

## AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Jin-cai Fang for the degree of Master of Arts in Applied Anthropology presented on

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Abstract approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
John A. Young

Gender relations as well as the social situation of Manchu women have long been ignored in studies of the cultural evolution of the Manchu. By setting the discussion of Manchu women in the context of cultural adaptation, this study reintroduces gender and women's problems into the research on the Manchu culture by outlining the social changes in Manchu society over 300 years, which in turn have affected the social position of Manchu women.

A literature review provides a theoretical framework to the understanding of the interaction between the social system of Manchu society and environmental stress. An emphasis is laid on the role of the state in cultural evolution and its influence on Manchu women. Two factors significantly affecting Manchu women's lives are the introduction of the Banner system and the process of systematic sinification.

Cultural assimilation and maintenance are also major topics covered in this study. The results of a field investigation at Outer Firearm Camp In Beijing reveal a pattern of a mixture of Han and Manchu customs, which serves as a good example of how a cultural system be partially destroyed and partially preserved in the process of adaptation, and how women's

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status remains higher among the Manchu than among the Han. The Manchu's basic cultural value system with its emphasis on women's equality has proven to be remarkably stable despite many social adaptations to extreme pressures from the outside world.

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THE INFLUENCE ON MANCHU WOMEN OF CHANGES IN SOCIAL  
INSTITUTIONS AND THE SINIFICATION OF MANCHU SOCIETY

by

Jin-cai Fang

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APPROVED:

*Redacted for Privacy*

Major Professor, representing Applied Anthropology

*Redacted for Privacy*

Chair of Department of Anthropology

*Redacted for Privacy*

Dean of Graduate School

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Jin-cai Fang, Author

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## **DEDICATION**

**In memory of Dong-chun Fang, my dearest sister and closest friend.**

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# THE INFLUENCE ON MANCHU WOMEN OF CHANGES IN SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND THE SINIFICATION OF MANCHU SOCIETY

## CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

This study explicates changes in the social position of Manchu women as a result of the evolution of Manchu society in an attempt to deepen our understanding of the relationship between changes in social as well as cultural systems and women's problems. Before discussing the influence of social changes on Manchu women, it is necessary to briefly introduce the historical background of this remarkable ethnic group --- Who are they? Where did they come from, and what significant role have they played in China's history.

### **1.1 The Ethnohistorical Background of the Manchus**

In current China, the Han Chinese constitute 92% of the total population according to the 1990 census figures (People's Daily, 11. 14, 1990). The remainder of the population is distributed among fifty-five recognized national minorities (*shao-shu-min-zu*) as defined by the state. These range in population size from a few thousand to several million. Among them, the Manchu is the second largest ethnic group with a population of 9,821,180 ( People's Daily, 11.14, 1990) scattered all over China. For the most part, they live in Liaoning, Jilin, and Heilongjiang provinces in the Northeast of China known to the West as Manchuria. Most of the remainder inhabit in Hebei, Gansu, Shandong, Inner Mongolia, Xinjiang and Ningxia, as well as in Beijing, Chengdu, Xi'an, Guangzhou and other cities ( Ma, 1989:41).

Despite their current minority status (the Manchu constitutes less than one percent of the entire population of China), the Manchu at one time were significantly important in Chinese

history. The Qing Dynasty (1644-1912) which they founded, “is without doubt the most successful dynasty of conquest in Chinese history” (Ho, 1967:191). It was the height of Chinese civilization as well as the crucial bridge between China’s traditional and modern history. It was a period remarkable for its expansiveness, cultural sophistication, stability and staying power (Smith, 1983: xiii). Contemporary China has inherited many features from the Qing, including tremendous geographical scope and a huge population.

The Manchus, descendants of the southern branch of the Tungusic tribal people and better known before the early seventeenth century as the Jurchen, or Nuzhen, have had a much longer history and more complicated ancestral line than their present name suggests. Their early ancestry can be traced back more than 2000 years, attributed to the Su-shen, I-lou, Wu-chi, and Mo-ho peoples, all of whom were active in the Northeast at different times, each group was a regional cluster composed of members of diverse origins. The Manchus identify the Jurchens as their immediate ancestors (Huang, 1990).

The Jurchens, a tribe which lived along the Heilongjiang and the Sungari Rivers, in 1115 overthrew the Liao Dynasty. Later on they drove the Sung south, and established themselves at Beijing as the Chin, or Jin, or “Golden” Dynasty (1115 - 1234) ruling most of North China.

In the early thirteenth century, however before the Chin leaders had achieved their ambitions of controlling all China, the Chins, or Jurchens, were swept away by the irresistible power of the Mongols and later fell under the rule of the Yuan Dynasty (1272-1368). Most of the common Jurchens at that time were still leading a hunting and gathering life in the Northeast of China.

Though the Manchus identified the Jurchens as their immediate ancestors, the constitution of the Manchus was by no means a homogeneous Jurchen entity. In fact, the origins of the Manchus are so diverse that they are difficult to identify. This diversity is in great part due to the geography of Manchuria --- basically a great plain, connecting the steppes and the desert in the west and northwest with the Great Xingan Mountains, bordering Siberia on the north and the Korean peninsula on the south. Because of its location, Manchuria became a melting pot for many ethnic groups from China, Mongolia, and Siberia who influenced one another and acquired foreign elements. As time went by, blood ties lost their importance as the Manchus embraced members of diverse origins (Huang, 1990: 240-241).

On the other hand, this diversity is also due to wars among the Jurchen tribes, particularly when the Manchus fought against the Ming power and expanded their territory. From the mid-sixteenth century onward, repeated internecine wars broke out among the Jurchens who were at that time divided mainly into three sections: the Jianzhou Jurchen living along the Yalu and Tumenjiang Rivers; the Haixi Jurchen along the Sungari River; and the Yeren Jurchen along the Ussuri River (see figure 1.). But they were later reunified by Nurhachi, who was then the chief of the Jianzhou Jurchen and later given title by the Ming Court as the governor of Jianzhou prefecture. He became the founding father of the Manchu regime.

During the unification by Nurhachi in the early 17th century, the Jurchens acquired a considerable number of non-Jurchen traits. Some of these certainly derived from captives of war, most of whom became slaves and later on *bao-i* ( bounservants ) of the Manchus. Others probably came from renegade soldiers of Ming troops stationed in the Northeast who joined



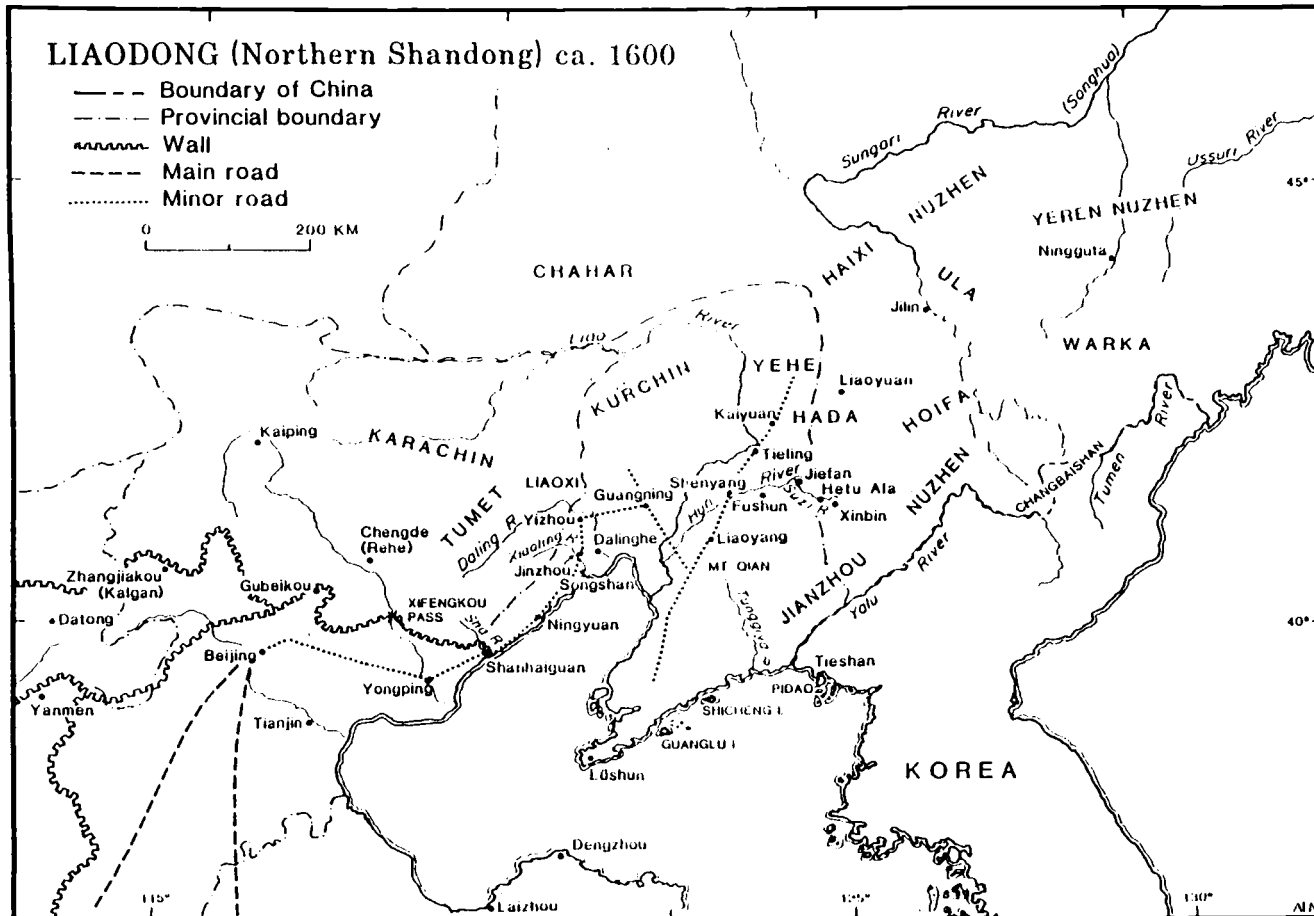


Figure 1. Map of Liaodong in 1660

Source: Wakeman, 1985:40

the Manchus voluntarily. On the other hand, some of the traits might also have stemmed from the Liaodong non-Jurchen settlers who were assimilated by the Jurchen culture, took Manchu names and adopted tribal customs, eventually losing their identity as Chinese --- in manner, dialect, custom and physique seemingly more akin to the Manchus than to their former countrymen (Wakeman, 42-44). The last, but not least, possibility has much to do with the establishment of the Banner forces which will be described below. A large portion of the Mongol Banners and Chinese Banners who later on identified themselves as “*qi-ren*”, (bannermen), mixed with the Manchus and gained a distinct ethnopolitical identity. From 1613 onward, this new group was occasionally mentioned in Qing sources as the “Man-chou” or “Manchu”. For political and social reasons, in 1635, Huang Taiji (1592 - 1643, the eighth son of Nurhachi and later enthroned as emperor Tai Zong of the Qing Dynasty) adopted the name of “Manchu” to replace Jurchen for his people. The following year, when he ascended the throne, he proclaimed Great Qing as the name of his dynasty (Huang , 1990:282; Ma 1989:47).

In short, the Manchus identify their origins as Ninguta, from which they later spread to the upper Sungari in the region of Jilin city and Heilongjiang River, and still later, with the growth of their military power, all along the western slopes of the Changbaishan until they overlooked and dominated Liaoning Province, where they established their capital at Mukden (Shenyang) in the first half of the seventeenth century, prior to their conquest of China (Lattimore, 1932:33).

In 1644, Eight Banner soldiers, commanded by Dorgun, son of Nurhachi, and uncle of, Regent for the eventual first Emperor of the Qing Dynasty, Shunchi, marched south of

Shanhaiguan Pass of the Great Wall without resistance, drove straight into Beijing, swept away the Ming enemy, unified the whole country, and established themselves as rulers of China. This was only the second non-Han dynasty in the history of China. Manchu rule lasted 268 years until the fall of the Qing Dynasty in 1911 (see appendices A and B).

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Since the fall of the Qing Dynasty, and particularly in recent years, there has appeared voluminous literature in Chinese dealing with the Manchus and the Qing Dynasty. Western historians of late imperial China, and the Qing period in particular, have also made significant advances in recent years toward an understanding of the Chinese past on their own terms. In general, a great part of the literature can be characterized as follows: studies on the Qing Dynasty tend to overlook an examination of Manchu culture; academic interest in the imperial court or in royal families is not concerned with ordinary Manchu people; the focus of most of those studies has been predominantly political and historical. Studies of Manchu people and their culture through socioanthropological perspectives are very rare. One aspect in particular, fundamental to a thorough understanding of Manchu culture and Qing China, has remained consistently beyond reach: this might be termed “gender relations” or “women’s status”. Since I began collecting data for this paper, I have noted with astonishment that out of the overwhelming quantity of mainstream literature on the Manchus published in the past ten-odd years, not a single book focusing on gender relations in Manchu society or on Manchu women is to be found, and even articles and papers with this concern are very rare. Take the *Journal of Manchu Minority Research*, for example. Among journals focusing on Manchu studies, this one, issued quarterly, is the most influential. From 1985 to 1994, there have been a total of

718 articles in its 38 issues, with just two short articles narrowly focusing on the topic of Manchu women. Some authors have occasionally mentioned women in general terms in their writings with such statements as: “the Manchus respect women.” “Before the conquest of China, Manchu society had a matrilineal and matriarchal system”, or “ Manchu women had a relatively high social status” etc. However they included no ethnohistorical details.

It is not uncommon for ethnography about Manchu culture, which is very poorly developed in China, as well as introductory textbooks, to consistently omit discussion of women as significant members of society beyond the contexts of reproduction, childbearing, and domestic roles. Consequently, a number of very basic preliminary questions often go unexplored.

There are two major reasons for this state of affairs: (1) the nature of the researcher-informant relationship; and (2) the use of ethnocentric and androcentric models by most Chinese researchers.

Simply stated, up to this century, Manchu society, like most societies at the present time, have become male dominant. When anthropologists and ethnologists in China, most of whom are Hans and males, conducted their field work, the key informants they preferred were those who were either in charge of community affairs, like clan chiefs, heads of villages, etc., or those who were influential in local communities, most of whom were men also. As a result, the investigators spent much of the time talking with men. Any information about Manchu women was usually provided by male informants, and discussion tended to be biased towards topics that men assumed were the primary concerns of women --- namely, childbearing and other domestic responsibilities.

Secondly, most researchers assume both an ethnocentric and an androcentric perspective towards gender roles in Manchu society. For instance, the problem of ethnocentrism, or Sinocentrism in China's case, and of androcentrism can be clearly illustrated in the studies of *The Dream of the Red Chamber*, a well known and realistic novel widely recognized as the number one novel in the history of Chinese literature. This novel, containing at least thirty major figures and some four hundred minor ones, gives a vivid portrayal of the life of a noble family. The novelist, Cao Xueqin (or Ts'ao Hsueh-ch'in, 1715-1763) was the grandson of Cao Yin (Ts'ao Yin), who had been a bondservant of the most famous Manchu emperor Kang Hsi, and whose ancestors had a close connection with several Manchu emperors.

Throughout the Qing period and up to the present, *The Dream of the Red Chamber* has inspired countless plays, games and sequels as well as a huge body of critical scholarship, and the study of *The Dream of the Red Chamber* even has been made a specific subject, termed "Hong Xue" (Red Study or Rubology).

However, one aspect in this novel which tends to be a "riddle" that many researchers either ignore or cannot explain logically is, on the one hand, why women, instead of men, play the most significant role in maintaining and administering the life of this extended family (actually a small society --- more than four hundred characters ranging all along the social spectrum either directly or indirectly related to this family appeared in the novel), and on the other hand, why the novelist showed wholehearted sympathy for the misfortunes of women, and highly appreciated the talents of women, regardless of whether they were concubines of the emperor or slave girls. In fact, *The Dream of the Red Chamber* can be seen as a

celebration of women (Smith, 1983:209). At the time this novel was written, the centrality of women was entirely contradictory to the prevailing social norms in Han Chinese society where women were regarded as absolutely insignificant or even untouchable. They drew no social attention at all, and any single word praising or sympathizing with women was socially ostracized.

Only recently have some researchers made a breakthrough on the research of this novel. They positively and “boldly” assert that the family in this novel was actually a Manchu noble family or, at least, a “Manchuified” noble family. Among the customs described in the novel, some were totally Manchu, and some obviously were products of the mixture of Han and Manchu customs. As to the perspective about women, these scholars have a unanimous opinion --- the novelist was deeply influenced by and completely accepted the indigenous Manchu idea about women <sup>1</sup>.

Bias has long been evident in the studies of “Rubology”. Researchers have been reluctant to admit that this number one masterpiece of Chinese literature belongs to a “barbarous people”, rather than the more highly regarded Han culture. Such an acknowledgment would hurt the Han sense of national pride. Furthermore, because of prejudices against these “barbarous conquerors”, who by their sudden onset had interrupted the

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<sup>1</sup> Once, I talked about *The Dream of the Red Chamber* with a Manchu elder. I expressed my curiosity: “Cao Xueqin was kind of odd. He actually liked Feng Jie and Tan Chun that these kind of formidable women.” The old man laughed and said: “Considering the time period, the Manchu blood in Cao Xueqin’s body was probably much purer than that in our bodies. Don’t you think so?” (Jin, 1989:54) The fact is that the novelist, Cao Xueqin, who himself was a bannerman of the Plain White, came from a bondservant family whose ancestors were previously Hans. The great-grandfather of Cao Xueqin’s grandfather was captured during the time of Nurhachi, and enrolled in the Plain White Banner before Manchu troops marched towards Beijing (Spence, 1966: ix). This family was greatly “Manchuified” and the author himself was almost thoroughly Manchu-orientated (Jin, 1989:54. Also see Zhou, 1992; Zhang, 1992; Ma, 1989).

“progressive development of the Chinese civilization” (Zhang and Cheng, 1990:41), it is quite natural for these researchers to open their eyes widely to search for negative aspects and shut their eyes to positive aspects of this ethnic group. Researchers unconsciously use their Han-oriented perspectives to judge people and events in Manchu history and to view gender relations with a male-centered perspective which has been internalized within the Han people.

This androcentrism has also been reinforced by Marxism since 1949. Marxism was stipulated by the Communist Party as a nation-wide ideology that people must follow. Marxist evolutionary theory perceives the evolution of society as a sequential process from a lower stage to a higher one. The substitute of a patrilineal system for matrilineal one was viewed by Engels (1972: 120) as “the world’s historical defeat of the female sex.” He believed a patrilineal society is at a higher level than a matrilineal one. This perspective has strongly influenced Chinese researchers.

Under such circumstances, it is not surprising why the ethnography of the Manchus is very poorly developed, and why women are consistently invisible and not discussed in the literature. Unfortunately, the ethnocentric and androcentric depiction of culture and society have not significantly changed up to the present time.

### **1.3 Objectives**

The primary objective of this study is to reintroduce women into the study of the evolution of Manchu culture, and to call researchers’ attention to the discussion of women as significant members of society, instead of merely as mothers or wives. To achieve this goal, this paper, based on a field investigation at Outer Firearm Camp (*Wai Huo-qi-ying*) by myself, and on the materials written by other scholars will depict the main characteristics of women’s

activities in indigenous Manchu society as contrasted with that during the Qing Dynasty and current Manchu society, with emphasis on female-male relations in the spheres of social organization, economy, politics, religion and household. The lives of women in traditional Han Chinese society are also briefly described as a frame of reference. It suggests that comparing to Han women in traditional Han Chinese society and Manchu women after the two cultures encountered each other, Manchu women had enjoyed higher prestige in both the public and domestic spheres. They had much more freedom than Han Chinese women. Furthermore, women sometimes appeared to be more dominant and more powerful than men. After the new social institution, the Eight Banner organization was practiced, a sudden change occurred affecting Manchu women. The Eight Banner system destroyed the kinship system of Manchu society, and legitimated the dominance of males at the expense of females. Furthermore, after Manchu culture came into contact with Han culture, the cultural assimilation of Manchus brought a further decline in the social positions of Manchu women.

Secondly, this study is an effort to deepen our understanding of gender and women's problems in general, and those that have evolved in Manchu society in particular. It attempts to integrate an anthropological perspective with feminist issues, that is to view gender relations and women's problems through the lens of cultural adaptation. To be more clear and definite, it sets the discussion of Manchu women in the context of environmental stresses and human responses to them. In this theoretical framework, my special interest is in the role of the state (in Manchu's case, the role of Manchu rulers and their governments) in the process of adaptation, which in turn affects women's lives. In the case of the evolution of Manchu society, I will examine the responses --- strategies, policies and decisions --- that Manchu rulers



made to environmental stresses resulting from the encounter with Han civilization and the task of exercising control over the whole China. The bulk of this paper will analyze two factors --- the practice of the Banner system and the adoption of systematic sinification which (1) resulted in changes in social institutions; (2) accelerated the pace of cultural assimilation; and (3) partially contributed to the maintenance of the indigenous Manchu culture. Each of these changes affected the social position of Manchu women and folk attitudes towards gender roles. By analyzing the results of my field investigation at Outer Firearm Camp, the only area now existing in Beijing where the Manchus live in a comparatively compact community, this paper attempts to determine whether elements of Manchu culture still survive or have disappeared after long-term assimilation.

Thirdly, my sense of responsibility as a student of applied anthropology has driven me to keep an eye on government policy-making. Applied anthropologists have often been described as cultural brokers. One of roles of cultural brokerage is the representative role. That is "the anthropologists serve a particular group of people, usually in reference to their relationship with the large society" (Chambers, 1985: 28). As a result of this sense of responsibility, I attempt to call attention both to students of cultural anthropology and decision-makers in particular to be well aware of problems which might appear in the process of the development of a given culture, or of interaction between two or more cultures due to the policies, and decisions of states as well as ideologies advocated by states.

Although there has been an increasing literature in China researching both the Manchu minority and government policy-making respectively, few of these writings are concerned with policy-making or strategic-planning to facilitate women's adaptation to social change.

Currently in China, the fact is that when law-makers or policy-makers work on women's issues specially, their laws or policies may be gender-orientated. Otherwise, if they make new policies or initiate innovations which are not directly related to women's issues, they are almost completely gender-blind. This phenomenon has been taken for granted by both males and females in this male-dominant society. As for the policies and strategies related to the integration of minority cultures into the mainstream culture, minority women are almost completely ignored during the course of policy-making.

The analysis in this paper on the practice of the Eight Banner system, Qing legislation and the strategy of ideological control will provide a different perspective. Even though the events analyzed here took place in the distant past, I believe it will be helpful to deepen our understanding of the importance of state roles in cultural adaptation of women's position in society.

