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Reinventing *China*

Imperial Qing Ideology and the Rise of Modern Chinese National Identity in the Early Twentieth Century

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This article uses both Manchu and Han sources to interrogate the relationship between Qing and *China*. After toppling the Ming reign, the Qing rulers identified their state with China as their eighteenth-century campaigns in Inner Asia redefined what China was. By the early twentieth century, educational institutions had facilitated the Manchu efforts to gain the hearts and minds of the Han intellectual elite, who embraced the idea that China was a multiethnic state. Although Manchu rule ended in 1911, the Chinese people never returned to the position that “China” was the property of the Han people: China’s modern identity would be that of a unified multiethnic state. In other words, the Qing legacies to modern China include not just the country’s vast territory but also a new concept of China that laid the solid foundation for the rise of its national identity.

Keywords: *national identity; the concept of China; Zhongguo; multiethnic state*

Almost all historians who have addressed the topic agree that the Qing territorial bequest laid the foundation for the modern Chinese state as a geographic and ethnic entity (Ho Ping-ti, 1967). Until recently, however, few noted that the Qing court’s creative reinterpretation of the concept of *China*

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(*Zhongguo*) as a composite of non-Han and Han peoples provided twentieth-century Chinese nationalists with one of the major components of modern Chinese national identity: the multiethnic state.

An excellent example of the Qing rulers' dexterity and creativity in employing the Han concept of China is Qianlong's 1755 pronouncement: "There exists a view of *China (Zhongxia)*,¹ according to which non-Han people cannot become *China's* subjects and their land cannot be integrated into the territory of *China*. This does not represent our dynasty's understanding of *China*, but is instead that of the earlier Han, Tang, Song, and Ming dynasties" (HC, 7338). As the Qing rulers adopted the idea, they invested it with a new meaning that represented the multiethnic nature of the Qing state. We thus are left with two important questions: how did the Qing court adjust the concept of *China* to the development of the Qing multiethnic empire? And what role did that concept play in the formation of modern Chinese national identity?

Before the mid-1990s, scholars of Qing history merely treated the identification of Qing with *China* as a self-evident historical fact, without noting the complexity of the Qing imperial understanding of *China (Zhongguo)*.² Since then, a number of historians challenging the sinicization model have argued that the longstanding conflation of *Qing* and *China* is in need of critical scrutiny, pointing out that a multiethnic empire defined the Qing, while the name *China* referred to no peoples other than the Han group and China proper until the 1911 revolution (Millward, 1998: 9, 12-13, 201, 249; Crossley, 1999: 341).

More recently, scholars have offered more complicated interpretations of the imperial Qing concept of *China*. Mark Elliott has indicated that because of the unification of China proper and Inner Asia under the Qing, by the end of the 1700s, the meaning of *China* was no longer confined to China proper and the people living there (Elliott, 2000: 638). And in Peter Perdue's view, the rise of Chinese nationalism can be traced to the late seventeenth century, when the Qing armies encountered Russia during their northward expansion (Perdue, 1998: 285). Such arguments remind us of the internal connection between Qing history and twentieth-century Chinese national identity. On the final page of his authoritative study *The Manchu Way*, Elliott also emphasizes that analyzing conceptualizations of "Great Qing" and *China* "will furnish the stuff of future debates on the significance of the Manchus and their empire for China and Inner Asia in the modern world" (Elliott, 2001: 361). But whether and how the Manchu rulers accommodated the concept of *China* to the Qing multiethnic enterprise, let alone how the official Qing view affected the formation of modern Chinese national identity, remain open questions.

Drawing on Chinese and Manchu source materials, this article tells a different story about the relationship between Qing and *China*. I argue that after replacing the Ming, the Qing rulers identified themselves with *China*, expanding its scope to include various parts of Inner Asia and to refer to a multiethnic entity. In the final years of the Qing dynasty, because this imperial interpretation was embraced by Han literati and officially disseminated through the educational system, it reached a wide audience and strongly influenced the Han Chinese perception of their own state. More important, it eventually constituted the source of the “greater Chinese nationalism” adopted by the new Republican government as its national identity.

Separating Qing from *China*: The View of the Early Manchu State

The earliest extant records of Qing attitudes toward *China* date from the formative period of the Manchu state. At that time, the Jianzhou clan, from which the Qing emperors would descend, was still a minor tributary of the Ming dynasty, and the Manchus adopted the official Ming understanding of *China* as referring to China proper and to the Han people.

The rulers of the Ming dynasty controlled a territory considerably smaller than that of present-day China. The Inner Asian territories added to China before the end of the eighteenth century—Manchuria, Mongolia, Xinjiang, Tibet, and neighboring areas—were not yet considered part of *China*; instead they were, like Korea, Vietnam, and other states, tribute countries (*Ming huidian*, 1989: 571-87; Qian Mu, 1980; Fincher, 1972). Under the Ming, *China* referred both to fifteen provinces and to the Han people living in them (Hu Axiang, 2000: 281n35). This usage was common among the Han elite by the early fifteenth century; it had reached a wide audience through the circulation of popular and official maps and geographic works (Li Xiaocong, 1996; Smith, 1998).

In Manchu records, the earliest references to the Han people used the term *nikan*, and the Ming empire was called *nikan gurun* (the state of the Han) or *nikan i daiming i gurun* (the state of the Han’s Great Ming) (*Jiu Manzhou dang*, 1969: 21, 223; *Kyū Manshū tō*, 1975: 173, 250, 266; Li Xuezhì, 1971: 57-63).³ Early Manchu rulers simply adopted the Ming view, treating *China* as equivalent to both the Ming empire and to the Han group. This equivalence is clearly reflected in the Manchu translation of the various Chinese terms for *China*. For example, in his Chinese-language memorial, a Han official serving the Qing court during the Hong Taiji period referred to the Ming state with the word *China*, which was then rendered as *nikan gurun* in Manchu (Li Guangtao, 1959: 95; Liu Housheng, 1993: 199).

With the rise of the Manchu state, the Manchu rulers drew an increasingly sharp line between themselves and China. In 1627, Hong Taiji, the second Manchu ruler, tried to discuss the border issue with the Ming court. In an official letter, he suggested that the Shanhai Guan pass serve as the legal boundary between the Manchu state and *China* (Li Guangtao, 1959: 106). Clearly, he viewed his state as independent of *nikan gurun*. But once the Qing trampled the Ming, this attitude had to change.

Equating Qing with *China*

Shortly after occupying Beijing, the Qing rulers began to identify their own empire as *China*. The term (*Zhongguo*) was first used around the tenth century b.c.e. Its literal meaning is “central state,” but it referred to no specific ethnicity or location (Yu Shengwu, 1981: 1-11; Wang Ermin, 1977: 441-46; Luo Zhitian, 1998: 1-91; Hu Axiang, 2000: 243-91). This vagueness permitted a multitude of states in the Zhou period to assert their political priority by appropriating the label. States we know today as Zhou, Yan, Lu, and Wei often referred to themselves in less formal contexts as *Zhongguo*, especially to distinguish themselves from those tribes that refused to adopt Zhou rituals and institutions (Luo Zhitian, 1998: 35-53; Wang Ermin, 1977: 441-45; Hu Axiang, 2000: 25-62).

