

PART FIVE
*
NEW IMPERIAL
MANDATES AND THE
END OF THE CHINGGISID
ERA (18TH–19TH) CENTURIES



The Qing and Inner Asia: 1636–1800

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The proclamation of the Qing dynasty in 1636 signalled the beginning of a new phase in both Chinese and Inner Asian history. The dynasty established by the Manchurian Aisin Gioro royal clan was going in a few years to conquer China and rule it down to the year 1911. During this period of time the political and territorial configuration of the eastern part of Inner Asia, and in particular Mongolia, Xinjiang and Tibet, would be transformed as the Qing extended their rule over these regions. The year 1636 marked not only a new dynastic beginning, but also the end of a period of consolidation during which the Jin dynasty founded by Nurhaci in 1616 and continued by his son Hong Taiji (r. 1627–43) led to the completion of several military and political projects. These projects were milestones on the road to the self-strengthening of the Manchu regime *vis-à-vis* the Ming, while at the same time anticipated the transformations in the political and social fabric of the Inner Asian borderlands under Qing rule.

Early achievements included the unification of the Manchurian aristocratic kingdoms, the military defeat of the Ming and conquest of the Liaodong peninsula, and successful expeditions against Korea. Above all, however, it was arguably the success of the Manchus' multisided policy with regard to the south Mongol tribes that contributed the most to stabilizing the Inner Asian front and allowing the Manchus to reorganize the Mongols as a component of the newly minted Qing dynasty. It is in the context of the inter-Mongol wars fought to defeat the Chakhar Ligdan Khan (1592–1634), a Chinggiskhanid noble with imperial aspirations of his own, that Manchu rule was established over the Mongols and that the Qing began what was arguably going to be one of their most important political legacies: the creation of a Sino-Inner Asian empire that, notwithstanding some similarities with the Han and Tang, was not modelled after Chinese precedents. By the 1760s, the Inner Asian regions ruled from Beijing included the north-eastern provinces (Manchuria), Inner and Outer Mongolia, Kokonor (Qinghai), Tibet and Zungharia, the Tianshan

region and the Tarim Basin in the northwest. The Qing view of, and policy towards, Inner Asia and the systems of government of the frontier regions were shaped from the beginning first by the special circumstances of the Manchu dynasty's identity as a frontier regime, and second by the significance of the Mongol factor in the state-building process. The result was an entirely new configuration of imperial expansion and government of the Inner Asian and especially Mongolian dependencies. The purpose of this chapter is to trace the main lines of the changes taking place in Mongolia in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, whose role was central to the system of 'imperial tutelage' set into place by the Manchus to rule the 'outer regions' (Ma. *tulergi golo*) of the empire.

Manchuria before the rise of the Manchus

At the end of the sixteenth century the Jurchens who inhabited Manchuria were politically divided into three main groupings: the Haixi were located in the valley of the Sunggari rivers; the Jianzhou to the south of the Haixi, in the basin of the Liao and Yalu River; closer to the Liaodong border with China; and the Yeren (savage) Jurchen, to the north of the Haixi, in the forest zone of the Amur River. Both Haixi and Jianzhou Jurchen entertained tribute relations with the Ming, with annual visits to court in which they typically offered horses. Breeding horses was, together with hunting, gathering and agriculture, an important part of Jurchen economy, which has traditionally been regarded as 'mixed' or – less properly – as 'semi-nomadic'. Environment and tradition dictated the form of subsistence that prevailed in one or another area.

After the fall of the Yuan dynasty (1368) the Ming began to intervene militarily in Manchuria to curb residual Mongol resistance and sever Mongol-Jurchen political ties. The Ming offensive, which relied also on diplomatic means, resulted in the establishment of a series of garrisons or 'guards' (*wei*) and 'posts' (*suo*) during the reign of the Yongle Emperor (1403–24). In practice, these corresponded to pre-existing Jurchen political groupings, organized on tribal and territorial bases.¹ Their leaders were turned into Chinese 'commanders' (*zhihuishi*) of various ranks and acquired, together with the titles, certain privileges and obligations *vis-à-vis* the Ming Emperor. The first important *wei*, the Jianzhouwei, was created in 1403, headed by its chief Ahacu. This was to become the ancestral home of the Manchu royal family, the Aisin Gioro clan. The Wuzhe and Nuergan *wei* were established in 1404, and Maolian in 1406.

¹ For a full analysis of the distribution of the Jurchen people and list of Jurchen Guards in the Ming period, see Wang, 1956a.

Over the next 200 years in total the Ming established 368 *wei*, in addition to twenty *suo*.² The Jianzhou Jurchen obtained two additional *wei*, the Jianzhou zuowei (1405) and the Jianzhou youwei (1438). While the Ming court did not exercise any direct control over these subdivisions, prominent Jurchen chiefs could be promoted to high positions within the Ming military-administrative system of the region. One of the ancestors of Nurhaci, Mǒngke Temür (r. 1405–33) was first commander (*zhihuishi*) of the Jianzhou zuowei, then rose to Assistant Governor (*duduqianshi*) and finally attained the post of Vice-Governor (*duduqianzhi*).³

One of the key advantages of high rank consisted of the permits the chiefs received from the Ming government. In total the Ming issued permits for 1,500 Jurchen people, 1,000 from the Haixi and 500 from the Jianzhou. These allowed Jurchen aristocrats in positions of leadership to carry out commercial activities in trading towns along the border. They were also required for the annual presentation of tribute to the court in the capital. ‘Tribute bearing’ missions were lucrative ventures, as the members of the ‘delegation’ were able to trade and sometimes plunder along the way. The ‘gifts’ received in exchange from the emperor, moreover, surpassed the value of the tribute presented. Hence, competition among Jurchen tribes developed over access to border markets (the so-called horse markets, *mashi*) and over the permits that allowed presentation of tribute. Nurhaci himself, in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, fought consistently to appropriate the licences and trading rights held by other Jurchen chiefs.

Historians concur in finding that the Jurchen society of southern Manchuria underwent a massive economic development in the period from the Yongle (1403–24) to the Wanli era (1573–1620). Both internal and external factors are responsible for this development. Among the factors of internal development we see a large increase in agricultural production, which was especially significant in southern Manchuria. Demographic growth and the chronic need for iron agricultural implements such as ploughs and hoes, or farming animals such as oxen, are already noticeable from the second half of the fifteenth century. Only from 1600 onwards did autochthonous production of iron tools increase with the development of mining and the establishment of local workshops in Manchurian territories. Jurchen, Chinese and Korean artisans (some migrants, some war prisoners) were employed as blacksmiths but local production still remained insufficient to replace imports.

2 The best study in English on the establishment of *wei* and *suo* garrisons in Manchuria remains that by Serruys, 1955.

3 Cf. Serruys, 1967, p. 613.

The development of agriculture had an important side-effect, as hunting and foraging, which were formerly subsistence activities, could be harnessed to provide luxury products sought by Chinese merchants. Among the most precious Jurchen exports we find pearls, furs – from fox, sable, marten, leopard, lynx, Siberian squirrel and other animals – and ginseng. They also traded horses, honey, and forest products such as wild mushrooms and nuts. Economic data from the late sixteenth century show a significant difference in value between Manchurian imports and exports, with substantial quantities of silver flowing into Manchuria to make up for the difference.⁴

One of the effects of the prosperity of southern Manchuria, irrespective of the pendulum swings of the political relations with the Ming, is the migratory movement and relocation of northern peoples to more southern places, closer to the Liaodong frontier. The most common causes of attrition between Jurchen and Ming were the breaches or abuses of trading rights, which often led to disruption of peace and to violent raids carried out by the Jurchen against Ming cities. Intense bouts of military confrontation occurred in the mid-fifteenth and in the mid-sixteenth centuries. In the first case the support given by the Jurchen to the Oirat ruler Esen Khan (r. 1438–54) led to economic sanctions and to the further fortification of the north-eastern frontier. In the 1570s military clashes along the Sino–Jurchen border resulted from the Ming policy, already started with regulations issued in 1536, to curb the size of tribute missions and to subject border trade to more rigorous controls and taxation.⁵ However, this is a period in which tensions develop especially among the various Jurchen ‘tribes’ and aristocratic groups, fuelled by rampant military and economic competition.

Jurchen society at the time can be said to comprise three main classes of people: the aristocracy, the commoners and the slaves. The aristocracy was primarily engaged in the exercise of political power and military activities. Its members were called *beile* and *beise*, and belonged to families traditionally powerful, and often connected to the Ming court. To this class belonged also the companions-in-arms, or *gucu*, of high-ranking political figures. Access to aristocratic rank could therefore come from the association, usually at a young age, with a successful leader. Slaves (*aha*, *booi aha*, *booi niyalma*) were initially mostly household slaves, and typically consisted of people captured in battle or in the course of pillaging raids in Chinese and Korean borderlands. During the sixteenth century the spectrum of their activities expanded together with their number and social function, as they began to be employed

⁴ Zhou, 1979, p. 160.

