1. A Manchu Warrior

1 See Spence (1990: 27) and Crossley (1997: 207). About 150 families were organized into a company unit known as “arrow.” Arrow units were combined into groups of about 50 to form regiments, with five regiments to the “banner.” Nurhaci incorporated conquered or surrendered tribal groups into his own arrow-banner supra-tribal army of the hereditary military class. See also Barfield (1989: 253).

Nowadays in the People’s Republic of China, each province is divided into counties (xian) and townships (xiang). In the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region, however, counties are still called banners (qi) and townships arrows (sumu).


Return of the Manchurian Tigers: The Ruzhen Qing Dynasty

THE MING CONQUERED BY THE MANCHU QING

Wontack Hong
Professor, Seoul University

REFINING THE TRADITIONAL DUAL SYSTEM

Nurhaci (1559-1626) organized his troops and their families into different groups of “banners.” He created four banners in 1601, each of a different color (either yellow, white, blue or red), and appointed four of his kinsmen the lords of these banners. Each of the four banners was split into two in 1616 (the year Nurhaci declared himself the Kahn of the Later Jin), one being the plain banner and the other being bordered. The banners served as identification devices in battle, and membership in a given banner was used as the basis for population registration in daily life.

Nurhaci also refined the traditional dual system (of the Former Yan, Norther Wei, Liao, Jin and Yuan) with a miniature civil administration in imitation of the Ming government. Educated Chinese who surrendered were offered a chance to serve in the rapidly expanding Ruzhen bureaucracy. Senior Chinese officials who came over to Nurhaci’s side were offered marriage into his family, honorific titles, and high office. The Chinese administrators handled administrative tasks of governing the Liao River basin, without interfering in the military activities of tribal banners.

SA-DAE (SERVE THE GREATER) STRATEGY OF THE CHOSUN

In the Korean peninsula, King Seon-jo (1567-1608) of Chosun was succeeded by Kwang-hae-gun (1608-23) whose skillful foreign policy kept the Korean peninsula from being drawn into the conflict between the Ruzhen and the Ming. In
the midst of his endeavor to enhance the Chosun's state of military preparedness (by repairing defensive strongpoints, renovating weaponry, and instituting training programs), Kwang-hae-gun was removed from the throne and succeeded by King In-jo. In-jo (1623-49) switched to a pro-Ming and anti-Ruzhen policy. Lee (1984: 215) notes: “The Manchus now came to feel it necessary to eliminate the threat to their rear posed by Korea … before proceeding with their campaign against Ming.”

Nurhaci’s eighth son, Hong Taiji (Tai-zong, 1627-43), was helped to power by Chinese advisers. In 1635, all of the Inner Mongolian tribes were incorporated into the Manchu state. Expeditions to the north also brought the wild Ruzhen tribes along the Amur River under control. Hong Taiji officially renamed the Ruzhens the Manchus in 1635, declared himself emperor of the Qing in 1636.

Hong Taiji had invaded Chosun in 1627 with a 30,000 man army, but withdrew his army in exchange for a Chosun’s pledge to do honor to Later Jin as would a younger to an older brother. In 1936, he demanded a suzerain-subject relationship. When the Chosun court refused to do so, Hong Taiji himself led an army of 100,000 men (consisting of the Manchu, Mongol and Chinese soldiers) and invaded Chosun. King In-jo surrendered in 1637, and vowed to sever his ties with the Ming dynasty, to pay homage to the Qing court, and to dispatch troops to assist the Manchu campaign against Ming, delivering his two sons as hostages.