Thanks to this tradition, once the various competing states located in what is today called China had been subdued and their territories unified under a single ruler, most of the Chinese dynasties that followed over a period of two millennia boasted of being *China*. They also maintained the tradition of having a distinctive alternative name—Han, Tang, Song, Ming. These dynasties clearly treated the titles as interchangeable and as referring to the same polity (Wang Ermin, 1977: 441-80; Hu Axiang, 2000: 258-64). As in the pre-Qin period, *China* was used in dealing with foreign affairs; in contrast, the distinctive name and its variants, such as Da Wei (Great Wei), Da Jin (Great Jin), Da Yuan (Great Yuan), *guochao* (state dynasty), and *benchao* (our dynasty), were used in domestic contexts (Hu Axiang, 2000: 273-75).⁴ By the Ming, *China* was commonly used as the state’s official title on edicts and other official documents.⁵

But because those who founded new dynasties often emerged from groups with different ethnic attributes than their predecessors, their understanding of what *China* meant varied over time. Whenever a non-Han group overthrew the rulers of the central country, *China* came to mean a mixture of the Han and non-Han groups. When the dynasty was founded by Han persons, as was the case with the Ming, the term simply referred to the land of

the Han (Qian Zhongshu, 1986: 1486-89; Luo Zhitian, 1998: 1-91). This evidence suggests that the concept of *China* was long shared and redefined by non-Han groups, despite its Han origins. Notably, for the non-Han people, the adoption of the concept of *China* did not lessen their sense of their own ethnic identity. For example, though the Jin and Yuan rulers drew a sharp line between the Han and non-Han peoples, they clearly identified their states with *China*.⁶

A paucity of documentary evidence may forever rule out the possibility of determining precisely when the Qing court embraced this cultural resource, but not long after the collapse of the Ming, *China* became the equivalent of Great Qing (Da Qing)—another official title of the Qing state—in imperial edicts. As noted earlier, the Qing rulers distinguished between China and the Manchu state before the Ming. But from the fall of the Ming dynasty onward, the Qing court's view changed: *Qing* and *China* became interchangeable official titles, and the latter often appeared as a substitute for the former in official documents.

There were obvious reasons for the Qing's switch. First of all, rulers of China, whether indigenous or foreign, had often redefined the scope of *China* to suit their needs: the Manchu rulers were not concerned that equating *Qing* with *China* would lead to the loss of their Manchu identity. Second, if they publicly embraced the concept of *China*, such acceptance of Han culture would win them the support of the Han people. Given the political benefits, it is not surprising that the Qing rulers quickly adopted the term as a standard synonym for the Qing state in foreign affairs. The Qing court's routine use of *China* to refer to its state in treaties, diplomatic correspondence, and so forth most clearly demonstrates its identification of *China* with Qing. Despite shifting political conditions, the Qing rulers from Shunzhi to Qianlong always held to the equation of Qing with *China*, only adjusting the latter's scope to match the expanding Qing territory.

An early identification of Qing with *China* appeared in a 1656 edict issued by the Qing court. The subject is a territorial dispute with Mongolia: "Those barbarians (*fanyi*) who paid tribute to Mongolia during the Ming should be administered by Mongolia. However, those barbarians submitting to the former Ming court should be subjects of *China*" (*lishu Zhongguo weimin*) (*Da Qing Shizu Zhanghuangdi shilu*, 1964: 103.10b-11a).

From that date onward, the term *China* was seen frequently in a multitude of official and private writings in the Chinese and Manchu languages, from edicts to treaties to the emperor's personal works to the travelogues of Manchu officials. In a 1710 edict concerning the border between Korea and the Qing state, the Kangxi emperor referred to what had previously been the land of the Manchus as belonging to *China*: "The Hongtong River [now called the

Songhua River, in northern Manchuria], which flows from the Changbai Mountains, . . . belongs entirely to *China (shu Zhongguo)*. To the northwest of the Yalu River is part of *China (shu Zhongguo)*; the land to the southeast of the Tumen River belongs to *China (shu Zhongguo)*” (Jiang Liangqi, 1980: 349).

In both the Manchu and Chinese versions of the treaties with foreign countries signed in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Qing was clearly equated with *China*. Consider, for example, the language used in the famous Treaty of Nerchinsk in 1689, which settled a long-standing territorial dispute between the Qing empire and Russia. One passage from the Chinese version reads, “The land lying to the south of stony Xing’an Mountain . . . belongs to *China (shu Zhongguo)*. . . . In order to preserve good relations with *China (yu Zhongguo hehao)* Russia will bring about no new disputes” (*Da Qing Shengzu Renhuangdi shilu*, 1964: 143.16a-16b).

In the Manchu version of the treaty, we find the following: “The official Songgotu, . . . sent by the order of the great emperor of *China* to settle the boundary with Russia, met with the Russian missions at Nerchinsk” (*Dulimbai gurun i enduringge hūwangdi hesei jecen be toktobume takūraha amban . . . Songgotu . . . Oros gurun i . . . amba elcin . . . Nibcoo bade uhei acafi*) (*SDRK*, 7). The Manchu term *Dulimbai gurun* is the standard translation for the Chinese terms *China (Zhongguo)*, *Zhongyuan*, and *Hua* and appeared in official documents produced by the Qing court beginning in 1689, if not earlier. The origin of the word *Dulimbai* can be traced to another Manchu word, *dulin*, meaning “middle,” “central”; *gurun* means “country.” The Manchu expression *Dulimbai gurun i enduringge hūwangdi* in the above passage translates the Chinese phrase “the wise emperor of *China*.” Some official Manchu documents, such as a passage cited below, used a different Manchu title for the Qing emperor, *Dulimbai gurun i enduringge han* (the wise khan of *China*).⁷

In 1686, three years before the Treaty of Nerchinsk, the Qing court had declared in a Manchu communication sent to Russia, “The Western countries all . . . comply with the procedures established by Our Great *China*.” A similar document sent to Russia in 1693 states, “After we report this matter to the emperor of Our Great *China*, we will return” (QD, 64, 144).⁸ When Russian writings sent to the Qing court were translated into Manchu, the official titles of the Qing state and emperors were rendered as *Dulimbai gurun* and *Dulimbai gurun i enduringge han*. The same translation can be found in Manchu versions of other Russian documents presented to the Kangxi emperor (Gugong bowuyuan, [1936] 1969: 198-201, 208-9, 214).⁹

Other Manchu diplomatic papers from the Kangxi and Yongzheng periods provide more evidence that *Qing* and *China* were often equated. Of the

surviving diplomatic documents from the Qing court to Russia between 1661 and 1734, more than 160 used *Dulimbai gurun* as the official title of the Qing state.¹⁰

In the Qianlong era, the identification of *Qing* with *China* was more visible than ever. The Manchu and Chinese terms for *China*—*Dulimbai gurun* and *Zhongguo*—were routinely used as the title of the Qing state in official documents and even in the emperor's poems. During the 1980s, the government of the People's Republic of China organized and opened to the public the archives of materials produced during the Qianlong period concerning Sino-Russian relations. According to Qu Liusheng, a scholar who helped to compile those archives, the term *China* (*Zhongguo/Dulimbai gurun*) occurs more frequently in them than in similar documents from the Kangxi and Yongzheng periods (personal communication, June 2002). In 1735, shortly after the Qianlong emperor ascended the throne, he wrote in a poem, "Foreigners appreciate only military power. . . . Thus, they submit to us wholeheartedly and do not dare to despise *China* once we display our hunting techniques to them" (Qianlong emperor, 1993: 3.693). In a poem from 1754, Qianlong advised, "*China* should generously pacify those foreigners" (*Zhongguo huai rou ning cong hou*) (Qianlong emperor, 1993: 3.296). In an edict issued in 1780, he declared, "*China* deals with foreigners from afar only by treating them without discrimination" (*Da Qing Gaozong Chunhuangdi shilu*, 1964: 15018). The 1793 commercial treaty with Russia states, "*China* trades with your country" (He Qiutao, n.d.: 12.2a).

