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The Non-Han Peoples in Chinese History

EVELYN S. RAWSKI

The term “non-Han” is relatively new. In the late nineteenth century, thinkers like Liang Qichao (1873–1929) used the term “Han” to claim that the “yellow race” was led by the Han people, who “were the initiators of civilization and had civilized the whole of Asia.”¹ In his early revolutionary efforts, Sun Yat-sen (1866–1925) used the term “Han” to denote a race. Today, just who is Han and who is or was not Han is a complex issue of self-identity. Applying the term to earlier periods raises a host of complex issues. For example, calling individuals whose native language was Chinese Han seems on the surface to be satisfactory, but many who fell into this category, for example Manchu bannermen (all Manchus were registered in banners, large civil–military units created from 1601 onward), were most assuredly not identified as Han, either by themselves or by others.

Archaeological discoveries in recent years have also complicated our understanding of the origins of Chinese civilization. Current scholarship contradicts the notion of a single “cradle” of Chinese civilization and instead suggests that five different regional Neolithic cultures fed into the “formation of civilization.”² Chinese civilization “can be traced back to several points of origin,”³ and precisely how these regional cultures interacted with one another remains unclear. Under these circumstances,

the formation of what would eventually become the "Han" people is itself a major unresolved issue for future research.

At the same time, documents throughout Chinese history testify to the persistence of contrasting social groups, divisible into "us" versus "them." The earliest Chinese-language texts refer not to Han versus non-Han but rather contrast the "civilized people," the "Hua" or "Xia," with specified groups of barbarians. A scholar has recently argued that "barbarian" was an essential concept against which, in contrast, the concept of civilization developed.⁴ In this essay, I use "us" to refer to the Han, and "them" to refer to the non-Han peoples who appear in Chinese history.

Although the overwhelming majority of the citizens of the People's Republic of China today are Han Chinese, peoples whose native language was not Chinese played major roles in China's long history. Non-Han peoples ruled over the Chinese speakers in whole or in part for over half of Chinese history, and contributed to the richness and diversity of Chinese culture. This interaction, in particular between steppe nomads and the Chinese speakers, most of whom were tied to an agrarian economy, was so important that it has given rise to several major theories.

According to the twentieth-century scholar Owen Lattimore, the rise and fall of steppe nomadic federations and Chinese dynasties were intimately linked.⁵ When the Chinese dynasty was strong, it defended its frontiers against steppe invaders with vigor; nomads had to purchase the silk, tea, and other Chinese goods they coveted. When the Chinese dynasty grew weak, the nomads could plunder border towns instead of trading for these goods. Nomadic khans attracted and expanded the numbers of their followers with the lure of booty; out of this process emerged steppe federations that posed major military challenges to the Chinese dynasty. Sometimes the nomad confederation conquered Chinese territory, but the nomadic political organization was ephemeral and tended to disintegrate with success. Over time the steppe federation would itself be crushed by a strong new Chinese dynasty. The cyclical appearance and reappearance of Chinese and Inner Asian conquest regimes thus characterized the historical interaction between a sedentary Chinese agrarian society and a mobile pastoral society.

In 1989, an anthropologist named Thomas Barfield challenged the Lattimore analysis. Barfield argued that the relationship between nomads and China was not confrontational but symbiotic. Cycles of unification and dissolution within China and the steppe were closely tied to one another, because "ultimately the state organization of the steppe needed a stable China to exploit."⁶ Nomads found that they could ally with Chinese rulers and obtain the goods they desired by treaty rather than by plunder. For their part, Chinese rulers decided that co-opting the nomads with subsidies in exchange for military aid against internal enemies was cheaper than fighting nomads. There are many examples of such alliances in the Tang dynasty (618–907), although historians note that the Tang ruling house was founded by people who originated outside the Chinese-speaking world.

Recent studies of conquest regimes ruling north and northwest China from the tenth to the fourteenth centuries have challenged Barfield in one part of his historical thesis, namely the assertion that only north-east Asian or "Manchurian" states were successful in creating stable polities that could hold on to the Chinese-speaking territories. Barfield argued that the typical nomad confederacy was too loosely organized to persist once the conquest was completed: only a continuous inflow of new booty acquired on the battlefield could ensure continuity. Once the new riches ceased to flow, nomadic tribal leaders frequently chose to return to the steppe, and the leader of the confederacy found himself stripped of significant portions of his army. Manchuria was different because groups living in that region were familiar with both the agrarian and the steppe regimes and could adapt to the political requirements for ruling large empires of sedentary peoples.

More recently, scholars have emphasized the great variety of ecosystems within the steppe, noting that nomadism was interspersed with some agricultural activity whenever the rainfall and climate permitted cultivation of crops.⁷ Through long historical exposure to sedentary societies, which provided essential commodities, nomads also learned about alternative modes of political and social organization and encountered new ideologies and religions, and they adopted many new technologies and ideas imported from sedentary agrarian societies. Specialists writing on the conquest regimes that ruled part or all of the Chinese-

speaking world from the tenth to the fourteenth centuries have suggested an alternative to the Barfield thesis, namely that a historical shift occurred during the Tang dynasty.⁸ States formed in Inner Asia along Tang borders adapted their own polities to synthesize Tang bureaucratic practices with the realities of their own political situations. Acting within a multistate context, they developed states before taking over portions of the Tang empire. The Tanguts controlled the land from Ordos westward to the Gansu corridor as the Western Xia (Xi Xia, ca. 982–1227). The Khitan became a major power in north Asia and ruled the north China plain as the Liao dynasty (907–1125). The Jurchen were able to overthrow the Khitan, expelling the Song dynasty from north China, and ruling as the Jin dynasty from 1115 to 1234, only to be defeated by the Mongols, who conquered the Song and established the Yuan dynasty (1279–1368). The inclusion of the Mongol empire in this group disproves Barfield's argument that steppe societies could not form stable political entities to rule sedentary populations.

The Qing dynasty (1644–1911) represents the culmination of this long tradition of interaction between Inner and East Asia. The founders of the dynasty were a northeast Asian people who claimed descent from the Jurchen rulers of north China during the Jin dynasty (1115–1260). In the late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries, a minor tribal chieftain named Nurgaci (1559–1626) successfully united many of the tribes in northeast Asia. His son Hongtaiji (1592–1643) transformed these diverse peoples into a new solidary group, the Manchus. Incorporating the tribes into banners, the Manchus conquered the Ming territories and created a large empire that extended into Inner Asia. Elsewhere, I have argued that their northeast Asian origins were influential in shaping the cultural policies they used to create an empire that successfully incorporated Inner and East Asian peoples.⁹ Qing court robes copied the Inner Asian style of Manchu garments; seasonal sojourning on the Inner Asian model dominated the residential patterns of the emperors until the nineteenth century. While in Peking, emperors alternated between the Forbidden City and elaborate villas in the northwest suburbs; during the summer months they moved to Rehe, outside the Great Wall.

The *Bishu shanzhuang quantu* (Complete Map of the Mountain Retreat for Escaping Summer's Heat; see figure 1) depicts a site that was



1. Detail of *Bishu shanzhuang quantu* (Complete Map of the Mountain Retreat for Escaping Summer's Heat). Qing dynasty, undated, ca. 1900. Horizontal hanging scroll; ink, color, and white pigment on paper; 212.0 x 382.5 cm. The National Library of China, 074.45/(211.911)/1900-2. *Visible Traces* catalogue, item 56-2, p. 206.

