STARING AT HORSEWOMEN: CHINESE LITERATI IN MANCHURIA AND THEIR NARRATIVES OF SELF AND OTHER

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1 Introduction[1]

Possibly in 1685,[2] a brilliant Chinese literate from Jiangsu Province by the name of Wang Yiyuan 王一元 (1658–?, *juren* 1690, *jinshi* 1703) crossed the region east of the Shanhai Pass (*Shanhai guan* 山海關), which historically divided China (proper) from the external realms and was thus considered the end or the beginning of the civilized world depending on the direction one was headed when crossing it. A few decades later, Wang wrote in his *Memories of Liaozuo*[3] (*Liaozuo jianwen lu* 遼左見聞錄):

> 山海關外三里許，有一嶺甚峻，西曰"悽惶"，東曰"歡喜"。蓋前代戍邊壯士入則喜而出則悲也，因以名嶺。
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> About three miles from the Shanhai Pass, there rose a tall peak whose western face was called "grief" and the eastern one "joy." Most likely, this is because, under the previous dynasty, soldiers of the border defense rejoiced when crossing the Pass going west and mourned when going east.[4]
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> 山海關東羅城有額曰："天下第一關"。至此者莫不泫然。
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> At the Dongluo—the eastern fortress of Shanhai Pass, a plaque reads: "The First Passageway under Heaven." None of those who cross the Pass can hold back their tears.[5]

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1 Before discussing the two writers and their works specifically, some information about the historical, social, and institutional context will be provided in this first section.

2 The exact year is uncertain. Apart from a few sections in which consecutive entries are on the same topic, Wang Yiyuan's work "Memories of Liaozuo" lacks organization—chronological or of any other kind. Most of its content gives the impression of scattered notes. Very few entries are dated, and there is no sure way of determining the time frame of those that are not. The author does say that he arrived in Manchuria in 1685 (see GTCJWL: 1 and XGRJWL: 1). He most likely crossed the Pass on his way to his destination, Tieling, in northern Liaoning Province, so the passage may refer to that year. On the other hand, it is possible that he visited the region again later.

3 For a discussion of the name "Liaozuo," see section 3.

4 GTCJWL: 2; XGRJWL: 5. For this study, two editions of "Memories of Liaozuo" have been consulted: the one of the National Library, deemed to be the closest to the original, and the one punctuated and commented by Xu Guangrong (for details, see References below). For the reader's convenience, I will indicate page references for both the versions.

5 GTCJWL: 8; XGRJWL: 22.

The Ming did expand their dominion beyond the Pass and into present-day northeast China, establishing two military commissions (*duzhihuisi* 都指揮司): that of Liaodong (Liaodong dusi 遼東都司), in present day eastern Liaoning Province, and that of Nu'ergan (Nu'ergan dusi 奴兒乾都司, Jurchen-Manchu *nirugan*) in present day Jilin and Heilongjiang Provinces. Soldiers posted at the Liaodong Border Wall (*Liaodong bianqiang* 遼東邊墻[6]) or stationed in the other, even more remote, commission, faced a cold, hostile environment and hard living conditions.

After the Qing conquest of northern China (1644), the militias of the Eight Banners still based in Manchuria guarded the Empire from the constant threat from tsarist Russia and the Dzungars.[7] Sustaining the armies in the then-sparsely populated territory was not easy. To better provide for the troops' necessities and, in general, to repopulate and strengthen the region, in addition to relocating both bannermen and Chinese commoners (*minren* 民人) from other places of the Empire, the Qing also punished Ming loyalists, criminals, and corrupt individuals by exiling them to the northeast to serve as farmers, laborers, builders, and border guards, or to be enlisted in the banner contingents. Under the Qing dynasty, the Northeast was not just a border region: Manchuria was also the new rulers' motherland, populated, at least up to the first half of Emperor Kangxi's reign (1690s), by a majority of Manchu people.[8] Outlaws were thus sent to live in a foreign place geopolitically embedded in the empire of which they were the disloyal subjects. The ethnocultural blending had only just begun, and Manchu and Han Chinese (apart from those incorporated into the Eight Banners) were mostly foreigners in each other's eyes. The exiled Chinese, who would gradually become integrated into various constituencies of Manchuria, all the while preserving their own specific identity, are widely known as *liuren* 流人, the "exiles."[9]

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6 See Zhang Shizun 2002, 2003.

7 For the relationships and conflicts between the Qing and the Zunghars in Kangxi era, see Di Cosmo 2014: 344–350; for relationships with Russia from the 1640s to the Treaty of Nerchinsk, see Perdue 2010a, b.

8 See section 3.

9 A very common term, still widely used in contemporary Chinese. It is an abbreviation of *liufang zhi ren* 流放之人, "people who have been exiled." In the language of Qing sources, exiles are also sometimes referred to either by the somewhat ambiguous term *liuxi* 流徙—which can also denote, and is in fact semantically closer to, "migrants" or "vagrants"—or the more technical *qianshu* 遣戍, "sent to defend the border." Generally, the similar terms *ximin* 徙民 (Qing-era) and *liumin* 流民 (contemporary) refer, instead, to migrants in general.

In a 2008 essay,[10] Jin Yue argued that Manchuria's exiles can be divided into two main categories: those who "assimilated into the Manchu community" (*jiaru manzu gongtongti* 加入滿族共同體) and those who "always preserved their identity of Han Chinese" (*shizhong baochi Hanren shenfen* 始終保持漢人身份).

Jin's succinct summary of a very complex reality suffers from oversimplification. In some cases, he seems to take for granted the fact that, once a group of people is folded into an institutional framework, they blend in and develop a new identity influenced by other groups that have been part of that framework longer. To some extent, such identity formation did indeed take place in Qing Manchuria; however, the "Manchurization" of Chinese exiles registered in the banner system and living alongside bannermen (see Jin's categories below)[11] happened over a very long span of time, in some localities more than in others, and affected some categories of *liuren* much more than it did others. As will be shown below, many of the exiles inserted into Manchu institutions proudly preserved their "authentic" Han identity until they died on their posts or, when lucky enough to obtain an imperial pardon, carried it back to their hometowns almost unaltered. At the same time—as Jin himself states, without, however, elaborating in detail on the phenomena—some who were identified as "Chinese" (*hanren* 漢人), underwent a process of Manchurization or, at the very least, absorbed elements of Manchu culture.

Despite some shortcomings, Jin's work nevertheless provides a clear and reliable account of the basic categories of exiles which can be helpful here. Among the *liuren* who were integrated into the Manchu institutions, Jin individuates the following groups:

1. *gei pijiaren wei nu* 給披甲人為奴, "bound as serfs to banner fighters."[12] Especially among the exiles deported to northern Manchuria, many were feudally attached to Eight Banners nobles, officers, and soldiers as serfs (*nu* 奴). Their status was perpetual and hereditary, so entire Chinese families served Manchu households for generations.
2. *fu bingyi* 服兵役, "required to perform military service."[13] This group of exiles were enlisted in the navy to help build riverine craft in Girin Ula (烏拉, see map 1) and Heilongjiang and, of course, engage in combat whenever the need arose. Some were coopted into the local Chinese Martial Banners (Hanjun 漢軍, *ujen*

10 Jin Yue 2008: 54–58.

11 More generally, despite the rulers' effort to segregate the main ethnicities and constituencies of Manchuria, the phenomenon of "intermingling" between Chinese and Manchu, and, as a consequence, the merging of the two cultures, was constantly ongoing.

12 Jin Yue 2008: 55.

13 Jin Yue 2008: 56.

cooha), while others, such as those on the Shenyang naval base, were assembled into newly established banner cells. The institutional process took a long time, however, and it was not until the late nineteenth century that they were officially recognized as bannermen. But nor were they commoners: for centuries, they had identified simply as "sailors" (C. *shuishiyingren* 水師營人).

3. *zhanding* 站丁, "station workers", *taiding* 台丁 (Manchu *tai nikan*), "guard post personnel."[14] In Qing Manchuria, a great number of post-and-relay stations were installed as well as a quantity of watch posts on the Willow Palisade (*liutiaobian* 柳條邊, *biregen i jase*,[15] see map 1). These were manned mainly by captives from the war against the Three Feudatories.[16] The Manchu *tai nikan* is an interesting compound of a Chinese mono-morphemic loanword, *tai* 台 (post, station, platform), and *nikan*, meaning "(Han) Chinese." The whole expression thus literally means "the Chinese of the watch posts." Interestingly, however, as low as their social status may have been, these people were registered under the Manchu Banners and soon began to identify as bannermen.
4. *nongnu* 農奴, "field servants."[17] The exiles also provided labor force for manor lands[18] which they worked as serfs. They answered to the Shengjing Imperial Household Department (*Shengjing zongguan neiwufu* 盛京總管內務府, *Mukden i dorgi baita be uheri kadalara yamun*), which was in charge of the manor land—hence their name, which can be translated as "farming serfs." These serfs were registered under the institution's banner divisions.

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14 Jin Yue 2008: 56

15 The barrier, consisting of an embankment planted with willows, was erected as a border between southern and northern Manchuria starting from the 1650s. The palisade also served the purpose of enforcing the prohibition on migration to the north of the region—whereas, during early Qing times, migration to Liaoning was permitted. For extensive accounts on the palisade's structure and functions see Yang Shusen 1978 and Edmonds 1979.

16 *San fan zhi luan* 三藩之亂. The three southern lords—Wu Sangui 吳三桂, Shang Kexi 尚可喜, and Geng Jingzhong 耿精忠, formerly allies of the Qing—rebelled in 1671 and were ultimately defeated under Kangxi rule in 1682.

17 Jin Yue 2008: 57

18 The manor land was owned by the state—C. *guanzhuang* 官莊—or by Manchu nobles belonging to the imperial family or to the elite warriors of the conquest—C. *wangzhuang* 王莊. Although, strictly speaking, it was distinguished from the regular bannerland, *qidi* 旗地, which belonged to the "rusticated bannermen," the manor land was perceived as belonging to the Eight Banners in contrast to the commoners' land, *mindi* 民地. This is why Isett (2006: 8, 57) and other scholars choose to generally refer to both bannerlands and manor lands as "Qing land."

The only category of deportees who maintained their Han identity mentioned by Jin are those who were pardoned but not allowed to return home. Instead, they were granted the status of commoners—the only constituency in Manchuria that was not incorporated in the Eight Banner system and was made up of Han Chinese only. They were mostly migrants from inner China who settled in Manchuria and farmed taxed lands. Since other constituencies in Manchuria were all subsumed under the banners, although each to a different extent and in different ways, one could argue that only those among the exiles who became commoners maintained their "Chinese institutional identity."[19] Yet their cultural identity was another matter.

