

Forging the Imperial Nation:
Imperialism, Nationalism, and Ethnic Boundaries in China's *Longue Durée*

by

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To my parents

Preface

This thesis would not have been accomplished without the continuous support and encouragements of many individuals. First and foremost, I wish to thank my father, Lee Ki-dong. He is the one who has influenced me the most. As a scholar, he is a historian conducting what he calls the “microscopic analysis” of historical facts. As a father, he always gives me emotional support and is ready to answer my questions. He will be remembered as an aloof intellectual and monk-like figure, who abstained from secular pleasures and kept his life simple. My mother has committed to taking care of mundane family affairs. They supported my plan to study abroad and have shared the hardship of getting a Ph.D. in a foreign country. This thesis is dedicated to them.

Naturally, I have had casual conversations with my father on the relationship between sociology and history. He has often suggested that sociologists can benefit historians with the following analogy: “We historians are working ants. You sociologists should feel free to utilize our time-consuming efforts. But we expect you to generate a general social theory that would guide us. You must avoid a simple ‘copy-and-paste’ method that appears in historical works done by ‘bad’ sociologists. Historians won’t appreciate it.” By keeping his advice on the desirable division of labor between sociologists and historians in mind, I have wished to create my own way of generalizing historical complexities through sociological frameworks. Before I came to Michigan, however, I never realized how hard it would be and how long it could take. I was an isolated and wild student for the first few years in the program. My anxiety for the right thesis topic led me to pursue various theoretical and methodological approaches.

At last, I found the dissertation topic which, in the beginning, seemed exceedingly exciting but overwhelming. One of the first pieces of advice given to me by Professor James Z. Lee was to read Chen Pan’s annotated collation of the *Chunqiu Dashibiao*

(Table of major events during the Spring and Autumn period) by Gu Donggao (1679-1757). When I first read this seven-volume set written in literary Chinese, I was neither aware of how this text mattered for my research nor convinced that it should matter to sociology at all. The more I thought about it, however, I grew confident that we cannot genuinely understand virtually any aspect of Chinese society without first understanding its ancient origins and enduring continuity through change. What is more, in the final stage of thesis writing, I began to realize that this study can be regarded as a partial fulfillment, not just of my degree but of my father's wish. These feelings have driven me to pursue this difficult project. In retrospect, rather than elegize my years at Michigan with a triumphalist narrative, I humbly admit that this thesis is the tentative product of inner tension between self-confidence and self-disappointment.

My gratitude also goes to the members of my committee. I was fortunate enough to organize a 'dream team' in that the major research topics of all four members have something in common with my work. Their in-depth understandings of my thesis topic probably made them raise the bar, which in turn led to significant revisions and made my argument more persuasive and robust.

James Z. Lee invited me to pursue Chinese studies and provided me with a general idea of my topic. He constantly gave me emotional encouragement as well as rigorous comments on my evolving work. One of his most significant interventions was correcting my mistaken interpretation of the nature of ethnic relations in China. I once cited the following sentence from James Legge's translation of the *Analects*: "The Master was wishing to go and live among the nine wild tribes of the east." James was suspicious about the term "wild" and immediately checked the original passage in front of me. His suspicion was correct. There was no expression equivalent to the word "wild." Until then, I tended to uncritically accept the misleading idea of a pejorative 'ethnic' stereotype of non-Sinitic aliens dated back to the age of Confucius.

Barbara A. Anderson shared her first-hand knowledge and experience on the questions of non-Russian and non-Han minorities. This broadened my intellectual horizons immensely.

She also helped me to frame my argument in a more sociological way and corrected my initial inclination to particularize China as a unique case, a tendency that has been deeply seated in the sinological tradition. Ronald G. Suny, a renowned expert on the ethnic relations of imperial Russia and the Soviet Union, always gave me an invaluable insight into the question of empire and nation. His suggestion of the concept of imperial nation gave me the title of my dissertation. Tsutsui Kiyoteru, who has done research on the minority questions in Japan, gave some efficient suggestions.

I am also indebted to other professors inside and outside Michigan. I am grateful to Kamachi Noriko who instructed me: “Don’t be a wild and untrained graduate student.” On several occasions, she cordially invited me and other students to have dinner. Cameron Campbell at UCLA was an informal external reader who carefully reviewed my chapter drafts. Barry Sautman, Ma Jianxiong, Cheng Siu-woo, and Xie Xiaohui at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology helped me shape my understanding in an interdisciplinary manner. The late professor Ananda Rajah at the National University of Singapore offered a course on ethnic relations and nationalism, which was my first serious encounter with the topics that I decided to devote my intellectual career. I also would thank all the members of the Lee-Campbell Group who provided me with encouragement as well as advice over the last five, especially three, years.

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Thanks also to my friends: Evgeny Alexandrovich, Jan Brughmans, Chen Shuang, David Flores, Marco Z. Garrido, Hwang Sun-Jae, Ito Asei, Lei Ya-Wen, Alwyn Lim, Long Yan, Lionel Pousaz, Saruya Hiroe, and Jomo Smith. My special thanks to Shin Su-Jin who has significantly changed me into a more optimistic person.

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Abstract

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In this dissertation, I study the dynamics of ethnic group boundaries in China, emphasizing its continuity through changes from the pre-imperial times to the present day. I distinguish the imperial, patrimonial pattern of ethnic relations, to which China belongs as an exemplary case, from the colonial and national type in which ethno-racial boundary-making tends to function as a source of social inequality and political discrimination. Further, I depict the post-imperial Chinese state as the 'imperial nation,' enshrining the traditional Sinic ideals of statehood and nationhood together with the patrimonial structures of ethno-territorial governance, albeit with reconfigurations in a national form. The current imperial nation of China is to some degree the prison-house of nation, which symbolizes the fundamental contradiction of being in the midst of the empire-nation continuum in the age of nation-states. Yet, like most non-colonial world-

empires, it is modeled not on ethnic exclusion but on the trans-ethnic inclusion underscoring its multiethnic unity. Therefore, I critically examine several misunderstandings and misconceptions in that scholarship which interprets Chinese realities through the lenses of racism, internal colonialism, and Oriental Orientalism.

I illustrate ethnicity in China as an imagined category associated with the state-making process and examine how the macro-level structure has affected the individual's ethnic self-identity. I identify three major characteristics, which constitute major chapters of this study. First, I discuss the ethnic boundary-making process in both cognitive and institutional dimensions. Despite the enduring evidence of Sinocentric prejudice, the various Chinese states have institutionalized ethnic categories not so much to discriminate against non-Han groups as to protect and privilege them compared with the Han peoples. Second, I trace the ethnic boundary-clearing characteristic in the construction of national self-imagery. The conception of common descent as the primordial foundation of Chinese genealogical nationalism has not identified one particular group at the expense of others, but has been employed to integrate diverse ethnicities within one big family, often portrayed as descendants of the mythical Yellow Emperor. Lastly, I demonstrate the porous nature of ethnic boundaries at the individual level, based on the analysis of the Eight Banner household registers as an empirical case of boundary-crossing.

Chapter One Introduction

Prefatory Remarks

The triumph of modern nation-states over old empires and the politicization of ethnicity as a result of this great transformation have been central themes of comparative-historical sociology as well as of nationalism studies. Making sense of the global rise of the nation-state is “one of the most formidable tasks of comparative-historical sociology” (Wimmer and Feinstein 2010: 765). Before 1800, almost all large states remained highly composite, ruling indirectly through presumed representatives of diverse peoples and powers, making little effort to homogenize or co-opt any but a small imperial elite (see Tilly 1994: 133-134). Shortly after the Napoleonic Wars, roughly half of the world was still controlled by several world-empires, whose nature can be categorized as continental or coastal as well as noncolonial or colonial. Since 1918, however, the dissolution of empires had created newly independent nation-states. This empire-to-nation transition shows the four major waves—the breakup of the Ottoman and Habsburg empires after the First World War, the decolonization of Asia after the Second World War, the disintegration of the British and French colonial powers in the 1960s, and the collapse of the Soviet Union in the 1990s (Wimmer and Min 2006: 870-871). Accordingly, by the turn of this century, almost the entire globe is governed by nation-states; the former great empires have completely disappeared.

This worldwide formation of the nation-states, which eventually attains an uncontested hegemony as the world polity theorists suggest (Meyer 1980, 1999; Meyer et al. 1997), is concomitant to the decline of major empires and their eventual dissolution (see Barkey and von Hagen 1997; Esherick, Kayali, and Van Young 2006; McNeill 1986). The

principle of national self-determination, which comprises the triumphalist narrative of nationalism, becomes a global norm (Hechter and Borland 2001). Ironically, however, this normative and institutional transformation concurrently provides an incentive for the ethnic framing of political struggles. Nationalist conflicts between incumbents and challengers have to be newly ethnicized, that is to say, re-framed in ethnic terms, precisely because ethnicity per se does not spontaneously lead to ethnic violence (Bennett 1975; Brass 1991; Brubaker and Laitin 1998; Keyes 1981). The political salience of ethnic feeling as the effect of nationalizing the masses is undeniably a “marked feature of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries” (Gellner 1994: 34).

Further, the transition from empire to national state was not achieved without contention, but obviously followed by the ethnicization of political violence. From 1789 onward, the disintegration of continental empire and colonial powers and the rise of the nation-state have led to wars, revolutions, revolts, and violence through mass mobilization for national self-determination such that the world now consists of nation-states with strongly nationalistic citizenries. In general, this ethnic logic of the nation-state subsequently creates an unequal power differential between the national majority and ethnic minority in which the latter becomes more or less disadvantaged and discriminated. Various forms of ethnic conflicts and violence have been organized accordingly, ranging from non-violent protests, through riots, armed irredentist and secessionist movements, to civil wars, ethnic cleansing, and genocide (see, e.g., Conversi 2006; Fearon 2006; Fearon and Laitin. 2003; Greenfeld and Chirot 1994; Hechter 1995, 2000; Horowitz 1985, 2001; Olzak 2006; Suny 2004; Tilly 1994; Wimmer and Min 2006).

It is also evident that, as Hannah Arendt (1968: 149-170) points out, the transition from multiethnic empire to nascent nation-states after the First World War provoked the refugee and stateless problem. There were only two ways to resolve this problem: repatriation and naturalization. These two recognized solutions, however, proved to be a failure. Scholars, who extend her original thesis, have shown that what really characterizes the post-imperial conditions is “ethnic unmixing,” including a steady mass exodus of once-dominant ‘new minorities’ in the successor states (Brubaker 1995a;

Hayden 1996b; Marrus 1985; Martin 1998: 817-821; Zolberg 1983). Historical examples of such migrations, either forced or voluntary, include ethnic Turks in the Balkans or Balkan Muslims in the former Ottoman territories (Karpat 1985; Kirişci 2008), ethnic Germans and Hungarians in the former Habsburg lands (Hayden 1996a), and, to a lesser degree, ethnic Russians in the non-Russian republics of the former Soviet Union (Kolstoe 1994; Pilkington 1998; Shlapentokh, Sendich, and Payin 1994). Likewise, the former colonial masters emigrated from postcolonial nation-states; for instance, almost all ethnic Japanese residents in Korea, which had numbered more than 700,000, were hastily repatriated to Japan after the end of the Second World War (Trewartha and Zelinsky 1955).

This study focuses on the historical foundations of statehood and nationhood in China, emphasizing their pre-imperial origins and imperial expansion in the *longue durée*, and indicates how they have been enshrined even in the post-imperial and post-colonial world order. The post-imperial Chinese state following the collapse of the Qing dynasty has significantly inherited, with some modern modifications, traditions of statecraft and institutions as regards not only to ethnic ideology and national identity but also to governance and policy for non-Han minorities. In effect, China may well be the *only* remaining country after the disintegration of the Soviet Union that preserves the many important legacies of the non-colonial world-empire into the twentieth-first century. To identify its genuine features, we need to go beyond methodological colonialism and postcolonialism that have been uncritically applied to the non-Western imperial and post-imperial societies including China (see, e.g., Hostetler 2000, 2001; Teng 2004: 249-258).¹ Likewise, it is imperative to move away from methodological nationalism (Wimmer and Schiller 2002) that naturalizes the nation-state as a unit of analysis for explaining the development of modern political systems.²

¹ See Chapter 7 on the inapplicability of methodological colonialism and postcolonialism in China. See also Di Cosmo (1998), Dirlik (1996, 1997), Fletcher (1978), Lee (1978, 1982a, forthcoming), and Shin (2006a).

² Methodological nationalism is “understood as the assumption that the nation/state/society is the natural social and political form of the modern world” (Wimmer and Schiller 2002: 301).

Presenting an alternative theory, I suggest that the modern Chinese state is the *imperial nation* located in the midst of an empire and a nation. It is also ideal-typically different from colonial and national societies where ethnicity is employed not only to privilege one dominant ethnic or racial group but to discriminate the other. This work is, however, not to confirm the Sinocentric claim which tends to unduly exaggerate Chinese ‘uniqueness.’ It rather seeks to place the history of the Middle Kingdom (*zhongguo*) as the specific case to the long list of non-colonial world-empires, which allows us to facilitate a comparative-historical study of ethnicity before the rise of modern nationalism.³

Evidently, the historical empires such as the Roman, Byzantine, Persian, Mongol, Ottoman, Habsburg, Mughal, Russian, Chinese states always included culturally and ethnically heterogeneous inhabitants of the frontier, many of whom were depicted as mixed-barbarians (*mixobarbaroi*) by the aesthetically cultured elite of the imperial center. Most of these imperial societies, however, did not follow the ethnic logic of colonial and national states. They can be rather characterized by a lower degree of institutionalized ethnic (or racial) hierarchy and discrimination and a greater willingness to intermarry, ones that promote the fusion of diverse populations (see, e.g., Issawi 1989). On the one hand, empires commonly allowed the *horizontal* and unconnected coexistences of ethnically segregated groups within their territories. On the other hand, this constellation did not necessarily transform into a *vertical* system of super- and subordination like a caste institution—“a system of particularly rigid and exclusive hereditary estates” where intermarriage with nonmembers is shunned (Weber 1958: 4).

Hence, the fundamental nature of ethnic relations in the world of empires is that, as Max Weber in his ‘Class, Status, and Party’ perceptively notes, the “development of status

³ The renowned Scottish sinologist James Legge (1815-1897) put “the Middle Kingdom” as English translation of *zhongguo* and it has been a popular English term for political states in traditional China. Scholars also use other translations of *zhongguo* like “the Central States” and “the Celestial Empire.” For instance, Lydia Liu, who questions the ahistorical articulation of “the Middle Kingdom” covering every epoch of Chinese history, argues that “‘the Central States’ is more accurate for referring to the ancient states” (2004: 267). Even though using a plural noun would be a better translation of *zhongguo* before the Qin unification in 221 B.C., I generally follow Legge’s original translation in part because it bears a geographical implication. The Chinese traditionally believed that their state was located in the middle of the world and surrounded by aliens living around four corners (*siyi*). Indeed, traditional Koreans consciously used the term “the Eastern Kingdom” (*dongguo* in Chinese, *dongguk* in Korean) for referring to their polity vis-à-vis the Middle Kingdom. Instead of treating *zhongguo* as a stable and definitive concept, however, my research shall demonstrate how its meanings have been changed and redefined (see Chapter 3).

groups from ethnic segregation [into a caste] is by no means the normal phenomenon. On the contrary” (1978[1922]: 935). What is more, even when the status group evolves into a closed caste, the pariah peoples in the pre-nationalist empires, by virtue of their economic indispensability, “are tolerated, *indeed frequently privileged*, and they live interspersed in the political communities. The Jews are the most impressive historical example” (ibid.: 934; my emphasis; see also Weber 1952). Charles Tilly (1994) adds to the list of such “imperial minorities” in European history before 1800 as the conquered Moors, Protestants in the Balkans and Hungary, and Greeks under the Ottoman rule that the central state intended to subordinate, expel or eradicate. Yet it should be also noted that in some occasions they were treated as privileged minorities. Being conceived as representatives of the Christian powers as well as protégés of European merchants, for instance, Ottoman Christians especially Armenians and Greeks obtained powerful tax exemptions that allowed them to buy and sell goods more cheaply than Muslim merchants prior to the age of nationalism (see Bloxham 2002: 40). This study seeks to suggest that, like other pre-nationalist empires, the Middle Kingdom has a long history of privileging non-Han groups over the native Han population.

The Chinese empire was frequently ruled by alien conquerors who enjoyed the status of privileged minority without imposing much discrimination against the native subjects collectively classified as the Han people. Besides, as for internal minorities who formed ethnic enclaves on the edges of the empire, the central government not only exempted them from the population registration system and regular duties imposed upon imperial subjects in the interior, but granted them administrative, legal, cultural, religious autonomy under the control of hereditary local leaders.⁴ The Chinese imperial policy of

⁴ During Ming China, for instance, most of the Southwest was ruled by semi-autonomous native leaders who owed no corvée to the central government and did not register their population so that much of the indigenous people were not included in the *lijia* census enumeration. So the governor of Guizhou, for example, reported in 1555: “There is no way I can find out the complete size of the provincial population. Not only are there no statistics for most non-Han, even the army registers for military households are incomplete” (quoted in Lee 1982b: 714). James Lee (1982b: 715) carefully estimates the proportions of the exempt territory regarded as the indigenous jurisdiction. In Yunnan the native jurisdiction area covered roughly one-third of the province. In Guizhou the native territory was more extensive still, at least one-half of the province. In southern Sichuan the exempt area comprised well over three-quarters of the region. Until mid-eighteenth century, the Qing government still continued to exempt all residents in the areas under indigenous rule from registration (see Lee 1982b: 724).

indirect rule is in some way comparable to the Ottoman millet system (see Hechter 2000: 71-76) as well as the Russian imperial policy toward the indigenous groups in Kazan, Astrakhan, Siberia, Georgia, and the Caucasus (see Raeff 1971). Hence, regarding its spatial and administrative scope, the centralizing Chinese state commonly relied on native chieftains “to maintain order in areas where the state was unable or unwilling to assert direct control” (Shin 2006b: 104). This imperial tradition should date back to the early imperial period, namely Former Han times (206 B.C.-9 A.D.), when the ruling house preferred nominal ritual superiority over its internal and external vassals vis-à-vis costly attempts to enforce centralized rule beyond the *de facto* boundaries (see Kiser and Cai 2003: 530-532; Pines 2008: 87). The Chinese empire was always what Michael Hechter (2000: 49) calls “the tribute-taking empire,” although it reached the most highly centralized bureaucratic officialdom prior to the rise of modern bureaucracy.

Until today, ethnicity as a categorical identity exists not so much to discriminate and exploit as to privilege and protect the non-Han peoples vis-à-vis the Han majority. Likewise, the implementation of the semi-autonomous regions reveals the imperial heritage of the dual administrative system between the interior and the exterior as the grand strategy of the Chinese empire. It is important to note that this spatial separation is not the same as that between the metropole and the colony in the colonial powers. The territorial expansion of the Chinese state does not follow the route of “colonial booty capitalism based on direct force and compulsory labor” (Weber 1978[1922]: 918) but rather shows little, if any, significant role of capitalist interest groups as motivating forces. Much scholarship, however, has mistakenly understood China’s frontier strategy through the Western lenses of racism, internal colonialism, and Orientalism.

My argument of China as the imperial nation points out that the construction of the Chinese nation is not merely a modern invention but rather a modern reconfiguration of ancient practices through appropriating new ideas and institutions. Although the government of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) structurally resembles other multiethnic states concerning its classification of nationalities and institutionalization of preferential treatments and semi-autonomous regions for minority nationalities, the

underlying logic of those practices tellingly reveals the resilient imperial heritage. By the same token, the predicament of ethnic minorities and the problem of ethnic strife and violence in China do not stem from the politics of exclusion, as happened in most colonial and national states, but rather from the politics of inclusion, which is a common dynamic in the history of multiethnic world-empires.

The Approach of the Dissertation

This work seeks to address both theoretical and empirical issues by examining the formation of the imperial nation in China. I first theoretically outline the ideal-type of empire and contrast it with that of colonial power and nation. My argument is that, as regards ethnic relations, historic China represents an exemplary case of world-empire and its non-colonial, imperial ideas and practices have remained largely enshrined with some reconfiguration until today. Most importantly, the characteristics of the ethnic divide between native Sinic, or Han Chinese, and non-Sinic, or non-Han, peoples are considerably distinct from the binaries of colonizer-colonized in the colonial state and majority-minority in the national state. I then empirically investigate how China has evolved into the imperial nation that we see today by historicizing the dynamics of ethnic group boundaries in the *longue durée*. I characterize the recurrent pattern of making and clearing ethnic boundaries in China from the early first millennium B.C. to the present day, and reflect this framework onto social theories. As Arthur Stinchcombe suggests, “One does not apply theory to history; rather one uses history to develop theory” (1978: 1). I, therefore, believe that my sinological survey of forging the imperial nation in China contributes to the sociological theories of ethnicity, empire, nation, nationalism, and inequality. To begin with, I discuss China’s imperialism, nationalism, and ethnic boundaries—three key concepts mentioned in the subtitle of this work—with a special emphasis on its historical foundation.

Imperial Settings: In the history of world-empires, despite the periods of political division and contention over centuries, the imperial history of China is the longest and most persistent since its first unification in 221 B.C. until the last emperor Puyi was dethroned

in 1911 A.D. In general, the Chinese empire has an “undeniably enduring nature,” which is the opinion of “almost all historians of China, no matter what nation or ideological camp they may belong to” (Balazs 1964: 15). It also represents “the most consistent political form of patrimonialism” (Weber 1978[1922]: 1091; see also Bendix 1977: 100-103; Eisenberg 1998, 2008: ch.1; Hamilton 1984, 1990; Weber 1964) that emerged as a consequence of replacing the pre-imperial feudal-like system (*fengjian*) (see Creel 1970: ch.11) with a regime of officials who in principle were qualified based on their personal merit.⁵ This enduring patrimonial state was basically modeled on four major institutional elements—vertical hierarchy, centralized officialdom, frontier feudalism, and universal emperorship (see Chapter 2).⁶

Throughout imperial China, the idea of the patrimonial state was uncontested even by radical, heretical intellectuals like the iconoclastic but influential Ming thinker Li Zhi (1527-1602) who once wrote that “all treasures under heaven are the emperor’s personal property, and it may be all right for the Emperor to consume more than he should. All the people under heaven are the emperor’s people, and they can but only endure [the burden] if the Emperor wants to squeeze them more than he should.”⁷ The archetype of this imperial rhetoric is evidently traced back to the famous ancient statement, originally made in the late days of the Western Zhou dynasty (11th century-771 B.C.) and repeatedly cited in later Chinese texts like the *Zuozhuan* and the *Mencius*: “Everywhere under Heaven is the King’s land (*wangtu*), each of those who live on the land is the King’s subject (*wangchen*).”⁸ Likewise, the concept of the Mandate of Heaven (*tianming*), the key source of legitimate authority throughout the entire imperial era, emerged in the Western Zhou period (see Creel 1970: ch.5). After a major debate concerning the

⁵ The term *fengjian* (“assign and establish”) has come to be employed to render the European term “feudal” with all its historical context and complexity. This analogy between the Zhou practice of *fengjian* and medieval European feudalism is more inclined to mislead than clarify. See Falkenhausen (2006: 246).

⁶ Weber also points out the durable nature of the Chinese socio-political structure in the *longue durée*: “the unshaken order of internal political and social life, with thousands of years behind it, was placed under divine tutelage and then considered as the revelation of the divine” (1964:27). This passage is directly associated with his overarching theory of the absence of ‘the disenchantment of the world’ in non-Western societies, serving as a contrast for the special peculiarity (*Eigenart*) of Western rationalism.

⁷ Li Zhi, “Fu Jinchuan wenshu” (A reply to Liu Dongxing), *Fenshu* (A book to burn) 2.73. Quoted in Jiang Jin (2001: 20).

⁸ The passage appears in the *Shi jing* (Book of Poetry). See the *Zuozhuan*, the Seventh Year of Duke Zhao (535 B.C.); Legge (1872: 616) and the *Mencius* V (1), 4; Legge (1875: 278).

bestowal of the Mandate in the early Western Zhou, the Mandate of Heaven was believed to be conferred upon the individual ruler as a person, rather than upon the Zhou people as a group, an outcome that deprived the Zhou forever of “the status of a ‘chosen people’ (that of the Israelites)” (Hsu 2005: 455; see also Shaughnessy 1993, 1997: ch.4). Since the concept of Mandate of Heaven as a ruling ideology was not ethnically defined, it could be spiritualized into a purely impersonal (Weber 1964: 20-30; see also Weber 1952: 210) and universalist world power, legitimizing the political authority of a foreign ruler.⁹ In the genealogy of Chinese thought, especially Confucianism and Taoism, there was no parallel to the “anthropomorphic corporeality” (Weber 1952: 211) of the Yahweh. The predominance of the ideal of political universalism over ethnic particularism and separatism was one of the major obstacles for a development of Han Chinese ‘nationalism’ prior to the advent of the West in China (see Chapter 3). Even the ‘unorthodox’ local folk religions did not have a specific ethnic feature but a supra-ethnic one (see, e.g., Sutton 2000).

In line with patrimonial rulership, the Chinese statecraft tradition is essentially characterized by its intention to accommodate multiethnic imperial subjects under the Son of Heaven (*tianzi*) without necessarily establishing an ethnic form of discrimination and exploitation. It is far from my intention to ignore the extant history of ethno-cultural prejudice conventionally called ‘Sinocentrism’ (see Chapter 4). My argument is that, in spite of such ethnocentric bias, the Chinese statecraft tradition did not create a discriminatory state-system, but rather the opposite. It is important to recognize that political power in China was theorized since pre-imperial times as the pairing of punishment (*xing*) and generosity (*de*), and the latter “ranged from the granting of life through acts of deliberate mercy to material payments and gifts from the ruler to his allies and subordinates” (Lewis 2009: 122). As a matter of realpolitik, the conciliatory treatment of such ‘aliens’ was one of the twin pillars of the grand strategy of the Chinese

⁹ Weber (1964: 26) perceptively points out that “in China, the God of Heaven could not assume the form of a hero-God (*Heldengott*) who revealed himself in the irrational destiny of his people through its foreign relations, or who was worshipped in war, victory, defeat, exile and nostalgia.” By contrast, Yahweh remained not only “the war god of the confederacy” (Weber 1952: ch.5) but also “a god of history, especially of political-military history. This differentiated him from all Asiatic deities” (ibid.: 224).

empire—the “dual use of kindness and sternness” (*enwei bingyong*) (see McMahon 2008)—which is essentially a blend of leniency and brutality.

However, it is still necessary to move beyond the tendency to totalize imperial China as a single analytical unit, shown in the scholarship of comparative-historical sociology notably Eisenstadt’s (1963) classical study. Although the symbiotic relationships of the center and the periphery, characterized by mutual benefit and obligation, may explain its extraordinary endurance over its two thousand years, there is a crucial difference between native and conquest dynasties in the history of Chinese imperialism regarding the task of pacifying the frontiers (see Chapter 3).

Native dynasties, on the one hand, commonly relied less on military strength and more on appeasement and deterrence, comparatively similar to the Byzantine Empire (see Luttwak 2009; Ostrogorski 1969). These dynasties employed the carrot more frequently than the stick to achieve the imperial aim of security and stability, just as the Byzantine state did to secure the loyalty of the various Slav potentates in the Balkans (see Stephenson 1999, 2000).¹⁰ The ‘taming’ strategy, rhetorically decorated as the action of the beneficent Son of Heaven, was chosen over a triumphal militarism at the cost of financial burden to the imperial court.¹¹ This Sinocentric rhetoric, however, often functioned simply as a medium to conceal a harsh reality. The vast gulf between rhetoric and reality became evident when the native dynasty such as the Song was constantly exposed to the military threat from its neighboring states. As for the Song dynasty, in theory such payments—the generous imperial ‘gifts’ to the less sophisticated ‘barbarians’—were in practice a ransom.

¹⁰ In the Byzantine case, “material benefits took the form of grants of imperial titles with associated stipends and silks, privileged trade, tribute payments or largesse” (Stephenson 2000: 319-320). In the Chinese case, a long list of incentives in the form of imperial ‘gifts’ was strikingly similar. See Bang (2009), Lewis (2000, 2009b), Pan (1997b), Serruys (1975a, 1975b), Yü (1967, 1986), Zhao (2008).

¹¹ For instance, Zhu Yuanzhang, the first Ming emperor (r. 1368-1398), plainly articulated the burden of the imperial ‘gifts’ to his tributary dependencies. In 1374, he announced in an edict that “I do not want too many foreign tributary missions to come because they will cause our country too much trouble.” In 1390, he repeated the same opinion that “I have insisted that foreign countries must not send missions more often than once every three years.” These passages are quoted in Zhao Gang (2008: 89).

Alien dynasties, on the other hand, tended to underscore their military force as a primary tool of statecraft and relegate persuasion as a secondary complement, to some degree resembling the Roman Empire (see Luttwak 1976). Many of them preferred a more centralized rule than a concessionary administration for frontier peoples under the native dynasties. For instance, the *gaitu guiliu* program of the Manchu Qing, embarked upon around 1700, was to replace the hereditary native chieftaincy, particularly in China's southwest, with a centrally appointed civilian officialdom. The ruling groups of the conquest dynasties also wanted to maintain their status as a privileged minority by distancing themselves from the native Han subjects. Their pejorative attitude toward the Han people, who were considered militarily inferior, was often pervasive. The speech of Gao Huan (496-547),¹² recorded in the annalistic history by Sima Guang (1019-1086) of the Northern Song, is one of the earlier recorded examples: "Whenever the premier [Gao] Huan made an oral command to his soldiers, ... if he spoke to the Xianbei [Sārbi] soldiers in Xianbei language, he said 'The Han people (*hanmin*) are your slaves; the men plow the land for you; the women weave clothes for you; they transport your grain and cloth. So, if you are warmly dressed and well-fed (*wenbao*), why do you still humiliate them?'"¹³ Similarly, Yelü Abaoji (r. 907-926), the founder of the Liao dynasty, said shortly before his death that "I can speak Han Chinese (*hanyu*), but I never speak it in the presence of my tribal people. I fear that they [the Khitans] may emulate the Han Chinese and grow timid and weak."¹⁴

The most important feature is that, for both native and conquest dynasties, albeit with their different orientations, there was no equivalent parallel to the principle of national self-determination of modern nationalism, but at most some xenophobic feeling toward ethno-cultural others. Instead, especially in late imperial China, what was dominant was the Confucian culturalism that not only pursued the cultural transformation of alien peoples into the main Sinic tradition, but served as a crucial impediment to the creation of

¹² See footnote 18 in Chapter 3.

¹³ Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian* Chapter 157 (537 A.D.), p. 4882. Sima Guang comments that "In that period, the Xianbei people generally looked down on Han Chinese." Gao Huan's statement therefore reflects the ethno-political situation of his days, when various non-Han states controlled North China—the cradle of the Yellow River civilization.

¹⁴ *Xin Wudai shi* Chapter 72, p. 890. The translation follows Mote (1999: 47) with minor changes.

ethnic Han nationalism (see, e.g., Fincher 1972; Langlois 1980; Tillman 1979). The philosophical discourse of the achievability of cultural conversion originated as early as from Mencius who said: “using the Sinic doctrine to transform the non-Sinic aliens (*yong xia bian yi*).”¹⁵ He also suggested that one’s inborn nature is perfect, and a kind of microcosm that represents or contains the essence of all things.¹⁶ Thus, the mainline Confucian tradition never essentialized ethno-cultural aliens as immutably inferior. Everything became a subject of education and the educational goal was to cultivate the self from one’s innate endowment. In his discussion of the nature of Confucianism, Weber (1964: 153) argues that “there was no radical evil”—a worldview that typically followed upon the lack of a supra-mundane deity and reflected the status conditions in the patrimonial state.

Historic Chinese imperialism was incommensurable not only to nationalism, but also to colonialism. Instead of conceiving an immutable barrier between ‘superior’ Han and ‘inferior’ non-Han, the Mencian idea of innate commonalities among all humans prevailed during late imperial times.¹⁷ The prominent Ming thinker Wang Yangming (1472-1529), for instance, proposed that the apparent primitivism of frontier aborigines could be transformed, because their ‘original nature’ (*benxing*) was not intrinsically distinct from the Han Chinese.¹⁸ In his opinion, their ignorance of Confucian ritual propriety was not a sign of inherent inferiority but rather a reflection of their honesty and simplicity in opposition to the enormity and hypocrisy of some Han subjects (see Shin 2006b: 117-118). As a means of frontier pacification, Wang built community schools to convert indigenes of the southwest where he had several posts (see Hauf 1999;

¹⁵ *Mencius* III (1), 4; Legge (1875: 210).

¹⁶ As he said: “All things (*wanwu*) are complete within us. There is no greater delight than to be conscious of sincerity on self-examination” (*Mencius* VII (1), 4; Legge 1875: 345). See also Creel (1953: 92).

¹⁷ The ultimate triumph of the Mencian doctrine was closely associated with the consolidation of neo-Confucianism as an official state orthodoxy since the Song dynasty. Almost all neo-Confucian scholars affirmed the Mencian line. Possibly, this is in part because they had unconsciously appropriated some elements in Buddhist thought, particularly its idea of human nature—everyone can be Buddha. See Wright (1959: ch.5) for a more discussion of appropriation of Buddhism by the neo-Confucian school.

¹⁸ In his words, “all people [who had blood and breadth] have the same innate knowledge (*liangzhi*) of the sense of right and wrong without deliberation and, thanks to this shared good conscience, the fame of the sage-kings of antiquity who spoke and acted with their innate knowledge extended to all the barbarous tribes (*manmo*)” (Wang 1963: 166-167). His moral philosophy evidently echoes the Mencian idea of human nature.

Schneewind 2006; Shin 2006b). School construction was not solely mandated by some notable individuals but also embedded in the state-system. The imperial government usually sponsored the construction of ‘community schools’ (*shexue*; largely known in the Ming times) and ‘charitable schools’ (*yixue*; generally in the Qing period) for the non-Han natives in the frontiers, such as Guizhou, Guangxi, Yunnan, Xinjiang, and Hainan Island.¹⁹ The goal of local officials—generating some prominent examination successes—was sometimes achieved strikingly.²⁰ The perception of the natives and the efforts to transform them during late imperial China cannot be tantamount to colonialist/racist practice and discourse (see Chapter 7).

National Identity: Even after the formal demise of empire, the post-imperial Chinese nation reveals little semblance to the ideal-typical nation within the modernist perspective of nationalism, one that is intrinsically based on “the evolutionary model of understanding of nation” (Duara 1993: 25). Rather, it has been placed in the midst of the empire-nation continuum—the imperial nation. In a way, the Chinese nation “was there and it endured, with its core territory and population relatively stable over the centuries” (Townsend 1992: 126). What is more, the current discourse of the Chinese nation as an imagined giant family with 56 ethnic members should not be exclusively attributable to the epiphenomenon of the modern state-making project. Rather, it represents a reconfiguration of traditional patrimonial kingship—the Son of Heaven portrayed himself in a paternal role as an extended household head and as a lenient father whose duty was to protect and take care of his subjects, which was remarkably parallel to the self-image of the Russian tsar (Kivelson 1997; Wortman 2000: 3-15). Likewise, the foundation of ethnic policies and frontier governance of the post-imperial Chinese state preserves its ancient form and arrangement, albeit with some change. In this respect, the

¹⁹ See Elman and Woodside (1994), Herman (1997), Rowe (2002: 506-507), Schneewind (2006: ch.3) and Woodside (1983) for a detailed discussion.

²⁰ For instance, over 79 non-Han natives in Yunnan between 1750 and 1850 received the highest civil service degree (*jinshi*), roughly thrice the number for the four preceding centuries altogether (Lee 1982a: 304). It was not a mere coincidence that there was the creation or rehabilitation of 650 charitable schools in Yunnan alone in the 1730s under the management of a vigorous local administrator Chen Hongmou (1696-1771). Quoting the *Mencius*, he declared that Miao human nature is innately good, and therefore the Miao should be educated (Rowe 2001; Woodside 1983).

transformative processes during the great Chinese revolution were not something entirely discontinuous with its tradition. China was not born in the late nineteenth century!

Although I emphasize the durability and continuity of the Chinese nation in the *longue durée*, I do not conceive of it as an ahistorical, over-generalized entity. Likewise, I do not adopt the conventional Eurocentric view that ‘traditional China’ was basically changeless and stagnant, while the far-reaching transformation began to take place only after the advent of the West in the nineteenth century. Unfortunately, as Prasenjit Duara (1993, 2009) argues, this cognitive divide between ‘old’ and ‘new’ China is deeply embedded in much scholarship on the conception of Chinese nation and nationalism as manipulative inventions of the modern nationalizing state, which implicitly equates the post-imperial Chinese state with other full-fledged nation-states in the post-imperial and post-colonial age. In his manuscript written after the Republican Revolution in 1911, for instance, Weber argues that “Only fifteen years ago, men knowing the Far East still denied that the Chinese qualified as a ‘nation.’ ... Yet today, not only the Chinese political leaders but also the very same observers would judge differently. Thus it seems that a group of people ... may attain the quality of a nation through specific behavior, or they may claim this quality as an ‘attainment’—and within short spans of time at that” (1978[1922]: 924). Likewise, Benedict Anderson emphasizes the “recentness of Chinese nationalism” that emerged no earlier than the late nineteenth century, namely during the last phase of the Qing dynasty (2001: 35-37; see also Zhao 2004: ch.2). He further categorizes it as an example of “official nationalism”—state-led nationalism—which is associated with the efforts of monarchies to sustain their waning empires, as a means of concealing a gulf between nation and dynastic realm (Anderson 1991: 83-111).

While I agree that the birth of nationalism, as such, is recent and modern in China, Anderson’s discussion seems not only to assume the universality and inevitability of nationalism but to overrate the capacity of the post-imperial Chinese state to inspire and enforce the spirit of nationalism throughout the populace.²¹ Moreover, this kind of

²¹ As Duara (2001: 15) argues, “while the Republican era (1912-1949) was dominated by the growing ideological hegemony of nationalism, it was characterized by the reality of weak political control. The

ahistorical perspective considers post-imperial China as radically discontinuous with the traditional past so that it fails to capture the continuity through changes in the course of the great transition from patrimonial empire to the People's Republic. It therefore inexorably gives rise to conceptual puzzlement and at best such paradoxical statements as, “although China produced one of the world's greatest civilizations and still has a powerful and tenacious culture, it now has in modern times a relatively contentless form of nationalism [or formless nationalism]” (Pye 1993: 108). As Zhao Suisheng (2004: 13-14) analyzes, Lucien Pye here delineates a void in the cultural ideals that could constitute the substantive form and content for Chinese nationalism, because the historical legacies of Chinese tradition, Confucian tradition in particular, have long been under serious attack since the May Fourth movement of 1919. It is a continuing process that reached its apogee under the frantic movement of eradicating the ‘Four Olds’ (*si jiu*)—old ideas, old customs, old traditions, and old habits—during the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal Cultural Revolution. Behind such anti-traditionalist movements, however, the long-lasting ideal of constituting a unified multiethnic state, namely forging Greater China, one that transcends the chasm between imperial and post-imperial China, has never been challenged or abandoned by the revolutionaries and intellectuals. Hence, one should neither unduly overestimate the ‘newness’ of post-imperial China nor uncritically subscribe to Chinese critiques of their own heritages.

Strictly speaking, therefore, the post-imperial Chinese state is the “nationless state” (Fitzgerald 1995) seen from a conventional perspective of modern nation and nationalism.²² Alternatively, its state-building project has to be understood within the framework of the imperial nation whose governance can be summarized as horizontal heterogeneity. The imperial nation, as I shall discuss, is historically constituted as a convergence of two different types of statecraft—an imperial form modeled on vertical heterogeneity and a national form based on horizontal homogeneity.

nation-state [i.e., the post-imperial Chinese state] was forced ... to tolerate alternative discursive and ideological defenses of the local against the nation.”

²² Similarly, Duara argues that “The social whole in historical China was conceived, in short, in a way that is not completely different from the conceptualization of the social whole of modern nationalism. Yet the impulse in modern scholarship to view the two as fundamentally different is not confined to China scholarship, but informs the most influential studies of nationalism today” (1993: 6).

Moreover, I consider the PRC and the Soviet Union as two remarkable cases of imperial nation (see Chapter 2). As for the post-Romanov transition, Ronald Suny (1997: 151) illustrates that:

[F]rom its inception the Soviet Union replicated imperialist relations. ... [The Bolsheviks] assumed that political and cultural rights for non-Russians and the systematic constraint of Russian nationalism, along with the development of a socialist economy, would be sufficient to solve the “national question.” While creating national territorial units with broad cultural privileges, the new government’s overwhelming concern was that the new multinational federal state be a single integrated economy.

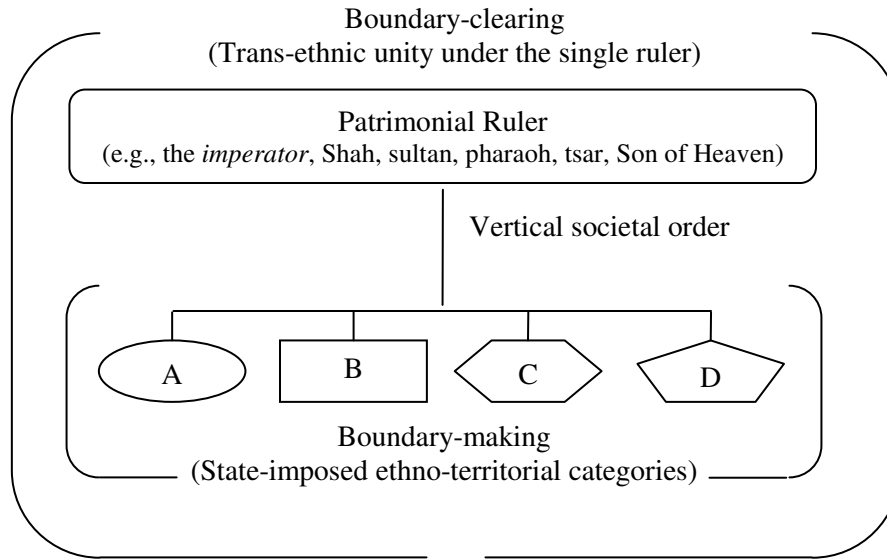
His assessment can be largely applicable to the PRC’s response to nationality problems by substituting Han and non-Han for Russian and non-Russian. But there was one critical institutional difference. That is, instead of creating a multinational federal state, the PRC insisted upon the concept of one republic with several semi-autonomous regions for non-Han peoples. The final rejection of an idea of a federal republic of China, one that was actually supported by the Chinese communist leadership during the pre-PRC era, was legitimized by referring to its imperial tradition as a transcendence of the federative system in the Zhou period in early China.²³

Ethnic Boundaries: The fundamental, enduring predicament for all patrimonial rulers of world-empire was how to settle their primary goal of imperial unity with the enormous ethnic, religious, administrative, regional, and legal diversity among the subjects. This imperial condition continues to persist in contemporary multiethnic nations. The Chinese state has always faced reconciling the dilemma of unity and diversity. Its strategy has been to employ two contradictory processes simultaneously: *boundary-clearing* and *boundary-making*, which were quite universal in major patrimonial empires (see Figure

²³ See footnote 19 in Chapter 7 for the communist perspective on the national question and the form of the state prior to 1949. On the eve of the establishment of the PRC, however, as Zhao Suisheng (2004: 175-176) shows, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leadership “made a sharp U-turn in favor of the notion of a unitary, multiethnic nation-state” while admitting that “its earlier emphasis on self-determination and federation was a mistake.” He further argues that this radical shift “came largely from the fact that ethnic nationalism was no longer instrumental and instead had become a threat to the unitary state” (ibid.: 176). See also Wang Ke (2001: 260-266).

1.1). The consequence is that ethnic differences have never been essentialized; they have been porous, malleable, and changeable.

Figure 1.1 Making and clearing ethnic boundaries in the patrimonial world-empire



In addition to the basic features of state and nation, the configuration and pattern of ethnic group boundaries represent constancy and change in China. Again, instead of proposing a qualitative break between the ‘traditional’ and the ‘modern,’ I argue that the Chinese state for both imperial and post-imperial times has shown the dual nature of the dynamics of ethnic boundaries; namely, the boundary-making process between ethnic groups (see Chapter 4) and the boundary-clearing process within a unified state (see Chapter 5).

On the one hand, one of the essentials of Chinese nationhood has been the emphasis on a sense of interethnic commonalities, either imagined or real, that intends to clear ethnic group boundaries for maintaining national unity. As argued, a key aspect to the consolidation and longevity of the Chinese empire had been its ability to incorporate an array of different ethnic and religious groups within a system in a way that was lenient and inclusive. It is evident that, during imperial China, an all-inclusive state ideology was prevalent since such familial metaphors as ‘All-under-Heaven is one family’ (*tianxia*

yijia), ‘within the four seas we are all brothers’ and ‘Chinese and non-Chinese are one family’ (*huayi yijia*) were used to legitimize the supra-ethnic ideal of imperial unity. These metaphors, conceiving the Middle Kingdom as one unified family, were connected directly to the all-embracing attribute of patrimonial rulership, meaning the Son of Heaven was like the father of one giant family; the state. This universalistic ideal had been particularly appropriated by the ethnically alien ruling elites of the conquest dynasties to legitimize their dominion over the native Han subjects.

The concept of the Chinese nation in the post-imperial era reveals both continuity and change from its imperial practice. The PRC’s official propaganda about the great Chinese family (*zhonghua da jiating*) is not just exclusively designated to the Han majority but also to the non-Han minority groups. This boundary-clearing familial metaphor represents an astonishing legacy of the transcendental ideal of the Chinese empire. But we should not ignore the fundamental alteration made in post-imperial China, namely the transition from *vertical fatherhood* to *horizontal brotherhood*. It is evident that empire and nation have a different emotional valence to each other on the ground that relations of fathers to children in the patrimonial empire differ greatly from idealized relations of brothers and sisters in the modern nation. The post-imperial changes indeed strive to essentialize its inalienable ‘racial’ unity, asserting the primordial horizontal brotherhood based on the ‘scientific’ theories of the Chinese nation as the common descendants of the Yellow Emperor (*huangdi*) and Peking Man (*Homo erectus pekinensis*) allegedly believed to be ‘racial’ progenitors. To corroborate this idealized vision of indisputable brotherhood, PRC scholars have employed the modern sciences of archaeology, history, genetics, linguistics, anthropology, ethnology, and sociology. Such activities are of course devoted to forging an image of the Chinese nation as ‘affective community,’ accommodating various ethnic groups as its family members. To that end, regional diversity and ethnic plurality are tolerated or even promoted within the overarching narrative of racial unity that firmly advocates interregional and interethnic commonalities. Despite their ostensibly separatist discourse, regionalist and ethno-nationalist claims neither overtly nor covertly confront Chinese nationalism (Falkenhausen 1995: 215); rather, they are nothing but a manifestation of the principle of horizontal heterogeneity to

mute nationalists who seek to secede from the PRC. This inclusionary aspect of Chinese nationalism is substantially incompatible with the standard depiction of a nationalism that tends to be exclusionary and demarcate the ethnically-defined national boundaries.

In that respect, much of nation-building in post-imperial China should probably be called, more precisely, empire-building in a more general sense, if we concur that the question of empire is, as the Weberian sociologist pertinently suggests, “the problem of establishing political order in the face of social and cultural heterogeneity” (Roth 1968: 204). Like its imperial predecessors, the PRC faces a substantial task in integrating diverse ethnic, cultural, and religious elements, many of which are typically considered to be ‘nations’ (in the Western sense of the term) without having their own independent states, including the Tibetans, Muslim Uighurs, and Mongolians.²⁴ The PRC’s responses to the worldwide expansion of nation-states are not just limited to its self-image of a China as a multiethnic nation, unified for thousands of years, but reflected in its nationality policies, aimed at institutionalizing horizontal heterogeneity.

On the other hand, the Chinese state has a long history of exercising a boundary-making process of differentiating ethno-cultural differences that takes a variety of institutionalized forms of heterogeneity by taking the individual’s genealogy (blood) and the indigenous territory (soil) into account. As mentioned above, the administrative duality between the interior and the exterior had been extant throughout the imperial period. This grand strategy of the Chinese empire was driven by the rational choice of the central government calculating its fiscal and military capacity under the circumstance that the frontier problems produced a constant strain upon the resources of the government and imposed a heavy burden upon the Chinese heartlands—the major revenue-producing regions. John Shepherd aptly states that “the Chinese state only found direct rule of frontier territories attractive when a jurisdiction’s economic development ensured that local tax revenues would cover the costs of administration or when strategic concerns

²⁴ Indeed, structurally, this kind of problem of empire-making is not just limited to such giant states as the PRC and the former Soviet Union, but common in several postcolonial societies including the newborn African nations which have more tribal segmentation on a smaller scale (see, e.g., Wallerstein 1960; Roth 1968) as well as Indonesia whose national motto is ‘unity in diversity’ (*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*).

dictated an administrative presence (that might have to be subsidized by the central government) despite low revenue potential” (1993: 401). Hence, as Yang Lien-sheng (1969) discusses, the Chinese statesmen frequently opposed the proposal of imposing excessive centralized control over the frontiers but, rather, endorsed the continuation of the native chieftain system that would function as a relatively inexpensive medium for securing the superiority of the Son of Heaven in those areas. As Table 1.1 illustrates, this imperial condition can be characterized as the system of *vertical heterogeneity*.

Table 1.1 The typology of political systems by societal order and ethnic governance

		Ethnic Governance	
		Homogenous	Heterogeneous
Societal Order	Vertical	Small-scale Tribal Society	Empire (e.g., the Romanov, Ottoman, and Qing state)
	Horizontal	Nation-state (e.g., France, Japan, and Korea)	Imperial Nation (e.g., the Soviet Union and PRC)

Making the imperial nation in post-imperial China is a drastic shift from vertical to *horizontal heterogeneity*. As a matter of administrative diversity, the PRC appropriated the system of Autonomous Regions mainly from the Soviet Union as a substitute for the traditional system of inner feudatories (*neifan*) at the margins of the Chinese scene. The ethnic borderlands under this new institution are horizontally integrated in a single republic; the imperial frontiers were vertically integrated to the center by means of the feudal tribute system. Yet, as before, the PRC continues to institutionalize heterogeneity between the inner and the outer regions. The PRC’s territorial incorporation of Hong Kong and Macau as special administrative districts is essentially an extension of this tradition of one unified country with multiple administrative systems.

On the contrary, nation-building since the historical formation of the European nation-state has been based on the principle of *horizontal homogeneity* through nationalizing the people of all strata with a common national identity, particularly a common language and history. In other words, a nationalizing state is an “unrealized” nation-state or a state

destined to be a nation-state and, partly due to its homogenizing force, typically considered as a nationally oppressive host state by national minorities (Brubaker 1995b). This concept of the nationalizing state is ostensibly applicable to post-imperial China on the grounds that the state builders have occasionally initiated such strong assimilating movement towards minority nationalities as the Cultural Revolution by labeling their practices as ‘backward’ and ‘inferior’ (see Heberer 1989: ch.2). Yet still, they have generally not so much created the state of and for a Han Chinese nation as to instead restructure the condition of multiethnic heterogeneity directly inherited from the imperial past. So the Chinese policy for ethnic minority education and studies has been fairly tolerant toward a certain kind of ethnic ‘nationalism’ which denounces the Han-centered perspective of Chinese civilization and asserts the invaluable contribution of minorities to the formation of the present Chinese nation (see Chapter 5). From the PRC’s perspective, it is ethnic separatist movements that cause “a serious threat to the unity of the multiethnic Chinese state” (Zhao 2004: 22; see also *ibid.*: ch.5). This alludes to one important aspect of Chinese statecraft, that is, ethnic boundary-making is an instrumental medium for maintaining national integrity and should be subservient to an overarching process of ethnic boundary-clearing. Accordingly, the nature of ethnic group boundaries has been porous, allowing some changes in personal ethnic self-identification (see Chapter 6).

Methodological Sinology: As the valid method for linking the past and the present, I take the sinological approach in comparative-historical sociology to map out the specific and significant pattern as well as the causes and consequences of continuity through changes concerning China’s ethnic history. It is a truism that, as a renowned sinologist reminds us, the “ignorance of China’s cultural tradition and historical experience is an absolute barrier to comprehending China today” (Mote 1999: xv). The problem is that, in reality, it is almost impossible to deal with more than a tiny part of the various issues of Chinese society, past and present. Faced with this question, another eminent sinologist proposed that “the only alternative is to select certain problems that have significance both for sinology and for twentieth-century sociology” (Balazs 1964: 6), which is still true for the twenty-first century. I believe the perspective and the methods of the sinological branch

of sociology would be a suitable, if not ideal, solution for expounding the main theme of my study if we agree that the concept of the nation and the logic of ethnic relations in post-imperial China can represent one enduring aspect of Chinese society. Given this persistence and stability, therefore, the importance of the sinological orientation is not merely limited to the research of Chinese tradition in historical depth; it extends to the study of the process of nation-building and state-building in a multiethnic society during the post-Qing period.

The foundations of sinological sociology were laid by Weber, as shown in his landmark work *Konfuzianismus und Taoismus* (see Bendix 1977: 98-141; Eisenstadt 1985), and later developed by such scholars as Etienne Balazs, Wolfram Eberhard, Marcel Granet, Karl Wittfogel. The heritage of this tradition, however, has been mostly neglected on both sides of the Atlantic for decades, a situation that George Steinmetz (2010) calls “ideas in exile.” I revive this forgotten perspective to identify the origin, expansion, and transformation of the idea and system of ethnic boundaries in China, relying on the primary sources (ranging from the Sinitic classics, standard histories of dynasties, historical annals, works of literati to the local household registers) and secondary literature written in English as well as in Chinese, Korean, and Japanese.

Outline of Chapter Organization

With this introduction, this dissertation is organized into seven chapters. Chapter 2 outlines its theoretical framework. Then in the following three chapters, I will unpack the duality of ethnic group boundaries; one is to make and the other is to clear. Chapter 3 introduces the patterns of boundary-making and boundary-clearing in China and then historicizes them by categorizing Chinese history into three major phases. Chapter 4 discusses the boundary-making process concerning both cognitive Sinocentrism and institutional ethnic categories. Chapter 5 focuses on the boundary-clearing feature and emphasizes the tradition of trans-ethnic kinship discourse in China which imagines genealogical commonalities among various ethnicities. To measure how these macro-

level ethnic boundaries have affected the person's self-identity, Chapter 6 analyzes the individual-level panel data and demonstrates the empirical evidence for ethnic boundary-crossing. Chapter 7 is devoted to debunking some misconceptions about China's ethnic relations in much of Western scholarship, which have instead examined them through the lenses of colonialism, racism, and Orientalism.

Chapter Two, **The Historical Sociology of Empire: A Weberian Account**, constructs three ideal-types of political systems—empire, colonial power, and nation—to establish a conceptual clarification of these ambiguous categories. I apply the Weberian account of non-colonial and patrimonial empires to differentiate it from colonial powers and national states. The key characteristics of non-colonial world-empires are the symbiotic relations between the center and the periphery as well as the comparatively less intense ethnic exclusion, discrimination, and exploitation. I would further suggest that the former Soviet Union and the post-Qing Chinese state are two remarkable cases of the imperial nation located in the midst of an empire-nation continuum.

Chapter Three, **The Dialectics of Ethnic Boundaries in China**, explores the dynamics of making and clearing ethnic boundaries from pre-imperial times to the present day. As a way of historicizing the construction of the ethnic boundaries in China, I introduce three major phases in Chinese history; the *formative*, *expansionary*, and *post-imperial* phases, which will be applied in the two subsequent chapters.

First, the native Chinese states—such as the Han (206 B.C.-220 A.D.), Tang (618-907), Song (960-1279), and Ming (1368-1644)—generally favored the policy of ethnic boundary-clearing over ethnic separatism as a way to integrate non-Sinitic peoples into the Sinic cultural realm. They pursued the Confucian principle of the moral transformation of 'uncultured' aliens, the ideas that emerged during pre-imperial times and remained an integral part of the state ideology throughout the imperial period. They also facilitated the process of miscegenation, the documented evidence of which dates back to early China, while not evolving into the proto-racial idea of purity of blood. As a

result of melting-pot processes, what has predominated in China is the blurring of ethnic boundaries, namely the mutual melding between the native Han and non-Han peoples.

Second, the conquest dynasties in China expanded the conceptualization of ethnicity in many respects. These ruling groups institutionalized the system of ethnic boundary-making not only to preserve their ethno-cultural identity but also to maintain their dominant status over the native subjects who were indiscriminately classified as the Han people. Ethnic separatism and hierarchy particularly persisted under the four major alien regimes: the Khitan Liao (907-1125), Jurchen Jin (1115-1234), Mongol Yuan (1206-1368), and Manchu Qing (1644-1911). However, the unintended consequence of those minority rules was the expansion of the boundaries of the Chinese people by incorporating various alien groups who remained inside the China heartland after the downfall of their dominators. In addition, as a result of the massive territorial expansion under the Qing dynasty, the spatial boundaries of the Middle Kingdom as a political definition of China extended beyond the traditional China proper.

Lastly, the legacy of the imperial governance of making and clearing ethnic boundaries has led to the formation of Han Chinese (the largest official ethnicity in the world) and non-Han minorities in the post-imperial times. China's imperial heritage has also shaped the ethnic policies and political boundary of the post-imperial Chinese state. More importantly, the discourse of modern Chinese nationalism has been to manifest the ideal of a unified multiethnic state as a way of enshrining the imperial integrity of the past, while countering against ethnic nationalism among both Han and non-Han peoples.

Chapter Four, **Imagined Boundaries: Ethnic Boundary-Making and State-Building**, investigates the ethnic boundary-making process in relation to Sinocentrism and ethnic governance. I shall focus on the formation of the 'us-them' boundary in China by differentiating its two dimensions: attitudinal and institutional. China represents an intriguing example of polity where ethnic prejudices and stereotypes have not led to an institutionalized system of discrimination, oppression, inequality, and violence.

On the one hand, the Sinitic people frequently disparaged ‘barbarians’ in the outer fringes as inferior beings whose mind and behavior are closer to animal, somewhat parallel to the other great ancient civilizations of Greece, Rome, Persia, and India. The textual evidence of Sinocentric prejudices and stereotypes dates back at least to the age of Confucius, although the specific referents and circumstances forming such attitudes varied over times. I shall trace the genealogy of Sinocentrism, paying special attention to the topoi of the “hearts of birds and beasts,” articulated particularly under the native dynasties. Such prejudices, however, did not progress into institutionalized ethnic discrimination, albeit state-led ethnic categorization. The Confucian doctrine, which emphasizes the viability of moral and cultural alteration, overrode any temptation to forge an ethnic-based national state. In effect, in comparison with the European colonial powers, this inclusive attitude is the essential feature of non-colonial and patrimonial empires where the boundaries between civilized and barbarian remained cultural, not biological.

On the other hand, the Chinese state has a long history of implementing official ethnic categories based on two principles: the principles of territoriality and personality. In general, the former is meant to demarcate an ethno-territorial community in the periphery. The latter is meant to identify the person’s special status as having non-Han backgrounds. In both cases, state-imposed ethnic boundaries have not been intended to create discriminated and disadvantaged groups. Rather, they have been imposed to protect and even privilege the non-Han minority. I will apply the framework of three major phases, presented in Chapter 3, to historicize the pattern of state-building and ethnic-making.

First, I will discuss the origins and consolidation of spatial boundaries between Sinitic and non-Sinitic groups in ancient China. Throughout imperial times, furthermore, this principle of territoriality remained a fundamental principle of regulating the center-periphery relation. The Chinese imperial government not only distinguished the native chieftaincy in the peripheral regions from the regular county-prefecture system but also granted administrative, fiscal, and legal autonomy as an official recognition of its distinctive status. Especially under the native dynasties, it favored a conciliatory policy toward the indigenous frontiersmen and their leadership. In this respect, the Sinocentric

tributary system, a ritualized form of the political supremacy of the Middle Kingdom, was based on the reciprocal duties of vassalage and protection. Such setting represents a remarkable difference in relation to the system of colonial power, where the overseas colonies were not only exploited to feed the metropole, but rigid racial hierarchies were also set up between the colonizer and the colonized.

Second, alongside the establishment of multiple territorial jurisdictions, the conquest dynasties introduced the principle of personality of law, one that transcended the place of origins. They separated the dominant conquerors from the regular administrative system, based on the person's tribal genealogy or membership in the elite hereditary military organization. This particularistic reference to 'ethnic' affiliation was to benefit the dominant minority who were not only judged according to their own customary law but also waived from regular duties imposed upon their subjects. Despite implementing comparatively exclusive ethnic boundaries, the conquest regimes did not involve much discrimination against the conquered Han people. To summarize, the structure of ethnic hierarchy was devised not so much to discriminate against the dominated as to identify those who were to be privileged.

Third, the formation of ethnic categories and policies by the PRC reveals the heritage of two past principles of ethnicity (viz. soil and blood). The establishment of the Autonomous Regions and the preferential treatments for minority nationalities are not merely a modern creation imported from the Soviet Union. They are rather a post-imperial reconfiguration of ethnic governance within the Chinese empire. Meanwhile, there are two significant changes made in the post-imperial period. First, the conception of territoriality of the modern nation-state replaced the fluid space of empire modeled on the institution of vassalage so that the loosely-defined frontiers, i.e., *limes*, became the tightly-marked borders. Second, the concept of equal status for all members of the Chinese nation substituted for the ethnic inequality under the Qing dynasty. As discussed in the next chapter, this transition from unequal imperial subjects to national citizens of equal status required a distinctive myth of national homogeneity based on imagined interethnic commonalities.

Chapter Five, **Imagined Commonalities: The Origins and Development of China's Genealogical Nationalism**, examines the process of boundary-clearing, as reflected in the primordial conceptualization of ethnicity in genealogical terms. My point is that the conception of common descent as the foundation of Chinese nationhood has not identified one 'chosen' group at the expense of others. Rather, it has been used to accommodate diverse even all ethnic groups within one big imagined family, often depicted as common descendants of the Yellow Emperor—a mythical progenitor of Chinese culture and one of the highest deities in Taoism.

I begin with a discussion of a sociological perspective of ethnicity as an extension of family and highlight the role of ethno-history, particularly the shared belief in a common ancestry within the course of ethno-national boundary-making. I will then demonstrate how the mythicized account of genealogical commonness has formed a sense of *imagined commonalities* through a trans-ethnic kinship metaphor—we, the Chinese nation, are one big family with many members.

The idea of universal genealogy overriding ethnic differences was created in the late pre-imperial period and crystallized during the early imperial times. It was, in particular, Sima Qian (ca. 145-86 B.C.), the famous Grand Historian, who systematically constructed the genealogy of the Yellow Emperor. His vision of ethno-genealogy had not only been adapted by the Han people, but also later appropriated by several non-Han groups. In addition, the familial rhetoric had frequently appeared in diplomatic affairs between the Middle Kingdom and its neighbors as well as between the native and conquest dynasties. Even now, the history of the marriage alliances between Tang and Tibet serves the PRC well in terms of the construction of Sino-Tibetan commonalities.

In post-imperial times, the discourse of imagined commonalities has become stronger and more pronounced, as China began to appropriate the Western theories of race, ethnicity, nation and nationalism to declare the inalienable unity among all 56 nationalities within the Chinese nation. I elucidate this point by examining two cases. The first deals with

current official discourse on Tibetans as ‘brothers’ of the Han, which assumes the indivisible ‘blood’ relationships between the two, highlighting the history of interethnic exchanges as well as ‘racial’ similarities. The second examines how the Chinese ethnologists, who canonize the Morgan-Engels paradigm of universal stages in cultural evolution, perceive some minorities like the Yi and Naxi as having preserved the original form and essence of Chinese civilization, rather than isolating their culture from the Han or degrading it as backward, uncivilized and inferior.

Chapter Six, **Imagined Identity: The Processes of Ethnic Naming Customs and Name Changes in Southern Manchuria, 1749-1909**, discusses the construction of ethnic self-identity underscoring its porous nature. While being largely affected by a genealogical mindset, it is not uncommon for Chinese to change their personal identity for their own benefits. Under the conquest dynasties, in particular, many Han people preferred to be registered as Khitans, Jurchens, Mongols, and Manchus so as to attain certain privileges and advantages reserved only for the ruling ethnicity. In opposition to the one-way sinicization thesis, historical reality shows a certain de-sinicization trend as well.