The Qing invasion was of short duration, but the northwest region through which the Manchus had passed was ravaged. When the Koreans maintained an adroit Sa-dae (Serve the Greater) strategy, yielding to the Stronger, be it the Qidans, the Ruzhens, the Mongols or the Han Chinese, the Korean dynasty could maintain its independent nationhood free from the ravages of warfare. When the Koreans stood up against the Stronger, they suffered a wholesale destruction until they, voluntarily or involuntarily, changed their stance. A Manchurian force, in particular, could not leave the threat to their rear posed by the Koreans before proceeding with their campaign against mainland China.
According to Barfield (1989: 6), the Mongol “banner princes were set apart from ordinary tribesmen who were not permitted to leave the boundaries of their districts.” According to Jagchid and Symons (1989: 21), the Qing rulers implemented a quasi-feudal system of rewarding Mongol leaders with rank and territorial domains based on their nobility, prestige, and how well they might serve Qing causes. Manchu policy fragmented the steppe by carefully delineating land holdings. As boundaries became demarcated, the mobility of the nomads, which had always been a key to their power, was impeded. The Mongol leaders became to seek greater influence and rewards from the Qing court.

According to Jagchid and Symons (1989: 21), “as the Manchus consolidated their rule over China, they were highly dependent upon Mongol auxiliaries to supplement their military forces.” Purdue (2005: 126) notes that “the successful incorporation of the Eastern and Southern Mongols during the early conquest period provided a substantial fund of experience that the Manchus could use when they confronted the more isolated, hostile, and autonomous Mongolian tribes farther west.”

Mobilizing the Han Chinese who had settled around the Liao River basin, Hong Taiji established two full Chinese banners in 1637, increasing the number to four in 1639, and then to eight in 1642, just in time for the conquest of China that began two years later. The Han Chinese knew how to cast and use cannon and were practiced with muskets. After Han Wu-di had conquered Old Chosun in 108 BC, a large number of Han Chinese came to settle in the fertile Liao basin area. The descendants of these original settlers joined the Qing military organization and came to constitute the core of the Chinese Eight Banners, enabling the Ruzhens’ sense of a shared identity with their Mongol allies was based on the broad similarities in their cultures.

Elliot (2001: 77) notes: “their attitude and policy toward the Mongols was much more friendly … the Manchus enlisted them as active supporters and friends.” According to Purdue (2005: 124), “intermarriage with Mongolian noble families further cemented alliance between the two peoples. … From 1612 to 1615 Nurhaci and his sons together married six Mongolian women. … Hong Taiji expanded the marriage alliance policy, marrying twelve of his daughters to Mongolian chieftains.”

The Manchus enlisted the Mongols as a junior partner in conquering the mainland China and maintaining the empire. Hong Taiji established a parallel structure of eight Mongol banners in 1635. All the Mongols along the frontier, from Manchuria to Gansu, were incorporated into the banner system. The descendants of Chinggis Khan received positions of rank in the Qing administration commanding their own tribal people. The Qing rulers effectively divided and immobilized the Mongols by organizing them under separate leagues with assigned pasturage. The Qing dynasty depended heavily on Mongol troops to defend its Inner Asian frontier.

**THE EIGHT BANNERS OF THE MANCHU, MONGOLS AND HAN CHINESE: ENLISTING THE MONGOLS AS A JUNIOR PARTNER**

The Manchus enlisted the Mongols as a junior partner in conquering the mainland China and maintaining the empire. Hong Taiji established a parallel structure of eight Mongol banners in 1635. All the Mongols along the frontier, from Manchuria to Gansu, were incorporated into the banner system. The descendants of Chinggis Khan received positions of rank in the Qing administration commanding their own tribal people. The Qing rulers effectively divided and immobilized the Mongols by organizing them under separate leagues with assigned pasturage. The Qing dynasty depended heavily on Mongol troops to defend its Inner Asian frontier.

Ledyard (1983: 328) notes: “their attitude and policy toward the Mongols was much more friendly … the Manchus enlisted them as active supporters and friends.” According to Purdue (2005: 124), “intermarriage with Mongolian noble families further cemented alliance between the two peoples. … From 1612 to 1615 Nurhaci and his sons together married six Mongolian women. … Hong Taiji expanded the marriage alliance policy, marrying twelve of his daughters to Mongolian chieftains.”