⁵ Rossabi, 1982.

in agriculture and handicraft production. The expanding Jurchen economy required manpower that came from south of the border, often as war prisoners. The commoners were called *jušen*, a Manchu term that designated both the Jurchen people as a whole and the non-aristocratic members of society. They tilled the land, hunted, bred animals and followed their clan leaders in war. Their social position gradually became less free and more subordinated to the aristocracy, which implied an increase in compulsory taxation, corvées and military service. In Nurhaci's time they made up the bulk of the Eight Banner system, a military and administrative institution that produced an even steeper verticalization of social relations.⁶

The rise of Nurhaci, from the 1580s to the early years of the seventeenth century, took place at a time that is described in the Manchu annals as a period of turmoil and great political instability. This was also, however, a period of overall economic development, of demographic expansion and of intense militarization of Jurchen society. The aristocracy became especially powerful. The accumulation of riches in the hands of a few political leaders is nowhere exemplified better than by Nurhaci's own strategy, as he made effective use of his growing political influence with the Ming to carry out, by war and diplomacy, a monopolistic concentration of the tribute and commercial privileges granted to the Manchurian leaders.⁷ The consolidation of power in the hands of Nurhaci was, at least in part, due to a process of monopolistic control of economic resources, of militarization of the commoners and of astute diplomacy.

Nurhaci's strategy was not limited to intra-Jurchen politics and border relations with China and Korea. It was increasingly clear after the establishment in 1616 of the independent regime known as the Latter Jin dynasty (*Ma. amaga aisin gurun*) that the very survival of Nurhaci's political creation depended on his ability to accompany the military expansion into Ming territory (the Liaodong Peninsula) with efficient ways to organize the newly conquered population and territory and to defend these gains against a growing number of current or potential enemies. It also appeared in 1619 that Nurhaci's ambition to establish an independent regime was not going to go unchallenged, as Ligdan Khan of the Chakhar Mongols rose to political prominence. If the defection of Chinese advisors who joined Nurhaci following the conquest of Liaodong is held responsible for 'teaching' the Manchus how to rule China, it is in the context of the developing relationship with the Mongols that the Aisin

6 For a list of the economic and military obligations to which the *jušen* were subject in the early reign of Hong Taiji (1627–43) see Wang, 1956b.

7 Liu, 1978.

Gioro rulers, Nurhaci and his son Hong Taiji, expanded the range of tools at their disposal to control nomadic peoples and incorporate territories that, for their intrinsic qualities, could not be easily incorporated within the still young and evolving Jurchen state. Thus the seed was planted for a frontier strategy that differed deeply from that of any previous Chinese dynasty.

The Qing expansion in Inner Asia

A useful concept in examining the relationship between the Qing and Inner Asia has been put forward by James Millward, as he speaks of ‘imperializing’ projects that developed on the northern frontier among the Mongols and the Manchus. According to Millward, regarding the relations between Manchus and Mongols, the ‘Qing looks almost like a project to restore an empire along Mongol lines by gathering clans and eliminating rivals’.⁸ Several attempts had been made by various Mongol leaders during the Ming dynasty to ‘imperialize’ and unify the Mongols into large power centers, whether or not they attempted to re-create Chinggis Khan’s empire. Among them the political projects of Esen Khan (r. 1438–54), Dayan Khan (r. 1480?–1517?), Altan Khan (1508–82) and Ligdan Khan were especially bold and far reaching. As the Manchus began their rise, and even long after the conquest of China had been completed, such attempts to unify the Mongols constituted an explicit or implicit threat to the realization of the Manchus’ own political ambitions. In this regard, we must note that, while the Mongol imperial tradition in theory regarded a descendant of Chinggis Khan to be the only legitimate authority to launch and realize ‘imperializing’ campaigns and to adopt an imperial rhetoric, the Western Mongols, or Zunghars, proved equally capable of expressing imperial aspirations even though, with the exception of the Khoshut, they could not claim a Chinggisid ancestry (see below). The Chinggisid legacy did not lose its political importance, and continued to play a role at some rhetorical level, but the most influential Zunghar khans relied primarily on the legitimation obtained through the support of the Dge-lugs-pa sect and the Dalai Lama.⁹ The Manchus countered such projects by extending their rule into the borderlands and making them part of their empire. At the same time, these regions remained ethnically and culturally distinct and administratively separate from the rest of China nearly to the end of the dynasty. How this was achieved is one of the fundamental questions in the history of early modern Inner Asia.

⁸ Millward, 2004, p. 110.

⁹ Miyawaki, 1999, pp. 319–31.

The Qing expansion into Mongolian territories cannot be conceived as a ‘manifest destiny’. Rather, it progressed as a response to a series of challenges spanning a century and a half. Schematically, we can identify four phases which, however, should not be seen as disconnected, but as part of a continuous and evolving frontier strategy. The first phase includes the relations between the early Manchu rulers, Nurhaci and Hong Taiji, and Mongol leaders before and after the foundation of the Jin (or Later Jin) regime (1616–35), leading to the organization of southern Mongols into ‘Banners’ (Mong. *sumu*, Ma. *niru*). This phase also includes the early development of the Lifan Yuan as the main government branch in charge of frontier administration. The wars by the Kangxi Emperor against the Zunghar leader Galdan constitute the second phase of this process, as they led to the submission of the Khalkha khans to the Qing at the Dolon Nor Conference, and to the subdivision of Mongolia into administrative units. The third phase is one of continued conflict with the Zunghars, which brought the Qing to occupy some towns in Eastern Turkestan and especially to establish political rule in Tibet through the system of imperial residents (Ma. *amban*). The fourth and last phase can be identified in the Qing military conquest of what later became Xinjiang, the ‘New Frontier’, as a result of which new territories and diverse populations, including Muslim oasis settlers and Qazaq and Qirghiz nomads, came under Qing rule.

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When Nurhaci began to assert himself as regional strongman and leader of the Jianzhou Jurchen the political relationship between him and the southern Mongols worsened. In 1593 a group of Mongol aristocrats, later to become staunch allies and even close relatives of Nurhaci himself, joined Jurchen tribes in an anti-Nurhaci coalition. The military successes of the Jianzhou Jurchen – the Manchurian political union headed by Nurhaci – led to territorial and economic expansion, and with the growth of Nurhaci’s regional power Khalkha Mongol tribes reached a diplomatic agreement with him in 1606/7.¹⁰ On that occasion they ‘bestowed’ upon him the honorific title of Kündülen Khan, meaning ‘Most Respected Ruler’, a title higher than he enjoyed even among his own people.

From 1620 the Manchus were drawn more deeply into Mongol politics as a consequence of the rise of the Chakhar leader Ligdan Khan, who began a series of bloody raids against other Mongol groups meant to terrorize them into submission.¹¹ The Manchu leadership chose to intervene, both to curtail

¹⁰ QTZWHSL, II, p. 28.

¹¹ On Ligdan the best work remains Heissig, 1979.

Ligdan's ambition to re-create a unified Mongol Empire and to stop the flow of refugees from Mongolia to Manchu-controlled territory. Nurhaci and his son and successor Hong Taiji proved in the end able to attract Mongol aristocrats to their side by offering them protection and by actively fighting Ligdan. At this time we can already detect in the Manchu diplomatic exchanges with various Mongol leaders the essential aspect of tutelage that characterized the Qing attitude towards the Mongols and was later extended to the other dependencies on the frontiers. The act of granting protection was sanctioned ritually by swearing oaths, and involved a series of obligations by both parties, among which the integration of Mongol troops in the Manchu army was paramount. The Mongols who joined the Manchus and moved into Manchu territory were then organized into companies (*niru*, *zuoling*), and in this way were incorporated within the Eight Banner system created by Nurhaci in the early seventeenth century. With a larger population of southern Mongols accepting Manchu sovereignty, the number of Mongols incorporated into Banner companies grew steadily throughout the 1620s and early 1630s. As more and more Mongol aristocratic families and subjects were brought into the fabric of the Manchu state, they became actively involved in the Manchu military.

The culmination of this phase can be dated to 1635, when Hong Taiji extracted the Mongol companies from the Manchu Banners to which they had been assigned and reconstituted them into a separate and autonomous formation as Mongol Eight Banners (*Menggu Baqi*). While the Mongol Banners were still subordinated to the Manchu Banners of the same colour, they retained a separate ethnic profile.