The Qing emperors sometimes emphasized their identification with *China* by using the phrase "our *China*" (*wo Zhongguo*). In 1712, the Kangxi emperor wrote in a Chinese edict to a Qing mission sent to Russia, "Our *China* has no such place" (*wo Zhongguo bing wu ruci difang*) and "Our *China* has [similar weapons]" (*wo Zhongguo huoyou*) (Tulisen, 1964: 376). In 1729, an official document sent to Russia began, "According to the institutions of our great *China*. . ." (QD, 528). In 1750, Qianlong wrote in an edict to a chief of Zunghar: "Many people have fled from our *China* (*wo Zhongguo*) to your place" (*Pingding Zhungeer fanglüe*, 1990: 910).

The conflation of *Qing* and *China* was taken up by Manchu officials serving in the court. In the 1720s, a Manchu official named Tulisen served as an ambassador to Russia and then described his experiences in a famous travelogue titled *Yiyulu* (*A Record of the Foreign Regions*), published in both Chinese and Manchu (Tulisen, 1964: 44). The Manchu and Chinese versions of his book use *China*—*Dulimbai gurun* and *Zhongguo*, respectively—many times to refer to the Qing state; only once does he employ the phrase *Daicin gurun*, Manchu for "Great Qing state." Tulisen often uses *meni Dulimbai gurun*, Manchu for "our *China*," to show where his allegiance lay: "In our

China, there are no officials who can handle this kind of matter [without the emperor's permission]" (*Meni Dulimbai gurun de umai ere gese baita be salifi yabure amban akū*) (Tulisen, 1964: 112).

The Manchu acceptance of the concept of *China* was visible not only in Beijing—the capital of the empire—but also in Manchuria. As early as the 1660s, Fang Gongqian, a Han-Chinese poet exiled to northern Manchuria, made this point in a poem: "We feel that we have been sent to an extremely remote part of the world, but [non-Han] tributary people who come here say that this is still part of *China* (*lairen you shuo shi Zhonghua*)" (Fang Gongqian, 1992: 257). In the early 1800s, Mamiya Rinzo, a Japanese explorer, arrived at the mouth of the Heilong River and met some Manchu officials there. He noted that while they displayed an official badge identifying them as agents of the "great Qing state" (*Da Qingguo*), they called their country *China* (cited in Hayashi Akira, 1913: 237.155, 159).

The Qing court routinely used other terms as well in referring to its state, such as *guochao* (state dynasty), *wochao*, *wojie* (our territory), and *benchao* (our dynasty). But it treated these titles and *China* as interchangeable. For example, the Chinese version of the 1689 Treaty of Nerchinsk used *China* as the state title, but in a different version of the same treaty, it was replaced by the term "our territory" (*wojie*): "All of the land to the south of the Xing'an mountains and all branches of the Heilong River belong to our territory (*wojie*)" (Wei Yuan, 1992: 2002).

Similarly, two edicts from the Qianlong period dealing with a military post on the Qing border with Korea treat the terms as synonyms. The first stressed that the post was "within the territory of *China* (*Zhongguo jienei*)," while the second proclaimed that it was "within the territory of our dynasty (*wochao jienei*)" (*Ming Qing shiliao jiabian*, 1972: 665, 690). Until the late nineteenth century, memorialists writing to the Qing emperors made no distinction between *China* and *wochao*. For example, an 1883 memorial reads, "Vietnam has informed *China* of its treaty with France in the hope that our dynasty (*wochao*) will mediate between the two" (*Qingji waijiao shiliao*, 1964: 131). For the Qing rulers, the equivalence of *Qing* and *China* was complete.

Redefining *China* as a Multiethnic Entity

As many scholars have pointed out, by the Qing, there were two ways of defining *China*. The *ethnic* approach created boundaries by constructing a Han Chinese identity, while the *cultural* approach relied on an imaginary divide between Confucian and non-Confucian communities (Santangelo, 1988; Langlois, 1980; Wiens, 1969). According to either definition, the non-

Han Manchus could identify themselves with *China* only by adopting Confucian rituals and institutions. Just as important, these two definitions prevented other non-Han peoples—say, those from Inner Asia—from being incorporated into *China* because they had non-Confucian cultures and religions. To avoid these problems, the Qing court relied on a new definition of *China* that was based on Qing territorial administration over different ethnic groups.¹¹

The Manchu rejection of the ethnic view of *China* first manifested itself at a lexicographical level. Before 1644, the Qing court had translated the word *China* with the Manchu term *nikan gurun* (the state of the Han people), basically adopting the Ming view of *China* as constituting a single ethnicity. But after the fall of the Ming, the Manchu rulers began using a different Manchu rendering of *Zhongguo*: *Dulimbai gurun* (the central country).¹² This change made it plain that the Qing court had already gone far toward removing any Han-centered meaning from its concept of *China*.

At the same time, the view of *China* as a Confucian cultural community was being supplanted by a definition that emphasized the Qing political domain. As a result, Inner Asia—a new, utterly non-Confucian territory within the Qing empire—became part of the territory of *China*. The Yongzheng emperor stressed this point in his famous tract *Dayi juemilu* (*A Record of Rightness to Dispel Confusion*): “Since our dynasty began to rule *China*, the Mongols and other tribes living in extremely remote regions have been integrated into our territory. This is the expansion of *China*’s territory (*Zhongguo zhi jiangtu kaituo guangyuan*)” (Yongzheng emperor, 1983: 5; as trans. in Elliott, 2001: 347). A similar view can also be found at the section of geographical studies (*Yudi kao*) in *Huangchao wenxian tongkao* (*A Comprehensive Study of the Qing Imperial Documents*), an imperial work edited in the 1750s. Because the scope of *China* was defined by the dynastic territory, it varied over time, as this book emphasizes. By the Qing, those regions that had been tributaries in previous dynasties were completely under Qing domination, swelling *China*’s territory to an unprecedented size (*HC*, 7413). The geographical section in *Huangchao wenxian tongkao* thus treats as *China*’s territory not just the provinces of China proper but all Inner Asia under the Qing. These sources make clear that for the Qing rulers, *China* extended to all Inner Asia under the Manchu house and to the non-Han people living there.

In the 1750s, a number of Han officials strongly opposed the Qing conquest of the land to the northwest of China proper. What would eventually be called Xinjiang had never belonged to *China*, they declared (Millward, 1998). To refute them, Qianlong added to an article celebrating the Qing triumph over the Zunghars a distinction between the Qing and previous dynas-

ties' concepts of *China*. While asserting his right to the term *China*, he rejected the policies of those who had claimed it before him—specifically, the Han, Tang, Song, and Ming dynasties—and refused to exclude non-Han peoples from its scope (*HC*, 7338). By redefining *China*, the Manchu emperors not only legitimated their own rule but also opened the way for the Banner armies to conquer and incorporate a range of ethnically diverse peoples into the imperium.

The declarations of Kangxi, Yongzheng, and Qianlong views made the new definition of *China* more clear and systematic, but its roots lay further back. Half a century before the publication of *Dayi juemilu*, a similar idea had already been incorporated into the Treaty of Nerchinsk, which (together with other relevant documents) cast northern Manchuria as part of *China*. The Manchu version of the treaty states, “All the rivers and creeks, flowing into the Sahalian River [the Heilong River] and lying to the south of great Xing’an Mountain that stretched to the sea, are *China*’s territory” (*Amba Hingan i mudun be jafahai mederi de niketele antu i ergi Sahaliyan ula de dosikale bira birgan be gemu Dulimbai gurun i harangga obume*) (*SDRK*, 8).