In analyzing the quantitative data of the Eight Banner household registers during the Qing dynasty, I would argue that individuals often lived in communities with multiple registered ethnicities and sometimes even switched identities at will. I demonstrate this process by investigating the naming patterns of more than 266,000 residents from 698 communities in southern Manchuria between 1749 and 1909, tracing changes in names from their 1.51 million individual registrations currently available. They were mostly descended from migrants from North China who became hereditary tenants on state land administered by the Eight Banner system. As banner people, on the one hand, these residents could legitimately claim to be Manchu. As descendants of Shandong migrants, on the other hand, they could also claim to be Han. Under these circumstances, they could express their ethnic identity of preference, declaring themselves as a member of ruling minorities by de-sinicizing their original names and acculturating to their ruler’s language and customs.

The de-sinicizing trend continues into the present, as the PRC government began to institutionalize preferential treatments and subsidize non-Han minorities after the Cultural Revolution. As a result, the minority population has risen considerably in recent decades.

As the titles of chapters four, five and six indicate, I would emphasize that the notion of ethnicity in China is *imagined* concerning three dimensions of ethnic boundaries—institutional (Chapter 4), primordial (Chapter 5), and instrumental (Chapter 6). First, there is an institutional foundation for ethnic boundary-making, which is closely connected to the state-making process and frequently manipulated by state policies. Second, the Chinese state implements the process of ethnic boundary-clearing by insisting on a communal ethno-genealogy between Han and non-Han peoples. Such imagined commonalities have contributed to the construction of China's national self-image—a unified multiethnic state. Third, in consequence of the porous nature of ethnicity at the macro level, personal ethnic identity has been fairly fluid at such a level. People have regarded ethnicity as a medium for increasing their fortune in response to the institutional division of power differentials and material benefits.

Chapter Seven, **Mistaken Identity: The Fallacy of Reading China's Ethnic Relations through Western Lens**, is a critical evaluation of several misinterpretations and misconceptions in much of Western scholarship which have appraised the Sino-Western parallels within the framework of racism, colonialism, and Orientalism. After debunking these three mythologies, I would suggest a tentative scheme for comparative-historical studies on how China as a case in point might render some useful insights on general social theories.

I would argue that the Chinese concept of ethnic boundaries shares much with other historic empires and does not fit into the theories of the formation of peoplehood and nationhood, induced not only from the history of the colonial powers but from its mimicry in the postcolonial nation-states. First, ethnic feelings and boundaries in Chinese history did not progress into a notion of racial essentialism subsuming one's constant and

unalterable superiority or inferiority over the other. There were no rigid polarities of 'superior' Han and 'inferior' non-Han, both in the native and conquest regimes. Second, there was no indication of the center's economic exploitation of the periphery in the course of territorial expansion and frontier settlement under Chinese imperial rule. The overall frontier conditions throughout the late imperial times were largely incommensurable to both internal and overseas colonialism, embedded in the capitalist world economy that emerged and expanded since the sixteenth century. Third, the traditional Sinocentric cultural discourse was neither tantamount to the representation of the uncivilized 'Other' as appeared in Orientalism nor the 'civilizing mission' of European colonial powers.

I would conclude that a closer examination of the historical development of statehood, nationhood, and ethnic boundaries in the context of China would provide a key toward rethinking the prevailing theories of the minority used in the study of ethnicity, race, nation, and nationalism, as well as of inequality, discrimination, and violence.

Chapter Two

The Historical Sociology of Empire: A Weberian Account

Christiandom, the Islamic Ummah, and even the Middle Kingdom – which, though we think of it today as Chinese, imagined itself not as Chinese, but as central – were imaginable largely through the medium of a sacred language and written script. ... The barbarian becomes ‘Middle Kingdom’, the Rif Muslim, the Ilongo Christian. The whole nature of man’s being is sacrally malleable. ... The fundamental conceptions about ‘social groups’ were centripetal and hierarchical, rather than boundary-oriented and horizontal — Benedict Anderson (1991: 12-15).

Ambiguous Categories: Empire, Colonial Power, and Nation

Empire is an elusive concept with considerable ramifications. Not only has it changed its contextual meaning according to different times and spaces, it has also designated a variety of societies that have existed at one time or another. In general, empires “are characterized by a diversity of peoples dominated by one of them; a vast extent of territory; a large population; and durability over time” (Issawi 1989: 178). Even though I can also identify with this common definition, I would still argue that the conventional discussions of ‘empire’ — especially in the comparative-historical studies of the empire-to-nation transition—inadvertently totalize the various incommensurable political systems as a singular unit of analysis encompassing not only the Spanish, British, French, Portuguese, Dutch, German, and Japanese colonial powers but also the Habsburg, Russian, Ottoman, Mughal, Abyssinian, and Chinese empires. What is more, applying the term ‘empire’ to modern states and institutions—the former Soviet Union, contemporary United States, the Third Reich of Nazi Germany, or the dispersed hegemonic “empire” of Hardt and Negri (2000)—has added to the semantic ambiguity. Such generic definition may lead to a highly problematic comparison between ‘empires.’ For instance, much scholarship has mistakenly interpreted frontier ethnic relations during late imperial China as analogous to what the European colonial powers had done in the New World since the

fifteenth century (see Chapter 7). The historic world-empires hardly if not never maintained their superordinate position on the basis of racism, colonialism, Orientalism—the indivisible trinity of the colonial world order.

What is an empire then? How is imperialism distinguishable from other forms of governance such as colonialism and nationalism? My theoretical constructs for these three forms, as the ideal-typical abstractions, hypothesize that they can be placed in strict opposition to one another in spite of some overlapping at various levels. To begin with, I will refer to the colonial states (i.e., the various political systems constructed in non-European territories as a consequence of European expansion, colonization, and conquest) not as colonial empires but as the overseas “colonial powers” even if they share some institutional similarities with contiguous, continental empires such as unequal hierarchy between the center and the frontier as well as the practices of indirect rule. Likewise, I would insist that the ‘informal empire’ of the United States in the age of Pax Americana still does not qualify despite having maintained overseas military outposts in a way similar to what several large-scale empires did for their frontier regions. I also treat imperialism as “simply the process or policy of establishing or maintaining an empire” (Doyle 1986: 45), in a manner quite distinct from the classical theories of ‘imperialism’ found in Hobson, Lenin, and Schumpeter (see *ibid.*: ch.1) which have critically examined colonial and postcolonial relations. Empire formation and expansion, as Max Weber (1978[1922]: 913-921) shows, are not inevitably driven by capitalist motives. So I consider empire as a form of polity in what Ronald Suny (2001c: 26) calls a “value-laden appellation” subsuming either the sublime form of political existence (e.g., Pax Romana, Pax España, Pax Britannica, Pax Sinica) or an evil, illegitimate polity that should eventually, indeed inexorably, meet its demise. It may seem elusive yet I will limit my interpretation of empire and imperialism so as not to be loaded with terms as have been employed but to be a value-neutral appellation in both theoretical and empirical senses. More specifically, it is by no means my intention to either glorify the Chinese empire or vindicate the official propaganda and policies on ethnic relations in contemporary China.

The political systems of empire, as I employ in this study, are distinct from feudalism, colonialism, nationalism and consist of two main elements—namely, the *patrimonial state* in the center and semi-autonomous *tributary dependency* (or client state) in the periphery. As such, my theoretical modeling is roughly tantamount to Weber’s discussion of a continental empire, the list of which includes the great world empires of China, Persia, Russia, India, the Mongols, Turks, Arabs as well as the Hellenic, Roman, and Byzantine empires. Yet it leaves out his references to the great colonial powers of Dionysius, Athens, Carthage, and pre-imperial Rome in antiquity. Also left out are those of the British, Dutch, and Spaniards in the modern period whose “overseas empires” and their formation of large-scale overseas dominions are described by Weber as “overseas imperialism” (1978[1922]: 914).¹ In addition, my conceptualization of empire is in part associated with the “centralized historical bureaucratic empires” once elaborated by Samuel Eisenstadt (1963), of which the developmental stage is more advanced than feudal systems but less advanced than the modern nation-state. And yet, there are at least two key differences. One is that my usage of “patrimonial empires” is closer to that of Weber and thereby broader than that of Eisenstadt whose ideal-types strictly separate them from historical bureaucratic empires. The other is that, while I exclude them, Eisenstadt includes colonial powers in his discussion of empires, labeling them as “conquest empires” (ibid.: 11).

On the one hand, patrimonialism in the history of empires, following Weber’s landmark discussion in *Economy and Society* and other works, is a form of central imperial government where the emperor, sultan, tsar, or Son of Heaven dominated on the basis of possessing legitimate authority through centralized bureaucratic, administrative and military organizations. Weber indeed clearly remarked that the “majority of all great continental empires had a fairly strong patrimonial character until and even after the beginning of modern times” (1978[1922]: 1013). Hence, my definition of empire rules out autonomous nation-states from colonial powers in the past, which were internally democratic yet externally colonial (e.g., the French Republics, Great Britain, Netherlands, United States and, to a lesser degree, the German and Japanese ‘empires’). The ruling

¹ Hannah Arendt (1968) also differentiates between colonial imperialism and continental imperialism.

institution in those countries is a representative government in form but not necessarily in substance, largely modeled on the principles of modern nation-state system, regardless of whether there is an emperor as the head of state in the form of a constitutional monarchy.

On the other hand, the tributary dependency is a political organization ruled by indigenous leaders in the peripheral societies, characterized for its political allegiance to the imperial court through the paying of regular tributes. Even when empires are inclined to favor colonization, in comparison with overseas ‘settler colonies’ among the colonial powers, it is still motivated largely by the interest of pacifying turbulent frontiers rather than the prospects of economic gain (think of the British and French settlers in Africa, who migrated there to exploit profitable mines and rich farmlands). Imperial policy of colonization is not so much to exploit as to pacify, the extent of which hinges on the availability of reliable indigenous elites willing to collaborate with the imperial center. Among continental empires, the Chinese and Ottoman empires generally saw a more limited colonization of the periphery and a preference for indirect rule via local leaders than the colonial powers (see Esherick, Kayali, and Van Young 2006). The Russian expansion throughout the Eurasian continent (see Brower and Lazzerini 1997; Khodarkovsky 2002; Sunderland 2004), by contrast, was the most notable instance of colonization resembling the practices of colonial powers to a degree, depicted as “internal colonialism” by Lenin. As presently discussed, the coexistence of the center (patrimonial-bureaucratic government) and periphery (tributary vassal states), which is at times symbiotic and on occasion confrontational, is intrinsic to the system of empires and distinguishes it from other forms of governance.

So the principal feature of empire as a form of domination is the dual coexistence of a finite realm of governance within its control and an infinite realm of influence toward the frontier (Burns 2003: 35; see also Doyle 1986: 30-47; Luttwak 1976: ch.1). Although scholars have been defining it in many different ways, most definitions commonly point out that empire is a large, composite, multiethnic polity linked to a central power by indirect dominion over the areas beyond imperial jurisdiction. The central power, as Charles Tilly (1997: 3) put it, “exercises some military and fiscal control in each major

segment of its imperial domain, but tolerates the two major elements of indirect rule: (1) retention or establishment of particular, distinct compacts for the government of each segment; and (2) exercise of power through intermediaries who enjoy considerable autonomy within their own domains in return for the delivery of compliance, tribute, and military collaboration with the center.” To legitimize its authority and domination, the political systems of historical empires generally have the following institutional elements: (1) a well-defined vertical hierarchy between rulers and ruled, (2) a centralized bureaucratic and patrimonial form of government, (3) the suzerainty of a core region over peripheral frontiers; and (4) a claim to universal emperorship (see Eisenstadt 1963; Wimmer and Min 2006: 870).

Four Institutional Foundations of the Historical Empire

Societal Hierarchy: One of the fundamentals of empire is that its center does not need be defined geographically and ethnically (see Suny 2001c: 25). The center is a “phenomenon of the realm of values and beliefs” (Shils 1985: 3) in that it is the center of the order of symbols which governs society. In this respect, the center or the central zone of the empire is not a spatially located phenomenon for its centrality has nothing to do with geometry and little if any with geography. Likewise, the essentially multiethnic ruling institution generally predominates over its ethnically and culturally diverse imperial subjects. Therefore, in comparison with the colonial powers, the ruling institution of empire barely, if at all, creates and perpetuates a rigid ethno-racially defined stratification and inequality among its subjects.

The isolation and dissimilarity between the rulers of the empire and the ruled, generally not by ethnicity or geography but by culture, caste, status or lineage, become part of the ideological rationale for the supremacy of the ruling institution. The ethnic background of the ruling group had *not* been such a critical source of political mobilization, conflict and violence as found in the nation-states. As Suny has summarized it, rather than a geographic or ethnic distinction from the periphery, the ruling institution has “a status or

class character, a specially endowed nobility or political class, like the Osmanli in the Ottoman Empire, or the imperial family and upper layers of the landed gentry and bureaucracy in the Russian Empire” (2001c: 25-26). Similarly, the ruling institution of the Middle Kingdom is hardly modeled on an ethnic supremacy of native peoples over non-Sinitic ‘barbarians’ or a stable geographic center analogous to Rome or Constantinople, but frequently changed and reconfigured according to the dynastic capitals (e.g., Xi’an, Luoyang, Nanjing, Kaifeng, Hangzhou, Beijing). It is instead based on a cultural superiority, emphasizing the values of literary Sinitic, the mainstay of imperial bureaucracy, the mastery of which had been one of the most important selection criteria for recruiting scholar-officials. The supremacy of literary Sinitic over vernacular languages in Chinese imperial officialdom can be paralleled to the preeminence of literary Latin in European Christendom. In effect, the decline of literate high culture and the rise of putative folk culture, which evolved into an ethno-national identity, have become crucial for the birth of modern nationalism (Anderson 1991; Gellner 1983, 1994).

Patrimonial Officialdom: The right to rule in empire, unlike modern nations, resides with the dominant institution that is basically patrimonial, and not in agreement with the governed. In theory, patrimonial empire as mass domination by one individual is an *imagined familial community*, represented as an extended family and exclusively possessed by the imperial family of the dynasty.² Its ruler therefore aspires to portray himself as the divine father, whose moral duty is to take care of his children, his obedient subjects. As the abstract relations of personal loyalty have been consolidated, this process has required the severe modification or complete destruction of the preexisting kinship polity based on patriarchal domination (see Eisenberg 1998; Schluchter 1981:133-138). Most importantly, imperial governance is, at least in theory if not in reality, modeled on the *symbiotic, paternalistic* relationship linked through reciprocal moral ties not only between the ruler and the ruled but also between the imperial government and the tributary dependencies. This is in contrast to the feudal image of a free companionship of warriors pledged in loyalty to their leader, as Weber (1978[1922]: 1107) lucidly put it:

² Furthermore, scholars in the Weberian tradition have hypothesized that, despite some overlap, patriarchalism, patrimonialism and feudalism as the ideal types of traditional domination remain in opposition to one another (Weber 1978[1922]: 1006-1110; see also Eisenberg 1998; Kalberg 1994).

[P]atriarchal patrimonialism must legitimate itself as guardian of the subjects' welfare in its own and in their eyes. The "welfare state" is the legend of patrimonialism, deriving not from the free camaraderie of solemnly promised fealty, but from the authoritarian relationship of father and children. The "father of the people" (*Landesvater*) is the ideal of the patrimonial state.³

Here, it is important to emphasize that this patrimonial principle of imperialism "always had given rise to the patriarchal and charitable ideal of the 'welfare state'" (Weber 1952: 303). Hence, it has not promoted an image of the ruler as the unlimited autocrat, the myth of which has been either positively idealized into the image of enlightened despotism in the nascent European Orientalism or negatively depicted in Hegel's (1956[1837]) portrayal of the Chinese despot and Wittfogel's (1981[1957]) notorious thesis of "oriental despotism."⁴ The Son of Heaven in Chinese imperialism, contrary to such despotic image, had an ethical responsibility to accomplish the classical welfare ideals of Confucian thinkers notably Mencius (Woodside 2006: ch.3).

Even one of the cruelest rulers in all Chinese history, the founding Hongwu emperor of the Ming (r. 1368-1398) whose reign was filled with bloody terror in court politics, was extremely conscious of getting broad support from the farmers and was compassionate toward the difficulties of life among the poor. In 1397, he remarked, "Generally speaking, only so long as the people have enough can the state be rich. Only so long as the people are comfortable can the state be at peace."⁵ As one authoritative historian of the Ming dynasty evaluates it, Hongwu's "repeated and fervent protestations about the imperative need to protect the common people from abuses and exploitation [by the bureaucrats and the rich] have an unmistakable ring of sincerity" (Hucker 1978: 67). In effect, the main feature of patrimonial bureaucracy in late imperial China was that in terms of the grand strategy on national defense, fiscal balance, and social stability, "there was relatively

³ Reinhard Bendix (1977: 361-369) points out the crucial differences between patrimonialism and feudalism. He argues, "Feudalism is domination by the few who are skilled in war; patrimonialism is domination by one who requires officials for the exercise of his authority. A patrimonial ruler is in some measure dependent upon the good will of his subjects (unless his domination is based on military occupation); feudalism can dispense with such good will" (ibid.: 365).

⁴ See Mote (1961) for a critique of the Wittfogel thesis.

⁵ *Ming Taizu shilu* (Veritable records of Ming Emperor Hongwu) Chapter 250, p. 3618. This quotation was apparently inspired by classical Confucian ideas of the ruler-subject relationship.

little opportunity for imperial caprice, and there were few basic disagreements between officials and emperors” (ibid.: 100).

The pattern of patrimonial state, of course, varies across the various types of empires in history. In his ideal-type model, Weber hypothesizes that the tsarist patrimonialism and the late Roman and Byzantine empire represent the “manorial patrimonialism,” while the Chinese empire seems to have developed the most sophisticated structure of bureaucratic patrimonialism.⁶ The landed hereditary elite in China had relatively little control over imperial bureaucracy, especially during the late imperial period (see, e.g., Ho 1964: 70-72).

However, even under the most advanced form of bureaucratic patrimonialism, no empire ever actualized a highly centralized, homogeneous administrative system, as found today in the modern nation-state (see Roth 1971: 86-89).⁷ Patrimonial officialdom, even the most advanced cases such as China, “did not develop into a modern bureaucracy, for the functional differentiation of spheres of jurisdiction was carried through only to a *very limited extent* in view of the country’s huge size” (Weber 1978[1922]: 1049; italics mine). Likewise, it was sustained by the remarkably small number of state officials relative to the size of the population. By the last days of Qing China, for instance, the imperial bureaucracy still numbered only some 20,000 civil officials, while at the same time the population had reached nearly half a billion (Eastman 1988: 239). As happened in other historical bureaucracies, the dynasty was not capable of exercising direct rule over most of the countryside; instead routine administration of the majority of the country’s prefectures and counties remained the hereditary prerogative of local elites upon whom

⁶ On his discussion of “tsarist patrimonialism,” see Weber (1978[1922]: 1064-1068). Valerie Kivelson (1997) renders an excellent account on the patrimonial rulership in the history of Russia. Rather than conceiving Russia as an example of exceptionally oppressive despotism, she suggests that “The tsar’s divinely-appointed rule entailed the weighty responsibilities of fatherhood or guardianship. God’s commandments obligated the tsar to rule *sternly yet mercifully*, to protect the meek from the strong, and to remain receptive to the wishes of his people” (Kivelson 1997: 651; my emphasis). This very ideology that provided a strong foundation for tsarist legitimacy simultaneously set “moral limits on that rule, limits understood by elites and commoners alike” (ibid.: 653).

⁷ As Weber remarks, “Even under purely bureaucratic patrimonialism no administrative technique could prevent that, as a rule, the individual parts of the realm evaded the ruler’s influence the more, the farther away they were from his residence” (1978[1922]: 1051).

the dynasty relied to maintain order and mobilize resources. This paucity of imperial local administration meant that the Chinese in town and country essentially “governed themselves” (Weber 1964: 16-17; see also *ibid.*: 91-95) even if the state had devised the neighborhood-level system of collective responsibility such as the *baojia* and *lijia* organizations as medium of control. In the eyes of local populations, therefore, “heaven is high up and the emperor far away,” according to a traditional Chinese aphorism (Ho 1959: 87). The presence of the emperor was obviously much farther away for indigenes in the frontiers. Regarding the center-periphery relationship, therefore, the centralized historical empires inherently created numerous cases of ‘frontier feudalism,’ a special kind of feudalism developed in the frontier zone (see Eberhard 1965: 137-139; Lattimore 1962).

Frontier Feudalism: The historical empire, as Robert Somers (1990: 398) perceptively points out, was extensive but not intensive; it ruled but did not administer the affairs of society at large. The limits of such patrimonial empires intrinsically allow an “elaborate mosaic of unabsorbed, particularistically structured socio-cultural elements” to remain in the frontier regions (Parsons 1966: 91). The periphery is marked by differences vis-à-vis the center—by ethnicity, religion, ecological environment, economic form, geographic separation, administrative distinction, etc. Such condition in turn creates the administrative, judicial, fiscal diversity as a practical way of securing the dominion and integrity of the empire. Just outside the reaches of central administration, one finds a tribal chieftain in relative independence or what Weber calls “a *conglomeration of satrapies*, in part merely nominally dependent” (1978[1922]: 1052; my emphasis). The central government received only its fixed tribute. By contrast, as Suny (2001c: 25) demarcates it, if those political dependencies were fully incorporated into the central state and their inhabitants governed, registered and taxed as well or badly as the subjects in the central provinces, then the center-periphery relationship was not imperial.

It should be emphasized that this kind of ‘frontier feudalism’ indicates not so much a brutal exploitation as a *reciprocal, symbiotic exchange* in the sense that the court

rewarded its vassals with generous gifts in return.⁸ As mentioned earlier, this structural circumstance is associated with the foundation of imperial order, a patrimonial state, in which “the prince organizes his political power over extrapatrimonial areas and political subjects—which is *not discretionary* and *not enforced by physical coercion*—just like the exercise of his patriarchal power” (Weber 1978[1922]: 1013; my emphasis). More often than not, however, the symbiosis between empire and its aliens was uneasy. If the central government attempts to exploit its dependencies by increasing the amount of tribute, it only faces great difficulties and severe resistance, which could lead to the fall of the dynasty. Meanwhile, the central government also has to deal with the presence of competing and hostile polities that challenge the superiority of the center. It basically employs either conquest or negotiation as a practical solution, depending on consideration of the military strength of both sides. In some instances, empires even had to pay a humiliating tribute to alien chieftains or foreign rulers as a consequence of the peace treaty (e.g., the Byzantine Empire to the Sassanid Empire, Avars, Bulgars, Arabs, and Turks (Ostrogorsky 1969) and the Song China to the Khitan and Jurchen states (Franke 1970, 1994; Tao 1988, 2008; Twitchett and Tietze 1994; Wright 2005). They were the lesser empires.

The appeasement policy as a means of taming ‘barbarians’ is therefore the essential feature of the history of empires in which the relationship between the center and the periphery reveals a recurrent cycle of symbiotic exchanges between political compliances (tribute) and economic incentives (gift), justified by the paternalistic ideology. The dependency relationship betrays a complicated web of mutual obligation—the vassals’ claim to reciprocity at the cost of their loyalty and fidelity to the emperor. Hence, the emperor too ‘owes’ something to his tributary dependencies as well as his own imperial subjects “not legally but according to custom and in his own self-interest: first of all external protection and help in case of need, then ‘humane’ treatment and particularly a ‘customary’ limitation of economic exploitation” (Weber 1978[1922]: 1010). When the Japanese invaded Korea in 1592, for instance, the Ming emperor dispatched his troops in

⁸ In the Roman Empire, for instance, the essential transaction of the unequal relationship between empire and foreign client polities was “the exchange of rewards (*beneficia*)—accorded by the patron—for services (*officia*) performed by the client” (Luttwak 1976: 21).

response to a desperate request from one of his most important tributary vassals—namely, the Korean king.

The empire is more likely to maintain its stability if the native frontiersmen are convinced that “the result of their association with the empire is beneficial rather than exploitive, as long as the two conditions of distinction and subordination obtain” (Suny 2001c: 26). Economic exploitation could be reduced without severely jeopardizing the interests of the patrimonial emperor. Such a restraint is indeed “positively advantageous” to the master (Weber 1978[1922]: 1011). The conciliation policy, sometimes carried out even by means of purchasing peace (paying regular tributes to formidable foreign enemies), would be a more rational and effectual medium for ‘pacifying’ frontiers than a policy of sheer coercion and exploitation. So it is not uncommon that sustaining peripheral provinces would prove to be a financial drain on the empire’s resources rather than an asset.⁹ Likewise, the net balance of the tributary trade could favor the political vassals (gift>tribute) which in turn became an enormous fiscal burden to the imperial government.

In general, as James Millward (1998: 8) suggests, China’s appeasing payoffs could in return be treated as imperial gifts. Further, the Chinese empire, especially under the native dynasties, can be an exemplary case of the flow of economic resources from the core to the periphery through the practices of conciliatory policy and interethnic marriage alliances (see Chapter 4). Even when it extended its territory by conquest or alliance, the central government transferred its resources from the affluent interior to the frontiers for subsidizing administrative and military expenses (e.g., Xinjiang during the Qing dynasty). This pattern of interregional fiscal flow still persists even in contemporary China in which the local government in peripheral regions still heavily depends on the subsidies from the central government (see Chapter 7). By contrast, in the history of colonialism, it is the metropole that benefits from the periphery in a discriminatory manner. There is exploitation—the harsh demands of the metropole upon the colonial territories,

⁹ According to Mattern (1999: 160-161), Britain was the most notorious case among the Roman frontier territory. Strabo’s calculation that Britain was not economically lucrative did not prove false.

imbalances and distortions in the economic structures of the overseas colonies—the essence of what being ‘colonized’ means. I suggest that the structure of center-periphery relations is the crucial difference between patrimonial empires and colonial powers.

Such ‘frontier feudalism,’ as embedded in the imperial system, intriguingly resembles the feudal hierarchical relationship of Medieval European society that began as contractual and quickly became hereditary: the vassal agreed to serve his lord through his pledge of fealty in exchange for protection and other advantages. Although the hierarchical system of the empire is far more centralized, extensive, and universalistic than that of feudal fiefdom, the imperial power, even for the most bureaucratized form such as China, was “like a feudal suzerainty over the princes” (Weber 1964: 22). It should be emphasized, however, that the general trend of feudalism in Europe was, according to Talcott Parsons (1971: 37), the elimination of a universalistic base of order in favor of particularistic loyalties, originally tribal and local. To the contrary, the cognitive image of the imperial world order, as presently discussed, is modeled on universal emperorship. The Chinese emperor, for instance, considered the rulers of peripheral polities such as governors or petty feudatory kings as thinking always within the imperial administrative edifice. The result of the tributary mission was therefore the ritual conferment of a Chinese title.

Universal Emperorship: The most important dimension of imperial condition is presumably its self-perception—the empire is the center of the earth so that its style sets the universal standard. The concept of empire as a “single exclusive world domain” (Pagden 1995: 27) envisions a world composed of concentric territorial zones occupied by the civilized –‘us’ at the center and surrounded by the barbarous -‘them’ who have yet to be civilized. The claims of the emperor to universal dominion over the whole world are the core identity for both the Roman and Chinese empires.¹⁰ For the Romans, all non-Roman polities ranging from the Germans to even the highly refined Parthians, which had not yet subordinated politically and militarily, were ‘barbarians’ living in lands at the

¹⁰ The European overseas colonial powers, especially that of Spain, could never quite abandon this legacy of universalism of the Roman Empire, developed over centuries and reinforced by a powerfully articulated learned elite (see Pagden 1995: ch.1).

margins of the empire.¹¹ The ‘barbarians’ in the eyes of the Romans had no place within the *civitas*, the domain of the fully human world (see, e.g., Mattern 1999: ch.2). Further, their cognitive map of the world, exemplified by Strabo’s monumental *Geographica*, was not strictly binary but multilayered and concentric in that those aliens living closer to Rome were more dependent and less barbarous, in contrast to those who were still isolated from direct contact but could always be reassessed and added to the Roman Empire (Burns 2003: 140-193; Clarke 2008). The Middle Kingdom also had the vision of the incorporative empire; for instance, the mental image of non-Sinitic peoples living in the four corners of the world, the pejorative attitudes toward those in the wild domain as lesser human-beings, and the intermediate zones such as the administrative accommodation for ‘mature’ Miao, categorized as distinct from the ‘wild’ Miao as well as the native Han people (see Chapter 4).

This hierarchical worldview assumes that the empire has an infinite sphere of influence, that is, an empire without end. The gradual adaptation of indigenous societies to imperial standards was not uncommon in history (e.g., Hellenization, Romanization/Latinization, Byzantinization, Arabization/Islamization, Russification, Sinicization; see Issawi 1989). It is also important to mention that this process was not simplistic and one-sided but rather based on mutual exposure and understanding. Besides, it was not carried out via enforced assimilation or conversion resembling the ‘civilizing mission’ in colonial societies. As Roman historian Thomas Burns argues, while creating numerous barbarian enclaves inside the empire, Rome “*never forced* either provincials or barbarians to live in the Roman style, and so in the most remote areas of the empire nothing altered the lives of the indigenous population” (2003: 34; emphasis mine). As for the Chinese empire, the admission of aliens had long been praised as an indication of the emperor’s ability to radiate his virtue, the ideal of which was clearly articulated in pre-imperial texts like the *Gongyang zhuan*, a late Warring States commentary attached to the Spring and Autumn Annals (*Chunqiu*).¹² Like the Roman Empire, the resettlement policy was carried out

¹¹ The Parthians were conceived not only as a dreaded enemy but also as barbarians who were “descendants of the barbarous, nomadic Scythians” (Mattern 1999: 71; see also Isaac 2004: 495-496).

¹² *Gongyang*, the Fifteenth Year of Duke Cheng (576 B.C.); Pines (2008: 81). It reads: “The *Annals* consider their state [Lu] as internal and All-the-Xia [Chinese] (*zhu xia*) as external, consider All the Xia as internal

throughout its history as early as the first century A.D. when the southern Xiongnu [Hun] confederacy voluntarily surrendered to the Han dynasty. Those ‘internal’ aliens—many of whom served in the imperial army of the Later Han—became gradually acculturated but not completely absorbed into the Sinic way of life (see Bielenstein 1967; Lewis 2000; Yü 1967: ch.8). In 304 A.D., their Xiongnu leader Liu Yuan (d. 310) declared his people independent from native Chinese rule which catalyzed nearly three centuries of political disunion. To some extent it resembles the gradual infiltration by barbarians from across the frontiers of the late Roman Empire. Instead of evolving into feudal states, however, what happened toward the end was the reunification of the centralized, patrimonial empires of the Sui and Tang dynasties.

To sum up, my main objective in this section is to single out what is an empire and, more importantly, what is *not* an empire. My attempt to define the structure of empire and imperialism should not be taken as an indication that all major empires always acted in predictable or anticipated ways. Nor should my conceptual discussion of empire be taken as more than the ‘ideal type’ in the Weberian sense; any individual case may have differed in details.

Still, I would argue that at least in this study the ideal type of imperialism is essentially different from that of feudalism, colonialism and nationalism. As has been discussed, the system of empire as an ideal type consists of two parts—the patrimonial state in the center and political dependency in the frontier—and entails four major institutional foundations—a societal hierarchy between the ruler and the ruled, a centralized and bureaucratic government at the center, an indirect control over the client states at the margins of imperial authority, and a perception of universal rule under the authority of one emperor. Despite some overlap with the imperial system, the ideal type of the colonial powers—as a system of stratification based on direct force, enslaved labor and exploitation—is modeled on the ideas of racism, colonialism, and Orientalism, all of which are not really found in the system of empire under consideration. In addition, as

and the Yi-Di [aliens] as external. [But] the True King (*wangzhe*) wants to unify All-under-Heaven, so why then talk of internal and external? This means that he must begin with those who are close.

mentioned earlier, the modes of domination inside the metropole in colonial powers encompass both patrimonial empire and plebiscitary nation-state. Meanwhile, as discussed presently, much of the argument of the empire-to-nation transition have already elucidated that the ideal type of the nation-state is qualitatively different from that of empire. The most crucial point is that “while empire is inequitable rule over something different, nation-state rule is, at least in theory if not always in practice, the same for all members of the nation. Citizens of the nation, equal under the law, have a different relationship with their state than do the subjects of empire” (Suny 2001c: 25).

My contention in the next section, however, is that there are some instances in which the legacy of empire could survive in the world order of nation-states, just as the legacy of colonial powers has been preserved in many ways, much of which has been dealt with in the postcolonialism literature. At least in the cases of the former Soviet Union and post-imperial China, they could not be neatly grouped within the framework of the ideal type of the nation-state. These two cases lie squarely within the ideal types of empires and nation, but not of colonial powers and nation.

The Imperial Nation in the Empire-Nation Continuum

The main argument here is to critically engage the underlying premises of the empire-to-nation transition that inadvertently lead to conceiving ‘historical’ empire and ‘modern’ nation-state as if they are mutually exclusive. So far, most sociological studies have been devoted to the ideal-typical level analysis of the two systems’ incompatibility rather than singling out a feasible hybrid combination (see, e.g., Balibar and Wallerstein 1991; Barkey and von Hagen 1997; Esherick, Kayali, and Van Young 2006; Gocek 1996; Parsons 1966, 1971; Tilly 1994, 1997; Wimmer and Feinstein 2010; Wimmer and Min 2006). For instance, derived from his evolutionary stage perspective on societal development, Parsons (1966) situates the “historic” intermediate empires between archaic societies and modern societies.¹³ Unlike the empire, he notes that “a most important trend

¹³ Parsons specifically refers to China, India, the Roman and Islamic empires as the cases of the “historic”

in modern societies is the presumption of the possibility and desirability of including all persons subject to political jurisdiction in full membership status within the single societal community [i.e., the nation-state]” (Parsons 1966: 71).

My contention is not to deny that empire and nation-state are essentially different in many respects. Theoretically speaking, empire is modeled on the distance of power from people to consolidate ‘vertical hierarchy’ (or what Andreas Wimmer [2004: 43] calls “pyramidal mosaic”), whereas nation-state is based on shared emotions of ‘horizontal equivalency’ (*égalité*). Considering the concept of peoplehood and territoriality, the transformation from empire to nation entails at least three critical processes: from imperial subjects to equal citizens, from extensive frontiers to intensive borders, and from exclusive suzerainty to mutual sovereignty.

Most historic empires had multilayered strata of subjects. They loosely integrated ethnic and cultural differences under the umbrella of a patrimonial and hierarchical yet universalistic and non-ethnic political order between the rulers and the ruled, where each group ought to have its properly defined place. Also, there were no borders but only multilayered frontiers (i.e., the *limes* as the routes of imperial penetration and large zones of transition) where the suzerainty of emperor was not always accepted even frequently contested. The imperial frontiers can sometimes be a fortified defense perimeter such as the Hadrian’s Wall and the Great Wall of China, but mostly they were not strictly defined and did not coincide with the geographical distribution of each segment of the *limes* (see Eberhard 1965: 174-175; Luttwak 1976; Waldron 1990).

In contrast to historical empires, Wimmer (2004: 43) suggests that the world order of nation-states is modeled on three notions of peoplehood: (1) the people as a sovereign entity (democracy); (2) the people as citizens of a state holding equal rights before the law (citizenship); (3) the people as an ethnic community held together by common political destiny and shared cultural features (national self-determination). The emergence of nationalism as the political principle of the nation-state is a very important

intermediate empires.

aspect in this process of the incorporation of mass population into the central institutional and value systems (Gellner 1983; Shils 1975: 15). Furthermore, the territoriality of modern nation-states is based on the premise of exclusive and universal sovereignty within a clear-cut border legally recognized by the inter-state system since the Westphalia Peace Treaty of 1648. Given this binary framework, the demise of empire and the triumph of nation-state have been usually, if not always, conceived as the global competition between two exclusively inassimilable systems. In retrospect, during this great transformative period, empire had been dismissed as a big, bad, obsolete, and composite polity that should be replaced with a new form. Chinese revolutionaries, for instance, vehemently articulated the coming of ‘new China’ after the collapse of the *ancien regime* which had persisted for over two millenniums (see, e.g., Meisner 1967).

Meanwhile, it is interesting to note that nationalism and colonialism often went hand in hand. The modern colonialism of Britain, France, Germany, and Japan rose directly from the nation-building process. In these cases, nation-building laid bare the underlying colonialism of the state (See Esherick, Kayali, and Van Young 2006: 4; Suny 2001c: 27). Most sociological arguments, which critically question the binary opposition of empire and nation, however, have conflated imperialism and colonialism rather than differentiating the two concepts. Craig Calhoun, for instance, asserts that the misrecognition of the sharp contrast between nation and empire has been blind to “the fact that the emerging national states were themselves imperial powers.” He argues that even France in its most republican phases was also an empire (Calhoun 2007: 33). Prasenjit Duara also states, “Before the late nineteenth century, nationalism tended to emerge as a *functional support* for imperialism. By the twentieth century, there is reason to believe that the stimulus for *functional reciprocity* between the two may have moved to nationalism as an ideology” (2003: 19; my italics). Despite the ostensible resemblance, my approach is considerably different from their argument that the development of nationalism should be recognized as being almost always intertwined with imperial narratives and practices. In effect, the legacy of empire in post-imperial societies has evolved in quite the *opposite direction* vis-à-vis the legacy of colonial powers in

postcolonial nation-states with regard to the way of conceptualizing ethnicity—more specifically ethnic ‘minority.’

I would argue that in some way, empire and nation should be conceptualized as a *continuum* rather than a strict dichotomy. Although it has formally disappeared, empire has been brought center stage as the source of tensions and contradictions in the age of nation-state hegemony. This spectral remainder of historic empire is particularly salient in cases of the former Soviet Union and post-imperial China since the Romanov and Qing dynasties fell in 1917 and 1911 respectively. The conventional wisdom would tell us that the great empires of Russia, China, Ottoman, and Habsburg were a ‘prison-house of nations’ in that the imperial center imprisoned the ethnic minorities within its border (see Comisso 2006). On the one hand, the dissolutions of the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian empires ended up creating not only dozens of modern nations such as the Turks, Greeks, Magyars, Czechs, Croats, and Serbs but nation-states as well. On the other hand, the successor states to the Romanov and Qing empires should be conceived not as ordinary independent national states but as unitary multinational ones (see e.g., Suny 1993: ch.3). They were comparatively successful in containing national self-determination for non-Russian and non-Han minorities in the peripheral regions. Accordingly, they largely managed to preserve most parts of the former empire except Finland, the Baltic territories (1918-1940), Georgia (1918-1921), Manchuria (1932-1945), and Outer Mongolia.

Most importantly, I argue that the former Soviet Union and the PRC are located in a somewhat intermediate position within the empire-nation continuum which could not be fully explicable through mutually exclusive binary. Scholars have been debating whether or not the Soviet Union was an empire or if so what kind of empire it was; at the same time, they have seldom attributed contemporary China to being an empire. Yet they share some commonalities which could not simply be ignored. Although my intention is not to overstress certain common points, for brevity’s sake I generally leave out any full analysis of key structural differences between the two. On the one hand, they can be treated as modern states because they formally accepted some key constituents of nation-state such as equal citizenship and people’s democracy as the source of legitimate

domination. On the other hand, they can be regarded as cases of reconfiguring the imperial system or simply the ‘empire,’ as reflected in the scholarly depiction of the Soviet Union as the “affirmative action empire” (Martin 2001), “multi-ethnic empire” (Birgersson 2002) and “empire of nations” (Hirsch 2005). The shadowy continuation of the imperial structure is evident at least in the following fourfold manner.

First, they reaffirm the limit of their sovereignty derived from the extent of the former empire while disregarding the principle of ethno-national territory of nation-state. The post-imperial Chinese state has always denounced any secessionist movement as parochial, local nationalism; at the same time, it has propagated the official ideology of asserting all peripheral minority regions, notably Tibet, Xinjiang, Manchuria and Inner Mongolia, as inalienable part of China. Meanwhile, the Soviet Union and PRC officially differentiate ethnic differences even if it may contradict the universalistic nature of the communist ideology. They not only classify peoples by nationalities in the censuses but institutionalize semi-independent administrative machinery in the minority areas, namely the Autonomous Republic of the Soviet Union and Autonomous Region of the PRC.

Second, those self-governing governments for minority nationalities are not a sovereign nation-state based on the principle of national self-determination but an intermediate state situated between empire and nation-state. As analyzed earlier, far from being directly incorporated into the central administrative system, the frontier governance of empire is intrinsically characterized by its multifaceted, multilayered configuration permitting enormous legal, administrative, fiscal, cultural and religious diversity. Intended or not, the post-imperial formation of the ‘autonomous’ regions in the two countries is a repercussion of the imperial governance, that is, the dual system between the interior and the exterior. The introduction of semi-autonomous government is therefore not so much a pure invention as rather a post-imperial appropriation of imperial practices in the *longue durée*. The legacy of imperial statecraft is not just limited to the realm of domestic affairs but extended to their external behavior.

Third, the Soviet Union and PRC somehow retain the typical imperial strategy of maintaining the superiority of the center with regard to their international relations with other nation-states. Just as the imperial center used a mixture of force and conciliation for taming or pacifying its frontier, so they have played a double-edged sword of economic subsidies and military interventions in their satellite nation-states which are (but not always) the former political dependencies. In the age of nation-state, the domination of a core region over peripheries is not the same as it was in the past. Unlike historical empires that relied on both a central imperial army and local auxiliaries, the Soviet Union and PRC rarely engage in direct military intervention save a few exceptions as in the Prague Spring and the Korean War respectively, on the consideration that they must abide by the international norm of equal status for each nation-state embedded in the machinery of world polity. Instead, they prefer an indirect intervention strategy, sending military advisors and weapons to their allied satellite regimes occupying the outpost of the 'empire' such as North Korea, Vietnam, Myanmar, Cambodia under Khmer Rouge, Mongolia, Cuba, and the former communist states in Eastern Europe. They also carry out direct economic subsidies, transferring their own economic, military resources to the satellite regimes, to consolidate their hegemony and compete with other contenders such as the United States and Taiwan.

As happened in the system of 'frontier feudalism' of most historic empires, there has been a symbiotic trade-off between compliance from the periphery and incentive from the core, manifested in both domestic and international domains. The Soviet Union disappeared but the remains of the Chinese empire seem to have survived and became even stronger after the Cold War. China's approach to Africa and its proclamation as the anti-colonial patron of the Third World, for instance, have been more assertive and increasingly intensified to become a serious scholarly discussion, as it rises as a global superpower at the turn of this century. Despite modern characters, the underlying mechanism of the Sino-African relations leads to a reminiscence of the conciliatory-appeasement gestures in the past; if the regime maintains pro-PRC line and cuts off diplomatic relations with Taiwan, the PRC then confers monetary subsidies in the name

of the Bandung spirit.¹⁴ The more the client state becomes dependent on subsidies from China, the more it leans toward the PRC. The current situation of North Korea, for instance, represents this trend despite its official ideology of national self-reliance (*juche*). Probably, the PRC government does not wish for either economic reform by the North Korean government or helping-hand from South Korea. This is something akin to ‘neo-imperialism’ but must not be misconceived as ‘neo-colonialism.’

Lastly, the idea and policy of ethnic ‘minorities’ in the Soviet Union and PRC do not neatly fall into the conventional theories of nationalism as well as racial and ethnic groups in part because they could be characterized better as a response to imperial history rather than as a product of the modern nation-building process. In general, the solution for the minority question in two states would be well understood within a framework of the institutionalization of preferential treatments, which Terry Martin (2001) calls the “affirmative action empire.” As for contemporary China, this governmental practice somewhat resembles an old imperial tactic of accommodating the ethno-cultural aliens without much discrimination and marginalization, even though the stereotypes and prejudices of the Han peoples on non-Han minorities may endure. Indeed, as I discuss extensively in Chapter 7, the reality of being an ethnic minority in China has been quite misunderstood particularly when scholars interpret it through either the lens of ethnic logic of nation-state or the prism of colonial history of racism, colonialism, and Orientalism. This can be fully understandable only in light of the empire-building process. In contrast to the course of colonialism and nationalism, the pattern of empire making does not necessarily track the routes of ethnic (or racial) forms of domination, discrimination and stratification.

Privileged Minorities: A Conceptual Oxymoron?

¹⁴ As reported in *Le Monde diplomatique*, for instance, the PRC government has cancelled 10 billion dollars in bilateral debt since 2000 until early 2005. It has also signed agreement to relieve or cancel the debt of 31 African nations since 2006.

Most sociological studies have conceived ethnicity, part of a set of categorical identities, as the main category of societal differentiation, exclusion, institutionalized discrimination, conflict, and violence.¹⁵ I agree that the politicization of ethnicity is a salient characteristic in the structure of post-colonial and post-imperial nation-states in which the national elites create and institutionalize discriminatory policies based on popular prejudice as part of their legitimation process and platform. Even in the lack of a solid ethnic base, ethnicity has often been invoked and constructed in times of political conflicts by state elites and other participants to legitimate their actions (see Brass 1991; Calhoun 1993; Wimmer 2002, 2004, 2006; Wimmer, Cederman, and Min 2009).

The meaning of being ‘ethnic’ as a rule alludes to a minority status. The term “ethnicity” refers to the minority, not to the national majority. By definition, a minority is a subgroup within a larger society whose members are placed in a vulnerable social position and often exploited for the benefit of the majority.¹⁶ Further, the notion of ethnic minority currently encompasses both concepts of biological race and cultural ethnicity since they designate a group faced with popular prejudices and organized discrimination.¹⁷ So, what has been a truism in social science is that “the minorities referred to are *always* in ‘a defensive position’ and do not include ruling or privileged minorities,” as Suny (2001b: 246; my emphasis) carefully summarizes.¹⁸

Evidently, the colonial and national states have established and enforced the system of institutionalized discrimination and violence against these defensive and disadvantaged minority groups. The most extreme instance of state discrimination against minority

¹⁵ As a reified identity, race in particular has not only demarcated the ‘objective’ boundary, but naturalized the inherent inferiority of the racial ‘Others’ by attributing biological terms. The existing discussion of race as a major source of social categorization reflects the trends in present-day sociology, particularly in American sociology.

¹⁶ See Wimmer (2006: 339-341) on the creation and management of ethnic minorities. Further, Michael Hechter (2000: 14) conceptually distinguishes two types of ethnic group: minorities and nations. In his definition, ethnic group who are spatially dispersed in a given state are often termed ‘minorities’ while ‘nations’ constitute a subset of ethnic group who are territorially concentrated. This territorial concentration, however, is *not* a sufficient condition for the formation of nations. Ernest Gellner remarks: “It is nationalism which engenders nations, and not the other way round” (1983: 55).

¹⁷ Yet, as Susan Olzak (2006: 33-35) argues, this decision has their critics who have suggested that subsuming race under the broader category of ethnicity necessarily ignores some of the historical specifics surrounding racial discrimination patterns.

¹⁸ Suny (2001b) provides an informative survey of how social scientists have used the term “minority.”

groups has been to exterminate them, i.e. genocide, carried out not only by the colonial states (Moses 2008) but also by the national states (Mann 2005). In the history of ethnic types of state violence, what is quite astonishing is that many of the tragedies of genocidal bloodshed in the twentieth century were carried out in the name of democracy, a political representation of the will of the majority, with an inherent political rationale for the majority to persecute the ethnic minority. In this respect, scholars have identified an irony in formal democracy since political elections often stimulate this ethnic bifurcation (see, e.g., Horowitz 1985; Wilkinson 2004). This ironic situation that Michael Mann (2005) calls the “dark side of democracy” has a long history. He gives some examples such as the ‘genocidal democracies’ in the New World, Armenian Genocide of 1915, Holocaust under the Nazis, ethnic cleansing in Yugoslavia, and the Rwanda genocide. Even in the absence of state-sponsored violence and genocide, it is not the national majority but the minority that is vulnerable to the target of social exclusion in both public and private spheres. Under such circumstances, the racial and ethnic mobilization of the minority is more likely to erupt and often progress into a nationalist movement (Olzak 2006: 33-49).¹⁹ Conversely, when the minority group rules, the dominant minority often clings to political power through the ruthless deployment of military and police forces. The process of suppressing majority groups in turn increases not only the very tension which it is intended to overcome but the propensity to civil war (see Cederman and Girardin. 2007; Fearon, Kasara, and Laitin 2007; Wimmer 2004; Wimmer, Cederman, and Min 2009).

The historical empires also had minority groups; yet most of them did not neatly follow the ethnic logic of colonial and national states analyzed above. Taking the reality of ethnic strife and violence into consideration, it is important to note that the protests of imperial minorities were driven by the threat to their relatively autonomous and privileged position. As a rule, the resistance of the minorities against imperial authority occurred whenever empires “sought to strengthen central control over populations that

¹⁹ In other words, an ethnic protest generally occurs when a certain minority group expresses a racial or ethnic grievance to the government or the public at large (Horowitz 2001). Typical cases include the Civil Rights movement in the U.S. during the 1960s and protests against anti-foreigner violence in Germany during the 1990s.

had previously *enjoyed substantial autonomies* through indirect rule or weak imperial administration” (Tilly 1994: 137; my emphasis). Therefore, the imperial minorities aspired to defend their privileged situation, whereas the ethno-national movements of the minorities in colonial and national states had more to do with altering their disadvantaged status.

Additionally, in comparison with modern nation-states, the political domination of the minority over the majority is not uncommon among various historic empires, especially in what Eisenstadt (1963: 11) calls “dualistic nomad-sedentary empires.” The ruling people (*herrenvolk*) at the top were often not native but alien conquerors whose population size was far smaller than the conquered majority. The Manchus, for instance, only counted less than one percent of the total population (predominantly Han Chinese) when they crossed the Great Wall in 1644 and ultimately conquered entire China proper. Like other preceding conquerors, they were not only “resident aliens” (Elliott 1993, 2001: ch.6) but ‘privileged minorities’ until the end of their domination in 1911.

However, foreign dynasties were significantly different from the European colonial conquerors in the New World on the ground that it was usually the conquering peoples who gradually assimilated into the conquered society through the following processes, not vice versa. The conquerors became localized by embracing the literary high culture (e.g., sinicization), converting to the local religion (e.g., the Il-Khanate) or facilitating interethnic marriages between rulers and the ruled (e.g., the Northern Wei dynasty in North China, Khanate of the Golden Horde, the Mughal and Ottoman Empire). In the Chinese cases, the nomads simply “disappeared” after the collapse of alien regimes (Eberhard 1965: 113). Yet it does not just allude to a one-way absorption. The upshot of interethnic interaction between conquering aliens and conquered natives were certain levels of mutual assimilation (see Chapter 3 and 4). By contrast, the colonial powers particularly the French and Portuguese colonial masters pursued a civilizing mission (*mission civilisatrice*) in which only the colonized needed to be assimilated. Most of the European colonizers did not simply disappear even in the age of postcolonial nation-state but transplanted its cultural value system—language, religion and mindset—as the

dominant standard in the former colonies. Likewise, the vertical racial hierarchy of the past has not completely disintegrated either.

At last, I suggest that China as a case study would shed new light on the prevailing portrayal of ethnic minorities as discriminated against, defenseless, vulnerable, and disadvantaged. From the framework of empire-nation continuum, the legacy of 'privileged minority' (or dominant minority) in China's dynastic history could provide a constructive analytical scheme to understand the PRC's current approach toward ethnic minorities. In the age of nation-states, the prerogative of being minority does not mean political supremacy over the majority as in the past but the entitlement to socio-economic benefits for non-Han peoples at the cost of the premise of equal rights among all citizens. Most importantly, the motivation under preferential treatments for minorities is not so much parallel to compensatory 'affirmative action' in other countries as to the practice of ethnic governance under the Chinese empire (see Chapter 4). In fact, the notion of privileged minority in both historic and contemporary contexts has not been sufficiently explored in the sociological studies of ethnicity and nationalism, most of which refer to either post-imperial nation-states in Eurasia or post-colonial societies in the New World.

Chapter Three

The Dialectics of Ethnic Boundaries in China

In his *Notes on the State of Virginia*, written in 1782, Thomas Jefferson discussed what he thought was the immutable physiological nature of race. As he put it, “Besides those of color, figure and hair, there are other physical distinctions proving a difference of race. They [Blacks] have less hair on the face and body. They secrete less by the kidneys, and more by the glands of the skin, which gives them a very strong and disagreeable odor. This greater degree of transpiration renders them more tolerant of heat, and less so cold, than the whites. They seem to require less sleep” (Jefferson 1853[1782]: 150). By naturalizing the black body as such, he insisted that there were irredeemable defects in black physiology and they could not be cured either by conversion to Christianity or emancipation. His ‘scientific’ enterprise of race also suggested that “the blacks, whether originally a distinct race, or made distinct by time and circumstances, are inferior to the whites in the endowments both of body and mind” (ibid.: 155). He concluded the related paragraph with a warning against the threat of racial mixture by stating that the desire to tarnish the master’s blood is black.¹ His consciousness of color, largely shared by such notable contemporaries as Benjamin Franklin, influenced the belief of later generations whose idea of race, while more sophisticated, was similarly hierarchical and filled with a fear of interracial closeness.² For instance, Louis Agassiz, a Swiss-American zoology and professor at Harvard, insisted that blacks and white would segregate naturally. He was incapable of confronting the feeling that blacks are not of the same blood as whites and feared any possibility of racial amalgamation (see Gould 1981: 42-50; Young 1995: 148-

¹ It reads: “Among the Romans emancipation required but one effort. The slave, when made free, might mix with, without staining the blood of his master. But with us a second is necessary, unknown to history. When freed, he is to be removed beyond the reach of mixture.”

² See Michael Hunt (1987: 46-48) for the discussion of Franklin’s racial ideas.

150). It took more than two centuries after the Declaration of Independence for ‘a product of racial mixture’ to become the leader of the United States.

Jefferson’s emphasis on purity of blood can be traced back to the discriminatory policies of the Spanish Inquisition three centuries earlier, having been initiated in 1480 against putatively ‘impure’ groups. By reifying the racial axioms behind the Inquisition, the nascent emperors of Ferdinand and Isabella positioned themselves as champions of orthodoxy and inventors of a Spanish identity. The test used by the Inquisitors was purity of blood, based upon genealogies which were often fictive (Hirschman 2004: 392). Race-thinking consequently outstripped religious persecution. The forcible conversion of all Spanish Muslims was nearly complete by 1526. Nevertheless, even being practicing Catholics could not defend their status as Christianized *Moriscos*, who were finally deported to North Africa in 1609 (Kiernan 2007: 70; Zolberg 1983: 31-32).³ Considering the dominant role of racial criteria, therefore, the methods the Inquisitors used and their assumptions about purity of blood presaged the rise of modern scientific racism. Concurrently, the first biological racial theory originated in the New World from the sixteenth century, shortly after the arrival of Columbus in the Caribbean in 1492. As much as they tried to assert Spanish superiority, the colonists aspired to reinforce the inferior nature of the Indigenes, thereby justifying their policies of genocide and extermination (Fitzmaurice 2008: 55-80; Kiernan 2007: 72-100). The Spanish conquest of the Americas also institutionalized racial castes driven by a deep sense of ethnic distinction between whites, mestizos, and Indians. From the sixteenth century, race became a prominent marker of human categorization in the world under colonial powers (see Hirschman 2004; Hobsbawm 1992: 67; Wallerstein 1991, 1995).

While the European colonial powers began to construct an essentialized concept of race and institutionalize a presumably permanent racial caste and inequality, most continental empires continued a process of ethnic mixing. The Chinese empire was a typical case

³ In addition, another major target of the Inquisition to have been Christians descended from Spanish Jews—Conversos, Marranos, New Christians (*Cristianos nuevos*), who were considered crypto-Jews or heretics (Netanyahu 2001). As a result of this racist idea, Spain expelled hundreds of thousands of Jews in the late fifteenth century and more than one million Muslims from 1502 to 1510.

where the politicization of ethnicity was not as salient as the colonial powers and nation-state. In particular, the aftermath of alien rule by Moors in Spain and by Mongols in China represents an intriguing contrast between the birth of colonial power and the continuation of historical empire without evolving into the modern nation. The Ming state was not modeled on a homogenous ethnic foundation of the nation—as some scholars have mistakenly assumed to be the case.⁴

A Heritage of Ethnic Mixing in China

Just when the Inquisition was at its apex around the time of Columbus' 'discovery' of the New World, the Son of Heaven of the Middle Kingdom was himself of mixed blood. He was the Ming Hongzhi emperor (r. 1488-1505) and his mother, known as Consort Ji, was non-Han Chinese, most probably ethnic Yao. According to the official *Ming History*, she was originally a daughter of a native chieftain (*tuguan*) in the Guangxi region of southern China, sent to the Forbidden City to serve the Emperor Chenghua (r. 1465-1487).⁵ Among Chenghua's fourteen sons, her own son, Zhu Youtang, was chosen as heir apparent in 1475 and ascended to the throne as the Hongzhi emperor on the principle of primogeniture according to the Chinese imperial tradition. His half-Yao blood did not disqualify him as a legitimate candidate for the Son of Heaven. Instead of hiding his ethnic identity, when he came to the throne, the Hongzhi emperor not only commemorated his mother by establishing a temple in Guangxi, but made exhaustive yet unsuccessful attempts to trace her clan members (*zuren*) among the Yao tribesmen.⁶

⁴ For instance, it has been argued that "Ming China was arguably a nation-state emerging in the wake of the Mongol Empire, with borders roughly following the Han Chinese ethnic frontier, a shared culture, and a 'national' education system institutionalized through the examinations" (Esherick, Kayali, and Van Young 2006: 9). Likewise, Edward Farmer (1995: 81-83) treats the Ming regime as a Han Chinese state that sought to construct a self-sufficient, ethnically uniform Han society shielding itself from the outside influences and manifested some proto-nationalistic elements.

⁵ *Ming shi* Chapter 113, p. 3521. Unfortunately, *Ming shi* did not specify an ethnicity of Hongzhi's mother, simply mentioning her background as "originally the [Southern] Man" (*ben man*). Given the massive Yao rebellion in Guangxi during 1465-1466 (Yang and Mo 1996: 358-359), however, it is safe to assume that she was born an ethnic Yao.

⁶ When Hongzhi ascended the throne, one of his first acts was to give his own mother the posthumous rank of empress-dowager. He then ordered a search for her family. A couple of men soon claimed that they were her relatives by submitting the Ji genealogical chart. After scrutiny, however, it turned out to be a forgery

Interethnic marriages between Sinitic and non-Sinitic peoples have a long-established history.⁷ As early as the Spring and Autumn period (770-476 B.C.), as an eminent sinologist put it, “the children of barbarian wives of Chinese rulers seem to have suffered no disability with regard to succession” (Creel 1970: 211). They were indeed best suited as ruler of the frontier state who had to show his ability to incorporate a variety of peoples (Di Cosmo 2002: 111). The cases of half-Sinitic offspring were well-documented in early Chinese historiography notably the *Zuozhuan* (Zuo’s Commentary in the Spring and Autumn Annals (*Chunqiu*), compiled during the fourth century B.C.). For instance, Duke Xian of Jin (r. 676-651 B.C.) once declared a captive woman from the Li Rong, a branch of non-Sinitic Rong groups, as his principal wife even with unfavorable responses from divination (*bu*).⁸ Later, among eight sons of Duke Xian, her son Xiqi ascended to be the heir to the state in 656 B.C., when the previous heir (whose mother was a daughter of Duke Huan of Qi, the first hegemon of the Sinitic interstate confederation) hanged himself owing to a plot by his stepmother.⁹ Other half-Rong princes of Duke Xian, Yiwu and Chong’er, subsequently became the Duke Hui (r. 650-637 B.C.) and the reform-minded Duke Wen (r. 636-628 B.C.) respectively.¹⁰ Marriage diplomacy and the strategy

and they were punished by banishment. After he failed to find any of her family members, he felt intensely the solitude of being her only survivor (Goodrich and Fang 1976: 376; see also *Ming shi* Chapter 15 and 113). Given his dedication to his mother, it is understandable that he is also known as his temple name (*miao hao*) Xiaozong, literally “filial ancestor.”

⁷ See Holmgren (1982b, 1995-96), for instance, for the evidence on intermarriage between members of the Han and non-Han elites during the fifth and sixth centuries. See Tao (1976: 95-98) on the history of Sino-Jurchen intermarriage during the late Jin dynasty. See also Lipman (1997: ch.2) on the history of intermarriages between immigrant Central Asians and local Chinese since the Tang dynasty. Because of the majority of these migrants being male, Muslim men often intermarried with Chinese women, who converted to Islam and taught their children to speak local dialects. By the late twelfth century, some Muslims had been living in China for generations and occupied a special status such as ‘native-born foreign sojourner’ (*tusheng fanke*). They were officially “allowed to intermarry and to purchase land for mosques cemeteries in the port cities” (Lipman 1997: 29).

⁸ Duke Xian had at least four Rong wives. In the *Zuozhuan*, when he invaded the Li Rong, their chief gave him as wife his daughter Li Ji. See Legge (1872: 113-115) for the English translation as well as original text. See also *Shiji* Chapter 39, p. 1640. According to Chen Pan (1969: 503), the Li Rong tribe was originally located in east to the Jin state during the Spring and Autumn period, and later moved to a southwestern direction.

⁹ *Shiji* Chapter 39, pp. 1641-1646. See also Creel (1937: 302-303) and Legge (1872: 139-142). Contrary to his father’s wish, however, Xiqi was murdered only a month after the death of Duke Xian.

¹⁰ Duke Wen of Jin was the second of Five Hegemons (*wuba*) in the Spring and Autumn period. Prior to coming to the throne, Prince Chong’er fled from Jin for 19 years, shortly after when his half-brother Xiqi became the heir. He himself married a non-Sinitic Di woman whose sister also married the important Jin officer.

of exchanging hostages had brought several non-Sinitic women to the ruling house of the dukedom of Jin and thus made foreigners a significant element in relations between the inner court and outer court (Di Cosmo 2002: 110). Besides the state of Jin, the chances of interethnic marriage seem quite high in that the Sinitic states in general faced a significant amount of non-Sinitic peoples who were settled both inside and outside the frontiers (Hsu 1999: 569-570; Ma 1962a: 5). Conversely, it was also common for Chinese rulers to send their own daughters or other family members in marriage to foreign leaders for the purpose of establishing marriage alliances (*heqin*; literally “harmonious kinship”) between Chinese and nomadic regimes.

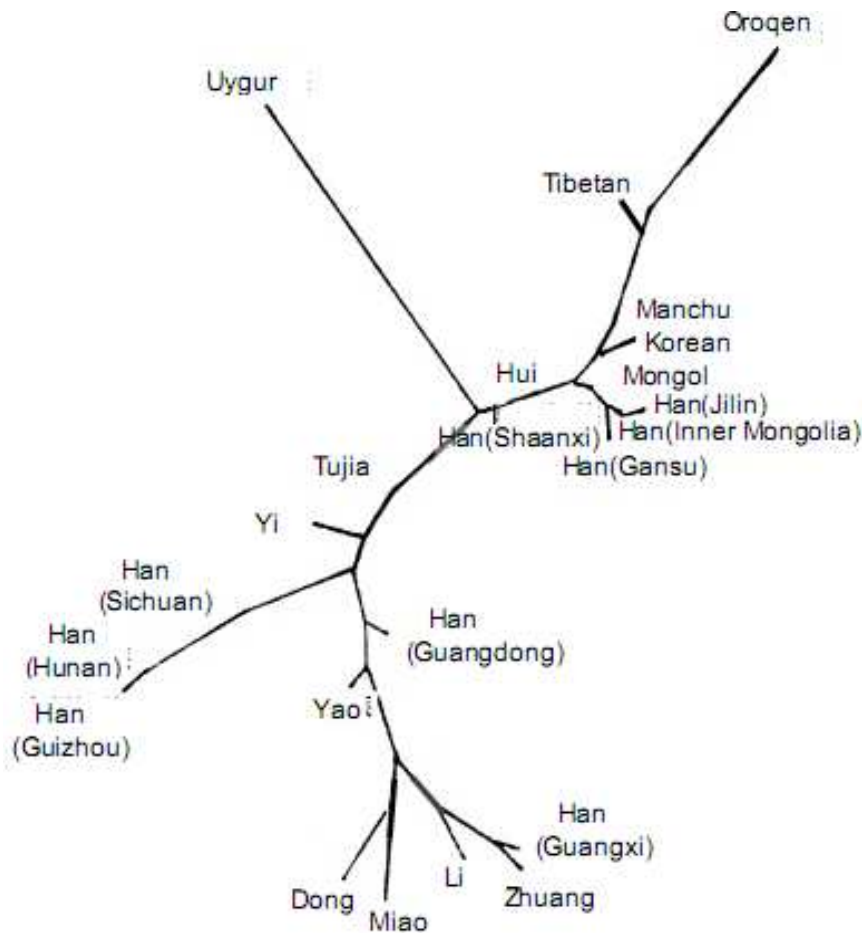
Although such documented historical examples of interethnic marriage were restricted to the elite, biomedical markers prove that ethnic intermarriage was extremely common among the Chinese population at large. Recent genetic studies, conducted by the Chinese Academy of Sciences and Stanford University School of Medicine, uniformly confirm that genetic distance among populations in China is more a function of geographic distance than ethno-linguistic boundaries. Moreover, genetic profiles repeatedly show a clear distinction between a more homogeneous north China and a more heterogeneous south China (Cavalli-Sforza 1998; Chu, Huang, Kuang et al. 1998; Du and Xiao 1997; Xiao, Cavalli-Sforza, Minch, and Du 2000; Xue, Bao, Fu et al. 2003; Yuan 1991).¹¹ Given such geographical variations, a renowned Chinese geneticist, Yuan Yida, also suggests that the Han Chinese are not a homogenous population, and that regional differences between Han subgroups are great (1991: 20). Miscegenation has been a dominant trend in China, as it does elsewhere: the Chinese are as much “a mongrel group as any other” (Standen 1997: 78).