The purpose of the foregoing account was to provide some background information about Qing Manchuria's social mosaic and the exiles in particular. However, the extent to which the categories of exile listed above can be considered "bannermen"[20] and the varying degree of their "Manchurization," are extremely complex topics that cannot be dealt with in detail here. The historical and literary works this study is dedicated to address the interaction and intermingling between the Chinese and Manchu worlds that was happening in Manchuria from the point of view of their cultured authors. I will now turn to the specific situation of the two Chinese literati to whom this study is dedicated, Wang Yiyuan and Wu Zhenchen.

Two recent studies by An Dawei and Sun Xiaodong[21] provide an alternative classification of the exiles and can help having a better grasp on Wu Zhenchen, author of *A Treatise on Ningguta* (*Ningguta jilüe* 寧古塔紀略). An and Sun base their categorizations on the reasons why exiles such as Wu were deported in the first place. Among the various groups they introduce, there are individuals who were punished because of "Imperial-exam-related offenses" (*kechang an* 科場案, or *kechang shi* 科場事). In Shunzhi times, many cheaters were caught. Those who were not executed, were exiled. Some scholars hold that the the arrests were actually a stratagem to eliminate potential dissi-

19 Jin Yue 2008: 57, "*shizhong baochi Hanren shenfen* 始終保持漢人身份."

20 Like the sailors, many other groups in Manchuria were identified, and identified themselves, based on their tasks and functions rather than on ethnicity or institutional belonging: this was true of station personnel, border guards, bailiffs (C. *zhuangtou* 莊頭), serfs (C. *zhaungding* 莊丁), and many others. Yet, generally speaking, they were all embedded in the banner system which, as a whole, was distinguished from the commoners. In other words, just as the banner lands, while internally diverse, were distinguished from the commoners' lands, so the categories of people belonging to the banners varied in ranks and social status, from the army general to the ship builder, while maintaining a fundamental social distinction between banner people and non-banner people.

21 An Dawei 2016, Sun Xiaodong 2016.

dents among Han literates.[22] In 1657, such sad destiny befell Wu Zhenchen's father, Wu Zhaoqian 吳兆騫 (1631–1684) from Wujiang 吳江, Jiangsu Province, who was exiled to Ningguta (present-day southern Heilongjiang Province, see map 1), where Zhenchen was born seven years later. Wu Zhenchen was thus the son of an exiled man of letters, born and raised in his father's place of exile.

Much less is known about Wang Yiyuan's life and background. The very reasons why he moved to Tieling in Liaoning (see map 1 and 2) in 1685, are still uncertain. Nevertheless, from the many pages dedicated to exiled scholars in his *Memories of Liaozuo*, which include a beautiful eulogy of Wu Zhaoqian, it is quite clear that Wang Yiyuan very much related to the exiled intellectuals' misfortune.

Although, strictly speaking, neither Wu Zhenchen nor Wang Yiyuan belonged to the category of literati exiled for allegedly cheating at the Imperial exams, both of them were, for different reasons, strongly attached to this group of exiles—Wu Zhenchen was the son of such an exile and Wang Yiyuan possibly identified as one, as I will explain later.

Both Wu Zhenchen and Wang Yiyuan were gifted writers, and both spent about twenty years in Manchuria. Their vivid sketches of local life contain information on languages, habits, customs, and activities as well as the character and psychology of local ethnicities and constituencies. They also pay much attention to both the social diversity and the cultural blending that was taking place. Their descriptions of the Manchus, the New Manchus, the Chinese, bannermen and commoners, soldiers and exiles, reflect their particular perception of the Other and how this part of their life redefined their perception of the Self.

The two writers lived, respectively, in northern and southern Manchuria. Comparing the contents, styles, and vocabulary choices of their works helps us to perceive the significant differences between the two sub-regions in terms of society, culture, and institutions.

In this essay, I will focus on these differences, in view of demonstrating how, in addition to their great value as historical sources, the two books provide precious material for the study of the Chinese historical perception of the Other and the Self.

22 Xu Guangrong 2013: 27 (when referring to notes and comments instead of the original contents of the book, the 2013 edition of *Memories of Liaozuo* will be indicated by the chief editor's name); Sun Xiaodong 2016: 48–50.

2 Wu Zhenchen's *A Treatise on Ningguta*: A clash between the ethnocentric sense of superiority and the fascination with the simple, earnest Other

In 1657, cases of cheating at official examinations spread throughout the country, infuriating the Shunzhi emperor. That year, all the candidates from the Jiangnan circuit were summoned to the capital to retake their exams in the menacing presence of the monarch himself and dozens of relentless supervisors. Wu Zhaoqian, a prominent scholar who had gained fame as one of the "Three Phoenixes" of Jiangzuo (江左, southern China), terrified by such circumstances, or maybe as an act of protest against tyranny, handed in a blank paper. Whatever his reason may have been, it was a major offense. He was condemned to deportation to Ningguta, the coldest northern region of Manchuria—as harsh a punishment as could be inflicted, short of hanging or decapitation. Wu was devastated. To be able to follow him, his wife married away their elder daughter and entrusted the younger one to friends. During their life in Ningguta, she gave birth to a son and two more daughters. The boy was named Zhenchen 栚臣. Although they sometimes had to rely on economic help from Zhaoqian's older brother, Wu Zhaokuan 吳兆寬 (dates of life unknown), who had obtained the *jinshi* qualification and a high-level bureaucratic position, the Wu family managed to do relatively well. Zhaoqian earned the appreciation of high-ranked banner officers, including General (*jiangjun* 將軍, *amba jangin*) Bahai (?–1696),[23] who hired him as a scribe, interpreter, and teacher for his two children. The general was indeed good to him. When Bahai was recruiting sailors to fight against the Russians, he made sure both Wu Zhaoqian and Wu Zhenchen were exempted from joining the naval forces in Girin Ula in exchange for a few taels of silver—pocket change to Zhaoqian's powerful brother. When Zhenchen came of age and was to be enlisted as a soldier, the general exonerated the boy, it seems, simply out of fondness for his father.

Just like it happened in southern Manchuria, exiled literati, former high officials, and their descendants also enjoyed differential treatment. According to Wang Yiyuan, many were given the status of commoners and exempted from forced labor which often burdened other migrant commoners.[24] However, judging from Wu Zhenchen's narration

23 The translation "General" is based on Hucker 1985: entry 694. The highest authority of the local Eight Banner system's administration. Prior to 1683, there were two generals stationed in Manchuria, one in Shenyang, and one in Ningguta; the latter was later transferred to Girin Ula (present day Jilin city). Bahai 巴海 was general of Ningguta/Jilin from 1660 to 1683. His tenure covers the Wu family's entire stay was in Ningguta (1657–1681), except for the first three years.

24 See section 3.

as well as other reports, it would seem that all this did not help much to alleviate the suffering of Zhaoqian's afflicted soul. Zhenchen's courtesy name was Suhuan 蘇還, "Return to Suzhou." Suzhou 蘇州 is one of the most important and well-known Chinese cities, and in Zhenchen's courtesy name it symbolizes his parents' hope of return to the family's province of origins.[25] Their dream came true in 1681, when Gu Zhenguan 顧貞觀 (1637–1714)[26] and Wu Zhaoqian's other influential friends vouched for him before the emperor.[27] Before that, Kangxi had received Zhaoqian's "Fu[28] of Mount Changbai" (*Changbaishan fu* 長白山賦)[29] which, it is said, moved the sovereign deeply.[30] Zhenchen mourned the death of his father only three years after their return to Jiangsu, and wrote that Heaven had given him "a notorious name and a tragic destiny."[31] In the closing section of *A Treatise of Ningguta*, mainly dedicated to his father's memory, Zhenchen stated that he meant for the treatise to be read by his children, so that they would know "what kind of hardship and danger their grandfather had experienced." Most of first-generation exiles saw the deportation as the ultimate condemnation, and held that view throughout their lives even when they managed to make a decent living. They were thousands of miles far from their families, in a strange place with a harsh climate. The only possible redemption was to be pardoned and allowed to move back home.

In an episode about a schoolmate of his, and a student of Wu Zhaoqian's, Chen Zhaoling 臣昭令, Wu Zhenchen captures the exiles' state of mind. Just like Wu Zhaoqian, the student had done pretty well for himself. Yet, when he was offered a position in Shanxi, China proper, he was both euphoric and confused, so much so that he was unable to think straight:

> 余窗友陳昭令者，父鐘愛之。因在官莊，萬無出身之日，我父言於將軍，稱其精通滿漢文理，將軍即用為官莊撥什庫，總三十二莊。後複兼管筆帖式事，辦事勤能，不數年，遂得實授八品筆帖式。後將軍調艾渾，隨行。又

25 See Liu Jiaming and Liu Qiong 2022: 78.

26 An eminent scholar and official. He was a friend of Nara Singde, a member of a prominent family of the Plain Yellow Banner very close to the emperor, see Official Biographies of Qing Era: 5738–5739.

27 Official Biographies of Qing Era: 5738.

28 Poetic style alternating rhyme and prose which dominated the literary scene in Han dynasty—206 BC–220 AD—thus also known as *Hanfu* 漢賦.

29 Manchu *Golmin Šanggiyan Alin*, the mountain on which the goddess Fekūlen gave birth to Bukūri Yongšon, the chosen leader of Manchu people. See *Manju i yargiyan kooli* 1:1–22. Zhaoqian's work is a hymn to the legendary Manchu ancestral mountain written in a classical Chinese literary style. Most likely, it was also an attempt to garner the emperor's favor.