The Eight Banner Mongols came from the oldest and closest allies of the Manchus, and as such enjoyed the privileges of the Qing ruling elite, continued to intermarry with the Manchu aristocracy and were promoted to high-ranking positions in the military as well as civilian hierarchies. Yet these represented only about a fifth of the total of the Mongol population under Qing rule. The remainder of the southern Mongol 'nations' were organized into new territorial units that were also called Banners but had no connections, as a political and administrative system, with the Eight Banners.¹² It was rather a system of rationalization of the political

12 Often called 'tribes', Mongol political and territorial groups are however not based on common ancestry, but on ties that are territorial, political and sanctioned by common traditions. They are closer, in actual historical meaning, to Native American 'nations' than to generic 'tribes', while collectively as a people they recognized themselves as 'Mongol'. The word 'nation' in that sense may therefore be better than 'tribe' to refer to socio-political units such as Chakhar, Khalkha, Khorchin and others.

boundaries among southern Mongol groupings that was imposed onto them along lines of pre-existing as well as newly emerged geopolitical configurations resulting from the upheaval caused by the Chakhar wars and subsequent population shifts.

The reorganization of southern Mongolia after its pacification proceeded through the early period of the Qing dynasty. In 1635 southern Mongolia was organized into forty-nine Banners, whose names are still visible on current maps of Inner Mongolia. To facilitate communication between the Banners and the court, and to allow for consultation among Banners on a series of issues such as serious criminal offences, the ruling officials of the Banners met on a regular basis. The groups of Banners that held these meetings together were referred to as 'Leagues' and were altogether six in number. The Banners were designated by the names of the main Mongol sub-ethnic groups (tribes or 'nations') that constituted them. One such nation could have more than one Banner, with multiple Banners of a single group differentiated by a positional indicator (usually 'right' or 'left'). These were as follows:¹³

1. Ten Banners, respectively belonging to the four nations of the Khorchin (6), Jalayit (Jalayid) (1), Dörbet (Dörbed) (1) and Ghorlos (2), forming the Jerim League.
2. Eleven Banners comprising the Mongol nations of the Aokhan (1), Naiman (1), Ongniut (2), Barin (2), Jarut (2), Khalkha of the Left Wing (1), Aru Khorchin (1) and Kesigten (1) in the territory of Juu Uda League.
3. Five Banners of the Karachin (3) and Tümet (Tümed) (2) nations, both of them staunch allies of the Manchus, in the Josutu League.
4. Ten Banners of the Silinghol League, comprising the Üjümchin (2), Abagha (2), Abaghanar (2), Khauchit (2) and Sünit (Sünid) (2) nations.
5. Six Banners of the Dörben Keüked (1), Khalkha of the Right Wing (1), Urat (Urad) (3) and Maominggan (1), which formed the Ulanjab League.
6. The seven Ordos Banners, which formed the Yeke Juu League.

In addition to these there were the Chakhar Banners. These were units of a mixed nature that straddled the military-administrative organization of the Eight Banners and the territorial structure of the *jasagh*-ruled *sumu*. They were first created in 1634 after the defeat and death of Ligdan Khan, when the Chakhar who submitted to Hong Taiji were organized as Eight Banner Chakhars. The following year Ligdan Khan's son Erke Khonggor Eje (1622–41)

¹³ Brunnert and Hagelstrom, 1911, pp. 455–63 (nos. 884–901). See also Veit, 1986a, p. 402. An excellent map of the Inner Mongolian Banners and Leagues can be found in Lattimore, 1934.

submitted to the Qing with the remainder of the Chakhar people. At this point the Chakhars regained considerable independence, Hong Taiji raised Eje to the highest nobility honours and settled the Chakhars in the nomadic pastureland in today's south-eastern Inner Mongolia, forming there a Chakhar Banner. The actual status of these Chakhars has been in question until recently, when newly discovered Mongolian documents show that they were organized not as part of the Eight Banner system but as a *jasagh* Banner, thus enjoying the privilege of territorial autonomy and relative political independence. In 1669 the arrest of the Chakhar leader Abunai precipitated a situation of tension leading to the revolt by his son Burni, in coincidence with the Rebellion of the Three Feudatories in south westChina (1673–81). The rebellion was quashed by Kangxi in 1675 and ended with the death in battle of Burni, and the execution of Abunai and many other members of his family and officials of the Chakhar forces. The Kangxi Emperor then dissolved the Chakhar people as an autonomous *jasagh* Banner and reorganized them into Eight Banner units directly under the supervision of the same-colour Qing banners. Some of them were given land and organized into 'pastures' as a service agency of the court charged with providing pastoral products to the capital. All twelve Chakhar units were under the supervision of the Manchu resident *amban* (*dutong*) at Kalgan (Zhangjiakou).¹⁴

The most critical element of the political remaking of the southern Mongol nations lies in the figure of the *jasagh*, a Mongol term derived from the words 'to rule' that indicates the local ruling authority, the 'puissant' lord, and was instituted as a Qing administrative position in 1635, with the formation of the Inner Mongol Banners. Each Banner was headed by a *jasagh* who acted as the highest political and judicial authority. The *jasagh* were all local aristocrats and virtually all Chinggisids, whose position was hereditary, although it needed to be confirmed by the Qing Emperor, who might also rescind or alter the succession line. While the *jasagh* had to abide by the laws and regulations of the Lifan Yuan, the position retained ample powers. Among its prerogatives were the supervision of the census, the collection of taxes, the adjudication of the lower crimes, and military assistance as needed. The *jasagh* was also responsible for regulating trade and providing support to Qing officials and other government representatives travelling through his Banner's territory, a task that, however, was made less onerous during the Kangxi period by the creation of a postal station system under the direct control of the Lifan Yuan. The *jasagh* communicated with the Lifan Yuan

¹⁴ Dalizhabu, 2005a; see also Serruys, 1978.

on any number of issues related to civil, administrative, legal, military and political matters. The system of ‘indirect rule’ devised by the Qing based on the cooptation of local elites combined with local imperial presence with supervisory powers that we have defined above as a system of ‘tutelage’ was later adopted in Outer Mongolia, and contributed one of the chief principles for the establishment of Qing rule in Tibet and Xinjiang. It is hard to gauge, however, the degree to which the authority of the *jasagh* was accepted by the common people. A 1651 regulation of the *Menggu lüshu* (Mongol statute book) forbidding the people from turning directly to the local Qing government officers, thus bypassing the authority of the *jasagh*, indicates that the central government and its chief agency in Mongolia, the Lifan Yuan, at least initially needed to prop up the authority of the *jasaghs*.¹⁵ (This statute disappears in later editions of the code.)

The other crucial achievement of this phase, which will be discussed in greater detail below, is the formation of the Lifan Yuan, the administrative lynchpin of the Qing policy for the rule of Mongolia and other Inner Asian dependencies and the political transmission belt between the Manchu court and the local Mongol, Turkestani, Tibetan and other elites. This term has received several English translations in addition to the traditional, and now less favoured, ‘Court of Colonial Affairs’,¹⁶ such as ‘Department of Tributary Territories’,¹⁷ and others based on the Manchu or Mongol names of the same, for instance ‘Ministry Ruling the Outer Provinces’ (*tulergi golo be dasara jurgan*),¹⁸ and ‘Court of Administration of the Autonomous Mongolian States’ (*ghadaghadu Mongghol törö-yi jasakhu yabudal-un yamun*).¹⁹ The Mongol translation in particular indicates that in 1638 the terms *fan* and *tulergi golo* in the Chinese and Manchu versions referred specifically to Mongolia. *Fan* is a term that was applied in ancient Chinese texts to liminal regions, beyond the control of a central authority, but possibly within its sphere of action, as in the sentence in the *Zhouli*, ‘*jiu zhou zhi wai wei zhi fan guo*’,²⁰ that is, ‘what is outside the nine divisions [the Hua-Xia states] is called the “fan” [foreign or outer] countries’. Taking that as the central allusion of *fan* in Lifan Yuan, a translation such as ‘Board of Government of the Outer Regions’ is probably the most fitting, but for clarity’s sake the term Lifan Yuan will be used in this chapter.

¹⁵ Heuschert, 1998, p. 322.

¹⁶ This translation has been deemed unsatisfactory by Chinese scholars in view of the anachronistic use of the term ‘colonial’. See Wang Zhonghan, 1984, p. 167.

¹⁷ Wang, 2000, p. 130 n. 11.

¹⁸ Chia, 1993, p. 61.

¹⁹ Atwood, 2004, p. 333.

²⁰ *Zhouli*, 1991, I, p. 491.