Mobilizing the Han Chinese who had settled around the Liao River basin, Hong Taiji established two full Chinese banners in 1637, increasing the number to four in 1639, and then to eight in 1642, just in time for the conquest of China that began two years later. The Han Chinese knew how to cast and use cannon and were practiced with muskets. After Han Wu-di had conquered Old Chosun in 108 BC, a large number of Han Chinese came to settle in the fertile Liao basin area. The descendants of these original settlers joined the Qing military organization and came to constitute the core of the Chinese Eight Banners, enabling the Ruzhens’ sense of a shared identity with their Mongol allies was based on the broad similarities in their cultures.

Elliot (2001: 77) notes: “their attitude and policy toward the Mongols was much more friendly … the Manchus enlisted them as active supporters and friends.” According to Purdue (2005: 124), “intermarriage with Mongolian noble families further cemented alliance between the two peoples. … From 1612 to 1615 Nurhaci and his sons together married six Mongolian women. … Hong Taiji expanded the marriage alliance policy, marrying twelve of his daughters to Mongolian chieftains.”

Mobilizing the Han Chinese who had settled around the Liao River basin, Hong Taiji established two full Chinese banners in 1637, increasing the number to four in 1639, and then to eight in 1642, just in time for the conquest of China that began two years later. The Han Chinese knew how to cast and use cannon and were practiced with muskets. After Han Wu-di had conquered Old Chosun in 108 BC, a large number of Han Chinese came to settle in the fertile Liao basin area. The descendants of these original settlers joined the Qing military organization and came to constitute the core of the Chinese Eight Banners, enabling the Ruzhens’ sense of a shared identity with their Mongol allies was based on the broad similarities in their cultures.

Elliot (2001: 77) notes: “their attitude and policy toward the Mongols was much more friendly … the Manchus enlisted them as active supporters and friends.” According to Purdue (2005: 124), “intermarriage with Mongolian noble families further cemented alliance between the two peoples. … From 1612 to 1615 Nurhaci and his sons together married six Mongolian women. … Hong Taiji expanded the marriage alliance policy, marrying twelve of his daughters to Mongolian chieftains.”

Mobilizing the Han Chinese who had settled around the Liao River basin, Hong Taiji established two full Chinese banners in 1637, increasing the number to four in 1639, and then to eight in 1642, just in time for the conquest of China that began two years later. The Han Chinese knew how to cast and use cannon and were practiced with muskets. After Han Wu-di had conquered Old Chosun in 108 BC, a large number of Han Chinese came to settle in the fertile Liao basin area. The descendants of these original settlers joined the Qing military organization and came to constitute the core of the Chinese Eight Banners, enabling the Ruzhens’ sense of a shared identity with their Mongol allies was based on the broad similarities in their cultures.

Elliot (2001: 77) notes: “their attitude and policy toward the Mongols was much more friendly … the Manchus enlisted them as active supporters and friends.” According to Purdue (2005: 124), “intermarriage with Mongolian noble families further cemented alliance between the two peoples. … From 1612 to 1615 Nurhaci and his sons together married six Mongolian women. … Hong Taiji expanded the marriage alliance policy, marrying twelve of his daughters to Mongolian chieftains.”
By the early 1640s, the Manchu ruler finished organizing a hereditary socio-military system for soldiers to provide active combat duty on rotation, to register and protect their families, and to supervise work on their land. Banner units were organized along traditional tribal lines but were all personally attached to the emperor. The banner elites were recruited from hereditary ranks of the Manchu, Mongol and Han Chinese, and were trained to perform both military and civil tasks to further the ends of conquest and occupation. The bannermen enjoyed booty in warfare, and stipends of rice and cash in peacetime, and they also formed a talent pool from which individuals could be chosen as civil bureaucrats. The pre-conquest ideal of the bannermen as comprehensive state functionaries (soldiers, clerks, or officials) continued to shape the Qing educational policies after the conquest. By giving up the banner status, however, they could conduct commercial activities or manual labor.

In 1643, Hong Taiji suddenly died, leaving his younger brother Dorgon as the regent for his five-year-old (ninth) son. In 1644, the rebel Li Zi-cheng had seized the Ming capital of Beijing, and then led his army toward the Shanhai-guan pass to attack the Ming General, Wu Sangui. The Qing army of Manchu, Mongol and Chinese banners together with Wu Sangui, who threw in his lot with the Manchus, marched down the coast and entered Beijing. The boy emperor was enthroned with the reign title of Shun-zhi. His mother was a descendant of Genghis Khan, and the grandmother of the Kang-xi emperor. It took eighteen more years to hunt down the Ming royal families and their supporters. In 1662, the last remnants of the Ming pretenders were executed in Yunnan province.