Drawn in the Guangxu reign (1875-1908), this massive map depicts a favorite Qing imperial summer destination, Rehe, which is located 250 kilometers northeast of the capital, beyond the Great Wall. The emperors spent several months of each year here, especially during the late-seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Meetings with Uighur nobles, Mongol allies, and Tibetan prelates made Rehe an important center for relations with the Qing empire's Inner Asian subjects.

selected and named by the Kangxi emperor (reigned 1662–1722). A summer capital for the Qing rulers, the Mountain Retreat for Escaping Summer's Heat (Bishu shanzhuang) was located in Rehe (later renamed Chengde), in the region north of the Great Wall lying between the North China plain and the Mongolian steppe. The Liao, Jin, and Yuan had all had seasonal capitals in this area, and the Qing consciously followed their precedent. Beginning in 1681, as the conquest of the Ming territories drew to a close, the Kangxi emperor came annually to Rehe with a large entourage. Rehe was not only a refuge from the north China summer but a major arena for the conduct of Qing relations with its Inner Asian subjects and allies. After several months, the emperor would proceed with his Mongol allies to Mulan, an imperial hunting preserve north of Rehe, for the autumn hunt. Mongol nobles who had never been exposed to smallpox were invited to Mulan; this attendance was called the "hunting rotation" (*weiban*) as opposed to the "annual rotation" (*nianban*) to the court at Peking.¹⁰ Hunting provided an opportunity for the emperor to review the martial skills of his troops and to display his own prowess with the bow.

The Kangxi emperor at first lived in tents when he visited Rehe and Mulan. The late-Qing map seen in figure 1, however, shows the elaborate building of temples, pavilions, and landscape architecture that took place in the eighteenth century. Many of these edifices and landscapes were created by order of the Qianlong emperor (reigned 1736–1796), who spent many months every year at Rehe and Mulan.¹¹ Here he received the Panchen Lama in 1780, and during the visit built a replica of the lama's home monastery in Tibet as a guest house.¹²

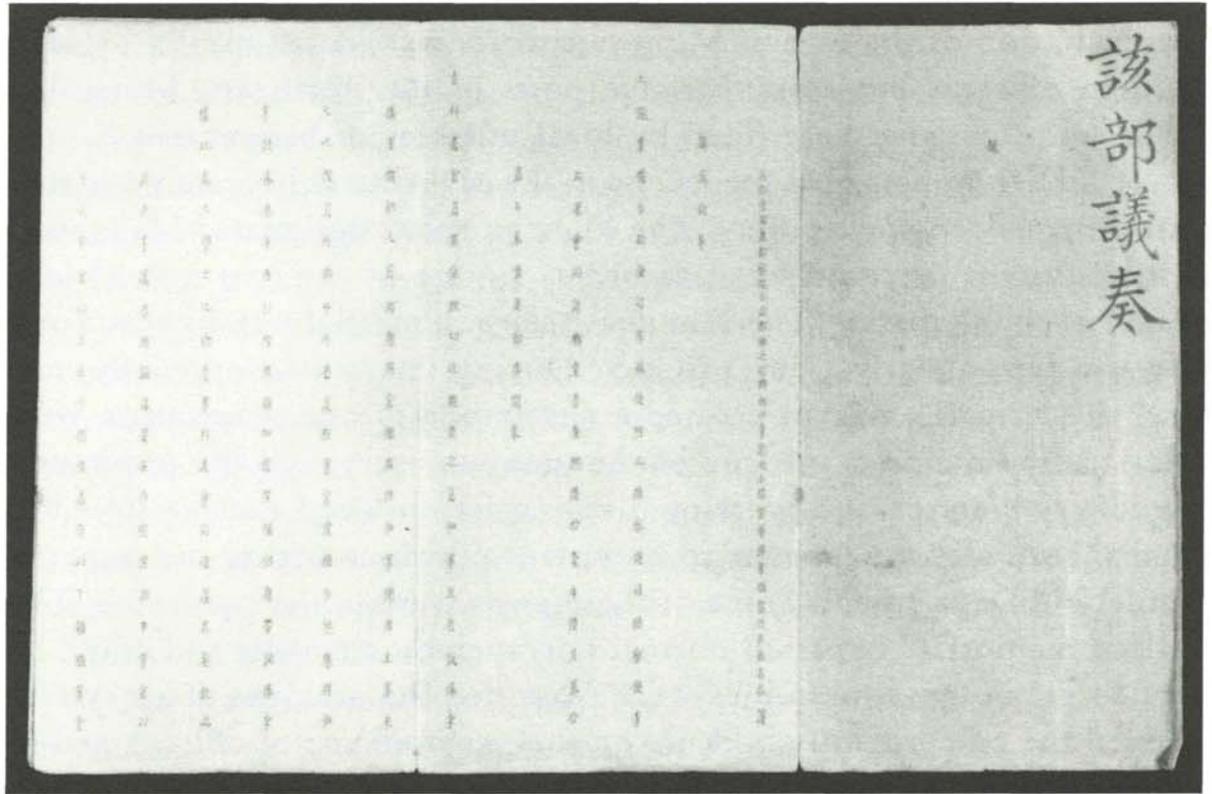
In contrast to the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), when a succession of weak emperors sat on the throne, the late-seventeenth and eighteenth centuries saw strong-willed emperors who successfully centralized authority and decision making into their own hands. This was achieved by implementing the principle of checks and balances. The civil service, which was recruited and organized according to practices adopted from the preceding dynasty, was dominated by Han Chinese officials. Countering their influence, the emperors were careful to keep bannermen separate from the subjugated Han Chinese population. Since the Eight Banners included Manchu, Mongol, and Han-Martial components, the

division between the conquerors and the conquered was not ethnic but political. A bannerman and a Han Chinese headed each of the central government ministries; provincial governors tended to be Han Chinese, but governor-generals tended to be from the banner population. The administration of the former Ming territories was staffed mostly by Han Chinese officials, but administrative posts in the northeast, Mongolia, Tibet, and Xinjiang were filled by local notables or bannermen.¹³

Like their non-Han predecessors, the Manchus deliberately adopted a multilingual language policy. The Manchu rulers designated Manchu (a writing system invented by state order) as one of the two official languages of the dynasty.¹⁴ The bilingual palace memorial (see figures 2 and 3) was a typical early-Qing product. During the late-seventeenth century, the Kangxi emperor created a new mode of communication with a few trusted bondservants and bannermen who served in the provinces. Hereditary bondservants were men who were enslaved and registered in companies under the banners to important positions within the Imperial Household Department. Some of these posts were in the provinces. The "palace memorial" bypassed normal bureaucratic channels and could be kept secret because no copies were made for the archives. This system enabled the emperors to check up on the performance of officials and to learn about actual conditions in key localities of the empire.¹⁵

