), 132.462.1 (JQ18.11.1), 133.466.93 (JQ19.10.29), 135.473.142 (JQ20.11.3); MWLF 3572.24.164.966 (JQ2.9.13), 3587.32.165.1553 (JQ3.9.27).

What was causing such precipitous declines? To the court, the answer was simple: poachers and the black-market were to blame. Scarcity signaled an enforcement problem, and so as pearl production declined, the policing infrastructure grew. In 1808 Gilu was thus ordered to dispatch troops to police for mussel poachers around the surviving pearl beds. That year, 61 teams of legal harvesters proceeded to the Erecuke River, where there were “still good mussels for pearling.” They departed on JQ13.4.28, while Gilu led a group of separate teams to the Sunggari, Neyen, Salun, and Lalin Rivers as well as the Itun and Lipcun Rivers in Mukden territory. While hunting pearls, the teams were ordered to be on the lookout for poachers. After August 23, the bannermen were ordered to continue patrolling strategic passes (Ma: *oyonggo kamni*) before returning to their home posts.<sup>44</sup>

In 1821, nineteen years after the previous three-year moratorium on pearl-harvesting was lifted, and in anticipation of the twenty-year anniversary, the Daoguang emperor reinstated another three-year ban on pearling. As in the years 1800-1802, there was again a need to “restore the oysters” (Ma: *tahūra be mutubume ujibume*). The justification was twofold: to “conserve the energy of hunters and lovingly care for the lives of oysters” (Ma: *buthai ursei hūsun be malhūšara tahūra i ergen be hairara gūnin*). To enforce the edict and curb poaching, he ordered *karun* established at river mouths and mountain passes. In the summer of 1822, the first year of the three-year moratorium, troops were dispatched to survey the area, and the authorities in Heilongjiang and Jilin clarified which jurisdictions were responsible for which territories. Guardsmen were to maintain their posts at *karun* throughout the summer. Hunchun, for one, was divided into

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<sup>44</sup> MWLF 3738.33.177.2256 (JQ13.4.9).



six policing zones, each with its own *karun*: the Burhantu and Hailan Rivers were patrolled from Darhūwan Holo *karun*; the Gahari River from the Gahari *karun*; the Hunchun River from Amidan *karun*; the Fiyan, Niowanggiyan Šeri, and Mongol Rivers from Mongol *karun*; the Gihin and Yancu Rivers from Situ *karun*; and the Jurun River from the Jurun *karun*.<sup>45</sup>

In 1825, with the conclusion of the resting period, the pearl harvest resumed.<sup>46</sup> Yet the harvest proved a disappointment. In 1827, the military governor of Jilin, Luceng, reported the river's tribute pearls to be "small and utterly useless." The emperor concluded that "if we hunt [for pearls] annually, then the mussels will be ravished," while the effort and suffering of the pearl harvesters only increased. He thus proposed resting the pearl beds to "allow the mussels to be nurtured and grow." At the same time, he ordered that the military governors of Heilongjiang and Jilin reorganize *karun* along the roads and waterways leading to the pearl-beds, situated at strategic passes and the river's mouths: poachers had to be put under arrest. Troops were dispatched to the new guard-posts that summer.<sup>47</sup> Another three-year moratorium was issued in 1827, by now the standard response to the crisis.<sup>48</sup> The pearl beds were rested continuously thereafter: the moratorium was reissued from 1830-1832, and still again in the years 1833-1835.<sup>49</sup> Every three years, requests were put in to open up the pearl beds, and each time the

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<sup>45</sup> *Hunchun fudutong yamen dang'an*, 33: 333 (DG2.2.5).

<sup>46</sup> *Hunchun fudutong yamen dang'an*, 37: 50 (DG5.2.22).

<sup>47</sup> MWLF 4045.37.197.1818 (DG7.3.25).

<sup>48</sup> *Hunchun fudutong yamen dang'an*, 38: 68 (DG8.4.21), 39: 8 (DG8.5.1).

<sup>49</sup> See *Hunchun fudutong yamen dang'an*, 43: 338 (DG.14.10.15) for the Manchu text of the edict. The edict was also recorded in the *Veritable Records*; see *Xuanzong shilu*, 222: 319.

emperor declined. As he succinctly rescripted in 1842: “Stop the hunt for these upcoming years!” (Ma: *jidere aniya kemuni butara be joo*).<sup>50</sup> Jilin’s pearl beds were depleted.

### **Ginseng**

As with pearls, ginseng production was likewise a reflection of the strong top-down structure of the Manchurian political system, premised upon robust territorial controls. Moreover, as with pearls, the nature of demand shaped the methods of production. High sustained demand necessitated long-term conservation strategies, while the desire for authenticity inspired significant quality controls: access to the ginseng-producing mountains was restricted; farming and alternative methods of production were prohibited. Yet, again, the high costs of maintaining the system, and inability to control corruption and black market activity, revealed limits to the Manchurian conservation order, and throughout the years 1750-1850, wild ginseng grew increasingly scarce; indeed, the decline of wild ginseng stocks became pronounced at least a half-century prior to collapse of oyster populations. Significantly, however, the logic of conservation, driven by costs, demand, and by what appears to be a nascent ideology of “loving nature,” along with the toolkit of conservation, including rotating harvests and border controls, were similar for both pearls and ginseng.

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<sup>50</sup> *Hunchun fudutong yamen dang'an*, 46: 286 (DG18.11.28). In 1846 and 1848 the moratorium was yet again reinstated. *Hunchun fudutong yamen dang'an*, 58: 230 (DG26.11.20), 61: 273 (DG28.4.9). Further research is needed into the pearl harvest in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. One-year reprieves are recorded in the *Veritable Records* for 1874, 1893, 1895, 1899, 1907, 1909, and 1910. *Muzong shilu*, 1: 84; *Dezong shilu*, 331: 252, 379: 958, 452: 966, 580: 679; *Sundi shilu*, 24: 458, 44-798. In 1846 and 1848 the moratorium was yet again reinstated.

These overarching similarities tied pearl and ginseng production despite the fact that the mechanisms and practice of “tribute” were significantly different. In the case of pearls, the resource was extracted through the Eight Banners; bannermen pressed into service had no choice in the matter. Ginseng tribute, on the other hand, was collected through a form of tax farming: after 1744, the Qing state granted licenses to private Han Chinese collectors, who were obliged to submit a quota of ginseng to the local government. Licensed pickers could then sell all surplus ginseng on the open market, unlike pearl collectors, who exchanged all extra pearls for set exchange rates of silk or silver.

### ***Working the Mountains: “Tribute Farming”***

This “tribute farming” system took shape over the course of the first century of Qing rule, and was inseparable from broader efforts to protect the Qing court’s monopoly and manage poaching. Prior to 1744, a variety of mechanisms were used to collect ginseng, including both banner corvee and licensing. The Three Banner Bondservant Captain of Shengjing (Ch: 盛京上三旗包衣佐領) was charged with oversight, and 150 ginseng pickers drafted to collect tribute each year.<sup>51</sup> Only one location was open to the harvest: the Ussuri region. In 1744, a major reform was pushed through. First, a Ginseng Bureau (官參局) was established, operated under the military governor of Shengjing’s yamen. Second, legal production sites were expanded to include Suifen and Elmin, and fifteen years later, in 1759 (QL24), the Halmin area was opened as well (Ussuri and Suifen were under the jurisdiction of Jilin, Elmin and Halmin of Shengjing). Expanding

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<sup>51</sup> Prior to 1667 (KX6), ginseng tribute was jointly administered under both the Manager of the Imperial Household Department (Ch: 總管內務府) and the Three Banner Bondservant Captain of Shengjing.

the legal territory was designed to facilitate sustainability: by rule every 20 years each locality was to lay fallow.

To better manage poachers, the third major reform of 1744 was to institute tribute farming, whereby Han Chinese would be charged with collecting ginseng under the supervision of Eight Banner officials. Five types of permits were put into operation.<sup>52</sup> There were first and foremost standard permits for entering the mountains (Ma: *temgetu*; Ch: 進山照票), which were obtained prior to departure. The permits issued in Shengjing were land-route permits, good for the Shengjing-Xingjing-Hoifa-Elmin-Halmin circuit. Those issued in Jilin and Ningguta were for the water-route, used to travel from Jilin Ula to Ussuri and Suifen. Each year, they were sent from the Board of Revenue to Shengjing, then onwards to Jilin and Ningguta; all unused permits were returned to the Board of Revenue to be destroyed. In addition, there were also “permits to return from the [ginseng] mountains” (Ma: *alin ci bederere temgetu bithe*; Ch: 下山照票), to be presented after the harvest. There were permits for bodyguards (Ma: *fiyanjilara temgetu bithe*; Ch: 押票), who were brought into the mountains for protection.<sup>53</sup> There were wooden plaques used for identification around one’s belt (Ma: *ashara šusihe*; C: 腰牌). And there were permits issued to merchant resellers (lit. “red permits,” Ma: *fulgiyan temgetu bithe*; Ch: 紅票). What the pickers took in beyond quota, they were allowed to sell for themselves. Merchants who dealt in surplus ginseng, when crossing through Shanhaiguan, had to have licenses stating the quality, grade, and quantity of the ginseng.

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<sup>52</sup> On the importance of 1744 as a turning point and a full description of the 1744 reforms, see Tong Yonggong, *Manyuwen yu Manwen dang’an yanjiu* (Shenyang: Liaoning minzu chubanshe, 2009), 264-269.

<sup>53</sup> Very few were issued each year. In 1755, altogether 6000 “entrance permits” 6000 permits, compared to only ten for bodyguards.

In Beijing, they returned the permits to the Board of Revenue. They were used both to better police the black market and for generating customs revenue: from each catty of ginseng, six taels silver in fees were assessed.<sup>54</sup>

Imperial-level supervision of the system was constant. In Jilin, after 1744, communications with the court operated according to a fixed schedule. Just before New Year's, the military governor sent a memorial (Ch: 奏摺) to Beijing requesting the release of the coming year's ginseng licenses.<sup>55</sup> When the temperature warmed between the fourth and fifth months and the picking season began, the military governor sent tallies of licenses issued. In early autumn (usually in the seventh month), his office memorialized again with lending notices of debts incurred through the summer. When the season was over, in the early winter, the office issued an accounting statement. All communications were in Manchu, even through the nineteenth century. From the Qianlong period on, the Imperial Household Department compiled separate accounting records (Ch: 內務府奏銷檔), of the quantities and grades of ginseng received each summer. The entire system was designed to check corruption; if an official failed to make any of the reports, he was censured.<sup>56</sup>

Tallies of issued licenses were compiled at the military-department level, at Alcuka, Bedune, Jilin *hoton*, Ilan Hala, and Ningguta. All reports required, at a minimum, a record the number of standard licenses issued to Chinese pickers, the number

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<sup>54</sup> Tong Yonggong, *Manyuwen yu manwen dang'an yanjiu*, 266-267.

<sup>55</sup> MWLF 3651.37.170.1514 (JQ7.12.28).

<sup>56</sup> Siolin, for example, was censured for failing to send a report on ginseng conditions, a nod to imperial anxiety about keeping control over both officials in Jilin and the ginseng trade. MWLF 3637.37.169.1217 (JQ7.3.23).

of non-standard “stamped forms” (Ma: *doron gidaha bithe*) issued, a comparison with the previous year’s output, and amount of unused licenses left remaining. In the military departments of Ningguta and Jilin, where the ginseng picking was more extensive and the management infrastructure was more elaborate, tallies were also kept of the number of brewer’s licenses (Ma: *arki bureku temgetu bithe*), and merchant’s licenses (Ma: *hūda salibuha temgetu bithe*). Tallies were then forwarded to the military governor’s office twice: once in the middle of the season, once at the end.<sup>57</sup>

At least nominally, the Qing state kept oversight over production, despite the relative autonomy of ginseng pickers in the field. Legally, there were three types of ginseng: “tribute ginseng” (Ma: *alban orhoda*), “state-use ginseng” (Ma: *siden de baitalara orhoda*), and “surplus ginseng” (Ma: *funcehe orhoda*). Each permit came with the requirement that the recipient return two taels of ginseng in weight (about eighty grams) back to the office of the military deputy lieutenant-governor. At the end of the summer, five-sixths of the submitted tribute was immediately dispatched to the Imperial Household Department in Beijing, with one-sixth set aside in the locality to cover banner expenditures. Cash used for managing ginseng affairs in the two military departments of Jilin and Ningguta was taken from the various department’s storehouses (*namun*). In the seventh month, a tally was taken of the total number of *temgetu bithe* and *doron gidaha*

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<sup>57</sup> Based on a synopsis of MWLF 3541.22.162.802 (JQ1.4.10), 3544.16.162.1465 (JQ1.5.27), 3546.46.162.2041 (JQ1.7.17), 3562.14.163.2270 (JQ2.4.20), 3564.35.163.2794 (JQ2.5.29), 3567.2.163.3194 (JQ2.+6.6), 3575.34.164.1729 (JQ2.12.7), 3580.42.164.3211 (JQ3.4.16), 3583.3.165.230 (JQ3.5.28), 3584.38.165.718 (JQ3.7.15), 3612.22.167.952 (JQ5.6.21), 3627.2.168.1519 (JQ6.6.10), 3651.37.170.1514 (JQ7.12.28), 3669.45.171.3196 (JQ9.6.6), 3675.10.172.1205 (JQ9.10.27), 3683.17.173.214 (JQ10.5.24), 3691.8.173.2768 (JQ10.11.4), 3703.14.174.2967 (JQ11.6.11), 3710.14.175.1710 (JQ11.11.4), 3720.28.176.1232 (JQ12.5.21), 3723.33.176.1852 (JQ12.7.3), 3726.24.176.2667 (JQ12.8.21), 3730.49.177.420 (JQ12.11.25), 3742.8.177.3022 (JQ13.5.21).

*bithe*, and those which had not been dispersed were sent back to the Board to be destroyed.<sup>58</sup>

The venture was thus extremely risky: a poor harvest meant financial ruin for the pickers, and crippling deficits for the banner government. Risk was gradually shifted away from the government office. Liquor dealers (Ch: 燒鍋舖戶), for one, were gradually institutionalized as the ginseng picker's guarantors in cases of poor harvests. Further, in 1800, Shengjing's ginseng licenses began to be subsidized using customs taken from grain shipments. For every grain boat, 20 taels of silver were assessed, of which 17 was used to subsidize ginseng licenses. In 1807 (JQ12), a fixed quota of cash from grain shipment customs was set at 44,372.01 taels silver, with 75 taels silver allocated for each ginseng license.<sup>59</sup>

Despite the incentives to promote participation, in the half century after the system was institutionalized, the issuances of licenses plummeted (see Figure 22). Between 1744 and 1789, licensing fell by 75%, from a 9000 licenses to 2330. Between 1789 and 1852, license issuances fell an additional 68% to as few as 753 per year.<sup>60</sup>

Figure 22: Ginseng Permits Issued, 1744-1852

<b>Year</b>	<b>Licenses Issued</b>
1744	9000
1760	6000
1777	2900
1789	2330

<sup>58</sup> MWLF 3546.46.162.2041 (JQ1.7.17).

<sup>59</sup> A document from 1847 (DG27) put the figure at 44,325 liang, thus giving exactly 75 taels of silver for 591 ginseng licenses. Tong Yonggong, *Manyuwen yu manwen dang'an yanjiu*, 273.

<sup>60</sup> Wang Peihuan, "Qingdai dongbei caishenye de xingshuai," *Shehui kexue zhanxian* 4 (1982): 191.

1799	2287
1846	1752
1852	753

The decline varied by locality. In Jilin, most of the losses were reported in the military departments of Jilin and Ningguta (See Figure 23). The quantities of brewer's permits and merchants permits issued held constant: in Jilin department, 150 brewers' permits, 114 *šen ioi*, and thirty five merchant's permits; in Ningguta twenty brewers' permits, thirty-five *šen ioi*, and fourteen merchant's permits.<sup>61</sup>

Figure 23: Jilin Ginseng Permit Tallies by Military Department, 1796-1808

Year	Alcuka <sup>62</sup>	Bedune	Ilan Hala	Jilin (hoton)	Ningguta	TOTAL <sup>63</sup>
1796	29	34	36	507	209	815
1797	29	34	36	508	210	817
1798				509	101	821
1801	24	20	23	207	113	387
1804	27	24	20	170	102	343
1805	27	26	21	161	104	339
1806	27	26	21	166	85	325
1807	27	26	21	168	88	330
1808	27	27	21	168	89	332

Two factors drove these declines. First, the amount of ginseng in the wild was plummeting: there was simply not enough product to pick. Second, people were opting out of the system altogether: there were more opportunities in the black market. To the Qing court, both problems were interrelated and required a common solution: stepped-up

<sup>61</sup> MWLF 3627.2.168.1519 (JQ6.6.10), 3669.45.171.3196 (JQ9.6.6), 3541.22.162.802 (JQ1.4.10), 3544.16.162.1465 (JQ1.5.27), 3562.14.163.2270 (JQ2.4.20), 3564.35.163.2794 (JQ2.5.29), 3580.42.164.3211 (JQ3.4.16), 3583.3.165.230 (JQ3.5.28), 3669.45.171.3196 (JQ9.6.6), 3683.17.173.214 (JQ10.5.24), 3703.14.174.2967 (JQ11.6.11), 3720.28.176.1232 (JQ12.5.21), 3742.8.177.3022 (JQ13.5.21).

<sup>62</sup> The Alcuka tally began to include Lalin jurisdiction in 1804. MWLF 3669.45.171.3196 (JQ9.6.6).

<sup>63</sup> The report for 1798 gave a tally of 211 permits for Alcuka, Bedune, and Ilan Hala combined. MWLF 3583.3.165.230 (JQ3.5.28).



policing, enhanced territorial controls, and rehabilitation of the ginseng-producing mountains.

### ***The Mountains Rest***

State controls over production were a long-standing concern. Two decades prior to reforms, in 1724, the Yongzheng emperor had started a major crack-down on illegal ginseng trafficking, and the military governors of Jilin and Heilongjiang began to send palace memorials on all poachers arrested and contraband seized. In the first ten months of 1731 alone (YZ8.12 to YZ9.10.1), for example, Jilin reported the arrests of thirty groups of ginseng poachers, comprised of 69 men, who had been dispatched to Ningguta. From these teams, a total of 620.3 taels of ginseng, 72.45 taels of *se solo*, and 62 sable pelts were confiscated. Then, in the eleventh month alone (YZ9.10), another nine teams of thirty-six were arrested, bringing in another 446 taels of ginseng and 98.5 taels *se solo*. In the first ten months of 1731, a total of 105 men, 1066.3 taels ginseng (about 40 kilos), 170.95 *se solo* (6.5 kilos) and 62 sable pelts were sent to the Imperial Household Department from Ningguta.<sup>64</sup> The value would depend on the quality of the ginseng; in this case, given a possible range of between 60-280 silver taels per catty,<sup>65</sup> the haul would have equaled, conservatively, at least 4,000 silver taels.

The anti-trafficking measures extended to the patrolmen at the Willow Palisades. In 1732, the guardsmen, based at the six gates centered on Fort Weiyuan (Ma: *Wei Yuan Pu*; Ch: 威遠堡), captured a similar range of items while patrolling for pickers coming

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<sup>64</sup> MWLF 900.1.19.126 (YZ10.1.6).

<sup>65</sup> Chiang Chushan, *Qingdai renshen de lishi: yige shangpin de yanjiu*. Ph.D. Thesis, National Tsing Hua University (2006), 215.

from Elmin and Halmin. Altogether, they arrest 72 men and seized 57.72 taels of ginseng, 190 stems of “raw” (Ma: *eshun*) ginseng; 1.22 taels of *se solo*, 84 sable pelts, 5 muskets, 4 *san ban cuwan*, 25 catties of *hosiyo*, 31 catties of *tiyei šan*, 27 racoon-dog pelts, 2 horses, 4 bushels of grain, cooking supplies, and tents.<sup>66</sup>

Yet ginseng continued to illegally cross out of Manchuria, and the problem only increased in scope and degree. In 1738, the assistant military lieutenant-governor of Mergen memorialized that ten ginseng poachers, led by one Zhang Jihui, had been caught in the Saddle Mountain (Ma: *enggemu alin*) region. Two taels of ginseng and an additional .5 taels of *se solo* were confiscated. Zhang Jihui was interrogated and dispatched to the Mukden Board of Punishments for sentencing. Zhang’s team was equipped with six horses, one bow, a quiver of arrows, two cooking pots, and two tents; this was dispersed to the troops who arrested them. Their most valuable items were given over to the state, including a musket (which was entered as “tribute” [Ma: *alban*]), and the ginseng, which was sent to the Imperial Household Department at the end of the year.<sup>67</sup> In the summer of 1748 alone, patrolmen based in Hunchun arrested 176 poachers, all of whom were processed and sent to Ningguta.<sup>68</sup>

As poaching continued, the court experimented with new strategies to stamp it out, particularly from the late Qianlong period on. In the Ussuri and Suifun regions, for example, between 1748 and 1792, troops had been making seasonal patrols, setting off in the spring and returning in the autumn in rhythm with the picking season. Because the

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<sup>66</sup> MWLF 900.2.19.127 (YZ10.1.6).

<sup>67</sup> MWLF 905.4.19.1437 (QL3.10.1).

<sup>68</sup> *Hunchun fudutong yamen dang’an*, 1: 337, 348, 351, 354, 362, 365, 370, 372, 376, 379, 390, 413, 415, 419, and 454.

patrols were deemed too predictable, however, in 1793, the military governor of Jilin, Hengsio, memorialized that the troops dispatched to the Usuri and Suifun mountains establish posts in the region, so that they could make sudden and irregular raids into the mountains to seek out diggers without proper documentation. According to precedent, they would call up two colonels (Ma: *gūsai da*) from Ilan Hala to lead the patrols on year-long tours of duty.<sup>69</sup>

The patrolmen left for the restricted hunting grounds, splitting up on the mountain roads, in the seventh month, in the late summer when the ginseng harvest was at its peak. The main target of their inspections were the diggers' camps (lit. the place where they "nested" (Ma: *tomobure*)). When they reached designated high grounds, they made winter camp, and commenced "thorough roving inspections of the mountains and valleys" (Ma: *alin holo be meleburakū were heceme giyarime baicabufi*). A year later, the following autumn, as licensed ginseng pickers returned from the mountains, the troops followed behind them in a rear-guard action patrolling for poachers and diggers who might have overstayed their permits. When they returned, they were required to issue a report of their inspection. For their work, they were to receive an [extra] half year's salary.<sup>70</sup> Other troops, called up just for summer tours, received three months salary.<sup>71</sup> The patrolmen were specially selected for being "capable soldiers and police" (*sain mutere hafan cooha hūjaci*); their mission was to capture poachers and participants

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<sup>69</sup> MWLF 3596.16.166.0150 (JQ4.5.28).

<sup>70</sup> MWLF 3596.16.166.0150 (JQ4.5.28).

<sup>71</sup> MWLF 3730.47.177.408 (JQ12.11.25).

in the black market (Ma: *hūlhame cisui orhoda guruhe, udaha deyebure weilengge niyalma*).<sup>72</sup>

It was expected that arrests and seizures be made annually, with tallies of confiscated contraband and captured poachers and black-marketers awaited in the weeks following the lunar New Year when the licensing tribute-ginseng pickers returned from the mountains. Local authorities navigated the Scylla of arresting too few and appearing corrupt and the Charybdis of arresting too many and appearing to have fostered a new problem. Their aim was not to stamp out the illegal behavior but to manage it.

To incentivize the guardsmen, all arresting officers were rewarded with captured loot. Seized goods from the poaching raids were divided into four categories. The first was reserved for the most valuable commodities, sable and ginseng, which the court had special claims over; all sable, ginseng, and pearls were thus put into the local treasury and, at the end of the year, dispatched under guard to the Imperial Household Department. A second category of seized good, which included captured muskets, were to be kept by local yamens.<sup>73</sup> A third category was for items to be destroyed on site, including cultivated ginseng and the pickers' huts.<sup>74</sup> Everything else was awarded to the arresting guardsmen: horses, tents, and cookware. They also could keep all second-tier furs, such as raccoon-dog (Ma: *elbihe*) pelts.

Arrest reports from the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when participation in the tribute system plummeted, reveal extensive poaching networks, and ginseng poachers were

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<sup>72</sup> MWLF 3575.34.164.1725 (JQ2.12.7).

<sup>73</sup> The category also included *hosiyoo*, and *tiyei šan*.

<sup>74</sup> MWLF 900.2.19.127 (YZ10.1.6).

involved with illegal fur trapping and *vice versa*. Poachers were caught often with over half a pound of ginseng on them. In 1796, Siolin reported that the first haul of captured “privately obtained” (Ma: *cisui*) ginseng totaled 16.5 taels of *korofi*, and 2.1 taels of *se solo*, and that the second round of patrols by troops and policemen (Ma: *hūjaci*) seized an additional 12.1 taels *korofi* and 1.5 taels of *se solo*, yielding a grand total of 28.6 taels *korofi* and 3.6 taels *se solo*.<sup>75</sup> Later that winter, policemen arrested a man in the act of illegally buying 10.7 taels of ginseng and *korofi*; the guard who made the sting was rewarded and the ginseng forwarded to the Imperial Household Department.<sup>76</sup> In 1797, patrolmen caught three people carrying unlicensed ginseng, totaling 18.5 taels ginseng and *korofi* and 2.3 taels *se solo*.<sup>77</sup> 1798, the two raids yielded 31.6 taels of *orhoda* and *kofori* and 3.9 taels of *se solo*, with one man carrying 2.7 taels of *orhoda* captured separately later.<sup>78</sup> At the end of the year (JQ3.11.26), a total of 37.43 taels of *orhoda* and *kofori* and 7.85 taels of *se solo* were reported detained; these were securely bundled, affixed with a seal, and dispatched under guard to the Imperial Household Department.<sup>79</sup>

Yet these hauls proved to be relatively modest, and the guardsmen were exhorted to capture larger numbers of poachers and contraband. In 1800, 320 guardsmen (Ma: *cooha*) were called up for a thirteen-month tour; they were divided into twelve teams, each under the command of an officer (Ma: *hafan*), and put under the ultimate command of two officials of rank colonel (Ma: *gūsai da*): Funghai and Uyumboo. That autumn,

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<sup>75</sup> MWLF 3557.7.163.1051 (JQ1.12.18).

<sup>76</sup> MWLF 3558.17.163.1332 (JQ2.1.21).

<sup>77</sup> MWLF 3575.34.164.1725 (JQ2.12.7).

<sup>78</sup> MWLF 3576.47.164.2023 (JQ3.1.19).

<sup>79</sup> MWLF 3590.13.165.2228 (JQ3.11.26); 3590.29.165.2315 [JQ3.12].

Funghai's men caught twenty poachers (Ma: *hūlha*) and seized 2.24 taels of ginseng, .4 taels of *se solo*, two stems of *eshun orhoda*, thirty-nine sable pelts (*seke sukū*), two lynx pelts, and three otter pelts. At the same time, Uyumboo's men caught twenty-two poachers with 3.1 *yan* of ginseng, .5 taels of *se solo*; an additional branch unit captured nineteen more men. The pickers' camps and domesticated ginseng fields were discovered in the mountains of Nentun, Fantun, and Sikada. When found, the guardsmen razed the huts, and dug up the small plantations. The season's haul was relatively modest; in their report to the military governor, they conceded that a total of sixty-one poachers caught was "not a large number" (*ton labdu akū*). Higher authorities agreed: the low turnout, plus the fact that the additional branch unit had arrested nineteen men but failed to seize any contraband, aroused suspicion. Following a precedent from 1789, an investigation into possible corruption or negligence was demanded, as none of the arrested men were captured in the backcountry; they were all found along the established routes (*jūgun de jafame baha*).<sup>80</sup>

In 1801, the commanding officers were under renewed pressure to increase seizures and arrests. The previous year's tours had not been able to "purge" (Ma: *geterembume*) the area of illicit activity and men. This year, they were ordered to ensure that "the interior of the mountains was thoroughly searched and purged (Ma: *ferē hecereme geterembume baicaha*), and there were no illegals wintering [there]." Under the command of the assistant military lieutenant-governor of Ningguta, Golmingga, and the assistant military lieutenant-governor of Ilan Hala, Elhengge, more inspection teams were added so more ground could be covered. This time, the tours went far to the west,

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<sup>80</sup> MWLF 3621.28.167.3574 (JQ6.1.11).

from Dekdenggi mountains and Usuri River clear to the Pacific coast. Golminga departed in the late spring (JQ7.4.20), returning about five and half months later (JQ7.10.1). In the intervening months, his troops marched up the Juci River and along the Pacific coast, hanging new placards (Ma: *ice šusihe*) on trees to mark the borders of the restricted areas and warn trespassers of the law. While on patrol, they arrested eighty-three men and seized 24.41 taels of ginseng, 2.45 taels of *se solo*, 5.5 taels of *abdaha*, nine sable pelts, two otter pelts, four racoon-dog pelts, and sixteen squirrel pelts. When they discovered poacher's huts and cultivated ginseng fields, they burned them down and destroyed the fields (Ma: *fetehe usin be gemu fehuteme efulehebi*). His second in command, commanding his own branch unit, captured twenty-two men, 8.3 taels of ginseng, and five *yan* of *se solo*. Elhengge, for his part, caught sixty-two poachers, 1.6 *yan* of ginseng, .4 *yan* of *se solo*, fifty-three sable pelts, one otter pelt, one fox pelt, ten racoon-dog pelt; his second in command arrested an additional three men and 2.2 *yan* of ginseng. He too reported that he had burned down houses, destroyed ginseng fields, and left placards in the “designated high grounds” (Ma: *joriha ten i ba*).<sup>81</sup>

The state aimed to ensure sustainability by tightening territorial controls, increasing the police presence, and stamping out corruption. Conservation schemes were also pursued: in 1802, for example, the Jiaqing emperor endorsed a plan to “rest the mountain which produce ginseng” (*orhoda gurure alin be teyebure*), on the principle that “if there is little ginseng production, the mountain must be rested” (*aika orhoda tucirengge seri oho, urunakū alin teyebure*) with the permission of the emperor.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> MWLF 3651.36.170.1503 (JQ7.12.8).

<sup>82</sup> MWLF 3637.37.169.1217 (JQ7.3.23).

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The flipside of chronic poaching was endemic corruption. Corruption at the Ginseng Office (Ch: 蔘局) was rampant; some cases were reported, others never came to light.<sup>83</sup> Serving as military governor of Jilin was likewise a a posting fraught with corrupting opportunity, and corruption (or the inability to stem it) brought down the careers of many officials, particularly from the late eighteenth century on. In 1777, the *fuguogong* Fu Chun (Ch: 富椿) submitted his own resignation after failing to stop widespread poaching.<sup>84</sup> In 1785, the military governor of Jilin Duo-er-jia (Ch: 都爾嘉) was implicated in a ginseng corruption scandal.<sup>85</sup> Two regiment colonels (Ch: 協領) at the Ginseng Office in 1794, Nomsan (Ch: 諾穆三) and Tomengga (Ch: 托蒙阿), were similarly brought down on corruption charges, an event which precipitated the dispatch of Fuk'anggan, Sungyūn (Song-yun), and Lin Ning from Beijing to inspect and take charge in Mukden.<sup>86</sup> In anticipation of their arrival, Siolin reported, they were already cooking the books.<sup>87</sup>

Fuk'anggan was sent to deal specifically with the corruption case, which was a repeat of the Dorjya affair. The problem revealed in 1785 and 174 alike centered around how the licensing system was used to launder extra taxes on Jilin's residents. The scheme was simple: the military governor's office often had insufficient "official ginseng" (Ch:

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<sup>83</sup> On the corruption case of 1762, see *Gaozong shilu*, 789: 694b.

<sup>84</sup> *Gaozong shilu*, 1045: 988a.

<sup>85</sup> *Gaozong shilu*, 1244: 726a.

<sup>86</sup> *Gaozong shilu*, 1444: 271b-272a.

<sup>87</sup> *Gaozong shilu*, 1444: 272a.



官棧), and the ginseng pickers often needed to borrow funds for financial assistance. The Ginseng Office could then borrow funds from the public coffer and buy the surplus ginseng at market prices to make up the difference. The Ginseng Office could make money from the exchange if the full difference was not fully compensated for. This final amount was raised through extorting extra tax money from ordinary households.<sup>88</sup>

Both Nomsan and Tomengga had become quite rich. Though neither owned any land or had exceptionally flashy clothing or jewelry, both were landlords: Nomsan leased out over eighty units; Tomengga leased out over ninety. Between the two of them, they had collected 37,000 taels of silver. The amount needed to balance funds at government coffer was 20,000 taels. The Ginseng Office used over 12,000 taels, with over a 1000 taels remaining as surplus. They sold 82 taels of ginseng. In the twelfth month, they paid back the government coffers 9000 taels.<sup>89</sup>

According to Siolin's investigation, the government coffers were down by 14,000 taels. In Fuk'anggan's reckoning, the amount needed to balance the accounts was over 29,000 taels of silver. Beyond this amount needed, they were still short an additional 110,000 taels. How exactly all this money went missing was unclear, though Fuk'anggan doubted it was simply through the laundering mechanism.<sup>90</sup>

Corruption extended down to bannermen themselves. In 1783, beyond the 600 poachers captured that year, were sixty-seven guards (Ch: 守尉) from Kaiyuan were discovered to have built homes within the restricted ginseng-producing mountains and

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<sup>88</sup> *Gaozong shilu*, 1444: 272b-273a.

<sup>89</sup> *Gaozong shilu*, 1445: 279a-280b.

<sup>90</sup> *Gaozong shilu*, 1445: 279a-280b.

were harvesting the product, and the seventy-eight patrolmen (Ch: 驍騎校) from Fuzhou (Ch: 復州) charged with patrolling had made two runs and turned up only two ginseng poachers and one poacher of Jew's ear mushrooms (Ch: 木耳); they had not discovered or reported the impromptu pickers' village built by the guards. When discovered, both groups were banished to the far west: the sixty-seven guards were exiled to Ili, while the 78 patrolmen were dispatched to Uliasutai.<sup>91</sup>

As with pearling, maintaining the restricted ginseng grounds was costly. Supplying the men and paying their bonuses was expensive, as “entering the mountains” required special allotments of gear and grain.<sup>92</sup> In 1799, Siolin, the military governor of Jilin, requested that the annual inspections of the Suifen and Usuri regions with troops from Ningguta and Ilan Hala be eliminated in favor larger sweeps every four to five years. Fewer inspections would be cheaper and was critical “so as not to squander state expenses” (Ma: *gurun i caliyān be fulu fayara de isinarakū ombime*). By limiting the expenditures on policing, he argued, “it would also be beneficial to the ginseng business” (Ma: *orhoda i baita de inu tusa ombi*).<sup>93</sup>

The costs also spurred local authorities to pinpoint the exact jurisdictions for which they were responsible. Borders were standardized and clarified. A case from 1732 was typical in this regard. That year, the Yongzheng emperor had a decision to make: should the mountains of Hulan be opened to ginseng picking and trade, or should it be made illegal? The matter was submitted to the Grand Council for review. Having

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<sup>91</sup> *Gaozong shilu*, 1192: 938a-b.

<sup>92</sup> MWLF 3634.14.169.158 (JQ6.12.11).

<sup>93</sup> MWLF 3651.36.170.1503 (JQ7.12.8).

investigated the matter, the Grand Council held that that the “mountains and rivers of Hulan were originally hunting and pasturing grounds (Ma: *nuktere buthašara ba*) of the Gorlos and Durbet Mongols.” It was recorded that it had been put under the jurisdiction of the Gorlos prince (*gung*) Batu, *karun* had been established, with the Lifanyuan coordinating. Yet because the land in question was on the Manchurian side of the Sunggari river, it was recorded in the *Daqing yitong zhi* (Ch: 大清一統志) as being part of Hulan, and thus Heilongjiang territory. Although it was administratively Manchurian, its sheer distance from the administrative centers, and its ambiguous status, rendered the ginseng picking rules in “these mountains and rivers” unclear. State management was necessary: the land was rich in ginseng, making “strict prohibitions impossible” (*ciralame fafularakū oci ojorakū*) without the proper apparatus in place, starting with a *karun* line.<sup>94</sup>

Indeed, troops had been placed along a string of eight karuns, stretching from the mouth of the Nioman River, to the mouth of the Sun River, Nemer Spring, Hamni Hada, Mt. Suilengge, Sukcin i susu, Laha Oforo, and Unduhun. Each year when the sprouts appeared (Ma: *niyanciha tucime*), they guardsmen would set off on their rounds; when the plants withered with the coming of winter, they returned. Mongols of the Durbet and Gorlos banners charged with guard duty were to investigate and punish “the roving of ginseng poachers” (Ma: *hūlhame orhoda gurire urse nambuha*). In a previous case, involving the ginseng poacher Tang Guizhu in Hulan, the question of Hulan’s status in the ginseng trade had come into question. Now, the military governor of Heilongjiang, Jorhai (*jiangjun* 1730-1732), memorialized on the crux of the confusion: “Although these

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<sup>94</sup> MWLF 900.3.19.127 (YZ10.2.18).

mountains and rivers in Hulan were originally the hunting and herding grounds of the Gorlos and Durbet Mongols, when we investigated the local Mongol records, it was not recorded that this was a Mongol land. When we questioned the Durbet Mongols, they too said that this was not their subject land.” The *Yitong zhi* only confirmed that being on the near side of the Sunggari River, it was indeed subject to Heilongjiang. The *karun* responsibilities should fall on Heilongjiang, not the Mongol banners. Merchants and “idle Chinese” would be prohibited from the area. The decision was sent to the imperial Archival Office (*guoshi*), Fengtian, and Ningguta.<sup>95</sup>

The following year, with regard to the Sunggari and Nonni Rivers, east along the northern edge of Bedune *hoton*, those living to on the southern shores included the people of Beduna, Alcuha, Ilan Hala, Jakūn Hala, Heje, and Fijaka; the northern shore belonged to Heilongjiang territory. There, in the region of the Holon River, there was ginseng picking. Troops were placed at the eight *karun*, but the military governor of Heilongjiang still believed it was insufficient to deal with the poaching problem: “In my humble opinion, if [we] dispatch 500 troops to the Holon River area, there will no longer be ginseng poachers, and it will also bring great benefit to the locality (Ma: *ba na de inu labdu tusa*). The Grand Council was not so sure, and they demanded more information from the military governors of Jilin and Heilongjiang. Which troops would they use? How would they be deployed? While the state aimed to bring order and prosperity to every jurisdiction, what was “truly beneficial for the locality and what was not” (Ma: *yargiyan i ba na de tusa bisire akū*) was contingent and debatable.<sup>96</sup> The manner in

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<sup>95</sup> MWLF 900.3.19.127 (YZ10.2.18).

<sup>96</sup> MWLF 901.1.19.129 [YZ11].

which one benefitted was essential to the imperial order: it was inseparable from the Manchu way of life.

The fact that the land was proven to be under the jurisdiction of Heilongjiang, and not the Mongol banners, was less significant than the act of border-making itself. For, as this case makes clear, different rules, standards, and procedures applied to the Mongol and Manchurian territories. If the land was indeed Mongol lands, than allowing ginseng picking was improper. Now that the area was valuable and source of disorder, its exact proprietary status had to be clarified: ambiguity was unacceptable, because the special rules governing ginseng, pearl, and fur producing required precision. Like imperial hunting grounds and the borderlands Russia and Korea, they were specially favored and monopolized by the court and the military. As such, they were excluded from land reclamation schemes. In 1790, for example, Songcun (Song-chun) conducted a survey of the unused “wilderness” (Ch: 荒地). The plan was to reclaim the lands between Yingge (Ch: 英額) and Aiyang (Ch: 爨陽) to agriculture and give it to landless bannermen of Mukden. The court, however, expressed concerns that opening the “immense” (Ch: 遼闊) territory might lead to problems at military hunting grounds and the mountains for picking ginseng; to be doubly sure, it dispatched another official, Jicing (Ch: 吉慶) to review the land in question.<sup>97</sup> When it came to ginseng, territorial jurisdictions had to be precise.

### **Sable: Tribute, *Culgan*, and Sustainability**

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<sup>97</sup> *Gaozong shilu*, 1352: 105b-106a.

Compared with pearls and ginseng, the institutional history of sable tribute in Manchuria was in many ways distinct. For one, sable populations remained high until the 1820s, when they began a sharp decline; the crisis thus came seventy years after the beginning of the ginseng problem, and thirty years after the beginning of the fall in pearl harvests. Whereas pearls and ginseng were collected from designated sites, sable-hunting grounds lacked a jurisdiction. Selected bannermen collected pearls; licensed Chinese collected ginseng. Sable came from neither. Rather it was mostly the product of special, ethnically defined banner units: the Solon, Oroncon, Dagūr, Birar, and other hunting (*Ma: butha*) banners. Most, like the Solon, lived unambiguously under Qing rule, and were subject to corvee labor, military duty, and regular exchanges with the court. Others, including groups from Sakhalin Island, regularly presented fur tribute, but were neither incorporated into banner nor subject to state responsibilities, and their lands were not guarded and policed for poachers. If for Ula Hunters fur tribute was a domestic tax obligation, for more distant groups it was a profitable alliance strategy.

Despite its distinctive trajectory, the history of domestic fur tribute, centered on Heilongjiang, runs in many ways parallel to that of pearls and ginseng. Like pearls and ginseng, sable was a state monopoly: the state had first claim over the resource, and unlicensed trade was prohibited. Poaching and the black market, however, were constant problems, and in the first half of the nineteenth century uncontrolled exploitation led to declining yields. While the mechanisms and infrastructure of fur tribute will be explored at greater length in Chapter 5, it is worth highlighting first the overlapping histories of fur, ginseng, and pearls.

As with ginseng and pearls, the early history of fur in Manchuria was inextricably tied to processes of state building.<sup>98</sup> Each time the Later Jin state expanded into a new village, it recorded not only the number of people and livestock captured, but the quantities and types of furs as well. An entry from 1632 in the court's records is typical; the names of the conquered villages (Ma: *gašan*) of Ningguta, Lafa, and Hoifa is presented with a tally of pelts: 5,396 sable, 12,900 squirrel, 155 lynx, 368 otter, eighteen wolf, eighteen tiger, four wolves, forty-eight eagle pinions.<sup>99</sup> Of all the peoples conquered in the early years, the Warka were the closest to the forests and most well-endowed with furs, though their villages varied greatly in terms of productivity (See Figure 24).<sup>100</sup>

Figure 24: Fur Captured from Warka and Neighboring Villages, 1632-1636

Village Resource	Kereci and Bolgo	Ujala golo	Warka Village 1	Warka Village 2	Warka Village 3	Warka Village 4	Warka Village 5	TOTAL	Animal per person
People		700	312	2800	795	601	861	6069	1.00
squirrel	1480	800	2570	2010	140	566	1500	7586	1.25
sable	174	78	561	982	106	201	486	2588	0.43

<sup>98</sup> As Nicola Di Cosmo has argued, the Later Jin state built itself upon Manchuria's natural resources, not the pastoral or agricultural economies; ginseng exports to the Ming alone accounted for more than thirty times the value of all Chinese imports. Nicola Di Cosmo, "The Rise of Manchu Power in Northeast Asia (c. 1600-1636)." Talk presented at the University of California, Berkeley, October 12, 2007. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G11-vop7ipY>. See 39:30-52:15. By Liao times, fur trade was already extensive. Under Liao rule, in 988, there were even signs of overhunting. The *Liaoshi* records that "the Wuwei Yujue tribe, because the sable and gray mole furs which they annually offered as tribute were not produced locally but were all purchased from other places for presentation, requested that the tribute be changed." Like the Qing court when faced with similar problems, the Liao emperor proved flexible, and the fur tribute was switched to one of horses and oxen. In 1018, the *Liaoshi* records that "the five northeastern tribes of Yue-li-tu, Pou-a-li, Ao-li-mi, Pu-nu-li, and Tie-li were ordered to render an annual tribute of sixty-five thousand ermine furs and three hundred horses." Karl Wittfogel, *History of Chinese Society: Liao*, 353, 357.

<sup>99</sup> MBRT 2.45.268.

<sup>100</sup> MBRT 2.60.278 (TZ6.12.12), 3.5.955 (TZ10.3); 3.7.990 (TZ10.4.10); 3.8.995 (CD1.4); 3.8.995 (CD1.4.15); 3.9.1023 (CD1.5.27); 3.10.1036 (CD1.5.5).

horses		373	27	327	10	24	61	822	0.14
weasel			99	146	42	187	200	674	0.11
cattle		102	3	180	17	5	41	348	0.06
otter	13	38	8	79	19	48	67	259	0.04
raccoon-dog	4		17	57	42	66	1	187	0.03
fox	14	22	44	34	2	4	10	130	0.02
lynx	1	15		14	3	9	12	54	0.01
wolf			2	2		2		6	0.00
tiger						4		4	0.00
seal					2			2	0.00

After the conquest, set compensation rates were established for Manchurian bannermen assigned to fur trapping. In 1647, the Shunzhi emperor's court also formalized the exchange values of tribute furs submitted to the court, whereby a function of species and pelt quality determined compensation (see Figure 25). All pelts had to be undamaged. The annual quota was set at 2 sable pelts per head in the summer and three sable pelts per head in the winter.<sup>101</sup>

Figure 25: Exchange Rates for Fur Tribute, 1647

Pelt Type (English)	Pelt Type (Chinese)	Grade	Value in Sable Pelts
Lynx	猞猁	1	6
Lynx	猞猁	2	5
Lynx	猞猁	3	4
Lynx	猞猁	4	3
River Otter	水獭	1	3
River Otter	水獭	2	2.5
River Otter	水獭	3	2
River Otter	水獭	4	1.5

<sup>101</sup> *Daqing huidian shili*, 10: 278.2.



River Otter	水獺	5	1
River Otter	水獺	<5	0.5
Leopard	豹	1	5
Leopard	豹	2	4
Leopard	豹	3	3
Tiger	虎	1	4
Tiger	虎	2	3
Tiger	虎	3	2
Tiger	虎	4	1
Fox	狐		2
Wolf	狼	1	3
Wolf	狼	2	2
Wolf	狼	<2	1
Badger	貉		0.5
Short-haired Sable	小毛貂		0.5
coyote? Wolverine?	豺狼		1
Top grade squirrel	上好灰鼠		0.05
Short-haired squirrel	小毛灰鼠		0.04

Tribute was obtained through two methods: having tribute-bearers deliver the furs themselves to a yamen, or dispatching an official to collect it. Through the course of the eighteenth century, the bulk of fur tribute in the Northeast came to be processed by having it delivered to yamens, with Cicigar (Qiqihar) and Ilan Hala (Sanxing) serving as the key processing points.<sup>102</sup> Cicigar was the nexus for tribute from Heilongjiang,

<sup>102</sup> In the early Qing, the mechanics of the tribute system changed as administrative control over the Northeast was elaborated and standardized. Following the conquest of Beijing in 1644, fur tribute was required to be delivered in person in Beijing. After the creation of the Ningguta region in 1653, Ningguta became the primary collection point unless the tribute-bearers chose to make the trip to Beijing. In 1683,

including the Xinggan Mountains and the upper Amur, while Sanxing served southerly and easterly communities from Jilin military department, the Ussuri, the Lower Amur, the Pacific coast, and Sakhalin. In either the fourth or fifth month, an official “gathering” (Ma: *culgan*) was held.

The *culgan* had two components. The first was the presentation and selection of tribute furs. The ceremony began with the Qing official welcoming the tribute-bearers on the road outside the gates of the town; an archery contest was among the festivities which followed. Food and provisions were provided as a form of largesse. While a fixed quota of furs were levied, the tribute-bearers always brought more fur than necessary. The best pelts were selected by the yamen. These would then be individually presented by the individual bearer, who performed the kowtow and offered the tribute up as a gift to the emperor. The gift was reciprocated with gifts of silk and fine cloths.<sup>103</sup> Slightly differing quotas were in effect for each community. In Sanxing, for example, each household presented a tribute of one sable pelt, but each ranking official giving an additional fur pelt on a per-man basis.<sup>104</sup> With the finest sables selected, a leg was removed from the remaining sable pelts (Ma: *maktaha seke*), and, thus marked, were free to be traded at market. Witnesses reported seeing enormous piles, thousands of pelts high. Indeed, special pelt-treasuries would soon be built to accommodate the enormous volume of skins

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after the creation of Heilongjiang, Cicigar arose as the collection point in the north. Finally, with the creation of the Sanxing (Ilan Hala) prefecture in 1729, southern-route fur tribute was diverted from Ningguta to Sanxing. Cong Peiyuan, *Dongbei sanbao jingji jianshi* (Beijing: Zhongguo huanjing kexue chubanshe, 1990), 215-216.

<sup>103</sup> Cong Peiyuan, *Dongbei sanbao jingji jianshi*, 207-209.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 203.

that accumulated.<sup>105</sup> A month-long trading fair ensued, the biggest of the year. With the gathered tribute-bearers came Mongol nomads with leathers and livestock and Chinese merchants with goods from the interior. Furs were a key item for trade, but the tribute-bearers also sold other specialty items. The state itself was important buyer at the market place, with the yamen having first choice over the available furs for sale.

Fur trade was similarly forbidden. The *Lifanyuan zeli* specifically targeted the illegal poaching, buying, or selling of sable as a crime. The punishments for allowing illegal sable and ginseng trade in a Mongol banner were comparable to those for sheltering illegal migrants. The *Lifanyuan zeli* from 1841 made the prohibition explicit: “In cases of illicitly going to prohibited areas to poach sable or ginseng, or where illicit buying or selling [of such products] arise, the illegally poached goods will be entered as tribute, and the criminals sentenced according to the laws of the Board of Punishments.” The law further specified that the banner nobility of rank *wang*, *beile*, *beise*, *gung*, *taiji*, and *tabunang* should lose one year’s salary, and the banner officials of noble rank *wang*, *beile*, *beise*, *gung*, *taiji*, and *tabunang* should pay an indemnity of two “nines” of livestock. If they knowingly covered up the matter, their punishment was made one level more severe.<sup>106</sup>

Mongols were likewise specifically prohibited from buying sable in Heilongjiang’s Solon lands. Noblemen found guilty of illegally buying or trading for sable were penalized a year’s salary, the banner officials charged with their oversight

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<sup>105</sup> The first of these storehouses was built in 1726 in Ningguta, with another being built in Sanxing in 1780. The Ningguta storehouse, with Ningguta superseded by Sanxing as a collection point, would be switched to a storehouse for fruit in 1783. Cong Peiyuan, *Dongbei sanbao jingji jianshi*, 216-217.

<sup>106</sup> TGKH 53: 5a-6a.

paid indemnities of two “nines” livestock, and commoners were whipped 100 times. The capture sable became tribute. Even a man dispatched as a middleman to pick up sable for a Mongol bannerman was to whipped eighty times.<sup>107</sup>

Through the first half of the nineteenth century, however, the Sanxing *culgan* became increasingly unsuccessful in drawing in crowds, and tribute collectors had to be dispatched into the field, with up to four officials each year making the trip (see Figure 26). If in 1790s over 70% of the fur was delivered to the *culgan*, by the 1840s, less than a quarter was. The state was assuming transportation costs to maintain steady levels of tribute.<sup>108</sup>

Figure 26: Sable Tribute at Sanxing, 1791-1867

Year	Collected in Sanxing	Hezhe, Jilar	Hezhe, Jilar 2	Hezhe, Kuye	Erhan, Hekela	Total	Percent Presented at Sanxing
1791	1714	1714		623	90	2427	70.62%
1794	1713	1713		623		2336	73.33%
1803	1193					2512	47.49%
1804	940					2162	43.48%
1825	729					2443	29.84%
1841	453					2443	18.54%
1845	450	470	800	627	91	2443	18.42%
1857	77					2443	3.15%
1866	574	652	500	627	90	2443	23.50%
1867	598	563	565	627	90	2443	24.48%

<sup>107</sup> TGKH 53: 7a-8a.

<sup>108</sup> *Sanxing fudutong yamen manwen dang'an yibian*, 70 (QL56.11.5), 71 (QL5911.5), 72 (JQ8.11.1), 73 (JQ9.10.25), 75 (DG5.10.20), 76 (DG21.10.25), 77 (DG25.11.5), 85 (XF7.11.12), 88 (TZ5.3.21), and 90 (TZ6.11.17).

Officials in Heilongjiang struggled over issues of corruption and transportation costs. With so much at the discretion of the yamen, there was much room for corruption. Perhaps the most visible case of corruption, because it was discovered by the court, came to light in 1795, in the final year of the Qianlong emperor's reign, when it was discovered that [an official] was unfairly judging and rewarding the tribute-bearers in Cicigar. For the historian, perhaps the most important change brought on by the 1795 corruption scandal was a new outpouring of paperwork that thereafter accompanied the Cicigar *culgan*. In that year, local authorities were found to over-assess tribute quotas and keep the extra returns to themselves; such was the case in a scandal from 1795, in which the assistant military lieutenant-governor (Ma: *meiren-i janggin*; Ch: 副都統) of Cicigar was found guilty of over-assessing the Solon, Dagūr, and Oroncon communities who paid tribute through him. The result was a more public ceremony of the tribute's presentation, and a revamped system for reporting tribute tallies was initiated, providing a new outpouring of statistics on the quantities and qualities of animal pelts that poured into the Imperial Household Department thereafter.<sup>109</sup>

Previously, the Heilongjiang military governor was required to report on the number of sables collected (divided into first class, second class, and quality third class). From 1796 on, the memorialist also had to report on the number of tribute-bearers, the total number of sables they brought to the *culgan*, the number accepted, and the number rejected; the system remained in place until 1899. While the reports were written in Manchu exclusively, beginning in 1823, these records were to be supplemented by Chinese-language tallies of the population, tribute, and overall sable catches divided into three

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<sup>109</sup> On the 1795 reforms, see Cong Peiyuan, *Dongbei sanbao jingji lishi*, 208.