Indeed, the genetic distances between contemporary Han Chinese population and contiguous non-Han population are often smaller than among Han Chinese in general. For instance, the genetic distance between Han Chinese and the Zhuang minority in the

¹¹ According to Cavalli-Sforza (1998: 11502), who has been the core member of the Human Genome Diversity Project (HGDP) where China constitutes a significant regional unit, contrary to the greater geographic homogeneity of the north, the greater heterogeneity of southern China “is likely to reflect the greater geographic fragmentation of this area, resulting in greater isolation of local populations, probably mostly determined by the nature of the environment.”

Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region is much narrower than those between Han in Guangxi and other Han populations in such neighboring provinces as Guizhou and Hunan (see Figure 3.1). This finding cannot be explained without taking into account the history of interethnic relationships between Han migrants and indigenous population in the southwest. The importance of location is also evident from the genetic studies of linguistic boundaries. Because the pattern of the phylogenetic clustering is constrained by geographical location, the boundaries of language in China transcend language families, reflecting extensive gene flow between populations (see, e.g., Chu, Huang, Kuang et al. 1998). This is more noticeable among southern population groups where population migrations have been considerable for centuries. In southern Sichuan, for instance, the immigrant Han at Jianchang have been so acculturated to the native Yi society that at present the descendants of these ‘Han’ no longer speak even Han Chinese (Lee 1982a: 286). Meanwhile, many Manchus in Hangzhou can speak Mandarin (*Beifanghua*; literally “northern speech”), whereas virtually all the Manchus in Guangzhou speak only local Cantonese (Lee and Wong 1991: 69).

Figure 3.1 The genetic tree diagram of Han Chinese and ethnic minorities*



Source: Du and Xiao (1997: 145).

* The result was obtained from 67 population groups covering thirty Han Chinese groups by province and thirty-seven ethnic minorities.

To sum up, China has been a melting-pot society, the driving forces of which lay not in one dominant ethnic core, but in the permeable zones, that lay in between.¹² The permeable nature of ethno-cultural boundaries, mediated through long-distance migrations, often breaks conventional understandings of ethnic categories either defined by official ethnic classifications or by ethno-language groups.

¹² Scott Pearce aptly points out that “to the extent that there ever had been a clear and precise definition of ‘Chinese’ as opposed to ‘barbarian,’ those categories had become increasingly open to question, in the same way and for the same reasons that ethnic categorization of the U.S. census has become ever more difficult” (2000: 72).

Duality of Ethnic Boundaries in Chinese History

Although China has a long history of ethnic mixing, one in which existing ethnic boundaries have often been blurred, the government has frequently institutionalized ethnic categories in order to single out differences and determine social status and privileges. Especially under alien regimes, ethnically-defined categories between the rulers and the ruled were manipulated by state policies to sustain within-category equality and between-category inequality in entitlement rights to political privileges and material resources. Yet they were quickly cleared and realigned upon the establishment of a new dynasty so that the former members of a privileged ethnicity lost their special status and became reclassified as regular Han subjects. Karl Wittfogel (1957: 353) explains these boundary-making and boundary-clearing processes:

The motive for maintaining a distance between the two national and social groups [the foreign conquerors and the conquered natives] lost its purpose when the conquest dynasty collapsed. Then those members of the former ruling nationality who did not choose to return to their tribal homelands were indeed gradually assimilated. Absorption became a reality, not while the conquest situation lasted, but when it had ceased to exist.

To further conceptualize this dynamics of making and clearing ethnic boundaries, I would categorize two types of Chinese empire—‘conquest’ and ‘native’ dynasties (see Table 3.1). In the following, I would first illustrate the histories of the conquest dynasties and then contrast them with the native ones.

Table 3.1 The periodization of major Chinese dynasties by ethnicity

	Native Dynasties		Conquest Dynasties	
	Dynastic/Period Name	Dates	Dynastic/Period Name	Dates
Early Imperial Period	Qin	221-206 B.C.		
	Former Han	206 B.C.-9 A.D.		
	Later Han	25-220		
Middle Imperial Period	The Age of Disunion*			
	Three Kingdoms	220-280		
	Western Jin	265-317		
	Eastern Jin	317-420	Sixteen Kingdoms**	304-439
	Southern Dynasties		Northern Dynasties	
	Song	420-479	Northern Wei (Xianbei)	386-534
	Qi	479-502	Eastern Wei (Xianbei)	534-550
	Liang	502-557	Western Wei (Xianbei)	535-556
	Chen	557-589	Northern Qi (Xianbei?)***	550-577
			Northern Zhou (Xianbei)	557-581
	Sui	581-618		
	Tang	618-907		
	Five Dynasties			
Later Liang	907-923	Later Tang (Turk)	923-936	
		Later Jin (Turk)	936-947	
		Later Han (Turk)	947-951	
Later Zhou	951-960			
Late Imperial Period	Northern Song	960-1127	Liao (Khitan)	907-1125
			Xi-Xia (Tangut)	1038-1227
	Southern Song	1127-1279	Jin (Jurchen)	1115-1234
			Yuan (Mongol)	1206-1368
	Ming	1368-1644	Qing (Manchu)	1644-1911

* This period, in the absence of any conventionally agreed upon name, has also been called the Six Dynasties, the Wei, Jin, and Northern and Southern Dynasties, or the Early Medieval period (see Lewis 2009a: 1). I choose another conventional period name, the Age of Disunion, in spite of recognizing its disadvantage—implicating political unity under a single regime as if the normal state of affairs in the Chinese dynastic history.

** These short-lived polities were mostly founded by five non-Han stocks, the Xiongnu, Xianbei, Di, Jie, and Qiang, collectively called as “Five Barbarians” (*wuhu*). Only three of them were under the native Chinese leadership: the Former Liang (314-376), Western Liang (400-421), and Northern Yan (409-439).

*** See footnote 18 in this chapter.

Boundary Making under the Conquest Dynasties

One of the most important but neglected facts of Chinese history is that conquest regimes have ruled the Middle Kingdom almost as long a period as native dynasties. The dynasties of conquest include Northern Wei (386-534), Eastern Wei (534-550), Western Wei (535-556), Northern Zhou (557-581), Liao (907¹³-1125), Jin (1115-1234), Xi-Xia (1038-1227),¹⁴ Yuan (1206¹⁵-1368), and Qing (1644¹⁶-1911).¹⁷ If we count the state founded by sinified foreigners, then we must include Northern Qi (550-577).¹⁸ In addition to this already substantial number of conquest states, non-Sinitic groups established thirteen out of the Sixteen States during the fourth and fifth centuries A.D. Of these, only twice did foreigners ever conquer the entirety of China—the Mongols and Manchus. Yet

¹³ The year in which Khitan (Han Chinese: *Qidan*) tribal society was transformed into a hereditary monarchy. In 916, Yelü Abaoji, the founder of Khitan state, declared himself as emperor. In 948, Khitan was replaced with the new dynastic name Great Liao. In 983, Liao was changed back to Khitan, which in 1066 was called Liao again. See Liu Pujiang (2001) for detailed discussion.

¹⁴ The Tangut (Han Chinese: *Dangxiang*) state ruled over a huge area extending from Mongolia to Xinjiang. In 967, the ancestor of Li Yuanhao, the founder of Xi-Xia, was given the title King of Xia by the Song emperor; the legacy of which influenced the choice of the dynastic name on the proclamation of the new empire in 1038. See Wright (2005) for the history of the rise of the Tangut Xia state and its conflict with the Song. In general, however, it has not been counted in the legitimate succession of dynasties in Chinese historiography as early as the Yuan times when the imperial court did not compile a Standard History for the Xi-Xia, but for the Liao, Jin, and Song

¹⁵ In 1206, Chinggis Khan declared the establishment of the Mongol monarchy. It was Khubilai Khan (r. 1260-1294) who adopted the term “Yuan” as dynastic name in 1271, and unified the whole of China in 1279 by conquering the Southern Song dynasty.

¹⁶ In 1616, Nurhaci set up the new state which he called “Later Jin” in order to signify it as the successor of the Jurchen Jin dynasty. The new name, Qing, was adopted in 1636, eight years before it succeeded the Ming.

¹⁷ Meanwhile, Wittfogel (1957) maintains the narrower definition of the major conquest dynasties including only the Liao, Jin, Yuan, and Qing. As for the alien regimes prior to the Liao, he regards them as “dynasties of infiltration.” See also Wittfogel and Feng (1949) for a discussion of two classifications of non-native states in Chinese history.

¹⁸ It is still unclear the ethnicity of the imperial Gao family of the Northern Qi. Gao Huan (496-547), the premier of the Eastern Wei who laid the foundation of the Northern Qi, claimed to be descended from the Gao lineage of Bohai, one of influential Han Chinese clans in his times. Even if he might be a Han, however, he was too assimilated with Xianbei culture to have a purely Han background. In her careful study, Holmgren (1982b) hypothesizes that Gao Huan’s family was of Xianbei background and his putative claim reflects the prevalent lineage falsification, as shown in Holmgren (1980, 1981-83), during the period of Northern Dynasties. Yao Weiyuan (1962: 134-137) also persuasively argues that Gao Huan was of Xianbei origin. As Pearce (2000) discusses, Gao Huan’s old comrade Hou Jing (?-552), who presumably descended from the Jie stock, disdainfully referred to his son, Gao Cheng (521-449), as “that Xianbei child” (*Xianbei xiao’er*).

still, alien rule was not uncommon in the northern part of China during the second millennium.

For instance, for more than seven centuries, from the Khitan Liao to the Manchu Qing except the Ming interregnum, the present-day Beijing had been under alien domination. Indeed, in 1648 (only four years after the fall of Ming), the Manchu conquerors expelled all Han subjects from the Inner City civilian residents to the Outer City. Accordingly, in contrast to the prevalent image of Beijing today, the Manchu imperial clan together with the banner households from Manchuria made up virtually the entire Inner City population (Lee and Wong 1991).¹⁹ Starting with the partition of Beijing, separate residential areas for the Manchus were subsequently enforced in the major cities and in the frontiers, a situation which can be termed as the “Manchu apartheid” (Wakeman 1985: 476; see also Elliott 2001: ch.2). The Manchus, like preceding conquering ethnicities, were a tiny ‘privileged minority’ throughout Qing China. As an influential late Qing scholar and reformist, Liang Qichao (1873-1929) remarked: “Han farmers and artisans are industrious and frugal. ... The Manchus [on the other hand] have for the past two centuries eaten without farming and been clothed without weaving” (Rhoads 2000: 5).

To keep the dominant position of *herrenvolk*, the alien conquerors separated their own kind and alliances from the regular Han subjects in the population registration system, favored them with respect to taxation and jurisdiction, and allocated more military and civil posts to them (see Elliott 2001; Franke and Twitchett 1994; Mote 1999; Rhoads 2000; Sen 2002; Tao 1976; Wittfogel and Feng 1949). As Wittfogel summarizes, the conquerors “reserved for themselves the political key positions; and, as a rule, they forbade intermarriage between conquering group and the [native] Chinese” (1957: 353). Among the list of alien dynasties, the Mongol Yuan state was unusually oppressive toward the native Chinese, the condition of which was vividly observed by Marco Polo,

¹⁹ The city’s basic arrangement is well portrayed by an Italian Jesuit, Matteo Ripa (1682-1746) who lived there between 1711 and 1723. He says, “Peking is composed of two distinct cities, one being called the Tartar city, the other the Chinese. The Tartar city is so named because it is inhabited by Tartars, and by those who, though not Tartars, are enrolled in the Ki-hiu-ti, or eight bands [Eight Banners] which constitute the Tartar troops. The Chinese city is inhabited by Chinese alone. ... The Tartar city has nine gates, and each side of it is three miles in length. The Chinese city, which is also walled, joins the northern wall, which separates it from the Tartars” (Ripa 1844: 51-52).

the Venetian traveler, who visited China during the reign of Khubilai Khan in the late thirteenth century, in the following statement:

[A]ll the Cathayans detested the Grand Kaan's [Khan's] rule because he set over them governors who were Tartars, or still more frequently Saracens, and these they could not endure, for they were treated by them just like slaves. You see the Great Kaan had not succeeded to the dominion of Cathay by hereditary right, but held it by conquest; and thus having no confidence in the natives, he put all authority into the hands of Tartars, Saracens, or Christians, who were attached to his household and devoted to his service, and were foreigners in Cathay.²⁰

But this pattern of boundary-making was far from stable, owing to the cultural sinicization of the rulers and de-sinicization of the ruled. Even under the Yuan dynasty, the Mongol nobility became acculturated to the Sinitic lifestyle—“[The genuine Tartars] are greatly degenerated; for those who are settled in Cathay have taken up the practices of the Idolaters of the country, and have abandoned their own institutions,” as Marco Polo (1871: 231) witnessed it; although they were still undoubtedly left behind by their Central Asian allies. The native Chinese, meanwhile, had an incentive to try to pass for Mongols so as to attain some privileges reserved only for the Mongols and their allies. So many Han people, who hoped to ascend the social hierarchy, avidly embraced the Mongol customs and style and even changed their name. They also learnt the Mongol language in that it remained the main official language, even though the Yuan court forbade them to learn it. After driving out the Mongol power, one of the first things that the founding Hongwu emperor (r. 1368-1398) of the Ming did was to ban adherence to the Mongol hairstyle, clothes, language, and way of life (see, e.g., Serruys 1957). His decision was intended to clear out the previous ethnic categories and hierarchy

Boundary Clearing under the Native Dynasties

The native Chinese dynasties, such as the Han (206 B.C.-220 A.D.), Tang (618-907), Song (960-1279), and Ming (1368-1644), did not generally institutionalize a caste system in terms of ethnic backgrounds, but rather emphasize the maintenance of Chinese cultural

²⁰ This passage appears in Marco Polo (1871: 372-373). Further, as Wiffogel and Feng (1949: 8-10) aptly show, this conquest situation described by Marco Polo involved a dual political and social system which, with certain changes and modifications, prevailed until the collapse of the dynasty in 1368.

identity. They adopted assimilative policies on the basis of the principle of ‘moral transformation by proper teaching’ (*jiaohua*), which were mostly non-coercive although force was sometimes an element. This universalistic ideal of cultural transformation was firmly established in Confucian doctrine, which served as the official state ideology since the Han period.

It had also been their state policy to accommodate aliens who came over and pledged allegiance (*guifu*) to the Son of Heaven, the practices of which were promoted as examples of his generosity. Despite displaying a pejorative attitude toward them, the Han dynasty embraced the pastoral Xiongnu nomads who happened to come to the Chinese heartland, provided that they were willing to be imperial subjects.²¹ The consequence of this practice was the formation of ethnic enclaves inside China proper, which eventually caused the political domination of the sinicized aliens in northern China for nearly three centuries—called the Age of Disunion. The Sino-Foreign hybrid was formed and led to the rise of the second major native dynasty, Tang. The spirit of cosmopolitan tolerance (nearly the opposite of “great Han chauvinism” and xenophobic arrogance) culminated during Tang China, when various ethnicities were allowed to play themselves out.²² Likewise, the early Ming court was eager to persuade large numbers of Mongols to move into the Middle Kingdom and become dedicated subjects.²³ Despite prejudice against Inner Asian nomads, some became high military officers and, as Henry Serruys (1959b) enumerates, more than a dozen Mongols in Chinese service were granted noble titles during the first hundred years of the Ming rule.

The Ming state even favored a policy of better treatment for alien subjects than native populations to divide and control the strength of its northern enemies. Mongols, who

²¹ See Bielenstein (1956, 1967), Chang (2007b), de Crespigny (1984), Lewis (2000, 2007), and Pan (1992b), on the political strategy and settlement policies of the Han dynasty toward the northern steppe nomads.

²² Ho Ping-ti remarks, quite passionately: “The kind of true cosmopolitanism that characterized the life, outlook, and attitude of the T’ang [Tang] Chinese is almost unique in world history, parallel perhaps only by the Roman Empire from Hadrian to Marcus Aurelius” (1998: 135). See also Abramson (2008) for more discussion of ethnic discourse in the Tang.

²³ After the establishment of the Ming dynasty in 1368, the founder Zhu Yuanzhang and his associates still expressed ethnic consciousness of being Chinese and banned various kinds of Mongol customs in language, surnames, costume, and hairstyles (Jia 1999; Tsai 2001).

settled inside China proper and served in civil and military posts, were provided with housing, household implements, allowances in fuel, a variety of clothes, and sometimes even animals like oxen, sheep and horses. Indeed, the early Ming government allocated one-third of the tribute grain in the capital to feed the Mongol officials and their families, causing Han people to complain about such generous policies (Tsai 2001: 150). Mongol officers also received much higher salaries than their Han counterparts of the same rank.²⁴ These preferential treatments continued until at least the mid-Ming period. In his thoroughgoing studies on the Mongol subjects under the Ming, Serruys concludes that “it is evident that the Ming emperors [in the fifteenth century] wanted to be extra generous towards foreigners, especially Mongols, who declared themselves ready to become their subjects” (1961: 67). Since the time of the Yongle emperor (r. 1403-1424), meanwhile, the Ming state wanted to assimilate the Mongols so that they could eventually be treated as regular imperial subjects (Tsai 2001: 152). As a consequence, the descendants of the Mongol subjects who were predominantly registered in the army increasingly acculturated to local society and gradually abandoned their ethnic status by leaving behind hereditary military households.²⁵ As Serruys observes, “eventually all the Mongols settled in China could not avoid becoming [Han] Chinese. In fact, they all did sooner or later” (1959a: 240).

Alongside such preferential treatments, the early Ming court also employed the policy of enforced assimilation regarding the non-Han peoples’ rule of marriage.²⁶ According to the *Da Ming lü* (Great Ming Code), the legal regulation of interethnic marriage reads as follows:

²⁴ For example, Li Xian of the Ministry of Personnel memorialized in 1437: “Speaking in terms of rice, a commandant in the capital of the third rank first degree is entitled to a salary of 35 *shi*, but he really receive only one *shi*, but a Tartar officer [of equal rank] really receive 17 *shi* and 5 *dou* of rice. This signifies that one Tartar officer is worth seventeen and a half [Chinese] capital officials.” This passage appears in *Ming Yingzhong shilu* (Veritable records of Ming Emperor Zhengtong) Chapter 25, p. 510. The translation here follows Serruys (1968: 240-241) with minor modification. For reference, one *shi* during the Ming is ten *dou* and approximately 107.4 liters (Tong 1991: xiv-xv). See also Winkinson (1998: 234-240) on the historical units of measurement in China.

²⁵ See Robinson (1999, 2001, 2004) and Swope (2001, 2003) for the recent studies on the Mongol subjects of the Ming.

²⁶ Ho Ping-ti (1998: 141) mentions certain retaliatory measures in the early Ming such as prohibiting the descendants of those alien traitors of Song during the Mongol Yuan from taking civil-service examinations, but which “often could not be enforced effectively.” Those ideas are “preserved only in private literary works and genealogies.”

Mongols and *semu* [literally “color-eye,” designating all the Western and Central Asians during the Yuan] shall marry with Chinese persons (*zhongguoren*), provided both parties are willing. They are not permitted to marry within their own kind. Any violations shall be punished by 80 blows of the heavy stick and both male and female shall be enslaved by the state. If Chinese persons do not wish to marry Qicha Muslims (*huihui*) [whose physical appearance is different from Han Chinese], the latter may marry with each other among their own kind; the above prohibition shall not be applied.²⁷

It is not clear to what extent this law effectively accelerated the pace of ethnic mixing since there were some cases of successful evasion and of changing foreign names into Chinese to make intra-ethnic marriage functionally legal (Ho 1998: 141). Under those circumstances, however, the blurring of ethnic boundaries through intermarriage would “then quite naturally follow” in the end (Wang 1991: 141). In this regard, the aforementioned case of mid-Ming Emperor Hongzhi can be better understood from this enduring process of interethnic assimilation since the early Ming.

In summary, ethnicity was employed in a different way between native and conquest dynasties; yet, their underlying motivation for demarcating ethnic group boundaries was essentially similar on the basis that it was not to discriminate against the ethnic minorities. Both native and conquest dynasties intended to grant certain privileges to the non-Han groups in relation to the Han subjects, who were required to fulfill their regular duties (see Chapter 4). Indeed, the Chinese history of appeasement policies under the native dynasty and the dominant minority under the conquest dynasty was not anomalous with respect to the statecraft of continental world-empires. But it is by no means my intention to totalize the Chinese state as unchanging and invariant. Rather, my discussion of the dialectics of boundary-making and boundary-clearing can be considered as ideal-type constructs in a Weberian sense, which still need to be historicized. In the forthcoming section therefore, I will focus on its diachronic dimension by illustrating some major phases in Chinese history.

²⁷ Article 122 “Marriages by Mongols and *semu* people” (*Menggu semu ren hunyin*). As rendered by Farmer (1995: 82-83), Jiang Yonglin (2005: 88), Lipman (1997: 38-39) with some revision. The Great Ming Code reached its final form in 1397 and basically intact except minor modification of ordinances until the end of the Ming dynasty.

Three Major Phases in the Formation of Ethno-Political Boundaries

To explicate the complex nature of China's ethnic boundaries, I distinguish three major phases of state-building regarding ethnicity and apply this framework in the forthcoming chapters: (i) the formative phase as the establishment of a unified patrimonial empire and the crucible of multiethnic society; (ii) the expansionary phase as the synthesis of political universalism and ethnic separatism; and (iii) the post-imperial phase as the formation of a unified multiethnic republic after the demise of the Manchu Qing dynasty.

The Formative Phase

The concept of we-group boundaries, self-identified as Hua, Xia, or Hua Xia, was formed and gradually expanded by incorporating non-Sinitic groups in the pre-imperial period. Meanwhile, the Sinitic states began to employ boundary-making strategies no later than the Warring States period (475-221 B.C.), notably the wall-making efforts vis-à-vis the northern steppe peoples. The earlier construction of the Great Wall, which might not have been initiated for defensive needs, delimited not only the physical but also the symbolic boundaries between the 'cultured' interior and the 'uncultured' exterior.²⁸

The ethno-territorial boundaries were crystallized during the early imperial period (or the Qin-Han empires), covering the unification of the Qin dynasty in 221 B.C. to the end of the Later Han dynasty in 220 A.D. It was during this stage that the political and ethnic identity of the Middle Kingdom was decisively defined and subsequently transmitted. In spite of its short-lived history, the Qin dynasty (221-206 B.C.) is conventionally regarded

²⁸ Scholars have recently become critical to the enduring assumption on the motivation of the wall-making process, pursued by three northern states during the Warring States period. Nicola Di Cosmo, for instance, challenges scholars who have argued that the northern walls had a defensive purpose and had been erected as protection against nomadic attacks: "Surely at some point the fortifications did acquire a 'defensive' function, but the context suggests strongly that this defensive role was subordinated to a grander strategy, one that was militarily offensive and territorially expansionist" (2002: 143). Hence the walls were built to repel or to contain the nomads *only after* a substantial drive into foreign lands. See also Waldron (1990) for detailed discussion.

as the etymological origin of the name ‘China.’²⁹ Further, the political reference for the subjects of the Han dynasty later became an ethnonym for Han Chinese.

In addition to the internal homogenization of the imperial subjects, the Chinese in this period demarcated an ethno-cultural boundary against non-Han aliens and sometimes imbued these categories with strong prejudice. In ancient Chinese cosmology, the center of the world was occupied by the refined Chinese, and surrounded by the uncultured aliens of the periphery who were often characterized as animals (wolves, rats, birds and beasts) for their rapacious, violent and greedy behaviors. This binary categorization, however, was far from being clear-cut and immutable, but still allowing for an immense interethnic exchange. In fact, the Chinese during the early imperial period wanted to supplant existing ethnic differences through the notion of genealogical commonality (see Chapter 5). Further, this coexistence between cosmopolitan vision and ethnocentric attitudes had been quite common throughout ensuing Chinese dynasties save the dynasties of conquest. Yet each dynasty indicated points on the spectrum, from ethnocentrism to cosmopolitanism, based largely on the geopolitical balance of power: the Tang moved toward the end of the cosmopolitan spectrum whereas the Southern Song was in the opposite direction.

It is also important to emphasize that since the formative stage, the Confucian universalistic doctrine of the state—the Great Unity (*da yitong*) and the Grand Commonality (*datong*)—had been the orthodoxy of Chinese emperors.³⁰ Also, the patrimonial ideal of the one-world one-ruler was persistent in traditional Chinese cosmology and cosmography, and can be traced back to Confucius who said, “There are

²⁹ Recently Geoff Wade (2009) gives an alternative account for the origins of the name ‘China.’ He suggests that this term initially derived from the indigenous name of the ethnic Yi polity, recorded in Chinese as Yelang during the Han dynasty.

³⁰ See Pines (2000, 2008). The notion of the Great Unity (or Great Unification under universal rule) appears in the beginning of the *Gongyang zhuan* where the text reads: “Why does the text in [the first entry of the *Spring and Autumn Annals*] begin with ‘the first month of the King?’ To magnify the great universal rule (*da yitong*).” *Gongyang*, the First Year of Duke Yin (722 B.C.); Pines (2008: 80). Also the Grand Commonality is a key concept in Confucian school, discussed in the *Liyun* (Ceremonial Operations) chapter of the Book of Rites (*Liji*) where the text reads: “When the Great Way (*da tao*) was pursued, a public and common spirit ruled All-under-Heaven; they chose men of talents, virtue, and ability; their words were sincere, and what they cultivated was harmony. ... This was [the period of] what we call the Grand Commonality (*datong*).” The translation is by Legge (1967[1885]: 364-366) with minor changes.

not two suns in the sky, there are not two sovereigns over the people.”³¹ Plurality was, as Herbert Franke (1978a: 69) points out, “always a deviation from the ideal.”³² In this model, the emperor is proclaimed to be a universal ruler—the sole legitimate possessor of the Mandate of Heaven (*tianming*), an archetypal concept formulated during the Western Zhou period (11th century-771 B.C.) (see Hsu and Linduff 1988; Kominani 2005; Shaughnessy 1991, 1997, 1999). Commoners were, on the contrary, forbidden to intrude on the emperor’s exclusive right to communicate with heaven.³³ Max Weber aptly elucidates this cosmological hierarchy in Confucian philosophy as follows: “sacrificial rites to Heaven became the monopoly of the emperor who was considered the ‘Son’ of Heaven. The princes made sacrifices to the spirits of the land and to the ancestors; the heads of households made sacrifices to the ancestral spirit of their kinship group” (1964: 22). In this sense, the form of domination in imperial China was modeled on a strict demarcation between the patriarchal family and the patrimonial state; the former represents the concrete-particular while the latter symbolizes the abstract-universal (see e.g., Eisenberg 1998). As an abstract idea, political allegiance to the state was not necessarily coupled with one’s inherited ethnicity.

The status of Confucianism, as the orthodox state ideology since the reign of Emperor Wu (141-87 B.C.) of the Former Han dynasty until the end of the Qing, had not only played a crucial role in the formation of the Confucian literati but also significantly contributed to China’s cultural longevity and homogeneity (see Balazs 1964: ch.2; Hsu 1986; Weber 1964: ch.5 and 6). The political order based on the Confucian orthodoxy also prevented the development of an ethnic-based nationalism where loyalty and ethnicity conjoin. As Hsiao Kung-chuan summarizes it, “Confucius used a cultural standard in deciding who was a barbarian and who was a Chinese. ... Since the

³¹ The sentence appears in the *Mencius* V (1), 4; Legge (1875: 278).

³² Even when the Chinese empire was by no means universal like the Song, the pretension was kept alive and mutual recognition of two Sons of Heaven was only a last choice, driven by dreadful political necessity (Franke 1978a; Rossabi 1983; Tao 1988; see also Fletcher 1968: 206-216).

³³ See Farmer (1995: 90-91). For instance, Article 180 “Profaning the spirits” (*xiedu shenming*) of the Great Ming Code reads: “In all cases where private families pray to Heaven (*gaotian*), worship the Dipper (*baidou*), burn incense at night, or light the celestial lamp or the seven lamps, thus profaning the spirits, they shall be punished by 80 strokes of beating with the heavy stick. If women commit such crimes, the household heads shall be punished.” The translation comes from Jiang Yonglin (2005: 112).

distinction between them was not one of any fixed line, but one that fluctuated according to rising or falling cultural levels, it therefore *entirely* lost its racial significance and became a *purely* cultural term” (1979: 140; my emphasis). In summary, the traditional Chinese theory of universal emperorship maintained the idea that there was only one Son of Heaven and he was the ruler of All-under-Heaven (*tianxia*), an ancient concept of Western Zhou origin which by definition knew of no borders and ethnicities.³⁴ It is therefore greatly mistaken to claim that “ethnicity had been a basis for separatism from earliest times” (Naquin and Rawski 1987: 134).

The Expansionary Phase

The alien regimes in China not only challenged a putative linkage between overarching political authority and Han ethnicity, but also actualized the trans-ethnic nature of the Son of Heaven. In the case of the Xiongnu [Huns of Asia], Xianbei [Särbi], Khitan, Jurchen, Mongol, and Manchu, these were eager to retain their socio-political dominance over the native Han subjects and, frequently, also wanted to keep their ethno-cultural identities and religions as a reaction against the erosive forces threatening the Sinic culture. Whether Sinophiles or Sinophobes, however, those conquerors adopted Confucianism as the ruling ideology to legitimize their domination. In addition to sheer military strength, they were keenly aware that it is feasible to establish and consolidate their regime in the Middle Kingdom as long as they embrace the Confucian models of government and adjust themselves to the Sinic way of life without being completely absorbed by it.

The ‘foreign’ Son of Heaven extensively employed some elements of Confucian thought to assert his emperorship in China proper. As an example, in 947, the ambitious Khitan ruler, Emperor Taizong (r. 927-947), donned the imperial Chinese robes and announced ‘Datong’ as the beginning of a new reign, which means that, at this time, the Khitans

³⁴ See Zhao Tingyang (2005, 2006) on the concept of All-under-Heaven and its contemporary implication. William Callahan (2008) critically assesses Zhao’s theory on the ground that this all-embracing system, which was a key to the governance and self-understanding of over two millennia of Chinese empire, presents a popular example of a new hegemony where imperial China’s hierarchical governance is updated for the twenty-first century. For him, the theory of All-under-Heaven as a Chinese vision of world order misses a fundamental point: not everyone wants to be included.

surely adopted the Confucian ideal of Grand Commonality (see Mote 1999: 66). Likewise, although Yesün Temür (r. 1323-1328) of the Yuan was an ‘un-Chinese’ ruler who had only one high ranking Han Chinese at his court, he could still show his deference to Confucius by refusing to abolish the civil service examinations (*keju*), and having scholars lecture him on the Chinese classics (Hsiao 1994: 535-541). Lastly, when they eventually crossed the Great Wall in 1644, the Manchus came to understand the conception of the Mandate of Heaven and to apply the Chinese system of government so well that the country turned to them. The Manchu policy, at least to the gentry, “was more ‘Chinese’ than that of the Chinese rebel [indicating Li Zicheng (1606-1645) who brought down the Ming dynasty] who was the Manchus’ rival!” (Michael 1965: 11; see also Parsons 1970).³⁵ Moreover, innumerable Confucian literati shaved their foreheads in the Manchu style and kowtowed to the incipient Qing dynasty immediately or participated in the special Broad Learning (*boxue*) examination, later intended to employ previously non-collaborating Han literati in top metropolitan and provincial posts (see Balazs 1965; Kessler 1971). From the perspective of the plebeians, the Manchu rule was not experienced as ‘foreign domination’ since “successful usurpation of the throne or successful invasion simply meant a different tax receiver, not an altered social order” (Weber 1964: 27).

So the essence of Chinese political philosophy, originally promulgated in ancient Sinitic tradition, had long ceased to belong to any one ethnic group or social class. The supra-ethnic principle of the Mandate of Heaven was even confirmed by Zhu Yuanzhang, the founder of the Ming, who initially mobilized the people’s hatred against their Mongol rulers and ultimately drove them beyond the Great Wall. As an evaluation of the preceding rule, Zhu and his followers at last accepted the idea of the original legitimacy of the heaven-assisted Mongol domination of China.³⁶ They were definitely in favor of

³⁵ In his study of the peasant rebellions of late Ming China, James Parsons makes similar observation: “To the gentry, the rebels were more ‘foreign’ than the Manchus” (1970: 260).

³⁶ *Ming Taizu shilu* (Veritable records of Ming Emperor Hongwu) Chapter 26, pp. 401-402. It reads: “After the Song dynasty, the throne (*zuo*) passed to the Yuan so that the Northern Ti entered the Middle Kingdom (*zhongguo*) and ruled it, and both within and without the Four Seas there was none who did not submit to them. Could this have been achieved by human power alone? Indeed when Heaven transferred [the Mandate] to them [the Mongols], the rulers were bright and the subjects were sincere which was enough to govern All-under-Heaven.” The translation and discussion are found in Dardess (1978), Mote (1999: 560),

Confucian-minded legitimacy; their critique of the Yuan was not so much based on their ethnocentric prejudice toward the Mongols as on the decay of ethical norms in the late Yuan period.³⁷ The Chinese emperors, regardless of their ethnic backgrounds, were conscious of the fundamental premise of political ideology: political integrity is one thing and ethnocentric prejudice is another. But this important distinction, which the Chinese in the past had carefully recognized because of the frequent ascendance of alien leadership over the Middle Kingdom, has largely been misconceived in much of Western scholarship (see Chapter 7).

Further, it is important to discuss the question of ethnic boundaries during Manchu Qing, not only the last alien dynasty but also the last Chinese dynasty. In line with its relatively abundant source materials, the Qing history reveals the interesting complexity of a unified multiethnic state, which has considerably influenced the national self-representation of the post-imperial Chinese state. As summarized by the American sinologist Mary Wright (1962: 56), it can be characterized as a “Sino-Manchu synthesis, a genuinely harmonious coalition that marked a new stage in the development of the non-national Confucian monarchy as the symbol of traditional culturalism” (see also Elliott 2001; Ho 1967; Ishibashi 2000; Rawski 1996). It is controversial to consider this Sino-Manchu hybrid to be ‘genuinely harmonious’ since the Manchu conquerors had used coercive means to enforce their domination over the natives and liquidate the resistance movements from Ming loyalists. Nevertheless, over the 250 years of its existence, the Qing state was successful in creating a fuller realization of the political ideal of the Middle Kingdom that reached its apex in the era of Pax Sinica of the eighteenth century.

The Qing state, based on the submission of divergent ethnic communities, each of whose culture would remain separate, had continued to emphasize an ancient doctrine of universal kingship. In particular, the Qing emperors had defended their legitimacy as the Son of Heaven by referring to Confucian thought: the Manchu must not be condemned as

and Serruys (1957: 149).

³⁷ Likewise, historians during the Ming dynasty blamed the disinterest of the Mongol emperors in the Chinese state-cult. The eventual fall of the Yuan dynasty was seen “as a consequence of the carelessness of the Yuan emperors in observing the Chinese rites” (Franke 1978a: 33).

the barbarous aliens. For instance, the Yongzheng emperor (r. 1723-1735) argued in his imperial edict:

The victories of the Qing court are in fact the victories of Chinese civilization and of the march of morality generally. ... The 'Five Relationships' (*wulun*) are also involved.³⁸ The relationship between ruler and official is the chief of these, and people without a ruler could hardly be called "people"; it is the Qing who alone has proved capable of establishing order in China and the Qing alone who provides the demarcation between Chinese and animals; indeed in natural law, the fundamental distinction is not between Chinese and barbarians but between people and beasts.³⁹

Being conscious of his Manchu identity notwithstanding, he insisted that the Mandate of Heaven could be endowed regardless of ethnic background.⁴⁰ The Yongzheng emperor also believed that what makes people human has nothing to do with ethnicity, but hinges on the existence of a virtuous ruler who governs the peoples with paternalistic compassion, as stipulated in the Confucian canons. The statecraft of Manchu rulers relied on coercion and persuasion, which presumably made the imperial government more absolutist and less nationalistic than it might have become under the native Chinese rulers alone.

While institutionalizing a socio-political division of the Manchu masters from the native Han subjects, the Qing state also tried to redefine the boundaries of 'China' (*zhongguo*) and 'Chinese' (*zhongguo zhi min*), previously denoting the Han peoples, in purely non-ethnic terms. A good example of the rulers' intention to supplant the Han concept of China and Chinese with a new meaning is Emperor Qianlong's edict in 1755: "There exists a view of China (*zhongxia*), according to which non-Han people cannot become

³⁸ In Confucian morality, as defined by Mencius, there are five fundamental human relationships: ruler-ruled, father-son, husband-wife, elder brother-younger brother and friend-friend. Specific duties are attached to each of the participants in these relationships.

³⁹ It appears in the *Dayi juemi lu* (Great righteousness resolving confusion). The translation comes from Crossley (1999: 256-257) with minor revision. The "Great Righteousness" was published and distributed in 1730 as a political response against anti-Manchu sentiment among some Han Chinese literati. See Crossley (1999: 246-262), Liu (2004: 81-88), and Miyazaki (1950) for more discussions including the explanation and translation of this text.

⁴⁰ Contrary to the defensive stance of his father, however, the Qianlong (r. 1736-1795) emperor denied the conception of the "barbarous" origin of the Manchus. Instead of more acculturation towards the Sinitic way, he strove to preserve his ethnic identity by promoting the Manchu way. It is no accident that the Qianlong emperor ordered the retraction of all copies of his father's manifesto, *Dayi juemi lu*, less than week weeks after taking the throne. See Crossley (1987, 1999) and Elliott (2001) on the 'ethnic revival' during the reign of the Qianlong.

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."⁴¹ This is not merely an ideological propaganda of the Manchu emperor. In effect, because of the political integration of Inner Asia and the Chinese heartland, the traditional demarcation between the Central Plains as the land of the Han people and the frontiers as the land of inhospitable aliens was gradually altered by the end of the eighteenth century.⁴² The meaning of 'China' was no longer simply confined to the territories inhabited by the people of the Central Plains, for as Mark Elliott writes, "[I]t became a space, the territories over which the state claimed sovereignty—and which, like other early modern states, it had mapped" (2000: 638). One of the most significant contributions of the Qing state to the post-imperial Chinese state-making and nation-building is that it crystallized the formation of a Greater China that includes Mongolia, Manchuria, Xinjiang, Taiwan, Qinghai, and Tibet, which largely corresponds to the present-day Chinese geo-body.

The change in the idea of China's territorial boundaries since the mid-Qing era simultaneously gave rise to a more ambitious vision of a unified multiethnic empire—"five nations under heaven" (see Crossley 1989, 1999; Ishibashi 2000; Millward 1998: 197-203; Teng 2004: 238-241). The Qianlong emperor portrayed the unity of the five peoples (Manchu, Han, Mongol, Tibetan, and Muslim) All-under-Heaven and identified himself as the element integrating the whole in the following words:

Now, in Han Chinese, "Heaven" is called *tian*. In the language of our dynastic house (*guoyu*) it is called *abka*. In Mongolian and Zungharian "Heaven" is *mgri*. In Tibetan it is *nam-mkhah*. In the Muslim tongue [i.e., Turki] it is called *asman*. Let a Muslim, meaning "Heaven," tell a Han it is called *asman*, and the Han will necessarily think this is not so. If the Han, meaning "Heaven," tells the Muslim *tian*, the Muslim will likewise certainly think it not so. Here not so, there not so. Who knows which is right? But by raising the head and looking at what is plainly up above, the Han knows *tian* and venerates it, and the Muslim knows *asman* and venerates it. This is the Great Unity (*datong*). In fact, once the names and unified, there is nothing that is not universal.⁴³

⁴¹ The passages appear in the *Huangchao wenxian tongkao*, 7338. As rendered by Zhao Gang (2006: 4).

⁴² However, the government did not incorporate the newly acquired peripheral regions into the framework of provincial administration until the last phase of the Qing. Xinjiang became a province only in 1884, and the three provinces in Manchuria (*dongsansheng*) were created in 1907. Mongolia, Qinghai and Tibet were never transformed into provinces during the Qing.

⁴³ It appears in Qianlong's preface to the *Xiyu tongwen zhi* (Imperially Commissioned Unified-language Gazetteer of the Western Regions) completed in 1763. As translated by Millward (1998: 199) with minor

His pluralist arrangement of empire envisioned ethno-linguistic equivalency with non-Manchu groups while enshrining Manchu as the state language. Hence, this ideal vision of the Great Unity of the five peoples who constitute the Qing state considerably altered the traditional hierarchical Sinocentric worldview since Han Chinese did not retain cultural superiority but became parallel to other non-Manchu subjects. Further, this model of ethnic diversity under Manchu leadership has decisively affected the formation of the ‘imperial nation’ in post-imperial China with some conceptual changes (see Figure 3.2).

The Post-Imperial Phase

The construction of nationhood and statehood in post-imperial China has extensively been modeled on the heritage of the past. Regarding the ideal of the state, the birth of a ‘new’ China signaled a great transformation from a unified multiethnic empire to a unified multiethnic republic. It should also be mentioned that although the Chinese have been influenced by the Western ideas of scientific racism and social Darwinism, they have never abandoned the ideal of political unification and the narratives of interethnic unity even when the concepts of the Mandate of Heaven and the sage king as the universal sovereign of the world no longer worked.

China’s attempt to maintain political integrity via national cohesion in the aftermath of the fall of the Qing dynasty has inevitably led to the all-encompassing whole of nationhood and peoplehood, compared with other post-colonial and post-imperial nation-states in which the exclusivist model of race and ethnicity has prevailed. What is more, modern sciences such as anthropology, archaeology, and genetics have substituted for the ancient cosmology of All-under-Heaven to support the doctrine of a unified multiethnic state. They have played an important role in essentializing the ‘racial unity’ of the Chinese nation, shown in the state’s efforts to create the narratives of the descendants of a common ancestor of the Yellow Emperor (*huangdi*) and Peking Man (*Homo erectus*

modification.

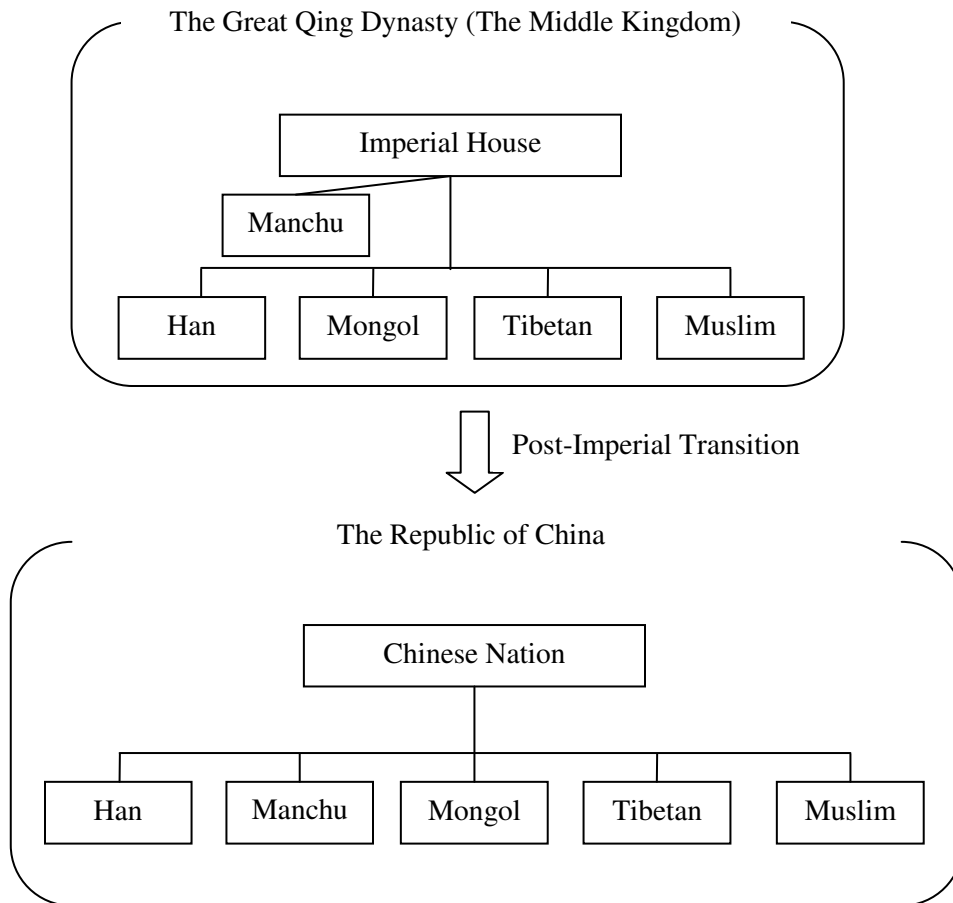
pekinensis), and the enduring history of interethnic fusion through marriages (see, e.g., Leibold 2006, 2007; Sautman 1997a, 1997b, 2001; Schmalzer 2008). In other words, this emphasis on ‘blood nationalism’ in a primordial sense has been a central tenet of the ideology of the Republican government between 1912 and 1949 (see, e.g., Leibold 2004) and the PRC since 1949 (see Chapter 5). Given that the discourse of indivisible blood ties among diverse ethnic groups has become essential in post-imperial nationhood, the number of official ethnic groups, no matter how many nationalities the government may identify, remains aggregate under the single family, i.e., the Chinese nation (*zhonghua minzu*) as a supra-ethnic entity. In this respect, the nationalist question stems from its all-encompassing definition (treating non-Han minorities as ‘inalienable’ family members of the Chinese nation), which in turn does not tolerate any state-seeking nationalism from the minorities. It is a case of the violence of inclusion.

In addition, the heritage of the Qing state has played a crucial role as a territorial and ethnic foundation of the post-imperial Chinese nation.⁴⁴ Figure 3.2 illustrates that just as the Qing emperor identified himself as the ruler of five peoples, so did Chinese nationalists in the early Republican years develop the slogan of the “Five Nationalities in Harmony” (*wuzu gonghe*) including the Han, Manchus, Muslim Hui, Mongols, and Tibetans.⁴⁵ Meanwhile, they quickly abandoned the Han-centered anti-Manchu racism (see Ishikawa 2003) during the last days of the Qing. Further, the post-imperial Chinese state has asserted the sole legitimate inheritor of the Qing frontiers in the face of territorial disputes with foreign powers such as Japan and the former Soviet Union as well as separatist movements comprising non-Han nationalists.

⁴⁴ Based on his careful survey of Qing official documents, for instance, Zhao Gang concludes that “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” (2006: 14).

⁴⁵ The term *wuzu gonghe* refers to the union of five ethnic groups into a single national state. During the first half of the twentieth century, meanwhile, the Japanese, who wanted to justify their intervention in Manchuria, criticized this notion as a modern political creation to suppress the legitimate national aspiration of the former Qing frontier peoples, who desired self-determination from Han domination. See Leibold (2006: 196-197).

Figure 3.2 Changes in the multiethnic vision of the Chinese state from the Qing to the Republican period



Finally, the empire-to-nation transition created the conception of modern Han and non-Han nationalities, largely based on imperial practices. The term “Han” itself is of ancient origin, dating from the time when it indicated the imperial subjects of the Han dynasty.⁴⁶ The subsequent dynasties, especially alien regimes, had employed such various names as the Han people (*hanren* or *han’er*, *hanzi* in quite a derogatory sense), Hua people (*huaren*), Han commoners (*hanmin*), and Han bannermen (*hanjun*) to designate the native populations of the Middle Kingdom (see Chen 1986; Crossley 1989; Jia 1987, 1999; Li 2007; Liu 1998). But the name “*hanzu*”—which represents the present-day Han nationality—was not used until Chinese intellectuals began to embrace the Western ideas

⁴⁶ Jia Jingyan (1999: 169-170) suggests that the term “Han people” (*hanren*) was used no later than the Later Han dynasty (25-220 A.D.). As he further explains, however, even after the demise of the Qin dynasty, the word “Qin people” (*qinren*) was still popular throughout Han times.

of race, nation, and nationalism in the late nineteenth century.⁴⁷ It was only in the early twentieth century that this term became associated with Han nationalism under the political leadership of Dr. Sun Yat-sen (1866-1925), who used it as a slogan to unite the Han peoples in opposition to the Manchu rulers (Hostetler 2006: xxv). So the concept of Han nationality is a modern construction through appropriating traditional references to the Han people. As a corollary, the term “*shaoshu minzu*” (literally means ‘minority nationalities’) was first coined in the age of nation-states.⁴⁸

To date, the PRC government recognizes fifty-six ethnic groups (*minzu* or *zuqun*)—Han majority which comprises over one billion people, and fifty-five minority groups (see Table 3.2).⁴⁹ According to the Chinese government, however, the number of ethnic minorities has been far less certain. It officially identified 38 ethnic minorities in 1954; 53 in 1964; and 55 in 1979.⁵⁰ Regardless of how many minorities have been declared, the relative size of those groups has always been small. According to the fifth census in 2000, those 55 minorities accounted for only 8.4 percent of the total population.⁵¹ As a result of such ethnic distribution, people tend to assume that the Han Chinese are ethnically

⁴⁷ It is hard to determine who first used the term *zu* or *minzu* for classifying ethnic group categories. Some Japanese intellectuals after the Meiji Restoration translated the term “nation” as *minzoku*, and then Chinese adopted the same Chinese characters (*minzu*) for translating ethno-racial definition of modern nation. See Ishikawa (2003) for more discussion of the development of racial discourse in the Meiji Japan and its impacts upon Chinese scholars and revolutionaries.

⁴⁸ According to Jin Binghao (1987), the earliest traceable usage of the word *shaoshu minzu* occurred in the declaration of the First National Congress of the Chinese Nationalist Party in January 1924. As a result of the First United Front, Dr. Sun Yat-sen chaired this conference with the alliance of the Chinese Communist Party. Meanwhile, the first time the Chinese Communist Party used this term was in November 1926 when it was used for referring to the Hui Muslim people in northwestern China. Later on, the implication of *shaoshu minzu* grew much wider than it was in 1926. In the mean time, such terms as ‘weak and small nationality’ (*ruoxiao minzu*) and ‘backward nationality’ (*luohou minzu*) were also used interchangeably to denote the same or similar ethnic groups. See Zhonggong zhongyang tongzhanbu (1991) for the documentary survey on the subject of names for non-Han nationalities.

⁴⁹ Recently, Chinese scholars like Ma Rong (2007) prefer to put the English term “ethnic group” rather than “nationality,” traditionally used in Communist countries. Also, as a conceptual distinction between nation (*minzu*) and ethnic group (*zuqun*) as a subgroup of nation, they propose an alternative term *zuqun* for the Chinese equivalent to ethnic group.

⁵⁰ The history of the national ethnic identification (*minzu shibie*) project in the People’s Republic has been analyzed in Brown (2002), Caffrey (2004), Fei (1980), Huang and Shi (1995), Keyes (2002), Mackerras (2004), Mullaney (2004, 2010), Tapp (2002), and Yang (2009).

⁵¹ Although it only counts for less than 10 percent, more than 105 millions minorities represent slightly less than the entire population of Japan the 10th most populous country in the world, and far greater than that of Germany or France.

homogenous and predominate over the other ethnic minorities.⁵² However, this widely accepted illusion of ethnic homogeneity and a Han-dominated state is largely mistaken; the myth of which stems from reading China's ethnic relations through the prism of the ethnic logic of nation-state. As I shall discuss in the forthcoming chapters, the definition and boundary of Han and non-Han have been nebulous, reflecting different state-making processes of each polity. More importantly, this reified official classification was not meant to privilege the Han and exclude the non-Han. The overall situation has indeed been the opposite—it was meant to grant the non-Han populations a special status in relation to the majority; the policies of which had been a part of imperial statecraft, that is, the administrative separation between the interior and the exterior and, in cases of conquest dynasties, the privileged conquerors and the regular subjects. Certainly within the context of China, this is an essential but not well-discussed principle of ethnic governance.

⁵² Eric Hobsbawm, for instance, argues that China (along with Korea and Japan) is “indeed among the extremely rare examples of historic states composed of a population that is ethnically almost or entirely homogenous,” by referring to the census enumeration of the People's Republic. He further asserts: “it is quite possible that ethnicity and political loyalty are linked” (Hobsbawm 1992: 66).

Table 3.2 Major ethnic groups in China

Ethnonym	Other Names	Language Family	Location	Population	
				1982 Census* (Rank)	2000 Census** (Rank)
Han		Sino-Tibetan/Chinese	Countrywide	940,880,121 (1)	1,137,386,112 (1)
Zhuang	Chuang	Tai-Kadai/Tai	Southwest: Guangxi	13,388,118 (2)	16,178,811 (2)
Manchu		Altaic/Tungus	Northeast	4,304,160 (7)	10,682,262 (3)
Hui		Sino-Tibetan/Chinese	Countrywide	7,227,022 (3)	9,816,805 (4)
Miao	Hmong	Sino-Tibetan/Miao-Yao	South	5,036,377 (6)	8,940,116 (5)
Uyghur	Uighur	Altaic/Turkic	Northwest: Xinjiang	5,962,814 (4)	8,399,393 (6)
Yi	Lolo	Sino-Tibetan/Tibeto-Burman	Southwest: Yunnan	5,457,251 (5)	7,762,272 (8)
Tujia		Sino-Tibetan/Tibeto-Burman	South: Hunan	2,834,732 (10)	8,028,133 (7)
Mongol		Altaic/Mongolian	North	3,416,881 (9)	5,813,947 (9)
Tibetan	Zang	Sino-Tibetan/Tibeto-Burman	Tibet	3,874,035 (8)	5,416,021 (10)
Bouyei	Buyi, Puyi	Tai-Kadai/Tai	Southwest: Guizhou	2,122,389 (11)	2,971,460 (11)
Dong	Kam	Tai-Kadai/Kam-Sui	Southwest: Guizhou	1,426,335 (13)	2,960,293 (12)
Yao	Mien	Sino-Tibetan/Miao-Yao	South	1,403,664 (14)	2,637,421 (13)
Korean		Altaic (?)/Korean	Northeast: Jilin	1,766,439 (12)	1,923,842 (14)
Bai	Minchia	Sino-Tibetan/Tibeto-Burman	Southwest: Yunnan	1,132,010 (15)	1,858,063 (15)
Hani	Akha	Sino-Tibetan/Tibeto-Burman	Southwest: Yunnan	1,059,404 (16)	1,439,673 (16)
Kazak	Kazakh	Altaic/Turkic	Northwest: Xinjiang	908,414 (17)	1,250,458 (17)
Li	Hlai	Tai-Kadai/Hlai	South: Hainan	818,255 (19)	1,247,814 (18)
Dai	Lue, Pai-I	Tai-Kadai/Tai	Southwest: Yunnan	840,590 (18)	1,158,989 (19)

* Source: Colin Mackerras (1994: 238-240).

** Source: The China Data Center at the University of Michigan (in electronic forms).

Chapter Four

Imagined Boundaries: Ethnic Boundary-Making and State-Building

When Confucius wrote the Spring and Autumn Annals (*Chunqiu*), if the enfeoffed lords used the manners (*li*) of the [non-Sinitic] Yi, he treated them as Yi. If they progressed to the level of the Central States (*zhongguo*), then he treated them as Central States — Han Yu (768-824).¹

A renowned late-Tang scholar-official Han Yu here indicated the mutable nature of us-them boundary in the history of the Middle Kingdom. From the age of Confucius, this distinction has been fluid and porous as the upshot of the state-building process in the *longue durée*. This is not to underestimate the fact that China's us-them binary also generated ethnocentric prejudices, the extent to which non-Sinitic peoples were depreciated as inferior beings whose mind and behavior were akin to animals, somehow commensurable to Western depiction of 'barbarians' in classical antiquity. Likewise, Chinese polities, as elsewhere, employed ethnic categories to distinguish differences derived from the imagined us-them dichotomy of state-system builders. Yet what is important, even though largely ignored, is that such pejorative sentiment as in the claim to a bestial mind has *hardly* evolved into any predictable state responses to the inferior 'others' in the form of slavery, colonization, institutionalized discrimination and exclusion, and genocide. Indeed, the Chinese state has used ethnic boundaries not so much to discriminate minorities as to protect and privilege them relative of course to the majority. Such conception has been consistent even though each polity set up its own standard for the subjects of privileged minority such as the Xianbei, Khitan, Jurchen, Mongol, Manchu, and present-day non-Han nationalities. If the state no longer permits

¹ The passage appears in Han Yu's "Essentials of the Way" (*yuandao*). This short treatise is among the most influential texts in the history of Chinese thought. For the translation of the text, see De Bary and Bloom (1999: 569-573).

their special status, those subjects would then become reclassified as members of the majority. I would suggest that China's approach to the minority would lead to a rethink of the conventional sociological theories of ethnicity, generated for the most part from Western perception in which prejudice and discrimination dovetail.

The Genealogy of Ethnocentrism in Chinese History

Social scientists, who try to figure out why we are disposed to categorize human groups by ethnicity and hold strong prejudices against ethnic strangers, have focused on our universal tendency toward ethnocentrism. The premise of ethnocentrism is that the human we-group, no matter which ethnic group we are in, tends to have a natural aversion to what is different based on a belief in the unique value and rightness of one's own group (Simpson and Yinger 1985: 45). By relying on the research in the field of cognitive psychology, for instance, Massey (2007: 10) argues that all human beings, whether they think of themselves as prejudiced or not, hold schemas that classify people into categories based on age, gender, race and ethnicity which they cannot help. Following his argument, our cognitive tendency toward ethno-racial prejudice is nearly universal and deeply rooted in an overarching scheme of the binary opposition between us and them. As has been much discussed in the studies of race, ethnicity, colonialism and nationalism, our conceptual boundary of 'us' and 'them' has created a set of unequal social relations such as Self-Others, majority-minority, civilized-barbarian, white-black, and colonizer-colonized.²

The Topoi of the Hearts of Birds and Beasts

In China, as elsewhere, the concept of ethnicity has frequently entailed ethnocentric prejudice that goes beyond purely ethnographic description. Recorded examples of such

² In his discussion on the construction of peoplehood in relation to ethnicity, racism and nationalism, Immanuel Wallerstein (1991: 80) also claims that this binary-thinking began to code human species into a certain number of reified groupings, and, in the end, came down to only two, "White" and "non-White" in a symbolic sense.

prejudice can be found in Chinese classics no later than the earliest stage of the Spring and Autumn period (770-476 B.C.). One of the well-known passages in the *Analects* reads—Confucius said: “The Yi-Di [aliens] with their rulers are still not equal to All-the-Xia [Chinese states] (*zhu xia*) without [lords].”³ Further, the ancient Chinese often regarded culturally alien peoples less as subjects of interest in themselves than as foils for Sinitic culture. It is in early Chinese classics that, by articulating such pejorative expressions as “birds and beasts” (*qinshou*), the non-Sinitic groups were conceived to be avaricious, bellicose, and closer to untamed animals in character (see Di Cosmo 2002: 93-126; Loewe 1999: 992-995; Schaberg 2001: 130-135; Sterckx 2000, 2002; Yang 1968: 24-28). Speeches in the *Zuo zhuan*, for instance, contain the following telling statement: “The Di and Rong are like wolves, to whom no indulgence should be given: All-the-Xia states are closely related, and none should be abandoned; to rest in idleness is a poison that should not be cherished.”⁴ This statement, according to Di Cosmo (2002: 97), has mostly been taken as an earlier example of a clearly demarcated ‘us’ and ‘them’ indicating a mature notion of cultural unity within China. Similarly, as recorded in the *Guo yu* (Narratives of the polities), King Ding of Zhou (r. 606-586 B.C.) considered the Di and Rong as “greedy with no thought of yielding; such temperament (*xueqi*) has not been remedied and, therefore, they appear to be birds and beasts.”⁵

Early Chinese perceptions of the non-Sinitic groups had been further reiterated and elaborated throughout the imperial period. The concept of bestial minds and behaviors was an important marker of prejudice towards ‘uncultured’ groups and frequently articulated when either the Chinese state suffered a serious threat from formidable enemies in the frontiers or native Han Chinese were subjugated under alien rule. Under the conquest dynasties, it was practically impossible for native populations to publicly denounce the ‘barbarous’ characteristics of their rulers. If they did, it would lead to a ruthless persecution once detected by the state.⁶ So I would focus on how the Chinese

³ *Analects* III, 5, in Legge (1893: 156) and De Bary and Bloom (1999: 572).

⁴ *Zuo zhuan*, the First Year of Duke Min (661 B.C.); Legge (1872: 124). The statement is attributed to Guan Zhong, a major statesman of the dukedom of Qi.

⁵ *Guo yu* Chapter 2, p. 62. *Guo yu*, compiled around the late fourth century B.C., is a collection of historical accounts, largely political speeches, regarding the major polities of the Spring and Autumn period.

⁶ In 1191, for instance, the Jurchen emperor Zhangzong (r. 1190-1208) of the Jin stipulated that “any

constructed the pejorative discourse regarding aliens under four major native dynasties: Han, Tang, Song, and Ming.

The analogy of alien peoples to wild animals became strident during the early imperial period through the military confrontation between the Xiongnu [Huns of Asia] and Former Han empires. There are ample examples in such early imperial texts as the *Shiji* (Records of the Grand Historian) and *Yan tie lun* (Debates on salt and iron) showing such derogatory attitude toward northern steppe nomads.⁷ As recorded in the *Shiji*, an imperial secretary of Emperor Gaozu (r. 206-195 B.C.) said: “It is the nature of the Xiongnu to swarm together like so many beasts, and to disperse again like a flock of birds.”⁸ This remark certainly goes beyond the ethnographic description of nomadic lifestyle. This kind of stereotype was also recorded in the memorial by Zhufu Yan (?-127 B.C.): “It is not only our generation which finds the Xiongnu difficult to conquer and control. They make a business of pillage and plunder, and indeed this would seem their inborn nature. ... No attempt has ever been made to order or control them; rather, they have been regarded as birds and beasts (*qinshou*) to be domesticated, not as humans.”⁹ An eminent historian Ban Gu (32-92 A.D.) of the Later Han dynasty also pointed out some ‘undesirable’ Xiongnu customs in the light of Confucian moral standards such as the levirate marriage and disrespect of elders, and concluded that they have “human face but hearts of beasts” (*renmian shouxin*).¹⁰

As a powerful and expansionist state, meanwhile, it was the spirit of cosmopolitanism that characterized the foreign policy of early Tang dynasty. This open-minded attitude was well-reflected in the statements of the energetic second emperor Taizong (r. 626-649), who was simultaneously acknowledged as the Son of Heaven of the Middle Kingdom and the Heavenly Qaghan of the steppes (see Pan Yihong 1997a). When asked

violators who would call the [ruling] peoples and the language of our dynasty (*benchao*) as “alien” (*fan*) shall be punished by blows of the heavy stick.” This edict appears in the *Jin shi* Chapter 9, p. 218.