30 Official Biographies of Qing Era: 5738.

31 ZDNJL: 25.

數年，升山西太原府陽曲縣丞。蓋流人無選內地之事，部憑忽到，同流者皆以晝錦相賀。昭令喜極，轉生憂懼，乃赴部問明。時熊賜履為塚宰，以為八品筆帖式不宜選縣丞，當得彼處驛站章京，即留憑不發。於是昭令叩頭固請，終不可得。大概久沉淵底，無升天之望，其可悲悼如此。

I had a schoolmate named Chen Zhaoling; my father was very fond of him. However, Zhaoling served as a laborer on the Imperial manor land, so he would never have the opportunity to build a career. So my father talked to General [Bahai] and told him about Zhaoling's literary talents both in Manchu and Chinese. The general made him a superintendent in charge of 32 plots. Later, Zhaoling also served as a translator[32] and, having proved himself diligent and competent, a few years later he was officially granted the title of Eight-graded Scribe. He followed the general on an expedition to Aihui.[33] A few years later, and he was promoted to Deputy Magistrate of Yangqu County of Taiyuan Prefecture, Shanxi province. Since exiles were not normally appointed to offices in the inner lands,[34] when the order was delivered it was a great surprise to all of us, and everyone celebrated Zhaoling's success with the rite of "the honorable officer who returns to his homeland." Zhaoling himself was euphoric, but somehow, his joy turned into fear, so he went to the Board [of Personnel] to ask for clarifications. At the time, Xiong Cilü was Minister of the Board. He deemed that an Eight-graded scribe was not fit to be appointed as Deputy Magistrate, and should instead be put in charge of one of the local relay stations, so he withheld the order and would not let Zhaoling depart for Shanxi. Zhaoling kowtowed and implored persistently, but his efforts were in vain. Sometimes, when you have stayed too long in a dark abyss, you lose the desire to reach the sky. Such was the my friend's misfortune.[35]

It is not like the "inner lands" of China proper were heaven per se, but for a young Chinese intellectual, obtaining a bureaucratic office definitely was, and that of Deputy

32 *Bitieshi* 筆帖式, from Manchu *bithesi*, literally meaning clerk, Hucker 1985, entries 4601–4602. In Manchuria's offices, their main responsibility was translation and proof-checking translations in bilingual official documents.

33 Also called Heilongjiangcheng 黑龍江城 (Manchu Aihūn (or Aigūn) hoton), located on the western bank of Heilongjiang river, see map 1. It was the first seat of Banner General Yamen in Heilongjiang. With its installment in 1683 (see QSL 5: 159), the basic jurisdictional geography of contemporary Northeast was established, the three modern provinces of Liaoning, Jilin, and Heilongjiang corresponding to the Banner General Headquarters of Shengjing (Shenyang), Ningguta/Girin Ula, and Aihui. As regards region's social fabric, though, the bisectional division into southern and northern Manchuria was still valid after 1683, since in Heilongjiang jurisdiction, just as in Jilin, there were no legal commoners.

34 Chinese *neidi* 內地. The expression indirectly classifies Manchuria as an outer, alien land.

35 JXCSNJL: 3-4.

District Magistrate (*xiancheng* 縣丞)[36] was a much higher a position than anything an exile could hope for. As for life in the remote north, it was an "abyss." Such was the exiles' basic perception of the place they lived in and of their adverse fortune.

In the final pages of the work, Wu Zhenchen evaluates of the role the exiled intellectuals played in Manchuria:

> 窮邊子弟，負耒傳經，據鞍弦誦，彬彬乎冰山雪窖之鄉，翻成說禮敦詩之國矣。
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> [We] people confined at the edge of the world, taught the Classics with a plough on our shoulders, recited poetry on a horseback. With the elegance of erudition, we transformed this freezing desolation into a land of rites and poems.[37]

Surely enough, Wu Zhenchen was raised on the myth of the holy, prosperous land from which his father had been wrongfully torn away. Moreover, Wu left Manchuria when he was only seventeen, didn't begin write his treatise until he had been back in his homeland for decades, and felt as if "several lifetimes had passed since those troubled times." One might thus argue that his words may have been an expression of nostalgia for the distant Manchuria. Nevertheless, these passages clearly convey the feeling of cultural superiority shared by the whole community of exiled intellectuals: Wu and his companions brought the light of civilization—mainly identified with culture and erudition—to this remote, undeveloped location. The belonging to an all-Chinese community of exiles, as well as the fact that Ningguta was territory of the Manchu, lends a sense of alterity to the foreign land where he was born and its inhabitants.

This sense of alterity and cultural superiority permeates the whole work. Two early passages meaningfully describe the ethnic segregation, the sense of diverseness felt between Hans and Manchus, and the despair of having been banished to the freezing north:

> 內城中惟容將軍、護從及守門兵丁，餘悉居外城。[...] 漢人各居東、西兩門之外。予家在東門外。[...] 後因吳三桂造逆，調兵一空，令漢人俱徙入城中，予家因移住西門內。內有東西大衙，人於此開店貿易。從此人煙稠密，貨物客商絡繹不絕，居然有華夏風景。
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> Only the general, his attendants, and the gate guards lived in the inner city. Everyone else had to stay in the outer zone. [...] The Chinese dwelt outside the Eastern and Western gates. Our family lived outside the Eastern gate [...]. Later on, Wu Sangui rebelled, the soldiers were all sent to fight, and the Chinese were transferred intra muros, so we moved within the Western gate. A thoroughfare ran across the inner city from east to

36 Translation based on Hucker 1985: entries 993 and 2492.
37 ZDNJL: 25.

> west, and many stores opened along the road. The place became densely populated, and merchants from other provinces came and went ceaselessly. Oddly enough, the place now reminded me of the urban landscapes of China.[38]
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> [...]
>
> 我父初到時，其地寒苦。[...] 初至者必三襲裘，久居則重裘可禦寒矣。至三月終，凍始解，草木尚未萌芽。近來漢官到後，日向和暖，大異曩時。滿洲人云："此暖是蠻子帶來。"可見天意垂憫流人，回此陽和也。
>
> When my father arrived here, the place was bitterly cold. [...] Those who just got here had to wear three coats to withstand the cold. After some time, two coats were enough. Only toward the end of the third month would the ice begin to melt, but the vegetation would not yet be sprouting. Recently, after the Chinese officials came, it started getting warmer every day, and now the weather had indeed changed. The Manchu always say: "It's the southerners who brought the heat." Apparently, Heaven pities us derelicts, and is blessing us with some warmth.[39]

After spending his childhood outside the city walls, it was a pleasant surprise for Zhenchen when the Chinese were allowed to live intra muros. He would not have expected to see an atmosphere resembling the Chinese urban environment—we should keep in mind, however, that at the time he had never been to a Chinese city, so the comparison is either inspired by his father's memories or drawn retrospectively decades later. In any case, the sense of Chineseness is very evident in these lines. When describing the landscape, Wu uses the term Huaxia 華夏, which refers to China in a broad, historical sense; but, more importantly, he extracts Ningguta and Manchuria from the Chinese world, as conveyed by the adverb *juran* 居然—surprisingly, unexpectedly.

The cold was indeed nearly unbearable to the Chinese, at least at the beginning. The image of the place made warmer by more Chinese settlers is found in other sources of this kind.[40] The passage accounts for the sense of desolation and loneliness of the Chinese in Manchuria and their hope to be reached by more "compatriots" to bond with—not that they would not pity the new arrivals. The use of the word *manzi* 蠻子, here translated as

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38 ZDNJL: 3-4.

39 ZDNJL: 6-7.

40 For instance, see "An unofficial history of Heilongjiang" (C. *Heilongjiang waiji* 黑龍江外紀), by the late Qing official and literate Xi Qing 西清: "people's spit would freeze before it touched the ground; domestic animals would die from hypothermia if not allowed near the heated *kang*; if one stayed outdoor too long, one's ears and nose would freeze and fall off one's face. [...] Later, when more migrants arrived from the south, it got warmer." See HWJ *juan* 1: 4–5.

"southerners," when quoting the Manchus, is very intriguing, since it can help analyze the Manchus' perception of the local Chinese and how the author interpreted this perception. Considering that in early Kangxi period's northern Manchuria the linguistic and cultural merging between Chinese and Manchu was in the very initial phase, it is most likely that the author refers to something the Manchu were saying in their own language—which Wu Zhenchen surely understood—rather than in Chinese. The Chinese epithet was used by both northern Chinese and northern foreigners (such as Jurchen-Jin and Mongols) to refer to southern Chinese, often in a derogatory sense. It can still be used like this in present times, although *nanman* 南蠻 is now more common—both words can be translated as "southern barbarian." There seems to be no exact equivalent in Manchu. The persons Wu Zhenchen overheard talking could have just been using the phrase *julergi bai niyalma,* "people from the south" or simply *man*.[41] One might also hypothesize that the term *manzi* was transliterated into Manchu as *mandzi*, as such phonetic loanwords are not uncommon: for instance, the word *fandzi* is derived from the Chinese *fanzi* 番子 (generally indicating foreigners or barbarians).[42] The compilers of the *Jianxicunshe* edition of the treatise[43] argue that the whole utterance is an innocent joke, just like when the people of the state of Northern Qi said that the southern literate Xu Ling 徐陵 had brought warmth into their land.[44] They may well be right. In the whole work, there is no sign of bitterness or discrimination on the part of the Manchu, and even the use of the term *manzi* or *mandzi* does not sound all that harsh. Nonetheless, the sense of alterity is clearly present.

At that time, in northern Manchuria, the Manchus could barely distinguish among Chinese of different provenance, so whichever term they used, even considering the unlikely possibility that Wu Zhenchen heard them speaking Chinese and therefore just using the Chinese word *manzi*, it most likely referred to the people coming from south of the Great Wall as a whole—the Chinese. Both the generic character, and the (not necessarily pejorative) connotation, of the term seem to be corroborated by Qianlong's "surprisingly relaxed attitude toward this verbal practice: 'Manchus informally term Han people *Manzi*, and the Han also informally call Manchus *Dazi*. This is only a reference to their home regions.' "[45] So to the Manchus, heat was a strange element imported by

41 Hauer 2007: 638.

42 Or, it could also have been an expression like *julergi (ba i) fandzi or julergi (ba i) fan i*, meaning "barbarians from the south." *Fan i* is also derived from the Chinese *fanyi* 番夷.

43 Probably edited by Yuan Chang 袁昶 in the late nineteenth century, this version is punctuated and annotated.

44 JXCSNJL: 5.

45 Mosca 2018: 112. The scholar quotes the emperor's utterance from the Veritable Records:

the Chinese. To the Chinese themselves, on the other hand, it clearly was a blessing from Heaven.

From the treatise, it is hard to determine how well Wu Zhenchen knew the Manchu language. Apart from the sentence above, which he most likely translated from Manchu, the only other clue on the issue is a half-a-page-long list of basic Manchu words he includes in the work.[46] The list, which contains kinship terminology, names of natural elements, some simple adjectives, common verbs, numbers from one to ten, probably aimed to give the readers a taste of what the language sounded like and how different it was from Chinese. The transcription of some verbs is captivating. In most cases, Wu Zhenchen uses the basic form, and renders the Manchu suffix *-mbi* with the Chinese characters 米 mǐ or 密 mì. A few verbs, however, are in the imperative form, such as "eat," *jefu* (者夫 zhefu); "sit," *te* (突 tu); "stand," *ili* (衣立 yili). This might suggest he did not have a perfect mastery of the grammar. For someone who knows it well, it would probably be more natural to write all the verbs they are listing in the same form, while Wu gives the impression of putting some verbs in the form he heard most frequently. However, he might have simply not paid much attention to an issue that was not important for the book—he did not even bother to use the same character consistently for the *-mbi* suffix. After all, he was born in Ningguta; his father, who worked as a secretary to the banner general, surely knew the language; as did his friend and classmate Chen Zhaoling, whom his father had recommended to the general for his command of both Manchu and Chinese; he also had the opportunity to study together with the general's sons.