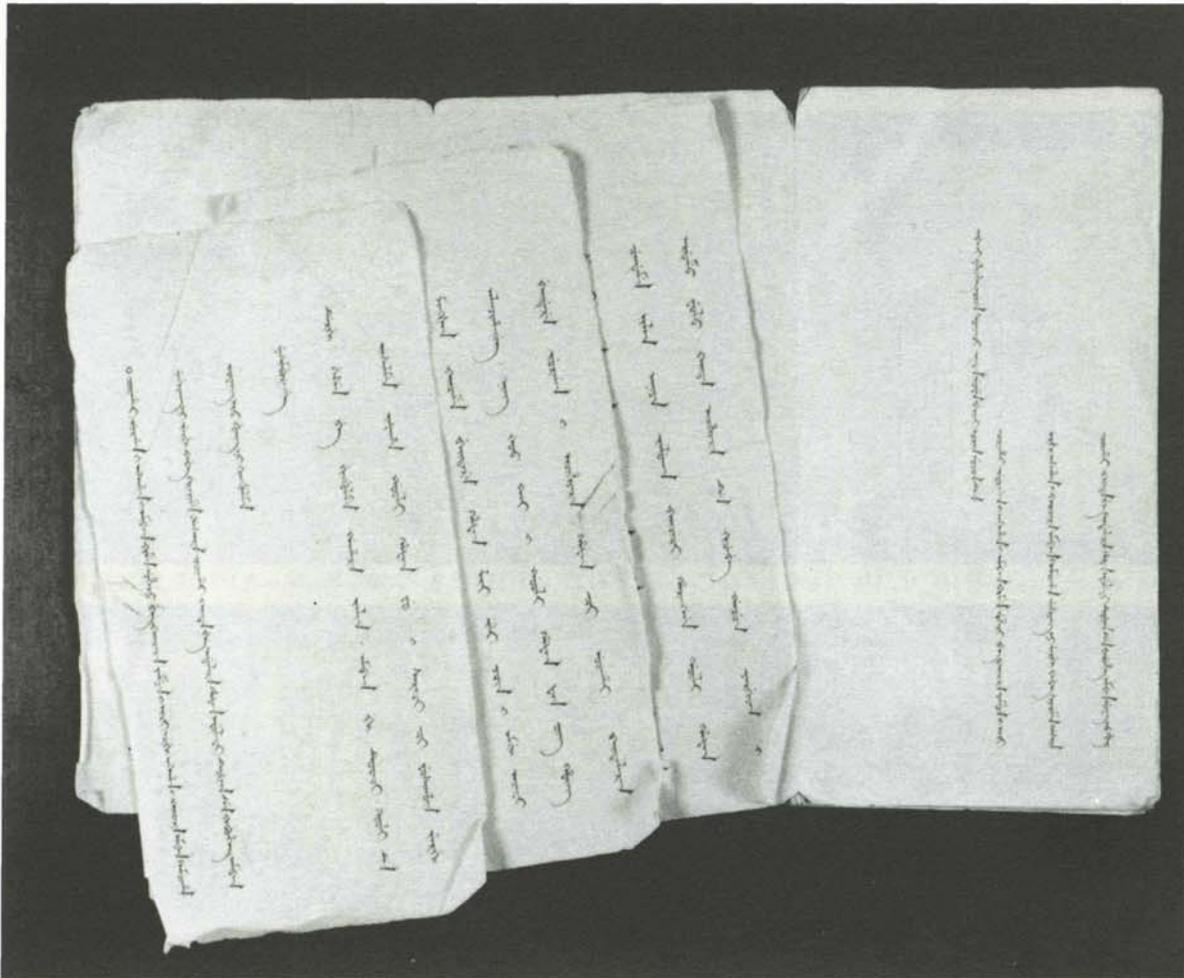
The imperial patent of nobility, recorded in Manchu and Chinese writing, is another product of the Qing (see figure 4). Patents, which often conferred posthumous titles on the parents of meritorious officials, were a way for the emperor to reward outstanding service. The rich brocade on which the patent was mounted provided a suitable setting for this imperial honor. Such patents were frequently inscribed on ancestor portraits.¹⁶

By the eighteenth century, when Qing territorial expansion reached its peak, an ideology of universal monarchy identified the empire as composed of five major groups of peoples: the Manchus, Mongols, Tibetans, Uighurs (Turkic-speaking Muslims), and Han Chinese. Each of these five groups was permitted its own language, culture, and religious practices. The elites of each group were summoned to court and presented with titles and gifts. Nobles were tied to the emperors through exchange of brides. What bound these diverse peoples together (from the



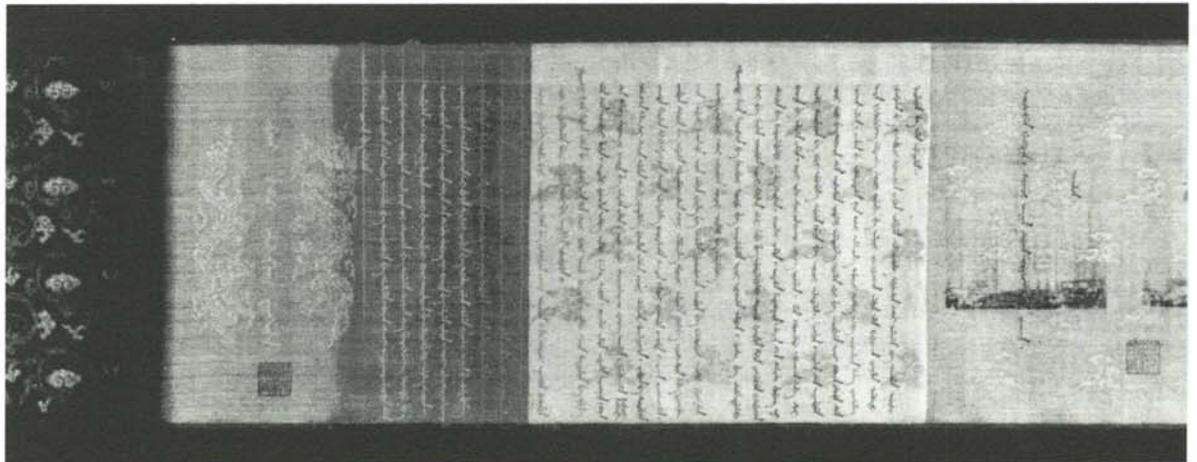
2. *Man Han hebi zouzhe* (Palace memorial in Manchu and Chinese scripts), Chinese cover. Qing dynasty, dated 1760. Composed by Zhuang Yougong (*jinsi* 1739, d. 1767). The National Library of China 1143. *Visible Traces* catalogue, item 63-1, p. 233, top illustration.

Palace memorials were an innovation of the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries. Initially such documents bypassed ordinary bureaucratic procedures to reach the emperor directly, and enabled him to receive information from handpicked underlings who had been sent to localities on imperial business. The emperor would write a response directly on the original document, in vermilion, as displayed here in the four characters at the far right, which state “Let the appropriate ministry deliberate and memorialize.” Although this kind of document became less secret in the Yongzheng reign (1723-1735), it remained the high-priority form of official communication through the rest of the Qing dynasty.



3. Palace memorial in Manchu and Chinese scripts, Manchu-language pages. Dated 1760. Composed by Zhuang Yougong. The National Library of China 1143. *Visible Traces* catalogue, item 63-3, p. 232.

Unlike Chinese, which is written from right to left, Manchu is written from left to right. Bilingual documents such as this palace memorial thus start at opposite ends of the accordion-pleated paper and end together at the center. Manchu or “Qing writing” (*Qingwen*), as it was called, was one of the two languages used for official communications in the Qing. Memorials written only in Manchu were particularly numerous during the Kangxi reign. Military intelligence and discussions of military campaigns and imperial family matters used Manchu as a “security” shield. Bilingual memorials were written throughout the Qing dynasty.



4. Detail, *Man Han hebi gaoming* (Imperial patent of nobility in Manchu and Chinese scripts). Dated 1799. The National Library of China 80319. *Visible Traces* catalogue, item 64-1, p. 234.