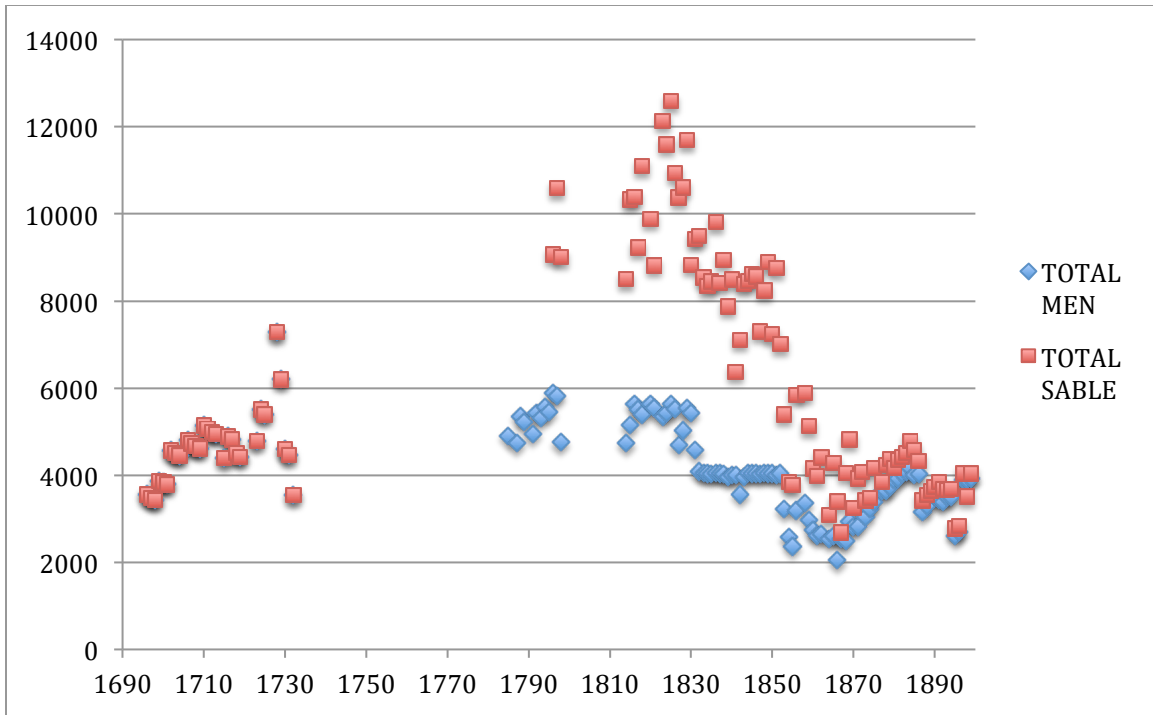
constituencies: Solon and Dagūr, Mounted (Moringga) Oroncon, and Infantry (Yafahan) Oroncon.<sup>110</sup>

The period 1815-1850 marked the *culgan* at its peak. It was only in this period that participants brought, on average, two or more sables each year: one to present as tribute, one to sell on the open market afterwards. In the period 1790-1815, the records were imperfectly preserved, but the limited evidence suggests that the *culgan* market was less active: people came just to fulfill their tax obligation. After 1850, on the other hand, almost nobody came to the *culgan* to trade: the average man brought one sable pelt, and some years they brought none. Not only was the sheer number of participants shrinking, the number of sables they came with declined twice as fast (see Figure 27). The draft in the Taiping wars brought an end to era.

Figure 27: Sables Brought to the Cicigar *Culgan*, 1696-1899

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<sup>110</sup> The following analysis of tributary records is based on *Manwen lufu* held in the First Historical Archives in Beijing, Manchu palace memorials held in the National Palace Museum in Taipei, and published archives from Harbin and Beijing in *Qingdai Elunchunzu Man-Hanwen dang'an huibian* (Beijing: Minzu chubanshe, 2001). For a full citation and description of the sources, see Appendix A.

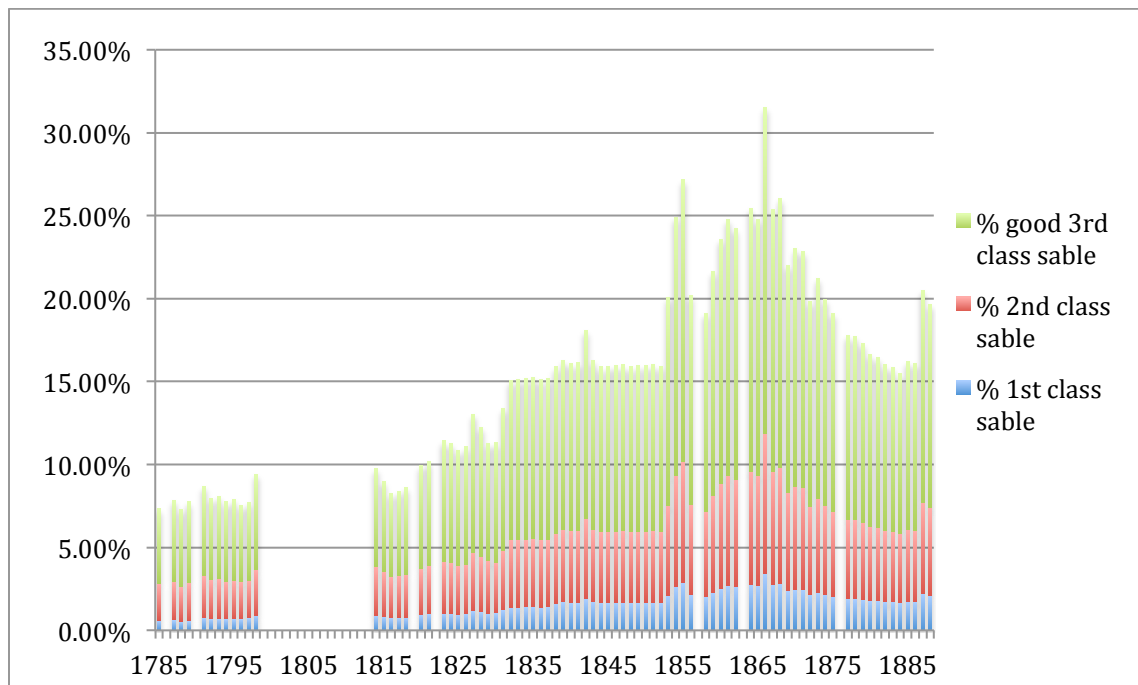


The figures show that the court was able to extract tribute throughout this time period – the number of furs brought to the culgan always exceeded the minimum of one pelt per hunter. However, the number the absolute number of sables brought to the culgan show a general decline in the 1820s, plunge dramatically in the early 1850s, and fail to recover thereafter, losing on average almost half their number. The overall haul in sables was strongly correlated to the number of men participating in the culgan. The major decline, that is, reflects the decline in the number of men, as the Solon were drafted into the Taiping Wars. Yet while both began to decrease in the 1820s, and experienced a marked decrease after 1851 sable hauls plunged significantly faster the population of men. If each hunter, that is, brought an average of two pelts to the culgan prior to 1850 (presenting one as tribute and keeping one for the marketplace), hunters from the 1860s onwards brought only one pelt, with nothing leftover to sell for themselves. The

marketplace component of the culgan system had collapsed. The quota, however, was not to blame.

The records also reveal other trends. The sables were ranked according into four categories: “top class” (Ma: *uju jergi*; Ch: 頭等), “second class” (Ma: *jai jergi*; Ch: 二等), “good quality third class” (Ma: *sain ilaci jergi*; Ch: 好三等), and “regular third class” (Ma: *an i ilaci jergi*; Ch: 常三等); nothing below regular third class was accepted as tribute. From the 1820s, at the same time that the overall number of furs submitted was declining, the overall percentage of higher grade furs rose. Thus through 1820, over 90% of the furs accepted as tribute were graded as regular third class: on average, 5% of the sables were quality third class, 2.5% second class, and 0.75% top class. By 1832, twice the number of each high grade sable were taken (see Figure 28).

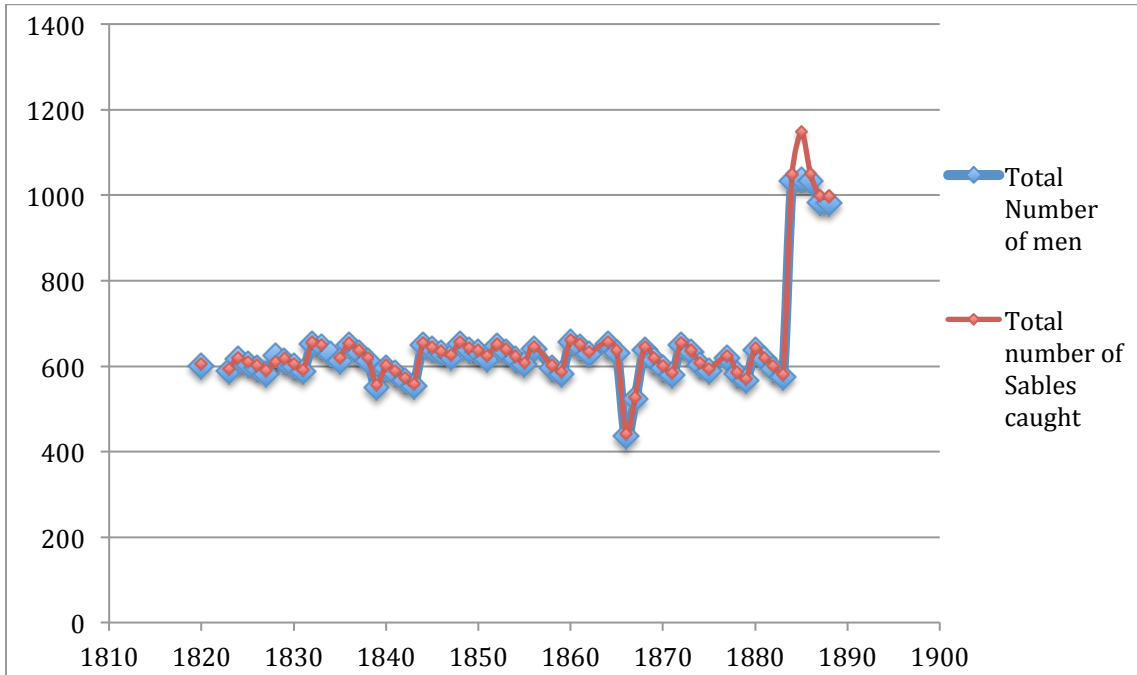
Figure 28: Percentage Top-Quality Sable Accepted as Tribute, 1785-1888





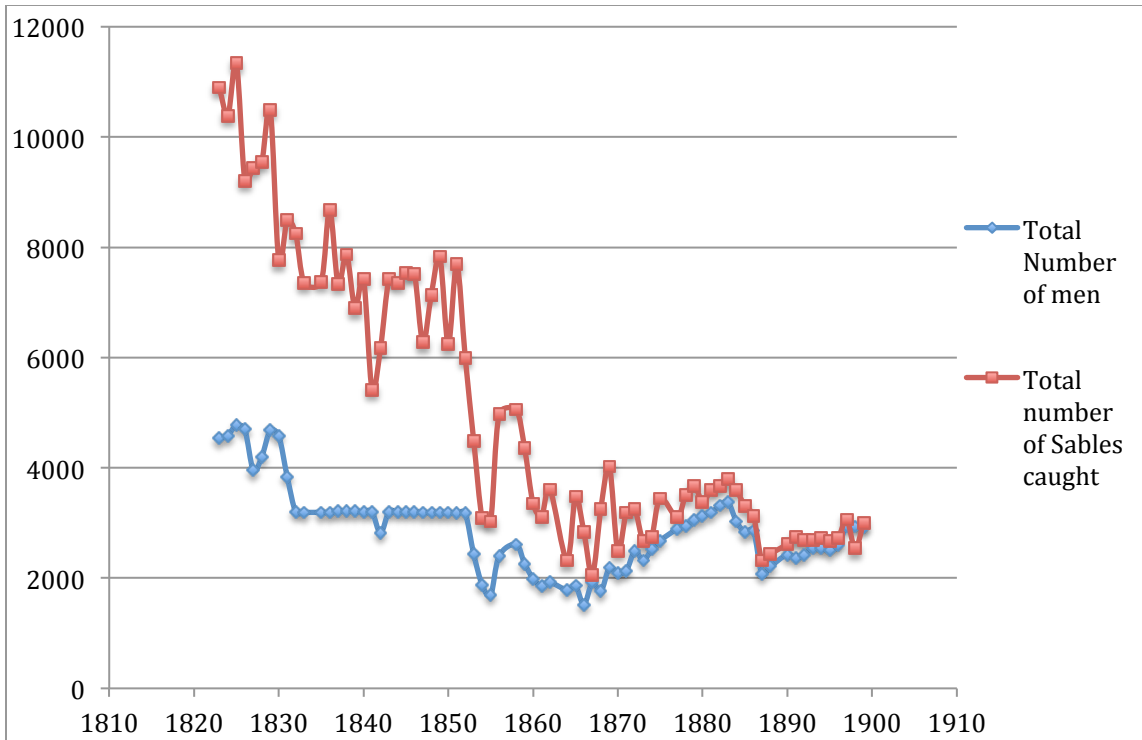
Looking into the tallies for each ethnic group, the declines were more pronounced for some groups, and non-existent for others, such as the Yafahan Oroncon and Birar, who maintained a steady tribute of about 600 pelts each year (See Figure 29).

Figure 29: Sable Tallies from the Cicigar *culgan* – Yafahan Oroncon and Birar



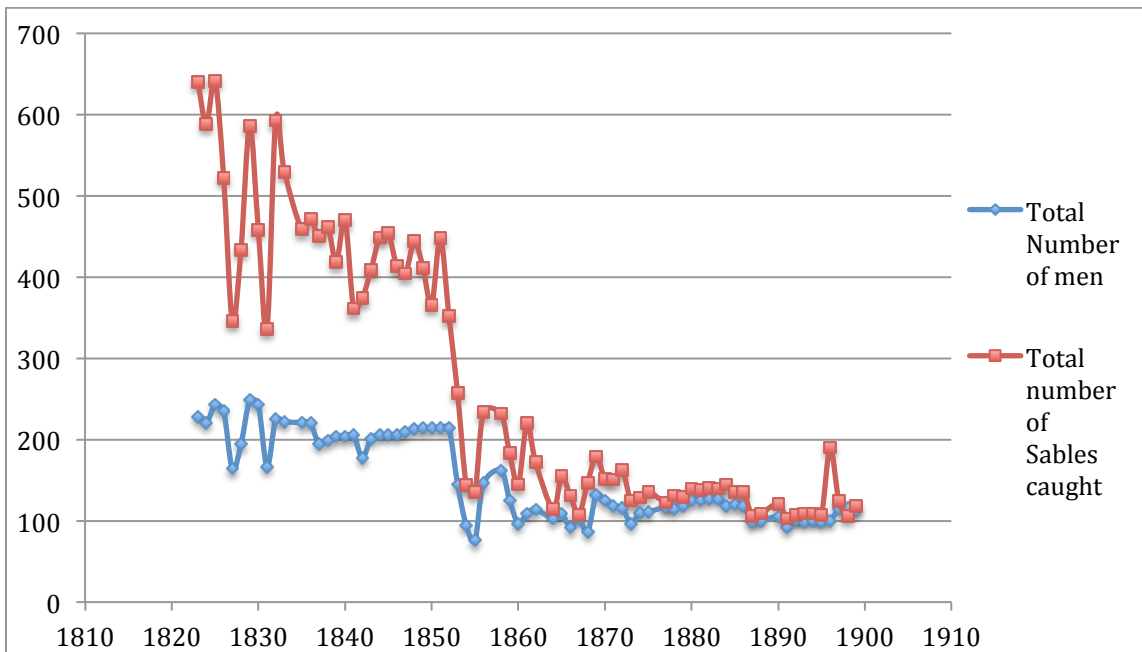
The Solon and Dagūr, in contrast, brought to the *culgan* over 10,000 pelts in the early 1820s, but roughly only 6,000 pelts by 1850 (See Figure 30).

Figure 30: Sable Tallies from the Cicigar *culgan* – Solon and Dagūr



Likewise, the smaller Moringga Oroncon community brought over 600 pelts to the *culgan* in the early 1820s, but only 400 by the 1850s.

Figure 31: Sable Tallies at Cicigar *culgan* – Moringga Oroncon



In sum, the decline in sables was geographically uneven, but widespread: the small community of Yafahan Oroncon, for example maintained steady rates of participation in the *culgan*; the Solon, Dagūr, and Moringga Oroncon, who accounted for most tribute-payers, saw fewer and fewer households participating. Indeed, while the number of participants in the Cicigar *culgan* declined throughout the nineteenth century, with the year 1850 and the onset of the Taiping rebellion marking a major turning point, the number of sables brought to the fair declined even faster: there were fewer sables brought each year per man. Moreover, despite the lower quantity of furs presented, the quality of those accepted was rising, suggesting that tribute-bearers had increasingly less choice in what they submitted. The *culgan* itself had become a different event: it was no longer for both tribute and trade; it was now used solely for tribute.

## **Conclusion**

Significantly, all three of Manchuria's most precious resources – pearls, ginseng, and sable – became increasingly scarce in the period 1750-1850. First ginseng, then fresh-water oysters, than sables disappeared from the wild. The depletion of these natural resources was perceived primarily as a problem of insufficient state control as poachers, black market traders, and corrupt officials proliferated. While reforms to contain the problem differed for each commodity (moratoriums on pearling, licensing private ginseng-picking, increased oversight at the *culgan* for tribute and trade sables alike), the thrust of reforms was always similar: more centralized controls over production and a strengthening of the territorial order. Guard posts were permanently established at

strategic choke-points, placards erected around the restricted areas, and roving patrolmen were dispatched to arrest illegal trespassers and seize contraband.

The logic behind these measures had environmental, economic, and ideological dimensions. The land had its limits: it needed to “rest,” like a person, in order to be productive: moratoriums, lower tribute quotas, and efforts aimed at making production more extensive and less intensive by opening new rivers and mountains all took this sense of ecological limits into account. At the same time, sustained demand in the metropole for these products necessitated long-term conservation. The Qing court in particular required a constant inflow of pearls, ginseng, and furs not only as tradeable commodities, but as emblematic objects of Manchu ethnicity and required ornaments at court. The nature of this demand, in turn, insisted upon authenticity: Manchurian pearls, ginseng, and furs had to be produced the right way, by the right people, to be endowed with full value. Cultivating ginseng or buying furs from another location and passing them as tributary items was prohibited.

The conservation effort reflected the unique interests and position of the Qing court in Manchuria. The primacy of tribute and the banner system made the court an unusually important actor: nowhere else in the empire was so much land marked off and set aside for the emperor. In Mongolia, where the local nobility controlled the territory, the court played an altogether different role in facilitating production and movement of commodities. In Mongolia, tribute was of relatively minor importance, and, at least officially, most commodities came to the metropole through licensed trade. It is from Manchuria and the world of tribute to Mongolia and the world of licensing that we turn in Chapter 3.

## **Chapter 3: Resource Production and Commercial Licensing in Qing Mongolia**

### **Introduction**

Mongolia, like Manchuria, was deeply immersed in the metropolitan economy of the Chinese interior. Just as the pearls, sables, and ginseng produced under court supervision in Manchuria found their way into markets in Beijing and elsewhere, so, too, did the produce of Mongolia's taiga and steppe lands end up entering the fast-growing commercial networks of the Qing empire. However, while some of its natural resources, such as wild boar and venison, were levied as an annual tribute to the court, the legal mechanism for moving most products in Mongolia was licensed trade: with a proper permit, a merchant was granted the right to conduct trade in Mongolia – a privilege not granted to merchants in Manchuria. Thus, in the first half of the nineteenth century, as the economy of Mongolia became increasingly commercialized, Chinese merchants and their caravans became common sights in the major trading hubs, such as Kiakhta, Uliasutai, and Khüree (modern-day Ulaanbaatar), and on the roads between them. The enormous traffic in frontier commodities, in turn, inspired new rules and institutions to mediate contacts between Mongols and Chinese.

Yet, as this chapter argues, the growth of licensing of Chinese merchant activity was not some simple form of liberalization or sinicization. Rather, the Qing state used licensing to reinforce the multiethnic imperial ideal. Just as modern passports facilitate movement while inscribing upon travelers their territorial and national identities, licenses allowed internal borders of the empire to be crossed while confirming their existence?relevance. China's booming commercial markets of the eighteenth and

nineteenth centuries did not undermine the Qing imperial order, they helped define it: increasingly, the lines between ethnic groups and their homelands were drawn at the market place. Commercial production and empire building were complimentary, not conflicting, processes.

To understand the production and movement of frontier commodities in Mongolia, one must begin with the invention and practice of commercial licensing. In Qing Mongolia, where the court recognized the right of local nobility to rule within their domain, the role of central authorities was to mediate trans-jurisdictional matters, including long-distance trade. In the years 1750-1850, commercialization and new stresses in the pastoral economy dramatically transformed the economy of mid-Qing Mongolia, encouraging expanded natural resource production. Frontier and metropole were integrated to an unprecedented degree, as commercial markets came to play a central role in mediating contacts between Mongols and Chinese, locals and migrants. As trade and resource exploitation boomed, the Qing state intensified efforts to identify and better manage its changing subject populations. Finally, as commercial resource exploitation began booming, the court moved to strengthen the imperial order by allowing the licensing of not only trade, but production.<sup>1</sup>

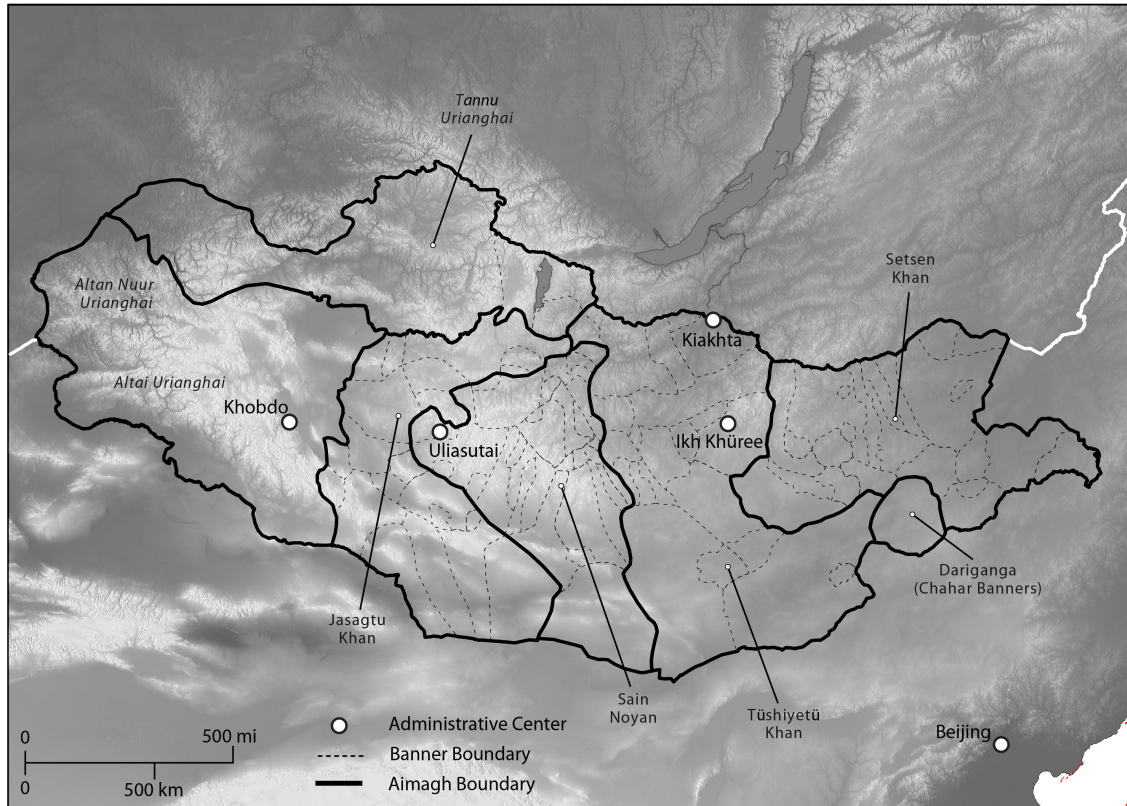
### **Boundaries and Boundary Crossing: Licensing Travel in Qing Mongolia**

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<sup>1</sup> They were not the only ones to emerge; similar systems were also put in place for gold mining. See High and Schlesinger, "Rulers and Rascals: The Politics of Gold in Qing Mongolian History," *Central Asian Survey* 29.3 (2010): 289-304.

Qing administration over Mongolia was premised upon robust borders and legal restrictions on movement.<sup>2</sup> Outer Mongolia was divided into three nested layers of administration, with clear jurisdictional lines dividing each. The primary territorial

Map 3: Qing Outer Mongolia, c. 1820



administrative unit was the banner (Ma: *gūsa*; Mo: *qosiγu(n)*; Ch: 旗), which was headed by a single authority, the *jasay* (Ma: *jasak*; Mo: *jasay*; Ch: 扎薩克). Above the banners were four *aimay* (Ma: *aiman*; Mo: *aimay*; Ch: 部落), each named for the prince who was its titular head: namely, from east to west, Cecen Han (Mo: *Secen Qan*; Ch: 車臣汗), Tusiyetu Han (Mo: *Tüsiyetu Qan*; Ch: 土謝圖汗), Sain Noyan (Mo: *Saiyin Noyan*; Ch:

<sup>2</sup> On the historical territoriality of Mongol and Inner Asian political units, and a critique of the idea of the unbounded nomad, see David Sneath, *The Headless State: Aristocratic Orders, Kinship Society, and Misrepresentations of Nomadic Inner Asia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).

賽因諾顏), and Jasaktu Han (Mo: *Jasaytu Qan*; Ch: 扎薩克圖汗) (see Map). The *aimay* were also known as “leagues” (Ma: *culgan*; Mo: *ciγulyan*; Ch: 盟), and were administered under “League Chiefs” (Ma: *culgan i da*; Mo: *ciγulyan u daruyā*; Ch: 盟長). Beneath the banner were local units called “arrows” (Ma: *niru*; Mo: *sumu(n)*; Ch: 佐領). The number of arrows per banner, and banners per *aimay*, was irregular (see Figure 32). At a regional level, the Inner Mongol banners, for example, contained on average 23.6 arrows. In Outer Mongolia, in contrast, the banner itself was often the smallest unit of territorial governance, with fifty-five of eighty-six banners lacking arrow subdivisions altogether.<sup>3</sup>

Figure 32: Territorial Administrative Units of Outer Mongolia, Early Nineteenth Century

<b>Aimay Name</b>	<b>League Name</b>	<b>Number of Banners</b>	<b>Number of Arrows</b>
Cecen Han	Kerülün Bars City	23	48
Tusiyetu Han	Qan Mountain	20	58
Sain Noyan	Cicirliḡ	24	39.5
Jasaktu Han	Lake Biduriya	19	24.5

Every Mongol subject was identified by their banner and, by extension, their governing *jasay*. Indeed, Qing documents invariably refer to the name of the *jasay* when discussing the banners; being part of a banner entailed singular lines of authority running up to *jasay*. Aristocratic privilege was at the center of this order: only men of the

<sup>3</sup> David Farquhar, “The Ch’ing Administration of Mongolia Up to the Nineteenth Century,” 71.



Borjigid (Chinggisid) lineage were granted imperial recognition and administrative, pecuniary, and legal authority of a *jasay*.<sup>4</sup>

The banner system restricted movement for *all* Qing subjects, regardless of their identity. Prohibitions on settlement and movement (Ch: 封禁) were not limited to Chinese settlers, but extended to everyone on the frontier: Chinese, Russians, Mongols, and Manchus alike.<sup>5</sup> Boundaries were long fundamental to the banner order. Chinese civilians could not cross into Mongol banners; Mongol bannermen could not cross out.<sup>6</sup> Restrictions on mobility extended to the banner nobility themselves: by the high Qing, if a nobleman left his banner, or wished to marry outside the banner, he requested the appropriate travel permit from the military governor in Uliasutai.<sup>7</sup> As early as 1629, even prior to the Qing conquest of Beijing, the state first prohibited crossing banner boundaries; it then established a schedule of fines for those who “escaped” their home banner in 1634; and it criminalized hunting outside the home banner in 1662. To make the order manifest, physical boundary markers were used on the ground, including

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<sup>4</sup> As David Sneath has argued, the continuity of local aristocratic privilege in Mongolia was striking: Though he perhaps underplays the role of the Qing state in upholding the aristocratic order, David Sneath, *The Headless State*.

<sup>5</sup> Li Baowen first impressed the point upon me. Personal communication, 2009.

<sup>6</sup> According to the *Lifanyuan zeli*, “bannermen and civilians who live within the [Great Wall] boundary may not cross the boundary and plow fields in Mongol lands. Punish the those who break the prohibition in accordance with laws for illicitly farming pastureland.” In parallel fashion, a similar rule existed for “illicitly inviting in Mongols from other banners to cross the border and homestead on state land” (Ma: *siden i ongko ba*; Mo: *alban u belciger yajar*). GMQJ 34: 8a, 10: 9a-10b; TGKH 10: 1a-b, 34: 8a, 10; 14a-15a.

<sup>7</sup> Li Yushu, *Waimeng zhengjiao zhidu kao* (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan jindaishi yanjiu suo, 1978), 75.

physiographic landmarks (mountain ridges, forests, etc.), placards, and cairns (Mo: *oboγa*).<sup>8</sup>

Like international borders today, imperial subjects could legally cross banner boundaries only with a special travel permit (Ma: *jugūn yabure temgetu bithe*). For Chinese merchants in particular, an edict in 1720 (KX59) established the requirement that all those travelling to Khüree obtain a special license.<sup>9</sup> In 1727, the court established inspection points at the existing garrison posts of Xifengkou (Ch: 喜峰口), Gubeikou (Ch: 古北口), Zhangjiakou (Ch: 張家口), Hohhot (Ch: 歸化城), and Shahukou (Ch: 殺虎口) to better regulate cross-border commerce, with merchants required to carry passports (Ch: 部票).<sup>10</sup> In 1800 (JQ4.12), to handle increased commercial traffic, the court reformed the passport and licensing system once again. Paperwork was standardized across jurisdictions:

People going to trade in Khüree, Kiakhta, Uliasutai, and the four Khalkha *aimag* should be permanently organized according to established rules and regulations. Henceforth the names, amounts of merchandise, and dates of departure will be clearly written on government permits (*jurgan i temgetu bithe*) obtained through the various yamens by the merchants. Having attached the government permit and affixed it with a seal, the officials' yamen at the trade-

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<sup>8</sup> Farquhar, "The Ch'ing Administration of Mongolia Up to the Nineteenth Century," 7, 67-68. Farquhar rightfully described the Mongol banners as "rigidly delineated parcels of territory." I have translated the Mongol *oboγ-a* as "cairn" in most locations in the text, despite limits to the translation. The Mongol *oboγ-a*, unlike the English "cairn," is imbued with spiritual dimensions and cultural importance specific to the Mongol context, a sense which cairn fails to capture. At the same time, translating the term as "cairn" is adequate in the context of using *oboγ-a* to mark boundaries on the ground. On the multiple uses and meanings of *oboγ-a*, see Charles Bawden, "Two Mongol Texts Concerning Obo-Worship," *Oriens Extremus* 5 (1958), 23-41.

<sup>9</sup> Li Yushu, *Waimeng zhengjiao zhidu kao*, 109-110.

<sup>10</sup> Zhang Zhengming, *Jinshang xingshuai shi* (Taiyuan: Shanxi guji chubanshe, 2001), 43, 46, 73-74. The checkpoints doubled as customs offices.

destination will be notified. [For all these activities] records will be kept.<sup>11</sup>

The system required constant cooperation between merchants and the local yamens. Six months prior to issuing trade licenses for travel from Khuree to Uliasutai, for example, the *amban*'s office in Khuree would receive a request for a number of blank permits affixed with the *amban*'s seal; these permits were then transferred to the trade supervisor's office, where clerks issued them to merchants.<sup>12</sup> For merchants travelling from Shanxi or Beijing, the application process usually began in Hohhot or Kalgan, where the caravan leader registered his name, merchant house, destination, number of camels or ox carts, types and quantities of goods, and the names, home jurisdictions, and sometimes physical descriptions of all Chinese and Mongol caravan members. The yamen then issued a permit with a designated length of stay on it – either 100 days, 200 days, or a year, depending on the destination.<sup>13</sup>

While the licenses opened up trade, they also served to identify merchants to the state and facilitate supervision. The license itself was a form letter, in block print, with Mongol text on the left and Chinese text on the right. At the top was printed “TEMPORARY PASSPORT” (Mo: *quyusayan temdegtü bicig*; Ch: 票限). Beneath it were written the rules for conduct in Mongolia (prohibitions against entering restricted areas, etc.) and a message granting safe passage; only the dates and names of the

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<sup>11</sup> Cited in M1D1-3935.15b (DG11.7.28).

<sup>12</sup> M1D1-4079.53 (DG17.2.29).

<sup>13</sup> The length of stay was calibrated to estimated travel times and the time needed to do business. A permit for a trip from Hohhot to a Khalkha banner was good for one year. One-hundred days was given for the Khuree-Kiakhta round-trip. Two hundred days were the allotted norm for Khuree-Uliasutai permits, and three months usually allotted for banner closer by. M1D1-4079.13a (DG17.10.4); M1D1-4079.15a (DG17.12.24); M1D1-4079.26 (DG17.3.30).

recipients were left blank.<sup>14</sup> To ensure the timeliness of each departure, merchants had twenty days to leave town or else the permit would be invalid.<sup>15</sup> When they arrived at their destination, the full caravan reported to the local yamen; when they returned home, they reported again and submit their used permits to the clerk's office.<sup>16</sup> The yamens alerted one another to all caravan movements; if someone failed to show at their expected destination, reported to the wrong destination, came with the wrong number of people or merchandise, or lacked a license altogether, they were arrested.

Licensing, however, was not limited to Chinese merchants and Mongol caravan workers. The state was vested in documenting and restricting all manner of cross-border movement, especially of large groups, no matter their ethnic identity. Like merchants, pilgrims' parties also required special travel permits (Ma: *jugūn yabure temgetu bithe*), with teams of Buddhist pilgrims regularly heading to Khüree, Amdo, Lhasa, and Wutaishan throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.<sup>17</sup> It was standard practice for pilgrims' travel permits to include a list of names, ranks (if applicable), number of riding and pack animals, and lists of positions, especially weapons. As with travel permits for merchants, pilgrims' were similarly prohibited from "unruliness" (*balai baita*) while

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<sup>14</sup> MID1-4319.45a (DG27.12).

<sup>15</sup> MID1-3697.6 (JQ24.12.20).

<sup>16</sup> MID1-4079.53 (DG17.2.29).

<sup>17</sup> Qing documents list two types of pilgrimages: "going to pay respects" (Ma: *hengkileme genembi*; Mo: *mörgükü* (lit. "prostrating oneself before")) and "offering tea" (Ma: *manja fuifume*). For an in depth discussion of pilgrimage in the Mongol world, see Isabelle Charleux (forthcoming); Charleux, "Padmasambhava's Travel to the North: The Pilgrimage to the Monastery of the Caves and the Old Schools of Tibetan Buddhism in Mongolia," *Central Asiatic Journal* 46 (2002), 168-232; Charleux, "Mongol Pilgrimages to Wutai Shan in the Late Qing Dynasty," *JIATS* 6 (2011), 275-326; and Gray Tuttle, "Tibetan Buddhism at Wutai Shan in the Qing," *JIATS* 6 (2011): 163-214. On historical pilgrimage practices in China, see Susan Naquin and Yu Chunfang, *Pilgrims and Sacred Sites in China* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1992).

on the road.<sup>18</sup> Licenses were good only one way: when travelers reached their point of destination, they had to register with the jurisdictional office and, before leaving, apply for a permit for the exit trip. According to the law, “if any Mongols request permission to make a pilgrimage to places such as Khüree or Mt. Wutai, [the petitioned office] will both memorialize the throne and issue the travel permit.”<sup>19</sup> Thus while requests were never denied, they had to be made nonetheless – and the emperor had to be informed of these movements.<sup>20</sup>

In 1793 (QL58.10), seven years prior to the standardization of merchant licensing, the court finally streamlined the licensing process for pilgrims: “Henceforth, if there are more than ten people [in a group] going to Tibet to pay respects to the Dalai Lama or Bancen Erdeni (Pancen Lama), offer *mang ja* (boiled tea), or learn sutras, they must

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<sup>18</sup> See, for example, the language in M1D1-3840.18 (XF7.9.20).

<sup>19</sup> See M1D1-3840.32 (DG7.2.7): “*kooli de yaya monggoso u tai alin, kuren i jergi bade hengkileme geneki seme baime aliburengge bici, gemu emu dergi wesimbume, emu dergi jugūn yabure temgetu bithe bahabufi unggimbi.*”

<sup>20</sup> Not all pilgrims were equal, with some Mongol groups trusted more by the law than others, depending on their historical relationships with the court. Oirat Mongols, for one, had special procedures which limited their movement. By rule, whenever Turgūt or Hoošot Mongols went on pilgrimage to Kūke Noor (Qinghai), the responsible authorities were required to send a memorial. Thus when a party of fifteen that included the Turgut han Dzedendorji’s wife, the queen (*katun*) Rasipil, his two adult sons, a *jalan i janggin* and a lama petitioned to make a pilgrimage to the monasteries around Xining and Kūke Noor (Qinghai), the petition was first forwarded to the Daoguang emperor. By rule, their request was only granted if the pilgrimage was made in good faith – if the “Mongols truly are honoring the Yellow Dharma [i.e. Buddhism] and have honest intentions in accordance with the law” (Ma: *monggoso suwayan šajin be wesihulere unenggi gūnin hono kooli de acaname*). Only after first petitioning were they then granted travel permits (Ma: *jugūn yabure temgetu bithe*), with the key administrative authorities at their destination, and in each region through which they passed, notified in advance of their travels, the size of the party, the names of the members, etc. The entire process of imperial confirmation took about a month. (In this case, the memorial informing the emperor of their movements was sent out on DG7.4.25, a vermilion rescript endorsed the pilgrimage three weeks later (DG7.+5.13), and notices were sent out the relevant parties on DG7.+5.21)). In the case of a pilgrimage from the Ili region (*Hara Šar*) to Qinghai, the law thus required alerts sent to the *Lifanyuan* and eleven regional offices: the governor-general of Shaanxi and Gansu, the Provincial Commander-in-Chief of Gansu, the military governor of Uliasutai, the *horon be algimbure jiyanggiyūn* [see Norman], the *amban* at Xining, the assistant *amban* at Kobdo, the *amban* at Ikh Khüree, the Lieutenant-General of Urumci, the *ambans* at Hami, the brigade general at Suzhou, the commandant of forces at Gucheng and Turfan, and the brigade general at Barkol. M1D1-3840.23a (DG7.4.4); M1D1-3840.7 (DG7.+5.21).

obtain a permit. If there are less than ten people [in the party], and they want a permit, let them have one. If without a permit, there is no need for the *ambans* in Tibet to pursue the matter too far.” Special leniency to pilgrims, he explained, was consonant with “My loving compassion for all Mongol subjects (Ma: *geren monggo ahasi*) who make Gelukpa Buddhism (lit. “Yellow Teaching”) flourish.”<sup>21</sup>

Uniquely, and unlike trade caravans, women were prominent travelers in pilgrim’s parties. A group of Turgut Mongols who made the trip in Khüree in 1811, for example, was led by the Turgut khan Tzendendorji’s queen mother, Rasipil; their journey began in Kara Šar and stopped in Urumqi before veering north to Turpan, Gucheng, Kobdo, Uliasutai and finally Khüree. She was escorted by sixty-eight “men and women,” including the khan himself. They departed their home pastures in the late spring, on April 20, 1811 (JQ16.3.28). Rasipil had, in fact, written the Turgut league chief, prince (*beise*) Guntan, to set in motion the licensing process, informing him of the planned trip and notifying him of Tzerendorji’s replacement while he was away and requesting official permission to carry on the trip.<sup>22</sup> Such parties also doubled as trade caravans. In 1857 a party of twenty-four “lamas and laymen, men and women” (*lama kara haha hehe*) from the Šarabulak postal station district (near Kobdo) likewise came to Khüree to pay respects to the Jebtsundamba Kütuktu.<sup>23</sup> They came in a caravan laden with goods:

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<sup>21</sup> MID1-3840.55a (DG7.9).

<sup>22</sup> MID1-3675.86 (JQ16.+3.24). The age of Tzerendorji is not clear, but is clear from the chain of command that his mother, Rasipil, was in charge of Tzerendorji’s banner. Her letter is cited within the document by Guntan in a communication to Urumci.

<sup>23</sup> MID1-3840.18 (XF7.9.20). Khüree was a common destination for Turgüt pilgrims. In the same year of 1827, the *ambans*’ office in Tarbagatai sent notices of yet another relative of a Turgut prince, this time the *cin wang* Engkjirgal’s younger brother, a *gelung* lama, requesting permission to make visit to Khüree to “pay respects” (*hengkileme*) to the Jebtsundamba Kutuktu. The travel permit specified that his party included twenty one men, nine camels, twenty horses, and six muskets; he would have to reapply for

fifteen riding horses, fifty camels with miscellaneous trade items, one Mongol-style *ger* each, one tent (*maikan*) each, and two muskets (*miyoocan*).<sup>24</sup> As the muskets suggest, the road was a dangerous place. While pilgrims often armed themselves, it was the responsibility of the highest officials in Outer Mongolia, the *ambans* in Khüree and the military governor in Uliasutai, to make the roads safe.

### **Empire at the Interstices: Keeping Merchants in Line**

Through licensing and monitoring even the most innocuous types of population movement, the Qing state was more broadly involved in maintaining the physical and legal infrastructure that bound Mongolia to the Chinese interior: it kept up roads, protected those with permits, and arrested those without. The offices responsible for these activities stood above the banners: a military governor (Ma: *jiyanggiyūn*; Ch: 將軍) in Uliasutai, and an imperial representative in Khüree (Ma: *hesei takūraha Kuren de tefi baita icihiyara amban*; Mo: *jarliγ-iyar jaruγsan Kūriyen-dur saγuju kereg sidkegci sayid*; Ch: 庫倫辦事大臣; lit. “official dispatched by imperial decree to Khüree to manage affairs” in Manchu and Mongol). Both officials were dispatched from Beijing, and belonged to the Eight Banners; the vast majority were Manchu; after 1800, the imperial representative in Khüree was given oversight over the eastern *aimag*, and the military

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another permit for his return trip from the *ambans*' office at Khüree. (In Khüree, the *ambans* office had capable *jaisang* and *halgaci* called up to look after them while in town. Another Turgut party registered as five people, 10 camels, and gun received travel permits on DG7.3.10, good for sixty days. See MID1-3840.55a (DG7.9).

<sup>24</sup> MID1-3840.19 (XF7.8.18).

governor over the two western *aimay*.<sup>25</sup> The post of imperial representative in Khüree, or “*amban*,” was established in 1762; he was charged primarily with managing relations and trade with Russia. The office quickly assumed other jobs as well, all involving cross-jurisdictional matters: maintaining the postal roads, coordinating with the Jebtsundamba Khutukhtu and the Buddhist establishment, overseeing the Chinese merchant community, and handling cases of inter-ethnic crime and marriage. As trade grew, so, too, did the size and stature of the office, with new offices for trade supervisors, directly responsible to the *amban*, established in Kiakhta and Khüree.<sup>26</sup> It was the *ambans*’ responsibility to ensure that the imperial order, based on the integrity of the Mongol banner system, remained in place. Banner *jasays* kept control over local affairs; Uliasutai and Khüree intervened only to maintain order in inter-banner, interethnic, and international relations.

In this function, a basic task of the two offices was to maintain the imperial road network. The Qing court invested heavily in new postal roads and ferries linking Beijing, Kalgan (Ch: 張家口), and Hohhot to Khüree, Kiakhta, Uliasutai, and Khobdo. The highways were guarded by postal stations placed thirty miles, or a days’ ride, from another, and were subject to regular inspections by top authorities in Mongolia, including the military governor at Uliasutai and imperial representatives in Khüree.<sup>27</sup> At regular intervals in the autumn, when camels and horses were in top condition, the top authorities in Uliasutai and Khüree were required to inspect the post-stations (*Ma giyamun*) in their

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<sup>25</sup> There were two Imperial Representatives in Khüree, one a Mongol aristocrat who served a life term, and a second a Eight Bannerman, almost always a Manchu, who served a three-year term.

<sup>26</sup> Li Yushu, *Waimeng zhengjiao zhidu kao*, 46-78, 95, 105, 121-130, 149-154, 167.

<sup>27</sup> On the main trunk-lines connecting Kalgan, Hohhot, Khüree, and Uliasutai, these postal stations were placed about every 100 *li* from each other, and between Uliasutai and Kobdo the postal station were thirty *li* apart. *Wuliyasutai zhilue*, 2.



jurisdictions; in the two eastern *aimag*, they included twenty post-stations on the southern road. Likewise, all newly arrived military governors at Uliasutai were required to inspect all *giyamun* and *karun* in the jurisdiction.<sup>28</sup> Despite the inconvenience of the trip and the burden it imposed on the local population, it was considered state work of the foremost importance, and archival records attest to the faithfulness with which military governors performed their duty, checking that the horses and camels were properly fattened up and that the posts' arsenals were in order. If necessary, extra horses from the area were pressed into service to ensure that post had a sufficient number of healthy animals.<sup>29</sup>

Considerable resources and time were sunk into the inspection tours, which lasted up to three weeks. In the summer of 1825, to take a typical year, the military governor at Uliasutai inspected a total of forty-one relay stations around Uliasutai, including the fourteen west of Uliasutai, on the way to Aldar and Qara Usu; the eight north of Kobdo, around Šara Bulak, and the nine north of Uliasutai in the vicinity of Cagan Dologai and Coboriya. He reported he had personally ensured that after rigorous inspection, the stations' weapons were all in order, the horses and camels were all strong, and banditry was nonexistent.<sup>30</sup> Such tours were taxing on the local population pressed into postal duty. The relay station, and the community in which it was based, was responsible for hosting the official and his accompanying party. In difficult years, the authorities requested exemptions from making tours on grounds that locals were already “suffering”

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<sup>28</sup> M2D1-176.11a (DG14.5.16).

<sup>29</sup> M2D1-176.31b (DG14.9.8).

<sup>30</sup> M2D1-176.15b (DG14.6.26).

enough. In 1834, for example, the new military governor of Uliasutai, Kingšan,<sup>31</sup> was by law required to perform an inspection tour of the *karun* and *giyamun* in his jurisdiction as new appointee. However, since the authorities in Kobdo had already conducted an inspection tour that year, Kingšan memorialized the emperor that a “great number of Mongols” would be affected by the undertaking, and it was better to conserve resources.<sup>32</sup>

The state also maintained ferries along the postal routes. Authorities in Mongolia were not unusual in this regard. In Manchuria, the law required postal station ferries (Ma: *dobonggo*, *giyamun i dogon*), grain transport, and military training in Heilongjiang to be renovated at regular intervals, some every ten years, other every five years, and still other every three years. Each year, the military governors had to memorialize on the number of boats in need of repair, the type of boat, its location, its date of its last renovation, and its current state (“falling apart at the seams,” “rotting planks,” “pegs coming loose.”).<sup>33</sup> He then prepared a budget for the Board of Works, so that materials (“tung oil, etc.”) could be dispatched from Beijing. Thus in 1804, for example, twenty-five boats received funding for renovation in Heilongjiang, including two ferries in Cicigar, two in Sahaliyan Ula (Heilongjiang) department, and two in Mergen.<sup>34</sup> In 1806, forty-five boats were renovated in Jilin, including ten postal ferries, and thirty-four different boats were renovated again in 1810.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Kingšan (慶山), Manchu; military governor 1833-34.

<sup>32</sup> M2D1-176.11a (DG14.5.16).

<sup>33</sup> MWLF 3709.27.175.1478 (JQ11.10.18).

<sup>34</sup> MWLF 3673.30.172.806 (JQ9.9.4).

<sup>35</sup> MWLF 3709.27.175.1478 (JQ11.10.18); MWLF 3791.46.181.148 (JQ15.10.19).

In Mongolia, banners assumed the costs and procured men and supplies, and ferry services usually came with an unofficial price. As Pozdneyev described the toll system in Qing Mongolia:

I learned from conversations with Mongols that this ferry was maintained by decree of the hoshun [i.e. banner] authorities and that local Mongols served a term here as a hoshun duty. The ferrymen are obliged to ferry across, free of charge, anyone traveling at official request as well as any neighboring Mongols; they receive no pay either from the hoshun or from the local community; they are granted only the right to levy a charge on Chinese merchants and their wares and likewise on Mongols living farther away. There is no set fare in this case; the ferrymen set the price at their own discretion, taking into consideration the amount of their own labor and circumstances of the person being ferried, with their personal feelings towards a given person, of course, entering in. They customarily charge Chinese merchants five silver rubles for ferrying across one hundred sheep, thirty to fifty copecks for a cart and horse, and ten copecks for a riding horse.<sup>36</sup>

While the permit system placed limits on mobility (one could not diverge from one's plans), it also guaranteed a measure of predictability. There of course remained inherent in dangers to travel and limits to state protection. Taking to the road meant exposure to disease and the elements, and travellers often died from sickness. Banditry also remained a problem. Even Buddhist pilgrims were not foolish enough to travel without weapons, including muskets; many parties brought several muskets (See Figure 33).<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Pozdneyev, *Mongolia and the Mongols*, 1: 5.

<sup>37</sup> These pilgrimages in particular were made in advance of the Jebtsundamba's arrival in Khüree. See MID1-3675.29a (JQ24.4.9), MID1-3675.38a (JQ24), MID1-3675.42a (JQ24.2.26), MID1-3675.62a (JQ24.2.21), MID1-3675.63a (JQ24.2.2), MID1-3675.64 (JQ24.2.26), MID1-3675.69b (JQ24.2.6), MID1-3675.72 (JQ24.2.20). The travel parties on the occasion of the Jebtsundamba Khutukhtu's arrival from Tibet were exceptionally large. In the spring of 1819, the Ambans' Office reported the departure, following a personal inspection of the *ambans*, of the team of 539 armed lamas and laymen headed by *wang* Manibdara on the occasion of the arrival of the Fifth Jebtsundamba Kütuku. Additional officials and lamas were called up to act as their escorts up to the edge of the Kalka border to the south. The *kuren i*

Figure 33: Armed Pilgrims' Caravans from Cecen Han *aimay* to Tibet, Spring 1819

Leader's rank	Number of Pilgrims	Horses	Camels	Guns	Quivers	Swords	Spears
<i>taiji lama</i>	12	4	35	1	3	2	
<i>lama</i>	15	30	30			1	1
<i>gelung</i>	12	2	31	1		2	
<i>lama</i>	6	2	28	2	2		
<i>lama</i>	9	6	30	2	7		
<i>lama</i>	17	22	35	2	1		
<i>lama</i>	11	11	25	2	3		

While the Qing state's control over highway robbery was limited, and caravans felt it necessary to fend for themselves, the state used other measures to help secure the property of travellers and provide a measure of dependability to long-distance trade. Even in cases of caravans overcome by prairie fires, for examples, merchants' goods were protected. In one case from 1831, a flash prairie fire in the banner of *beise* Pungcukdorji destroyed 742.39 taels worth of goods owned by the merchant Yin Zhengtong, known locally as "Sengge."<sup>38</sup> For Sengge, the situation was a disaster, as he

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*g'ambu nomun han* Jangcubdorji and the Šangjotba, Gombujab, were immediately responsible for overseeing that welcoming the *hūbilgan* would be Mongol-style *gers*, large tents (Ma: *cacir*; cf. Mo. *caçar*), carts and sedan chairs covered in red cloth, and parasols, according to precedent. Other gifts included a scepter (Ma: *keksebuku*), rosary, and saddle (Ma: *enggimu*) personally granted by the Emperor, Manjusri. The travel parties on the occasion of the Jebtsundamba Khutukhtu's arrival from Tibet were exceptional large, (literally) a once-in-a-lifetime event. A year before the event, the Šangjotba's office coordinated logistics, splitting up teams of lamas to pasture horses and camels in Qinghai and Alašan, which required an exit-permit for crossing the gate at San Yan Ging. Led by the *jaisang lama* Isicerin and *halgaci lama* Lobsangdubjur, their team included a total of twenty-six men, 200 camels, 300 horses, 300 sheep, five large tents, three guns, five sets of quivers, and two swords. Even high lamas had to be armed. A round up of the suspected "bandits" was conducted all the same. Three men, led by a man named Baburung, were arrested in Hohhot, with the news reassuringly transmitted to the emperor himself. The Lifanyuan and all the top jurisdictions in Khalkha Mongolia, religious and secular, were kept apprised of the situation and kept on alert. The procedures were a scaled down version of heightened upkeep for imperial tours. M1D1-3675.17a (JQ24.2.21), M1D1-3675.81a (JQ24.10.20), M1D1-3675.85a (JQ24.+4.12), M1D1-3675.87 (JQ24.+4.12).

<sup>38</sup> I return to the question of the acculturation of Chinese merchants below.

found himself deeply in debt to his merchant house.<sup>39</sup> An investigation into the source of the fire was carried out and tracked down to the *ger* door of a man named Mandahū and his mother, a live-in nun named Angke. He was twenty-five, and his mother sixty-eight. When questioned, his mother admitted to letting ashes from the stove catch the grass around doorway on fire, unleashing a prairie fire that burned for a week, consuming mile after mile a grassland, before ever reaching the merchant's tent. Mandahū had left home to fulfill his service duty (*alban*) in his banner, leaving his mother alone; she never knew there was a problem until she suddenly heard her neighbors yell 'Fire!' The only crime she had committed was destroying the merchant's property; starting a wildfire was not a crime in itself. The Mongol Code was clear on the matter: "if any Mongol starts a fire which consumes the possessions of an *irgen*, a clear investigation of the amount of destroyed items shall be made and the *irgese* shall be repaid [by the offender] according to their value." 742.39 taels, though, was beyond Mandahū and Angke's means: they only had two *gers* and two horses to their name. The insolvent Mandahū was thus ordered to be whipped.<sup>40</sup>

Off the road, the Qing state assured licensed merchants a dependable, albeit segregated, place within towns. In each of the main trade hubs – Uliasutai, Kiakhta, and Khüree – Chinese merchants were allotted special districts, each walled off from the Mongol neighborhoods around them. In Khüree, Chinese merchants were enclosed in a

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<sup>39</sup> MID1-3935.33 (DG11.12.3). Chinese merchants in Mongolia that accidentally started prairie fires were punished according to the same laws used to prosecute Mongols found guilty of starting fires while smoking out animal dens. If they did not have livestock, they were to pay an equivalent indemnity in silver. TGKH 55: 6a-b.