Moreover, the treaty refers to the Qing court’s promise “to erect a stone monument in the place where two countries meet, inscribed with [the text of the treaty] in the Latin, Russian, and Chinese languages” (*Dulimbai gurun i bithe, Oros gurun i bithe, Latino gurun i bithe arafi, wehe de folofi juwe gurun i acan i bade ilibufi*) (*SDRK*, 10). In 1690, one year after the treaty was signed, the monument was erected: it was inscribed in Latin and Russian on one side and in Chinese, Manchu, and Mongul on the other (*QD*, 125). The fascinating implication is that by the 1680s, *China* no longer referred to the Han alone: there was not a single Chinese language but three.

During the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, the aggressive Mongolian leader Galdan drove the Kangxi emperor to launch a series of punitive campaigns, which led to Outer Mongolia becoming part of Qing territory. When the new treaties between the Qing state and Russia signed in the 1720s clarified the borders of that region, they described Outer Mongolia as part of *China*: “[All the land] lying to the south of the mountains, from Mount Šabinai to the Erguna River, belongs to *China*” (*Šabinai dabaga ci Ergune birai dalin de isitala antu ergi be, Dulimbai gurun de obume*) (*SDRK*, 64; for more details on the treaty, see Nomiya Atsushi, 1977: 37-84).

In the 1750s, the Qing won its war against the Zunghars and annexed Xinjiang. Again, this result was taken as an expansion of the territory of *China*: “The mountains and rivers of Zunghar Mongolia have been completely integrated into the territory of *China*” (*Jungar Monggo tala, alin bira de Dulimbai gurun-i nirugan dangse de uherilebuhe*) (qtd. in Elliott, 2001: 503n19).¹³

Other types of documents also shed light on how the Qing court extended the scope of *China* to include Inner Asia in the mid-eighteenth century. In the 1750s, Michael Benoist, a French Jesuit serving the Qing court, drew a world map that he planned to offer to the Qianlong emperor, a great lover of such Western marvels. Because Benoist's map was based on geographical information available before the conquest of the Zunghars, its rendering of *China* did not include what was later called Xinjiang. But after the conquest, some official cartographers made maps reflecting the view that Xinjiang had become integrated into the territory of *China*. Hearing this news, Benoist hastened to revise his work so that *China* would encompass Xinjiang. Qianlong highly approved of the redrawn map, presented to him in 1756, which also placed Manchuria, Mongolia, Qinghai, and Tibet within the borders of *China* (Qin Guojing, 1997).¹⁴

Late-eighteenth-century gazetteers edited by Manchu officials, of which the most important is Chunyuan's *Xiyu zongzhi* (*A General Gazetteer of the Western Region*), also show how *China* was being rethought. Chunyuan presents Xinjiang as part of *China*: "To the south of Kengertula [a Russian town on the border with Xinjiang] is the territory of *China*" (*yinan ji Zhongguo dijie*) (Chunyuan, 1966: 2.22b-23a). Elsewhere he notes, "Outside the Jiayu Pass is Mount Snow, stretching nine thousand *li* within the territory of *China*" (*xueshan zhi zai Zhongguo zhe, Jiayu guan wai dongxi miangen jiuqian li*) (Chunyuan, 1966: 3.1b). The writings of Benoist and Chunyuan show that once the official Qing view of *China* as a multiethnic entity was articulated in the mid-eighteenth century, it began to affect geography and cartography.

After Inner Asia was incorporated into the scope of *China*, none of its constituent areas was ever categorized as a tribute state (*HC*, 7263-412).¹⁵ Its inhabitants were no longer to be considered barbarians, a term suitable for the tributary countries, and an error on this score could be dangerous. For example, in 1787, the Shaanxi governor Bayansan referred to a Tibetan mission as a "barbarian mission" (*yishi*) in a memorial sent to the Qianlong emperor. The emperor replied with some asperity, "Because Tibet has long been incorporated into our territory, it is completely different from Russia, which submits to our country only in name. Thus, we cannot see the Tibetans as foreign barbarians, unlike the Russians" (*Da Qing Gaozong Chunhuangdi shilu*, 1964: 19019).

Another immediate result of the incorporation of Inner Asia into the scope of *China* was to redefine the *Chinese* (*Zhongguoren*) as a collection of ethnically diverse groups. The Qing categorization of the Mongols in Chinese and Manchu documents proves this point. As early as the 1650s, the Qing court had referred to the Mongols under its rule as *Chinese* (*Zhongguo zhi min*)

(*Da Qing Shizu Zhanghuangdi shilu*, 1964: 103.10b-11a). Within a half century, the same term was being applied to non-Han peoples in northern Manchuria.

The first important example occurred in the 1689 Treaty of Nerchinsk. Among Kangxi's reasons for signing the treaty was his desire to prevent his Mongolian subjects from fleeing to Russia (Perdue, 1998). Those Mongols living along the border with Russia were called *Chinese* (*Zhongguo zhi ren*) in this treaty.¹⁶ Its Manchu version used *Dulimbai gurun i niyalma*, the Manchu translation of *Chinese*, to refer to the Mongols: "[Both countries agree to cease] seeking repatriation of those who crossed the border into the other's country, whether of *Chinese* now in Russia or of Russians now in *China*" (*Ne Dulimbai gurun de bisire Oros i niyalma, Oros gurun de bisire Dulimbai gurun i niyalma be ishunde niyalma be ishunde gaire be nakafi uthai bibume*) (*SDRK*, 9). The Chinese version said, "[The Qing court] no longer requests that Russia return the *Chinese* (*Zhongguo zhi ren*) who have fled in Russia [prior to signing the treaty]" (*congqian . . . Eluosi suoyou Zhongguo zhi ren rengliu bubu qianfan*) (*Da Qing Shengzu Renhuangdi shilu*, 1964: 1936). Later in the Kangxi reign, the emperor was concerned that the Han people would fail to stand as firm as the Mongols and Manchus did when *China* was faced with a Western threat (*Da Qing Shengzu Renhuangdi shilu*, 1964: 3598), suggesting that for Kangxi, the *Chinese* were not uniquely Han but were multiethnic.

The identification of Mongols with the *Chinese* (*Zhongguoren*) was repeated in the 1727 Treaty of Kiakhta, as the Manchu version makes quite clear: "[If found guilty,] the *Chinese* should be beheaded" (*Dulimbai gurun i niyalma oci sacime wambi*) (*SDRK*, 71-72). Because the Mongols accounted for the vast majority of the inhabitants of Outer Mongolia until the early twentieth century, the phrase *Dulimbai gurun i niyalma* must refer to them.

A similar implication is found in the new Chinese version of the Lifan Yuan code (*Lifan Yuan zeli*) issued around the 1820s. A passage reads, "When the *Chinese* criminals (*xi Zhongguoren*) are arrested by the frontier troops on the border with Russia, . . . related information should be reported to the Lifan Yuan and the criminal must be beheaded. . . . The *Chinese* (*Zhongguoren*) must be whipped in accordance with the code if they are arrested for hunting in the Russian territory" (qtd. in Nomiya, 1977: 63-65).

It appears that as early as the late seventeenth century, the Qing court had shaken off the view of *China* as unique to the Han people and created a new definition of *China* as a multiethnic entity that incorporated the non-Han groups in Inner Asia. More than two centuries ago, the meanings of both *China* and *Chinese* had already come to closely resemble what we now associate with the national identity of twentieth-century China and its citizens.