This handscroll records the award of honorary titles of nobility to the parents of Yulin (d. 1833), a bannerman who served in civil and military offices during the Jiaqing (1796-1820) and Daoguang (1821-1850) reigns. The detail shows the beginning of the Manchu-language portion of the document, showing off the multicolored silk brocade on which the text was written. Such honorary titles allowed the Qing court to reward meritorious officials in a way that reinforced the value of filial devotion: rewarding an individual's hard work by heaping honor on his parents.

perspective of the throne) was simply the emperor himself, the universal monarch.¹⁷

But the Qing empire held many more groups whose lifestyle and language were not Chinese. After 1683, when the Manchu conquest was completed, Han Chinese moved out of densely populated areas into previously unexploited lands to establish settlements and to farm. These "frontier regions" were often populated by non-Han peoples. Han Chinese settlers moving to the island of Taiwan, off the Fujian coast, found aboriginal peoples of Austronesian origin living there; other settlers, moving into the southwest, found many different groups, who practiced slash-and-burn agriculture and spoke in varied tongues. The eighteenth century was punctuated by conflict between the new settlers and these minorities (see figure 5).¹⁸

The Qing policy with respect to the minority peoples in south and southwest China differed sharply from their multicultural policy in the Inner Asian border regions. The south and southwest minorities were not strategically important; they could and should be subjected to the assimilatory process advocated by Han Chinese officials. In terms of the Han Chinese discourse, the process of assimilation, which involved introducing the Chinese language and Chinese culture to the minorities, was expected to transform barbarians into civilized Chinese. Qing provincial officials like Chen Hongmou (1696-1771) opened up elementary schools in the minority areas for just this purpose.¹⁹

Recent scholarship has emphasized the degree to which the Qing government and its officials behaved like imperialists, that is, like the British who took control over lands in Asia, North America, and Africa in the course of the sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries. Emperors commissioned geographies of newly conquered regions, ordered officials to compile detailed reports of non-Han peoples living in the peripheries of the empire, and compiled multilingual dictionaries of the languages of the major subject groups in Inner and Central Asia.²⁰

During the eighteenth century the Manchu and Russian states subjugated the nomadic peoples of Eurasia. Russian advances into the Amur River basin in northeast Asia, stimulated by the Russian quest for sable, made the Kangxi emperor assign a top priority to the security of his northeast frontier after 1683. The boundary between the two empires



5. *Taiwan ditu* (map of Taiwan), detail. Qing dynasty, Qianlong period, undated, 1787 or earlier. Handscroll, ink and color on paper, approx. 40.5–40.6 x 437.9 cm. The National Library of China, 232/1784-2/3638. *Visible Traces* catalogue, item 53-1, p. 193.

One of the earliest extant hand-painted maps of Taiwan adopts the perspective of someone in Fujian, the Chinese province directly across the Taiwan Straits from the island, focusing primarily on the half of Taiwan that is closest to the China mainland. Many Han Chinese migrants moved to Taiwan in the eighteenth century and interacted with aboriginal peoples on the western coastal plain. By 1800, the island had been transformed into a Chinese agricultural society.

was settled through a series of campaigns during the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries, concluding in the Treaties of Nerchinsk (1689) and Kiakhta (1727).²¹

In the first half of the eighteenth century both the Russian and the Qing empires undertook vigorous campaigns against other nomadic tribes. Scholarship on the Russian-language side reveals the puzzlement and annoyance of Russian officials, who thought that “submission” was a binding act, unlike the Mongols, Kazakhs, and Uzbeks, whose fluid political concepts enabled them to contract multiple alliances and submissions with equanimity. The Western Mongols, who were courted by Russian and Qing officials, engaged in a triangular geopolitical game but eventually lost their independence to the Qing. As Zungaria was incorporated into the empire, the Kazakhs and Uzbeks fell under Russian control in what one scholar has called “the partition of the steppe.”²²

The inclusion of Tibet under Qing “protection” was a byproduct of the court’s Mongol policy. Tibetan Buddhism spread among Mongols after its reintroduction (1578), and ambitious Mongol leaders patronized the religion to enhance their political legitimacy. The relationship between Inner Asian elites and Tibetan prelates had long historical precedents. Earlier non-Han rulers, like the Tanguts, found Buddhist patronage to be a valuable alternative base on which to construct legitimacy for their rule.²³ The Tangut-language *Xi Xia wen Cibe dao chang chan fa* (*Liang huang bao chan*) (Rules for Confession in the Place of the Merciful and Compassionate One; see figure 6) reminds us of these pre-Qing precedents for religious patronage.

During the seventeenth century Western Mongol khans who patronized Tibetan Buddhism put the dGe lugs pa hierarch, the Dalai Lama, on the throne of Tibet. Because the dGe lugs pa had successfully missionized in Amdo, Khams, and Mongolia, the Dalai Lama wielded great influence in seventeenth-century Inner Asia. Mongol khans sought recognition of their positions from him, he could order Mongol troop movements outside Tibet, and he could also make peace between warring tribes.²⁴

Historical records outside China show that the Dalai Lama’s authority among the Mongols during the seventeenth century was greater than the authority of the Manchus. The Qing allied with the Khosot



6. Illustrated frontispiece of *Xi Xia wen Cibe daochang chanfa (Liang huang baochan)* (Rules for Confession in the Place of the Merciful and Compassionate One [Precious Confessional of Emperor Wu of Liang]), ten *juan*, in Tangut script. Yuan dynasty, undated, ca. 1300. The National Library of China. *Visible Traces* catalogue, item 59-1, p. 219.

This late-eleventh- or early-twelfth-century Tangut translation of the late-fifth-century *Rules for Confession in the Place of the Merciful and Compassionate One* includes undated prefaces by Xia emperor Huizong (r. 1068–1086) and his mother, the empress dowager Liang (d. 1099). Tangut was the language devised by the Xi Xia state, and this work is an example of the vast translation of the Buddhist scriptures that was undertaken by the rulers, who were devout Buddhists, although the current edition dates from the Mongol or Yuan dynasty, who destroyed the Xi Xia empire in 1227. The illustrated frontispiece depicts the Liang-dynasty emperor Wu (r. 502–549), seated at the left, conducting a repentance ceremony in the presence of the Buddha, seated at the right. The snake on the ground in front of the emperor represents the empress Xi, who was said to have been reincarnated as a snake because she had committed murder. This ritual-penance text was composed by the emperor Wu to release his wife from the karmic consequence of her actions.

Mongols against the Zunghars (sometimes spelled Zungar or Jungar). When Mongol rivalries that focused on the Dalai succession sparked a Zunghar invasion of Lhasa, the Qing invaded Lhasa (1720). The eastern Tibetan territories of Kham and Amdo were detached and put under the control of the governor of Sichuan province. After quelling a Khosot Mongol rebellion (1723), the Qing also asserted suzerainty over Kokonor, which was renamed Qinghai. Although the western half of Kham was returned to central Tibet in 1725, the eastern half remained outside Tibetan control. Nominal in the first half of the eighteenth century, Qing control in Tibet increased after 1750 and remained in place until the Revolution of 1911.