<sup>40</sup> MID1-3935.33 (DG11.12.3).

designated “trade quarter” (Ma: *hūdai hashan*).<sup>41</sup> In Uliasutai, where merchants was fewer, they were kept on a smaller “trade street” (Ma: *hūdai giya*). The privilege was not free. Each year, the government rented out the land allotted to merchants in Kiakhta for 400 silver taels per year and the Khuree for 300 taels, with a representative of the trade community for paying the Trade-Inspector’s office. If split evenly, with twelve trading firms in Khuree, represented each by a headman, the rent amounted to 25 taels per merchant house.<sup>42</sup> After the establishment of the merchant quarter in Kiakhta, it was made illegal for any women to reside there. Most merchant and caravan workers thus came without their families as single men, with many between the ages of eleven and thirteen.<sup>43</sup> Some merchants took Mongol wives.<sup>44</sup>

The merchant houses forged close ties with the trade supervisor, who was immediately responsible for the district, and the trade supervisor in turn relied upon the cooperation of the leaders of the merchant community for tax and rent collection, registration activities, and law enforcement.<sup>45</sup> In Kiakhta, for example, the prohibition on arms trading with the Russians was enforced not by inspecting individuals, but by

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<sup>41</sup> MID1-4079.15a (DG17.12.24).

<sup>42</sup> MID1-3697.16a (JQ25.10).

<sup>43</sup> Zhang Zhengming, *Jinshang xingshuai shi*, 80.

<sup>44</sup> MID1-843.1 (DG4.8.9). A register was made of all mixed Chinese-Mongol households, composed of Chinese fathers and Mongol mothers. The register took their names, home jurisdiction (county for the Chinese, *otok daruga* for the Mongols), and ages, as well as the names, gender (male, female, and infant), and age of all children and dependents, including adopted children, children-in-law, nieces, and nephews; all children were registered with Mongol names and subject to the jurisdiction of their mother’s *daruga*. A register from 1824 divided the couples into those on registered eight years prior and those newly registered, suggesting that a separate registration drive had been made in 1816. Eighteen mixed households, comprised of seventy-two individuals, were listed on record before 1816.

<sup>45</sup> Judging by their names, the trade supervisors were Manchus dispatched from Beijing. In Uliasutai, trade was managed through the separate institution of Trade Judges (*maimai jargūci i ba*). See MID1-3697.31 (JQ5.8.6).

meeting with the leaders of each merchant house in the city.<sup>46</sup> The men responsible for governing the district were “zone leaders” (Ma: *giyai da*) and heads of merchant houses (Ma: *hūdai da*). Beneath them, a separate policing apparatus was installed for dealing with Chinese crimes, with those pressed into service given the rank of bailiff (Ma: *undeci*); the bailiffs were drawn invariably from amongst Han Chinese men in intermarried households. Mongol men occupied all other service positions in town, including clerks (Ma: *bithesi*; Mo: *biciyeci*), night sentries (Ma: *manaci*; Mo: *manayaci*), and postriders (Ma: *ulaci*; Mo: *ulayaci*). A register kept of all men performing police service in Khüree was compiled in 1824; it listed their names, postings, home jurisdictions, wives, and names and ages of dependents (See Figure 34). The profile of an average Mongol serviceman was a thirty-six year old man, with thirty-five year old wife and four dependents; in contrast, the average Chinese *undeci* was fifty-five years old, with a thirty-eight year old wife and four dependents. The families were similar, but the Chinese men were generally two decades older, suggesting how some unmarried Han men may have come to the frontier looking for wives as well as for business opportunities.

Figure 34: Men Serving Police Duty in Khüree, 1824

<b>Name</b>	<b>Posting</b>	<b>Man's age</b>	<b>Wife's age</b>	<b>Home jurisdiction type</b>
Dondob	postrider	44	43	banner
Dasi	postrider	38	34	banner
Tanggūt	postrider	43	38	banner
Namdak	postrider	37	35	banner

<sup>46</sup> MID1-3697.22 (JQ25.12.8) and MID1-3750.10a (DG3.12.18). In both years there were reported to be eight such headmen (Ma: *hūdai da*).

Batunasun	postrider	28	23	banner
Wacirajab	postrider	18		banner
Cimet	clerk	30	27	banner
Cibakjab	clerk	46		banner
Baldan	lead sentry	60	60	Monastery <i>otok</i>
Tūman	senty	32	37	Monastery <i>otok</i>
Aysui	postrider	23		Monastery <i>otok</i>
Hūrgangkuo	clerk	29	29	Monastery <i>otok</i>
Namjil	lead sentry	53	28	Monastery <i>otok</i>
Basutu	senty	36	39	Monastery <i>otok</i>
Norbo	senty	40	38	Monastery <i>otok</i>
Mingjur	bailiff	43	34	Monastery <i>otok</i>
Erincin	senty	30	29	Monastery <i>otok</i>
Gombudorji	postrider	18	24	Monastery <i>otok</i>
Damdin	postrider	17		Monastery <i>otok</i>
Jampil	senty	33	31	Monastery <i>otok</i>
Kisiktu	senty	50	52	Monastery <i>otok</i>
Ciwang	senty	32	30	Monastery <i>otok</i>
Najil	senty	54		Monastery <i>otok</i>
Ciwang	senty	42	50	Monastery <i>otok</i>
Bayar	senty	21	22	Monastery <i>otok</i>
Gombudorji	postrider	22	18	Monastery <i>otok</i>
Wangtan	postrider	27	24	Monastery <i>otok</i>
Ceden	postrider	60	40	Monastery <i>otok</i>
Ceringkuo	senty	52	43	Monastery <i>otok</i>
Šakdur	senty	43	43	Monastery <i>otok</i>
Ma Zhaofu	bailiff	72	28	<i>junxian</i>
Li Shiqi	bailiff	61	54	<i>junxian</i>
Wu Zheng	bailiff	50	38	<i>junxian</i>
Ma Wanbao	bailiff	70	49	<i>junxian</i>
Tian Shilu	bailiff	49	22	<i>junxian</i>
Wang Guda	bailiff	37	30	<i>junxian</i>
Zuo Paifang	bailiff	50	33	<i>junxian</i>
Wang Zichang	bailiff	45	37	<i>junxian</i>
Tuan Jinding	bailiff	57	56	<i>junxian</i>
Wu Eryuan	bailiff	46	30	<i>junxian</i>
Lü Yangbi	bailiff	75	47	<i>junxian</i>



Qiu Fende	bailiff	42	50	<i>junxian</i>
Wu Yingkui	bailiff	39	36	<i>junxian</i>
Fang Dacheng	bailiff	78	34	<i>junxian</i>

If discovered, undocumented merchants and migrants were arrested and repatriated. Some attempted to use expired licenses; other forged permits from scratch. It was better to pass off a fake license than to have none at all: the punishment for traveling in Mongolia undocumented was eighty blows with the cane.<sup>47</sup> Yet “vagrancy” remained such a problem that, in 1820, the imperial representatives began to keep registers of all undocumented Mongol migrants who had left their banners and relocated to a ramshackle community encircling the Chinese quarter of Khüree. The first survey turned up no less 417 households.<sup>48</sup> Thereafter, the *ambans*’ office was notified of round-up activities of “vagrants” (Ma: *norome tehe urse*) caught around Khüree.<sup>49</sup> Policing also stepped on the main highway. In a single day in 1828 at the Sair Usu postal station, guardsmen arrested a young Chinese man from Urumqi, an unemployed lama, a twenty-six-year-old Karacin Mongol man with his fourteen-year-old wife. All were undocumented, and all were punished and repatriated.<sup>50</sup>

Those with licenses, on the other hand, were guaranteed protection over property and safe haven within the merchant’s quarter. In cases of fire, for example, similar guarantees over property for caravans on the road extended to merchant houses in town. The seriousness with which the Qing state upheld these obligations is attested in the case

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<sup>47</sup> MID1-3935.13a (DG11.4.19).

<sup>48</sup> MID1-3697.41a (JQ25.6.5).

<sup>49</sup> MID1-3833.36a (DG6.4).

<sup>50</sup> MID1- 3874.15 (DG8.3.10); MID1-3874.16 (DG8.1.24); MID1-3874.17 (DG8.9.24).

of a fire that destroyed much of Kiakhta in 1779. The Qianlong emperor had shut down the Kiakhta trade the year before, and the merchants had returned home; there was no reason to stay. Since there was no one to look after their homes, one hundred troops were specially called up to guard them. The city was run as a military camp, and total order was demanded. The Ambans' Office thus made it a top priority to investigate the fire: how did such chaos get unleashed? According to the initial reports, the fire had broken out spontaneously at dawn on June 27, 1779 in the empty merchant's quarter, on the southeast end, by the northeast corner of the temple to Guandi. A patrolman on guard described how troops rushed to the scene and doused the flames with water, and neighboring *karun* troops were called to the scene to help. The Chinese man who looked after the temple came out to help. The attendant had no idea how such a disaster had befallen the merchant's quarter. At sunset he had locked up for the night, and was inside the temple with his friend, a cook, when the "fire came out from a heavenly spirit" (*abka enduri ci tuwa deijihe*). The houses built of earth and wood went up in flames in a flash. Altogether seventy-one units were destroyed, including forty-six owned by merchants.

The patrolman reported there was nothing suspicious about the affair.<sup>51</sup>

Witnesses all agreed that nobody was cooking or boiling tea when the fire started: "it was truly a fire that came down from heaven" (Ma: *abka ci wasinjiha tuwa inu*). The Ambans Office considered the story of the miraculous fire a "total farce" (*fuhali injeku ohobi*), and further investigations were ordered.<sup>52</sup> They suspected arson: had "hustlers" (Ma: *buya aisi be kicere urse*; lit. "people hustling for small profits") started the fire to create a

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<sup>51</sup> MID1-3033.6 (QL44.5.20).

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

diversion to rob the merchant houses?<sup>53</sup> Tellingly, the locks to some of the merchant houses had been damaged and the doors pried open; in some houses valuables, such as decorative copper and iron horse bridles, were missing. Then a ladder tall enough to scale the merchant quarter's walls was found. Suspicion immediately fell upon the guardsmen posted to the wall: Jikmet and Dorji, who already had a prior history and were pegged as trouble-makers. Under interrogation, Jikmet admitted to starting the fire. He had been out with a torch on the evening of the 26<sup>th</sup>, but he was not a thief. Before finishing his duty and going home to sleep, he had tossed the torch away, and it must have started the fire.<sup>54</sup>

Yet when they interrogated Dorji, he had a different confession. Two days before the fire, he and Jikmet had broken into several of the merchant house branch offices to take a look around. Then, on the night of the fire, they climbed over the merchant quarter's walls by standing on a big wooden bucket, hauled the ladder over, then scrambled down. With a torch in hand, they searched through the houses looking for loot, but found nothing. They dropped the torch behind them, and when the wind kicked up its flames and the houses caught fire, they spread word that the fire had descended miraculously from the sky. He named another accomplice as well, a *uksin* named Rabtan. Finally, when Rabtan was interrogated he admitted to breaking into the courtyards of the branch offices and stealing garden tools, cooking pots, ladles, porcelains jars, and half-full bag of flour.<sup>55</sup> He was caught by two patrolman, but they

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<sup>53</sup> MID1-3033.2 (QL44.7.28).

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> The exact amount stolen was two cooking pots, two porcelain jars, two perforated spoons (used for lifting things from water) [cf Norman *hereku maša*], three axes, one sickle, one hoe, and a half-full bag of flour. Apparently the merchants did not trust the guardsmen enough to leave behind any valuables.

failed to report the case, instead taking a cut of the stolen booty as bribes. The thieves were stripped of rank, ordered to wear the cangue for three months, then whipped 100 times. The patrolmen who accepted bribes were similarly stripped of rank, whipped 100 times, and ordered to return the stolen property.<sup>56</sup> The case was so outrageous that it was feared that the Qing would “become a joke” (*injeku obufi*) to the Russians. After deliberation, the punishments were stepped up: all the men involved were banished into exile in the miasmatic south. Some were exiled to Yunnan, others to Guizhou, and still others to Guangdong and Guangxi.<sup>57</sup> Most never made it. Dorji died of heat related illness on route, as did some of the others.<sup>58</sup>

The creation of a stable, dependable business environment under the umbrella of Qing rule stimulated a new commercial integration of Mongolia and the Chinese interior. The history of trade across the Great Wall frontier was defined by an ever-evolving

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<sup>56</sup> The commanding officer, Gongcukcerin, was docked three years of *fulun*, with it instead used as compensation for the 15 *alban i boo* whose homes were lost. In addition, the guardsmen involved in the previous year’s affair were ordered to pay one-ninth of livestock in restitution, and ordered whipped an additional fifty times for the grievousness of their various crimes. (While the reward would normally go to the captors, the option was disallowed in this case).

<sup>57</sup> MID1-3033.38 (QL44.10.24). Fires again raged through Kiakhta in 1801 and 1819. On JQ6.4.22, *Kuren i hūdai giyai i yong tai cang gi puselii irgen* Giyan Be Wan arrived in Khuree. That night, at the fifth watch, a fire erupted from his kang and burnt his house down, taking his trade permit and other possessions with it. For failing to mind his surroundings and starting a fire, he was hit with a staff (*undehen*) twenty times. His story about the permit was checked out with the authorities at *Goroki be elhe obure hoton*.<sup>57</sup> There was another fire in Kiakhta in 1819. This time the source was nowhere the less than the kitchen of Dingtai, the *Kiyaktu i hūdai irgesei baita be kadalame icihiyara ejeku hafan*. When the fire broke out, the Russian *mayur* took some of his men, and working in a “honest and harmonious” (*hono hūwaliyasun*) spirit together with Qing men, snuffed out the fire. The responsible cook, Ren Xingming, was sentenced to two months in the cangue and a beating with a rod (*undehen*). Another Kiakhta fire reported in JQ1.10.27 was cited as a precedent. In that case, an *alban boo* belonging to *irgen* Dzaio Ki Fa’s *puseli* caught fire (located on the western *giya*); Zao received forty blows with the rod for his negligence. Immediately afterwards, Dingtai’s office sent the Muslim merchant Mu Jinke to the *mayur* to send a special greeting and offer a gift of snuff, with small baskets of bricked tea and sugar candy (*juhe šatan*) for his soldiers.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>58</sup> MID1-3041.18 (QL45.12.14).

symbiosis between merchants and the state. From the late sixteenth century, in particular, new forms of corporate organization and coordination with the state are apparent with the founding of the Shanxi merchant houses.<sup>59</sup> Zhang Zhengming has argued persuasively in this regard that the rise of Shanxi merchants did not reflect increased agricultural or artisanal production in northern China, as previous scholars have argued, but rather specific policy shifts in Ming military strategies for provisioning Inner Asian garrisons: the great Shanxi merchant houses only began to form when the state commissioned merchants to supply troops with grain, in exchange for shares in the government's salt monopoly.<sup>60</sup> Likewise, as Perdue Perdue argued, processes of state building and commercialization were inexorably intertwined during the Dzungar Wars of the mid-eighteenth century.<sup>61</sup> These processes of state building and commercial expansion did not end in the peace that came with *Pax Manjurica*: they continued to be deeply and mutually informed.

### **Commercial Expansion: The Metropole Pulls, The Frontier Pushes**

The economy of Qing Mongolia was transformed in the early nineteenth century, as markets opened up and increasing numbers of herders turned to commercial resource exploitation.

In practice, trade in Qing Mongolia became focused around the imperial road network just described. The licensing system provides an in-depth picture of the long-

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<sup>59</sup> Zhang Zhengming, *Jinshang xingshuai shi* (Taiyuan: Shanxi guji chubanshe, 2001), 4.

<sup>60</sup> Zhang Zhengming, *Mingqing jinshang ji minfeng* (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 2003), 1-14. Beginning in 1492, the provisioning of grain was monetized, with the Shanxi merchants required to supply silver instead for the salt licenses. Zhang Zhengming, *Mingqing jinshang ji minfeng*, 12.

<sup>61</sup> Zhang Zhengming, *Jinshang xingshuai shi*, 4-30.

distance caravan trade that defined this period. A typical caravan west from Khüree to Uliasutai in the second quarter of the nineteenth century numbered between three and twelve men, with an average caravan size of 6.5 men. The vast majority of caravans were large camel trains, averaging 117 camels in size, though some merchants travelled by ox-cart as well (with an average size of 129 carts per caravan). Going west, they carried almost exclusively tea, each camel bearing four boxes of tea bricks.<sup>62</sup> Heading east, the caravans were significantly larger and carried a wider range of goods.

Originating in Gansu, the average train had twenty-two men, 292 camels, and twenty-three horses; they carried rhubarb, tobacco, rice, and noodles.<sup>63</sup> Eastbound caravans were also more diverse, with men from counties from Shanxi to Gansu represented; of a sample of 237 caravan workers in 1847, ninety-one were from Shanxi, 144 were from Gansu, and two were from Shaanxi. Heading west, in contrast, the merchants were almost exclusively from Shanxi.<sup>64</sup>

The composition of caravans differed by region. Caravans that worked the local Mongol banners along the Hohhot-Khüree-Kiakhta trunkline were also primarily staffed by Shanxi merchants: of a sample of 537 caravan members tallied between 1826 and 1847, all were from counties in Shanxi. The average caravans working the north-south route were also notably smaller, composed of twelve men, fifty-one pack camels, seven

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<sup>62</sup> Based a description of nineteen caravans in 1847. M1D1-4319.20 (DG27.1.30), M1D1-4319.20 (DG27.1.30), M1D1-4319.20 (DG27.1.30), M1D1-4320.21a (DG27.11), M1D1-4320.21a (DG27.11), M1D1-4320.21a (DG27.11), M1D1-4320.27a (DG27.12), M1D1-4320.27a (DG27.12), M1D1-4320.27a (DG27.12), M1D1-4320.27a (DG27.12), M1D1-4320.37a (DG27.12), M1D1-4320.37a (DG27.12), M1D1-4320.37a (DG27.12), M1D1-4320.37a (DG27.12), M1D1-4320.51a (DG27.3.1), M1D1-4320.51a (DG27.3.1), M1D1-4320.25 (DG27.5.29), M1D1-4320.25 (DG27.5.29).

<sup>63</sup> Based on a description of thirteen caravans in 1847. M1D1-4320.19 (DG27.6.10), M1D1-3845.2b (DG7.8.20).

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.* Of the 237 Chinese individuals listed in the thirteen caravans to Khüree, ninety-one were from Shanxi, 144 were form Gansu, and two were from Shaanxi.

riding camels, and three riding horses. The dominant commodity they sold was brick tea, which comprised 30% of the camel load, but their goods they carried were relatively more diverse, including textiles, tobacco, rice, noodles, leather, cooking oil and pots.<sup>65</sup> Merchants plying the Khüree-Kiakhta route, on the other hand, specialized almost exclusively in selling brick tea; merchants arriving from Uliasutai and the west carried other products, such as rhubarb. The short trip from Khüree to the border town was usually made in teams of twenty-six ox carts, though camel caravans of comparable size were not uncommon. A minority of these merchants specialized in supplying food to the border towns, bringing boxes of grapes, noodles, and cooking sauces.<sup>66</sup> In return they brought back furs: foxes, squirrels, ermine, and others. At its peak, each merchant house imported hundreds of thousands of pelts each year.<sup>67</sup>

The growth of the domestic caravan trade in Mongolia was stimulated by the dramatic rise of the Kiakhta trade: both boomed at the same time. The rules of trade with Russia were initially established in 1727, on the principles of firm boundaries and controlled exchange. Yet the Dzungar wars slowed trade through the first half of the

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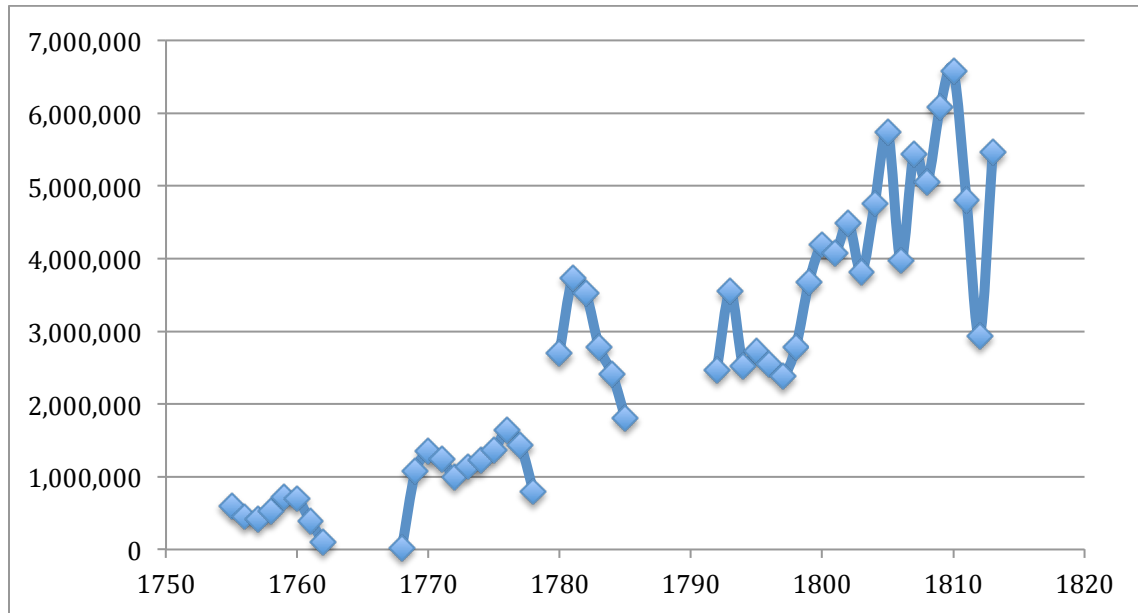
<sup>65</sup> Based on a sample of fifty-eight caravan licenses issued between 1826 and 1847. M1D1-3822.45 (DG6.11.15), M1D1-3822.51 (DG6.11.24), M1D1-3822.47a-1 (DG6.11.3), M1D1-3845.33 (DG7.9.22), M1D1-3845.10a (DG7.9.20), M1D1-3845.27a (DG7.11.20), M1D1-3845.34a (DG7.1), M1D1-3845.34a (DG7.1), M1D1-3936.13 (DG11.11.8), M1D1-3936.36a (DG21.9.24), M1D1-4319.32 (DG27.11.28), M1D1-4320.1 (DG27.11.15), M1D1-4320.2 (DG27.11.8), M1D1-4320.42 (DG27.11.22), M1D1-4320.55 (DG27.12.12), M1D1-4320.10a (DG27.1), M1D1-4320.22a (DG27.11.1).

<sup>66</sup> Based on a sample of forty-six caravans in the years 1831-1847. M1D1-4320.35a (DG27.7.1), M1D1-4079.15 (DG17.12.24), M1D1-3936.16a (DG24.8.1), M1D1-3936.42 (DG11.4.29).

<sup>67</sup> For figures, see MZWYH 27.1.1.42 (JQ21.5); 26.19.125.162 (JQ25.3.9); 26.18.83.124 (DG1.3.2); 31.21.69.115 (DG2.3); 29.4.41.75 (DG5.2.20); 29.10.94.143 (DG7.3); 3.8.120.166 (DG9.2.30); 30.21.80.133 (DG15.3.8). In the late nineteenth century, A.M. Pozdneyev described how the permit system was still in effect at Kiakhta: “We did not enter the Mai-mai-ch’eng but skirted its southeast side on the so-called ‘caravan’ street. It has received this name because it is traversed by all caravans coming to the Mai-mai-ch’eng. At the southwest end of this street a sentry box has been erected, where the local Chinese authorities check the permits of the Chinese arriving here, and no trading caravan is allowed into the Mai-mai-ch’eng without the presentation of the latter.” A.M. Podzneyev, *Mongolia and the Mongols*, 1: 2.

eighteenth century, and border closings in 1764-1768, 1779-1780, and 1785-1792 stalled trade for much of the second half. After 1792, as the dependability of the route was established, cross-border trade took off. The value of trade was already four times greater by 1805 than it was in 1775 (See Figure 35).<sup>68</sup>

Figure 35: Kiakhta Trade by Value (rubles), 1755-1813



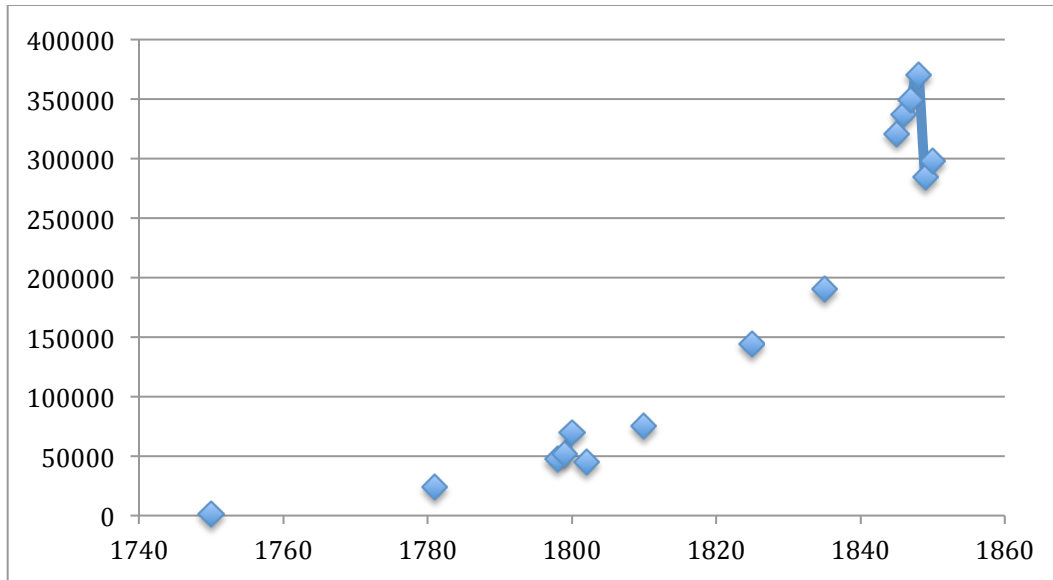
In the period 1825-1850, the Kiakhta trade witnessed exponential growth (See Figure 36).<sup>69</sup>

Figure 36: Chinese Tea Exports at Kiakhta (*pud*), 1750-1850

<sup>68</sup> Aleksandr Korsak, *Istoriko-statisticheskoe obozrenie torgovykh snoshenii Rossii s Kitaem* (Kazan: Izd. Knigoprodavtsa Ivan Dubrovina, 1856), 67, 73, 97, 105.

<sup>69</sup> Zhang Zhengming, *Mingqing jinshang ji minfeng* (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 2003), 56; Mi Zhenbo, *Qingdai Zhong-E Qiaketu bianjing maoyi* (Tianjin: Nankai daxue chubanshe, 2003), 22. Citing Korsak. The Russian *pud* is equal to approximately 16.4 kilograms.





One result of all this activity was increased commerce within Mongolia itself. With more merchants plying the roads, Mongol bannermen had greater access to markets, and increasing numbers of pastoralists turned to alternative forms of work to capitalize on it. The history of this commercial boom, however, involved not only the pull of opportunity, but the push of poverty. Tellingly, much of the new economic activity became focused on the exploitation of natural resources. Yet commercial hunting, foraging, and mining were not the preferred livelihood for most Mongols, pastoralism was: most tended livestock; most wanted to tend livestock.<sup>70</sup> Hunting and gathering were last resorts. In other stories, foraging is a metaphor for destitution, as in practice it often

<sup>70</sup> David Millar Farquhar, “The Ch’ing Administration of Mongolia Up to the Nineteenth Century,” (PhD Dissertation, Harvard University, 1960), 5. Farquhar argues that hunting declined after 1800, but does not describe why: “In earlier times hunting had been an important subsidiary economic activity of all the Mongols, but by 1800 its significance was greatly reduced. In northern Mongolia where there were forests, a fair amount of hunting was still done, mainly for fur-bearing animals like the sable and the squirrel. In the steppe, however, hunting had largely degenerated into a sport. The only animals that were hunted for a practical purpose were the marmot, which provided both food and fur, and the wolf, which was hunted at all times because it was a menace to the herds.” Farquhar, 4-5.

was: they were famine foods.<sup>71</sup> When the Dzungars were at their most desperate, they were thus described as “slaughtering horses and camels and hunting wild animals (Ma: *gurgu*) for food.”<sup>72</sup> To Nurhaci’s court, the idea that trappers and ginseng pickers lived a life of hardship was common sense. The Old Manchu Chronicles record an exchange in 1615 with a nobleman named Baban:

The *amban* Baban replied to the khan: “At the marriage banquet, why not have the two families slaughter a lot of livestock? If they only kill a small amount of livestock, the feast will be dull.” Sure Kundulen Khan said in reply: “Baban, your suggestion that everyone should eat a lot is well and good. But if we say that they should all eat a great deal, will we have fed the poor and suffering people who work the fields and grow hungry and thirsty? Will we have fed the people who undergo hardship to transport wood, earth and stone to erect the fortifications, the people who go for two or three months in the wilderness to gather ginseng and catch sable and squirrel. If people like you fed those who endure privation and suffer distress, what you are saying would indeed be correct.”<sup>73</sup>

Archives from the first half of the nineteenth century are littered with desperate communities turning to alternative ways of surviving. In the first half of the nineteenth

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<sup>71</sup> In the classical tradition, the disposition was exemplified by the case of young Temujin, who before becoming Chinggis Khan, scavenges for marmots and wild onions to support his family. A similar tale was told of the young Nurhaci, who collected pine seeds, ginseng, and other wild pharmaceuticals from the forests of Manchuria after his own father’s death. See, for example, Dai Yi and Li Wenhai. *Qing tongjian* (Taiyuan, Shanxi renmin chubanshe, 1999), 1: 2-3. On wild onions and destitution, see *Altan Tobci*, Bawden translation (1955), 189. See also A.G. Sazykin and D. Yondon, “Travel-Report of a Buriat Pilgrim, Lubsan Midzid-Dordzi,” *Acta Orientalia* 39.2-3 (1985): 237.

<sup>72</sup> Chuang Chi-fa, *Qingdai zhungaer shiliao chubian* 140-141, 180-181. See also the *Han-i araha manju monggo gisuni bileku bithe* (Mo: *Qayan-u bicigsen manju mongyol*), a dictionary published in 1708, in which the secondary role of hunting and forestry was shown graphically in the ordering of listed professions: a first chapter (Ch: *juan*) was devoted to the most respectable professions (scholar, official, soldier, herder), a second to the less respectable ones (farmer, merchant, artisan, hunter, forester). See *Han-i araha manju monggo gisuni bileku bithe / Qayan-u bicigsen manju mongyol ügen-ü toil bicig, niyalmai hacin*.

<sup>73</sup> MBRT 1.4.41-42.

century, life could indeed be brutal in the banners. In Sonomwangcuk's banner,<sup>74</sup> a relative hotbed of mercantile activity, one finds the case of a Mongol bannerman (Ma: *uksin*) named Dorji who sold his son, G'aldancerin to a merchant. Regretting his decision, and desperate to reclaim his son, he had approached the head of his arrow (Ma: *niru*), *janggin* Coijab, who forwarded the matter to the *ambans*' office. When asked why he had sold his son, he explained that he, his wife, and his son were beggars. A merchant, a Muslim (Ma: *hoise irgen*) with a Mongol name ("Dasi"), had stopped on his return trip from Kiakhta, and the family approached him for a pittance.<sup>75</sup> That night, the merchant offered to buy Dorji's son for three leather skins (Ma: *bulgari sukū*),<sup>76</sup> three bricks of tea, and bag and half of flour, and in the hopes of giving his son a better life, he agreed.<sup>77</sup>

Much more common were cases of herders turning to hunting, foraging, and mining. In a more typical case from 1837, herders in the region of the Iruge River owed a merchant, Lü Changrong, over 20,000 bundles of "yellow tea" (Ma: *suwayan cai*). The community was poor (*yadahūn*) and had a "hard time getting by" (*ergen hetumbure de mangga*), and so were forced into hunting. Their debt proved impossible to settle in a

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<sup>74</sup> Sonomwangcuk (Ch: 索諾木旺楚克), 扎撒克一等台吉普襲固山貝子後隆襲扎撒克鎮國公. *Jasay* for the left wing, right banner of Tusiyetu Han *aimay*. Fourth generation descendant of 禮塔爾 (assumed rank 1693). Assumed his rank in QL58, held until his death in DG17 (1793-1837). Succeeded by Baldardorji. Bao Wenhan et al, *Menggu huibu wanggong biao zhuan* (Hohhot: Neimenggu daxue chubanshe, 1998),

160; Jin Hai et al, *Qingdai menggu zhi* (Hohhot: Neimenggu renmin chubanshe, 2009), 90.

<sup>75</sup> Though "Dasi" never stated it himself, and the case was ongoing, the trade supervisor guessed that he was probably engaged in the thriving rhubarb trade with Russia, which Muslims from the Northeast dominated.

<sup>76</sup> The Manchu *bulgari* is derived from the Mongol word *bulyari*, which Lessing defines as "yuft, Russian leather." Lessing, *Mongolian-English Dictionary*, 134.

<sup>77</sup> MID1-3697.27a (JQ25.7.9). Selling Mongols to Chinese merchants was illegal, and the authorities were able to track down the merchant for interrogation.

single season; in the words of the Šangjotba, the chief administrator for all ecclesiastical estates under the Jebtsundamba Khutukhtu,<sup>78</sup> they had the absolute minimum number of animals to be self-sufficient, they “managed to get by hunting” (*buthašame ergen hetume*). They thus agreed to pay back their debt the following spring and summer using “what they obtained through the hunt.” The following spring, however, the community was only able to pay back 3,400 bricks of tea: the “squirrels and other wild animals” (Ma: *buthašame baha gurgu ulhu*) were too few to support the entire community.<sup>79</sup>

Livestock and population censuses conducted triennially for all monastic land in Outer Mongolia provides some perspective into the state of pastoralism in the early nineteenth century. For forty years between 1773 and 1812, the Buddhist establishment made a census of all households, lamas, individuals, and livestock living under the Jebtsundamba Khutukhtu, whose land holdings were spread throughout the region. The tallies were compiled by the office of the Šangjotba, sent to the *amban* in Khüree, then forwarded to Beijing in a Manchu language attachment (See Figure 37).<sup>80</sup> The figures reveal, in short, that Mongol herders were growing poorer. In the years 1773-1812, the population rose by 9.87%, while family size declined from 6.0 to 5.3 individuals per household. While the human population rose, livestock populations declined: sheep fell by 36.90%, cattle by 20.62%, and the reindeer population (tended by a lone Urianghai

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<sup>78</sup> On the office of the Šangjotba and ecclesiastical estates, see Charles Bawden, *The Modern History of Mongolia* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1968), 106.

<sup>79</sup> MID1-4079.1 (DG17.9.13).

<sup>80</sup> MWLF 2559.33.101.1064 (QL38.12.6), 2700.6.110.1345 (QL41.11.4), 2947.44.126.213 (QL47.12.11), 2947.44.126.213 (QL47.12.11), 3220.7.143.2502 (QL53.12.12), 3220.7.143.2502 (QL53.12.12), 3487.13.159.1420 (QL59.12.1), 3575.57.164.1823 (JQ2.11.25), 3575.57.164.1823 (JQ2.11.25), 3663.35.171.1387 (JQ8.12.19), 3712.27.175.2415 (JQ11.12.15), 3779.10.180.641 (JQ14.12.14), 3825.28.183.995 (JQ17.12.14), 3825.28.183.995 (JQ17.12.14).

community in the far north) collapsed entirely. Only the population of camels rose – and it rose a staggering 74.91%. The average household in 1773 commanded 1.74 camels, seventeen horses, twenty-four cows, and 146 sheep; the average household in 1812 possessed 2.5 camels, fourteen horses, fifteen cows, and seventy-four sheep. It had lost 30% of its wealth.<sup>81</sup>

Figure 37: Triennial Census Records for 17 *otok* of the Jebtsundamba Khutukhtu, 1773-1812

Year	Households	Lamas	People	Camels	Horses	Cows	Sheep	Reindeer
1773	12,122	11,297	72,604	21,096	211,491	287,928	1,775,413	259
1776	12,441	12,069	73,354	24,479	223,389	227,550	1,544,641	226
1779	13,875	13,042	74,038	27,919	263,906	280,030	1,749,112	85
1782	14,186	13,795	76,649	28,097	274,763	298,538	1,793,784	94
1785	14,362	14,482	77,462	26,564	267,915	259,071	1,319,300	58
1788	14,670	14,875	77,654	29,747	289,896	309,484	1,377,734	97
1791	14,889	15,339	76,415	29,611	289,130	332,516	1,262,938	107
1794	15,262	16,153	78,277	31,758	304,676	334,402	1,335,081	109
1797	15,580	16,209	81,602	33,139	266,569	268,460	1,235,126	103
1800	15,630	17,561	82,408	34,743	268,365	269,482	1,245,634	32
1803	15,683	17,720	82,585	36,197	270,230	270,987	1,262,495	30
1806	15,107	17,779	76,815	37,579	223,826	283,958	1,363,392	59
1809	15,068	17,902	77,739	34,864	206,830	221,348	1,265,846	61
1812	15,073	18,402	79,773	36,900	208,875	228,570	1,120,337	16
<b>% change</b>	<b>24.34%</b>	<b>62.89%</b>	<b>9.87%</b>	<b>74.91%</b>	<b>- 1.24%</b>	<b>- 20.62%</b>	<b>- 36.90%</b>	<b>24.34%</b>

Similar patterns held for the Jebtsundamba Khutukhtu’s personal pastures (See Figure 38). While his pastures experienced a striking 40% growth in horses (and yak populations grew as well), other types of livestock conformed to the broader trend: camels rose by 115%, cattle fell by 55%, and sheep fell by 51%.

<sup>81</sup> Prices for livestock in the Qing have yet to be compiled from the archival evidence. From passing evidence I have seen in the archives, I have roughly calculated the price of camels as 14 taels, horses as 10 taels, oxen as 6 taels, and sheep as 1 tael per head. The *Menggu zhi*, published in the early twentieth century, gives inflated prices for all four types of livestock and comparatively low prices for horses, with camels at 30-35 taels, horses at 12-15 taels, oxen at 12-15 taels, and sheep at 2-3.

Figure 38: Livestock Holdings of the Jebtsundamba Khutukhtu

Year	Camels	Horses	Cows	Sheep	Yaks
1773	1,591	19,988	1,782	64,986	2,906
1776	1,829	20,868	1,336	47,946	1,584
1779	1,864	24,511	1,304	50,939	2,361
1782	2,571	29,336	1,409	50,876	4,403
1785	2,060	24,978	713	27,573	4,316
1788	1,843	27,685	1,065	30,731	6,783
1791	2,041	33,114	1,428	32,366	6,503
1794	2,212	34,060	2,017	36,025	6,728
1797	2,217	24,856	1,335	42,960	7,796
1800	2,291	26,011	1,338	22,498	6,472
1803	2397	27,515	1,525	24,295	6,483
1806	3,457	31,015	1,833	33,991	7,003
1809	3,244	27,155	707	31,960	5,269
1812	3,426	27,868	810	32,103	5,272
<b>% change</b>	<b>115.34%</b>	<b>39.42%</b>	<b>- 54.55%</b>	<b>- 50.60%</b>	<b>81.42%</b>

Previous scholars have attributed such economic distress that to a rise in indebtedness and a new, empowered position of Chinese merchants and bankers.<sup>82</sup> The reality was more complex. The decline in sheep and cattle populations after 1795, together with the rise in camel populations, for one, suggests the possibility of problems endemic to the pastoral economy, and in particular distress from increased aridity. Indeed, pronounced and increasing dryness marked the years 1795-1820, and rainfall during the entire period 1800-1850 stood below the 350-year mean.<sup>83</sup> 1827 and 1835-37

<sup>82</sup> The classic statement of this position in English is M. Sanjdorji, *Manchu Chinese Colonial Rule in Northern Mongolia* (London: C. Hurst & Company, 1980). See also David Millar Farquhar, “The Ch’ing Administration of Mongolia Up to the Nineteenth Century,” 154.

<sup>83</sup> Davi, et al. “Extension of Drought Records for Central Asia Using Tree Rings: West-Central Mongolia,” *Journal of Climate* 19 (2005), 294. Similar patterns were found by D’Arrigo, et al, “1738 Years of Mongolian Temperature Variability Inferred from a Tree-Ring Width Chronology of Siberian Pine” *Geophysical Research Letters* 28.3 (2001), 544. Other studies, however, have yielded differing results. See, for example, Pederson, et al, “Hydrometeorological Reconstructions for Northeastern Mongolia Derived from Tree Rings: 1651–1995” *Journal of Climate* 14 (2000), 876.

in particular were years of drought.<sup>84</sup> At the very moment the pastoral economy was suffering, commercial opportunities and demand for natural resources were offering new alternatives: selling objects such as squirrel or other animal pelts on the market. It is these new forms of resource exploitation that we now turn.

### **Empire Building at Production Sites: Farms, Fuel, and Pharmaceuticals**

Amidst the new economic climate, the logic and administrative infrastructure used to govern cross-border movement was extended to the exploitation of high-demand natural resources, including farmland, timber, and deer horn. As in trade, the offices of the ambans and trade supervisors played the key role in licensing and regulating these activities. In licensing these emergent forms of commercial production, moreover, the Qing state in Mongolia aimed to better control and segregate mobile populations, and so strengthen the territorial and sovereign integrity of the imperial banner system.

#### ***Farmland***

In 1828, Gao Yumei arrived at the merchant's quarter in Khüree, modern-day Ulaanbaatar. He came to the trade supervisor's office and "requested to open new farms on Mongol land" (Ma: *monggo bade usin suksalara be baime*). Gao Yumei was a known troublemaker. Seventy years old and from Fuqi county (Taiyuan prefecture), Shanxi, he had been banished from Mongolia in 1815 for lacking a proper trade license, but had quietly returned. In 1826 (DG6), he ran afoul of the business leaders in Khüree's Chinese quarter. He was arrested for "disturbing the peace," banished a second a time,

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<sup>84</sup> See M1D1 Catalogue, Mongolian National Archives.

and again secreted his way back across the border. In 1828 he was brought to the trade supervisor's yamen for a special interrogation. Finally, under torture, he confessed to a larger conspiracy: rich benefactors in Beijing had put him up to delivering the petition. These four merchants, led by one Zhang Xi, were bullish about farmland in Outer Mongolia. The petition was theirs; Gao Yumei was only the messenger.<sup>85</sup>

In a report to the emperor, the *amban* accused Gao Yumei of feigning ignorance of a fundamental law: Han homesteading in Mongolia was prohibited. Given Khüree's proximity to the Russian border, discipline and order were necessary: it was "unacceptable" to have undocumented Chinese from the interior wandering about on the Mongol steppe. In this case, however, Gao Yumei was already 70 years old, and seemingly had lost his senses, so it was decided to simply banish him once more to his home county. This time, the governor of Shanxi was warned to keep him under better control. The area he proposed for farming was called Tulber, just west of Khüree under the jurisdiction of Uliasutai. While farming had once been permitted there, it had since been discontinued. As the trade supervisor explained in his report to the *amban* in Khüree, farming was also licensed in four other regions, all to the north of Khüree. From this it would appear that the problem was not farming in Mongolia *per se*, but unauthorized farming.<sup>86</sup>

While never on a scale comparable to Inner Mongolia, Chinese homesteading was, in fact, legalized in certain parts of Outer Mongolia. These farmers came to be identified and regulated through licenses, supervised by the *ambans*, and confined to segregated

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<sup>85</sup> MID1-3874.27 (DG8.6.4).

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*



territories. The first scheme for opening up farmland to undocumented Chinese migrants in Outer Mongolia can be dated to 1775 (QL40) at the latest, when the Ambans' Office proposed legalizing their status and granting farmland north of Khüree.<sup>87</sup> All those selected were registered, with the name of each farmer kept in one record book locally, and in another sent to the Lifanyuan. They were not altogether welcome. In 1801, the local banner *jasay* proposed that the number of farming families be reduced to ten households, with the remaining “made to return back to their homelands.”<sup>88</sup> He no longer wished to support them: “migrant Chinese farmers have become many, without any benefit to pasturing animals.”

In 1803, in response to a rise in “vagrancy” in Khüree, the imperial representative and the emperor cleared room for Chinese refugees to open land north of Khüree, and banner and monastic authorities agreed to provide pastureland in four locations: Ibeng, Burgaltai, Kiseyetu, and Usu Seir.<sup>89</sup> They were thereafter put under the joint supervision of the Trade Inspector's office, banner authorities, and the Šangjotba's office, which managed monastic lands. All Chinese farmers were issued permits (Ma: *temgetu bithe*) and identification placards for their homes (Ma: *men pai*). The trade supervisor personally toured the farming villages each year.<sup>90</sup> During the inspection, the *men pai*

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<sup>87</sup> Military farms had been established at Khobdo and Uliasutai during the Dzungar campaigns.

<sup>88</sup> M1D1-3350.5 (JQ6.5.14).

<sup>89</sup> Li Yushu, *Waimeng zhengjiao zhidu kao*, 80. Ibeng and Burgaltai fell under the Jebtsundamba's jurisdiction, while Kiseyetu fell under that of the western Namjildorji and Usu Sair under the eastern Namjildorji; these two noblemen named Namjildorji are not to be confused. M1D1-3811.1a (DG5.9).

<sup>90</sup> In 1822, these were led by *jaisang lama* Jambala, *jalan* Gombudorji, and *taiji* Dondob, arranged with the help of the *aimay* chief, Cedendorji, the two *jasaks* Namjaldorji, and the Office of the Šangjotba. See M1D1-3744.1a (DG2.10) and M1D1-3744.3a (DG2.8.21). On the inspections of 1825, see M1D1-3811.1a (DG5.9).

were collected and examined and new ones issued with the help of the Chinese village heads (Ma: *gašan i irgen data*). When making rounds, the banner authorities were to ensure prohibitions were “thoroughly understood by both Chinese and Mongols.” Mongols heard the law decreed in Mongol, Chinese heard it in Chinese, and a written proclamation was issued to the village leaders and hung from the gates of the village walls. the inspections completed, a four-volume Chinese-language register (one for each community) was compiled for all the farmers then sent to the Ambans’ Office, then forwarded to the Lifanyuan.<sup>91</sup>

Expansion was prohibited. The villages were themselves responsible for ensuring that no unregistered Chinese entered the community, and were expected to arrest and report illegals to the Ambans’ Office. Local soldiers were also called to inspect the villages. They were on alert for four types of criminals: 1) migrants with expired or forged permits; 2) undocumented relatives of legitimate farmers; 3) undocumented homesteaders (who “erected homes and courtyards, lorded over Mongols and ravished? them with misdeeds”); and 4) Mongols who sheltered undocumented homesteaders. If they discovered the house of an unlicensed farmer, they were to raze it immediately. Each year, the top banner and monastic authorities issued sworn and sealed statements (Ma: *akdulara doron gidaha bithe*) to the trade supervisor’s office that no unlicensed Chinese were in the area.<sup>92</sup>

The harshness of the land and living conditions led to high attrition rates. In 1821 there were altogether 200 Han farmers. In 1822 inspectors found that twenty-nine

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<sup>91</sup> MID1-3811.1a (DG5.9).

<sup>92</sup> MID1-3744.2a (DG2.8.10).

farmers had died or “returned home” (Ma: *da susu de mariha*) in the intervening year. By 1823, the number of registered farmers had slipped to 143, and by 1824 the population was down to 139. The population had plunged 30% in three years. Yet the concern of the inspecting troops and the trade supervisor’s office was not the declining yields or households: it was the search for “Chinese that live aimlessly as vagrants and secretly hide away” amongst the villagers and local Mongols; their basic aim was to maintain segregation. If anything, local herders and banner authorities felt the farmers to be too many, and a rash of complaints provoked a formal investigation by the Amban’s Office in 1824.<sup>93</sup> Banner authorities petitioned to have the farmers removed and repatriated to the Chinese interior. The amban suggested taking it more slowly: the harvest was coming, and depriving the farmers of their livelihood could cause trouble.<sup>94</sup> The Lifanyuan likewise recommended caution to avoid unnecessary quarrels. The emperor needed a solution that “benefited both Mongols and Chinese” and was thus “in accord with the compassionate and lofty intentions of the emperor for Mongols and Chinese.”<sup>95</sup>

The drive to keep Mongols and Chinese separate, and the costs of enforcing segregation, inspired efforts to mark clearer territorial boundaries between the two. Yet complaints continued into 1826, when a jurisdictional dispute between banner and monastic authorities broke out: neither wanted to bear the costs of licensing, inspecting,

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<sup>93</sup> Li Yushu, *Waimeng zhengjiao zhidu kao*, 80.

<sup>94</sup> MID1-3350.16 (JQ6.3.26).

<sup>95</sup> MID1-3350.5 (JQ6.5.14).

and policing.<sup>96</sup> That year, the Šangjotba's office requested that the imperial representative help delineate the exact borders of all territories the Chinese farmers resided. Complicating the matter was that, by imperial decree, the farmer's rent was paid to the treasury of the Jebtsundamba Khutukhtu. Thus profits went strictly to the Buddhist establishment, leaving the banners footing the bill for provisioning the peace. While the banners were required to inspect the farmers monthly, to cut costs and make the arrangement more equitable, the two responsible *jasays*, both named Namjildorji, proposed that inspections be made annual and conducted in tandem with ecclesiastical authorities.

Spurred by similar pressures in 1805, the *amban* had overseen a general survey of all bannerland in Tusiyetu Han *aimaγ*. Boundaries were “newly revised and established” and maps and registers produced for each banner. According to the 1805 maps, the farms were spread over three banners: that of Prince Cedendorji, and two under *jasays* named Namjildorji. Thus during the 1826 inspection tour, the trade supervisor had a separate charge: finalize “which *jasay*'s banner territory the farmland settled by Chinese ultimately should be,” as well as exact boundaries of pastureland. He ultimately concluded that “although the lands of Ibeng and Burgaltai were indeed their banner territory, none of their subject peoples lived there.” Instead, monastic serfs (*šabi*) lived in the adjacent

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<sup>96</sup> Even the inspection tours cost money, and required pressing supplies and services from the postal stations along the Khüree-Kiakhta route, with Ibeng was located near Postal Station Four (*duici aruganggatu giyamun*). Supplies for the postal stations were taken from nearby bannermen and monastic *šabi*. Before the trade supervisor's tour, each postal station required fifteen fresh horses, four properly saddled camels, six cavalry guards, three *gers*, one tent, and food. M1D1-3855.1a (DG7.9).

pastures. Ultimately, the Amban's office agreed to a proposal to let banner and Buddhist authorities have more equal share in the costs.<sup>97</sup>

### ***Fuel***

A similar overriding concern with identifying and segregating illegal migrants dominated firewood collecting. Herders traditionally used two types of fuel for cooking and heat: animal dung (Mo: *aryal*) and charcoal. Compared to *aryal*, firewood was relatively scarce and expensive. Yet it was also in high demand: a single banner collected as much as 30,460 pieces of firewood in tax each year.<sup>98</sup> From the 1820s on, as the cities expanded, so too did the black market for firewood around the major trading hubs of Kiakhtha and Khüree. Forests, as fuel sources, tended to attract migrants, and it forced the state to decide: should migrant wood collectors be arrested or licensed?

In most cases, such woodcutters were simply arrested. Authorities first alerted the Ambans Office to the problem in 1825 in the banner of prince (*gung*) Mingjuor, just outside of Khüree. That winter, four unlicensed Chinese had trespassed on his banner, erected “one-room village houses” (Ma: *emu giyalan baising boo*), and were cutting down trees, building wood carts, and selling liquor. He “repeatedly tried to drive them

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<sup>97</sup> M1D1-3855.2 (DG7.1.11). In 1805, in the language used to describe the event by banner officials of the Namjildorjis, the area “became territory of the two banners” (Ma: *juwe gūsai nukte obume*) and was thereafter to be administered as such. According the maps and registers, as well as the locations of the cairn erected following the general survey, Ibeng belonged unequivocally to *jasak dergi* Namjildorji's banner. Burgaltai Bira was a more complicated case, as it cut through borderlands of cin wang Cedendorji and *jasak wargi* Namjildorji. The investigator found that the border was not clear locally or from names used at the scene, but a careful examination of the locations of cairn and the description of the border in the 1805 survey found that the entirety of the Burgaltai River region occupied by Chinese farmers belonged to the western Namjildorji, not *wang* Cedendorji.

<sup>98</sup> Farquhar, “The Ch'ing Administration of Mongolia Up to the Nineteenth Century,” 150. The Ambans' Office in Khüree pressed altogether fifty silver taels of silver annually from Tusiyetu Han and Cecen Han *aimaγ* and monastic lands for its fuel expenses. In 1794 (QL59), they were able to save 32.16 taels, and in 1795 (QL60), they were able to take in 59.56 silver taels for charcoal and firewood, yielding a total 91.72 taels currently in the fund. Their estimated purchases for the upcoming year were estimated to be 37.10 taels, leaving 54.62 in storage. M1D1-3271.8 (JQ1.1).

away,” but no avail: they were in his banner to stay. The league chief, prince Sandubmingjuor, referred the matter to the Amban’s Office, which assigned the case to the trade supervisor. Officers, sentries, and Chinese bailiffs (Ma: *bošokū, manaci, undeci,*) were dispatched to the scene.<sup>99</sup> Several months later, in 1826, the troops managed to detain five men.<sup>100</sup> Their houses were razed, and they were sent under guard to Khüree for sentencing. According to their confessions, they had come to the forests north of Khüree to collect “a little wood” and to build ox carts.<sup>101</sup> Two of the poachers, Jia Zhen and Yue Yongzai, were registered wood artisans; they were sentenced to be caned twenty times and handed over to the Chinese quarter-master, Zhang Zhaoji. The other three men were repatriated to their home counties.<sup>102</sup>

Two years later, in 1828, five whole teams of wood poachers, led by unlicensed migrants from Shanxi were discovered and arrested in Sandubmingjuor’s own banner.<sup>103</sup> Yet their crime extended beyond trespassing. Sandubmingjuor complained not only that they illegally settled in his banner, but that the very act of logging trees violated his proprietorship over the land. Again, the trade supervisor took charge and dispatched armed police to the scene, this time led by the Chinese bailiff Gao Zhang, and one Mongol guardsman, Namjil, who corralled the poachers, arrested them, and took their

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<sup>99</sup> MID1-3833.26a (DG6.1.12).