Apart from the term *manzi*, the sentence Wu Zhenchen quotes from the local Manchus is also interesting as a whole. The entire treatise is written in classical Chinese, *wenyanwen* 文言文, whereas for the sentence spoken by the Manchus, the author chooses a syntactic structure much closer to the vernacular *baihuawen* 白話文 and, consequently, to modern spoken Chinese. The proud son of a famous scholar could not have written his work in any language other than that of the literati; to translate from Manchu, on the other hand, he used the plain language of the people, making Manchus sound illiterate. This is another example of the author's perception of the cultural gap between the learned Chinese, the Self, and the northern barbarian, the Other.

In the whole work, Wu Zhenchen refers to both the Chinese and Manchus mostly in ethnic terms. He refers to his community as *liuren*, and to the Chinese in general as *hanren. Qiren* 旗人, which most commonly identifies the Manchu from an institutional angle, but which, in a broader sense, can include bannermen of other ethnic affiliations, is not

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see Qing shilu 15: 64.

46 JXCSNJL: 10–11.

found in the work. Up to the early Qianlong era, no soldiers of the Chinese section of the Eight Banners were stationed in Ningguta, whereas in Girin Ula, as early as in 1692, seven *niru* of the division were already present.[47] Ula was the seat of the naval forces and the shipyard—hence the city's alternative name "Dockyard" (Chuanchang 船廠). Strategically much more important than Ningguta, especially as far as defense against the Russians was concerned, the place was far better manned. The local Chinese banner soldiers are mentioned in Yang Bin's 楊賓 (1650–1720) *A Treatise on the Willow Palisade* (*Liubian jilüe* 柳邊紀略, 1707), the best part of which is dedicated to Dockyard, where Yang's father was exiled, and the surrounding areas. The writer clarifies that the Chinese bannermen and the exiled Chinese, although they did not share the same institutional identity, appeared to be all alike in the eyes of Manchus.[48] Before emperor Yongzheng expanded the civil administration system to northern Manchuria in 1726, no officially recognized commoners lived in Ningguta either, even though vagrants did find their way there and illegally farmed banner land which was difficult to keep monitored. Their numbers were, however, very low, so that the civil county Yongzheng established in the area, *Taining xian* 泰寧縣, was abolished in 1730.[49] Therefore, being neither Chinese bannermen nor commoners, the Chinese in Ningguta could only identify as exiles and as Chinese, while all the other people Zhenchen interacted with were Manchu or New Manchus. In Ula, there were moreover Mongol soldiers. In addition, in early Kangxi era's northern Manchuria, the cultural blending between Manchu and Chinese was only just beginning, and the ethnic boundaries were still very strong.[50] These are the main reasons why Zhenchen refers

47 SJTZ QL 1, *juan* 19: 22–26.

48 LBJL *juan* 4: 2.

49 SJTZ QL1 *juan* 10: 10.

50 In a 2022 work dedicated to the treatise, Liu Jiaming and Liu Qiong have argued that by interacting with the locals, Chinese exiles were "developing a second identity" (Liu and Liu 2022). They draw such a conclusion mainly based on elements that do not actually show any significant change in the Chinese's perception of their own identity. Adjustments in diet and dwelling were necessary to survive in the new environment. Learning each other's techniques might have made Han and Manchus impressed with one another, but it also accentuated their sense of difference. This is quite clear from Wu Zhenchen's writing when he states, for instance, that the Manchu did not even know how to make a candle or use a fan, and yet they knew how to keep their feet warm at –30°C. Intriguingly, as Liu and Liu point out, the two ethnicities united against a common enemy: the Russians. There is no sign in the text, however, that this brought the two constituencies any closer. On the contrary, the vision of a powerful foreign invader only seems to emphasize the feeling of alterity: "they all had high-bridged noses and protruding eye sockets, green eyes and red hair. They were ferocious like tigers and were all marksmen with the musket. [...] Even the Manchus feared

to the Chinese as *hanren* and to the Manchu as *manren* or *manzhouren* 滿洲人. For opposite reasons, Wang Yiyuan hardly made any use of such ethnonyms in his work on Liaoning as I show below.

The recurring phrase *bu zhi* 不知, "to have no knowledge of," "to not know how to," is used in the treatise to indicate various aspects of the Manchus' and other Tungus people's cultural inferiority. The first two occurrences of the expression in the text state that the Tungus tribesmen "do not know any sort of calendar, nor do they know their birthday" (不知歲月，不知生辰).[51] Considering the importance of such notions in traditional Chinese culture, Wu Zhenchen must have found the fact quite striking. Several mentions of the Tungus' ignorance are related to material culture. For instance, beekeeping was unknown to the Manchus. They would tear down hives from trees when gathering pine nuts, and only later acquired from the Chinese the skill of heating the hive and melting the honey inside. Chinese also taught them how to make candles out of wax.[52] The fan was a mysterious object, as well, especially to the Tungusic tribes who were given fans together with other goods when they delivered the furs they paid as tribute. They would give them to the Chinese in exchange for "odds and ends" (*lingxing wujian* 零星物件).[53]

One main aspect of this cultural inferiority laid in these people's unrefined manners (*bu zhi* is used to denote this as well). Especially the tribesmen, whose strength and courage were very much appreciated by the Manchu ruler, and who would later gradually be registered in the banner system as the New Manchu (Xin Manzhou 新滿洲, Ice Manju), lacked any social graces, to say the least, in the eyes of Chinese observers. Of course, they could not possibly have any notion of the quintessence of Chinese culture—the rites, with which the Manchus, on the other hand, had already been familiar for some time.

The following passage illustrates the Chinese perception of the New Manchu:

> 今上愛其勇，賜以官爵 [...]。賜以官爵，亦不知貴。將軍嘗謂有爵者曰："今已有官，須學禮儀，一體上衙門。"次日，有官者約同齊到，有戴笠者，有負叉袋者，有跣足者。見者無不大笑。將軍命坐，即以叉袋墊地而坐。雖衣大紅蟒袍，其叉袋仍負於背不稍去，以便於買物也。後命進京，有不願

them" (ZDNJL: 4). The last remark seems to suggest that even the fierce, proud Manchu warriors were afraid of such an enemy—one can only imagine how frightened the southerners could be. Further, Wu Zhenchen seems to be saying that the Manchu and the Chinese might face the same destiny, which is not necessarily related to self-identification. They were threatened by the same people. It doesn't mean that they had got any closer in their perception of identity.

51 JXCSNJL: 7.

52 ZDNJL: 15.

53 ZDNJL: 10.

者聽歸本土。一日，數百家聚於郊外送別，哭聲震天。男婦相抱親臉，唧唧有聲，以此作別。近於都中見之，大非昔比，禮貌言談，亦幾與滿、漢無異矣。

Recently, His Majesty bestowed lordships on them [the New Manchu] to express admiration for their bravery. Yet even when gaining such titles, they still did not know how to act like nobles. General [Bahai] once addressed the "nobles" and said: "You have titles now; it is important that you learn the etiquette and present yourself at the office." And there they were the following day, with bamboo hats on their heads and sacks on their shoulders, barefoot. Whoever saw them laughed to tears. The general ordered them to sit down, and they sat on [their] sacks. Some were wearing beautiful, red embroidered robes, but they would not ever take the big sacks off their shoulders—they were also buying things [on the way to the general's office and back home]. When ordered to move to the capital, some were not willing to go and were allowed to return home. One time, hundreds of families gathered outside the walls to bid each other farewell, and their cries shook the earth. Men and women hugged and kissed each other's faces, making sharp, annoying sounds. That was their way of saying goodbye. Those who live near the capital are very different, however. They speak eloquently and politely, so that one can barely notice any difference between their manners and those of the Manchu or the Han.[54]

The passionate, uninhibited, noisy displays of affection among these people surely felt inelegant to the young learned Chinese man.[55]

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54 ZDNJL: 11–12.

55 The lack of affectation shown by the Tungus might be related to their social organization and family structure. The eminent anthropologist Sergej Michajlovič Shirokogoroff has pointed out that neither of the two fundamental units of Tungus society—the family and the clan—were perceived as social units, and therefore were not even named. The nomenclature for both the institutions are of alien origins—mainly Chinese, Mongol, or Russian. Only under such alien groups' pressure did the Tungus conceptualize the two social units. Many Tungus would say that before foreign influences, they had neither family nor clan, and lived like wild animals. In the traditional perception of the Tungus, the family was understood as a "biological and economic unit" that lived in the wigwam. The clan was perceived as "merely a group of persons connected by a certain complex of rights and obligations, bearers of terms, and they could not intermarry." The organization of the Tungus family was based on its economic efficiency, which implies that the family members' duties were dictated by material necessities. Relationships within the same generation and between sexes were rather egalitarian; for instance, both the father and the mother could become the head of the family based on their capability of managing the family's affairs. Sexual relations were quite free as well. In the Manchu family, the woman was allowed some leeway in sexual

As much as the "Old Manchu" (M. *Fe Manju*) were perceived as Other, the New Manchu were on another level of otherness. The former, after all, had been in contact with Chinese culture for many decades. If the New Manchu in Beijing could barely be distinguished from the Chinese and other Manchus because they had become graceful and eloquent, one can only deduce that old Manchus living in the "south" had made outstanding progress in the matter of manners and etiquette.