The last great Qing conquest came at the end of its first century of rule, when the Tarim Basin was incorporated into the empire.²⁵ With the addition of what became Xinjiang, the Qing empire reached its territorial maximum, a size that was greater than the current People's Republic of China. The Qing empire in 1759 consisted of two rather disparate regions: the former Ming territories, which were inhabited for the most part by Chinese-speaking peoples, and the newly acquired regions, located on the Inner and Central Asian peripheries of East Asia, all of which were inhabited by non-Chinese speakers, with different cultures and histories.²⁶

The Qing conquests in Inner and Central Asia were comparable to the colonizing activities being pursued by European nations. Recent studies have underlined the many parallels between Qing imperial expansion and European imperialism before 1750. Michael Adas has noted that the historiographical bias that assigns "imperialism" and "colonialism" to Europe and "empire building" to the Chinese, Zulus, and others privileges Europe, because "colonialism is deemed to be one of the global forces that has defined the modern Age," while "empires are seen as modes of state expansion" that were "increasingly anachronistic in an era of industrialization and high technology."²⁷

Like European imperialists, the Qing systematically collected information about new territories and new subject peoples.²⁸ The map of Taiwan (figure 5) is an example of the Qing cartographic effort. The government encouraged local officials to collect data on various groups within the empire. The state's efforts to document local ethnic groups

supplemented an earlier spate of travel writing produced by seventeenth-century figures like Xu Hongzu (1587–1641), a geographer-explorer whose voluminous diaries, considered “to be the ultimate example of aesthetic realism in Chinese travel writing,” also carried “considerable documentary credibility.”²⁹

Xu Hongzu was a private subject who traveled for his own pleasure and edification. State-sponsored projects, on the other hand, were closely tied to strategic targets. One prominent example is the famous travel record by Tulišen (1667–1740), *Lakcaha jecen de takūraha babe ejehe bithe*. Tulišen was a Manchu official who conveyed the emperor’s message to the Turguts, a Mongol tribe that had fled the steppe and resettled along the Volga River. In his book he carefully recorded the terrain, water sources, and other information pertinent to military campaigns he had observed during his long journey (1712–1715).³⁰

Even more ambitious efforts were undertaken during the Qianlong reign. The emperor commissioned a military history of the victorious campaign against the Zunghars in 1755, but before the history could be written, the scholars appointed to write it laboriously collected the names of places and persons in the new western regions being added to the empire. The *Xiyu tongwenzhi* was modeled on a Tang work; the emperor was thus implicitly comparing the achievements of his ruling house with the achievements of “great Tang.” The new geography covered the northern and southern circuits of Zungaria, Chinese Turkestan, Qinghai, and Tibet. Completed in 1782, it gave the standardized Manchu and Chinese transliterations of proper names, accompanied by the spelling of the words in their original language and phonetic equivalents in Mongol, Tibetan, and Uighur pronunciation.³¹

Building on earlier precedents, Qing rulers also commissioned pictorial representations of tributary peoples, and of peoples beyond the tributary network, in a genre that also flourished in the sixteenth century. Whenever possible, these representations were based on empirical evidence, as the careful imperial instructions about sketching foreign ambassadors and subject peoples indicate. Nor was the interest in ethnography limited to Manchus and other members of the conquest elite, as shown by the eighteenth-century albums of the Miao, a minority living in Guizhou province who were targeted for assimilation, produced by Han Chinese officials and literati.³²

For some Mongols and Manchus, the Qing peace and imperial patronage opened linguistic doors that had formerly been closed. Some Mongol princes were invited to study at the Palace Schools (*guanxue*) in Peking, where Manchu princes learned Mongolian as well as Manchu and Chinese as a matter of course. There was a Mongol school in the Xian'an Palace (Xian'an gong) and another to teach Oirat, the dialect spoken by western Mongols. A Tibetan school was established under the Lifanyuan (Court of Colonial Affairs) in 1657 that trained people for work in the agency. The school recruited Mongols and sent students to Tibet for advanced study in writing, speaking, and translating Tibetan. This practice was continued until the late 1840s.³³

Qing officials also opened schools in Eight Banner garrisons and recruited graduates who were bilingual or trilingual to keep government records. Government schools taught students to read and write first Mongolian, then Manchu and Chinese. They emphasized learning to write with the Chinese brush; graduates who could write were obliged to serve in administrative offices three months each year as a corvée duty. The rest of the year graduates might teach at private schools, which mostly emphasized reading.

The most important Mongol educational centers were religious. Qing patronage and Mongol religiosity stimulated the creation of monasteries in Mongolia. By the early part of the Qianlong reign, there were nearly two thousand monasteries and temples there, with hundreds of others serving the Tibetan and Mongol population in the present-day provinces of Qinghai and Xinjiang. The monasteries all had schools, where Tibetan was the prestige language.³⁴ Mongol monks translated Tibetan texts and wrote biographies of religious notables, church histories, and philosophical dissertations in Tibetan. The most brilliant example of the polyglot Mongol monk was Rol pa'i rdo rje (1717-1786, hereafter Rolpaidorje), the second lCang skya khutukhtu.

Heir to a reincarnate title conferred by the Qing (1705), Rolpaidorje was taken from his home monastery in Amdo in boyhood and educated alongside the imperial princes in the Palace Schools in Peking. He became a distinguished theologian and scholar who read Chinese, Manchu, Tibetan, and Mongolian. The Qianlong emperor assigned him to supervise important imperial projects such as the translation of the Tanjur (*bsTan 'gyur*, the collected Tibetan translations) into Mongolian (1741-

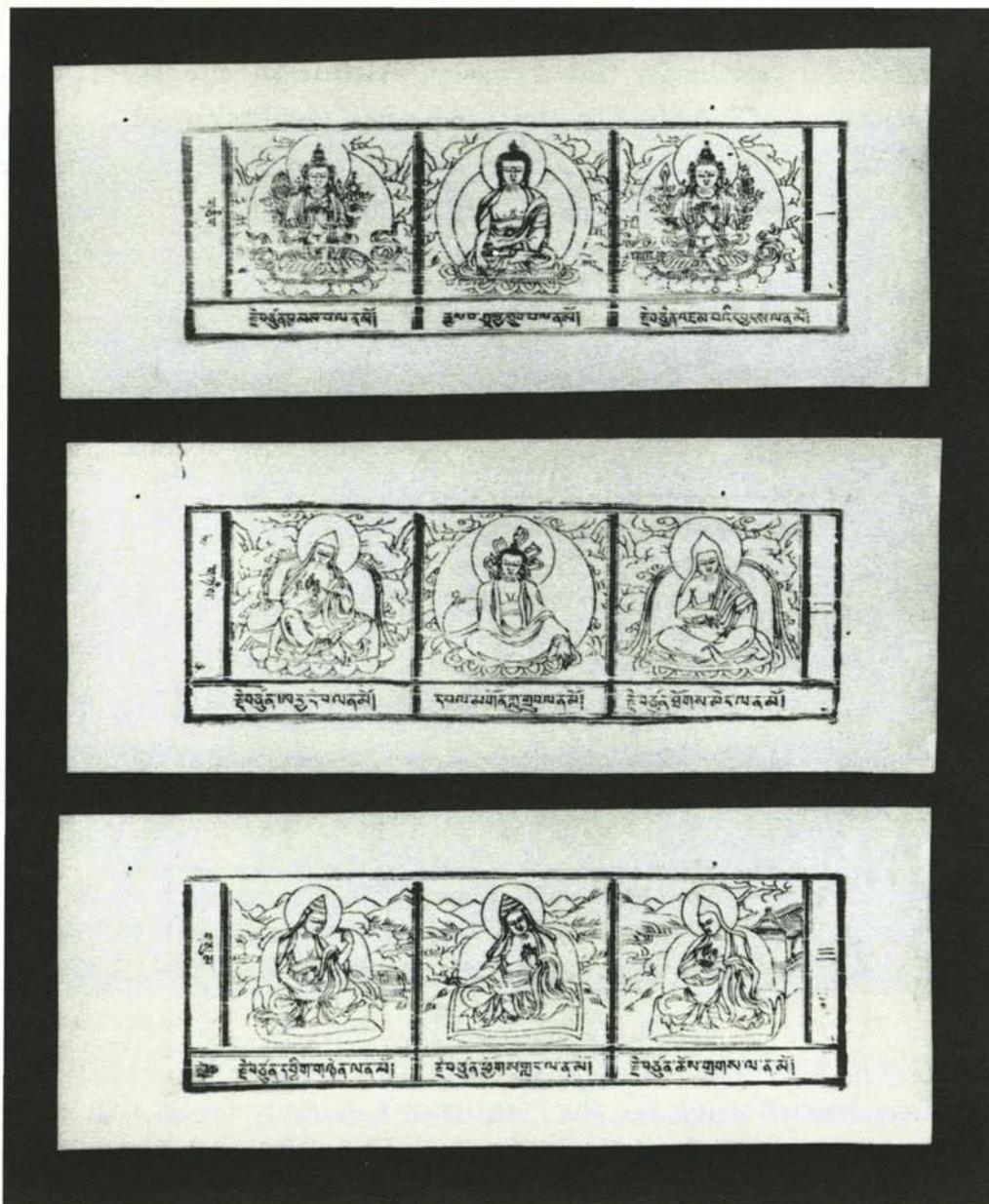
1749) and the translation of the Kanjur (bKa' 'gyur, the words of Buddha) into Manchu (1773).³⁵ Rolpaidorje was not limited to translating Tibetan-language texts into other languages; he also participated in the translation of a Chinese Buddhist work, the *Sūrangama sūtra*, into Manchu, Mongolian, and Tibetan.³⁶