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The second phase of expansion brought the Kangxi Emperor to assert his rule over the Khalkha Mongols of Outer Mongolia, a fateful development resulting from the long-brewing rivalry between Khalkhas and Zunghars, finally erupting into open conflict in 1686. The Qing relationship with the Western (Oirat) and Eastern (Khalkha) Mongols had been settled as a tributary relationship in the early years of the dynasty, when the dust of conquest had yet to settle and the Manchus were busy 'pacifying' Chinese provinces loyal to the Southern Ming. In 1655 eight Khalkha chiefs were accepted as tributary *jasaghs* and presented the tribute of the 'nine whites' (eight white horses and a white camel) to the Qing Emperor, thus establishing trade and tribute relations and accepting the Qing as the superior power. The Qing, on the other hand, used the tribute system hoping to maintain peaceful control over an especially troublesome frontier.

In the meantime, the Oirats, a confederation that included several separate nations, had undergone a process of expansion under Batur Hongtayiji (r. 1635–53), whose project to 'imperialize' the Western Mongols by establishing a Zunghar 'khanate' had been essential to the strengthening of the Zunghars in relation to the Eastern Mongols. While Batur Hongtayiji never assumed the title of Khan and therefore it is not possible to speak of a khanate until Galdan received the title of Boshoghtu Khan in 1678, the political intention and trajectory was doubtless that of creating an imperial entity that may eventually unify all Mongols.²¹ In this phase a shift took place from a purely Chinggisid legitimation, which allowed only Chinggisids to aspire to both the title of Khan and the political project to form a true 'khanate'.²² This principle held true among the Mongols up to Ligdan Khan, but it gradually lost consistency in the following decades.

This development has been partly attributed to the acceptance by southern Mongols that the political authority deriving from being associated with the Mongol imperial legacy had been appropriated by the Manchus. Already in the *Precious Summary* (*Erdeni-yin Tobči*) compiled in 1662 by the Ordos nobleman Sagang Sechen, there are passages that suggest a Manchu succession to the Mongol imperial legacy, for instance by stating that Hong Taiji (Mong. *Sechen Khan*; Ma. *Sure Han*) 'took the state' of the Mongol khans and by establishing a connection between Chinggis Khan and Nurhaci that posited the latter

²¹ Perdue, 2005, p. 105.

²² On the issue of legitimate access to khanship among the Khalkha and Oirat Mongols, see Miyawaki, 1984.

as the political descendant of the former.²³ In eighteenth-century texts such as Rashipungsug's *Crystal Rosary* of 1774 it is stated explicitly that the Qing emperors enjoyed the blessing of the Holy Chinggis Khan.²⁴

Hong Taiji's support for Tibetan Buddhism, culminating in the construction of the Māhākāla temple complex in Mukden (now Shenyang) in 1636, together with the ceremonies that accompanied the victory against Ligdan and the public ceremony that announced recovery of the 'seal' of the Yuan dynasty in 1635, are unmistakable signs that the Manchus' political propaganda aimed to establish an image and reputation for themselves as the successors of the Mongol imperial khans without recourse to the legitimation principle of Chinggisid ancestry.²⁵

Indeed, not all Mongols who attempted to grow into an imperial entity could boast membership of the Chinggisid lineage. As mentioned above, the Zunghars were able to make an 'imperializing' claim upon other Mongols without blood ties to Chinggis Khan. This goes to show that among seventeenth-century Mongols the principle of being a descendant from the Chinggisid agnatic line was an important but not unique path to imperial rulership. Absence of a royal genealogy was most effectively compensated for, as in the case of Galdan, by the investiture from the Tibetan Buddhist chief hierarch, the Dalai Lama. It is possible that the erosion of the principle of Chinggisid legitimacy among the Mongols, and its at least partial replacement by that of religious investiture, facilitated the transfer of a notion of universal *imperium* (as conceived in the Mongol and Tibetan political language) to the Manchus.

In 1640 the Khalkha Mongols under the Jasaghtu Khan and the Oirats under Batur Hongtayiji met at a great assembly that gathered also the Volga Kalmyks (Qalmaqs) and the Kokonor Mongols, but excluded the Inner Mongols that had submitted to the Qing. On this occasion Oirats and Khalkha signed a peace treaty and issued a legal code. The code was meant to buttress Mongol unity, punish those who violated the peace, establish ways to resolve dispute between tribes and increase the power of the aristocracy. On this occasion Tibetan Buddhism was formally proclaimed the official religion of the Mongols.²⁶ In the 1640s Batur also managed to establish and formalize

23 Elverskog, 2006, pp. 44, 81.

24 Elverskog, 2006, p. 80.

25 On early Manchu relations with Tibetan Buddhism, see Grupper, 1984. On the recovery of the jade seal of the Yuan dynasty, see the account of ceremony in which Hong Taiji thanks Heaven see *CMCT*, II, pp. 258–61.

26 Perdue, 2005, p. 107.

trade relations with Russia, and a treaty signed in 1647 allowed commercial exchanges between Oirats and Russians to expand.²⁷ The prosperity and peace created by Batur was short lived as his death in 1653 was followed by a series of succession disputes that eventually led, in 1670, to the assassination of Batur's son and successor Sengge. It was after 1670, with the rise of Galdan, that the Western Mongols again found a unifying leader.

On the eastern front the 1660s witnessed increasing tensions. The Khalkha were divided into four 'khanates': two on the right flank or wing (western side) and two on the left flank (eastern side), each named after the titles of their khans, all of them of Chinggisid descent. The two right-flank ones were named after the Jasaghtu Khan and the Altyn Khan, the left-flank ones were the Tüsiyetü Khan and the Sechen (Setsen, Chechen) Khan. A civil war broke out in 1662 among the right-flank Khalkha Mongols when one of their two rulers, the Jasaghtu Khan, was killed by the other ruler Lobzang Tayiji (r. 1652–67), who was honoured as the Altyn Khan. The Altyn Khan's territory was located in north-western Mongolia, and his subjects were mainly Oirats who had been subjugated by Khalkha princes in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. One of the two left-flank Khalkha rulers, the Tüsiyetü khan Chakhundorji (r. 1655–99), intervened in defence of the Jasaghtu Khan's rights, defeating Lobzang Tayiji, who was subsequently captured by the Oirat ruler Sengge. This war caused widespread destruction and the displacement of many of the Jasaghtu Khan's Mongols, who ended up as subjects of the Tüsiyetü Khan, either because seized by his troops or because they moved to his territory to escape the war and seek protection. The new Jasaghtu Khan, after being installed in 1670 with the support of the Tüsiyetü Khan, requested that the former subjects of his domain be returned by the Tüsiyetü Khan. Because of lack of progress on the return of these people the dispute dragged on, leading to a worsening of the relations between the two wings of the Khalkha Mongols.

The Oirat camp was at the same time troubled by internal wars as Galdan (1644–97) rose to avenge the death of his brother and ruler of the Zunghars Sengge, assassinated in 1670 by a half-brother. Galdan had previously been sent to Tibet to become a disciple of the Panchen Lama and of the Dalai Lama. He then broke his vows, defeated his enemies, and subsequently overthrew the Ochirtu Khan, the highest Oirat authority, thus unifying all Oirats under Zunghar leadership. In 1678 the Dalai Lama bestowed upon him the title of Boshoghtu Khan (the 'legitimate' or 'mandate-holding' khan) and by doing so

²⁷ Bergholz, 1993, pp. 58–9.

made Galdan his champion in the Mongol political world. Galdan soon began a political expansion into Eastern Turkestan and launched raids against the Qazaqs, while keeping good relations with Russia.

In 1686 Galdan entered the broader theatre of Mongol politics as he tried to mediate between the Jasaghtu and the Tüsiyetü khans at a conference held at Küriyen Belčiger.²⁸ At this meeting Galdan took offence at a supposed affront suffered by the representative of the Dalai Lama, who was given a post of honour equal to that of the Jebtsundamba Khutukhtu, the highest Buddhist authority among the Khalkhas, a position held by the brother of the Tüsiyetü Khan. The meeting ended with a general oath of peace and the promise to return all displaced people to their respective domains. Soon after, however, Galdan accused the Jebtsundamba of having challenged the authority of the Dalai Lama. He then prepared to attack the Tüsiyetü Khan by moving closer to the Jasaghtu Khan's territory and holding talks with the right-flank Khalkhas. The Qing emperor Kangxi tried to resolve this dispute diplomatically, but matters precipitated when the Tüsiyetü Khan, possibly fearing a coalition against him, launched an attack in 1687 against the Jasaghtu Khan, in the course of which Galdan's brother, who was assisting the Jasaghtu Khan, was killed. Galdan retaliated with an all-out war invading the eastern Khalkha with 30,000 troops and inflicting heavy losses on the Tüsiyetü Khan. Galdan's march through Khalkha territory was marked by much violence, and by the wholesale destruction of temples and religious establishments. It caused tremendous upheaval among the Khalkha population and as the Khan and the Khutukhtu fled to seek protection in the territory of the Sechen Khan (the second ruler of the left-wing Khalkhas), the common people could only save themselves by running away and moving closer to the Qing border. The masses of refugees made the Qing look at Galdan's advance with increasing apprehension, and persuaded the Kangxi Emperor to send troops to the border to keep the situation under control.