⁷ In the *Yan tie lun*, the Imperial Secretary Sanghong Yang (d. 80 B.C.) said: “The Xiongnu, cruel and crafty, boldly push through the barriers and harass the Middle Kingdom. ... They long deserve punishment for their unruliness and lawlessness.” See *Yan tie lun* Chapter 1, p. 2. See also Di Cosmo (2002: 255-311) for a detailed discussion of the Han-Xiongnu relations.

⁸ *Shiji* Chapter 112; Watson 1961: 227-228.

⁹ *Shiji* Chapter 112; Watson 1961: 228.

¹⁰ *Han shu* Chapter 94 “The biography of the Xiongnu: part 2,” p. 3834.

by his ministers over why his foreign policy exceeded that of all previous emperors, he replied that “since antiquity, all have honored the Hua [Chinese] and despised the Yi-Di peoples; only I have loved them both as one.”¹¹ Contrary to Zhufu Yan and Ban Gu, he also discarded the idea of bestial mind in alien groups: “The Yi-Di peoples are also human; their sentiment is not different from [people in] the central, Chinese (*zhongxia*) state. ... In accordance with extending kindness and charity to them, aliens in four directions (*siyi*) can be part of the one family [with us].”¹²

However, with the decline of the Tang government since the mid-eighth century, the situation had considerably changed. Accordingly, as Michael Drompp (2005) extensively demonstrates, the rhetoric of foreign enemies as possessing a bestial nature was again articulated in the late Tang period. For instance, facing the border security crisis related to the Uighur (Han Chinese: Hui-he, Hui-hu) during the mid-ninth century, the Tang official documents frequently referred to their ‘bestly’ behaviors not only as “owlish cries” (*xiao yin*) symbolizing the lack of filial morality, but as “wolfish glances” (*lang gu*) intended to suggest rapacious violence and greed.¹³ The Uighur people were also called vipers and scorpions, which ideologically served to legitimize the Tang court’s plan for their destruction as a just war. The imperial decree of Emperor Wuzong (r. 840-846) to his generals reads: “How can we harbor a den of vipers at the Great Wall? [How can we] nourish venomous scorpion in our bosom and sleeves? Taking advantage of their rushing about, we certainly wish to expel them.”¹⁴ It is also interesting to see that, in the rhetoric of the Tang-Uighur confrontation, the most cited historical precedent was the case of the Han-Xiongnu rivalry (Drompp 2005: 184-195). As in the Han perception of the Xiongnu, the Tang attitude toward enemies in the steppe followed the same pattern:

¹¹ Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian* Chapter 198 (647 A.D.), p. 6247.

¹² Sima Guang, *Zizhi tongjian* Chapter 197 (644 A.D.), pp. 6215-6216.

¹³ One of the examples of such rhetoric appears in the document of the famous Tang statesman Li Deyu (787-850), a chief minister who received the exalted title of Duke of Wei in 844. It reads: “We are still concerned that we have not yet rid of the owl’s shriek. [The Uighurs] dare to look back wolfishly [toward the border] and, oppressed by famine, they again have harassed our border cities. See Li Deyu, *Li Weigong Huichang yipin ji* 7.56-57. The translation is by Drompp (2005: 305). The reference to the owl here is interesting since it was a well-known symbol of unfilial behavior as it was generally regarded to kill its own mother. In the eyes of the court, therefore, the Uighurs should be treated as the owl since they have turned their backs on the imperial kindness and virtue of the Tang emperor (Drompp 2005: 173).

¹⁴ Li Deyu, *Li Weigong Huichang yipin ji* 6.44. As rendered by Drompp (2005: 281-282).

they were charged with immorality and their behavior was associated with that of birds and beasts which possess no innate sense of morality.

The rhetoric of the bestial nature of alien groups peaked during the long period of conflict between the Northern Song and the Khitan Liao, and between the Southern Song and the Jurchen Jin.¹⁵ It is during the Song, for instance, that we find the en masse addition of dog and insect radicals to the names of non-Han population and societies.¹⁶ By and large, this practice reflects a symbolic representation of pejorative attitude toward frontier tribes. There were, however, other reasons for putting those radicals in such a condition, as in considering their totemic belief or the environmental setting of certain ethnic groups as well as conceiving certain tribes as having descended from insects or beasts (Ruey 1972b: 73-117; see also Mair 1998).¹⁷ Notable examples of the use of dog radical that began to emerge during the Song period include the Qilao [present-day Gelao], Yao, and Zhuang, which are still counted as major ethnic minorities. It was not until the mid-twentieth century that the Chinese government decided to replace such radicals with a 'human' component (see Fiskesjö 2006: 28-31).

It is also during the Song that we find some scholar-officials identifying the custom of levirate—sons could marry their deceased father's wives or concubines, nephews those of their uncle, and brothers those of another brother—as an example of the animal-like behavior of the non-Han ruling groups in the north. One Southern Song author of the mid-twelfth century, for instance, condemned this practice among all Jurchen tribes as

¹⁵ See Franke (1983, 1992) and Tao Jing-shen (1983, 1988) for their in-depth studies of how Song Chinese had negatively portrayed their northern rivals. Also see Xu Mengxin (1126-1207) *Sanchao beimeng huibian* particularly chapter 4 for his ethnographic description of 'wild' Jurchen tribes from which the Jin ruling house came. He characterized the Jurchen as stupid, deceitful, covetous, violent and cruel by referring to their 'barbarous' customs and behaviors. English translation of this chapter with commentaries and annotations was rendered by Franke (1975). Fearful of an enagement from their Manchu ruler for depicting his ancestor such pejorative way, further, all 'sensitive' paragraphs and 'inappropriate' expressions were censored out in the Siku Quanshu edition of *Sanchao beimeng huibian* compiled during the Qianlong reign (Deng and Liu 1998).

¹⁶ The Chinese written ethnonyms for people seen as uncultured were regularly, and especially in the southwest, formed with such animal signifiers, most often in the shape of that indicating a 'dog' (*quan*) or a 'insect' (*chong*). This usage is obviously ancient yet proliferated in the names for many southern peoples during late imperial times since the Song when Chinese influence there increased (Fiskesjö 2006: 30).

¹⁷ In addition, Serruys (1957: 150) suggests that the Chinese expression of naming foreigners as animal terms may have been a literal translation. It was the Mongols and Turks themselves who used the many names of animals as personal names; for instance, Arslan (lion), Noqai (dog), and Buqa (bull).

“the custom of the caitiffs” and felt so disgusted by the behavior of some people “who even have made their stepmother their wife, just like dogs and pigs.” He further insisted that “with the [Song] Chinese this is different because they know that it would be against the law.”¹⁸ The rhetoric of bestial mind was also used to illustrate the brutal rules of their northern rival in the sense that it contradicted the Confucian ideal of benevolent and paternalistic government. In a memorial in 1064, Li Wei of the Northern Song, who had been an envoy to the Liao, condemned the cruelty of the Liao law: “even their ruler once said, ‘The Khitans are wild animal. They cannot be ruled with written law as can the [Han] Chinese.’”¹⁹ Such negative remarks, quite common in the embassy diary and report, were evidently meant to affirm the cultural superiority of the Sinitic lifestyle and to reinforce the self-respect and confidence of the native Song dynasty at the expense of the Khitans and Jurchens and their states. The sovereign of the Liao and Jin was simply called the “caitiff master” (*lu zhu*) and the imperial house was depreciated as the “caitiff court” (*lu ting*) inside Song proper (see Franke 1983; Wright 1998, 2005).

The rhetoric of the hearts of beasts continued to survive under the Ming, the last native dynasty in imperial China. In Ming times, derogatory terms such as “dog-caitiff” (*quan lu*) and “barbarian caitiff” (*hu lu*) were frequently used to designate the Mongols. Likewise, some Ming officials explicitly referred to ethnic governance in the frontiers and related foreign policy as the taming of wild animals. A reform-minded statesman Zhang Juzheng (1525-1582), for instance, once stated: “Just like dogs, if they wag their tails, bones will be thrown to them; if they bark wildly, they will be beaten with sticks;

¹⁸ The passages appear in the *Lu ting shishi* (Veritable facts from the caitiff’s court). As rendered by Franke (1975: 181, 1981a: 228). In fact, the Jurchen government officially abandoned levirate for wives of deceased brothers in 1169, but only for Han Chinese.

¹⁹ Li Wei’s memoir is available in Franke (1983: 123). His prejudice was derived without paying due attention to the social conditions of pastoral nomads such as the Xiongnu and Khitan who were more mobile and less easily controlled than a sedentary population. Lu Zhen (957-1014), who travelled to Liao in 1009, also pointed out the cruelty of the Khitan state the following: “The caitiff government is very harsh. The land tax designated for mulberry tree is several times that of the Song. ... In tax collection and in conscription, [the Khitan government] is more pressing than plunders and robbers” (translation in Wright 1998: 33). In addition, Cheng Zhuo (1153-1223), a Southern Song official who served as envoy to Jin in 1211 to 1212, recorded what he was told by the local commoner of the Jin the following: “The officials here are all alike in their disregard. Those who must render labor service have to supply themselves all expenditures for the food of the workers and the materials such as the bamboo and wood which they need. Our sons and grandsons therefore don’t continue the family business. The love for the people under our Southern Court [Song] was quite different!” As rendered by Franke (1981b: 189).

after the beating, if they submit again, bones will be thrown to them again; after the bones, if they bark again, then more beating” (translation in Yang 1968:31). It seems therefore that merciless suppression would be a viable solution for dealing with the resistance of frontier ethnicities to Ming authority. In 1528, in spite of his humanistic vision and congenial attitude toward the frontier indigenes, it was Wang Yangming (1472-1529), one of the most prominent Confucian scholars in late imperial China, who was in charge of a bloody campaign against the “Yao” bandits (*Yao zei*) in central Guangxi by decapitating some 3000 participants (Shin 2006b).²⁰ Yet, in practice, such military action was not what the imperial government usually pursued including Wang Yangming himself. He not only made an unusual effort to conciliate the native chiefs in western Guangxi, but applauded the inherent honesty and simplicity of aboriginals, compared with the wickedness and insincerity of some Chinese people.²¹ Rather, the Ming court generally strove to persuade, negotiate, and even cajole its non-Han subjects by conferring better treatments on them than on native Han Chinese. In his memorial to the emperor, a renowned statesman, Li Xian (1408-1467),²² described the preferential policy toward ethnic Mongol officers in the following:

We have heard that the way of the emperors and rulers consists in treating the black-haired people [Chinese] as [the emperor’s] newly born babies (*chizi*), and the Yi-Di [barbarians] as animals: the black-haired people must be loved as newly born babies and the Yi-Di must be rejected as animals. ... The Tartar [Mongol] officers enjoy their salaries in idleness and in complete relaxation. Alas! Food is taken from the babies to feed animals, and the newly born babies die of starvation while animals are full and satisfied. Needless expenses are being made without anybody feeling a regret. What is even worse: those Yi-Di barbarians have human faces but beastly hearts: they are greedy and out for profit, but totally unreliable in their allegiance. Those who come to surrender do not submit from their hearts’ desire, but they are bent on profiting from the Middle Kingdom.²³

²⁰ The “Yao bandit” here does not implicate a specific ethnicity tantamount to the present-day Yao minority. Contrary to the imperial subjects (*min*), the Yao people were generally known by this time as the indigenes who inhabited the hill areas in the south and did not pay taxes. Later, as a result of the military campaigns in the mid-Ming (ca. 1450s-1570s), the Yao constituted an ethnic category with tax and territorial implications. See Faure (2006) for the detailed discussion of the Yao wars and the aftermath.

²¹ In addition, when he had several posts in the southwest that brought him into contact with indigenous peoples, Wang Yangming established community schools for the purpose of disseminating the Confucian culture to transform the uncultured, as a way of fulfilling the chief doctrine of Mencius. See Hauf (1999) and Shin (2006b), for Wang’s general attitude toward the native population revealed both in his philosophical writings and his careers in the frontier.

²² A concise biography of Li Xian was rendered by Tilemann Grimm in Goodrich and Fang (1976: 819-822).

²³ *Ming Yingzhong shilu* (Veritable records of Ming Emperor Zhengtong) Chapter 25, pp. 509-512.

Here, he repeated the idiom of ‘human faces but beastly hearts,’ spurred by his fear of surrender with yet still unreliable Mongol forces concentrated in Beijing.²⁴

Ephemeral Process of ‘Othering’

From ancient times, the Chinese attitudes toward ethno-cultural strangers have often been one of contempt, sometimes tinged with fear. While the Chinese disparaged alien peoples, it should be emphasized, as the sinologist Herrlee Creel claims, that they “have been singularly hospitable both to individuals and to groups that have adopted Chinese culture. And at times they seem to have had a certain admiration, perhaps unwilling, for the rude force of these peoples of simpler customs” (1970: 60). He further remarks:

The fundamental criterion of “Chinese-ness,” anciently and throughout history, has been cultural. The Chinese have had a particular way of life, a particular complex of usages, sometimes characterized as *li*.²⁵ Groups that conformed to this way of life were, generally speaking, considered Chinese. Those that turned away from it were considered to cease to be Chinese. ... [W]e almost never find any reference in the early literature to physical differences between Chinese and barbarians. Insofar as we can tell, the distinction was purely cultural (Creel 1970: 197).²⁶

So, in China, ethnicity has both been a transient and residual category, notwithstanding the few accounts of warped monsters, one-eyed people, and three-header barbarians in the texts of mythology notably *Shan hai jing* (Collection of the mountains and seas), compiled around the third century B.C. More permanent and more highly valued had been the attribute of cultural superiority based on a common literary language, generally accepted beliefs about morals, history, and other shared customs. The conception of a Chinese state designated as the Middle Kingdom indicates the political center in which those venerable cultural traits are enshrined and disseminated to the peripheries. Further,

²⁴ Li Xian estimated that those Mongols receiving stipends in Beijing, numbering about ten thousand, made up a third of the city population in the 1430s (which must have numbered about thirty thousand individuals as heads of household). Fearful of them as a real threat, hence, he proposed that imperial orders should be issued to the Ministry of the Army to scatter the Mongol officers gradually over the various garrisons of the empire so that their power will be broken up. The emperor approved his proposal.

²⁵ The word *li* has been used in many ways. Generally speaking, it means propriety, courtesy, ritual, or rite.

²⁶ For similar statements, see Lattimore (1962: 54-58), Boodberg (1979: 7), Wang (1991: 145-164), and Honey (1992: 8).

‘China’ (*zhonghua*), as the center of Hua peoples, has been purely cultural and even went beyond ethnic differences.

To summarize then, we discuss the conceptualization of ethnicity in China as having demarcated the boundary between ‘us’ and ‘them’ yet, in effect, it has only been an ephemeral process of ‘othering.’ Sinocentric prejudice against unfamiliar aliens was sometimes intense through rhetorically relegating them as having the hearts of birds and beasts. Yet this binary distinction between Hua and Yi was far from fixed, essentially analogous to that of modern racism, but fluid and fluctuated. It is possible within the ladder of Confucian cultural hierarchy that the former Yi can achieve Hua through literary transformation as happened to the Koreans, and the other way around as happened to some immigrant Han who acculturated to indigenous customs.

Further, as discussed presently, Sinocentric prejudice shown in the language of official documents has *not* created any robust state policies of institutionalized discrimination and genocidal violence against non-Sinitic groups. In fact, it has been quite the opposite considering that the state-building process was modeled on the universalistic notion of the Chinese state. In particular, it was under the conquest dynasties that state-imposed ethnic categories facilitated durable inequality in which the minority ethnicities not only intentionally separated from the conquered, but maintained their privileged social position over the Han majority.

Prejudice without Discrimination

The Chinese state typically manipulates ethnicity to recognize difference, but not to enforce discrimination. To elucidate this point, it is necessary to discuss how the state plays two principles of ethnicity—territoriality and personality—and the interaction between them as the foundation of its policies. I briefly introduce the origin and basic element of the two principles respectively.

First, the notion of spatial dimension of us-them boundary went back to early China. As the Sinitic cultural-political domain expanded, there simultaneously occurred in-group homogenization as Hua and out-group differentiation as Yi. These two intertwined processes consequently produced the sense of territorial demarcation between Sinitic people in the Sinic center and non-Sinitic groups in the four corners of the world as early as the fifth century B.C. This abstract ethno-geographical concept had long been a primary principle for regulating the relationships between the center and the periphery in two dimensions: the Middle Kingdom and its neighboring polities, and the Chinese heartland and the border region.

Due to the limit of imperial government, the Chinese empire allowed specific territorial jurisdictions for native inhabitants in the frontiers based on the conceived center-periphery boundaries. The policy of indirect rule was rooted in the paternalistic principle of governance in which the center should demonstrate its benevolence towards the peripheries in order to get hold of its suzerainty. In theory, it symbolized the generosity of the Son of Heaven. But the Chinese empire had more practical reasons for carrying out this conciliatory policy (*huairou zhengce*) toward local chieftains at the margins of empire and in foreign countries. In practice, it functioned as a pragmatic way of ‘pacifying’ the frontiers.

It was particularly the native dynasties that pursued the appeasement policies in various manners. In the Han and Tang times, it was the ‘marriage alliances’ (*heqin*) which saw the sending off of Chinese princesses to the leaders of alien polities, as well as material transfer to them (see Chapter 5). Under the Song, it was the annual monetary payments (*suibi*) to the Khitans and Jurchens, which raised a serious and chronic fiscal burden.²⁷

²⁷ The amount of the payments was evidently one of major controversies between Song and its northern rivalries. In the Shanyuan treaty of 1005, the amounts of annual payments to the Liao were set at 100,000 taels (*liang*) of silver and 200,000 bolts of silk in the name of assisting with Khitan military expenditures. In 1042, the yearly payments were increased to 200,000 taels of silver and 300,000 bolts of silk. In 1123 treaty between Northern Song and Jurchen Jin, both parties agreed upon the same amount as the Song formerly paid to the Liao; however, it lasted only for a short period. A more endurable peace came only after the 1141 treaty between Southern Song and Jin when the annual payments, labeled “tribute” (*gong*), were fixed at 300,000 taels of silver and 300,000 bolts of silk. In the treaty of 1164-1165, the payments were reduced from 300,000 to 250,000 for both silver and silk and the term “tribute” was eliminated by restoring previous term “payments” (*bi*). In 1208, however, the annual payments were increased to 300,000

During the Ming, fearful of the intimidating forces of steppe nomads, the court made a concession by permitting a border trade called the horse fairs (*mashi*) in Mongol horses and Chinese silk and grains, the suspension of which predictably caused persistent raids on the northern border areas. The horse fairs evidently caused a financial burden for the Ming state (see Rossabi 1998) since the government policy was, in principle, to buy all the horses the Mongols offered for sale despite often complaining about the low quality of those horses.²⁸ From the Ming government's standpoint, "trade would in no way profit China, and that China needed nothing from the Mongols; if trade was permitted it was only out of magnanimous feelings to keep the Mongols supplied with some commodities" (Serruys 1975a: 34). In summary, the conciliatory policies were a typical imperial strategy of purchasing peace at the cost of Chinese wealth and resources, justified by the concept of *huairou* in the diplomatic rhetoric. Indeed, these kinds of imperial statecraft were not uncommon in the history of continental, non-colonial empires; for instance, the Byzantine response to the Pechenegs, nomads who dwelt beyond the Danube in the mid-eleventh century.²⁹

Second, the personality principle of ethnicity, transcending the tie between ethnicity and territoriality, evolved no later than the fourth century A.D., when the non-Han ethnicities first became the rulers of North China. As the conquerors left their homeland and were widely dispersed in China proper, the identity of the ruling minority became defined either by the person's kin-group and tribal origins reflected in their surname or by registered membership in the privileged military organization. Native Chinese dynasties

again as a result of the unsuccessful revanchist war against the Jin. See Franke (1970) and Wright (2005) for the discussion of the history of Song-Liao and Song-Jin diplomacy with English translation of key official documents.

²⁸ The horse fairs always remained not a commercial enterprise but an entirely political scheme for containing the outbreak of major conflict. The budgets for procuring foreign horses were financed partly with funds granted by the Ministries of the Army and Revenue; partly with local taxes and local resources. The amounts of the Ming government expenditure were carefully analyzed in Serruys (1975b: 255-268). Under such circumstance, there were always some officials who criticized the border trade as a poor foreign policy and a sign of weakness; however, those hardliners seem to have always been a minority (Serruys 1975a: 54).

²⁹ From the perspective of the Byzantine court, as Paul Stephenson (2000: 318) points out, "the most effective method for neutralizing the threat of nomad raids to the north-eastern Balkans was to offer them opportunities to acquire through peaceful trading what they would otherwise have sought to seize by raiding."

such as the Tang and Ming also provided non-Han individuals with preferential treatments and legal autonomy relative to the regular subjects.

The basic premise behind this principle is that the Chinese state registered the identity of non-Han individuals even when they were outside their places of origin, *terre natale*. This policy not only protected the minorities in certain situations such as invoking their own native legal codes, but permitted them to receive better treatments than the Han Chinese. It was evident, for instance, that the Ming court granted preferential treatments to its Mongol subjects (see Chapter 3). As revealed in his memorial above, Li Xian metaphorically described the long-term consequence of such policies: food is taken from the civilians to feed the Mongol subjects. The civilians die of starvation; the Mongols are full and satisfied. As Serruys (1966: 395) remarks, many Ming officials like Li Xian became alarmed at “what many a Chinese considered unwarranted privileges enjoyed by the Mongols not available to themselves!” It was obviously the fulfillment of the conciliatory policy beyond spatial boundaries.

The non-Han ruling houses also demarcated ethnic cleavages by creating separate administrative system for the individuals of their own kind and collaborators so as to retain their privileged status over the majority. All of the four major conquest dynasties maintained a special socio-military machine, composed mainly of reliable tribesmen: under the Liao dynasty the “horde” (*ordu*); under the Jin the “Meng’an Mouke”; under the Yuan the Mongol troops; and under the Qing the “Eight Banners” (Han Chinese: *baqi*, Manchu: *jakûn gûsa*) (Wiffogel 1957: 353). The privileges belonged to the members officially registered in these elite groups; yet when the conquest regime collapsed, attempt at maintaining a distance between the two ethno-social groups lost its purpose. Those members of the former ruling ethnicity who did not choose to return to their homelands were reclassified normally as Han Chinese: an elite group in one dynasty could be plebeians in another (see Chapter 3). As a result of this mutability of state-created population categories, inequalities between the privileged minority and the conquered majority generated by these categories were not durable. This process of state-imposed ethnic classification and its demise appears to have been a common pattern of

increasing the population of the Han people throughout Chinese history; the legacy of which has ended up by far in the largest official nationality in the world, over 1 billion Han Chinese.

The ethnic policies based on the two principles of ethnicity tell us that it had always been the minority which substantially received both protection and privilege. I also want to point out that we can still see the heritage of these two principles in the ethnic policies of the PRC—the establishment of the Autonomous Regions and the individual-level enumeration of fifty-five non-Han nationalities in the censuses. As before, the motive for continuing such ethnic differentiation has not been so much to impose discrimination against ethnic minorities as to privilege and protect them.

The following sections are divided into three parts in order to historicize China's state-building process regarding ethnic boundary-making. First, I trace the formation of the dichotomy between Sinitic and non-Sinitic groups and its impact on the consolidation of ethno-territorial boundaries in early China. In this context, I also discuss how they fundamentally shaped the center-periphery relations in imperial China throughout history. Second, I would document my claim that while the later conquest dynasties created and enforced a more rigid and hierarchical ethnic society, they used ethnicity not to discriminate against natives but to define and protect the political rights and privileges of the conquest elite. Finally, I will identify and trace the historical antecedents of many contemporary ethnic policies and boundaries and then differentiate what current policies and practices are new.

Center and Periphery in State Formation

The Construction of We-group Identity in Early China

The notion of Hua Xia first appeared during the Western Zhou period (11th century-771 B.C.).³⁰ This early self-designation of the ‘Chinese nation’ symbolized the common identity among loosely-coupled political confederacy called the Central States (*zhongguo*) under the suzerainty of the Zhou royal house. These Central States had diverse cultural origins and gradually expanded over the course of the eight centuries of the Zhou period. By the eighth century B.C., the political dominance of the Zhou ruler as Heavenly King (*tianwang*) to his feudal nobilities had waned.³¹ However, the vassal states of the Zhou, at least in principle, respected the principle of ‘honoring the [Zhou] king and repelling the [non-Zhou] Yi peoples’ (*zunwang rangyi*) during the Spring and Autumn period.³² The Central States, which defended the Zhou federation from alien groups, also identified themselves as “Hua” and “All-the Xia” (*zhu xia*) feared by penetration of non-Sinitic elements. As shown in the *Zuozhuan*, for instance, when Confucius and his master were faced with a threat by the Lai, who were longtime natives of the Shandong Peninsula, Confucius boldly said: “Those distant people have nothing to do with our great land [Xia]; those Yi tribes must not be permitted to create disorder among our flowery states [Hua].”³³ Hence, while constructing their self-identity defined as Hua Xia, ancient Chinese no later than the age of Confucius simultaneously developed

³⁰ For a detailed discussion of the Western Zhou origin of the concept of Hua Xia, see Creel (1970: 196), Ho Ping-ti (1975), Hsu and Linduff (1988), and Bai Cuiqin (1995: 60).

³¹ In ancient classics like the *Spring and Autumn Annals* (*Chunqiu*), the Zhou king was called “Heavenly King” in his relation to the leaders of the Zhou states as their ruler. He was also styled “Heaven’s Son” (*tianzi*) as Heaven’s vice-gerent (Legge 1872: 6). Like the idea of Hua Xia, the ideology of the Mandate of Heaven (*tianming*) exclusively granted to the Heavenly King is thought to have originated in the Western Zhou period. See Hsu and Linduff (1988: 68-111) and Kominami (2005) on the formation of the notion of the Mandate of Heaven in the early Zhou period.

³² There are two most important princes, Duke Huan of Qi (r. 685-643 B.C.) and Duke Wen of Jin (r. 636-628 B.C.), who restored the authority of the Son of Heaven against a serious military threat from the non-Sinitic peoples. Duke Huan, with the help of his advisor Guan Zhong (ca. 730-645 B.C.), brought order to the Hua Xia world and halted the expansion of the non-Sinitic peoples, both the Rong and Di in the north and the newly emerging Chu in the south. Likewise, Duke Wen not only settled succession disputes in the Zhou royal house but defeated the state of Chu at the battle of Chengpu in 632 B.C. They all held the Hegemon (*ba*) status which was in principle supposed to protect the Hua Xia states in the Central Plains against the enemies, ordinarily Chu (Schaberg 2001: 139-142). It is however important to recognize that the states of Qi and Jin were indeed ethnically and culturally mixed entities by absorbing numerous non-Zhou peoples. See Hsu Cho-yun (1999) for more discussion of political leadership within interstate system during the Spring and Autumn period.

³³ *Zuozhuan*, the Tenth Year of Duke Ding (500 B.C.); Legge (1872: 776). The Lai people were part of various Yi groups so that they were also called the “Lai Yi” and “Yi Lai.” As Hsu Cho-yun (1999: 549) suggests, the Lai polity seems to have been loosely affiliated tribes. See also Chen Pan (1969: 388-393) for comprehensive documentation on the history of the Lai. Although they were conquered by the state of Qi in 567 B.C., Confucius still considered the Lai people as Yi, not part of Hua Xia.

a sense of being alien represented as Yi and made a clear cultural demarcation between Hua and Yi.

The notion of Yi, which is conventionally translated as “barbarians” in English, originally designated the numerous non-Zhou groups of the east (the Eastern Yi) and the south (the Southern Yi), who inhabited southwestern Shandong and the area further south to the Huai River valley since the Western Zhou period.³⁴ Later, it became a generic word for non-Zhou polities, as the statelets founded by the Yi groups were gradually integrated into the Zhou cultural sphere. The amalgamation of the Yi into the Hua Xia nation was well documented in early Chinese historiography in which rulers of Yi polities were repeatedly mentioned among the participants of the interstate meetings for reconfiguring the order of the Central States. If the motivation of Yi statelets’ leaders in joining the Zhou federation was to secure the political survival of their polities, this policy did not meet with any durable success. The Yi polities were increasingly merged not only by the Zhou-affiliated states in the Central Plains like the states of Qi, Lu, and Song but also by the state of Chu, the strongest state in the Yangtze River basin that gradually made a northward expansion to the Huai River. By the end of the Spring and Autumn period, the Yi statelets that partly constituted “the twelve lords on the Si River” (*Si shang shier zhuhou*) were either absorbed or controlled by the major states of the area (see Falkenhausen 2006: 252-254; Li 1985: ch.9).

Furthermore, once incorporated into the Zhou feudal network, people who were offspring of the former Yi polities asserted their Hua Xia identity and looked down upon alien groups in much the same way their predecessors were looked down upon. An intriguing example is the thought of Mencius (ca. 382-300 B.C.) who was born in the state of Zou, also known as Zhu and Zhulou. He was proud of his place of origin because, in spite of its tiny size, the Zou was nearly all surrounded by the state of Lu, the birthplace of Confucius and one of the major cultural centers. In contrast to his assertion though, this geographical contiguity cannot be directly associated with cultural similarity. Prior to

³⁴ The Ancient Chinese also used the term “Nine Yi” (*jiuyi*) to signify the multiplicity of the Yi tribes. On the origins and complex composition of the Yi peoples, see Chen Pan (1969: 167-170) and Ho Ping-ti (1975: 346).

being entirely assimilated into the Zhou cultural realm, the Zou was in fact one of the lesser states of the Eastern Yi in present-day southwest Shandong and was depicted as the “Man-Yi,” a derogatory term for Eastern Yi polities in this region.³⁵ It is evident that its Eastern Yi origin was at times recalled in the political scene of the Spring and Autumn period. For instance, in 639 B.C., the nobility of Lu spoke to the prince of Xuju, who came as an exile due to Zou aggression, as follows: “It is the Zhou rule to honor the bright sacrifices, and to protect the little and the few; and it is misery to Zhou, when the Man-Yi [refers to Zou] disturb the Xia, the land of China.”³⁶ Likewise, in 529 B.C., Zou together with Ju, who also had Eastern Yi origin, filed a complaint at the court of Jin against their neighbor Lu; subsequently, Lu responded that Jin should not trust such accusation by the “Man-Yi.”³⁷ In spite of such negative attitudes towards the Zou people in the past, there was no barrier for Mencius to become one of the most influential Confucian sages. It is indeed Mencius himself who was so confident of the cultural superiority of Hua Xia over Yi in the following: “I have heard of men using [the ways of our] Xia to change the Yi peoples, but I have not yet heard of any being changed by Yi.”³⁸ So the person’s ethnic origin was practically irrelevant to his qualification as a member of the Hua Xia group.

As shown in the case of Mencius, the fundamental criterion for defining membership in the Sinitic world was, as Ho Ping-ti notes, “the awareness of a common cultural heritage rather than of true racial or ethnic affinity for in all likelihood the majority of the ancient peoples in North China took their ethnic affinity for granted” (1975: 344). The Hua Xia order did not exclude anyone who came into contact with it and aspired to join it.³⁹ Further, solidarity within the Chinese population and the Hua Xia tolerance of aliens were the main supports behind the longevity of Chinese civilization which has lasted for

³⁵ On the history of the Zou and its Eastern Yi origins, see Chen Pan (1969: 131-135, 169).

³⁶ *Zuozhuan*, the Twentieth-first Year of Duke Xi (639 B.C.); Legge (1872: 180).

³⁷ *Zuozhuan*, the Thirteenth Year of Duke Zhao (529 B.C.); Legge (1872: 651-652).

³⁸ *Mencius* III (1), 4; Legge (1875: 210). Mencius further referred to Chen Liang who was a native of Chu in the south. Chen Liang was pleased with the doctrines of Confucius so that he came north to the Central States and learned them. Subsequently, there were perhaps none who excelled him among the learners of the northern regions.

³⁹ This universalistic notion of the Hua Xia identity owed much not only to the concept of the Mandate of Heaven but to the rationalism that was derived therefrom (Hsu and Linduff 1988: 384).

three thousand years since the Western Zhou period while constantly incorporating non-Sinitic peoples into it. Not surprisingly, Mencius himself said, “Shun [who was one of mythological sage-rulers] was a man of the Eastern Yi; King Wen [of Zhou] was a man of the Western Yi. Those regions were distant from each other. ... But when they got their wish and carried out their principles throughout the Middle Kingdom (*zhongguo*), it was like uniting the two halves of a seal.”⁴⁰ Nearly two thousand years later, the Yongzheng emperor of the Qing referred to this passage in the *Mencius* to legitimate the Manchu domination of China as follows: “Although our dynasty was originated from Manchuria, the Manchus [whose ancestors were regarded as Eastern Yi] are still the natives (*jiguan*) of the Middle Kingdom.”⁴¹

Given this open-ended membership of the Hua Xia identity, there had been no such exclusive boundary between ‘us’ and ‘them’ as the case was between the Hellenes and the Barbarians. Indeed, not a single Chinese character analogous to the European “barbarian” ever existed (Creel 1970: 197; Di Cosmo 2002: 7). Yet this is not to deny that the Hua Xia Chinese established the sense of ‘otherness’ towards peoples living outside the Central States and represented those alien subjects as bellicose, uncultured, inferior, and dangerous. As discussed, the genealogy of Sinocentric prejudice has a long history, dating to the formative period of the Hua Xia community. The Hua Xia peoples coined a list of alien groups such as the Yi, Man,⁴² Rong,⁴³ Di⁴⁴ (Hsu 1999: 548-550).⁴⁵

⁴⁰ *Mencius* IV (2), 1; Legge (1875: 253). As Ho Ping-ti (1975: 344) argues, in fact, this famous saying of Mencius is so iconoclastic that for ages it has baffled Chinese classical commentators and also a modern Western translator who have been preoccupied with the longtime interpretation emphasizing a sharp dichotomy between Hua and Yi.

⁴¹ The passage appears in the Great Righteousness Resolving Confusion (*Dayi juemi lu*). See Crossley (1999: 260-261) and Liu (2004: 81-88) for more discussion of Yongzheng’s opinion on Mencius’ characterization of Shun and King Wen.

⁴² The category of Man appears to have been a generic term to refer to southern peoples. In general, the non-Sinitic peoples inhabited the central and lower Yangtze were collectively referred to as the Man or Jingman. The state of Chu has been considered as a Man polity before it was fully accepted as a member of the Zhou feudal network. Yet the culture and philosophical ideas of Chu still showed so many differences vis-à-vis those of the north (Creel 1970: 217-227). For instance, there has been a tendency to ascribe some significant role in the origin of Taoist thought to the state of Chu. Mencius once complained the dissemination of the philosophy of Chu into the Central States the following: “Now here is this shrike-tongued Southern Man, whose doctrines are not those of the sage-kings of antiquity” (*Mencius* III (1), 4; Legge (1875: 211).

⁴³ The term “Rong” appears to indicate more than a single people and is considered not as an ethnonym but as a generic word for depicting warlike or bellicose peoples since it has the lance (*ge*) radical (Di Cosmo 2002: 108). The Rong had been a formidable enemy of the Zhou confederacy. The Dog Rong (*quanrong*),

These four names were then reduced to an abbreviation, the “Four Yi” (*siyi*). The ancient Chinese also came to use a binom combined from those terms for people who inhabited the reverse side of morality and virtue: Man-Yi, Yi-Di, Rong-Di, and Man-Rong. It is, however, important to mention that all those terms had lost any residual ethnic significance and were merely meant to depict the general notion of foreignness that was used to admonish a behavior not consonant with normally accepted norms. Not confined to the non-Sinitic polities, this moral category had also been applied to states normally regarded as part of the Central States. Any polity could be branded Man-Yi or Rong-Di regardless of whether it was in fact a member of the Hua Xia nation. Under such circumstances, ethnic differences were noted rarely; and even if they were, these were meant to underscore a moral difference and were not in themselves sufficient cause for the exclusion of a people or a state from being constituents of the Hua Xia confederacy (Di Cosmo 2002: 102).

It is also important to remark that the ancient Chinese states *never* formed any social and political institution comparable with citizenship in the Greek city-states and the Roman Republic which served to disenfranchise and rule out part of their subjects. Instead of the idea of citizenship, what originally predominated was the patriarchal clan system (*zongfa*) that stratified peoples by their kinship affiliation (Hsu and Linduff 1988: 147-185). Given

one of the Rong branches, for instance, invaded the capital of the Western Zhou and killed King You (r. 781-771 B.C.), the last sovereign of the Western Zhou dynasty. Being unable to create larger unions, however, the Rong communities seem to have been organized into relatively small tribal or territorial units. In general, the Rong peoples were distributed in present-day northern Shanxi and northern Shaanxi, and Hebei.

⁴⁴ The original meaning of the Di was ‘distant.’ Like the Rong, in ancient Chinese literatures, the Di had been used to designate foreign groups hostile to the Zhou-type states. By the late seventh century B.C., the Di peoples were divided into at least two major groupings, the Red Di (*chidi*) and White Di (*baidi*). Those Di groups were frequently mentioned as invaders in Shanxi, Hebei, Shandong, and Henan. Meanwhile, some of the Di polities like the state of Zhongshan formed small political enclaves within China proper and had been fully integrated into the Sinitic cultural domain. The discussion of the ethnic characteristics of the Di has been far from conclusive. Many scholars believe that the Di peoples were generally proto-Turkic nomads. Ma Changshou (1962a), for instance, hypothesized a historical linkage between Di and Xiongnu. But, as Falkenhausen claims (2006: 258), it should be realized that the Di had never been tent-dwelling steppe nomads, but were descended from mountain-dwellers who had been settled for several millennia.

⁴⁵ See Creel (1970), Barfield (1981), Pulleyblank (1983), and Di Cosmo (1994, 2002) for further discussions of various non-Sinitic groups and their relationships with the Hua Xia in prehistoric and early historic times. From an archaeological perspective, besides, Falkenhausen (2006: 164-288) discusses the origin and development of the notion of ethnic distinctions during the Zhou times by investigating up-to-date archaeological findings.

the political instability throughout the Eastern Zhou period (770-221 B.C.), however, the emphasis on the person's birth gave way to an emphasis on the importance of the individual's personal talent while loosening the tight familial bonds among members of society. The trends, in both upward and downward social mobility, became irreversible no later than the age of Confucius and, consequently, the number of people who rose from obscure social and ethnic background greatly increased while the class of hereditary nobles began to disappear (see Hsu 1965). Such social condition surely led many talented people of non-Sinitic origins to climb up the ladder of success, resembling to some degree the admission of elite barbarians into the Roman military elite which became an established fact in the third century and only increased thereafter. As Mencius himself has proven, the salience of a person's ethnic background became completely muted as long as s/he strove to uphold the Hua Xia identity.

The universalist principle of the Hua Xia identity further consolidated itself when the eclipse of the center (the Zhou capital at Luoyang called "Chengzhou") and the advance of the periphery became unstoppable. Most importantly, it is the state of Qin at the western frontiers of the Zhou cultural domain that would eventually conquer all of the Central States and establish the first unified empire in 221 B.C. As numerous archaeological and textual evidences indicate, however, it was non-Sinitic in origin, probably the offspring of the Rong groups (see Falkenhausen 2006: 204-243). Besides, this state remained rather isolated and is said to have followed non-Sinitic customs down to a rather late date (Creel 1970: 216). As shown in the *Shiji*, by the reign of Duke Xiao (361-338 B.C.), Qin was situated in the secluded region and "did not participate in covenants with the feudal lords of the Central States, who regarded Qin as an unrefined Yi-Di people."⁴⁶ While we cannot exclude the possibility that the Qin core group was of non-Zhou origin, recent archaeological findings illustrate that Qin society as a whole was increasingly integrated into the Zhou social framework throughout the Eastern Zhou period (Falkenhausen 2006: 204-243). Once the full integration of Qin as part of Hua Xia was reached, the Qin dynasty not only standardized what has been represented as Chinese culture but became a political symbol of the Sinitic world to outsiders from whose name

⁴⁶ *Shiji* Chapter 5, in Nienhauser 1994: 108.

the English “China” itself was derived. In sum, the empire-building process of Qin reflects the transient nature of conceptual boundary between Hua and Yi since it is a peripheral polity, once despised by Sinitic peoples and considered as uncultured, that ultimately became the embodiment of the Chinese cultural mainstream. What is more, this peripheral origin of Chinese polities has fundamentally shaped the Chinese perspective toward the frontier and the peoples living there.

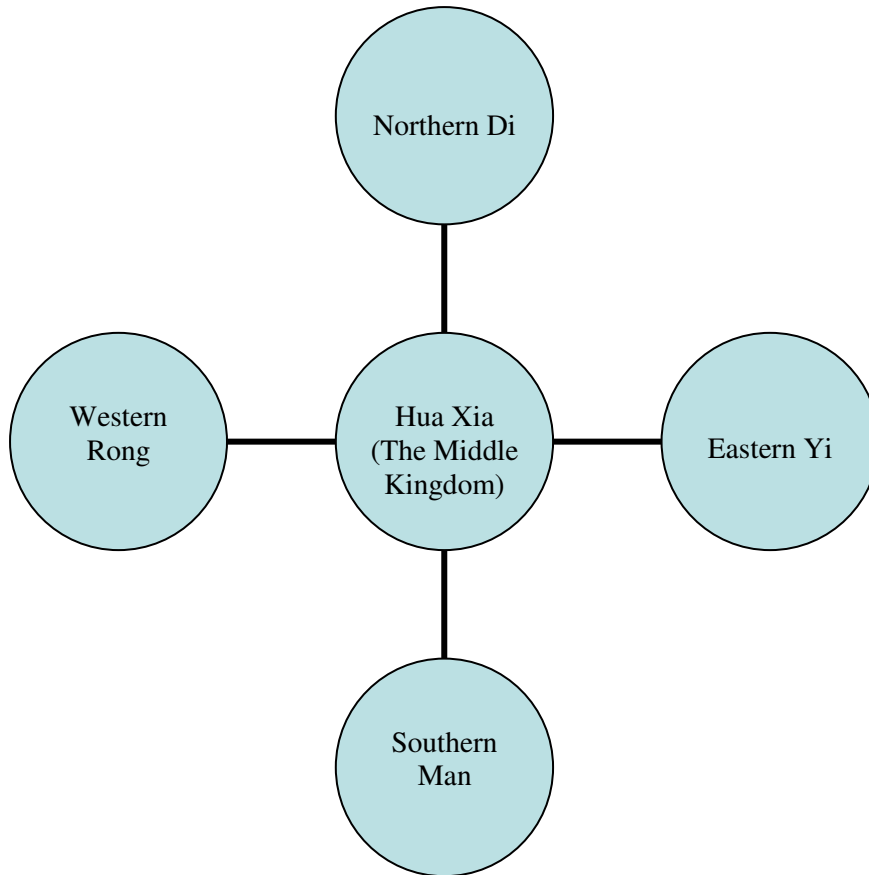
Making Ethno-Territorial Boundaries

In accordance with the internal homogenization of the Hua Xia identity, the Chinese had constructed the abstract concept of spatial boundary between Hua and Yi by the early phase of the Warring States period (475-221 B.C.). As illustrated in Figure 4.1, the Hua Xia was placed at the center; exogenous groups collectively called the “Four Yi” were relegated to the four quarters of the world. This Sinocentric world model first appeared in the *Liji* (Book of Rites), compiled in the early fourth century B.C., which reads: “The [chiefs] among the Eastern Yi (*dongyi*), the Northern Di (*beidi*), the Western Rong (*xirong*), and the Southern Man (*nanman*), however great [their territories], are called ‘viscounts’ (*zi*).”⁴⁷ This ideational landscape of the “Four Yi” was influential in imperial times (see Cartier 1981), but it never neatly corresponded to the geopolitical reality of the Middle Kingdom in part because of the frequent migration and resettlement of non-Sinitic populations (see, e.g., Chen 1969: 512; Lee 1978).⁴⁸ The referent “Four Yi” was also constantly changing, as the frontier of the Hua Xia civilization expanded by incorporating the former non-Sinitic peoples. Once the Eastern Yi polities in the Huai River were integrated into China proper, for instance, the “Eastern Yi” was referred to the various Tungus tribes in Manchuria and ancient Korean polities. Hence, this ethno-geographical model “is not primarily a description of facts but a representation, of the Chinese constructing ‘China’” (Fiskesjö 1999: 141).

⁴⁷ *Liji* Chapter Quli (Summary of the rules of propriety): part 2; Legge (1967[1885]: 111).

⁴⁸ The seven-volume work of Chen Pan (1969), especially the sixth volume, is one of the finest discussions about the ethnogeography of ancient times with special reference to how various non-Sinitic peoples settled, migrated, and interacted with the Chinese states until pre-Qin period.

Figure 4.1 The traditional Chinese image of the world



However, the representation of Yi originally signifying an un-Chinese identity had not been essentialized as uncivilized ‘Others.’ Interestingly, it was not necessarily associated with alien peoples but was, in fact, sometimes used to designate the native Chinese polities considered as ‘barbarous’ by non-Han conquerors. It is evident that nomadic conquerors in north China during the fifth and sixth centuries looked down upon native Chinese in the south as “Dao Yi” (isolated Yi islanders).⁴⁹ Likewise, as Tao Jing-shen (1976:105) points out, the Jurchen conquerors in North China despised the native Southern Song Chinese as “Dao Yi” and “Huai Yi” (‘uncultured’ Yi on the Huai River; the usage of which can be traced back to as early as the Western Zhou period).

⁴⁹ The usage of “Dao Yi” as a pejorative expression toward native Chinese emperors and statesmen of Southern Dynasties appears in the title of their biography in the *Weishu*, the canonical history of the Northern and Eastern Wei dynasties (386-550), compiled by Wei Shou (506-572). For instance, Emperor Wu of the Liang dynasty (r. 502-549) was simply called by his personal name with the expression of Dao Yi, namely Dao Yi Xiao Yan.

Throughout the Yuan dynasty, those native Chinese were also collectively depreciated as “Man-zi”, alluding to the ‘barbarous’ Southerners who were severely discriminated against by the Mongol conquerors. Such usages evidently reveal that the notion of Yi had not been used exclusively by native Chinese. The appropriation of this concept by non-Han peoples also blurred the group boundary between Hua and Yi, and eventually no longer functioned as an ethnic demarcation.

While the boundary of Hua and Yi became increasingly blurred, by and large, the notion of ethnicity was associated with the principle of territoriality. In this regard, conceived ethnic differences had been a major consideration of state policies towards the frontiers and beyond. The Chinese concept of territoriality (called “*jifu*”) denotes concentric liminal zones, layering from the center where the Son of Heaven resides to the land of wilderness occupied by uncultured and wild peoples. In his conduct, in principle, the ruler of the Middle Kingdom should start with what is near in order to reach the far-away. This ideal model of the center-periphery relationship is well-reflected in such ancient classics as the *Shu jing* (Book of Documents) where it reads:

Up to five hundred *li* from the capital was the Domain of the Sovereign. ... The next five hundred *li* constituted the Domain of the Nobles. ... The next five hundred *li* formed the Peace-securing Domain. ... The next five hundred *li* constituted the Domain of Restraint. The first three hundred *li* were occupied by the Yi people. The next two hundred *li* were occupied by criminals undergoing the lesser banishment. The next five hundred *li* formed the Wild Domain (*huangfu*). The first three hundred *li* were occupied by the Man people. The next two hundred *li* were occupied by criminals undergoing the greater banishment.⁵⁰

With these multilayered boundaries, the term “Four Yi” became a conventional idiom used to designate all foreign polities that were in theory required to pay tributes to the Son of Heaven in the Middle Kingdom. This unequal relationship between center and periphery was further conceptually specified in the forms of tribute system (*chaogong*) and conferment of noble titles (*cefeng*) which largely persisted until the last moment of the Qing dynasty.⁵¹ The ideological justification for the suzerainty of the Middle Kingdom vis-à-vis its neighbors came from the conception of “Serving the Great” (*shida*)

⁵⁰ *Shu jing* The Tribute of Yu; Legge (1899: 75-76). The Great Yu, one of the legendary sage-kings of antiquity, was the founder of Xia (ca. 2205-ca. 1767 B.C.), the first dynasty of China.

⁵¹ Fairbank (1968) has been a classic study of the history of Sinocentric tribute system. See Wright (2005) for Fairbank’s models of the tribute system and the Chinese world order and their critics.

in Confucianism.⁵² This Confucian idea stipulates a web of mutual obligations between center and periphery; if the peripheral polities show their deference and allegiance, the Son of Heaven in turn has some responsibility to protect them and show his benevolence by rewarding them. As a rule, the burden of tribute should be imposed with reference to their distance from the center; the farther they reside, the less they need to pay.

Ethnic Governance in the Frontier

Likewise, one of the major features of the edifice of Chinese administration was that the frontier subjects were either exempt or levied less from regular obligations, tax, corvée, and tribute, to the central government. In effect, the political economy of China's frontiers was characterized by heavy expenses and inadequate revenues. Hence, the empire-building process in China took precisely the reverse route from the general image of a successful overseas colonial power, emphasizing its capacity to transfer wealth efficiently from the colonies to the metropole. The Chinese empire also distinguished itself from the colonial powers regarding its ability to integrate frontier societies. In the history of colonial powers, the overseas European settler societies created a sense of separate identity from their homeland, which eventually became a foundation of "Creole nationalism" (Anderson 1998, 2001). Despite the history of "the psychology of regional feeling" (Lattimore 1935: 8), there were no parallel 'nationalistic' sentiments on the part of the Han migrants. So, even when it steadily declined in the nineteenth century, the Qing dynasty was comparatively successful in maintaining ties with the frontier regions, including the northeast (Lee 1970), the southwest (Atwill 2005; Jenks 1994; Lee forthcoming), and the northwest (Fletcher 1978; Millward 1998; Perdue 2005; Wang 2001: ch.7). As such, China's situation can be comparable to the Russian settlements in Central Asia and other non-Russian lands following the expansion of the Romanov state (see Brower and Lazzerini 1997; Khodarkovsky 2002; Sunderland 2004).

⁵² The following passages in the *Mencius* had been so well-known among Confucian literati in East Asia: "It requires a wise prince to be able, with a small country, to serve a great. He who with a small state serves a great stands in awe of Heaven" (*Mencius* I (2), 3; Legge 1875: 142-143).

Evidently, China has a long imperial history of forging frontier colonies as early as the second century B.C. (see Bielenstein 1959; Chang 2007b; Lee 1978, 1982a). However, in comparison with the European colonial powers, the main motivation for creating those colonies was not so much economic as military. The notable example is the institution of state farms called *tuntian* that first emerged in the third century. The *tuntian* system, made up of civilian and military farms, supported the peasants by allocating the public land to them; at the same time it was intended to be economically self-reliant. In late imperial times, the organization of frontier military colonies was developed into the *weisuo* garrisons of the Ming and the Eight Banner garrisons of the Qing. These agro-military colonies (*juntun*), widespread in nearly every region, comprised a large proportion of registered land in the frontier regions.⁵³ In addition, the Chinese state not only organized massive migration to the frontiers, but made huge efforts and expenditures to settle immigrants from the interior. In general, the development and consolidation of the frontier societies were backed up by state revenue that recurrently flowed from the center to the periphery (see Chapter 7). I propose to analyze the Chinese model of frontier governance by taking its four elements into account: population, administration, jurisdiction, and taxation.

As the central authority extended its reach to the frontiers, the government demarcated the ethno-territorial boundaries by differentiating the borderland indigenous peoples. The common ‘ethnic’ categories were the “mature” (*shu*) and “wild” (*sheng*) natives.⁵⁴ The depiction of the ‘mature’ and ‘wild’ did not simply reflect Sinocentric prejudice, as some scholars such as Dikötter (1992: 8-10) have argued. Rather, it also represented the extent

⁵³ See Tsai (2001: 114-118) for the formation of frontier colonies and the transfer of population from the interior during the early Ming period. By the early fifteenth century, the total land holdings of the colonial farms in Liaodong, southern Manchuria, reached 25,300 *qing* (approximately 154,710 hectares) (ibid.: 115). By the late Ming, the proportion of military land in the southwest, which represented virtually all the registered land in the middle of the fifteenth century, was still one-quarter of all registered land (Lee forthcoming: ch.2).

⁵⁴ In his discussion on this issue, Fiskesjö (1999) chooses the “cooked” and the “raw” barbarians for the English translation of the Chinese terms. Dikötter (1992) interprets that the Chinese hold extremely ‘racist’ views on “raw” and “cooked” barbarians. He even conjectures, “The consumption of raw food was regarded as an infallible sign of savagery that affected the physiological state of the barbarian (ibid.: 9). In the absence of such ‘racial’ ideas (see Chapter 7), I put the “mature” and “wild” natives in a neutral or less pejorative sense since the use of the terms “raw” and “cooked” may cause a semantic misunderstanding on China’s historical reality to the Western readers.

to which the rule of the central government could reach. The ‘mature’ natives indicated semi-aculturated subjects who obeyed the Chinese rule but still remained culturally distinctive. On the contrary, the ‘wild’ natives were not ready for the imperial subjects. By the early tenth century, for instance, the Jurchens in the Liaodong area of southern Manchuria who became the direct subjects of the Liao dynasty were known as the ‘mature,’ as opposed to their relatives outside Liao domination to the north, who became known as the ‘wild.’⁵⁵ The Liao government subsequently forbade those ‘mature’ Jurchen from having contact with the ‘wild’ Jurchen (Chan 1984: 52-53; Franke 1975, 1994).⁵⁶ Similarly, in 1615, the Ming government built the anti-Miao walls in western Hunan area to separate the ‘wild’ Miao from those ‘mature’ Miao as well as the Han (Fiskesjö 1999: 148-149; Yang and Mo 1996: 390; see also McMahon 2002, 2008; Rowe 2002: 505-506).⁵⁷ Meanwhile, around the mid-eighteen century, the Qing government began to include the ‘mature’ Miao who paid taxes and living in areas under control of the central government in population registration alongside the immigrant Han Chinese.⁵⁸ As the ‘mature’ Miao were considered as regular subjects regarding legal status, tax treatment and population registration, the role of their ‘ethnic’ origins began to disappear. By contrast, the Han who settled within native jurisdictions were almost always excluded from the reported population. Under such circumstances, therefore, the official ‘ethnic’ categorization of immigrant Han peoples as well as being ‘wild’ and ‘mature’ indigenes

⁵⁵ See Xu Mengxin, *Sanchao beimeng huibian* Chapter 3. According to this text, the Liao founder Yelü Abaoji was afraid that the Jurchen would cause trouble and so he induced their powerful clans and great families with several thousand households to move and settle south of Liaoyang (the Eastern Capital of the Liao) in order to divide up their strength so that they could no more communication with the other Jurchen tribes. These were the ones called the “mature Jurchen” (*shu Nüzhen*). On the other hand, north of the Sungari (then, Sumo in Chinese) River was occupied by over one hundred thousand families and individuals who lived scattered in the mountains and valleys in a wilderness beyond the Liao frontier. These were called the “wild Jurchen” (*sheng Nüzhen*). In addition, those who lived in the northern limit of Liao domain and were loosely subject to the military commissioner were neither classified as the ‘wild’ nor the ‘mature,’ which suggests that the mature-wild continuum was differentiated by geographic distance from the center as well as administrative capacity of the government.

⁵⁶ It was the ‘wild’ Jurchen who founded the Jin in 1115 and overthrew the Liao in 1125. Meanwhile, Fiskesjö (1999: 142) asserts that hardly any Northern barbarians “were ever known as Raw and Cooked,” by enumerating some key differences between Northern and Southern frontiers. Seen from the case of two Jurchen groups under the Liao, his argument is obviously misleading.

⁵⁷ The Chinese have called it the “Great Walls in Miao Proper” (*Miaojiang changcheng*). As a consequence of the assimilationist drives of the Qing government, in the end, the ‘wild’ Miao living inside the wall appear to have been completely ‘matured.’

⁵⁸ According to Zhang Guangsi, governor of Guizhou, for instance, the 1746 population report included “the immigrant Han peoples who have settled in Guizhou for some time, bought land, established families, and become native, as well as the ‘mature’ Miao who pay taxes along with the Han” (Lee 1982b: 721-724).

was indeed not only arbitrary, porous, but quite often transcended by the spatial, administrative boundaries. As James Lee put it, inclusion and exemption from population registration were “mainly a function of territory, not, as has been thought, of ethnicity” (1982b: 724).

As to an administrative edifice, the Chinese state maintained an ethnically composite polity that possessed ethnic enclaves loosely connected to a central government. The practice of semi-autonomous indirect rule for frontier indigenes spanned over the entire imperial history: from the “loose-rein” (*jimi*) prefectures during early dynasties such as the Han, Wei, Tang, and Song⁵⁹ to the “native chieftaincy” (*tusi, tuguan*) in the Yuan, Ming and Qing.⁶⁰ Although the rules and regulations that governed such arrangements had changed over time, the principle that guided their functioning had remained remarkably consistent: in exchange for a semblance of order in its borderlands, the centralizing state was willing, to an extent, to leave the chieftains alone and let them rule as they desired (Shin 2006b: 104). Yet, the institutional edifice of frontier governance with respect to the degree of state control could be classified into two phases, before and after the Yuan dynasty. Apart from local tributes, the Mongol Yuan state was the first Chinese dynasty that tried to levy taxes on its frontier indigenes (Wang 2001: 146). I am focusing on the development of frontier rules from the Yuan times since it played a significant role in forging post-imperial rearrangements.

In late imperial times, the separation of hereditary chieftaincy from standard administrative unit had not only permitted legal privileges for indigenous peoples, but protected their local customs. In other words, the principle of ethno-territorial jurisdiction allowed for legal diversity in the regions of unassimilated aborigines, who were to remain

⁵⁹ See Pan Yihong (1992b) for a general discussion of the pattern of settlement policies towards the nomads from the Han to the Tang times. For the policies of the Han government in particular, see Bielenstein (1956), de Crespigny (1984), and Lewis (2007). Unfortunately, there is only a little study on the Song policies towards frontier indigenes written in English, compared with other period. To my knowledge, An Goulou (1997) renders a useful, reliable discussion on the overall scheme of the Song policies.

⁶⁰ See Herman (2006, 2007), Lary (2007), Lee (forthcoming), Took (2005), and Wang (2001: ch.6) for a discussion of the history of native chieftaincy in the southwest during late imperial China. Also see Shin (2006a, 2006b) for the Ming policies in particular. For the Qing policies towards the Miao, see Jenks (1994) and Sutton (2006).

and observe their own customary laws. A mid-Ming supreme commander in Guangdong and Guangxi, Yao Mo (1465-1538), addressed the typical response of Ming officials to the question of governing the native domains in the southwest: “It is unworkable to apply solely Han [Chinese] law (*hanfa*) [i.e., the regular Ming Code]” (Shin 2006b: 125).

In addition to legal autonomy, non-Han natives were largely exempt from regular administrative obligations during the Ming times. In the southwest, the land tax was not assessed throughout much of the region until the sixteenth century (Lee forthcoming: ch.2). Instead of corvée, the natives paid a set tax called *chaifa*. Where taxes were charged, the rates were generally much lower than elsewhere in the interior. In theory, the Ming government could extract more taxes from those indigenous subjects if it replaced the existing collection system with one used in the interior. In practice, however, as Yao Mo calculated, the overall costs of replacing such a well-established practice would probably far outweigh any revenue gains. He further recommended that officials should alleviate the tax quotas assigned to local headmen, who collected land taxes from the natives, and refrain from burdening them with excessive demands (Shin 2006b: 125). Table 4.1 indicates the native revenues or levies (*chaifa*) in Yunnan during late Ming times. According to these figures, although the non-Han natives made up two-thirds of the Yunnan population, they provided little more than 5 percent of all provincial revenues. Evidently, the total provincial revenues in Yunnan and Guizhou were hardly sufficient to meet the expenditures, in part because of the state’s inability to levy the indigenes in the same manner as Han subjects. As one early Qing governor of Guizhou once evaluated, the entire revenue in his region throughout the Ming period was “not even the equivalent of a small county’s revenue in the [prosperous] Southeast.”⁶¹ This fiscal imbalance certainly continued during the Qing; as Robert Jenks correctly points out, “Guizhou held no financial attraction for the government. It did not constitute a lucrative source of state revenue; on the contrary, it represented a constant financial drain” (1994: 166). As I shall discuss later, this imperial pattern has not been fundamentally changed until today, even though the central government has made a continued and active effort to infiltrate and control the southwestern borderlands.

⁶¹ Tian Wen. *Qian shu* (The Book of Guizhou).

Table 4.1 Native tribute in Yunnan during late Ming period

Commodity (unit)	Year	
	1580	1625
Gold (taels)	16	66
Animals	121	121
Cotton cloth (<i>duan</i>)	1,700	1,700
Bamboo silver (taels)	-	1,639
Silver (taels)	8,487	9,455
Grain (<i>shi</i>)	9,163	8,191
Cowry shells	21,790,160	16,190,224

Source: As calculated by Lee (forthcoming) in Table 2.7 with the author's permission.

Compared with the Ming, the Qing government pursued a more direct administrative consolidation in southwest China through the process of “bringing chieftains into the regular system” (*gaitu guiliu*); however, it never achieved a complete incorporation.⁶² Still, much cultivated land were declared exempt from taxation and not registered at all (see Lee 1982b, forthcoming). In 1766, for instance, the Qianlong emperor decided that in Yunnan all mountain plots below 3 *mu* and valley plots below 2 *mu* would be tax exempt forever.⁶³ The net effect was to exclude most of the land from registration since the vast majority of plots were well below 2 to 3 *mu* in size. Further, the legal code had not been fully unified, but was still applied differently between the ‘mature’ and ‘wild’ natives. According to the 1701 statute, for example, a ‘mature’ Miao who hurt or killed other(s) should be punished by Chinese civil law (*min li*), and a ‘wild’ Miao by aboriginal Miao law (*Miao li*).⁶⁴ In this situation, in order to get lighter punishments, there was an opportunity that ‘mature’ Miao may claim to be ‘raw’ Miao, Han to be native, and natives to be Han. It raised indeed a serious concern for the government. Having deliberated a memorial from Shen Mengxi, the Guangxi Provincial Judge, the Board of

⁶² See An (2009), Herman (1997, 2006, 2007), McMahon (2008), Rowe (2002), Sutton (2006), and Took (2005). By the late eighteenth century, the territory under native jurisdiction in Yunnan and Guizhou had been shrunken from one-half of the provincial area to one-quarter and from two-thirds to one-third respectively (Lee 1982b: 728).

⁶³ See Lee (forthcoming: ch.2). One *mu* is approximately equal to 1/15 of a hectare.

⁶⁴ *Da Qing huidian shili* vol. 158, p. 993. Similarly, the 1828 edition of the local gazetteer of Yongzhou Prefecture in Hunan recorded, “Ever since the Song dynasty, we have classified the ‘good’ Yao, who obey state law, as ‘mature.’” The author would like to thank Professor James Z. Lee for sharing those documents as well as his intriguing manuscript, entitled “Law and Ethnicity in Late Imperial Southwest China.” See also Sutton (2003b).

Punishment issued an order in 1760, again in 1763 and 1801. It states that in the Miao territory, among the criminals supposed to be sentenced to exile or military service, if Han claims to be Miao so as to avoid cangue and exile, he must be punished by law, plus wearing cangue for one month before exile. If an offence involves homicide, the judicial official must file evidence. Once fabrication is found, the offender must be punished according to the law.⁶⁵ Although Qing officials were generally strict with ethnic divisions when applying punishments, it reveals that some Han individuals were willing to change their status to being natives with the intention of evading the punishment stipulated by the regular penal code.

The Qing state further maintained a less direct control over other frontier regions, including Manchuria, Mongolia, Taiwan, Tibet, and Xinjiang, in comparison with the interior and the southwest. In particular, until the last decades of the Qing, the Manchu rulers deliberately tried not only to separate Mongolia, Tibet, and Xinjiang from the interior, but also to prohibit the Han subjects from moving into these lands. The policy of strict separation between Han settlers and the natives went hand in hand with the policy of non-interference in local leadership, religion, culture, and customs (see, e.g., Di Cosmo 1998; Fletcher 1978; Ishibashi 2000; Wang 2001).

In Manchuria, local tribal peoples such as the Solon Ewenki, Kiakar (Kuyala), Oroqen, Hezhen (Nanai in Russia), Xibe (Sibo) and the Mongolian-speaking Daur were classified as a category of “New Manchus” under the command of the Jilin and Heilongjiang military governors. In return, they, who now formed part of the Manchu Eight Banner forces, received tax-exempt banner farmlands (*qi tian*) for their maintenance. They did not offer tribute, with the exception of the hunting banners in Heilongjiang (see Fletcher 1978: 42-43; Lee 1970; Rhoads 2000).