More than a decade before the Manchu’s entrance into mainland China, they had created in Shen-yang the Six Ministries, in exact imitation of those at the Ming court, staffed by a bureaucracy in which Manchus, Mongols, and Chinese were represented. The Qing court also introduced the examination system for appointment to the civil service. By the time the Manchus entered North China, they were fully who had lived around the Liao River basin and consequently played an important role in the creation of the empire, were treated differently from those Han Chinese who lived inside the Great Wall. After 1741, the Qing state transferred most of the Nikan bannermen to the Manchu banners, and the Chinese banners were thereafter not distinguished from the Han Chinese civilian population.

9 Crossley (1999: 287)
10 Fairbank (1992: 146-7)
11 Crossley (1997: 127)
12 By giving up the banner status, however, they could conduct commercial activities or manual labor.
13 Crossley (1997: 76)
14 See Fairbank and Goldman (1992: 146). According to Elliott (2110: 364), the (roughly) estimated number of male Manchus in the Eight Banners increased from (approximately) about 160,000 to 450,000 persons and that of male Mongols from 84,000 to 180,000 persons, while
the total number of male Han Chinese increased from about 133,000 to 600,000 persons between 1648 and 1720. Including females and bondservants, the total population of Eight Banners increased from about 1.9 million persons in 1648 to 3.7 million persons in 1720.

15 Spence (1990: 41)

prepared to rule in the Chinese way while maintaining their Manchu identity.

The Chinese bannermen made up three quarters of the total bannermen by 1648, while 8 percent were Mongols and only 16 percent Manchus (that rose to 23 percent by 1723).14 Many of the Chinese bannermen spoke both Manchu and Chinese. Without the Han Chinese bannermen (including the Chinese bondservants), there would probably have been no conquest of the Ming Empire.15

Less than 400,000 (Manchu, Mongol, and Han Chinese) bannermen had taken over the Ming China, establishing banner garrisons (the so-called Manchu cities) at Beijing and 18 strategic provincial cities where soldiers were allotted a place to live with their households behind a wall that separated them from local Han Chinese.16 According to Elliott (2001: 363), the total Manchu population at the time of conquest amounted to have been between 206,000 and 390,000 (regular companies only, excluding bondservants) who took power over about 120 million Chinese.

The Manchus were not bound by the Chinese tradition that required the eldest son, whether an idiot or a rogue, to take the throne: “Instead, in good Altaic fashion, they were free to choose the most capable heir (Elliott, 2001, p. 356).” Over a period of 133 years, three capable and hard-working Manchu emperors extolled the Confucian virtues and consolidated the new empire: the Kang-xi (1662-1722), Yong-zheng (1722-36), and Qian-long (1736-96). Emperor Kang-xi led a major steppe campaign in person, enjoying the excitement of the war.17

The Yuan dynasty had conquered the oasis states of Islamic Central Asia and also the state of Dali, and made Tibet into a subordinate state. The Mongol armies had reached into Burma, and attempted to conquer Vietnam and Champa. The Manchu rulers were apparently inspired by the Mongol conquests, and came to provide modern China with a territorial unification of much greater extent than that achieved by the Han and Tang dynasties. By the mid-1770s, Emperor Qian-long completed the conquest of Inner Asia, specifically Zungharia (the area east of Tarbaghatai and west of Altai Mountains) and Xinjiang (the area south of Tianshan and
north of Kunlun Mountains) that were all inherited by what is now the People’s Republic of China. The inclusion of Manchuria was a direct consequence of the Manchu rule. By 1779, the Han Chinese bannermen had been eliminated from all Manchu garrison cities save Beijing and Guangzhou. After a protracted process of weeding-out the Han Chinese bannermen, all banner people eventually came to be recognized as the Manchus (or Mongols). According to Fairbank and Goldman (1992: 148-9), “the only Chinese troops given a recognized existence were provincial forces that were used mainly as a constabulary on the post routes and against bandits but which lacked any training as a striking force.”