#### **1.4 Research Methods and Data Collection**

It is improper to report anthropological findings without reporting the processes of discovery which led to these findings. Since the trail that pioneering researchers have left is neither wide nor well marked, especially when one attempts to follow it through currently existing Manchu society, it is particularly necessary to report the procedures and methods of this study in as much detail as possible. The following account of research methods is intended to serve a dual purpose: it provides a basic framework for those with an interest in the comparative study of Manchu culture or cultural adaptation of a given culture, and it serves as an essential aid to those wishing to understand and evaluate the findings presented in succeeding chapters.

#### 1.4.1 Library Research

The major concern of library research was the social position of Manchu women in indigenous society. I believe that without knowing the situation of Manchu women in the past, there would be no grounds on which the comparative study of Manchu women could be based.

The library research, with this concern, was divided into two steps. From June to September, 1993, I searched for written information through the Chinese literature, mainly from two resources: (a) ethnohistorical documentation which occasionally recorded facts or events relevant to Manchu women; and (b) writings about the Qing Dynasty and indigenous Manchu culture as well as changes in the social position of Manchu women. The second step in library research was done after returning from my summer field work to the US; it focused on Western literature about Manchu women in the Qing Dynasty and more broadly about Manchu culture.

The results of my library research have illustrated that the ethnography on Manchu women has been extremely poorly developed in both Chinese and English. Two ethnographies, one in Chinese and one in English have been found which at least contain chapters specifically discussing the social roles and activities of Manchu women. They are Manchu scholar Jin Qizong's recollections, *The Manchus in the Outskirts of Beijing*, and Russian anthropologist Shirokogorov's *Social Organization of the Manchus*. These sources are frequently used or quoted in this thesis. Another pseudo-ethnohistorical writing, *The Customs of the Manchus in the Qing Dynasty*, by Han Yaoqi and Lin Qian is very informative about Manchu culture, but unfortunately, the authors appear to be completely gender-blind.

The remaining materials on Manchu women in indigenous society used in this thesis were obtained from approximate 70 books and 300 articles in both Chinese and English, which have been reviewed or skimmed. These materials were combined in order to reconstruct the traditional Manchu lifestyle.

#### *1.4.2 Preparation for Field Investigation*

Locations of investigation: Two factors were taken into consideration to locate sites for the field investigation. First, the sites being investigated should be representative of Manchu communities (either a village or a neighborhood). Ideally one should be where Manchus live in a relatively compact community, and another where they live scattered among the Hans. This would allow the assessment of cultural change due to the influence of the Han. Second, due to insufficient funding and time, my project was only feasible if the sites being investigated were not too far from where I stayed during the summer of 1993 in Beijing and my home city, Dandong. I had lacked much money for room and board and local transportation.

My field investigation was preceded by consultations with scholars on Manchu culture at the Central University of Nationalities in Beijing. Afterwards, two sites for fieldwork were chosen. One was Outer Firearm Camp on the western outskirts of Beijing, the only Manchu community left in Beijing where the Manchus live in a comparatively compact area. It was accessible by bicycle. The other one was Da-pu village in Feng-cheng Manchu autonomous county in Liaoning Province, where the Manchus live scattered with the Hans. That site could be reached by a two hour trainride from my home city, Dandong. Unfortunately, due to the limitation of time, the Da-pu project had to be aborted.

Mapping out questions for interviews: The questions I prepared for an intensive interview, listed in the appendix, basically cover the following aspects: division of labor based on gender; women's activities in the political sphere; gender roles in religion and family rituals; the decision-making power of women; roles that women played inside and outside the family; taboos imposed on women in their life cycle; and social attitudes towards women.

Questions were made as simple and concrete as possible since most of the prospective interviewees would be illiterate or semiliterate elderly women. For example, instead of asking: "What kinds of taboos were imposed upon a bride?", I would ask: "What was a bride not supposed to do before and after she married?" Questions were also made as open-ended as possible. Instead of asking: "What kind of marriage did you have, an arranged marriage or a marriage in which you were free to choose your husband?", I would ask: "Do you mind describing me the whole marital process of your marriage? How did you get to know your husband? Who was (were) involved in your marriage arrangement? Who was (were) the final decision-maker(s) regarding your marriage?" In order to collect data which may demonstrate changes in women's lives, questions were designed to show these changes over the course of three or four generations. Virtually the same or similar questions were posed to the interviewee covering not only herself but also her mother, grandmother and daughter. For example: the same questions --- "Did your mother participate in *tiao-hua* <sup>2</sup> for your family income? How often did she do it and how much did she make by doing so?" --- would be asked again to the interviewee herself, and sometimes would be asked again with modification

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<sup>2</sup> A kind of handicraft art similar to embroidery prevailing at Firearm Camp after the fall of the Qing Dynasty as the primary source of income for banner families.

as: “How many people in your family used to do this job? How much of the total income did they bring back to your family ?”

#### *1.4.3 Interview Procedure*

The informants: I conducted a case study from July to September, 1993 at Outer Firearm Camp on the west outskirts of Beijing. I had learned from anthropology classes that anthropological interviewing tends to be informal, concentrating upon intensive questioning of key informants. Therefore, I thought, the first step in the conduct of interview was to locate the key informants in that community. To accomplish this, I located the head of the second neighborhood committee of the Camp, Mrs. Guan, who provided me a list of key informants on which appeared the names of seven women, all of whom were over the age of 60. Five of them eventually showed up for interviews. The reason why I chose elderly women as my key informants was to assess gender roles as they were perceived to change over time. I believed that analyzing gender roles could not be separated from the context of Manchu culture.

Interviewing: I conducted eleven interviews, totaling about 33 hours (the first two times accompanied by a colleague who intended to investigate phenomena of social linguistic changes in that community). Five women on the list of seven key informants and two volunteers participated in the conversations. Each time the number of participants in the conversations varied, ranging from one to five. Seven interviews were conducted in the house of a major informant, the remaining four interviews were in the house of another key informant.

Basically, the interviews went on in a friendly and sometimes enthusiastic atmosphere. When questioned about the process of traditional Manchu marriage, two of the informants not

only gave me a detailed account, but also demonstrated for me the way a bride was supposed to get in and out of a sedan chair, and how she was expected to enter the room to meet her husbands' family.

#### *1.4.4 Survey Research Methods*

Survey research methods are not routinely employed in anthropological research with non-western and illiterate populations, while they are frequently used by sociologists. However, due to the lack of time to do a thorough field investigation at the Camp, I had to utilize survey methods to gather further information.

This task was done entirely by my husband under my instruction. First of all, I worked out the questionnaire form which consisted of personal data, a social opinion inventory and a folk practice inventory. I sent this form to my husband who made a total of fifty copies. With the help of two neighborhood committee chiefs at the Camp, my husband handed out a portion of the copies to respondents who were assumed by the heads of the neighborhood committees to be able to answer those questions without the problem of miscomprehension. If difficulties arose, their literate children were encouraged to assist them. For other respondents whose ability to do this survey was questioned by the heads of neighborhood committees, my husband went to visit door by door to explain the items on the survey and write down their answers.

A total of 50 questionnaires were handed out, and 44, nearly 90 percent, were sent back to me by my husband. Both the survey and the results can be found in the appendix of this paper and will be discussed in succeeding chapters.

### **1.5 Limitations of the Research**

Library research has proven to be the most difficult step in the collection of data. Due to the dearth of previous writings and ethnohistoric documentation narrowly focusing on Manchu women, I had to change my strategy and began to “cast a big net”, that is all information and materials relevant to Manchu history, culture or folk life would be included in data collection. From a wide variety of accessible writings, I had to filter out data. The Chinese saying goes: “Searching for a needle from the sea”. Many “bricks” were used in the reconstruction of Manchu women’s lives in the past, and most of these “bricks” were picked up here and there, and accumulated. One was from a book which might deal with government economic policies in the Qing Dynasty, and another from an article which might talk about the Manchu custom of worshipping dogs. In other words, even though, the picture of Manchu women’s lives in the past has been redrawn, it is far from sufficient.

Another limitation of the existing study was funding and time as I had to give up my scheduled trip to Da-pu village in Feng-cheng Manchu Autonomous County. Even my investigation at Outer Firearm Camp was affected because of lack of time. I had only three months for summer vacation. That short period of time did not allow me to conduct a sufficiently intensive and thorough investigation. In addition, there was no pioneering research in this field to guide my inquiry, therefore, some research questions were not raised initially and had to be addressed in later interviews. As for observation by personal participation in the activities at that Camp, a common research method advocated by anthropologists, I gave no consideration to it due to the time limitation.



## CHAPTER 2. HUMAN ADAPTATION: A LITERATURE REVIEW

### **2.1 Adaptation in Biology**

The concept of adaptation --- the key mechanism in the evolutionary process --- comes originally from biology, and Charles Darwin made a significant contribution in his theory of evolution to the use of this concept. Accordingly, some anthropologists insist that “a discussion of adaptation must be set in the context of evolutionary theory” (Alland & McCay, 1973:143).

The concept of adaptation has been used at least since the early seventeenth century to refer to the state of being fit, apt, or suitable to some condition. Since the end of the eighteenth century, it refers to the process of modifying something to fit new condition. Apparently, Charles Darwin at first held the seventeenth century view, but later on he made his major contribution with “his specification of the causes of the second dictionary meaning of ‘adaptation’: the process of modification to suit new conditions” (Alland & McCay, 1973:144).

Darwin’s definition of evolution refers to changes in populations through time (Changes in phyletic lineages), and these changes result from the process of natural selection, that is, the accumulation in a population of favorable hereditary variations through differential survival and reproduction of individuals within those populations (Darwin, 1895).

To summarize the concept of adaptation in biology, three principles are worth noting: (1) Natural selection: Although not all evolutionary biologists agree that natural selection plays the primary role in organic evolution, there is general agreement that “Natural selection is the only acceptable explanation for the genesis and maintenance of adaptation” (Williams, 1966:

vii). (2) Adjustment of the adaptation process and the variability in population response to the environment: Adaptation can be viewed as “the process of evolutionary change by which the organism provides better and better ‘solutions’ to the ‘problems’ set by the environment” (Dyson-Hudson, 1983:2). Such responsive capabilities vary or evolve transgenerationally, that is, change transgenerationally in the direction of improved environmental fit, and also change to meet new conditions. Therefore, it is useful “to distinguish between adaptation as the physiological response of organisms and transgenerational adaptation as an outcome of the evolutionary process” (Alland & McCay, 1973:144). Organisms do not become better and better adapted, but rather the adaptation process consists of a series of fine adjustments in the organism in accord with the environmental conditions at a given time, and the variability in the population (Dyson-Hudson, 1983: 2). (3) Open-ended process of adjustment: Since environments are constantly changing, there is, in fact, no end to adaptation, nor is there any pinnacle of organic evolution (Dyson-Hudson, 1983:). “Evolution occurs because no adaptation is permanent because no habitat remains unchanged” (Cohen, 1968: 42).

In general, the adaptive explanation for evolutionary biology encompasses the relationship of organisms to their habitats.

## **2.2 Adaptation in Anthropology**

Inspired by evolutionary theory, the concept of adaptation has been borrowed by anthropologists in order to help interpret human behavior. Adaptation has been the cornerstone of ecological explanation in anthropology at least since the seminal work of Julian Steward to describe the fitness of customs and societies to their settings, as implied in the phrase “cultural ecological adaptation” (Steward, 1958). However, there is often a great disparity in the way

the term “adaptation” is used in the disciplines of biological and social sciences respectively. This means that while biologists and anthropologists may appear to be discussing the same thing, they are often, in fact, attempting to analyze and explain quite different phenomena. For example, “In the biological sciences, adaptation tends to refer to entropy functions, the behavior of organisms resulting in steady states or homeostatic rhythms. However, in social behavior the organism may do just the opposite --- disturb or overturn existing conditions in order to satisfy needs” (Bennett, 1993: 30). But, one thing is in common: principles in both the biological and social sciences involve the interaction between organisms and environments (or humans and nature in social sciences).

On the other hand, among anthropologists, disagreement over definitions, principle, measurements of adaptation and rules for writing evolutionary and adaptive explanation reflected in the current literature “suggests that the cornerstone may be made of shifting sands” (Hardesty, 1984:326). It is impossible in this paper to review the diversity of principles or perspectives, but some approaches pertaining to or more congenial to the orientation of this paper will be cited as follows:

### *2.2.1 Definitions of Human Adaptation:*

There has been a large number of definitions of adaptation used in social sciences. Adaptation as “fitness for reproduction and survival” by Cohen (1968) was obviously adopted from Herbert Spencer’s phrase “survival of the fittest”. Adaptation as a “process of adjustment” or a “state of adjustment” to environmental conditions by Medawar (1951) and Little (1983) is the emphasis on the nature and capability of human adjustment. Rappaport defines adaptation as “the process by which organisms or groups of organisms, through

responsive changes in their states, structures, or compositions, maintain homeostasis in and among themselves in the face of both short-term environmental fluctuations and long-term changes in the composition or structure of their environments” (1971: 60).

Bennett criticizes Rappaport’s definition as too narrow, because “adaptive behavior does not maintain equilibrium but does just the opposite: disturbs an existing state in order to arrive at a new one” (1976: 246).

Marshall Sahlins, another major figure in cultural-ecological theory states that “adaptation implies maximizing the social life chances. But maximization is almost always a compromise, a vector in the internal structure of culture and external pressure of environment” (1964; 1360).

The implication of Sahlins definition is the proposition that the important phenomena for adaptational or “environmental” anthropology involving dynamic human behavior of maximizing the life chances always occurs within a cultural environment of compromise and decision.

### *2.2.2 Environmental Stress and Responsive Adaptation:*

The approach of stress and adaptation grew out of biological research conducted by Baker and his colleagues (Baker & Little, 1976) and Hass (1983) on human adaptation at high altitude in the Peruvian Andes. The reason for discussing this biological approach briefly here is that the model of stress / strain / response created by these researchers can also serve as a vehicle by which to convey the implicit relationship of human behavior to the social milieu.

According to Little, a stress refers to a perturbing force that “stimulates the need to change or modify a level of adaptation that arises from the environment”, and this perturbing

force, or a deforming force may “produce a deviation from homeostasis or a dynamic state of balance”. The deviation or imbalance itself is referred to as a strain which impairs normal function. A response to the strain could be either adaptation or maladaptation. The former might be achieved by one of three ways: (1) removal of the stress directly; (2) returning the system to its previous state of homeostasis by appropriate feedback controls, or (3) accommodating to the strain by maintaining a new homeostatic level. The latter could result from “any of the above responses being unsuccessful or by an overshoot effect or overcompensation of control mechanisms” (1983: 138).

### 2.2.3 *Stimuli - Value Interaction:*

Instead of the terms of stress and response, Devine (1972) prefers using “stimuli” and “value system” to view human adaptation through the perspective of the interaction between environment and culture *system* and lays an emphasis on cultural *maintenance*. His argument is that culture is viewed as a system which seeks to maintain its value constellation. This system has the ability to screen “stimuli which may threaten its own survival as a value system. Weak stimuli which act on the culture may be ignored completely. Stronger stimuli are screened in terms of the value constellation” (1972: 288).

Stimuli put stress on the value constellation of culture in two ways: One is called *intracultural stress*, the stress arises when environmental stimuli cause a conflict between two component values within the culture.

Using the system analogy, a research model can be outlined. At time one, support for political culture Value A is measured. At time two, a stimulus is introduced which is related to Value B and which threatens Value A. During the period of the confrontation between stimulus, Value B and Value A, stress is high for the political culture system. Support for Value A is lowered to a

accommodate Value B. However, Value A (as well as Value B, since the stimulus had to accommodate itself to it) has had its influence upon the stimulus. It has shaped the stimulus, to some degree, to itself. The stimulus has thus been shaped and tempered by political culture. After the stimulus recedes or is converted, the stress eases and, in the normal culture situation, Value A and B return to their former state. In cases of extreme stress, however, values may be altered (1972: 289).

The second type of stress is called environmental stress, which arises from direct interactions between environmental stimuli and a political culture value. The normal result of this case would be the shaping of the stimuli in the direction of the value. When the stimuli reach a certain strength, stress can be so great as to alter the culture value. Even in this situation, though, culture influences the stimuli.

In short, Devine's conclusion is that "systems can persist and that culture systems will seek to maintain themselves. We would, thus, predict that in most situations, the value would be maintained" (Ibid., 290-291).

#### *2.2.4 Role of States in Human Adaptation:*

The discussion about priorities in change, that is, whether some aspects of culture necessarily depend on prior changes in other aspects, and whether there are changes that automatically set others into motion, has led Y. A. Cohen to distinguish between "stateless societies" and "state societies" in discussing whether nontechnological institutions can affect a society's adaptation (1968).

A stateless society, according to Cohen (1968:53), "is one in which the checks, balances, and controls over behavior that are among the prerequisites of all social life are exercised through local institutions at the community level, without the intervention of

supracommunity centers of authority. Local autonomy is the key factor in the maintenance of order and conformity and in the resolution of disputes in stateless societies.”

A state society is one with coercive institutions such as police, army, legislative or administrative offices which are absent in a stateless society.

Inspired by the work of Leslie White (1943) and F. W. Cottrell (1951), Cohen has focused on energy use as the indicator of the level of adaptation. He suggests that the development of the state organization is a watershed in cultural evolution, because it makes possible the harnessing of more efficient sources of energy. In other words, “the goals of a state organization are not only to centralize decision-making and implementation but also to explore physical energy potentials in the service of the society as a whole” (Cohen, 1968: 53-54).

But the sequence of priorities on adaptation is reversed in societies that are integrated into nation-states by central political institutions. This integration usually (but not always) takes place as a result of conquest or the threat of conquest, but unification, if it is to be successful, must be accepted by the polity.

States have a variety of means at their disposal by which to gain mass acquiescence, which are physical as well as symbolic. But whatever means are used, adaptation in state societies can best be understood in terms of a sequence of priorities in which technological advance is a product of --- or at least is stimulated by --- political institutions that unify the society into a single entity (Ibid., 54).

#### *2.2.5 Trajectories of Cultural Change:*

Trajectory of cultural change refers to the directions of cultural evolution occurring when two or more cultures come into contact. Marvin Harris has drawn three lines: divergent,

convergent and parallel to illustrate different directions of cultural evolution and all cultural differences and similarities, he points out, have been produced by these three kinds of evolution.

Divergent evolution is the appearance of increasing amounts of difference between two or more cultures as a result of different rates and directions of change. Convergent evolution occurs when the amount of difference between two or more cultures is decreasing. Parallel evolution denotes a situation in which two or more evolving cultures similar in certain respects undergo similar transformations at approximately the same rate” (Harris, 1983:163).

Alexis de Tocqueville has made an analysis on the way of interaction between two cultures, specifically between conquered people and conquerors, which appears to challenge Harris’s three patterns of evolution. Although Tocqueville is not an adaptation theorist, his assumption is worth quoting here:

When the conquered people are enlightened and the conquerors half-savage as when the nations of the north invaded the Roman Empire or the Mongols invaded China, the power which the barbarian has won by his victory enables him to keep on a level with the civilized man and to go forward as his equal until he becomes his rival; one had force to support him and the other intelligence; the former admires the knowledge and arts of the conquered and the latter envies the conqueror’s power. In the end the barbarians invite the civilized people into their palaces and the civilized open their schools to the barbarians (Tocqueville, 1969:330).

The implicit of Tocqueville’s assumption is the proposition of another kind of direction of adaptation which might be termed “reverse evolution”, or “mutual adaptation”, that is when a big discrepancy between two cultures exists in terms of levels of military capacity and civilization respectively, each culture partially conform to the stress coming from the other side.



### 2.2.6 *Manchu Adaptability:*

Although the fact of the Manchu's sinification has drawn a wide attention to both Chinese and western scholars, and various explanations have been given, few of them come from the perspective of adaptation. Lattimore probably is the only one who associated the Manchu's conquest and sinification with their cultural adaptability. However He attributed this cultural adaptability to the immaturity of their own tradition. Lattimore asserts:

The Manchus were, from the very beginning, without either the strong tribal consciousness or the strong historical traditions of the Mongols.

... they rose to power with such rapidity that they never thoroughly absorbed the tradition and spirit of the 'reservoir'; they rather created a new modified 'reservoir' and regional tradition of their own. This very immaturity facilitated their extraordinarily rapid and thorough assumption of Chinese characteristics.

The Manchus therefore survived and prospered thanks to their cultural adaptability, conforming to Mongol standards when they were with Mongols, and to Chinese when they were with Han. At the same time, they retained their tribal ability to organize hunting / military units.

Lattimore's assumption has a grain of truth insofar as Manchu's ethnic characteristics.

Unfortunately it is not supported by evidence given in his analysis.

### CHAPTER 3. MANCHU CLAN SYSTEM AND WOMEN'S STATUS

In order to gain insight into the changed role of Manchu women, it will be necessary to discuss the status and the role of women in traditional Manchu societies.

The Manchu society here termed as traditional is so vague that it is very hard to define. For example, most Chinese scholars have used 1644, the year when Manchu troops entered Beijing as a demarcation to account for the different stages of the evolution of Manchu culture. To be more precise, the year 1644 has been regarded as the beginning point of a large scale sinification of Manchu culture. However, cultural change is a complicated process and its results often turn out to be uneven due to different degrees of contact among different cultures. For some Manchu communities, contact with Han culture had occurred long before the conquest of China in 1644. By contrast, some Manchu societies in remote areas of the Northeast such as Aihui county, Heilongjiang Province, lived their old traditions and used their own mother tongue until 1949, when the People's Republic of China was founded (Ma, 1989:42). Therefore, the term "traditional" used here tentatively refers to societies which had the clan system<sup>3</sup> and existed with or without minor Han Chinese influence.

#### **3.1 Social Organization**

The Manchus had a patrilineal clan system.

Whenever studying Manchu history, one would notice the assertion frequently made by many Chinese researchers in their writings that "the Manchus had remained at the level of *mu-xi she-hui* for a long period of time" (Li, 1990; Fu & Yu, 1998; Luo, 1993). Sometimes, they

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<sup>3</sup> See the definition on the page 31.

use *mu-quan she-hui* instead. *Mu-xi she-hui* literally means matrilineal society, and *mu-quan she-hui*, matriarchal society. However in most instances, this statement has always been made without convincing evidence. The terms of *mu-xi she-hui* and *mu-quan she-hui* seem to have been used in such a confusing way that they do not help us to understand the social organization of Manchu society in remote time. To be more exact, there is no differentiation in terms of matrilineality, matrilocality and matriarchy.

Shirokogorov has proposed a similar hypothesis. He has thoroughly studied the kinship terminology of the Manchus, finding that the terms designating the relationship of matriline were well preserved in the Manchu language, and that the major portion of terms of patrilineal filiation are borrowed from the Chinese [1973(1924):49]. Thus his hypothesis is that “such a system is comprehensible on the condition that we agree to suppose that the Manchu clan at some early time was based not on the patrilineal relationships, but on the matrilineal relationships”. Nevertheless, Shirokogorov points out that “this supposition does not solve the problem of special woman’s rights and privilege which some ethnographers call the ‘matriarchate’, and the problem of the uniform evolution of the clan and family.” [1973(1924):48-49]

It is also true that we may discover many indications in Manchu myths, legends, customs, religion, marriage, etc. which might reveal that the Manchus used to practice a matrilineal and matriarchal system in the distant past. In proving that, a great deal of work is needed.