Continuity and Popularization: The Imperial Qing View of *China* in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries

Beginning in the 1800s, the Qing empire was buffeted by a wave of political, economic, and military crises, first from within and then from without. But these crises did not affect the official Qing view of *China*. Until the fall of the dynasty in 1911, its leaders continued to insist both on the conflation of *Qing* and *China* and on the treatment of *China* as a multiethnic entity.

In a variety of diplomatic documents issued after 1800, the Qing court used the words *Qing* and *China* interchangeably as the state's official title—just as had been done during the previous century and a half. According to Kawashima Shin, who examined diplomatic documents from 1805, 1806, 1807, and 1821, in 28 cases, both terms were used in the same text (Kawashima Shin, 1997: 44). After 1840, the Qing court continued to use *China* as an alternative official state name. Many examples can be gleaned from published collections of official documents; I will cite only a few.¹⁷ The treaty signed with Russia in 1861 reads, “The land to the west of these two rivers belongs to *China*.” The Chinese version of the treaty signed with the United States of America in 1880 states that “*China* and the United States will strengthen their good relationship . . . [and] *China* . . . will allow American ships to visit its coastal ports” (Wang Tieya, 1957: 161, 380).

In many other late-nineteenth-century treaties, *China* and *Qing* both appeared as official titles. Among them is the Chinese version of a treaty with Russia signed in 1881: “The emperors of both the great Qing state (*da Qingguo*) and the great Russian state agree to send officials . . . to sign an agreement on the following items: the officials of *China* (*Zhongguo guanyuan*) will take up the Yili region in accordance with the orders of the emperor of the great Qing state” (Wang Tieya, 1957: 381-82).

As for Inner Asia, the late Qing court maintained the tack of their predecessors. In the 1850s, Russian troops intruded into the lower Heilong River area, claiming that region as Russian territory. Citing the Treaty of Nerchinsk, already more than 150 years old, the Qing court rejected the Russian claim: all the land north of the Heilong River was the territory of *China* (*Zhongguo dijie*) (QD, 82-83, 196). Likewise, Mongolia and Xinjiang remained part of *China*. According to a treaty signed with Russia in 1869 to reestablish a mutually acceptable border between Outer Mongolia and Russia, “To the south of this line is the Kobdo region of *China* [i.e., northwestern Outer Mongolia]” (Wang Tieya, 1957: 236). In the Chinese version of a treaty with Russia signed in 1881, the Qing court described the Yili and Kashgar areas as part of *China*: “The Yili region of *China* (*Zhongguo Yili*

difang) is bounded by Russian territory. . . . Both countries will send officials to define the border between the Ferganah region of Russia and the western region of *China's* Kashgar (*Zhongguo Kashiga'er*)" (Wang Tieya, 1957: 382-83).

Late in 1911, in its edict of abdication, the Qing court still reaffirmed the view of *China* as a multiethnic entity: "[We] welcome the establishment of a great *Chinese* republic that integrates all of the territories where dwell the five ethnic groups, that is, Manchus, Han, Mongols, Muslims, and Tibetans" (*he Man Han Meng Hui Zang wuzu wanquan lingtu wei yi da Zhonghua Minguo*) (*Zhongguo dier lishi dang'an guan*, 1991: 2.72). This edict was issued at the moment when control over China was passed to Yuan Shikai, but it was not a product of Yuan's influence; long before Yuan's rise to power, as we have seen, the Qing court had definitely embraced the concept of *China* as a multiethnic entity. The language of this edict was carefully articulated to effect a transfer of allegiance: both Han and non-Han Chinese would now place their faith in the new republic.

While the Qing court continued to view *China* as a multiethnic entity during the late nineteenth century, there is scant evidence that official efforts were made to convert its subjects to this position. The situation changed substantially only after 1900, when the government began to broadcast its understanding of *China* to the Han and non-Han people nationwide through the new schools. The newly mandated geographical curriculum was deliberately employed as the most direct channel to shore up Chinese national identity and inculcate patriotism. The Qing court stipulated that students be well versed in the geography of *China*, a requirement made explicit in *Zouding xuezhi zhangcheng* (*School Regulations Sanctioned by the Court*), drafted by some Manchu and Han court officials (headed by Rongqing and Zhang Zhidong) and implemented in 1906 in all public and private schools. In elementary school, the regulations stress that "the key goal [of the geography course] is to familiarize students with the contemporary territory of *China*, . . . so as to cultivate their patriotism" (*qi yaoyi zai shizhi jinri Zhongguo jiangyu zhi daliue*, . . . *yi yangcheng qi aiguo zhi xin*) (Qu Xingui and Tang Liangyan, 1991: 296). In middle school,

all teachers of geography should familiarize students with the relationship between the world and human beings. In teaching foreign geography, they must emphasize the content most germane to the geography of *China*, illuminating the line between *China* and the rest of the world so as to cultivate a patriotic spirit among the students. [Qu Xingui and Tang Liangyan, 1991: 321]

Also, the court required all students who chose geography as their area of concentration to study one of the four "dialects of *China*" (*Zhongguo*

fangyan)—meaning Ugyur, Tibetan, Mongolian, and Manchu (Qu Xingui and Tang Liangyan, 1991: 354). Although clearly wrong in labeling these languages dialects of Chinese, in doing so, the Qing court confirmed that it never relinquished the idea of a fundamentally multiethnic state as it attempted to build a modern state. Also, the Qing court called on educational commissioners to inspect all levels of schools to determine whether the published regulations were being adhered to (Qu Xingui and Tang Liangyan, 1991: 326). Thus, the official view of *China* was inculcated into millions of young people.

In the last decade of the Qing dynasty, publishers throughout the empire produced more than 150 textbooks that focused wholly or prominently on the geography of *China* (Zou Zhenhuan, 2000: 293-94); nearly all of them declared that Inner Asia was part of it. For example, *Zhongguo dili jiaokeshu* (*A Textbook of Chinese Geography*), written by Tu Ji and published in 1905, included Manchuria, Xinjiang, Tibet, Mongolia, and Qinghai within *China*'s territory; so did a 1909 textbook edited by Zang Lihe (Zou Zhenhuan, 2000: 290, 291). This official view of *China* dominated the geographic textbooks in Jiangnan, the cultural and educational center of the empire, but it cropped up in those written and published in South China as well. In 1905, for example, Luo Runan, a scholar in Guangdong, combined materials he had collected for years in *Zhongguo jinshi yudi tushuo* (*A Study of Modern China's Geography*). This textbook conflated Qing and China, using the titles "great Qing state" (*da Qingguo*) and *China* interchangeably (Luo Runan, 1909: 1.2a). While Luo did distinguish the traditional Chinese heartland from Xinjiang, Manchuria, and Tibet by calling the former "China proper" (*Zhongguo benbu*), he nevertheless identified the latter as part of *China* (Luo Runan, 1909: 1.4a-5b).

Geography textbooks streamed out of the doors of the national publishing houses, and some enjoyed multiple reprints—for example, Tu Ji's book was reprinted seven times between 1905 and 1909, and Zang Lihe's book was reprinted eleven times between 1908 and 1913 (Zou Zhenhuan, 2000: 290-94). It has been estimated that during the first ten years of the century, more than 4 million students passed through modern schools (Fairbank, 1980: 376-83). Through these assigned books, the imperial Qing view of *China* reached a wide audience and was imparted to the country's future leaders well before the Republican period, which has often been cited as the time when a modern Chinese national identity was formed.