In Mongolia and Zungharia, the Qing state imposed lenient duties on its Mongol subjects compared with the Han peasants in the interior. In Mongolia, the Mongolian commoners owed tax and service obligations to their princes and to the Qing government. Taxes were

⁶⁵ Xue Yunsheng, *Du li cun yi* p. 147.

usually in kind, mainly livestock, although as time went on silver played an increasing role. They were also liable to special levies like the annual imperial demands for animals, furs, felt, tents, and other Mongolian products. In Zungharia, the political, economic, religious and social characteristics of the Kalmyk-Mongolian tribes like the Torghut and Khoshot resembled those in Mongolia, except for the fact that they did not pay taxes on livestock (see Fletcher 1978: 50, 62). Further, the monasteries and lamas in Mongolia and Zungharia were exempt from taxes and services and enjoyed many privileges under Manchu imperial patronage.

In Taiwan, similar to other frontiers particularly Manchuria and the southwest, aborigine-owned and -farmed land was exempt from the land tax. At the same time, the state once responded through active engagement for the sake of preventing potential conflicts between Han migrants and Taiwanese aborigines. In 1722, for instance, a Han Chinese censor reported following his tour of inspection that Han settlers could be arrested for hunting deer in aborigine fields, on the ground that they were interfering with payment of the aborigine head tax (Shepherd 1993: 246). Further, the Qing government found it useful to intervene in order to protect aboriginal claims to land when it sought to reconcile the competing interests of Han settlers and plain aborigines. In the government's perspective on the dispute over land ownership, the tribal head tax paid by aborigines established their claim to land rights and entitled them to the government protections of their property rights. Hence, Han settlers seeking to reclaim tribal lands were required to respect the tribes' prior claims by paying an aborigine large-rent (*fan da zu*). As a result, large areas of Taiwan's west coast were subject to aborigine large-rent until the Japanese colonial government abolished this system at the turn of the twentieth century (Ch'en 1996; Shepherd 1993: ch.9).

In Xinjiang, the Qing state maintained a policy of non-interference toward Islam and local customs; it preserved the forms of local administration and jurisdiction and protected local religious institutions (see Fletcher 1978; Millward 1998, 2007; Perdue 2005; Wang 2001: ch.7). The native populations were commonly allowed to live by the Islamic calendar, dress in their traditional fashion, and go about without the Manchu

pigtail with shaved forehead that the Manchu strictly enforced on Han Chinese in the interior (see Wang 2001: 171). For the administration of justice, the bureaucracy of the indigenous officialdom (the *begs*) and the religious establishment (the *akhunds*) tried local court cases by the prevailing Hanafite legal tradition, which impressed foreigners since “disputes arising between Muslim and ‘Chinese’ were settled according to Muslim law” (Fletcher 1978: 77). Further, as applied to the Mongol monasteries and lamas, Islamic institutions were waived from taxes while Islamic clerics (*mullahs*) were excused from paying the head tax (see Fletcher 1978: 36).

In summary, the Chinese state markedly encouraged the construction of ethnicity and the maintenance of ethnic cleavages by recognizing ethnicity as an administrative category. But the political interests of the state to retain such ‘ethnic’ classification was not so much to discriminate against the peripheral natives (in comparison to the Han peoples both in the Chinese heartland and in the frontier) as to recognize their distinct social conditions and grant a certain degree of autonomy with respect to administration, jurisdiction, and taxation. So, as discussed thus far, non-Han native tax obligations were always far less onerous than the state extraction from Han subjects, even if they would have varied broadly. Moreover, the semi-autonomous local leadership in the native domain survived even during the Republican period (see Took 2005) and subsequently became a model of the present-day Autonomous Regions for ethnic minorities. As in imperial times, what have been typical of the fiscal state of Chinese borderlands are heavy expenditures and little revenues.

Separate and Unequal under the Conquest Dynasties

Meanwhile, along with the principle of territoriality, a more rigid definition of ethnicity emerged under the conquest dynasties. Contrary to the inclusionary Hua Xia identity, the non-Han conquerors aspired to establish and maintain exclusive boundaries between the ruling minority and the conquered majority, generally determined by blood lineage or tribal affiliation rather than cultural attributes. Unlike earlier group registration based

mainly on place, the new conquest elites by migrating into the Central Plains and by resettling around the dynastic capital and other major garrison cities substantially modified the previous link between territoriality and ethnicity. Under these circumstances, ethnicity was determined by the principle of personality, namely the person's genealogical descent.

In fact, it was not until the kin-group membership of the non-Han conquerors who became important in the fourth century that we can find the frequent usages of mixed ethnicities such as *zahu* (mixed-barbarian), *zazhong* (mixed-roots) and *zaren* (mixed-people). Chinese used such terms for referring to non-Han people in the Chinese heartland of whom it was practically impossible to trace precise origins.⁶⁶ For instance, until the introduction of modern comparative linguistics, Chinese historians had no clue of the exact origin as to the most well-known *zahu* in Chinese history, An Lushan (703-757) of the Tang.⁶⁷ In the canonical history records, accordingly, he was simply described as “a barbarian of mixed-roots” (*zazhong huren*) who originally had no surname.”⁶⁸ However, the meaning of the prefix ‘mixed-’ (*za-*) cannot be equivalent to terms for racially-mixed groups in other societies such as *mestizo* or *mulatto*. If China had such ‘racial’ categorization, the emperors of the Sui and early Tang who undeniably had non-Sinitic blood in their veins, discussed in Wright (1978), would have been regarded as ‘impure’ Chinese, just as *mestizo* children were treated as only partly white. . The classical notion of mixed ethnicities was not located between Han and non-Han boundary. Instead, it only indicated that a certain non-Han people had either an ambiguous lineage or diverse origin. It also reveals the impact of alien regimes, which dominated northern China during the fourth and fifth centuries, upon the new conceptualization of ethnicity through blood lineage.

⁶⁶ See Tang Changru (1955: 382-450) for in-depth studies of those ‘mixed-barbarians’ during the Age of Disunion. Also see Tang and Fu (1994) for a brief discussion of interethnic mixtures during the Tang dynasty.

⁶⁷ The general An Lushan initiated the An-Shi Rebellion (755-763) against the central government, which subsequently led to the political instability that Pulleyblank (1976) called the “chronic militarism” in the late Tang. Contemporary scholars surmise that An Lushan and Shi Siming, who succeeded the Rebellion, are believed to be of mixed Sogdian and Turkish descent. The name Lushan has been identified by the brilliant Iranist W. B. Henning as standing for *Rokshan* meaning “light” in Sogdian language. Henning’s idea has been confirmed by many scholars like Pulleyblank (1955) and Sugiyama (1997).

⁶⁸ *Jiu Tang shu* (Old standard history of the Tang dynasty) Chapter 200a.

Furthermore, given this introduction of descent-based ethnic categorization, the Chinese state began to practice the principle of personality in ethnic jurisdiction: non-Han individuals were permitted to invoke their own native legal codes even when they were outside the spatial boundaries of their polities.⁶⁹ The earliest available example appears in the Tang Code (*Tang lii*) regarding crimes in which non-assimilated aliens (*huawairen*) were involved.⁷⁰ They were subject to their own law, and Chinese codified law was only applied in cases where persons of different nationalities committed offences against each other. Thus, if a Korean kills a Korean in Chang'an, they should be judged by Korean law. If a Korean kills a non-Korean, they should be judged by Tang law. If a non-Korean kills a Korean, the family of the deceased can choose whichever legal system they prefer. Meanwhile, assimilated aliens were subject to the provisions of the code and treated like native Chinese. It was therefore a matter of decision whether the perpetrator could be considered as assimilated or not (Franke 1981a: 220). This individual-based 'ethnic law' continued particularly under the dynasties of conquest: the Liao, Jin, Yuan, and Qing (Franke 1981a, 1992; Mote 1999; Wittfogel and Feng 1949).

In general, the rulers of conquest regimes wanted to maintain a strict membership of their kind both to preserve their privileged status and to keep their ethno-cultural identity. It was mainly driven by their concerns of being completely absorbed by the conquered if they permitted their own ethnicity to freely interact with Han peoples. Regardless of the sheer number of conquering ethnicity, it was always the minority vis-à-vis the Han considering the relative size of the population. For instance, at the time of the Mongol conquest, the Han Chinese easily outnumbered their conquerors more than one hundred to one (Ho 1998:139). Likewise, at the dawn of the Manchu conquest, the estimated population of the Manchus seems to have been between 206,000 and 390,000; the

⁶⁹ Concepts of personality of law were common notion in early European as well as early Chinese legal systems. For examples from the Carolingian Age, see Wood (1986: 7-22).

⁷⁰ *Tanglii shuyi* (The Tang Code and the Subcommentary), Article 48 "Crimes Committed against Each Other by Non-assimilated Aliens" (*Huawairen xiang fan*). The translation is available in Johnson (1979: 252). In addition, on the boundary of *huawairen*, Zou Min (2006) claims that they included not only foreigners (*wai guoren*) but also unassimilated ethnic minorities attached to the Tang dynasty. Following this more discursive definition, I choose the term 'aliens' rather than 'foreigners,' the translation of which Western scholars including Johnson have conventionally accepted.

population of the Qing dynasty in 1650 was roughly 130-150 million (Elliott 2001: 363-364). Thus, the proportion of ruling ethnicity stood at no more than 0.3 percent of the total population. At the turn of the twentieth century, they presumably numbered less than five million yet ruled over more than 400 million subjects.⁷¹ Given such enormous numerical imbalance, the general principle of ethnic policy under the conquest dynasties can be epitomized as ‘separate and unequal.’

First, they often strove to *separate* intentionally from the majority in order to keep their ethno-cultural identity from being eroded by the Han. Consequently, several rulers of conquest regimes imposed a policy of ethnic revival on their tribesmen. The statements of Emperor Shizong (r. 1161-1189) of the mid- Jin dynasty, for instance, elucidated his anxiety over how to secure and revitalize the customs of the Jurchens. He once said to the Han Chinese minister: “The Jurchen originally esteemed sincerity and simplicity (*chunpu*), although the customs become more ostentatious in the present days. I am deeply grieved over this.” Besides, in his conversation with the Khitan officer, he criticized his predecessor, Prince Hailing (r. 1149-1161), for having tried to ‘sinicize’ the state: “Hailing imitated the customs of the Han peoples (*hanren fengsu*). This means that he forgot his origins. As long as we observe the old customs of our state, we shall have no trouble on our four borders. This should be our perpetual policy.”⁷² However, his desperate wishes were not fulfilled as most Jurchens except those in secluded areas in Manchuria were increasingly acculturated by the end of the Jin. In the end, the vast majorities were collectively registered as the Han people (*hanren*) by the Yuan. In 1636, nearly five centuries later, when Hong Taiji (r. 1627-1643), the Manchu ruler who self-identified as the Jurchen descendant lectured his officials on the perils of acculturation. He praised Emperor Shizong and asked them to learn from the ultimate fate of the Jin (Rhoads 2000: 52). Once inside the Chinese heartland, the Qing rulers remembered what Hong Taiji had taught them and thereby kept the Manchus separate.

⁷¹ The figure of five million was proposed by many anti-Manchu Han nationalists. But the sheer number of the Manchu must have been much smaller. The total number of the ‘banner people’ in the late Qing would have been six million and the Manchus were only a part of banner population whose estimated proportion is about sixty percent (Rhoads 2000: 34).

⁷² These passages appear in the *Jin shi* Chapter 89. The translation follows Franke (1979: 136-137). The movement for the restoration of Jurchen culture was, however, only a temporary success. See the detailed study by Tao (1976: 68-83) regarding the policy of ethnic revival under the reign of Emperor Shizong.

Second, the conquering elites wanted to institutionalize *unequal* relations between the minority and the majority. Among them, it was the Mongol elites who were the least predisposed to the Sinitic way of life and who were thus, as Ho Ping-ti (1964: 55) lamented, “unusually oppressive” to their Chinese subjects. On the legal administration, the ‘ethnic law’ was evidently in favor of the conquering elites which in turn led to much dissatisfaction among Han Chinese who complained that legal protections were not enforced if it would not serve the interests of rulers. On the recruitment system, the government of conquest dynasties made it much easier for non-Han candidates to pass the civil service examinations compared to Han candidates. This was achieved either by allocating the quota system in terms of ethnicity particularly during the Yuan or by adjusting the difficulty of the subjects or reducing the number of subjects in favor of the non-Han as prevalent under the Qing. This kind of ethnic cleavage, however, does not mean that Han Chinese were severely discriminated in the system since they still had a chance to take the examinations and serve in public offices.

The last conquest dynasty, the Qing (1644-1911), exemplifies the boundary-making and boundary-maintenance efforts of earlier conquest regimes. One of the major characteristics of Manchu domination in China is the official categorization of the imperial subjects into conquerors (bannermen in the Eight Banners where the Manchus occupied the highest status) and conquered (Han civilian commoners). It is important to note that throughout the 268-year Manchu rule, the banner institution created sharp boundaries between bannermen and Han commoners and, as Chen Shuang (2009) shows, this separation was the most important categorical inequality in Qing China. The banner organization, which combined social, economic, and military functions into one system, was initially devised by Nurhaci (1559-1626) in 1615 to classify all the dispersed Jurchen tribes under his control into eight banner groups, each with several companies called “*niru*.”⁷³ This new system increasingly contributed to the consolidation of the authority

⁷³ Franz Michael (1965) argues that the banner organization had its model in the Ming system of military colonies on the frontier (*weisuo*) because Nurhaci knew the Chinese guards and posts established in the Liaodong area during late Ming. He remarks that the army Nurhaci created resembled the Ming system in so many ways that “it can hardly have been accidental” (ibid.: 65). But the general feature of Qing banner

of the khan, while replacing previous tribal organizations and weakening the kinship tie among the Jurchen tribes. Further, as the early Manchu state (then the Later Jin) expanded, the banner system was extended to non-Jurchen subjects when mobilizing military campaigns against the Ming, which consequently led to the creation of the Mongol banners, which subsumed the Chakhar and Kharachin populations in 1636 and the Han Chinese banners (Han Chinese: *Hanjun*, Manchu: *ujen cooha*) in 1642 (see Crossley 1997; Michael 1965). Once they became the ruler of the Middle Kingdom after crossing the Great Wall through the pass in 1644, the Manchu emperors invested enormous efforts to maintain the Eight Banner institution as a special organization of the conquest elites throughout the Qing period.

The Eight Banner system had a tripartite ethnic division: the Manchu, Mongol, and Han banners, corresponding to three sets of Eight Banners into which these ethnic groups were organized.⁷⁴ Of the three ethnic elements, the Manchu Eight Banners were the oldest and outranked the other banners.⁷⁵ In general, the Manchu bannermen and Mongol bannermen, with close ties to the Manchu, enjoyed better material support and occupational mobility than the Han bannermen. Moreover, the Han bannermen were vulnerable to being expelled from the banner organization by the Qing government whereas the Manchus were rarely allowed to leave the system. In the mid-eighteenth century, in order to relieve the fiscal burden of supporting the banner population, the Qianlong emperor (r. 1736-1795) began to order the demobilization of a large number of Han bannermen and reclassify them as civilians (Sun 2005). This movement was accomplished either by asking regular Han bannermen to decline their banner affiliations or by expelling Han Chinese who had been adopted by Manchu bannermen. As a result of

system actually shows a remarkable similarity with that of another special organization of previous conquest dynasty, the Meng'an Mouke of the Jurchen Jin, albeit the impact of the Ming military system during its formative phase.

⁷⁴ The ethnic composition of bannermen was indeed much more complicated. In addition to the Manchu, Mongol, and Han banners, there were the Xibe, Daur, Oroqen, Korean, and other small ethnic groups in Manchuria who joined the banner system. As regards institutionalized population categories, however, there were mainly three.

⁷⁵ However, the Manchu banners were not ethnically homogenous. For instance, apart from the Jurchen who organized the core, eight Manchu banners also included thirty-seven companies of Mongols, six of Koreans, one of Russians, and one of Tibetans. In addition, many individual Mongols and Han Chinese were scattered among the Manchu banner companies (Rhoads 2000: 20).

massive demobilization that lasted until the end of the eighteenth century, the Manchu banners roughly accounted for sixty percent of the entire banner force and were the largest during the late Qing period (Rhoads 2000: 19-20).

From its very start, the Manchus, categorically registered as banner people (*qiren*), were segregated from the subject Han majority administratively, occupationally, residentially, and socially (Rhoads 2000: 35-42). The Qing emperors affirmed the policy of categorical segregation by stationing the banner population in the inner capital city and establishing a nationwide garrison system to secure their control over the massive territory.⁷⁶ The banner garrisons were isolated from the local population so that Manchu bannermen and Han commoners normally lived in separate communities and kept apart from each other. The Manchu conquerors did so to maintain the minority's rule over the majority. With the banner system, in other words, they managed to stay at the top of the ethnic hierarchy and sustain their status as the ruling elite. As Elliott (1993) aptly describes it, the Manchus remained the "resident aliens" in China. As a cumulative consequence of multifaceted segregation, furthermore, the banner people forged a distinctive 'ethnic' identity whose legacy led to the construction of a modern Manchu ethnic group after the fall of the Qing state (see Chapter 6). In the 1950s, Manchu nationality was judged on the basis of whether the person's ancestors belonged to the banner household registers (see Sun 2008).

The Manchu rulers not only made a sharp distinction between the bannermen and the civilians, they also maintained the elite status of the bannermen by granting them material supports, occupational privileges, and legal protection. First, the state provided most banner households with two forms of material support as a permanent source of income according to their rank: stipends in the form of silver and rice salaries and property grants

⁷⁶ Bannermen in the capital were called metropolitan bannermen (*jingqi*) who occupied the top layer in the hierarchy of state stipends and land grants. For instance, the metropolitan bannermen with the lowest soldier's rank received two taels of silver as monthly salary, while the garrison bannermen of the same rank only received one tael of silver. Likewise, occupational mobility was much more restricted for garrison bannermen than for metropolitan bannermen. In addition, there existed the regional variation among garrison bannermen where the bannermen in garrisons in Manchuria received the least material support. Bannermen in Liaoning had no grain stipend so they worked on state-allocated land to supplement their living, while those in other garrisons received both silver and grain salaries (Ding 2003).

consisting of land and housing (Elliott 2001).⁷⁷ They were also exempted from tax and rent. Second, the state made it easier for non-Han bannermen to enter government service compared to Han Chinese. The Qing court stipulated that some posts in almost every level of government could only be filled by Manchu and Mongol bannermen. It also arranged the special recruitment system just for bannermen by creating translation (*fanyi*) examinations which only required candidates to translate the Four Books of the Confucian classics from Han Chinese to Manchu for the Manchu and Han bannermen, and from Manchu to Mongol for Mongol bannermen. Compared with the standard civil service examination given to Han civilians, the translation examinations were shorter and, more importantly, their success rate was several times higher (Rhoads 2000: 43-44).⁷⁸ Lastly, Manchus had more favorable legal status than Han civilians. For the Manchu rulers, one of the key principles regarding legislation was that different punishments were applied for the same sort of crimes when committed by different ethnicities. According to the 1646 Qing Code, Manchu offenders were not tried by the regular legal institution but by campaign commanders, generals, or the Punishment Office of the Imperial Household Agency (*Neiwufu*). And an offender from the royal family was tried by the Court of the Imperial Clan (*Zongrenfu*). The later Qing Code also had a different category for bannerman offenders, who were not to be tried by prefect or county magistrates but by special administrators.⁷⁹ In this way, members of the Manchu elites enjoyed the privilege of either reducing or changing a punishment. In sum, the Manchu rulers institutionalized a system of “separate and unequal” (Rhoads 2000) to safeguard banner identity as an elite privilege.

⁷⁷ After entering China proper, the Qing court acquired a large amount of land and then allocated this land to bannermen according to their ranks. In 1647, the court granted bannermen permanent usufruct on their allocated land but prevented them from selling their land to non-banner peoples. In principle, bannermen of the same rank received the same amount of land. Yet this egalitarian principle of the banner land system was soon eroded by arising land sales between bannermen and civilians as well as within bannermen. Also, as bannermen changed their lifestyle into city dwellers, they were gradually detached from their allocated land and rented out to Han civilians who gradually came to occupy the banner land. As a consequence, by the 1730s, a considerable proportion of banner land belonged to Han commoners. This situation not only impoverished some bannermen, but jeopardized the state control of banner land and the Eight Banners as an elite institution. As a response, from 1729 to 1762, the Qing court repeatedly redeemed banner land from commoners to maintain banner landownership and the privileges of bannermen. Yet, because of fiscal difficulties, the court stopped redeeming banner land after 1762 (Chen 2009).

⁷⁸ Despite the court provided such opportunities, the occupational mobility of the bannermen was largely restricted to serving the emperor, either as soldiers-officers or as government officials. As Mark Elliott (2001) remarks, the occupational privileges were indeed a double-edged sword to bannermen.

⁷⁹ *Da Qing lüli, mingli* (general principles).

In principle, the conquest elites generally intended to maintain ethnic boundaries and separate themselves from the majority. Nevertheless, in effect, the state-imposed ethnic boundaries were quite porous because there was room for crossing the lines through adopting the language and customs of the group to which a person wanted to belong (see Chapter 6). Frequent lineage falsification for the purpose of forging blood ties with elite families was also conducive to blurring ethnic boundary lines.

Today: Separate but Equal

The heritage of traditional concept of ethnicity in connection with the state-making process cannot be denied even in the age of nation-state, although the impact of the Lenin-Stalinist conception of nationality has been immense. Chinese leaders strove to make the transition from a unified multiethnic empire to a unified multiethnic republic alongside their aspiration toward establishing a ‘New China.’ Indeed, of all the world’s major multiethnic empires such as the Roman, Habsburg, Ottoman and the Soviet Union, China alone has kept its territory largely undivided as the Qing dynasty was transformed into the Republic of China in 1912 and once again into the People’s Republic in 1949 (Barkey and von Hagen 1997). As Esherick (2006: 229) evaluates, “this was a remarkable achievement.” I believe that the modern appropriation of past conceptualization of ethnicity has significantly contributed to this relatively successful transition.

First, similar to the ‘loose-rein’ prefectures and ‘native chieftaincy’ of the past, the principle of territoriality has been reaffirmed in the name of “Nationality Regional Autonomy” since 1949, modeled on the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Government established in May 1947. These areas are further subdivided into ‘Autonomous Region’ (*zizhi qu*), ‘Autonomous Prefecture’ (*zizhi zhou*), and ‘Autonomous County’ (*zizhi xian*). Besides, this territorial accommodation was allocated not only to the longtime native populations but to a rather recent immigrant group, the Koreans, who formed the Yanbian

Korean Autonomous Prefecture of Jilin in 1952 which became in fact one of the earliest instances. At the same time, as early as 1951, the State Council had issued a directive ordering the removal of or a ban on ethnonyms, place names, or board inscriptions which were deemed discriminatory or insulting to minority nationalities.⁸⁰ Accordingly, some place names were renamed such as Hohhot, transliterated as Hutehaote in Han Chinese, in Inner Mongolia and Urumqi, its Uighur name, abandoning Han Chinese names. (Bulag 2002a).

As before, in spite of much direct control from the central government, the non-Han natives are not only governed by their own leadership but granted some special treatments regarding their religion, custom, legal status, education, and political representation (Dreyer 1976: 105).⁸¹ The principle of ethnic governance, stipulated in the Law of Nationality Regional Autonomy (see Seldon 1979: 200-207), has been regularly put into practice since the establishment of the PRC except in the decade of Cultural Revolution when a coercive drive toward assimilation was enforced under the gist of the Maoist theory of class struggle.⁸² Among many prominent non-Han cadres, Ulanhu (1906-1988) was the paramount Mongol leader from 1947 to 1966, and again in the 1980s.⁸³ Further, the financial expenditure of local non-Han governments has almost always exceeded their revenue, implying a significant amount of subsidy from the central government (see Table 4.2). It reminds us of the pattern of frontier governance in the

⁸⁰ In fact, even before the establishment of People's Republic, the Chinese Nationalist government collected and renamed most ethnonyms with insect and beast radicals on the ground of the promulgation of the recognized name list in 1940. The name list was reprinted in Ruyi Yih-fu (1972b).

⁸¹ In the Article 27 of the 1950 Marriage Law, for example, it read: In regions inhabited by minority nationalities in compact communities, the people's government (or the military and administrative committee) of the greater administrative area or the Provincial People's Government may enact certain modifications or supplementary articles in conformity with the actual conditions prevailing among minority nationalities in regard to marriage. As rendered by Seldon (1979: 200). See also Diamant (2000: ch.4) for the process of family reform in Yunnan in the early 1950s.

⁸² The impact of Cultural Revolution on ethnic society is very complex and open to a scholarly debate. In general, however, it has been widely accepted that it severely eroded the cultural and administrative autonomy for minority. On the language policy, only Han Chinese was to be spoken at meetings, and in many places it was a misdemeanor to use one's native language. On the administrative level, minority cadres were not only depicted "culturally inferior" and "sinister pullers of the strings of the tribal chieftains" but, in many cases, replaced by Han cadres (Heberer 1989).

⁸³ Indeed, Ulanhu is the only non-Han person ever to hold alternate membership in the Political Bureau of the Communist Party. He was also vice-chair of the People's Republic and vice-chair of the National People's Congress. See Harrell (2007) for more discussion of the condition of minority cadres in People's Republic.

past; the resources from the heartland supported the frontier. Even though the guidance of the thoughts of Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong substituted for the paternalistic ideal of Confucian kingship as the ruling ideology, what has largely been unchanged therefore is the perspective of the center to the border, the legacy of which still remains today, notably in the current “Great Western Development” (*Xibu dakaiifa*) project.

Table 4.2 The fiscal balance of local governments in 2000 and 2005 (Unit: billion yuan)

	2000			2005		
	Spending (A)	Revenue (B)	A/B	Spending (A)	Revenue (B)	A/B
Five Autonomous Regions						
Inner Mongolia	24.71	9.50	2.60	68.19	27.75	2.46
Guangxi Zhuang	25.85	14.71	1.76	61.15	28.30	2.16
Ningxia Hui	6.08	2.08	2.92	16.03	4.77	3.36
Xinjiang Uyghur	19.10	7.91	2.41	51.90	18.03	2.88
Xizang Tibet	6.00	0.54	11.11	18.55	1.20	15.46
Subtotal	81.74	34.74	2.35	197.27	78.85	2.50
Other Peripheral Regions						
Jilin	26.07	10.38	2.51	63.11	20.72	3.05
Heilongjiang	38.19	18.53	2.06	78.78	31.82	2.48
Guizhou	20.01	8.52	2.35	52.07	18.25	2.85
Yunnan	41.40	18.07	2.29	76.63	31.26	2.45
Qinghai	6.83	1.66	4.11	16.98	3.38	5.02
National Total	1036.67	640.61	1.62	2515.47	1488.42	1.69

Source: Guojia tongjiju (ed.) 2006. *Zhongguo tongji tiyao* (China Statistical Abstract), pp. 71-72.

Second, the legacy of the principle of personality in ethnic governance is largely reflected in the formalization of state-administered category of nationality groups. The Manchus, although they were dispersed all over the country and largely assimilated to the Han culture, became part of the minority nationalities because of their historical presence and distinctive self-identity as the descent of the banner people. Likewise, other historical communities such as the Muslim Hui had their ethnic independence confirmed although they do not neatly satisfy any of the Stalinist definition of nationality: 1) language; 2) territory; 3) community of economic life; and 4) community of psychological make-up as

constitutive characteristics of a nation. In fact, the decision to recognize Hui communities as an independent nationality was akin to the Austro-Marxist notion of ‘cultural autonomy’ summarized in Bauer (2000[1924]), which Stalin (1953[1913]) harshly criticized as a super-structural approach. Chinese politicians and scholars, however, put more emphasis on its historicity since the Tang dynasty, while unanimously repeating the Stalinist definition of nationality.⁸⁴

Once a family is registered as an ethnic minority, they receive some preferential treatments such as school admissions, salaries, hiring and promotion, and an exemption from the family planning policy.⁸⁵ Interestingly, even though they have not been officially recognized as an independent ethnicity, the self-defined “Chinese Jews” of Kaifeng have recently become entitled to receiving some preferential treatments including exemption from birth control policy and getting a monthly allowance (Zhou 1997). Since the 1980s, therefore, people have tried to become ‘officially’ ethnic so as to attain some socio-economic advantages. Ostensibly, one may conjecture that the cause of such preferential treatments is similar to other multiethnic states. Just as affirmative action in the United States has been used to rectify a long history of white domination, so does the Chinese case which serves as an institutional compensation counterbalancing a long history of Han chauvinism. Both the cause and consequence of China’s preferential treatments are, however, substantially different. For instance, Barry Sautman (1998: 104), based on his study of China’s minority policies focusing on Xinjiang, insists that China is “an aberrant case” in the sense that there is little tension or discord over preferential policies that might threaten social stability, compared with other countries in which they

⁸⁴ In addition, Gladney renders the following account: “Although the Hui did not fit the Stalinist model, the government chose to recognize them on the basis of prerevolutionary ideas for the political goals of incorporation and state-building” (1998: 174). See also Lipman (1997: xx-xxv).

⁸⁵ For China’s preferential treatments for minorities on college admission, see Wang Tiezhi (2007). Regarding family planning preferences, it is noteworthy that ethnic groups with a population of more than 10 million have been subject to the same policy as the Han Chinese. Hence two ethnic groups, the Zhuang at 16.1 million and the Manchu at 10.6 million from the 2000 Census in China, became subject to the one-child policy (Li and Zhang 2006). Meanwhile, although ethnic minorities are exempted from strict one-child family policy, by pledging to have only one child they receive a number of governmental benefits, including pay raises, priorities to new or larger housing, education, medical care, and job opportunities (Park and Han 1990).

become a source of destructive interethnic tension and a disincentive to minority achievement.

This feature of China's preferential policies is comprehensible when we remind ourselves that Han Chinese as an administrative category of state has hardly been devised to either privilege them over non-Han or discriminate against the minority, resembling the institutionalized racial discrimination as in the Jewish Ghettos under the Third Reich or Jim Crowism in American history. In effect, it was during the conquest dynasties that non-Han elites made the category of Han people salient to sustain their supremacy over the conquered without much discrimination. The Qing ethnic policy was "not so much anti-Han as pro-Manchu, but their favoritism toward the Manchus occurred unavoidably at the expense of the Han" (Rhoads 2000: 42).). Likewise, the preferential policy toward non-Han groups was still extant under the native dynasty; for instance, the Ming policy over its Mongol subjects. In short, the conceptualization of ethnicity was not so much to discriminate as to appease, protect, and privilege non-Han ethnicities both in the past and in the present. Yet the processes of ethnic boundary-making in post-imperial China have not been a mere replication of its past experiences.

Meanwhile, the modern adaption of the personality principle in China invariably constructs far more rigid, reified ethnic categories than in the past. The state imposition of ethnic classification inevitably sets up a more rigid boundary between Han and non-Han and even separates them. It also obscures considerable intra-ethnic diversity under a single reified supra-local ethnic signifier such as Miao (Diamond 1995; Schein 2000), Mongol (Connor 1984; Khan 1995), Naxi (McKhann 1995), Yi (Harrell 1995b) and Zhuang (Kaup 2000). On the other hand, by reifying Han as a single ethnicity, numerous Han immigrant communities of the south have not been officially recognized, even though they have maintained their distinctive identity for centuries. Such situations clearly represent state intolerance regarding a multiple, blurred, or changing identification such as 'Hakka Han,' 'Nuosu Yi,' 'Hei Miao (Black Miao)' or 'half Nuosu Yi and half Han.' As Anderson (1991: 166) put it, the fiction of the principle of personality in the

national census is that “everyone is in it, and that everyone has one – and only one – extremely clear place. No fraction.”

In short, there had been in China an intersection of two principles of ethnic group registration, territoriality and personality. The formation of these principles can roughly be linked to the consolidation of an ethno-geographical dimension during the formative period and a genealogy-based conceptualization under the conquest dynasties, respectively. In either case, the state’s motivation for demarcating ethnic boundaries has not been so much to discriminate as to protect such ethnic groups. Under the native dynasty, it was generally the non-Han peoples or polities who received certain preferential treatments based on the paternalistic ideal of Confucian ideology as well as the conciliatory policy for securing the frontiers. Under the conquest dynasties, non-Han ruling groups built up the administrative system so as to have ethnic cleavages in their favor at the expense of the conquered Han subjects. The PRC’s current ‘ethnicization’ has largely inherited this traditional conceptualization of ethnicity although we need to identify what current policies and practices, if any, are indeed new. The conventional mythology of ‘dominant Han’ and ‘disadvantaged non-Han’ cannot stand with respect to the pattern of ethnic boundary-building and its relations to the state-making process. In China, ethnocentrism is one thing and state governance of ethnic groups is another, a distinction that may allow us in social science to rethink the conventional image of ethnic minority as defensive, vulnerable, and disadvantaged.

Chapter Five

Imagined Commonalities: The Origins and Development of China's Genealogical Nationalism

We shall call “ethnic groups” those human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent; this belief must be important for the propagation of group formation; conversely, it does not matter whether or not an objective blood relationship exists — Max Weber (1978 [1922]: 389).

All-under-Heaven is one family, all things form one body (*tianxia yijia wanwu yiti*) — in the imperial edict of the *Dayi juemi lu* (Great righteousness resolving confusion), Emperor Yongzheng of the Qing dynasty (r. 1723-1735).

When Pan Ki-moon, the then South Korean foreign minister, was elected as the eighth Secretary-General of the United Nations in late 2006, the Chinese media soon proudly produced numerous articles on his ‘Chinese’ origins, tracing the history of his lineage. This argument was based on the genealogical ties between two Pan clans, one in Korea and the other in China’s Henan province. Their kinship affiliation dates back to the thirteenth century, when the progenitor of the Pan branch in Korea, Pan Wenjie (Korean: Pan Moon-jeol), migrated to the Korean Peninsula and settled there. In 2009, the local media in Quanzhou of the Fujian province challenged the existing theory and argued instead that Pan Ki-moon’s ancestors originated from the Pan lineage in Quanzhou, separate from its northern branches.¹ Such debates in mainland China seem to be a futile quest, for whether he may have originated from northern or southern China, Pan Ki-moon is Korean whose ethnic identity is distinct from any claim in China. It is also practically impossible to prove whether his real biological ancestry came from China, although the recorded genealogical history of the Pan clan in Korea may allude to his Chinese root.

¹ “Pan Ki-moon’s ancestral home was originally Quanzhou.” *Quanzhou wanbao* (Quanzhou Evening News), March 21, 2009.

China has a long history of imagining primordial kinship ties modeled on the myth of common descent. As the recent debate on Pan Ki-moon's ancestry reveals, the Chinese have constructed the sense of 'imagined commonalities' not only between mainland and overseas Chinese but also between Chinese and non-Chinese. This notion of all-inclusive whole, originated in pre-imperial times, has been a mainstay of modern Chinese nationalism. In particular, the unifying myth in China, as elsewhere, has been crucial to the formation of modern nationhood since it has apparent advantages for cementing the various groups together. In comparison with the process of exclusive ethnic boundary-making in most of the nationalizing states, this primordial foundation of the Chinese nation has always displayed the trans-ethnic feature of boundary-clearing in the sense that the rhetoric of common blood and kinship is not to exclude but to accommodate heterogeneous ethnic groups into a single genealogical origin. I would also suggest that the Chinese practices of imagining kinship commonalities could render certain insights for the development of a social theory of nationalism in an age of post-imperial and post-colonial nation-states.

Imagined Kinship and Primordial Ethnic Attachment

Ethnicity is an extension of the concept of family. As mentioned in the beginning quote, Weber clarifies that ethnic group identity is almost always based on the subjective belief in a common ancestry, from which the shared characteristics of co-ethnic members are ostensibly derived. Regarding modern society, Ernest Gellner remarks that ethnicity "has replaced kinship as the principal method of identity-conferment" (1994: 46). This was his critique of the political silence on the importance of such ethnic feelings in Western liberalism and Marxism. So ethnicity as an extended family, either real or imagined, manifests "a greater resiliency and recuperative power than corporate bodies which are not centered on primordial qualities," as Edward Shils (1971: 158) put it. Evidently, the strength of ethnic nationhood in a given society primarily hinges upon its ability to arouse 'primordial attachments' like the bonds of kinship and the ties of blood among its

members. These psychological affiliations gratify the most irrepressible and ineluctable needs; for that reason such attachments are not frivolously disavowed (see, e.g., Geertz 1963; Shils 1957, 1971, 1975, 1981).² Shils therefore suggests, “Kinship, ethnic identity, and nationality all have their roots in these primordial reactions” (1975: 20).

Many scholars have pointed out that ethnic nationalism has a tendency to put emphasis on the myth of common descent and eventually on biology in a genealogical sense (see, e.g., Connor 1991, 2004; Smith 1986; Suny 2001a).³ Other ethno-symbolic elements like shared memories, values, symbols and traditions also play a critical role in what constitutes the foundation of ethnic and national identities (Smith 1988, 2000, 2004). The notion of ethnic nationhood therefore entails a sense of ascribed, inalienable attachment to a larger community, especially via the myths of common descent and shared histories, whether real or imagined. Here, the issue of nationhood becomes not a question of choice but a matter of destiny that transcends individuality. By and large, this nationalist appeal to primordial traits is more strident when the ethnic identities in question seem to be threatened. As Ronald Suny perceptively illustrates, “even though immutable identities should be the least threatened, primordialist nationalists, as if unconvinced by their own rhetoric, fear the loss of identity and seek actively to intervene to save it” (2001a: 893-894). The problem is that this kind of primordial ethnic sentiments also tends to demarcate along strict ethnic lines between ‘us’ and ‘them’ such as the opposition between the national majority as an ethnic core and the ethnic minority as an alien outsider. In turn, it can be assumed that ethnic groups having clear-cut and uncontested boundaries will enter into conflict with each other in many forms: ethnic and national discrimination, forced segregation, violence, oppression, exploitation, and resistant movement. The extreme forms of ethnic conflict include ethnic cleansing and genocide in

² Clifford Geertz proposes the conception of ‘ineffability’ to explain the salience of primordial ties and sentiments in modern societies based upon a wider range of ascriptive traits like assumed blood ties, race, language, region, religion, and custom. These objects of primordial attachment are seen to “have an ineffable, and at times overpowering, coerciveness in and of themselves” (Geertz 1963: 109). He further claims that political modernization “tends initially not to quiet such [primordial] sentiments but to quicken them” (ibid.: 119). See Eller and Coughlan (1993) for their critique of primordialist perspective, especially a Shilsian/Geertzian approach to ethnic phenomena.

³ As Rogers Brubaker (2004: 136-137) challenges, however, the ascribed common descent may not be the once-and-for-all definition of ethnicity because this strict understanding of ethnicity does not capture nationalist rhetoric which emphasizes common culture, but not common descent.

the contexts of post-colonial and post-imperial nation-state building (see Brubaker 1995a; Brubaker and Laitin 1998; Hechter 1995; Horowitz 1985, 2001; Mann 2005; Olzak 2006; Wimmer 2002, 2004, 2006; Wimmer, Cederman, and Min 2009).

In China, as elsewhere, ethnicity has been imagined as an abstract extension of family, whose idea has been essential in the formation of modern Chinese nationhood.⁴ The narratives of common descent, in particular, have served not only as the source of primordial attachments to the Chinese nation comprising the Han and non-Han peoples, but as the official propaganda of a unified multiethnic society. In the familial metaphor of a national community as being one big family, China's ethnic minorities are considered as the 'branches' or 'brothers' of Han Chinese who constitute 'inalienable' members of the Chinese nation rather than the exotic and inferior 'Others' who need to be civilized by the 'Self.' This metaphor thus represents an essential facet of the all-inclusive whole of the Chinese nation, one that embraces 56 official nationalities. It is important to note that this all-embracing nationhood makes China incommensurable to most post-colonial and post-imperial societies, modeled on the ethnic (or racial) logic of nation-state, including its neighbors such as postwar Japan and postcolonial Korea and Vietnam. The crucial bifurcation began to emerge in the course of the empire-to-nation transformation. The dissolution of other continental empires and colonial powers was more likely to result in ethnic separatism in nascent national states. On the contrary, China has reconfigured its ancient ideas of common descent and kinship across various ethnic groups. So much so that its historical heritage has to be taken into account to explain the primordial foundation of post-imperial Chinese nationhood.

Although scholars of modern Chinese nationalism have paid little attention to it, the shared sense of common origin has always been fundamental since the earliest stages of Chinese civilization. In his discussion on prehistoric China, Ho Ping-ti remarks that, "archeology proves beyond doubt the rise of the Sinitic religion on ancestor worship, especially on male-ancestor worship" (1975: 281). As the structure of domination in

⁴ Although he does not specify China's ethnicity, Donald Horowitz claims that "the power and permeativeness of ethnicity owe much to the considerable strength of kinship ties in Asia and Africa" (1985: 63).

China began to develop from the primeval patriarchal type to the patrimonial state under the universal supremacy of the Son of Heaven, the rites of ancestor worship transferred collectivities from the family to the state, reinforcing unity through mutual participation and the manipulation of symbols of a common ancestry. This idea of common descent was key to maintaining fundamental social relationships such as father-son and ruler-subject no later than the age of Confucius.⁵ Throughout its dynastic history, the ancestor worship had a long-range effect on the Chinese social order and an ethical importance concerning one's fundamental moral duties of filial piety (*xiao*) and loyalty (*zhong*) (see Eisenberg 1998, 2008: ch.1; Hamilton 1984, 1990). Most importantly, this 'genealogical mentality' of primordial belief in common descent has shaped the Chinese national self-image even today. In addition, the historical memories of interethnic exchanges have further contributed to the metaphorical narrative of familial genealogy between Han and non-Han Chinese, together with Chinese and non-Chinese peoples. The question, then, is: in what way(s) have the Chinese created, expanded, and transmitted such conception?

The Formation and Expansion of the Myth of Common Blood

The concept of genealogically-defined descent group persisted, most notably through the ancestral worship of the mythical Yellow Emperor (*huangdi*). Since no later than the fourth century B.C., the Yellow Emperor had been regarded as the founder of Chinese civilization and an ancestor of the legendary Sage Kings of antiquity, particularly Yao and Shun.⁶ For modern Chinese nationalists, the Yellow Emperor has remained the most

⁵ Obviously, the reverence for ancestors was a primal duty. One of the earliest examples can be found in the *Guanzi*, an ancient classic which was allegedly written by Guan Zhong, a major statesman in the seventh century B.C., but seriously rewritten during the third century B.C. In the Mumin (On Shepherding the People) chapter, the text reads: "if you do not respect your ancestral temples, the people will emulate their superior's example; if you do not venerate your ancestors and great men of the past, the people will be lacking in filial and fraternal submission." The translation follows Rickett (2001: 53) with minor modification.

⁶ The legend of Yao and Shun is that Yao chose Shun from the people, and ordered him to take charge of a high office, and consequently transferred his own imperial dignity not to his incompetent son Danzhu but to Shun. According to Mitarai Masaru, around the later part of the Spring and Autumn period (c. sixth-fifth century B.C.), the legends around Yao and Shun "became well known and people came to believe that these two sage-rulers had really existed" (1982: 148). Later, the myths of Yao and Shun were integrated into other mythological narratives such as the Yellow Emperor so that they incorporated into a part of the myth

revered figure; at the same time, many historians such as Gu Jiegang (1893-1980) and Yang Kuan (1914-2005) have been quite skeptical about the historicity of such a figure.⁷ As I will discuss, the national discourse on the Yellow Emperor as the progenitor of the Chinese people is not simply an ‘invented tradition’ of modern times but is based on an ancient cultural repertoire. In other words, the Yellow Emperor as the highest deity (in Taoism) is an invented tradition forged around the fourth century B.C. My intention is not to examine the factuality of these historical myths of common descent which, after all, is a task that belongs to historians. Given that the myths of common descent need not, and usually will not, correspond to historical realities, sociologists tend to concern themselves “not with actual descent, but with the sense of imputed common ancestry and origins” (Smith 1986: 24). So I focus on the social role of the myth of the descent of the Yellow Emperor, emphasizing its all-embracing conceptualization. Both yesterday and today, the descent group-determined discourses have sought not to preclude ethnic strangers from the (Han) Chinese, but to construct the primordial myths over the ‘Chinese’ origins of non-Chinese peoples.

In this regard, it is interesting and important for comparative-historical sociologists to note that the notion of common descent in China, one that strove to accommodate all ethnicities, differed from the idea of God’s chosen people, in which the superiority of one ethno-religious group over others was implicitly assumed. In fact, as a historical sociologist, Philip Gorski (2000, 2006), a critic of the modernist approach to nationalism, convincingly suggests that this Hebraic mythology which entails a binary opposition between a sacred ‘us’ and profane ‘others’ not only became a crucible on which Western nationalism was forged but also had its roots well before the early modern period.⁸

of the Five Emperors.

⁷ Their skepticism toward ancient myths and documents was well articulated in the *Gushibian* (Critical Discussion of Ancient History), first published in between 1926 and 1941 under the general authorship of Gu Jiegang who had been a leader of the Skeptical School of Historiography (*Yigu xuepai*). For Gu Jiegang, the account of the myth of the Five Emperors in which the Yellow Emperor generally came the first “rest entirely upon spurious history fabricated during Qin and Han times” (1983: 153). See Mitarai (1983) and Schwartz (1985) for the detailed discussions of the origin and development of the myth of the Yellow Emperor and the summary and evaluation of the arguments of Gu Jiegang and Yang Kuan.

⁸ As Gorski put it, the Hebraic idiom was “well-nigh universal in Medieval Europe” and later precipitated particularly by Calvinism in early modern Europe (2000: 1455). He further argues that some nationalist discourses in early modern polities were “no less nationalistic than the nationalism of the French

Although I limit my argument to China's case, I wish to remind readers of how China's boundary-clearing conception of common descent (up to the contemporary Yellow Emperor nationalism) can be distinct from other boundary-making ideas embedded in the nationalist discourse. Let me then discuss how the myth of the Yellow Emperor's descent and legendary Sage Kings of antiquity originated, developed, and expanded throughout Chinese history.

The Pre-Imperial Origins

The use of fictive kinship metaphors as a way of integrating a heterogeneous population is common in ancient history. China is not an exception. Just as the supposed ancestor, Abraham, united the various tribes of ancient Israel, so did the early Chinese during the Warring States period (475-221 B.C.) who tried "to coordinate all or most of the clans of the Zhou [Sinitic] culture sphere under a common genealogy descended from the mythical Yellow Emperor" (Falkenhausen 2006: 165). The first authenticated reference to the Yellow Emperor, according to Schwartz (1985: 239), is found in a bronze inscription attributed to King Xuan (r. 319-301 B.C.) of Qi (what is now Shandong province) to whom Mencius gave advice. Although that does not mean that the idea of the Yellow Emperor was an invention of the Qi kings, the Yellow Emperor was nevertheless the high ancestor of the Tian family, the ruling house of Qi, which usurped the Jiang family in 386 B.C. Likewise, myths of the Ying clan (the ruling clan of the state of Qin which later established the first unified empire) centered around the Yellow Emperor and his descendants (see Mitarai 1982: 149). More probably, this ancestral worship of the Yellow Emperor was widespread among the ruling houses of the large powers like Qi in the east and Qin in the west during the Warring States period. As Schwartz infers, they were "most anxious to establish the cosmic and historic prestige of their own pedigrees" (1985: 239). It also reflected the political ideal of unifying all the states into one large empire, characteristics of the period between the late Warring States and the early Han.

Revolution" (Gorski 2000: 1428). In his book *Chosen Peoples*, Anthony Smith (2003a) also underscores the premodern origins of the sacred dimension of national identity.

This mythology, the conception of the descent from quasi-divine, quasi-human, sage-ruler of the remote past, was not limited to the political sphere, but disseminated into the philosophical and religious domains. In particular, the Taoist school in the pre-imperial periods made attribution to the Yellow Emperor not only as the origin of its own philosophy, but also the race and all the arts of civilization, which later created the ‘Yellow Emperor-Laozi (Huang-Lao) Taoism,’ so popular during the early decades of the Han dynasty.⁹ The linkage between the Yellow Emperor and Taoism (and other schools) clearly appeared in the Four Canons of the Yellow Emperor (*huangdi sijing*).¹⁰ In this recently unearthed text, the Yellow Emperor was depicted as “the only one who united All-under-Heaven (*tianxia*) as one” (Chang and Feng 1998: 155). As a corollary, the Yellow Emperor as a universal king was believed to be the ancestor of all humankind.

In summary, the mythology of early China tells of how the Chinese began to imagine their communal ethnic history by creating a fictive kinship narrative to make sense of the ever-increasing inhabitants within China proper. It is important to note, however, that the ancient Chinese did not have a belief analogous to the Israelite’s self-image as Yahweh’s chosen people. As presently discussed, they regarded the nomadic peoples outside the Great Wall not as the descendants of the wicked and rejected ancestors but as having a common kinship with the native Chinese. There is no similar story in the myth of the Yellow Emperor comparable to the expulsion of Abraham’s eldest son Ishmael to live in the wilderness.

The Early Imperial Development

⁹ For the discussion of the Huang-Lao Taoism and its changes, see De Bary et al. (1999: 235-282), Durrant (1995: 157), Ess (1993), Hsiao Kung-chuan (1979: 71-72, 666), Ryden (1997), and Schwartz (1985: 237-254). Scholars have tried to see in Huang-Lao the missing link filling the gap between the philosophical Taoist tradition of the times of the Warring States and religious Taoism which is said to have originated only during the Later Han period (Ess 1993: 161).

¹⁰ The Four Canons, also known as the Huang-Lao Silk Manuscripts (*huang-lao boshu*), was excavated from the tomb at Mawangdui, Hunan province in 1973. This invaluable document was most probably written during the last phase of the Warring States period. Scholars have considered these works as “the first concrete textual evidence of the long-lost Huang-Lao lineage” (De Bary et al. 1999: 241). For the English translation with general discussion of the Four Canons, see Chang and Feng (1998) and Ryden (1997). Also see Carrozza (2002) for a recent review of the major studies on the Four Canons.

The notion of a single kinship community as the common descendants of the Yellow Emperor had grown more elaborate after the unification of the Qin dynasty in 221 B.C., for the Chinese peoples had encountered various foreign groups previously barely known to them. In the first half of the Former Han dynasty (206 B.C.-9 A.D.), the syncretic complex of the ‘Huang-Lao Taoism’ became so dominant that it even received imperial support until the triumph of Confucianism as state orthodoxy during the reign of Emperor Wu (141-87 B.C.). As a follower of Huang-Lao thought, Sima Tan, who served as the court historian and astronomer to Emperor Wu, proclaimed the superiority of Taoism over other schools of thought. Similarly, his son, Sima Qian (ca. 145-86 B.C.), was deeply influenced by the Huang-Lao scholarship; this is clearly reflected in his monumental writings, *Shiji* (Records of the Grand Historian), the first of twenty-four canonical histories of China (Ess 1993; Lewis 2007: 214-218).

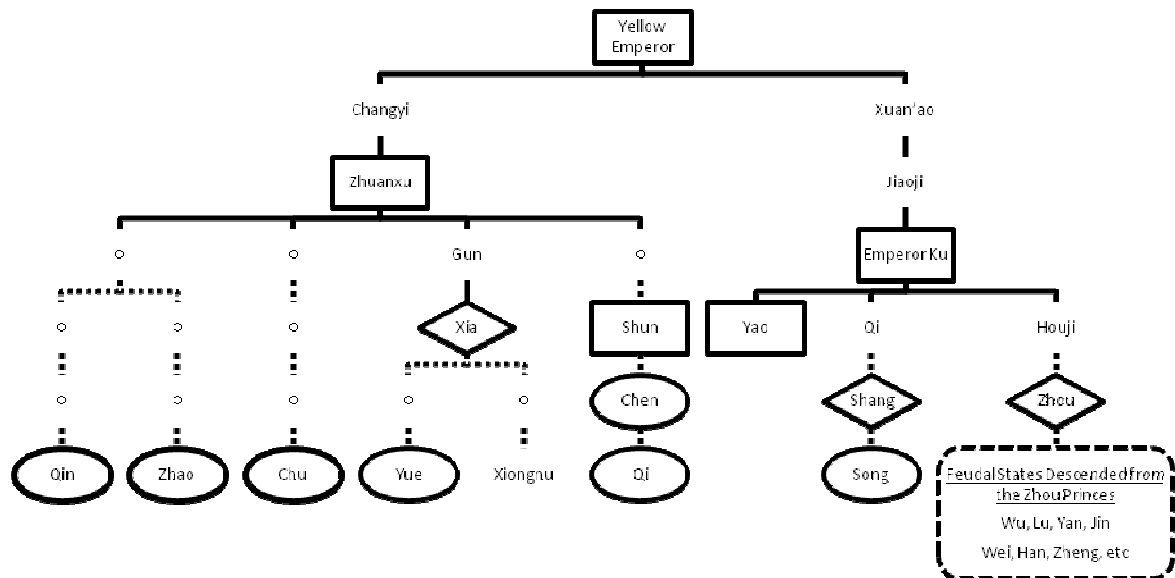
Sima Qian, the ‘Herodotus of China,’ lucidly formulated the allegedly ‘shared’ ancestry not only in terms of Chinese but also of non-Chinese on the basis of his belief that all human history and society stemmed from the Yellow Emperor (see Figure 5.1). Thus, the first chapter of *Shiji* is the basic annals (*benji*) of the Five Emperors (*wudi*) and, among them, the Yellow Emperor comes in first.¹¹ In fact, the very first word of the *Shiji* is the “Yellow Emperor.”¹² From the Yellow Emperor to Sima Qian’s own ruler Emperor Wu, Sima Qian created accordingly a narrative of imagined commonalities among all human societies. As Mark Lewis pertinently put it, such decision let Sima Qian organize the *Shiji* around the fundamental principle that “the world had been ruled by a chain of universal monarchs since the creation of the state by the Yellow Emperor” (2007: 215). Yet still, “this is no *Genesis*” (Nienhauser 1994: 18). Contrary to the first sentence of the Genesis, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth,” the first sentence of the *Shiji*

¹¹ The Five Emperors in the *Shiji* consist of the Yellow Emperor, Zhuanxu, Emperor Ku, Yao, and Shun. At the beginning, however, there were no such sequential and genealogical relationships. These gods had originally been worshipped in a parallel manner by the different clans in the various regions in early antiquity. So the very early form of the Chinese myths had been shaped “independently by each clan” (Mitarai 1982: 148). See also Gu Jiegang (2002: 13-19, 86-95) and Kaizuka (1971: 71-75).

¹² The influence of Taoism becomes obvious here, given the lack of any obvious link between the Yellow Emperor and ancient Confucian canons that mostly referred to the legend of Yao and Shun.

reads: “The Yellow Emperor, whose surname (*xing*) was Gongsun and personal name (*ming*) was Xuanyuan, was a son of Shaodian”¹³

Figure 5.1 The genealogy of the Yellow Emperor recorded in the *Shiji*



Legends:

□ : The Five Emperors (The Yellow Emperor, Zhuangxu, Emperor Ku, Yao, and Shun).

◇ : Three pre-imperial dynasties (Xia, Shang, and Zhou).

○ : Feudal states descended from the non-Zhou clans during the Eastern Zhou period (770-221 B.C.).

To construct the myth of a common descent within Han proper, Sima Qian also wrote that originally non-Sinitic polities of pre-imperial times like the Chu, Yue, and Qin indeed originated from the descents of the Yellow Emperor (see Figure 5.1). For instance, he related that the ancestors of the kings of the state of Chu in the central Yangtze River basin were descendants of Zhuangxu, one of the Five Emperors and believed to be a grandson of the Yellow Emperor, and by the end of the Shang dynasty they were “at times in the Middle Kingdom (*zhongguo*), and at times among the [alien] Yi-Di peoples.”¹⁴ Likewise, his records on the genealogical origin of the state of Qin were the same as Chu: the ancestors of the Qin core group descended from Zhuangxu and resided “sometimes in the Middle Kingdom and sometimes among the [alien] Yi-Di peoples,”

¹³ *Shiji* Chapter 1, p. 1. See Nienhauser (1994: 1-17) for the translation of the first chapter of the *Shiji*.

¹⁴ *Shiji* Chapter 40, pp. 1689-1690.

having been located in the northwestern frontiers of China proper (what is now the Shaanxi province).¹⁵ However, it was this peripheral state that eventually unified China by establishing the first imperial society which came to represent the mainstream Chinese culture.

Such genealogical reconstruction in the *Shiji* seems intriguing in the sense that the Chu state in particular had been largely excluded as a member of the Zhou-centered feudal federation known as the Central States during the Spring and Autumn period (770-476 B.C.). The Chu state and the Central States both understood the ethnic differences between the two. As Sima Qian had recorded, in 706 B.C., King Wu of Chu called himself, “I am [non-Sinitic] Man-Yi [in the south].”¹⁶ Regarding the perspective of the Central States on Chu, the ancient chronicle *Zuo zhuan* renders the following well-known historical event. When Duke Cheng (r. 590-573 B.C.) of the state of Lu (largely located in what is now Shandong province) wished to seek a friendly alliance with Chu and to revolt from Jin in 587 B.C., so many Lu people opposed their master’s plan so that he eventually gave up his purpose. The main disagreement came from the idea that “If he is not of our kin, he is sure to have a different mind (*fei wo zulei, qi xin bi yi*). Although Chu is great, its ruler is not akin to us; will he be willing to love us?”¹⁷ This reference to kin relations was made on the basis that the dukedoms of Lu and Jin began with the enfeoffment of relatives of the Zhou kings. The attachment to origins was equivalent to the familial commitments of the founders of the states and manifested itself frequently in the metaphor of brotherhood during the Spring and Autumn period (see, e.g., Schaberg 2001: 135-139).

Yet, as the domain of the Central States expanded, the kinship rhetoric that separated the Zhou-affiliated polities from the alien states was increasingly replaced by the fictive concept of genealogical homogeneity between the two. For instance, the founding legend of the state of Wu in the lower Yangtze area was revised when King Shoumeng (r. 585-561) began diplomatic relations with the Central States of the north. As a way to appeal

¹⁵ *Shiji* Chapter 5, pp. 173-174.

¹⁶ *Shiji* Chapter 40, p. 1695. It occurred in the thirty-fifth year of King Wu’s reign.

¹⁷ The translation follows Legge (1872: 354-355) with some modification.

to the Central States, the Wu kings, who initially identified themselves as a branch family of Chu, changed their self-image as scions of Taibo, a member of the Zhou royal clan, and asserted homogeneity with the Central States and heterogeneity with Chu (see Yoshimoto 2005). This fictive genealogy that the state of Wu originated from a Zhou prince was later compiled in the *Shiji*.¹⁸ In addition, even if the early Wu rulers did not seem to have accommodated themselves completely to the Sinitic culture, their descendants would eventually be able to intermarry with ruling houses of the Central States. The last Wu king, Fucha (r. 495-473), even intended to proclaim himself Hegemon of the Central States whose duty it was to protect all the Zhou-associated polities, so that in 482 B.C., he said, “With regard to the Zhou royal house, I am of the eldest.”¹⁹ The case of the Wu state represents the processes of socio-political expansion in the *longue durée* by means of bringing formerly non-Sinitic groups into the Zhou kinship system and migrating Zhou-type lineages into previously peripheral areas (see Falkenhausen 2006: ch.6).

When Sima Qian recorded the history of foreign states, he pointed out that beyond Han proper they were mostly founded by disaffected or defeated ‘Chinese’ who fled to the wilderness and reestablished there their regimes. So he formulated their ethno-genealogy as having some connection to Chinese ancestors—the descendants of the Yellow Emperor. His intention in the *Shiji* is clearly embodied in the chapters on Vietnam (then the Nam Viet kingdom), Korea (then the Wiman Chosun kingdom), and even Xiongnu, China’s main enemy (see Wang 2004: 41). The passage in the *Shiji* on the ethnic origins of the Xiongnu people reads: “The ancestor of the Xiongnu was a descendant of Xiahou clan (the ruling clan of the Xia dynasty)” (see Figure 5.1).²⁰ Hence, the Xiongnu became the descent of the Yellow Emperor because, from the Yellow Emperor down to Yu the Great, one of legendary Sage Kings who founded the Xia dynasty, they all shared the “same

¹⁸ *Shiji* Chapter 31 “Genealogical account of the house of Wu Taibo,” p. 1445.

¹⁹ *Shiji* Chapter 31, p. 1474. Fucha’s self-consciousness of belonging to the same kin as the Zhou king is also mentioned in the *Guo yu* Chapter 19, p. 615-617.

²⁰ *Shiji* Chapter 110, p. 2879. Sima Qian’s ethno-genealogy on the Xiongnu was critically reexamined by an eminent scholar Wang Guowei (1877-1927). In spite of some factual errors, however, contemporary Chinese historians such as Yao Dali (2004) still acclaim Sima Qian’s invaluable contribution of tracing entire history of the Xiongnu since he was the first historian who actually did that. See also Di Cosmo (2002: 163-166) and Ma Changshou (1962a) for a question of ethnic origin of the Xiongnu.

gens (*tongxing*) but adopted different designations for their states.”²¹ This ‘Chinese’ origin of the Xiongnu in the *Shiji* marks them out as legitimate constituents of Chinese history from the very beginning and, more importantly, makes them “part of the family” (Di Cosmo 2002: 300) in conjunction with the kinship rhetoric in Han-Xiongnu diplomacy sustained by marriage alliances.²²

It is interesting to compare the Roman portrait of Attila and the Huns, with the description of the Xiongnu, the ancestors of the Chinese, as offered by ancient Chinese. For instance, the fourth-century Roman historian Ammianus Marcellinus wrote, “The Huns exceed anything that can be imagined in ferocity and barbarism. They gash their children’s cheeks to prevent their beards growing.²³ Their stocky body, huge arms, and disproportionately large head give them a monstrous appearance. They live like beasts” (Grousset 1970: 74). Many Chinese in Han times evidently shared this kind of pejorative characterization and saw the Xiongnu as beasts to be pastured, not as members of their kind (see Chapter 4). Perhaps influenced by the prejudice of his contemporaries, Sima Qian also criticized the greedy actions of the Xiongnu and expressed some moral disapproval regarding their nomadic behavior and customs (see Di Cosmo 2002: 288).²⁴ However, comparisons between the Roman viewpoint of the Huns and the Chinese perception of the Xiongnu made by several Western scholars notably René Grousset (1970), do not capture the real and essential difference. Contrary to Ammianus Marcellinus and other Roman historians, Sima Qian and Ban Gu (32-92 A.D.) imagined

²¹ *Shiji* Chapter 1, p. 45. The translation follows Nienhauser (1994: 17), but I put “*gens*” instead of “*cognomen*” as an original translation of *xing*. In ancient China, the term *xing* means a large descent unit above the lineage level, approximately synonymous with “clan” or the old Roman usage of *gens*. The term “*cognomen*” (or “*familia*”) is roughly tantamount to Chinese term *shi*, designating corporate kin-group or simply “lineage.” I consult Falkenhausen (2006) regarding the definition of those terms.

²² See Di Cosmo (2002: ch.7 and 8) for a detailed discussion of ethno-history and ethnography of the Xiongnu in the *Shiji*.

²³ The custom to gash the face with a knife was fairly common among the Inner Asian peoples. As Franke (1975: 137-138) demonstrates, the Chinese sources also pointed out this custom not only among the Xiongnu from whom the Hun originated, but among the Uighur and Jurchen. For the Jurchens, for instance, their leaders gashed their foreheads and wept to heaven when they had eventually conquered the Northern Song dynasty in 1127. Likewise, a Southern Song writer wrote: “If someone dies, they [Jurchens] gash their forehead with a knife so that blood and tears stream down and mingle. They call this “to take leave with bloody tears.” They bury their dead but do not have inner and outer coffins.” See Xu Mengxin, *Sanchao beimeng huibian* Chapter 3, p. 18.