<sup>100</sup> Their names were Giya Jen (Jia Zhen), Yuwei Yong Dzai (Yue Yongzai), Wang Lu Gi (Wang Luji), Du Jung Ling (Du Zhongling), and Jang Ting De (Zhang Tingde).

<sup>101</sup> MID1-3833.23a (DG6.3.20). The document names three locations within the banner where illicit logging took place: Gūngtu, Hargana, and Burinbulak.

<sup>102</sup> MID1-3833.27a (DG6.4.6).

<sup>103</sup> They were Chinese in an administrative sense. Nine of the captured loggers were Chinese with Mongol names: Xiao Liao (“Dumbedu”), Yu Haopiao (“Šajindalai”), Qin Shao (“Ulangdai”), Kang Bao (“Bujantu”), Lan Shige (“Dalai”), Wang Xuan (“Bayartu”), Fan Ji (“Bayan”), Wu Qiang (“Buyantu”), and Bai Tong (“Arbing”).

names and identification. According to the testimony of one poacher, Xiao Liao (also known as “Dumbedu”), they had ventured to Sandubmingjurdorji’s banner to try their hand at forestry because they were destitute (Ma: *funḡsan yadahūn*); he had no intention of permanently settling there. Their crime, however, merited serious punishment: they were sentenced to be whipped, then caned, then banished back to the interior.<sup>104</sup>

Yet, as the problem grew, authorities shifted tactics began to register and license wood collectors. Similar outbreaks of poaching confronted the trade supervisor in Kiakhta. In 1828, after reports of rampant wood poaching around Kiakhta surfaced, the ambans’ office in Khüree ordered the trade supervisor to inspect the identities of all “vagrant Chinese and Mongols” logging in the Logar Hiya area, south of Kiakhta, where Mongol migrants had formed a small community as wood collectors.<sup>105</sup> Later reports revealed the laborers to be working for Chinese entrepreneurs who had illegally made homes and erected enclosures (Ma: *boo hashan ilibuha*) in the area. These illegal settlements were ordered to be razed immediately.<sup>106</sup>

Mass arrests, however, proved impracticable. At first, the amban mandated the authorities to arrest everyone, clear away the camps, and make the area “pure” (Ma: *bolgo*; Mo; *ariyun*) – a stringent call for social and environmental order, as we shall see in Chapter 4. Yet the sheer number of people congregated at Logar Hiya suggested the need for more flexibility: these were not all single men and vagrants, but whole families working as woodcutters. Many of the people on site were so poor they lacked even the ox

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<sup>104</sup> M1D1-3874.12b (DG8.3.23).

<sup>105</sup> M1D1-3874.13a (DG8.11.21).

<sup>106</sup> M1D1-3913.9a (DG9.1.20).

carts to leave.<sup>107</sup> When troops proved incapable of dispersing the crowd, the local *jasay*, Namjildorji, decided to halt their campaign and “keep an eye on the matter” (Ma: *yasa tuwame*) through the winter and proposed waging a mop-up campaign the following spring; the *amban* endorsed the plan as an expedient measure.<sup>108</sup> The wood-collectors were allowed to stay. In the meantime, he demanded registers of the identities of all implicated “Mongol men and women” (Ma: *haha hehe monggoso*): to properly manage the situation, he needed the names, ages, household sizes and home jurisdictions of every individual on the scene. Policing was also stepped up: no further outsiders to be allowed in: not “lamas nor laymen, men nor women, [Mongol banner] people nor Chinese people” (Ma: *ba ba i lama, kara, haha, hehe, urse, irgese*).<sup>109</sup> When the census was complete, a register was compiled in Manchu, and forwarded to the *amban* and the emperor in Beijing.

Logar Hiya, however, was only one of several new logging sites near Kiakhta. There was an additional community of fourteen poachers active to the southwest of the town, at Bayangbulak, on the southern bank of the Boora River. All of these poachers were Chinese men known to be “mixed up living with Mongol women.” Given its proximity to the Russian border, the *amban* explained, it was entirely “improper to have a profusion...of Mongol and Chinese firewood and charcoal sellers in the area.” When, again, the trade supervisor and *jasay* Namjildorji took charge, no demonstrated no leniency. To head off criticism that they were providing a necessary service to the city,

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<sup>107</sup> M1D1-3874.9b (DG8.12.15).

<sup>108</sup> M1D1-3913.9a (DG9.1.20).

<sup>109</sup> M1D1-3913.9b (DG9.1.29). *Urse* and *irgese* here are juxtaposed.



the trade supervisor emphasized that a group of Mongol brothers already served the town with charcoal, and they had official permission.<sup>110</sup> All the wood poachers were thus tracked down and arrested.<sup>111</sup>

Poaching was likewise a problem in the military game parks outside Khüree, which were treated with the same severity as borderland surrounding Kiakhta. Illegal logging was prohibited in both.<sup>112</sup> All wood that entered the town had to be certified that it had not come from the restricted game parks. Throughout the 1820s, however, illegal logging became an increasingly serious problem. In 1830, the banner *jasay wang* Nasunbatu<sup>113</sup> reported that his policemen had detained a team of two Mongols, with altogether sixty carts of wood, leaving the protected hunting grounds with stolen wood. An additional twenty carts filled with wood were latter found on a separate logging team. All those accused of logging pleaded that they were transporters; they had never chopped down trees themselves. Finally, one man admitted to logging twenty birch trees with his partner. He maintained, however, that he had only eight carts, not sixty, and he disputed that he had even been in the protected park. The driver of the twenty separate carts likewise claimed he had never chopped down any trees: he had only bought while on the wood banks of the Narin River from a Chinese merchant named “Mookuo.” When detained, the merchant pleaded that he was on commission: Lobsangcultem, a high-

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<sup>110</sup> M1D1-3874.9b (DG8.12.15).

<sup>111</sup> M1D1-3913.9a (DG9.1.20).

<sup>112</sup> M1D1-4144.3 (DG10.8).

<sup>113</sup> Nasunbatu (Ch: 那遜巴圖), *dolo jun wang*. *Jasay* for the center-right banner of Tusiyetu Han *aimag*. Fifth generation descendant of Sidisili (Ch: 西第什哩, enfeoffed 1691). Assumed rank DG19, passed on rank to his son, Wacirbatzar in DG30 (1839-1850). Bao Wenhan et al, *Menggu huibu wanggong biao*, 426; Jin Hai et al, *Qingdai menggu zhi*, 88.

ranking lama (Ma: *da lama*) had paid for “several thousands [pieces of] fence wood,” for use at his monastery, and he had only sold the surplus wood to a contact passing through the restricted area. An investigation ensued into the ultimate veracity of each of these reports and whether or not Lobsangcultem had obtained his wood with the proper permit (Ma: *temgetu*).<sup>114</sup>

That year, a midlevel official at the Amban’s office,<sup>115</sup> Pungcukdorji, took matters into his own hands and began licensing logging and wood collection from designated parts of the park.<sup>116</sup> The scheme involved allowing properly vetted Chinese loggers access to the restricted area for a year and a half. When time limit expired, he planned to once again remove loggers from the park and “make the land pure.”<sup>117</sup> In a gesture of magnanimity, no revenue was to be extracted from the licensing fees: the banner had been impoverished by natural disasters (Ma: *gashan tušafi yadahūraha*), and earnings were thus to be channeled back to the local community. 1900 carts of “coarse” (*muwa*) wood and 400 carts of wood were thus “chopped down and ravaged” (Ma: *sacime gasihyabuha*) that spring. Confronted with a choice between licensing woodcutters and protecting the military game park, however, the court ultimately decided to stand by the military: Pungcukdorji and all the guardsmen were punished with 40 lashes each for corruption.<sup>118</sup> The more important the jurisdiction, and the more disruptive the activity of woodcutters, the louder the calls were for a strong top-down intervention.

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<sup>114</sup> M1D1-4144.18a (DG20.10).

<sup>115</sup> His rank was Judge at the Office of the Seal (Ma: *doron i baita be icihiyara jakirokci*).

<sup>116</sup> The locations were the south side of Burgaltai, Bayangkükui, and Aru Übere Tarbagatai.

<sup>117</sup> The problem of parks and “purity” is discussed at length in Chapter 4. See below.

<sup>118</sup> M1D1-4144.2a (DG10.10.7).

## *Deer Horn*

As with logging, a strong impetus for instituting the licensing scheme for deer horn was the nearby game parks, where poaching was a constant problem. Deer horn was big business, by far the most valuable commodity in Mongolia by weight. As the price of elk horn rose, so too did the poaching problem: in 1841, poachers could sell a large set of elk horns for 180 bricks of tea – enough tea to fill thirty-five ox carts, a full caravan.<sup>119</sup> Licensing schemes were applied to the deer horn trade after the late 1820s; like in farmland and forestry, they functioned to identify participants in the market and provide a mechanism for oversight and control.<sup>120</sup>

According to the law, “For all Mongol people, when coming to the market in Khuree to engage in trade, if there is a person selling elk-horns, that person must be brought to the trade supervisor’s office by the relevant Chinese [buyer] for registration. Every month a report shall be prepared for the ambans. This is a strict mandate for all merchant houses.”<sup>121</sup> It was enforced using both banner authorities and the trade supervisor’s office, with “all Mongol people coming to Khüree to trade” made aware of

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<sup>119</sup> MID1-4166.15a (DG21.12.28). The man who shot the deer, Pungcuk, originally registered the horns to a legal location, but was later blackmailed by his friend, Darmajab, who threatened to reveal his secret, into giving up his prize. Their ensuing argument led to the investigation. Pungcuk later testified that he went out hunting with *taiji* Darmajab in their banner’s west region at a place called Sonin Hanggai. On the road there, at the east side of *noyan alin*, near the forest of Bayanggon, they spotted a deer and shot it with a musket. Though it was the first time Pungcuk and Darmajab had committed such an act, the *amban*’s office saw the crime as “truly detestable” (Ma: *yala ubiyacuka*) and “exceedingly brazen” (Ma: *jaci fahū amba*), and so levied heavy punishments on the men. Pungcuk, who took responsibility for thinking up the crime, was removed from his post and whipped eighty times, and *taiji* Darmajab was fined five-ninths of his livestock and the 180 bricks of tea were confiscated.

<sup>120</sup> Deer horn was not always the precious commodity it would become: the *Shengjing tongzhi* makes note of the antler as a valuable part of the elk (Ch: 麋鹿), but includes it amongst the full range of other parts (such as tail and other cuts) of equal importance (it also notes the historical connection between Shengjing’s deer and those of the ancient Fu Yu). *Qinding shengjing tongzhi* 27.30a.

<sup>121</sup> MID1-3697.1 (JQ25.5.13).

the regulation. It was assumed, as the directive for keeping registers stated, that the market would only have “Mongol sellers” (Ma: *uncaha monggoso*) and “Chinese buyers” (Ma: *udaha irgese*).<sup>122</sup>

Yet the situation was not so clear-cut: it is clear from the archival evidence that marketplace and ethnic identities did not overlap so neatly. Memorializing on the problem in 1826, the amban’s office conceded that deer horn was not always hunted by the people who submitted it; they bought it on the black market without knowledge of where the deer horns actually came from.<sup>123</sup> Registering sales inserted the state, and the trade supervisor’s office in particular, into this market in new ways. The registration book, kept in either Manchu or Chinese, listed the names of all buyers, buyers’ merchant houses, sellers, their home banner or *otuy*, the date of the transaction, the number of antlers sold, its price (tallied in bricks of tea), the place the animal was killed, and the name of a guarantor for the transaction, who could vouch for the information.

The registers reveal how deer horn prices shot up during the 1820s. In the twenty-one-day span between May 31, 1820 and June 20, 1820, the trade supervisor’s office registered the sale of thirty-three sets of deer horns. Their average value was ninety bricks of tea, though the range in prices varied from eleven to 165 tea bricks per pair.<sup>124</sup>

Figure 39: Merchant Houses in the Deer Horn Trade, 1820

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<sup>122</sup> M1D1-4320.54 (DG27.12.20).

<sup>123</sup> M1D1-3822.23 (DG6.4.20).

<sup>124</sup> M1D1-3697.2 (JQ25.4.28), M1D1-3697.1 (JQ25.5.13).

<b>Merchant House</b>	<b>Racks of Deer horn purchased</b>	<b>Bricks of Tea Paid</b>	<b>Average Price per Rack (in tea)</b>	<b>Market share (volume)</b>	<b>Market share (value)</b>
<i>Linshengyuan</i> (林盛元)	10	1076	107.6	30%	36%
<i>Xinglongyong</i> (興隆永)	7	839	119.9	21%	28%
<i>Tianchunyong</i> (天春永)	4	331	82.8	12%	11%
<i>Wanchangrong</i> (萬常榮)	2	212	106.0	6%	7%
<i>Yongrongsheng</i> (永茂盛)	2	165	82.5	6%	6%
<i>Guangheyuan</i> (廣和源)	1	138	138.0	3%	5%
<i>Fushunyuan</i> (復順元)	1	100	100.0	3%	3%
<i>Wanshenglong</i> (萬盛隆)	4	82	20.5	12%	3%
<i>Yuanshunlong</i> (元順隆)	2	36	18.0	6%	1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	33	2979			

By 1831, the price and volume of deer horn had risen considerably, while the number of houses engaged in the trade was whittled down to three: *Linshengyuan* (Ch: 林盛元), *Xinglongyong* (Ch: 興隆永), *Tianchunyong* (Ch: 天春永). In eighty-three days between May 14 and August 10, a total of fifty-nine pairs of deer horns were sold in exchange for 6,259 bricks of tea (see Figure 40).<sup>125</sup>

Figure 40: Merchant Houses in the Deer Horn Trade, 1831

<b>Merchant House</b>	<b>Racks of Deer horn purchased</b>	<b>Bricks of Tea Paid</b>	<b>Market share (volume)</b>	<b>Market share (value)</b>
<i>Linshengyuan</i> (林盛元)	39	4640	66%	74%
<i>Xinglongyong</i> (興隆永)	15	1173	25%	19%
<i>Tianchunyong</i> (天春永)	5	446	8%	7%

<sup>125</sup> Each of these three houses took on Mongol names. They were known, respectively, as the merchant houses of Buyandalai, Sanggaidalai, and Bayandorji.

In 1820 the average rack of deer horn sold for 90 bricks of tea, but in 1831 sold for 106 bricks (with prices ranging from 20-202 bricks of tea per pair). The rising prices may have been a result of shrinking supplies, as the deer became increasingly scarce. An average day in 1820 brought in 1.65 antler racks; in 1831 the figure was .71 racks per day for the year, and .85 racks per day in the high season. The average *per diem* haul had dropped by half.<sup>126</sup>

Rising prices for deer horn encouraged the state to license production in Xinjiang and Manchuria as well, as the Qing intervention in Mongolian deer horn trade during the 1820s and 1830s was mirrored by similar efforts in throughout Qing Inner Asia.<sup>127</sup> In Manchuria, where a general prohibition on deer horn trade was in place, an investigation in 1827 revealed that Korean poachers were smuggling deer horn across the border, Chinese merchants were buying it up, and Manchu border patrols had been taking bribes for “several years” from the smugglers.<sup>128</sup> After an initial crackdown, the court moved towards commercial licensing for bannermen hunters. Smugglers and poachers should be

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<sup>126</sup> MID1-3935.3 (DG11.12.14). The record book for all sales for the year, kept in Manchu, listed a total of fifty-two transactions involving fifty-nine pairs of antlers. Thirty (51%) pairs of antlers came from Dorjirabdan’s banner, five (8%) from the that of the *amban beise*, sixteen (27%) from jasaγ Cerindorji’s banner, and eight (14%) from various monastic *otok*.

<sup>127</sup> Unlike ginseng and precious furs, deer horn was not a commodity limited to the northern frontiers. In the Qianlong period, it was a famous local speciality in provinces such as Guangxi, Guangdong, and Yunnan as well.<sup>127</sup> In 1779, Chinese poachers were crossing into *tusi* (Ch: 土司) land from the Lan Xang region (Ch: 南掌, overlapping with northern Laos) to collect elephant tusks, rhinoceros horn, deer horn, and peacock feathers; the leader of the party, Chen Wenqing, had been caught four times previously by authorities, and was sentenced to exile in the far north illegal crossing borders and running a blackmarket; authorities in Guangxi, Guangdong, Sichuan, and Guizhou were alerted of the new precedent. *Gaozong shilu*, 1080: 509a.

<sup>128</sup> *Xuanzong shilu*, 123: 1062a-b, 126: 1099b-1100a, 131: 1178a-b.

kept out, but Manchus should have better access to merchants within their assigned territory.<sup>129</sup>

The discussion of this issue made it clear that in Manchuria, the opening of deer horn trade to commercial licensing was meant to strengthen, not usurp, the position of Manchu bannermen. In 1831, Fujun, a minister in the Lifanyuan who in 1830 had served as acting military governor of Mukden, was the first to memorialize on allowing bannermen to participate in the trade. Crackdowns on deer horn merchants in Shengjing were keeping away the merchants, and so keeping Jilin bannermen out of the game. Fujun thus had to convince the emperor that allowing bannermen to hunt for profit was good for them, good for the state, and not a threat to discipline:

One cannot compare Jilin bannermen to villagers dwelling in the Chinese interior (內地環居鄉村). They live along rivers and against mountains; they are widely dispersed, with settlements sometimes two or three hundred *li* apart, and sometimes four or five hundred *li* apart. Outside the off-limits hunting grounds and restricted mountains, they hunt, practice musketry and horse-riding, and through practice they perfect their natures? (Ch: 習與性成)<sup>130</sup>

Licensing, Fujun, reassured the throne, posed no threat to the territorial order. Though widely dispersed, Manchuria's bannermen were nonetheless restricted in how far they could travel. As Fujun wrote, "officers personal conduct roll-calls according to the law, and the bannermen are all listed in registers. They do not dare go far." Yet because the deer in restricted hunting grounds in Mukden had become scarce, Yi Hao was pushing through an initiative to curtail the use of muskets and curb the blackmarket in medicinal horn. As a result, "merchants have their feet bound, and bannerman have

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<sup>129</sup> *Xuanzong shilu*, 202: 1171a-b.

<sup>130</sup> *Xuanzong shilu*, 202: 1171a.

nowhere to sell [deer horn]. They no longer study musketry, and they do not have enough to live on.”<sup>131</sup> His proposal was to loosen the laws on desertion and the deer-horn trade. It was a radical idea: if bannermen were freed to hunt deer for profit, then it would both enrich them and sharpen their martial skills.

Licensing deer horn trade had an altogether different function in Xinjiang’s Ili valley, where Military Governor Teišunboo (Ch: 特依順保) proposed a new scheme in 1833. Here, licensing was used not to enrich bannermen, but to help finance local waterworks. As in Manchuria, the trade was originally completely prohibited. In 1834, the Grand Council endorsed the plan on grounds that “many in the four Mongol *aimay* survive by hunting (Ch: 打牲為業),” and “from time to time they take the deer horn they captured and sell it in town.” The danger to the Mongol way of life was not hunting, but Chinese merchants that haphazardly travelled into the *aimay*. Given that Teišunboo’s plan called for Mongols to sell their product in town, and restricted the movement of merchants, the plan was harmless.<sup>132</sup>

Smuggling and poaching dogged all three frontiers, and in all three licensing was the solution. It entailed consolidating borders, maintaining differences, and keeping the imperial peace. Yet important differences emerge from the three cases: in Mongolia, the court aimed to stem poaching and monitor the market; in Manchuria, the hope was to support impoverished banner troops; in Xinjiang, the key concern was drumming up tax revenue. Yet in all three cases, at least ideologically, the court was unwilling to part from the multiethnic ideal: Mongols and Manchus were to keep their distinctive and protected

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<sup>131</sup> *Xuanzong shilu*, 202: 1171a.

<sup>132</sup> *Xuanzong shilu*, 249: 761a-b.



positions in the empire. The quick comparison with Manchuria and Xinjiang underlines the importance of understanding institutions within their context: commercial licensing had a different significance in each frontier.

## **Conclusion**

In Mongolia, as this chapter has argued, commercial licensing over trade and production was designed to reinforce imperial order in the face of rapid economic changes during the early nineteenth century. The market was bringing disparate peoples together in new ways, and stresses in the pastoral economy threatened inherited means of making a living. Faced with drought and falling livestock populations, many turned to new livelihoods, such as gathering firewood or participating in trade caravans. At the same time, infrastructure and institutions established under Qing rule, such as the highway system and travel permits, fostered an unprecedented integration of the Mongol frontier with the Chinese metropole; through Kiakhta, the stability of empire ultimately helped integrate Qing markets with Russian and broader global ones as well. As cross-jurisdictional movement and exchanges accelerated, so too did state efforts to identify, segregate, and control participants. Licensing, in this sense, was a form of empire building: it expanded the reach of the Qing court, while maintaining the ethnic distinctions that characterized the greater imperial project.

Commercial licensing was ultimately one of many responses of the Qing state to the challenges posed by the new commercial environment. As discussed in Chapters 4 and 5 below, in some contexts, licensing was deemed inappropriate given the nature of the land or the impact of the business. The perceived impact of logging and deer-hunting

was limited enough to permit some degree of legalization. Sometimes, however, as in the case of loggers at Logar Hiya, the initial response was more ambiguous: could logging be legalized, or, to borrow the language of the documents, should the area instead be made “pure”? The answer hinged on the properties of the commodity itself, the methods of its exploitation, and the jurisdiction in which the resource was removed, all of which affected the balance between people, product, and place. In the case of mushroom picking, with its unexpectedly dramatic political and environmental consequences, local authorities had no doubts: the practice was a disaster for Mongols. As the next chapter discusses, the activity became the focal point of a new campaign to make Mongolia as “pure.”

## Chapter 4: Purity and Mongolia: The Mushroom Crisis

### **Introduction: In Pursuit of Purity**

In 1836, the emperor received an alarming complaint from the *amban* in Khüree: “Mongols and Chinese, lamas and laymen, men and women...are mixed up in chaos” (Ma: *suwaliyaganjambi*). In some cases, undocumented Chinese migrants brazenly trespassed on Mongol lands, and Mongols quietly allowed it to happen. On other cases, the Mongol land itself was changing beneath people’s feet, as increased exploitation of resources transformed the very nature of the steppe. The top secular and ecclesiastical authorities in Khüree (modern Ulaanbaatar) sent a join petition: let the emperor “bestow grace” and unite behind their “plan for purifying the interior of Khüree” (Ma: *Kuren i dolo bolgo obure arga*); they aimed to repatriate undocumented Chinese migrants and arrest Mongols who sheltered them.<sup>1</sup> In the second quarter of the nineteenth century, booming trade with Russia and increased traffic in domestic products like deer horn, timber, and steppe mushroom swelled the city with unlicensed peddlers, seasonal laborers, beggars, street performers and other illegal “vagrants.” Segregation laws were ignored; the Mongol and Chinese quarters bled into one another. After 1800, memorials streamed into Beijing: remove women from the monasteries; banish Chinese from Mongolia; clean out all “filth, manure, bones, and ashes” from the city. Let Khüree, and all of Mongolia, be “pure.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> M1D1-4079.57 (DG17).

<sup>2</sup> M1D1-3840.6 (DG7.8.18).

To many, it seemed the licensing system was a failure: Mongol authorities were simply not enforcing it. In the judgment of the Lifanyuan, “originally there were no Chinese self-indulgently and selfishly going to the four Khalkha *aimaγ*, and there was also no rule for making excuses for vagrancy” (Ma: *Kalkai duin aiman de daci umai irgese gūnin cihai cisui generengge akū, inu umai kanagan arame norome tehengge kooli akū*).<sup>3</sup> Common Mongols, too, tacitly undermined the commercial order: “it has come to the point that a great deal of [cases] accumulate of Mongols seeking profit and privately giving refugee to Chinese” (Ma: *amala ulhiyen i monggoso aisi be kiceme cisui halbume bibuḡi iktambuhai geren labdu de isinaḡi*).<sup>4</sup> In 1805 (JQ10), the military governor of Uliasutai thus proposed an extreme solution: all Chinese merchants – including licensed merchants – should be driven from the four Khalkha *aimaγ*. The edict he received in response was unambiguous: the law was not the problem, enforcement was. Illegal migrants should be targeted more forcefully: “inside the said territories let unlicensed vagrant Chinese be driven out and returned [home]; let not one be sheltered” (*harangga nuktei dolo temgetu akū norome tehe irgen be baicaḡi bašame maribuḡi emke seme halbume biburakū obuki*).<sup>5</sup> Thereafter, the league chiefs were to conduct irregular inspections. Their mandate was twofold: “we should make all banners pure and bring profit to common Mongols” (*gūsa be bolgo obume fejergi Monggoso de tusa obuci acambi*).<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> M1D1-3744.7a (DG2.10).

<sup>4</sup> M1D1-3811.4a (DG5.4).

<sup>5</sup> M1D1-3744.7a (DG2.10).

<sup>6</sup> M1D1-3811.4a (DG5.4).

Why were Mongols and Chinese, men and women, lamas and laymen “mixed up in chaos”? And what, for that matter, did it mean to be “pure”? By the early 19<sup>th</sup>-c. a crisis was at hand: the ties between people and their homeland were being cut; Mongols were losing their way, and Mongol lands were losing their territorial and constitutional integrity. This chapter argues that the new resource economy and its associated environmental problems were at the center of this new sense of dislocation. Using mushroom picking on the eastern steppe as a case study, the chapter documents state efforts to contain unlicensed production, repatriate undocumented migrants, and restore the steppe to traditional form. Mushroom picking in Mongolia, unlike licensed woodcutting or deer-hunting trade, was wholly illegal. Though neither as deadly nor as lucrative as other restricted activities, mushroom picking, it turns out, was still every bit as dangerous for the imperial order. Unheralded and forgotten, the rush for wild steppe mushroom (*tricholoma mongolicum*) was in fact at the center of a new elaboration of the Qing imperial project on the eastern steppe.

Mushrooms were big business, and each year undocumented Chinese workers crossed the border to Mongolia for the summer harvest. While unlicensed mushroom-picking began in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, memorialists denounced the practice only after 1818: by then an exploding number of pickers threatened the Mongol “way of life” and environment. They stripped the steppe of mushrooms, removed trees, hunted marmots, and fished; still more disturbing, they induced local Mongols to participate in the destruction. The state’s response was “purification,” a drive to repatriate undocumented Chinese, investigate Mongol collaborators, and restore the steppe to its ideal form. “Pure” Mongolia, like its wild mushrooms, was a Qing product of the early modern economy.

## On Purity

The vision and practice of “purification” (Ma: *bolgo be obu*; Mo: *ariγun bolγa*; Ch: 肅清) applied to the Mongolian steppe in the early nineteenth century was congruent with an order previously mandated for jurisdictions of exceptional imperial importance – such as game parks, holy mountains, and gold mines – where the court prohibited *any* form of unauthorized human intrusion. In the years 1820-1840, against the backdrop of rampant poaching, all of Qing Mongolia became such space: untouched, hallowed ground. Crucially, control over territory and natural objects required control of human subjects; indeed, for those who experienced it, the most insidious aspect of the resource economy was neither the exploitation of the land, nor the coming of undocumented migrants, but the fact that Mongols themselves proved willing accomplices in the enterprise of their own disappropriation. That is to say, Mongol subjects were acting no different than Chinese mushroom pickers. As Anna Tsing argued of modern resource frontiers, “the activity of the frontier is to make human subjects as well as natural objects.”<sup>7</sup> The court’s project in nineteenth-century Mongolia was act against this activity: to separate, clarify, and institutionalize the Mongol “way of life” as distinct from the Chinese. Only then could Mongolia be put back together again, in its original “purity,” under the protective guardianship of empire.

Before moving onto a case study of mushroom-picking and a discussion of pure places, it is worth first briefly discussing “purity” (Mo: *ariγun*; Ma: *bolgo*) in its broader Qing and Inner Asian context. In the Mongol world, “purity,” or *ariγun*, had long been a

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<sup>7</sup> Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, “Natural Resources and Capitalist Frontiers,” *Economic and Political Weekly* 38, no. 48 (2003), 5101.

cultural touchstone. Like its Turkic variant, *arık*, the word was a commonplace in Turko-Mongol names; famous examples include Ariq Böke (1219-1266), the grandson of Chinggis Khan that lost a succession struggle Khubilai, two medieval Mongols rulers of Persia, Arghun Aqa (r.1243-1255) and Arighun Khan (r.1284-1291), and the Mogul “Arghun dynasty,” which competed with Babur and his descendants for control of Kandahar and Sindh (c.1479-1591). In the Qing, as today, Ariyun (Arigün in Manchu) was a common element in names for both men and women.<sup>8</sup>

The term had a wide semantic field, denoting various ideal forms of order. The Qing Manchu-Mongol dictionary, *Han-i araha Manju Monggo gisun-i buleku bithe* (Mo: *Qayan-u bicigsen Manju Mongyol ügen-ü toil bicig*), published in 1708, defined the Mongol *ariyun* and its stated equivalent, the Manchu *bolgo*, as “1) incorrupt actions and unselfish motives; 2) everything being without a blemish and extremely beautiful; or 3) clear water” (Ma: *yabun hanja. gūnin doosi akū be bolgo sembi. geli yaya jaka icihi akū umesi gincihyan be inu bolgo sembi. jai muke genggiyen be inu bolgo sembi*. Mo: *yabudal cenger, sanay-a qobtoy ügei ji, ariyun kememui, basa aliba yaçum-a ikir ügei masi ke ji, mön ariyun kememüi, jici usu tongyalay i, mön ariyun kememüi*).<sup>9</sup> The Manchu-Chinese *Daqing quanshu* gives four characters for the Manchu *bolgo* (rendered “*bolho*” in the text): *qing* (清, “pure”), *jing* (淨, “clean”), *jie* (潔, “clean”), and *xiu* (秀, “beautiful”).<sup>10</sup> The lexical range of the word, like the English word “clean,” included

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, NWFZXD 629.1.15.219 (YZ10.1.12). See *Daicing gürün ü dotuyadu yamun u monyol bicig un ger ün dangse*, 2: 233, for tribute presenter in 1680 named *da lama arigün*.

<sup>9</sup> *Han-i araha manju monggo gisuni bileku bithe / Qayan-u bicigsen manju mongyol ügen-ü toil bicig*, 6: 65a (*tondo bolgo i hacin*).

<sup>10</sup> *Daqing quanshu*, 6: 8b.

moral, physical, and aesthetic dimensions. A later dictionary, the trilingual *Yuzhi Manzhu Menggu Hanzi sanhe qieyin Qingwenjian* (Ch: 御製滿珠蒙古漢字三和切音清文鑒), published in 1780, is organized thematically and makes this range explicit (See Figure 41).<sup>11</sup> While the word invariably signifies “clean,” in context it takes on specifically physical, military, or moral meanings. In its verbal forms, the dictionary an even broader range, including Buddhist dimensions: the verb “to abstain or fast” (Ma: *bolgomimbi*), for example, found under “Monks and Priests – Buddha-related” (Ch: 僧道部佛類), denoted “purification” through self-denial (Ch: 齋; Mo: *ariyulamui*).<sup>12</sup>

Figure 41: Translations for Manchu word “bolgo” in the Qingwenjian (1780)

Lexical Department (部)	Sub-category (類)	Chinese translation	Mongol translation	Text location
Rites 禮	Mopping 灑掃	<i>jiejing</i> 潔淨	<i>ariyun</i>	6.40a
Military Feats 武功	Infantry and Archery 步射	<i>ganjing</i> 乾淨	<i>ceber</i>	8.47b
Humanity 人	Loyalty and Honesty 忠清	<i>qing</i> 清	<i>ariyun</i>	11.62b

The same range for “purity” extended to the Qianlong Pentaglot Dictionary (Ch: 五體清文鑒), which gave a standard definition in Tibetan and Uighur as well:<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> *Qingwen jian*, 6: 40a. A fourth definition of *bolgo*, listed under “Humans – sounds,” is given as “tonal harmony” (Ch: 聲清, Mo: *irayu*). See *Qingwenjian*, 14: 23b.

<sup>12</sup> *Qingwen jian*, 19: 3b. See also *bolgombi*, “to clean up” (Ch: 決勝負; Mo: *suyudumui*, “to win in gambling”) under “Arts – Gambling” (Ch: 技藝部賭戲類).

<sup>13</sup> *Gotai shin bunkan yakukai*, no. 2593, 3573, and 5476.



Figure 42: *Bolgo* in the Qianlong Five-Language Dictionary

Language	Defintion 1 (Rites)	Defintion 2 (Military Feats)	Definition 3 (Humanity)
Manchu	<i>bolgo</i>	<i>bolgo</i>	<i>bolgo</i>
Tibetan	<i>gdzang, dzang</i>	<i>ts'uks gdzang, ts'ukdzang</i>	<i>gdzang ma, dzangma</i>
Mongol	<i>ariyun</i>	<i>ceber, ariyun</i>	<i>ariyun</i>
Uighur	<i>arik pakidza</i>	<i>sylik</i>	<i>arik</i>
Chinese	<i>jiejing</i> (潔淨)	<i>ganjing</i> (乾淨)	<i>qing</i> (清)

While *ariyun* and *bolgo* served as consistent translations for one another, Chinese translations were more variable. In dictionaries, the term is often translated as variant of *qing* (清) – the very name of the dynasty, though the connection, it seems, was never made in texts.<sup>14</sup> In texts, it is usually translated as *qingjing* (清淨) or *suqing* (肅清). The former carries strong Buddhist and religious overtones (as in “pure land” [Ch: 清土]). The latter carries a military meaning, in sense of “mopping up” an area and pacifying it.<sup>15</sup> In contexts in which its aesthetic meaning is primary, as when Tulišen described a mountain as “pure and beautiful” (Ma: *bolgo saikan*), he rendered the Chinese as “contending for beauty” (Ch: 競秀).<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Manchu and Mongol documents never translate through “Qing,” they always transliterate the state name from *Daqing* (Ch: 大清) to *Daicing*. In contrast, the state name “Jin” (Ch: 金), used by the Jurchen courts of the medieval (1115-1234) and pre-Qing (1616-1636) periods is invariably translated through as “Gold” (Ma: *aisin*; Mo: *altan*) in Qing documents. See Schlesinger and High, “Rulers and Rascals,” *Central Asia Survey* 29.3 (2010): 301 n.27. For a contemporary translation of “Qing” as *ariyun*, see Enhbayaryn Jigmeddorj, *Halk-Manjiin uls töriin hariltsaa* (Ulaanbaatar: Mongol uls shinjleh uhaany akademi tuuhiin hüreeleen, 2008), 27.

<sup>15</sup> In Southeast Asia during WWII, the concept of *suqing* – remembered as “*sookching*” – was applied as a form of ethnic “cleansing” by the Japanese army to extermination campaigns directed at overseas Chinese in Malaysia.

<sup>16</sup> Tulišen, *Lakcaha jecen de takūraha babe ejehe bithe*, 96.

The concept was closely associated with the ideals of Qing rule. As with other words identified with the imperial person (*dele*, *Mukden*, etc.), the spot at Summer Palace where lamas read sutras, called the “pure place” (Ch: 清淨地), was raised up a notch in Qing documents as a sign of respect.<sup>17</sup> Likewise, the word was used to describe other ideal imperial places, such as the summit of Changbaishan.<sup>18</sup> As I make clear below, some places thus needed to be more pure than others. Imperial hunting grounds, holy mountains, the borderland with Russia, and other uniquely “important” or “strategic” (Ma: *oyonggo*; Ch: 要) spaces closely associated with the empire, were to be pure. All forms of trespassing were strictly prohibited, and maintaining “purity” was a basic task of governance: purity did not just happen; it required vigilance and work. As the petitions to separate “Mongols and Chinese, lamas and laymen, men and women” suggested, the interior of Khüree was one such special space. Registration, segregation, and repatriation were the solutions. It involved, among other activities, registration of intermarried couples (see Appendix B), repatriation of undocumented migrants, and, in one case prior to emissaries arriving from the Dalai Lama, literally cleaning up the town. Outside the city, on the open steppe, an analogous process was put into effect. In eastern Mongolia, the catalyst for the new mobilization was the mushroom trade.

## **Mushrooms**

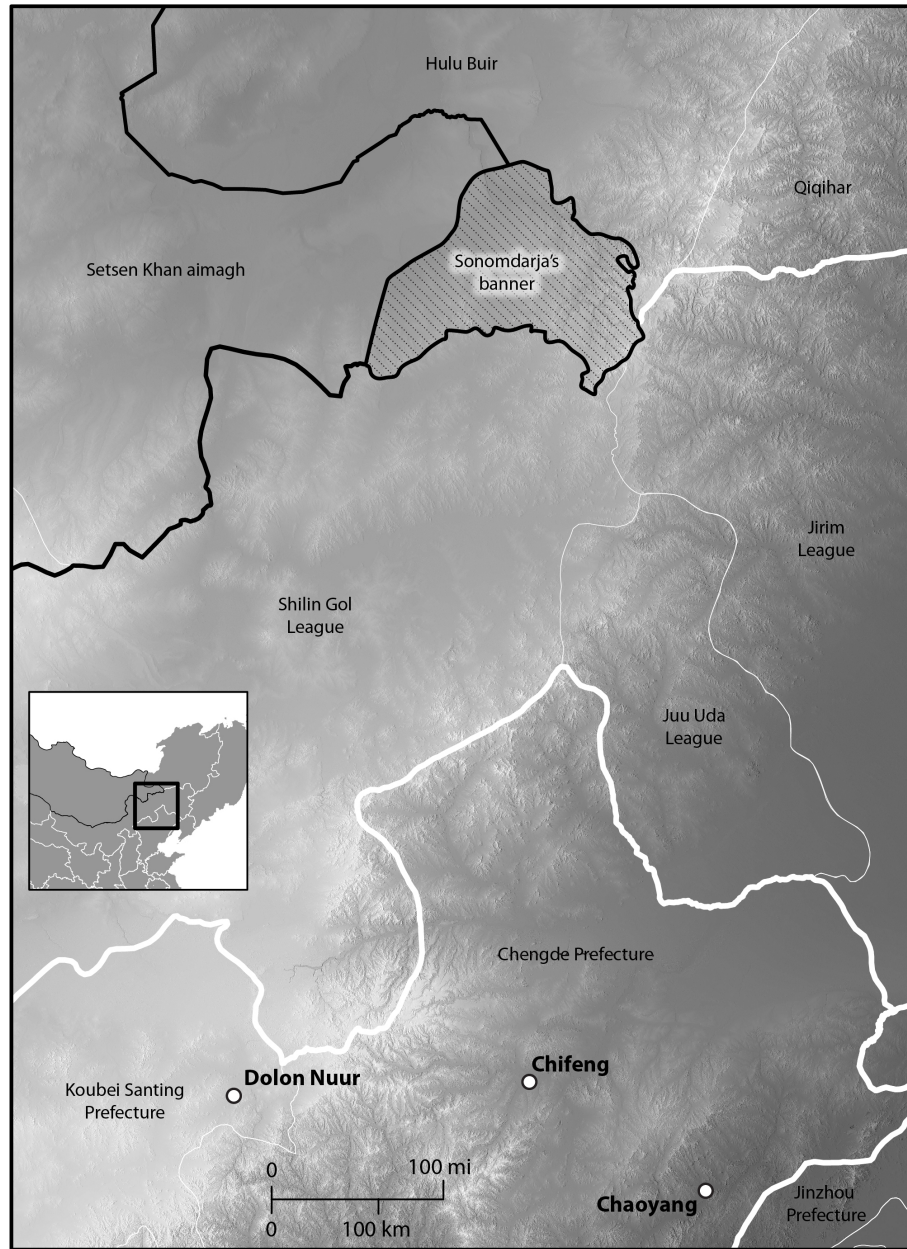
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<sup>17</sup> NWFZXD 142.514.76 (DG2.10).

<sup>18</sup> See the use of *qingjing* (Ch: 清淨) in the Chinese translation of Umuna’s account to Kangxi of his trip up Changbaishan in 1677. Yang Bin, *Liubian jilue*, in *Longjiang sanji* (Harbin: Heilongjiang renmin chubanshe, 1985), 30.

In the summer of 1829, 103 seasonal laborers illegally crossed the border from China to Mongolia. As in previous years, they came in anticipation of the wild mushroom harvest – a lucrative but illegal trade. As they knew border police awaited them, they brought protection: fake permits, signed with vermilion ink (the color of the emperor), to help pass for legitimate pickers. The mushroom pickers had no intention of getting caught. Though unarmed, they were ready to defend themselves with the tools of their trade: wooden poles, iron spades and hatchets. Setting off from Chengde in June, they arrived in the eastern tip of Outer Mongolia in July. In Mongolia, the Qing cavalry awaited them.

Map 4: Mushroom Picking Zone, 1820



The mushroom pickers, all Han Chinese, braved the journey for mushrooms (Ch: *mogu* 蘑菇; Mo: *mögü*; Ma: *sence, megu*) to sell in the markets of Beijing. While it is possible they collected common field mushrooms (*Agaricus campestris*) – the wild cousin of the modern champignon – it is more probable they came for the Mongolian steppe mushroom, *tricholoma mongolicum* (Ch: 蒙古口蘑, or 口蘑; Mo: *talyn tsagaan*

*muug*), today one of the rarer mushrooms in the world.<sup>19</sup> In the late eighteenth century, the customs office in Beijing appraised one catty (approximately .609 kilograms) as equal in value to a newly made sable-fur coat.<sup>20</sup>

The leader of this particular 1829 picking team leader was one Liu Deshan (Ch: 劉得善; 劉得山). Born in Zhaoyuan county, Shandong, he left home after his marriage prospects fizzled. He later settled in Chaoyang county, a hard-scrabble frontier of Chengde prefecture, where he hired himself out as a petty laborer in the mushroom trade. In 1824, with help from Chen Wu (Ch: 陳五), a clerk from Shandong at the county yamen, he became an independent foreman.<sup>21</sup> Chen Wu later explained (under torture) that finances were tight at the yamen; they had run the office for a year without funds. So for a steep price of one tael per page, he agreed to furnish Liu Deshan with yamen letterhead: blank paper pre-sealed with the magistrate's chop. Liu pooled together funds with a partner and bought seventeen slips, writing on each a vermilion decree: "Give these men safe passage to the front-left-wing banner of Cecen Han *aimaγ* to collect a

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<sup>19</sup> A relative of the matsutake (*tricholoma matsutake*), the Mongolian steppe mushroom sprouts in late summer into thick white bulbs up to eight centimeters high; rarely growing alone, they form fairy rings twelve meters across in open pastures. They are fleshy, fine textured, pungent, and famously delicious; modern guidebooks even claim they fight cancer. In Mongolia today, rural families near Ulaanbaatar put them out to dry for two or three days and eat them roasted with butter or steeped in mutton soup; they use them medicinally as a febrifuge. Tanesaka, Fukata, Okada, and Kinugawa, "Mongoru sōgenni jiseisuru tricholoma mongolicum Imai," *Memoirs of the Faculty of Agriculture of Kinki University* 26 (1993), 33; Mao Xiaolan, *Zhongguo daxing zhenjun* (Zhengzhou: Henan kexue jishu chanbanshe, 1998), 69.

<sup>20</sup> Customs rates provide only a faint indication of market value, as they were infrequently adjusted. Chongwenmen Gate was located on the southwest side of the Beijing city wall. In the years 1669 (KX8) and 1780 (QL45), the mushrooms were taxed at a rate of .402 silver taels per 100 catties, or approximately .66 taels per kilo. By comparison, a new sable fur or a leopard skin coat (襖) were taxed at the same rate, and a catty of sea cucumber – a rare delicacy – was taxed at half the rate. In 1902, the customs rate was recorded at .9 taels per 100 catties (about 1.5 taels per kilo) – which was still double the sea cucumber rate, but 100 times lower than the rate for low-grade wild ginseng. See *Chongwenmen shangshui yamen xianxing zeli*, v.6.1, 6.2 and 7.

<sup>21</sup> MID1-3913.10 (DG10.4.16).

tribute of mushrooms.” He later hired an educated Mongol lama to translate his Chinese text into Mongol, and the forged bilingual permits were complete.<sup>22</sup>

By law, undocumented mushroom-pickers were arrested on sight. Guardsmen were posted at the border, and authorities in Chengde, Khüree, and Beijing awaited status reports as soon as the summer picking-season began. In 1828, the year before Liu Deshan’s first foray, unlicensed pickers had arrived “in swarms” 300 strong from Chifeng (Ch: 赤峰, Ma: Ulan Hada), in the northeast corner of Chengde prefecture.<sup>23</sup>

While they had slipped through the border undetected, their camps proved impossible to hide. After scouts spotted them, troops arrived on the scene; two veteran foremen in the camp, Hui Wanzong and Ding Weilian (Ch: 丁微連), took responsibility and bargained for time.<sup>24</sup> Not longer after, as one guard later remembered, the mushroom-pickers soon began “speaking altogether in Chinese” and formed a mob. They wielded hatchets and clubs, beat the guards off, and managed even to steal four of the patrolmen’s horses. After they fled, the guards went hut to hut on foot and razed the pickers’ camp.<sup>25</sup>

A banner-wide manhunt ensued through the autumn of 1828. The cavalry tracked down Hui Wanzong’s men first, though they were only subdued with force, and Ding

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<sup>22</sup> M1D1-3913.5a (DG9.11.15); M1D1-3913.10 (DG10.4.16). This was not the first corruption case involving blank, yamen-sealed paper. Just four years prior, in 1825 (DG5), twenty fake documents with official letter head had been reportedly issued, with twelve put to use. The previous *gūsai amban*, Nacingga, and yamen authorities in Chaoyang county were punished, and the practice strictly prohibited. See M1D1-3913.10 (DG10.4.16).

<sup>23</sup> M1D1-3913.14b (DG9.1?).

<sup>24</sup> M1D1-3913.14b (DG9.1?); M1D1-3913.17a (DG8.11.1).

<sup>25</sup> M1D1-3913.14b (DG9.1?).

Weilian's team was captured soon after.<sup>26</sup> Hui Wanzong was sentenced to a harsh penalty: three months in the cangue, one hundred strokes with a cane, and banishment under guard back to his home county.<sup>27</sup> He escaped due to bungling, leading to a second manhunt in the spring of 1829.<sup>28</sup> Liu Deshan, operating in his own unit, heard of the initial raids and managed to cross back across the border undetected.<sup>29</sup> His men returned to Chengde laden with dried mushrooms. He later testified that "there was no other business" (Ma: *gūwa maimai akū ofi*) in town, so he prepared to return the following season; Hui Wanzong and Ding Weilian braved the return trip as well.<sup>30</sup> Humiliated, the *amban* drafted into service bannermen from throughout Outer Mongolia, and the head of Cecen Han *aimag*, Artasida, rode to the scene to take charge.<sup>31</sup>

The record says that, indeed, pickers returned – again, "in swarms" – in 1829. The border patrol was again outnumbered; Liu Deshan's men beat them back with rocks, kitchen knives, hoes and clubs. Yet their success proved short-lived, and by September 19, nearly everyone was arrested, with their camps razed (Ding Weilian managed to escape, but Hui Wanzong was again captured<sup>32</sup>). Bureaucratic processing began: workers'

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<sup>26</sup> M1D1-3913.17a (DG8.11.1). The trade supervisor's office found his name and home jurisdiction in their registers. He was from Chang'ai county, Shandong (Laizhou prefecture). In his confession, he testified he had migrated from Shandong to the village of Kisiktu, near Chifeng.

<sup>27</sup> M1D1-3913.18a (DG9.5.2). Two foremen working beneath him wore the cangue for two months. They were named Jiao Shi (Ma: Giyoo Si and Kui Qiufan (Ma: Kui Cio Fan).

<sup>28</sup> He escaped at a place called Zaoniangao. See M1D1-3913.18a (DG9.5.2) for the extended list of people accused of helping him along the way.

<sup>29</sup> M1D1-3913.18a (DG9.5.2).

<sup>30</sup> M1D1-3913.10 (DG10.4.16).

<sup>31</sup> M1D1-3913.5a (DG9.11.15).

<sup>32</sup> M1D1-3913.10 (DG10.4.16).

names and home jurisdictions were registered, and forced repatriation ensued.<sup>33</sup> Liu Deshan and eleven sub-foremen (see Figure 43) were singled out as leaders; all were escorted to the Board of Punishments in Beijing for sentencing. Under torture, everyone confessed.

Figure 43: Arrested Mushroom-Pickers' Foremen, 1829

Foreman	Age	Men Led	Province of Birth	Prefecture of Birth	County of Birth	Resident Prefecture	Resident County	Resident Town
Li Dengkui	46	13	Henan	Zhangde	Wunan	Chengde	Qifeng	Shanzuizi
Li Dengli	49	7	Henan	Zhangde	Wunan	Chengde	Qifeng	Shanzuizi
Feng Xiang	45	7	Shanxi	Pingding	Yu?	Chengde	Qifeng	Šanbutu
Shen Chenglin	49	6	Henan	Zhangde	Wuzhi	Pingquan		henan yingzi
Dai Han	n/a	4	Henan	Zhangde	Wunan			Chifeng
Fu Wan	n/a	9	Henan	Zhangde	Wunan			Chifeng
Zhai Laosan	n/a	11	Shanxi					Chifeng
He Laosan	n/a	11	Shanxi					Chifeng
Xing Wan	n/a	7		Rehe		Chengde	Qifeng	Rehe
Song Duan	n/a	3	Zhili	Chengde	Qifeng			Rehe
Xing Meng'er	n/a	7	Zhili	Chengde	Qifeng			Rehe

That December, the Daoguang emperor issued a special decree. Illicit mushroom picking was “extremely detestable” (*Ma: jaci ubiyada*). The responsible officials were cashiered for negligence and incompetence. Chen Wu was ordered to repay the seventeen taels he accepted in bribes, then caned one hundred times and sentenced to become a bondservant to a military garrison in Shuntian prefecture, a “somewhat close frontier” (*Ma: hanciki jecen*). Liu Deshan was also caned one hundred times, but with a heavy rod, and exiled for three years. Hui Wanzong, in contrast, was caned seventy

<sup>33</sup> MID1-3913.5a (DG9.11.15).



times and exiled half a year.<sup>34</sup> On February 14, 1830, the emperor confirmed their sentences, and they were dispatched to Shuntian to receive their punishments.<sup>35</sup>

Adjudicating the case had taken months. In part, the delay reflected the strangeness of it all: as of 1830, there was still no precedent for dealing with illegal mushroom picking. The phenomenon had taken off too fast. There were, however, analogous crimes. One precedent was found in prohibitions “leading hired laborers across the Great Wall boundary (Ma: *jasei tule*, lit., “outside the passes”) to pick rhubarb.” If the rhubarb-pickers numbered less than ten, then the foreman’s punishment was one hundred blows with a cane and a year in exile; if the foreman took more than ten men, the punishment was made one notch more severe: a caning followed by three years of exile in Ili. It was by the logic of this decree that a relatively light punishment was handed down for Hui Wanzong: his picking team had fewer than ten men. Significantly, a second precedent was found in a prohibition on poaching in imperial “game parks” (Ma: *aba hoihan*). In such cases, first time offenders wore the cangue for a month; second time offenders wore it for two months.<sup>36</sup> As repeat offenders, all the arrested mushroom pickers were thus ordered to wear the cangue.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Hui Wanzong was ordered to receive one-hundred blows, but no hard-labor or exile. Because he resisted arrest, the punishment was stiffened. MID1-3913.10 (DG10.4.16).

<sup>35</sup> MID1-3913.10 (DG10.4.16).

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> MID1-3697.29 (JQ25.2.7), MID1-3697.26 (JQ25.9.13), MID1-3913.10 (DG10.4.16). The punishments were comparable to similar, serious crimes. If a Chinese man swore at the *amban* he sentence also wore the cangue a month, received 100 strokes with the heavy staff, and was banished back to the Chinese interior. Likewise if a Chinese man was expelled from Mongolia and returned, he was sentenced to wear the cangue in the marketplace for two months, after which he was whipped one-hundred times and expelled again.

The analogy with rhubarb picking seems relatively intuitive. Yet how was Mongolia at all analogous to an imperial game park? The answer lies in a more basic question: what was wrong with mushroom picking in the first place? There is evidence of Chinese mushroom pickers in Outer Mongolia as early as 1759. It was not until 1818, however, that any complaints surfaced.<sup>38</sup> That year a banner *jasay*, Dasigeleng,<sup>39</sup> reported to the head of Cecen Han *aimay*, Artasida, that undocumented migrants had become unmanageable: they were not only picking mushrooms, he explained, but engaged in other types of behavior that were problematic:

Self-indulgently digging holes, cutting down trees, pitching tents, planting vegetables, catching fish, and driving off the sheep, goats, horses and cattle Mongols live on.

Artasida reported the matter to the Amban's Office in Khüree, which forwarded the report to Beijing. Without even waiting to receive a response, however, he mobilized troops from neighboring banners to "clean up the area." The first step was bureaucratic: compiling registers of all known mushroom-pickers (442 from Chifeng, 28 from Dolon Noor, 42 from Rehe). The register was forwarded to Artasida, the Ambans Office, and (ultimately) Beijing, the governor-general of Zhili, and county-level authorities in Chengde.<sup>40</sup> In his own jurisdiction, Artasida took responsibility for (and expressed

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<sup>38</sup> In 1759 they were noted for accidentally starting a prairie fire.

<sup>39</sup> Dasigeleng (Ch: 達什格埒克), 扎薩克鎮國公. *Jasay* of left wing, front banner of Cecen Han *aimay*. Fourth generation descendant of Cebden. Ascended to rank in QL51, passed rank onto his eldest son Dorjibolam in DG1 (1786-1820). Bao Wenhan et al, *Menggu huibu wanggong biao zhuan*, 165; Jin Hai et al, *Qingdai menggu zhi*, 101.