Both the conduct of Galdan in war, who showed no mercy for religious places, and his rage at the treatment of the Dalai Lama's representative show that Galdan's attack, while allegedly meant to avenge his brother's death, had as its main objective the destruction of the power of the Khutukhtu, which he feared might grow independent of that of the Dalai Lama. It was not possible for him to tolerate the existence of two foci of spiritual leadership, especially in consideration of the inextricable ties that the heads of the Tibetan Buddhist clergy had with Mongol leaders, and the critical role they played in Mongol

28 Hevia, 1993.

politics. Galdan therefore would not budge on his request that the Khutukhtu be surrendered to him and sent to the Dalai Lama to make amends.

In 1690 Galdan's position as leader of the Oirats was challenged by Sengge's son Tsewang Rabdan (r. 1697–1727). After some fighting the latter gained the upper hand and proclaimed himself the ruler of the Zungharia. Galdan survived the civil war, and continued to lead the troops still loyal to him against the Khutukhtu, the Tüsiyetü Khan and the Sechen Khan. In the course of this campaign he wished to negotiate with the Qing and came into Inner Mongolia, which was of course under Qing rule. At this point the Kangxi Emperor, outraged by Galdan's continuous disruption of the peace, launched a military campaign that he led in person. The expedition was by no means a triumphal march for the Qing, who suffered many casualties and had severe supply problems.²⁹ A decisive battle was fought at Ulan Budung on 3 September 1690, celebrated as a major Qing victory even though, while the Qing certainly inflicted heavy losses on Galdan, they were unable to crush him.³⁰ Galdan was allowed to withdraw and present an oath of submission in which he promised to refrain from further military activity. At this time Galdan also found that the Russians were not willing to help him as the Tsar had, the year before (1689), signed the Treaty of Nerchinsk with the Qing Emperor that strictly regulated international relations between China and Russia and prevented any intervention in internal affairs.³¹

The most important outcome of these events from the point of view of the Qing rule in Mongolia lies in the decision by the Khalkha rulers to submit to the Qing, a historical determination made at the Dolon Nor Convention (1691). The Kangxi Emperor organized the gathering with great pomp and an impressive display of power and grandeur, securing the submission of the Khalkha khans, the Jebtsundamba Khutukhtu, and 550 noblemen. This fateful event led to the complete restructuring of the political and administrative order of northern Mongolia, modelled after the reorganization of Inner Mongolia. The Khutukhtu was enshrined as the nominal head of all Khalkhas and the Khalkha population was divided into thirty-four Banners (*khoshuu*) that were included in three *ayimagh* named after the Tüsiyetü, Jasaghtu and Sechen khans. A fourth was added in 1725, named after the Sayin Noyan Khan. The *khoshuu* was in effect an aristocratic appanage while the term *ayimagh* originally meant 'tribe' or 'clan'. After 1691 they were given clear administrative meaning, and

29 On the logistical difficulties met by Qing armies, see Perdue, 1996.

30 Perdue, 2005, pp. 155–8.

31 On the treaty of Nerchinsk, see Sebes, 1962; for the Latin, Russian and Manchu texts of the treaty, see Stary, 1974, respectively pp. 308–11, 311–14, 317–19.

their evolution responded to the administrative logic of the Qing Empire. The number of *khoshuu* increased throughout the eighteenth century from thirty-four in 1691 to fifty-three in 1725 and eighty-six in 1765. After 1778 the *ayimaghs* were given the same status as the Inner Mongol leagues (*meng*). The heads of the *khoshuu* were the *jasaghs*, who met every three years to discuss major political or legal issues. Most of the Qing civil and military posts in Mongolia were created after 1725, when the Khalkha nobility was directly subordinated to imperial residents, the highest of whom was the military governor of Uliasutai.³² The whole of northern (or Outer) Mongolia was thereafter ruled through the same mechanism of tutelage that applied to Inner Mongolia, with resident *ambans*, military commanders, and especially the representatives and personnel of the Lifan Yuan that actively supervised the Mongol aristocracy while allowing ample latitude of internal government.

The concluding episode of this phase consists of the second expedition of Kangxi against Galdan. Galdan's attempts to gain support in Western Mongolia and Xinjiang, and his intention to reach Tibet, possibly to establish his own rule there with the support of the Dalai Lama or the regent (who had ruled Tibet by keeping secret the demise of the Dalai Lama until 1693), persuaded Kangxi that it was necessary to eliminate him once and for all by launching a second campaign, also led by the emperor in person. The Qing expeditionary troops under the command of the Manchu general Fiyanggū engaged Galdan on the battlefield of Jao Modo, on the Kerulen River close to today's Ulan Bator. Here Galdan and his Zunghar troops were severely defeated on 3 July 1696. Galdan fled and was pursued by the Kangxi emperor for nearly a year, finding his death on 4 April 1697 in Western Mongolia from causes unknown.

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The third phase of the consolidation of Qing control of the frontiers and definition of the system of frontier administration begins in the late seventeenth century and lasts until the Qing conquest of Xinjiang and complete destruction of the Zunghar khanate. In the process, Qing armies acquired control over Kokonor (Qinghai) and Tibet, setting up civil and military resident officers that led to critical changes in the role, structure and size of the Lifan Yuan.

With the death of Galdan the new ruler of the Zunghars, Tsewang Rabdan, tried to keep good relations with China and Russia while fighting against the Qazaq 'hordes' (as their main divisions were called, namely the Senior, Junior

³² Barkmann, 1988.

and Middle Horde), who suffered for several years from the punishing raids of the Zunghars. Relations with the Kangxi Emperor, however, had already soured in the early years of the eighteenth century over territorial disputes as well as over the Zunghars' recalcitrance to be reduced to the dependent status of the other Mongols, as the Kangxi Emperor had explicitly requested. Moreover, developments in Tibet increasingly drew attention from both sides for the inherent political sensitivity of the religious issue, stemming from the power games that the Regent in Lhasa had engaged in for decades, and because of the weak and ineffective role played by the Sixth Dalai Lama. The latter apparently behaved in a manner unbefitting his religious vows and, perhaps more worryingly from the viewpoint of the Qing, was a political puppet of the traditionally pro-Zunghar Regent. Therefore the Qing supported a takeover by the Lazhang Khan (r. 1703–17), a Khoshut (Khoshuud) descendant of Gūūshi Khan (r. 1636–56), and traditionally both the main Mongol power in Kokonor and Tibet, and a staunch ally of the Manchus. The removal of the Sixth Dalai Lama and installation of a new Sixth Dalai Lama by Lazhang Khan caused great displeasure among the Tibetans, and offered the Zunghars, who had seen themselves since Galdan's time as the secular defenders of the Dalai Lama's dignity, the opportunity to intervene militarily.

In 1715, as the Qing and the Zunghars came to blows in Western Mongolia over territorial disputes and Zunghar incursions into Khalkha territory, and as Kangxi was preparing for a new campaign against such a crafty rival, Tsewang Rabdan launched a devastating campaign against the Khoshut Mongols in Tibet. The Zunghars overcame Khoshut resistance, occupied Lhasa and, in the process, killed Lazhang Khan. This turn of events brought the Kangxi Emperor into direct military confrontation in Tibet. The first Qing expeditionary army was soundly defeated by the Zunghars in 1718 but subsequent military operations were successful, and in 1724 Tibet was freed of the Zunghars.