Regardless of how much he cherished his identity as a Chinese and as son of a family of talented intellectuals, Wu Zhenchen was born and raised in Ningguta, and inevitably grew attached to the place and its inhabitants. Among the privileges he enjoyed as the son of a "learned gentleman", was the ability to study alongside the general's sons and other children from high-ranked Manchu families. This included the training in mounted archery (*qi she* 騎射)—the very symbol of military prowess in Manchu tradition:

> 予七歲，鎮守巴將軍聘吾父為書記，兼課其二子，長名額生，次名尹生。余及固山烏打哈隨學。巴公長子，晝則讀書，晚則騎射。各攜自制小箭一、二十枝，每人各出二枝，如聚五人，共箭十枝，豎於一簇，遠三十步，依次而射，射中者得箭。每以此為戲。
>
> When I was seven, General Bahai hired my father to be his secretary and to teach his two boys. The elder was named Esen, the younger Isen. Sons of other banner officers and I attended their classes. The general's eldest son was taught letters in daytime and archery and riding in the evenings. Every [student] brought a dozen or more small arrows they made themselves. Each of us took out two, so if there were five pupils there would be ten arrows available. We would stick them in the ground as a bundle and then practice from a distance of 30 paces. We took turns shooting, and if you hit the target, you won an arrow as a prize. This was a game we often played.[56]

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relationships within the family, whereas in other Tungus groups she was basically free to have any sexual relationships she wanted. (See Shirokogoroff 1935: 97–104 and 405–408.) One could make the hypothesis that these characteristics would tend to make people behave more genuinely and spontaneously. In particular, if one's duties are not categorized as social or moral obligations but perceived merely as necessary to the family's livelihood, then such duties are felt less like impositions or restraints, and this might let the person feel free to be more direct and spontaneous. The Chinese family, on the other hand, had been perceived as a social unit for several thousands of years. It was internally regulated by moral norms, mainly deference and (sometimes unconditioned) obedience of the younger toward their elders, both within the same generation and between generations, and of women toward men. So before going under the yoke of government and functionaries (*guanzhang yueshu* 官長約束) as adults, Chinese children grew up under the moral yoke of the family. It is no wonder that the Chinese are not the most direct people in the world.

56 ZDNJL: 5-6.

In his leisure time, Zhenchen enjoyed fishing for big, delicious black breams (M. *falu*). He also liked the tasty brown frogs (M. *hasima*). Similar beasts could be found in China proper, but the author's use of the Manchu terms and the fact that he provides detailed anatomic descriptions suggest that he never saw these exact species anywhere else. The wild chickens the bannermen haunted were fat and juicy, even more than the famous ones of Liaoning; melons were incredibly sweet, in the summer you could have your fill without getting a bellyache; the majestic gyrfalcons could fly two thousand miles in a day and capture swans. All the things found in Ningguta were special in Zhenchen's later recollection.

The local Chinese had very much to learn from the Manchus, especially about survival in the blistering cold. For example, "water grass" (*wula cao* 烏臘草),[57] which was thin, long, and soft, could be stuffed into leather shoes and one's feet would never feel cold, even when walking in the deep snow.

Apart from enjoying practicing archery, Zhenchen was fascinated with the bravery and the military culture of the Manchu. The seasonal group hunting (*dawei* 打圍), was the one activity by which the Manchu warriors trained their fighting abilities in times of peace. Wu Zhenchen was very familiar both with the mighty hunters and with their fearsome beasts they hunted:

> 四季常出獵打圍。有朝出暮歸者，有兩三日而歸者，謂之打小圍。秋間打野雞圍。仲冬打大圍，案八旗排陣而行。成圍時，無令不得擅射。二十餘日乃歸。所得者，虎、豹、豬、熊、獐、狐、鹿、兔、野雞、雕羽等物。獵犬最猛，有能捉虎豹者。虎豹頗畏人。惟熊極猛，力能拔樹擲人。
>
> Hunting was frequent in all four seasons. Sometimes it just lasted one or a few days, those were called "small hunts"; in the fall [the hunters] went for wild chickens. In the middle of winter, they had the "big hunt," when they marched in the formation of the Eight Banner armies. When the prey was surrounded, it was prohibited to shoot unless a commander had given the order. The big hunt would last twenty days and more. They caught tigers, leopards, boars, bears, deer, foxes, rabbits, chickens, and raptors. The hounds were fierce, some could capture tigers. Tigers and leopards feared humans very much; only the bears did not, they were monstrous beasts, so strong that they could pluck trees out of the ground and throw them at the hunters.[58]

Frightful predators became prey; the gyrfalcons were ferocious, yet the hunters trained them; some New Manchus could kill a tiger single-handed—no wonder the Manchu ruler made them lords. Exiled Chinese intellectuals might have enlightened the place with

57 ZDNJL: 14.

58 ZDNJL: 19-20. For the relation between hunting and the Manchu identity, see Bello 2010.

culture, but the locals surely knew their way in the wilderness and in the battlefield. Nevertheless, such formidable fighting ability was not the aspect Wu Zhenchen was most fascinated with; nor was it what made him question his own culture and society. The spontaneity, directness, and honesty of the locals, especially of the New Manchu, amazed him. After a vivid description of the appearance, lifestyle, and livelihood of three of the Tungusic tribes, and right before the passage in which the author ridiculed them, come some of the most moving lines in the work and one of the best passages in the travel literature of Qing Manchuria:

> 黑斤人留發梳髻，耳垂大環四、五對，鼻穿小銀環。所產貂皮為第一。富者多以雕翅蓋屋，貂皮為帳為裘，元狐為帳，狐貉為被褥。非牙哈亦留發，男、婦不著褲，耳垂大環，鼻穿小環。所產貂皮略次。以樺皮為船，止容一人，用兩頭槳。如出海捕魚，則負至海邊，置水中。遇風便歸。呼兒喀則剃頭，男人帶環者少。所產貂鼠為次，惟黃狐、黃鼠、魚肉幹頗佳。此三處俱無官長約束，為人愚而有信義。有與店家賒綢緞蟒服者，店主擇黑貂一張為樣，約來年照樣還若干，至次年，必照樣還清。有他故，亦必托人寄到。相去千里，又非舊識，而不爽約如此。又勇不畏死，一人便能殺虎。今上愛其勇，賜以官爵，時以減等流徙者賜之為奴。如是者數年，令從呼兒喀遷至寧古，又遷至奉天。又二年，則令入都。今名"衣扯滿洲"者，即此也。
>
> The Heje people leave their hair very long and comb their beards. They pierce their ears with four, even five pairs of rings and have a small, silver one in their noses. Their sable furs are the finest. The richest among them cover their roofs with feathers of birds of prey, use sable furs for tents and coats, silver fox furs for tents as well, and racoon or fox furs as blankets.
>
> The Fiyaha also have long hair. Neither men nor women wear trousers. They wear big earrings and a small nose ring. Their sable furs are the second best. They make small, one-rower canoes out of birch bark and use double-bladed oars. When they set out to fish at sea, they would carry the canoes on their shoulders to the seashore and then put them on the water. When the wind is too strong, they just go back home.
>
> The Hūrha, on the other hand, shave their heads and very few males wear rings. Their furs are of inferior quality compared to those of the other two tribes, with the exception of red fox and squirrel furs, which are very good, as is their dried fish.[59] These people,

59 Among the other tribes and clans living in northern Manchuria who had relations with the Qing, there are the Solon, the Kūyala, the Oronco, the Dahūr (of Mongol origins), to name a few. Most of these people relied on hunting and fishing, and due to geographic proximity and cultural similarities were easily confused with one another—the nomenclature can get very tricky, and sometimes a single tribe's name is used to refer to various groups—the Solon, for instance (Kim 2009: 47). Since most of them wore fish skins, the name "fish skin tatars"

> free from the yoke of rulers and officials, are very simple and trustworthy. Some of them gave their furs in exchange for silk dresses. The silk merchants would select a sable fur as a sample, and the following year the tribesmen would give them an agreed-upon number of furs of that kind. The tribesmen always did as agreed. If they had other urgent business and could not go personally, they send someone else to deliver the furs. The two parties lived a thousand miles away and did not know each other, and yet not once the tribespeople failed to uphold their end of the bargain. These people are also fierce, brave, and not afraid of death. Some of them can kill a tiger single-handedly. Recently, the Emperor has expressed great admiration for their courage and rewarded them with lordships. Sometimes, exiles whose sentences have been mitigated would be given to them as servants. After some years, they were relocated from Hūrha to Ningguta, and the following year to Fengtian. After two years, they were summoned to the capital. These people are those we now call "Ice Manju."[60]

Undoubtedly, China had always been the land of rite and music, of fine arts and belles-lettres. Yet sometimes government and bureaucracy oppress you, and just to survive, you must be clever or worse. Not burdened by all that, those people were free of being themselves and saying what they thought with no need for deception. In China, connections, *guanxi* 关系, are crucial. To get things done, to obtain what you want, you need to know people who know other people, and normally you only trust people within your connection network. How could those salesmen blindly trust the tribesmen? They had never seen each other, and the merchants would have to wait a whole year for those people to come to them from a thousand miles away. And yet not once were they fooled. People

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(C. *yupi dazi* 魚皮韃子) was used for pretty much all of them (JXCSNJL: 7). In the early days of the dynasty, these people paid tribute to the Qing, mainly with furs, as Zhenchen describes in detail. The Lifan Yuan 理藩院 (Court of Colonial Affairs, Hucker 1985, entry 3603) was in charge of their affairs. Later, the Qing rulers, impressed with their bravery and hunting and rowing skills, decided to enlist some of them in the Eight Banner militia. The selected tribesmen were first organized in *nirus* and registered under Manchurian local banner garrisons—from this moment on, they were conferred the title of New Manchu. In 1689, a Butha (Manchu root for *buthambi*, meaning both "fishing" and "hunting") Headquarter (C. *Buteha zongguan yamen* 布特哈總管衙門), was established, and in Yongzheng times, a specific banner section—the Butha Banners (C. *Butha baqi* 布特哈八旗) was created. They proved their valor in battle against the Russians several times, including the battle of Albazin (M. Yaksa), 1686. For extensive accounts on these populations, see Tong Dong 2006: 1456–1548, Kim 2009: 38–136; for the Butha Banners structure and functions, see Han Di 2011: 105–136; Jin Xin 2013. For the previously mentioned tribute-based relationships, see Bello 2010.