²⁴ Against such Sinocentric interpretation, Thomas Barfield (1981) tries to rationalize the behavioral pattern of the Xiongnu by considering the situation in the steppe.

interethnic kinship commonalities by attributing foreign groups like the Xiongnu, Koreans and Vietnamese as all descendants of the Chinese.²⁵

In the eyes of the ancient Chinese then, the nomadic aliens were uncultured and unsophisticated kin, but who could be corrected through learning the Confucian moral standard. A typical example of a naturalized Chinese is Jin Midi (134-86 B.C.), originally the heir-apparent of the Xiongnu Xiutu king, who came to the Han court as a prisoner in bonds.²⁶ Thanks to his devotion to duty and respectful demeanor, he later became one of the closest aides of Emperor Wu and was given the posthumous title of the Respectful Marquis (*Jinghou*).²⁷ The success of Jin Midi, however, was not achieved devoid of ethnic tensions. Ban Gu, indeed, did not forget to mention some tacit ethnic prejudice toward Jin Midi, but, as was often the case, the Confucian perspective of cultural universalism eventually prevailed.²⁸

To sum up, the works of Sima Qian reflect the typical Chinese understanding of the Middle Kingdom and its neighboring states during early imperial times. The construction of the myth of the Yellow Emperor as a common ancestor of all Chinese, self-identified either as the 'Qin people' (*qinren*) or as 'Han people' (*hanren*) in his times, neatly corresponds to the expansion of ancient China in the course of a gradual unification of ethnically heterogeneous populations. This fictive kinship discourse was further stretched

²⁵ In the *Han shu* Chapter 94, Ban Gu followed Sima Qian's description of ethno-genealogy of the Xiongnu with only minor variants (see Boodberg 1957). Although Ban Gu mainly inherited Sima Qian's notion of common ancestry, however, his perception toward non-Chinese was different from Sima Qian in many respects. See Di Cosmo (2002: 271) and Liu Chunhua (2003) for a detailed discussion of similarities and differences between two great historians.

²⁶ King of Xiutu was one of the major leaders under the supreme command of the Chanyu, the great khan of all the Xiongnu. See Tang Changru (1955: 382-403) for a more detailed discussion. Ho Ping-ti (1998: 130) mistakenly claims that Jin Midi was an heir-apparent to the Chanyu. In addition to Jin Midi, Gan Fu, a Xiongnu who had been captured in war and later accompanied by his master Zhang Qian, can be regarded as another representative of the nomad's presence in Han China. Gan Fu traveled to Central Asia with Zhang Qian and proved a loyal and resourceful assistant to his famous master.

²⁷ *Han shu* Chapter 68 "The biography of Jin Midi," p. 2959-2967. The complete translation is available in Watson (1974: 151-157).

²⁸ *Han shu* Chapter 68, p. 2960. It reads, "Many of the emperor's relatives and other persons in high position were secretly resentful, saying, 'His Majesty [Emperor Wu] by some quirk of circumstance gets himself a barbarian boy (*hu'er*) and what does he do but treat him with honor and respect!' When the emperor heard of their remarks, he only treated Jin Midi more generously than ever." The translation follows Watson (1974: 152-153).

beyond the Great Wall. For Sima Qian and Ban Gu, this ‘Chinese’ origin of non-Chinese groups probably marked their efforts to rationalize foreign polities, including the formidable Xiongnu. According to Di Cosmo, such reconstructions of the Xiongnu’s distant past “have a highly normative function and fulfill two goals: making the unknown seem familiar, and establishing a certain subject as one worthy of investigation” (2002: 298). In other words, the rationalization of the nomadic peoples was part of the grand strategy of ‘taming the north’ of the Han dynasty. In the long run, such interpretation was to become the foundation of China’s all-inclusive conception of ethnicity. As presently argued, this imagined commonality was not only asserted by native Chinese, but by non-native peoples as well.

The Middle Imperial Expansion to Non-Han Conquerors

About half a millennium later, despite going largely unnoticed in much of scholarship, Sima Qian’s kinship rhetoric of the Xiongnu was appropriated by Helian Bobo (r. 407-425), the founder of the short-lived Xia, one of the Sixteen Kingdoms and the last Xiongnu state in Chinese history. When he established the empire, he proclaimed himself as a descendant of the Xiongnu Xiahou clan (which exactly followed the *Shiji*), and thus chose “Great Xia” as the name of his state.²⁹ At the same time, unlike his ancestors who sinicized their surname to Liu, the imperial surname of the Han dynasty, he went back to the old Xiongnu noble clan name, which reveals that he was very conscious of his ethnic identity.³⁰ However, it was not contradictory for Helian Bobo to be both Xiongnu and Chinese on the basis of his reference to the ‘Chinese’ origin of the Xiongnu in the *Shiji*. Indeed, he declared himself both the Great Shanyu (supreme chief of the Xiongnu) and the Heavenly King of Great Xia.

As an ambitious Xiongnu leader-ruler in times of disunion and disunity, Helian Bobo also embraced the Chinese political ideal of one unified empire. For instance, the name of the capital of the Xia in the Ordos region, Tongwan, was combined from *tongyi* (unification)

²⁹ *Jin shu* Chapter 130, p. 3202.

³⁰ Boodberg (1979: 47-73) provides in-depth information on Helian Bobo’s genealogy. The surname Helian may have come from the Huyan, one of three great noble houses in the Xiongnu society.

and *wanfang* (all states), which symbolizes his aborted dream of unifying all of China.³¹ In opposition to the conventional interpretations in Western scholarship, such as those of Thomas Barfield (1989) who overestimates the non-Chinese elements of the Xia, he was deeply influenced by the Chinese ideal of Great Unity (*da tongyi*) (see, e.g., Qiu 1993: 51).³² Throughout Chinese history, this utopian ideal prevailed over the realpolitik of many states and was as true for such alien polities as the Liao, Jin, Yuan, and Qing as for any native dynasty. At present, the PRC's official slogan of a 'unified multiethnic state' is not something invented in modern times but an extension of prior convictions.

Helian Bobo's syncretic ideal was not uncommon during the Age of Disunion (220-589), the early phase of the middle imperial period. Several non-Han conquerors not only adopted the image of the Chinese ruler as the exclusive holder of the Mandate of Heaven (*tianming*), but portrayed themselves as the descendant of the Yellow Emperor. Although he was of the proto-Tibetan Di tribe, Fu Jian (r. 357-385) of the Former Qin, who temporarily unified northern China, strove to be the sole legitimate ruler of the Middle Kingdom. To prove his qualification as the Son of Heaven, he embraced Sinitic culture as a whole. Accordingly, he was inclined to identify himself with the personage of the Yellow Emperor. On the eve of the Fei River battle in 383, he praised the Yellow Emperor for achieving the Age of Grand Commonality and was determined to accomplish it again, by pacifying the South where the native Chinese dynasty, the Eastern Jin, was located.³³ As it turned out, however, the lack of military coordination led to a decisive defeat in his campaign against the Eastern Jin—the Fei River battle.³⁴ Just as

³¹ *Jin shu* Chapter 130, p. 3205.

³² Barfield (1989: 119) asserts that Helian Bobo stressed steppe traditions and therefore his government was self-consciously tribal and rejected Chinese forms of administration. Contrary to his imagination, however, the capital Tongwan was a heavily fortified and technologically advanced city not common to steppe tradition, not to mention the meaning of its name. Further, it could probably influence the urban planning of Luoyang, the capital of Northern Wei dynasty from 495 A.D.

³³ *Jin shu* Chapter 114 "The biography of Fu Jian: part 2," p. 2915. Fu Jian said, "Xuanyuan [a personal name of the Yellow Emperor] was a great sage. His humanity was like that of heaven, his wisdom like that of a spirit. Thus it could be that there was none who did not follow and obey. ... How can we dare not to institute the enterprise of Grand Commonality (*datong zhi ye*)." The translation follows Rogers (1968: 163-164).

³⁴ Eberhard gives an intriguing sociological explanation of Fu Jian's sudden rise and fall by attributing it to the characteristics of Tibetan social organization in which "tribal organization always had been weak among them" (1965: 124). As he further discusses, it was easy for Fu Jian to transform his Tibetans, who were mostly fought as footsoldiers, into a regular army, given that the organization of footsoldiers is easier

his overconfidence in the Mandate of Heaven was betrayed, so was his reliance in vain on the ethno-political rhetoric of the Yellow Emperor.

In addition, the rulers of the Northern Wei dynasty (386-534), the Tuoba [Tabgatch] clan of the Xianbei [Särbi], declared that their ancestors descended from the Yellow Emperor (see Bai 1995: 68). This is well reflected in the Book of Wei (*Wei shu*), one of twenty-four canonical histories compiled by Wei Shou during the Northern Qi dynasty (550-577). On the ethnic origin of the Touba Xianbei, it says:

In antiquity, the Yellow Emperor had twenty-five sons. Those who stayed at home became the ancestors of the Hua Chinese; those who went abroad scattered in the wilderness (*huangfu*).³⁵ The youngest son, Changyi, was given the northern lands containing the Great Xianbei Mountain.³⁶ From this he took his name. ... Since the Yellow Emperor ruled through the virtue of 'earth' (*tude*) and northerners call the earth "Tuo" and the ruler (*hou*) "Ba," therefore, "Tuoba" became their lineage name (*shi*).³⁷

Imagining non-Sinitic nomads as descendants of the Yellow Emperor becomes quite explicit here: even the tribal name Tuoba stands for the descendants of the Yellow Emperor.³⁸ Likewise, the Yuwen clan of the Xianbei, who established the Northern Zhou dynasty (557-581), claimed descent from the Divine Husbandman (*Shennong*), the legendary founder of Chinese agriculture and herbal medicine (Pearce 2001: 150). At the same time, the Northern Zhou court de-sinicized their subjects by bestowing Xianbei surnames on its Han Chinese followers (see Dien 1977; Lewis 2009a: 168). Like Helian Bobo, there was no contradiction for the ruling Yuwen house to claim at once Chinese-ness and Xianbei-ness. This trend of 'Sino-Xianbei synthesis' as an outcome of the interaction between sinicizing and de-sinicizing forces also appeared in its rival state—

than the organization of mobile horsemen. As soon as the leader died or was defeated, however, the organization quickly collapsed. What remained were unorganized individuals. See also Eberhard (1977: 127-134).

³⁵ As Honey (1990: 169-171) demonstrates, some Western scholars interpret these accounts as part of the defensive process of 'demonizing the barbarians' by turning them into the descendants of the great evil doers of the past, banished to the outer world. But such imagination, which is probably motivated by the Judeo-Christian idea of children of Abraham, is mistaken.

³⁶ According to the *Shiji*, Changyi was also described a father of Zhuanxu, one of the Five Emperors after the Yellow Emperor. As discussed, Zhuanxu was believed to be an ancestor of the state of Chu and Qin.

³⁷ *Wei shu* Chapter 1, p. 1. The translation follows Holmgren (1982a: 51) with minor changes. See Holmgren (1982a) for a complete and annotated translation of this chapter with a general introduction of early Tuoba history.

³⁸ Boodberg (1979: 237-239) gives several possible hypotheses on the etymological origin of the name 'Tuoba.'

the Northern Qi.³⁹ By the sixth century, therefore, ‘Han’ and ‘Xianbei’ aristocratic families were neither distinct nor separate groups from each other (see Pearce, Spiro, and Ebrey 2001: 17).

To summarize, during the Age of Disunion, we can observe many instances in which fanciful ethno-genealogies were drawn up. For alien conquerors, in general, this manipulation of ancient mythologies and symbols of an idealized antiquity reflects their efforts to secure the right to govern the Middle Kingdom and its multiethnic subjects. Further, it was a political strategy to mitigate any potential threat from the majority population; for without substantial support from the native Chinese population, the less numerous alien rulers risked “being swamped by revolt as soon as their coercive grip loosened” (Barfield 1989: 103). In this respect, the appropriation of ancient Chinese mythology was one practical way to integrate diverse ethnicities. Under such circumstances, interethnic marriages were increasingly frequent, although hostility would remain. Arguably, the interethnic amalgamation could not be so common at some points; but, it must have changed after the political ascendancy of the foreign intruders (see, e.g., Dien 1976; Holmgren 1995-96; Lee 1978; Li 1928; Tang 1955). It was the “drift of a kind of alloy, so to speak, tempered and mellowed by a number of new elements” (Li 1928: 275). Most importantly, this overall trend of ethnic blending laid the foundation for the cosmopolitan spirit of the Tang China.

One of the typical characteristics of Chinese historiography has been the appeal to the conception of common ancestry, which holds that both Sinitic and non-Sinitic peoples originated from the same ancestors. For instance, the editors of the *Liao shi* (Standard history of the Liao) recorded that the Khitan royal house descended from the Yuwen Xianbei, so that the Khitans were simultaneously descendants of the Divine Husbandman, known as the Flame Emperor (*yandi*). They probably intended to bolster the political legitimacy of the Liao (907-1125) in Chinese imperial history by tracing their ancestry to another alien regime, the Northern Zhou, placed in the legitimate line of dynastic

³⁹ The socio-political condition of the Northern Qi state was vividly discussed in the works of Yan Zuitui (531-591), translated in Teng (1968). See also Lewis (2006).

succession. In contrast, the Liao statesman Yelü Yan (d. 1113) called the Khitans descendants of Xuanyuan, the Yellow Emperor.⁴⁰ His argument would reflect the high degree of acculturation in the late Liao society, which differed from the earlier phase when the Khitans enshrined their own founding legend.⁴¹ However, later conquest dynasties, the Jurchen Jin,⁴² Mongol Yuan,⁴³ and Manchu Qing,⁴⁴ did not share the ancestral myth of the native Chinese but cherished their own tribal mythologies. They instead pursued the ideal of political unification—a desire to achieve inclusiveness within a unified empire to which all peoples belong. To accommodate all ethnicities, they employed Confucianism as the official state ideology, one that preaches a supra-ethnic cultural universalism as well as a doctrine of ‘one-world one-ruler’ (see Chapter 3).

After the collapse of the Qing in 1911, the idea of common blood has been the dominant force in the formation of post-imperial Chinese nationhood. In particular, the Republican-era nationalists transformed the ancient myth about the Yellow Emperor as the progenitor of the Chinese peoples into a systematic theory of the antiquity and consanguinity of the Chinese nation (see Dikötter 1990, 1992, 1994, 1996, 1997, 2005; Harrison 2000: ch.1; Ishikawa 2002a; Leibold 2006, 2007; Li 1928; Shen 1997). The Republican government adopted a calendar based on the Yellow Emperor and the fourth of April was declared a national holiday in honor of his birthday; as critical historian Gu Jiegang recollected, “the official bulletins posted on every street and lane in the days of the Revolution [of 1911] stated that we were living ‘in the year of the Yellow Emperor 4609.’ On what basis was this chronology compiled?” (Hummel 1931: 81). Further, Chinese nationalists regarded

⁴⁰ *Liao shi* Chapter 63, p. 949. See also Wang Ke (2001: 127).

⁴¹ On Khitan’s legend of tribal origin, see Wittfogel and Feng (1949: 272). See also Liu Pujiang (2008).

⁴² Regarding the legend of the origin of the Jurchen Jin imperial clan, consult Franke (1978b, 1981). The first ancestor’s name was Hanpu (Korean: Hambo) who came from the Korean Peninsula in the tenth century.

⁴³ The ancestral legend of the Chinggisid Mongols was recorded in the *Secret History of the Mongols*, which has been the only genuine Mongolian account of the history of Chinggis Khan and his family. Igor de Rachewiltz (1971) renders the translation of the first two chapters of the *Secret History*. See also Tamura (1973).

⁴⁴ The Qing rulers were conscious of being descendants of Jurchens. Indeed, the Manchu dynasty was founded as the Later Jin in 1616 by Nurhaci who “explicitly claimed to the heir of the imperial mantle of the Jin Jurchens and utilized the imagery of the Song-Jin period to reinforce his claim to a legitimate right to rule the Northeast” (Crossley 1987: 770). Later, in 1777, the Qianlong emperor initiated the research project on Manchu origins. Accordingly, the *Research on Manchu Origins (Manzhou yuanliu kao)* was published in 1783 (see Crossley 1987, 1999: ch.6). Contrary to the belief of Manchu rulers, however, the origins of the Manchus “could not be easily restricted to the imperial Jurchens” (Crossley 1987: 769).

non-Han groups such as the Manchus, Mongols, and Tibetans as racially related ‘branches’ (*fenzhi*) off the Han line of evolution (see Chapter 7). Their emphasis on the ‘Chinese’ origin of non-Han peoples was in a manner remarkably similar to Sima Qian’s fictive ethno-genealogy that united the Han and Xiongnu peoples in common blood and kinship. As I shall discuss later, this practice of emphasizing interethnic commonalities has continued in the PRC.

The Persistence of the Kinship Rhetoric in Interstate Relations

China’s kinship rhetoric was not only articulated through ancestral myth and legend, but played a significant role in interstate relationships. The formal relationship between the Middle Kingdom and foreign states had often been defined by adopting kinship terms like ‘grandfather and grandson,’ ‘father and son,’ ‘uncle and nephew,’ and ‘elder and younger brothers.’ In theory, the Sinocentric world order imagines that the kinship status of the Son of Heaven should be superior to his frontier vassals. In reality, however, the suzerainty of the Chinese emperor over foreign rulers was far from stable. The actual status of non-Han sovereigns was sometimes equal to or even higher than that of the rulers of native Chinese dynasties like the Han, Tang, Song, and Ming.⁴⁵ That situation had been particularly common in the era of what Rossabi (1983) pertinently calls “China among equals,” a period which spanned nearly four centuries—from late Tang until the thirteenth century. In late Tang China, the Sino-Tibetan treaties of 783 and 821 comparatively resemble a modern interstate treaty between sovereign equals, although the Tang emperors wished to retain their symbolic supremacy in kinship terms—‘the father and the son-in-law’ or ‘the maternal uncle and the nephew’ on the basis of marriage alliances.⁴⁶ Such alleged superiority was merely one example of the traditional rhetoric in a lesser empire.

⁴⁵ See Fletcher (1968: 206-216), Franke (1970), Suzuki (1968), Tao Jinsheng (1988, 2008), Wang Gungwu (1983), and Wright (2005).

⁴⁶ See Suzuki (1968: 185-186), Wang Gungwu (1983: 58), and Pan Yihong (1992a: 137-148, 1997a: 347-355). At the same time, the Tang-Turkish and Tang-Uighur relations were also marked by a sense of equality between the parties (see Drompp 2005: ch.1; Tao 1983: 67).

After the demise of Tang, the kinship metaphor in interstate relations continued to appear during the period of Five Dynasties (907-960). Given that the Middle Kingdom was weak and disunited, the Khitan emperors treated the Son of Heaven as their brother or even son. In 926, when Yelü Abaoji (r. 907-926), the founder of the Liao dynasty, met the ambassador of the Later Tang dynasty named Yao Kun, he said, “I swore brotherhood with the father of that Lord of Hedong province [Li Keyong]; that Son of Heaven in Henan [Emperor Zhuangzong] was my son, as the son of my dear friend.”⁴⁷ Yet it is also true that this kind of kinship rhetoric did not guarantee a peaceful coexistence. He said further to Yao Kun, “My son [Emperor Zhuangzong] in China, although having the son-to-father relationship with me, nonetheless was at times in a relationship of enmity with me.”⁴⁸ Like his father, Yelü Deguang (r. 926-947) set up a son-to-father relationship with Shi Jingtang (r. 936-942), the founder of the Later Jin.

This kinship rhetoric was not restricted to the relationship between the Khitans and sinicized Turks but continued to persist in the Song-Liao relations after the Treaty of Shanyuan in 1005. Two imperial households thereafter built a fictive kinship relation and retained it until the end of the Liao.⁴⁹ Although they probably did not develop kinship solidarity greater than the level of symbolic rhetoric, this imagined kinship effectively ensured the absence of major wars between what Tao Jing-shen (1988) metaphorically calls “Two Sons of Heaven” over a century. Likewise, the pejorative attitudes of the Song Chinese toward the Khitans, sometimes insultingly characterized as ‘wolves,’ ‘owls,’ ‘ugly caitiffs,’ gradually but not completely, disappeared. By the mid-eleventh century, the Song court even admitted that the Khitans are the most advanced of any of China’s

⁴⁷ Li Keyong, well-known for his loyalty to Tang, was the Shatuo Turk warlord of northern Shanxi with whom Abaoji swore a blood brotherhood in 905. His son Li Cunxu (r. 923-926), Emperor Zhuangzong, founded the Later Tang, second of the Five Dynasties. Yao Kun was dispatched to make a formal announcement of the death of Emperor Zhuangzong and the accession of Emperor Mingzhong (r. 926-933).

⁴⁸ This rare memoir of Yao Kun was translated in Mote (1999: 45-47). See also *Xin Wudai shi* Chapter 72, pp. 889-890. Being unable to respond Abaoji’s demand of territorial concession including present-day Beijing, he was sent in prison. The territorial claim of the Liao was fulfilled when Shi Jingtang of the Later Jin granted the Sixteen Prefectures to Abaoji’s son. That region had become the major source of conflict for nearly two centuries.

⁴⁹ See Tao Jing-shen (1988:107) for a list of kinship terms adopted in Song-Liao relations. In general, these two ‘brother’ emperors would address each other as elder or younger brother with respect to actual age. Further, the kinship terms extended to include all other members of imperial families (see Mote 1999: 70-71; Tao 1988: 10-24; Wright 2005).

neighbors throughout history; at the same time, the Liao rulers had expressed the opinion of ‘one family two states’ (see Tao 1983: 72, 77; Wang 2001: 127). The relations of the Southern Song to the Jurchen Jin were also defined in terms of fictive kinship in which the Jin emperor became the generational seniors, which symbolizes his political superiority over the Song ruler. In the treaty of 1164-1165, the familial relation of younger uncle (Jin) and nephew (Song) was adopted (Franke 1970: 81).

Along with this pseudo-family relationship, actual interethnic marriage alliances were frequently occurred, commensurable to some degree with many European absolutist states. In the history of the Chinese empire, ‘marriage alliances’ (*heqin*; literally “harmonious kinship”) with alien states, traced back to the pre-imperial period and formalized later during Former Han times, had been a common diplomatic technique.⁵⁰ When it was weak in relation to foreign enemies, the Middle Kingdom adopted the imperial policies of peace and appeasement such as the marriage alliances to deflect ‘barbarian’ attacks. Generally but not always, therefore, this alliance by marriage was established by sending off Chinese princesses to the powerful chieftains in the frontiers such as the Xiongnu, Turk, Tibet, Uighur.⁵¹ After the Tang, the rulers of conquest dynasties like Khitan, Tangut, Mongol, and Manchu often invested the marriage bond with other non-Han ethnicities, while native Chinese emperors of Song and Ming dynasties never did promote it. In the following, I shall delve into one most famous case, the Sino-Tibetan marriage alliances during Tang China.

Princess Wencheng of the Tang was married off to the Tibetan ruler (*btsan-po*) in 641. Once this Sino-Tibetan marriage was achieved (for the first time in history), the Tibetan ruler allowed himself to be significantly swayed by Princess Wencheng. He built a city for his Chinese bride; he began to use silk garments, following the Chinese style; and he invited Tang scholars to Tibet (see Jagchid and Symons 1989: 155). Once Princess Wencheng left for Tibet, the period of peaceful cultural exchange between the two lasted

⁵⁰ See Cui Mingde (2007) and Cui Mingde and Lin Enxian (1995a, 1995b) for a general survey of the history of marriage alliances. See also Jagchid and Symons (1989), Pan Yihong (1997b), and Wang Gungwu (1983) for the effects of marriage alliances on Sino-nomadic relations.

⁵¹ Interestingly, this policy was also adopted by alien conquerors during the Age of Disunion, specifically throughout the fifth and sixth centuries. See Cui Mingde (1991).

for decades (Pan 1997b: 114). About half a century later, upon request from the Tibetan side, another Tang princess, Princess Jincheng, was married to the Tibetan *btsan-po*. She left for Tibet in 710 and played a central role in diplomacy and politics, developing an intimate relationship between the Tang and the Tibet until her death in 740 (Pan 1997a, 1997b; Shi 2000). The Tibetan leader, therefore, came to be regarded as a “son-in-law” or “maternal nephew” of the Tang emperor. As for the Tibetans, this kinship rhetoric was to survive even after the demise of the Tang. For instance, when a Song envoy, Liu Huan, was sent to the Tibetan regime, centered in Qingtang (what is now Xining, Qinghai province) in 1038, the Tibetan leader, a descendant of *btsan-po*, asked: “How about my maternal uncle, the Son of Heaven (*ajiu tianzi anfou*)?”⁵² For the Song side, it was a diplomatic gaffe for it disregarded the proper title of the Song emperor, and represented the unrefined impropriety of the Tibetans. For the Tibetan side, however, it was the primordial response to the Chinese based on collective memories of Tang princesses. In spite of recognizing different surnames of Tang (Li) and Song (Zhao) emperors, it did not prevent the Tibetans from eliminating a fictive kinship relation between the two.

Until the last days of the imperial period, the Chinese statesmen relied on the strategy of “harmonious kinship” as an important part of appeasement policy toward foreign powers, no matter how alien they were to the Chinese standard. One exemplary case would be the diplomatic strategy of Qiying (1787-1858), a Manchu imperial kinsman of the Qing state, for negotiating a peace treaty with Great Britain after the First Opium War. In 1843, despite his prejudice against European ‘barbarians,’ he proposed an honorary adoption of the son of the chief British plenipotentiary, Sir Henry Pottinger (1789-1856), who was the first governor of Hong Kong between 1843 and 1844. As John King Fairbank (1939: 479, 1969: 110) vividly describes:

Seeing a miniature of Pottinger’s family, for example, Ch’i-ying [Qiying] explained that, having no son himself, he wished to adopt Sir Henry’s eldest boy. On being told that the boy must first finish his education in England, Ch’i-ying replied, “Very well, he is my adopted son from this day”; henceforth his name should be “Frederick Keying Pottinger.” Having obtained the son’s

⁵² *Song shi* Chapter 492 “The biography of foreign countries: part 8 the Tufan (Tibet),” p. 14162. See also Franke (1983: 118) for another source on the same event. According to this slightly different account, the Tibetan ruler referred to the Song emperor as the “Son of Heaven of the Zhao Family” and to the crown prince as “Our Maternal Uncle of the Zhao Family.”

miniature, he then made bold to ask for that of his mother and offered a portrait of his own wife in exchange. After some hesitation Sir Henry gave up Lady Pottinger's picture also. Ch'i-ying received it in elaborate Manchu fashion and ordered it borne home in his chair of state.

It proved to be a merely symbolic gesture in that Sir Henry's son, Sir Frederick Pottinger (1831-1865), did not become Qiying's son. Nevertheless, this episode alluded to the Chinese way of conceiving aliens. As has been discussed, the sense of imagined kinship endures into the present.

The Search for Shared Commonness in Contemporary China

In modern China, the basic principle for interpreting its ethnic relations in the past has been to search for the 'scientific' evidences of shared primordial commonality between Han and non-Han nationalities. That has been a central tenet of nationhood and statehood, as reflected for instance in the PRC's official mantra that China is a 'unified multiethnic country,' articulated not only by statesmen like Li Weihai (1981, 1987) who was the director of the Commission of the Affairs of Nationalities, but also by ethnologists and sociologists such as Ma Yin (1989), Fei Xiaotong (1989, 1999), and Ma Rong (2001, 2004, 2007). So, even when the Chinese began to read their national history through the idea of linear history (see Duara 1995; Kwong 2001) and the notion of race (see Dikötter 1992, 1996) since the late nineteenth century, their application of such concepts has been to assert the inseparable ties among the members of the Chinese nation. In particular, China's current ethnic discourse is not simply intended to substantiate a putative binary opposition between 'civilized' Han and 'uncivilized' minorities. Rather, the orthodox theory of the origin and development of Chinese civilization has been what Fei Xiaotong (1999) coins 'a single system with many branches' (*duoyuan yiti*)—there has been but one enduring civilization with regional and ethnic variations. From the two examples of contemporary historiography on Tibetan and Yi peoples, I will now discuss how the Chinese strive to essentialize inalienable ties between Han and minorities by means of the idea of race and social evolutionism.

Tibetans as the 'Racial Brother' of Han Nationality

It has been well-known to foreigners that the Chinese government has always wanted to legitimize its possession of Tibet proper. Outside China, however, what has been less understood is China's justification—treating the Tibet people as racially-defined 'brothers' of the Han peoples without regard to the will of the Tibetans. In the opening lines of their book, for instance, the authors of *The Historical Status of China's Tibet* assert: "China is a unified country with 56 nationalities. As a major member of *this big family*, the Tibetans are found in large number. ... At the time the unification of the Tibetan race, its various tribes maintained close ties with the Han and several other nationalities" (Wang and Nyima 1997: 1; my emphasis).⁵³ They further insist: "This 1000-year-long written history between the Tibetans and various other nationalities in the big Chinese family is an inalterable fact" (ibid.: 4). As for defending China's sovereign claim to Tibet, most of the state-sponsored works on Tibetan history have thus been dedicated to the argument that Tibet is and historically has been an inalienable part of China. This idea of interethnic commonalities is modeled on at least two facets of the indivisible connection between the two—one is historical-cultural and the other is racial.

On the one hand, the PRC's official sources unanimously underscore the long-lasting cultural and economic interchanges between Han and Tibetans since the seventh century. On the political status of Tibet, they highlight a historical continuity of Chinese 'rule' since the Mongol Yuan dynasty that invaded Tibet in the 1240s, what is obviously untrue as even Mao Zedong once acknowledged.⁵⁴ But still, they deliberately discount the reality that Tibet's political relations with Ming China were distant and only maintained through a nominal recognition of Tibetan leaders and a tea-horse trade, despite the Chinese label of "tribute" (Rossabi 1998: 241-245; Tuttle 2008).⁵⁵ Furthermore, following the

⁵³ This English text published in the PRC was intended to counter what the authors call the theory of "Tibetan independence" in much Western scholarship. See Tuttle (2008) for a more discussion of this book including the authorship, some background of the publication.

⁵⁴ As he candidly admitted, "there was no unity between the Han people and the Tibetan people for hundred of years" (Mao 1986[1951]: 201).

⁵⁵ Contrary to the Sino-Tibetan relations during the Ming dynasty, Tibet's interactions with Mongol regimes in the steppe were increasingly close. The most significant event was the conversion of Altan Khan (1507-1582) in 1578. He declared Tibetan Buddhism the official religion of all the Mongols. Thereafter, Buddhism "became the dominant faith of the whole Mongol world" (Barfield 1989: 288).

government's propaganda line, almost all scholars in the PRC highly esteem the history of marriage alliances as a catalyst for reciprocal interactions between the Han and Tibetan peoples, one that eventually consolidates China's political integrity.⁵⁶ At present, therefore, it is not surprising that the epic of Princess Wencheng is taught in nearly every school in China and serves as a critical instrument for asserting the undeniable control by the Beijing government over Tibetan regions. In summary, the memories of Chinese princesses who became mothers of the Tibetans serve the PRC's national interest (*raison d'état*) and, as common in the cases of primordial nationalism, these imaginary narratives simply transcend time and space.

On the other hand, the Chinese government makes use of the modern science of race to highlight blood ties across its ethnic groups. So it asserts genetic similarities between Han and Tibetans and differences between Tibetans and Nepalis and Indians (see Sautman 2001: 107). A renowned sociologist Ma Changshou (2003), for instance, proposes the Han-Tibetan racial sameness on the ground that both belong to the Mongoloid race and the same (Sino-Tibetan) language family. He then tries to refute two major claims, which contradict his argument. First, based on some anthropometrical researches suggesting physical similarities between Han and Tibetans, he criticizes the theory that treats the Tibetan race as an inherently separate group from the Chinese nation as an ideological weapon of Western imperialism. Second, despite admitting to a long history of cultural interaction between Tibetans and Indians, he harshly denounces the idea of the Indian origin of Tibetan peoples as falling short of any 'objective' validity: "We [Chinese] are against a subjective idealist who constructs a deductive reasoning of racial origin on the basis of religious origin" (Ma 2003: 348). His idea evidently resonates with the PRC's official statement; both Tibetans and Han peoples share inseparable commonalities in terms of racial and linguistic grounds and maintain hospitable relations since the age of Princess Wencheng. As such, China's appropriation of modern racial theories is not so much to delineate a dichotomy of 'superior' Han and 'inferior' non-Han as to construct

⁵⁶ Chen Mingxia (1993: 20), for instance, regards the marriage alliances as marking an invaluable "historical contribution" to the formation of a modern multiethnic China. By acclaiming the role of Princess Wencheng, Ma Dazheng also claims that the Sino-Tibetan marriage alliances played a "practical function (*shiji zuoyong*) on the overall development of mutual relationships" (2004b: 9). See also Ma Dazheng (1989).

blood-linked brotherhood to accomplish its utilitarian political ends—maintaining territorial integrity.

Minority as the ‘Living Past’ of Chinese Civilization

In line with the theory of race, the linear evolutionary perspective on ethnic history has been another important framework, accounting for the theoretical development of the Chinese nation in the post-imperial era. The PRC’s official vision of historical progress in particular, has been modeled on Marxist social developmental theory, initially proposed by the American anthropologist Lewis Henry Morgan and later developed by Friedrich Engels in his work *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*.⁵⁷ Insofar as the goal of research has been given to Chinese archaeologists and ethnologists by the state, it has been precisely to prove the correctness of the Morgan-Engels uni-lineal evolutionary theory in terms of the Chinese situation (see Falkenhausen 1995; McKhann 1995: 46; Tong 1995: 179-183). Thus, Western scholars, critical of ethnic studies in the PRC, criticize Chinese ethnologists for having totalized the diverse aspects of minorities’ cultures within the Morgan-Engelsian framework, rather than appreciating their history, culture, society, and politics in their own rights. Stevan Harrell, for instance, notes that under the guidance of the dominant Morgan-Engels historical paradigm, Chinese scholars have enshrined “the Han as the leading nationality and big brother to the backward minorities” (2001b: 4). What he fails to observe, however, is that even during the pinnacle of canonical Marxist-Leninist historiography, their discourse was not to prove a superiority of the hegemonic Han, but rather to confirm a fundamental premise of interpreting China’s past—the commonality between the Han and the minorities.

Chinese ethnologists and historians, including both Han and minorities, have generally considered some minority nationalities as a ‘thing’ of the (Han) Chinese past—preserving the primordial and ancient nature of Sinitic culture. So they tend to conceive these groups,

⁵⁷ According to the Marxist-Leninist theory of ethno-social development canonized in the Soviet Union and adopted in the PRC in the 1950s, all human societies should go through the progressive sequence of primitive band, matrilineal clan, patrilineal clan, slave society, feudal society, capitalist society, socialist society, and, ultimately, communist society. This paradigm “still influences Chinese archaeology today” (Tong 1995: 182).

particularly the Yi (Nuosu, Lolo) and the Naxi (Dongba) minorities in the southwest borderland, as holding traces of many of Morgan's major stages and are probably the examples *par excellence* of the application of Morganian theory.⁵⁸ In this sense, these groups have been conceived as the 'living past'—a crucial key to solving the question of the origins of Chinese civilization.⁵⁹ For instance, the writing system of Naxi nationality, supposedly of greater antiquity than that of the ancient Egyptians, is believed to enshrine the traits of archaic Sinitic language, which subsequently leads to the claim that Han Chinese is the oldest language in the world (see Sautman 2001: 106). Even though the Morgan-Engels paradigm is not as popular as it used to be, the revisionist perspective on the Yi ethno-history still continues to hold this 'living past' hypothesis. This radical theory places the ancestors of the Yi at the center and forefront of the development of early Chinese civilization and portrays them as having been pushed to the periphery only in the last thousand years (see Yi 1996).

Several Yi scholars, led by Liu Yaohan who founded the 'Chinese Yi cultural school' (*Zhonghua Yizu xuepai*), have emphasized the inalienable relationships between proto-Yi/Tibetans (Qiang Rong) and proto-Han (Hua-Xia) people in the earliest stage of Chinese civilization, and argued that the former's contribution to the latter was very significant. According to Liu Yaohan (1980: 212-217, 1985: 25-34), one of the similarities between the ancestors of the Yi and the Han is that they all respected black color and thought of black as a precious thing. Liu Yaohan and other Yi scholars further propose that although the worship of black ceased to exist among proto-Han people after the fall of the semi-mythical Xia dynasty (the first Chinese dynasty mentioned in ancient records), contemporary Yi people still respect black ('Ni' in Yi language) as spiritual energy and thus 'Ni' becomes the highest object of worship.⁶⁰ In this way, PRC scholars

⁵⁸ Some works on this topic are available in English. See McKhann (1995) for the discussion of the Naxi and Harrell (1995b, 2001) on the Yi.

⁵⁹ In case of the Nuosu (or Yi of Liangshan), it was the only group determined to be at the slave stage at the time of the Democratic Reforms of the 1950s (Harrell 2007: 238). That means the Nuosu was considered to be the oldest 'living past' in China proper.

⁶⁰ According to the ancient classic, Book of Rites (*Liji*), the Xia dynasty respected black color. The Tangong chapter of the *Liji* says: "Under the sovereigns of Xia they preferred what was black. On great occasions [of mourning], for preparing the body and putting it into the coffin, they used the dusk; for the business of war, they used black horses in their chariots; and the victims which they used were black" (Legge 1967[1885]: 125). Once the Shang dynasty (ca. 1600-1045 B.C.) conquered the Xia, people then respected what was

support the hypothesis that the Yi nationality today preserves China's glorious past, and gives useful clues for deciphering the origins of the Yellow River civilization, although they admit that the ancient connection between proto-Yi and proto-Han people is still hard to prove.

Not only did he argue that the elementary cultural traits of the Yi are the prototype of Chinese civilization, Liu Yaohan (1985) even boldly proclaims that Taoism, which is a characteristic expression of the Chinese spirit and historical experience, indeed originated from the Yi nationality.⁶¹ He also asserts that the ancestors of the Yi are believed to have made at least three great contributions to Chinese civilization and the world: the ten-month solar calendar, the binary mathematical system, and the knowledge of crossbreeding the horse with the donkey to give birth to the mule (see Liu 1996; Pan 2002: 200). Interestingly, his radical Yi-centric 'nationalism' is hardly challenged by Han scholars in public. Insofar as he makes a contribution to the formation of the Chinese nation rather than to its deconstruction, to criticize his arguments is equivalent to saying that the Yi culture has nothing to do with the Han culture. The current discourse on the Yi ethno-history evidently reveals what seems to be politically correct in the PRC (Pan 2002: 200-201). By the same logic, the PRC's minority education policy generally tends to be lenient. As in this interesting analogy from Lucien Pye: "[T]he Chinese policy, if transferred to America, would be similar to the United States government's sponsoring the 'Black Power movement,' monopolizing the teaching of 'Afro-American studies,' and directing those who are thus trained to be more 'knowledgeable' about a somewhat synthetic 'black culture' to make all their 'cultural performances' climax in uninhibited praise of the President" (1975: 508).

In summary, treating some non-Han peoples as the 'living past' of earlier phases of Chinese civilization is an exemplary case of making-up a sense of shared commonality

white.

⁶¹ Quite interestingly, some Western scholars, who may not share Liu's radical Yi nationalism, also claim the role of non-Han peoples on the origins and development of Taoism. As Terry Kleeman put it: non-Han ethnic groups "have played a significant role in Daoism from the beginning, that Daoism remains an influential religion among ethnic minorities within and outside China even today, and that archaic forms of Daoism survive among non-Chinese peoples that are no longer to be found among the Chinese" (2002: 24).

between the majority and the minority. Even the ultra-nationalistic historiography of minority scholars like Liu Yaohan who may challenge the leading role of Han majority should be tolerated as long as it does not breach the principle of a ‘unified multiethnic state’ modeled on the idea of a common genealogy—the Yellow Emperor or Peking Man as a common ancestry of the Chinese nation. By contrast, any opposition to this line of official narrative would be strictly forbidden. When the Tibetans mobilized into armed revolt in March 1959, the response from the PRC government was to defend the Chinese nation as a great family: “Tibet is an inalienable part of China. It belongs to the big family of the Chinese people, not to the handful of reactionaries, much less to the imperialists and foreign interventionists.”⁶² This familial metaphor embodies a striking continuity in conjunction with a universalistic ideal of Chinese empire—namely, the world as one family (as shown in the beginning quote of this chapter). In this sense, the ethnic logic of nation-state building, which is critical to the empire-to-nation transition, has not been transplanted in post-imperial China.

The Kinship Metaphor in China: Yesterday and Today

China’s current version of ‘genealogical nationalism’ illuminates the persistence of ancient Chinese thought. As Patricia Ebrey notes, the ethnic dimension of Chinese identity “was rooted in the habit of thinking of the largest we-group in terms of patrilinear kinship, that is, imagining the Hua, Xia, or Han, metaphorically at least, as a giant patrilinear descent group” (1996: 20).⁶³ She is right; yet I want to add that this emphasis on kinship relations has not been exclusively beneficial to the development of in-group solidarity among Han Chinese. My point is that the Chinese have imagined some primordial commonality between the Han and non-Han peoples on the basis of the myth of common descent and the historical memory of interethnic exchanges. Furthermore, the discourse of such ‘imagined commonalities’ as constituent of the

⁶² Resolution of the Question of Tibet, adopted on April 28, 1959, by the First Session of the Second National People’s Congress of the People’s Republic of China. As rendered by Patterson (1960: 102).

⁶³ Frank Pieke further argues that such a genealogical idea renders “the position of China’s non-Han groups highly ambiguous and vulnerable” (2003: 121).

genealogically informed Chinese nation reverberates with the state project of the PRC. From the 1980s, in particular, this has been an important part of the state's efforts to construct a new nationalism that would serve as an ideological bond to crisscross and transcend complex class, regional, and ethnic lines in order to fill the vacuum left by the decline of Maoist ideology (see Esteban 2006; Pieke 2003; Zhao 2004: ch.6).

But China's assertion of shared commonalities is not always consensual, for it often faces a severe resistance from outside the PRC. The Dalai Lama, for instance, counters the PRC's claim of historically-constituted common blood relations in the following ways: "archaeological findings have revealed that the Tibetans and Chinese have been two distinct people since the dawn of human civilization" (see Sautman 2001: 107). Similarly, the recent cult of Chinggis Khan as the number one 'Chinese' national hero, the unifier of China for the Chinese and the only 'Chinese' who ever defeated Europeans, surely provokes the Mongol peoples in Outer Mongolia and elsewhere.⁶⁴ Such addition of Chinggis Khan to the Chinese national pantheons is an intricate process, "reflecting the complex relationship between Mongols as an ethnic minority that wishes its culture and heroes to be properly represented by the state and the state's desire to integrate minorities, including Mongols, into a national state" (Bulag 2002b: 243). Taking such ethnic politics of the PRC into account, foreign scholars and human rights activists together with overseas non-Han nationalists have been critical of the official theory being used by the Chinese nation as an ideological weapon to repress the rights of self-determination for non-Han groups, which would eventually eliminate their cultural independence—leading to 'cultural genocide' in Inner Mongolia, Tibet and Xinjiang [Eastern Turkestan] (Bulag 2004, 2010; see also Sautman 2006a, 2006b). Among them, the overseas Mongol anthropologist Uradyn Bulag harshly repudates the PRC's formulation of the Chinese nation, noting that "an inclusive concept presumes the 'Han' as its core and is deeply inflected by

⁶⁴ See Bulag (2002b, 2003) on the recent Chinese cult of Chinggis Khan. Since the end of the Cultural Revolution, the cult of Chinggis Khan has been intensified as implied by an official evaluation; in 1980, he was praised in the People's Daily as a "leader of Chinese and foreign peoples, an outstanding military strategist and statesman" without even identifying his Mongol ethnicity (Connor 1984: 466-467). Further, the Beijing government has espoused the official sponsorship of the rituals of Chinggis Khan as a proof of 'concern and love' for the Mongol nationality (see Khan 1995). The annual honoring ceremonies have been held in the Chinggis Khan Mausoleum located in Ordos of Inner Mongolia, which was built in 1954 to 1956 and rebuilt from the destruction of the Cultural Revolution.

racism” (2002b: 17-18). He is right to argue that this is modeled on the all-embracing whole that does not demarcate an immutable ethno-racial line. Yet I think his accusation of Han ‘racism’ is inaccurate if Chinese realities are properly considered (see Chapter 7). The representation of Chinggis Khan as winning the ‘racial glory’ for the Chinese people is absurd yet still understandable within the context of the present-day racial nationalism in China.

The conceptualization of ethnicity in China, because of its inclusionary nature, can be ideal-typically differentiated from that among colonial powers and the post-imperial and post-colonial national states. It does not necessarily impose a fixed objectification of ‘Self’ and ‘Other,’ nor does it essentialize non-Han minorities as inferior beings. Also, it is not based on the representation of ethnic minorities as ‘impure’ and ‘foreign’ vis-à-vis the national majority. From pre-imperial times to the present day, there is a historical continuity and persistence in the making of a primordial dimension of nationhood. In the past, as shown in the history of patrimonial state, the Son of Heaven embodied the father of the abstract, imagined family. In the present, although the Han is usually conceived as the core ethnicity, the leader of the giant family of the Chinese nation is not so much the ethnic Han as the Communist leaders.

The former Soviet Union and the PRC somewhat resemble each other in the sense that they are a ‘nationless’ socialist state and emphasize the communal ties among their multiethnic citizenry. But the crucial difference between the two should be recognized. The former, imagined as a large “communal apartment” (Slezkine 1994) in which national state units represented separate rooms, ironically promoted ethnic particularism. As Ronald Suny points out, the unintended consequence of Soviet nationality development was that “an antinationalist state helped create nations within it” (2001a: 895; see also Suny 1993: ch.3). The latter, by contrast, imagined as a “giant family” of the Chinese people, has not endorsed ethnic separatism but continued its imperial practice in a more centralized manner, that is, setting up semi-autonomous administrations in the borderlands. Thus, instead of adopting the Soviet federal system that consists of national republics for minority nationalities, the PRC government eventually endorsed the idea of

one unitary republic by referring to the heritage of the unified Chinese empire first created in 221 B.C. and to the principle of the United Front, as rendered by Li Weihai (1981: 672-675), the Chinese equivalent of Stalin as the commissar of *Narkomnats*.

Finally, my study suggests that the primordial kinship discourse is not simply a modern invention but rather a cultural repertoire that has persisted since early China. Much scholarship on Chinese nationalism, however, has largely conceived this primordial aspect of the Chinese nationhood as an 'instrumentalist manipulation' or 'invention of primordial essence' (Bulag 2003) without paying due attention to its historical background. Instead of the modernist perspective, I suggest that the myth of a common ancestral origin All-under-Heaven was invented in pre-imperial times. It was Sima Qian of the Former Han dynasty who systematically crystallized the genealogy of the legendary ancestors, starting from the Yellow Emperor. His records, which were believed to be orthodox history, had not only been shared by native Han peoples but also echoed by several alien rulers especially during the Age of Disunion who proclaimed themselves as the common descendants from the mythical Chinese deities and the Sage Kings of early antiquity. For those non-Han conquerors, it was a symbolic medium to legitimize their possession of the Middle Kingdom. The idea of trans-ethnic genealogical unity had also been common in interstate diplomacy by imagining a kinship between the native Chinese and the non-Han states, based especially on the practice of marriage alliance. From these historical memories of fictive ethno-genealogies, the Chinese in the post-imperial era started to create a more essentialized vision of racially informed interethnic unity within the Chinese nation by manipulating not only the narratives of the Yellow Emperor and Peking Man together with Princess Wencheng and Chinggis Khan but also the ancient Yi and Naxi history.

Such mythicized genealogical narratives are, of course, not based on historical reality. Some modern historians, notably Gu Jiegang and his followers, began to radically reassess the works of Sima Qian and criticize him for treating ancient mythologies as real history. As Gu Jiegang put it, "when we open the *Shiji*, we are met with a wealth of ancient myths and legends that do not agree with historical fact" (1983: 150; see also

Hummel 1931; Schneider 1971). Accordingly, Sima Qian seriously breached the primary obligation of historians in the tradition of Chinese historiography—“investigate first, and only then trust” (*kao er hou xin*), even as he advocated this very principle. Yet the people’s belief in the ancestral origin became what Marshall Sahlins (1981) calls “mythical realities.” It means that myth “makes the non-existent exist,” as historical sociologist Philip Abrams (1988) has put it. The mythical realities of the Chinese nation as the common descent of the Yellow Emperor persist, probably more strongly than in any other historical times. Even ethnic minorities (to say nothing of the Han) learn in school that all ethnicities have indeed a common history and are descendants of the Yellow Emperor (see, e.g., Hansen 1999: 160). Likewise, Chinese scholars have tried to ‘prove’ the historical justification of how non-Han minorities should be considered descendants of the Yellow Emperor as well as the Flame Emperor (*yandi*), another legendary ancestor of the Chinese people (Huang and Wang 1996). Further, the recently completed 106-meter high statues of the Flame and Yellow Emperors, located in Henan province, the birthplace of the Yellow River civilization, symbolize China’s aspiration to resurrect and reconfigure the state religion of ancestral worship in terms of legendary Chinese sovereigns and cultural heroes. Following Carlton Hayes’s famous definition of nationalism as a modern religion, this modern manipulation of the cult of mythical progenitors reveals the essence of contemporary Chinese nationalism. It is an undeniable and reified reality.

Chapter Six
Imagined Identity:
The Processes of Ethnic Naming Customs and Name Changes in Southern
Manchuria, 1749-1909¹

Individual self-identity is not so much fixed as negotiated. Although ascriptive elements such as language, religion, custom, and genealogy play a significant role in the identity formation process, those ostensible given traits often become a matter of choice in response to political and economic circumstances. This is also true in the construction and reconstruction of ethnic self-identity. That is, while in theory ethnicity is based on the belief in a common ancestry, ethnic group boundaries should be conceived as a plastic and malleable social construction (Anderson and Silver 1983, 1989; Barth 1969; Chai 1996, 2005; Wimmer 2008a, 2008b, 2009). Social scientists, especially those who criticize the taken-for-granted idea of ethnicity, have indicated the mechanisms for how the individual's ethnic identities may be transformed under the porous ethnic boundaries at hand (Alba 1990; Bennett 1975; Hechter 1971, 1975, 1995; Hoddie 2006; Keyes 1981; Waters 1990, 1996). This is particularly prevalent in the age of nationalism because the salience of specific ethnic identities is often chosen and manipulated by the nationalist elite (see, e.g., Brass 1991; Renan 1996[1882]). As this study suggests, this constructed aspect of ethnic boundaries is also evident in the history of world-empires.

Names, as an expression of self-identity, are not only an important boundary-marker, but also a reflection of social taste. Studies have shown that names are classed, gendered, and racialized, and naming practices often happen in close correlation with the overall social trends such as religiosity and fertility (see e.g., Fryer and Levitt 2004; Goldin and Shim

¹ Campbell, Lee, and Elliott (2002) discussed the earlier results of naming and name changes in historic Liaoning, based on the analysis of parts of the CMGPD-LN. The author would like to thank Professor James Z. Lee and Cameron Campbell for allowing me to access the raw data and analyze some variables including the dependent variables, which have not been released as of July 2011.

2004; Hacker 1999; Levitt and Dubner 2005: ch.6; Lieberman and Bell 1992; Lieberman, Dumais, and Baumann 2000). Names are also ethnicized and become a subject of change in two directions: either from the minority to the majority or vice versa. On the one hand, the minority groups may conceal their ethnic markers because of actual or potential discrimination from the dominant majority. Such ethnic concealment was widespread among some Jewish families in the nineteenth century who Germanized their surnames.² Similarly, as a means of acculturation, a variety of ethnic groups who migrated to the United States switched their names or those of their children (Thorvaldsen 1998); for instance, from Meyer R. Schkolnick to Robert K. Merton and from Daniel Bolotsky to Daniel Bell.

On the other hand, people in the majority group may distinctively adopt ethnic names. This is especially common in the context of alien rule proceeded either by involuntary coercion such as Koreans under Japanese occupation (Kim 1998) or by voluntary acceptance. In the latter case, having ethnic names signifies a political loyalty to foreign rulers, whose names are considered unique and are thus a status marker. Historically, under the conquest dynasties, members of a dominant minority had a greater incentive to avoid having their status confused with the conquered natives because they had more to lose in a symbolic manner were their distinct features be fused with the native population. But, since they wanted to be included in the elite society, people in the dominated group kept striving to adjust their self-identities to the dominant minority, which eventually led to a process of ethnic boundary-clearing. In this chapter, I will demonstrate that this process of blurring ethnic boundaries can occur even in an area like naming where there are no purely instrumentalist considerations.

This chapter analyzes one such manifestation of ethnic self-identities, the personal names of over 96,000 adult male hereditary state-farm tenants, known as bannermen (*qiren*),

² The family history of one of the founders of sociology, Georg Simmel, illustrated strategies of ethnic concealment as a response to anti-Semitism in Germany during the nineteenth century. His paternal grandfather, born Isaac Israel, had changed his last name to Simmel in 1812 to attain German citizenship. Isaac's son later converted to Catholicism and married a woman who had converted to Lutheranism. Georg Simmel himself was baptized as a Protestant (Pampel 2007: 132). Even so, as well-known to sociologists, his Jewish background negatively affected his academic career.

who lived in southern Manchuria, more specifically Liaoning, between 1749 and 1909. Given that there is very little information on names, it was not possible to do an analogous analysis among adult women.³ Most men, though not all, were descendants of Han Chinese migrants from North China and administratively registered as “Hanjun,” that is, Han banner people. They could think of themselves as both Han and Manchu on the ground that they were of Han ancestry from China’s interior, and also a bannerman that was the major criterion for Manchu identity. They may probably continue to regard themselves as Manchu, even if the Manchu-dominated Qing state (1644-1911) greatly restricted Manchu group membership to the Manchu banners (Crossley 1989, 1999; Elliott 2001). Hence, their names and naming behaviors of choosing between Han and Manchu names may reflect competing perceptions of their ethnic identities, which were supposed to be mutually exclusive in the perspective of the state. In effect, the fluidity in ethnic self-concept has a temporal and spatial universality; for instance, based on information over self-identified nationalities from the Soviet censuses, Anderson and Silver (1983, 1989) meticulously proved that the non-Russian groups, especially the smaller and middle-sized ones, changed their official nationality to Russian. Broadly speaking, therefore, such phenomena in rural Liaoning are to some extent parallel to the growing trends in contemporary societies, including what Mary Waters (1996) calls “optional ethnicities” in America.

This chapter is divided into five parts: (i) ethnic naming practices in Chinese society from the sixth century onwards and in Liaoning banner communities in particular; (ii) the characteristics of the Liaoning household registration data; (iii) the descriptive analysis of the temporal, spatial, administrative, and age effects on naming customs and name changes; (iv) the results of a multivariate analysis; and (v) the implications of these finding for understanding China’s current ethnic boundaries.

Background: Naming Practices in Imperial Chinese History and Liaoning

³ See Rubie Watson (1986) regarding the namelessness of adult women in traditional Chinese culture.

In China, as elsewhere, names, either surname or given name, are a general signifier of ethnic identity and attachment.⁴ Nearly all Han Chinese names consist of such single-character surname as Wang, Liu, Li, Zhao, and Chen and a given name of one or two characters (Du and Yuan 1995); this latter is generally chosen for their favorable meaning and for their indication of the same generation among related kin.⁵ These naming customs are not exclusively restricted to Han peoples but also common to Koreans and Vietnamese, although each developed their own unique monosyllabic surnames such as *piao* (Korean: *park*), the third most common surname in contemporary Korea. By comparison, in history the names of the Inner Asian people including Xiongnu [Huns of Asia], Xianbei [Särbi], Turk, Tibetan, Uighur, Jurchen, Mongol, and Manchu were quite different. They usually consist of a polysyllabic surname and a given name that has more than two syllables with distinct sounds. As for the Mongols, Uighurs, Turks, and other steppe peoples, they commonly used the names of their totem animals as personal names (Serruys 1957: 150); for instance, *arslan* (lion), *bora* (wolf), *noqai* (dog), *buqa* (ox), *bars* (tiger), and *bughra* (bull camel), for they believed that their given name would have a magical power on their life destiny. Their names also had a religious origin (Serruys 1958); for example, ‘*bao*’ (protected) as in *shenbao*, *zhongshenbao*, and *guanyinbao*, all of which appear in the data used in this study, and which were widespread among the Lamaistic Mongols and Manchus.

On the one hand, surname changes from Han to non-Han and vice versa reflect an important aspect of the individual’s ethno-political identity and affiliation. When non-Han conquerors ruled the Middle Kingdom, it was not uncommon for native Han people to change their surnames to those of the conquering minority to assimilate with their new masters. Empirical evidence for such behavior can be traced back to as early as the sixth century. During the short-lived Northern Zhou dynasty (557-581), the royal Yuwen family of Xianbei and Xiongnu origins bestowed non- Han surnames on their Han

⁴ Although this study focuses on personal given names, see Ebrey (1996) for a discussion of surnames and ethnic identity. In a forthcoming study, I examine the relations of ethnic surnames and identity and the patterns of surname changes in Chinese history.

⁵ As of today, two-character surnames only account for less than 0.1% of the Han population (Du and Xiao 1995: 172). This is generally attributed to the fact that throughout the history of China, people have turned polysyllabic surnames into monosyllabic ones for convenience.

followers (Dien 1977; Lewis 2009a: 168). Notable examples include Yang Jian, the founder of the Sui dynasty, who was born to a mixed-ethnic family with a Han surname, but changed his name to Puliuru Jian when he became a statesman of the Northern Zhou.

Furthermore, until the late Jurchen Jin dynasty (1115-1234), the royal Wanyan clan, who were the putative ancestors of the later Manchus, bestowed their surnames on some eminent Han subjects to honor their achievement and loyalty.⁶ The Jurchens, especially toward the end of their dynasty, “had to grant their surnames to the non-Jurchen to secure their loyalty or enlist allies” (Tao 1976: 98). Meanwhile, in 1173, the Emperor Shizong (r. 1161-1189) prohibited Jurchens from translating their surnames into Han surnames (*hanxing*).⁷ In 1187, he again ordered punishment for all Jurchen who changed their surnames to Han surnames or wore Han-style clothes, thus alluding to the popularity of such practices.⁸

Likewise, under the Mongol Yuan dynasty (1206-1368), some upper-class Han people adopted the Mongol language, customs, lifestyle, and even names. It was clearly mentioned in one of the first imperial decrees of the Ming founder in 1368: “[Until the end of the Yuan], some went so far as to change their surnames for foreign [Mongol] names (*huming*), and they learned the foreign [Mongol] language and their customs. Since they had been doing this for a long time, they took it all for granted. ... As to braided hair, plaits, foreign clothes, foreign speech, and foreign surnames (*huxing*), there were absolutely forbidden. ... At this time, after more than one hundred years of foreign [Mongol] customs, all went back to China’s old [Tang fashion].”⁹ Further, from the late Ming, some Han Chinese families, who became subjects of the embryonic Manchu regime, adopted Manchu-style surnames; for instance, from Tao to Tuohuoluo [Tohoro]

⁶ Zhao Yi. *Nian'er shi zhaji* Chapter 28, pp. 626-627.

⁷ *Jin shi* Chapter 7, p. 159.

⁸ *Jin shi* Chapter 8, p. 199. See also Wittfogel and Feng (1949: 8).

⁹ *Ming Taizu shilu* (Veritable records of Ming Emperor Hongwu) Chapter 30, p. 502. The same point was made earlier in 1376 and recorded in the *Ming Taizu shilu* Chapter 26, p. 403. It reads: “[In North China], there are some heroic men who have forgotten the surnames of their ancestors, and instead, have turned to the names of animal-like barbarian caitiffs (*hu lu qinshou zhi ming*) and consider them honorable appellations; who borrow titles of the Yuan to further their personal benefits.” More in-depth discussions are found in Serruys (1957: 148-167) with translation. I follow his translation with some revision.

(Rhoads 2000: 55). Thus, the Chinese situation under alien rule may well have been somewhat different from the Western condition in late antiquity when, as comparative sociologist Michael Mann put it, “upper-class Goths become Romans; some lower-class Romans had become Goths. This was probably the most common pattern where barbarians conquered more civilized peoples” (2005: 35).

On the other hand, in Chinese imperial history, it was not unusual for some Han people to adopt another combination of a Han surname and a non-Han given name. Indeed, as many Chinese, especially males, change their given name several times over the course of their lives, given names are a useful medium to express any changes not only in expressed self-identity in general, but in ethnic self-identity in particular. As the eminent Qing historian Zhao Yi (1727-1814) had pointed out, many Han people under the Yuan regime took Mongol given names; for instance, Jia Tocihun, Zhang Badu [Batu], Liu Hacibuhua, and Yang Duo'erzhi.¹⁰ As in the bestowal of non-Han surnames, many of the conquering rulers endowed their Han allies with their ethnic given names. As an example, Chinggis Khan conferred his artisan Zhang Rong (1158-1230), who surrendered in 1214, with a Mongol name Wusuchi to honor his efforts to build boats for the Mongol troops to cross the river.¹¹ Khubilai Khan conferred his favorite doctor whose surname was Liu with more than one name: first Hacibatulu, then Chahanwotuochi, and later Haciwotuochi.

Similarly, some Han Chinese adopted Manchu given names throughout the Qing dynasty. Just like the Mongols, personal names were an obvious ethnic marker for the Manchus since their names were easily recognizable and distinct from Han names.¹² They were meaningless when transliterated into Han Chinese characters. In theory, the Manchu rulers did not accept either the practices of Han-style naming by Manchus, and even attempted to outlaw either those practices (Elliott 2006: 52-53) or the use of Manchu-sounding names by the Han people. In reality, however, such bilateral identity changes

¹⁰ Zhao Yi. *Nian'er shi zhaji* Chapter 30, pp.701-703. For a biography of Jia Tocihun and his descendants, see *Yuan shi* Chapter 151, pp. 3577-3578.

¹¹ For a biography of Zhang Rong and his descendants, see *Yuan shi* Chapter 151, pp. 3581-3583.

¹² See Elliott (2001: 241-246) and Rhoads (2000: 54-57) for more discussion of Manchu names and naming customs.

were not possible to control. For instance, a Han bannerman, Cui Zhilu, adopted the name Arsai when he was young on the ground of self-conviction that he could be a Manchu since he did a long study of the Manchu language, the ‘national’ language (*guoyu*) of the Qing. He later became a garrison banner commander and then appealed to the Qianlong emperor (r. 1736-1795) in 1737 over his desire to switch his name back to his original name, Zhilu, probably driven by the fear that he would be blamed for holding a Manchu name (Elliott 2001, 2006). This intriguing case represents a contradiction between the individual’s expressed ethnic self-identity and state-imposed ethnic categories.

In this chapter, I would suggest that the popularity of adopting non-Han names was not only restricted to elite Han families who had a close connection with the court society, but that such practice was in fact common among the Han population at large. The results of the analyses of the data used in this study clearly suggest that Manchu names were prevalent at least among the state-farm tenants who lived in rural Liaodong between 1749 and 1909. On average, about 4 percent of adult males are observed to have Manchu names. Moreover, some of these bannermen switched their names, moving back and forth from Manchu to Han and vice versa, in accordance with individual preference, familial background, and the local circumstances. About 40 percent of adult men with Manchu names switched to Han names over the course of their lives; at the same time slightly less than 1 percent of adult males with Han names changed theirs to Manchu names.

Data

These numbers come from a study of household register records for hereditary tenants on state farms in Liaoning, which had been compiled on a triennial basis from the early eighteenth century until 1909. More specifically, the data are derived from the population records in the China Multi-Generational Panel Dataset, Liaoning (CMGPD-LN), which were transcribed from the Eight Banner household registers (*baqi rending hukou ce*) preserved in the Liaoning Provincial Archives.¹³ This source is described in detail in Lee

¹³ Lee, James Z., and Cameron D. Campbell. China Multi-Generational Panel Dataset, Liaoning (CMGPD-

and Campbell (1997) and Lee, Campbell, and Chen (2010). The CMGPD-LN populations belonged to the Eight Banners, a civil and military administration of the Qing to govern the Manchurian and Mongolian frontiers as well as China's interior. All these people were grouped under the top three of the Eight Banners, the plain and bordered yellow banners and the plain white banner. They were affiliated with the Northeastern banners located in the three contemporary provinces of Liaoning, Jilin, and Heilongjiang, and administered under the jurisdiction of the Shengjing [Mukden] Imperial Household Agency (*neiwufu*). They were hereditary tenants who lived on state farms in the Liaodong area of southern Manchuria, the present-day Liaoning province.