From the available ethnohistorical documents, the only assertion we may positively make is that around the period of their conquest of China, most Manchu people lived in a

patrilineal clan system. By patrilineal clan system, here I mean, male kin lived together bringing their wives to live with them (patrilocal), and traced group membership by descent through the unilineal male line (patrilineal), as Shirokogorov defines [1973(1924):16] that clan is “a group of persons united by the consciousness of their common origin from a male ancestor and through a male ancestor, also united by the recognition of their blood relationship, having common clan spirits and recognizing a series of taboos, the principal of which is the interdiction of marriage between members of a clan, i.e. exogamy.”

Even though this clan system in early Manchu society was characterized by patrilocal, and patrilineal structure, but it does not necessarily mean patriarchy, that is male controlled over females where only men were property owners and decision makers. In fact, one of the characteristics of this clan system was that women had autonomy in controlling their own lives and authority in decision-making about their families and clan affairs.

In Manchu, the clan is called “*hala*” --- the name of a male ancestor. In early times, *hala* played a significant role in Manchu social life. In fact, it was the only social organization that the Manchus could remember. There were very few social phenomena of importance which were beyond clan control, or, in other words, life outside the clan organization was absolutely impossible and unimaginable. However, as the population grew under constant immigration, *hala* became such a large unit that the exogamic and religious practices, social functions in general, could not be controlled by it. In fact, the same *hala*, i.e. the bearers of the same clan name, were often scattered in several different places. Therefore the Manchus created a new subdivision of the clan, “*mokun*”, which appropriated all functions of a clan. The Manchus understood *mokun* to be a group of people, who belonged to the same *hala*; it

includes several generations with a common male ancestor, and members basically lived in the same geographical area. If two members of the same clan who did not know each other should meet somewhere, the following conversation might occur between them:

To which *hala* do you belong?

I belong to the *Gjoro hala*.

From which district are you?

From Aigun.

Well, thus we are the same *hala-mokun* people --- concluded the questioner.

[Shirokogorov 1973(1924):18]

The functions of a clan in details can be illustrated in the duties or obligations of the *mokunda*, the clan chief who was usually a male, elected by members of the *mokun* annually. The clan chief had unchallengeable authority. All important affairs and events within the *mokun* were handled by him, and almost all thorny problems were judged and settled by him. Accordingly, only a wise, knowledgeable, honest person could be considered for the candidacy of the clan chief.

Generally speaking, the duties of the clan chief included the following: marriage, affairs of justice, home affairs, intermokun affairs, administration, financial and economic questions in general, and under the Manchu Dynasty, military affairs were also included. For example, from calling a general meeting of *mokun* members, and presiding over all ceremonies --- initiation, marriage, funeral ---, to keeping important clan documents, the most important of which was the clan membership list, all of those tasks had to be done by the clan chief.

The male clan chief was called a “*haha mokunda*”, and the female clan chief was called a “*hehe mokunda*”. The latter had absolutely the same authority and functions as the male clan chief. I shall treat this topic in detail in a later chapter.

Under this clan system, women were free to participate in any social activities and legitimized to control their won lives.

### **3.2 Women's Subsistence Activities**

As a nomad people, the ancestors of the Manchus lived in forests and mountains along the Heilongjiang River in the northeast of China which was abundant in natural resources, such as game, wild plants, vegetables and fishes.

The natural environment within which the ancestors of the Manchus lived made possible the basic form of the economy --- hunting, gathering and fishing. "Yu Pi Dazi" (the fish skin Tartar) was the name the Manchus came to be called.

Women were substantial contributors to the daily subsistence of their families. They participated in every subsistence activity that men carried out. Tasks were not identical, however, and a division of labor did exist which was built upon the principle of sharing common goals, that is all members of a family or a clan had to share the economic goals in order to survive. Under this principle, there was a modest division of labor based on gender, but, in fact, not as strictly as in some complex societies.

Basically, men went hunting and did heavy jobs outside the family. The unit of hunting (as well as warring) was called "*niru*" (lit. an arrow). Ten people, usually male adults from the same clan (*zu*) or the same stackade (*zhai*), were organized into one *niru*. The person who headed the *niru* was called "*niru ejen*" (lit. the head of the arrow). Before starting off for a hunting expedition, each person handed in an arrow, and selected a person who would serve as a head of *niru*. Once going through this formality, they set out. The nine members of the *niru* had to tightly follow each instruction from the *niru ejen*. Any disorder was seen as a break of

the clan folk law, and thus, would be severely punished afterwards (*Qing Tai Zu Shi Lu*, cited in Han & Lin, 1990:30).

The game animals they hunted came in a wide variety, the large animals were tigers, leopards, bears, wild oxen, wild pigs, and deer. In addition, foxes, badgers, martens were frequently caught.

Hunting varied seasonally. The hunting techniques included using bows and arrows, riding horses and using tamed animals as aids to hunters. Dogs and *hai-dong-qing* (a kind of fierce eagle) were the dominant tamed animals to be used in hunting (Han & Lin, 1990:26, 183-187).

Women took charge of the housekeeping. They were responsible for childrearing, cooking, preserving foods for the family, sewing clothes and shoes with animal skins, keeping kindling materials, weaving baskets and containers (Li, 1990:127). But their responsibilities were not limited to these activities. The principal tasks traditionally reserved for women were gathering, and feeding animals. Fishing in the rivers and trading with Ming Chinese merchants were cooperative jobs done by both men and women.

When necessary, women, particularly girls, went hunting with their male kin. Girls started hunting shortly after puberty. Before they were physically strong enough to hunt, they were trained by kinsmen or kinswomen in riding, hunting, physical exercises, and gaining knowledge of the forest. Boys were no different. The following kind of eulogistic assertion is frequently found in historical documents as well as current writings: "Women were by no means inferior to men in horsemanship and archery. Even those in their early teens could ride a horse in the forests and shoot." (Zhang, 1987:73)

If women were too busy collecting plants, elderly men, sometimes even middle-aged men did the sewing, cooking and childrearing. Although the collecting of wild plant foods was not a daily task, women had to wander far through forests and mountains to gather large portion of edible grass and plant roots. Women produced much of the typical hunter-gatherer's diet as the forest vegetable foods far out-weighed meat in reliability and frequency of consumption (Zhao, 1992:23).

Women cruised the forests searching for mushrooms, and wood ears (a kind of edible fungus). They also collected honey produced by wild bees. The most desirable root they dug was ginseng, which has been regarded as the first of *guan-dong san-bao* (three treasures east of the Great Wall). Pinenuts, hazelnuts, wild walnuts, wild grapes, *shan-li-hong* (a kind of hawthorn), *ruan-zao-zi* (soft jujube), *chou-li-zi* (a kind of blueberry) were also favorite foods of the Manchus (Han & Lin, 1990:131).

In terms of ethnic background, the Manchus are regarded as a branch of the Tungus. Some researchers suggest that Tungus means "the people who are good at breeding of pigs" (Lin & Han, 1990:131 ). The Manchus have a history of almost 3000 years of breeding pigs. There was a brief account in "*Hou Han Shu*" (The History of Later Han): "In Yilou, the ancient country of Sushen, people were good at breeding of pigs. (They) ate the meat of pigs, and made clothes out of the skin (of pigs)." Though I have no evidence showing that this task was originally done by women, according to ethnographic reports, it was the exclusive responsibility of women at the beginning of this century in many Manchu communities in Heilongjiang Province (Ma, 1989).



Both Manchu men and women fished. If most male adults were gone on a hunting trip for several days, the remaining men and children would go fishing with female adults who were not away gathering. Only women in late pregnancy, with young infants, or in old age, withdrew from fishing or gathering. Nevertheless, they would take care of children left behind by their mothers who participated in group fishing, or gathering activities.

Trade and exchange were also cooperative tasks done by both men and women, but most of the time by women. Historical documents, early local gazettes and writings indicate that none but the most remote Manchus were “pure” hunter-gatherers before their conquest of China. Whenever they had a surplus from hunting or gathering, they would make trips to the border between the Manchu and Ming territories to exchange meat, fur or forest plant foods for their daily necessities. There was virtually no money involved in the trade, only goods for trade. In areas where trade rested mostly on meat or animal skins and where men did most of the hunting, women were likely to sell the dried meat and skins, the fur of marten being preferred, and bring back goods they needed. In contrast, in areas where trade relied mostly on plant foods, particularly ginseng, and where women did most of the digging of ginseng, men were more likely to go out to trade with Ming merchants. Many Ming merchants attempted to cheat the Manchus by shortchanging them on accounting or weights, but they did so on the basis of the gullibility or naiveté of the Manchus, not on the basis of gender. Actually, the Manchu women were more aggressive traders than were the men, who did not like confrontation.

There is no information available indicating the degree to which women controlled the means of production and distribution. The general information is that whenever men and

women formed a temporary group for hunting, collecting or fishing, each participant would take home an equal portion of the fruit of their labor. The surplus of each family was basically for the use of trade with the Han Chinese merchants (Liu, 1984:111).

Many contemporary theories base the frequently lower status of women squarely on motherhood, that is women's subsistence activities are not compatible with simultaneous childcare responsibilities. An interesting childcare practice still prevalent among the Manchus in the Northeast and even learned by the Hans is the use of the cradle which enabled women to make childcaring compatible with a great variety of women's activities.

There is a widely known old Chinese saying describing Manchu customs: "There are three bizarre performances in the Northeast: the window paper is stuck outside; young girls always hold a tobacco pipe in their mouths; and newborn babies are hung up." The last reference is to the use of cradles. When the first baby is born, according to the old custom of the Manchus, it is the maternal grandmother's responsibility to prepare a cradle for the baby as a gift. The cradle looks like a small boat (see figure 2). It can be hung on a beam inside the house or between two trees outside the house. It can be used for the baby as a bed and at the same time, it accustoms the baby to a sitting position. The use of the cradle was especially well adapted to the conditions of Manchu life. The mother was not obliged to take the child out of the cradle to suckle or to rock it. Besides, while the child was sleeping in the cradle which was hung between the trees so that wild beasts were not able to attack the child, the mother was allowed to collect plants as well as wild vegetables around the area. Furthermore, "this form of cradle is very comfortable for putting on the mother's back during a nomadic journey on

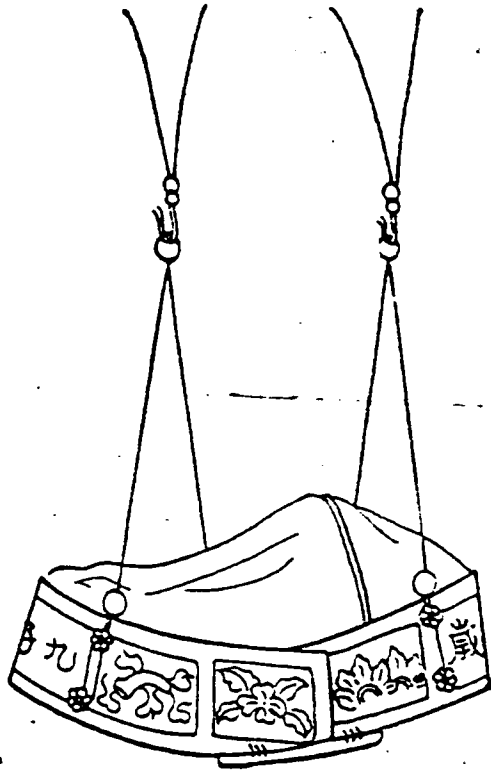


Figure 2. Cradle of the Manchus

Source: Jin, 1981:13

horseback. When they stop, this cradle can be immediately hung on the first tree or in a tent or house” [Shifokogorov, 1973(1924):118].

Manchu mothers did not spend a great deal of time actually interacting with their children. They had domestic and subsistence duties that took up most of their time. Older children were often left with no one to look after them directly, but were kept close to home or within earshot of their mothers. With respect to infant care, elderly women took the primary responsibility. Sometimes older children cared for infants but mothers had to, in turn, supervise the older children.

### **3.3 Women’s Political Activities**

Individuals including women were permitted to address their demands to the clan only through the clan chief or to the clan chief directly. In dealing with important clan affairs, the clan chief summoned meetings among the members of the clan. The meetings were separate. Men attended men’s meetings, and women attended women’s meetings. “Men do not also control the women’s affairs, and their influence does not spread over the women. The women are organized just like the men.” [Shirokogorov, 1973(1924):55]

At the women’s meetings, no men except the male-clan-chief could be present. They discussed every thing concerned with women, such as assisting all unmarried women born in the clan, as well as the women adopted by the clan as wives of the clan men. Women also elected a *hehe-mokunda*, i.e. woman-clan-chief, who had absolutely the same authority and functions as the male-clan-chief. The same sorts of questions were discussed, the same rules and customs were practiced at the women’s meetings by this women’s clan organization.

It is believed that the commencement of the feudalization of Manchu society, and consequently the marginalization of Manchu women was at the time of Nurhachi. Though Manchu women were in the process of being relegated to a lower social position, they were still allowed to show up in public and to interact with men under the condition of not being involved in national affairs. For example, the wives of Nurhachi were allowed to participate in various national ceremonies, go hunting and act as representatives for their husband to entertain state guests and to convey greetings to his subjects and their wives (Wang, 1991:125).

As for the role of elite women in political activities early in Nurhachi's reign, historical documents recorded many cases in which Manchu elite women were very influential, sometimes acting as real decision-makers in military as well as in tribal affairs, directly or indirectly. The wives of both Yehe *Beile* (Prince) and Wula *Beile* could instigate their husbands to act upon their wills which significantly threatened Nurhachi who, in 1625, said to his subjects: "Mantai's wife in the Wula tribe and the wife of the Yehe Prince are instigating their husbands to be hostile to me. That is really detrimental to us." (*Man Zhou Shi Lu*, 372) The chief of the Yehe tribe, Jin Taishi, was well known among both Manchu tribal society and the Ming Court for always acting upon whatever his wife said. The Ming commander, Yang Gao in Liaodong sent a representative, the nephew of Jin's wife, to pay a secret visit to Jin's wife, in order to win Jin Taishi over (*Ming Shen Zong Shi Lu*, *juan* 577). Being afraid of being fooled, Hada Prince, Menggebulu dared not go himself to negotiate with the Yehe tribe. Instead, he sent his two wives to Kaiyuan to negotiate with the Yehe Prince. This was not unique. In 1619, when the Yehe tribe was encircled ring upon ring by Later Jin troops, the

Yehe Prince, afraid of being killed, sent his mother out of the castle to make a treaty with the Later Jin Prince, Daishan (*Qing Tai Zu Shi Lu*, *juan* 6).

The influence of these noble wives did not diminish after their husbands died. On the New Year of 1625, Nurhachi invited home the four widows of the Yehe Prince and the Wula Prince. Nurhachi himself, who was over 60 years of age, and his wives kowtowed to the four widows, showing his great respect to women whose husbands had been Nurhachi's vanquished foes. Actually Nurhachi had good reason to kill these widows. However, considering the profound influence of these widows upon their tribes, and wanting to draw these two tribes over to his side, he had to give them a courteous reception (*Man Zhou Shi Lu*, 372).

Certainly, among the Qing emperors --- as among the Mongolian Khans before them--- a tendency to depend upon the counsel of older women (whether mothers, grandmothers, stepmothers or wet-nurses) was marked (Crossley, 1990:80). It is well known that Empress Xiao Zhuang, the wife of Huang Taiji, exerted great influence on Qing politics over three eras -- Huang Taiji, Shun Zhi, and Kang Xi. The most famous and established Qing Emperor Kang Xi (1662-1722) was cultivated in his childhood and instructed when he was in power by his grand-mother, Empress Dowager Xiao Zhuang herself.

Kang Xi was made an emperor at the age of seven. During the first six years of his reign, he faced considerable challenges largely from Oboi, one of the four Regents appointed by Kang Xi's dying father to assist this child emperor. Actually the government soon after Shun Zhi's death became dominated by Oboi.

To face these challenges, Kang Xi profited from his grand-mother's skillful guidance. She must have realized that in order to assure a lasting victory in the power contest she needed to enlist people in court who were loyal to the throne; she also needed time to train her grandson to assume the burden of being ruler of all China. During these trying years under Oboi's domination, she taught Kang Xi many of the principles of

government as she understood them. The values and ideas that she instilled in the youngster provide important clues in understanding the emperor's adult behavior. (Wu, 1979:19)

So profound was the influence of Xiao Zhuang upon Kang Xi that it is unimaginable that Kang Xi's successes could have been achieved without it.

Wang (1994:67) points out that noble women could serve as decision-makers in vital military, tribal and state affairs without limitation. As influential as the noble women were there even more cases of commoners' wives who provided essential support for their husbands. Men served either as soldiers going on expeditions all the year round or as servants doing corvee labor outside the family, while women took care of their families, headed their households and made decisions both inside and outside the family. Therefore, there was no reason why these capable Manchu women would not receive respect from their men.

### **3.4 Religion and Beliefs**

The Manchus, like other ethnic groups in the area of the Northeast such as Hezhe, Daur, Elochun, Ewenkin, and Xibo have believed in Shamanism since ancient times. It is believed by some Chinese researchers to be a religion based on the hunting and fishing economy of primitive societies (Fu and Yu, 1988:204).

Shamanism, in the early days, was divided into the common folk branch and the court branch. The former generally fell into two categories: village shamans, who acted as intermediators between human beings and super natural beings, and performed shamanic dances to exorcise evil spirits adhering to patients through the power of the gods; and clan shamans who presided over sacrificial ceremonies for various purposes, such as eliminating disasters and catastrophes from their clans, praying for a bumper harvest, and blessing the

deceased to send their souls peacefully to another world (Ma, 1989:43; Han & Lin, 1990:116).

Court shamans were responsible for an assortment of rituals aimed at maintaining the regular sacrifices for the well-being of the government and empire, such as,

... invoking the spirits of the imperial clan, giving thanks for blessings received and asking for new ones; ritually washing the Buddha statue; making sacrifices for the prosperity of saddle horses and of horses in general (this took two days); driving away evil spirits, especially the exorcism of smallpox; praying over offerings, such as chickens, a goose, a fish, or a pheasant; burning incense and paper money for the spirits; parading the statue of Buddha and the tablets of ancestral spirits, and playing official music. (Humphrey, 1994:214)

As the only religion of the Manchus, shamanism affected the ideas as well as the lifestyle of the Manchus tremendously. A phenomenon worth noting is that in the early days, most of the shamans who were well respected people in Manchu communities and considered as omniscient and omnipotent were women.

After the Manchus occupied Beijing, they still used female shamans. "A large number of court shamans were women, but the main shamans were men." "Female shamans were wives of officials and ministers in the court" (Humphrey, 1994:216).

The prominent role of women in religion also can be observed from the family rituals of worship as well as systematic Manchu myths expressed in the divining songs sung by shamans when they performed rituals. These songs have been preserved and passed down in both the shamans' performances and the telling of folktales.

Each Manchu family had its own special list of spirits and special statues in wood for the spirits, largely identical but with minor differences among Manchu families. A Qiakela (a branch of Manchu) family kept twenty-eight wooden statues of spirits. Among them, twenty-seven were images of elderly women. They were the goddesses of heaven, earth, sun, moon,



star, cloud, mountain, roads, sea, water, wind, fire, thunder and rain, etc. and ancestors (Li, 1990:126; Han & Lin, 1990:115).

The system of Manchu myths is characterized by a genealogy of gigantic female families, the center of which is the family of a female celestial who took charge of opening the world. In this central family were various *mama shen* (mother goddesses), and *gege shen* (daughter goddesses) numbering more than three hundred. Such emphasis on females is a phenomenon seldom seen in the myths of other ethnic groups in the world.

Luo (1993: 77) concluded that the Manchus used to be an old hunting - fishing people, located in a peripheral area isolated from China Proper, which made it possible for them to keep a simple, honest and unspoiled folkway, to keep an indigenous idea of feminist leadership, to respect women. Thus the myths of the Manchu female goddesses could be preserved and passed down from generation to generation by female shamans. Later on, when male shamans took this position, they continued to practice the custom left by preceding shamanesses to sing and praise the merits and achievements of the goddesses (Li, 1990: 127). The fact that female shamans dominated religious performances and sang praises of goddesses have doubtlessly affected the feelings of respect towards women in Manchu society.

### **3.5 Marriage**

Monogamy had always been practiced by the Manchus (Ma, 1989: 42; Xiketeli, 1992:10). Polygamy is considered as a modern fashion borrowed from the Chinese [Shirokogorov, 1973(1924):64].

At some remote time, young people, particularly girls had much freedom in their marriage arrangement. *Jin Shu: Su Shen Zhuan* briefly describes the marriage custom among

the Sushen --- the ancestors of the Manchus, two thousand years ago: The Sushens lived in deep forests or barren valleys. They practiced a very simple custom of marriage. When girls or boys reached the age of marriage, the boy simply inserted a piece of feather on the girl's head, indicating the proposition of marriage. If the girl agreed, she took the boy home directly. Afterwards, betrothal presents would be prepared (cited in Han & Lin, 1990:76; Xiketeli, 1992:11).

Under the Liao (907 -1125) and Jin (1115 - 1234) dynasties, the forms of marriage became complicated. Freedom to choose one's spouse, arranged marriage by match-makers and parents, and betrothal before the birth of the bride and groom coexisted as acceptable forms of marriage. In regard to freedom to choose a spouse, one notable custom prevailed at this time --- girls took the initiative in making an offer of marriage: When a girl reached the age of marriage, she sang songs while walking on the road. In her songs, she would introduce her family background, her talents of skills related to women's work, her appearance and her willingness to find an ideal husband. If someone among the listeners had the intention to marry her, he would give her a response and then take her home. Afterwards, he would make up presents for the girl's parents (*San Chao Bei Mong Hui Bian*, *juan 3*).

It is not known when this custom disappeared. Doubtlessly, it had to do with the influence of Han Culture, because, after the Late Jin Dynasty, the Manchus began to adopt the customary practice of the Hans wherein young people were required to follow the orders of their parents as well as the words of match-makers in their marital arrangement. Manchu parents tried to imitate each step of the marriage arrangement of the Hans exactly, including the use of a match-maker; exchanging the eight characters of birth year, month, day and time of

the bride and the groom; examining the family background of both sides in order to match with each other; and giving marital presents.

Obviously, under such circumstances, Manchu girls and boys completely lost the freedom to choose their own spouses. However, one aspect the Manchus kept different from the Hans was the mother's or old women's role in such a marital arrangement. In the typical feudalistic family of the Han, children's marriages were discussed and finally arranged by the male head of the family without consulting his wife or the mother of the children. Women could say little, sometimes nothing about their children's marriages. The real decision maker was the male head of the family, usually the eldest man in the family.