<sup>40</sup> M1D1-3744.7a (DG2.10), M1D1-3913.20 (DG9.1.19).

deepest concern over) collaborating Mongols, and he ordered a special investigation into collaborators who harbored migrant Chinese. None were discovered.<sup>41</sup>

New complaints were elaborated four years later, in 1822, when the mushroom pickers arrived 1,200 strong, equivalent in size to a military battalion. The banner *jasay*, one Sonomdarjya,<sup>42</sup> issued the initial alarm to Artasida, mobilizing the Ambans Office, the Lifanyuan, the imperial court, and county- and provincial-level authorities in Zhili.<sup>43</sup> To get their attention, Sonomdarjya emphasized the most serious complaints: the workers degraded the steppe by mowing grass for straw, hunting marmots, fishing, and cutting down trees.<sup>44</sup> Still worse, the camps were built of wood, straw, mud, and stone – suggesting they were built to last. The mushroom pickers, moreover, were but drifters and vagrants: people “without property” (Ma: *hethe akū*), of whom “not one was [originally] from the province of Zhili.” Most damning, Sonomdarjya complained, was that they made it impossible to govern. They “took over my banner’s pastures.” He reiterated the point (they “lorded over the rivers that Mongols use to herd animals in my banner”), or invoked a higher ideal than personal authority: they “took over Mongols’ territory” (Ma: *Monggosoi nukte ejelefi*) and “Mongols’ pastures.”<sup>45</sup> The result was that the “way of life” (Ma: *banjire doro*) of his subject Mongols (Ma: *fejergi Monggoso*) was

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<sup>41</sup> M1D1-3744.8a (DG2.6.27).

<sup>42</sup> Sonomdarjya (Ch: 索諾木達爾佳, 索諾木達爾濟雅), 扎薩克輔國公. *Jasay* of the left wing, front banner of Cecen Han *aimay*. Sixth generation descendant of Cebden. DG2 ascended to rank, passed on to his younger brother Erdenitoγtagal in DG24 (1822-1844). Bao Wenhan et al, *Menggu huibu wanggong biao*, 303; Jin Hai et al, *Qingdai menggu zhi*, 101.

<sup>43</sup> M1D1-3744.8a (DG2.6.27).

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> M1D1-3744.7a (DG2.10).

under duress. Yet some Mongols dared now to profit from the arrangement and secretly shelter the Chinese.<sup>46</sup> Good Mongols lived the honest life of a herder; these Mongols acted “blindly” (Ma: *balai*) and “impulsively” (Ma: *gūnin cihai*) and knew only the “chase for profit” (Ma: *aisi be kiceme*).<sup>47</sup>

State intervention grew ever more involved. In 1825, a total of 700 mushroom pickers braved the prohibition and arrived in Sonomdarjya’s banner.<sup>48</sup> More reinforcements arrived on the scene: this time, Artasida appointed a “capable, rather high-ranking official who understands this matter,” Sonomdobcin, to serve as a permanent special deputy, tasked solely with solving the mushroom-picking problem and facilitating coordination between banner and *aimag* authorities.<sup>49</sup> He issued an ultimatum to the mushroom-pickers: leave by the start of the eighth lunar month (September 12) or face immediate arrest.<sup>50</sup> When the appointed day arrived, only two groups, comprised of thirteen men, remained behind.<sup>51</sup> They were accused of the most serious crimes: using mushroom picking as a “pretext” for “settling down as vagrants and thieves,”<sup>52</sup> and inducing Mongols to “provide shelter” (Ma: *halbure bibure*) and collaborate.<sup>53</sup> While these thirteen stragglers were being rounded up, a group of 393 who were being

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<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*; M1D13913.14b (DG9.1?).

<sup>48</sup> M1D1-3811.5a (DG5.8.20).

<sup>49</sup> M1D1-3744.7a (DG2.10).

<sup>50</sup> M1D1-3811.4a (DG5.4).

<sup>51</sup> There were ten men under one Chao Wanxiu (from Dolon Noor) and three men under Qing Luosan (from Ulan Hada).

<sup>52</sup> M1D1-3811.5a (DG5.8.20).

<sup>53</sup> M1D1-3811.4a (DG5.4).

repatriated across banner lines staged a small uprising, subdued their Mongol guards, and pitched camp for the winter.<sup>54</sup> Sonomdobcin confidently predicted the winter would decimate them, and tactically waited for spring.<sup>55</sup> In the meantime, he took comfort that the workers were confined to the Buhan River area, a “steppe wilderness” (Ma: *bigan tala*) that “Mongols will not use as pastures.”<sup>56</sup> His response suggests that the problem was less Chinese settlers in Mongol territory *per se*, than the disturbance to the Mongol ways of life and livelihood.

Sharp contrasts emerge from these official narratives: Chinese and Mongol, pure and corrupted, legal and illegal, our territory and yours. The mushroom pickers’ settlements destroyed the environment, upset the territorial order, and corrupted local Mongols. In so doing, their presence violated the historical responsibility of the emperor towards his Mongol subjects. “Purity” meant removing permanent Chinese residents and their profit-driven way of life and restoring the environment and proper lines of authority. It was also a call to mobilize the banner system and the highest levels of Qing government.

The situation on the ground was not so black-and-white, as the documents themselves betray important shades of gray. Arrested mushroom-pickers contested the complaints against them and the basic state narrative. In the spring of 1826, for example, before the authorities took police action on the winter camps, a fresh wave of migrants

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<sup>54</sup> MID1-3811.5a (DG5.8.20).

<sup>55</sup> MID1-3833.25a (DG6.1.21). Tree-ring and stream-flow data from Northeastern Mongolia show that the years 1826-1830 were the eighth wettest in the 350 years between 1651 and 2001. See Pederson et al, “Hydrometeorological Reconstructions for Northeastern Mongolia Derived from Tree Rings: 1651–1995,” 877. Mongolia experienced particularly devastating blizzards in the winter of 1828-1829.

<sup>56</sup> MID1-3811.5a (DG5.8.20). The locations were *šereneke kūwangbaci i hotduk* and *salkitu*.

arrived, 200 strong. Scouts discovered them erecting houses and cutting hay along the Khalkha River.<sup>57</sup> Troops were drafted from throughout the *aimag*,<sup>58</sup> and authorities issued another ultimatum: leave by August (DG6.7) or face severe consequences.<sup>59</sup> The foremen pleaded for leniency. Their statements, as recorded by officers at the scene, conceded that they indeed came annually to pick mushrooms – and that they fished, chopped down trees, and hunted marmots as well. Yet they did so only because they were poor. They also admitted that they came without permits. Yet each year, they emphasized, they returned home without any intention of permanently settling down.

Revealingly, they insisted they had been coming to the banner for years, through the rule of three consecutive *jasays*, without ever being harassed. Only in recent times, under the rule of Sonomdarjya, were they under attack. They returned each summer because they “had no faith in those Mongols” (Ma: *tere monggoso be akdarakū jalin*) who razed their camps: they were not being sincere. They never mixed with “Mongol herding groups” (Ma: *monggo falga*). They only stayed behind because their oxen were sick and starving. All these facts “local Mongols know well” (Ma: *ere ba i monggoso inu getuken sambi*).<sup>60</sup> Their historical memory was the opposite from the official narrative: they had been part of the landscape for generations. Yet their pleas fell on deaf ears. On

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<sup>57</sup> Listed men included Co Sii, Wang U, He Ju Lu Dangjigū and Jang Jin Lu.

<sup>58</sup> These men were organized under *aisilara taiji* Cerindorji and *meiren i* Burgut. *Daiselaha ilhi culgan i da gung* Coijunjab also dispatched men to the scene: *jasak taiji* Darmajab and *janggin* Cerindasi. M1D1-3833.25a (DG6.1.21). Other units under *jurgan i janggin* Wesingge, *jurgan i bošokū* Hengling and *monggo uju jergi taiji* Gongcukdasi, had departed Khüree on July 17, 1825, and a team led by Sonomdobcin departed the following day. At Sonomdarjya’s banner they were joined by *uju jergi taiji* Pungcukdorji, and still more *tusalakci hafasa* sent by Artasida. M1D1-3822.58a (DG6.6.9).

<sup>59</sup> M1D1-3822.58a (DG6.6.9).

<sup>60</sup> M1D1-3833.20 (DG6.7.19).

August 14, the special deputy and Sonomdarjya issued a Chinese-language proclamation announcing their banishment. The mushroom-pickers were rounded up, their names compiled in a Mongol-language register (523 men, divided into sixty picking teams), and they were banished from the banner.<sup>61</sup>

Similar discrepancies were apparent in the negotiations of 1827. That year, 700 men had arrived in the banner, armed with wooden cudgels. “Although as a lone *taiji* I repeatedly ordered them to leave,” a patrolman named Bayandelger meekly reported, “they paid no attention.”<sup>62</sup> Sonomdarjya and the new special deputy, Coijunjab, issued a copy of the proclamation of banishment, then headed for the camps. They succeeded in compiling a fresh register of names. Reports revealed the desperate condition of the pickers. Some lived in ramshackle cave dwellings and others in wooden thatched-roof huts. Over 300 had come on foot without any pack animals. When ordered to disperse by the first of the seventh lunar month, the foremen challenged the case against them.<sup>63</sup> As they argued, “we came to an understanding and returned as usual [*muse inu an i jalgiyanjame amasi jifi*].” They had a deal: “we pick mushrooms, cut down trees, fish, and hunt marmots then return back [home] in the eighth lunar month.”<sup>64</sup> Both foremen representing the group, Menggetu and Haisandai, were fluent in Mongol and known by

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<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> MID1-3855.7a (DG7.6.4).

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.* Wesingge at the time was posted in Kiakhta, and there were no other *janggin* available for the job; *ilhi culgan i da gung* Coijunjab and *wang* Toktohoturu were called to the scene with troops. Due to a broken foot suffered after falling from his horse, Toktohoturu was replaced on the fly. Coijunjab, however, arrived at the banner on August 10, 1827, and coordinated with Sonomdarjya on a plan. See MID1-3855.9a (DG7.7.30).

<sup>64</sup> The original draft of this document left out “cutting down trees” (Ma: *moo sacime*); it was inserted in a later draft.

Mongol names.<sup>65</sup> Menggetu – later identified from a past register as Zhang Yishang of Chifeng<sup>66</sup> – pleaded to keep their deal. The officials relented; their arguments seemed to carry weight.<sup>67</sup>

The phenomenon of Chinese mushroom pickers in these borderlands was thus neither alien nor novel. Further, just as Mongols were acculturating to the ways of mushroom pickers, the Chinese were likewise acculturating to the ways of Mongols.<sup>68</sup> Indeed, documentary evidence of Chinese mushroom pickers in the banner extend back to at least 1759, and it was this history the pickers invoked in their testimonies. Like Menggetu and Haisandai, many had Mongol names and spoke Mongol fluently; others had Mongol wives. Some lived in Mongol style *gers* – the traditional nomad’s yurt.<sup>69</sup> Many local Mongols, on the other hand, married Chinese, spoke Chinese, actively participated in commerce, labored in caravans, and supported the mushroom trade – just as the state feared. Distinctions between Mongols and Chinese were blurring. Concern about Chinese influence on traditional “ways of life” even extended to the very word “mushroom.” In one case, when a clerk at the Ambans Office rendered it with the

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<sup>65</sup> MID1-3855.9a (DG7.7.30).

<sup>66</sup> MID1-3855.7a (DG7.6.4).

<sup>67</sup> MID1-3855.9a (DG7.7.30).

<sup>68</sup> See Lattimore, *Inner Asian Frontiers of China* (New York: American Geographical Society, 1940), 481. As Lattimore argued, “the edge of the steppe was not abrupt by shaded by an indefinite margin of debatable terrain, in which there worked spontaneously and in varying degrees both the tendency for some of the steppe tribes to evolve toward the Chinese norm and for some of the Chinese borderers to devolve away from the norm.” For Lattimore, Chinese acculturation to Mongol ways was the necessary outcome of a changed environment and mode of production: “the steppe was not suitable for occupation by unmodified Chinese communities. Lattimore, 473.

<sup>69</sup> See the case of two wood-sellers from Chifeng in Sonomdarya’s banner in MID1-3822.58a (DG6.6.9). The names of the men were given as Bayartu and Mujang.



colloquial Chinese *mogu*, his superior crossed it out. Instead, the official proofed in the Manchu word, *sence*, leaving a lingering “*mogu*” in the original draft.<sup>70</sup>

Mushroom picking was not limited to Sonomdarjya’s banner. It was also taking place in Sandubmingjur’s banner.<sup>71</sup> In 1826 (DG6), the *ambans* submitted a report to the Lifanyuan lamenting that even though they were policing the area, with *culgan i da gung* Coijunjab himself on the scene, the migrant laborers driven out, their huts destroyed, and soldiers stationed on the road, that year had brought more of the same: in the sixth month, “Chinese again came swarming in” (*irgese geli feniyeleme jifi*). That year, they had only been able to catch a few men for punishment, but they had not been organizers. In the ninth month, over 200 more loggers and mushroom pickers (under one Li Tai) were dispersed by authorities. The incident was not without violence, with one leader of camp named Zhang Zhenglun of some 20 “men punching (*šolo gala de tantame*) an official (*kunde*) and causing a small injury.” It was during the raid of these 200 men that Hui Wanzong was first detained. Zhang Zhenglun was a Shanxi man living in Ulan Hada. A leader of over forty mushroom pickers, he was fluent in Mongol. Though each year he had been driven out, he kept coming back, while his men had built twenty-seven modest huts (*coron*) in the area.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> MID1-3744.8a (DG2.6.27). The Manchu *megu*, another word for mushroom, was interestingly not used in either draft. The text is a useful reminder of how much is missed when we rely on Chinese translations of Manchu documents.

<sup>71</sup> Sandubmingjur (Ch: 三都布明珠爾, 三都布敏珠爾, 桑都布明珠爾), 扎薩克輔國公. *Jasaγ* of the right wing, right-end banner of Tusiyetu Han *aimaγ*. Fifth generation descendant of Bahai (enfeoffed 1732). Ascended to rank in DG3, passed onto son Dasidorji in DG11 (1823-1831). Bao Wenhan et al, *Menggu huibu wanggong biao zhuan*, 297; Jin Hai et al, *Qingdai menggu zhi*, 92.

<sup>72</sup> MID1-3913.20 (DG9.1.19). Cf. *coron tatan* in Norman: “a small, temporary wooden, tent-shaped structure.” Jerry Norman, *A Concise Manchu-English Lexicon* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1978), 48.

The official narrative was aimed at Artasida, the amban, and ultimately the emperor himself; it legitimated regional and imperial intervention at the local level. As Sonomdarjya argued, “if it reaches the point where poor Chinese gradually take over (*ejeleme*) the Mongol steppe and overthrow the Mongols’ way of life, it will not be accordance with the lofty aim of the His Majesty (*enduringge ejen*, lit. “sacred lord”) to love his humble Mongol servants (*monggo ahasi*).”<sup>73</sup> Action was justified not only because the land was Sonomdarjya’s, or because it was Mongol, but because the emperors intended it so. In other contexts, different justifications would be found for state intervention. The Ambans Office, for example, argued Sonomdarjya’s banner was “at the extreme boundary of the Khalkha *aimag* on the borderlands, close to the foreign land (*tulergi aiman*) of Russia” and he called for a coordinated response between Artasida, the governor of Zhili, and the Lifanyuan.<sup>74</sup> Whether Mongol land or borderland, the implication was similar: all of Mongolia commanded a special place in the empire.

### **Pure Places: Precedents**

There were spaces in Mongolia that had long been treated as both special and “pure” prior to the 1820s, including the imperial game parks, from which mushroom-poaching laws were later derived. Mushroom picking was itself tied to the history of regulating hunting grounds. In 1773, a new precedent was set when the military governor of Mukden, Hong-šang, memorialized that the existing policy of putting first and second

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<sup>73</sup> M1D1-3913.20 (DG9.1.19).

<sup>74</sup> M1D1-3744.8a (DG2.6.27).

time poachers in the cangue for one or two months was “an insufficient warning.” He proposed that whether or not they were first- or second-time offenders, bannerman or Chinese civilian, they should be transferred to the Board of Punishments in Shengjing, investigated, then banished into exile. Wood and mushroom poachers were not to be treated any differently: they were still trespassing on a restricted area (Ch: 禁地), disturbing the animals; they too should be exiled. The Qianlong emperor assented, and further ordered an investigation of the environs of the hunting grounds and the discipline and diligence of the guards.<sup>75</sup>

These sites shared properties of what Caroline Humphrey identified as “chiefly landscapes:” an association with heaven (Mo: *tnggri*), the state, patriarchal authority, and spiritual “rulers” or “masters” (Mo: *ejen*).<sup>76</sup> In the Qing period, imperial hunting grounds, holy mountains, the interior of Khüree, the borderlands with Russia, and areas known to produce gold were all “restricted areas” (Mo: *caγalyсан γajar*) with certain administrative and ideological commonalities.<sup>77</sup> Most prominently, no people or livestock were permitted within their jurisdiction: all forms of hunting, logging, and fishing were prohibited. In hunting grounds, even “spooking” animals was against the law. Maintaining the spatial order required constant policing by vigilant guards and a constant inflow of resources.

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<sup>75</sup> *Gaozong shilu*, 947: 838.

<sup>76</sup> Caroline Humphrey, “Chiefly and Shamanist Landscapes in Mongolia,” in *The Anthropology of Landscape: Perspectives on Place and Space*, ed. Eric Hirsch and Michael O’Hanton (1995), 142-149. Humphrey puts chiefly landscapes in contrast in “shamanist landscapes,” which were generally associated with the earth (e.g. caves), females, and peripheral lands outside state control.

<sup>77</sup> The phrase appears in Mongol language laws but not in their Manchu language translation. Compare GMQJ 5a-b, and TGKH 53.5a-6a. On gold mines in particular, see High and Schlesinger, “Rulers and Rascals,” 293-295.

Holy mountains were the classic “chiefly landscape.” As the “lands of the spirit palace on high” (Ma: *enduri i dergi urdu i bade*),<sup>78</sup> they were strongly associated with both heavenly and state authority; most took the honorary title *khan*. The ceremonies that took place on the mountains, which involved activities such as wrestling and shooting, reinforced the male, martial, and Mongol quality of the space. At Mt. Khan (Mo: Han Ayula; Ma: Han Alin),<sup>79</sup> located just to the south of Khüree,<sup>80</sup> a grand, multi-day ceremony was performed each spring and autumn.<sup>81</sup> All of the league’s aristocracy (*han, wang, gung, jasak sa*) was expected to personally participate, giving them the opportunity to meet in a single gathering.<sup>82</sup> Preparations were made in advance for the requisite

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<sup>78</sup> MID1-3840.27 (DG7). The site was also called the “place of prayer to the spirit of the great and high *ovoo*” (Ma: *wecere enduri i dergi amba obo i bade*). MID1-3675.30 (JQ24).

<sup>79</sup> In Manchu, Han Alin was also referred to as “Han Colgon Alin” or “Han Colhon Alin.”

<sup>80</sup> The mountain was the namesake of the “Han Ayula League,” the league name for Tusiyetu Han *aimay*. The mountain is today protected as a national park. The president’s mansion lies at its northern foot; after the disorder following the 2009 elections, riot police trained there.

<sup>81</sup> It is not clear when Qing involvement in the ceremonies began and ended. The earliest reference I found in the archives is to the ceremony of 1787. See MID1-3110.1 (QL51).

<sup>82</sup> The trips provided a similar socialization function for the *aimay* elite, that is, as the trips to Chengde and Wutaishan did for Mongols as a whole. At the same time, given the time and resources necessary to travel for the trip, fulfilling the obligation could be burdensome. A late spring in 1819, before the grass had had a chance to green and the horses had fattened up, together with the other obligations (specifically providing livestock and horses for sending young incarnations to Tibet, made the *amban* request that the horse races be called off that year. In 1819 it was decided that because of the great distances between Ikh Khüree and *karun* of the two western *aimay*, and the difficulty of making the trip twice a year, an alternating schedule was proposed: the two *jasak* from the *karun* east of Kiakhtha would be responsible for the spring ceremony, and the two *jasay* for the *karun* west of Kiakhtha would make the trip in the autumn. The participants, moreover, were allotted a set amount of sheep to be requisitioned from the banners. For the ceremonies at Kentei Han *alin*, for example, twenty sheep were allotted to the *amban wang*, fifteen to the *amban*, five sheep each to two *jurgan i janggin* and two *bithesi*, two sheep each to the *bošokū* and four *monggo hafan bithesi*. At Kentei Han performing the ceremony was complicated by the fact that the river was at high water during the spring. In 1819, the *ambans*’ office agreed there was a need to make rafts and press into service some “good boatmen” (*sain šuruci*). In 1819 craftsmen thus built one three-beam boat and eight two-beam boats, based at Honggon i Adak, on the Kerlun River. Eight sailors were brought in from three different banners, Cecen Han Artasida’s, *gung* Senggedorji’s, and *jasak* Mingdurdorji’s. In 1819, requisitioned sheep were compensated at a rate of .7 taels per head. Altogether, sixty-seven sheep (valued at 46.9 taels silver) were requisitioned for the Kentei Han *alin* ceremony in the spring of 1819. MID1-

number of horses, livestock, and provisions to support the massive party, and yaks and other livestock carried the provisions up in advance of the official party.<sup>83</sup> It was mandatory that “everything for the ceremonies was respectfully purified and prepared” (*wecere jaka hacin be gingguleme bolgomime belhetebure*) in advance.<sup>84</sup> On the first day, *ambans* and League Chiefs helped honor the mountain spirit, then presided over three days of wrestling, archery, and horse racing.<sup>85</sup> The sports “cultivated the propitious way of manly virtue” (*hahai erdemu be sabingga doroi urebure jalin*). After three days of ceremonious festivities, they pitched a yellow tent (*suwayan cacar*) at the archery site,

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3675.3 (JQ24); M1D1-3675.30 (JQ24); M1D1-3675.83 (JQ24.+4); M1D1-3675.84 (JQ24.+4); M1D1-3675.44 (JQ24.1.25).

**Sheep Requisitioned in 1819 (Kentei Han, spring ceremony)**

<b>Officials</b>	<u>Tusiyetu Han</u>	<u>Cecen Han</u>	<u>Šangjotba</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
<i>amban wang</i>		6	19	25
<i>amban</i>	18	2		20
<i>2 bithesi and 2 bošokū</i>	6	8		14
<i>4 monggo hafan bithesi</i>		8		8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>67</b>

<sup>83</sup> M1D1-3840.27 (DG7).

<sup>84</sup> M1D1-3675.30 (JQ24).

<sup>85</sup> M1D1-3675.2 (JQ24.4.4); M1D1-3840.27 (DG7). The spring ceremonies took place on JQ24.5.1 in 1819 and DG7.5.6 in 1827. To ensure that the execution of the day’s events went without a hitch, the responsible noblemen selected capable men and checked the quality of their wrestling and shooting before dispatching them. Two types of archery are mentioned: “strap shooting” (*uše gabtabume*) and “polo-ball shooting from horseback” (*mumuhu niyamniyabumbi, aigan mumuhu niyamniyabumbi*). In 1827, the men who selected the wrestlers included *culgan i da cecen han* Artasida, *gung* Sonomwangcuk, *aisilara jiyanggiyūn tusiyetu han* Oidubdorji, *ilhi culgan i da gung* Coijonjab, Baldorji, *hebei beise* Yondambatar, *gung* ciwangdorji, and the *Kuren i šangjotba* Gombujab. Baldorji (巴勒多爾濟, 巴爾多爾濟), 扎薩克一等台吉後普襲扎薩克輔國公. *Jasay* of the left wing, front banner of Tusiyetu Han *aimay*. Seventh generation descendant of Balang (enfeoffed 1691 as *jasak*; his son Wangbu enfeoffed as 輔國公 in 1738 on account of military merit). Ascended to rank in JQ9, passed on to his son Dansüründorji in DG21 (1804-1841). Bao Wenhan et al, *Menggu huibu wanggong biao zhuan*, 298; Jin Hai et al, *Qingdai menggu zhi*, 92.

where lamas prayed for good fortune (*hūhuri baime*) and read sutras. The ceremonies concluded with a sacrifice of oxen and sheep that had been “well purified” (Ma: *saikan bolgomime*),<sup>86</sup> and cloth was tied to the tails of others, which were released to graze in peace.<sup>87</sup> Similar events were held on other holy mountains, such Mt. Kentei Khan, in Cecen Han *aimay*. Both mountains were associated with the authority of the *aimay* League.

Imperial hunting grounds in Mongolia were long treated with a similar degree of reverence.<sup>88</sup> Like holy mountains, they were associated with Heaven, the state, martial vigor, and masculinity. There two types of protected parks: those used to catch tribute animals (such as wild boar) and those for “training hunts” (Ma: *urebume abalara*).<sup>89</sup> Hunting cultivated “soldierly virtue”<sup>90</sup> and served as “a way of manifesting power in the frontier.”<sup>91</sup> Given their vital strategic nature, participating in them was a uniquely

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<sup>86</sup> M1D1-3840.27 (DG7); M1D1-3675.2 (JQ24.4.4). Archers and wrestlers reported to Khūree five days in advance; white cloth and incense used in the ceremonies was prepared at the *amban*’s office at the end of each year. M1D1-3840.26a (DG7.11.10).

<sup>87</sup> M1D1-3833.39 (DG6.7.18).

<sup>88</sup> For a detailed study of imperial hunting, including conservation practices, see Allsen, *The Royal Hunt in Eurasian History* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006). On imperial hunting in the Qing in particular, see Mark Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, 57-58, 183-187. On the Manchu hunt, Elliott writes: “Recalling as it did the rugged origins of the horse-riding Manchu *gurun*, which decorated its early palaces with the skins of tigers and bears and made the first royal throne out of stag antlers, reenacting the imperial hunt demonstrated the persistence of Manchu tradition, even as the custom of hunting grew rarer among ordinary Manchus.” Elliott, 186.

<sup>89</sup> There were multiple such sites used as game parks for the military training. One was to the northeast of Khūree, in land under the formal jurisdiction of the Jebtzundamba Kutuktu. There were other hunting grounds in the far east of Cecen Han *aimay*, on the border with Hulun Buir, near the mushroom fields. For descriptions and geography, see M1D1-3416.19 (JQ10.8); M1D1-3416.5 (JQ10.4).

<sup>90</sup> M1D1-3416.7a (JQ10.8).

<sup>91</sup> M1D1-3834.8 (DG6.6.18).

“important obligation to the state” (*oyonggo alban*)<sup>92</sup> and “incomparable with standard affairs.”<sup>93</sup> Qing documents signaled the parks’ close association with the emperor himself by commonly raising the words “game park” (Ma: *aba hoihan*; Mo: *aba qomoray-a*; Ch: 圍場) a notch above ordinary text.<sup>94</sup> Their importance was also signaled administratively. Like the ceremonies at holy mountains, top Mongol authorities participated in the hunt, including *aimay* League-Chiefs and Assistant Commanders (Ma: *aisilara jiyanggiyūn*; Mo: *tusalayci jiyanggiyun*; Ch: 副將軍). Also as in holy mountains, the hunt was accompanied by public offerings to Heaven, the earth and spirits.<sup>95</sup> Twenty-one sheep were sacrificed, each one “purified, prepared and dispersed to the various banners with the strictest [care].”<sup>96</sup> The emperor was kept appraised of the proceedings, and assured at hunt’s end that “all [your] Mongol servants kowtowed to the Imperial Palace.”<sup>97</sup>

The rituals surrounding the hunt likewise reinforced its imperial dimensions. According to the law, a battue hunt commenced each year during the seventh month. The battue involved five hundred men, all drawn from the two eastern Khalkha *aimay* under the *ambans*’ supervision. All able-bodied men between the ages of twenty and forty were

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<sup>92</sup> M1D1-4166.9a (DG21.1.19).

<sup>93</sup> M1D1-2875.2 (QL27.6.4).

<sup>94</sup> See, for example, M1D1-2875.2 (QL27.6.4).

<sup>95</sup> M1D1-3750.1.

<sup>96</sup> M1D1-3416.11 (JQ10.6).

<sup>97</sup> M1D1-3416.1a (JQ10.8). The men who killed animals were rewarded. There was a fixed amount of rewards each year, amounting to eighty taels of silver, 612 bricks of tea, four bolts of silk, five-hundred tobacco pouches, fourteen bolts of cloth, two bolts of *pingji* (?), two bolts of cotton, two bolts Tibetan wool (*kubun cengme*), two hat tassels (*sorson*), thirty-two pieces of leather (*ilgin*), and four pairs of fine leather boots (*sarin gūlha*). M1D1-3416.30 (JQ10.9.1).

eligible to be pressed into the hunt, with each assigned five “good and fat” (*tarhūn sain*) horses.<sup>98</sup> If selected for service, substituting in another in one’s place was prohibited.<sup>99</sup> On a prearranged date, the entire hunting party gathered in Khüree, and then proceeded to the hunting grounds to establish a base camp. On the next day, an auspicious day on the calendar, the leaders made a public offering to High Heaven and earth and various spirits (*geren be gaiḥi gingguleme // Dergi abkai na, geren // Enduri banaji be // Wecefi*).<sup>100</sup> According to precedent, twenty-one sheep were slaughtered as part of the ceremonies (*wecere de baibure*); each was “purified, prepared and dispersed to the various banners with the strictest [care]” (*geren gūsade doigonde selgiyebufi bolgomime belhebure babe ciralame aḥabuki*).<sup>101</sup> The hunt then proceeded for fifteen days.<sup>102</sup> When the hunting was complete, “all the Mongol subjects kowtowed toward the imperial palace” (*geren monggo ahasi yooni hukšeme niyakūrafi aisin gurunḡ ni baru forome abkai kesi de*

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<sup>98</sup> MID1-3416.11 (JQ10.6).

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>100</sup> MID1-3750.1 (DG3.6.9).

<sup>101</sup> MID1-3416.11 (JQ10.6).

<sup>102</sup> MID1-3416.7a (JQ10.8).



*hengkilefi*),<sup>103</sup> and the men returned home to their banners.<sup>104</sup> Altogether, from the time they left Khüree to the time they returned, they were in the field for twenty-five days.<sup>105</sup>

Maintaining the holy mountains and game parks required constant work and complex logistics, and preparations were made months in advance. When “by an edict of grace,” the Qianlong emperor deemed Mt. Kentei Khan and Mt. Colhon Khan “state mountains of good fortune” (Ma: *gurun booi sabingga alin*), he decreed that their “wildlife and trees be neither frightened nor defiled” (Ma: *gurgu moo be aksabure gasihiyaburakū*). Unique rules for the territory were necessary: it was “proper that that precedents and laws be established that suitable for the [special] circumstances of the locality” (*giyan i ba na i arbun de acabume kooli kemun toktobuci acame*).<sup>106</sup> Patrolmen were put on “constant” vigilant for signs of poaching, woodcutting, or haymaking within the restricted grounds.<sup>107</sup> Special concern was paid to pilgrims – the diverse lot of “lamas and laymen, men and women” who traveled on foot from Khüree to the temple of the Dongk’or *kūtuktu* on the far side of the mountain. The pilgrimage required passing through Yeke Tngri and Jaisang Dabagan, both protected areas within the restricted

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<sup>103</sup> M1D1-3416.1a (JQ10.8).

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.* The men who killed animals were rewarded. There was a fixed amount of rewards each year, amounting to eighty taels of silver, 612 bricks of tea, four bolts of silk, five-hundred tobacco pouches, fourteen bolts of cloth, two bolts of *pingji* (?), two bolts of cotton, two bolts Tibetan wool (*kubun cengme*), two hat tassels (*sorson*), thirty-two pieces of leather (*ilgin*), and four pairs of fine leather boots (*sarin gūlha*). These were necessarily all distributed. In 1805, for example, the nobility and soldiers (*beise, gung, jasak, taiji, hafasa, coohai urse*) who killed an animal actually received were 1.5 bolts of silk 6.5 taels of silver, 622 bricks of tea, one bolt of cotton and Tibetan wool cloth, fourteen bolts of cloth, one pair of boots, two hat tassels, and the thirty-two pieces of leather. The remaining items were put into storage at the yamen. M1D1-3416.30 (JQ10.9.1).

<sup>105</sup> M1D1-3416.11 (JQ10.6).

<sup>106</sup> M1D1-3675.1a (JQ24.5.14). A replica of this document can be found in M1D1-3675.46.

<sup>107</sup> M1D1-3675.1a (JQ24.5.14).

territory. The *amban*'s office coordinated with the Šangjotba's office and the Šangjotba for the Dongk' or *kūtuktu* to ensure a united front: the guards were to keep strict oversight to ensure that no passers-by poached on the flora and fauna or started any fires.<sup>108</sup>

“Purifying” Mongolia's game parks similarly entailed protecting “game and trees” from being “ravaged” or “spooked.”<sup>109</sup> Special edicts criminalized “poaching game” as well as “wood-gathering, tea-picking, and trespassing.” Herders from neighboring jurisdictions were evacuated and pressed into service as guardsmen (Mo: *cayday-a*; Ma: *cakda*) arrived: “not one bannermen or temple serf (*šabi*) can herd or settle [there].”<sup>110</sup> Making the area “pure” also meant beating out man-made fires and harsh punishments for hunters found guilty of smoking badgers from their dens.<sup>111</sup> In the case of a fire, guardsmen were required to rush to the scene, organize into fire brigades, and beat out the fire. While wildfires were not considered wrong in and of themselves – prairie fires were often set, and allowed to burn intentionally – the restricted hunting grounds were different.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> M1D1-3675.67 (JQ24.3.13).

<sup>109</sup> M1D1-4166.14a (DG21.9.10); M1D1-3750.3 (DG3.5.17).

<sup>110</sup> M1D1-3750.8b (DG3.6.12).

<sup>111</sup> Wildfires were not considered wrong in themselves: prairie fires were set intentionally. See Gilmour's description of a trip from Khuree to Kalgan: “Just before spring, sometimes, large tracts of the desert are fired accidentally from the unextinguished fires left by passing caravans, and purposely by the natives, that the new grass may grow up better and free from the old.” Gilmour, 79. Special punishments were in place, however, for those who accidental started fires while attempting to smoke badgers out from their holes. In 1846, a women from *taiji* Gurujab's banner (Cecen Han *aimay*), named Songingkoo, accidentally started a fire while badger-hunting. Several people were killed. Three-nines of livestock were to handed over to the families of those killed. See M1D1-4319.46 (DG27.6).

<sup>112</sup> As discussed in the previous chapter, rules were in place for those who started accidental prairie fires. For all of Mongolia, however, special punishments were in place for those who accidental started fires while attempting to smoke badgers out from their holes. In 1846, a women from *taiji* Gurujab's banner (Cecen Han *aimay*) named Songingkoo accidentally started a fire while hunting badgers. Several people were killed. The law stated that the accidental arsonist was to be fined one-ninth of livestock, to be handed

The punishments for poaching were harsh. On holy mountains, aristocrats found guilty of poaching were stripped of rank; commoners were tattooed with the word “criminal” (Ma: *hūlha*) and forced to wear the cangue. Recidivist commoners were exiled to another *aimag*, while noblemen found guilty twice were punished like commoners. The legal infrastructure matured through late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. New precedents were set: merchants who bought elk horns received special punishments, as did those who cut down a live tree. The number of guardsmen increased as well. In 1819, for example, eight patrolmen reinforced the line at Mt. Kentei Han.<sup>113</sup> In the imperial grounds, those caught poaching flora or fauna, or found to have started a wildfire, were “dealt with severely,” with all violations of the law reported up to the Šangjotba, the local *jasay*’s yamen, and the local high-ranking lamas (*da lamasa*).<sup>114</sup> As “matters related to game parks were extremely important” (*aba hoihan i ba holbobuhangge umesi oyonggo*)<sup>115</sup> first time offenders wore the cangue a month; second time offenders wore it two months; and third time offenders were whipped one hundred times.<sup>116</sup>

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over to the yamen. Three-ninths were to handed over to the families of those killed. MID1-4319.46 (DG27.6).

<sup>113</sup> MID1-3675.1a (JQ24.5.14). These were recruited from amongst *šabi* and bannermen from Tusiyetu Han Cecen Han *aimags* and placed under *jasak* Cembeljab. Cembeljab (Ch: 車木布爾札布), 扎薩克一等台吉. *Jasay* of the center-right-back banner of Cecen Han *aimag*. Seventh generation descendant of Lobzang (enfeoffed 1697). Passed on rank to his son in in DG1(1821); assumed post sometime after JQ4. Bao Wenhan et al, *Menggu huibu wanggong biaozhuan*, 167; Jin Hai et al, *Qingdai menggu zhi*, 106. See Cedeng’awa.

<sup>114</sup> MID1-3416.5 (JQ10.4).

<sup>115</sup> MID1-2875.3 (QL27.7.17).

<sup>116</sup> MID1-2875.1 (QL27.9.16).

Purity, that is, did not just happen: it took months of work to prepare the hunting grounds and make them pure. Four months in advance of the hunt, the *amban* put a notice through to the league captain-generals of Tusiyetu Han and Cecen Han *aimays* to organize a draft of guardsmen.<sup>117</sup> Guardsmen assumed posts in the hunting grounds two months later. Though vast (Ma: *leli onco ba*) and sparsely populated (Ma: *urse komso*), the hunting grounds were still home eight months of the year to local temple serfs (*šabi*). All local households, and those in the vicinity of the restricted areas, were registered and put under the direct supervision of the Director of the Hunting Grounds (Ma: *aba hoihan i ba be uherileme kadalabuha [gung]*).<sup>118</sup> They were then pressed into duty as guardsmen. Households in the neighboring areas tended to cluster together in the finest pastures, leaving gaps along the perimeter (particularly in “the forested mountains and precipitous places”). One of the first orders of business was to disperse the households to the most strategically located pastures for catching intruders.<sup>119</sup>

Local noblemen, under the supervision of the Hunting Grounds, were responsible for the guardsmen, though Guardsmen provided for themselves by continuing to pasture their animals around their posts.<sup>120</sup> Substituting out was not easy: if a local guard grew

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<sup>117</sup> M1D1-3750.2 (DG3.4.10).

<sup>118</sup> These were recruited on a circulating basis from neighboring *jasays*. In 1794 (QL59), for example, the *dergi juwe aimani karun be kadalara beise* was Sonomwangjildorji (Ch: 索諾木旺扎勒多爾濟, 扎薩克多羅貝勒後隆襲扎薩克固山貝子. *Jasay* of the center-left banner of Cecen Han *aimay*. Forth generation descendant of Budajab (*taiji* 1688; *beizi* 1711). Assumed rank in QL46, removed from rank after committing murder in JQ7 (1781-1802). In 1841, it was *gung* Gombujab. Gombujab (Ch: 棍布札布), 扎薩克輔國公. *Jasay* of the center-back banner of Cecen Han *aimay*. Sixth generation descendant of Cebden (*beise* in 1691, grandson a 輔國公 in 1701). Assumed rank in DG1, passed on to his son Gongcukcerin in DG29 (1820-1849). Bao Wenhan et al, *Menggu huibu wanggong biao zhuan*, 30, 431; Jin Hai et al, *Qingdai menggu zhi*, 100-101.

<sup>119</sup> M1D1-3416.5 (JQ10.4).

<sup>120</sup> M1D1-4166.14a (DG21.9.10).

seriously ill or passed away, the highest authority in the Buddhist establishment, the Šangjotba had to approve his replacement.<sup>121</sup> To help ensure reliability, guardmen had to be “men of sufficient means;” impoverished bannermen were not to be drafted into service.<sup>122</sup> In the hunting grounds in Cecen Han *aimaγ*, the infrastructure for guard posts was put into place as early as 1758 (QL23). That year, *karun* were erected in a line stretching from the left wing, front banner of Cecen Han *aimaγ* to Uyumcin territory, each 30 to 40 *li* from the other. Each *karun* was assigned one official (*hafan*) and five *uksin*. As with border-*karun*, game-park guards had to patrol daily in search of “criminals, frauds, and escapees” (*hūlha holo ukanju*). On the first and fifteenth of the month an official of the rank *taiji* [*aisilara taiji hafan*] audited their work with his own tour of inspection, though these were later replaced with tours at irregular intervals.<sup>123</sup>

Yet despite the strict legal code and elaborate policing apparatus, the “restricted areas” suffered nonetheless during the resource boom of 1820-1840, as poaching and corruption grew endemic. As discussed in Chapter 3, commercial deer hunting and logging frequently encroached upon the restricted areas. Yet poachers came in all forms, from commercial hunters, trying to make a living, to sportsmen; they included both

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<sup>121</sup> M1D1-4166.8a (DG21.4.20). By rule, he was to be replaced by a man from the same *otok*.

<sup>122</sup> M1D1-4166.13a (DG21.10.6). Likewise, those already laden with other service obligations or were located too far away could be exempted from duty. When Ongdubciwang, the nobleman charged with overseeing the stewardship of the hunting grounds north of Ikh Khüree (*aba hoihan i ba be giyarime tebuhe ursebe kadalabuha gung*) died in 1822, finding a *gung* or *jasay* from the area to fill his post proved difficult, since everyone else’s pastures were so far away. It was on these grounds, not by automatic right, that Ongdubciwang’s son, Mingjudorji, was nominated for the post. M1D1-3750.5

<sup>123</sup> M1D1-2875.3 (QL27.7.17).

Chinese and Mongols, commoners and noblemen.<sup>124</sup> As early as 805, hunters complained that animals were “scarce” in the game parks around Khüree because “many bannermen and *šabi* in said hunting grounds herd livestock, scare away animals, and destroy the forests.” Still worse, “many” Chinese merchants induced people to “pitch tents along mountain streams, cut down trees, and reap hay.”<sup>125</sup> (*kemuni hūdai irgese alin bira de boo ilibufi moo sacime orho hadume bargiyahangge inu labdu, tutu gurgu be aksabume jailabufi ele komso oho*). More guardsmen were pressed into service and dispatched to the source of the Tula, Bürku, and the northern parts of Terelji, as well as to Noyan Agūla, Gūrban Urtu, Gahai Habcagai, Narin Burgaltai, and Tushaltu. The official charged with cleaning up the park, Pungcuk, put special emphasis on putting a stop to merchants stealing into protected land to reap hay and log trees. While the focus was on the “local people” (*nuktei urse*) in an initial draft, the final draft put the emphasis on *nikasa*, the “Han Chinese.”<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> There was a case, for example, of a nobleman’s son and two friends chasing a deer into the restricted area just a month prior to the hunt. Officials agreed on leniency in this case, noting that the boy, Sengge, was not yet mature.

<sup>125</sup> M1D1-3416.19 (JQ10.8). The official charged with managing the park, Pungcuk, put special emphasis on merchants as the central problem. While initial concern was on the “local nomads” (Ma: *nuktei urse*), his proposals focused on *nikasa*, the “Han Chinese.” More guardsmen were immediately pressed into service and dispatched to the most threatened parts of the park.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.* Amongst the memorials housed in the Mongolian Central Archives, this *nikasa* was the lone case found from after the Qianlong period in which “*nikan*” or “*nikasa*” appeared in a document. Instead, the common term for Chinese was “*irgen*” or “*irgese*” – literally a civilian subject whose jurisdiction was outside the banners (民), but in Inner Asia used in practice to refer to Chinese whose home jurisdiction lie in the 郡縣 system. *Irgen* had the flexibility to apply, for example, to Chinese Muslims, while *nikasa*, from what I have seen, did not. Here, *nikasa* can be understood as outdated or otherwise inappropriate for this context. Further research is needed into the use of *nikan* in earlier documents. At least in the case of trade licenses at Kiakhta, early Qianlong period documents use Kiakhta, whereas later ones do not. See M1D1-128.1 (QL22); M1D1-128.2 (QL22); and M1D1-128.3 (QL22). See also M1D1-2875.2 (QL27.6.4), discussed below, for an example of *nikasa* picking mushrooms and starting a prairie fire.

Just like with mushroom picking, however, the court often proved most concerned that Mongols themselves were the primary problem: achieving “purity” was an enforcement issue; either negligence or the tacit complicity of Mongol authorities was to blame for violations of restricted areas. In one case from 1759 (QL24), a wildfire tore through Soyolji, an area neighboring the imperial hunting grounds of Cecen Han *aimay*, along the border with Heilongjiang. The source of the fire was later traced to a place known as Aru Bulak, in the banner of a *jasay* named Jamcan,<sup>127</sup> where a group of Han Chinese (Ma: *nikasa*) mushroom pickers had been camped out in the region. For his negligence, Jamcan was originally sentenced to be caned with a heavy staff and stripped of his title of *jasak gung*.<sup>128</sup> In his edict settling the affair, however, the Qianlong emperor showed leniency and granted that Jamcan not be stripped of his rank of “*jasak gung* by imperial grace” (*kesi isibume jasak i gung*) but fined a year’s salary. As the emperor wrote, “all the Mongols of the *karun* are muddleheaded Mongols” (*karun i monggoso gemu hūlhi monggo*), and lamented that Mongols were “incomparable with the troops called up from the *karuns* of Heilongjiang” (*sahaliyan ula i karun de tucibuhe hafan cooha be monggoso de duibuleci ojarahū*). Jamcan was, in the end, only first time offenders.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Jamcan (Ch: 扎木禪, 扎薩克鎮國公. *Jasay* of the left wing, front banner of Cecen Han *aimay*. Third generation descendant of Cebden (enfeoffed in 1691. Ascended to rank in YZ11, passed on to his son Yundan in QL32 (1733-1767). Sixth generation descendant was Sonomdarja. Jin Hai et al, *Qingdai menggu zhi*, 101.

<sup>128</sup> M1D1-2875.2 (QL27.6.4).

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*

In other cases, travellers describe authorities willfully but quietly neglecting the law. The late nineteenth century missionary James Gilmour witnessed the sentencing of a man that accidentally started a prairie fire:

Another case was peculiarly Mongolian. A young lama was brought up accused of causing a prairie fire, which ran for miles and scorched a caravan of Halhas, encamped with their camels and loads of tea in the long dry grass. The accused admitted the charge, but pleaded that it was unintentional; and appealed to the mercy of the court, reminding them that he was a quiet and orderly subject, and the sole support of his father, an old man aged eighty years. The court was evidently satisfied with the explanation, but the law must be magnified, which was supposed to be done when thirty nominal lashes were laid on lightly, not even his coat being removed; and the count being so cooked that though *thirty* was counted, hardly more than fifteen were administered.<sup>130</sup>

Such resistance would never have shown up in the archival materials, but other forms did, such as with guardsmen themselves caught poaching or starting fires. Just three years after the 1759 conflagration, in 1762, yet another man-made wildfire swept through Soyolji.<sup>131</sup> The fire started when hunting ground's top guardsman, Batu, went smoking out badgers (*manggisu*) on the southern sand bank of the Numurge River.<sup>132</sup> At first he claimed that he had not caused the fire while hunting; rather he had been smoking tobacco when a smoldering ember fell to the ground and ignited the prairie. He

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<sup>130</sup> James Gilmour, *Among the Mongols* (London: Religious Tract Society, [1888]), 303.

<sup>131</sup> The fire was located in the jurisdiction of *meiren i janggin* Nomhon, in the banner of *jasak wang* Demcuk. **Demcuk** (Ch: 德木楚克), 扎薩克多羅郡王. *Jasay* for the center-right banner of Cecen Han *aimay*. Third generation descendant of Pungsuk (enfeoffed 1691, promoted in rank in 1696). Assumed title in YZ13, passed on to his son in QL45 (1735-1780). Jin Hai et al, *Qingdai menggu zhi*, 98-99. Another small fire had started earlier that summer. MID1-2875.1 (QL27.9.16). At the time of the fire, Demcuk was carrying out service duties at the Uliyasutai *coohai kūwaran*. At the time of the fire, Demcuk was carrying out service duties at the Uliyasutai *coohai kūwaran*. MID1-2875.1 (QL27.9.16).

<sup>132</sup> The Numurge River ran through the north end of Soyolji. Five karuns under Kalka jurisdiction dotted the river, continuing off from the Solon and Barhū *karuns*. Urgin Nolon was made a *karun* under *jasak taiji* Sonomdondub; Adaki, Hūsun Tohoi, Bahirga, and Hūjirtu *karun* were put under *wang* Demcuk, while three *karun* of Hūsutai were under the jurisdiction of Jamcan. MID1-2875.3 (QL27.7.17).



scrambled to stamp it out but failed; so too did the four troops from his *karun* who hastened across the river to help. The wind picked up and quickly carried the fire to the southeast, and by evening almost 60 *li* of land had burned; with the wind at its back, the prairie fire (*dekjin tuwa*) continued to spread quickly.<sup>133</sup>

Yet most of the guardsmen proved to be remarkably diligent. That night three men from the neighboring *karun*, Adaki, arrived at the scene. According to Jambala, Adaki's *karun* leader, he had spotted smoke coming from the west, he climbed to a highpoint for a better look, and saw a prairie fire near Hūjirtu *karun*. He had immediately dispatched one man to the banner *jasay* to file a report, another to Halhūn Muke *karun*, the next *karun* to the east to spread the news, then personally set off on horseback with the remaining three troops to the scene of the fire. When alerted of the fire, the *jasay* had dispatched two men, Dasi, and another man, Ayusi, to the scene of the fire. With the full authority of the *jasay*'s *yamen*, they had pressed all able bodied men into service that they came across on the road, and thus were able to draft approximately 60 men to the cause.<sup>134</sup> When they arrived at the scene at sunset (*šun kelfike erinde*), they called an emergency meeting took place that evening (*yamji*), and the fire was ultimately put out the early evening (*yamjishūn*) of the following day, the fifteenth. It was a true prairie fire: the territory that burned was described as “bare mountains without any forests” (*gilajan alin moo bujan akū ba*). The estimated dimensions of the land were 60 *li* north to south,

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<sup>133</sup> Prairie fires, as a rule, spread quickly but burn at lower temperatures (allowing people to stamp them out from close); forest fires, on the other hand, move relatively slow but burn at much higher temperatures.

<sup>134</sup> MID1-2875.3 (QL27.7.17).

and 30-40 *li* east to west at the widest points and over ten *li* at the narrowest.<sup>135</sup> The affair would later be personally inspected by the Imperial Representatives' office and the league captain-general of Cecen Han *aimay*, Manibdara and met with *wang* Demcuk, *gung* Jamcan, and the *juwe gūsai aisilara taiji hafasa* and proceeded to investigate the affair<sup>136</sup> Batu and his company of *karun* soldiers were all punished for negligence, and Demcuk faulted for promoting “the useless, weak, and dim” (*budun eberi ulhicun akū niyalma*) as *janggin*.<sup>137</sup> Guards were previously supposed to go out on patrols on the first and fifteenth of every month. It was decided that a man be called up to lead irregularly spaced (and thus less predictable) patrols through the hunting grounds. The man picked for the job was *wang demcuk i gūsai sula beile* Danjin, as he lived close to Soyolji and the five neighboring Khalkha *karun*.<sup>138</sup>

As a man “specially called up to guard the hunting preserve” (*cohome aba hoihan be seremšeme tuwakiyabure de tucibuhe niyalma*), Janggin Batu was expected to “keep in

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<sup>135</sup> M1D1-2875.3 (QL27.7.17). From its source, the fire burned all the way to the southern ridge of Berke Bulak, the mountain ridge on the eastern boundary (*ujan*) of Hūjirtu Bulak, on the southeast ridgeline of the mountains on the western boundary, at Baica Bulak. When *solon i nirui janggin* Gabcikan (under the *meiren i janggin* of Hulun Buir, Hūrgi) was questioned on the matter as a “man who knew the hunting grounds well” (*aba hoihan i babe getuken i sara*), he stated that although the burnt land encircled the hunting grounds, it was not part of the hunting grounds proper.<sup>135</sup> Indeed, Gabcikan stated that the land that burned was the part of hunting grounds (*hoihan*) called Hokiyaḡol Bayan Ger, but the boundary of the fire was for from the hunting ground's boundaries. He placed the southern ridge of Berke Bulak, where the fire was extinguished, at over 10 *li* from Halhūn Muke Halhūn Muke at over 30 *li* from Halbagatai Alin, and Halbagatai Alin at 70 or 80 *li* from Bayan Ger. Thus the land that burned was ultimately deemed “unconnected” (*daljakū*) with the hunting grounds. See M1D1-2875.3 (QL27.7.17) and M1D1-2875.5 (QL27.7.15).

<sup>136</sup> M1D1-2875.9 (QL27.7.14). The *amban* left Khūree on QL27.6.16. All the while, he was in touch with various officials, including the *meiren i janggin* of Hulun Buir; he reported to Hulun Buir an estimated arrival date of QL27.7.3; *meiren i janggin* Nisihai *uheri da*, *buthai meiren i janggin jergi uheri da* were dispatched to meet him. The *Hulun buir i solon barhū cooha be uheri kadalara meiren i janggin isihai uheri da i kалан be daiselame icihiyara fulu uheri da* had another go for him, claiming he was too sick to go. The Cecen Han Manibdara personally arrived at Hūjirtu on QL27.7.7.

<sup>137</sup> M1D1-2875.1 (QL27.9.16).