The CMGPD-LN is a sample of the Liaodong Eight Banner populations under the Shengjing Imperial Household Agency, who accounted for a substantial proportion of the population of this area as many as 1 to 2 million individuals, probably one-tenth of the provincial population and one-quarter of the banner population in Liaodong during the century and a half under observation (Lee, Campbell, and Chen 2010). Therefore, while these populations are not representative of China as a whole, and probably not even of Liaoning, they are unquestionably representative of the inhabitants of a large region within Liaoning. Indeed, the CMGPD-LN provides more extensive and detailed records than most of the other sources used for the quantitative study of the population and society in late imperial China (see Lee and Campbell 1997; Lee, Campbell, and Chen 2010).

The CMGPD-LN consists of 29 separately registered state-farm populations in Liaoning from 1749 to 1909, containing more than 1.51 million observations of 266,000 individuals. As comprehensively discussed in Lee, Campbell, and Chen (2010), these 29 administrative populations were remarkably heterogeneous with respect to administrative status, population size, geographic location, and the time-span of the register. In addition to such variations, there was a variety of state-imposed ethnic categories.

LN), 1749-1909 [Computer file]. ICPSR27063-v2. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor], 2010-08-17.
doi:10.3886/ICPSR27063 <http://dx.doi.org/10.3886/ICPSR27063>

I will provide a summary of the ethnic composition of all 29 populations in Table 6.1, shown in the later part of this section. In general, most of the people in the CMGPD-LN were the descendants of Han migrants who moved largely from Hebei, Shanxi, and especially Shandong areas in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries when they were recruited by the Qing state to repopulate Manchuria (Lee, Campbell, and Chen 2010).¹⁴ Accordingly, twenty-two of 29 populations exclusively consist of Han Chinese bannermen. Meanwhile, two populations, Wangduoluoshu Manzhou shengding and Wangduoluoshu Manzhou rending, are entirely Manchu. One entire population, the Subaigong rending, was categorized as Mongol.

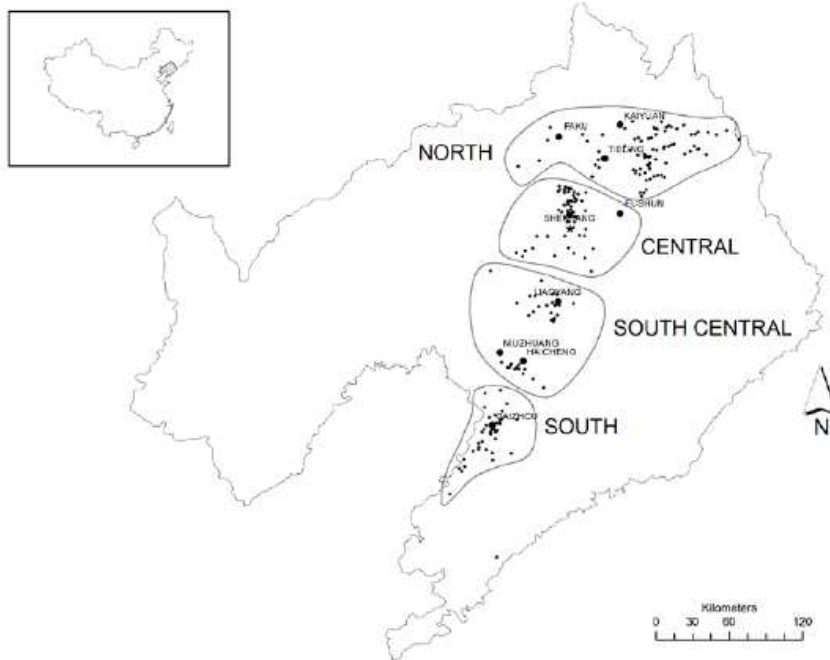
While they mostly consist of Han Chinese, the remaining four populations also include a number of individuals classified as Manchu, Korean (*Gaoli*), or Korean-Manchu (*Gaoli Manzhou*). Hence, the CMGPD-LN can provide an intriguing example of the potential for diversity in the ethnic configuration of the Eight Banners system, especially when taking the appearance of those Koreans and Korean-Manchus into consideration. In addition, another Banner society in Shuangcheng (what is now southern Heilongjiang province) was a heterogeneous population comprising a total of six ethnic groups as recorded in the household registers: the four common ethnicities (Manchu, Mongol, Han Chinese, and Xibe) and two small ones (Baerhu and Taimanzi) (see Chen 2009 ch.3: Chen, Campbell, and Lee 2005: 56-57).

Unlike genealogies, the CMGPD-LN provides details on village and household residence. The CMGPD-LN populations lived in 698 distinct rural communities scattered over an area of 40,000 square kilometers. These communities range in size from hamlets of only a few households to villages of several hundred households. As Map 6.1 shows, these communities can be arranged in four separate regions in Liaodong with regard to the individual/household's place of residence: North, Central, South-Central, and South Liaodong. The northern region, which includes Kaiyuan and Tieling, is hilly and remote.

¹⁴ The region had been vacated in the course of the Ming-Qing transition since the Manchus, who had originally lived there, moved to other parts of China to garrison its interior after conquering the country in 1644. Thomas Scharping (2000) roughly estimates that the total population in Manchuria decreased from 4.5 million to less than 1 million between 1640s and 1660s. More specifically, the Manchu population fell down from a half million to some 130,000 only.

It remains poor even today. The central region, which includes Shenyang, Juliuhe, Xingjing, and Fushun, is centered around the northern suburbs of modern Shenyang, the provincial capital of Liaoning. It is an agricultural plain located more or less at the center of the Liaodong Plain. The south-central region, which includes Niuzhuang, Liaoyang, Xiongyue, and Guangning, is also mainly flat and arable. The south region, which includes Gaizhou, Jinzhou, and Xiuyan, is along the Bohai Gulf coast area. It is close to Yingkou, which became a Second Opium War treaty port that was open to international trade in 1858. Despite being less suitable for agriculture, this region was therefore relatively well-off, particularly since the middle of the nineteenth century.¹⁵

Map 6.1 Area in Liaodong corresponding to the four categories of regions



Source: Map 3.1 in Lee and Campbell, and Chen (2010).

For each individual, the original household of the CMGPD-LN record at three-year intervals registers the following information in order of appearance: 1) relationship to their household head; 2) name(s) and name changes; 3) adult banner status; 4) age (in

¹⁵ Based on descriptive results on demographic behavior, Campbell and Lee (2008: 25) confirm the impression of prosperity in the south: its tenants married the earliest, had the most children, and lived the longest.

sui);¹⁶ 5) physical disabilities, if any and if the person is an adult male; 6) name of their kin-group head; 7) banner affiliation; and 8) village of residence.¹⁷ Moreover, key life-course events such as birth, death, marriage, immigration, or emigration are either recorded directly or can be inferred from comparison of successive entries. In addition to such sociodemographic information, the CMGPD-LN also indicates whether a male holds a salaried position in the current register. Holding such official position was an important source of privilege in this rural society, so that position holders and their families constituted the local elite (Campbell and Lee 2003; Lee and Campbell 1997: 196-214). Three broad categories of people had salaries or stipends: officials, the majority of soldiers, and all artisans. Only about 2 percent of men aged 18-60 *sui* in the populations, however, ever held such positions.

With the CMGPD-LN, it is also possible to link the observations of the individuals across time and between kin. On the one hand, individuals can be followed easily from one register to the next in the sense that they appear in almost the same order in the following registers. Despite the name changes, it is feasible to link these individuals because after a name change each register indicates both former and new names. In the same manner, it is comparatively easy to generate variables describing such past characteristics such as whether a male previously held an official position. Perhaps more importantly, by comparing the observations for the same individual in successive registers, it is possible to construct outcome measures indicating whether particular events took place in a particular time interval. For this analysis, as described later, I hope to construct indicators of whether or not adult males switch their names either from Manchu to Han or from Han to Manchu between one register and the next. On the other hand, the extensive detail on

¹⁶ All the ages in the Liaodong Eight Banners population registers were recorded in *sui*. Under the traditional Chinese system of reckoning age, a person is aged one *sui* at birth. This is incremented each lunar new year, not on one's birthday. On average, a Western age can be approximated by subtracting 1.5 from the age in *sui*. Since additional details about date of birth recorded in the registers appear unreliable, there is no means of precisely calculating an age in Western years. So for this analysis the ages are left in *sui*. Age groups used in the construction of categorical variables are defined to approximate familiar Western age groupings. For example, the age group 11-15 *sui* corresponds roughly to 10-14 Western years.

¹⁷ Entries also record a lunar date of birth, including year, month, day, and hour. As regards lunar birth year, the Chinese distinguish between twelve-year cycles in which each year is identified with a specific animal: rat, ox, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, sheep, monkey, chicken, dog, and pig. But previous investigation suggests that these dates are reliable for only a small fraction of the observations. See Lee and Campbell (1997).

household relationships allows for the reconstruction of genealogies and identification of kin by chaining the intergenerational father-son links together. Once reconstructed genealogies become available, it is straightforward to link men to their brothers, uncles, cousins, and other kin and measure their characteristics, even if they live in other households or villages. In the multivariate analysis, I will examine how the characteristics of kin including father, brothers, father's brothers (uncles) and their sons (first cousins) affect the chances of having a Manchu name and switching from a Manchu to a Han name and vice versa.

The data analyzed here are extracted from a subset of the CMGPD-LN. Restrictions dictated by the characteristics and limitations of the data as well as the statistical methods only allow for the analysis of 481,071 observations by 95,925 individuals from 29 populations in Liaoning from 1749 to 1909. Table 6.1 indicates the total number of observations and individuals and contains a list of the 29 state populations indicating percentage with Manchu names and registered ethnicity. To be included in this analysis, an observation has to meet a number of criteria. First, I only include observations of taxable adult males (*ding*) aged 18-60 *sui*, roughly 17 to 59 Western years of age. Excluding children from the analysis is in part to eliminate some ambiguities in determining which names are Manchu; for instance, many Manchu children's names are similar to Han children's names (Campbell, Lee, and Elliott 2002: 104). Second, I restrict myself to observations by individuals who are alive and present in the current register and at risk of experiencing vital demographic events. Third, I only consider observations by men whose fathers can be identified because it is impossible to identify any kin due to the small number of affected males: the measures of kin backgrounds are therefore all zero for them. Likewise, I exclude observations by those whose grandfathers are not identifiable since it is only possible to identify the individual's brothers. Finally, in the analysis of name changes, the observations of each individual are restricted to ones that are also available in the next triennial register.

Table 6.1 Observations and individuals of adult males aged 18-60 *sui*, percentage with Manchu names, and registered ethnicity, by administrative population

Administrative population	Obs	Individuals	% with Manchu name	Registered ethnicity
1 Daoyi tun Hanjun rending	39,303	6697	4.99	Han
2 Gaizhou Hanjun rending	13,006	2499	2.75	Han
3 Dami Hanjun rending	9,494	1737	3.36	Han
4 Chengnei Hanjun rending	15,687	3108	5.89	Han
5 Gaizhou Hanjun mianding	18,327	3958	1.90	Han
6 Niuzhuang Liuerbao Hanjun rending	18,121	3698	2.82	Han
7 Feidi Yimiancheng Hanjun rending	22,720	3373	4.81	Han
8 Gaizhou Man Han rending	15,998	4335	3.68	Han, Korean-Manchu
9 Dadianzi Hanjun rending	23,332	5125	2.59	Han
10 Guosan tun Hanjun rending	11,487	1759	6.71	Han
11 Bakeshu Laogudong Man Han rending	15,207	2858	4.50	Han, Manchu
12 Daxing tun Hanjun rending	28,751	5721	3.86	Han
13 Nianma Daihai zhai Hanjun rending	18,511	3619	3.54	Han
14 Changzhaizi Hanjun rending	14,724	3220	3.40	Han
15 Zhaohua tun Hanjun rending	16,848	3213	3.79	Han
16 Diaopi tun Hanjun rending	27,480	5301	5.77	Han, Manchu
17 Langjiabao Weijiatus Tanggangzi Haizhou Yuezhou Hanjun rending	15,135	3255	1.98	Han
18 Wangzhihui tun Hanjun rending	20,116	3650	3.80	Han
19 Aerjishan	5,101	959	2.39	Han
20 Haicheng Hanjun rending	37,871	8082	2.86	Han
21 Wangduoluoshu Manzhou shengding	3,135	808	3.92	Manchu
22 Wangduoluoshu Manzhou rending	7,285	1590	19.19	Manchu
23 Waziyu Hanjun rending	24,728	4752	5.09	Han
24 Wuhu Hanjun rending	13,638	2722	3.17	Han
25 Mianhua yandian zhuangtou zhuangding	23,735	5091	3.26	Han, Korean, Korean-Manchu
26 Subaigong rending	1,338	332	2.84	Mongol
27 Kaidang	2,506	840	6.11	Han
28 Kaidang Toucong Baoyang rending	9,000	1777	3.38	Han
29 Mianhua Yandian Xiaomen rending	8,487	1846	1.77	Han
Total	481,071	95,925	4.06	

Note: The observations were only included if and when the individuals were alive and present in the current household register. They were not included whenever it was a case of missing identifications for father and grandfather.

Deciding which given names are Manchu is to some degree indeterminate because even though some are definitely Manchu, several remain ambiguous. The household registers were written in Han Chinese. Manchu names are therefore approximated by strings of homophonic Han Chinese characters. Names such as *yilibu* [Ilibu], *bahana* [Bahana], *baerhu* [Barhu], *fulinga* [Fulingga], and *guanyinbao* [Guwanyinboo] are unambiguously Manchu. Most numeral names can also be considered Manchu because they represent typical Manchu naming customs influenced by Mongols (Elliott 2001: 243). Han-style numeral names generally designate the individual's birth order; at the same time those in Manchu-style symbolize different meanings. For instance, *nadanzhu* [Nadanju], meaning seventy in Manchu, was given to the babies to celebrate their ancestors, aged 70, or to represent the sum of the ages of their parents. In other occasions, number names used the Manchu transcription of Han Chinese numbers. Others are quite unclear, as many given names like *baozhu* [Booju] and *fubao* [Fuboo] could be both Han and non-Han. I treat these ambiguous names as non-Manchu to ensure that no Han names were accidentally included in the analysis. But other ambiguities still remain after this point because I may categorize those names whose holders actually were Manchu as non-Manchu. Given that there are no clear-cut boundaries between Han and Manchu names, the Manchu names used in this study should therefore be considered with caution. Table 6.2 lists the 20 most common possible Manchu given names with the Han Chinese syllabaries.

Table 6.2 The twenty most common possible Manchu given names: adult males aged 18-60 *sui*

	Name	%	Cumulative %	Name in number
1	dingzhu	4.35	4.35	
2	yongtai	2.97	7.32	
3	guanbao	1.41	8.73	
4	qishiyi	1.22	9.94	71
5	guanyinbao	1.13	11.07	
6	xiaodazi	1.08	12.15	
7	liushi	1.07	13.22	60
8	qishisan	1.03	14.25	73
9	qishier	1.01	15.26	72
10	liushiwu	1.00	16.26	65
11	xizhu	0.96	17.22	
12	bashi	0.93	18.15	80
13	liushier	0.91	19.06	62
14	changtai	0.91	19.96	
15	shitai	0.89	20.85	
16	liudazi	0.87	21.73	
17	detai	0.87	22.60	
18	liushisi	0.86	23.46	64
19	qishi	0.86	24.32	70
20	wushijiu	0.85	25.18	59
Total count		19,553		

Note: The name in the far left column is the pinyin transcription of the Han Chinese characters used in the register to transliterate a given Manchu name except names in numbers.

As currently discussed, I address four specific issues by providing the relevant descriptive results to account for continuity and changes in the processes of Manchu naming and name changes. First, I consider the long-term trends in the prevalence of Manchu naming and in the incidence of name changes from Manchu to Han and vice versa. I also examine how these trends are associated with the macro-level political transformation, that is, the decline of the Qing state. Second, I analyze the spatial variation in the Liaoning area. Third, I examine the administrative effect on Manchu naming and name changes between Manchu bannermen and non-Manchu bannermen. Lastly, I assess the role of age in the popularity of Manchu names.

Descriptive Statistics

In this section, I discuss the temporal, spatial, administrative, and age effects on the prevalence of Manchu names and incidence of ethnic name switching to give some context for the later discussion of multivariate results. I first consider temporal trends to indicate that there was considerable variation over time on the popularity of holding Manchu names. I then identify regional variation patterns by the categories of four regions shown in Map 6.1. I also demonstrate the administrative effect of being registered as Manchu bannermen. I finally figure out the age-specific variation over the life course by generating five age categories, one is between 18 and 20 *sui* and the other four are ten-year age groups between 21 and 60 *sui*.

Furthermore, for each of the four types of variation, I carry out a separate analysis for each of the following topics: the possibility of having a Manchu name, the propensity to switch from Han to Manchu, and the propensity to switch from Manchu to Han. The first analysis, which focuses on *prevalence*, investigates the chances of holding Manchu names as adult males. The second and third, which focus on *incidence*, identify the risks of changing names.¹⁸ Table 6.3 presents the percentages for having a Manchu name, switching from Han to Manchu, and switching from Manchu to Han by the categories of register year, geographic location, registered ethnicity, and age. It also contains the valid number of observations included in each analysis.

¹⁸ By definition, prevalence is the proportion of a population that has the outcome of interest at a specific point in time. Incidence, on the other hand, quantifies the occurrence of new outcome-positive cases in a population. See Marshall (2005) for the definition and measurement of these two concepts.

Table 6.3 Descriptive statistics of the patterns of temporal, spatial, administrative, and age variation in the analyses

Variable	Analysis		
	Percentage of having a Manchu name	Percentage of switching from Han to Manchu	Percentage of switching from Manchu to Han
Register year			
1749-1800	7.91	0.27	9.17
1801-1850	5.56	0.18	7.89
1851-1909	2.15	0.14	10.80
Region			
North	4.65	0.16	8.65
Central	4.82	0.18	7.94
South Central	2.64	0.13	8.71
South	2.69	0.20	15.50
Administrative population			
Non-Manchu Banners	3.83	0.16	9.45
Manchu Banners	14.60	0.23	1.40
Age in <i>sui</i>			
18-20	4.39	0.36	15.38
21-30	4.12	0.20	12.14
31-40	3.93	0.12	8.17
41-50	3.89	0.11	4.77
51-60	4.22	0.09	3.27
Total population	4.06	0.16	8.92
Valid number	481,071	264,154	10,815

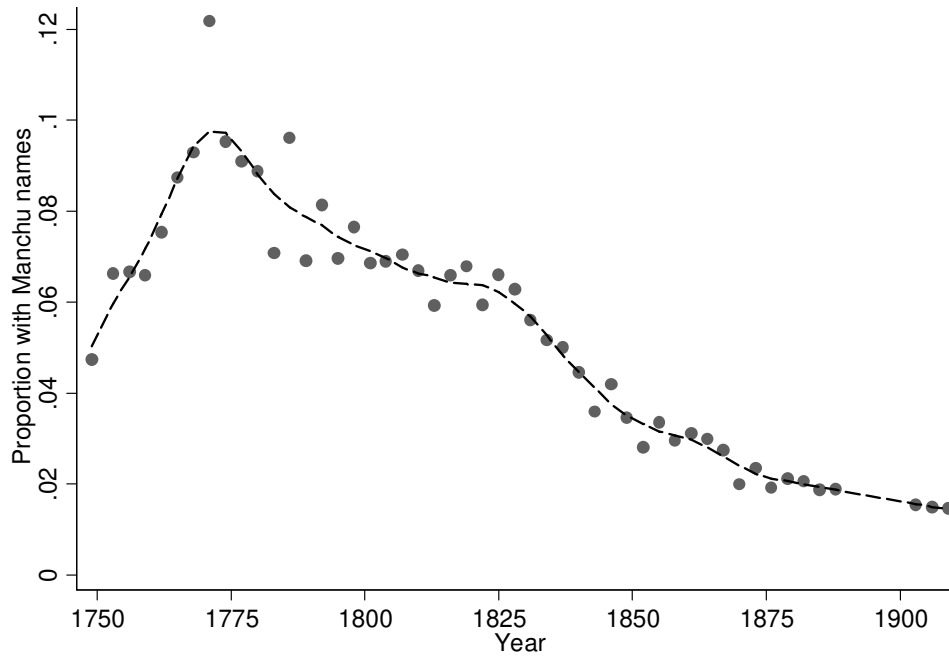
Note: The observations were only included when the individuals were alive and present in the current household register. They were not included whenever it was a case of missing identifications for father and grandfather. In the analyses of switching name, the observations of each individual were restricted to ones that were also available in the next triennial register.

The prevalence of Manchu names varied over time. Figure 6.1 plots the proportion of men with Manchu names and reveals an increase in the 1770s, peaking at 12 percent, a plateau until the first quarter of the nineteenth century, and then a steady decrease until the first decade of the twentieth century. The apparent rise in popularity in the earlier decades and the relatively higher rates during the eighteenth century should be interpreted

with caution because there is a compositional problem in the CMGPD-LN populations in this earlier period. The household registers available prior to the 1790s have a disproportionately small number of observations from the south-central and southern regions where Manchu names were less common. Instead, nearly 70 percent of the observations were collected from individuals whose place of residence was the northern region where Manchu names were quite popular (see Figure 6.2).

The steady decline after the 1820s, however, was real. According to Figure 6.1, the proportion of adult males with Manchu names began to fall below 4 percent by 1843, right after the First Opium War (1839-1842), and remained mostly below 2 percent during the Guangxu reign (1875-1908). The popularity of Manchu names, in other words, largely reflects the declining fortunes of the Qing. In this respect, despite being located beyond the Great Wall, rural society in Liaodong also experienced dramatic social changes and its inhabitants including bannermen had to adjust to them. After the end of the Second Opium War (1856-1860), for instance, the chances of attaining an official title steadily decreased by about 2 percent per year, which was mainly driven by a remarkable reduction in the availability of salaried positions in the Eight Banners system (Campbell and Lee 2003: 17-18). Under these circumstances, secular trends in the prevalence of Manchu names may reflect the decreasing status of a Manchu identity.

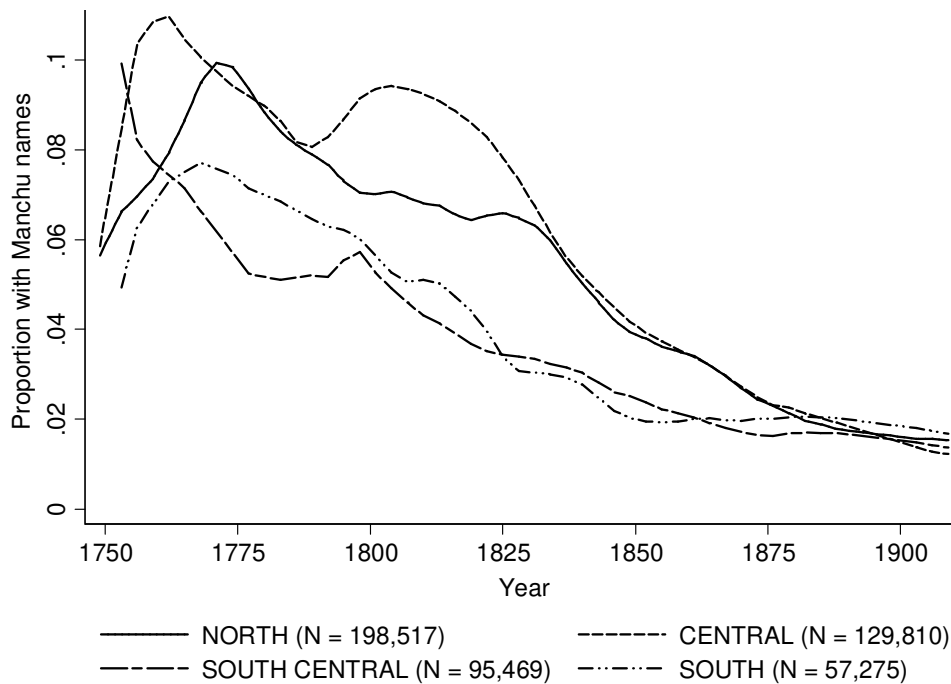
Figure 6.1 Proportion of men aged 18-60 *sui* with Manchu names, by register year ($N = 481,071$)



In addition, changes over time in the rates at which men switched from Manchu to Han and vice versa are fairly consistent with the time trends in the prevalence of Manchu names. The proportion of men with Han names switching to Manchu names fluctuated around two per thousand until the 1810s and then declined to less than two per thousand. The proportion of men with Manchu names switching to Han names declined from one-tenth in the 1780s to six per hundred in the 1810s, before it began climbing and generally remained over one-tenth throughout the second half of the nineteenth century. In the multivariate analysis, I will elaborate on these time trends regarding the popularity of having Manchu names by decomposing the period effect into the cohort and age effects. My decision is driven by the findings that it is better to distinguish between cohort and age than between register year and age to account for systematic variation over the life course especially in the propensity to switch names (see Figures 6.5 and 6.6). To make this two-factor model (age/cohort) more reliable, I also control for the 29 administrative populations to deal with the issue of compositional heterogeneity in the CMGPD-LN.

Manchu naming, furthermore, followed a clear spatial pattern until the last decades. As Figure 6.2 presents, the observations of adult males in the northern and central regions show a much higher proportion of having Manchu names than those in the south-central and southern regions. In particular, men who lived in the central region—Shenyang, the original capital of the Manchu state until 1644, and its vicinity—were more likely to identify themselves with a Manchu name. According to Table 6.1, nearly 6 percent of adult males from Chengnei Hanjun rending, that is, Shenyang itself, had a Manchu name. The people on this Han banner population were mainly urban military and official families, which may suggest that those who had official positions were more inclined to have a Manchu name. Indeed, among the 29 administrative populations, this population stands out to be the most elite in the CMGPD-LN in that nearly 10 percent of observations of men at age 18-60 *sui* had a salaried position, far higher than the average 2.2 percent. Another elite population, Guosan tun Hanjun rending, evenly distributed in the northern and central regions, shows the second highest percentage (6.71 %) of men with Manchu names. If we restrict our observations to men in the central region, it increases to 10.13 percent. Moreover, this central Liaoning portion of the Guosan tun population had a very high proportion of adult males with non-farming positions but with state provided salaries, predominantly among men who lived in the northern suburb of Shenyang. The popularity of having Manchu names in the central region therefore seems to be coupled with the spatial concentration of elite status in this region. To test the validity of this association, in the multivariate analysis, I will investigate the effect of geographic location on the prevalence of Manchu names and incidence of name changes, controlling for the variables of salaried official positions and others.

Figure 6.2 Proportion of men with Manchu names in different regions by register year ($N = 481,071$)



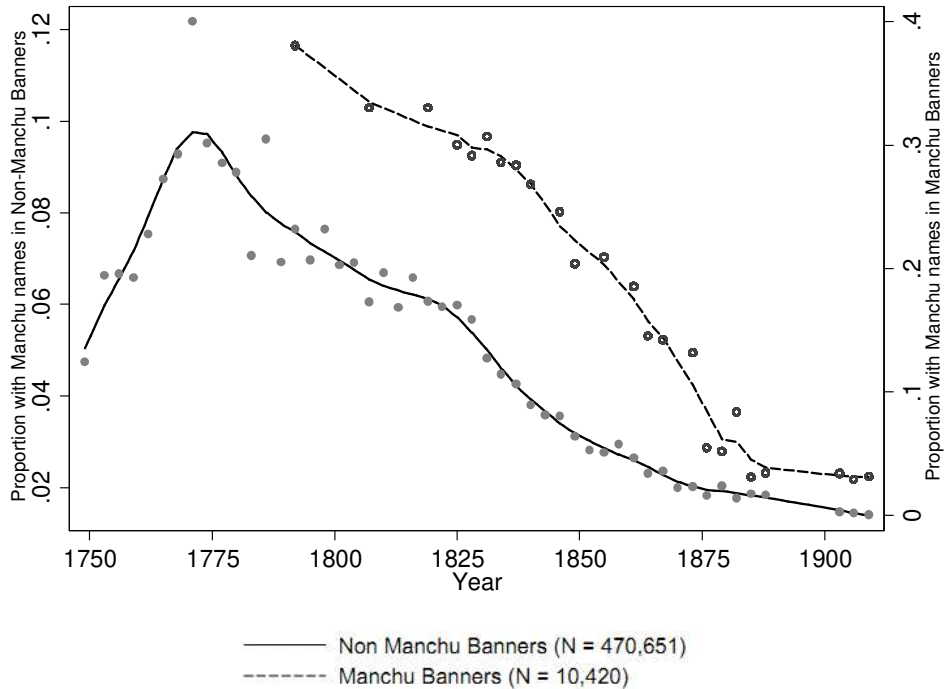
As the results in Table 6.3 also indicate, the prevalence of Manchu name substantially differed between Manchu banner and non-Manchu banner populations. As shown in Table 6.1, two of 29 populations were exclusively registered as Manchu banner populations, that is, dataset 21 (Wangduoluoshu Manzhou shengding, hereafter Manzhou shengding) and dataset 22 (Wangduoluoshu Manzhou rending, hereafter Manzhou rending).¹⁹ The percentage in the Manzhou rending dataset was 19.19 percent, the highest percentage of men with Manchu names in the CMGPD-LN. By comparison, the percentage of observations of men with a Manchu name in the Manzhou shengding population, a special duty banner population providing wild boar and venison to the Imperial Household Agency, was only 3.92 percent, even lower than the average 4.06 percent. But the relatively small proportion could be attributable to the fact that the first register year of this population was 1864 when the popularity of having a Manchu name already declined substantially. To test this possibility, in the multivariate analysis, I will investigate the effect of being administratively registered as Manchu bannermen on the

¹⁹ These two Manchu populations are extensively discussed in detail in Lee, Campbell, and Chen (2010).

prevalence of Manchu names and incidence of ethnic name changes, controlling for the birth year and age group variables as a decomposition of register year and others.

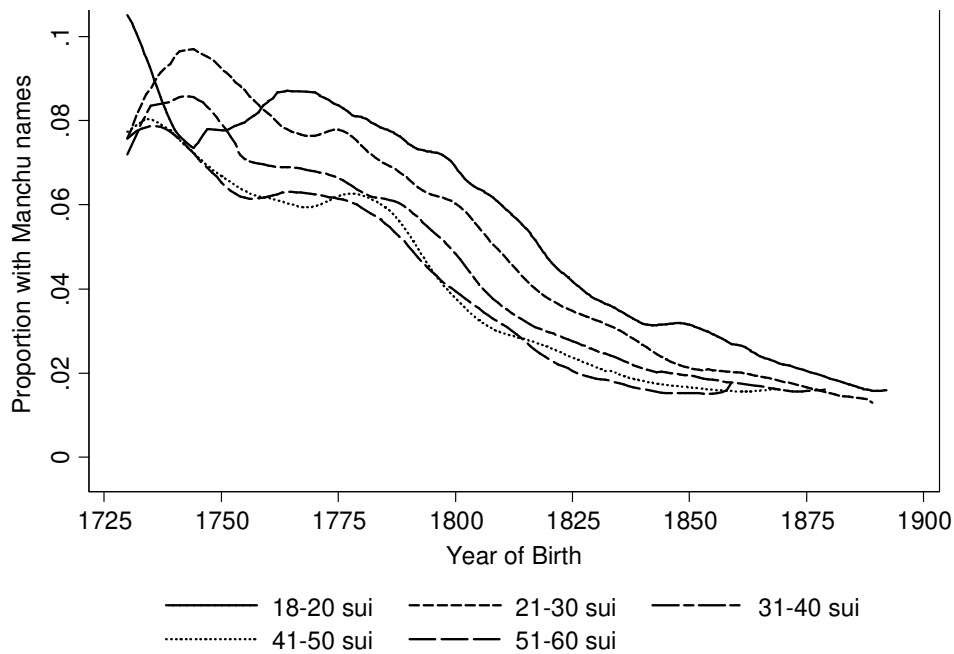
Figure 6.3 plots the proportion of men with Manchu names between Manchu banner and non-Manchu banner populations from successive register years. It confirms that Manchu bannermen were always much more likely to have Manchu given names. Until the 1820s, over 30 percent of them had Manchu names. But, after the 1820s, the percentage declined rapidly to less than 5 percent within five decades. Accordingly, by the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the huge discrepancy between Manchu and non-Manchu banner populations became smaller, even though the Manchu bannermen were still further expected to have a Manchu name. Such time trends may reflect the decreasing desirability of a Manchu affiliation even for Manchu bannermen themselves who were the mainstay of the Qing state.

Figure 6.3 Proportion of men with Manchu names between Manchu banner and non-Manchu banner populations by register year ($N = 481,071$)



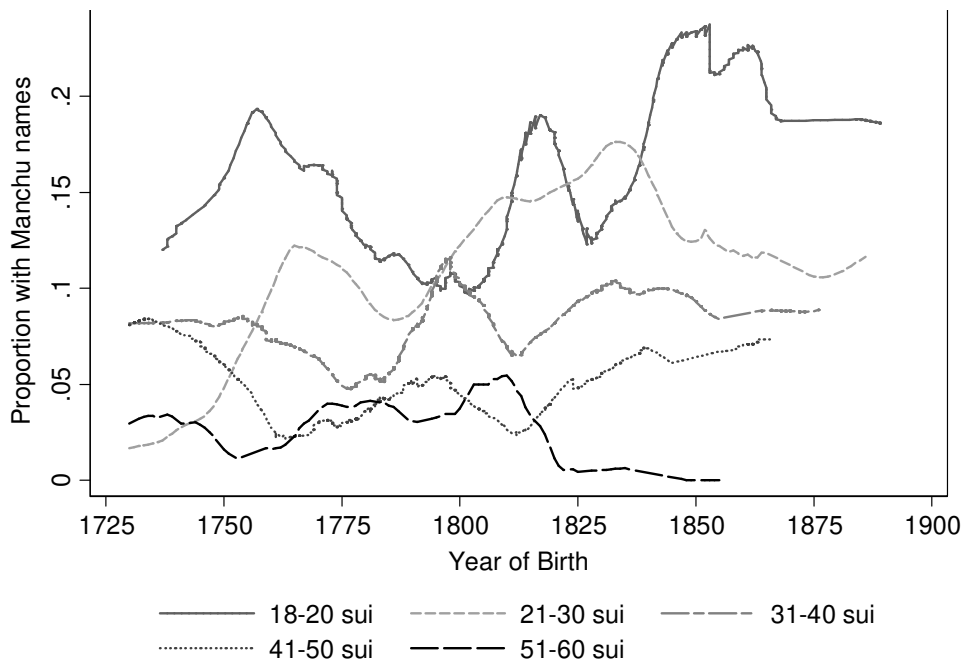
Finally, the prevalence of Manchu names also differed by age. Figure 6.4 plots the proportion of men at each age group with a Manchu name from successive birth years. The proportions declined for all age groups over the birth cohorts. The relatively high proportion for men aged between 18 and 20 *sui* reflects the tendency of some to retain Manchu names into their late teens (and probably early twenties) and only adopt Han names afterward. Figure 6.5 may partly account for this variation over the course of life. In general, men at age 18-20 *sui* had the highest propensity to switch from Manchu to Han between two consecutive triennial registers, which means that they changed their given names before they reached the age of 21-23 *sui*. For those who were born between the 1840s and 1850s, for instance, more than 20 percent had their Manchu name switched to a Han name before they reached 21-23 *sui*. When they reached their thirties, however, the percentages declined to less than 10 percent. On the other hand, as Figure 6.6 indicates, men aged 18-20 *sui* also had a relatively high propensity to switch from Han to Manchu within three years. It may reflect the increasing desirability of a Manchu affiliation among young adult males who avidly aspired to enter the elite group controlled by the Manchu rulers. In the multivariate analysis, I will further examine the patterns of age effect on the prevalence of Manchu name and incidence of name change while controlling for other explanatory variables.

Figure 6.4 Age-specific proportion of men with Manchu names by birth year ($N = 470,380$)



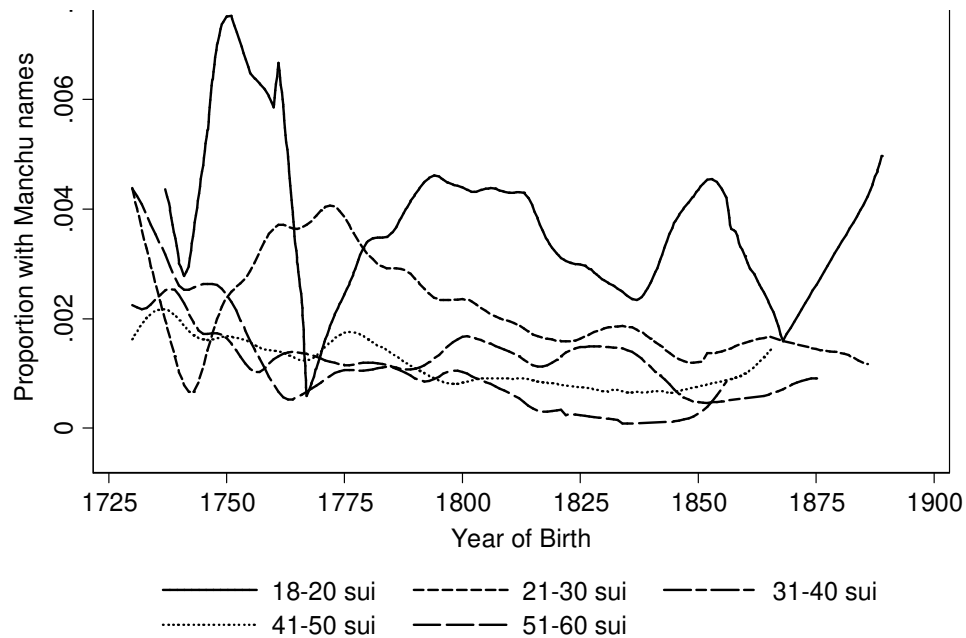
Note: Due to the small sample size and compositional heterogeneity in the CMGPD-LN, those who were born before the 1730s were not included.

Figure 6.5 Age-specific proportion of men switching from Manchu to Han names within three years by birth year ($N = 10,660$)



Note: Due to the small sample size and compositional heterogeneity in the CMGPD-LN, those who were born before the 1730s were not included.

Figure 6.6 Age-specific proportion of men switching from Han to Manchu names within three years by birth year ($N = 261,570$)



Note: Due to the small sample size and compositional heterogeneity in the CMGPD-LN, those who were born before the 1730s were not included.

Multivariate Analysis

I carry out three separate multivariate analyses. First, I examine not only the influence of geographic location, registered ethnicity, birth year, and age on the likelihood of having a Manchu name, but also the effects of individual and family backgrounds so as to further investigate the possibility of diffusion of Manchu naming within families. Second, I analyze the determinants behind the propensity to switch name from Han to Manchu between the current register and the next, taking into account the identical explanatory variables employed in the first analysis. Lastly, I analyze the determinants for switching from a Manchu name to a Han name.

Methods and Measures

In the first analysis of the prevalence of Manchu names, I use logistic regressions where the outcome variable is a dichotomous indicator of whether or not an individual had a Manchu name. In the second and third analyses of the incidence of name switching, I choose discrete-time event history models as the most appropriate because the registers in the CMGPD-LN do not specify precise dates of name change except the three-year period in which the name change occurs, which is indeed, as Campbell and Lee (2004a: 300, 2008) point out, the major limitation of the registers.²⁰ The complementary log-log transformation for the discrete-time hazard regression models using grouped survival data yields results that are most comparable to continuous-time methods and have been used for studying other demographic behaviors in the CMGPD-LN (Campbell and Lee 2003, 2004a, 2008). In the actual data, the dependent variable is specified as a dichotomous indicator of whether a man switched his name between the current register and the next. To guarantee consistency in the meaning of dependent variable, the analysis is restricted to the observations of men at age 18-60 *sui* for whom the observations of two consecutive triennial registers were available.

All estimations in the three analyses include the controls for geographic location, birth year, and age group, all of which are discussed the descriptive statistics. As mentioned already, I also include the controls for the 29 administrative populations to manage the apparent compositional variation in the CMGPD-LN and the missing identifications for the father and grandfather. In addition, I include four dichotomous indicators on the issue of whether kin of particular types had Manchu names to test hypotheses about the significance of family background. I first consider the ‘classic’ father-to-son transmission as an indicator of whether the father was ever observed with a Manchu name while the index individual was still alive and present. The existence of father-to-son transmission would be revealed by a large positive coefficient for this variable. To account for the possibility of diffusion of Manchu naming among other male kin, I also include three indicators of whether at least one of the brothers, cousins, and uncles had a Manchu name. Moreover, I examine the role of institutional affiliation to the state bureaucracy. First, to

²⁰ Another minor shortcoming is that in the rare cases where a man changed his name from Manchu to Han (or from Han to Manchu) but then switched back to Manchu (or to Han) within three years, his name would appear unchanged from one register to the next, and there would be no evidence of name switching.

assess whether men adjusted the ethnicity of their names according to their own institutional affiliation, I include an indicator of whether the index individual currently had an official position. Second, I use an indication of possession of position by the father to investigate whether the index individual's ethnicity reflected his father's institutional affiliation. Lastly, I add three indicators measuring the presence of other male kin with official positions to examine whether effects of institutional affiliation were diffused within families.

For each of the three analyses, I will provide results from four models. In each case, the first model does not account for the role of individual and family characteristics. The second model only considers the effects of the father having a Manchu name, which means considering only the possibility of father-to-son transmission. The third model allows for the effects of other male kin having Manchu names. I include the second model mainly to assess whether apparent effects of the father simply reflect general characteristics of the families to which men belong. If an effect of the father's name is attributable to a tendency for certain families to have a predilection for Manchu names, the addition of variables for the names of other male kin in the third model should attenuate the effect of the father's name in the second model. The final model estimates the effects of official positions in order to examine whether there was a general tendency for higher-status families to seek Manchu names. For the most part, I discuss the results from the final models. The results from the regression models for each analysis are presented in Tables 6.4, 6.6, and 6.7. Instead of coefficients, I present the risk ratios (relative risk) generated from them by exponentiation. Standard errors for the estimated risk ratios are robust in the sense that they are adjustable for the presence of repeated observations of the same individuals. To save space, I present only the p-value from statistical tests on coefficients rather than standard errors and indicators of significance.

Empirical Findings

Table 6.4 presents multivariate results on the prevalence of Manchu names among men at age 18-60 *sui*. According to these results, men's registered ethnicity clearly played a

significant role in determining whether they would have a Manchu name. Both Manchu banner populations were considerably more likely to have a Manchu name vis-à-vis the remaining 27 populations, which confirms the results in Figure 6.3. For those Manchu bannermen in the Manzhou rending, for instance, their chances of holding a Manchu name were nearly 5.85 times higher than those of the Han bannermen in the Daoyi tun, holding all other variables constant. Despite being registered only from 1864 to 1909, the bannermen in the Manzhou shengding were almost three times more likely to have a Manchu name, indicating the persistent effect of registered ethnicity until the final years of the Qing state. Hence, their relatively small percentages in holding a Manchu name in the CMGPD-LN, as shown in Table 6.1, should be taken carefully.

There was also an apparent pattern of age-specific variation in the chances of having a Manchu name, largely consistent with the results in Figure 6.4. Assuming that the age-specific mortality rate is the same among the males with and without a Manchu name, the multivariate results indicate a pronounced incidence of switching names from Manchu to Han, far more frequent than from Han to Manchu. For the index male, as shown in Table 6.3, the percentage of switching from a Manchu name to a Han name between two consecutive triennial registers was 8.92. So each observation with a Manchu name was, on average, at risk of switching by 9 percent. As a consequence, about 40 percent of men with Manchu names switched to Han names over the course of their lives. Within the same birth cohort, the index individuals in their fifties were 1.87 (1/0.533) times more likely to have a non-Manchu name than those at age 18-20 *sui*, holding all other variables constant. In other words, if there were initially 100 men aged 18-20 *sui* with a Manchu name in the population, only 53 men including those who switched from Han to Manchu could hold it into their fifties. This scenario, which predicts a 47 percent decrease, is roughly consistent with the percentage of switching names from Manchu to Han. This age-specific rate of incidence will be examined later in the analysis of name switching from Manchu to Han.

Individual and family backgrounds all affected the chances of a man having a Manchu name as an adult male. According to the results for model 4, all things being equal, if the

index male's father had ever had a Manchu name, he himself was 1.2 times more likely to have a Manchu name. The persistence of the strong effect of a father's name from model 2 to model 4 further suggests that it was not driven by a tendency for entire families to be of one ethnicity or other. Had the effect of a father's name reflected uniformity within families, the addition of the characteristics of other male kin with Manchu names would have attenuated the effect of a father's name. In this respect, heredity defined as father-to-son transmission was important.

In spite of the evidence of heredity, correlations within families are also apparent in Table 6.4. Holding a father's ethnicity constant, the existence of brothers, cousins, and uncles with Manchu names raised the probability that the index male would also have a Manchu name. A man having at least one brother or cousin with a Manchu name multiplied the chances of holding a Manchu name by 2.19 and 1.35 respectively. This correlation among related men of the same generation will be further considered in the discussion of the results in Table 6.5. Still, this analysis of prevalence, not incidence, does not measure the temporal dimension of intragenerational clustering; whether this association tended to continue after adulthood. In the analysis of name changes, therefore, I examine the presence of intragenerational diffusion by examining whether the existence of brother or cousin with a Manchu name among adult males increases the risks of switching their names from Han to Manchu to match with their kin.

The results in Table 6.4 also indicate that men with official salaried positions were 1.90 times more likely to have a Manchu name. In this respect, the possession of a salaried position had an effect as strong as that of having at least one brother with a Manchu name. The strong effect of an official position even when the ethnicity of other male kin was held constant means that, regardless of family background, men's expressed ethnic identity was affected by whether they had an affiliation with one of the bureaucratic hierarchies. The persistence of the effect after controlling for the naming practices of other kin excludes the possibility that it can be attributed to a tendency for men in official positions to be recruited from families that have taken on Manchu names.

Table 6.4 Logistic regression of the chances for having a Manchu name as an adult male aged 18-60 *sui*, Liaoning, 1749-1909

Variable	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	Odds ratio	<i>p</i>	Odds ratio	<i>p</i>	Odds ratio	<i>p</i>	Odds ratio	<i>p</i>
Year of birth	0.985	0.00	0.984	0.00	0.984	0.00	0.984	0.00
Age in <i>sui</i> (ref.: 18-20)								
21-30	0.833	0.00	0.825	0.00	0.820	0.00	0.809	0.00
31-40	0.669	0.00	0.664	0.00	0.656	0.00	0.639	0.00
41-50	0.569	0.00	0.573	0.00	0.563	0.00	0.546	0.00
51-60	0.546	0.00	0.555	0.00	0.550	0.00	0.533	0.00
Administrative population (ref.: Daoyi)								
Wangduoluoshu Manzhou shengding	2.338	0.00	2.666	0.00	3.056	0.00	2.992	0.00
Wangduoluoshu Manzhou rending	7.980	0.00	7.406	0.00	5.911	0.00	5.848	0.00
Region (ref.: North)								
Central	1.330	0.00	1.340	0.00	1.245	0.00	1.160	0.00
South Central	1.046	0.22	1.056	0.16	1.083	0.05	1.063	0.13
South	1.168	0.00	1.156	0.00	1.169	0.00	1.162	0.00
Manchu names								
Father (ever)			1.350	0.00	1.259	0.00	1.201	0.00
At least one brother					2.290	0.00	2.191	0.00
At least one cousin					1.432	0.00	1.350	0.00
At least one uncle					1.565	0.00	1.493	0.00
Official positions								
Self							1.903	0.00
Father (ever)							1.430	0.00
At least one brother							0.958	0.14
At least one cousin							1.074	0.02
At least one uncle							1.102	0.00
Pseudo R ²	0.0645		0.0680		0.0883		0.0926	
Log likelihood	-76504.388		-71047.767		-69498.504		-69176.339	
Degrees of freedom	36		37		40		45	
Observations	481,071		458,155		458,155		458,155	

Note: Analysis was restricted to observations of adult males aged 18-60 *sui* who were alive and present in the current registers. Models also included controls for all 29 state-farm populations and missing identifications for father and grandfather. To save space, the results of these controls are not included here except the two Manchu administrative populations.

Table 6.5 shows predicted probabilities from actual observations of adult males with a Manchu name under a variety of different scenarios. According to these results, the person's individual and family backgrounds as in holding official positions do not seem to be significant predictors. The effect of institutional affiliation on the individual's ethnic self-identification was much weaker than that of family background such as having Manchu names. Nearly one-quarter of the men had at least one close male kin (father, brother, uncle, or cousin) with a Manchu name under the scenario that they had only one kin with a Manchu name and they and their kin did not attain official positions. The chances of having a Manchu name under this condition varied according to their family background. About 11 percent of men had at least one brother with a Manchu name. By comparison, less than 5 percent of the men had fathers with a Manchu name, even slightly lower than the percentage for having at least one cousin with a Manchu name. If the only source of men with Manchu names was father-son transmission, the probabilities for having Manchu names would fall substantially by an order of magnitude in each generation.

One clear implication, based on the findings in Table 6.5, is that heredity alone was not sufficient to maintain the prevalence of Manchu naming. Rather, there was a pronounced clustering of having Manchu names among related men of the same generation. Results from an analysis that considers as explanatory variables the counts of numbers of brothers and cousins with Manchu names confirm the clustering effects among kin of the same generation. The modified calculations of model 4 in Table 6.4, not presented here, show that every additional brother with a Manchu name multiplied the chances of having one by 1.81, holding all other variables constant. Every additional cousin with a Manchu name increased the odds of having one by 15 percent. This proportional effect of the number of brothers and cousins with Manchu name became stronger in the scenario of men whose fathers and uncles did not ever have a Manchu name and who made up the vast majority of observations in the CMGPD-LN. Every additional brother with a Manchu name multiplied the chances of having one by 1.84 and every additional cousin by 1.15.

Table 6.5 also suggests that some of the men, but not the majority, who had Manchu names in rural Liaoning were likely to be ‘new blood.’ Nearly four-tenths of the men with a Manchu given name had no apparent individual or family backgrounds.²¹ It should be noted that most adult males in the CMGPD-LN did not hold official positions and had no male relative with Manchu names or with official positions. But they still accounted for about 40 percent of those who had a Manchu name. The presence of ‘new’ Manchus reflects the effects of applying a low rate to a very large population base.

Table 6.5 Individual and family backgrounds of adult males having a Manchu name, Liaoning, 1749-1909

No. of predictors observed	Characteristic	%
0		39.76
1	Having an official position	0.77
	Father ever observed with Manchu name	4.72
	At least one brother with Manchu name	11.10
	At least one cousin with Manchu name	4.97
	At least one uncle with Manchu name	2.35
	Total	23.14
	Father ever observed with official position	1.74
	At least one brother with official position	1.03
	At least one cousin with official position	0.51
	At least one uncle with official position	0.57
	Total	3.85
Subtotal		27.76
> 1		32.48
Total		100

Note: Based on results for Model 4 in Table 6.4.

²¹ In comparison with the previous result in Campbell, Lee, and Elliott (2002: 111-112), individual and family characteristics now account for about 27 percent more. It was identified that most men who had Manchu names at their first appearance were ‘new.’ Around two-thirds of the men (66.8 percent) who had a Manchu name when they first appeared as adults had neither any close kin with a Manchu name nor an official position.

Table 6.6 presents the multivariate results of the chances that an adult male would switch from a Han name to a Manchu name between the current register and the next. Some individual and family backgrounds influenced such propensity to switch. Brothers appear to be especially important. According to these results, a man having at least one brother with a Manchu name was 1.54 times more likely to switch than someone without one. At least one cousin with a Manchu name also multiplied the chances of switching by 1.48. Current possession of an official position may influence the future propensity to switch from a Han to a Manchu name. In other words, some men with salaried positions may have adjusted their expressed ethnic identity according to their institutional affiliation. But all the individual and kin characteristics of holding official positions appear to have been relatively unimportant because their effects were not statistically significant by conventional standards. Likewise, the effect of being registered as Manchu bannermen was not significant. Hence, the results on incidence in Table 6.6 do not strongly support the hypotheses on the significance of institutional connections to the Qing state, measured in terms of being registered as Manchu bannermen and having salaried positions within the state bureaucracy.

The apparent effects of brother's and/or cousin's Manchu names, meanwhile, confirm the findings of the analysis on prevalence in Table 6.4 that the popularity of having a Manchu name as expressed ethnic self-identity could be diffused among kin of the same generation. While the results on prevalence could not figure out the dynamic aspect of intragenerational clustering during adulthood, the outcomes in Table 6.6 indicate that adult men could switch from Han to Manchu in response to the presence of a brother or cousin who already had a Manchu name. The modified calculations of model 4 in Table 6.6, not presented here, show that every additional brother with a Manchu name further multiplied the risks of name switching from Han to Manchu by 32.67 percent; and every additional cousin by 18.13 percent.

Table 6.6 Complementary log-log regression of the chances for switching from Han to Manchu names as adult males within three years aged 18-60 *sui*, Liaoning, 1749-1909

Variable	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	Risk ratio	<i>p</i>	Risk ratio	<i>p</i>	Risk ratio	<i>p</i>	Risk ratio	<i>p</i>
Year of birth	0.994	0.00	0.994	0.00	0.994	0.00	0.995	0.00
Age in <i>sui</i> (ref.: 18-20)								
21-30	0.534	0.00	0.531	0.00	0.529	0.00	0.526	0.00
31-40	0.297	0.00	0.291	0.00	0.290	0.00	0.286	0.00
41-50	0.247	0.00	0.252	0.00	0.251	0.00	0.248	0.00
51-60	0.191	0.00	0.175	0.00	0.176	0.00	0.174	0.00
Administrative population (ref.: Daoyi)								
Wangduoluoshu Manzhou shengding	0.652	0.56	0.786	0.74	0.844	0.82	0.827	0.80
Wangduoluoshu Manzhou rending	1.317	0.49	1.386	0.42	1.185	0.68	1.148	0.74
Region (ref.: North)								
Central	1.137	0.45	1.214	0.26	1.127	0.48	1.013	0.94
South Central	1.315	0.34	1.315	0.36	1.325	0.36	1.275	0.43
South	1.678	0.13	1.690	0.14	1.678	0.15	1.627	0.18
Manchu names								
Father (ever)			1.081	0.61	1.024	0.88	0.982	0.91
At least one brother					1.650	0.00	1.539	0.00
At least one cousin					1.580	0.00	1.477	0.00
At least one uncle					1.438	0.01	1.352	0.05
Official positions								
Self							1.488	0.13
Father (ever)							1.437	0.05
At least one brother							1.202	0.32
At least one cousin							1.140	0.51
At least one uncle							1.165	0.41
Log likelihood	-3082.745		-2992.235		-2970.260		-2963.042	
Degrees of freedom		34		35		38		43
Observations		262,719		255,057		255,057		255,057

Note: Analysis was restricted to observations of adult males aged 18-60 *sui* with non-Manchu names who were alive and present in the current registers. An observation three years hence also had to be available. Models also included controls for all 29 state-farm populations and missing identifications for father and grandfather. To save space, the results of these controls are not included here except the two Manchu administrative populations.

Table 6.7 shows the multivariate results of switching from Manchu to Han names. According to these results, there was a pronounced age effect on the propensity to change to a Han name, consistent with the pattern of age-specific variation in Figure 6.5. Registered ethnicity evidently played an important role in determining whether men would convert to a non-Manchu name. Significantly, both Manchu banner populations were less likely to change to Han given names in comparison with the rest of the 27 administrative populations. For those Manchu bannermen in the Manzhou rending, for instance, their chances of retaining a Manchu name were nearly 15.38 times ($1/0.065$) higher than those of the Han bannermen in the Daoyi tun. Meanwhile, men with an official position were in general less likely to switch to Han names between the current register and the next. They had roughly a 2.44 times lower risk of switching than men without an official position. Similarly, adult males whose fathers once had a Manchu name were more likely to retain a Manchu name. But there was very little evidence of any clustering effect in the same generation except when at least one cousin had an official position.

All things considered, as they became older, the Han Chinese bannermen who were born in the last phase of the Manchu rule and did not attain a salaried position in the state bureaucracy were much less likely to keep a Manchu name without reference to the characteristics of their male kin in the same generation. This decreasing desirability to express their ethnic self-identity as Manchu could be based on a self-interested calculation that having a Manchu name by itself did not guarantee material rewards and prestigious status. As such, they considered ethnicity as an instrument for improving one's lot in life.

Table 6.7 Complementary log-log regression of the chances for switching from Manchu to Han names as adult males within three years aged 18-60 *sui*, Liaoning, 1749-1909

Variable	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	Risk ratio	<i>p</i>	Risk ratio	<i>p</i>	Risk ratio	<i>p</i>	Risk ratio	<i>p</i>
Year of birth	1.004	0.00	1.004	0.00	1.004	0.00	1.004	0.00
Age in <i>sui</i> (ref.: 18-20)								
21-30	0.805	0.02	0.811	0.02	0.811	0.02	0.825	0.04
31-40	0.580	0.00	0.584	0.00	0.585	0.00	0.607	0.00
41-50	0.349	0.00	0.344	0.00	0.344	0.00	0.363	0.00
51-60	0.254	0.00	0.247	0.00	0.248	0.00	0.260	0.00
Administrative population (ref.: Daoyi)								
Wangduoluoshu Manzhou shengding	0.352	0.05	0.269	0.03	0.267	0.03	0.267	0.03
Wangduoluoshu Manzhou rending	0.063	0.00	0.065	0.00	0.067	0.00	0.065	0.00
Region (ref.: North)								
Central	0.724	0.00	0.718	0.00	0.728	0.00	0.768	0.01
South Central	0.742	0.10	0.720	0.08	0.723	0.08	0.746	0.11
South	0.903	0.61	0.884	0.55	0.885	0.55	0.912	0.65
Manchu names								
Father (ever)			0.793	0.03	0.798	0.04	0.841	0.11
At least one brother					0.898	0.19	0.953	0.57
At least one cousin					1.061	0.51	1.139	0.19
At least one uncle					0.974	0.80	1.041	0.71
Official positions								
Self							0.410	0.00
Father (ever)							1.003	0.98
At least one brother							0.912	0.55
At least one cousin							0.881	0.45
At least one uncle							0.891	0.44
Log likelihood	-3032.843		-2921.432		-2920.407		-2908.060	
Degrees of freedom	35		36		39		44	
Observations	10,795		10,305		10,305		10,305	

Note: Analysis was restricted to observations of adult males aged 18-60 *sui* with Manchu names who were alive and present in the current registers. An observation three years hence also had to be available. Models also included controls for all 29 state-farm populations and missing identifications for father and grandfather. To save space, the results of these controls are not included here except the two Manchu administrative populations.

Conclusion

This paper demonstrates that the nature of ethnic boundaries in China was porous. As one manifestation of such fluidity and complexity, naming practices in Liaoning during the late imperial period were thus explored. While the Han bannermen were of course Han, some of them identified themselves as Manchu by adopting Manchu names and by switching names from Han to Manchu. These naming practices may represent a symbolic pride in being incorporated into the Manchu-created banner society. They may also allude to a personal aspiration to ascend the status ladder since nearly 40 percent of those who had Manchu names were predicted to have no family background, accounting for a significant role for individual choice and agency. In this respect, the person's ethnic self-identity can move beyond one's ascriptive ethnicity as determined by lineage. Meanwhile, intergenerational heredity was correlated with the chances of having a Manchu name. Indeed, there was a strong effect on intragenerational clustering especially when switching names from Han to Manchu.

It is also important to note that as the case of Cui Zhilu [Arsai] mentioned earlier in this chapter reveals, the practices of Manchu naming and name changes conflicted with the administrative ethnic categories of the Liaodong banner populations. From the perspective of the Qing state, being officially registered as Han bannermen meant being non-Manchu even though they may have adopted Manchu names or switched their names from Han to Manchu. Meanwhile, being registered as Manchu bannermen meant being Manchu without reference to whether they adjusted to Han-style naming practices or changed their names from Manchu to Han. So individual's expressed ethnic identity did not correspond to one's official ethnicity as recorded in the household registers. Further, as a methodological note, it is essential to carry out statistical analysis of the large quantities of reliable individual-level data sets to systematically decipher the 'hidden' gap between the individual's own identities and the official categories on which the aggregate statistics of population in the censuses and the household registers are based (see, e.g., Lee, Campbell, and Wang 2002; Lee and Wang 1999a, 1999b). In this sense, this empirical study may provide sociological insights into the micro-foundation of macro

social phenomena (see Collins 1981; Hechter 1983) by taking both the processes of social identity construction at the individual level and the dynamics of group boundaries at the aggregate level into account.

Further, studies on the prevalence of Manchu names and incidence of name changes will not only elucidate the dynamics of ethnic identity construction and reconstruction in late imperial Liaodong, but will also contribute to our understanding of the fundamental aspect of ethnic group boundaries in China. There is a duality in boundary-making and boundary-clearing and, as discussed, they sometimes create contradictory ethnic locations. On the one hand, the Chinese state has a long history of defining and maintaining its ethnic boundaries.²² On the other hand, despite this long history of ethnic registration, ethnic self-identity has been rather fluid until today.

After the Cultural Revolution, the size of non-Han groups has drastically increased, in part because of ethnic re-registration (see Hoddie 2006: ch.4; Hsu 1993). This is particularly true for Manchus whose populations have more than doubled in only two decades, from 4.3 million in the 1982 census to 10.6 million in the 2000 census. At the same time, the government started to create autonomous areas for the Manchu nationality, mostly in northeastern China. In 1985, as a symbolic gesture, it established the first Manchu autonomous county at Xinbin in East Liaoning, the place of Nurhaci's first Manchu capital of Hetu Ala (Scharping 2000: 348). As of July 2011, there were 10 autonomous Manchu counties (6 in Liaoning, 1 in Jilin, and 3 in Hebei).²³ The trend of ethnic revival may be attributed to the individual's self-interested preference for being qualified to receive material benefits from the preferential treatment program, which is not unique to China but used widespread in other multiethnic states including India,

²² Each regime constructed its own ethnic categories, largely embedded in the population registration system. The list of historical examples includes Jurchen, Han, and Southern people under the Jin (Zhao Yi *Nian'er shi zhaji* Chapter 28, p. 630), four official categories—Mongol, Semu (of Western and Central Asian ancestry), Han, and Southern people—of the Yuan (Endicott-West 1989; Jia 1999; Mote 1999: 489-497), hereditary Mongol soldiers of the Ming (Robinson 2004: 75-76), Manchu, Mongol, and Han bannermen of the Qing, and fifty-six nationalities of the People's Republic.

²³ From the web page of the State Ethnic Affairs Commission of PRC, searched on July 08, 2011 (URL: http://www.seac.gov.cn/gjmw/zzdf/M1003index_1.htm).

Malaysia, Australia, and the United States.²⁴ But, as presently discussed, it can also be driven by the collective memories of the past rather than instrumentalist calculations (see Bai 2005).

The historical legacy of the Liaodong banner population continues to persist even today, one century since the fall of the Qing dynasty in 1911. Only Han bannermen have asserted a separate identity from Han late-comers who remained outside the Eight Banners system; their descendants have preserved their own identity vis-à-vis other fellow Han people. Oral histories collected from their elderly descendants indicate that the CMGPD-LN descendants continue to differentiate themselves from other Han Chinese in Liaoning, referring to themselves as bannermen who “followed the dragon and entered the passes” as opposed to others who were of the common people (*minren*) (Lee, Campbell, and Chen 2010). Taking such collective memories into account, it is not surprising that, while Manchu ethnicity is no longer as prestigious, around 10-20 percent of the people in Liaoning still claim themselves to be ‘Manchus’ despite their Han origins (Campbell, Lee, and Elliott 2002: 102). Given such competing ethnic heritages, it is unclear to what extent and in what circumstances do they consider or represent themselves as either Manchu or Han or both.

²⁴ For some empirical examples, see Hoddie (2006) for his studies of India, Australia’s aborigines, Malaysia’s indigenous people depicted as *bumiputera* (son of earth), and China’s non-Han minorities. In each case, the implementation of preferential treatment programs was followed by an increase in the number of people claiming membership in the ethnic groups favored by government policies. Likewise, with the lessening of the stigma and the increase in economic incentives for being Native American, a recent population explosion in their numbers has occurred (Hirschman 2004: 406).

Chapter Seven
Mistaken Identity:
The Fallacy of Reading China's Ethnic Relations through Western Lens

[T]he history of modern social development in the West (1500-1914), when reflected in the mirror of Chinese history, is seen to be the very reverse of what happened in China — Etienne Balazs (1964: 21).