Textbooks specially prepared for Manchu and Mongol students also reflected the court's efforts to popularize its view of *China*. For example, *Man Meng Han hebi jiaokeshu* (*A Comprehensive Textbook in the Manchu, Mongolian, and Chinese Languages*), edited by a Manchu scholar named

Rongde for Mongol schools, contains two accounts of the history and geography of *China*. Like the Chinese texts, Rongde's stressed that Manchuria, Tibet, Qinghai, Xinjiang, and Mongolia were part of *China* (Rongde, [1909] 2001: 92-93). In his view, Manchurian and Mongolian students were *Chinese* (*Zhongguo zhi ren*), and they should love *China*. In a chapter titled "Dulimbai gurun" (*Zhongguo*), he flatly declared, "We are the *Chinese*, and why should we not love *China*?" (*Meni Dulimbai gurun i niyalma ohu manggi, aiku Dulimbai gurun be hairarakuci ombini, wu ji wei Zhongguo zhi ren, an ke bu ai Zhongguo ye*) (Rongde, [1909] 2001: 412).

It is difficult to assess how effective these efforts by the court actually were in influencing non-Han people, especially those living in Outer Mongolia and Xinjiang. But the educational campaign helps to explain why several years before the fall of the Qing, some young Manchu intellectuals consciously accepted the view of *China* as a multiethnic entity and promoted the idea of a new and ethnically diverse *China*.

From Imperial Qing Ideology to Modern Chinese National Identity

During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Han Chinese and Manchu intellectuals played an important role in spreading the official Qing view of *China*, beginning with Gong Zizhen, Wei Yuan, and other famous literati concerned with frontier issues during the Daoguang and Xianfeng periods (1821-1860). They not only accepted the official view of *China* as a multiethnic entity but also injected this view into a number of books on history and geography.

Recent scholarship has examined the plans promoted by Gong Zizhen and Wei Yuan to exploit Xinjiang by resettling the Han people there and instituting an administrative system molded on that of China proper (Millward, 1998). But these ideas have been seen as the beginning of Han Chinese expansion into Inner Asia when they were in fact a mere reiteration of Qianlong's Xinjiang policy. After his armies had conquered Xinjiang, Qianlong allowed the Han people to immigrate there, established many areas as prefectures and counties, and changed the Mongol names of many cities to Chinese.¹⁸ He also called for civil service examinations to be offered in Xinjiang, hoping to thereby draw local Muslims into the national bureaucracy (*Xiyu tuzhi*, 1965: 36.4b-10b). Since the mid-Qianlong period, many of the Manchu elites, especially those high officials sent to Xinjiang, had embraced the policy of transferring large numbers of Han people to the region. They viewed this as an important step in consolidating Qing rule,

despite the considerable hardships faced by the new arrivals (Toru Saguchi, 1983: 278, 296).

Furthermore, Qianlong's project to assimilate the inhabitants of Xinjiang into Confucian culture was more aggressive and ambitious than Gong's later plan to implement the civil examination system there. According to the *Xiyu tuzhi* (*The Imperial Gazetteer of the Western Regions*), drawn up by a team of Manchu officials led by Fuheng, the Qing court planned to Confucianize Muslims through a system of state-funded schools (*Xiyu tuzhi*, 1965: 36). But Gong lacked the same confidence as Qianlong, doubting that Xinjiang's first civil examination could be held within 30 years of its establishment as a province (Gong Zizhen, 1975: 110).

Gong and Wei's revival of Qianlong's policies on Inner Asia makes sense once it is placed in the context of state-sanctioned studies of the history and geography of Inner Asia—mainly Mongolia and Xinjiang. Beginning in the late eighteenth century, the Qing court and regional authorities in Xinjiang commissioned many books on frontier geography and history. Those projects involved almost all of the famous Han intellectuals active in the first half of the nineteenth century: Qi Junzao, Qi Yunshi, Xu Song, Gong Zizhen, Zhang Mu, and He Qiutao (Zhao Lisheng, 1992: 223-58). To assist their research projects, the court granted them special access to various official archives and maps (Qi Yunshi, 1992: 107; Gong Zizhen, 1975: 604).

The complete information they were given persuaded the Han literati to embrace Qing frontier policies. For example, Qianlong claimed that whereas the earlier Han rulers relied on the Great Wall to defend the Chinese heartland from Inner Asian threats, the Qing court addressed the problem more successfully by unifying both the Han and the steppes into "a single family" (Yuan Senpo, 1991: 228-29). Gong Zizhen, who accepted this explanation of the policy differences between the Qing and previous dynasties, used the same language to praise the Qing court's strategy, which alone had managed to bring peace: now he could blithely travel to the areas formerly off-limits to civilians, such as the Great Wall. After describing a day he spent in pleasant games and talk with some Mongols traveling to Beijing, he added,

In ancient times, the steppes' invasions led the people to build the Great Wall. I am a literatus from Jiangnan. Had I lived under the Song dynasty, I would never have been able to travel to the Yan and Zhao regions [now called Hebei], let alone to enjoy myself with the Mongols. As one who lives under the great Qing dynasty, an era that has seen inner and outer unified into a family, I am proud indeed, especially when I consider those who lived in ancient times. [Gong Zizhen, 1975: 136-37]

Gong reasoned that after the conquest of Xinjiang, Confucian principles could no longer be applied to solving the frontier issue: the unification of inner and outer had fundamentally changed the scope of what was called *China*, and everything was different. New circumstances required new strategies, and the Han Chinese scholars who cited the Confucian canon to criticize the Qing enterprise in Xinjiang were “pedantic Confucians” (*yuru*) (Gong Zizhen, 1975: 105, 117).

Gong’s friend Wei Yuan espoused similar views. If the Qing rulers had managed to subdue Inner Asia, their success was due to the flexibility with which they had handled the Confucian canon. Only after Qianlong had rejected the position held by the Han and Tang Confucians—that the western regions were hardly worth the effort involved in subduing and ruling them—did Qing rule over Xinjiang become stable (Wei Yuan, 1984: 512-13). Wei also noted the cultural plurality of the Qing empire and argued that a respect for cultural and religious particularity had helped the Qing court to maintain order in Inner Asia:

Mongols cannot accept the teachings of the duke of Zhou and Confucius. The wisdom of Gaozong [i.e., the Qianlong emperor] led him to dispatch the Dalai and Panchen lamas permanently to the west, where they were responsible for teaching. As a result, Tibet became peaceful and the northwest frontier was unthreatened. [Wei Yuan, 1984: 218-19]

Because Gong and Wei both denied that Confucian attitudes were relevant to ruling Xinjiang, they could easily shift from a Han-centered view of *China* to the official interpretation that it was a multiethnic entity. At the outset of a well-known article in which he proposed making Xinjiang a province, Gong equated Qing with *China*: “The great Qing state is *China*, which has existed from the time of Yao [a mythical ruler said to have ruled thousands years earlier]” (Gong Zizhen, 1975: 105).

In his famous book *Shengwu ji* (*A Record of the Military Achievements of the Qing Emperors*), Wei Yuan characterized many rivers in Xinjiang and Mongolia as being within *China*’s territory. He also stated that Russian lands were delimited by northern Manchu, Mongolia, and Xinjiang: *China* and Russia were neighbors all along Russia’s southern border (Wei Yuan, 1984: 147, 243). For Wei, *China* had come to include Manchuria, Mongolia, and Xinjiang.