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*

strict order the people under his jurisdiction and diligently and properly keep guard” (*giyan i fejergi urse be ciralame bargiyatame, saikan kiceme giyarici acambi*). Yet he had started the fire himself. In this case, starting a fire was “no different from poaching” (*hūlhame gurgušere ci encu akū*). The punishment for first time offenders (a month in the cangue) was insufficient for Batu: he was stripped of the rank of *janggin*, put in the cangue for three months under the jurisdiction of the *jiangjun* of Heilongjiang. His four underlings were sentenced to a month in the cangue for “knowing no fear” (*gelere isere be sarkū*); they were ordered to be whipped one hundred times at the end of their sentence. According to the law, Demcuk should have been punished with a half-year’s salary; given the seriousness of the crime, the punishment was doubled to a full year’s salary.<sup>139</sup>

Negligence by the guardsmen was a constant problem, and malingering was commonly suspected.<sup>140</sup> In other cases, the guardsmen openly flaunted the law. In 1841,

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<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>140</sup> Malingering was always suspected, at least *pro forma*, in cases where men dropped out. M1D1-4166.17 (DG21.5). All cases of suspected malingering were investigated. See, for example, M1D1-3416.13 (JQ10.8) and the case of *gung* Sonomjab’s illness and his missing of the hunt. If someone was suspected of “recklessly making excuses and continually shunning the duty of the hunt” (*balai kanagan arame abalara alban ci jailataci*) were investigated and punished. M1D1-3416.17a (JQ10.7) In JQ10, they investigated the cases of three men (*tusalakci* Gombujab, *jakirukci* bayartu, and *meiren* ceden) who failed to report for the hunt the year before. In 1805, several *jasaks* submitted such requests, including *jasak* Namjildorji *gung* Sonomjab, and Cembuljab. The later was granted leave on account of his mother’s health, which had been deteriorating for over a year. He had no one else to take care of her. For Namjildorji, see M1D1-3416.28a (JQ10.7). For Sonomjab, see M1D1-3416.32a (JQ10.10.14). For Cembuljab, see M1D1-3416.18a (JQ10.7) Requests for sick-leave, however, remained relatively common. Yet only if a man was legitimately sick or had pressing family emergencies was he granted leave.<sup>140</sup> The year prior, along with Gombujab, *jakirukci* Bayartu and *meiren* Ceden failed to report to the hunt. In his place, [*culgan i da*] Gombujab sent *taiji* G’alsang; Bayartu sent *janggin* Nayantu; and Ceden sent a man from *jasak* Cedenwambu’s banner. (Cedenwambu (Ch: 車登旺布), 扎撒克輔國公後隆襲扎撒克一等台吉. *Jasay* for the left wing, back banner of Cecen Han *aimay*. Fifth generation descendant of Ceringdasi (assumed rank 1691). Assumed his rank JQ8, and passed it on to his son, Namjildorji, in DG1 (1803-1820). Bao Wenhan et al, *Menggu huibu wanggong biao zhuan*, 32, 165; Jin Hai et al, *Qingdai menggu zhi*, 102. Gombujab claimed he was “seriously ill” (*ujeleme nimkekulefi*), Bayartu claimed to have already served *alban* duties in Kobdo, and Ceden also claimed to be sick. All reported in advance the arrival of a replacement except

two junior ranking guardsmen (*janggin* G’aldan and *uksin* Cedenjab) reported to Gombujab, the Director of the Hunting Grounds, that a guard leader (*cakdan šabi daruga*) in the Gūrban Bayan area, Cerindondob, was not taking his service seriously (*giyarime yaburengge heolen sula umai alban be wesihulere gūnin akū*). Instead, he was using the hunting grounds to pasture his herds, amounting to over a thousand horses, yaks, and sheep, while scaring away the wild animals, particularly around Bayansangdahū and Dulagan Han. Furthermore, he had failed to deliver any supplies to the guardsmen.<sup>141</sup>

Local herders, for their part, may have had good reason to trespass on the hunting grounds or have conflicts with the guardsmen. Locals, for one, were required to help supply the hunting party. To avoid “needlessly allowing confusion to proliferate” (*baibi ušan fašan i largin banjinambime*), those who were forced to sell sheep to the hunting parties were compensated at a flat rate of .5 taels of silver per sheep. But as they were compensated not on the spot, only later, the tax could be heavy in years in which every sheep and horse counted for survival.<sup>142</sup> In the drought-filled years of 1799-1801, for

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Ceden, who was found guilty. For his dereliction of duty, *jasak* Cedenwambu was fined five ninths of livestock. M1D1-3416.33a (JQ10.9).

<sup>141</sup> M1D1-4144.5a (DG20.12.14).

<sup>142</sup> In 1805, for example, twenty-five taels of silver were awarded for fifty compensated sheep, which was approved to be dispersed via Cedendorji and the *culgan i da* of Tusiyetu Han *aimaγ*’s office. M1D1-3246.16a (QL59.9.10) Horses and camels to be used in the training hunts were to be taken in equal measure from each of the four Kalka *aimans*. In QL51 (1786), it was decreed that since Cecen Han and Tusiyetu Han *aimans* were so far from Uliyasutai, but close to Khuree, the *ambans* at Khuree took charge over the training hunts of the two eastern *aiman*, and the Uliyasutai *jiyanggiyūn* took charge of the hunts in the two western *aiman*; it was hoped that by breaking the hunt down into two, the state would not be unduly wearing out the horses and camels necessary for such long trips. The demands of the hunt were modest: 200 horses and 100 camels for each hunt. In 1824, though, even this compromise was proving unbearable for those responsible for funding the hunt to the “gradual impoverishment of the various banners” (*geren gūsade ulhiyen i yadahūn de isibuha*) over several years and the weakening of livestock due to natural disasters, it was requested the livestock necessary for the hunt be taken not from the two *aiman*, but from some of the “tribute/taxed animals” (*albani ulha*) herded into the vicinity of Khuree from Uliyasutai, in effect putting the burden of the both hunts on the western *aiman*. In his response, the *jiyanggiyūn* of Uliyasutai, Golfongga [sp?], noted that Uliyasutai was 3,000 *li* from Khuree, and that animals herded there

example, healthy horses were in short supply, but the training hunts were carried out nevertheless.<sup>143</sup> Acknowledging the problem, the *amban* often memorialized requests to cancel the hunt during years of extreme hardship. Despite preparations during the summer of 1823, for example, a drought that had begun in the two months prior to hunting season had caused waters to recede and animals to weaken, and it was ultimately decided to forego the hunt.<sup>144</sup> Through 1826, the hunt was similarly called off due to the devastation caused to the economy by “drought and hunger” (*hiyan yuyun*) in the two *aimay*.<sup>145</sup> It was again cancelled for “several years” (*ududu aniya; hanciki aniya*) through 1840.<sup>146</sup> In the summer of 1841, upon again cancelling the hunt, the *amban* conceded,

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are could not be used for being too skinny and weak, and there was no profit (*tusa akū*) in using the *alban ulha* for the hunts. MID1-4166.13a (DG21.10.6)

<sup>143</sup> MID1-4144.13 (DG20.5); MID1-3416.7a (JQ10.8). In JQ4 and JQ6, it was recorded that the supplies and soldiers were insufficient in number and the horses too weak to carry out the hunt successfully, the number of soldiers and supplies were insufficient as well, leading to harsh words and punishments (*gebu jorime wakalame*) for the implicated *culgan i data, aisilara jiyanggiyūn, ilhi culgan i da hebei harangga jasak* and *hafasa*. In 1805 the quota for horses was met, but the riding horses from three southern banners in Tusiyetu Han *aimay* – those of *wang* Dorjijab, *jasak* Urjinjab, and *jasak* Dasijab’s -- were described as “grossly emaciated and exhausted” (*hūsun turha*<sup>143</sup> *šadara macurangge labdu bimbime*). The banner authorities all attributed the problem to both draught the distances of their banners from the hunting grounds. Dorjijab (Ch: 多爾濟札布), 扎薩克多羅郡王. *Jasay* for the left wing, central banner of Tusiyetu Han *aimay*. Sixth generation descendant of 固魯什喜 (enfeoffed 1691). Assumed his rank QL47 to JQ21 (1782-1817). Urjinjab (Ch: 烏爾津札布), 扎薩克一等台吉. *Jasay* of the left wing, right-end banner of Tusiyetu Han *aimay*. Forth generation descendant of Mucuk (enfeoffed 1697). Ascended to rank in QL36, passed on to his his son Dondubdorji in DG2 (1781-1822). Dasijab (Ch: 達什札布), 扎薩克一等台吉. *Jasay* for the second central banner (中次旗) of Tusiyetu Han *aimay*. Forth generation descendant of Chenggunjab (enfeoffed 1719). Assumed rank in JQ10; passed onto to his eldest son, Jamchubdorji, in JQ11 (1805-1806). Bao Wenhan et al, *Menggu huibu wanggong biao zhuan*, 28, 158, 161; Jin Hai et al, *Qingdai menggu zhi*, 88-89, 93, 95.

<sup>144</sup> MID1-3750.11 (DG3.10).

<sup>145</sup> MID1-3834.8 (DG6.6.18). In 1826, an investigation was called for into exactly which banners were experiencing devastation, and which had finally been washed by rain; when the inquisition left the *amban*’s office on DG6.6.18, all banners were given ten days to respond on their preparedness.

<sup>146</sup> MID1-4144.13 (DG20.5). In part, the exhaustion of the animals reflected the fact that they were being used already for other types of service. In 1840, other forms of service (*alban*) cited included escorting Russian mission-men to Beijing and patrolling the relay-stations (*giyamun*). Indeed it was as a result of a “full-on inspection of all [Tusiyetu Han] *aimay*’s bannerlands during the summer” that the “people’s horses

“due to the relentless decimation of the pastures in the *aimays* and the emaciation of the horses and livestock, for already several years there has not been a hunt.”<sup>147</sup> In 1842, a deadly combination of fierce winds in the spring and drought in the summer ended the hunt yet again.<sup>148</sup> Moreover since Mongols had already performed the service obligation of escorting Russian schoolchildren (*tacikūi juse*) back to Russia from Beijing, it was argued that that one obligation had been taxing enough.<sup>149</sup>

## Conclusion

In the period 1820-1840, the Qing state mobilized language and institutions used to govern “restricted grounds” and applied them to Mongolia as a whole. In practice, the project was limited. Campaigns for “purification” were confined to banners on the most lucrative trade routes or containing the most valuable production sites: the caravan highway linking Beijing to Kiakhta, the northern taiga which yielded fur, the mushroom fields of the far east, the mountains around Khüree with their elk-horn and lumber, the scattered alluvial deposits of gold. Since the establishment of Qing rule, other

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and livestock have not yet recovered their strength,” rendering the training-hunt impossible. M1D1-4144.14 (DG20.8.27).

<sup>147</sup> M1D1-4166.5 (DG21.5). Still the call went out for 250 soldiers aged 18-40 from each *aimay*, with requisite riding horses, weapons, Mongol-style *gers*, tents and tools.<sup>147</sup> While emphasizing the importance of the hunt, the authorities conceded that it would have to be postponed for another year. M1D1-4166.6 (DG21.6).

<sup>148</sup> M1D1-4166.3b (DG21.6.5). As the league captain-general for Tusiyetu Han *aimay* (the *han ayula* [*han alin*] league), Pungcukdorji wrote, Wang Lasurunbatzar and other’s banners in desert pastures (*gobi nuktei*) had been hit the hardest. Lasurunbatzar (Ch: 喇素隴巴咱爾, 拉蘇隆巴扎爾), 扎薩克多羅郡王. *Jasay* of the left wing, center banner of Tusiyetu Han *aimay*. Ascended to rank in DG7 (1827), passed on after [1850]. Bao Wenhan et al, *Menggu huibu wanggong biao*, 425; Jin Hai et al, *Qingdai menggu zhi*, 88-89.

<sup>149</sup> M1D1-4166.3a (DG21.12.3); M1D1-4166.4 (DG21.12.28).

institutions, such as tribute and licensing, had supported trade and migration; the empire had found space for Mongols and Chinese to live together. Undocumented migrants, poaching, and the black market inspired a more radical vision: “pure” Mongolia. At production sites like the mushroom fields, unlicensed exploitation and its environmental consequences became the key friction point between registered Mongols and undocumented Chinese; “purity” was this friction’s administrative and ideological expression. A vision of untouched steppe, uncorrupted Mongol, and pure ethnic space came to the fore. Environmental protection, that is, was not tangential to the greater project of multiethnic empire: it was central to it.

Yet the state proved remarkably successful in preserving these spaces as “pure” in their time, and “natural” in ours: the holy mountains and hunting grounds survive today as protected national parks. In the nineteenth century, too, visitors were struck by them. In 1821, a Russian traveller on his way back from Beijing was struck by Mt. Khan: “the forests which cover it are held sacred by the Mongols.”<sup>150</sup> Yet he also learned that “in the clefts of the Khanola [i.e. Mt. Khan] there are tents, where sentinels are stationed to hinder people from ascending the mountain.”<sup>151</sup> The nature of the mountain, that is, was not an original nature: it was an expression of manufactured wilderness. Empire produced this peculiar purity, not nature.

Ideologically, the Mongol subject was meant to be simple herder, not a reckless and profit-driven mushroom-picker. One could not act “blindly” or “impulsively:” the maintaining the welfare of Mongolia required long-term vision and temperance. In this

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<sup>150</sup> Egor Fedorovich Timkovskii, *Travels of the Russian Mission through Mongolia to China and Residence in Peking, in the years 1820-1821* (London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, and Green, 1827), 426.

<sup>151</sup> Timkovskii, 427.

sense, the Mongols were not altogether different from Manchus, for whom frugality was a defining virtue. Imperial order required Qing subjects to follow their appropriate ways. Austerity, as much as martial vigor, sustained the empire. As the Yongzheng emperor declared in 1727 on the perils of luxury:

It is an established principle that the practice of frugality means not falling into poverty while extravagant spending always ends in cold and starvation. The ordinary disposition of us Manchus is to be pure (Ma: *gulu*) and plain, ...[but] lately the Manchus have not been doing well at making ends meet and their livelihoods have been sometimes meager or even miserable.<sup>152</sup>

Later, in the Jiaqing and Daoguang reign periods, the influence of the market similarly seemed to the court to threaten the viability of the Mongol way of life. Like Manchus, as a Daoguang era gazetteer of Uliasutai explained, the Mongols too were “endowed with an pure and honest nature” (Ch: 蒙古賦性淳樸).<sup>153</sup> Emperors had long warned, however, that this original virtue was easily corrupted: in Kangxi’s words, “it is the Mongols’ nature to be easily deceived” (Ma: *Mongoso i banin eitereme hūlimbure de ja bime*).<sup>154</sup> By the first half of the nineteenth, it was easy to be led astray. Temptation was everywhere: leave your pastures behind, and become a logger, join a caravan, collude with Chinese mushroom pickers. Mongol lands were changing under the very feet of its people as plants, animals, and fish were disappearing and the land was taken over and converted to other uses. Seeing in this a threat to essential “Mongolness,”

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<sup>152</sup> Cited and translated in Mark Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, 287. For the original Manchu, see *Dergi hese jakūn gūsade wasimbuhange*, 5:36b.

<sup>153</sup> The writer of the *Wuliyasutai zhilue* was not convinced, however, that Mongol ways were entirely right-headed. He recorded that Mongol medicine was practiced by lamas and left something to be desired; likewise, for his Chinese-reading audience, he notes the curiosity that Mongols do not cloth the dead, but leave them in the wilderness to be ravished by wild animals (置屍於山野俾野獸殘食). *Wuliyasutai zhilue*, 65.

<sup>154</sup> Chuang Chi-fa, *Qingdai zhungaer shiliao chubian*, 148-149.



starting in the early 1800s, the court sought a solution by treating Mongolia a notch more important than it normally had: to make Mongolia “pure” required that the territory as a whole be handled like an imperial hunting ground or a holy mountain.

Anxieties about the corrupting influence of the market, however, were hardly limited to Manchus and Mongols. Indeed, as the final chapter shows, the closer one got to the Russo-Mongol borderland, the greater the need to protect imperial subjects from reckless behavior, and the more active the interventions to establish social and environmental “purity.” Similar dynamics, however, were at work. As in the Mongol territories to its south, the years 1820-1840 proved transformative for the northernmost borderlands of the empire, as uncontrolled “mixing,” black-market commerce, and an environmental crisis – the collapse of fur-bearing animal populations – inspired new calls to discipline both Qing subjects and their natural environment.

## **Chapter 5: Purity and the Qing Borderlands: Fur and Lake Khovsgol in the Early 19<sup>th</sup> Century**

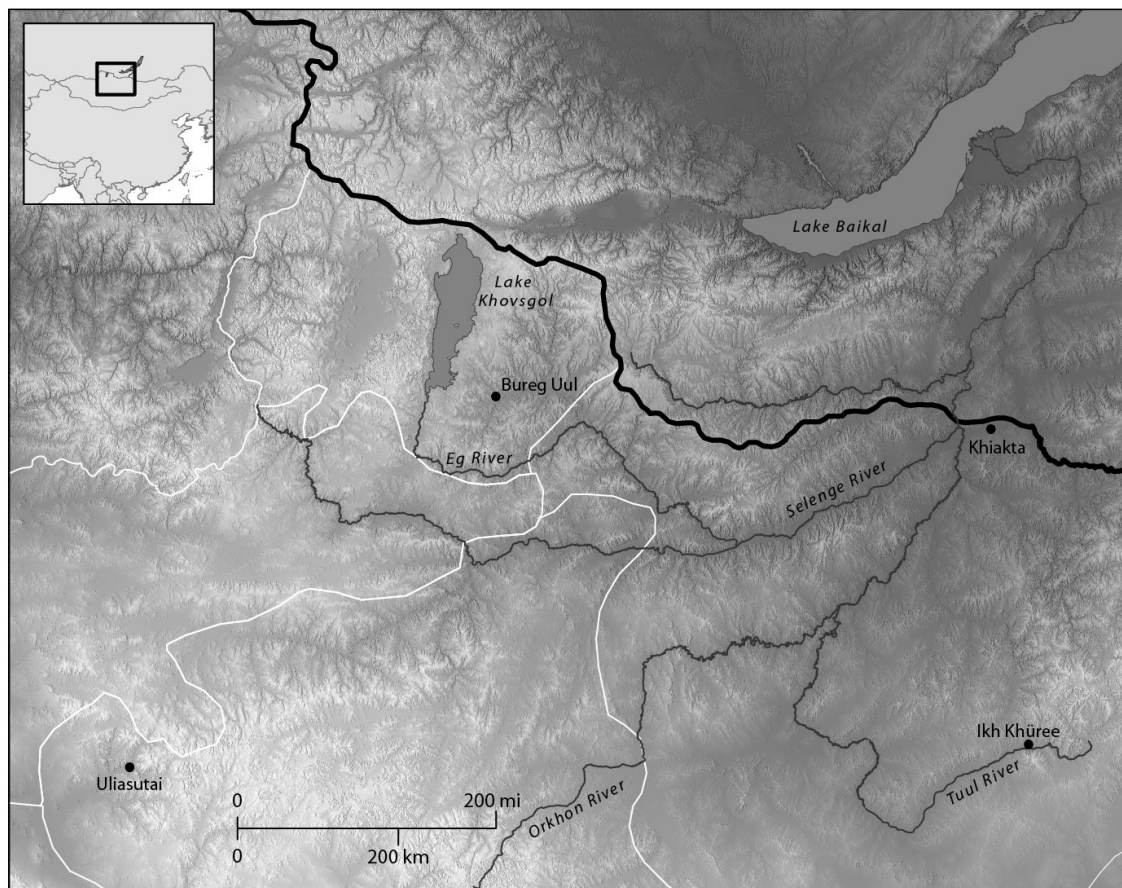
### **Introduction**

In the spring of 1837, the Qing empire's representative in Khüree assembled a small entourage of secretaries, attendants, and guides and prepared for a journey to Lake Khovsgol, near the Russian border.<sup>1</sup> His name was Dorjirabdan, and as the Mongol amban, he was one of the most powerful figures in all of Qing Mongolia. He packed with him bundles of silver, tea, and tobacco – gifts to be distributed on the trip – and set off on a seven days' ride for the borderland. Tensions were high then between Qing border guards and the people they knew as the Tannu Urianghai. In the middle and late Qing period, the Urianghai were known for providing a lucrative tribute in wild furs – tens of thousands pelts each year. Like other tribute-payers, these helped outfit the imperial family with clothing and accessories, including the distinctive sable-lined dragon-robos worn by the emperors in Beijing. During the boom years of the eighteenth century, these furs also found their way into elite fashion, as the craze for fur, described in Chapter One, swept through the cities of the Chinese provinces. Given the circumstances, then, it is perhaps not surprising that in 1837, at Lake Khovsgol, the dispute between Tannu Urianghai and border guards centered on fur and trapping rights. Tensions had flared when a hunter's trap mistakenly killed a border-guard's horse. Now, trappers and guardsmen were feuding about the boundary between them: where, exactly, did the restricted borderland begin?

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<sup>1</sup> The following account is taken from M1D1-4092.1 (DG17.4.20).

Map 5: Lake Khovsgol and the Russo-Mongol Border Region



In a Manchu-language memorial to the throne, Dorjirabdan reassured the emperor that he knew the borderland with Russia was of the “utmost importance,” and he intended to “make the borderland pure” (Ma: *jecen be bolgo obure*). At the same time, he aimed to ensure that fur-trapping, the Urianghai “livelihood” (Ma: *banjire were*), continue undiminished. Within a day of arrival – after the tea, tobacco, and silver was handed out – he secured a settlement, and a new boundary was drawn between the two jurisdictions. To finalize the accord, the *amban* hired a local lama to draw a map, wrote a summary memorial to the throne, and returned home.<sup>2</sup> Why, of all decades, did tensions over land-

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<sup>2</sup> MID1-4092.1 (DG17.4.20).

use flare up in the 1830s? And what did it mean, in practice, for the borderlands to be “pure”?

This chapter argues that the boreal forests of the Qing taiga, like the Mongolian steppe, became the objects of “purification” amidst an environmental crisis. Whereas mushroom picking broke the nexus between people and place on the Mongol steppe, the depletion of fur bearing animals had the same dislocating effect on the northern borderlands. Stakes were high in the northern borderland: the closer one moved to Russia, the greater the need to maintain order. There was no room for ambiguity. Just as Mongol bannerland was administratively, territorially, and environmentally distinct, so too were the two key jurisdiction types of the far north: borderlands (Ma: *jecen i ba*; Mo: *kijiyar un γajar*; Ch: 邊界) and lands of the Urianghai (Ma: *urianghai*; Mo: *uriangqai*; Ch: 烏梁海). The Qing empire protected both from outside intervention. The borderlands were ruled to be like holy mountains or imperial hunting grounds: empty and “pure;” Urianghai lands were to serve the Urianghai “way of life,” defined as hunting and fur trapping. Both were protected from Mongol herders and Chinese merchants. Herders and merchants were fit for the steppe; border guards and Urianghai trappers were fit for the northern forest (Ma: *taiga*; Mo: *taiya*).

In the first half of the nineteenth century, however, the environmental order was thrown into chaos, as rampant over-hunting decimated local animals. First sables, then foxes, then squirrels disappeared from the forest. The Urianghai were under duress, and the line between borderland and Urianghai land – like the boundary between Mongol herder and Chinese agriculturalist much further south – was getting “confused” (Ma: *suwaliyaganjaha*). In response, the Qing state mobilized itself to “make the borderland

pure:” to repatriate trespassers, defend boundary lines, and ensure the long-term sustainability of fur-bearing animals. Just as the steppe embodied the imperial will to protect it from mushroom picking, the taiga embodied the will to maintain its association with fur-trapping Urianghai and fur-bearing animals. In both cases, the Qing empire elaborated and defended the boundaries and constitution of a jurisdiction, and in so doing provided the political framework for the invention of nature as well. The border with Russia, in short, was anything but natural: its nature was an imperial creation.

The chapter discusses first the administrative and territorial identity of the Qing borderlands. It then shifts to Urianghai lands, highlighting the crucial distinctions between border-, Urianghai, and Mongol jurisdictions. Having established the contours of the imperial order, the chapter then delves into the great crisis of the early nineteenth-century – the collapse of fur-bearing animals – and imperial efforts to maintain stability and “purity.” It concludes where it begins: with the *amban* Dorjirabdan, trudging up to Lake Khovsgol, ready to put the border back in line.

### **Pure Wilderness in the Borderland**

A basic feature of the Russo-Qing borderland in Mongolia in the high Qing period should be established first: the fact that there *was* a “borderland.” The term “borderland” should not be confused with the empire’s Inner Asian “frontiers” – a realm that encompassed two-thirds of all Qing territory, including Manchuria, Mongolia, etc. Rather, the borderland (Ma: *jecen i ba*) was a discrete jurisdiction: the militarized strip of land fronting Russia established with the treaties of Nerchinsk (1689) and Kiakhta (1726). It was confined, to its north, by the “border” (Ma: *jecen*) with Russia, and to its

south by a “boundary” (Ma: *ujan*) with regular “Mongol land” (Ma: *monggo i ba*).<sup>3</sup> In some locations, the distance between border and boundary was a short day’s ride on horseback; in other locations, such as near Lake Khovsgol, it was perhaps five or six days’ ride.<sup>4</sup> The only residents of this space were border guards (Ma: *karun i urse* or *cakda i hafan cooha*), whose guard stations, called *karun* (Ma: *karun*; Mo: *qarayul*; Ch: 卡倫), were positioned not on the border itself, but closer to the southern boundary.

The territory possessed an administrative identity distinct from Mongol bannerland. This is clear from the fact that *karun* guardsmen reported up to the *ambans* in Khüree or the military governor in Uliasutai, not to Mongol *jasays*. There were altogether twenty-three *karun* in the Uliasutai jurisdiction, staffed by a rotating group of 850 soldiers (each *karun* with 30-50 men), twenty-three *taiji* (each *karun* with one), and six assistant *taiji* (Ch: 協理台吉, each in charge of three or four *karun* each).<sup>5</sup> Following administrative divisions, Qing documents contrasted these “border guards” with “bannermen” (Ma: *gūsai urse*) and “Mongols” (Ma: *monggoso*) living to their south: they were different types of imperial subjects, governed under different administrative hierarchies, and with differing claims to their territories’ resources. The space, in this sense, was more akin to “restricted areas,” such as holy mountains and imperial game parks, than to standard Mongol bannerland. The *Huidian*, for example, defined the *karun*

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<sup>3</sup> M1D1-3834.7a (DG6.1.12), for example, explicitly contrasts “borderland” (*jecen i ba*) with “Mongol land” (*monggo i ba*).

<sup>4</sup> Russian diplomats later pointed to this peculiarity of the Qing borderlands to justify expansion into certain areas, including Tannu Urianghai lands, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. See Thomas E. Ewing, “The Forgotten Frontier: South Siberia (Tuva) in Chinese and Russian History, 1600-1920,” *Central Asiatic Journal* 25, no. 3-4 (1981), 189.

<sup>5</sup> *Wuliyasutai zhilue*, 45.

to be “wherever there are borders or restricted areas” (Ch: 若邊裔若禁地則以卡倫守之).<sup>6</sup> Both types of space were held to be of top importance and held to the highest standards; both had to be “pure.”

The basic principles for governing the borderland were outlined in the treaties of Nerchinsk and Kiakhta.<sup>7</sup> All Russian subjects (lit. “people of Russia” (Ma: *Oros i niyalma*) who, by the time of the treaties, had already settled in designated Qing territory were removed north, and thereafter all “escapees” (Ma: *ukanju*) who crossed the border were to be arrested and returned to their homeland for punishment. All travelers to the border region would need a special “passport” (Ma: *jugūn yabure temgetu bithe*; lit. “permit for travelling on roads”), and, after 1727, the Treaty of Kiakhta limited cross-border trade to the town of Kiakhta. The core principles of these treaties were: 1) clear delineation of sovereign jurisdiction; 2) strict segregation of imperial subjects; 3) special oversight over cross-border commerce; and 4) a licensing system for travelers.<sup>8</sup> Not only

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<sup>6</sup> Cited in Li Yushu, *Waimeng zhengjiao zhidu kao*, 55.

<sup>7</sup> These principles became domestic law, with the same language used in the Treaty of Kiakhta inscribed into the *Laws and Precedents for the Board Governing Outer Dependencies* (Ch: *Lifanyuan zeli*), the compendium of laws governing Outer Mongolia. The text was published on six different occasions: 1789 (*juan* 12, as the *Menggu lili*), 1817 (*juan* 63), 1826 (*juan* 63), 1841 (*juan* 63), 1891 (*juan* 64), and 1908 (*juan* 64). See Farquhar p. 206-207, n. 176. The Mongolian State Library holds multiple copies of the text, testifying to the broad dissemination of the regulations in the region.

<sup>8</sup> Significantly, the treaty also maintained special provisions on fur trappers. The Treaty of Bura and Kiakhta adopted the same language: “The Uriankhy [people], to whichever side they pay five sables of yasak, on that side they shall remain and continue to pay [the yasak]. Those Uriankhy [people], however, who paid one sable to each side, from the day the frontier is established, will never again be required [to pay it].” Translated in Mark Mancall, *Russia and China; Their Diplomatic Relations to 1728* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), 285. Just as on the Russo-Qing border, poaching similarly helped institutionalize the Chosŏn-Qing border. Sable poaching outside Chosŏn and a cross-border black market was recorded as early as 1409. Korean ginseng poaching was at the center of disputes between the Later Jin and Choson courts in the 1630s. After a significant expansion in ginseng poaching from the early eighteenth century on, the problem became instrumental in the creation of the border infrastructure. In the first half of the nineteenth century, Korean poachers increasingly targeted not only ginseng, but sable and medicinal deerhorn, with incidents reported across both the Yalu and Tumen River areas. Yet the poaching of all three major commodities was already endemic by at least 1772, when extensive black markets in these key resources was investigated in the Chosŏn border areas. For sable poaching in 1409, see *T’aejong*

Russians, but Mongols and Chinese were prohibited from entering the borderland. All who trespassed were found guilty of “haphazard mixing” (Ma: *suwaliyaganjame*); none but guardsmen were permitted to “rule over the pastoral territory” (Ma: *nuktere babe ejelefi*).<sup>9</sup> If someone trespassed, they were arrested. If someone built a home, it was razed. By law, illegal migrants to the area were “to be driven back to their homelands” (Ma: *da ba*; Mo: *uy yajar*), in order that, as we have seen before, the “borderland be made pure” (Ma: *jecen be bolgo obu*; Mo: *kijiyar i ariyun bolya*; Ch: 肅清邊界).<sup>10</sup>

Searching for any signs of human activity was thus the primary job for guardsmen, who swept the border on their regular “patrol routes” (Ma: *karun i jugūn*). Each spring and autumn, top officials, including jasaγs and newly appointed Military Governors of Uliasutai (Ma: *jiyanggiyūn*, Mo: *jiyanggiyun*; Ch: 將軍) audited their work with two inspection tours of the forty-seven *karun* dotting the Russian border with Mongolia.<sup>11</sup> After each inspection – and whether or not any border violations were discovered – they submitted a memorial to the emperor confirming that inspections had, indeed, taken place. In Mongolia’s far northwest, in the Ketun River region, for example, a team of 120 Durbet, Urianghai, and Khalkha soldiers annually assembled for the job. Beginning their patrol in Hak Noor, they rode to Oimon Gool, Ike Hotoronggoi, and finally Baga Hotoronggoi. If there were no irregularities, they reported that having

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*sillok*, 17. On ginseng in the making of the Qing-Chosŏn border, see Li Huazi, *Qingchao yu Chaoxian guanxi shi yanjiu* (Yanji: Yanbian daxue chubanshe, 2006): 14-22, 123-135, 162-164. On Qianlong period black markets, see *Yŏngjo sillok*, 119.

<sup>9</sup> TGKH 63: 4b-5a.

<sup>10</sup> TGKH 63: 4b-5a; GMQJ 63: 5a.

<sup>11</sup> MID1-3750.11 (DG3.10).



“thoroughly investigated every place,” they found “no people residing in or using pastures” (Ma: *umai nukteme tere niyalma akū*).<sup>12</sup> As the wording suggests, the land could be neither inhabited nor worked; even livestock were prohibited from the territory.

Prohibitions against trespassing were pragmatic: they made the border guards’ job easier. During their patrols, the authorities had to confirm that having “thoroughly investigated” the borderland and had found “no person living within the territory” (Ma: *umai nukteme tere niyalma akū*).<sup>13</sup> Patrolling for Russian incursions was the primary task, but it involved thoroughly “keeping look-out over the land” (Ma: *baran karara*) and “tracking” (Ma: *songko faitara*).<sup>14</sup> As the *amban* explained in 1826, when Mongols were haphazardly using the borderlands, their activities resulted in the destruction of other tracks, making it impossible to find signs of possible Russian trespassing.<sup>15</sup>

Exclusion also had a broader strategic function, as the territory was conceived, in part, as a natural defense. When the Kangxi emperor agreed to the Treaty of Nerchinsk, it was on condition that the border lay astride natural barriers whenever possible:

If in the vicinity of places ruled by Russian subjects there are mountains, rivers, or taiga, use the mountains, rivers, or taiga as the border.<sup>16</sup> If in the vicinity of Mongol guard-posts and cairns (Ma: *obo*) there are mountains, rivers, or taiga, make the mountains, rivers, or taiga the border. If there are no mountains or rivers but there is an open plain (Ma: *šehun necin ba*; Mo: *jildam tübsin ɣajar*), divide [the plain] exactly in the middle, erect cairns, and establish the border.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> M2D1-176.78a-b (DG15.+6), M2D1-177.12a (XF1.6), M2D1-177.35b (XF2.6). The language in the three documents is identical. The emperor responded “*saha*” - “acknowledged” - in each case.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> M1D1-3834.1a (DG6.7).

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> “Taiga” is the word used in all texts. The English word “taiga” derives from Mongol via Russian.

<sup>17</sup> TGKH 63: 3a-3b; GMQJ 63:3a-b.

To the Kangxi emperor, empty space could be used as a bulwark against intruding armies. In this spirit, when Kangxi dispatched the emissary Tulišen to Russia in 1712, he ordered Tulišen, if asked by the Russians, to report that his travel route had “a great many mountains, forests, and steep and narrow places” (Ma: *jugūn i tuwaci, alin hada bujan weji haksan hafirahūn ba umesi labdu*; Ch: 沿途皆高山峻岭，林木叢繁，險隘之處甚多).<sup>18</sup> The basic strategic uses of wooded areas as “strong positions” (Ma: *akdun ba*) was well understood.<sup>19</sup> Such spaces had two advantages: they were difficult to pass through, and they made it difficult to support an army.<sup>20</sup> Any eighteenth-century army would have found formidable such treacherous terrain.<sup>21</sup>

It was the absence of usable life – either in the form of fodder or people – and disconnection from the wider world that made such spaces so strategically formidable. During the Dzungar Wars, when Qing armies had to cross through lifeless expanses Outer Mongolia, it was described as “backcountry” or “bush” (Ma: *bigan*; Mo: *keger-e*).<sup>22</sup> Troops were paid extra commission for time served in the *bigan*, and any army that

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<sup>18</sup> Tulišen, *Lakcaha jecen de takūraha babe ejehe bithei*, 14.

<sup>19</sup> Chuang Chifa, *Qingdai zhungaer shiliao*, 46.

<sup>20</sup> For a discussion of scale and the logistics of supporting an army, see Peter Perdue, “Military Mobilization in Seventeenth and Eighteenth-Century China, Russia, and Mongolia,” *Modern Asian Studies* 30, no. 4 (1996), 757-793.

<sup>21</sup> The pre-conquest Manchu records characteristically celebrate Nurhaci (r. 1616-1626) and Hong Taiji (r. 1626-1643), the founders of the Qing ruling house, for their superior ability to use terrain to their advantage, manipulating, for example ill-fated Ming armies into quagmires and marshes, only to set ambushes. Qing (and *aisin gurun*) generals were to avoid such areas at all costs. Cf. MBRT 1.8.126.13, 3.38.1484.6, 3.4.940.15, 3.8.1007.6c.

<sup>22</sup> Chuang Chifa, *Qingdai zhungaer shiliao*, 72-73. In Manchu dictionaries published since the late nineteenth-century, “*bigan*” is the word most consistently translated as wilderness. See Norman: “wilderness, an uncultivated area, wild;” Hauer, “*unbebautes Land, Ödland, freies Feld, Wildnis;*” and Zakharov, “всякое дикое, необитаемое, вне жилья находящееся место, открытое чистое поле;

could truly conquer it was unusually imposing.<sup>23</sup> Defenses could nevertheless be augmented by evacuating the land of people – a strategy pursued at the same time, in a similar way, in the borderlands with Korea and, most famously, on the southwest coast during the war with Zheng Chenggong.<sup>24</sup> Such a space was different entirely from Mongol “steppe” (Ma: *tala*; Mo: *tala*): according to one Manchu-Mongol dictionary from 1728, the “steppe” was “backcountry with roads” (Ma: *bigan de jugūn bisirengge*; Mo: *keker-e [d]ür jam bui*).<sup>25</sup> The implied meaning of “backcountry,” defined in the dictionary simply as “open plains” (Ma: *onco šehun ba*; Mo: *ayuu sarayul yajar*), was a land through which no roads passed. The Mongol steppe was defined by its accessibility – a world of vital linkages with the outside, not isolation. The borderland was defined for its impenetrability.

Beyond this strategic function, excluding settlement was also meant to safeguard the guardsmen’s livelihood. In 1826, for example, the *ambans*’ office led an effort to

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пустыня, степь; пустынный, степной, дикий.” Jerry Norman, *A Concise Manchu-English Lexicon*, 29; Erich Hauer, *Handwörterbuch der Mandschusprache* 2<sup>nd</sup> rev. ed. (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz GmbH & Co. KG, 2007), 49; Ivan Il’ich Zakharov, *Polni man’chzhursko-ruskii slovar’* (St. Petersburg: Tip. I. Akademii nauk, 1875), 495.

<sup>23</sup> Chuang Chifa, *Qingdai zhungaer shiliao*, 72-73, 108-109. The bigan “wilderness” as described in early Manchu records was similarly difficult to survive in. Warm hats and gowns were offered as gifts to keep one warm while hunkered down there. See MBRT 2.60.869-872. In Qing documents, *bigan* spaces likewise figure as spaces outside the direct gaze of the state and as a refuge for criminals: bandits, poachers, and spies hide in wilderness, and murder investigations begin when locals discover bodies there. MID1-3935.36 (DG11.8.12); MID1-3936.18a (DG11.9.2); MID1-3936.2a (DG11.8.30). As an adjective, it was also term reserved for undomesticated plants and wild peoples. For the example of *bigan*’s use in both senses, see Tulišen, *Lakcha jecen de takūraha babe ejehe bithe*, 30, 174.

<sup>24</sup> A similar border was maintained between Manchuria and Korea. It was not unusual for Korean travellers passing through on their way to Manchuria to write as if they were isolated on an ancient and broken steppe: “Going to bed I think of home. It is truly silent [at the water’s edge]. There is no one to be seen, only dense grass and mature forest. I suddenly recall Du Fu’s poem, ‘I travel amongst northern barbarians [胡], as if in an empty valley.’” Zhang Jie, *Hanguo shiliao sanzong yu shangjing manzu yanjiu* (Shenyang: Liaoning minzu chubanshe, 2009), 185.

<sup>25</sup> *Han-i araha manju monggo gisuni bileku bithe / Qayan-u bicigsen manju mongyol ügen-ü toil bicig* (1708).

reassess the boundaries of all Kalkha banners which adjoined the borderland. For each banner, their boundary line with the borderlands was renegotiated, remapped and new boundary cairns erected.<sup>26</sup> In the process, guardsmen had a chance to air some of their grievances. Such conflicts over pastures suggest ways in which segregation was used not only to protect the guardsmen's mission but their economic interests as well: the guardsmen needed pastures large enough to support their households. Over time, the borderland became, in practice, a strip of land broad enough to support the troops. If the quality of the land was high, the strip was relatively small; if the land was mountainous, dry, alkaline, or otherwise poor for grazing, the allotted strip was allowed to be larger.

Knowing the exact location of the southern boundary line was thus fundamental to the integrity of the borderland, and disputes over access rights were not uncommon. The years 1820-1850 in particular witnessed a series of conflicts over land-use between border guards and neighboring populations. 1826 in particular witnessed a flurry of such conflicts, when six of the fifteen Kalkha banners that adjoined *jecen* borderland had their territory reassessed. The boundaries were renegotiated, remapped and new cairns (Ma: *obo*; Mo: *obuy-a[n]*) erected.<sup>27</sup> In a typical case, the land that had been designated the boundary (Ma: *ujan obuha ba*) in the vicinity of Asinggū karun, in Cecen Han aimag, was deemed “extremely close” to the regular summer pastures of bannermen. While the

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<sup>26</sup> These were the banners of the two *jasays need to fix these gammas* named Namjildorji in Tusiyetu Han aimag, those of *güng* Gombujab and *jasay* Mingjurdorji in Cecen Han aimag, and those of *güng* Šakdurjab and *jasay* Jikmitcebden in Jasaktu Han aimag. Their banners stretched along the border between Jijilik *karun* (on the road from Uliasutai) and Kubuljek *karun* (the last before the Heilongjiang *karuns* began). M1D1-3822.1a (DG6.9.1).

<sup>27</sup> These were the banners of the two *jasays* named Namjildorji in Tusiyetu Han aimag, those of *güng* Gombujab and *jasay* Mingjurdorji in Cecen Han aimag, and those of *güng* Šakdurjab and *jasay* Jikmitcebden in Jasaktu Han aimag. Their banners stretched along the border between Jijilik *karun* (on the road from Uliasutai) and Kubuljek *karun* (that last before the Heilongjiang *karuns* began). M1D1-3822.1a (DG6.9.1).

matter had been raised the previous fall, and cairns established on the southern perimeter, land management was proving to be “lax” (Ma: *sulfakan*), and animals from the two jurisdictions were getting “mixed up” (Ma: *suwaliyaganjame*). All herders were thus transferred south to avoid further conflict.<sup>28</sup>

In the banner of *jasay* Mingjurdorji,<sup>29</sup> abutting thirteen *karun* to the east of Asinggū *karun*, in the far northeast corner of Mongolia, boundary infringement involved both Mongol pastoralists and Chinese merchants. In the winter of 1826, having trespassed on *karun* land, both herders and four caravans of merchants had been trapped in the borderlands.<sup>30</sup> Though the border guards ordered them to leave, their condition was pathetic: the snow had decimated their horses, and finding fuel (either firewood or dung) was virtually impossible. As things stood, they were living in “extreme violation of rules and principles,” since it was “inappropriate to continue having people from

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<sup>28</sup> MID1-3834.1a (DG6.7).

<sup>29</sup> Mingjurdorji (Ch: 敏珠爾多爾濟, 敏珠多爾濟), first degree *taiji* *jasay* of the center-front banner of Cecen Han *aimay*. Seventh generation descendant of Ananda (enfeoffed *beise* in 1691; demoted to *taiji* in the fourth generation). Ascended to rank in JQ11, passed on to younger brother, Yitsingnorbu, in DG27 (1806-1847). Bao Wenhan et al, *Menggu huibu wanggong biaozhuan*, 432; Jin Hai et al, *Qingdai menggu zhi*, 108.

<sup>30</sup> The Mongols were locals from Mingjurdorji’s banner, under the jurisdiction of “Mingjurdorji *i gūsai emu tanggūta boigon i taiji*.” MID1-3822.1a (DG6.9.1). The winter of 1825-1826 was a disaster throughout Mongolia. Border guards around Hathūlbom *karun* perhaps suffered the worst, when flooding, followed by a blizzard, washed away the Eg River at its source, at the southern tip of Lake Khovsgol. When the snow melted the following spring, a wall of mud and rocks remained, leaving the Eg dammed at its source. Downstream communities which depended on the water for its pastures – including the guardsmen at Hatgal – were in desperate straits: their only short-term solution was to remove to different pastures. But when they issued a panicked plea to the amban’s office, the response returned was ice cold: leaving the *karun* was out of the question. Instead, they were upbraided for bringing misfortune upon themselves by failing to pay proper respects to mountain and river spirits (Ma: *amba alin, bira muke i enduri geren banji be weceme hukšeme jalbarihakūci banjinahabi*).<sup>30</sup> The amban ordered that all the soldiers and lamas in the community gather together to read sutras, pray for good fortune, and pay more earnest respect to Lake Khovsgol, local mountains, and the Eg river. Then, with Heaven’s help, water would come forth on its accord. MID1-3834.2a (DG6.3.21). On the seriousness of state rainmaking and similar stories from the Chinese interior, see Jeffrey Snyder-Reinke, *Dry Spells: State Rainmaking and Local Governance in Late Imperial China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2009).

banner-lands and Chinese merchants haphazardly mixing in *karun* land on the Russian border.” An agreement was decided upon by Artasida (the league captain-general for Cecen Han *aimag*), the coordinating authority for the eastern *karun* (Ma: *karun be uheri kadalara gung*) and the local *jasay*, Mingjurdorji, to resolve the matter. It would require “renewing what has been established and living segregated,” which meant erecting new cairns, tightening the travel permit system, and finally “putting a stop to haphazard nomadizing” (Ma: *suwaliyaganjame nukteburakū obume*). By doing so, they would “make the land borderland” (Ma: *jecen obuha ba*).<sup>31</sup>

The case was not singular. In Mingjurdorji’s banner, however, it was clear that merchants were regularly crossing the Kherlen and engaging in loan-and-trade practices with the local Mongols and guardsmen. Even more egregiously, they were conducting trade with Russians as well. Thus after the investigation of 1826, the merchants were ordered once again south of the Kherlen River, and authorities in Hohhot, Dolon Noor, and Kalgan forced to double check the status of all Chinese who applied for travel permits to Mingjurdorji’s banner.<sup>32</sup>

Total exclusion of trespassers was, of course, impossible: the border was too long and guardsmen too few. Difficult terrain exacerbated problems posed by the sheer length of the border and great distances between *karun*. Inspection tours, moreover, were expensive and demanding. The “extremely important” (Ma: *umesi oyonggo*) *karun* north of Uliasutai and Khobdo, for example, proved woefully under-supervised. In the wake of

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<sup>31</sup> MID1-3834.7a (DG6.1.12). It is perhaps worth underlining the flexibility the officials demonstrated in allowing the migrants to pass the winter in the border-zone. Whether out of humanity, inability to change the situation, or both, the difference with twentieth-century style “ethnic cleansing” provides an interesting point of comparison. this point may deserve consideration again in the conclusion

<sup>32</sup> MID1-3822.1a (DG6.9.1); MID1-3845.1 (DG7.4.4).

the Dzungar wars, the court had endorsed a system whereby these twenty-three *karun* were jointly administered through two headquarters (Khobdo and Uliasutai). Below headquarters, a guard (Ma: *hiya*) was appointed at five *karuns* to manage the neighboring four or five *karuns*.<sup>33</sup> The distances involved were large: the three *karun* under the jurisdiction of the *hiya* at Alak Obu karun reached approximately 165 miles (500 li) from one end to another. To facilitate better oversight, the *hiya* was allowed to appoint an assistant (Mo: *tusalayci*) to patrol the road connecting the *karuns*, police for illegal activity, and inspect all travelers' permits.<sup>34</sup> When it was conceded that such a large jurisdiction rendered the assistant's job impossible for a "lone Mongol official" (Ma: *emu monggo hafan*), a request was sent to Beijing to put extra guard-leaders on the payroll. By 1830, two extra *hiya* were appointed to the post, decreasing the area-per-administrator ratio by 40%, but still leaving the border fundamentally understaffed.<sup>35</sup>

The border and boundary lines were not impassable walls, but embodied standard procedures for common violations. Whenever detected, violations of the border were

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<sup>33</sup> They were based out of five designated stations: Alak obu, Bodogoni holo, Sogok, Canggistai, and Honi mailahū. The later two *karuns* – Canggistai and Honi Mailahū – were administered via Kobdo, and the others administered by Uliasutai.

<sup>34</sup> MID1-3909.2 (JQ[10?].6). The document notes that Alak Obu jurisdiction was particularly important for holding Jinjilik *karun*, located at the junction of the postal route from Uliasutai and the *karun* patrol route. North of Jinjilik was "Tangnu Uriyanghai pasture land" (*tangnu uriyanghai i nuktere ba*). Jinjilik thus served as an important junction for representatives of Kalka nobility (*kalkai wang gung*) who traveled north to make contact with Urianghai.

<sup>35</sup> MID1-3909.2 (JQ[10?].6). An additional *hiya* was added to Jinjilik *karun*, making a total of six *hiya*, who responsible for Samgaltai *karun* as well as two other *karun*; the Ilak Obu *hiya* would henceforth be responsible for only three *karun*, including Ciciragana. The aid to the *hiya*, the *tusalakci*, formerly based out of Domilbuki, was transferred to Ersun *karun*. A steady number of *hiya* were added, such that by 1830 there were altogether six *hiya* based out of the *karuns* north of Uliasutai and Kobdo, with three stationed between the two cities (*hoton*) and off-duty, including two in Uliasutai and one in Kobdo. Uliasutai held jurisdiction over four of six *hiya*, and Kobdo held jurisdiction over the other two. With the addition of the post at Jinjilik, which was filled at the prerogative of the general, one *hiya* was transferred to Kobdo, giving Kobdo a total of three *hiya*, including the two *karuns* of Honi Mailahū and Canggistai. The *hiya* was to have jurisdiction over all local legal matters as well.

taken seriously, even in cases where only domesticated animals made the crossing. In one case from 1786, a horse with a dangling lasso about its neck “running wild” (Ma: *tuilame*) towards Russian territory was considered a scandal; after a young guard managed to corral it, an investigation involving no less authority than the amban himself ensued.<sup>36</sup> Other, seemingly minor infractions were reported all the way up to the throne. In the summer of 1815 alone, three separate incidents triggered bursts of diplomatic correspondences and paperwork. The first involved five horses crossing into Qing territory; the second Russian children who chased a loose bellwether across the border, then again yet another case of escaped horses. The displaced animals and children were all returned according to proper procedure.<sup>37</sup>

By 1815 dealing with border-crossing Russians had become routine. Those caught were arrested, and their goods confiscated and assessed. A bilingual guardsman then interrogated them in Russian. If they were found to be simple refugees or lone hunters (and not smugglers or spies), they were given fresh clothes, escorted to the border, and discharged back to the Russia, with their original possessions returned at the border. The process was formalized in 1780 (QL45), when the Qianlong emperor sent down the order: “hereafter, with regards to Russians who have illegally escaped (Ma: *ukame tucike*), capture and interrogate the man or woman whether or not they are

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<sup>36</sup> MID1-407.14a (QL51). The horse was not held responsible; its negligent owner was.

<sup>37</sup> The case of children and the bellwether can be found in MID2-307.7 (JQ20.5.14). For the five-horse affair see MID2-307.9 (JQ20.7.18), and for the second horse affair (involving eight lost horses), see MID2-307.10. This final document is a bilingual Russian-Mongol diplomatic correspondence dispatched to the captain of Boora *karun*, Teksurun. A brief document, totaling a page in length, the letter follows the rules of Qing official writing: it opens with the title of the sender, followed by the title of the intended receiver, a brief synopsis of the purpose of the communication, and finally a discussion of the issue. According to standard form, it also concludes with the date, but breaks convention by dating the letter June 8, 1815 using the Julian calendar (June 20, 1815 Gregorian), not using the Qing imperial date (JQ20.5.14).



important (Ma: *oyomburakū*). If they have no ulterior motive, send them back as usual.”<sup>38</sup> At the border, the guards assured Russian authorities that all refugees had been returned with their possessions. Thereby the Qing state made known the “magnificence” (Ma: *ambalinggū*) of their “great country” (Ma: *amba gurun*).<sup>39</sup> Patrolmen were ordered to be on guard for those who “feigned ignorance” or claimed to have innocently gotten lost.<sup>40</sup> Much less common were cases of potential spies. In one such case, the presence of an unidentified Chinese man, whom the merchants’ houses in Kiakhta refused to vouch for, led to suspicions that he was a Russian spy (Ma: *helen*).<sup>41</sup> Given Kiakhta’s proximity to the border, the problem was serious, but proved impossible to manage: the man seemingly slipped in and out of merchant’s quarter’s gates at will.<sup>42</sup>

In the first half of the nineteenth century, such reports of Russians crossing the border trickled in at steady but relatively low rates, with the vast majority of cases handled in routine fashion. On the Argun and Amur River border, for example, the years 1811-1843, less than one incident on average was reported each year.<sup>43</sup> The arrests were

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<sup>38</sup> MWLF 3802.50.181.2912 (JQ16.6.15).

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> MID1-407.36a

<sup>41</sup> MID1-3935.36 (DG11.8.12); MID1-3936.18a (DG11.9.2). I was unable to find documents on how the case was resolved.

<sup>42</sup> MID1-3936.18a (DG11.9.2). The document states that he had traveled to Kiakhta from the Chinese interior via Ikh Khüree. No follow-up documents could be found to verify the identity of the man, and I have seen no evidence that the Russians employed vagrant Chinese as spies, so I have doubts about the official story. The fear of spies, however, is suggestive of the official fears, stereotypes, and bureaucratic pressures operating within the government in Qing Mongolia and is a researchable topic.

<sup>43</sup> The following synopsis is based upon a survey of thirteen cases. See MWLF 3802.50.181.2912 (JQ16.6.15), 3806.3.182.71 (JQ16.9.10), 3806.3.182.71 (JQ16.9.10), 3806.3.182.71 (JQ16.9.10), 3820.48.182.3437 (JQ17.8.17), 3834.52.183.3260 (JQ18.9.6), 3854.12.185.1030 (JQ19.10.13), 3879.63.187.658 (JQ21.7.6), 3928.2.190.1493 (JQ24.8.9), 3928.2.190.1493 (JQ24.8.9), 3928.2.190.1493 (JQ24.8.9), 3928.2.190.1493 (JQ24.8.9), 4008.27.195.666 (DG4.8.18), 4023.1.196.240 (DG5.8.3), 4023.1.196.240 (DG5.8.3), 4023.1.196.240 (DG5.8.3), 4023.1.196.240 (DG5.8.3), 4023.1.196.240 (DG5.8.3), 4023.1.196.240 (DG5.8.3).

made almost exclusively between the months of July and November, with half taking place in the month of September alone. All captured Russians were men. Roughly half had traveled by canoe and half had passed into Qing territory on horseback. In the interrogations, while the border-guards were required to obtain interpreters who “generally understood Russian,” their testimonies were recorded exclusively in Manchu. These were taken according to a standard formula: first the name of the man, then his home town or province, whether he had any living family, how he had come to the border area, what crimes he had committed in the past, and the story of his illegal entry into Qing territory; the memorialist also included a physical description, centered on clothing, and a list of confiscated possessions; these were usually limited to a knife and the dirty clothes on their back, but sometimes including fine furs and leather - suggesting these men might not have all been such simple refugees. Most captured Russians claimed to have fled their homes amidst an unbearable famine and pleaded they were only trying to survive by hunting and fishing, when they inadvertently crossed the border. Others cited the cruelty of their overseers,<sup>44</sup> or the wish to live the life of an itinerant holy man.<sup>45</sup> Many had slashed noses and tattooed faces – the marks of a convict. They generally all looked “like beggars” (Ma: *gihoto adali*). If so, they were given fresh shirts and pants

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(DG5.8.3), and 4039.1.197.170 (DG6.8.22). Cases of Russians crossing the border before this period appear to have been relatively rare. A case from 1811 (JQ16) cites only two direct precedents, dating to 1794 (QL60) and 1802 (JQ7), as if no other incidents had happened in the intervening years. See 3802.50.181.2912 (JQ16.6.15)

<sup>44</sup> MWLF 4008.27.195.666 (DG4.8.18).