According to historical documents, the emperor commissioned Rolpaidorje to compile the *Zang chuan fojiao sanbai foxiang tu* (Three Hundred Icons of Tibetan Lamaism; see figure 7). The work provides a visual representation of major Tibetan Buddhist deities and spiritual teachers along with renditions of their names in Tibetan, Manchu, and Mongolian. Since the correct information concerning the appearance of the deities was essential for visualization of the deities in meditative practice, *Three Hundred Icons* was an important resource for monastic training and in the creation of deity images for altars.³⁷

Qing Peking became a major center for publishing in Manchu, Mongolian, and Tibetan. Dictionary compilations of the major languages—as identified by the Qianlong emperor—included Manchu, Mongolian, Tibetan, Uighur, and Chinese. Compiled in part to glorify the achievements of the Manchu rulers, these were at the same time vehicles for the transmission of knowledge that was directly relevant to the administration and trade of the empire. Privately compiled dictionaries, published by commercial firms, appeared in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to meet the needs of scholars, clerics, and traders.

Over two thousand unique editions or works were published in Manchu during the Qing.³⁸ Although almost 40 percent of these works were monolingual, 48 percent were bilingual (Manchu and Chinese), and the rest were multilingual editions in a great variety of languages. Printed Mongolian books, which first appeared in significant numbers during the Qing, were predominantly monolingual. Secular Mongol-language works dealing with trade, administration, and language tended to be in Mongol and Chinese or Mongol, Chinese, and Manchu; religious works were written in Tibetan and Mongolian or in Tibetan, Mongolian, and Sanskrit.³⁹

The Qing government was a major publisher of texts in non-Han languages. Three of the top five publishers of Manchu-language books were government agencies; the palace itself produced the greatest number



7. *Zang chuan fojiao sanbai foxiang tu* (Three Hundred Icons of Tibetan Buddhism). Qing dynasty, Qianlong period, undated. Attributed to lCang skya khutukhtu Rolpaidorje. Beijing: Songzhu si, n.d. The National Library of China. *Visible Traces* catalogue, item 62-2, p. 229.

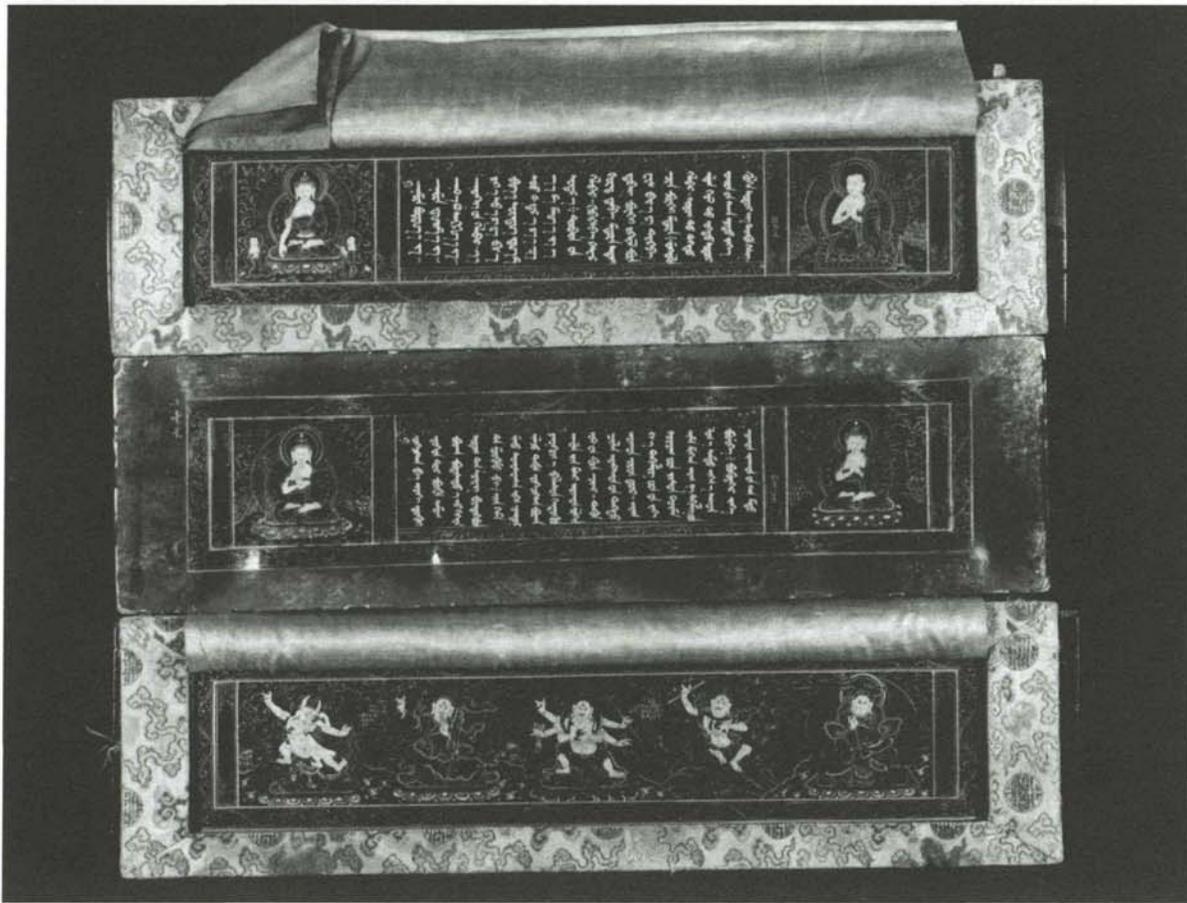
These first three leaves of this most famous iconographic work depict (from top left to bottom right) Maitreya Buddha, Sakyamuni, and Mañjuśrī (Manjusri), followed by the “Six Jewels of India,” men who were responsible for founding major Buddhist schools. According to historical records, this work was commissioned by the Qianlong emperor, and intended to present a comprehensive guide to Tibetan Buddhist iconography. The Songzhu si, where this woodblock edition was printed, also printed many other Tibetan Buddhist works.