The same view can be found in other works of geography published in the mid-nineteenth century. In his *Shuofang beicheng* (*On the Defense of the Northern Frontier*), He Qiutao, a specialist in the history of Sino-Russian relations, referred to the Qing border with Russia from Manchuria to Xinjiang as that between *China* and Russia, and his drawing of the boundary

bore a name in keeping with that perspective: “Map of the border between *China* and Russia” (*Zhongguo yu Eluosi jiaojie tu*) (He Qiutao, n.d.: 68.3b-4a). In his well-known *Yinghuan zhiliue* (*An Outline of World Geography*), Xu Jiyu declared that *China*’s territory included Manchuria, Mongolia, Xinjiang, Qinghai, and Tibet (Xu Jiyu, 1995: 1.11a-b). As many scholars have indicated, the geographical works of Gong, Wei, He, and Xu powerfully influenced how the Han people thought about geography in the second half of the nineteenth century, functioning as an ideological bridge between the imperial Manchu enterprise and Han elites (Zhao Lisheng, 1992: 223-58).

During the second half of the nineteenth century, gunboats filled with foreign troops exploded conceptions of *China*, which was no longer the “central state” it had long seemed (Wang Ermin, 1977). Yet these changes did not prevent the view of *China* as a multiethnic entity from spreading further among the Han literati. What is more, by the 1900s, this view became a tool exploited by the proponents of “greater Chinese nationalism” in their debates with the advocates of Han nationalism.¹⁹

One scholar relying on this approach was Kang Youwei, who refuted the Han nationalist view by adopting the official one (Tao Xu, 1995: 197). In a 1902 article, Kang described the expansion of the Qing realm as the growth of *China*’s territory. The territories collected under the name *China* had varied considerably over time, but the Qing conquest of Manchuria, Mongolia, Tibet, Xinjiang, and Qinghai had expanded the Chinese empire so vastly that in comparison, the lands ruled by the Han, Tang, Song, and Ming dynasties seemed quite small (Kang Youwei, 1981: 486-87). According to Kang, with the consolidation of Qing rule over the preceding two centuries, different groups had been woven into a new community that he called “greater *China*” (*da Zhongguo*), a development that laid the groundwork for a “new *China*” (*xin Zhongguo*) (Tao Xu, 1995: 200-201). Kang Youwei strongly opposed talk of establishing a Han-centered *China*, an effort that he viewed as ignoring the new reality of the multiethnic state (Kang Youwei, 1981: 496-97). He proposed instead that the threats from abroad be countered by fostering a strong national identity created from different ethnic groups: “[The Qing government] should establish as [*China*’s] permanent national name the Chinese state (*Zhonghua guo*). Because the Manchus, Han-Chinese, Mongols, Muslims, and Tibetans all belong to a single state, they are all *Chinese* (*Zhongghuo ren*) without any distinction” (qtd. in Tao Xu, 1995: 201).

As Kang Youwei demonstrates, the “greater Chinese nationalism” was rooted, in many respects, in the official Qing view of *China*. Rather than being an ivory-tower viewpoint of a few scholars, it was a way of thinking deeply ingrained in many Han and non-Han people even before the 1911 Revolution. Between 1903 and 1908, memorials by at least eighteen Man-

chu, Mongol, and Han officials from Beijing, Jiangsu, Ningxia, Heilongjiang, Hunan, Anhui, and Guangxi suggested a similar position (QM, 915-60). They argued that because *China* was a country containing different ethnic groups, only a set of institutional reforms could reduce the divisions between the Han and non-Han people and establish a strong, united state (QM, 915-60). Typical in this regard was Dong Fangsan, an unknown licentiate from Fulu—a small county of Hubei. In a 1907 memorial regarding Manchu-Han relations, he stressed, “The Manchus, Mongols, and Han are different branches of a single tree. Originally, they came from the same ancestor and they will develop into a unity” (*yi er shu, shu er yi*) (QM, 931). His description suggests that “greater Chinese nationalism” had spread not only in the capital but also among regional elites.

Some members of the Manchu elite also promoted their cause by simultaneously publishing newspapers in Beijing and Tokyo (Rhoads, 2000: 116; Huang Xingtao, 2002: 8-9): they conceived of “Manchus, Han Chinese, Mongols, Tibetans, and Muslims as united in a great citizenry” (*tonghe Man, Meng, Zang, Hui, Han wei yi da guomin*) (qtd. in Huang Xingtao, 2002: 8). One of these Manchu activists, a scholar named Henjun emphasized in his essays that the “people of *China*, an ethnically diverse group, have become a single nation” (*Zhongguo renmin, jie tong minzu yi zhongzu zhi guomin ye*) (Huang Xingtao, 2002: 8).

Because “greater Chinese nationalism” depended on the official view, which, as noted earlier, was being broadly disseminated through the educational system, it was far more influential than Han nationalism. But that influence has long been ignored by scholars of the 1911 Revolution, who have tended to pay excessive attention to the anti-Manchu spokesmen in the early twentieth century: Zhang Taiyan, Zou Rong, Sun Yat-sen, and others hoping to replace the Qing empire with an ethnically pure *China* that would no longer include Manchuria, Mongolia, Xinjiang, and Tibet (Zhang Yong, 2002: 6-10; Li Guoqi, 1994; Wang Fansen, 1985: 68-101). This scholarly imbalance may give the false impression that Han nationalism enjoyed greater support among the Han literati than did the vision of a modern multi-ethnic state propounded by Kang Youwei and his supporters. In fact, until 1911, anti-Qing intellectuals had to work underground; their writings were banned in China proper and thus available only in the Western concessions along the coast. Their views therefore reached a highly limited audience, even after the Wuchang revolt of October 10, 1911.

Zhang Yong’s recent study has demonstrated that far from representing the majority position, Han nationalism did not enjoy significant support even

among the Han elites. Its lack of adherents was particularly obvious in the Jiangnan region during the interim between the Wuchang revolt and the founding of the Republic of China later in 1912. When Sun Yat-sen, long a loyal advocate of Han nationalism, realized just how powerful the rival camp was, he gave in and adopted the broad concept of “greater Chinese nationalism” (Zhang Yong, 2002: 110-11).²⁰

Thus, one might say that while Sun won a political victory over the Qing rulers, the Qing dynasty enjoyed a geographical and ideological victory, having defined the form of the emerging postrevolutionary Chinese state. Thanks to the rise and spread of “greater Chinese nationalism,” the official Qing view of *China* as a multiethnic entity has persisted into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, contributing directly to the construction of the modern Chinese national identity.

As we have seen, from the mid-seventeenth century to the fall of the Qing dynasty, the Manchu rulers identified themselves with *China* while fostering a new understanding of that word. They creatively developed the idea of *China* as a multiethnic entity. On entering the twentieth century, the Qing court used educational reforms to promulgate its view among both Han and non-Han groups. The official Qing view of *China* gradually impinged on the Han Chinese conceptions of *China*, spurring a shift from its strict identification with Han people to acceptance of the idea that it had to be ethnically heterogeneous.

A review of the imperial Qing view of *China* enunciated over three centuries provides new insights into the Manchu-centered approach to explaining Qing history. The advocates of the Manchu-centered model have revealed the historic contribution of the Manchus in conquering Inner Asia and forging a multiethnic empire, but they have not completely freed themselves from the traditional view of the Manchu rulers as passive exploiters of Han cultural resources. Thus, while they have investigated the Qing imperial success on the frontier, they have left unexamined another important issue: how did the Manchu emperors accommodate the concept of *China* to the new political reality of the Qing multiethnic state? By tracing the shifting definition of *China* over the course of the Qing dynasty and by linking those shifts to modern Chinese national identity, I have shown that Manchu rule affected not only the historical course of Inner Asia but also the core concepts of Han culture linked to the idea of *Zhongguo*. In this regard, the Manchu-centered approach helps us to interpret the development of Han Chinese culture under the Manchus as well as the Qing success in Inner Asia.