<sup>45</sup> Such was the case of the man named “Gerig’uri” [i.e. Gregory] from “Uriyesi.” According to his testimony, he had quit his service obligation (*alban kara be nakafi*), become a “lama,” and set out on the road treating the sick and begging for alms. He had gotten lost and arrived at the mouth of a small tributary to a “big river” (the Amur?) during a violent storm. According to the guardsmen who caught him, he was found at the mouth of the Hūmar River. He was fifty years old. See MWLF 3802.50.181.2912 (JQ16.6.15).

(Ma: *gahari* and *fukuri*), and escorted back to Kūke Dobo *karun*, on the Argun river, where the *karun* officer transferred them back to the authority of the *mayur*. Altogether, from capture to discharge, the process took about three weeks.<sup>46</sup>

In the early nineteenth century, that is, the threat of Russian intrusion was the *raison d'être* for the borderland, but not the primary challenge to its viability. In practice, the borderlands served not only to keep Russians out, but to keep Qing subjects in, and though meant to be empty, increasingly the jurisdiction began to draw trespassers from within the Qing empire itself. For like other nineteenth-century production sites on the frontier, the borderlands produced a uniquely valuable resource, and one vital to the livelihood of trappers: fur. It is to the fur trappers, the Urianghai, that we now turn.

### **Between Borderland and Bannerland: Urianghai Territory**

There was one exception to the general ban on human settlement in the borderland: a people called the “Urianghai” were granted either permanent or seasonal access and allowed to work the land as hunters. They were unique in this regard. Yet while they lived within borderland geographically, administratively they remained apart. Indeed, the court governed Urianghai lands in a way that made them territorially, commercially, and environmentally distinct both from neighboring *karun* lands and Mongol land alike. While regulation over them was not as strict as in the borderland – the court expected Urianghai to work the land – their strategic positioning near the border, and their identity as people of the taiga, demanded special protections.

As just mentioned, the Urianghai were administratively and territorially set apart. Altogether, there were distinct three polities organized under the Urianghai rubric in Qing

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<sup>46</sup> MWLF 3802.50.181.2912 (JQ16.6.15).

Mongolia, known as the Altai, Altan Noor, and Tannu.<sup>47</sup> All lived west of Kiakhta, in areas incorporated into the Qing empire after treaties with Russia had defined the border; all became Qing subjects through the course of the Dzungar wars and the failed rebellion of a Khotgoid general, Chinggunjab, in 1756.<sup>48</sup> Before the conquest, the Urianghai were subjects of either Dzungar or Khotgoid Mongol rule; some simultaneously paid tribute to Russia as well. They were organized into *decin* (literally “forties”), each headed by a *demci*, and larger units of *otok*. Rulers of several *demci* were ranked *jaisang*. The polity dubbed by the Qing court “Tannu” Urianghai had previously been organized into sixteen *otok*, each ruled by a *jaisang*. The 16 *otok*, in turn, were divided into four geographical categories: the Tes, Kem, Toji, and Sarkiten. After 1756, they were formed into banners: Urianghai *decin* became companies, *otok* became banners, the *demci* assumed the rank of *nirui janggin*, and the *jaisang* took the rank of *uheri da*.<sup>49</sup> At first, some Urianghai groups straddled the southern boundary of the borderland: the Sarkiten, for example, a subgroup of the Tannu Urianghai, “lived in a jumbled mess both within and outside the *karun* (Ma: *ceni nuktei ba karun i dolo tule suwaliyaganjame tehebi*).”<sup>50</sup> After the conquest, most Tannu Urianghai continued to hold territory within the borderland, while others were based south of the boundary. All Urianghai banners, however had defined

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<sup>47</sup> Today, the Altai ethnic minority trace descent to the Altan Noor Urianghai, Tannu Tuvans of the Tannu Urianghai, and the Urianghai minority of Mongolia to the Altai. Christopher P. Atwood, “Altai Uriyangkhai” in *Encyclopedia of Mongolia and the Mongol Empire* (New York: Facts on File, Inc., 2004): 9. For a general discussion of the history of the Tannu Urianghai, using Chinese sources, see Fan Mingfan, *Tangnu Wulianghai lishi yanshi* (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2007).

<sup>48</sup> For background on the Chinggunjab rebellion, see Bawden, “Some Documents Concerning the Rebellion of 1756 in Outer Mongolia.” *Bianzheng yanjiusuo nianbao* (1970), 1-23.

<sup>49</sup> MWLF 1663.29.46.3298. The language on this transition was unambiguous. In imperial decree on the Altan Noor Urianghai, for example, the Qianlong emperor ordered simply: “*decin i dorgi dahalaha data weci, aiman gemu demci oci, uthai demci i songkoi nirui janggin i jergi hafan sindakini*.”

<sup>50</sup> MWLF 1748.35.52.799 (QL24.3.7).

territorial bounds with distinct chains of command, leading up from the arrows, to the banners, to the office of military governor in Uliasutai.

While they belonged to banners, and reported to Uliasutai, the Urianghai remained culturally peripheral to the Mongol world. An early-twentieth-century ethnologist might have confirmed their distinctiveness from neighboring Mongols on objectivist grounds, pointing to their Turkic language, how many used teepee-shaped tents instead of a Mongol-style *ger*, and so on. In Qing times, however, the Urianghai were regularly described as “Mongols.” In dealing with them, documents regularly used the trope that “the emperor’s people of the *aimays*, whether near or far, are all like one” (Ma: *enduringge ejen i hanciki goroki aiman i urse be emu adali*).<sup>51</sup> Acting harshly towards Urianghai was thus “not in accordance with the loving intention of the emperor towards Mongols.”<sup>52</sup> Along these lines, the court made few attempts to civilize or intervene in Urianghai affairs: it embraced the imperial responsibility to protect the Urianghai way of life, just as it did for Mongols.

Unlike Mongols, however, the court identified the Urianghai way of life as hunting and fur trapping, not nomadic pastoralism. In 1758, the Military Governor of Uliasutai, Cenggunjab (not to be confused with the just-mentioned Chinggunjab), described the newly incorporated Tannu Urianghai *otok* as including a great number of poor people who were living “like birds and beasts” (Ma: *gurgu gasha i adali*).<sup>53</sup> For two years, since the end of hostilities, they had been “without a person to rule over and bring

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<sup>51</sup> MWLF 3601.28.166.1520 (JQ4.9.21).

<sup>52</sup> MWLF 1786.20.54.2057 (QL24.9.29).

<sup>53</sup> MWLF 1734.7.51.1373 (QL23.12.13).

them together” (Ma: *bargiyatame kadalara niyalma akū*). Thus “it was as though the *otoks* had all dispersed and gone into the mountains and valleys in search of fish and game” (Ma: *otok gubci facafi, gurgu nimaha baime babuci alin holo de dosifi genehengge bisire adali*); many could not survive. Likewise, a group of over twenty Tes Urianghai, under *jaisang* Onom, were described of “going in search of game and fish” (Ma: *gurgu nimaha baime genehebi*) were so impoverished that Onom was stripped of his rank, and his households were combined with thirty Kirgis households to create a new *otok*.<sup>54</sup> As with the tales told of Chinggis Khan foraging for wild onions or Nurhaci scouring the forests for ginseng, their livelihood suggested desperation.

Their livelihood was central to distinguishing the Urianghai from their Mongol neighbors to the south. The *Draft Gazetteer of Uliasutai* (Ch: 烏裡雅蘇台志略), a guide for incoming officials in Uliasutai,<sup>55</sup> explained, for example, that Mongols had an abundance of livestock, and they did not depend on hunting; they “herded for a living” (遊牧為業). The rich had camels, horses and tens of thousands of cattle and sheep, while the poor still had “dozens” of sheep. Given their prosperity, Mongols were largely self-sufficient: they ate meat in the winter and dairy in the summer, made spirits of cow, sheep, and mare milk, used dung for fuel, and crafted utensils and furniture from wood.<sup>56</sup> The Urianghai, in contrast, “lived by hunting wild animals and fishing” (Ma: *gurgu*

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<sup>54</sup> MWLF 1786.20.54.2057 (QL24.9.29).

<sup>55</sup> On the text, which is undated but can reasonably be traced to the first half of the nineteenth century, see David Farquhar, “The Ch’ing Administration of Mongolia up to the Nineteenth Century,” 311-312, n. 92.

<sup>56</sup> This was all the more impressive given the harsh and even unhealthy environment of the “extreme frontier” (地處極邊). As the *Wuliyasutai zhilue* recorded, “The warmth comes late, and the cold comes early. The summers are not hot, and the winters are severe, so much so that simply moving about causing one to wheeze (行動作喘).” *Wuliyasutai zhilue*, 66.

*nimaha butame banjime tehe bihe*).<sup>57</sup> When two Urianghai arrows based south of the *karun* line asked to be transferred north to former pastures on grounds of poverty, investigation into their living conditions revealed that:

They depend on reindeer for riding and pack animals, and, for food their custom [Ma: *taciha*] was to fish Lake Khovsgol for food or search for the snakeweed [Ma: *meker*] and bulbous roots [Ma: *tumusu*] growing around the lake. They know nothing at all of the way [Ma: *doro*] of raising livestock or seeking good pastures.<sup>58</sup>

While Urianghai and Mongols had different ways of making a living, they also had differing relationships to the market. Mongols were profoundly dependent upon broader networks of exchange. As the *Draft Gazetteer of Uliasutai* explained, no household could do without tobacco or tea (煙磚茶尤為要需家家時不可少). Their clothing, too, represented a mix of foreign and domestic products: both men and women wore leather and fur hats (皮帽), and the winter covered themselves with fur coats (皮裘) in the winter and cloth (布衣) in the summer, though the rich also wore silk (綉緞). To get what they needed, they traded livestock and skins (牲畜皮張) with merchants to get what they needed.<sup>59</sup> At the same time, the Mongols were ultimately a simple people, and easily led astray: trade could be legalized but had to be controlled.

Urianghai, in contrast, were more prone to be led astray by the market, which was unacceptable given their strategic location on the border. Along these lines, the court prohibited merchants from entering their territory: it was simply not suitable to the

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<sup>57</sup> MWLF 3601.28.166.1520 (JQ4.9.21).

<sup>58</sup> MWLF 3601.28.166.1520 (JQ4.9.21) *Ere Uriyanghai i urse...ceni yalure, jaka acirangge, gemu oron buhū de akdaha, an i ucuri uthai Kusugel Noor i nimaha be butafti jembime, noor i šurdeme banjija meker, tumusu be baiŋi jeme taciha, ongko muke be baime nukteme ulha fusembure doro be asuru sarkū.*

<sup>59</sup> *Wuliyasutai zhilue*, 67.

Urianghai way of life. In one case, Tannu Urianghai were discovered to be conducting black market trade with the Russians, leading the Qianlong emperor to order them relocated south of the borderland. After another case, in 1783 (QL48), a Chinese caravan was robbed by armed Russians and Urianghai on the banks of the Eg, prompting a special decree prohibiting merchants from not only crossing into the borderlands, but an ever broader “strip of land” (Ma: *girin i ba*) extending to the Eg, Selengge, Onon, and Kherlen rivers and the Cisa Baracihai, Bayanburdu, Bindurje mountain chains. While Mongol pastoralists could herd right up to the southern boundary of borderland, Chinese merchants had to adhere to a separate geography.

While the Urianghai may have disagreed with the policy: they themselves sought out merchants and petitioned the court to legally allow them into their territory. In 1796, the young Jiaqing emperor relented: if proper permits were obtained, merchants would henceforth be allowed to journey to – but not past – the *karun* line to trade with those Urianghai based south of the borderland. Yet the ambiguous status of the Tannu Urianghai posed a problem that remained unsettled for the next decade. To Fugiyūn, the military governor in Uliasutai in 1806, the answer was simple: prohibiting trade to only some Urianghai was impracticable, as the Urianghai would collaborate with outsider-Urianghai in smuggling goods across the *karun* line. As he wrote the emperor in 1806, a full fifty years after the formal incorporation of the Tannu Urianghai into the empire: “the Tannu Urianghai are newly subjugated and rebellious Mongols; their situation is incomparable with that of Khalkha Mongols.” Furthermore, Fugiyūn explained, “there are no higher officials (Ma: *ambakan hafan*) besides a *jalan* and *nirui janggin* in the territory of the three Urianghai *niru* [living south of the *karun* line], and it is also difficult



to round up the Chinese merchants that travel there” (Ma: *hūdašame genehe irgese be bargiyatara de inu mangga*). Merchants were bound to “entrap” (Ma: *hūbišabufi*) the Urianghai into unmanageable debts, which would lead to unending trouble. In sum, he argued, trade was a “great hindrance to the Urianghai way of life” (Ma: *uriyanghai i banjire doro de inu ambula goicuka babi*). He thus proposed that trade be cut off to the three *niru* located within the *karun* line, as well as the nine post-stations leading up them between Uliasutai and Jinjilik *karun*. The Urianghai could conduct trade with merchants when they came to Uliasutai to present fur tribute and only then.<sup>60</sup> The emperor endorsed the plan.<sup>61</sup>

The Urianghai were not only distinct in their administration, territory, livelihoods, and relationship to the market: environmentally, too, the Urianghai lived in world apart. The *Draft Gazetteer of Uliasutai* captures the unique identities of borderland, Urianghai land, and Mongol bannerland in its description of local specialty products. The text provides a suite of products for each jurisdiction type: Mongols (蒙古土產), Urianghai (烏梁海土產), and border *karun* (卡倫土產).<sup>62</sup> The author recognized the difficulty of neatly associating people to product: the section on Mongol resources has an extended footnote next to it, warning:

The land is vast with endless mountains and rivers, and each locality has its own products. If I thus recorded in detail all the regular grasses,

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<sup>60</sup> MWLF 3573.38.164.1251 (JQ2.10.25).

<sup>61</sup> MWLF 3695.35.174.637 (JQ11.26).

<sup>62</sup> *Wuliyasutai zhilue*, 70-71. The author of the text is unclear, as is the date it was written (the latest dated entry is JQ9 (1804). See Farquhar, “The Ch’ing Administration of Mongolia Up to the Nineteenth Century,” 311-312, n. 92.

trees, wild birds, wild animals, and unusual objects, there would be a great number of types. I fear there would be errors and mistakes...”<sup>63</sup>

The text, however, proceeds to make broad environmental distinctions. Some plants and animals were located in multiple jurisdictions: moose (Ch: 堪達罕; cf. Ma: *kandahan*), for one, inhabited both Mongolia and the borderland. Yet most plants, animals, and minerals were more like humans: identifiable with a single territory. Mongolia alone, for example, contained livestock, mushrooms (Ch: 蘑菇) and “rocks from the Gobi” (Ch: 瀚海石), while the border *karun* were unique for their salt rocks. Urianghai lands, in turn, were defined by their fur-bearing animals: sable (Ch: 貂鼠), squirrel (Ch: 灰鼠), river otter (Ch: 水獺), lynx (Ch: 猞猁), corsac fox (Ch: 沙狐), stone marten (Ch: 掃雪), [pine] marten (Ch: 艾葉貂), fox (Ch: 狐狸), wolf (Ch: 狼), and badger (Ch: 獾子).<sup>64</sup> There was an idealized, unbreakable nexus of people, place, and product; jurisdictions overlapped with local ways of life and a unique suite of natural products. Mongolia was the land of Mongols, livestock, and mushrooms; Urianghai territory was the land of fur.

### **Fur Tribute: the Mechanics of Homeland Conservation**

From the start, fur tribute was at the center of Urianghai-Qing relations: it was the only legal type of material exchange afforded them. In a way, the Qing court was following convention: Urianghai payments of fur tribute had predated Qing rule. Prior to Qing rule, the Tannu Urianghai paid tribute to Khotgoid Mongol noblemen (Ma: *noyasa*).

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<sup>63</sup> *Wuliyasutai zhilue*, 70. The Chinese text reads 地勢遼闊山川綿遠處處各有土產若逐一細載則諸為訛謬僅將各處常有之物著寫數類以為土產備壯觀也。

<sup>64</sup> *Wuliyasutai zhilue*, 70-72.

The Altan Noor Urianghai, on the other hand, offered a tribute of five sables per household to the Dzungar lord Galtzangdorji and one pelt to the Russians, though the Qing documents state the Dzungars lowered this initial tribute of six pelts to four pelts. In 1757, the Qianlong emperor modified the system only slightly, when he “bestowed grace” and lowered the quota to two pelts per household.<sup>65</sup> The emperor also worked to standardize quotas across disparate Urianghai polities. When the emperor decreed that one Urianghai group, under the nobleman Cadak, be organized into companies and banners – thus creating the “Altan Noor Urianghai” – he stated: “The newly submitted Urianghai (Ma: *ice dahame dosika Uriyanghai*) all have presented tribute (Ma: *alban jafaha*). If the Urianghai under Cadak and company do not present any tribute, it will not be fair (Ma: *neigen akū ombi*).”

Submitting furs represented the fundamental act of submission and incorporation into the empire. Indeed, the emperor explicitly linked compensating Cadak with an official stipend (Ma: *fulun*) to paying tribute: “Furthermore, because the Urianghai under Cadak all offer tribute, Cadak should indeed receive stipends” (Ma: *jai Cadak sei fejergi Uriyanghai se gemu alban jafabure be dahame, Cadak sede inu fulun bahabuci acambi*).<sup>66</sup> The obligations on the Tannu Uriangahi were equally basic. The Tannu Urianghai “became the subject of the Divine Lord [Emperor]” (Ma: *enduringge ejen i albatu ofi* with the collapse of Cinggunjab’s rebellion.<sup>67</sup> The duties of a “subject” (*albatu*) were limited to a single “obligation” (*alban*): they were “without any other kind of

<sup>65</sup> MWLF 1663.29.46.3298 (QL22.12.5).

<sup>66</sup> MWLF 1663.29.46.3298 (QL22.12.5).

<sup>67</sup> Similar stock-phrases in the documents include “become the subject/tributary of the great lord” (*amba ejen i albatu obumbi*) [MWLF 1748.35.52.799 (QL24.3.7)] and “entering into service” (*alban de dosimbuha*). MWLF 1786.20.54.2057 (QL24.9.29).

onerous service/tax” (Ma: *umai encu hacin i joboro alban akū*) except for an annual payment of three sable pelts per household.<sup>68</sup>

The very decrees creating the Urianghai banners also established terms for submitting fur tribute. In 1758, when the Khotogoid general Cinggunjab rebelled, the Qing army dispatched a ranking officer and Mongol nobleman to conduct a census of the Tannu Urianghai that surrendered.<sup>69</sup> Later that year, in early summer (QL23.3), the generals dispatched an officer to inspect the condition of the six *otok* and conduct a census; this man, Cikdu, was later followed by a junior officer, Monijab. They found the Tangnu Urianghai comprised 1112 households of 5028 men, women, and children. Of these 1112 households, however, only 515 were deemed capable of supplying tribute. 519 households were found “extremely poor and unable to pay tribute,” and an additional seventy-eight households had only seniors or small children. These 515 households provided the Qing with its first tribute payment: 155 sable pelts, thirteen lynx, 346 fox, thirty-six wolf, nine corsac fox, two marten, and 2294 squirrel pelts, as well as seven eagle pinions, forty-six hawk pinions, and various other knickknacks.<sup>70</sup> That year, the *jaisang* of the three Tes and three Kem *otok* paid a personal visit to the Qing general (Ma: *daiselaha jiyanggiyūn*) Namjil and the Kalka noblemen *wang* Cencukjab. They claimed willingness to pay a fur tribute, but requested leniency due to famine conditions in their

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<sup>68</sup> Several times in the document, a single sentence is used to describe this connection. Besides the above mentioned example, the text also states that “since becoming subjects of the great lord, besides at once offering tribute, there have been no other kinds [of tribute]” (*amba ejen i albatu obuha manggai jingkini jafara alban ci tulgiyen, umai gūwa jobobure hacin akū bime*). MWLF 1748.35.52.799 (QL24.3.7).

<sup>69</sup> The man was *jalan i janggin* Cikdu; he was soon followed by *meiren i janggin* Monijab. That year six *jaisang* had paid a personal visit to the Qing general (*daiselaha jiyanggiyūn*) Namjil and the Kalka noblemen *wang* Cencukjab, offering to pay fur tribute, but requested leniency due to famine conditions in their *otok*.

<sup>70</sup> MWLF 1734.7.51.1373 (QL23.12.13).

*otok*.<sup>71</sup> After a reprieve of several years, each capable household was thereafter responsible for submitting three “good, naturally colored sables” (Ma: *da bocoi sain seke*). Dyed pelts were not accepted, nor were furs obtained through trade.<sup>72</sup>

Thereafter, annual tribute payments became routine. For every ten sables offered as tribute by the community, the court returned one “small bolt of porous silk” (Ma: *emu ajige kofon suje*). For every twenty “black squirrel” (Ma: *yacin ulhu*), the court returned a bolt of “fine blue linen” (Ma: *emu samsu bosu*).<sup>73</sup> Significantly, while it assessed the Urianghai by household, no census was conducted after the inaugural year. In the blithe language of Qing documents, it was instead expected that the Urianghai would naturally “lead joyful and leisurely lives under Heavenly grace and multiply.”<sup>74</sup> Linear growth of ten households per year would be expected: the Tannu Urianghai by five households, the Altai Urianghai by three, and the Altan Noor Urianghai by two. Each year the expected number of sables (or their equivalent in other furs) thus rose by thirty.

As the prohibitions against dying and trade suggest, tribute was meant embody to an authentic connection between the product, the land, and the people. All contraband pelts seized by the state were confiscated and forwarded immediately to the Imperial Household Department.<sup>75</sup> Any officials who failed to properly investigate a case of outsiders poaching on Urianghai land punished: Mongol noblemen received a fine valued

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<sup>71</sup> MWLF 1734.7.51.1373 (QL23.12.13).

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> MID1-3909.2 (JQ[10?].6).

<sup>74</sup> MID1-3909.2 [JQ10].

<sup>75</sup> TGKH 53: 5a-6a; GMQJ 53: 5a-6a. The criminals were punished under the legal jurisdiction of the Board of Punishments, suggesting they were expected to be Han Chinese.

at a year's worth of stipends (*fulun feita*), while banner authorities were fined three "nines" of livestock.<sup>76</sup> Punishments illegally buying or selling sables were comparable: a year's suspension of stipends and two "nines" of livestock for nobility and banner authorities. A Mongol commoner who bought sable pelts received 150 lashes with the whip. If a Mongol had acted as middleman and bought sable on behalf of another, he was still whipped eighty times.<sup>77</sup> Other provisions prohibited Mongols from venturing to Heilongjiang or "Solon lands" to buy sables. Fur tribute, in short, was not to be obtained in any other way except locally by the act of hunting.

The very mechanics of tribute collection were designed to ensure territorial hunt's boundedness in space. Furs had to be provided every year from designated borderland hunting-grounds. Each winter, for example, the Tannu Urianghai based south of the borderland sent a hunting party of twenty-five men north across the boundary line. At Hathūlbūm *karun* (modern-day Hatgal), guardsmen registered their names and tallied the number of horses and muskets.<sup>78</sup> While in the borderland, the hunters were ordered to "thoroughly wipe away their tracks," leaving no trace behind of their presence.<sup>79</sup> After the hunt, they reported back for a roll call. Those caught hunting outside the designated zone were sentenced to forty lashes with the whip.

The tribute system also designed to create long-term sustainability and annual success. From the start, meeting the tribute quota from such limited hunting grounds proved difficult. In 1759, the leader (*daruga*) of the Sarkiten Urianghai came to the

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<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.* Curiously the fine was reduced between the years 1826-1841 to two nines

<sup>77</sup> TGKH 53: 7a-8a; GMQJ 53: 8a-b.

<sup>78</sup> Until 1802 they also passed through Darkhintu *karun*.

<sup>79</sup> MID1-3976.7b (DG13.12.10).

generals with a tribute of animal pelts and bird-of-prey pinions, but no sables. As the man explained,

Since the time of my grandfathers (*mafa ama*) until now, [my people] have nomadized in places like Lake Khovsgol and the Arik river. Since in the environs of our territory there is absolutely no sable, in past times we presented tribute in accordance with the various things we captured.<sup>80</sup>

A latter investigation confirmed the complaint: the territory “produced no sable.”

The choice facing the Qing court was stark: either move these Urianghai *otok* to a land with more sable, or accept substitutes according to the capabilities of the land.<sup>81</sup> From the first year of collecting tribute in 1758, Qing authorities thus agreed to collect sable tribute according to an old Khotogoid exchange rate. As the document establishing tribute over the Tannu Urianghai explained:

Having investigated [the matter], when this type of Urianghai originally could not provide sables as tribute to their noblemen, they gave two foxes, corsac foxes, martens, or wolves as equivalent to one sable. They gave forty squirrels as equivalent to one sable. Hawk pinions were equal to one sable each, and leopards, lynx, horses, and eagle pinions were equivalent to three sables each.<sup>82</sup>

If sables were scarce, the Tangnu Urianghai could use the exchange (See Figure 44).

Figure 44: Exchange Rates for Urianghai Tribute

Animal	Value (in sable pelts)
Lynx	3
Otter	3
Leopard	3
Sable	1

<sup>80</sup> MWLF 1748.35.52.799 (QL24.3.7).

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

Yellow Fox	0.5
Sand Fox	0.5
Wolf	0.5
Stone Marten	0.5
Grey Squirrel	0.025

The Altai and Altan Noor Urianghai, by comparison, were ordered to submit a lower quota of sables: only two per household. Living in lands thought to be relatively rich in sable, however, the Altai Urianghai could substitute only foxes, while the Altan Noor Urianghai were not granted exchange rights until 1842, after sable populations had already crashed.

### **Sustaining Purity: The Depletion Crisis**

Though the court aimed to protect the integrity of the Urianghai homeland, the environmental stability upon which the imperial order depended began to come undone in the early nineteenth century as fur-bearing animals disappeared from Urianghai lands. In response, the court began a series of reforms to ensure the sustainability of the tribute system. The results on the ground were mixed: some communities managed to conserve fur-bearing animals; others saw them depleted entirely.

Serious problems in the tribute system became apparent in the year 1800, when Tannu Urianghai hunters protested that they now had “insufficient land” to survive: wild plants (Ma: *tumusū*; Mo: *tömüsü*), fish, or animals were too scarce to support their community. Acknowledging the problem, the court responded flexibly: it granted them new pastures in the borderlands, by the shores of Lake Khovsgol (see Map 5). In 1802, after continuing complaints about animal scarcity, the court halted all tribute-hunting parties east of Lake Khovsgol, at Darkintū *karun*, to allow sable populations there to



recuperate.<sup>83</sup> Relocation, however, proved an insufficient response, and complaints persisted.

Three years later, in 1805, the Qing court conceded a more fundamental reform. The court had always assessed the Urianghai by a per capita head tax, calculated on the assumption that the Tannu Urianghai community would grow by five households per year, the Altai Urianghai by three, and the Altan Noor Urianghai by two. For all three Urianghai groups, after factoring in their differential tax rates, the court thus raised the overall tax rate by twenty sables each year – an increase of 40% between the years 1765 and 1805, from 2944 to 4144 pelts. Recognizing the problem in 1805, however, the *amban* conceded that while population growth and tax hikes could be expected, “the number of sables and other small animals changed from year to year” (Ma: *seke i jergi ajigesi gurgu aniyadari labdu komso toktohon akū*). As a result, the policy was proving to be a failure: fulfilling the tribute requirement was “difficult” (Ma: *mangga*), and the Urianghai were being driven to poverty.<sup>84</sup> In 1805 (JQ10), it was thus ordered that the sable tribute be no longer tied to the size of the Urianghai populations. Thereafter the quota was fixed at 4144 pelts, the commensurate rate for an estimated population 1679 Altai, Altan Noor, and Tannu Urianghai households.<sup>85</sup> It represented, in effect, a shift from taxing the productivity of households to taxing the productivity of the land, which was deemed to be ecologically fixed.

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<sup>83</sup> M1D1-3427.18a (JQ13.11.3); M1D2-223.2b (JQ13.+5.24).

<sup>84</sup> M1D1-3909.2 [JQ10].

<sup>85</sup> M2D1-176.88b (DG15.8).

Yet the Urianghai continued to have problems securing even this lowered tribute requirement. In 1808, a report surfaced that “small wild animals have now gradually become rare” (Ma: *te ajige gurgu cun cun i tongga oho*) in the Eg River valley, near Hathūlbom *karun*. Indeed, throughout the protected borderlands, from Lake Khovsgol to Darkintu *karun*, hunting had made animals there “scarce” (Ma: *seri*). The *amban* memorialized a request to the emperor that the hunt be allowed to take place further to the east, out of Arhūn Booral booi *karun*. A move, however would be a delicate matter – Arhūn Booral was much closer to the Russian border than Hathūlbom, and thus more strategically sensitive. The pastures, moreover, were already occupied, making life again “difficult.”<sup>86</sup> When authorities at Arhūn Booral were questioned, they confirmed that the border (Ma: *kili i ba*) was only a half-day journey on horseback from the *karun*. It was thus ordered, after six years of rest, that hunts resume again from Darkintu.<sup>87</sup>

Still, problems meeting the quota continued to plague the system, growing increasingly frequent in the 1820s and 1830s. In 1822, for example, only eighteen of twenty-five hunters returned to Hathūlbom after the official hunt. When the military governor at Uliasutai caught wind of the deficit and ordered an investigation, the leader of the hunting party, Cultumg’umbu, admitted that the seven missing men had separated themselves from the group to trap furs in other territories. Although they ultimately surrendered their furs and returned without incident, the breach in the law was serious enough to warrant each man being whipped forty times; Cultumg’umbu was threatened

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<sup>86</sup> Further complicating the matter was the fact that Arhūn Booral *karun* lay under the jurisdiction of the *ambans*’ office in Ikh Khüree, while Hathūlbom belonged to the military governor’s office in Uliasutai.

<sup>87</sup> MID1-3427.18a (JQ13.11.3).

with demotion if it happened again.<sup>88</sup> Hunters made other attempts to use the land they had more intensively. In the summer of 1830, an Urianghai leader requested that the number of permissible hunters in a trapping party be expanded to thirty. Animals were simply harder to find, and the customary twenty-five-man parties now seemed too “small.” The prospects for procuring fur tribute were thus “extremely worrisome” (Ma: *ele facihyašara*). The military governor, however, summarily denied the request: since tribute had been procured successfully each year up to this point, he found insufficient reason to change the status quo.<sup>89</sup>

By 1836 – the year before Dorjirabdan’s arrival at Lake Khovsgol –the problem in the sable population was apparent, and the court was once again willing to experiment with reform. This time, it was not the official tribute burden, but an added burden of corruption that was held accountable for the decline. In this regard, there was certainly evidence that there corruption in the fur-tribute system was pervasive. As early as the Qianlong period it was documented, for example, that guardsmen were embezzling fur from official treasuries.<sup>90</sup> In 1836, it was revealed that representatives of the *beise* of Sain Noyan aimay, who were dispatched to Urianghai territory to receive the fur tribute, were extorting tea, tobacco, and other gifts from the Urianghai and engaging in illegal trade.<sup>91</sup> When the matter was brought to light, the emperor endorsed a plan by which the Urianghai would deliver the furs to banner authorities themselves. This policy proved

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<sup>88</sup> M1D1-3976.5a (DG13.5.24).

<sup>89</sup> M1D1-3909.1 (DG10.7.6). That spring, officials confirmed that a hunting party of 25 left from Hatholbom. See M1D1-3909.3 (DG10.8.19).

<sup>90</sup> M1D1-279.220a.

<sup>91</sup> This collection team was by law composed of two officers and fifteen soldiers. M2D1-177.1a (XF1.2.15)

just as ruinous. With their precious cargo, the delivery parties were the targets for banditry “numerous times” (Ma: *mudan labdu*), and Urianghai were falling into debt to cover the expenses for the journey. Thus, in 1851, the court allowed the old system to go back into effect, with the policy shift in delivery method blamed for causing the “decline” (Ma: *edelehe*) in fur tribute. A request to return to the pre-1836 setup was agreed to by the young Xianfeng emperor in the second month of his reign.<sup>92</sup> Though tribute continued to be delivered at this rate until the collapse of dynastic rule in 1911, the ecosystem was roiling: after the collapse of sable, the second half of the nineteenth century would witness the total collapse of the yellow fox, corsac fox, and Siberian squirrel populations, with hunters left to focus on the remaining lynx and wolf.<sup>93</sup> Despite the consistent flexibility of the court, a constituent element of the wild frontier – its animals – were disappearing from Tannu Urianghai lands.

A sense for the scale of the decline emerges from tribute tallies compiled by the military governor’s office in Uliasutai and the Imperial Household Department in Beijing.<sup>94</sup> Tribute returns for sable and substitute animals were tallied each year for the all Urianghai groups, pre-collated, by the Imperial Household Department and archived as part of the *Neiwufu zouxiao dang* (Ch: 內務府奏銷檔). Similar records were tallied by the military governor at Uliasutai’s office for all three groups separately, which were stored in the Grand Council’s collection of copies of Manchu-language memorials (Ch: 軍機處滿文錄副奏折). The former are exclusively in Chinese, while the latter are either

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<sup>92</sup> M2D1-177.1a (XF1.2.15).

<sup>93</sup> Thomas Ewing, “The Forgotten Frontier,” 208, n. 84. Citing Potanin, Ewing notes that up to 7000 squirrel pelts were exported to Russia each year in the 1870s.

<sup>94</sup> For a complete listing and discussion of the sources, see Appendix A.

in Manchu or Chinese. The numbers from the two fonds do not always tally with each other; when they do not, I have used those of military governor's office (see Appendix A).

For the Tannu Urianghai, a steady decline in sables began after 1817, from a high of 3800 sables caught in 1817, to 1342 sables in 1846, and only 800-1000 sables caught after 1860 – almost an 80% decline (See Figure 45). Records of the other animals presented as tribute indicate that the Urianghai made up for the loss sable by substituting foxes and squirrels. When the fox and squirrel populations crashed, they substituted lynx and otter (see Figures 46-51).

Figure 45: Sable Tribute – Tannu Urianghai, 1771-1910

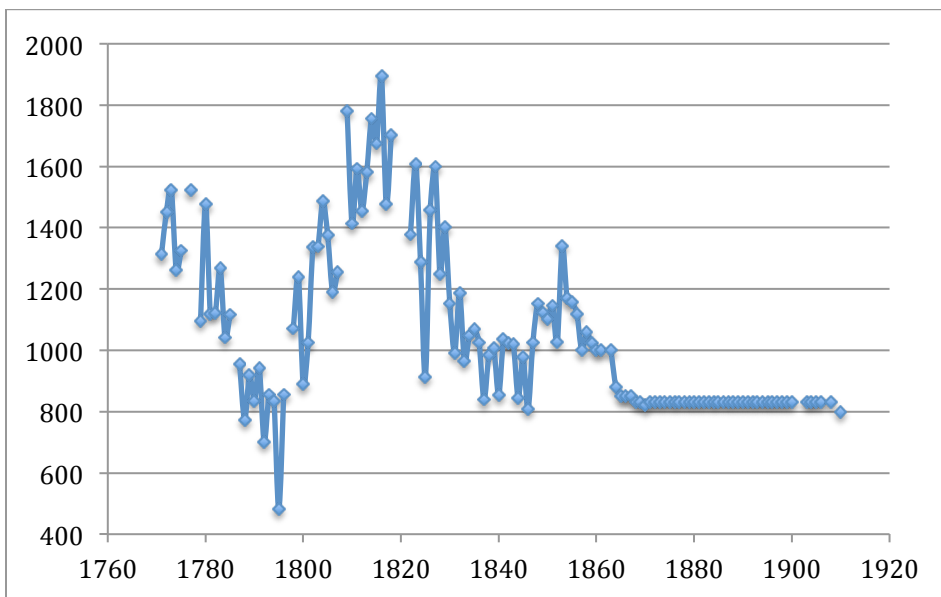


Figure 46: Fox Tribute – Tannu Urianghai, 1771-1910

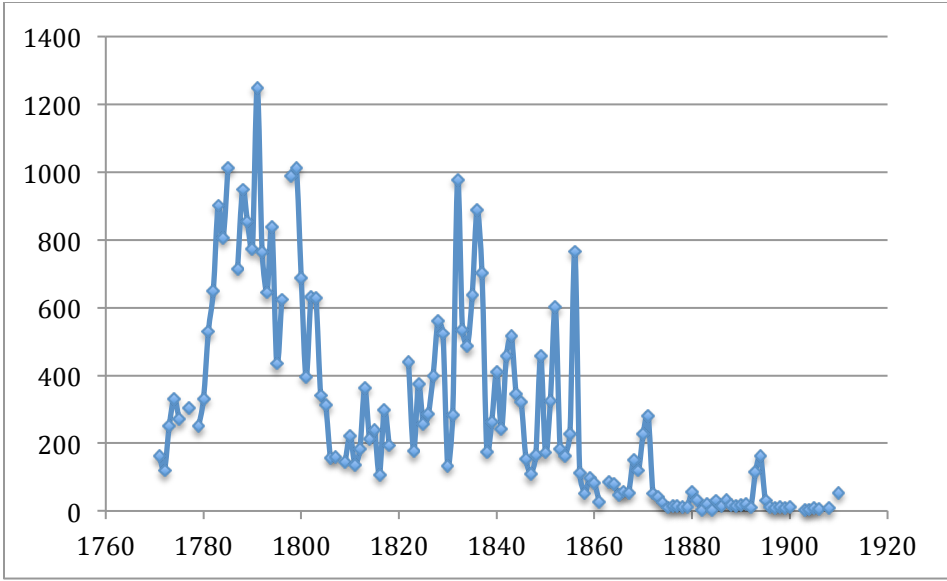


Figure 47: Corsac Fox Tribute: Tannu Urianghai, 1771-1910

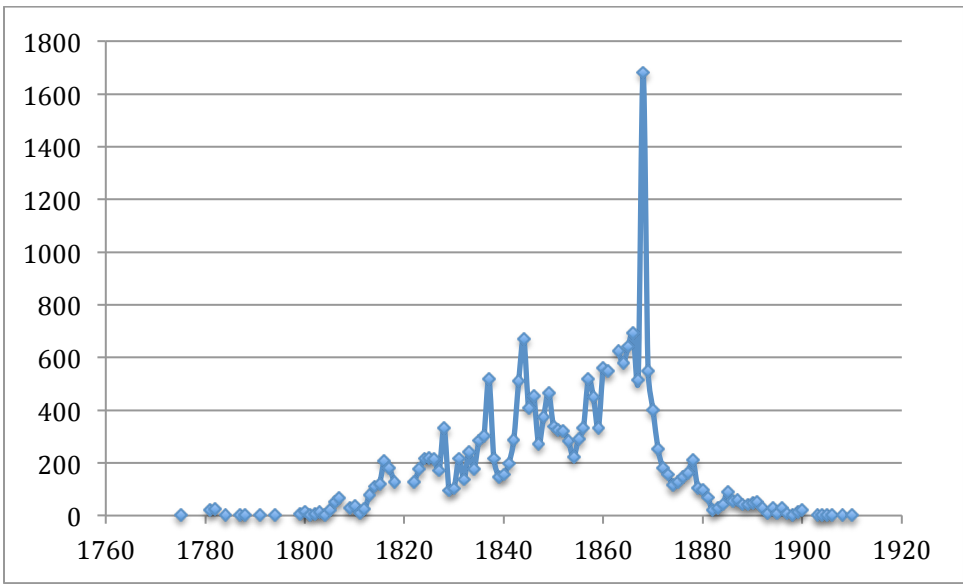


Figure 48: Squirrel Tribute – Tannu Urianghai, 1771-1910

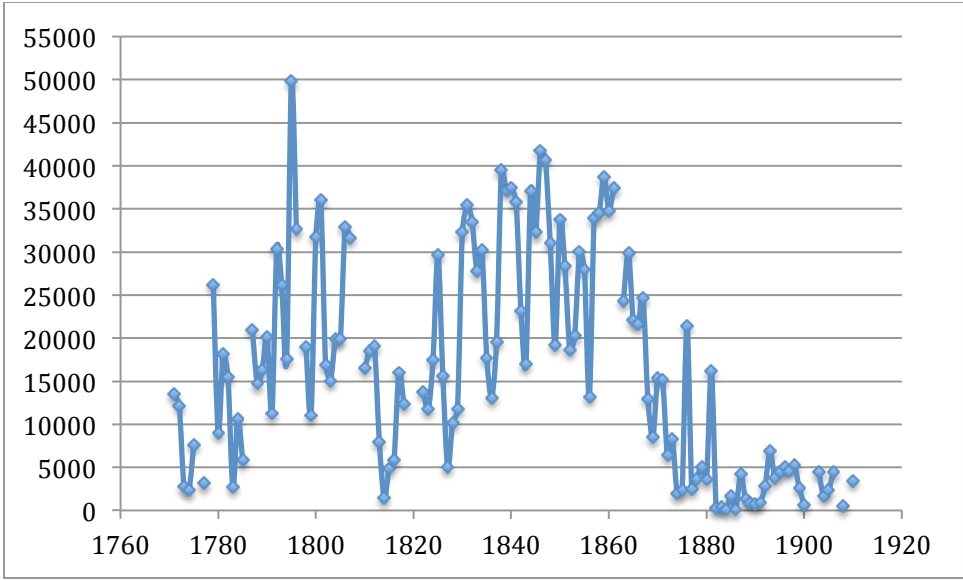


Figure 49: Stone Marten Tribute – Tannu Urianghai, 1771-1910

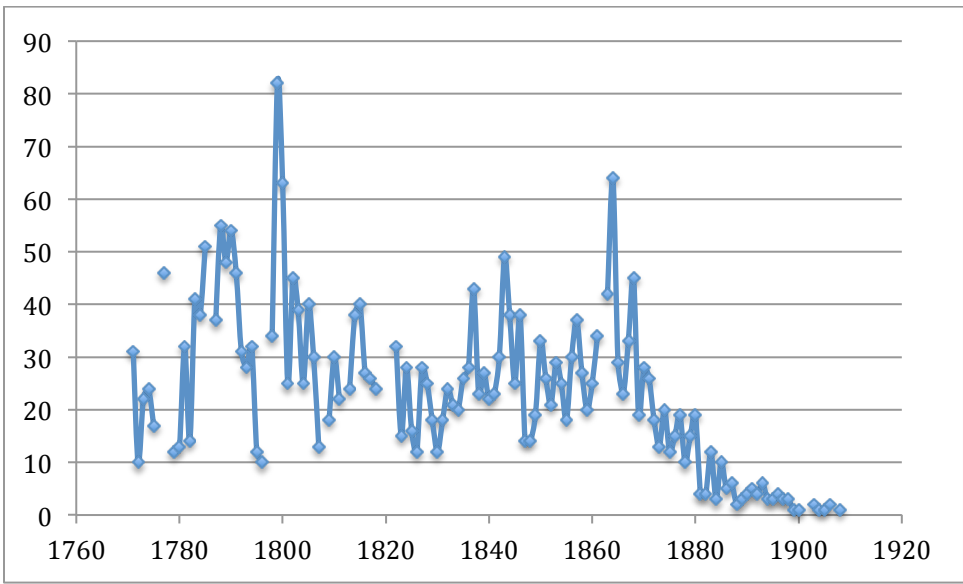


Figure 50: Lynx Tribute – Tannu Urianghai, 1771-1910

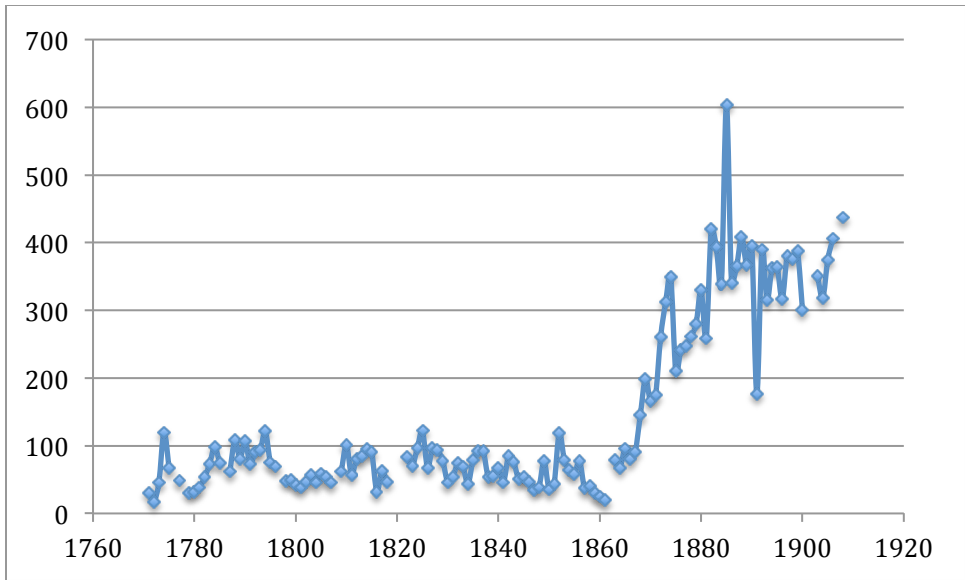
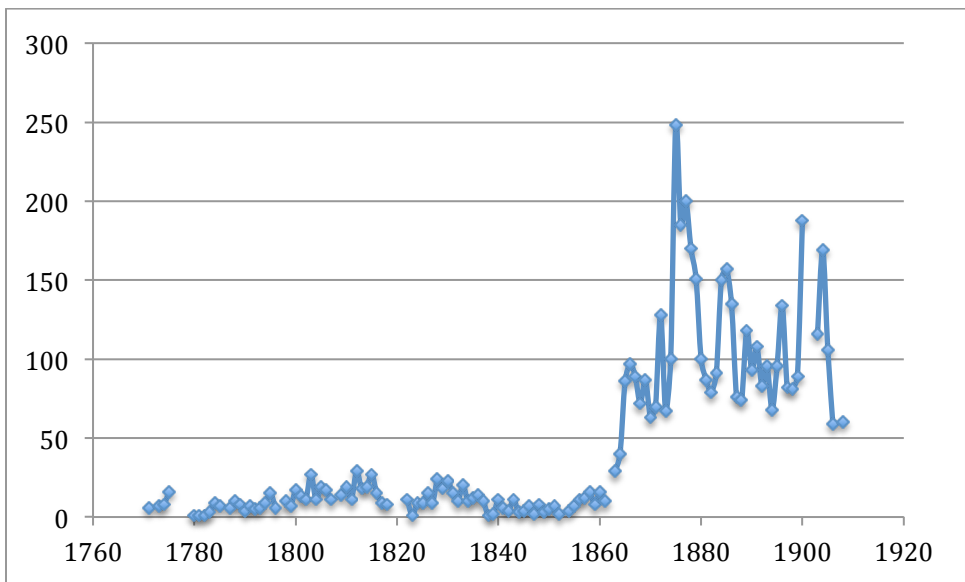


Figure 51: River Otter Tribute – Tannu Urianghai, 1771-1910



The decline in sable populations, to which the court was most sensitive, was not limited to the Tannu Urianghai, but extended from the Altai mountains to the Amur. From the viewpoint of conservation, the Tannu Urianghai were in fact a relative success story: the Altai and Altan Noor Urianghai experienced much more dramatic declines in sable populations, perhaps in part because no other types of animals could be exchanged in. For both of these groups, the 1820s proved a pivotal decade, with the Altai Urianghai



witnessing a steady decline in sable thereafter, and the Altan Noor a sudden collapse (See Figures 52-55). To make up the difference, the Altan Noor increasingly submitted squirrel pelts in replacement. Further, as they were originally only allowed to use squirrel in exchange for sable, in 1842, the court instituted the standard Tannu Urianghai exchange, and the Altan Noor began to substitute in leopard, otter, lynx, stone marten, fox, corsac fox, and wolf as well.<sup>95</sup> Yet because the Altan Noor jurisdictions had few of these animals, no more than several dozen of each were presented in the last two decades for which they submitted tribute. The Altai Urianghai, by law, were only allowed to replace sable with fox.

Figure 52: Sable Tribute – Altan Noor Urianghai, 1772-1864

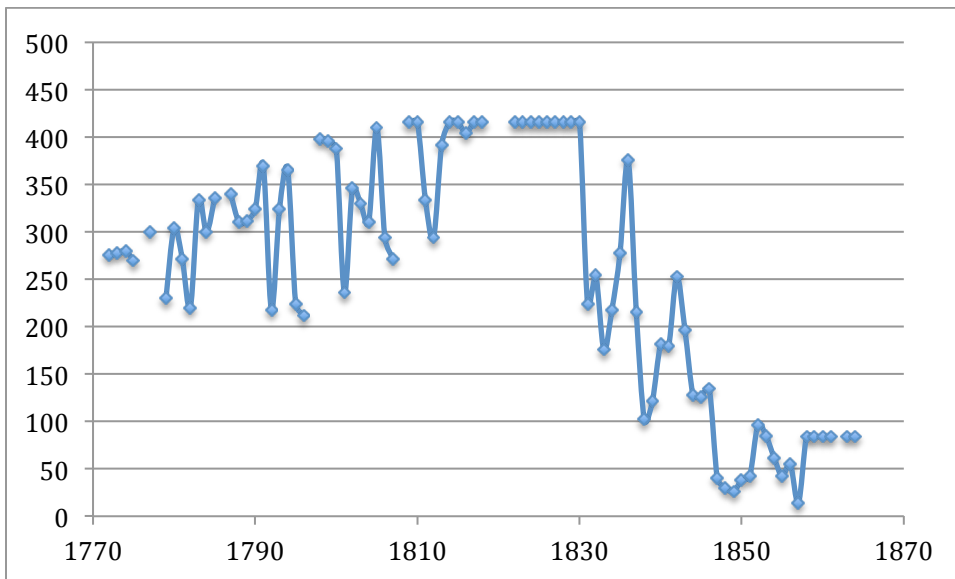


Figure 53: Squirrel Tribute – Altan Noor Urianghai, 1772-1864

<sup>95</sup> MWLF 4238.27.211.1940 (DG22.8.29).

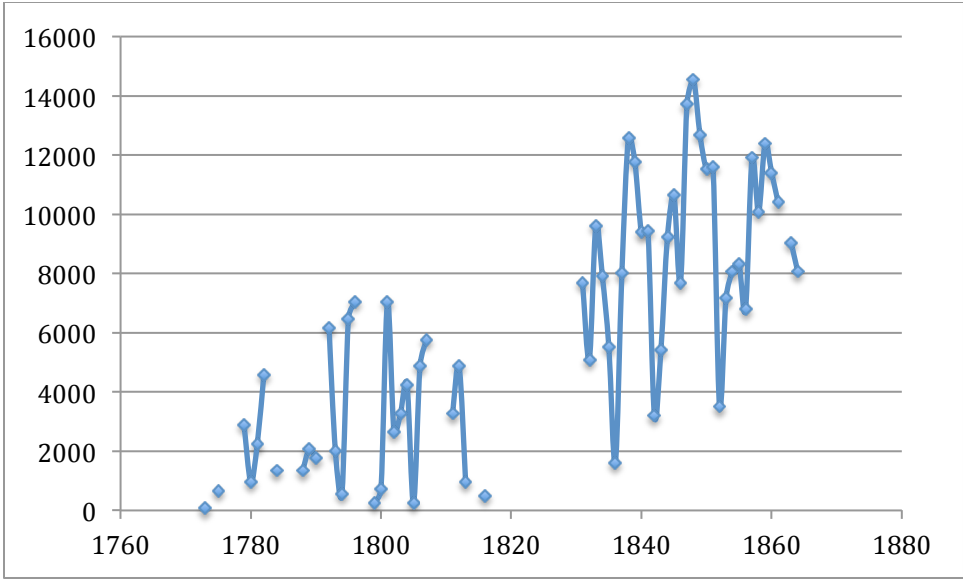


Figure 54: Sable Tribute – Altai Urianghai, 1772-1867

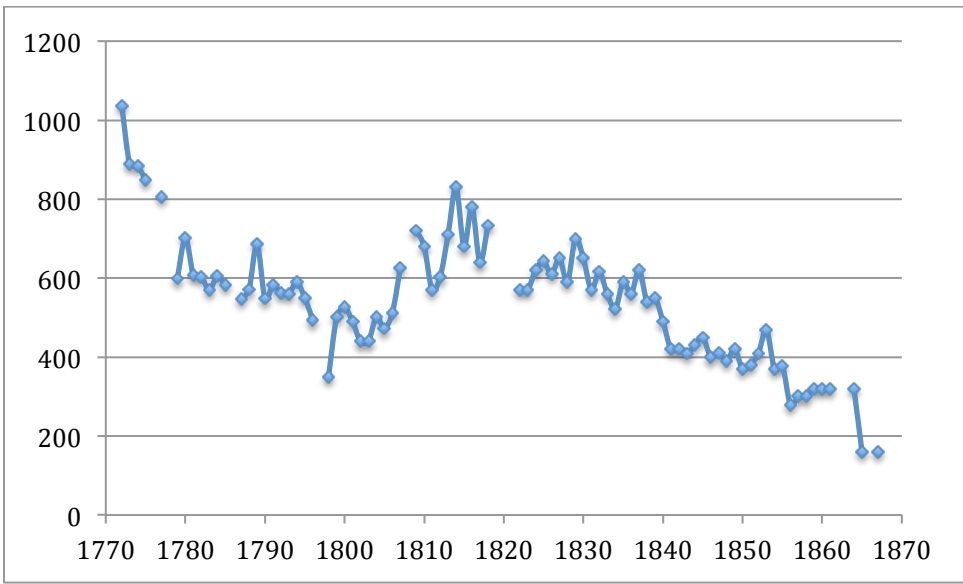
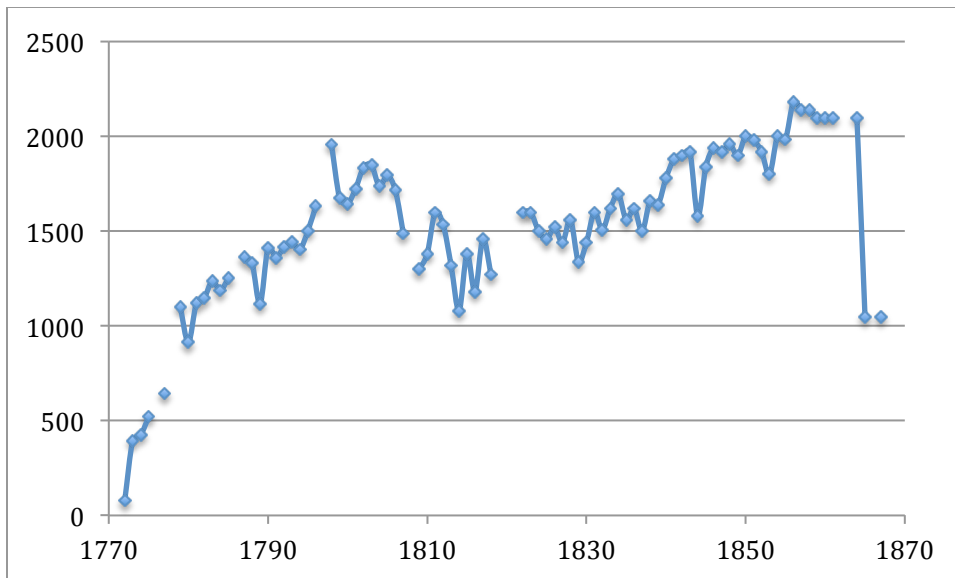


Figure 55: Fox Tribute – Altai Urianghai, 1772-1867



Commercialization and the market lurked behind these dramatic environmental changes. Indeed, hints for the cause of the decline can be found in some of the problems endemic to the tribute system. At every stage the governing norms were undermined. Merchants crossed into the borderlands, and Urianghai illegally sold them fur. Yamen officials in Uliasutai extorted pelts from the deliverymen. Later, furs would be stolen from the local treasuries in Mongolia,<sup>96</sup> and in Beijing, officers of the Imperial Household department cooked the books, embezzled the finest furs, and sold off the furs rejected by the court at unbeatable rates.<sup>97</sup> In short, tribute as designed by law was much less lucrative than other alternatives. A crude measure of the gap between the norms and practice of fur tribute can be gleaned through a comparison of the official exchange rates used for tribute with the comparable market rates for furs at Kiakhta. Roughly speaking, an Urianghai tribute-payer might double the value of their lynx or fox pelt, get 2.5 times

<sup>96</sup> MID1-279.220a. In this case, guardsmen were embezzling fur from the treasury. Six sable pelts and seven fox pelts were found missing. The amount was not much, but the value was high: perhaps equivalent to thirteen or more taels of silver, depending on their quality.