60 ZDNJL: 10–11.

from those northern tribes were different. When they said something, they did it.[61] Both old and new Manchus lied sometimes, but they did it out of compassion. When the New Manchus spotted exiles who were escaping, they did not report them. When Manchu soldiers captured them, they often said to their officials that the fugitives headed back on their own will, so that they got pardoned.[62] Later sources of the same genre of the treatise describe the sincerity of Manchus and Tungus, showing how this trait of their character was preserved in the following times. For instance, Bo Ming 博鳴, a literate of Mongol origins, when narrating of how Shandong people were colonizing south-eastern Manchuria in the late 18th century, drew a vivid comparison between the new settlers and the locals: "The people of Shandong are greedy and aggressive, while those of Liaoshen are benevolent and naive: the latter get often fooled, and when they don't, interminable quarrels and litigations arise."[63] Li Tianxiu, a member of the Chosŏn delegation who met emperor Qianlong in Shenyang in 1783, a century after the Wu family had left Manchuria, wrote in his travel diary that the Manchu officials he met were kind and straightforward, whereas the Chinese ones were devious and shady: "whenever even slightly unhappy

61 Shirokogoroff retains that the main factors from which the trait of honesty originated in the Tungus character are the lack of a writing system and the need to maintain clan relations, rather than any moral concern. Able to transmit experience and knowledge only orally, the Tungus are very scrupulous when relating facts. Any inaccuracy or untruth could have serious consequences for the main economic activities (hunting and fishing) and jeopardize the relationships between the clan and the individual or between two clans—such relationships are also crucial for survival. Because of these risks, among the Tungus, "people who are not able to relate clearly and without distorting the facts would be known forever as unreliable," and "the liars are considered the worst possible people" (Shirokogoroff 1935: 114). The transaction Wu Zhenchen narrates, which the tribesmen conducted so dutifully, had as a counterpart Chinese silk merchants, who are far outside the social reality of the Tungus clan. This too, however, should not surprise. Shirokogoroff also points out how the Tungus' trustworthiness spreads beyond family, clan, and ethnic unit. In particular, the rigor with which they fulfill obligations, even those taken on by previous generations, was widely observed and appreciated by external groups still in the twentieth century (see Shirokogoroff 1935: 114–116).

62 ZDNJL: 14. I believe that Liu Jiaming and Liu Qiong have misinterpreted the passage about the fugitives (Liu and Liu 2022: 81). They hold that the Manchu not reporting the Chinese escapees is a sign of a growing shared identity. It is nothing of the sort. Wu Zhenchen is moved by how benevolent the Manchu were and we cannot cast out the possibility that he might be implying that some Chinese, down in the south, for instance, would have been more than ready to rat each other out. The Manchu and especially the New Manchu were just good to them, so it's not *rentong* 認同, identifying, it is just *tongqing* 同情, pitying.

63 *Scattered Notes on Fengcheng* (*Fengcheng suolu* 鳳城瑣錄): 3. In *Liaohai congshu*: 274.

with something you said, they began to scheme behind your back".[64] In contemporary China, people from the Three Provinces of the Northeast, Dongsansheng 東三省, are commonly described as "direct and spontaneous" (*zhishuang* 直爽), in contrast with the southerners who are "mischievous" (*jianhua* 奸猾). Might this be, at least to a certain extent, the heritage of Manchu and Tungus culture? Might northeastern Chinese be, to their own and their compatriots' eyes, an image of a Self changed (for the better) by the Other?

3 Compassion for the unfortunate Self and fascination for the majestic Other in Wang Yiyuan's "Memories of Liaozuo"[65]

> 吳兆騫，吳江人。丁酉舉孝廉，戍寧古塔。著《長白山賦》及《秋集》。甲子，召至京師，未幾卒。吳幼負才名，以科場事論戍，而非其罪。在戍籍二十六年，垂老放還，齎志而歿，論著惜之。
>
> Wu Zhaoqian, from Wujiang, took the provincial examination in the Dingyou year [1657] and was exiled to Ningguta. He wrote "Long Poem on Mount Changbai" and

64 Li Tianxiu, "A Diary of our Journey to Shenyang," section 3 ("customs"), in Zhang Jie 2009: 292.

65 "Liaozuo" 遼左 literally means "left (river bank) of Liao River." However, since, according to Chinese traditional geomancy, the left stands for the east, the expression was used, in Qing times as well as earlier, as a place name referring to the vast territory east of the river. It was an alternative to the more common Liaodong 遼東, "east of Liao River" (see XGRJWL: introduction: 2–4, An Dawei 2016: 78, and Zhang Xinchao 2020: 142). Nevertheless, in Qing times, the territories west of the river, Liaoxi 遼西, together with those to the east, belonged to the same jurisdiction which, as a whole, went by the official names of Fengtian 奉天, or Liaoshen 遼瀋. The banner commanders in Jinzhou 錦州, Liaoxi, answered to the general whose headquarter was in Shenyang (see SJTZ KX 23 juan 6: 6), just like the Jinzhou Prefecture, in Liaoxi, was subject to the authority of the "Capital Prefecture" in Fengtian (also set in Shenyang) (SJTZ KX 23 juan 6: 10). In the famous memorial to the throne "On the Situation of our Roots" (C. *Genben xingshi shu* 根本形勢疏), by which the first-appointed prefect of Fengtian, Zhang Shangxian 張尚賢, signaled to the court how the region was severely underpopulated, the official describes both the zones to the east and the west of the river and, when summarizing, he uses the expression "looking at the territories East and West of the river" (see QSL 4: 64–65). In *Memories of Liaozuo*, Wang Yiyuan refers to the nine civil jurisdiction of the place, three of which—Ningyuan 寧遠, Jinzhou, and Guangning 廣寧—are in Liaoxi (see GTCLZJWL: 57, 59; XGRLZJWL: 153, 160) and he provides accounts regarding those places west of the river. The book, therefore, is about the whole Liaoshen, and roughly referring to it as Liaodong or Liaozuo was just an old habit developed at the times of the Ming Liaodong Commission (see introduction).

> "Collection of Poems of the Autumn Flute". Summoned to the capital in the year Jiazi [1684], he died shortly thereafter. He was a famous talent since he was only a child. He was condemned to exile for misbehavior at the examination room when he was not the one to blame. He spent twenty-six years in exile, was released only in his old age and soon died, his will unfulfilled. A real pity.[66]

The quotation above is a eulogy-biography that Wang Yiyuan wrote of Wu Zhaoqian, whom he admired very much. Wu Zhaoqian was not the only exiled literate Wang Yiyuan sympathized with. In his *Memories of Liaozuo*, Wang Yiyuan dedicates several moving pages to other intellectuals who suffered the same destiny. This, together with the fact that when participating in the provincial examinations himself in 1690, he used a fake last name—ironically, Wu 吳—and, in general, his mysterious identity would lead to suspect that something related might have happened to him as well. However, there is no proof of this. Starting in the early 2000s, Wang Yiyuan's book began to draw attention in Chinese academic circles, and various scholars investigated his life. Yet from the very scarce available sources, they only clarified that he took the exam under the fake name and as a citizen of Tieling, northern Liaoning, where he had settled a few years earlier, and that later he passed the Palace examination to obtain the office of Magistrate of Lingtai county, Gansu province. Wang Yiyuan himself states that he was "born and raised in the South"—probably Wuxi, Jiangsu—but it is difficult to determine why he left his hometown in his twenties and moved to Manchuria.[67] Officially, he was not an exile—he served no *corvée*, and took the imperial exams twice, which exiles were not allowed to do unless pardoned. It would seem that he did nothing but write and prepare for the examinations, so surely he relied on someone economically, but it is unknown who that was. Despite all these factors, though, he fits the profile studied here: he was a learned man from the south—an excellent man of letters, as can be perceived just by reading the magisterial preface to the memoir written in the classical parallel prose style (*piantiwen* 駢體文)—who lived a very significant part of his life in Manchuria and contributed an extremely intriguing work to the Chinese narration of the Qing's motherland.

The social fabric of southern Manchuria (roughly corresponding to present-day Liaoning province) was much more complex than in of the northern part of the region. In the southern sub-region, contacts between Chinese and Jurchens had been constant since the Ming era. During the wars of the first half of the seventeenth century, Chinese prisoners captured in Ming territories were deported to southern Manchuria to serve as laborers and

66 GTCJWL: 9-10; XGRJWL: 27. The dates reported by Wang Yiyuan are slightly wrong. Wu Zhaoqian was pardoned in 1681, so he lived twenty-four years in exile.

67 Xu Guangrong 2013: introduction 1–2; Dong Runli 2003: 91; An Dawei 2016: 78.

strengthen the demographic and productive basis of the Later Jin-Qing state. Under the rule of Hongtaiji (1626–1643), the Chinese Martial Banners were founded and many war captives were registered in the new divisions; before that, some had been enlisted in the Manchu Banners as well. After the Qing conquest of 1644, most of the population moved south to Beijing and the surrounding areas, leaving Liaoning very sparsely populated. In the following decades, members of all sections of the Eight Banner system were relocated to the region as "the ancient roots had to be nurtured."[68] Yet even before that relocation began, in order to repopulate Liaoning more efficiently and ensure the state a fiscal revenue by means of land reclamation, in 1653, emperor Shunzhi (1644–1661) issued a "Regulation for People Recruiting and Land Reclamation of Liaodong" (*Liaodong zhaomin kaiken ling* 遼東招民開墾令), whereby commoners south of the Great Wall were encouraged to migrate to Liaoning.[69] To govern them and collect land taxes, a Chinese-fashioned civil administration system was established, with prefectures (*fu* 府), sub-prefectures (*zhou* 州), and counties (*xian* 縣). From then on, the local government structure would be separated in two branches—the Eight Banners and the civil offices—which were in charge of banner members and commoners, respectively. The recruited settlers were given the status of "commoners." At the same time, criminals of the various categories we discussed in the introduction were exiled here, mainly to the localities of Shenyang, Shangyangpu, and Tieling. As for the Chinese bannermen, both those registered in the banners before the conquest of Beijing (Chen Hanjun 陳漢軍) and those incorporated in the system later (*ru qi* 入旗, *sui qi* 隨旗)[70] were present. There were also Mongol soldiers. These categories of people were fluid to a certain degree. Pardoned exiles could become commoners, and, on some occasions, commoners were enlisted in the banner troops, mainly the Chinese Martial Banners.

Wang Yiyuan, who was an acute observer, had a solid (yet not thorough) knowledge of the many constituencies and their roles within the local society. As mentioned above, the ethnonyms Manchu and Han are hardly found in his work, since the author clearly preferred constituency-based or institutional appellations. Commoners are referred to as *min* 民 or as "recruited settlers" (*zhaolai zhi min* 招徠之民), since, in the late seventeenth century, the vast majority of Chinese commoners was made up of settlers recruited from 1653 to 1668 and their descendants;[71] the bannermen, among whom Wang does not seem

68 From Fengtian Prefect Zhang Shangxian's memorial "On the Situation of our Roots," QSL 4: 64–65.

69 SJTZ QL 1 *juan* 23: 1.

70 On the latter category, see Ding, Guo, Lee, and Campbell 2004: 196–242.

71 In other words, throughout the whole work, "commoners" and "recruited settlers" refer to

to discern between Manchu and Hanjun, are denoted as "Eight Banners" (*baqi* 八旗). As for exiles, the technical institutional term, "those sent to defend the border" (*qianshu* 遣戍), is generally preferred to "wanderers" (*liuxi* 流徙), which is ambiguous since it can refer to immigrants more generally. The use of such terms accounts for the fact that, during a long period of coexistence, a certain cultural blending had been taking place among those ethnicities that shared the same institutional frame (which, as Wang shows, included pretty much everyone except commoners), and the ethnic boundaries had been loosened. In a few passages, the author generically refers to the population of Liaoning as a whole as "people of Liaozuo" (*Liaozuo zhi ren* 遼左之人).