NOTES

1. In this article, China and Chinese refer to the state and its people after 1911. *China* is used for the concept of *Zhongguo*—the state, according to the Qing court; its scope varied over different dynasties, expanded with the expansion of the Qing territory, and was similar to the scope of China on mid-eighteenth-century ethnic and geographical maps. *Chinese* translates *Zhongguoren/Zhongguo zhi ren*, the Qing court's label for the people living within its border. On the equivalence of the terms *Zhongguo* and *Zhongxia*, see *Ciyuan* (1979: s.v. "Zhongxia").

2. China's nationalism has recently been a hot topic among American scholars of Qing history, but they have paid little attention to the evolution of the concept of *China*. However, William C. Kirby's (2004) insightful essay does focus on its changes in the twentieth century, and Edward Rhoads notices that the Qing court considered *China* to be a multiethnic entity at the turn of the twentieth century (Rhoads, 2000: 293, 294). In her new book *The Clash of Empires*, Lydia Liu (2004) places the rise of the Western terms for *China* in the context of nineteenth-century imperialism (my thanks to Hu Minghui for drawing my attention to this work). Many Chinese and Japanese scholars have discussed the origin and evolution of *China* (Wang Ermin, 1977: 441-80; Yu Zhengui, 1994; Kawashima Shin, 1997; Luo Zhitian, 1998: 1-91; Hu Axiang, 2000), but only one has investigated the official Qing concept, in a brief outline: Kawashima Shin (1997).

3. The etymology of the word *nikan* is not clear; it may derive from the Mongol word *khatai*, which means "Han Chinese" (Chen Yinke, 1980: 91). On the meaning of *nikan*, see Huang Zhangjian (1967) and Li Yanji ([1756] 2001: 2.21a). Manchu archival documents show that the word was used to refer to the Han people. For example, Hong Taiji said in 1635 that he "treated the Jusen, Nikan, and Mongols equally" (Liu Housheng, 1993: 253). In addition, the Manchu archives used it to refer to the Ming state, emperors, and military. For example, the terms *nikan i gurun* (the Ming state), *nikan han i gurun* (the Ming emperor's state), *nikan i cooha* (the Ming power), and *nikan i jasei* (the Ming border) frequently appear in discussions of the Manchu 1618 and 1636 events (Li Xuezhai, 1971: 57-63; *Kyu Manshu to*, 1975: 173, 196, 224, 266, 349, 360, 362).

4. Hu Axiang thinks that the Chinese dynasties did not identify themselves with *China* until the Ming. But many official documents issued by the Northern Wei, Jin, and Yuan dynasties suggest that this identification began as early as the fourth and fifth centuries. For more details, see Wei Shou (1987: 497, 617, 1947-48), Tuo Tuo (1987: 1915, 2180), and Song Lian (1987: 1729, 3293, 3858).

5. A survey of only the *Ming shilu* materials related to foreign relations yields many edicts and memorials equating Ming with *China*. See Li Guoxiang (1991: 91, 93, 102, 346, 348, 361, 386, 394, 395, 420, 914, 919).

6. On the Jin and Yuan rulers' defense of their own ethnic identity, see Langlois (1981), Chan (1984), and Endicott-West (1989).

7. On the translation of *China* into the Manchu phrase *Dulimbai gurun*, see An Shuangcheng (1993: 713). On the Manchu translation of the term *Huaxia*, see San-e (1700: 3.26b). In the Qing period, *Dulimbai gurun* was also the equivalent of the Chinese word *Hua*. For example, in the Manchu version of *An Illustration of Tributaries* (*Zhigong tu*), the word *Hua* was translated *Dulimbai gurun* (Zhuang Jifa, 1989: 107). On the translation of *Zhongyuan* as *Dulimbai gurun*, see Elliott (2000: 638).

8. I have not seen the original Manchu documents cited here. But Qu Liusheng, who recently helped to translate these materials into Chinese, told me in Beijing in 2002 that they do use the Manchu term *Dulimbai gurun* as the title of the Qing state.

9. In 1936, these documents and their Manchu translations were collected into a book titled *The Russian Archives in the Former Palace* (Gugong bowuyuan, [1936] 1969). It is full of exam-

ples of Qing officials translating the titles of both the Qing state and its rulers into the Manchu terms *Dulimbai gurun* (*China*) and *Dulimbai gurun amba enduringge han* (the great *Chinese* khan).

10. This figure is based on my survey of the archives collected in QD, which includes all the surviving official documents on Qing relations with Russia between 1653 and 1734.

11. The Manchu court definitely and absolutely rejected the view of *China* as the Han state, but it by turns clung to and denied the notion that *China* was a Confucian community, depending on which ethnic community involved. In its dealings with non-Han groups in southwest China, the Qing court claimed that the groups were Chinese only to the extent that they accepted Confucian culture (Rowe, 1994). This standard was never applied to non-Han groups such as Tibetans and Mongolians, however; the court, though treating them as part of *China*, prohibited them from having much contact with Han culture (Zhang Yongjiang, 2001).

12. The paucity of source materials makes it difficult to determine when the new translation was first used in the official documents, but it did appear in 1689: the Manchu version of the 1689 Treaty of Nerchinsk refers to the Qing state as *Dulimbai gurun*.

13. I have modified Elliott's (2001) translation.

14. Benoist labeled the Qing state *China* (*Zhongguo*) on his map. He said that "in Asia . . . there are more than one hundred countries, of which the greatest is *China*" (*qi dazhe shoutui Zhongguo*) (Qin Guojing, 1997: 41).

15. The authors of the imperially sponsored *HC* placed the geographical account of Inner Asia not in the "surrounding countries section" (*siyi kao*), which discussed tribute countries, but in the "geography section" (*yudi kao*) devoted to the Qing state.

16. For the Qing court, the terms *Zhongguo zhi ren* and *Zhongguoren* were identical in meaning, and they therefore were rendered in the Manchu translations by a single phrase: *Dulimbai gurun i niyalma*. The word *niyalma* means "people" (An Shuangcheng, 1993: 255).

17. For relevant documents, see, for example, Wang Tieya (1957). Wang's book reproduces all the treaties entered into by the Qing court from 1689 to 1911.

18. In 1760, the Qianlong emperor gave Urumchi the rather Confucian name Dihua. Many Xinjiang towns and cities, even city gates, were assigned similar Confucian names—Changji, Suilai, Fukang, Huifu, Fengqing, and so on (*Xiyu tuzhi*, 1965: 10:1a, 2b). Shortly after the conquest, Qianlong superimposed on part of Xinjiang the governmental hierarchy of counties, departments, and prefectures found in China proper (*Xiyu tuzhi*, 1965: 10: 1a). Qianlong and his Manchu officials oversaw the compilation of *Xiyu tuzhi*, and its statements reflect the official view on Xinjiang.

19. On the past and present scholarship on Chinese nationalism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, see Levenson (1968), Townsend (1992), Duara (1995), Crossley (1999), Fitzgerald (1996), and Karl (2002). How the Qing imperial view of *China* affected its formation and development remains unstudied.

20. Many scholars have noted that Sun Yat-sen—long a loyal advocate of the Han nationalism—turned to "greater Chinese nationalism" shortly after the 1911 Revolution. But Zhang Yong (2002) is among the first to observe that the wide influence of the "greater Chinese nationalism" forced Sun to switch camps.

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