(112) of Manchu books in the dynasty. Although the rulers commissioned translations of Confucian classics—over 15 percent of the Manchu-language publications were in philosophy and ethics—a larger number (almost 25 percent) of the works were language guides. Some were imperially commissioned, including bilingual (Manchu-Chinese, Manchu-Mongol), trilingual (Manchu-Mongol-Chinese), and quadrilingual (Manchu-Mongol-Chinese-Uighur) dictionaries, produced from the Kangxi through the Qianlong reigns. Many more were commercially printed, and oriented to users of different linguistic groups who required aids for commercial and business purposes.

Imperial patronage stimulated translation projects that crossed the linguistic boundaries in the empire. The rulers ordered translations of the histories of earlier non-Han dynasties, while Mongols used their new access to Chinese- and Mongol-language texts to write historical works in Tibetan and Mongolian. Religious printing dominated the Mongolian and Tibetan literatures, and here too imperial patronage was significant. The Mongol-language *Mengwen Jin guangming zuisheng wang jing* (Sutra of the Golden Radiance of the Most Victorious Kings), a translation of the Tibetan fourteenth-century text, is an example of the religious texts that became more widely disseminated thanks to the Qing court's efforts (see figure 8). Similarly, especially during the Qianlong reign, multilingual sutras such as the *Fan Zang Han santi hebi sheng Miaojixiang zhenshi ming jing* (Sutra of Reciting the True Names of the Noble Manjusri) were produced as testimonies to the emperor's piety, using the emperor's patronage of Tibetan Buddhism to appeal to Mongol, Manchu, and Tibetan subjects (see figure 9).

Qing cultural policies stimulated a cultural efflorescence in Tibet and Mongolia. Through the printing industry's translations Chinese literary and philosophical works acquired new audiences. The major works of Chinese fiction were translated into Manchu, despite imperial prohibitions, and their influence can be discerned in original works by Manchu and Mongol authors written in the second half of the Qing period.⁴⁰

One could argue that the result was a closer acquaintance with Chinese philosophical and literary canons, but also a greater self-consciousness about one's own historical and cultural traditions, now articulated in



8. Sutra covers of *Mengwen Jin guangming zuisheng wang jing* (Sutra of the Golden Radiance of the Most Victorious Kings) in Mongolian script. Qing dynasty, undated, ca. eighteenth century. Translated from the Tibetan version by Sesarab Senge (fl. ca. 1323-1367). One hundred fifty loose folios between top and bottom sutra covers, and between top and bottom carved wood covers; overall dimensions approx. 17.0 x 63.7 x 13.7 cm. The National Library of China, 0299. *Visible Traces* catalogue, item 60-2, p. 222.

This sutra, first translated in the Yuan dynasty by a Sa skya pa monk, reflects the Mongol patronage of that sect of Tibetan Buddhism. The appointment of a Sa skya pa prelate, hPags pa, as state preceptor (*guoshi*) in 1260 at the court of Khubilai, gave this order overall religious authority over the Yuan empire. A Bureau of Buddhist and Tibetan Affairs (*Xuanzhengyuan*) supervised 360 Buddhist monasteries during the Yuan dynasty. During the seventeenth century, Hongtaiji had also patronized the Sa skya pa, but later rulers favored the dGe lugs pa sect, headed by the Dalai Lama.



9. *Fan Zang Han santi hebi sheng Miaojixiang zhenshi ming jing* (Sutra of Reciting the True Names of the Noble Manjusri) in Sanskrit, Tibetan, and Chinese scripts. Qing dynasty, undated, ca. eighteenth century. Forty-three loose folios between top and bottom sutra covers; each folio approx. 10.2 x 41.1 cm. The National Library of China. *Visible Traces* catalogue, item 61-2, p. 227.

This work, which is included in the Kangyur part of the Tibetan Buddhist canon, appeared in a Chinese-language translation during the Yuan dynasty. The sutra consists of a listing of the many attributes of the Bodhisattva of Wisdom. The sutra cover in the center bears the title of the work in Sanskrit, Tibetan, and Chinese. Multilingual sutras were particularly numerous during the Qianlong reign, reflecting the emperor's personal interest in Tibetan Buddhism and his desire to express the multiethnic nature of the Qing empire through the commissioning of works like the one pictured here.

writing and available to a larger readership than ever before. The full cultural consequences of the Qing multicultural policy were not evident until after the end of the dynasty, when the emergence of Han nationalism stimulated the non-Han peoples along the Inner Asian periphery of the empire to formulate their own versions of ethnic nationalism. During the Republican period (1912-1949), the Mongols, Tibetans, and Uighurs tried to divorce themselves from the Chinese state. The twentieth-century history of ethnic nationalism in China was thus rooted in Qing policies.

The appearance of texts in non-Sinic languages reminds us of the many peoples who have inhabited the territory now constituting the People's Republic of China. The early date of some of these non-Han texts in the *Visible Traces* exhibition underlines the long period of interaction between Chinese-speaking and non-Han peoples, and points to the need for further reflection on the impact of this interaction on the formation of what we call Chinese civilization.

NOTES

1. Frank Dikötter, *The Discourse of Race in Modern China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), p. 86. On the early historical discourse, see Tsung-i Dow, "The Confucian Concept of a Nation and Its Historical Practice," *Asian Profile* 10 (1982), pp. 347-361.
2. Zhongpei Zhang, "New Understandings of Chinese Prehistory," in *The Golden Age of Chinese Archaeology: Celebrated Discoveries from the People's Republic of China*, ed. Xiaoneng Yang (Washington: National Gallery of Art, 1999), p. 523.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 524.
4. Magnus Fiskesjö, "On the 'Raw' and the 'Cooked' Barbarians of Imperial China," *Inner Asia* 1, no. 2 (1999), pp. 139-168.
5. Owen Lattimore, *Inner Asian Frontiers of China* (New York: American Geographical Society, 1940).
6. Thomas J. Barfield, *The Perilous Frontier: Nomadic Empires and China* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), p. 131.
7. Nicola di Cosmo, "Ancient Inner Asian Nomads: Their Economic Basis and Its Significance in Chinese History," *Journal of Asian Studies* 53, no. 4 (1994), pp. 1092-1126.
8. See the essays in Herbert Franke and Denis Twitchett, eds., *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 6, *Alien Regimes and Border States, 907-1368* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