In contrast, in Manchu society, as Shirokogorov [1973(1924):73] observed,

... usually the bride's father consults his wife; if he decides the question without consulting her, she can protest, but her protest is not taken into consideration. Then her husband's youngest brother intervenes and advises the bride's mother to accept her husband's decision. After this formality is completed, she must agree to the inevitable thing. But if they address the demand to the bride's mother, her word has the same value as that of the bride's father and never can be changed. If they address the demand to the bride's father's youngest brother (it is supposed the father is dead), he does not answer without consulting the bride's mother and usually he acts according to her wish.

From this example, we gain insight into the decline of women's authority. Only under the circumstances of the unavailability of the husband could the wife act as a real decision maker. Otherwise her involvement, or her protest had merely symbolic meaning. Still, Han wives did not even have a symbolic right to protest.

*The Dream of Red Chamber* describes the life of a Manchu noble family more than one hundred years before the observation made by Shirokogorov. The marriage arrangement of the central character, the only son in the third generation of this family, is decided by three

women --- the boy's grandmother, who is the real head of this extended family, the boy's mother and his brother's wife. From the beginning to the end of the process, these women did not consult any man, not even the boy's father who was an official of high rank. This is something completely unknown and incredible to the Hans.

Another difference between Han culture and Manchu culture was the social attitude towards women's chastity, particularly the girl's virginity. Han society placed a high premium on female chastity. Wives were required to be faithful to their husbands, regardless of whether or not their husbands had many concubines or kept visiting prostitutes. Young girls were required to maintain their virginity until their weddings. Women who violated these social rules would be strictly punished.

In contrast, premarital sexual behavior of the Manchu girls was not taken as a serious event. In fact, Manchu tradition accorded girls considerable premarital sexual freedom and did not punish women's adultery severely. Smock (1977:200) suggests: "the absence of a high valuation of female chastity meant that the previously married woman was not at a disadvantage in the marriage market."

Before entering the Shanhaiguan Pass, Manchu society did not demand that widows preserve chastity to honor their deceased husbands. Divorce was socially accepted. Both widows and widowers were allowed to remarry. There was no social restriction to their remarriage. It was even acceptable for a widow to remarry and take her children with her (Han & Lin, 1990:91).

A widow could be remarried according to her personal choice and wish. No one in her husband's clan, or her father's clan could force her to do it. She might also take the property

inherited from her deceased husband with her. According to Manchu custom, the youngest of the living brothers took the responsibility for protecting the widow and children of the older brother(s), if he were an adult. In this case, the property of the deceased brother was left to the youngest of the brothers as payment for service. However, the widow had the right to request the separation of her family from the rest of her husband's family, and in this case, she could legally inherit all the property of her dead husband [Shirokogorov, 1973(1924):70-71].

### **3.6 Other Folk Customs and Social Attitudes Toward Women**

The biggest contrast between traditional Chinese girls and traditional Manchu girls was that the latter were always free from the barbarous practice of foot-binding, which had victimized Han Chinese women for more than a thousand years.

The Manchu custom even affected the lives of some Han women when the two cultures came into contact. Lu Qinglin, an old Han woman born in 1920, told the investigators that her hometown was in Shandong Province where her family emigrated to the Northeast two generations ago. The women in her family escaped from foot-binding just because of the influence of the Manchu practice in the Northeast. They noticed all Manchu women had natural feet ( WCBW, 1985:46).

It is undeniable that the Manchu emperors made a substantial effort to stop foot-binding. Before the conquest of China, Huang Taiji decreed: "Those who imitate the Han custom, hairstyle as well as the foot-binding, will be severely punished." (*Qing Shi Gao, Tai Zong Ji*) After the Manchus took over Beijing, no women with deformed feet were allowed to enter the Imperial Court (James, 1888:110). Both Emperor Kang Xi and Empress Dowager Ci Xi repeatedly decreed a halt to this practice, and foot-binding of Manchu females was strictly

prohibited by Qing Law, which effectively prevented the Manchu females from being victimized by that practice for over two hundred years (Dai, 1992:300).

Manchu women engaged in a wide variety of outside activities. Sometimes they went hunting, as I mentioned above, for either subsistence or entertainment. There are a great number of historical documents referring to skills Manchu women had at archery and equitation. “Unlike ancient Chinese women who were not allowed to go outside the house, to show up in public, Manchu women were just like men, riding on horseback, shooting arrows. They were very adept in archery and horsemanship. Therefore they had plenty of opportunities to be with men.” (Han & Lin, 1990:236)

In his *Du Shu Tang Xi Zheng Sui Bi*, Wang, Jingqi states:

(The Manchus) are agile and brave, eager to fight. All females know military affairs. Those women who are shameless tend to make money by selling their singing and dance performance at night before customers. Those who have a strong sense of morality and integrity hold themselves responsible for being intrepid and warlike, often dress in men’s costumes and go out to plunder on the back of horse. The natives call those women *yan-zhi-zei* (lit. rouged bandits, referring to woman bandits) (cited in Dai, 1992:301).

The Manchus are well known for their various calisthenics on ice. Rolling on ice (*Gulubing*) and walking on snow (*xuedizou*) were two favorite winter activities specially for Manchu women. On the fifteenth of the first month according to the Chinese lunar calendar, young girls and young married women in large numbers, headed by a young wife, would go outside. They would be laughing, playing and rolling in crowds on ice while murmuring words in their mouths. “Rolling, rolling, rolling on ice, no pain on legs and back; rolling, rolling, rolling on ice, make your body light.” It is said, *xuedizou* came from court women walking in the snow after a snowfall. To participate in this game, women were required to wear their

traditional Manchu high heel shoes. Unlike the typical high heel shoes worn by western women, these heels were actually located in the middle of the soles. The height of the heels was not less than 4 inches. The winner was the one who could keep her body in balance and reach the goal first.

In 1625, the second day of the first lunar month, Nurhachi held a sports meeting on the icy surface of the Taizi River to celebrate the Chinese New Year. One of the events was a women's competition of running on ice. Participants were Han, Mongolian and Manchu girls and women from noble and royal families. For Manchu women, that was not something unusual. However, for Han women, particularly the girls and wives in the upper classes who lived south of the Shanhaiguan Pass, it was unimaginable and incredible to show up in public, or even to take part in competition in front of men.

Shirokogorov [1973(1924):75] has concluded that the Manchus “treat the girls and women very kindly.”

Girls were not forced to do endless housework before they married. The principal task of girls was the embroidery of linens which would form part of their dowry at marriage. There were not many taboos or restrictions imposed upon women. Female infanticide and prostitution were unknown to early Manchu societies.

In summary, from the perspective of adaptation theory, this tribal society maintained a clan system for a long period of time because there were few influences (stimuli) from the outside world. In this society, Manchu women were substantial contributors to the daily subsistence of their families and had considerable authority in decision making in the family and

in their clan. The nature of women's autonomy in controlling their own lives and authority inside and outside the family, the prominent role of women in religious activities and elite women's profound political influence seem to support the hypothesis of gender equality in Manchu society in the early days. By gender equality, I mean that both males and females had equal access to resources: property, power and authority. Women were not dependents of their husbands when they were participating in economic and social activities, inheriting family property and making decisions.



## CHAPTER 4. BANNER SYSTEM CHANGES WOMEN'S STATUS

### 4.1 The Banner System

Once the Jurchens were unified, Nurhachi immediately initiated the “Eight Banner System”, under which all people were organized along military lines. Each banner consisted of many basic companies called “*niru*”, or an arrow, which functioned as the primary military, political and economic organization of the Manchus. Each company was formed of 300 people. Members of these units hunted or farmed together during peace time, and went into battle as militia during time of war ( Ma, 1989).

Originally, Nurhachi created four banners in 1601, but in the Later Jin period, the enlargement of the population led to the creation of four more units, so that the designations were: Plain Yellow, Bordered Yellow, Plain White, Bordered White, Plain Red, Bordered Red, Plain Blue, Bordered Blue (see figure 3.), which were comprised of Manchus alone. As they conquered Chinese in the Northeast and Mongolian territories, the soldiers of these nationalities who surrendered to them were organized into *niru* and Banners (James, 1888: 115-116; Crossley, 1990:232; Lattimore, 1932: 32). There was a Mongolian Corps in 1626 which expanded into two Banners before 1631 and into eight Banners in 1635. Similarly, two Chinese Banners organized in 1637 expanded into four Banners in 1639 and into eight Banners in 1643 (Fang, 1950:193). Ultimately, the new order of the banner system comprised twenty-four regular Banners, eight for each of the three categories: Manchu, Mongolian, and Chinese regiments, but ethnically these categories were not rigidly defined. The essential idea was that



Figure 3. The Eight Banners of the Manchus. In the left column from top to bottom: Bordered Yellow, Plain White, Bordered White, and Plain Blue. In the right column from top to bottom: Plain Yellow, Plain Red, Bordered Red, and Bordered Blue. Source: WCBW, 1985.

of a state based on functional structural position in relation to the emperor, rather than on ethnicity (Humphrey, 1994:209).

The Eight Banner regiments , as a unique military institution created by Nurhachi, made a significant contribution to the unification of Manchu society, and the conquest of China. The establishment of the Manchu Empire was the second as well as the last reign of a minority in China's 3000-year history. Bannermen were very famous for their horseback riding and archery, and fighting capacity. Huang Taiji used to be very proud of his bannermen. He pointed out, "The reason for our dynasty (success) is because our officers and men are adept at horseback riding and archery. Hence, when they battle in the open, they win; when they attack a city, they seize it. Everywhere the under-Heaven it is said of our troops: when they take a stand, they do not waver; when they advance, they never look back." (*Da Ch'ing Taizong Wen Huangdi Shi-lu*, 32:9)

The widespread saying was : "gaining a Mongol soldier is better than ten Korean soldiers; gaining a bannerman is much better than ten Mongol soldiers." (Ibid, 32:9)

The central institution, the Eight Banner system, was also the most important means through which the Manchu rulers bureaucratized the state, structured the relationship between society and the state, and restructured many crucial social relationships within society, including gender relationships.

First of all, the Banner system fatally destroyed the traditional kinship system; second, it set up a new economic system, i.e. a new way of organizing of distribution, and thus, it redefined gender roles. All of those changes were at the expense of women.

#### **4.2 The Destruction of the Kinship System by the Banner System**

Traditionally, Manchu clans were the basic units of social organization that coordinated hunting, fishing, gathering and communicating with the spirits. The head of the clan was a very powerful person and held multiple leadership positions in religion, administration and the militia. After the Eight Banners were formed, the '*niru*' (an arrow) became the basic unit combining military, administrative and economic functions into one, gradually replacing the clans. Except for borrowing the name of *niru* from the traditional clan system, the banner system was quite different. The most striking difference between the two systems was that the blood tie lost its importance in Banner organization. The Banner, "was not a tribe, and members of the same clan might be associated with different Banner. For instance, the 'Bordered Blue Banners' of Tsitsihar, Kirin, and Peking, respectively, had no connection with one another, tribal or administrative" (Lattimore, 1932: 32). Through the study of Manchu genealogies, researchers have noted a frequently appearing pattern which shows that the members of the same clan could belong to different banners. For example, the descendants of the Jue-cha-er clan in Fuling respectively registered under the Plain Yellow, Plain Blue, Bordered Yellow and Bordered Red in Beijing. One could also be shifted into different banner regiment from the previous one due to the policy of "Changing Banner"<sup>4</sup>. (Zhao & Lin, 1993:39)

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<sup>4</sup> During the Qing time, Eight Banners were divided into the Upper Three Banners: the Plain Yellow, Bordered Yellow and Plain White; and the Lower Five Banners: the Plain Red, Bordered Red, Plain Blue, and Bordered White. The former three were controlled by the emperors directly, and the latter five, by the princes. Qing Law stipulated: "Among the Lower Five Banners, those from the clans of empresses or imperial concubines, or those ministers who have great achievements can be lifted into the Upper Three Banners under orders of emperors." (Zhao & Lin, 1993:39)

In terms of social relationships, under the banner system, the relationship between officers and soldiers, and between emperors and commanders (*Beile*), replaced the relationship between clan chiefs and kinsmen. The Eight Banners were well-knit social institutions which provided a solid foundation for a bureaucratized state.

Before the conquest of Beijing, the Eight Banners had a tendency to be more and more incompatible with the kinship system, and finally the latter was compelled to be subordinate to and give way to the former. As Gertraude Roth Li (1992:712) has pointed out: “in fact, the almost total lack of mention of clans in the Manchu records before 1644 (*Jiu Manchu Dang*) suggests that the clans were relatively insignificant during the early seventeenth century.” Humphrey (1994:210) also states that the setting-up of permanent banners gradually bureaucratized and thus undermined the independent political role of clan.

What was the impact of the destruction of the clan system on Manchu women? Traditionally, the legal position of the Manchu women was guaranteed in the clan system which acknowledged such practices as female inheritance (albeit at half the share a man inherited), female consent at marriage, and remarriage by widows and divorcees. However Manchu women's position traditionally had been limited in northern China more by customs and attitudes than by religious law, so that the above legal rights had not always been enjoyed. The most obvious restriction on women stems from the institution of the Eight Banners, the formalized separation of women from the world of men, which no longer guaranteed women's rights as the clan system had done before.

### **4.3 The Redefinition of Gender Roles by the Banner System**

Prior to the conquest of Beijing, the Banner system had made little difference economically. After a large number of bannermen and their families either entered Beijing or were garrisoned at militarily important towns and cities, emperor Shun Zhi and his court decided to carry out a series of policies of giving privileges to bannermen in order to feed and clothe them. Two major measures were taken by the court to solve the problem of the banner family's survival.

First, immediately after their entry into Beijing, bannermen began to live on their *qian-liang* (silver and grain), paid by the government, instead of the fruits of their previous living by hunting and fishing etc. It was first time that Manchu men had received remuneration for soldiering.

Regarding the age of eligibility for the military subsidy, my informants were not able to reach unanimity. Some said that a boy who reached age 16 began to receive the subsidy; others said, boys around the age of 16 to 18 were required to take an examination on horseback riding and the martial art of archery. Only those who passed the examination could begin receiving their subsidies. Others insisted that a boy from the moment he was born was eligible to receive the subsidy.

Officials received silver and grain twice a year (spring and fall); banner soldiers, widows and orphans received silver monthly, and grain seasonally. Widows and female orphans received silver and grain from the banner regiments where their husbands or their fathers were registered before death. The amount of silver and grain varied according to bannermen's military rank shown as follows:

Table 1: Officials Yearly Income

military ranks	<i>qian</i> (silver, unit: <i>tael</i> <sup>5</sup> )	<i>liang</i> (grain, unit: <i>dan</i> <sup>6</sup> )
1	180	90
2	150	75
3	130	65
4	105	52.5
5	80	40
6	60	30
7	45	22.5
8	40	20
9 (upper)	33	16.5
9 (lower)	31	15.5

Soucr: WCBW, 1985:88

Table 2: Soldiers' Income

occupations	<i>qian</i> (silver, monthly, unit: <i>tael</i> )	<i>liang</i> (grain, yearly, unit: <i>dou</i> <sup>7</sup> )
<i>qin-jun</i> (bodyguard)	4	48
<i>qian-feng</i> (vanguard)	4	48
<i>hu-jun</i> (escort)	4	48
<i>ling-cui</i> (cavalry sergeant)	4	48
<i>gong-jiang-zhang</i> (head of bowyer)	4	48
<i>xiao-qi</i> (cavalryman)	3	48
<i>tong-jiang</i> (coppersmith)	3	48
<i>bu-jun</i> (infantryman)	1.5	24
<i>tie-jiang</i> (blacksmith)	4-1	24
<i>pao-shou</i> (artilleryman)	2	36

Souce: WCBW, 1985: 88

Most bannermen received enough to keep them from starvation but not for the attainment of a level of comfort. Widows and orphans were differentiated into several categories: ordinary widows; widows for a full year; widows who were immediate relatives of the royal family;

<sup>5</sup> 32 *taels* = a kilogramme.

<sup>6</sup> A *dan* = 22 gallons.

<sup>7</sup> A *dou* = 2.2 gallons.

widows who were distant relatives of the royal family; female orphans who were immediate relatives of the royal family; female orphans who were distant relatives of the royal family; ordinary orphans, etc. The amount of silver they received monthly ranged from 1.7 *tael* to 0.53 *tael*. How much grain they took yearly is now unknown.

Second, uncultivated land at the edge of towns was marked off and distributed to bannermen as their family property. Bannermen paid little for this land, and in very out-of-the-way places they obtained it free. The bannermen also paid a lower property tax than did the Han Chinese. Under certain circumstances, they were completely exempt from taxation. While the Manchu possessed and enjoyed certain privileges, they were strictly forbidden to run businesses or sell merchandise, though many cultivated their own land. What they produced on their own land was supposed to be for subsistence only.

Women were not entitled to any payment or land just because of their dependent status. Widows were supported by the banner in which their husbands were previously registered.

Under this economic system., women were consequently confined to the domestic sphere only. Accordingly, it is not difficult to discern that the Banner system as a central institution of Manchu society was a crucial means through which the state actually redefined gender roles. Men joined one of the banner regiments and adopted soldiering as their profession, from which they received the pay of a regular; if not, they stayed at home and cultivated their land or remained idle, and were called out for training twice-a-year. By contrast, women became dependents only. To obtain the goods and services of the society, women had to depend upon the good-will of the wage earners --- men. Manchu women, as wives, mothers or daughters, benefited from what their men earned, and there was beginning to develop a



definition of the husband's role as economic provider.

The redefinition of gender roles profoundly affected folk ideas about gender preference. The Manchus previously had treated boys and girls equally, but then began to prefer sons to daughters. When asked for explanation, my informants unanimously answered: "It is obvious. Sons were entitled to have *qian-liang* (silver and grain). Girls were not." I was also told that if there were several *ma-jia* (cavalrymen, or soldiers) in a family, this family would never worry about food and daily necessities. These families could live a good life by doing nothing except for registering their names in the banner regiments to which their fathers had belonged. The poorer families tended to be those with fewer men or with men at lower positions in the banner regiments.

In summary, from the perspective of the interaction between human behavior and the environment in adaptation theory, Manchu society was experiencing a transition from a tribal nomad community to a hierarchical, bureaucratized social organization in order to attain the goal of expanding territory and finally conquering the whole of China. Driven by this ambitions, Manchu rulers, from the time of Nurhachi, undertook significant social reform as a means for fulfilling their ambitions. The Banner system was a crucial strategy helping the Manchus to adapt to a new social environment. As a central social institution, the Banner system lay a solid foundation for a bureaucratic and hierarchical state concomitant with the restructuring of many crucial social relations within society. The gender relationship was affected by the Banner system through destroying the traditional clan system which guaranteed the Manchu women's freedom and rights of property inheritance. Under the Banner system, men were entitled to be breadwinners and women to be dependents only. As a result, women's activities were

marginalized in a major way. They were forced to withdraw from various social activities and confined to the family. The Banner system was the beginning point in Manchu history of the deliberate state-instituted marginalization and devaluation of Manchu women.

## **CHAPTER 5.            INFLUENCE OF THE HAN DURING MANCHU RULE**

### **5.1 The Systematic Sinification of Manchu Society**

After the conquest of China, Manchu communities, particularly those formed in Beijing and other places beyond the Northeast, were in fact closely surrounded by Han culture, just like isolated islands overwhelmed by the ocean. Under such circumstances, cultural assimilation was inevitable. As a result, something very interesting occurred in the history of China. The Manchus swept over the entire country at an unimaginable speed, defeating the Hans militarily. In return, the Hans defeated the Manchus culturally also at an unimaginable speed. The conquerors soon forgot their nationality and language alike, and were absorbed by the conquered. The same thing happened when the nations to the north invaded the Roman Empire, the Mongols invaded China.

Here, I will not examine the extent to which the conquerors were assimilated, Instead, I will attempt to analyze the role that the Manchu rulers played in bringing about the cultural adaptation of the Manchus to the new Han environment, and hence subsequent cultural assimilation in turn affected Manchu women's lives.

When the Manchus established themselves as the rulers of China in 1644, they inaugurated that country's second era of domination by non-Han people. The first such era was the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368) when the Mongols reigned supreme in the Middle Kingdom. For any seventeenth-century Han people curious about what life might be like under non-Han rule, Manchu rulers, like their predecessors the Mongols, faced a very thorny problem of how descendents of conquering Manchu warriors could adapt to the Chinese

intellectual and political environment, while maintaining their indigenous culture intact simultaneously.

Through their own practice as rulers and the lessons they learned from the Mongol reign, the Manchu leaders realized that it was impossible to achieve this dual goal. Although the Mongols were very different people from the Manchus, they had won their sway in China by military conquest, just as did the Manchus. Manchu rulers found through the study of the Yuan that despite the conquest by the Mongols, Han Chinese culture had continued to thrive. Furthermore, their studies enabled them to affirm the validity of non-Han culture, for it had passed the “test” of non-Han conquest and domination, although the Yuan was not long-lived by Chinese dynastic standards. The Mongol troops had been irresistible, and the Han Chinese polity of the Sung Dynasty had been crushed, but the culture lived on. The survival of tradition compensated for the obvious military weakness of the Han Chinese cultural order. Thus when the Mongols eventually lost the ability to dominate China and were driven off the throne of the Son of Heaven, the surviving Han culture was still capable of reconstituting the Han Chinese tradition which had not been broken by the Mongol conquest.

When Manchu aristocrats held the sway over dynastic authority, most governmental issues they had to handle were associated with the Han majority of the society, not of the Manchu minority, with the result that the Manchu aristocrats had to learn Chinese language as well as Chinese culture. If they did not learn Chinese language and culture, they realized their dynasty would turn out to be short-lived, like the previous Mongolian one (Han & Lin, 1990:50). Most Manchu commoners in the postconquest period lived together with the Han Chinese people south of the Great Wall, and they were tremendously outnumbered. In order to

avoid ethnic conflicts as much as possible, it was necessary for the Manchu commoners to get to know the Chinese value system and customary practices of the Han majority.

Notions of this sort enabled Manchu rulers to remain clear-headed. In order to achieve their imperial ambitions they had to subordinate Manchu tribal interests and institutions to imperial ambitions. They had to construct a dynasty based on the rule of a minority ethnic group and yet, more importantly, acceptable to the Chinese majority.

The critical strategy they employed was to adopt the policy of systematic sinification. Sinification or sinicizing refers to the process of bringing the Manchus under Han Chinese influence in order to familiarize them with and have them conform to Han culture. Perhaps like the British approaching Indian civilization in the late eighteenth century, the Manchus as conquering outsiders sought to codify and enforce norms in traditional Chinese culture so that they could claim to represent, and indeed to restore, an indigenous moral and social system (Mann, 1987:49).

Throughout most of China's imperial history, Confucianism was the predominant intellectual influence. It was regarded by rulers of past dynasties as orthodoxy, the strongest spiritual weapon consolidating imperial power. This was especially true during the Qing period, as Professor Ho, Ping-ti (1967:193) points out: "In no earlier period of Chinese history do we find a deeper permeation and wider acceptance of the norms, mores, and values which modern students regard as Confucian."