<sup>97</sup> This is reflected, in part, in discrepancies between the tribute tallies compiled in Uliasutai and Beijing; it is also reflected in the static market prices for furs cited by the *Neiwufu* after 1800.

value of their squirrel, and triple the value of wolf and fox pelts if they sold it on the open market.<sup>98</sup>

### **From Environmental Crisis to Jurisdiction Building: the 1837 Boundary Dispute**

Throughout the crisis, the court responded by fixing territories and clarifying jurisdictions. The case of Dorjirabdan's trip to the border in 1837, which opened this chapter, was typical in this regard. The importance of the process of delineating and segregating imperial jurisdictions was signaled by the presence of the *amban*: Russians had not penetrated the border, but the problem was comparable: it had prompted a personal visit from the highest official in Outer Mongolia.<sup>99</sup> Prior to the dispute, the Urianghai had used the southern slopes of the Kükge River valley in the summer to pasture their animals, and then moved back south through the passes in the winter before their annual sable hunt. It had proved to be a workable arrangement. As Dorjirabdan later summarized the matter, "when we looked into the condition of each side's territory [Ma: *nukte*], the guardsmen's land was limited in size but had much pastureland for herding livestock, while the Urianghai's territory was large but had a great deal of forests and steep mountains."

In the end, the nobleman representing the Urianghai, Mandarwa, agreed to allow the old wintertime boundary to be made permanent, effectively conceding the southern slopes of the valley to the guardsmen. Dorjirabdan remained confident that the loss was

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<sup>98</sup> Based on prices in the year 1794. Further research in Russian archival materials to get a full price series at Kiakhta is necessary.

<sup>99</sup> We can thus update Thomas Ewing's claim, made without the benefit of access to archival records, that "there is no evidence that Tannu-Urjankhai was ever visited by a senior Ch'ing official (except perhaps in 1726)." Ewing, "The Forgotten Frontier," 189.

minor, having caused “no harm or injury to [the Tannu Urianghai] way of life.”<sup>100</sup> When the agreement was finally struck, both sides agreed to not cross the boundary to the other side, with the boundary’s permanence announced in sworn, written statements by the noble leaders of both communities. Worried that livestock would still cross this line, hunters were further ordered to stop setting traps in the valley just south of the boundary line, creating an even larger buffer zone between the communities. Dorjirabdan hired a local lama, named Jamcu, to draw a map with the boundary line clearly delineated, and five cairns were erected on the ridgeline to mark the boundary on the ground. Copies of the new agreement, along with the sworn statements and the map were drawn up, and, having attached them his summary memorial to throne, they were forwarded to the Lifanyuan in Beijing, then back to the amban’s office in Ikh Khüree for clerical use.<sup>101</sup>

Map 6: Disputed Urianghai-Borderland Boundary Line, 1837

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<sup>100</sup> M1D1-4092.1 (DG17.4.20).

<sup>101</sup> M1D1-4092.1 (DG17.4.20); M1D1-4092.5 (undated); and M1D1-4092.7 (DG17.3).



On Jamcu’s map (Map 6), a thick red line cuts across the territory from east to west, marking the borderline between the Urianghai, who live to its south, and frontier guards, who live to its north. Five black triangles – the cairns – are placed along the line. North of the line are teepee-shaped markers, showing the location of karuns, including Hathūlbom karun, on the southern shores of Lake Khovsgol.<sup>102</sup> Black dotted lines wove through the landscape and connected the karuns; they represent the guardsmen’s patrol routes, with a northern route following the ridgeline and a southern route the valley of the Kükge River, which cut through the valley just north of the border.<sup>103</sup> The map, however, was made to represent a social segregation that was yet to exist. The clean, red

<sup>102</sup> This *karun* is the predecessor for the modern town of Hatgal, which today serves as the final staging point for outdoorsmen and tourists heading to Lake Khovsgol.

<sup>103</sup> On the top right corner is written the Manchu word “*asara*” – “store away [for the files].”

line cutting through the middle was drawn because the line had been consistently crossed. The line represented an ambition, an attempt to reestablish the borderlands.

In many ways, this process of making a border was typical for Qing Mongolia. Imperial authority was limited on the ground, and internal boundaries were frequently transgressed – in this particular case by fur-trappers. Local-level actors, focused on local-level problems, generated the demand for boundary lines. The imperial representative was an outsider, and his arrival marked a break in the rhythm of local politics. Significantly, he leveraged his position to claim impartiality: the Urianghai needed to trap furs; the borderland had to be secure. Dorjirabdan played the role of intermediary, not advocate: the identity and integrity of both jurisdictions was to be respected. In the end, though the border guards had their way, the empire's authority and material resources helped create a working peace.

## **Conclusion**

Significantly, the immediate cause behind the map-making and “bordering” process<sup>104</sup> arose in response to a dramatic local depletion of fur-bearing animals. The identity of people, place, and product was to be upheld: if the nexus was broken, it represented an artificial intervention and a break with the aims of empire. Laws prohibiting fur-dying or fur trade reveal how it was less important to receive furs from the Urianghai, per se, than to receive “authentic” products, that is, furs the Urianghai had trapped and came directly from their homelands. Rather than condone a Mongolization

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<sup>104</sup> On “bordering,” see David Newman, “From the International to the Local in the Study and Representation of Boundaries: Theoretical and Methodological Comments,” in *Holding the Line: Borders in a Global World*, eds. Heather N. Nicol and Ian Townsend-Gault (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005), 401; and Henk Van Houtum, Olivier Kramsch and Wolfgang Zierhofer, *B/ordering Space* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2005), 1.

of the borderlands, or promote Chinese mercantile activity, the empire aimed to maintain differences: to segregate, define, and allocate. The environmental crisis posed by the collapse of fur-bearing animal populations was at the center of this process: like the mixing and dislocation wrought by mushroom picking, the depletion of fur-bearing animals forced the Qing state to make distinctions and enforce the differences between taiga and steppe, pure and mixed, natural and foreign.

From the court's point of view, each jurisdiction needed to be stable and untouched, particularly in the far north: not only was the taiga a shield against Russian incursions, it was also the basis for the Urianghai way of life. The institutional geography of the far north was designed to ensure maximum stability as one approached the border. At the furthest extreme was the borderland, managed to be absolutely "pure." The borderland was followed by Urianghai territory, where Mongols and Chinese merchants were prohibited. Next came Mongol land bordering Urianghai land, where trade remained prohibited. Only south of the Eg and Kherlen Rivers was it safe enough to license trade. The closer the jurisdiction was to the border, the more direct and top-down the type of state intervention in cross-jurisdictional exchanges. The court had proved flexible and creative in its efforts to ensure the integrity of the borderland and the sustainability of fur-tribute: it did everything in its power to ensure that each of its jurisdictions was sustainable and identifiable.

Despite the limits to imperial rule on the ground, the Qing project was not a total failure. Indeed, the first modern European travellers to Urianghai territory were struck by the changes one encountered when crossing into the borderland: it seemed completely untouched by Russian, Mongol, or Chinese influences. Douglas Carruthers, in one of the



earliest European-led expeditions through the Tuvan mountain ranges in 1910, captured the mood. As he reported of Khovsgol region:

Swampy bottoms, half lake, half forest, looked so mysterious, that if some prehistoric monster had raised its snaky head to have a look at us, it would not have been surprising. We should have felt its presence was all in keeping with its surroundings, and was, in fact, more natural than our own.

There were, of course, people indigenous to this cut-off borderland. But as Carruthers dryly observed of them, “in such a secluded region a peculiar inhabitant can be guessed at.” They were the Tannu Urianghai, and like the place itself, they had been left behind in time. To Carruthers, the borderland wilderness represented an atavism and an opportunity: the survival of primordial environments threw doubts on the presence of the Qing state. Wilderness through this lens was an anomaly: it was a place left untouched by the commercial dynamism of the nation and, by extension, represented a natural border between states.

While the nature of the borderland in the Qing period existed, above all, as a strategic buffer, it was hardly untouched. If anything, however, the nature of the Urianghai borderland was more manufactured wilderness than a neglected one. If it was a world apart, it was because empire helped facilitate the separation. This space was not a *bigan*-type wilderness; it was, in Manchu terms, a *bolgo jecen*, a “purified borderland.” On the one hand, it was an historical bastion of Qing rule – a Green Wall of Inner Asia. On the other, it was a tailored economic zone for fur-production. The Urianghai were never so isolated. Rather, they were participants in empire and producers for distant markets; they were deeply integrated into the wider world. To cross the boundary into

Urianghai land was not to exit modern times: the boundary itself, like the taiga and furs it protected, was product of early modern empire.

## Conclusion

For men like H.E.M. James and Douglas Carruthers, who discovered the nature of Manchuria and Mongolia in the late nineteenth century, wilderness lacked history; it remained in what they believed to be its original, primordial form. Later scholars, writing in the national tradition, came to a similar conclusion: the Manchu court, acting against the natural interests of the nation, preserved these lands from the world beyond; only with the arrival of homesteaders did the “modern” history of the frontier begin. Yet, as this study has shown, Qing Manchuria and Mongolia were no less of their time than China proper was of its. The natural frontier was defined, not through its isolation, but through its integration with the world around it; “Nature” was created in the nineteenth century, not destroyed, proving that in this part of the world, as elsewhere, total wilderness can only exist in a context of total state control.

As we have seen, in the years 1750-1850, the Mongol steppe, Urianghai taiga, and Manchurian mountains were changing rapidly. Indeed, they seemed on the way to becoming almost indistinguishable from the jurisdictions around them; the line between steppe and sown, Mongol and Chinese, frontier and metropole began inexorably to dissolve. In response, the Qing court and its servants worked to elaborate the territorial, cultural, and environmental boundaries of Manchu imperial homelands, Mongol pasturelands, and northern hunting grounds; in order to defend against unbridled “mixing” and motion, the state repeatedly attempted to reconstitute each jurisdiction as “pure:” borders were tightened, migrants repatriated, and idealized steppe and forest environments newly protected. The difference between pure and corrupted, original and refashioned, was defended at the boundary line between Urianghai and Mongol,

pastoralist and merchant, Manchu and Chinese. It was in its pursuit of “purity,” where the native overlapped with the alien, that the Qing state produced nature: a realm supposedly untouched by outside intervention.

If the Qing invention of nature was above all a process of fixing the physical, administrative, and commercial position of people, the Western invention of nature was not altogether different: it too imagined connections between natural environments and indigeneity. This alignment of natural and native, in turn, was inseparable from modern contexts of empire and nation building. In the colonies of European powers, metropolitan actors were imagined as the sole agents of change, while genetic connections to a native land were used to place those without agency within a rigid hierarchy.<sup>1</sup> On the homefront, natural European landscapes were only preserved as they began to disappear, and modern commercial dislocations generated new anxieties about the survival of the state.<sup>2</sup> From the nineteenth century onwards, nations, too, became aligned with a primordial nature of their territory.<sup>3</sup> In both cases, nature was a political project whose antiquity was as imagined as nationhood and nativeness themselves.

The distinction between “natural” and “artificial” is not only historically variable, but is itself a cultural artifact. Indeed, humans have left an indelible mark on the land; it

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<sup>1</sup> Sumit Guha, *Environment and Ethnicity in India, 1200-1991* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 4; Carolyn Merchant, “Shades of Darkness: Race and Environmental History,” *Environmental History* 8.3 (2003), 380-394.

<sup>2</sup> Karl Appuhn, “Inventing Nature: Forests, Forestry, and State Power in Renaissance Venice,” *The Journal of Modern History* 72.4 (2000), 861-889.

<sup>3</sup> See Thomas M. Lekan, *Imagining the Nation in Nature: Landscape Preservation and German Identity, 1885-1945*, 4. Also Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory*.

is impossible to read them out of even prehistoric landscapes.<sup>4</sup> Modern attempts to read humans out of landscapes, without understanding the complex role we play in local ecosystems, has led to surprising or counterproductive results: forests sometimes arose because of human activity, not in spite of it.<sup>5</sup> As William Cronon wrote on the concept of wilderness as antipode to civilization: “Far from being the one place on earth that stands apart from humanity, it is quite profoundly a human creation – indeed, the creation of very particular human cultures at very particular moments in human history.”<sup>6</sup>

Along these lines, while the modern invention of nature posits a complete divorce between the natural and social worlds, in practice this divorce is never realized. In this sense, as Bruno Latour so provocatively argued, “we have never been modern.” Instead, “nature” has served as a production site for new cultures – those practiced, for example, in the lab or in the park. Natural spaces are fashioned to uphold localized values within a splintered, but constitutionally coherent, polity.<sup>7</sup> Modern park rangers cut trails to look uncut, pluck invasive species from the forest, and direct human traffic to designated, segregated grounds.<sup>8</sup> From the American park, to the German forest, to the Soviet reserve, modern nature has survived because, as A.R. Agassiz suggested, states “rigidly preserved” it, whether for participatory politics, primordialism, or technocratic rule.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> P.S. Martin and H.E. Wright, *Pleistocene Extinctions: The Search for a Cause* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967).

<sup>5</sup> Fairhead and Leach, *Misreading the African Landscape: Society and Ecology in a Forest-Savanna Mosaic* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996). James Scott, *Seeing Like a State*.

<sup>6</sup> William Cronon, “The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature,” in *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*, ed. William Cronon (New York: W.W. Norton, 1996), 69.

<sup>7</sup> Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*.

<sup>8</sup> William Cronon, *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*.

<sup>9</sup> Douglas Weiner, *Models of Nature: Ecology, Conservation, and Cultural Revolution in Soviet Russia* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988).

“Pure” places in Qing Inner Asia were no different. There was no separation of nature from culture *per se*, but a separation of two types of culture: one the native, imperial culture of Mongols and Manchus; the other the metropolitan culture of Chinese merchants and migrants. The material construction of purity embodied the highest values of Manchus and Mongols: manliness, martial vigor, and rusticity. If early modern European states manufactured in nature a “caricature of society as a military parade ground,”<sup>10</sup> the Qing state manufactured the order of a game park. Both projects were meant to engender productive, ordered, and coherent landscapes. Both were aimed against the chaos and dynamism of their immediate historical context.

In the period 1750-1850, an unprecedented level of commerce, migration, and resource exploitation upset the political, ideological, and environment foundations of the empire. A foundation of Qing rule, and the banner system in particular, was clear distinctions between ethnic identities and jurisdictional territories. In practice, however, the turbulence and opportunities of *Pax Manjurica* did not produce such a clean or simple world. Caravans, mushroom pickers, soldiers, tribute bearers, pilgrims, refugees, drunks, entertainers, convicts, escaped slaves, and runaway wives transgressed imperial boundary lines. Chinese took Mongol names and Mongol wives; Mongols became caravan workers and commercial fur trappers. Laymen entered monasteries, monks into the merchants’ quarter; Chinese camped on the steppe, Mongols meanwhile bivouacked around Beijing. Exotic commodities and contraband flowed and circulated throughout the empire. Tea, tobacco, silver, silk, and cotton found their way into Mongol *gers* and Manchu garrisons; furs, freshwater pearls, mushrooms, ginseng, deer horn, and game

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<sup>10</sup> James Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 82.

meat emptied onto the streets of Beijing. In the new Qing fashion, furs were stitched onto silk, and silver inlaid with pearls.

The land itself was changing in unprecedented ways. Fur-bearing animals disappeared from the taiga; fresh water oysters vanished from riverbeds; marmots, mushrooms, and fish were emptied from the steppe. Ginseng farms and pickers' huts appeared on the slopes of Changbaishan, while hunters and loggers worked the holy mountains of Mongolia. Such destruction was unheard of: as far as anyone knew, sables, pearls, wild ginseng, and mushrooms had never been so recklessly exploited. It was a crisis the Qing court could not ignore: it upended the livelihood of local Manchus, Mongols, and Urianghai; disrupted the flow of high-demand goods; and reflected poorly upon the emperor's commitment to maintaining order and destabilized a strategic frontier.

Amidst the dislocation, then, the Qing state worked to "purify" the land: a dual process of creating bordered, coherent imperial territories on the one hand, and consolidating sovereign control on the other.<sup>11</sup> Migrants were met with registration drives, licenses to settle or work, or repatriation campaigns; to properly govern, the banner system demanded clear, singular lines of authority running from individual subjects, to local authorities, to emperor. Indeed, a critical problem with the national narrative of "prohibition policy" (Ch: 封禁政策) was its focus on prohibitions upon Chinese settlement in the frontier; it failed to capture how the same policies restricted the mobility of Manchus, Mongols, and people like the Urianghai as well. The notion of

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<sup>11</sup> On the congruent processes of making bordered space and consolidating sovereign, see Thongchai Winichukul, *Siam Mapped: A History of a Geo-Body of a Nation* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994), 100-107.

Mongol and Manchu bannermen leaving home to work as woodcutters or commercial deer hunters was as problematic for imperial stability as the increase of Chinese migrants on the frontier: they, too, wrought administrative, environmental and social havoc. Chinese migrants were not a problem as much as *undocumented* migrants were, for only undocumented merchants and migrants stood outside the gaze and administration of the state. In this sense, clarifying and maintaining the integrity of banner territory, and so making it “pure,” entailed making the banner administratively simple and governable, as “purification” dovetailed with an underlying drive to achieve legibility from the complex “social hieroglyphic” of Qing frontiers.<sup>12</sup>

At the same time, in the eyes of the court, the most insidious threat to imperial order was not physical “mixing” and migration, but the sense that Mongol and Manchu bannermen lost their way in the chaos. Hunter, herder, and soldier were ideally uncomplicated men: simple, temperate, and sincere. While they participated in markets, the court envisioned a limited engagement: one of the defining aspects of the “Manchu Way,” alongside competence in Manchu language and skill with horse and bow, was frugality.<sup>13</sup> This Spartan spirit of the Manchu way was expressed in words like “purity” or “plainness” (Ma: *gulu*; Mo: *siluyun*; Ch: 淳) or, as, at least ideologically, one’s livelihood reflected one’s inner disposition. Sumptuary laws of the eighteenth century were intended to promote this spirit of frugality. To wear the finest furs meant exceeding one’s means and, in the long run, courting ruin: the frugal and the diligent thrived; those

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<sup>12</sup> James Scott, *Seeing Like a State*. To quote James Scott, “The utopian, immanent, and continually frustrated goal of the modern state is to reduce the chaotic, disorderly, constantly changing social reality beneath it something more closely resembling the administrative grid of its observations.” James Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, 82.

<sup>13</sup> Mark Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, 276, 347.



who overstepped their bounds did not. Yet living a modest life was not only a Manchu virtue, but one that befitted the rustic simplicity of Mongols and Urianghai as well.

For each group, temptation was everywhere: at the fur market, in the mushroom patch, and on at a guardpost at the Great Wall. Mongols and Urianghai were plain peoples; mushroom pickers, venal officials, and illicit fur traders were fundamentally different subjects, driven by blind cupidity. Unlike those of “pure” spirit, they were “reckless,” “blind,” or “negligent.” Unfettered access to markets subjected Mongols and Manchus to wastefulness and greed, and provided the opportunity to lose their way. The Urianghai were kept to even stricter standards: their way of life could not even support *any* interactions with merchants. On their own, they lived as humble subjects of the empire, trapping furs, respecting the border, and maintaining strong contacts with the Qing court. With merchants, they cut secret deals with Russians and let their homeland be stripped of its most precious resources. Mediated through their livelihood, Qing subjects ideally had fixed relations to the material objects about them; the “purity” (*bolgo*) of the disciplined landscape was mirrored in a “purity” of the disciplined self. The “mixing” described in Qing documents thus represented both a physical and cultural confusion, and purity demanded both a territorial segregation of peoples and the promotion of ethnic norms.

Defense priorities played a key part in the formulation and execution of these policies. The closer one lived to the Russian border, the greater the stakes of failure, the higher the expectation to conform to the martial ideal, and the more intense the effort to protect bannermen from the enervating temptations of the market. In the borderland, all trade and permanent settlement was banned. The borderland gave way to Urianghai

lands and adjacent Mongol banner-land, where the court prohibited all mercantile activity, then to standard banner land, where trade was legal only if licensed, then ultimately the Chinese interior, where administration lost any connection to the demands of the border. In a similar, but simpler, way, spatialization of dependability held for Manchuria.<sup>14</sup> The most severe standards of purity were reserved for lands where stakes were highest. Taiga and steppe, served as a natural bulwark against incursions from the north. Mongols and Manchus, as the military backbone of the empire, further required steppe and forest for their martial way of life, based on riding and the hunt, to flourish.

This strategic geography correlated to differing institutions for moving the production of the frontier to the metropole, including prohibition, tribute, and licensed trade. The line between threatened and safe jurisdictions shifted as commerce intensified, migration increased, or environmental challenges arose. Thus the court specially licensed the deer horn, farmland, and firewood trades in the early nineteenth century, while it banned Manchurian pearl production. In practice, moreover, all three types of institutions – prohibition, tribute, and licensing trade – changed significantly over time in response to these pressures. In Manchuria, ginseng and fur tribute came to incorporate increasingly elaborate oversight mechanisms and market opportunities. In Mongolia, after 1800, the licensing system was standardized across jurisdictions. Prohibitions on extralegal trade mobilizing increasing number of guards from increasingly distant

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<sup>14</sup> Jonathan Bone, “Socialism in a Far Country: Stalinist Population Politics and the Making of the Soviet Far East, 1929-1939” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 2003). Both the Qing empire and its national Chinese successors – as well as in the frontiers colonized by the Russian and Soviet states – each state endorsed the view that the frontiers were made safe by the presence of only certain types of people. The securing process involved both entrenching the right kind of people and removing the wrong kind. In the modern Chinese nation state, it meant promoting Chinese migration and settlement; in late Romanov empire, it meant promoting Russian settlement and removing Chinese migrants; in the Soviet state, it meant the mass-repatriation of Koreans and the deployment of more seemingly dependable nationalities.

banners. Yet while all three types of state interventions in trade were deployed in different contexts, and entailed differing expectations and oversight from the court, all were deployed for a similar end: empire building. Like other empires, integration was achieved through segregation, “self –consciously maintaining the diversity of people they conquered and incorporated.”<sup>15</sup> Each state intervention in the market was used to maintain difference, coherence, and stature of subject groups –in the words of the “plan for the purification of Khüree,” to separate “Mongols and Chinese, lamas and laymen, men and women.”

At the same time, the Qing court worked to achieve a balance between protecting imperial stability and encouraging production and exchange throughout the period 1750-1850. Multiethnic empire did not preclude the marketplace; it often depended upon it, a reality reflected clearly in Qing institutions. In a nod to the importance of commerce in supporting the livelihood of Manchus and Mongols, the court legalized trade in most frontier jurisdictions. Manchurian tribute systems incorporated market mechanisms through institutions such as the *culgan* and the farming-out of ginseng permits to private pickers. In Mongolia, the court supported the licensing system and created a legal infrastructure for the deer horn and timber trades. Mongolia and Manchuria served not only as ethnic homelands, but as complex zones of interaction, and the growth of the *ambans*' office, the creation of institutions such as the *undeci*, and the elaboration of trade mechanisms within fur and ginseng tribute were administrative responses to this emergent order, where vigorous exchange between frontier and metropole was the norm, at least along the major trade hubs and connecting roads.

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<sup>15</sup> Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, *Empires in World History: Power the Politics of Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

Indeed, while concerned about bannermen indulging in the market, the Qing court actively encouraged commercial production. When resources such as pearls, ginseng, and furs were plentiful, as they were in the early eighteenth century, the court rewarded surplus yields and steadily pressed more laborers into service. Later, as resources became depleted, the court instituted mechanisms to ensure sustainability: it rotated production sites, created flexible exchanges for tribute, and rejected petitions to intensify and expand the hunt. Further, to facilitate conservation measures, the court strengthened territorial controls on the ground, with increasing numbers of border guards, irregular patrols, contraband raids, permit inspections, and permanent *karun*.

Indeed, the productivity of the frontiers was essential to their very identity, as homelands were constructed, in part, as a catalogue of resources.<sup>16</sup> Just as gazetteers celebrated the uniqueness of Chinese counties with lists of local products, so too did writers and statesmen identify Manchuria and Mongol with precious commodities. Nurhaci, Qianlong, and the writer of *Muwa gisun* alike all celebrated the suite of products associated with Manchuria. Its lush biodiversity was on display both in the forests around Mukden and on merchants' stalls in Beijing: sable, ginseng, pearls, tigers, deer, and the multitude of other notable flora and fauna. At court and in the marketplace, commodities from the frontier maintained their strong association with their homelands; they were inseparable from the creation narrative that bound object to ethnicity and environment. They were critical components of what made a jurisdiction a homeland: they facilitated and embodied a unique way of life of local inhabitants. Each authentic

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<sup>16</sup> Shepard Krech III, *The Ecological Indian* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co, 1999), 173.

fur pelt carried with it the imagined environmental and social context of the production site.<sup>17</sup>

The Mongol and Manchu homelands, however, were always more than simple production sites. Qing documents describe the Mongol steppe in environmental, ethnic, and political terms: the steppe had mushrooms, trees, and fish; it supported Mongol herders and Mongol noblemen; it was governed through banners and upheld by the Qing emperor. Productivity had its limits: if picking mushrooms destroyed the environmental and social fabric of the steppe, or if fur trapping or pearling were carried out recklessly, the enterprise demanded regulation. The value of production was neither grossed up to nor reduced to a cash value; if a livelihood was inappropriate to the subject group, the Qing state did not encourage it. Rather, each group was encouraged to be productive in a way befitting the ethnos: Tannu Urianghai as trappers, Mongols as herders, and so on. If the Qing state was “developmentalist,” it was only within the context of a multiethnic empire. While Chinese merchants and migrants played expanded roles in frontier economies, the state continued to value the production and roles of others, whether they belonged to the jurisdictions of Manchus, Mongols, Urianghai, or borderland *karun*.

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In 1887, H.E.M James thought he discovered pristine wilderness on the slopes of Changbaishan. He was, as we have seen, mistaken. For generations, Changbaishan had been a major production site for commodities such as fur and ginseng, which were

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<sup>17</sup> Brian Spooner, “Weavers and Dealers: the Authenticity of an Oriental Carpet,” in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 199. As Spooner noted of oriental carpets: “The real thing is not simply an artifact; it is made by particular individuals, from special handcrafted materials, in particular social, cultural, and environmental conditions, with motifs and designs learned from earlier generations...Our desire for authenticity prompts us to reconstruct that context.”

poached and ravaged half a century prior to his arrival. Yet, like the holy mountains of Mongolia, Changbaishan stood out nonetheless as a relative success story: while not as diverse or lush as they were in 1750 or 1800, the “pure” spaces of the Qing remained special. Today, many of the restricted areas of the Qing – including Changbaishan, the holy mountain of Bogd Uul, the imperial hunting grounds at Terej, and the Urianghai borderlands near Lake Khovsgol – have been reconfigured as national parks. Modern “nature” is genealogically linked to imperial purity.

In the worlds of the Qing Mongolia and Manchuria, as in the colonial West, nature became aligned with indigeneity, not commercial dynamism. Today, the political positioning of natives, as ethnic minorities (Ch: 少數民族), has changed. Like furs, national parks in modern China are not Han, but “Chinese”: they have been appropriated by the majority for the multiethnic nation of the *Zhonghua minzu*. Yet nature continues to hold a strong association with ethnic space. Elements of the imperial heritage can be found not only in national parks, but in modern ethno-tourism and the ideal of the “Ecological Mongol” or the “Ecological Oroncon,” as exemplified in the recent boom in scholarly literature, noted in the Introduction, on the supposed environmental wisdom of ethnic minorities.<sup>18</sup> Both the ethnic and the natural are juxtaposed against the same Other; both are deployed as a retreat, critique, or comfortable counterpoint to the urban, cosmopolitan world of China. Modern tourists seek a common refuge.

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<sup>18</sup> See Boldbaatar, Z. “Mongolchuudyn Baigal’ Orchnoo Hamgallah Zan Zanwhil, Huul’ Togtoomhilin Höghliin Tuuhent Toim,” *Tuuh: Erdem Shinzhilgeenii Bichig* 188, no. 14 (2002), 80–98; Gagengaowa and Wuyunbatu, *Menggu minzu de shengtai wenhua* (Hohhot: Neimenggu jiaoyu chubanshe, 2003); Ge Zhiyi, *Zhidu shiyuxia de caoyuan shengtai huanjing baohu* (Shenyang: Liaoning minzu chubanshe, 2008); He Qun, *Huanjing yu xiaominzu shengcun – Elunchun wenhua de bianqian* (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2006); Wu Feng and Bao Qingde, *Mengguzuo shengtai zhihuilun: Neimenggu caoyuan shengtai huifu yu chongjian yanjiu* (Shenyang: Liaoning minzu chubanshe, 2009).

The fast and dramatic changes of the twentieth century have cast a long shadow over the historiography of Manchuria and Mongolia. From stronghold of the Qing empire, to a flashpoint between the expanding Russian, Japanese, and Chinese states, the demographic, political, and economic transformations the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were astounding, and they have justly captured the imagination of scholars ever since. First, as the “reservoir” of Qing military power, the nineteenth century crises struck Mongolia and Manchuria hard: beginning in 1850, troops began to be drafted to fight in the Taiping Rebellion; immediately, participation in institutions like the Cicigar *culgan* dropped in half. In 1858 and 1860, with the signing of the Treaties of Aigun and Beijing, the Qing court ceded Manchuria north of the Amur and east of the Usuri to Russia. In 1881, with the Treaty of St. Petersburg, it granted new rights to Russian merchants to live and work in Mongolia. The opening of the treaty ports and the lowering and standardization of foreign customs put Shanxi merchants at new disadvantage to foreign competitors.<sup>19</sup> Finally, with the onset of the New Reforms, an altogether different vision of the frontier was realized: nationalization. The opening of the Mohe mines and the granting of access to de Groot to open mines in Mongolia signaled further change: the central government would be explicitly in the business of frontier development. Railroads were built, coalmines opened, fields cleared for soybean, and the steppes and forests were connected to international wool, lumber, and fertilizer markets. Sable trappers turned to squirrels and marmots; wild ginseng pickers became ginseng farmers; deer hunters started ranches.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Zhang Zhengming, *Mingqing jinshang ji minfeng*, 60-63.

<sup>20</sup> For a synopsis of these events, see Robert Lee, *The Manchurian Frontier in Ch'ing History*. On domesticated deer and the production of deer horn in the Altai region, amongst descendants of the Altan

Yet, as this dissertation has emphasized, dramatic political, commercial, and environmental change came to Qing Mongolia and Manchuria well before 1850. The histories of these imperial homelands, to an overwhelming degree, have been written from the perspective of Russian, Japanese, and Chinese states and settlers; as such, they have been studied primarily as frontiers. By emphasizing the role of those who dwelt in those frontiers, this study has pointed to the value of Manchu and Mongolian-language archives in writing a different, and more vivid, history of empire. It is impossible, for one, to study the discourse of “purity,” which was perceived as a Mongol problem and administered to in the Mongolian and Manchu languages. Likewise, one cannot study the operation of the Inner Asian tribute systems without Manchu records: the tributary records and tallies for furs, pearls, and ginseng were all kept in Manchu, either by military governors in the field or at the Imperial Household Department in Beijing.<sup>21</sup> The Mongolian licensing system similarly operated in a complex, multi-lingual field: most interoffice communications were in Manchu or Mongolian; many had Chinese-language registers attached, but many did not. If the historian’s reach is limited to Chinese materials, key governing concepts, such as “purity,” or dramatic events, such as the collapse of fur-bearing animal populations or the mushroom picking crisis, are hidden from the historian’s gaze altogether. Manchu materials and the process of translation were likewise fundamental to the scholarly, informational, and imagined connections between frontier and metropole: knowledge of stone martens and corsac foxes, as much as foreign peoples, was generated first in Manchu, and only later translated into Chinese.

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Nuur Urianghai, see “National Treasures,” in *Russia: A Journey with Jonathan Dimbleby*, directed by David Wallace (BBC, 2008), DVD.

<sup>21</sup> Duplicate records kept in Chinese, moreover, do not tally with the Manchu numbers. See Appendix A.



The lesson of the New Qing History remains relevant: the more we rely on late nineteenth and twentieth sources, or confine ourselves to the lens of Chinese-language documents, the easier it becomes to read the assumptions of “sinicization” and national development narratives onto a past. Only with a multilingual approach can we understand the Qing empire on its own terms, in its full complexity, prior to the rise of modern nationalism and imperialism.

The Qing invention of nature, and territorial order at its foundation, emerged through processes endemic to the Qing world; unlike in other parts of the world, the bordering process is not the story of the rise of the modern European state system.<sup>22</sup> Rather, declines were caused by problems endemic to the Qing empire and its growing connections to outside markets, including those accessed through Kiakhta and Korea. The Qing invention of nature derived from processes of empire building and commercialization that typified China prior to these great disruptions. Crucially, it is in the first half of the nineteenth century, not the second half, that the pearls, sables, and other natural resources began to disappear. It was neither Russian and Western imperialism nor the demographic expansion of Chinese nationals that drove these declines; colonialism and nationalism, the key touchstones of modern historiography, were not directly relevant. The commercial dynamism of the frontiers, the “mixing,” dislocation, and depletion it inspired, and the territorial response and invention of nature were all reflections of the same early modern moment. If they resemble the European

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<sup>22</sup> Since the groundbreaking work of Thongchai Winichukal in *Siam Mapped*, historians have faceted onto the problem of territory as a modern invention. According to this view, the hegemony of the modern European state system (and its attendant understanding of geography) clashes with and displaces the many past conceptions of sovereignty and space. Nebulous frontiers become bounded territories, sovereignty becomes unitary, religious space becomes secular.

experience, it is a reflection of convergences in the Chinese and European economic experiences.<sup>23</sup>

Study of Qing frontiers allows for an approach to understanding the place of the Qing empire in its global context. As Brett Walker argued for the case of Japan, frontier is history *is* international history, only without the teleology of the nation state and Rankean ideas about foreign relations and the European states system.<sup>24</sup> Mongolia and Manchuria were constituent parts of the Qing empire, yet their histories are integrated with those of other territories in the Pacific world. Segregation, licensed trade, territoriality were hardly limited to Qing frontiers: congruent dynamics were at work in Southeast Asia, Australia, and California, where the alien was often the same person: the miner, the merchant, the assimilating migrant. Further research on the greater Pacific could offer insights to help transcend entrenched distinctions between north and south, coast and continent: to a provocative degree, Mongols, Malays, and Americans worked with the state, and defined an indigenous identity, amidst convergent upheavals.

Differences that became central in the twentieth century were contested first, in their own way, at the frontiers of empire: it was there that ethnicity, foreignness, and relationship to the court were challenged, defended, and made visible. Indeed, from the vantage of the twenty-first century, there is something peculiarly familiar about the imperial arrangement. Borders and passports, migration and exchange: we cherish the differences between each other, but what makes us distinct seems perpetually under

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<sup>23</sup> On this great convergence, see Kenneth Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence: China, Europe, and the Making of the Modern World Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

<sup>24</sup> Brett Walker, "Foreign Affairs and Frontiers in Early Modern Japan: A Historiographical Essay," *Early Modern Japan* 10.2 (2002), 44-62.

threat. We are freer to move across boundaries than ever, but the more we move, the more we are monitored, inspected, and forced to cooperate. As some people cross lines, others redouble efforts to build walls. All-under-heaven is united, but uneasily and ambivalently. The environment surrounding us changes quickly, dramatically, and uncontrollably: the problems of empire linger in the globalized, modern world.

## Appendix A: Fur Tribute Tallies

Archival fur tribute records for the Tannu, Altan Noor, and Altai Urianghai, discussed in Chapter 5, are available for the entire period in which tribute was collected. For the Tannu Urianghai, records are available for the 152 year span between 1759 and 1911 for the Tannu Urianghai. Almost all of the records are held at the First Historical Archives (FHA) in Beijing; the National Palace Museum in Taiwan holds records for the years 1850 and 1889-1898.<sup>1</sup> Tallies from fourteen years appear to be missing: 1776, 1778, 1786, 1797, 1808, 1819-1821, 1862, 1901-1902, 1907, 1909, and 1911.

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<sup>1</sup> For the records in Taiwan, see NPM-174661 (DG30.8.21), NPM-170779 (GX15.11.1), NPM-171123 (GX16.10.20), NPM-171477 (GX17.10.24), NPM-171885 (GX18.10.28), NPM-172227 (GX19.10.29), NPM-172806 (GX20.11.6), NPM-173223 (GX22.11.13), NPM-173605 (GX23.11.11), NPM-173869 (GX24.10.12). For records in Beijing, see MWLF 2441.14.94.209 (QL36.5.29), 2456.24.95.488 (QL37.5.17), 2521.24.99.468 (QL38.4.20), 2854.26.103.11 (QL39.5.19), 2635.14.106.769 (QL40.5.24), 2717.7.111.2133 (QL42.5.22), 2795.10.116.2662 (QL44.5.19), 2830.31.118.2902 (QL45.5.17), 2881.25.121.2676 (QL46.5.24), 2932.36.124.3606 (QL47.5.28), 2967.2.127.1255 (QL48.6.2), 3025.39.131.1532 (QL49.6.4), 3073.10.134.1629 (QL50.5.25), 3169.18.140.715 (QL52.6.19), 3197.5.142.678 (QL53.6.24), 3248.41.14.2616 (QL54.7.26), 3300.22.148.3323 (QL55.6.7), 3346.20.151.1728 (QL56.5.28), 3391.33.153.3169 (QL57.6.2), 3434.26.156.1537 (QL58.6.13), 3473.3.158.2326 (QL59.6.24), 3504.36.160.1392 (QL60.6.6), 3544.28.162.1510 (JQ1.6.4), 3582.49.165.202 (JQ3.6.19), 3599.33.166.1018 (JQ4.7.3), 3613.31.167.1223 & 3613.29.167.1206 (JQ5.7.10), 3628.29.168.1988 (JQ6.7.5), 3642.34.169.2452 (JQ7.6.25), 3659.36.171.225 (JQ8.7.2), 3671.41.172.161 (JQ9.7.13), 3686.9.173.1160 (JQ10.7.1), 3705.25.175.83 (JQ11.7.12), 3427.32.176.2180 (JQ12.7.20), 3770.20.179.2259 (JQ14.8.11), 3788.25.180.2858 (JQ15.6.20), 3802.20.181.2772 (JQ16.6.6), 3819.19.182.3116 (JQ17.6.26), 3833.15.183.2840 (JQ18.7.11), 3849.20.184.3328 (JQ19.7.12), 3863.27.185.3290 (JQ20.6.15), 3878.52.187.373 (JQ21.+6.13), 3909.10.189.947 (JQ23.7.7), 3925.41.190.1057 (JQ24.6.20), 3975.15.193.600 (DG2.7.20), 3990.43.194.459 (DG3.8.11), 4006.1.195.152 (DG4.+7.8), 4021.46.195.3507 (DG5.7.7), 4037.20.196.3360 (DG6.7.20), 4049.12.197.2763 (DG7.8.10), 4062.21.198.2806 (DG8.8.8), 4078.27.199.3044 (DG9.8.13), 4092.53.200.2959 (DG10.8.7), 4105.52.201.2413 (DG11.8.26), 4118.42.202.2038 (DG12.9.14), 4139.41.203.1625 & 4130.27.203.1557 (DG13.8.13), 4142.49.204.1142 (DG14.8.9), 4157.3.205.115 (DG15.8.6), 4169.29.206.824 (DG16.8.18), 4179.33.207.399 (DG17.8.20), 4190.36.208.87 (DG18.8.29), 4201.41.208.3288 (DG19.8.22), 4211.26.209.2501 (DG20.8.12), 4225.6.210.2462 (DG21.8.25), 4238.27.211.1940 (DG22.8.29), 4251.43.212.530 (DG23.8.20), 4264.2.213.931 (DG24.8.13), 4274.38.214.32 (DG25.8.16), 4286.32.214.3004 (DG26.8.17), 4296.62.215.2360 (DG27.8.16), 4309.13.216.2107 (DG28.9.13), 4321.4.217.1624 (DG29.8.24), 4343.10.219.337 (XF1.9.11), 4355.50.220.113 (XF2.8.17), 4369.45.221.735 (XF3.9.18), 4385.28.222.1304 (XF4.9.25), 4399.15.223.1417 (XF5.9.16), 4410.29.224.1372 (XF6.9.16), 4422.19.225.1463 (XF7.9.26), 4431.45.226.1217 (XF8.10.7), 4441.46.227.1353 (XF9.9.23), 4451.26.228.1641 (XF10.9.26), 4459.17.229.1453 (XF11.9.26), 4471.43.231.14 (TZ2.10.6), 4477.52.231.3014 (TZ3.10.3), 4483.70.232.2366 (TZ4.10.22), 4489.22.235.1324 (TZ5.11.9), 4494.7.234.14 (TZ6.10.9), 4500.5.234.2718 (TZ7.11.28), 4504.14.235.1015 (TZ8.11.13), 4508.16.235.2782 (TZ9.10.5), 4514.61.236.2222 (TZ10.12.6), 4518.21.237.629 (TZ11.10.25), 4520.33.237.1649 (TZ12.10.25), 4523.2.237.2937

Pelt tallies were compiled at the military governor's office in Uliasutai before their dispatch to the court, as well as by the Imperial Household Department upon their receipt in Beijing. In Uliasutai, the tallies were attached to Manchu-language palace memorials; today the records from Uliasutai are archived as part of the *Manwen lufu* collection, and are available on microfilm at the FHA. The Imperial Household Department records were kept in Chinese and archived as part of the *Neiwufu zouxiaodang*; they are also currently available on microfilm at the FHA.<sup>2</sup> The palace memorials from Uliasutai are more detailed than the *zouxiao dang*: they give the quantity and type of pelts submitted by each of the three Urianghai groups (Tannu, Altan Noor, and Altai), whereas *zouxiao dang* records give the aggregate total furs received as tribute from the Urianghai. It is thus impossible to tell the relative contributions of the three groups.

Significantly, the two tallies do not always equal each other, though the numbers might appear as if they do. The number of sables, squirrels, and so on differ. Yet for both tallies, the quantities of animals submitted always equals the quota of 4144 sable pelts in value. Either one set of figures are unreliable, or both are: at least one party was cooking the books to make it appear that the tribute returns were accurate and legal. In compiling the figures on fur tribute in Chapter 5, I relied on the tribute tallies from

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(TZ13.9.9), 4526.3.238.1861 (GX1.10.3), 4528.1.238.2085 (GX2.11.3), 4530.54.238.3305 (GX3.9.26), 4533.57.239.1300 (GX4.9.24), 4536.42.239.2672 (GX5.9.12), 4539.28.240.326 (GX6.9.28), 4542.62.240.1892 (GX7.9.20), 4545.31.240.3188 (GX8.9.20), 4549.8.241.1566 (GX9.9.24), 4853.1.241.3489 (GX10.9.10), 4556.62.242.1744 (GX11.9.28), 4589.68.242.3457 (GX12.10.4), 4564.20.243.2100 (GX13.10.7), 4567.69.244.244 (GX14.10.12), 4571.7.244.1482 (GX21.10.9), 4574.88.244.2965 (GX25.10.21), 4576.77.245.388 (GX26.9.21), 4579.47.245.1772 (GX29.9.6), 4881.6.245.2802 (GX30.9.19), 4582.95.246.404 (GX31.9.24), 4583.111.246.1061 (GX32.9.12), 4587.42.246.3074 (GX34.9.26), 4589.89.247.965 (XT2.9.18).

<sup>2</sup> It is unclear why the records were kept in Chinese. *Neiwufu zouxiaodang* tribute reports from Heilongjiang, for example, were compiled in Manchu through the early nineteenth century.

Uliasutai, not the Imperial Household Department: they yield more information on the individual Urianghai groups, even if they are not necessarily more trustworthy. Together with the qualitative evidence, including descriptive palace memorials and later traveller's accounts, however, there is strong evidence that animal populations did in fact suffer in the nineteenth century. Taken as a whole, the tributary records help pinpoint a time for the collapse: the 1820s and 1830s for sable, the 1850s and 1860s for fox, and so on.

Records from on the Cicigar *culgan*, discussed in Chapter 1, were reported in Manchu-language palace memorials from the military governor of Heilongjiang for the years 1785-1899, and are today mostly stored on microfilm at the FHA as part of the *Manwen lufu*. Most of these materials were published in 2001 in the volume *Qingdai Elunchunzu Man-Hanwen dang'an huibian*.<sup>3</sup> The years 1785, 1787-1789, 1791-1798, 1814-1820, 1823-1856, 1858-1862, 1864-1875, 1877-1888, 1895, and 1899 are all thus available in *Qingdai Elunchunzu* volume. The year 1821 was curiously not published, but is accessible at the FHA; the years 1889-1894 and 1896-1898 have also yet to be published, but are available at the National Palace Museum in Taiwan.<sup>4</sup> Taken as a

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<sup>3</sup> *Qingdai Elunchunzu Man-Hanwen dang'an huibian* (Beijing: Minzu chubanshe, 2001), no. 199 (QL50.6.6), 200 (QL52.6.6), 201 (QL53.6.6), 202 (QL54.+5.26), 203 (QL56.6.8), 204 (QL57.6.28), 205 (QL58.6.10), 206 (QL59.6.16), 207 (QL60.6.12), 209 (JQ1.6.16), 210 (JQ2.+6.6), 211 (JQ3.6.7), 213 (JQ19.6.12), 214 (JQ20.6.13), 215 (JQ21.+6.1), 216 (JQ22.6.7), 217 (JQ23.6.18), 218 (JQ25.6.7), 219 (DG3.6.12), 220 (DG4.6.28), 221 (DG5.6.8), 222 (DG6.6.14), 223 (DG7.+5.27), 224 (DG8.6.10), 225 (DG9.6.22), 226 (DG10.6.22), 227 (DG11.6.19), 228 (DG12.6.24), 229 (DG13.6.25), 230 (DG14.6.20), 231 (DG15.6.11), 232 (DG16.6.15), 233 (DG17.6.26), 234 (DG18.6.15), 235 (DG19.6.20), 236 (DG20.6.26), 237 (DG21.6.17), 238 (DG22.6.26), 239 (DG23.7.8), 240 (DG24.6.26), 241 (DG25.6.27), 242 (DG26.6.20), 243 (DG27.6.20), 244 (DG28.7.1), 245 (DG29.6.25), 246 (DG30.7.4), 247 (XF1.6.28), 248 (XF2.6.25), 249 (XF3.7.1), 250 (XF4.7.15), 251 (XF5.7.3), 252 (XF6.7.12), 254 (XF8.7.3), 255 (XF9.7.20), 258 (XF10.6.26), 259 (XF11.7.11), 260 (TZ1.7.27), 261 (TZ3.7.1), 262 (TZ4.6.20), 263 (TZ5.7.8), 264 (TZ6.6.25), 265 (TZ7.7.13), 266 (TZ8.6.24), 267 (TZ9.7.28), 268 (YZ10.7.18), 269 (TZ11.7.18), 271 (TZ12.6.28), 272 (TZ13.8.2), 275 (GX1.8.9), 279 (GX3.7.21), 282 (GX4.7.10), 283 (GX5.7.1), 284 (GX6.7.25), 286 (GX7.7.2), 288 (GX8.7.26), 290 (GX9.8.12), 291 (GX10.7.27), 293 (GX11.8.3), 295 (GX12.7.26), 296 (GX13.7.28), 298 (GX14.7.19), 304 (GX21.8.10), 307 (GX25.9.4).

<sup>4</sup> MWLF 3960.19.192.877 (DG1.7.10); NPM-170731 (GX15.8.13), NPM-171049, NPM-171050 (GX16.8.1), NPM-171397 (GX17.7.20), NPM-171770 (GX18.7.11), NPM-172155 (GX19.8.10), NPM-172728 (GX20.8.10), NPM-173163 (GX22.8.10), NPM-173508 (GX23.8.29), NPM-173790 (GX24.8.23).

whole, for the period 1785 and 1899, data for twenty-two years are missing: 1786, 1790, 1799-1813, 1819, 1822, 1857, 1863, and 1876.

## Appendix B: Registers of Intermarried Households in Khüree

A register was made of all mixed Chinese-Mongol households, defined as a household with a father from a Chinese county and a mother from a Mongol banner or monastic *otuy*. The register took their names, home jurisdiction (county for the Chinese, *otok daruga* for the Mongols), and ages, as well as the names, gender (male, female, and infant), and age of all children and dependents, including adopted children, children-in-law, nieces, and nephews; all children were registered with Mongol names and subject to the jurisdiction of their mother's *daruga*. A register from 1824 divided the couples into those on registered eight years prior and those newly registered, suggesting that a separate registration drive had been made in 1816. Eighteen mixed households, comprised of seventy-two individuals, were listed on record before 1816. Of the thirty registered households, the average age of the husband was 11.6 years older than the wife, with two children; the average wife bore the first child at age 27, suggesting the marriages happened relatively late in life. A disproportionate number of men came from Fenyang county in Shanxi.<sup>1</sup>

Figure 56: Registered Inter-Married Couples in Khüree, 1816

<b>Previously registered?</b>	<b>Man's Age</b>	<b>Women's Age</b>	<b>Children</b>
yes	61	54	3
yes	78	[dead]	4
yes	53	48	5

<sup>1</sup> MID1-843.1 (DG4.8.9). Compare with late nineteenth-century descriptions of segregated Kiakhtha. Pozdneyev, for example, told of how six or seven versts from Maimaicheng “I discovered that all these yurts were occupied by Mongol women, the concubines of Chinese merchants at the Mai-mai-ch’eng, since it was forbidden for them to live any nearer to the Mai-mai-ch’eng or at the Mai-mai-ch’eng itself.” Pozdeneyev, *Mongolia and the Mongols*, 1: 3. Further research at the archives into nineteenth century gender and marriage dynamics in Mongolia is necessary.



yes	70	49	10
yes	75	47	7
yes	48	46	2
yes	45	45	2
yes	48	[dead]	3
yes	63	47	3
yes	62	51	3
yes	58	50	1
yes	70	56	2
yes	60	49	3
yes	67	57	0
yes	60	67	1
yes	65	42	4
yes	49	52	0
yes	62	48	1
no	67	40	1
no	42	31	1
no	42	38	1
no	72	28	0
no	42	22	0
no	57	56	4
no	37	30	0
no	42	50	1
no	46	30	1
no	39	36	2
no	50	33	0
no	45	37	2

Figure 57: Registered Inter-Married Households in Khüree, 1824.

<b>Registered before 1816?</b>	<b>Husband Age</b>	<b>Wife Age</b>	<b>Number of Children</b>
yes	61	54	3
yes	78	[dead]	4

yes	53	48	5
yes	70	49	10
yes	75	47	7
yes	48	46	2
yes	45	45	2
yes	48	[dead]	3
yes	63	47	3
yes	62	51	3
yes	58	50	1
yes	70	56	2
yes	60	49	3
yes	67	57	0
yes	60	67	1
yes	65	42	4
yes	49	52	0
yes	62	48	1
no	67	40	1
no	42	31	1
no	42	38	1
no	72	28	0
no	42	22	0
no	57	56	4
no	37	30	0
no	42	50	1
no	46	30	1
no	39	36	2
no	50	33	0
no	45	37	2

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