Although the phrase "people of Liaozuo" does not refer every time to the whole population, the mere fact that it sometimes does shows that, in southern Manchuria, an interethnic and cross-constituency identity was developing which was simply based on the fact of cohabiting the same geographic area.[72] Wang Yiyuan mentions the fact, although he does not go into details:

> 遼左本八旗地方，合九州縣之民不及十之二三，故風俗化之，飲食、起居相類者十七八。
>
> Liaozuo has always been the homeland of the people of the Eight Banners. People of the nine civil jurisdictions combined are as numerous as maybe 2–3 tenths of the bannermen. Therefore, the commoners' habits have been strongly influenced. Diet and times of labor and rest of most of them are now very similar [to the bannermen's].[73]

As already pointed out earlier, no matter how complex the banner system was, or how many subcategories of banner members there where, all these people, even those with the lowest social status, belonged to the banner system, the commoners being the only

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the same constituency. The first term indicates their institutional status, whereas the second denotes their origins. In the rest of the article, I will be using the one or the other based on context; for the translations, I will choose according to the original text. Anyway, the reader should keep in mind that the two expressions refer to the same group of people and that those people were all ethnically Han Chinese.

72 In his work *Scattered Notes on Fengcheng*, Bo Ming refers to the whole population of the southern part of Liaodong as Liaoren 遼人, even more frequently than Wang. By that time, however, the merging process had got to a more advanced stage.

73 GTCLZJWL: 57; XGRLZJWL: 153. "The nine civil jurisdictions" refer to the two subprefectures (*zhou* 州) and seven counties (*xian* 縣) established during the implementation of the recruiting policy of 1653 in order to administer the recruited settlers. The two subprefectures were Liaoyang 遼陽 and Ningyuan 寧遠. The seven counties were Chengde 承德, Haicheng 海城, Gaiping 蓋平, Tieling 鐵嶺, Kaiyuan 開源, Jinxian 錦縣, and Guangning 廣寧. See map 2.

community outside it. Yet from the above passage, it can be deduced that the geographic proximity caused the two main socio-institutional realities to influence each other. The so called "intermingling" (*qi min zachu* 旗民雜處), seen as a threat for the "ancient Manchu custom" (*Manzhou jiuxi* 滿洲舊習),[74] gave the rulers sleepless nights even in early Kangxi times, when, due to the respective numbers, it was mainly the banner people who exerted influence on the commoners. This kind of preoccupation was one of the reasons to annul the 1653 recruiting regulation as early as in 1668. Later, beginning in the late Kangxi era, when spontaneous migrations of Chinese settlers began to increase at a very high rate, the population ratios and the power of influence gradually shifted, which was a cause of even deeper concern for the Manchu court.

Nevertheless, the quotation only refers to diet and daily activities, which are a necessary part of adaptation to the new climate and environment. Regarding other, deeper cultural elements, such as dress codes and the language itself, it appears that the recruited commoners were a quite closed community, whereas the Chinese within the banner system were undergoing a process of Manchurization. One very interesting passage of Wang's work sheds light on that situation:

> 遼左婦女皆遵本朝裝束，盤頭，窄袖而不裹足。惟有曆來招徠之民，皆永平府人，尚仍舊俗。好紅綠色衣，足雖弓而甚大[...]。種種醜惡，不可名狀。所育子女，依然鄉音。若入籍及遣戍者，嬰兒學語時，即遼左聲音，雖教以鄉語而不解也。
>
> Women of Liaozuo adopt the dress code of the ruling dynasty: they tie their hair, wear narrow-sleeved clothes, and do not bind their feet. Only the recruited settlers who moved here over the years, who are all from Yongping prefecture, still observe the old customs.[75] They like green and red dresses. Their feet, although curved, are still enormous. [...] They show all kinds of indescribable ugliness. Their children still have accents of those places, while those of families who entered the banners or were exiled here, naturally acquire the Liaozuo accent as infants, so even if one tries to teach them the dialect of the provinces their families are from, they do not understand it.[76]

Some philological discussion might be helpful here. The vast majority, but not all, of the local commoners were indeed recruited from Yongping, in the bordering region of Zhili 直隸, present-day northern Hebei 河北. The first chief recruiter, Chen Dade 陳達德 (dates of life unknown), who, in 1654, brought over one hundred families to Liaoyang 遼

74 See Isett 2006: 54–55.

75 That is to say, they still bound their feet and observed the traditional Chinese dress code from Ming dynasty.

76 GTCLZJWL: 6; XGRLZJWL: 15–16.

陽 and thus became District Magistrate (*zhixian* 知縣),[77] was from Yiwu 義烏, Zhejiang 浙江 province.[78]

When describing language varieties, the word *shengyin* 聲音, literally meaning "voice," and in this context "accent," definitely does not refer to the Manchu language. So this "Liaozuo accent" must refer to a variety of Chinese based on the Liaodong dialect of Ming times and which had absorbed a certain quantity of words from Manchu—most likely, the ancestor of contemporary northeastern dialect (Dongbei hua 東北話) which, however, was later also influenced by the dialects of Shandong and other close regions.

While the exiled are referred to, as usual, as *qianshu* 遣戍, the term *ruji* 入籍, "to be registered in a jurisdiction," which Wang uses to refer to members of the Chinese Martial Banners, is not appropriate in this context. In fact, the recruits were also registered, but in civil jurisdictions, so, in order to distinguish between the two situations, the expressions, "to be registered in a banner jurisdiction" (*ru qiji* 入旗籍) and "to be registered in commoners jurisdictions" (*ru minji* 入民籍), respectively, would be more suitable. The passage as a whole, however, suggests that commoners resisted the influence of other constituencies and had thus assimilated very little of the Manchu culture. They tended to preserve their appearance and their accent, whereas the Chinese in the banner system had been influenced significantly in both respects. Women had been unburdened of the feet-binding torture, and the unbound feet would endure as a sign of distinction among banner women until the end of the dynasty.

Imprecise as it is, the use of the general phrase "to be registered into a jurisdiction" (*ruji*) in reference to the banner Chinese only serves to exclude commoners from the core of Liaoning society and, in fact, so does the whole passage, which describes commoners as the only ones who looked and spoke differently. Whereas Chinese commoners were aliens in southern Manchuria, the term *ruji* conveys a sense of belonging to the place one was registered in. This is probably the reason why Wang Yiyuan used the word only with reference to the banner members. Of course, it should also be considered that other Chinese constituencies had lived for almost a century under the Jurchen–Qing domination, while commoners arrived only in the 1650s. In addition, the central power was trying to prevent Chinese commoners from intermingling with Manchus: borders were drawn between the banner and civil jurisdictions in 1680 and then again in 1689.[79] In the long term, such segregation policies failed, but back in the early Kangxi era, the fact that commoners were a minority made the authorities' intervention relatively easy.

77 Hucker 1985, entry 993.
78 Gazetteer of Liaoyang, *juan* 12: 2.
79 QSL 4: 1105; 5: 559.

The commoners' cultural singularity is not the only topic about which Wang offers insights in his work. He also describes their day-to-day activities and living conditions. His core message is that the local Chinese, for the most part, were treacherous and manipulative, but they were forced to be that way as a result of unfair treatment they were subject to. For starters, taxes were too high and taxation policies were very demanding:

> 遼左之民頗為田糧所累 [...] 有傭工糊口終歲，止得數金，以其半輸官尚若不足，而寔無寸土者。本戶死亡逃竄，則闔社均陪。有買其房屋基址者，糧亦隨之。或夫人再醮，則前夫之糧後夫代償，種種苦累，故糧雖輕而民困已甚。
>
> Commoners in Liaozuo are heavily burdened by taxes on agricultural production. [...] Many serve as laborers all year round, and half of the little they earn goes to the authorities in taxes. As if this was not enough, they do not own the tiniest bit of land. If members of a household perish or flee, the taxes they owed are levied from the commune as a whole; if someone buys the [abandoned] house or what remains of it, they also take on the tax debts. If a widow remarries, her debts fall on the new husband. All these impositions are very burdensome. Therefore, although the taxes per se are [relatively] low, the commoners live in extreme poverty.[80]

Apart from shouldering the fiscal burden, commoners were often required to serve in heavy corvées for the benefit of the banners:[81]

> 丁卯，命於興京、繡岩諸處添設京師八旗官兵。先命奉天州縣官率民夫開墾成熟，以為將士世業。
>
> In the year of Dingmao [1687], Eight Banner officials and soldiers from the capital were relocated to Xingjing, Xiuyan and other places in Liaozuo. Before their arrival, civil authorities were ordered to instruct commoners to clear the land which then became hereditary property of the new military officers.[82]

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80 GTCJWL: 58; XGRJWL: 155.

81 The only subcategory of commoners exonerated from this service were ex-noblemen or intellectuals exiled to the place and their descendants. They maintained their privileges as they institutional identity changed, see GTCJWL: 66; XGRJWL: 172–173.

82 GTCJWL: 13–14; XGRJWL: 45. Such practice, known as *daiken* 代墾, was quite common. Recent studies have investigated it in the context of later times—the eighteenth century—and mostly focusing on how it was implemented once bannermen were relocated—see Shuang Chen 2017. The exploitation of commoners in much earlier periods, on which Wang sheds light, however, has not yet been subject of an academic study. It would be an extremely interesting topic.

The information Wang provides is all the more precious that sensitive issues, such as the inequitable treatment Chinese commoners were subjected to, are hardly ever mentioned in institutional sources. For instance, to keep track of the results of the recruiting policy, demographic statistical data were recorded in gazetteers (*difang zhi* 地方志). Those records do mention "fugitives" (*dufu* 渡夫), but they do not say why they would have fled.[83]

To survive under such pressure, many commoners were forced to resort to all kinds of illegal stratagems:

> 招徠之民貧瘠異常而狡獪特甚，往往典身為傭，不數月即逸去，或支吾托故，輾轉局騙。迨鳴之官，甘受刑責，而身價已付子虛。複典於他人，其狡獪如故。有典至數家者。
>
> The recruited settlers are as poor as they are sly. They pawn themselves to wealthier families, but a few months later they disappear, then make all kinds of excuses, involve other people, and deceive them all. If caught by the authorities, they willingly endure the punishment; meanwhile, they would have already spent all the money. Then they pawn themselves to other people and just run the same scam all over again. Some even pawn themselves to several households at the same time.[84]

As earnest and unaffected the New Manchu, and some of the "old" Manchu, may have been, the Manchu rulers were surely not lenient on their Chinese subjects. While, in northern Manchuria, Wu Zhenchen and his family empathized with their fellow exiles, in Liaoning, Wang Yiyuan had one more community of Chinese to pity—the commoners.