**EFFORTS TO MAINTAIN THE MANCHUS’ RACIAL PURITY**

The Six Ministries had joint Manchu and Chinese presidents, and the provinces had Manchu governors-general and Chinese governors. The capable Chinese, recruited through the examination system, did the work while the loyal Manchus checked up on them. According to Fairbank and Goldman (1992: 143 and 151), “as part of their system of control the Manchu rulers tried to preserve the Manchu language and followed the Qidan, Ruzhen, and Mongol examples in creating a Manchu documentation that was generally unavailable to Chinese officials.” Important documentation was written only in Manchu. The Manchu tried to maintain their racial purity by banning intermarriage and fostering separate customs between the Han Chinese and Manchu. They kept to their own private religious practices, which were conducted by shamanic priests and priestesses in temple compounds to which the Chinese were denied access. They tried to maintain their martial superiority by practicing hunting and mounted archery. They emphasized their cultural distinctness by using the Manchu spoken and written language. The feet of Manchu women were not bound. The Manchu emperors spent summers in Inner Mongolia (Chengde=Rehe), maintaining physical fitness by riding, hunting, and shooting.

Emperor Qian-long prescribed rigorous study of the Manchu language and of military skills for banner education. He formalized the Old Manchu Way: immersion in military arts of riding and shooting, the speaking and writing of Manchu,
all of the Chinese to adopt the Manchu hairstyle (of shaving foreheads and braiding hair in the back) and high-collar tight-jacket dress (instead of the loosely hanging robes of the Ming).

23 Crossley (1999: 307-9)

24 Elliott (2001: 355)

25 The total estimated population of Manchuria was 22.6 million persons in 1891, and 46.8 million in 1942. See Gottschang and Lary (2000: 172-3). It has grown to more than 100 million people by 1990 plus an additional 10 million in the northern leagues of Inner Mongolia. As of 1990, the population registered as Manchu numbered about 10 million, and Koreans about 2 million. See Janhunen (1996: 39, 43. 47).

shamanism, frugality, and reverence for the lineages. He stated that “whether you have studied classical literature [the Four Books] is a matter of no concern to me.”23 The performance of songs at the Qian-long court celebrating the twelfth-century victories of the Ruzhen Jin dynasty over the Song was an indication of the sense the Manchus had of following in the footsteps of the Ruzhens.24

No combination of efforts, however, could save the Manchus from the fate of being sinicized. Conquering China implied sinicization and ethnic self-destruction. After the late 19th century, the whole of Manchuria itself came to be engulfed by the massive influx of Han Chinese, who now constitute approximately 90 percent of the total Manchurian population.25 The evolution in the China-Mongolia-Manchuria triangle left only Outer Mongolia and Korean peninsula to maintain independent polity on the Northeast Asian continent as of the 21st century.

THE SINO-CENTRIC BASICS IN WRITING THE QING HISTORY

A typical sino-centric history of China reads as follows: the Qing empire was “given a certain political and cultural cast by the Manchus”; or the Qing empire was “controlled by the Manchus”; or the Qing empire was founded by the Manchus but the Qing rulers “remade the court to bring it into harmony with established Chinese values” and the “golden age was represented in the rule of the Qian-long emperor, the most Confucian and sinified” of the Qing rulers. According to Crossley (1999: 3), these are the “basics” that are “accepted” in the field of Qing history.

The Ming emperors had struggled for control with the civil officials. The Qing emperors ruled. The Manchu more than doubled the territory of the empire. The thirteen Ming provinces and the two metropolitan regions were restructured into eighteen provinces that constituted the inner territory, known as “China proper.” Manchuria, Mongolia, Sinkiang, Tibet, and Taiwan were administered separately under the command of non-Han Chinese. The conquest elite promoted their martial traditions, and ruled the empire. They resisted sinicization. They prospered with their system and they fell with their system.

BIBLIOGRAPHY