Manchu rulers made exhaustive strivings in instilling Confucian ideology into both elite and folk life. First, as early as the Huang Tai-ji period, the order to translate Confucian classics into Manchu was issued for the purpose of teaching them both to the Manchu elite and to

commoners who did not know Chinese at all. This project was continued throughout the period from Huang Tai-ji (1626-43) to the end of the reign of Kang-xi (1662-1722) (Han & Lin, 1990:50).

After the Manchu elite were deeply attracted by, and eventually absorbed into Chinese civilization, more ambitious projects, such as encyclopedias, collections of essays, and literary anthologies, in both Manchu and Chinese, were also undertaken, both by the throne and by energetic private Qing scholars.

Of the many great literary compilations of the Qing period, one gigantic government-sponsored project stands out as worthy of special attention: *The Si-ku Quan-shu* (Complete Collection of the Four Treasuries). Intended as an imperial collection representing the best of China's magnificent literary heritage, *the Si-ku Quan-shu* project was conducted from 1773 to 1782. It resulted in the bringing together and transcribing (in seven sets) of nearly thirty-five hundred literary works in over seventy-eight thousand *juan* (volume, nearly 2.3 million pages per set). It also resulted in the compilation of a massive annotated catalogue known as the *Si-ku Quan-shu Zong-mu Ti-yao* (Annotated Index of the Complete Collection of the Four Treasuries), which critically reviewed the 3,461 main works plus an additional 6,793 works (Smith, 1983:192). Such a gigantic project compiling the cream of Chinese classical works was never undertaken prior to the Qing Dynasty.

Second, the Qing emperors patronized Confucian scholarship and the establishment of an elite education (*kuan-xue*). All Manchu princes were required to follow carefully constructed Confucian course of study, and the examination system was, of course, based almost entirely on the Confucian classics and commentaries.

Third, a nationwide campaign of worshipping Confucius was carried out by Manchu emperors. They paid unprecedented homage to Confucius in official ceremonies, including two kneelings and six prostrations in Beijing, and the full kowtow --- three kneelings and nine prostrations --- in Ch'u-fu, the birthplace of Confucius ( Ho, 1967:, Smith, 1983:108).

Fourth, under the influence of feudal ethic morality, Manchu rulers began to regulate commoners (both the Hans and the Manchus) behavior along exact Confucian lines by promulgating orders, decrees and legislation. For example, in 1630, Huang Tai-ji issued a decree: " From now onward, everyone is strictly prohibited from marrying his step-mother, aunt, sister-in-law or daughter-in-law." " Since we are born as human beings, if we marry women in our own clan, do we differ from animals ?" (*Qing Tai Zong Shi Lu Gao Ben*, Department of History, University of Liaoning, Oct. 1978 : 6-7).<sup>8</sup> "Offending superiors, the arson of temples, murdering parents or grand-parents, betraying brothers, informing against husbands" were regarded as heinous crimes in the Qing Code ( *Qing Tai Zong Shi Lu*, *juan* 38).

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<sup>8</sup> Prior to the conquest of China, the Manchus were still practicing levirate and intergenerational marriage. In his *Jian Zhou Wen Jina Ji*, Li, Min-Hua states: "When marrying, (Jurchen) did not take generations into account. A son may take his step-mother as wife after his father died." *Min E Shan Ren Yi Yu* in late Ming had a similar record: "Hu (a derogatory term for Jurchens) custom: if a husband died, a male, no matter father-in-law or brother-in-law, of her husband's family would take her as a wife or concubine. If this woman remarried right away, her previous husband's family would be laughed at for not being able to support a widow."

Nurhachi's wife was a daughter of Mantai, the prince of the Wu-la tribe. Nurhachi's brother, Shurhachi took one of the daughters of Buzhantai, the brother of Mantai, as his wife. The fourth daughter of Nurhachi and the daughter of Shurhachi were married away to Buzhantai. Therefore, Shurhachi was a son-in-law as well as a father-in-law of Bazhantai, and vice versa. Two wives of Huang Taiji, Empress Xiao Duan and Empress Xiao Zhuang had an aunt-niece blood tie, and it is said Empress Xiao Zhuang married the Regent Dorgon, the brother of Huang Taiji after her husband was deceased. One of the Four Senior Beiles, A-min took a Mongolian lady, the daughter of Saiarter, as his wife. In exchange, he married away his daughter back to Saiarter (Zhang, 1993:33).

Unfortunately, the whole process of systematic confucianization began with the victimization of women. "It is generally accepted that Qing China was a straitlaced, sexually repressed society: (Ng. 1987:57). This is not surprising because the core of Confucianism was to establish an hierarchical society within which all social relationships were characterized by the obedience of inferiors to superiors.

At the heart of the Confucian value system during late imperial times lay the Three Bonds (*san-kang*): between ruler and minister (or, more broadly, subject), between father and son, and between husband and wife. These were the first three of the famous Five Relationships (*wu-lun*), which also included the relationship of older (brother) to younger (brother) and friend to friend. Of these three relationships, the bond between husband and wife was considered most basic. This concept may be traced back as early as 2000 years ago. The *I-Ching* indicates that all other human relationships grow out of the relationship between men and women.

Following the existence of Heaven and Earth came the existence of all things. Following the existence of all things came the existence of male and female. Following the existence of male and female came the relationship between husband and wife. Following the relationship between husband and wife came the relationship between father and son. Following the relationship between father and son came the relationship between ruler and subject (*jun-ch'en*). Following the relationship between the ruler and subject came the general distinction between superior and inferior (*Shang-xia*). Following the distinction between superior and inferior came the arrangement of ritual and proper behavior(*li-i*) (cited in Smith, 1967:111-112).

To make it clearer, we may summarize the above quotation in the list below:

Superior	---	Inferior
Ruler	---	Subject
Father	---	Son
Husband	---	Wife
Male	---	Female
Heaven	---	Earth



This pyramid was built up on the principle of hierarchical relationship. This might be the most succinct explanation of social relationships under Confucian ideology. The left column indicates superiority, and the right column, inferiority. The basic relationship on which all other relationships rested was the one between the superior male and the inferior female.

## **5.2 Legitimization of Male-dominance**

In order to regulate people's (both elite and commoners) social behavior strictly following the Confucian line, Qing emperors used the double-edged sword: the hard edge stood for legislation and the soft edge, ideological inculcation. It is generally accepted that systematic confucianization and sinification began at least as early as the Huang Tai-ji ( Qing Tai Zong 1626-43) era. Actually the regulation and marginalization of Manchu women by the state took place much earlier than the Huang Tai-ji reign. Nurhachi codified the prohibition of wives' involvement in their husbands' affairs. The only obligation they had to fulfill was to serve their husbands wholeheartedly. It was also during the Nurhachi period that the ritual of wives being forced to kneel before their husbands, indicating the distinction in rank between males and females, was initiated. This replaced the former tradition of hugging each other, indicating the equality of the two sexes (Wang, 1994:68).

Nurhachi also initiated an absurd legal provision to prevent the husband from stealing, with the threat of punishing his wife. In July, 1623, Nurhachi declared:

From now on, if a husband steals, his wife must receive the death penalty by stepping on a charcoal fire, and carrying a heated pot on her head. If she fears this sort of penalty, she should have admonished her husband (not to steal), and if her husband refuses to accept her advice, she should inform against her husband. Just think about it, if wives do not take the stolen goods, who else will take them? (*Man-wen Lao-dang*, cited in Han & Lin, 1990:230)

The establishment of the Eight Banner system was another legitimization of male-dominance by the state which I have already analyzed.

By the Huang Tai-ji era, women were even deprived of the right to run their own households. In March 1641, the mother of A-da-li, the prince of Duo-luo-jun, violated this ban. She had her servant carry a huge sum of money to trade at the border between Ming and Manchu territory. Afterwards Sung-guo-tuo and I-mu-bu-lu, members of her family, testified against her in the court. After a judicial hearing of her case, she was fined a huge sum. It was not the end. Shortly afterwards, Huang Tai-ji summoned a conference of Princes, to investigate A-da-li's guilt in neglecting his duty. He reprimanded A-da-li: "You are not so young. Why can't you manage your household affairs? If you keep neglecting your own household management, entrusting your mother with this work, and if your mother is accused of a more serious offense, it would be too late for you to ask for exemption from punishment." (*Qing Tai Zong Shi Lu, chuan* 55). From this case, it can be seen clearly that a mother being in charge of family financial management was outlawed, even equal to a crime.

Prior to the enthronement of Huang Tai-ji in April 1636, he promulgated a series of decrees, including husbands' rights in dealing with their wives: a husband may abandon, sell, beat, even kill his wife. Later on this decree was modified as follows:

All cases of officials abandoning their wives must be reported to the higher level officials. Superiors should have these cases investigated and have family property distributed properly. In the case of failing to report to the higher level officials, members of the wife's family who destroyed property or took away clothes ought to be punished and be required to provide compensation for any loss. In the case of a husband taking another woman as a wife, whether the ex-wife should leave or stay ought to be determined by her ex-husband. The ex-wife is not allowed to leave her ex-husband on her own wish. (*Qing Tai Zong Shi Lu Gao Ben, chuan* 14).

The case of a wife informing against her husband was declared as one of ten heinous crimes in April 1636 and this Code was redeclared in Oct. 1640.

According to the Marriage Law at that time, a wife was prohibited from leaving her husband at her own will. In the case of a married daughter unable to endure the ill-treatment by her husband and running back to her natal family, if her parents felt sad and sorry for their daughter and hid her at home, the parents would be considered as being involved in the crime. Both the married daughter and her parents would suffer heavy punishment (Wang, 1994:60).

These codes and decrees promulgated by both Nurhachi and Huang Tai-ji laid the groundwork for the relationship between husband and wife, or more broadly, between male and female, which were followed by their successors from generation to generation, throughout the Qing Dynasty.

### **5.3 Inculcation of Morality in Women**

In addition to law making, the successors of Nurhachi and Huang Tai-ji showed zeal for moral reform and made plenty of new contributions toward repressing women by setting forth the system of “moral education” (*chiao-hua* or *li-jiao*). Most scholars agree that the late imperial system of moral education played a crucial role in the confucianization in the minds of especially commoners.

Within the system of moral education in the late Qing era, women’s ethical education drew great attention throughout society and profoundly influenced folk attitudes towards women. A great number of textbooks regarding women’s ethical education were published under the patronship of the Qing government. The first Qing emperor, Shun-zhi

personally annotated a new edition of an instruction book for women, the *Nei-ze Yan-yi* (Rules for the Domestic Realm), which became one of the three most popular examples of its genre in the nineteenth century (Liu, 1934:30). In the Kang Xi period, Lan, Ding-yuan's *Nu Xue* (Women's Learning) was seen as the first publication on a grand scale and consisted of a total of 6 *juan* (volumes). There were Ch'en Hong-mo's *Jiao Nu Yi Gui* (Instructions for Teaching Women Left by the Deceased) in the early Yong-Zheng era, and Li, Wan-fang's *Nu Zi Yan Xing Lu* (The Records of Women's Words and Deeds) in the late Qian-long time, these textbooks were aimed at teaching women to abide by the Confucian Three Obedience (*san-cong*) (Dai, 1992:306-307).

Guidance in matters of feminine concern could be found not only in Confucian Classics and published textbooks, but also in "family instructions" (*jia-jiao*, or *jia-xun*). Unlike "Clan rules" or genealogies, family instructions were usually informal and personal, typically written by a member of the family, exhibiting a blend of both idealism and realism. There were also family instructions aimed at larger audiences. Prior to the Qing Dynasty, family instructions were aimed at teaching younger generations in the family, including women. Expressed in simple language, family instructions promoted the values that all parents were expected to display themselves and to cultivate in their children. In addition to homilies regarding neatness, cleanliness, simplicity, proper demeanor, frugality and mildness, they emphasized the importance of filial piety, reverence for ancestors, kindness and compassion to friends and neighbors, the study of Classics, emulation of the sages, fulfillment of duty (*shou-fen*) and obedience to Heaven (*t'ing-t'ien*). The emphasis

on women's virtues was always one of the most important parts never neglected in family instructions.

During the Qing period, the conspicuous innovation of such family instructions was characterized by instructions especially for a certain kind of people, mostly women. One such work, of particularly broad appeal in Qing times was known as the *Xin Fu Pu* (The Instruction for Brides) and was attributed to Lu Xin in the thirteenth year of the Shun Zhi period (1656). Before marrying his daughter away, Lu had written these family instructions as a wedding present bestowed to his bride-to-be daughter. But it could be seen as instructions for all brides. It was the first time in China's history that a certain kind of women was selected out as a model of teaching.

Extracts from *Xin Fu Pu* made clear the purpose and the nature of women's ethic education.

The backing of a bride consists of three people, the father-in-law, mother-in-law and husband. Therefore, the bride must serve those three nicely, try her best to please them and never offend them. If they are not pleased, neighbors or villagers would think of her as not being virtuous, and she would be subjected to bullying and humiliation by servants, and her words would not be listened to by anybody. Therefore, good service toward parents-in-law and husband is not only important for her reputation of virtue and filial piety, but also for the purpose of avoiding being insulted.

The bride is obligated to rise earlier than her parents-in-law. Be quick and agile. Do not go slow. As soon as her parents-in-law get up, the bride should go to *qing-an*<sup>9</sup> immediately. Three meals should be managed personally. Do not sit and just let servants make meals. When her parents-in-law eat, she ought to stand by the dinning table to wait upon them. Never go there to serve until being called.

Whether a bride is virtuous or not can be seen through her voice as well as her way of speaking. Being soft-spoken reveals her virtue, by contrast, a high-pitched voice indicates a lack of virtue. Taciturnity is an

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<sup>9</sup> The way of greeting to senior people. Traditionally Manchu custom required children to pay formal respect to their elders regularly, once every three to five days. In greeting their superiors, men were required to extend left hand to the knee and idle the right hand while scraping a bow, and women would squat with both hands on the knees.

indicator of virtue, and talkativeness is not. She fails to show her gracefulness by speaking loudly, even though she is reprimanding servants. She would be loathed by others if she talks much, even though all she said is true.

The most critical thing to keep in mind when serving relatives is to always wear a pleasant countenance on the face . That is important for men, let alone for brides.

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Criticizing his wife's shortcomings and mistakes shows that the husband is an educated and sensible person and that he loves his wife. There is no reason for a wife not to accept it modestly. She ought to thank her husband and correct her shortcomings immediately. Later on, whenever seeing her husband, she should keep reminding him: "Did I do something else wrong? If I did, please be sure to let me know and instruct me." So long as she keeps this in mind, her virtue and moral integrity would be improved little by little.

As a person of refined tastes and full of vigor and vitality, a husband might often visit prostitutes or buy concubines. Provided he can be devoted to study and knows how to write, visiting prostitutes and taking concubines can be understood as activities of a gifted scholar. Therefore, it is not necessary for others to worry about it. Those wives who are jealous of their husbands' activities of this sort, will destroy their own marriages. It is good for a wife to understand that the wife's virtue of being tolerant toward concubines of her husband and treating prostitutes with whom her husband has affairs with leniency would consequently bring her a good reputation with her husband's family and avoid humiliation outside the family. As a result, her husband would be very grateful and love and stick to her like glue or lacquer.

From this long quotation, we may get to know how textbooks like *Xin Fu Pu* made a big contribution to the imperial moral education of women. Those books popularized the classics of *li-jiao* and *fu-jiao* (education to women), making them practicable and affecting folk ideas tremendously.

Prior to the conquest of China, Manchu society had not encouraged a wife to remain chaste after the death of her husband, and there was no interference in folk custom with the freedom of divorce by couples or remarriage by widows and widowers. Even the remarriage of a widow and the inclusion of the children from her previous marriage into

her new family had been accepted by public opinion. After entering Beijing, the social norms of the Manchus were dramatically modified under the strong influence of *jie-lie-guan*, the concept of widow chastity, one of the most emphasized points regarding women's virtue in Neo-Confucianism.

Female chastity (*jie*) and devotion to one's husband after his death were highly esteemed and ritually rewarded by both society and the state in Qing China. In fact, female chastity had "become a religion" (*zong-jiao-hua*), a prescriptive norm accepted as a matter of faith by most men and women (Smith, 1983:225; Mann, 1987:37).

The most evident demonstration of this was the adoption of *jing-biao*, the system of awarding imperial testimonials of merit to chaste widows, and constructing special sacrificial halls and monumental stone arches honoring widows. This practice was not initiated by Manchu rulers, it was continued from previous dynasties. However, the Qing Dynasty marked a turning point in the development of this system. Manchu rulers expanded this reward system to a grand scale, setting forth aggressive and elaborate procedures for locating, verifying, and recognizing widow chastity, specifically in commoner households. Testimonials of merit written in the emperor's own hand were mounted above the doorways of thousands of households who could claim a chaste widow as a member. In addition, the names of selected chaste widows were inscribed on arches or installed in shrines in every county seat.

The criteria of eligible women who might gain the honor included the following: (1) chaste widows (*jie-fu*): those who had remained chaste, since before the age of 30 until the age of 50, or those who had been chaste ten years or more but died before reaching 50; (2) exemplary wives and daughters (*lie-fu*, *lie-mu*), including women who committed suicide to avoid rape; women who died resisting rape, or who had killed themselves out of shame after being sexually assaulted; women who committed suicide

when forced to remarry, or were threatened with remarriage, by their relatives; an adopted daughter-in-law who committed suicide to avoid the premarital advances of the man to whom they had been betrothed as a young girl; and (3) virtuous daughters (*zhen-nu*), including women who killed themselves upon receiving news of the death of their intended spouse; and women who never married following the death of an intended spouse (Mann, 1987:41-42).

One of the distinctions between previous historical records regarding women and those in the Qing Dynasty was that the number of chaste widows reported in those documents increased drastically. Take the “*T’u-shu chi-ch’eng* (376 *juan*) for example, of all the various subsections on women, by far the largest is “Widows Who Would Not Remarry” (*Kuei-chieh*, 210 *juan*), followed by “Women Who Preferred Death To Dishonor” (*kuei-lieh*, 74 *juan*). By contrast, 7 *juan* are devoted to women writers (*kuei-tsao*), 4 to wise women (*kuei-chih*), and only 1 each to artistic women (*kuei-jiao*) and witty women (*kuei-hui*) (*Ch’in-ting ku-chin t’u-shu chi-ch’eng*, *tien* 16 categories women).

Such a great quantity of “heroic deeds” by those chaste women, who were considered and treated as national or local heroines by both government and commoners, was interpreted by historians as indicating that the rulers aimed at setting up paragons not only for women at that time, but also for women throughout the ages. Under such stringent circumstances, Manchu women were doomed. They were not able to break through the rings of encirclement by their neighboring culture; neither did they escape from the morality campaign carried out by the state. The changes in marriage customs at Firearm Camp, such as the virginity test as well as folk opinion against pregnancy before



marriage, which will be discussed in the succeeding chapter, were good examples of the influence of the state.

To sum up, immediately after Manchu rulers fulfilled their ambition, having won their sway in the Northeast and later over all of China, Manchu society evolved into a completely new form. The Manchus began to play a significant role in history of China --- exercising a minority role over the majority. However, they immediately realized that they were pressed and threatened by a new environmental stimulus --- the Han Chinese culture which was full of energy and vitality and strong enough to terminate this non-Han domination in a short time and drive the conquerors away. The primary strategy that clear-headed Manchu emperors adopted in order to adapt themselves to new environment and avoid such a destiny was systematic sinification . The impact of this state policy on Manchu women was detrimental. Manchu women not only had to accept the reality of being classified as dependents by the Banner system, but also were required to behave like Han women, strictly following the Confucian instructions sponsored by the state.

## CHAPTER 6.            INFLUENCE OF THE HAN AFTER THE FALL OF THE MANCHU DYNASTY

### **6.1 Nation-wide Anti-Manchuism**

The collapse of the Qing Empire in 1911 was undoubtedly a great tragedy to all Manchus, both elite and commoners.

According to my informants as well as Jin's recollection (1989), in 1911 when the last Manchu Emperor Pu Yi and his government were forced to accept the destiny of being dethroned, there was a treaty, *You Hui Tiao Jian* (The Preferential Treatment) made between the Manchu government and the government of the Republic of China. In this treaty, the government of the Republic of China promised various preferential treatment as compensation to the Emperor himself, the royal family, the Manchu government and his bannermen, in exchange for the Emperor's final decision to give up the throne. The treaty stated "Imperial Eight Banner Guards will be reorganized by the Republic of China. But the bannermen's subsidies will be the same as before.", and the government of the Republic of China "will be planning to solve the problem of the bannermen's livelihood. Before the measures are mapped out, the bannermen's subsidies will continue to be paid as usual". However, the government of the Republic of China never fulfilled its commitment. In contrast, the government adopted two very insidious measures: first, the government tried to cripple and wipe out the crack troops of the Banners. Shortly after the establishment of the Republic of China, several crack troops of the Eight Banners were sent out to Outer Mongolia to quell Mongolian rebels who intended to claim their independence from China. It was the depth of winter, all Manchu soldiers were ordered to put on very heavy but not warmth-conserving leather outerwear which made these

horsemen very clumsy. In addition severe weather made them ill-equipped to fight the rebels; instead, many of them were captured. Thus, the government achieved its goal of getting rid of the crack troops of the Manchu Banners by sending them against the Mongolian army in such conditions.

Second, the government deliberately failed to pay the bannermen's wages in order to eventually eliminate the Manchu troops. As a result, almost all Manchu families became so impoverished as to run out of their food supply.

At the same time, a strong anti-Manchu sentiment (*Pai Man*) was spreading like wildfire through the media, which criticized *Man Qing* (the Manchu and Qing government) indiscriminately. Bannermen were given many insulting nicknames, and all employment opportunities were closed to the Manchus due to nation-wide ethnic discrimination.

Under these circumstances, it is no exaggeration to state the the Manchus all over the country were struggling to survive, in many instances on the verge of death. In Beijing, Manchu men who managed to survive had to either run away from Beijing to make their livelihood, or to take low and humble jobs, such as operating tea or noodle carts, bricklaying, coal digging, and peddling in the streets. Many dealt in drugs, and some sold heirlooms, sometimes from their own homes or sometimes stole from the nobility. There were also cases of vandalism by desperate Manchu men. A large number of the Manchus used to hide their Manchu identities, pretending to be the Hans in order to avoid being insulted, bullied and excluded from employment.

## **6.2 Manchu Women's Situation Under Anti-Manchuism**

Women, as usual, were affected by this ethnic discrimination first and to the greatest degree. The Qing government had established pension for widows and orphans. This policy had been in effect for more than 200 years. After the government cut off all subsidies for bannermen, the first reaction came from widows in Beijing and widows of garrisoned Banner soldiers. Being drawn into a hopeless situation, these widows came to Beijing to petition to the government. However, they labored in vain. The widow's petition was the inspiration for another large scale petition by bannermen in Beijing as well as in three Outer Camps (Firearm Camp, Crack Troop Camp and Yuan Ming Yuan Camp), aimed at demanding their wages. Again, this petition came to naught.