Introduction

Based on discussions in the previous chapters, this chapter will critically examine some misconception widespread in the studies of China's ethnic relations, which looks at them through the prism of racism, colonialism, and Orientalism. In general, this comparative perspective assumes that China developed its own version of racism, colonialism, and Orientalism parallel to European colonial powers, and the legacy of which has continued until today. My argument is that one would be mistaken to interpret Chinese ethnic relations on the basis of these three "isms," modeled on the set of rigid racial, political, and cultural hierarchy between 'us' and 'them': white/colored, colonizer/colonized, civilized/uncivilized. I discuss how employing three dichotomies of 'Self' and 'Other'—viz. superior Han/inferior non-Han, dominant settlers/dominated indigenes, and civilized Han/uncivilized barbarian—would lead to a misleading portrayal of Chinese reality.

The Mythology of Racism

Many sinologists have a tendency to equate the early Sinocentric conception of world order with the early European understanding of group boundaries. This parallel comparison can be epitomized by saying that as early as the dawn of their history, the Chinese who self-identified as Hua, Xia, or Hua Xia looked down upon alien groups as

inferior beings in the same way the Hellenes looked down on the *barbaroi* (Pulleyblank 1983:411).¹ Likewise, Sino-Hellenic comparative researchers such as Schaberg (1999) have suggested certain similarities between Athenian imperialism and early Chinese imperialism. But they have mostly failed to point out a substantial difference, namely the former was coastal, colonial, and confederative; the latter was continental, non-colonial, and patrimonial. There are other remarkable distinctions to be made from antiquity between Chinese and Western civilizations. In the European world, the barbarians were, by default, not only excluded from the citizenry but at times enslaved as laborers, justified in philosophical discussions, notably Aristotle's natural slaves (see Finley 1980). Some scholars have even argued that ethnic prejudices and stereotypes evolved into the system of proto-racism, which interplayed with Greek and early Roman colonialism and was later taken up by early modern statesmen and many enlightenment thinkers.² In the Chinese world, by contrast, there was neither a conception of citizenship, which was a privilege hard to attain in the Greco-Roman society, nor a philosophical discourse that portrayed non-Sinitic aliens as having such a slave mentality and disposition. The Sino-Western parallel is more applicable by comparing China to the late Roman state when it shifted its direction from coastal into continental expansion, transformed from being republican to a patrimonial government, and became increasingly more inclusive toward aliens.

What is more, most Western literature on China's ethnicity, presumably driven by the premise of cross-cultural commensurability, use the term "barbarians" for the English translation of non-Sinitic peoples. As Lydia Liu (2004) has shown, such habitual conventions inevitably cause some semantic misinterpretation. The Han Chinese terms such as Yi, Di, Rong, Man, Fan, Lu, and Hu typically translated as "barbarians" do not have the strength of the English word (see Creel 1970; Di Cosmo 2002; Drompp 2005: 174-175). In comparison with the Hellenic understanding of unintelligible barbarians,

¹ In ancient Greek thought, *barbaroi* were speaking unintelligible or inarticulate sounds that gave rise to a sense of contempt, disgust, and loathing toward them. Everyone who did not speak Greek as his native tongue was classified into the single undifferentiated category of "barbarian," a person whose speech was unintelligible and sounded like "bar-bar-bar." See Finley (1954, 1987: 120-133) for a sociological discussion on the concept of the ancient Greek nation.

² Benjamin Isaac's (2004) thought-provoking book, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity*, represents this perspective.

whom “many Greeks came to believe, [to be] inferior by nature—the highly civilized Egyptians and Persians alongside the Scythians and Thracians” (Finley 1977: 18), these terms are basically generic words meaning ‘aliens,’ and were employed indiscriminately in Chinese texts to indicate foreign peoples and their polities. Their usage was generally meant to be objectively descriptive; “although ‘barbarian’ might convey uncomplimentary overtones, the intent in this substance is not to insult, merely to describe,” wrote Mote (1999: 982). Although the symbolism of aliens as birds and beasts had been a powerful rhetorical device, this was not the domain of foreign ethnicities alone, but used to indicate all enemies of the Middle Kingdom.³

Recently, scholars have begun to interpret the long history of Sinocentric worldview through the lens of racial discourse. Without distinguishing ethnocentrism from racism, they have insisted that the Sinitic peoples or Han Chinese despised barbarian ‘Others’ as lesser human-beings to the extent that can be compared neatly to racial ideology, taxonomy and hierarchy. The works of Frank Dikötter, who has extensively written about what he has called “racial discourse” in China, epitomize this approach, particularly in his book *The Discourse of Race in Modern China* (1992: ch.1). His basic argument is that China’s historical ethnocentrism can be equivalent to modern racism. He also remarks that racial consciousness and taxonomies, constructed from the concept of racial purity, were being established “well before the intrusion of Europeans in China” (Dikötter 1992: 34).

Dikötter even asserts that just as modern Europeans had dealt with the racial ‘Others,’ the Chinese elites developed a ‘racist’ discourse on skin color at a very early period. It means that the Chinese highly valued ‘white’ skin color as in the praise of jade-like whiteness of one’s hands; at the same time they set a metaphor for the ‘black’ faces of the slaves who tilled the fields under the burning sun in a manner that clearly implied contempt and disdain. This ‘white-black’ dichotomy was projected upon the outside world when the

³ As Drompp aptly put it, the symbol of owl, wolf, and feline as unfilial and immoral was “far too rich to be used only on foreigners” (2005: 174). Also, the Chinese word *lu* (literally means “a captive” and generally translated as “a caitiff”), widely employed during the Tang, Song, and Ming times, was used not only to depict northern nomads, but could also mean any enemy of the Chinese empire.

Chinese came into contact with alien groups: the Chinese people considered ‘white’ as center of the civilized world and ‘black’ as the negative pole of humanity like devils or ghosts, so that this polarity demarcated the edge of the known world (Dikötter 1992: 10-13). But the discourse on skin color in traditional China must be regarded not as racialized but rather classed prejudice, implying a pejorative attitude toward manual occupation. And indeed the conception of sacred color in the Sinic culture was far from stable but shifting in a connection between the succession of dynastic cosmic powers stipulated in the theory of Five Virtues (*wude*) and the circulation of five colors (red, yellow, white, black, and green) embedded in the theory of Five Elements (*wuxing*).⁴

Another strategy toward convincing Western readers is that to imagine the idea of ‘race’ in Chinese history is to have a deliberate word choice for translating Chinese classics. Dikötter, for instance, reads the famous phrase in the ancient chronicle *Zuozhuan*, discussed in Chapter 5, as follows: “If he is not of our *race*, he is sure to have a different mind” (*fei wo zulei, qi xin bi yi*), and judges that “this sentence seems to support the allegation that at least some degree of ‘racial discrimination’ existed during the early stage of Chinese civilization” (1992: 3; my emphasis). But the original translation by James Legge, which he cites as a source, reads: “If he be not of our kin, he is sure to have a different mind” (1872: 354-355). He intentionally replaces the term ‘kin’ with ‘race’ as the English translation of *zulei* and, as Liu (2004: 72) pertinently points out, makes a “strategic misquotation of James Legge’s.”⁵ It is important to note that the usage of *zulei* in early China did not refer to ‘race’ in a sociological and anthropological sense, but

⁴ As the Book of Rites, one of the ancient Confucian classics, points out, each of three pre-imperial dynasties (Xia, Shang, and Zhou) preferred one of five colors; black, white, and red respectively (Legge 1967[1885]: 125-126). See Paige (1974: 16-17) on the origin and early development of the Five Elements theory in pre-imperial China. Later, this Five Elements theory, which was originally elaborated by the Yin-Yang School, achieved considerable impact on the new syncretic Confucianism during the Former Han dynasty. Similarly, since the first unified empire, the Qin, identified itself as the Water Virtue, most of later dynasties employed the Five Virtues theory to justify their emerging state as the legitimate successor in a cosmological sense. See Liu Pujiang (2007) for his discussion of the Five Virtue theory and its gradual decline since the Song dynasty. He argues that this traditional theory was “probably used for politics in the peasant war of the late Ming Dynasty for the last time” (ibid.: 539). Li Zicheng (1606-1645), who brought down the Ming, not only declared himself as the ruler of the Water Phase, but adopted the color of blue, so soldier all wore blue, even the hats of officials.

⁵ Likewise, in Hsiao Kung-chuan (1979: 137), the English translator Frederick Mote interprets the same sentence as an expression of the “racial concept to distinguish the barbarians from the Chinese” by putting the term ‘race’ over the narrower sense of ‘kin.’ Prasenjit Duara (1993: 4) also uses the word ‘race’ for this quotation from the *Zuozhuan*.

rather denote those of the same clan, kin or descent group. She further suggests that the rendering of “*zulei* as a concept of ‘race’ boldly bypasses the millennia-long commentarial traditions surrounding the Confucian text to allow the modern speculation about the existence or nonexistence of racial discrimination in ancient China to stand as an anachronistic judgment on the classical concept” (ibid.: 73).⁶ Also, even when Chinese literati projected a pseudo-racist idea onto ‘uncultured’ aliens by quoting this sentence from the *Zuozhuan* which they canonized, they still believed that it is a question of one’s state of mind, which can be properly corrected through Confucian moral education, but was not an issue of skin color, physical markers, or purity of blood. The ultimate standard for determining what is superior and inferior was and remained the Confucian ethic.

Instead of developing the ‘racist’ perspectives, most Chinese intellectuals held the culturalist views: being a ‘barbarian’ was a question of will and environment shaped by geography and climate, not an inborn characteristic determined by genetic or physiological attributes. This is, however, not to deny that there were several neo-Confucian scholars unusually hostile to non-Han groups such as Chen Liang (1143-1194) of the Southern Song, Fang Xiaoru (1357-1402) of the early Ming, and Wang Fuzhi (1619-1692) who lived during the Ming-Qing transition. Their writings on barbarism can be characterized as a self-protective reaction to the threat from non-Han conquerors, the Jurchen Jin in northern China, the Mongol Yuan, and the Manchu Qing, respectively.⁷ After the fall of the Mongol Yuan, for instance, Fang Xiaoru argued that:

[T]o elevate them to a position above the peoples of the Middle Kingdom (*zhongguo zhi min*) would be to lead the world of animality (*qinshou*). If a dog or a horse were to occupy a human’s seat, even small boys would be angry and take a club to expel them. And fierce servant girls and treacherous [male] slaves would kill their owners and occupy their houses. ... Why these would happen? Because the general order would be confused.⁸

⁶ In addition, based on his argument of Wang Fuzhi’s works, Dikötter (1992: 29) insists that, in the context of the seventeenth century, racial group and *zulei* are “etymologically and semantically similar enough to be compared with each other.” However, until the nineteenth century, the term ‘*zulei*’ was still semantically incommensurable to the term ‘race’ and ‘human race,’ which to a degree led to the modern neologism ‘*zhongzu*’ and ‘*renzhong*’ as the Chinese translation respectively.

⁷ For the analysis of Chen Liang’s writings and ideas, see Tillman (1979). For Fang Xiaoru, see Fincher (1972). For Wang Fuzhi, see Balazs (1965: 37-50) and De Bary and Lufrano (2000: 32-25).

⁸ Fang Xiaoru, *Xunzhi zhai quanji* 2.10. Some parts of translation follow Fincher (1972: 59).

One may call his views in some sense ‘racist’; yet, if racism means that the us-them boundary is impermeable and linked to unalterable biological traits, he was “still only half a racist” since the culturalist vision retains a hold on his logic (Fincher 1972: 59). Strictly speaking, ‘racism’ appears to be less than half the explanation for his harsh treatment, to which Fincher (1972: 67) also admits. Also, Wang Fuzhi’s bitter lament, written under the occupation by the Manchus, was not to preserve “the territory of the Chinese race” or “a specific *Lebensraum (dingwei)*” as Dikötter (1992: 26-29) mistakenly interprets.⁹ His prime consideration was still culture not race, even when taking his apparent anti-foreign sentiment into account (see De Bary and Lufrano 2000: 32).

It is important here to point out that ethnocentrism is one thing and racism is another. Ethnic discourse in China has frequently generated ethnocentric stereotypes and prejudices (see Chapter 4) but not in the sense of racism which holds that otherness is not simply a product of language or culture but is part and parcel of the intrinsic characters. It is necessary to conceptually distinguish between the two since ethnocentrism is a common feature of most societies including the Chinese world while racism is a modern development of the last few centuries (see, e.g., Hirschman 2004: 388-389; Wallerstein 1991). As in most multiethnic empires in history, the key aspect of traditional Sinocentrism had been the absence of any presumption as to the alien’s intrinsic inferiority measured by physical or intelligence standard. If outsiders were to give up their foreign ways and wish to acculturate to the local culture, they could become members of Chinese society.

China’s imperial foundation has largely been preserved in the age of nation-state in the sense that the principle of nationhood that emphasizes primordial interethnic unity within a single national state has withstood. It was so even at the height of Han-centered nationalism in Republican China (1912-1949), one that the subsequent PRC leadership has criticized as the Great Han chauvinism (*da hanzu zhuyi*). Upon the victory of the Nationalist Revolution in 1911, the earlier concept that conceived the anti-Qing

⁹ James Millward includes a lengthy quotation of Dikötter’s summary of Wang’s thought without making any criticism, while he recognizes that “the fundamental distinction between Chinese and barbarians arises, according to Wang, not from biology but from environment” (1998: 36).

mobilization as the racial conflict between the two races of Han and Manchu was immediately replaced by the doctrine of the “Five Nationalities in Harmony” (*wuzu gonghe*) within the Chinese state, which emphasized mutually affective brotherhood as the fundamental essence of Chinese nationhood (see Chapter 3; also Duara 1995: 142-143; Leibold 2004; Wang 2001: 194-201; Zhao 2004: ch.2). This principle of five groups with equal status, proposed by Dr. Sun Yat-sen (1866-1925), the father of the Republic, was not only symbolized by the five stripes of the national flag of the Republic of China, but used to persuade non-Han groups to be loyal to the Chinese state. Even so, this pacifist doctrine must not disguise the uncomfortable reality of massive anti-Manchu violence in the course of the 1911 Revolution, often legitimized as a ‘national revenge’ against foreign oppressors (see Rhoads 2000: 187-205). Moreover, this slogan was in effect a political instrument of retaining the vast frontier regions of the former Qing dynasty, much of which were added by the great expeditions of the Manchu conquerors.

In line with this doctrine, the Provisional Law of the Republic in 1912 explicitly identified Mongolia, Tibet, and Qinghai as integral parts of the Chinese nation (Zhao 2004: 68). The same rule was applied to Manchuria, the *terre natale* of the Manchus who were previously regarded as the enemy of the Han race as early as late Ming, by referring to this region as “Northeast” (*dongbei*) China. Indeed, some late Qing revolutionary activists such as Zhang Binglin (1869-1936) and Zou Rong (1885-1905) tried to highlight a fundamental racial difference between the ‘Siberian’ races (including the Manchus, Mongols, and Turks) and the ‘Chinese’ races, comprised of the Han, Tibetan, and Miao peoples.¹⁰ According to this view, Manchuria could be the living space, *Lebensraum*, for the Tungus-Manchu race. So, the purpose of the anti-Manchu revolution was to drive out the Manchu oppressors back to their original place, just as the Mongol rulers of the Yuan fled to the Mongolian steppes after the founding of the native Ming state, and the attempt to keep China proper for the Chinese race.¹¹ By the same logic, others like Liu Shipai

¹⁰ On the subtle complexity of the anti-Manchu racialism among Han nationalists, see Dikötter (1992: ch.4, 2005), Duara (1995: ch.4), Fogel (1977), Ishikawa (2002b, 2003), Laitinen (1990), and Wong (1989).

¹¹ In a 1901 article, for instance, Zhang Binglin argued, “Today’s anti-Manchism is like the effort to reclaim one’s own house and land from occupiers by appealing to boundaries defined in old contracts. Therefore, [driving the Manchus out] is just regaining what we used to have. They can still have their Three Eastern Provinces [Manchuria] as autonomous areas for Manchus.” He further explained his anti-

(1884-1919) and Tao Chengzhang (1878-1912) even declared that the homeland of the Manchus had never belonged to China (Ishikawa 2003: 18-19; see also Bernal 1976). Ironically, such views among some extreme anti-Manchu revolutionaries were akin to that of many Japanese militarists who aspired to separate Manchuria from the Republic of China and establish the Manchu regime under Japanese control (see Duara 2003: ch.2). As a way to appeal to the League of Nations against the Japanese invasion of Manchuria after the Mukden Incident in 1931, many patriotic scholars like Fu Sinian (1896-1950) made the pseudo-historical claim that Manchuria has always been an inalienable part of China since ancient times (Fu 1932; Li 1932; Lee 2008; see also Schneider 1971). It is, therefore, important to note that the genealogy of Chinese nationalism with respect to the idea of statehood and the discourse of race is not so much continuous as discontinuous when it comes to pre-Republican and post-Republican eras.

Meanwhile, Sun Yat-sen later rejected his “Wuzu gonghe” principle and accepted a more assimilative doctrine, supporting Han-centric integration (see Duara 1995: 143; Wang 2001: 201-217). This radical change was based partly on his realpolitik calculation: the equality of the five nationalities is unrealistic since all four non-Han groups are incapable of defending themselves, a situation which necessitates the massive assistance from the Han Chinese majority. In his speech in 1922, for instance, he argued: “On the status of the five nationalities, Manchuria becomes within Japanese influence; Mongolia has been under Russian control; Tibet is almost becoming a thing in the British pocket. Because they all do not have the ability to self-defend, we Han Chinese (*hanzu*) must support them.”¹² In the same year, he even declared, “So-called ‘Wuzu gonghe’ is honestly a deceptive term since all the Tibetans, Mongols, Hui [Muslims], Manchus are not capable of self-defense. By carrying on the [spirit] of glorious and splendid nationalism, let the Tibetans, Mongols, Hui, Manchus *assimilate* to our Han Chinese and establish a biggest

Manchuism as “making them live in their own houses, farm their own land, and make their own living in their way. Just don’t let them come to our Han land.” As rendered by Shao Dan (2005: 39).

¹² See the passages from Sun Yat-sen’s speech, *Sanmin zhuyi zhi juti banfa* (The concrete means of the Three Principles of the People) cited in Wang Ke (2001: 203-204).

nation-state” (my italics).¹³ Further, in his famous “Three Principles of the People” (*sanmin zhuyi*) lecture, delivered one year before his death, Sun Yat-sen stated:

China, since the Ch'in [Qin] and Han dynasties, has been developing a single state out of a single race, while foreign countries have developed many states from one race and have included many nationalities within one state. ... The total population of the Chinese nation (*zhongguo de minzu*) is four hundred millions. Among them, there are several million Mongols, more than a million Manchus, several million Tibetans, and a million some Turkic Muslims. The total numbers of these foreign origins are only ten millions. As far as the majority is concerned, the four million Chinese (*zhongguoren*) can all be considered Han people with common blood lineage, common language, common religion, and common customs—a single nation (*minzu*) as a whole. (Sun 1953[1924]: 2, 5, with modification)

Rather than pointing out the equality between Han and non-Han peoples, his argument here clearly alluded to a Han-centered vision of the Chinese nation. Nevertheless, his doctrine of the “state-nation” (*guozu zhuyi*), one national family as one country, and his emphasis on China’s multiethnic unity were evidently inherited by his contentious successors, the Nationalists and the Communists. The Nationalist government regarded the ethnic minorities as branches of Han or, more specifically, “branches of the Chinese state-nation” (*Zhonghua guozu de fenzhi*) excluding fully assimilated Manchus and Hui Muslims, as one of the leading ethnologists, Rui Yifu, has termed it (Ruey 1972a[1942]). Hence, its perspective toward non-Han nationalities as ‘not-yet assimilated’ Chinese made ethnic identification and classification nearly impracticable.¹⁴ Without question, its leader, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, underscored common blood ties and ‘racial’ sameness among the diverse ethnic groups that constitute the Chinese nation, which had been, of course, shared by major politicians, bureaucrats, and scholars throughout the Republican years (see e.g., Leibold 2006, 2007; Li 1928; Lin 1984[1936]; Ruey 1972a[1942]; Shin 2007). In the first chapter of his wartime treatise, *China’s Destiny*,

¹³ See the passages from Sun’s speech, *Junren jingshen jiaoyu* (On the education of the spirit of soldiers) quoted in Wang Ke (2001: 206-207).

¹⁴ But, even the Nationalist government, as Fiskesjö aptly argues, “sometimes dismissed as wholly bent on denial and outright cancellation of any non-Han ethnicities, *actually did precede* its Communist successor in *enlisting* them as integral components of a declared multi-ethnic state. This is evident in a little-known Nationalist government project to this end dating to the late 1930s and early 1940s” (2006: 28-29; emphasis in original). This project was directed by Ruey Yih-fu who presented an official report on it to the government in 1941. This report was later compiled in Ruey (1972b). See also Mullaney (2010).

Chiang gave a historical account of the development of the Chinese nation and summarized it as follows:¹⁵

Throughout this lengthy historical process, these various clans often traced their respective genealogies and discovered their common origin. ... [T]he Mongols are the descendants of the Hsiung Nu [Xiongnu], and according to the *Shih Chi* and *Han Shu*, the rulers of Hsia [Xia] were their distant begetters.¹⁶ ... [I]t is revealed that he [the Yellow Emperor] was the forefather of both the Manchus and Tibetans of today. As to the so-called Mohammedans [*Huijiao tu*] in present-day China, they are for the most part actually members of the Han clan [*minzu*] who embraced Islam. ... In short, our various clans actually belong to the same nation, as well as to the same racial stock. Therefore, there is an inner factor closely linking the historical destiny of common existence and common sorrow and joy of the whole Chinese nation. That there are five peoples designated in China [i.e., Han, Manchus, Mongols, Tibetans, and Mohammedans] is not due to difference in race or blood, but to religion and geographical environment. In short, the differentiation among China's five peoples is due to regional and religious factors, and not to race or blood. This fact must be thoroughly understood by all our fellow countrymen. (Chiang 1947: 39-40, with modification)

The Chinese Communist leaders have also appropriated the discourse of race to essentialize the 'inalienable' ties among ethnicities, even though they have ascribed the detestable consequences of Great Han chauvinism to the Nationalist regime under Chiang's leadership.¹⁷ The politicians and scholars of the PRC have employed the Morgan-Engelsian theory to justify their concept of the non-Han minorities being 'racial' brothers of Han; namely, majority and minority nationals should be placed within the 'same' lineage of evolutionary continuum (see Chapter 5). So the state-sponsored propaganda of Sino-Tibetan 'racial' semblance seeks to elaborate it on scientific grounds from the studies of anthropometrics, genetics, and linguistics; at the same time overseas Tibet independence groups continually rebuff it. Similarly, the Chinese geneticists have tried to scientifically prove that all 56 ethnic groups have quite a large portion of common kinship in that the Han people have mixed in with their neighboring non-Han groups and vice versa (see Chapter 3). Thus, as top geneticists at the Chinese Academy of Sciences have insisted, "[T]hough there are 56 identified ethnic groups in China, we can

¹⁵ The author would like to thank Professor Barry Sautman for bring this book to my attention.

¹⁶ See Chapter 5 for a detailed discussion of the discourse of the Sinitic-origin of Xiongnu people in ancient China.

¹⁷ Zhou Enlai, for instance, harshly blamed the nationality policy of the Nationalist government in the followings: "Chiang Kai-shek's view of nationality was thoroughly steeped in Great Han chauvinism. In name, he called Mongols, Huis, Tibetans, Miaos, and others frontier people (*bianmin*) as he did not recognize them as [different] nationalities. In practice, he carried out [a policy] of ethnic discrimination and suppression." As rendered by Zhao Suisheng (2004: 173).

put them together and call them the Chinese Nation” (Du, Xiao, and Cavalli-Sforza 1997: 620; see also Du and Xiao 1997; Xiao, Cavalli-Sforza, Minch, and Du 2000; Yuan 1991).

This all-inclusive concept of ‘racial’ nationhood, which characterizes the course of post-imperial Chinese state-building, also aspires to transcend the territorial boundaries of the PRC. All ethnic Chinese, notably Taiwanese and overseas Chinese, are supposed to adhere to the Chinese state on the ground of their being common descendants of the Yellow Emperor, one of putative originators of the Chinese ‘race.’¹⁸ The myths of common ancestry, kinship, and shared historical memories serve what Barry Sautman (1997a, 1997b) terms a “racial nationalism,” which imagines primordial bonds among China’s 56 ethnic groups and external kin. Today, the PRC’s assertive claims to ‘racial’ sameness not only serve as an ideological weapon to counter the discourse of Indo-Tibetan race, but ruthlessly negate the political independence of Tibet and Taiwan. In this respect, the fundamental question of China’s racial thinking does not stem from the politics of racial hierarchy and the ensuing privileging of certain race over others but from its all-encompassing disallowing of any separatist and irredentist movements from the frontier non-Han minorities.

To sum up, the formation of the post-imperial Chinese state is based not so much on the principle of ethnic (Han) nationalism, but on the reconfiguration of the political and cultural universalism of the Chinese empire. Although there were several advocates of a racially-defined nationalism such as Zhang Binglin and Zou Rong in the earlier stages of Chinese nationalism, their idea of anti-Manchu racism was quickly silenced by the efforts of building up the unity of the multiethnic Chinese Republic after the fall of the Qing dynasty (see Ishikawa 2003; Zhao 2004: ch.1). The denial of the ethnic logic of nation-state is also evident, considering the fact that the right to national self-determination for minorities was initially endorsed by the Chinese communist leaders during the pre-1949

¹⁸ The Yellow Emperor and his propagation of the Chinese ‘race’ symbolize both racial and state nationalism. Deng Xiaoping argued that the desire for reunification of the mainland and Taiwan is “rooted in the hearts of all descendants of the Yellow Emperor.” A Chinese American astronaut was acclaimed as “the first descendant of the Yellow Emperor to travel in space.” Both examples are cited in Sautman (1997b: 84). Peking Man is another assumed racial progenitor, which constructs a “paleoanthropological nationalism” in China (Sautman 1997b, 2001).

period which was yet replaced by the right of regional autonomy in the PRC (see Wang 2001: ch.10; Zhao 2004: ch.5).¹⁹ The establishment of semi-autonomous regions for the native population would be a modern appropriation of its imperial practice of indirect rule, which reveals a heritage of administrative duality between the center and periphery. Yet, as has been discussed, China's pattern of spatial separation and frontier governance has not been analogous to the relations between the metropole and colony of colonial powers.

The Mythology of Internal Colonialism

The thesis of 'internal colonialism' in China stipulates that the territorial expansion of the Chinese empire shares a common route with European colonial powers, and that such a situation persists even today.²⁰ And a comparative-historical approach has been employed to substantiate it. Laura Hostetler (2000, 2001), for instance, compares early modern state-making in Europe with the Qing dynasty by mentioning Michel Hechter's classic *Internal Colonialism* (1975).²¹ Likewise, Peter Perdue depicts the Qing domination over the frontiers as "Manchu colonialism" and concludes that "despite the apparent differences between China and Europe, there are enough common traits to inspire further discussion" (1998: 261). This Sino-Western framework is said to characterize China's

¹⁹ For instance, the right of national self-determination was evidently stipulated in the constitution of the Soviet Republic of China of 1931. In the Article 14, it read: the Soviet government of China recognizes the right of self-determination of the national minorities in China, their right to complete separation from China, and to the formation of an independent state for each national minority. All Mongolians, Tibetans, Miao, Yao, Koreans, and others living on the territory of China shall enjoy the full right to self-determination, i.e., they may either join the Union of Chinese Soviets or secede from it and from their own state as they may prefer. As rendered by Brandt, Schwartz and Fairbank (2005: 223). See also Zhao Suisheng (2004: 173-175).

²⁰ For example, based on his fieldwork with ethnic Yao (Mien) in Thailand and historical analysis drawn partly from Dikötter's arguments mentioned above, an anthropologist argues that "This case of internal colonialism in China has some parallels in Western colonial expansion and the construction of 'savagery'" (Jonsson 2000: 74). Likewise, Pitman Potter argues that China's governance of the inner periphery "has traditionally exhibited features of colonialism, with significant Han-dominated oppression of local culture" (2007: 256).

²¹ She argues that Hechter's findings "are interesting as a comparative case to China not only because of similar process that took place, but also because of the geographic proximity of the territories gradually incorporated into the empire. ... We cannot say that the Qing was not a colonial power simply because its expansion did not involve lands overseas" (Hostetler 2001: 97).

centuries-long process of colonization as an ethnic mode of domination, inequality, and conflict, parallel to other colonized societies.

First, the premise of the history of (internal) colonialism in China entails and takes for granted the hegemony of Han Chinese, which has been consolidated through Han settlement in the frontiers since the Qing expansion in the eighteenth century. As a result of ‘colonial’ attitudes and actions, the frontier societies have become considerably stratified along ethnic lines. Ethnic stratification in the past, what Stevan Harrell calls “the empire model of ethnic division of labor” (2001a: 328), still persists.²² This ‘colonial’ landscape has become the main opinion in Western academia without much controversy.²³ It sounds even more appealing, considering that Chinese politicians have vehemently pronounced the abolition of vicious “Great Han chauvinism.” Mao Zedong, for instance, repeatedly articulates that the key toward resolving the nationality question hinges on overcoming Han chauvinism (see, e.g., 1977[1957]).²⁴ So, the idea of opposition between a dominant majority and discriminated minority, which is commonly found in modern nation-states, has been supported both inside and outside of China.

Second, the discourse over China’s colonialism focuses on the state which plays a decisive role in consolidating the Han-dominated social structure in the frontier societies. Like European colonial powers, the Chinese government has treated its minorities as if they lack morality, as less educated, more superstitious, and possibly dangerous (see Harrell 1995a; Heberer 1989, 2001). One of the colonial projects of the state is the ethnographic representations of the peripheral indigenes (see e.g., Deal and Hostetler

²² Robert Jenks remarks that the economic conditions of Miao peoples “clearly marked them as being of inferior social status” (1994: 45). He further mentions that, even today, despite improvements in communications and efforts to speed development, the government has done little for them: “Derogatory ethnic stereotypes persist along with poverty, and so it is perhaps no surprise that the Miao and other minority groups remain on the bottom of the economic pyramid” (1994: 167).

²³ See, e.g., Giersch (2006), Herman (2006, 2007), and Jenks (1994: 43). But there have been a few notable exceptions that avoid the application of the thesis of internal colonialism in China. They include Di Cosmo (1998), Fletcher (1978), Lee (1978, 1982a, forthcoming), and Shin (2006a).

²⁴ At the same time, Mao urges the eradication of local-nationality chauvinism—ethnic nationalism of minorities against Han nationalism. He therefore argues that both Han chauvinism and local-nationality chauvinism, which still exist to a serious degree in certain places, represent one kind of contradiction among the people which should be resolved (Mao 1977[1957]). See also Connor (1984: 407-430) for how the Chinese government dealt with the nationality question, particularly Great Han chauvinism as well as local-national chauvinism until the early 1980s.

2006) as inferior.²⁵ Some scholars also insist that ethnic education plays a vital function in strengthening a ‘superior’ Han culture; internalizing a sense of ‘backwardness’ among the minorities themselves; and accepting the control by Han leaders.²⁶ It is this process of ‘learning inferiority’ that qualifies Chinese society as being colonial.

Third, the idea of China’s ‘colonialism’ assumes the dreadful ‘ethnic’ violence in the frontiers. Colonial genocides carried out by European powers were undoubtedly remarkable and quite endemic (Kiernan 2007; Levene 2008; Moses and Stone 2007; see also Steinmetz 2001: 152; Stone 2001). Applying this pattern of colonial violence, Alexander Woodside states that when the Ming and Qing governments intended to push for administrative centralization in the border regions, the result could be something like ‘the Guizhou killing fields’—“the great slaughter of aboriginal peoples in the Chinese southwest that began roughly about the time of the initial slaughter of aboriginals in the Americas in the aftermath of Christopher Columbus’s voyages” (2007: 15).

However, the nature of ethnic relations in China’s frontiers both in the past and present has been essentially different from that of classical colonialism. As happened in most historical empires, one major aspect of the Chinese statecraft was the lack of economic exploitation of the periphery or institutionalized discrimination and victimization against indigenous peoples. Also, the Chinese state tried to control private commercial exploitation of the frontiers since it did not necessarily benefit the state, and unless the

²⁵ William Rowe, for instance, asserts that a process of ‘orientalization’ (the theme that I discuss in the next section) not unlike that undertaken by both the expansionist officials of the Qing and the public at large had rendered southwestern non-Han peoples quaint, picturesque, and doomed to be overwhelmed by a superior civilization, and therefore conceptually reduced them to a single, undifferentiated ‘Other’—the “Miao” or “Miao-man” (2002: 505). Interestingly, his statements are in some way akin to the Chinese nationalist historiography during the early twentieth century, which assumed the superiority of Han people who have triumphantly wielded the force of sinicization. Likewise, in his book on the so-called “Miao” uprising in southwest China during the late Qing period, Jenks (1994: 44) claims that most Han settlers looked down upon “barbarians as intellectually inferior and almost subhuman—more like animals in their behavior than like humans.”

²⁶ From her fieldwork in Yunnan, for instance, the Danish anthropologist Mette Hansen (1999: 160) remarks that China’s minority education has fostered among many minority students a perception of themselves as members of a ‘backward’ minority simply because it rejects the value of the minorities’ own languages, histories, religions, customs, values, ethics, and so forth. Likewise, in Inner Mongolia, the ethnic education has normally reinforced the dominant position of Han Chinese since actual leadership has regularly been in the hands of Han cadres rather than local minorities (Borchigud 1995). See also Postiglione (1999).

state tapped in to this new wealth or benefitted from it indirectly, it only profited the merchant class. The Qing statesmen, who dealt with interethnic tensions triggered by private activities, were of the opinion that the Han offenders in the Miao area should receive a more severe punishment than the natives on the consideration that Miao people dared not to court trouble if no ‘evil Han’ (*hanjian*) incited them.²⁷ Hence, given the continuation of ‘frontier feudalism,’ semi-independent indirect rule, and the deficiency of the capitalist market economy, it is excessive to attribute China’s territorial expansion during late imperial times to ‘internal colonialism.’ As the late Harvard historian Joseph Fletcher described in his landmark work on the Qing Inner Asia:

Even so, in the early years of the nineteenth century this [territorial] expansion [of the Qing state] was limited. For the common folk in Inner Asia, China and the Han Chinese were far away. Bannermen and Ch’ing [Qing] officials were rarely seen. No great revenues flowed to Peking [Beijing] from Inner Asian dependencies. Indeed *there was nothing that the Ch’ing [Qing] wanted from them but peace. Strategy rather than profit—a desire to forestall the rise of rival powers—had inspired the Manchus’ Inner Asian conquests.* (Fletcher 1978: 106; my italics)

In comparison with the European colonial powers, the main purpose of the Qing enterprise in Inner Asia (Manchuria, Mongolia, Xinjiang, and Tibet) was simpler: security and self-sufficiency. The bannermen relocation project in Shuangcheng (what is now southern Heilongjiang province) during the nineteenth century, for instance, was devised to satisfy these two goals—building a self-sustaining frontier society and securing Manchuria from Russian encroachment (see Chen 2009: ch.3; Chen, Campbell, and Lee 2005). In his memoir of 1821, Fujun of the Mongol Banner, who was the general of Jilin and a major figure in this project, envisioned that “their relocation, can relieve the burden of supporting the banner population in our interior; while it strengthens the frontier on our borders” (Chen 2009: 76). The Qing government was willing to incur huge expenditures to create the Shuangcheng state farm, rather than exploiting resources

²⁷ In 1749, for example, the Manchu nobleman and then-Guizhou Governor, Aibida reported that a Han criminal named Chen Junde refused arrest and hurt others after he raped a Miao woman. The Board of Punishment issued an order, based on the Emperor Qianlong’s decision, that he should be executed at the spot of his crime and the announcement be made known in the area for making Miao people feel grateful and keeping them in awe. Another case happened in 1768. A Han criminal named Yang Guochen went to the Miao area to sell licenses of cloth merchants. He was accused of being an ‘evil Han’ and was to be punished harshly, and the Miao buyers, considered being cheated, were beaten by sticks for warning rather than punished by law. The author would like to thank Professor James Z. Lee for granting a permission to use these valuable legal cases shown in his manuscript, “Law and Ethnicity in Late Imperial Southwest China.”

from the natives. It provided immigrants not only with housing, basic living and farming essentials, transportation and accommodation on their route to the site, but also relocation stipends to start anew in Shuangcheng.

More importantly, the government preferred security over self-support so that it was unenthusiastic about carrying out economic exploitation and state-led development in the frontiers as a means to achieving fiscal independence. In theory, at least, the imperial court expected these regions to be self-sustaining. In practice, however, the military expenditures that would be required to maintain the center's control over the frontiers tended to increase far beyond the local tax resources (see Fletcher 1978: 37). If the exterior did not achieve self-support, as happened in most regions except Mongolia and southwestern Manchuria (Liaoning), its maintenance relied heavily on substantial support from the interior. In the government's eyes, the cost of subsidizing frontier garrisons was still less than the cost of military campaigns to quell any rebellion by natives, prompted by exploitation and oppression.

The heritage of the imperial past remarkably persists even today; for instance, the Beijing government has pursued a policy of net resource influx into its western and southwestern borders notably the recent investment in the Great Western Development (see, e.g., Abigail 2002). The consolidation of China's control over the Xinjiang region represents such historical continuity. During the Qing, huge deliveries of silver from the interior paid for salaries, equipment, clothing, and construction costs for Xinjiang (Perdue 2005: 336).²⁸ This flow of fiscal expenditure still continues today.²⁹ Tibet is no exception. The increases in the Tibet Autonomous Region's total industrial and agricultural output have largely been attributed to state subsidies. Over the first three decades of the PRC's control of Tibet, the total output value increased fourfold, whereas state subsidies

²⁸ The Xinjiang garrison was an expensive operation and the tax revenues of the dependency did not even begin to cover the soldiers' annual pay, the equivalent of around 3,000,000 taels (roughly 114 tons) in silver. Thus, something like 1,200,000 taels (approximately 45.6 tons) of silver had to come each year from the interior to meet its expenses (Fletcher 1978: 60-61; see also Millward 2007).

²⁹ At the turn of the millennium, even with oil and gas revenues, "Xinjiang runs huge annual deficits, its expenditures routinely exceeding its GDP by between 12 and 19 billion yuan. ... [T]he region's effective subsidy remains on a par with those of Yunnan and Guizhou, the poorest parts of China" (Millward 2007: 302-303).

increased by 65 times.³⁰ Still, as of 2005, the expenditure of the local government was 18.55 billion yuans while its revenue only reached 1.2 billion yuans (see Table 4.2). The ratio of spending to revenue (18.55/1.2=15.46) represents the most serious fiscal imbalance among all provincial-level jurisdictions in the PRC.

In addition, the Chinese empire, compared with colonial powers, did not intend to place Han immigrants as categorically superior to natives. Like previous dynasties, the Qing state was keen to keep the conflict between settlers and aborigines from disturbing its control of a strategic periphery and from imposing additional costs. So the goal of the settlement policy was not so much to favor the Han migrants as to prevent them from entering minority areas thereby keeping the Han and non-Han communities separate.³¹ Yet it has been assumed that there was a state-led ethnic polarization during late imperial China. Frederick Mote, for instance, suggests that in the regions of south China since the Ming, Han immigrants, who were protected by local military authorities, took over the fertile river valley to farm the best lands; at the same time the unassimilated natives were driven out to dwell in less desirable hill regions or more remote regions. He remarks that as a result of changes in peripheral societies for centuries, Han settlers “gradually became the locally dominant population group and then displaced the native peoples or made them an inferior stratum within local society” (1999: 705). But, indeed, the edifice of property ownership often went in the opposite route. In the nineteenth century, for instance, one local Yunnan observer recorded that the indigenes cultivated land where the soil is fertile, whereas the Han migrants cultivated land in the mountain slopes where the soil is poor (Lee 1982a: 298; see also Lee forthcoming).³²

³⁰ June Dreyer evaluates that “An increase of one yuan in output value required an increase of 1.21 yuan in state subsidies—that is, Tibet had a *negative* multiplier effect on investment” (2006: 135; emphasis in original). Even now, much of the GDP growth reflects massive state subsidies (ibid.: 147). See also Sautman and Dreyer (2006).

³¹ In spite of the Qing government’s efforts, the massive internal migrations from the interior into the exterior increasingly took place throughout the eighteenth century. Although this was an unintended consequence for Manchu conquerors, as Fletcher (1978: 36) remarks, it was the Manchus who laid the groundwork for the sinicization of China’s Inner Asian frontiers. The dynasty’s need to encourage Han peoples to settle in those areas became evident to the court only dimly and belatedly in the nineteenth century, after it was too late to preserve the full territorial extent in Manchuria and Xinjiang.

³² Likewise, in Taiwan, in case of the rental-lease in which Han migrant only acquired a use-right in land, the Han peasant was a regular tenant and the aborigine a landed proprietor (Shepherd 1993: 339).

By and large, the native populations were granted legal and cultural autonomy by the imperial government.³³ Likewise, they were exempt from administrative duties rather than being exploited and discriminated as lesser human beings. Contrary to the registered subjects of the ‘inside land,’ Mongols, Tibetans, Turkic-speaking Muslims, Manchurian tribesmen and all bannermen were omitted from the tax registers, and, instead, required to pay tributes through the native princes of those unregistered people. The imperial government also exempted the indigenes from taxes and protected their land rights especially in Manchuria, Taiwan and the southwest; whereas, it prohibited Han settlers from buying, selling, or taking over aboriginal cultivated land (see Chapter 4). It is far from the reality to suppose that non-Han indigenes were destined to be more discriminated and exploited by the state-system than Han peasants, both in the interior and exterior. With the exception of a few privileges reserved for the Manchus, the Qing state, as Di Cosmo aptly put it, “did not promote ethnic discrimination, although ethnic classification remained an operating principle throughout Qing society and government” (1998: 287).

Finally, I would argue that the pattern of conflict and violence in China’s frontiers, like other continental empires, cannot be adequately explained as an ethnic or national form that appeared in the history of colonial genocide, ethnic cleansing of national minorities, anti-colonial rebellion, or ethnic-nationalist movement. To be sure, the Chinese imperial government so often carried out bloody and ruthless military actions against agitators and outlaws usually referred to as the “Yao” and “Miao” bandits. But the nature of those ethnicity-labeled uprisings was generally far removed from any resistance against ethnic discrimination instituted by the Han peoples. Indeed, many local Han opportunists joined the ‘ethnic’ revolts and banditry; while some natives who were loyal to the central government fought against them.³⁴ In Guizhou, for instance, from around the mid-eighteenth century, the Han Chinese played a more prominent role in social unrest than

³³ In the southwest, Qing officials developed the detailed set of “Miao sub-statutes” (*Miao li*) to protect the legal rights of native peoples around early eighteenth century, as the traditional native chieftaincy system was gradually dismantled by the aggressive centralization policy (see Chapter 4).

³⁴ See Jenks (1994), McMahon (2002), Shin (2006b), Sutton (2003a), and Swope (2001, 2003) for a detailed discussion.

non-Han natives.³⁵ Both Han and Miao were inspired to join a common struggle and ethnic hostility was “but one of several significant points of friction that contributed to the revolt” (Jenks 1994: 57). So Woodside’s above-mentioned rhetoric—the Guizhou killing fields—is a misconceived idea, more likely to have resulted from gazing at Chinese history through a Western prism.

The Mythology of Oriental Orientalism

Another popular, but largely misconceived, idea is to equate China’s ethnic relations to Europe’s Orientalism in colonial and postcolonial contexts: the Han Chinese represent themselves as modern and regard the non-Han minorities as inferior subjects needed to be civilized. Such assertion also implies a spatial hierarchy in the sense that the Han stand for the advanced core while the minorities are placed in the geographical periphery. From this perspective, the anthropologist Stevan Harrell (1995a: 10-17) argues that Han Chinese have developed three metaphors for non-Han minorities in the peripheries: the ‘educational’ metaphor regarding them as children, the ‘historical’ metaphor that sees them as ancient, and the ‘sexual’ metaphor that considers them as women. These metaphoric expressions also characterize what he calls China’s “civilizing projects” with three developmental stages—the Confucian, missionary, and Communist project (Harrell 1995a).³⁶

The idea of history as a linear progression, which evidently appears in Harrell’s discussion, is associated with the notion of the hierarchy of race and ethnicity and the discourse of cultural essentialism—the ‘Self’ is portrayed as advanced, the ‘Other’ as archaic and primitive. Several critical anthropologists have insisted that China is no

³⁵ During the second half of the nineteenth century, as Jenks comments on social disorder in this area, many more Han than Miao “were involved on the rebel side, despite the misleading name—to wit, “Miao” rebellion—that has been applied to this period of turmoil” (1994: 72).

³⁶ Inspired by postcolonial literatures, other scholars have also depicted the Chinese frontier setting through the lens of the ‘(Confucian) civilizing project,’ and argued that little of this foundation has changed until today (see, e.g., Hansen 1999; Heberer 2001; Litzinger 2000; Perdue 2005; Schneewind 2006; Sines 2002; Swain 2001).

exception.³⁷ Their argument is that the Han manifest themselves as the future; yet, the minorities have been objectified as a marked category, characterized by colorfulness and exotic customs.³⁸ In addition, this colorful visualization and exotic fantasies of minority peoples are often derogatory, colonial, and useful to the state. Dru Gladney, for instance, asserts that Han women are required to discipline their body by using modern contraceptive devices in the services of the state; minority women are allowed to be portrayed erotically and encouraged to be fecund because that too contributes to the interests of the regime.³⁹

Evidently, the aforementioned discourse in Western scholarship has been influenced by postcolonial studies. Indeed, it is not a mere coincidence that Edward Said's book *Orientalism* was originally published in 1978, and a critical mass of research on China's minorities, which problematizes ethnicity, has only developed since the early 1980s (Brownell and Wasserstrom 2002: 18). Said's well-known use of Orientalism denotes a collective notion that identifies 'us' Europeans in relation to undifferentiated 'them' non-Europeans.⁴⁰ Within the umbrella of Western hegemony over the Orient, the non-Europeans are portrayed as primitive peoples preoccupied with ancient paganism or less than human (see McGrane 1989: 68-69; Steinmetz 2001: 155). The 'savage' of the Orient accordingly takes on the value and status of representing the ancients, the incivility, and the exotic. Said also notes that in European images of the Orient since the late eighteenth

³⁷ On the studies of current Han perspectives on non-Han peoples, see *Cultural Encounters on China's Ethnic Frontiers* (1995) edited by Stevan Harrell. In this volume, most contributors are anthropologists and many of them are Harrell's students. See also Brown (1996), Diamond (1988), Gladney (1994, 1997, 2004), Harrell (1996), Heberer (2001), Rack (2005) and Schein (1997, 2000).

³⁸ Benedict Anderson (2001: 39), for instance, argues that the minorities are made to appear in their most colorful traditional costumes, whereas the Han do not appear in traditional clothing. In the past, typical visual illustrations during Mao's China reproduced the fixed image that the minorities who wore their ethnic attires warmly smiled at the Han cadres who wore the people's costume (*renmin fu*). Although wearing the people's costume is not popular anymore, the visualization of Han leaders who appear in business suits has nothing 'ethnic' at all.

³⁹ Gladney concludes that "perhaps one metaphorical reason the state exempts most minorities from birth planning is to preserve the notion that minorities represent uncontrolled sensuality, fertility, and reproductivity; Han represent controlled, civilized, productivity" (2005: 289). His assertion—hypersexualized portrayal of minority women serves the interests of the state—mistakenly interprets the governmental perception on minority population policy. The implementation of preferential treatments has been to deal with the decline in the minority population since the earlier years of the People's Republic (see, e.g., Li 1962: 299).

⁴⁰ Said defined that Orientalism is "the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures" (1994: 7).

century, the Oriental subject is gendered feminine (passive, subservient, erotic), in contrast to the European 'Self' which is gendered masculine (active, dominant, continental).

From the early 1980s, many scholars have applied Said's idea to China's imperial past. As one of its earliest applications, Edward Graham (1983) argues that 'otherness' was not a peculiarly Western idea about Orientals, the evidence of which comes from a distinctive Chinese self-view and worldview. He states: "Said's analytical approach can as logically be taken to Chinese views of the non-Chinese world," contained and perpetuated for thousands of years (ibid.: 41). Likewise, Emma Teng asserts that both European Orientalism and the Chinese image of unfamiliar spaces are 'colonial' discourses: "Expanding the scope of colonial studies allows us to view China not simply as the object of Orientalist discourse or as a mimic of Western Orientalism but also as the producer of its own brand of exoticist discourse" (2004: 13).⁴¹

The idea of the historical foundation of 'colonial Orientalism' in China has led some Western anthropologists, historians and comparative literature scholars to portray the present-day conditions in the context of 'internal Orientalism,' 'oriental Orientalism,' and so forth. They have constructed a parallel comparison between the ways in which Han Chinese marginalize non-Han minorities and the ways in which Europeans orientalize non-Europeans. For example, Gladney (1994, 2004) proposes the concept of 'oriental Orientalism.'⁴² Louisa Schein (1997, 2002) further argues that the gendered nature of China's 'internal Orientalism' is part of the colonial relations of domination—Han Chinese are routinely symbolized as male urban sophisticates; non-Han minorities are mainly represented as rural women.⁴³ Similarly, Nicholas Tapp reckons that China's

⁴¹ From the Qing travel accounts of Taiwan, she further suggests that the mainland elite scholars employed tropes of feminization of the male indigenous population and eroticization of the feminine. In this respect, Taiwan was regarded as "an island of women" (Teng 1998, 2004: ch.7), resembling to a greater extent modern European travel writing on the Orient and New World (see Perdue 1998: 260).

⁴² Gladney's thesis of 'oriental Orientalism' is based on the ground that "the representation of minority and majority in Chinese art, literature, and media will be shown to have surprising parallels to the now well-known portrayals of the 'East' by Western orientalists" (1994: 94, 2004: 53).

⁴³ For a good discussion of the intersection of gender and ethnicity in China, see Brownell and Wasserstrom (2002: 18-21). As mentioned earlier, Teng (1998, 2004) strives to trace the 'Chinese' origin of this gendered identity back to early modern times.

ethnic classification project in the 1950s “looks in retrospect like one of the great colonising missions of the twentieth century, a huge internal ‘self-Orientalizing’ mission designed to homogenise and reify internal cultural differences in the service of a particular kind of (gendered) cultural nationalism” (2002: 65).

Yet this homology between Han Chinese and European colonizers in the thesis of China’s internal Orientalism ought to be critically examined.⁴⁴ The recent rise in assertive non-Han identity construction indicates that ethnic consciousness of being minorities is far from internalizing a sense of inferiority. In particular, the ultra-masculine image-making of Chinggis Khan and his descendants (see Chapter 5) is the exact opposite to the premises of Orientalism—the ‘Orient’ is weak, feminized, and subordinated. Likewise, since the 1980s, some Manchu activists have been engaged with the Manchu identity revival movement, which identifies themselves as descendants of the great conquerors who significantly contributed to the formation of modern China (see Bai 2005: 186). The notion of orientalized portrayals of minority groups should also be questioned in other cases. From his ethnography of the Yao community in the southwest, Ralph Litzinger argues that many Yao people see colorful representations of their traditions “not as practices of commodification and exoticization but as ways to gain ideological distance from the assimilationist policies that prevailed in the 1960s and 1970s” (1998: 240). As for the Yao minority, celebrating their traditional culture is considered as a way to promote the tourism industry, which contributes to the local economy (Litzinger 1998, 2000; see also Shih 2002).

Non-Han groups, such as Mongol, Manchu, Yao, Korean, and Yi, have proactively worked for defining and maintaining ethnic boundaries rather than being passively orientalized by the Han majority. This boundary-work has been approved by the government on the condition that it does not go beyond the principle of a unified, multiethnic state. This self-assured identity construction, as a reaction against the

⁴⁴ Unfortunately, there have only been a few scholars who raised any critical question over the relevance of the postcolonial theories to the Chinese context. See, for example, Dirlik (1996, 1997).

assimilative policy during the Cultural Revolution, is an important aspect of ethnic politics in post-Mao China.

In summary, rather than positing a sharp boundary between ‘Self’ and ‘Other,’ the Chinese state has been based on the universalistic and eclectic principle of peoplehood shown in most historical world-empires. The imperial subjects of the Chinese state were not ethnically defined but collectively referred to as the Qin people, Han people, Tang people and Ming people, without regard to their original ethnicities. This open-ended concept of self-identity dates back to pre-imperial times when various non-Sinitic polities in the peripheries were incorporated into the Zhou-centered confederation, that is, the Central States. Rather than subordinating and enslaving the natives, ancient Chinese regarded them not as innately doomed to an unenlightened existence but as amenable, at least in principle, to the benefit of civilization (Falkenhausen 2006: 166). Later, the sinicizing force of the Chinese empire, intended to propagate the education of Confucian canons and morality through a voluntary and nonviolent manner, had been rather weaker than the colonial desire to exterminate the aboriginal peoples or coerce them to assimilate. In comparison with the ‘civilizing mission’ (*mission civilisatrice*) of European colonialism, Wang Gungwu argues that there were “no equivalents of the holy crusades, nor were there manifestations of missionary zeal” (1991: 148).

The holistic ideal of the Chinese state has gone beyond any concept of ethnic Han. This idea was remarked upon by Yang Shen (1488-1559), a renowned Ming scholar who was exiled to Yunnan and one of the earliest ethnographers of the southwest, in the following manner: “The Chinese are a truly cosmopolitan people, the heirs of all mankind, of all the world. The Han are just one of the ethnic groups in the [Ming] empire, and we include many different types of people (*min*). In Yunnan alone there are over twenty other non-Han native peoples. So long as they accept the emperor’s rule, they are Chinese.”⁴⁵ This all-embracing whole of peoplehood and statehood has since become a part of modern

⁴⁵ Yang Shen, *Lun min* (On the people). As rendered by Lee (1982a: 292). William Rowe also cites Yang’s treatise but insists, “Few were inclined to accept the threatening views of the sixteenth-century political exile” (2002: 505).

China's national self-image of a unified, multiethnic state without imposing an 'objectified portrayal' of non-Han minorities as exoticized, fantasized, and uncivilized.

Discussion and Conclusions

As cited at the beginning, the eminent sinologist Etienne Balazs has illustrated a fundamental incompatibility between Chinese and European civilizations regarding modern social development. Although he did not specifically characterize it, the theories of racism, colonialism, and Orientalism, developed through the history of European encroachment in the New World and the Orient, cannot be applicable to the Chinese realities. As a sinologist and sociologist, Wolfram Eberhard remarks: "In China, in contrast to the West, the question of minorities is not a question of race" (1982: 3). Until today, there have been no alternatives overriding the telos of the Chinese state—the Great Unity (*da yitong*) and Grand Commonality (*datong*) of all under heaven. In no other time than now, the Chinese state appeals to this long-lasting ideal of global community, as shown in the slogan of Beijing 2008 Olympic Games, "One World, One Dream."

This study has tried to debunk the limits of one particular case of 'misconceived' comparison, i.e., the Sino-Western parallel from the sixteenth century onward. It is useful here to make an ideal-typical distinction of the two forms of world-systems; the 'world-empire' and the '(capitalist) world-economy.' The latter represents a peculiar world-economy that has survived for 500 years and yet has not come to be transformed into a world-empire (see Wallerstein 1976: 229-233). The construction of racism, colonialism, Orientalism should be understood within the context of the development of historical capitalism (see Balibar and Wallerstein 1991; Wallerstein 1995). By contrast, the Sinocentric world was essentially one particular form of the historical 'world-empire.' The Chinese empire was in general a single multiethnic political entity over most of one single area, which mitigated the scale of its effective control. Like the Roman Empire, it had fairly simple goals: fiscal responsibility from the interior and political compliance from the exterior (see Burns 2003). Provincials paid taxes, aliens offered tributes. Every

alien polity from all four corners of the earth was in principle required to pay tribute, and in return endowed with generous gifts, the amount of which went beyond the tribute. Most importantly, the frontier land did not justify itself economically, while the capitalist economic development was never the primary goal of the Chinese empire.

Most leaders and thinkers in post-imperial China have for the most part enshrined the imperial legacies, what Craig Calhoun calls “reconstructing ancient China as a modern nation” (1997: 94). They have reconfigured the traditional notion of ethnicity by combining a native root with a new discourse of modern nationalism. The official narrative of the Chinese nation has been modeled on the imagined giant family: the majority and the minority are defined as inalienable brothers to one another under the leadership of the Chinese communists. This kinship rhetoric resembles the paternalistic emperorship where the enlightened, virtuous despot proclaimed himself to be a father of all his imperial subjects of whom he had to take care. Furthermore, evidence for a dialogue with the ancient Chinese ideas and systems should not be missed: the privileged minorities (the preferential treatments for non-Han groups); the indirect rule over the natives (the establishment of the Autonomous Regions); the flow of government fiscal spending (from the interior to the exterior); and the notion of a single political entity (one China, one country).

China’s ethnic boundaries and relations proffer the chance to rethink the dominant opinion in the study of ethnicity, race, and nationalism. First, the meaning of being an ethnic and national minority is not always represented as disadvantaged, marginalized, orientalized, and discriminated against; nor has it been regarded as a mirror image of the dominant group—as the inferior ‘Other’ to the superior ‘Self.’ Second, China as a case study would challenge the sociological discussion of ethno-racial inequality, which presupposes that one’s privileged status inevitably entails a categorical discrimination of other groups. Lastly, the predicament of national minorities does not always originate from the politics of exclusion but sometimes from the politics of inclusion. This is the dark, but largely overlooked, side of the ongoing heritage of the Chinese empire.

Epilogue: Continuity through Changes

Big structures: In the Chinese concept of *tongbian* (continuity through change), which appeared in the ancient classic *Yi jing* (The Book of Changes), change does not inevitably lead to complete destruction. I have argued that the foundation of contemporary Chinese statehood and nationhood is firmly based on its imperial ideas and practices in the past, most of which were of pre-imperial origin. This is not to suggest that the history of China is merely a quantitative aggregation of each dynasty. If so, Hegel was correct to assert that China has no real history, because of its deficiency in the progress of genuine subjectivity, but only the dynastic cycle. In the empire of China, he argued, “every change is excluded, and the fixedness of a character which recurs perpetually, takes the place of what we should call the truly historical. China and India lie, as it were, still outside the World’s History” (Hegel 1956[1837]: 116). Nevertheless, at the same time, as Etienne Balazs put it, Hegel “was right, to the extent that he sensed the unchanging character of Chinese social structure” (1964: 15). Even the most drastic change—empire-to-nation transformation through two great revolutions, the nationalist revolution of 1911 and the communist revolution of 1949—does not result in a full-fledged nation-state, but forges the imperial nation, located in the midst of the empire-nation continuum. This inbetweenness is fully comprehensible only when we take the fundamental feature of Chinese society, constancy and change, into consideration.

Large processes: The notion of *tongbian* not only negates an ahistorical, stagnant portrayal of China, but explains the qualitative changes with respect to political institutions, national characteristics, and ethnic group boundaries, while retaining their core principles. As to historicize these three interconnected issues, I have utilized the three major phases in Chinese history—the formative, expansionary, and post-imperial phases.

First, the basic foundations of the patrimonial state were devised during pre-imperial times and crystallized in the early imperial period. The common cultural framework for the concepts of the Middle Kingdom and its neighbors, Son of Heaven, Great Unity and Grand Commonality under heaven was consolidated during this formative phase. In the Jaspersian conception of the Axial Age being a breakthrough, such ‘cultural genes’ as major premises of the Chinese institutional system were decisive to the process of Axial transcendence, which eventually led to the formation of trans-ethnic and universal world-empire and still influences present-day China; for instance, see the PRC’s ambitious project of global expansion of the Confucius Institute (see Eisenstadt 1985, 1986a, 1986b, 2005; Harbsmeier 2005; Hsu 1986, 2005; Loewe 1999; Schwartz 1975a, 1975b).

Second, alien domination of the Middle Kingdom, which frequently occurred from the fourth century to the Manchu Qing dynasty, forged the synthesis of the Han natives and the foreign conquerors while embracing the traditional Chinese concept of patrimonial bureaucracy and frontier governance. In this expansionary phase, new elements were added to the foundation of ethnic group boundaries: the concept of privileged minority and the *jus sanguinis* principle of ethnicity, based on the person’s genealogical roots or household registration, transcending the ethno-spatial definition. Accordingly, new vocabularies such as *zahu*, *zazhong*, *zaren* appeared to depict the mixed-person. More importantly, the imperial condition of coexistence between patrimonial universalism and ethnic particularism that favored non-Han peoples was more conspicuous under the conquest regimes; however, the native dynasties also maintained similar lines in their ethnic-based policy, such as the preferential treatments towards the Mongol subjects of the Ming. In effect, this conciliatory policy without much discrimination against the native Han subjects constituted a significant component of the grand strategy of the defense, the ‘divide-and-control’ by permitting reliable aliens control over the others, and resulted in “unbounded loyalty” (Standen 2007) in an ethnic sense.

Lastly, the post-imperial Chinese nation is not an ordinary nation-state but an imperial nation. The patrimonial practices of imagining the country as a primordially unified

family, intended to supersede ethnic diversity, have become more vociferous. The non-Han minorities, regarded either as ‘branches’ or as ‘brothers’ of the Han peoples, have been reified to be an inalienable member of the Chinese nation. It is also important to emphasize that the imperial nation should not be conflated with the colonial nation, such as the French Republics and Great Britain, modeled on a hybrid of overseas colonialism and domestic nationalism. Both imperial and colonial nations faced the nationalist challenges; however, their solutions were different. The colonial nations pursued vertical homogeneity—the complex of unequal hierarchy between the colonizer and the colonized together with homogenizing discourses such as the ‘civilizing mission’ and the ‘Greater Asian Co-Prosperty Sphere.’ In contrast, as for the imperial nations, the principle of horizontal heterogeneity, stipulated for instance as ‘national in form, socialist in content’ in the USSR and PRC, was a practical instrument to reconcile a contradiction between imperial and national conditions.

Huge comparisons: Instead of particularizing China as an esoteric case, I have suggested that the Chinese empire was essentially one specific case of non-colonial, patrimonial world-empires. As elsewhere, it was generally a single multiethnic political entity over most of the area, yet mitigated the scale of its effective control. The methods of managing its vast territories occupied points on a spectrum, from various forms of generous appeasement—even going to the extent of purchasing peace by paying annual tribute to foreign states—to sheer force, but which cannot be commensurable to colonial genocides against indigenous peoples. This double-edged sword of persuasion and coercion was to achieve the “Heavenly Peace,” i.e., Pax Sinica, the strategy of which has continued in post-imperial statecraft.

The Chinese imperial nation can be to some degree analogous to another imperial nation, the Soviet Union, which also underwent a long course of continuity with changes; from tsarist patrimonialism, modeled in part on Byzantine manorial patrimonialism, to federal multiethnic socialism. In both cases, the post-imperial transition could be characterized from vertical heterogeneity to horizontal heterogeneity. Unlike the current condition of the Chinese imperial nation, the abrupt collapse of the Soviet empire represents the

inherent vulnerability of the imperial nation, which is apparent in the era of the hegemony of nation-state sovereignty. Yet, the dissolution of the Soviet Union was mainly caused by the implosion of the central authority, compared with the disintegration of colonial powers triggered by the nationalist movements of colonized peoples. As I have discussed, it would be a mistake to conceive these two imperial nations through the lenses of racism, colonialism, Orientalism, and nationalism, all of which are commonly employed to explicate the nature of either colonial powers or post-imperial, post-colonial nation-states.

Finally, although it is beyond my study to predict the destiny of the Chinese imperial nation, it is still feasible to envision the PRC's future domestic ethnic politics and external behaviors from our knowledge of the pattern of development of Chinese history as a whole. I believe the most valid method for making sense of China is to seek out the causes of continuity through changes. As Max Weber suggests, sociologists who want to search for adequate causation in historical explanation should find not a law-like formulation but the rules of experience (See Weber 1949[1905]; Roth 1971). The future of the Chinese nation is not predetermined but contingent upon the ideal-typical pattern of historical development. What really constitutes the content of the imperial nation is this enduring history itself, albeit socialistic in form.

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