Yet, it was the new dynasty who treated the Chinese that way. Manchu people in southern Manchuria were every bit as brave and proud as in Ningguta, and Wang was not less fascinated by them than the Wus. One poetic passage better than any other accounts for Wang Yiyuan's heartily admiration toward the Manchus—and the Manchurized Chinese. In the previous pages, we saw how he disliked the looks of women from Yongping, which is in northern China proper. He felt very differently about the "women of Liaozuo":

> 遼左女子善乘馬，較男子更勝。加鞭疾馳了無畏怯，而姿態更飄逸。偶有一二不能乘者，必共笑之。
>
> Women of Liaozuo are excellent riders, even better than men. They whip their steeds and gallop fearlessly and in a natural, beautiful, light pose. The very few of them who cannot ride get laughed at by everybody else.[85]

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83 See SJTZ KX 23 *juan* 17: 2–7; Gaiping Gazetteer *juan xia*: 4–5; Tieling Gazetteer *juan xia*: 1–2; Kaiyuan Gazetteer *juan xia*: 1–2.

84 GTCJWL: 58; XGRJWL: 156.

85 GTCJWL: 18; XGRJWL: 61.

Children were very impressive, as well:

> 遼左小兒五六歲即乘馬。然遼左不論男女，兩三歲時見騎則歡呼欲上。或抱置鞍上，則喜而笑；或叱之使行，或以手作加鞭勢。其性然也。
>
> In Liaozuo, children are trained in horse riding starting from the age of five or six. But even two- and three-year-olds, boys and girls alike, whenever they see a rider, get excited and want to mount the horse. If they get put in the saddle, they laugh euphorically; when, instead, they get scolded and dragged away, they mime the gesture of whipping a horse. This is just the way kids are in those places.[86]

Commoner families could not afford horses, and even if they had any, the women, with their bound feet, would never be able to mount them. Members of the Hanjun Banners and especially some of the better-off exiles were able to keep a few horses: in times of war, they were often allowed to donate horses as ransom or in order to obtain a pardon, a practice that went by the name of *juanmali* 捐馬例.[87] Most of the horses, however, were owned by the Manchus, and most likely, it is to them that the passage refers to.

The Korean diplomat Lee Jeon-Soo (Li Tianxiu 李田秀, dates of life unknown), writing a century after Wang's arrival, described the mounted warriors he saw in Manchuria in 1783:

> 弓之難傷雖勝于我，及遠、透、堅則百不及焉。釰亦皆比我製有遜，而馳馬之法無人不會，揮霍馳突于秋草黃埃之間著，自又一種河朔氣，雖有堅甲利器，恐不得施矣。
>
> Their bows are more resistant than ours, but with respect to range, penetration force, and stability, are not one hundredth as good. Blades too are of inferior quality. And yet, there is no one who cannot ride a horse. When they mount their steeds and dart through the prairie in autumn, raising the yellow dust, they have that majestic aura of northern warriors, and make you feel like you could never beat them, no matter how thick your armor, no matter how sharp your swords and spears.[88]

One would expect nothing less of the legendary Manchu horsemen. Yet, we can imagine that Lee Jeon-Soo, whose culture imposed the mutilation of women's feet, must have felt something entirely different as he was staring at those formidable horsewomen.

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86 GTCJWL: 18; XGRJWL: 61.

87 GTCJWL: 3; XGRJWL: 7.

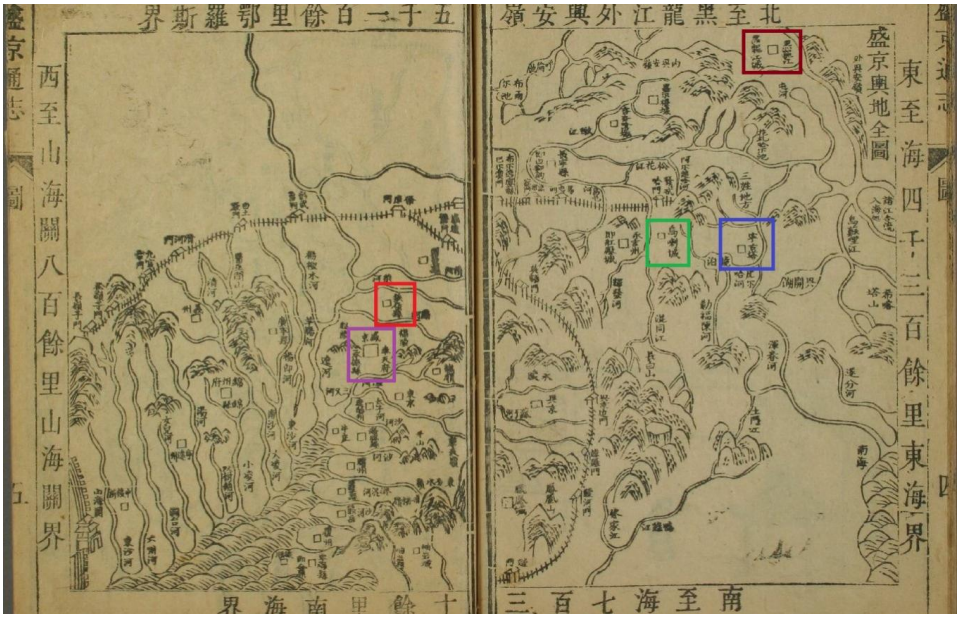
88 Li Tianxiu, "A Diary of our Journey to Shenyang," section 3—"customs," in Zhang Jie 2009: 292.

Conclusions

The Qing dynasty, which ruled for nearly 300 years, was the longest foreign domination over China, and the Chinese and the Manchu peoples coexisted for centuries. Therefore, the perception of the Manchu is one pillar in the history of the Chinese conception of the Other. A re-examination of the Chinese Self based on that conception is no less important. Diaries, memoirs, and treatises written privately by Chinese literati who lived in Manchuria in the seventeenth century—a time when the cultural blending was in its early stages—are a very precious source for the study of those conceptions. These works, based on first-hand experience, describe the everyday life of the various constituencies and ethnicities populating Qing Manchuria and provide information about the perceptions different people had of each other.

The two works to which this paper is dedicated, *A Treatise on Ningguta* by Wu Zhenchen and *Memories of Liaozuo* by Wang Yiyuan, are emblematic in this respect. They describe, respectively, northern and southern Manchuria, showing the differences between the two regions. In his treatise, Wu Zhenchen focuses on the Chinese and Manchus in a social environment divided by clear ethnic boundaries. The author offers a first-hand account of interactions with the local Manchu authorities, which were favorable toward him and his family, as well as gives voice to his fascination with the unrefined, yet earnest, tribesmen. All this somehow made his life in exile endurable, even in that inhospitable, glacial region. At the same time, the writer, his father, and other literati brought some "warmth" to the place with their erudition. For his part, Wang Yiyuan wrote in his memoir about banner members, commoners, exiles, and other constituencies in the much more complex social fabric of southern Manchuria, in which both ethnic and institutional boundaries were much less clearly defined. Wang paints a picture of the hardships suffered by immigrant Chinese commoners. He shows how this particular Chinese community was relatively closed off, in contrast to Chinese bannermen who were deeply influenced by the Manchu. Wang evinces sincere admiration for the Manchu and the bannermen in general.

By analyzing the two narratives, this essay aimed to demonstrate how important the two books are as sources of research about the Chinese perception of the Other and the Self.



Map 1. Qing Manchuria. Original picture from SJTZ QL 1, *tu*: 4-5

+++ Willow Palisade

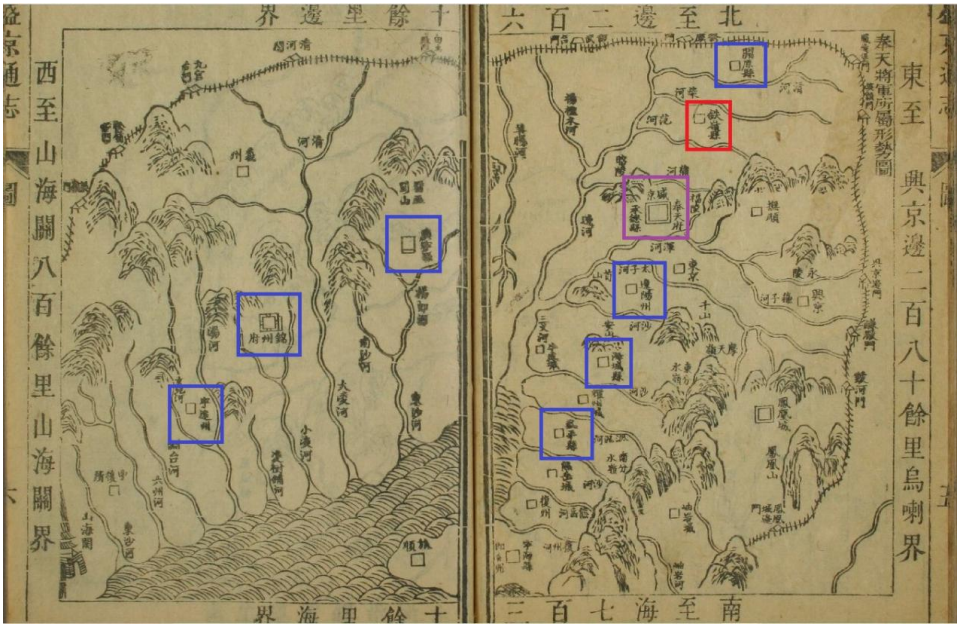
Ningguta. Present day Ning'an xian 寧安縣, Heilongjiang province.

Tieling. Present day Tieling shi 鐵嶺市, Liaoning province.

Girin Ula. Present day Jilin shi 吉林市, Jilin province.

Fengtian / Mukden / Shengjing. Present day Shenyang shi 瀋陽市, Liaoning province.

Aihūn / Heilongjiangcheng. Present day Aihui 愛輝 district of Heihe shi 黑河市, Heilongjiang province.



Map 2. Qing southern Manchuria. Original picture from SJTZ QL 1, *tu*: 5-6

+++ Willow Palisade

Tieling. Present day Tieling shi 鐵嶺市, Liaoning province.

Fengtian / Mukden / Shengjing. Present day Shenyang shi 瀋陽市, Liaoning province.

Other civil jurisdictions to the East and West of Liao River.

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