Under such a desperate situation, women in the three Outer Camps tried their utmost to find new sources of family income, which I shall treat in the following chapter. For the women living within Beijing city, a conspicuous phenomenon was that a large number of the Manchu families were unable to marry away their daughters. The Hans and other nationalities refused to take Manchu girls as brides, due to the anti-Manchu sentiment. Also ordinary Manchu families whose sons had reached the age of marriage could not afford to take daughters-in-law. Therefore, the phenomenon of single Manchu women at the age of thirty, forty, or even fifty who had to stay with their natal families was not something unusual in Beijing during the 1930's and 1940's.

Even worse, some poor Manchu girls fell into a trap of fraudulent marriage. Many married Han outsiders who came to Beijing in order to make money. Seeking to make use of the Manchu's miserable situation, they hunted for Manchu girls and married them in fraud. By

the time they were to return home, they disappeared without saying good-bye, leaving their Manchu wives and children untaken care of. Some cheaters never even told their Manchu wives their real home addresses. Therefore it was impossible for these abandoned Manchu wives to locate their swindler “husbands”. Many abandoned Manchu wives, who were unable to bear such disgrace and insults and had no one to turn to, finally chose to commit suicide by taking poison or hanging themselves.<sup>10</sup>

### **6.3 Manchu Women In Beijing After 1949**

The Manchu’s situation did not change until 1949, the year when the People’s Republic of China was founded. It was claimed that Chinese people advanced into a completely new era under the leadership of the Communist Party. It was also claimed that from then on the Manchus were to be lifted out of oppression and discrimination.

Under the new Chinese government, two events affected Manchu women profoundly: one was new legislation. The new Chinese government strongly advocated and firmly pursued the policy of all ethnic groups being equal, a principle included in the Constitution of the People’s Republic of China. The other event was that, shortly after the establishment of the People’s Republic of China, women, regardless of their Han or minority status, were strongly encouraged by the government to work outside the family. This is considered as the beginning point of putting theory on women’s emancipation into practice.

Data on the situation of Manchu women is extremely scanty after 1949. In addition to ethnocentrism and androcentrism in Manchu studies mentioned previously, two additional

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<sup>10</sup> A journalist named “Fei-fei” wrote a short story, based on the truth, in a newspaper. This story described the miserable destiny of abandoned Manchu wives and their poor children. The novel *Luo Tuo Xiang Zi* (Rickshaw Xiang Zi), written by the famous Manchu novelist Lao She, also describes the destiny of Xia Fuzi, the victim of a fraudulent marriage. (See Jin, 1989: 79).

factors are also responsible for the lack of data on Manchu women. First, the Manchus as a whole have long been treated as a people no different from the Hans. They draw little attention to scholarship on minorities, let alone special attention to Manchu women. Second, women's emancipation as advocated by the new government was practical and not theoretical. During the governmental campaigns for mobilizing women to work outside the family, the slogans "Women are the half of the heaven." and "Women are fresh combatants of production." were widely known to everyone. My understanding is that all efforts from the government with respect to this event were limited to the level of obtaining more and more productive forces desperately needed in the first period of developing the country. In other words, the governmental emphasis was more practical --- tapping the potentialities of productive forces --- than theoretical --- encouraging academic studies about women's social status.

Due to the extreme dearth of data about Manchu women's situation after 1949, the best I can do here is to make a statistical comparison between the occupations of Manchu females in 1953 and those in 1982.

Although the new government tried its utmost to eliminate ethnic discrimination and to solve the problem of the bannermen's survival, and although bannerwomen, like all Han Chinese women were strongly encouraged to work outside the family, the statistics of 1953 revealed that the occupations of the Manchus in Beijing were still at low level, shown as the following table.

Table 3: Occupations of the Manchus in Beijing in 1953.

total	71,153	handicraftsmen	365
factory workers	8,738	tutors	57
farmers	1,823	housewives	17,507
office workers	4,116	students	9,886
owners of industry	96	preschool children	19,655
owners of shops	1,000	unemployed	3,389
street peddlers	4,104	others	472

Source: Zhao, 1992: 2: 35

There is no sex ratio available for each category. However, by taking the number of students, preschool children and farmers out the total population of 71,153, the result would be 39,789 for adult holders of city household registration, and 19,894 for adult females, (if we assume that the sexual ratio is 1:1). Therefore, 17,507 housewives make up 88% of the total number of females, and the approximate gender ratio of occupations was 8.3 (male) : 1 (female).

The statistics from the census of 1982 on the Manchu female population and gender ratio in China and on occupational status of Manchu females in China are shown as follows:

Table 4: Manchu Female Population and Gender Ratio in 1982

total population	female	% of total	gender ratio (F =100)
4,304,981	2,007,167	46.6	114.5

Source: RIWF, 1991:26

Table 5: The Status of the Manchu Female Population in China in 1982

	total	female	% of total	gender ratio
employees	1,945,509	651,490	33	2 : 1
technical personnel & specialists	162,320	70,517	43	1.3 : 1
leaders in governments & managers	51,169	6,223	12	7.2 : 1
staff in offices	37,964	11,096	29	2.4 : 1
employees in business	49,075	23,876	48.6	1.05 : 1
employees in service trades	63,925	28,976	45	1.2 : 1
farmers, herdsmen & fishermen	1,131,238	372,117	32.9	2.04 : 1
factory workers	446,994	137,324	30.7	2.25 : 1
others	2,824	1,361	48	1.1 : 1

Source: RIWF, 1991:308-309

This set of figures shows that there was a fundamental change in the economic roles of Manchu women. First of all, most Manchu females were housewives and unemployed (no statistics available) soon after the founding of the People's Republic of China. In 1982, the number of employed females increased dramatically up to 651,490, accounting for 32% of total female population and 33% of total employees. Second, the discrepancy between the number of male employees and female employees (gender ratio) was reduced greatly. One out of three employees were women. Third, compared to the occupations held by the Manchus in Beijing in 1953 (see Table 3), the level of occupations of Manchus in 1982 was significantly higher.

Data on Manchu women's noneconomic activities are not available.

In summary, the collapse of the Qing Dynasty, the strongest environmental stress the Manchus had never encountered, resulted in a profound change in the Manchu social system and the breakdown the Eight Banner organizations. Previously well-organized bannermen



became a population unwanted and punished by the mainstream society. Ethnic conflict between the previous minority conquerors and majority conquered left no room for the Manchus in the society. The harsh situation drove Manchu men to any extreme in order to ensure the survival of their families.

The situation of Manchu women deteriorated drastically. The only guaranteed resource --- their men's subsidies --- was cut off. They faced a doubly heavy load: trying to save their families and escape from the fate of being deceived by fake husbands.

Under the Communist government after 1949, the situation of Manchu women improved greatly. It was the first time, after a long period of being confined to the family, that Manchu women were free from that limited domain. Even though they were wanted by the government merely as productive forces, nevertheless, change in economic status was the basis for women's liberation, consistent with the Marxist point of view.

With respect to gender relations after 1949, Manchu women gained in social status; however, as Manchus, they lost ethnically. They became a part of the general Chinese female population, due to the fact that Manchus as a whole have been seen as a population no different from the Hans.

## **CHAPTER 7. FIREARM CAMP -- A MIXTURE OF HAN CULTURE AND MANCHU CULTURE**

### **7.1 At the End of the Qing Dynasty**

Outer Firearm Camp (*Huo Qi Ying*), is located in the western outskirts of Beijing, less than seven kilometers northwest of Xi Zhi Men ( West Gate of the city). This is the only area now existing in Beijing where the Manchu nationality live in a compact community.

Coming within the jurisdiction of the Court, Firearm Camp became one of the three most important military forces securing Beijing and the Court during the Qing era. The other two forces were the Yuan-ming-yuan Eight Banners and the Xiang-shan Crack Troop Banners. The Firearm Camp was formed with Manchu and Mongolian soldiers selected from the eight banner regiments stationed in Beijing. The major duty for Firearm Camp was to produce artillery shells, firearms and ammunition. In addition, practice firing weapons, serving as a security force for Beijing in peacetime, and fighting in wartime were also mandatory for soldiers at Firearm Camp.

Initially, Firearm Camp was located inside the city. In 1770, the Mongolian Dutong (lieutenant-general) Butungbalezhur, who was in charge of Firearm Camp, submitted a memorandum to the Qianlong Emperor, suggesting that all officials and soldiers at Firearm Camp be concentrated in one residential area for military drills. Three year later, an imperial decree was issued to build up barracks along the west bank of the Long River on the western outskirts of the city and shift half of the officials and soldiers from Firearm Camp into these new barracks. From then onwards, Firearm Camp inside the city came to be called “Inner Firearm Camp”, the newly established one “Outer Firearm Camp”. In 1821, the Imperial Court

issued another order to build a munitions factory outside the south wall of the barracks. According to aged informants, at the end of the Qing dynasty (around 1912) 3,846 soldiers, plus their dependents, totally around 15,000 people, resided in the camp. This was five times as many as the current total population and twenty times the number of the Manchus and Mongols in the camp now.

At the end of the Qing Dynasty, all residences at Firearm Camp were registered under eight banners, and the residential areas within the camp also were arranged according to eight banners. Four banners were located south of the camp: the Plain Blue, Bordered Blue, Plain Yellow and Bordered White; and the remaining four has located in the north: the Plain Red, Plain White, Bordered Red and Bordered Yellow (see figure 4).

The transition from the original lifestyle of hunting, gathering and fishing in the forest to the lifestyle of soldiering in a huge capital city inevitably resulted in significant changes in almost all aspects of their life. I shall discuss some of these changes below.

#### *7.1.1 Social Organization:*

The eight banner system was the only social organization the dwellers of Firearm Camp knew. All informants I interviewed as well as most respondents to my questionnaire could remember the original banners of their families clearly. But few of them knew about *hala-mokun* (clan) to which their parents or grandparents used to belong. Some of them had not even heard the term of *mokunda*. Some of them could name official military titles of Firearm Camp in Manchu.

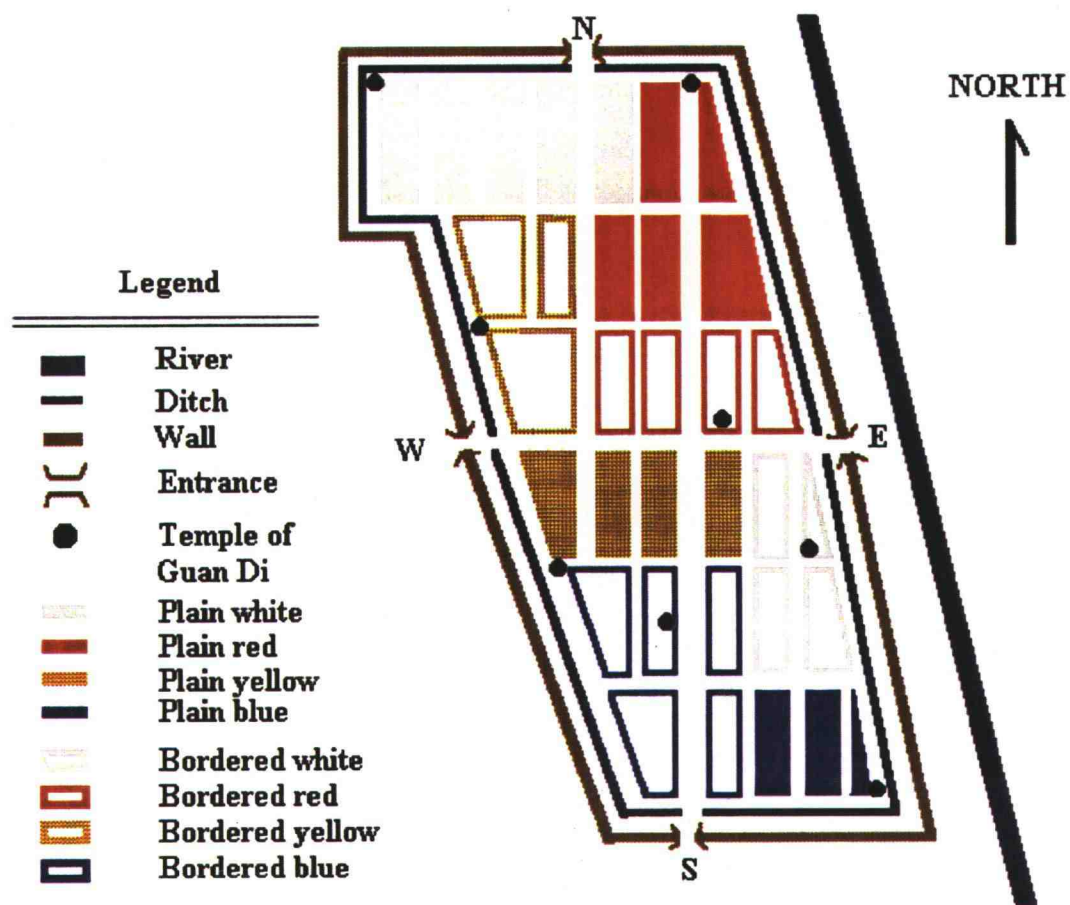


Figure 4: The Distribution of the Eight Banners at Firearm Camp before 1937

Source: It was provided by the head of the second neighborhood committee, Mrs. Guan.

Eight Banners became the only identification of social groups. If two members of the Camp who didn't know each other should meet somewhere and feel it necessary to introduce each other, instead of asking about their *hala* or *mokun*, the following conversation might occur between them:

Are you a bannerman or not ? (*Zai qi bu zai qi ?*)

Yes, I am. (*Zai.*)

To which banner do you belong ?

I am the plain white bannerman.

Well, we belong to the same banner ---- concluded the questioner.

Men registered as soldiers or officials, and women and children registered as dependents. The results of my investigation show that the number of women registered as soldiers or as officials at Firearm Camp around the 1910 was zero. Widows and their children were supported by the banner regiments to which their husbands had been registered.

In addition to the previously discussed military, economic and political functions, the banner organization also served as grass-roots unit of the bureaucratic state, in other words, the basic unit of local administration. For example, household registration, the registration of newborn babies, and even marriage permits were managed by the heads of banner units.

#### *7.1.2 Division of Labor on Gender:*

Men, previously hunters and fishermen, became professional soldiers and officials who were not allowed to involve themselves in any sort of productive or commercial activities. Women, previously having participated in all activities either outside or inside the family, were constrained to the domestic sphere where they took care of children and did housework.

Officials enjoyed high positions and lived in ease and comfort. At the level of the soldier, those who received 3 *tael* of silver monthly were considered as middle class. For

those soldiers who could not earn enough silver and grain to support their families, it was always women, particularly middle-age women and young girls who tried to find new sources of income to help out with the family expenses. The grandfather of one of my informants was a lower-ranking soldier. The silver and grain he received was far from adequate for his family. Therefore, the grandmother of my informant shared the burden of supporting the family by selling liquor. "My grandmother was a very capable woman. She went out carrying a huge liquor jar on her back and came back to sell it to the neighbors. At the same time, she took care of the family and managed the family very well financially", boasted my informant proudly.

In the 1920's, after the fall of the Qing dynasty, a strong anti-Manchu sentiment spread over the society. At the same time, the new government was reluctant to pay out wages to bannermen. The families of bannermen, including those at Firearm Camp were facing serious financial difficulties. Bannermen were forced to seek out every possibility to keep their families alive. Unfortunately, those bannermen, the former hunters or fishermen, had no skills needed for city life.

At Firearm Camp, it was the women who, like their female ancestors, made significant contributions to subsistence under this harsh situation. Almost all bannerwomen of working age in the Camp were involved in *tiaohua* --- a kind of handicraft art similar to embroidery.

There is no accurate figure available which shows the percentage of total family income that was made up by women's handicrafts. The fact is that one hundred percent of the respondents said that they and their mothers participated in these economic activities, and according to my informants, during that time, handicrafts were the main source of income for the majority of families at Firearm Camp. Initially, mothers and daughters did that job. Later

on, elderly men and children, and even middle-age men who did not go out seeking a job also joined in *tiaohua*. The previous military camp which produced ammunition and firearms turned into a handicraft factory.

### 7.1.3 Marriage Customs:

Another remarkable change was in the folk customs of marriage and sexuality. Evidently the Manchus adopted plenty of old customs of the Hans into their marriage practice. When my informants were young, most marriages were arranged by the parents or through matchmakers. 86 % of the respondents themselves reported having an arranged marriage (see Table 6). Thus young Manchu people during that time no longer had the right of choosing their own spouses.

Table 6: 44 Cases of Marriage for Each Generation.

	respondents' mothers	respondents themselves	respondents' daughters
exchanged marriage <sup>11</sup>	1		
mercenary marriage <sup>12</sup>	1	2	
child bride	1		
arranged marriage by parents and/or match-maker	13	38	5
freedom of marriage		2	37
others	1	2	1
unknown	17		1

During the whole process of arranged marriage, some old Han customs were involved, such as exchanging information on the respective year, month, day, and hour that the bride or groom were born. This produces eight characters for each couple (two characters per time) in

<sup>11</sup> Two families exchanged daughters as daughters-in-law.

<sup>12</sup> Marrying a daughter away in order to make money.

order to determine whether or not those characters, according to custom, conflict with those of the other partner. They also exchanged information on the respective signs of the year they were born in order to make sure that their signs did not conflict. For example, there were taboos regarding the marriage between certain signs. Doggerel known to every Han Chinese, recited to a five-word rhythm, were very prevalent among the Manchus. Those jingles included, “A rooster (hen) and a monkey will not remain a devoted couple to the end of their lives”, “A golden rooster (hen) is afraid of a jade dog”; “A white stallion (mare) is afraid of a black cow (bull)”; “The marriage between a ram (ewe) and a mouse is doomed to failure” .... When asked whether these were typical Manchu proverbs, some of my informants admitted that they were imported from the Hans and some answered that they did not know.

Premarital sexual behavior was strictly forbidden. Pregnancy before marriage was not only a disgrace to the two parties concerned, spoiling their chances of being married, but also resulted in severe punishment<sup>13</sup>.

Prohibition of premarital sexuality was demonstrated through virginity testing on the day after the wedding. Testing never originated at the woman's request. Instead a bride's husband or his family typically demanded that a girl's virginity be tested. Testing in this sense was undertaken in order to assure the husband, his family and their guests that they had not

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<sup>13</sup> At the end of the Qing dynasty, the event of a girl's death spread all over the outer three camps. My informants heard that tale from their elders and later on, I found information regarding this event in Jin's book, *The Manchus in the outskirts of Beijing* (1989). A banner soldier named Liu Ge fell in love with a girl from a neighboring village. It was too late for the girl's parents to stop their love affair before the girl became pregnant. The girl's parents were so ashamed and resentful that they pushed their daughter from *Luo Guo* Bridge down to the river. With deep grief, Liu Ge bought a coffin and buried his lover, and burnt paper money, a paper horse, and a paper cart for her (this is a typical Han burying custom, too). This event was regarded by the Manchus at Firearm Camp with galling shame and humiliation. Liu Ge remained single all his life. In the 1940's, when he was over 60, he was still ostracized. People still pointed at him and showed each other, “Look, this is Liu Ge.”



been cheated in their choice of a bride. Consequently, virginity testing became an unavoidable link in the chain of marital arrangement. The custom at Firearm Camp was, according to my informants, for the husband's family to witness that a spotlessly white piece of cloth given to the new couple the evening of the wedding day would become bloodstained when examined the next morning. The bloodstained cloth was called *zhen zhang*. "*Zhen*" in Chinese means "chastity" or "virginity", and "*zhang*" is a measure word for a piece of cloth. Males were not allowed to see this *zhen zhang*. Only a female, usually the husband's mother, was responsible for examining this *zhen zhang*. The announcement of the result of the bride's virginity examination was in a symbolic way tacitly understood by everyone. On the day following the wedding, the husband's family was expected to give a banquet entertaining the guests from the bride's family. On the wall facing the door, there would be an image of the god of longevity which was used at that moment as a symbol of the girl's virginity. Upon arriving at the house of the groom's family, the first thing that the guests wanted anxiously to see was whether this image was still on the wall. If so, that conveyed the information of the reaffirmation of the bride's virginity, and the banquet would merrily proceed. If not, the guests would turn around and leave the host's house with great embarrassment, because the absence of the image was the definite indicator of the bride's loss of virginity, thus grounds for the abandonment of the bride.

The disgraced and abandoned bride, especially in a rich family, was not allowed to leave her husband's family through the door; instead she had to jump out through a window of the house.

When asked how many such cases occurred at Firearm Camp as far as they knew, informants answer was "none", for the ordinary and poor families were not able to afford to

marry another woman. However, no matter what result would occur, virginity testing could not be eliminated. My major informant told me that when she married, her husband was an orphan. The match maker acted as a representative of her husband's family at that moment. Obviously appearing to be embarrassed to test the *zhen zhang* but not wanting to eliminate this step, she hinted her insistence as a way to try to make the bride relaxed. "Tomorrow morning, come over here to give me a *qing an*,<sup>14</sup> that's all." The bride understood the implication of her words clearly. Only after being able to present a *zhen zhang*, proving to be a good girl, could she *qing an* to the match maker as a chaste woman.

Although young girls were not allowed to choose their own fiancées, even to the point of having no say at all about their own marriage, there were still cases where young girls showed their strong resistance to the marriage arranged for them either by eloping or by directly fighting their parents and match makers.

The first negotiation of marriage for my major informant was proposed by a woman match maker to her aunt --- the wife of her father's elder brother. The two intended to marry her away to a landlord in another village who was almost 20 years older than she. When she found out about it, she was very angry. She could not help rushing into the room where her aunt and the matchmaker were discussing the arrangement of this marriage in detail. A direct conflict took place. She was shouting at her aunt with a tone full of ridicule, "It's really a good idea to marry me away to such an old man. How much money can you gain through this deal?" Then she turned toward that match-maker, yelling: "Why don't you marry your treasured daughter away to that old landlord?" Her aunt was stunned by this sudden attack.

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<sup>14</sup> See note 9 on the page 72.

Consequently, she jumped up and shouted back at her with extreme fury, “You are rising in rebellion. I’ll never take care of your business and never see you any more unless I walk into Firearm Camp on my hands.” She kept her word in that she did not show up in front of her niece, not even at her wedding. But my informant was very proud of her first successful rebellion.

The results of the investigation demonstrate the strong influence of the Han culture on the Manchus at the Camp in their marital and sexual practices during the 1930’s and 40’s. The prevalence of arranged marriages, exchanging eight characters, virginity testing and punishment for premarital sex were all indications of this influence.

#### *7.1.4 Religion and Family Rituals:*

“Initially, shamanism was, of course, believed at Firearm Camp because the original rites of any religions tended to be simple so the performances of worship sacrifice and ceremony were not costly and unaffordable.” (Jin, 1981:45)

However, none of my informants remembered any performances by shamans or shamanesses given at Firearm Camp. As far as they knew, *Guan Di* had always been the God-protector who received the most respect from the dwellers at Firearm Camp.