9. Evelyn S. Rawski, *The Last Emperors: A Social History of Qing Imperial Institutions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).
10. The rule was that Mongol nobles should appear in rotation at the Qing court, but nobles who had not been exposed to smallpox were given permission to omit this appearance in Peking and appear at Mulan instead. Smallpox, endemic in China, was extremely hazardous to Mongols, who had not built up immunity to it. On the significance of activities at Rehe and Mulan, see Ning Chia, "The Lifanyuan and the Inner Asian Rituals in the Early Qing (1644-1795)," *Late Imperial China* 14, no. 1 (1993), pp. 60-92.
11. Rawski, *The Last Emperors*, pp. 21-23, 35; see also Jonathan D. Spence, *Emperor of China: Self-Portrait of K'ang-hsi* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974), pp. 7-23.
12. Angela Zito, "The Imperial Birthday: Ritual Encounters between the Panchen Lama and the Qianlong Emperor in 1780," presented to the Conference on State and Ritual in East Asia, organized by the Committee for European-North American Scholarly Cooperation in East Asian Studies, Paris, June 28-July 1, 1995.
13. Rawski, *The Last Emperors*, chap. 2.
14. Pamela K. Crossley and Evelyn S. Rawski, "A Profile of the Manchu Language in Ch'ing History," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 53, no. 1 (1993), pp. 63-102.
15. Silas H. L. Wu, *Communication and Imperial Control in China: Evolution of the Palace Memorial System, 1693-1735* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970).
16. See Jan Stuart and Evelyn S. Rawski, *Worshipping the Ancestors: Chinese Commemorative Portraits* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001).
17. Pamela K. Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror: History and Identity in the Transformation of Qing Imperial Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).
18. John Robert Shepherd, *Statecraft and Political Economy on the Taiwan Frontier, 1600-1800* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993).
19. For an analysis of the government's attitude toward southwest minorities, see Fiskesjö, "On the 'Raw' and the 'Cooked' Barbarians of Imperial China." On Chen Hongmou's educational program, see William T. Rowe, "Education and Empire in Southwest China: Ch'en Hung-mou in Yunnan, 1733-38," in *Education and Society in Late Imperial China, 1600-1900*, ed. Benjamin A. Elman and Alexander Woodside (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), pp. 417-457.
20. Peter Perdue, "Boundaries, Maps and Movement: Chinese, Russian, and Mongolian Empires in Early Modern Eurasia," *International History Review* 20, no. 2 (1998), pp. 263-286; Laura Hostetler, "Qing Connections to the Early Modern World: Ethnography and Cartography in Eighteenth-Century China," *Modern Asian Studies* 34 (2000), pp. 623-662.
21. Mark Mancall, *Russia and China: Their Diplomatic Relations to 1728* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971).
22. Fred W. Bergholz, *The Partition of the Steppe: The Struggle of the Russians*,

- Manchus, and the Zunghar Mongols for Empire in Central Asia, 1619-1758: A Study in Power Politics* (New York: Peter Lang, 1993).
23. Ruth Dunnell, *The Great State of White and High: Buddhism and State Formation in Eleventh-Century Xia* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1996).
 24. For details on the Qing movements toward Tibet, see Rawski, *The Last Emperors*, chap. 7.
 25. James A. Millward, *Beyond the Pass: Economy, Ethnicity, and Empire in Qing Central Asia, 1759-1864* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998).
 26. Evelyn S. Rawski, "Re-envisioning the Qing: The Significance of the Qing Period in Chinese History," *Journal of Asian Studies* 55, no. 4 (1996), pp. 829-850.
 27. Michael Adas, "Imperialism and Colonialism in Comparative Perspective," *International History Review* 20 (1998), p. 371.
 28. Hostetler, "Qing Connections to the Early Modern World."
 29. Richard E. Strassberg, trans. and annotator, *Inscribed Landscapes: Travel Writing from Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), p. 319.
 30. Crossley and Rawski, "A Profile of the Manchu Language in Ch'ing History."
 31. The dictionary also provided the pronunciation of place names in the Todo script, which was adapted for the Western Mongol (Oirat) dialect: see Enoki Kazuo, "Researches in Chinese Turkestan during the Ch'ien-lung Period, with Special Reference to the *Hsi yü t'ung-wen chih*," *Memoirs of the Research Department of the Toyo Bunko* 14 (1955), pp. 1-46.
 32. Laura Hostetler, "Chinese Ethnography in the Eighteenth Century: Miao Albums of Guizhou Province" (Ph.D. thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 1995).
 33. Zhang Yongjiang, "Qingdai baqi Menggu guanxue" (The Qing Mongol Banner Schools), *Minzu yanjiu* 6 (1990), pp. 96-102.
 34. Robert J. Miller, *Monasteries and Culture Change in Inner Mongolia* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1959); Y. Rinchen, "Books and Traditions (from the History of Mongol Culture)," trans. Stanley Frye, *Analecta Mongolia, Dedicated to the Seventieth Birthday of Professor Owen Lattimore* (Bloomington: The Mongolia Society, 1972), pp. 63-76.
 35. The Tanjur and Kanjur are enormous compendia of sacred texts, each comprising hundreds of titles. The Kanjur is the Tibetan Tripitaka. Rolpaidorje's major writings are listed in his biography, written in Tibetan by Thu'u-bkwan bLo-bzang chos-kyi-nyi-ma (1737-1802) and translated into Chinese by Chen Qingying and Ma Lianlong under the title *Zhangjia guoshi Ruobiduoji zhuan* (Beijing: Minzu chubanshe, 1988). His translation projects are described in detail in Wang Xiangyun, "Tibetan Buddhism at the Court of Qing: The Life and Work of lCang-skya Rol-pa'i-rdo-rje (1717-1786)" (Ph.D. thesis, Harvard University, 1995), chap. 5.
 36. A. von Staël-Holstein, "The Emperor Chien-lung and the Larger Śūrangamasūtra," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 1, no. 1 (1936), pp. 144-145.
 37. On the *Three Hundred Icons*, see Walter E. Clark, *Two Lamaistic Pantheons* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1937).

38. Here I take my definition from Sören Edgren. A unique work is one that is a new edition of a title. Therefore I mean that there were two thousand works in Manchu that were not duplications of each other. These works flourished in the Qing period. Manchu-language works do not appear until the seventeenth century, when the written language was invented.
39. Evelyn S. Rawski, "Qing Publishing in Non-Han Languages," forthcoming.
40. Martin Gimm, "Manchu Translations of Chinese Novels and Short Stories: An Attempt at an Inventory," *Asia Major*, 3d series, 1, no. 2 (1988), pp. 77-114.

GLOSSARY

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| Bishu shanzhuang 避暑山莊 | Nurgaci 努爾哈赤 |
| <i>Bishu shanzhuang quantu</i> 避暑山莊全圖 | Qingwen 清文 |
| Chengde 承德 | Rehe 熱河 |
| Chen Hongmou 陳宏謀 | Songzhu si 嵩祝寺 |
| <i>Fan Zang Han santi hebi sheng Miaojixiang</i> | Sun Yat-sen 孫中山 |
| <i>zhenshi ming jing</i> 梵藏漢三體合璧聖 | <i>Taiwan ditu</i> 臺灣地圖 |
| 妙吉祥真實名經 | weiban 圍班 |
| guoshi 國師 | Wu 武 |
| Han 漢 | Xi 郗 |
| Hongtaiji 洪台吉 | Xia 夏 |
| Hua 華 | Xian'an gong 咸安宮 |
| Huizong 徽宗 | Xi Xia 西夏 |
| Liang 梁 | <i>Xi Xia wen Cibe daochang chanfa (Liang huang</i> |
| Liang Qichao 梁啓超 | <i>baochan)</i> 西夏文慈悲道場懺法 (梁 |
| Lifanyuan 理藩院 | 皇寶懺) |
| Man Han hebi gaoming 滿漢合璧誥命 | <i>Xiyu tongwenzhi</i> 西域同文志 |
| Man Han hebi zouzhe 滿漢合璧奏摺 | Xuanzhengyuan 宣政院 |
| <i>Mengwen Jin guangming zuisheng wang jing</i> | Xu Hongzu 徐宏祖 |
| 蒙文金光明最勝王經 | Yulin 玉麟 |
| Miao 苗 | <i>Zang chuan fojiao sanbai foxiang tu</i> |
| Mulan 木蘭 | 藏傳佛教三百佛像圖 |
| nianban 年班 | Zhuang Yougong 莊有恭 |