Tibet was now fully under the control of the Qing, and a series of institutional changes was introduced under Kangxi and especially under Yongzheng, in 1727. The spirit of the system was to allow the government of Tibet to remain in the hands of the Dalai Lama and the Council of Ministers, the *bka-shags*, which included secular and religious members. Yet it was to remain under a regime of supervision and arbitration operated by two Qing resident officials, one senior and one junior, and by the designated offices of the Lifan Yuan. The Qing officials, or *amban*, had at their disposal also a standing military force of 2,000. The tasks and duties of the Lifan Yuan in Tibet were similar to those they carried out in the Mongolian Banners, namely to supervise the

payment of taxes; to arrange for the appointments, promotions, demotions and stipends of local officials and noblemen; to make appropriate arrangements, supervise and regulate the journeys to Beijing and visits to court of the Tibetan nobility and Buddhist hierarchs. This system allowed a greater degree of autonomy than the *jasagh* system of Inner and Outer Mongolia, but in 1750, following an anti-Qing revolt, the powers of the resident *amban* were strengthened, and they began to take a more active role in the government of Tibet. The *amban* became directly involved in the nomination of civil and religious officials and their appointment by the government. In practice, all major economic, legal and political government activities of the Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama, as well as those of the local ministers (*bka'-blon*), were now to be carried out jointly with the Qing residents.³³

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The fourth and final phase of the Qing 'march' to establish primacy over Inner Asian territories refers to the last act of the Zunghar conflict and to the conquest of Xinjiang. Going back to the late Kangxi relations with Tsewang Rabdan, at the time of the expedition to expel the Zunghars from Tibet, Qing forces had also attacked and captured the Turkestani cities of Barkul, Hami and Turfan, the latter being especially critical as it allowed the Qing to open anti-Zunghar negotiations with the Qazaqs.³⁴ At the end of the Kangxi period Qing troops were poised to launch yet another campaign against the Zunghars, but this required time and considerable resources considering the remoteness of the Zunghar homeland, near the Altai Mountains in today's northern Xinjiang.

The death of the Kangxi Emperor in 1723 temporarily removed the threat of an imminent Qing assault on the Zunghars. In 1727 Tsewang Rabdan also died, and was succeeded by his son Galdantsering (r. 1727–45). In the 1720s, relations between the Yongzheng Emperor and the Zunghars, while remaining hostile, were less heated. In the 1730s, however, Galdantsering, who had spent his first years in power reorganizing the Zunghar state, resumed attacks on the Khalkha Mongols, who had been for so long the target of Zunghar expansionism. The Qing intervened militarily in order to protect their Eastern Mongol subjects, and especially to preserve their hegemony in the region, defeating the Zunghars on several occasions. Eventually a peace treaty was signed in 1739 that settled the border between the two states, by which the Zunghar

³³ Kolmaš, 1994; Xiao, 1977.

³⁴ Bergholz, 1993, p. 313.

suffered extensive territorial losses, including Tuva. Official trade, however, was resumed, and the Zunghars were allowed to send triennially commercial delegations to China. This treaty held until the 1750s.

At the death of Galdantsering a succession struggle broke out that eventually saw a Zunghar nobleman, Dawachi (r. 1753–5), accede to the throne in 1753 with the assistance of the Khojd chief Amursana. Within a few months the newly unified Oirat state was again troubled by massive defections to the Qing and internal dissent. Amursana himself revolted against Dawachi, siding with China. The Qianlong Emperor (r. 1736–95) took advantage of the Zunghar weakness to settle the situation once and for all, and a force of 25,000 Manchu and Mongol troops moved into Zungharia practically unopposed. Having gained an easy victory, Qianlong planned to reconfigure the Oirats politically, and divided them into four units according to their original tribal affiliation, namely the Dörbet, Khoshut, Khojd and Choroos (as the Zunghars were renamed). These tribes were to be headed by Mongol-style khans with equal standing, and to replicate the organization that obtained in Outer Mongolia. Amursana, however, aspired to something grander than being confirmed chief of the Khojd, and proclaimed himself the Hongtayiji (the supreme Oirat title of old, formerly held by Batur Hongtayiji) of all Oirats in 1756.³⁵ This rebellion was followed by the so-called Chingünjav rebellion (1756–7), that is, an attempt by some Khalkha princes to rise against the Qing.³⁶ However, support for either rebellions melted quickly as the Khalkha khans and princes fell in line with the diktats of the Qing, and initial supporters defected. Chingünjav himself was captured and executed in 1757. Amursana fled to Russia after having been hunted down by the Qing forces sent to ‘pacify’ Zungharia, and died there of smallpox in the same year.

The campaign led to the final incorporation of Zungharia and Eastern Turkestan into the Qing Empire, to the destruction of the Zunghar khanate – that is, the Oirat tribal confederation headed by the Zunghar khans – and to the disappearance of the Oirats, who were almost completely wiped out in the course of an extremely bloody campaign, as protagonists of steppe politics. The colonization of the northwest followed, to a certain degree, principles already in place in the Mongolian dependencies, while at the same time being more complex and articulated across different ecological, economic and ethnic regions. Xinjiang (the ‘New Frontier’) was divided into three regions under the general authority of a military governor (the Ili Jiangjun) based in the

³⁵ Miyawaki, 1997.

³⁶ Bawden, 1968a.

northern region (Zungharia, the Ili Valley) at Ningyuan with deputy military commanders in major centres in the east and the south. The army brought to Xinjiang included a number of Mongol and Manchu troops relocated from the east, such as Chakhar, Solon, Daghur, Sibe, regular Bannermen, Green Standard soldiers from the nearby provinces of Ningxia and Shaanxi, and local Western Mongols. These military units were largely expected to be self-sustaining through the system of military farms.³⁷

Civilian administration included different territorial divisions. In eastern Xinjiang, which included Urumqi, Turfan and Hami, some areas were turned into prefectures and counties under the supervision of the Gansu provincial government, but these were relatively few. The Mongols in the region and even some Muslim towns were organized along the model of the *jasagh*-Banners. The overall regional authority rested with the Lieutenant Governor (*dutong*) based in Urumqi. In southern Xinjiang, which included the oasis cities of the Tarim Basin, known as Kashgharia or Altishahr, several resident officials (*canzan dachen* and the subordinate offices of *banshi dachen* and *xieban dachen*) and a military commander (*lingtui dachen*) represented Qing authority, while the actual civil administration was entrusted to local Muslim officials, known as *beg*. The whole Qing administration of Xinjiang was brought under the jurisdiction of the Lifan Yuan, in collaboration with other ministries, and the ‘*beg* system’ in force in southern Xinjiang was in effect the result of the fusion of the pre-existing Turco-Muslim administrative structure within the framework provided by the Lifan Yuan. These officials were appointed by imperial decree, through a complex system of nomination and confirmation that was managed by the Lifan Yuan. They wore Qing official robes and imperial insignia, while retaining their Turkic and Muslim titles. The Lifan Yuan remained critical to Qing rule in Xinjiang in many areas of government, from carrying out land surveys and censuses for fiscal purposes, to keeping accurate accounts, to selecting candidates to fill political positions, and by managing the international relations with bordering states and independent nomadic groups, in particular Russia, Khoqand, and Qirghiz and Qazaqs tribesmen. Matters of international trade, tribute relations and all diplomatic correspondence were dealt with through the Lifan Yuan representatives. The Qing system of ‘indirect rule’ granted nonetheless considerable autonomy to the local elites, especially in judicial matters where the Muslim law was applied by local judges (*qādi*).³⁸

37 For a fuller account of Xinjiang under Qing rule refer to James Millward’s essay in this volume.

38 On the relationship between the *begs* of Altishahr and the Qing, see Newby, 1998.

The Lifan Yuan: structure and function

As mentioned above, the keystone of the whole border administration from Mongolia to Tibet was the Lifan Yuan. This critical office was established in the late 1630s in the context of the incorporation of Mongols within the ruling elite, social fabric, and military and administrative infrastructure of the Manchu state. Early relations between Manchus and Mongols were based on the Inner Asian system of tribal alliances. These were sealed in two ways, by sworn oaths and by diplomatic marriage. While there are differences between the two, both entailed a series of mutual obligations. The policy of intermarriage between Manchu and Mongol aristocracies over several decades created bonds of fealty that allowed the most trusted among the Mongol allies of the Manchu imperial household to integrate within the elite military caste and higher political echelons of the state. With the growth of the Mongol population and territory under Manchu rule, and with the replacement of a relationship of diplomatic equality with one of political subordination, a new type of territorial control over the Mongol aristocracy and management of local governments was needed. The Lifan Yuan was the branch of government intended to provide structural coherence to the administration of non-Han borderlands and organic connectivity between the court and the local elites coopted within the system of rule of these regions.³⁹

Created in 1636 as the Bureau of Mongol Affairs (see above, Ch. *menggu yamen*), in 1638 the office changed its name to Lifan Yuan, and began in the early years after the conquest of China to define its role and prerogatives in the government of the Mongols south of the Gobi. At this time the Lifan Yuan was restructured, and several new positions were created. The most important were the president (Ch. *shangshu*, Ma. *aliha amban*), of ministerial rank, and two vice-presidents (Ma. *ashan-i amban*), of whom the left-side one was the senior and the right-side one the junior. In addition, there were altogether eight assistant directors in charge of the four departments (Ma. *aisilakū hafan*). Finally, a supervisor (Ma. *mujilen bahabukū*) was appointed.⁴⁰ The higher officers were all Manchus and Mongols, with Han employees being hired in lower clerical positions, typically as scribes and secretaries.