Guan Di, or Guan Emperor, originally named Guan Yu, was one of the heroes during the Three Kingdom period (220-280). He assisted his master Liu Bei in fighting enemies in order to unify the country. He was well known for his bravery, righteousness, and especially loyalty to his master.

Originally, Firearm Camp was divided into eight residential areas corresponding to the Eight Banner organizations (See figure 4). Each banner had its own temple of Guan Di.

Imagine, within only one square kilometer of dwelling area (2 kilometers from north to south, 0.5 kilometer from east to west) there were eight temples of Guan Di constructed. And there were more. The Temple of Double Guan Di (two images of Guan were inside the temple) and the Temple of Riding Guan Di (Guan was riding on a horse) stood outside the Camp. Now there are still six temples of Guan Di remaining in the camp. According to custom, the Manchus from each banner go to the temples to burn incense and worship Guan Di on the first and the fifteenth days of each lunar month. At the New Year or other important festivals, there would be a big temple fair was held not only for the worship of Guan Di but also to commercial activities.

The Manchus are well known a variety of activities associated with ancestral worship. In the past, it was very easy to distinguish a Manchu house from a Mongolian house at Firearm Camp simply by stepping into the house. In front of the frontal wall of the central room of a Mongolian house, a Buddha image was erected. By contrast, there was a *zu-zong ban-zi* (ancestor board) on the west wall of the central room of a Manchu house. This place was set aside as the location of a small box called “*zu-zong xia-xi*” (ancestor’s box) which was the depository of the memorial tablets and images of all ancestors in the family. Originally, whenever the family offered a sacrifice to its ancestors, usually at the season of harvest, the senior person of the family, either male or female, opened the ancestral box and erected the memorial tablets as well as the images of ancestors in front of the western wall, and all members of the family, regardless of sex, lined up in rows according to their generation. The older generation went first to *kowtow* three times to the ancestors, followed by each succeeding younger generation. After that, the family shaman/shamaness began to perform in front of the

ancestors. The performer wore a special costume and a wrist bell. Meanwhile, family members withdrew to the north or south room (WCBW, 1985: 222).

The big difference between the ancient custom of ancestral worship and the one practiced at Firearm Camp during the 1920's and 1930's or later was that there was no shamanistic performance involved at all in the latter. Furthermore, all female members, especially the young girls, were forbidden to be present at the site of the ceremony.

In Firearm Camp, the cult of Guan Di --- a God originating from a Han male figure, and prohibiting female members of the family from participating in ancestral worship, reveal evidence of the degradation of the status of Manchu women.

#### *7.1.5 Heads of Households:*

Despite restrictions on women's activities outside the family, the data collected from Firearm Camp tend to show that the family was still the province of women, for women spoke first in family matters. But not all females had equal status within the family. This I shall discuss in the following section.

Almost all households in Firearm Camp were headed by women, usually the senior women, according to my informants. The result of my survey shows that 82% of the households in the generation of my respondents' mothers (a total of 36 cases in 44 responses), and 70% in the generation of the respondents themselves (31 cases in total) were headed by females, shown in the following table:

Table 7: Heads of the Households ( 44 Cases for Each Generation, Unit: Family)

	respondents' mothers		respondents themselves		respondents' daughters	
	cases	%	cases	%	cases	%
mother-in-law	27	61.4	29	65.9	1	2.3
father-in-law	2	4.5	3	6.8		
parents-in-law	1	2.3	4	9.1	1	2.3
wife	9	20.5	2	2.3	19	43.2
husband					6	13.6
couple	2	4.5	6	13.6	12	27.3
unknown	3	6.8			5	11.4
total of female	36	82	31	70.1	20	54.5
total of male	2	4.5	3	6.8	6	13.6
both sexes	3	6.8	10	22.7	13	29.5

By the heads of households, I mean that they controlled the disposal and use of the fruits of the labor done by men --- the family income.

#### *7.1.6 Stratification among Manchu Females*

The status of a daughter-in-law relative to that of the mother-in-law or sister-in-law was quite low. That was true until the end of the 1940's. The life of a woman in her husband's family was, in general, very hard. Starting from the time she married, she was treated poorly by her husband's family compared to her treatment as a daughter by her natal family. A newly married young wife was expected to respect and obey her parents-in-law, particularly the mother-in-law because her happiness in the new family depended on this relationship. She had to do routine services for her parents-in-law and was introduced to continuous housework. Every morning, she was the one who got up earliest. After her parents-in-law got up, the first thing she was expected to do was to go to see her parents-in-law and *qing an*<sup>15</sup>. Then she

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<sup>15</sup> See note 9 on the page 72.

began to wait on them by putting tobacco into the bowls of two pipes, lighting up the tobacco, and handing the pipes over to her parents-in-law with two hands. Next, she would make a cup of tea for each of them. Finally, she might return to the kitchen to fix the breakfast for the family. At the daily meal, she never ate with her parents-in-law at the same table, instead, she was obliged to stand one or two steps behind her parents-in-law who were eating at the table, in position to add dishes when necessary.

Basically the Manchus treated women very well. However wife-beating sometimes took place at Firearm Camp because for men, especially newly married husbands, not to do this was considered demeaning. It is hard to say whether wife beating was an original custom among the Manchus or one imported from other ethnic groups. Something interesting reported by Jin (1989:50) was that some young husbands, who were soldiers or lower ranking officials, could not put up with being laughed at by their neighbors for being considered as affectionate, so they had to playact a wife beating by tapping the wooden frame of the bed and letting their wives pretend to cry. From the noise produced by this couple, their neighbors would believe that the quarrel and wife beating was going on in that house. According to my informants, real wife beating was a rarity at Firearm Camp.

When a daughter-in-law reached middle-age or after she gave birth to a baby, no matter a boy or a girl, her situation would improve greatly. She could have more say in family affairs. Sometimes she could be involved in decision-making about domestic affairs, a topic which I shall treat later.

Daughters in the Manchu families enjoyed a much higher prestige than did the wives. There was no strict prohibitions for daughters in their natal families. Manchu customs

respected daughters; their positions were merely inferior to their mothers. Compared to their sisters-in-law as well as their Han counterparts, Manchu daughters (unmarried daughters in particular) had much more freedom in controlling their own indoor and outdoor activities. In traditional Han Chinese society, young girls were strictly forbidden from going out and presenting themselves on public occasions. Nevertheless, in Beijing, young Manchu girls could be seen everywhere, such as in tea houses, restaurants, and theaters. They came and went through the crowds, without any coyness. On New Year's Day or other holidays, they would dress up more beautifully than usual, attracting public attention. This custom continued on until the early twentieth century. A proverb prevailing in Beijing reflects this situation: "Roosters are not crowing, dogs are not barking, but 18-year-old girls are running all over the streets." Lu, Xun asserts that "women were not very restricted in Beijing ..... This custom might have been imported from the Manchus." (Lu, Xun 1982:256).

An adult Manchu daughter could direct and supervise her sister-in-law's behavior and work in the family. If her sister-in-law was considered to be doing something improperly, she could punish her by tapping her head heavily with the metal bowl of a tobacco pipe. The consequence of that might be a big bump on her sister-in-law's forehead. Her sister-in-law could do nothing but try to refrain from bursting into tears.

An adult Manchu daughter had a substantial say about family affairs if she wished. She was influential among and respected by the members of her own family.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> In *The Dream of Red Chamber*, Feng-jie is a granddaughter-in-law in that extended family. As the real manager of this extended family, she is the number one authority figure. She is so resourceful, intelligent, and capable, as well as wicked and merciless that she exercises her power so that nobody in her generation or below dares go against her. Even a capable man feels inferior to her. Dissatisfied with her manipulation of power, three clever and capable men (including her husband) decided to take a concerted action against her, and eventually uprooted her power thoroughly in this family. Only one person, her sister-in-law, the third daughter of the third generation in this family, Tan-chun, could show



After a Manchu daughter married away, her influence and power increased in her natal family. This phenomenon was in striking contrast to Han Chinese families, in which a married daughter was considered as “water splashed out”. She would never be involved in any decision making about the household matters of her natal family. A Manchu married daughter was regarded as an honorable guest in her natal family. When visiting her natal family, not only could she stay at her parents’ home as a guest without doing any household chores, but she also had the right to express her opinion freely about everything within the household. One of my informants told me that her aunt, her father’s younger sister, lived with her family after she was widowed. “During that period of time, nobody knew how much my mom was bullied. At every turn, my mom would be severely criticized by my aunt for a trivial things. My aunt rarely helped my mom with the housework. Her routines were chatting or playing cards with neighboring women.”

In some cases, such as the negotiation of her brother’s marriage, a married daughter would be called back home to help in negotiations or, simply to make the decision. At present, the Manchus in Fujian province still retain this custom (Wang, 1992:72). The results of my survey show that 41 % of the respondents reported that they were called back for the discussion of their brother’s marriages.

In short, results of my investigation have confirmed that during the 1920’s and 30’s at Firearm Camp, stratification among Manchu women was evident. Manchu women could be classified into three groups according to their family roles: mothers-in-law; daughters-in-law and daughters. Mothers-in-law were those who received the most respect from all members of

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contempt for her power and challenge regulations and rules that Feng-jie made. Tan-chun is the only person in this family that Feng-jie dare not to offend..

the family. Daughters were inferior to their mothers only. Daughters-in-law were at the bottom of this stratification.

The position of the first two groups was obviously far different from that of their Han counterparts, much higher than the latter. Whether the lower position of daughters-in-law was inherited from the indigenous Manchu culture is unknown, because the information on this topic in ethnohistoric documentation are too sparse and too general. My assumption is that the lower position of daughters-in-law was a mixture of Han and Manchu customs, or at least sinification worsened their situation. Comparing the routines of a daughter-in-law at the Camp to what a daughter-in-law was obliged to do in Instruction for Brides (*Xin Fu Pu*, see page 73-74), we would find much similarity between two. However, the position of daughters-in-law in their husbands' families was still much higher than their Han counterparts, particularly, when they gave a birth to the first child or reached middle-age, which I shall treat in the following section.

#### *7.1.7 Other Folk Practices:*

According to Jin's ethnography regarding the Manchus in the outskirts of Beijing during the 1920's and the 1930's, women in the Three Outer Camps basically were very competent. They could do everything related to their household affairs. They could think, speak, act and make decisions freely, although sometimes their ideas were not so wise. They had substantial knowledge, and sometimes they appeared superior to men. Whether young husbands really beat their wives or not, and no matter how much young wives were afraid of their husbands, when these wives gave birth to the first child or particularly when they reached

middle-age, all domestic affairs would be under their supervision. The older the women, the more powerful the women. Husbands would withdraw to the position of being obedient.

The Manchus have a good reputation for always being hospitable towards their guests. While serving guests with a good meal, the elderly hostess would be pouring out words in a constant flow. They tried to mention everything that had occurred since they left each after the last meal. The whole meal time was taken up by women's conversation. There was no room left for men to talk. During the meal men were expected to heat wine or serve dishes or rice for their guests. Sometimes, men did find a way to contribute to the conversation, however, they would be immediately stopped by the women: "Wait a minute." Then the men had to keep silent again. At first, Jin was surprised when he observed this phenomenon, because he had little knowledge about customs and habits in the Camp. Later on he was told that all households in the Camp were headed by women. Women knew more than did men about matters other than warring.

Another of Jin's observation was that the relatives coming and going in the Camp were mostly of the maternal side and not of the paternal side.<sup>17</sup> In traditional male-centered Han society, only relatives from the paternal side could be possibly recognized as immediate relatives of the family, whose involvement in important family activities might be accepted. Relatives from the maternal side were consistently considered as outsiders. For instance, the maternal grandfather is called *wai zu fu* (lit. outer grandfather) and maternal grandmother, *wai*

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<sup>17</sup> This custom can be verified by *The Dream of the Red Chamber* also. The majority of relatives frequently coming and going and staying at the Jia Family are those from the maternal side. All three main female characters, cousins of the central character, Jia Baoyu, come from the maternal side. Lin Daiyu came into and lived with her maternal grandmother (Jia Mu) after her mother died. Xue Baochai was brought into this family by her mother who is sister of Baoyu's mother; Shi Xiangyun is a granddaughter of Jia Mu's brother. There are many more examples I could give. In contrast, the paternal relatives from the Jia family are rarely discussed.

*zu mu* (outer grandmother) in Chinese. Nevertheless, the Manchu custom provides us the opposite picture --- the relatives from the maternal side were seen as more intimate than were the relatives from the paternal side, as in Western society to some extent. Maternal relatives were allowed to participate in important events or activities of the family, such as family rituals and grand ceremonies.

Forms of address used for women is another interesting phenomenon that tends to reflect women's equality with men. Another term at Firearm Camp for daughter is *bao bei*, meaning treasure. The husband of the mother's sister is called *yifu* in Han Chinese, meaning the husband of the aunt. At Firearm Camp, the Manchus used the term *yide*, the one who *belongs to my aunt*. It was not uncommon for the Manchus to use masculine terms to address women.

For example, the father's sister was commonly called "*gu yeye*" (*gu* means aunt and *yeye* grandfather) or "*gu baba*" (*baba* means father). After marrying, she would be called "*gu tai tai*" (aunt plus grandmother). The Empress Dowager, Ci Xi, was respectfully called "*lao fo ye*" by everybody. *Fo ye* is the masculine term for Buddha, *lao* means old, *lao fo ye* is the old Buddha.

By imitating men's behavior, some Manchu girls became sworn brothers, and these sworn brothers were called, according to their ages, the "first master" (*da ye*), the "second master" (*er ye*), the "third master" (*san ye*) and so forth. They never used feminine terms; nor did they use the term "sworn sisters". Jin's mother had several sworn sisters. Whenever his mother mentioned, "our third sworn brother", he would take it for granted that the third master of his mom must be a strong man. He had not realized this person actually was a middle aged woman until he met her for the first time during the 1930's.

Manchu girls were permitted to receive the same education as boys. They also played with boys. *Galaha* was a traditional game among Manchu children. Although it is now considered as a girl's game, previously boys and girls played *galaha* together. Typical boy games such as wrestling were also joined by girls. Jin (1989:4) reported : in Firearm Camp, "women fought just like men. They even fought men. As a daily game, women practiced wrestling too. It is said they used to wrestle men. Men kept braids and shaved their heads and faces. In Firearm Camp, I was very surprised to see women shaving their faces. Anyway there is no big difference between men and women; what men can do, women can do also."

The last, but not the least custom, worth noting is the taboos imposed upon Manchu women. In Han culture, a large portion of the taboo system, if it can be seen as a system, has to do with women --- to be more precise, with the oppression of women. A Han Chinese woman from the moment that she came to this world as a baby until her death, even after death, had to yield to a set of taboos established in social laws especially for her. This clearly placed her in a subordinate position to men. Taboos continued according to stage of the life cycle. For example, there were taboos for menstruation, for a bride, for pregnancy, for a widow etc. If a woman dared to throw off the yoke of these taboos, she would be at least ostracized by public opinion, and at most given a death penalty by her clan head.

While investigating taboos placed on women in Manchu community at Firearm Camp, I was surprised to notice that few of my informants could give me detailed information. The information with respect to taboos against women collected from my interviews shows that the extent to which Manchu women were tied by social taboos was far less than that of Han women. Some of my informants recalled taboos imposed upon pregnant women. For

example, a pregnant woman was forbidden to be on the scene of someone's house construction when the beams were going to be put, and she was not welcome at her neighbor's house where a woman had just given birth to a baby. Women in general were resented for paying a call at neighbors or friends houses during the New Year festival. Folk customs stipulated exactly how many days women should stay in their own homes during this period of time.

However, it is likely that most of the taboos informants reported are consistent with Han folk practice, even the number of days during which women were forbidden to do certain things is the same as that in the Han taboo system. There is no firm basis for claiming that one culture learned these customs from the other one, or that these identical folk practices in the two cultures are coincidental phenomena. But the greatest likelihood is that the Manchus adopted those taboos from the Han Chinese.

## **7.2 After 1949**

According to my observation and investigation, currently, anyone entering Firearm Camp with an attempt to trace Manchu traditions or find the typical Manchu life, would disappointedly discover that it appears to be a Han community, not only because of the changes in the composition of residence, but also because of the changes in the Manchus themselves. The Manchu dwellers at Firearm Camp tend to have been sinicized. No one can speak Manchu, except for a few old people who can name a limited number of objects, kinship terms, or official titles in Manchu. The last person at Firearm Camp who could speak Manchu fluently died sixty years ago. My informants could still remember his name. No one wears the traditional Manchu costume (see figure 6.), and no family lives in a traditional Manchu house.

Bannermen



Middle-age Manchu women



Elderly Manchu women

Figure 5: The Traditional Manchu Costume Source: Jin, 1989

The only indicator of non-Han ethnic consciousness is the continuous use of the names of the Eight Banners as names of the different groups within a neighborhood committee.

Now let us examine the further changes that took place after 1949.

### *7.2.1 Composition of Residence*

The Manchus make up only twenty percent of the total population at Firearm Camp, compared to more than ninety percent at the end of the Qing Dynasty and fifty percent during the 1950's. See Table 8 and Table 9 below:

Table 8. Changes in Population at Firearm Camp

time period	total population	households of Manchus & Mongols	Population of Manchus & Mongols	percentage of Manchus in total population
1912	15,000	N/A.	N/A.	90 %
1950	N/A.	341	1,268	50 %
present	3,181	343	750	23.5 %

Table 9: Composition of Residences at Firearm Camp

	population	percentage of total population	households	percentage of total households
total	3,181	100 %	963	100 %
Han	2,331	73.2 %	587	60.9 %
Manchu	654	20.6 %	297	30.8 %
Mongol	96	3 %	46	4.8 %
Hui	95	2.98 %	32	3.3 %
Zhuang	4	0.1 %	1	0.1 %

(Figures in Table 8 and 9 were provided by the head of the second neighborhood committee, Mrs. Guan.)

Several events were responsible for the dramatic drop in the total population from 1912 to the present and the remarkable change in composition of residences at Firearm Camp. First, the nation-wide anti-Manchu sentiment mentioned above resulted in a big exodus of the



Manchus from Beijing, which of course included Firearm Camp. Manchus sought survival in other provinces. Second, during the time when Beijing was occupied by the Japanese, the northern part of Firearm Camp, the bordered yellow and plain white, was forcibly demolished by the Japanese for the construction of living quarters for Japanese soldiers and officials at the airport on the western outskirts of the city. As a result, the residential area shrank. Third, after 1920, while banner families at the Camp were running for their lives, one after another, the vacant houses and available fields were taken over by oncoming Han families.

### *7.2.2 Social Organization and Manchu Identity:*

The banner organization has died out, except for the name of Outer Firearm Camp and the names of six of the eight banners, which are continuously used to designate residential areas within the Camp. At present, if two people in the Camp who know little about one another meet somewhere and like to introduce one another, the conversation might go like this after they exchanged the information of their names and occupations:

Where do you live?

At Outer Firearm Camp.

Which part?

The Plain Blue Banner.

Well, you live at the southeastern corner of the Camp.

Superficially, the only remnant of the Eight Banner system left to the descendants of the Manchus is the geographical names. Psychologically, this is still very important for the ethnic identification of the Manchus. Although the banner system as a social institution has vanished, the existence of banner names at Firearm Camp have made it feasible to switch the practical and physical banner organization into a symbolic banner under which the assimilated Manchus still remain eager to identify themselves as Manchu. Although some of them had to

hide their real identification and pretend to be Han under the social pressure of anti-Manchu sentiment; that remain proud of their ethnicity. In the words of my informants, “The names of the Eight Banners always remind us that we are Manchu, not the Han.”

One of the questions in my questionnaire was: “Some people say: ‘ the Manchu as an ethnic group has disappeared.’” Under this statement, four choices were given: strongly agree; agree; disagree; strongly disagree. One hundred percent of the respondents (no blanks left) chose “strongly disagree”. This is one of the only two questions where the answer was completely unanimous.

Most respondents could remember their original banners. Among 44 respondents, 36 were Manchu banners, four were Mongol banners, two Han banners, and two left this question blank. My informants told many sad stories of how discrimination and oppression after the fall of the Qing Dynasty brought misery to the Manchus, and how the Manchus tried to conceal their real ethnic identity by pretending to be Hans. “Now, it is time for us to speak out. We used to be Manchus; we are still Manchus. We are not Han.” said my informants. A dramatic fluctuation in numbers of the Manchu population counted in Beijing is evident --- 600,000 in 1910; 71,153 in 1953; and 164,680 in 1990. In China, there were 4,304,981 Manchus in 1982 and 9,821,180 in 1990. This is evident that the Manchus have altered their ethnic identity to suit to political climate.

### *7.2.3 The Economic Activities of Women*

Currently, it is hard to distinguish between Han Chinese women and Manchu women in economic activities at Outer Firearm Camp, in Beijing or in the country as a whole.

Among the 297 Manchu households in Firearm Camp, 110 hold the household registration of rural dwellers, and 187 are households registered as city dwellers. People registered as rural dwellers are prohibited from working at state-run units as permanent employees. Able-bodied women in these households basically participate in farming and vegetable growing and selling the fruits of their labor at the free markets of the city. Ninety percent of the women aged between 18 and 55 and registered as city dwellers work as permanent employees in various state-run units. Their opportunities for employment are similar to these of Han women, with somewhat fewer than opportunities available for men.

Elderly women in both kinds of families take the responsibility for housekeeping and caring for grandchildren in order to lighten the burden of their daughters or daughter-in-law who work eight hours per day outside their families. When I was interviewing my informants, several times I had to stop midway into the conversation to allow my informants to prepare meals for their grandchildren who would come back from school soon.

Again Manchu women have become significant contributors to their family income. The fluctuation of Manchu women's economic roles --- first as significant contributors in their tribal society, later as housewives only and once again as significant contributors in the current society --- illustrates the evolution of the Manchu culture: nomadic tribal society, gender-biased bureaucratized Manchu Empire and assimilated minority nationality in modern Han society.

#### *7.2.4 Marriage*

Two big changes have taken place in folk marital behaviors.

First, interethnic marriage now is not uncommon at Outer Firearm Camp. Among the 186 households of Manchus governed by the second neighborhood committee which contains

the Bordered Blue, the Plain Blue and the Bordered White banners, there are 105 cases of interethnic marriages, 56.4% of a total of 186 marriages. Most intermarriage have occurred between the Hans and the Manchus, fewer between the Manchus and Mongols. There is no single pure-blooded Manchu family found at Firearm Camp in which all members among the last four generations come from the Manchus (figures and information were provided by the head of the second neighborhood committee, Mrs. Guan). Interethnic marriage is another factor contributing to the sharp drop of the Manchu population from 1950 to present at Firearm Camp (see Table 8). Most of the children of interethnic marriages have claimed identity as Hans or other nationalities.

Second, the freedom to choose spouses is the dominant form of marriage among the younger generations. The figures in Table 6 (see page 91) suggest that during the marriageable years for the first two generations, arranged marriage was the dominant form. From the time of respondents marriages to the time of their daughters marriages, freedom to choose their husbands has increased dramatically.