From its inception and through the initial phase of its existence, in the Shunzhi period (1644–61), the Lifan Yuan was headed by a minister with two vice-ministers (Ch. *shilang*). Its administrative structure was formalized in 1661 into four main bureaus: the Bureau of Rewards for Meritorious Service (Luxun),

³⁹ Di Cosmo, 1998.

⁴⁰ Li, 1997, pt 2, p. 22.

the Guest Reception (Bingke) Bureau, the Bureau for Cherishing the Distant (Rouyuan) and the Bureau of Punishments (Lixing).⁴¹ Through the Kangxi and especially the Qianlong periods the Board underwent several reforms. After 1764 the number of bureaus was expanded to six, as new responsibilities were added in consequence of the conquest of the north-west (Xinjiang).⁴²

The Luxun Bureau handled rewards, rank assignments and appointments to local political and military posts. It also was in charge of supervising postal stations, frontier posts and commercial traffic. It carried out investigations into criminal cases, such as mishandling and theft of government animals and other property allocated to the postal stations, and pursued fugitives. During the Kangxi period all the ranking aristocrats of the outer regions (*wai fan*) began to be meticulously registered together with family affiliation. This office compiled short biographies with details of their meritorious service, promotions and other relevant personal information. In this way, it was possible to keep updated records and résumés of aristocrats who came periodically to visit the court to pay homage by performing the *chaojin* ritual, or who were proposed for appointments and rewards.

The Bingke Bureau handled all the preparations and matters relative to the *chaojin* annual visits, the royal hunt and the presentation of tribute by the Mongol *jasaghs* and later by other *wai fan* dignitaries, including Tibetans and Turkestanis.⁴³ It fixed the dates and itinerary of each delegation every year according to a rotation principle (*nianban*), established the names and number of the participants, the rank order and the sequence according to which they would be received. There were specific rules also about the tribute that each Mongol Banner was allowed to present and about the banquets prepared for the visiting delegation. The tribute was established and received by the personnel of the Lifan Yuan before being handed over to the Ministry of Rites. These regulations changed over time and remained an important aspect in fixing the delicate balance of power between the Qing court and the regional centres of power represented by the Mongol aristocracies and, later, by the Muslim *begs* and Tibetan lamas in their respective territories.

The Rouyuan ('Cherishing those who come from afar') Bureau was above all in charge of monitoring the presence of Tibetan Buddhist lamas among the Mongols. Every aspect of their activity was subject to supervision, from their number in each Mongol Banner to their movements in and out of Mongolian territories, and from the management of religious property, down to

41 Li, 2007, pp. 130–1.

42 Yuan, 1996, pp. 43–8.

43 On the *chaojin*, see Chia, 1993.

the colour of the robes and rank insignia they were allowed to wear when they visited the court, to the books kept in each monastery. If lamas were given overnight accommodation by Mongols while travelling, they had to be reported to the Lifan Yuan, and duly recorded under penalty of legal sanctions. These regulations were the same across all the territories under the jurisdiction of the Lifan Yuan, and applied to all Mongols. The close attention paid to lamaist activities throughout Mongol lands speaks to the great importance attached to the supervision of the relations between Mongol aristocracies and Tibetan hierarchies, and of the political control exerted by the Qing, through the Lifan Yuan, upon this relationship.

A central function of the Lifan Yuan in the Inner Asian territories was the exercise of legal powers, whose spectrum was ample and ranged across military, criminal and civil law. The personnel of the Punishment Bureau of the Lifan Yuan intervened in all Mongol Banners as investigators, consultants to the local *jasagh*, supervisors of the legal proceedings and members of the judicial process, usually in collaboration with the local authorities. Until the nineteenth century several codes and regulations were issued by the Qing government for the administration of the law in these territories that were periodically revised or updated (see below).

The Punishment Bureau was in charge of keeping the Mongols and other nationalities informed of any new regulations or modifications of the legal codes and statutes, and of transmitting copies of the code to the Banners. In practice, the Lifan Yuan was to be involved in every legal case, a report of which was to be made and recorded. The role of legal supervision and judicial powers were entrusted to the Lifan Yuan early on and there are records of legal proceedings among the Mongols handled by the Lifan Yuan dating from the Chongde period (1636–43), as in the case of three Bannermen sent to investigate a criminal case among the Khorchin in 1638.⁴⁴ Manchu envoys of the Lifan Yuan could investigate, indict Mongol *jasagh* and propose their removal from office, as in the case of the *jasagh* of a Jarut Banner, thus intervening directly in the administration of justice within the Mongol territories.⁴⁵

It is important to underscore the relevance of the legal codes and statutes for Mongolia and the other Inner Asian dependencies issued by the Qing dynasty, whose development can be traced back to before the conquest. It is in the military regulations that were issued to Mongol troops during the military operations in Chinese territory in the late 1620s and 1630s that one can locate the earliest instances of legal regimentation that the Manchus imposed on

⁴⁴ Li, 1997, pt 2, p. 12

⁴⁵ Li, 1997, pt 2, p. 9.

their Mongol subjects and allies.⁴⁶ Legal and administrative procedures, in addition to requirements of tribute, visits to court, and regulations regarding appointments to political positions (either by inheritance or by merit) formed the basis of the regime of tutelage that the Manchus gradually devised for their rule of Mongol tribes and later extended to other frontier regions, though with differences dictated by local circumstances.

The vast literature on the legal aspects of the Qing rule in Mongolia has stressed the statements by Manchu emperors on their intention that laws for the Inner Asian regions had to suit existing customary laws and local conditions.⁴⁷ At the same time, this declaration of principle was countermanded by the Qing promulgation of written codes to imbricate the administration of justice in a bureaucratic net that clearly delineated the powers of the central government *vis-à-vis* the local ones. If the Lifan Yuan was the bureaucratic structure through which the legal authority of the Qing was preserved and reinforced, the legal codes (*Menggu lüshu*, *Menggu lüli*, *Lifan Yuan zeli*), repeatedly revised, were a critical tool in the exercise of their power. It has been argued that over time the whole legal system of Mongolia was transformed by the introduction of Chinese laws, and contributed to the gradual assimilation of Mongolia within the Qing imperial system.⁴⁸

In 1643, Manchu armies crossed the Shanhai Pass, and the Lifan Yuan began to collate the legal edicts issued to the Mongols during Hong Taiji's period into a single code, called *Menggu lüshu* ('Mongol statutes'). This is the earliest version of what we know as the *Menggu lüli* ('Mongol statutes and regulations') and the predecessor, therefore, of the *Lifan Yuan zeli*, issued in 1811.⁴⁹ Periodic editions of the *Menggu lüli* in the Kangxi and Qianlong reign periods reflect changes in the administration of Mongolia, which required new edicts and modifications to existing laws.

Extant Mongol traditions regarding trials and punishments were not based on a judicial apparatus separate from the ruling aristocracy. Under the new regime, the noblemen's legal powers were limited by the establishment of a multi-tier process based on which the decisions on controversial or especially serious crimes were to be deferred to higher administrative levels and subject to supervision and examination by Lifan Yuan officials. Hence, minor offences and civil disputes were handled by the local *jasagh*; more difficult cases were reported to the league head who, in consultation with other *jasaghs*, issued

46 Di Cosmo, 2002, pp. 343–47.

47 Yang and Shi, 2005, p. 35.

48 Yang, 2006, p. 101

49 Dalizhabu, 2003.

a verdict. Then the sentence was transmitted to the regional Qing administrative or military officers (*dutong*, *ambans* and so on) for review, after which the case was reported to the Lifan Yuan. In areas in which there were no ruling *jasaghs* the competent authorities were by default the Qing officers and Bannermen stationed in that area. If a case involved a Mongol and a Han person then it was to be handled jointly by the Mongol and Qing authorities. The laws prescribed harsh penalties for serious crimes such as theft, plunder and murder. Members of the aristocracy, however, normally received only a monetary fine or a demotion. Cases in which a particularly harsh sentence was contemplated, such as exile but excluding the death penalty, had to be reported directly to the Bureau of Punishments, which had the power to adjudicate and impose the penalty. In cases that involved the death penalty the verdict by the same Bureau required consultation with the three judicial organs of the Qing administration, namely, the Board of Punishments, the Censorate and the Supreme Court, and in some special cases the final decision was only made by the emperor at the autumn assizes. Therefore, the Qing legal system and the role played by the Bureau of Punishment of the Lifan Yuan, with its broad range of competence, overrode in the most important cases the authority of local native rulers.

One key principle of the borderlands' legal system was that the applicable laws had to conform to the code of the place where the crime was committed. Therefore a Mongol committing a crime in Mongol lands was to be judged according to the Mongol statute laws, but if the crime was committed in China (*neidi*) then the Qing code would apply.⁵⁰ A precedent for this principle can be found in the pre-Qing period, when regulations issued as early as 1631 stipulated that a Manchu who committed a crime in Mongol territory (Khorchin or Abagha) had to be judged according to Mongol laws; conversely, a Mongol in Manchu territory was subject to Manchu laws.⁵¹ Only in those cases for which there were no clear regulations in the Lifan Yuan statute books, nor customary laws to rely upon, could one resort to the 'metropolitan' Qing code.

A special legislation applied to the Khalkha tribes of Outer Mongolia after their submission to the Qing. A legal code, known as *Khalkha Jirum*, was issued in 1709 and remained effective, albeit with some overlap with the *Menggu lüli*, until 1790. This has led to the impression that the Khalkha princes enjoyed a greater degree of independence. Recently found Mongol documents, however, show that these statutes applied essentially only to the appanages subject to Tüsiyetü Khan and to the Jebtsundamda Khutukhtu. In fact, from 1694 to

⁵⁰ Uljitokto, 2004, p. 69.

⁵¹ *MWLD*, V, pp. 506–7.

1709 the statutes of the *Menggu lüli* were transmitted to Outer Mongolia and used through the various *aimaghs*.⁵²

The *Khalkha Jirum* issued in 1709 contained eighteen sections on administrative and legal matters, from the management of temples and postal stations to military matters, marriage and inheritance laws, commerce regulations, hunting rights, handling of fugitives and penalties for criminals. The relationship between the Khalkha aristocracy of Outer Mongolia and the court continued to be regulated by the Lifan Yuan according to the rules of the *Menggu lüli*, and Qing military posts were established in northern Mongolia. Communication between *aimaghs* was likewise subject to governmental supervision, and the legal proceedings within each territory were monitored by the Lifan Yuan. If the *Khalkha Jirum* can be interpreted as a sign of greater autonomy conceded to a portion of Khalkha aristocracy, its existence does not necessarily imply a weaker Qing political presence in the region.

Another area in which the Lifan Yuan had an important role was the management of marriage relations between the Manchu imperial household and the Mongol aristocracy. Already in Nurhaci's time alliances with Mongol tribes were initiated or sealed by marriage agreements.⁵³ The strategic goal to expand the Manchu political role among the Mongol aristocracy by seeking marriage alliances was pursued even more extensively by Hong Taiji, who was himself related by marriage to the Khorchin. After the establishment of the Lifan Yuan the marriages between Mongol and Manchu royalties were handled by its officials. When a Mongol *efu* (imperial son-in-law) was sought for marriage to a Manchu princess the Lifan Yuan sent letters to the *jasaghs* of the Khorchin and the other thirteen Inner Mongol Banners with which the Aisin Gioro entertained marriage relations for the names of suitable candidates. When these were received, their birthdates and backgrounds were checked for up to three generations. Then the Lifan Yuan selected a few and submitted the 'shortlist' to the Imperial Household Department for additional screening, while the final decision had to be signed off by the emperor.

The Lifan Yuan was also in charge of relief to the local people in case of a natural calamity. The Qing imposed light taxes and few corvées upon the Mongols, but in areas hit by natural disasters it required that the *jasaghs*, wealthy families and monasteries provided aid to the local population. In case this was not sufficient, the entire league had to pool its resources to help the affected population. The families receiving aid were to be registered and reported to the Lifan Yuan. In particularly dire circumstances the league chief

⁵² Dalizhabu, 2005b.

⁵³ Di Cosmo, 2007.

and *jasaghs* asked the Lifan Yuan to send inspectors to assess the gravity of the emergency and deliver assistance as needed. While statistics are incomplete, it has been calculated that the Lifan Yuan took direct responsibility for relief operations forty times during the Kangxi reign, and eighteen and fourteen respectively for the Yongzheng and Qianlong periods.⁵⁴

The Lifan Yuan was also directly involved in the organization of the collective gatherings of the six Inner Mongolian leagues, held typically every three years, and made sure that protocol was observed. These were solemn occasions meant to affirm political allegiance, but especially to review the most serious criminal cases. After 1751 the presence of government officials at these meetings was discontinued, but the *jasaghs* had to report to the Lifan Yuan whenever special issues arose, in which case the Qing government would dispatch its representatives.

The Lifan Yuan personnel also took charge of the logistic network established by the Qing in Mongolia. A network of postal stations and military routes reminiscent of the Mongol *jam* system allowed government agents, military personnel and anyone else with official licence to use these logistic facilities. Prior to 1692 horses and victuals needed by government officials, both civil and military, travelling in the border regions were in effect requisitioned or borrowed from local Mongols, causing considerable hardship to the population. The Kangxi Emperor changed the system entrusting the Lifan Yuan with the task of establishing government-operated postal stations along several routes. Altogether fifty-one stations were set up in Inner Mongolia to connect the various Banners, and over 120 in northern Mongolia on routes to the most remote regions, including Altai, Uliasutai, Kobdo and Khiakhta. Military posts (*Ma. karun*) were also established at various locations between those outer regions (*fan*) and the 'inner' domains as well as along the frontiers of the Qing Empire to check the credentials and identity of travellers. Typically a postal station had to take care of twenty horses, in addition to camels, sheep and food. The personnel included, for every two adjacent stations, one Mongol officer with ten soldiers, two *bošokū* (corporals) and one secretary. They all depended on the Lifan Yuan. Among their tasks were the reception and distribution of dispatches from the court and imperial edicts through the areas under their jurisdiction. The relay stations network was also used to send military supplies, salaries, agricultural tools and provide logistic support wherever needed, such as to escort criminals or couriers. Only people with permits issued by the Lifan Yuan were allowed to use these facilities, and

⁵⁴ Zhao, 1994, p. 176.

horses, lodging and food were allocated to them according to specific regulations. Moreover, these stations functioned in peacetime as market places for those living in the area.

In conclusion, the Manchu and Mongol officials of the Lifan Yuan became, even before the conquest of China, the physical expression of the Qing imperial government among the Mongols and the other Inner Asian dependencies. They were charged with sensitive tasks related to keeping peace and order after the ‘pacification’ of politically unstable frontier regions.

The most salient aspect of the remaking of Inner Asia by the Qing is to be recognized in the forms of political tutelage that the empire established over indigenous communities. Political tutelage took chiefly two forms. The first consisted of norms that defined the relationship between the local aristocracies and the center of the empire, namely the emperor, the imperial clan and the court. The second consisted of the creation of a bureaucracy that allowed the central government to regulate through administrative and legal means the social and political life in the ‘outer borderlands’.

The former policy grew out of the incorporation of Mongol aristocrats within the Manchu elite, through alliances, marriage, cooptation, voluntary submission, military conquest or other means based on the historical contexts. These circumstances determined the political conditions upon which the allegiance and participation of the Mongols in the Qing imperial project was predicated. The latter policy is embodied in the development of the outer regions’ government structure, of which the Lifan Yuan was the lynchpin. The political, ritual, judicial, logistic and administrative tasks entrusted to its bureaucracy, and the normative codification of statutes and laws that underpinned its activity, testify to the comprehensive, and yet not burdensome and relatively fluid, control the Qing retained over Mongolia. These regulations provided a key element of the supporting structure of the Qing colonization of Inner Asia.

How to attract to their side the masses of internally divided and politically capricious Mongols became one of the critical questions confronting the Manchu leadership even before the conquest of China. Peaceful cooptation and legal control of the local elites, joined with military intervention, continued to inform the frontier strategy after the conquest of China. During the first half of the Qing dynasty (1644–1795) the dynasty honed the tools developed in the 1630s to produce an expert and efficient bureaucratic apparatus able to consolidate the political gains made on the battlefield. As a conclusive thought we should remind ourselves, however, that the Qing conquest of Inner Asia occurred at a time during which these frontier regions and their

societies were undergoing intense transformations. The emergence of strong ties between the Mongol aristocracy and the Tibetan Buddhist religious elites, the progressive erosion of the political values inherent in the notion of Chinggisid legitimation, and an international scene profoundly modified by the Russian expansion were some of the most critical intervening changes that contributed in some measure to the establishment of Qing rule in Inner Asia.