#### *7.2.5 Social Attitudes toward Women*

Manchu women are still regarded as capable, particularly in the domestic sphere. Daughters' rights and privileges in their natal families seem to be irrevocable. A prevailing Manchu folk saying goes: “*Gu nai nai, re bu qi.*” (Daughters are not persons to be trifled with.)

The position of daughter-in-law has been improved greatly, much of which has to do with the emergence of more and more nuclear families. As a result, most daughters-in-law do not have to live under the same roof with their parents-in-law.

Empress Dowager, Ci Xi (1835 - 1908) --- one of the most notorious rulers in Chinese history --- has been consistently criticized by Chinese historians. All comments about her are completely negative. The Manchus at Firearm Camp nevertheless hold a completely opposite view toward Empress Dowager Ci Xi.

In a male-centered Han Chinese society, “*chui-lian-ting-zheng*” (attending to the business of government behind a lowered screen) is seen not only as a woman challenging men’s superiority by interfering with state affairs. but also as an ill omen. “The hen is crowing,” goes a Han Chinese folk saying.

In Manchu eyes, female leadership is not something wrong. They believe that if women can lead the country, then let them do it. Since many households in Firearm Camp were headed by females, Empress Dowager could lead the big family --- the country. My major informant said that it is not fair to judge a ruler’s performances completely negative. Ci Xi ruled the country for almost fifty years. It is unimaginable that everything she did in these fifty years was evil. There are two sides to everything, just like a coin. This is consistent with a well-known Marxist point of view. Chinese historians should agree with this point if they claim themselves as Marxists. They should use the same standards by which they judge other emperors’ performances in China’s history.

After talking with informants, I realized that the Manchus love and respect Ci Xi, who, in their eyes was very capable, even equivalent to Kang Xi and Qian Long, the two most famous and respected emperors of the Qing era. I also found a similar account in Jin’s ethnography (1989:53).

In summary, the results of my investigation covering the course of three generations reveal a pattern of a mixture of Han and Manchu culture. This pattern is characterized as cultural assimilation and cultural maintenance simultaneously, or partially convergent evolution and partially divergent evolution. On the one hand, the influence of the Han culture seems to penetrate a number of areas of Manchu life, especially in gender roles, and folk customs related to marriage and sexuality. On the other hand, some aspects of the Manchu culture are deeply rooted in folk practices and still survive. In examining gender relations, several characteristics of this mixed culture at Firearm Camp can be summarized as follows: (1) There is a resurgence of women's economic roles outside the family. These roles were rejected by the Manchu state and by mainstream society after the fall of the Qing Dynasty, but again have been acknowledged and encouraged by the Communist Chinese government. Even though women were classified as dependents at the time of setting up of the Eight Banner organizations, when necessary, women at the Camp still would actively contribute to their family income resources. (2) The prominent roles that women played in religion in their remote indigenous societies has vanished. Female objects of worship were replaced by a male Han God, and females were excluded from participation in family rituals. (3) Women were subjected to adopted social norms in their marital and sexual practices such as the virginity test and the punishment of premarital sexuality. (4) Family seems to be an irrevocable domain of women, even under the circumstances where women are greatly devalued. This appears to be an indicator that "Some social values and structure (e.g., the family) are very resistant to change" (Devine, 1972:293). (5) The stratification among females still exists. Mothers-in-law are at the top of the pyramid; daughters are powerful and influential immediately inferior to their mothers, and daughters-in-

law are at the bottom of the pyramid. (6) The conspicuous changes in Manchu women's lives at Firearm Camp after 1949 parallel those experienced by the majority of Chinese woman in China, particularly in their economic roles. (7) A strong sense of ethnic identity still preoccupies the minds of the Manchus at the Camp. This is one of the indicators of the survival of the Manchu culture.

## CHAPTER 8.           DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The roles of women in Manchu society at different times have been reviewed, and the case of Outer Firearm Camp has also been discussed. Based on the preceding chapters. I will attempt to analyze the relationship between social change, state roles and women's social status in the context of cultural adaptation.

The primary principle of cultural adaptation deals with the relationship of human behavior to the environment, and human behavior can be examined at the level of either an individual or a group. In terms of discussing the evolution of a given culture, we should do it based on the latter, that is , adaptation is a "process of adjustment" to the environment with reference to group behavior, not individual behavior. Human behavior can be usefully seen as a system, and must be examined in the context of culture. Adaptive adjustment is the adjustment of a social system to its environment. The interaction between a social system and its environment can generally be described as follows: In the process of adaptation (or adjustment), a given culture as a system deals with stimuli from its environment. If stimuli are not too strong, the system simply ignores them. In this case, this cultural system maintains its functions and values (or maintains homeostasis). If stimuli are strong, the first response of the system is to resist them or try to shape them into its own framework. However if stimuli are so great that the system is not able to ignore, resist or shape them, social change in the system occurs.

A social system consists of numerous aspects which can be termed subsystems. When social change occurs, it does not change the system as a whole; instead, one or



more aspect of society are in the process of being modified, altered or reformed, which in turn affect and result in changes in other aspects of society.

Changes in Manchu women's social status can be understood in this theoretic framework. The evolution of the Manchu culture can be divided into five sequential stages: (1) A tribal indigenous society with few influences from the outside world; (2) A changing society under the pressures brought in the conquest of China; (3) A hierarchical state under pressure to consolidate minority rule over the majority; (4) A breakdown in society caused by overthrow of the state; (5) A minority group in the Han-dominated society. The situation of Manchu women has been altered in various ways in these five stages.

(1) A tribal indigenous society with few influences from the outside world.

In this stage, the Manchus were a relatively isolated and conservative tribal society. Women in this society had equality with men because they had similar authority in decision-making and similar autonomy in controlling their own lives. They enjoyed much higher prestige and greater freedom than did Han women during the same time period and more than sinicized Manchu women afterwards. Their autonomy and authority was based on an equal contribution to subsistence and equal participation in social activities. Women contributed heavily to their daily food supply by gathering , fishing, hunting etc., and performing food preservation tasks and trade as they saw fit.

Hunting and warring have been universally considered as domains of men. But indigenous Manchu culture has provided us a different picture where women were very active in these areas. They went hunting with men for acquisition of food supply, for

training in hunting skills, and even sometimes for entertainment. Whenever needed, women would pick up weapons and enter a war with men. In fact, indigenous Manchu culture had a tradition of cultivating young girls to be hunters and warriors.

The prominent role of women in shamanism may have also affected folk attitudes toward women, consequently enhancing respect for women.

During the period between the mid-16th and mid-17th centuries, Manchu men were heavily involved in war for either tribal unification or the conquest of China. War for many years running drove males to fight north and south and left most females home (except for those females who took part in war directly) to take care of everything. Under these circumstances, women were fully independent from men. They had to play various roles --- producers, reproducers, traders, educators, diplomats and decision-makers. In short, they had to take on responsibilities of both men and women as we understand them in the present society.

The above reasons explain the lack of clear differentiation of gender roles and no stratification based on gender in traditional Manchu society.

(2) A changing society under the pressures brought in the conquest of China.

The deterioration of the Ming Dynasty strongly encouraged the imperial ambition of Manchu leaders to take over the whole of China. The founding father of the Manchu Empire, Nurhachi, realized that the tribal clan system of the traditional Manchu society was not suitable for overthrowing a long established Han power. The response that Manchu rulers made to this environmental stimulus was to undertake social reform by establishing a central social institution, the Banner system under which all members of the

society were reorganized and all crucial social relationships were reshaped. The Banner system proved to be a successful adaptive strategy, because it became the foundation for the Manchu's conquest of China and later the bureaucratized Manchu Empire.

This social change resulted in what Devine termed "intracultural stress", the stress arising when an environmental stimulus causes a conflict between two component values within the culture. Support for the Banner system threatened the social position of women, and support for women's interests was lowered to accommodate the central social institution.

The institutionalization of the Eight Banner System directly destroyed the prestige and the rights that Manchu women possessed in indigenous society by subordinating, and thus replacing the clan system in which feminine rights had been guaranteed, and by redefining gender roles and creating separate roles for husband and wife. Under the Banner system, for the first time in Manchu history men legally became breadwinners and women became dependents. The social domain was clearly divided into two spheres --- the public sphere (outside the family) and domestic sphere (inside the family); the former was the province of men, the latter of women.

(3) The hierarchical state under the pressure to consolidate minority rule over the majority.

After the conquest of China, the strongest environmental stress that the Manchus had ever encountered came from the pressure of a highly developed Han Chinese culture, which, as a system, was potentially strong enough to defeat the minority conquerors and terminate their rule.

Systematic sinification was the only adaptive strategy open to the Manchu rulers, even though they were reluctant to subordinate Manchu tribal interests and institutions. Without sinification they realized they would face the same destiny as the previous Mongol dynasty.

Manchu women had to undergo further decline in their social position. In fact, the dramatic relegation of Manchu women to inferior status resulted from two different but mutually related sources: an unconscious assimilating process under the strong influence of Han culture where the respect for women, and favorable treatment towards females was absent; and conscious strivings by state policies to regulate and marginalize women through means of political, legal and ideological control.

The state campaigns of a systematic sinification resulted in further deterioration in the situation of Manchu women. The double-edged sword that the Manchu rulers wielded --- legitimization of male-dominance and moral education for women laid a solid foundation for bureaucratizing Manchu society and for the consolidation of the established bureaucratic system of China.

(4) A breakdown in society caused by the overthrow of the state.

The fall of the Qing Dynasty was the end of the Manchu social and political system. It was dismantled as a result of the revolution in 1911, but this does not necessarily mean that the Manchu cultural system was entirely broken).

Revolution is the strongest environmental stress aimed at overthrowing an existing state of homeostasis. The Qing social system under this stress was doomed. Women again

were victimized to the greatest degree without the protection of the social system to which they were previously integrated.

(5) A minority group in the Han-dominated society.

From the fall of the Qing Empire to the present, the transmission of power from the conquerors to the conquered made the Manchus a population unwanted and rejected by a society where a strong sense of anti-Manchuism existed. After 1949, the Manchus were made one of 55 official minority nationalities by the state, and their situation, compared to days of anti-Manchuism, has been improved substantially thanks to the policy by the state of considering all ethnic groups as equal.

After a long period of sinification which is still in process, the Manchus seem to be no different from the Han people. Consequently, Manchu women have been treated as Han women, just as all minority nationalities have been integrated into the Han-dominant society politically and socially. Therefore the discussion of the situation of Manchu women after 1949 cannot be isolated ethnically from the social environment of the Han-dominated society. In other words, the changes in the social status of Manchu women are concomitant with the changes in the social status of all women in China. At present, the identity of the Manchus primarily seems to have symbolic meaning.

However, when examining the changes in the situation of Manchu women in the context of adaptation, the results of my investigation at Outer Firearm Camp reveal that Manchu culture is not completely extinguished. The pattern of a mixture of Han and Manchu culture suggests that the Manchus as an ethnic group have been assimilated by the Han culture on a grand scale. and that the family remains the domain of women within

which the old tradition of respect for women almost unchanged. The latter phenomenon suggests that Manchu culture survives, at least in the domestic sphere. On Firth's theory of structure and organization (1955), he defines "structure" as the relatively slow-to-change anticipations that are called values, norms, or expectations of the behavior of others. "Organization" refers to the more quickly changing behaviors designed to attain immediate ends or to cope with shifting temporal circumstances. Compared to other social elements: say, politics, economy, religion etc., the cultural value system, like elements of inertia, tends to be more stable and conservative as social change is in process.

The value system contributes to the maintenance of cultural behavior as well as social norms. In the Manchu case, we see how the tradition of respecting women has been preserved. On the other hand, it serves unconsciously to protect Manchu culture when an external threat approaches. When the government tried to reshape Manchu folk ideas by implanting Confucianism, which appeared to conflict with the traditional concept of respecting women, folk custom began to play a role of protector resisting this stimulus and maintaining traditional social values. Under this systematic cultural protection, Manchu women, and girls in particular, could continue to enjoy same freedom and privilege within the family. Second, the strong sense of ethnic identity among the Manchus at Firearm Camp is another indicator that the Manchu culture has not died out. Historically, Manchus were a romantic nationality. They sprang up abruptly on the back of horses between "the white mountains and black waters", conquered the majority of China as suddenly as lightning, and successfully ruled the country for more than two-and-a-half centuries. Unfortunately, under the pressure of anti-Manchu sentiment early in this century, they

went through unimaginable suffering and humiliation which forced innumerable Manchus to conceal their real ethnic identity and pretend to be the Hans. A dramatic rise and fall and rise again in numbers of the Manchu population in Beijing tells us that the Manchus have claimed and now reclaim their Manchu identity, based on both their glorious history of conquering and ruling and their nightmare of national oppression.

Language, religion, social organization and particularly horsemanship and archery which had long been seen as the grounds for Manchu ethnic identity have vanished. But some old customs, indigenous ideas and values survive, and continue to serve as the grounds for the Manchu ethnicity. Among values the Manchus have treasured, one point should not be ignored: that respect for women was and is a part of Manchu society and that it will continue as long as culture survives.

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## **APPENDICES**

## Appendix A Eras of Qing Reign

	<i>Temple Name</i>	<i>Reign Title</i>
1636 --- 1643	Taizong Wen huangdi	Chongde
1644 --- 1661	Shizu Zhang huangdi	Shunzhi
1662 --- 1722	Shengzu Ren huangdi	Kangxi
1723 --- 1735	Shizong Xian huangdi	Yongzheng
1736 --- 1795	Gaozong Chun huangdi	Qianlong
1796 --- 1820	Renzong Rui huangdi	Jiaqing
1821 --- 1850	Xuanzong Cheng huangdi	Daoguang
1851 --- 1861	Wenzong Xian huangdi	Xianfeng
1862 --- 1874	Muzong Yi huangdi	Tongzhi
1875 --- 1907	Dezong Jing huangdi	Guangxu
1908 --- 1911		Xuantong



## Appendix B

## Major Events in Manchu History

Time period	Name	Event	Active area(s)
Before the Qin Dynasty (Before 221 BC)	Su-shen		Upper reaches of Mudan & Songhua Rivers; Heilongjiang River; Changbaishan
Han Dynasty (206 BC -- 220)	I-lou		Upper reach of Songhua River
Northern & Southern Dynasties (420 --- 581)	Wu-ji		Lalin River
Sui & Tang Dynasties (581 --- 907)	Mo-ho	Divided into 7 sections	Heilongjiang & Wusuli Rivers
698	Zha-rong, the chief of Mosu tribe	King of Zhen State	
713		Bohai State founded	The whole of Jilin; half of Liaoning; Part of Korea; Part of Russia.
Five Dynasties (907 -- 960)	Jurchen (Nuzhen)		Kaiyuan
1115	A-gu-da, Chief of Wanyan Tribe	Jin Dynasty	Capital: Acheng
1125		Jin defeated Liao Dynasty(916-1125)	
1127		Jin wiped out the Northern Song	
1153		Jin Entered Beijing	Capital: Beijing
1234		Mongols swept away Jin	
Ming Dynasty (1368 -- 1644)	Jurchen	(1) Jianzhou Jurchen (2) Haixi Jurchen (3) Yeren Jurchen	(1) Changbaishan, Yalu & Tumen Rivers; (2) Songhua; (3) Wusuli & Heilongjiang Rivers
1583	Nurhachi	Began to unify 40-odd sections of Jurchen	
1616	Nurhachi	Great Jin (Later Jin)	Capital: Hetuala
1621		Change of Capital	Liaoyang

1625		Change of Capital	Shenyang
1635	Huangtaiji	Changed the name of Jurchen to Manchou	
1636	Huangtaiji	Claimed Great Qing	
1644	Dorgon & Fulin	Entered Beijing	Capital: Beijing
1911		Fall of the Qing Dynasty	

## Appendix C

## Major Questions for the Intensive Interview

1. How long have you lived at this camp?
2. To which Banner did your family belong?
3. Do your mind telling me something about your family? How many people in your family now (when you were a child)?
4. What did (does) your family live on when you were a child? What did your father (grand-father) and your mother (grand-mother) do?
5. Did your mother (you) participate in *tiao-hua* for your family income? How often did she (you) do it and how much did she (you) make by doing so?
6. Did women (men) at the camp do something else besides *tiao-hua* when you were a child? Could you describe their job?
7. Do you mind telling me the whole process of your (your mother's, your daughter's if possible) marriage? How did you (they) get to know your (their) husband(s)? Who else was (were) involved in your (their) marriage arrangement? What were their roles?
8. Did (do) you (your mother, your daughter) live with your (her) parents-in-law? What was (is) life like as a daughter-in-law? Could you describe your daily routine?
9. Who took (takes) care of your household chores?
10. Could (can) a wife divorce her husband? Under what condition could (can) she do it? Could you give me some examples?
11. Were (are) widows allowed to remarry? Were (are) there any cases at the camp?
12. Were (are) there any case of girls getting pregnant before marriage? If so, what would happen to her?
13. Have you ever heard of *hala-mukun* (the clan) and/or *mukunda* (head of a clan)? What did a *mukunda* do basically?

14. If a women suffered from ill-treatment by someone in her husband's family, who (or which group or organization) would support and protect her? Could you give me some examples at the camp?
15. What did the head of the Banner routinely do?
16. Are (were) there any rituals going on in your family? Could you describe the process of these rituals and activities, roles of family members in these rituals?
17. Were there any Banner women at your camp being claimed as a chaste woman under the *jing-biao* reward system? If so, could you tell me her (their) stories?
18. Who was (is) the most powerful and influential person in your family?
19. Who was (is) the head of your (your mother's, you daughter's) household (*dang jia*)?
20. Who controlled money in your (your mother's, your daughter's) family?
21. Who made (makes) decisions for important events or matters in your (your mother's or your daughter's) family, such as decision in numbers of children you (they) intended to have; children's education; children's marriage; support of elder generation; purchase of valuable appliances.
22. After an adult died, what happened (would happen) to his (her) property? Did(do) female (daughters, daughters-in-law, wives, mothers) have any right to inherit the property?
23. Could you tell me something about your (your brother's) education?
24. Could you tell me something about your (your brother's, your daughter's, son's) entertainment? What were your (their) favorite games?
25. Could someone in your family speak, read in Manchu?
26. What were women not supposed to do in their daily lives?
27. What were women not supposed to do during special days or time periods, such as wedding, pregnancy, birthday or birth-month, divorce, widowed, funeral.

## Appendix D    Questionnaires and Results of the Survey

### I. Personal data:

1. Age group:
 

A) above 70:	11	B) 60-70:	18
C) 50-60:	8	D) below 50:	5
E) blank:	2		
  
2. Ethnic background:
 

A) Manchu Banner:	36
B) Han Banner:	2
C) Mongol Banner:	4
D) blank:	2
  
3. Approximate time period when your family moved into the Camp:
 

A) From the beginning when the Camp was established:	11
B) at the end of the Qing Dynasty:	18
C) around 1920's or 1930's:	7
D) after 1949:	1
E) unknown:	3
F) blank:	4
  
4. Education:
 

A) university:	0	B) high school:	0
C) middle school:	2	D) elementary school:	11
E) below D:	19	F) blank:	12

### II. Folk Practice Inventory:

5. There was (were) a female(s) ancestor(s) in my family who could ride horses and shoot.
 

A) Yes: 1	B) No: 17	C) Unknown: 22	D) blank: 4
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6. There was a case(s) in my family of a female member(s) practicing food-binding.
 

A) Yes: 4	B) No: 31	C) Unknown: 4	D) blank: 5
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7. Wife-beating used to be one of the Manchu's folk practices.
 

A) Yes: 18	B) No: 17	C) Unknown: 6	D) blank: 3
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8. According to Manchu's customs a wife was not allowed to have a meal with her husband and/or male seniors at a same table.
 

A) Yes: 31	B) No: 2	C) unknown: 5	D) blank: 6
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9. Adult daughters had a right to make decisions about important family affairs.
 

A) Yes: 28	B) No: 11	C) Unknown: 5	D) blank: 0
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10. \_\_\_\_\_ (person) finally decided my marriage.

- A) Father: 4 B) Mother: 9 C) Parents: 9 D) myself: 2  
E) My sister: 4 F) Others: 10 G) Unknown: 1 H) Blank:

11. I was called back home for consultation about my siblings marriage.

- A) Yes: 18 B) No: 24 C) blank: 2

12. What kind of marriage did you (your mother, your daughter) have?

	respondents' mothers	respondents themselves	respondents' daughters
exchanged marriage	1		
mercenary marriage	1	2	
child bride	1		
arranged marriage by parents and/or match-makers	13	38	5
freedom of marriage		2	37
others	1	2	1
unknown	17		1

13. Both my mother and my self did *tiao-hua* for the family income before 1949.

- A) Yes: 44 B) No: 0 C) Unknown: 0 D) blank: 0

14. \_\_\_\_\_ (person) was (is) the head of the household. (unit: a family)

	respondents' mothers	respondents themselves	respondents' daughters
mother-in-law	27	29	1
father-in-law	2	3	
parents-in-law	1	4	1
wife	9	2	19
husband			6
couple	2	6	12
unknown	3		5
total of female	36	31	20
total of male	2	3	6
both sexes	3	10	13

15. According to old Manchu custom, a wife could divorce her husband.

- A) Yes: 21 B) No: 13 C) Unknown: 7 D) blank: 3

16. According to old Manchu custom, a divorced wife or a widow was allowed to remarry.

- A) Yes: 28 B) No: 9 C) Unknown: 2 D) blank: 5

17. According to old Manchu custom, a female had the right to inherit property from her parents or her husband, or her son.

A) Yes: 13    B) No: 11    C) Unknown: 18    D) blank: 2

18. Women could participate in family rituals.

A) Yes: 17    B) No: 21    C) Unknown: 6    D) blank: 0

### III. Social Opinion Inventory:

19. Some people say: "The Manchus as an ethnic group has disappeared." Do you agree?

A) Strongly agree: 0    B) Agree: 0  
C) Disagree: 0    D) Strongly disagree: 44

20. It's lucky to be born a Han Chinese.

A) True: 20    B) False: 19    C) Unknown: 1    D) Blank: 4

21. A baby boy is more precious than a baby girl.

A) True: 32    B) False: 6    C) Unknown: 0    D) Blank: 6

22. I would have more pride and dignity if I were a man than I would as a woman>

A) True: 37    B) False: 2    C) Unknown: 3    D) Blank: 2

23. A woman's place is in the home.

A) True: 17    B) False: 21    C) Unknown: 5    D) Blank: 1

24. The best thing for the Manchus in China to do is to associate more with the Han Chinese, adopt the Chinese culture, and identify themselves as Han Chinese.

A) Strongly agree: 3    B) Agree: 6    C) Disagree: 4  
D) Strongly disagree: 28    E) Blank: 3

25. If only Manchu were strong, then the Manchus wouldn't have to swallow humiliations and be ashamed to claim that they are Manchu.

A) Strongly agree: 39    B) Agree: 1    C) Disagree: 0  
D) Sternly disagree: 0    E) Blank: 4